

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 691**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 08TH FEBRUARY, 2023/ MAGHA 19, 1944 (SAKA)

DECLARING HEATWAVES AND COLDWAVES AS NATURAL DISASTER

691 SHRI M. MOHAMED ABDULLA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to declare heatwaves and coldwaves a natural disaster to provide necessary relief works and compensation in case of deaths due to the same;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the efforts made/being made by Government to build resilience infrastructure, develop early warning infrastructure, and create public awareness about the impact of heat waves and cold waves in the country, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
(SHRI NITYANAND RAI)**

(a) and (b): Cold wave is already included in the list of 12 disasters notified in the Guidelines on Constitution and Administration of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), namely cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves, which are eligible for relief assistance under the SDRF and NDRF.

The issue of inclusion of more calamities in the existing notified list of calamities/ disasters, was considered by the 15th Finance Commission and the Commission in para 8.143 of its report had *inter alia* observed that the list of notified disasters eligible for funding from SDRF and NDRF covers the needs of the State to a large extent and thus did not find merit in the request to expand its scope.

However, in terms of the aforesaid guidelines, a State Government can use up to 10% of the annual fund allocation of the SDRF, subject to fulfillment of certain prescribed conditions and norms, for providing immediate relief to the victims of natural disasters, other than the aforesaid 12 disasters, that they consider to be ‘disasters’ within local context in the State.

(c): The primary responsibility of disaster management rests with the State Governments concerned. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments by providing the logistics and financial assistance. The Central Government has taken various measures for building disaster resilient infrastructure, development of early warning infrastructure, and for creating public awareness about the impact of heat waves and cold waves in the country, such as:-

- (i) The Disaster Management Act, 2005 articulates the need for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning.**
- (ii) Building Material & Technology Promotion Council has developed a digital atlas for capturing the vulnerability of various parts of the country to different hazards.**
- (iii) Government of India, in partnership with other countries, has established a global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) for promoting the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks.**
- (iv) Government has established a robust early warning system, which has significantly enhanced the accuracy of weather forecasts including the forecasts for heat waves and cold waves.**
- (v) National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a manual on House Owners' Guide to alternate roof cooling solutions to build heat resilience infrastructure.**
- (vi) NDMA has also issued guidelines for 'Preparation of Action Plan – Prevention and Management of Heat Wave' and 'National**

Guidelines For Preparation of Action plan – Prevention and Management of Cold Wave and Frost 2021’.

(vii) Government has initiated a project called "Common Alerting protocol (CAP) based integrated Alert System (Sachet Phase-I)" for dissemination of early warning/ alert regarding disasters to public including heat waves and cold waves.

(viii) NDMA has developed information, education, communication (IEC) material to inform, educate and to make the public aware about various disasters viz. Audio, video spots, pocket booklets containing do's & don'ts, digital newsletter etc. Awareness is also created through a special programme on DD News titled 'Aapda Ka Samna' through discussion/ talks with experts.

Further, India Meteorological Department (IMD) has started Forecast Demonstration Project (FDP) on heat waves from April 2017 for the hot weather season under which a detailed daily report including realized data of heat waves, weather systems leading to the occurrence of heat waves, diagnosis on the basis of Numerical Model outputs and forecast and warnings for five days is prepared. This bulletin is disseminated to all

concerned including health departments. As an adaptive measure, IMD in collaboration with local health departments have started ‘heat action plan’ in many parts of the country to forewarn about the heat waves and also advising action to be taken during such occasions.

The measures taken by the Central and the State Governments have significantly improved the disaster management practices, preparedness, prevention and response mechanism resulting in significant reduction in casualties during natural calamities.
