

# CENTRE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND LAW

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The Centre for Disaster Management and Law (CDML) is a centre dedicated to research on Natural Disasters. The center undertakes research on disaster management, preparedness and mitigation.





# PREFACE

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Odisha is no stranger to natural disasters. Cyclones, droughts, and flash floods have repeatedly shaped the state's history, influencing patterns of human movement and displacement. This year, too, the state experienced several calamities, including a significant rise in lightning strikes and the impact of Cyclone Moncha. On a positive note, the overall damage remained comparatively limited.

However, disaster response in the state also demands deeper scrutiny particularly through the lens of large-scale developmental projects sponsored at the industrial level. Such projects, while economically significant, have contributed to environmental degradation and the displacement of generations of communities, especially in forested regions rich in bauxite and other natural resources. These issues require sustained critical analysis. Over the years, Odisha has made notable progress in developing effective strategies to strengthen disaster management, relief, and rescue operations. Nevertheless, every disaster presents new challenges and offers an opportunity for the state to reassess, rehearse, and reinforce its administrative mechanisms.

The Centre for Disaster Management and Law (CDML) is dedicated to research on natural disasters. The Centre focuses on disaster management, preparedness and mitigation, migration and its implications, and the impact of disasters on vulnerable groups.

This newsletter seeks to reflect on some of the crucial nuances, concerns, and stories shaping the current landscape of disaster management, presented through eight written pieces.



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# CLIMATE RESISTANT RICE CROPS: A NECESSITY IN THE ERA OF DISASTERS

-Kanishka

Rice is the staple food for majority of Indians. In many parts of the country it is consumed three times a day in multiple forms. However cultivation of rice is a complex affair. Rice is obtained from the paddy plant which is grown as 'kharif' crop. The crop is considered water intensive as it requires constant watering right from the time of its planting in the fields. It is one of the prime reasons why the crop is cultivated during the monsoon months as that frees up the farmer from the worries of constantly irrigating his crop. Inversely the rice crop faces constant risk if the monsoon fails or if it rains erratically. Natural disasters like cyclones, floods, hurricanes also severely affect the rice crops. There have been many instances in the past where the failure on part of monsoon or other disasters led to draught and famine in many parts of the country. Worst, it was the rural and economically disadvantaged segments of the population that are hardest hit.

With the increase in global warming and the resultant climate change, it is certain that disasters like floods and cyclones will increase in future. Therefore it is in this light that climate resistant rice crops have become a necessity. Such rice varieties are urgently needed to safeguard the food security of millions of India. Right to food in India is a constitutionally guaranteed right under Article 21 of the Constitution. By virtue of National Food Security Act, provisioning of food has been converted into a legally binding entitlement. It is in this light that climate resistant rice crops become a necessity. If India has to reinforce its food security in the event of disasters as well as



fulfil the constitutional and legal mandate of right to food, it must supply its farmers with climate resistant rice crops. Such step would also fulfil the obligations of the state to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines under Article 48 of the Indian Constitution.



# THE HIDDEN ECONOMIC LEDGER OF NATURAL DISASTERS

-Sameer Panda

As climate change accelerates, the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters are imposing a staggering economic toll worldwide. These events are no longer occasional shocks but a persistent threat to development, fiscal stability, and household welfare. A comprehensive analysis reveals a complex web of financial consequences that extend far beyond initial damage reports, creating profound challenges for governments, economies, and vulnerable communities. To grasp the true financial impact of a disaster, it is essential to look beyond the immediate, visible destruction. The economic costs are multi-layered, comprising both direct and indirect losses. Direct Losses are the most visible and immediately quantifiable impacts. They encompass the damage to physical assets such as homes, commercial buildings, public infrastructure like roads and power lines, and agricultural crops. These are the costs associated with



repairing or replacing what was physically lost. Indirect Losses represent the subsequent, cascading consequences that disrupt the flow of goods and services. These include revenue lost from business interruptions, wage losses for workers, disruptions to supply chains, and increased transportation costs. Studies show that these secondary effects can often surpass the direct costs,

representing the more significant and enduring economic burden of a disaster.

