

Disaster

A disaster is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. Disasters can be caused by naturally occurring events, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, or tornadoes, or they can be due to man-made events, either accidental (such as an accidental toxic spill or nuclear power plant event), or deliberately caused (such as various terrorist bombings and poisonings).

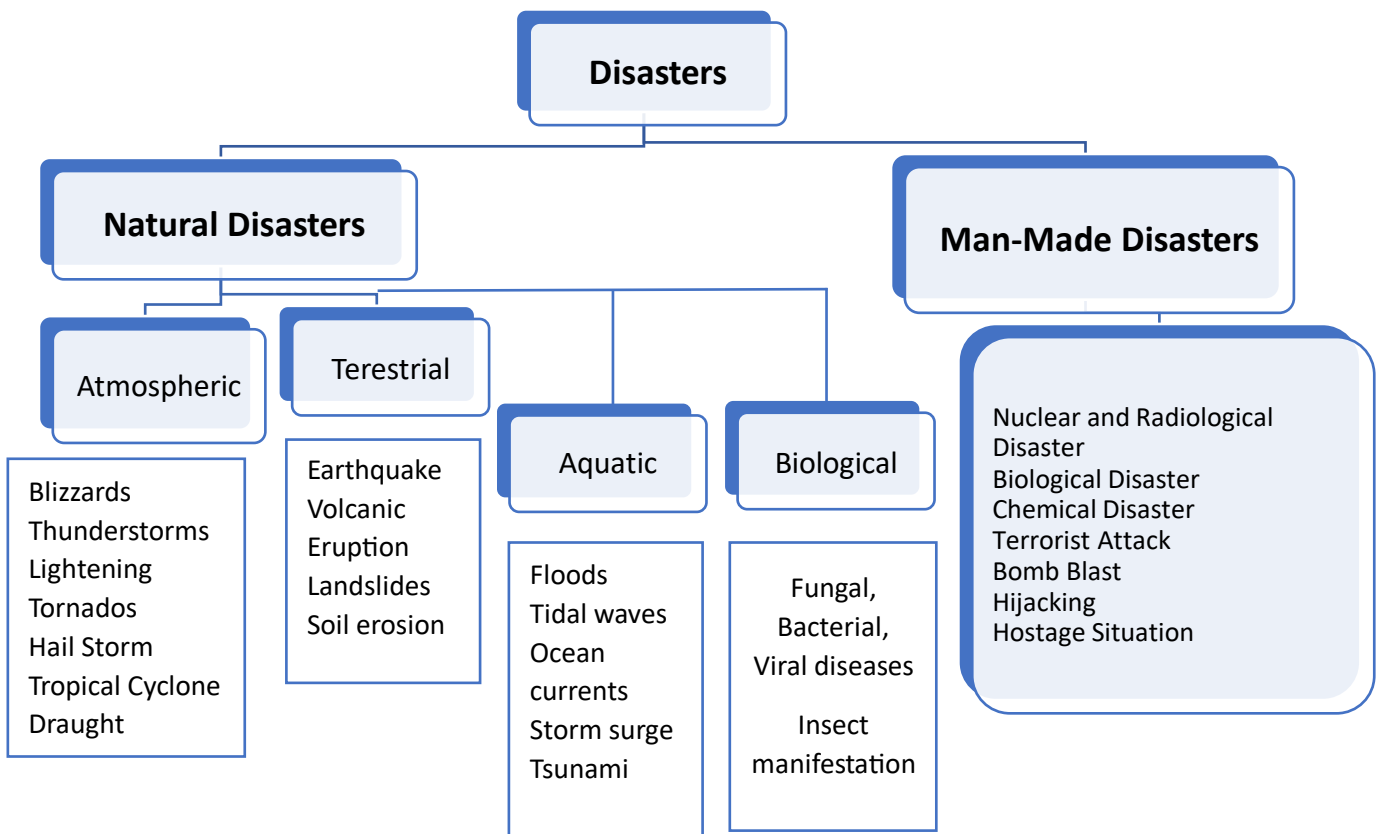
World Health Organization (WHO) definition of disaster:

“A disaster is an occurrence disrupting the normal conditions of existence and causing a level of suffering that exceeds the capacity of adjustment of the affected community.”

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat) considers disasters as:

“A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.”

Types of Disasters



Disaster management

Disaster management is a process of effectively preparing for and responding to disasters. It involves strategically organizing resources to lessen the harm that disasters cause. It also involves a systematic approach to managing the responsibilities of disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The 5 Stages of the Disaster-Management Cycle

The cycle involves the following five stages:

1. Prevention

This means identifying potential hazards and devising safeguards to mitigate their impact. Although this stage in the cycle involves putting permanent measures into place that can help minimize disaster risk.

2. Mitigation

Mitigation aims to minimize the loss of human life that would result from a disaster.

3. Preparedness

Preparedness is an ongoing process in which individuals, communities, businesses and organizations can plan and train for what they'll do in the event of a disaster. Preparedness is defined by ongoing training, evaluating and corrective action, ensuring the highest level of readiness.

