



JOINT TRAINING PROGRAMME

Professionalising Disaster Risk Mitigation at State and District Levels

Centre for Disaster Management (CDM)

Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie

In Collaboration with

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA),

Government of India, New Delhi

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Training Brief for Participants

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Strategic Context

India confronts a formidable and evolving disaster landscape. With 59% of our landmass situated in seismic zones (III-VI) including the entire Himalayan belt now categorized under the highest-risk Zone VI, 40 million hectares vulnerable to floods, and 8% of our coastline exposed to cyclonic activity, the imperative for professionalized disaster risk mitigation has never been more acute. Climate change is intensifying both the frequency and magnitude of disasters, as evidenced by events ranging from the 2018 Kerala floods to the 2025 Himachal Pradesh cloudbursts.

The transformation of India's disaster management capability over the past two decades has been remarkable. The contrast between the 1999 Odisha Super Cyclone, which claimed approximately 10,000 lives, and Cyclone Fani in 2019—a storm of comparable intensity that resulted in 89 deaths—demonstrates what systematic preparedness and professional

coordination can achieve. This transformation did not occur by chance; it resulted from deliberate institutional reforms, capacity building, and the professionalization of disaster management across all levels of government.

The recently enacted **Disaster Management (Amendment) Act 2025** has ushered in a new era of accountability and institutional strengthening through enhanced authority functions, mandatory periodic risk assessments, creation of Urban Disaster Management Authorities, formalization of State Disaster Response Forces (SDRF), and post-disaster audit mechanisms. These legislative advances, however, can only translate into tangible outcomes through the coordinated efforts of trained professionals operating at state and district levels.

1.2 Programme Rationale

Despite robust institutional frameworks and specialized response capabilities, operational effectiveness remains constrained by persistent coordination challenges. The gaps are well-documented: civil-military coordination ambiguities, inter-agency silos preventing optimal resource utilization, communication incompatibilities during crises, and the absence of standardized protocols for joint operations. These challenges persist not from lack of commitment or capability, but from insufficient opportunities for officers from diverse services to build mutual understanding, develop coordination mechanisms, and establish professional relationships before disasters strike.

This training programme addresses these challenges directly. You—mid-level officers with 5–12 years of service from All India Services, Armed Forces, and Central Armed Police Forces—constitute the operational backbone of India's disaster management architecture. Your decisions and coordination during disasters determine whether communities survive intact or face catastrophic loss. The relationships you build during this programme, the coordination protocols you practice, and the shared understanding you develop will prove invaluable when you must coordinate multi-agency responses under extreme pressure.

2. PROGRAMME AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Overarching Aim

To professionalize disaster risk mitigation at state and district levels by building inter-service synergy, enhancing technical competencies, and strengthening coordinated response capabilities among mid-level officers from All India Services, Armed Forces, and Central Armed Police Forces.

2.2 Specific Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this three-day programme, participants will acquire competencies across four domains:

Strategic Understanding

- Comprehensive knowledge of India's legal and institutional framework for disaster management, including the DM (Amendment) Act 2025
- Analytical capability to assess India's multi-hazard risk profile and service-specific vulnerabilities relevant to operational contexts
- Ability to evaluate international best practices and adapt relevant approaches to Indian conditions

Operational Competencies

- Design and implementation skills for effective multi-agency coordination mechanisms at district and state levels
- Application of Incident Response System (IRS) principles to establish clear command structures during joint operations
- Execution of civil-military coordination protocols addressing requisition procedures, deployment frameworks, and operational integration
- Utilization of emerging technologies (AI, GIS, IoT, satellite systems) for enhanced disaster governance and decision support

Technical Expertise

- Conduct comprehensive disaster risk assessments identifying hazards, vulnerabilities, and capacities
- Develop evidence-based mitigation strategies incorporating both structural and non-structural measures
- Integrate disaster risk reduction into development planning, ensuring that developmental investments build rather than undermine resilience
- Operationalize District Emergency Operations Centers for 24x7 coordination

Leadership Capabilities

- Exercise effective leadership during crisis situations characterized by uncertainty, time pressure, and competing demands
- Build and maintain professional relationships across organizational boundaries essential for crisis coordination
- Manage personal psychological wellbeing and team resilience during extended disaster operations
- Break organizational silos through mutual understanding, respect for diverse expertise, and collaborative problem-solving

3. KEY THEMATIC AREAS & PROGRAMME SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

The curriculum is structured around a Recognition → Reform → Response Framework, spanning three days and covering the complete disaster management cycle through five interconnected domains: Governance, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Technology.

