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DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

INDIA'S COMMITMENT FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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In Context

- India has reaffirmed its commitment to the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)**, a UN-backed global agreement adopted in 2015.
  - The framework **aims for the substantial reduction of disaster risks and losses** to protect lives, livelihoods, and the assets of communities and nations.

Key Dimensions of India's Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives

- **Adoption of the Sendai Framework Principles:** The Sendai Framework emphasizes reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing resilience. India has incorporated these principles into national policies, such as the **National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)**, which aligns closely with Sendai's four priority areas:
  - Understanding Disaster Risk
  - Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance
  - Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for Resilience
  - Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response
- **International Cooperation and Global Partnerships:** India promotes knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and joint initiatives on disaster resilience.
  - For instance, the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), initiated by India**, now includes 40 countries and seven international organizations. This initiative aligns with the Sendai Framework.
- **Strengthening Regional and Local Resilience: India's National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP)** and the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**, which addresses flood and drought risks, are tailored to the Sendai principle of contextual disaster resilience.
  - The **Heat Action Plan** implemented in Gujarat and other states, aimed at mitigating risks from extreme heat waves.
- **Enhancing Financing for Disaster Risk Reduction:** India has prioritized disaster financing, an often overlooked area. The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) allocate resources for quick responses and long-term resilience building.
  - At the G-20, India underscored the **need to upscale DRR financing and proposed Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** as cost-effective approaches to mitigate risks while conserving ecosystems.
- **Example:** The recent floodplain restoration project on the **Mula-Mutha River in Pune aims to use NbS for flood resilience** by restoring wetlands, which absorb excess rainfall, reduce erosion, and replenish groundwater.

India's Five DRR Priorities Highlighted at the G-20 Meeting

- **Early Warning Systems:** India's effective early warning systems for cyclones and heat waves have set benchmarks for disaster preparedness. This was demonstrated during Cyclone Tauktae, where timely alerts helped reduce fatalities.
- **Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure:** Through CDRI, India assists global communities in constructing resilient infrastructure that withstands floods, earthquakes, and cyclones.
- **Disaster Financing:** India emphasized increasing DRR financing, integrating it into policy planning, and securing public-private partnerships to enhance resource availability.
- **Resilient Recovery:** India supports post-disaster recovery with a focus on building back better, incorporating resilience into reconstruction efforts. The reconstruction in Kerala after the 2018 floods is an example, incorporating flood-resilient infrastructure and building standards.
- **Nature-Based Solutions (NbS):** India promotes NbS, such as wetland restoration and afforestation, as sustainable measures that reduce disaster impacts while preserving biodiversity.

Challenges and Gaps in Disaster Risk Reduction in India

- **Funding Constraints:** Despite efforts, disaster financing remains limited, and public-private partnerships for DRR are still developing.
- **Infrastructure Vulnerability:** Urban areas are often not built to withstand high-magnitude disasters. Rapid urbanization without adequate risk assessments increases vulnerability.
- **Data and Research:** There is a need for localized disaster risk data and enhanced research on emerging risks like climate-induced disasters.
- **Implementation of Nature-Based Solutions:** NbS require careful planning and long-term investments, but limited resources and competing priorities can slow implementation.

Way Forward for Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction

- **Increase DRR Financing:** Establish more robust public-private partnerships for disaster risk financing, create targeted funds for vulnerable areas, and encourage investments in DRR through tax incentives.
- **Expand CDRI and Global Alliances:** Continue to strengthen CDRI and explore new collaborations with countries facing similar disaster challenges, facilitating global knowledge exchange and capacity building.
- **Focus on Localized Early Warning Systems:** Enhance community-specific early warning systems, particularly for floods and landslides in high-risk zones like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Invest in Resilient Urban Planning:** Implement stricter building codes, enforce zoning laws, and incentivize climate-resilient urban infrastructure to reduce vulnerabilities.
- **Advance Research and Development:** Invest in disaster research, including climate-resilient crops, eco-friendly infrastructure, and flood management technologies, to anticipate and address emerging risks.
- **Promote Nature-Based Solutions (NbS):** Expand NbS projects in coastal, riverine, and forested areas to manage risks sustainably, integrating these solutions into broader development plans.

Mains Practice Question

[Q] "India has shown significant progress in disaster risk reduction but faces challenges in achieving comprehensive resilience. Discuss India's approach to disaster risk reduction in line with the Sendai Framework.

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