

12– 03 – 2023

News: States demand that lightning be declared a natural disaster

- A few states have demanded that “lightning” be declared a “natural disaster” because deaths caused by it surpass any other disaster in the country, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) member secretary Kamal Kishore said recently.

Disaster

- According to the Disaster Management Act, 2005 a disaster is defined as a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or manmade causes, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to, and destruction of, property, or 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.
- The MHA has defined a disaster as an “extreme disruption of the functioning of a society that causes widespread human, material, or environmental losses that exceed the ability of the affected society to cope with its own resources”.

State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)

- The State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) is constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and is the primary fund available with state governments for responses to notified disasters.
- The Central government contributes 75 per cent towards the SDRF allocation for general category states and UTs, and over 90 per cent for special category states/UTs (which includes northeastern states, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand).
- For SDRF, the Centre releases funds in two equal installments as per the recommendation of the Finance Commission.
- As per current norms, cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves are considered as disasters that are covered under the State Disaster Response Fund.

The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)

- The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), which is also constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 supplements the SDRF of a state, in case of a disaster of severe nature, provided adequate funds are not available in the SDRF.

Categories of disaster

- A High Power Committee on Disaster Management was constituted in 1999 to identify disaster categories.
- It identified 31 disaster categories organised into five major subgroups, which are: water and climate-related disasters, geological related disasters, chemical, industrial and nuclear-related disasters and biological related disasters, which includes biological disasters and epidemics.