Oxfam Scandal

What is the issue?

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- Oxfam International is following an opaque mechanism in regulating its employers involved in Haiti scandal.
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- Due to this agency faces an uncertain future for its International support and funding.
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What is Oxfam International?

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- Oxfam is a confederation of 20 independent charitable organizations around the world.
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- It is based in UK but it has its operation across 90 countries.
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- Oxfam international releases global inequality report annually.
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- Around the globe, Oxfam works to find practical, innovative ways for people to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive.
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- Oxfam works with partner organizations and alongside vulnerable women and men to end the injustices that cause poverty.
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What was the role of Oxfam in Haiti?

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- In 2010, A 7.1 magnitude earthquake devastated the island of Haiti, killing over 220,000 and injuring over 30,000.

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- During this disaster billions of dollars of aid poured in, with international aid organisations playing a pivotal role in the recovery and relief effort.
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- Among those to take a lead role was Oxfam, the Oxford-based charity, which had a Rs.629 crore fund for its relief efforts in the country.
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What are the scandals of Oxfam?

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- During the relief operations in Haiti many employees of Oxfam has indulged in sexual abuse on women and children as young as 14.
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- It also emerged that one of the alleged perpetrators had faced allegations while working in Chad for Oxfam, but had still been assigned to Haiti following the earthquake
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- Moreover, some of the men were able to get jobs at other organisations in contact with vulnerable people.
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- UK’s Charity Commission had failed to report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse and that the scale of abuse was likely to be far wider than was being reported to Oxfam.
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What are the actions taken in this regard?

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- The scandal has already triggered the resignation of the charity’s deputy head, while corporate sponsors are urgently seeking clarity on the situation.
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- The charity had allowed three senior male staff to resign following an inquiry into sexual transgression, and fired four others for gross misconduct and bullying.
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- RecentlyBritain’s charity regulator the Charity Commission opened a

statutory inquiry into Oxfam.
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- This includes concerns that the charity had not “fully and frankly” disclosed materials about the allegations at the time.
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What are the challenges in taking actions on Oxfam?

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- Oxfam has a “strong policy framework” for protecting staff and beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse.
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- The Oxfam aid is being used by the beneficial nations to expand their trade and national interests, so they are hesitant to take any action against the charity.
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- The Charity Commission and government departments of UK are not even ready to any disciplinary action against the organisation even within their territory.
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- The charity is strongly backed by UK’s political forces and no international proceedings has been initiated against the organisation.
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- Thus it is hard to confront the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation across the aid sector in Britain and beyond.
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Source: Business Line

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