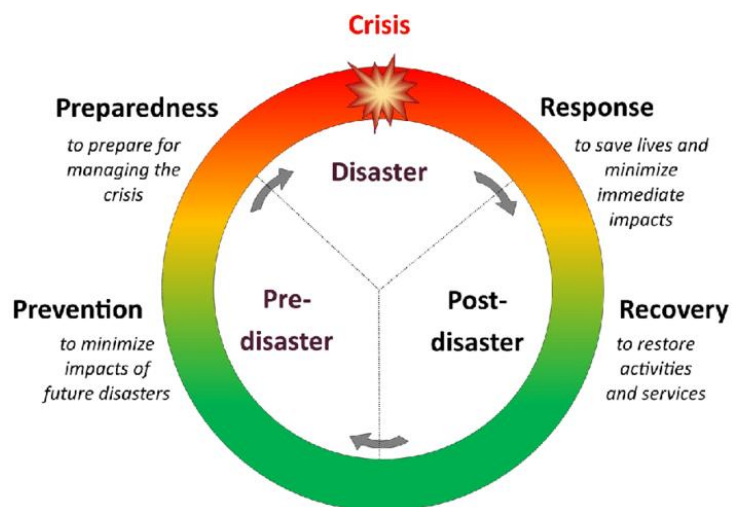
4. Response

Response is what happens after the disaster occurs. It involves both short- and long-term responses.

5. Recovery

The fifth stage in the disaster-management cycle is recovery. This can take a long time, sometimes years or decades. It involves stabilizing the area and restoring all essential community functions. Recovery requires prioritization: first, essential services like food, clean water, utilities, transportation and healthcare will be restored, with less-essential services being prioritized later.

Ultimately, this stage is about helping individuals, communities, businesses and organizations return to normal or a new normal depending on the impact of the disaster.



Disaster Preparedness Framework

<p>1. Vulnerability assessment</p> <p>Starting point for planning and preparation, linked to longer-term mitigation and development interventions as well as disaster preparedness.</p>	<p>2. Planning</p> <p>Disaster preparedness plans agreed and in place, which are achievable and for which commitment and resources are relatively assured.</p>	<p>3. Institutional framework</p> <p>Well co-ordinated disaster preparedness and response system at all levels, with commitment from relevant stakeholders. Roles and responsibilities clearly defined.</p>
<p>4. Information systems</p> <p>Efficient and reliable systems for gathering and sharing information (e.g. forecasts and warnings, information on relevant capacities, role allocation and resources) between stakeholders.</p>	<p>5. Resource base</p> <p>Goods (e.g. stockpiles of food, emergency shelter and other materials), services (e.g. search and rescue, medical, engineering, nutrition specialists) and disaster relief funding (e.g. for items not easily stockpiled or not anticipated) available and accessible.</p>	<p>6. Warning systems</p> <p>Robust communications systems (technologies, infrastructure, people) capable of transmitting warnings effectively to people at risk.</p>
<p>7. Response mechanisms</p> <p>Established and familiar to disaster response agencies and disaster victims (may include: evacuation procedures and shelters, search and rescue teams, needs assessment teams, activation of emergency lifeline facilities, reception centres and shelters for displaced people).</p>	<p>8. Education and training</p> <p>Training courses, workshops and extension programmes for at-risk groups and disaster responders. Knowledge of risk and appropriate response shared through public information and education systems.</p>	<p>9. Rehearsals</p> <p>Evacuation and response procedures practised, evaluated and improved.</p>

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), headed by the Prime Minister of India, is the apex body for Disaster Management in India. Setting up of NDMA and the creation of an enabling environment for institutional mechanisms at the State and District levels is mandated by the Disaster Management Act, 2005. NDMA is mandated to lay down the policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management. India envisions the development of an ethos of Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness and Response.

Disaster Management Act, 2005

The National Disaster Management Act, 2005 (NDMA) is a comprehensive legislation. It provides a framework for disaster management in India. The Act was enacted in response to the Gujarat earthquake of 2001. The Act covers natural disasters as well as man-made disasters. The NDMA establishes a National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs). They oversee disaster management at the national and state levels respectively. On December 23, 2005, the President of India approved the act. There are 79 sections and 11 chapters in the Disaster Management Act of 2005. The Act extends to the whole of India. The Act provides effective management of disasters and for matters connected there with or incidental 'thereto'. The main focus of this act is to provide the people who are affected with disasters, their life back and helping them.

Objectives of the Disaster Management Act 2005

The objectives of the Disaster Management Act of 2005 (DM act 2005) are given as follows:

- The act aims to establish an efficient disaster management system for the country in the event of natural and man-made calamities.
- The legislation empowers the central government to declare all or a portion of the nation impacted by a disaster and to develop preparations for mitigating the disaster's "risks, consequences, and effects."
- This Act also gives the federal and state governments the authority to create various authorities at respective levels to seek out such management in the event of a disaster to achieve this goal.
- It covers other things like capacity-building, relief measures, and mitigation methods.