Day 1: Recognition – Understanding Disaster Risks and Institutional Frameworks	• Understanding disaster risks comprehensively • Recognizing institutional frameworks and stakeholder capabilities • Acknowledging coordination challenges honestly
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Day 2: Reform – Building Systems and Capacity	• Learning from field experiences what reforms are needed • Strengthening systems for infrastructure resilience • Building mental health support systems
Day 3: Response – Operationalizing Coordination and Technology	• Operationalizing civil-military coordination • Mainstreaming DRR in development (prevention, not just response) • Leveraging technology for efficient governance

3.1 Governance, Policy, and Institutional Frameworks

This foundational domain establishes clarity on the legal, institutional, and policy architecture governing disaster management in India:

- **Legal Framework:** The DM (Amendment) Act 2025, including enhanced NDMA/SDMA functions, Urban Disaster Management Authorities, SDRF formalization, mandatory disaster databases, and accountability mechanisms
- **Institutional Architecture:** Roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms of NDMA, SDMA, and DDMA
- **Policy Integration:** Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into sectoral development planning (infrastructure, urban planning, agriculture, water resources)
- **International Commitments:** Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030), Prime Minister's 10-Point Agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction, and SDG integration
- **Financial Frameworks:** NDRF, SDRF, NDMF, SDMF, emergency procurement procedures, and legal protections

Key Learning Outcome: Clear understanding of authority, responsibility, and coordination requirements enabling you to navigate legal frameworks for rapid response while maintaining accountability.

Technical Mitigation and Preparedness

This domain builds technical competencies for evidence-based disaster risk reduction:

- **Risk Assessment Methodologies:** Hazard identification, vulnerability analysis, and capacity assessment for comprehensive risk profiling
- **Structural Mitigation:** Engineering solutions including earthquake-resistant construction, flood control infrastructure, and cyclone shelters
- **Non-Structural Mitigation:** Land-use planning, building code enforcement, early warning systems, and community preparedness
- **Ecosystem-Based Approaches:** Bioengineering, watershed management, and environmental considerations often overlooked in operational planning
- **Infrastructure Resilience:** Protecting lifeline utilities and critical facilities
- **District Disaster Management Plans:** Development, testing, and continuous improvement
- **Mock Drills and Exercises:** Design and facilitation for genuine preparedness testing

Key Learning Outcome: Technical competence in assessing and communicating disaster risks, designing evidence-based mitigation strategies appropriate to local contexts, and developing implementable, testable disaster management plans.

3.3 Multi-Agency Response and Recovery

This domain addresses the coordination challenges that determine disaster outcomes:

- **Breaking Down Silos:** Practical strategies for inter-agency coordination, addressing the fundamental challenge in every major disaster
- **Civil-Military Coordination:** Understanding military capabilities and constraints, requisition procedures, pre-authorization frameworks, command and control during joint operations, and financial arrangements
- **Incident Response System (IRS):** Standardized organizational structures for multi-agency operations

- **Specialized Response Forces:** Effective integration of NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, BSF, and other CAPFs
- **District Emergency Operations Centers:** Establishing and operating 24x7 coordination hubs
- **Operational Coordination:** Search and rescue, medical surge management, relief distribution, and restoration of critical services
- **Recovery Planning:** Build Back Better principles, livelihood restoration, and psychosocial support

Field Perspectives: District Magistrates who managed major disasters share actual experiences:

- Uttarkashi Flash Floods: Real-time decision-making under extreme uncertainty, Coordinating Army engineering, NDRF rescue, and community response
- Peer Learning Exercise

Key Learning Outcome: Practical skills in coordinating diverse agencies with different organizational cultures and command structures, confidence in establishing clear command relationships during complex operations, and ability to manage Emergency Operations Centers effectively.

3.4 Technology and Innovation for Disaster Governance

This domain explores how emerging technologies enhance disaster management capabilities:

- **Early Warning Systems:** Integration of IMD, CWC, INCOIS, and last-mile dissemination mechanisms
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** Spatial analysis for risk assessment, resource allocation, and impact visualization
- **Communication Technologies:** Interoperable systems, satellite communications, and Common Alert Protocol (CAP)
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Predictive analytics, automated damage assessment, and decision support systems

- **Emerging Technologies:** Drones and UAVs for reconnaissance and relief delivery, IoT for real-time monitoring, 5G for high-bandwidth coordination, and blockchain for transparent relief distribution
- **Digital Platforms:** SACHET, Bhuvan, IDRN, and other disaster management applications

Key Learning Outcome: Understanding of technology capabilities and limitations, ability to leverage existing platforms, and critical evaluation of when technology adds value versus when it creates unnecessary complexity.