Beyond these categories lie intangible losses, which are difficult to monetize but have real economic consequences. These include the degradation of ecosystem services (like the storm protection offered by mangrove forests), the destruction of cultural heritage, and long-term impacts on physical and mental health. Natural disasters impose a severe dual pressure on public finances, creating a "fiscal scissor effect" where expenditures soar just as revenues plummet. In the immediate aftermath, governments face massive, unplanned expenditures on emergency response, relief operations, and the eventual reconstruction of public infrastructure.

This surge in spending occurs precisely when revenue streams are compromised. Widespread damage to property erodes the local tax base, while business closures and economic disruption lead to a sharp decline in sales, corporate, and income tax collections. In India, a two-tiered financial mechanism exists to manage this strain. The primary responsibility rests with states, which fund immediate relief from their State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). For calamities of a "severe nature," states can request supplementary aid from the centrally managed National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). While this system provides a critical backstop, the process can be lengthy, and the funds are primarily for immediate relief, not long-term reconstruction.

The escalating costs of disasters make a compelling economic case for shifting from a reactive, relief-centric model to a proactive one centered on investment in disaster risk reduction (DRR). The World Bank reports that the benefits of investing in resilience measures can be two to ten times higher than the costs.

These investments deliver a triple dividend: **Avoided Losses:** The most obvious benefit is saving lives and averting property damage; **Stimulated Economic Activity:** The investment itself generates economic growth and creates jobs, such as in the construction of resilient infrastructure; **Development Co-benefits:** Resilient assets often provide year-round benefits. For example, a multipurpose cyclone shelter can function as a school or community health clinic, while a restored mangrove forest can support local fisheries and tourism. Strategic investments in early warning systems, nature-based defenses like mangrove forests, and resilient infrastructure are not merely defensive costs but high-return investments in economic stability and sustainable development. Financial instruments like crop insurance and reinsurance markets also play a critical role, acting as shock absorbers that stabilize incomes and ensure that funds are available for recovery without crippling households or domestic insurers.

To build a truly resilient future, policymakers must prioritize these proactive strategies. This involves strengthening fiscal buffers, integrating livelihood protection into disaster response, scaling up investment in cost-effective defenses, and enhancing the reach of financial safety nets. By doing so, we can mitigate the hidden economic ledger of disasters and safeguard development for generations to come.

# DISASTER MANAGEMENT LAW IN INDIA: THE EVOLVING LEGAL LANDSCAPE

-Pradipta Roy

The legal framework of disaster management in India has experienced a complete transformation which mirrors its development from spontaneous reactions to a unified system of prevention and resilience that India now follows. The strategy operated in a reactive manner for more than one hundred years according to the Disaster Relief Act of 1880. The colonial era lacked any disaster response laws because authorities concentrated their efforts on emergency recovery operations which included providing short-term shelter and food supplies. The colonial period lacked any post-disaster legislation because authorities focused their efforts on emergency response activities which included providing short-term shelter and basic necessities. The 1999 Odisha super cyclone along with the 2001 Bhuj earthquake exposed major weaknesses in disaster management systems for coordination and early warning and complete risk management. The nation experienced two major disasters which caused a fundamental shift in public opinion and created the necessary political backing and institutional power to establish a national legal system.

This led eventually to the path-breaking Disaster Management Act in 2005, which was a radical shift. The legislation established a complete organizational system which places the National Disaster





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Management Authority (NDMA) as the highest authority while creating similar organizations for states and districts. The Act demanded through legal requirements a total plan which covered all phases of disaster management starting with prevention and preparedness up to response and recovery. Scientific risk evaluation and local community engagement emerged as central issues which legal systems now focus on. The development process continued past the year 2005 without any indication of stopping. The interpretation of disaster law has adopted a rights-based approach for its application in recent times. The legal rights of disaster-affected communities received increased protection through judicial decisions which followed the Uttarakhand floods of 2013 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The courts have established three essential principles which include fair compensation rights and special protection for vulnerable people during resettlement and government accountability for disaster planning and response activities. The legal system shows growing awareness that disaster management requires more than organizational work because it protects human rights and dignified treatment and strong governance which safeguards citizens' legal protections during emergencies.



# CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE DISASTER OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISASTERS

-Shree Jishnu Patra

Lessons of Bhopal to Vizag. While industrial development is an indicator of a developing country, it has a dark secret when corporate responsibility is lost. The most agonising reminder of this fact in India is still the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984, in which the toxic leak in the pesticide plant of Union Carbide killed thousands of people and incapacitated thousands more. What started as a technical failure turned into an ethical and legal backlash, revealing the failure of the current systems to bring multinational companies to justice over the infliction of mass damage. Following the incident, the Parliament introduced the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act 1985, which granted the Union Government the right to act as a representative of all victims in a court of law. Although this was meant to centralise and quicken the relief, the ultimate disbursement of US \$470 million was denounced as being little and unequal. The tragedy brought up two basic legal issues, first, how far can corporations be held responsible when it comes to environmental and human damage; and secondly, should there be greater fiduciary responsibility on multinational corporations working in developing economies. Shortly after this happened a landmark case in Indian environmental jurisprudence in the case of *M.C. Mehta v Union of India (Oleum Gas Leak Case)* [(1987) 1 SCC 395]. The doctrine of absolute liability was developed by the Supreme Court which held that any business undertaking hazardous or in some way, a risky activity is the absolute and complete liability to the harm that it causes, whether by negligence or not. It was a departure of the English common law narrower principle of strict liability and in itself a uniquely Indian reaction to industrial risk in a highly populated country. The post-Bhopal period, legislatively, saw the enactment of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986, which gave the State the power to regulate the emission and hazardous processes and the Public Liability Insurance Act 1991, which required companies to take out insurance that gives them immediate compensations to the victims. Specialised adjudication of environmental claims became the norm with institutionalisation of special adjudication by the establishment of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) which aimed to strike a balance between industrial development and environmental preservation. However, decades on, the Vizag gas leak accident at LG Polymers in 2020 showed that it is not the legal deterrence that ensures compliance. Investigations into the case found out that the environmental clearance had expired, safety mechanisms were outdated and closer supervision was not strictly adhered the same failure in



governance as that of Bhopal. The suo motu move of the NGT in the case highlighted the fact that the enforcement and monitoring remain weak in spite of the developed statutory architecture. In the present times when industries are becoming more digitised and interconnected, the definition of what a disaster is has been broadened to take into account technological failures and accidents driven by data. The concept of corporate governance should therefore incorporate environmental, social and safety compliance (ESSC) in its risk-management system. The rise of ESG (Environmental, Social, and

Governance) standards around the world is an indication that this change has happened in which liability has become reactive, rather than being proactive. It is an eye opener that the role of law is not a punitive one based on the trip between Bhopal and Vizag. Real industrial development requires the companies to internalise the expense of safety, disclosure and communal wellbeing. When there is profit and protection, then the development can be sustainable--and no more tragedies such as the one of Bhopal should ever be repeated.

# DISASTERS AND DISPLACEMENT: THE INVISIBLE LOSSES EXPLAINED BY MICHAEL M. CERNEA'S IRR FRAMEWORK

-Debashis Lenka

Disasters such as floods, earthquakes, or hurricanes often force people to leave their homes, triggering complex social, economic, and psychological consequences. Michael M. Cernea's Impoverishment Risks Risk management and Reconstruction (IRR) Model provides a framework to understand these hidden costs of displacement, emphasizing that relocation is not just a physical move but a process that can impoverish individuals and communities in multiple ways. Landlessness is among the earliest risks pointed out by Cernea. The victims of the disasters lose their source of livelihood. Farmers are deprived of their crops, artisans and owners of small businesses are deprived of the space, on which they worked. Most closely connected is joblessness. The displaced people will not be in a position to secure new jobs, so much so when economies of the host countries themselves are also hit by the disaster. Most of them experience underemployment or long unemployment, which complicates the recovery further. The other critical problem is homelessness. Families lose the space of home and culture even when temporary shelters are offered. The identity and sense of belonging of refugees or population that is affected by disasters often create a perennial feeling of placelessness.

