

Disaster Management Act, 2005

The Disaster Management Act of 2005 (DMA 2005) is an act passed by the government of India for the 'efficient management of disasters and other matters connected to it.

Containing 11 chapters and 79 sections, the act received the assent of the President of India on 23 December 2005.

This article will give further details about the Disaster Management Act within the context of the Civil Service Examination.

Features of the Disaster Management Act 2005?

The following governing bodies are established by DMA 2005.

1. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA): The National Disaster Management Authority is headed by the Prime Minister of India as the chairperson and will have no more than nine members including a Vice-Chairperson. All the members will have a tenure of five years.

The main responsibility of the NDMA is to lay down the policies, plans and guidelines for disaster management to ensure an effective response in the event of any disaster.

2. National Executive Committee: The DMA empowers the Central Government to create a National Executive Committee (NEC) to assist the National Disaster Management Authority. The NEC consists of Secretary level officers of the government in the home, health, power, finance and agricultural ministries. The NEC is responsible for the preparation of the National Disaster Management Plan for the whole country and to ensure that it is "reviewed and updated annually".

3. State Disaster Management Authority: The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) is responsible for drawing the disaster plan for its respective state. It consists of the Chief Minister who is the chairperson and 8 members appointed by the Chief Minister.

The SDMA is mandated under section 28 to ensure that all the departments of the State prepare disaster management plans as prescribed by the National and State Authorities.

4. District Disaster Management Authority: The Chairperson of District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) will be the Collector or District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner of the district.

To know what role the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) plays in disaster mitigation in India, visit the linked article

5. National Disaster Response Force (NDRF): The National Disaster Response Force is tasked with responding to a threatening disaster or a situation similar to it. The NDRF is led by a Director-General appointed by the Central Government. The NDRF has played a major role in rescuing people from many disaster-related events in the past such as the Kashmir floods of 2014 and the Kerala floods of 2018

What has been the progress made by DMA 2005?

The Disaster Management Act is based on the principle belief that mitigation of disaster-related losses is efficient that expenditure on relief and rehabilitation. The drawing up of strategic partnerships and course of actions to counter disasters of various degrees the act has made significant inroads in the following

- Detailed directions to guide disaster management efforts
- Capacity development in all spheres
- Consolidation of past initiatives and best practices
- Co-operation with agencies at national and international levels

Criticism of the Disaster Management Act

Even though the DMA has filled crucial gaps regarding Disaster Management in India it still comes with its fair share of criticism. One of its drawbacks is the absence of a provision for the declaration of 'disaster-prone zones'. The states can play a more active role when such provisions are made as this classification can help in mitigating the damages that will be caused

The Act implies that disasters are a sudden occurrence when in fact they can be progressive in nature as well. For example, epidemics can be considered as disasters despite conventional definition as it does take thousands of lives in its wake. Epidemics of dengue and tuberculosis cause a lot of havoc yet no effective mechanism is in place to combat it.

New disaster management guidelines are underway and one can only hope it incorporates provisions to overcome dysfunctions of the current authorities and not overlook yet again the valuable role that the civil society, private enterprises and NGOs can play towards building a safer India.