



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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National Disaster

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Why in news?

With the rescue operations in the landslide hit Wayanad continues the opposition parties have urged the center to declare the landslide as a National disaster.

What is a National Disaster?

As per the *Disaster Management Act, 2005*, “disaster” means a *catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area*, arising from *natural or man-made causes*, or by *accident or negligence* which results in

I substantial loss of life or human suffering or

II damage to, and destruction of, property, or

III damage to, or degradation of, environment, and is of such a nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area.

A natural disaster includes earthquake, flood, landslide, cyclone, tsunami, urban flood.

A man-made disaster can be nuclear, biological and chemical.

The *10th Finance Commission (1995-2000)* examined a proposal that a disaster be termed “*a national calamity of rarest severity*” if *it affects one-third of the population* of a state.

The panel did not define a “calamity of rare severity” but stated that a calamity of rare severity would necessarily have *to be adjudged on a case-to-case basis* taking into account, inter-alia, the intensity and magnitude of the calamity, level of assistance needed, the capacity of the state to tackle the problem, the alternatives and flexibility available within the plans to provide succour and relief, etc.

The flash floods in Uttarakhand and Cyclone Hudhud were later classified as calamities of “severe nature”.

What are the benefits of such a declaration?

- On declaration as a calamity of “rare severity”/“severe nature”, *support to the state government is provided at the national level.*
- The Centre also considers additional assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund.
- A Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) is set up, with the corpus shared 3:1 between Centre and state.
- When CRF resources are inadequate, additional assistance is considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF).
- NCCF is funded 100% by the Centre.
- Relief in repayment of loans or grant of fresh loans to the affected persons on concessional terms are also considered.

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How is the funding decided?

- It works as per the **National Policy on Disaster Management, 2009**.
- The ***National Crisis Management Committee*** deals with major crises that have serious or national ramifications.
- It is ***headed by the Cabinet Secretary***.
- ***The inter-ministerial central teams*** are deputed to the affected states.
- They make assessment of damage and relief assistance required.
- ***An inter-ministerial group, headed by the Union Home Secretary***, studies the assessment.
- It then recommends the quantum of assistance from the NDRF/NCCF.
- Based on this, ***a high-level committee approves the central assistance***.
- **It comprises of Finance Minister as chairman, and Home Minister, Agriculture Minister, and others as members.**