Displacement can also lead to marginalization. People who were once socially or economically active may lose status, confidence, and social networks. Skills acquired over years can become obsolete in new locations, pushing individuals into poverty and social isolation. Another risk that is acute is food insecurity. Forced displacement leads





to the short-term or long-term undernourishment, since individuals lose access to agricultural land or to staples. Moreover, unsafe water, poor sanitation, and psychological trauma increase morbidity since they cause disease outbreaks in form of malaria, diarrhoea, and dysentery. Infants, children and the elderly are the most affected. Many displaced families also face loss of access to common property resources such as forests, water bodies, or grazing lands. These resources are vital for poor communities, and their loss reduces income and food availability. Displacement also results in disarticulation of communities that disintegrates social structures, kinship, and local associations. These social bonds are destroyed causing resilience to be weakened and the recovery to be slowed. Cernea introduced the education loss in his IRR model in the year 2002 due to the realization that the schooling of children is frequently interrupted, thus reducing the scope of opportunity in the future and further trapping a child in the cycle of poverty. In conclusion, Cernea's IRR Model reveals that disaster displacement goes beyond physical relocation. To truly rebuild lives, recovery programs must restore land, livelihoods, health, education, and social networks, only then can communities move from ruin to resilience.

# WHEN GREEN ENERGY CUTS THE GREEN: SOLAR EXPANSION, DEFORESTATION AND DISASTER RISK IN WESTERN RAJASTHAN

-Manoj Sihag



The large-scale source of solar parks in western Rajasthan is a promising source of clean energy but the recent massive deforestation of Khejri (*Prosopis cineraria*) and other native arboreal to provide plant locations has created an urgent environmental urges and catastrophe management problem. The Khejri serves as a key-stone species in the Thar ecosystem and plays the role of stabilization of soil, pastoral livelihood sustenance, and microclimatic regulation at the local level. According to the recent field reports and mobilizations in Bikaner, Barmer and other neighbouring areas, there is a huge cutting of trees, burning of stumps and communal unrest hence the manifestations of ecological stress. However, destruction of indigenous vegetation in arid scenery increases the likelihood of wind erosion, topsoil loss, reduced groundwater recharge, and changes in the local weather regimes. These effects could hasten desertification, compromise drought-resilience, and increase livelihood impacts in pastoralists and agrarian societies. The empirical studies based on satellite and land-use imagery, along with a

thorough examination of renewable energy land footprints at international levels, reveal that the poorly located large photovoltaic systems have the potential to trigger significant land-use change and a decrease in biodiversity unless favourable mitigation measures are adopted.

Legal and policy provisions provide enforceable provisions: the conversion of forest land is subject to statutory consent under the Forest (Conservation) Act, which is accompanied by the need of compensatory afforestation and mitigation, environmental impact assessment and cumulative impact study are essential conditions of large project clusters. Criminal and administrative steps must be put in place in cases of illegal logging and land-use decisions should be reevaluated. Disaster-

sensitive solar planning ought to incorporate in its practical application: First of all, use degraded, low-biodiversity sites and brownfield areas instead of community or forest areas. Require solar corridor cumulative impact and strategic environmental reviews. Include onsite conservation buffers and micro catchment restoration. Encourage rooftop and agrivoltaics systems which combine agricultural output with photovoltaic systems. Implement compulsory community consultation and implement visible compensatory afforestation, which is to be monitored by independent units.

These steps balance renewable energy goals and ecological sustainability thus addressing the threat that green energy will be a trigger of local environmental disasters.





# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND THE ELDERLY: THE VULNERABLE DEMOGRAPHIC IN INDIAN POLICY

-Anoushka Mukherji



The twilight years of life has quite often posed unique challenges and vulnerabilities to human life. One of the most demanding and specific vulnerabilities that older individuals face along with biological and situational changes is lowered resilience in times of disasters often grouped under the ‘economically and socially vulnerable category’ and rightly so. Apart from the economic and social hindrances, the elderly have been known to experience diminished mobility and sensory impairments, psychological distress, all of which amplify their exposure during disasters. For instance a news coverage reported that during the cyclone Dana in 2024, an elderly woman despite having been moved to a cyclone shelter, suffered from a cardiac arrest which ultimately led to her demise in Odisha’s Kendrapara district. Furthermore, much of scholarly work done on the vulnerable groups and disaster management reveal that relative to their non

exposure counterparts, elderly people who have experienced natural disasters in some form tend to report an inflated risk of ‘poor self-rated health’ (33.4% vs 23.31%), problems with activities of daily living (ADL), communicable diseases etc.