3.5 Cross-Cutting Themes

Throughout all domains, the programme emphasizes:

- **Psychosocial Support and Mental Health:** Recognizing psychological impacts on responders, self-care strategies, and organizational support systems—often overlooked but critical for career sustainability
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring disaster management serves all communities, with special attention to vulnerable populations
- **Gender Perspectives:** Role of women in disaster management and gender-sensitive response planning
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Ensuring disaster response and reconstruction do not create environmental damage
- **Communication and Public Information:** Managing media, countering misinformation, and maintaining public confidence
- **Ethical Decision-Making:** Navigating difficult choices with limited resources under extreme pressure

4. PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND TARGET COHORT

4.1 Strategic Composition

This programme brings together **39 mid-level officers** with 5–12 years of service (Level-12 and above) from diverse services. The composition is deliberately designed to mirror real disaster response scenarios where these exact services must coordinate seamlessly.

4.2 Service-Wise Distribution

All India Services and Sr. State Civil Service Officers (19 participants)

- **Indian Administrative Service (IAS):** 4 officers serving as District Magistrates, Additional District Magistrates, or equivalent positions (Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala) IAS officers provide overall coordination and strategic direction during disasters, chairing DDMAAs while coordinating with multiple agencies.
- **Indian Police Service (IPS):** 6 officers—4 male, 2 female—serving as Superintendents of Police or equivalent (Assam, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana). IPS officers manage security, traffic, and law enforcement, enabling all other operations while bridging civilian administration and para-military forces.
- **Indian Forest Service (IFS):** 6 officers—5 male, 1 female—serving as Divisional Forest Officers, Deputy Conservators of Forests, or equivalent (Gujarat, Punjab, Jharkhand, West Bengal). IFS officers bring critical expertise on ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, watershed management, and environmental considerations.
- **Senior State Civil Services Officers:** 3 officers—2 male, 1 female serving as Municipal Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Sub-Divisional Magistrate from Punjab and Uttarakhand.

Armed Forces (13 participants)

- Indian Army: 3 officers (Ladakh, Nagaland, Delhi NCT)
- Indian Navy: 2 officers (Kerala, Gujarat)
- Indian Air Force: 4 officers (Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal)
- Coast Guard: 2 officers (New Delhi, Gujarat)
- Border Roads Organisation (BRO): 2 officers (Delhi NCT)

Armed Forces officers provide heavy engineering capacity, logistics expertise, aerial operations, medical facilities, and disciplined manpower—but operate under different command structures requiring careful coordination.

Central Armed Police Forces (7 participants)

- Central Industrial Security Force (CISF): 1 officer (Uttarakhand)
- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF): 2 officers (Delhi NCT)
- Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP): 1 Officer (Uttarakhand)
- National Disaster Response Force (NDRF): 3 officers (Bihar, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh)
- Other CAPFs represented across specialized functions

NDRF officers represent India's premier dedicated disaster response force with specialized urban search and rescue capability. Other CAPF officers contribute specialized capabilities—high-altitude rescue (ITBP), border area expertise (BSF), and critical infrastructure protection (CISF).

4.3 Geographic and Hazard Diversity

Participants represent multi-hazard prone districts across 20+ states and union territories, bringing diverse disaster experience:

- **Himalayan Region:** Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh—earthquakes, landslides, cloudbursts, avalanches
- **Northeast:** Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland—floods, landslides, earthquakes
- **Coastal Areas:** Kerala, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha—cyclones, coastal flooding, tsunami vulnerability
- **Seismically Active Zones:** Gujarat, Delhi NCT—earthquake preparedness
- **Flood-Prone Regions:** Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam—annual riverine flooding

This geographic diversity ensures peer learning from officers facing different hazard profiles while recognizing that coordination challenges transcend specific disaster types.

5. PEDAGOGY AND LEARNING METHODOLOGY

5.1 Experience-Driven Approach

The programme employs experiential, interactive methodologies moving beyond traditional lecture-based training:

Interactive Sessions

- Expert presentations with extensive Q&A
- Discussions with practitioners who have managed major disasters
- Field perspectives from District Magistrates sharing actual disaster experiences
- Technical briefing on emerging technologies and platforms

Group Work and Exercises

- Mixed civil-military groups deliberately designed to build cross-service relationships
- Scenario-based exercises testing coordination and decision-making under pressure and developing solutions to common coordination challenges

Structured Discussions

- Facilitated dialogue on contentious issues (civil-military command relationships, resource allocation during scarcity, managing political pressures)
- Sharing of best practices from different states and services
- Honest assessment of current gaps and systemic challenges
- Brainstorming solutions applicable to participants' operational contexts

Practical Application

- Development of action plans for implementing learning in participants' districts
- Identification of specific coordination mechanisms to establish
- Networking time for building relationships that will facilitate future coordination

5.2 Distinctive Programme Features

Not Lecture-Heavy, But Experience-Driven: The programme prioritizes learning from peers and practitioners over passive absorption of content. Your field experience matters as much as instructors' expertise.

Deliberate Civil-Military Mixing: Group compositions ensure IAS officers work alongside Army officers, NDRF commandants coordinate with IPS officers, and IFS officers collaborate with Air Force personnel—replicating real disaster coordination requirements.

