

NDMA and Pandemic

India is now the country having fourth largest number of cases and which is further rising continuously. The mismanagement of the pandemic should be seen from the side of poor implementation of NDMA.

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) under DM Act 2005 is constituted to handle natural and manmade disasters. The pandemic had been declared as a national disaster, but NDMA failed in various stages to address it, for instance -

- (i) vacancy - The vice chairman post is vacant along with other three out of 8 members, leaving the authority overburdened, prone to fail.
- (ii) multiple disasters - continuous problems like, pandemic, cyclones, earthquake created a heavy burden, NDMA is ill equipped to handle such situations.
- (iii) Top down approach - Neither the authority laid any policy nor it guided from bottom. The pandemic needed both top and bottom approach. For example Mumbai and Delhi needs different approach.

- (iv) coordination - The implementation of NDMA Guidelines lies within state, but states already invoked Epidemic Diseases Act 1986 1997, creating mismatch and confusions.
- (v) NDRF deployment - even after visible crisis of migrants its unclear why NDRF team does not deployed.
- (vi) Funding - The authority has been accused for delaying funding, while SDRF has been accused for diverting fund to infrastructure.
- (viii) National Executive Committee (NEC) has ex officio chairmen Home minister, but during pandemic, health ministers role is more important.

Thus it can be seen that NDMA clearly lacked to handle the pandemic, one of the reason can be its in experience, nevertheless, it must be prepared with technology like AI, IOT etc for cyber disasters and upcoming pandemics.