Although disaster management framework like the National Disaster Management Plan have recognized age sensitive planning, with even HelpAge India quoting the need for geriatric aids, inclusive policy planning recognized at local levels and a comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction equipped with community mapping of high risk groups which would strengthen these groups and protect them in times of disasters, nevertheless the policy planning and guidelines rarely gets translated into practice. Following the prognoses from the United Nations Population Fund, the ‘decadal growth rate’ of the burgeoning elderly population of India is estimated to be at 41%, with the percentage of the geriatric population in the country “projected to double to over 20% of the total population by 2050”, it’s about time for the inclusion of an age-sensitive DRR preparedness observed at the grassroot levels. This would include changes in the monitoring and evaluation tasks as well which would be used to test the level of responsiveness of community based support shelters, intensive emergency care and geriatric help etc

# STATE-INDUCED DEVELOPMENT, DISASTER RISK, AND TRIBAL DISPLACEMENT: LEGAL GAPS IN INDIA'S GROWTH STORY

-Kumarjeeb Pegu

Scheduled Tribes (STs), who constitute about 8.6% of India's population, disproportionately shoulder the burden of internal displacement. Most tribal communities reside in rural, forested regions that are continuously targeted by development projects such as dams, mines, and roads that displace them without adequate alternatives (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014). Their deep cultural and economic connection to



land and forests makes them particularly vulnerable to displacement arising not only from development but also from increasingly frequent climate-related disasters. Although the Government of India does not maintain official data on the number of tribals displaced due to industrial projects or conflict, studies reveal that tribal populations in India suffer disproportionate levels of climate-induced displacement. This contributes to acute food insecurity, the collapse of traditional livelihoods, forced migration, and, in many cases, violations of legal safeguards by state institutions themselves (Mamo, 2023; Jafar, 2025). Rapid forest loss further compounds this vulnerability. India lost more than 2.3 million hectares of tree cover between 2001 and 2023 (Scroll, 2024), much of it in areas inhabited by tribal communities. The conversion of forest land for commercial purposes frequently proceeds without meaningful consultation with local residents, disrupting traditional land-use patterns (Mamo, 2023). This is especially alarming given that land tenure among tribal communities is already fragile: 9.4% of ST households are landless, compared to the national average of 7.4% (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2017). These trends are particularly pronounced in states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand, where forest-diversion and displacement intersect with endemic poverty and land insecurity. This systemic vulnerability is being intensified by state-level policy measures that undermine legal safeguards previously secured through long-standing tribal rights

movements. A notable example is a recent development in Odisha concerning the state's approach to compensating tribal land alienation, to be examined ahead.

### Legal Safeguards and Gaps in Forest Land Protection Regime

The Indian Constitution, along with the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 and the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act, 2013, was intended to reinforce land protection regimes for tribal communities (Pegu & Dutta, 2019). The FRA recognizes both Individual Forest Rights (IFR) and Community Forest Rights (CFR), affirming tribal peoples' traditional use of forests and empowering Gram Sabhas to grant or withhold consent for development projects in their territories. However, this framework is increasingly being diluted.

The Odisha government's 2023 revenue department circular introduces a fast-track mechanism to compensate tribals for the acquisition of forest land (Government of Odisha, 2023). While it claims to be a "comprehensive guideline," it focuses solely on IFR holders and disregards CFR claims entirely (Land Conflict Watch, 2023). The policy bypasses key legal requirements such as Social Impact Assessments and the consent of Gram Sabhas procedures essential under the FRA, particularly for safeguarding community-held rights (Land Conflict Watch, 2023).

By shifting the framework from collective rights to individualized cash compensation, the circular effectively undermines the spirit and structure of the FRA. An ideal proposition remains compensation based on the "market value" of government-owned forest land. However, since such land has no history of private sale, its market value is essentially indeterminate. This results in negligible payouts for lands that hold immense cultural and ecological value to tribal communities (Gupta, 2023). Moreover, officials have openly acknowledged that there is no formula to calculate the value of community rights, creating a legal vacuum that facilitates the handover of tribal lands to industries without redress (Gupta, 2023). This not only weakens the FRA but also undermines the provisions of the LARR Act, which recognises forest-dwelling tribes as landowners or "affected families" entitled to public hearings and written consent during land acquisition. The Odisha circular, by excluding tribal communities particularly from the CFR Rights perspective from these protections, strips them of even the limited safeguards offered under the LARR framework.