Honest Engagement with Challenges: Rather than presenting idealized scenarios, the programme confronts real challenges: political pressures, resource constraints, coordination failures, and communication breakdowns. Learning emerges from examining what did not work as much as from celebrating successes.

Focus on Relationships, Not Just Processes: While SOPs and protocols matter, personal relationships built during this training may prove even more valuable. When disaster strikes, the Armed Forces commander you meet here becomes someone you can call directly rather than a faceless name in a requisition form.

Practical Relevance: Every session addresses "So what? How does this help me in my district?" The gap between theoretical frameworks and operational reality is explicitly bridged.

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES

6.1 Individual-Level Outcomes

Knowledge Outcomes

- Comprehensive understanding of India's disaster management legal and institutional architecture
- Technical knowledge of mitigation strategies, and preparedness planning appropriate to your operational context
- Awareness of capabilities and constraints of different services, enabling realistic expectations and effective coordination
- Familiarity with emerging technologies and their practical applications

- Recognition of psychological impacts of disaster work and strategies for managing them

Skill Outcomes

- Practical coordination skills for managing multi-agency operations under pressure
- Communication competencies for clear, concise interaction across organizational boundaries during crises
- Decision-making abilities for complex situations with incomplete information and competing demands
- Leadership capabilities appropriate to disaster contexts requiring collaboration rather than command
- Technical competencies in using disaster management tools, systems, and platforms

Attitudinal Outcomes

- Proactive orientation toward risk reduction rather than merely reactive response
- Collaborative mindset valuing coordination over organizational territoriality
- Realistic humility about what disaster management can and cannot achieve
- Commitment to equity ensuring disaster management serves all communities
- Professional identity as disaster management specialists within generalist services

6.2 Organizational-Level Outcomes

- Enhanced institutional memory as you carry knowledge back to your districts and units
- Stronger coordination networks as relationships built here facilitate future operations
- Improved district and unit preparedness as you implement learning in your operational contexts
- Better resource utilization as understanding of different agencies' capabilities enables optimal deployment
- Increased professionalization as standardized approaches replace ad-hoc improvisation

6.3 Systemic-Level Contributions

Collectively, participants contribute to:

- Professionalization of disaster risk mitigation at sub-national levels across India
- Reduced disaster casualties and economic losses through improved preparedness and coordination
- Stronger community resilience as better-prepared administration enables effective support
- Enhanced national disaster management capacity as cadres of trained officers build over time
- Implementation of national policies (PM's 10-Point Agenda, Sendai Framework, DM Act) at operational levels where they matter most

6.4 Tangible Deliverables

Each participant will receive:

1. Comprehensive Training Manual serving as ongoing reference
2. Certificate of Participation from LBSNAA and NDMA
3. Digital Resource Library with guidelines, SOPs, case studies etc.
4. Participant Directory with contact information enabling continued networking

CONCLUDING NOTE

This training programme represents a significant investment—by NDMA and CDM in your professional development, by your organizations in releasing you from operational duties, and by you in time and commitment. The return on this investment will be measured not in certificates earned but in lives saved and communities protected through the improved coordination, enhanced competencies, and strengthened relationships developed here.

India faces an uncertain disaster future. Climate change is altering hazard profiles in ways we cannot fully predict. Urbanization is creating new vulnerabilities. Population growth is placing more people in harm's way. The disasters you manage in coming years may exceed anything in historical experience.

Yet India has also demonstrated extraordinary capacity for transformation. The reduction from 10,000 deaths in the 1999 Odisha cyclone to 89 deaths from comparable Cyclone Fani in 2019 represents the power of professionalized disaster management. The fishermen of Kerala who rescued 65,000 people during the 2018 floods demonstrated what community mobilization under effective leadership can achieve. The District Magistrate in Odisha who evacuated 1.47 million people before Cyclone Fani exemplified professional disaster management excellence.

You are the next generation of officers who will write the next chapter in this transformation. Your coordination determines whether disasters result in catastrophic loss or manageable impacts. Your leadership decides whether communities survive intact or are destroyed. Your commitment to excellence honors those lost in past disasters while protecting those who will be saved through your professional capabilities.

Disaster management is difficult, demanding, and sometimes heartbreaking work. You will witness suffering you cannot fully prevent. You will make decisions with imperfect information under extreme pressure. You will work exhausted when communities need you most. But you will also experience the profound satisfaction of knowing your expertise saves lives, your coordination enables rescues, and your preparedness protects the vulnerable.

Over the next three days, you have the opportunity to learn from each other, build coordination mechanisms, develop personal networks, and contribute to India's disaster resilience. Come prepared to work intensively, engage honestly, and commit to excellence in disaster management.

Welcome to the Joint Training Programme on Professionalising Disaster Risk Mitigation at State and District Levels.

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