

₹4L cr loss due to rains, floods in 65 yrs; 50% of it in last 10 yrs: Report

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New Delhi: A home ministry study, conducted by its think tank National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), has assessed economic damages due to floods and heavy rains at over Rs 4 lakh crore in 65 years (from 1953 to 2018). Nearly half of this has been in the last 10 years alone.

The Uttarakhand cloudburst of 2013, better known as the Kedarnath floods, and winter rains in south India during 2015 have inflicted the highest damages in any year. The report has assessed the economic losses in these two years at Rs 47,000 crore and Rs 57,000 crore, respectively.

The NIDM, after consultation with the Jal Shakti ministry, has recommended setting up of an Integrated Reservoirs, Dams and River Basin Management Authority under the home ministry for an integrated approach to flood management. This may include central and state government departments, district administrations, scientific institutions and NGOs as members.

“The role of the authority will be to promote schemes for irrigation, water supply

management, drainage, generation, transmission and distribution of power within basin and sub-basin as well as inter-basin transfer, flood control in rivers and tributaries, etc.,” the NIDM has suggested. Soil conservation and overall development of water resources will be among the priorities of the authority.

According to officials, the study was initiated on the direction of home minister Amit Shah who wanted a comprehensive policy approach to address floods that have become an annual phe-

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nomenon with more than 2,000 human lives lost every year, besides huge economic losses and damage to critical infrastructure.

During the flash floods in Kedarnath region of Uttarakhand in 2013, unofficial sources had claimed more than 6,000 lives were lost. The report, however, says only 2,180 deaths were caused by floods across India that year, including the Kedarnath incident.

This was less than the 3,400 deaths reported during the 2007 floods, the highest in any year.