### Gaps in National Displacement Policy Framework

These state-level erosions of rights occur within a broader national vacuum concerning internal displacement. India has neither adopted the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGPID) nor enacted a dedicated law for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Government of India maintains that





constitutional guarantees under Articles 14, 19, and 21 are sufficient for protecting displaced persons (Pegu & Dutta, 2019). However, in practice, this results in inconsistent and piecemeal approaches across states.

Even where national laws like the LARR Act provide procedural safeguards such as Social Impact Assessments and the requirement of community consensus the Act also contains provisions that allow these safeguards to be waived in situations deemed urgent, including emergencies related to national security, natural calamities, or other crisis situations. However, what qualifies as an 'emergency' remains largely subjective and open to broad interpretation. This creates significant

ambiguity and enables authorities to circumvent critical protections. Such loopholes are especially concerning in the tribal context, as Principle 9 of the UNGPID emphasizes the need for special protection of Indigenous Peoples, given their intergenerational and spiritual ties to the land (Kälin, 2008). The absence of a coherent, rights-based legal framework for IDPs in India leaves tribal communities exposed to unchecked displacement and inadequate rehabilitation.

### Disaster Management and Tribal Vulnerability

India's Disaster Management Act (2005) and the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP, 2016) provide the national framework for disaster preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation. While these instruments envision holistic support including physical, economic, social, and psychological rehabilitation their implementation is inconsistent, and they fall short in addressing the specific needs of tribal communities (Bhalla, 2016; Ogra et al., 2021). Generic disaster responses often result in the permanent alienation of tribal communities from their lands. When forest areas are cleared for post-disaster resettlement, or when tribal populations are relocated without informed consent, they are severed from their ancestral territories. The recovery process fails to account for collective tribal rights or to ensure their active participation in planning and managing their resettlement. This contravenes Principle 28 of the UNGPID, which requires authorities to facilitate voluntary return and ensure full participation of displaced persons in decisions that affect them. The absence of integration

between disaster management policies and tribal rights legislation like the FRA and PESA (1996) leads to long-term dislocation, marginalisation, and erosion of community identity.

### Recent Policy Shifts and The Forest Conservation Amendment

Adding to these legal regressions are the 2023 amendments to India's Forest Conservation Act and its associated rules. These new rules empower the government to allow private developers to clear forests without consulting tribal peoples and forest dwellers violating the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Of particular concern is the categorisation of "linear projects" such as roads, pipelines, and railways that can proceed without environmental assessments or community consent, especially within 100 km of India's international borders. Such provisions directly threaten nomadic, pastoralist, and tribal communities living in forested and border regions, stripping them of their rights over ancestral lands. Alarming, the Joint Parliamentary Committee reviewing the Bill did not incorporate a single change in response to over 1,200 submissions from tribal groups, environmentalists, lawyers, and citizens before the Bill was passed. This legislative bypass not only marginalises tribal voices but also sets a dangerous precedent for circumventing constitutional and statutory safeguards.

### Conclusion

Tribal communities in India face a dual and escalating crisis. Decades of displacement due to state-led development have already destabilised Adivasi societies. Now, climate-related disasters and legal dilution of protective frameworks have further eroded their access to land, livelihood, and cultural autonomy. The Odisha circular serves as a stark example of how procedural reform can effectively dismantle hard-won legal protections. In parallel, India's refusal to adopt a comprehensive IDP policy and its limited disaster governance structures mean that tribal rights remain vulnerable during crises.

The recent amendments to the Forest Conservation Act, the weakening of consent regimes, and the broadening of exemptions for strategic projects indicate a deepening of this threat. Taken together, these regressive policies, administrative bypasses, and governance failures create a "perfect storm" of legal and environmental precarity for India's most vulnerable communities. Unless meaningful reforms are implemented to restore legal safeguards, ensure participatory disaster management, and protect Indigenous land rights, India's tribal populations will continue to face dispossession and marginalisation under the very narrative of development and national progress.

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