INDIA

Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

SUMMARY OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2019

IDMC's figures show that 2019 represented yet another year of intense disaster-related displacement in India. Floods and storms generated most of the displacement movements recorded that year. The disasters generating the most displacement were the south-west monsoon, about 2,563,561 displacements, Tropical Cyclone Fani, 1,821,042 displacements, Tropical Cyclone Vayu, 289,000 displacements, Severe Cyclonic Storm Bulbul, 186,218 displacements, and drought in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, 61,404 new displacements. Apart from these mega events, IDMC also recorded seven smaller disasters that led to displacement and housing destruction.

Tropical Cyclone Fani hit Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh on 3 May 2019. It was the strongest cyclone to strike the Indian subcontinent in five years and the most powerful cyclone to form in the Bay of Bengal since 1999. Scientists estimate wind speeds of 180 kilometres an hour to 190 kilometres an hour. It was one of a series of cyclones in recent years that rapidly intensified and are thus increasingly unpredictable. The early evacuation of people in harm's way, both in India and in neighbouring Bangladesh, however, probably limited the number of fatalities.

As early as March 2019, particularly severe drought was reported in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, affecting farmers and cattle owners and triggering the displacement of about 61,000 people. Continued heat in May negatively affected families struggling to rebuild their houses following Tropical Cyclone Fani. These events, taken together, illustrate how various diverse disasters affect the overall resilience of populations in India.

Tropical Cyclone Vayu was set to strike Gujarat in June, leading to the pre-emptive evacuation of about 300,000 people. The cyclone changed track before hitting the coastline, however, and degenerated into a low pressure area before finally making it to Gujarat later than expected.

Meanwhile, having been delayed by a week, the south-west monsoon set in over Kerala on 8 June 2019. Monsoon-related flooding escalated from July onwards, leading to nearly 2.6 million displacements between July and October. In a rare meteorological event, this south-west monsoon exited on the same day, 16 October, as the north-west monsoon entered.

The north-west monsoon continued to generate displacements in October and November, along with Cyclone Maha, which hit Kerala and Lakshwadeep islands on 31 October, and cyclone Bulbul, which hit Odisha and West Bengal on 9 November. According to a preliminary analysis, these events triggered more than 2,800 evacuations and 186,000 evacuations respectively. Inter-Agency Group (IAG) also reported that 7,274 households, encompassing an estimated 34,188 people, were in need of immediate shelter support in the three most badly hit districts of West Bengal alone following cyclone Bulbul.

Table 1. 2019 summary of internal displacement in India

Number of events that triggered displacements[1]	12
Total new displacements[2]	5,018,000
Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019[3]	590,000
Houses destroyed[4]	344,639
People pre-emptively evacuated before events[5]	N/A
People officially sheltered after events[6]	N/A

Notes

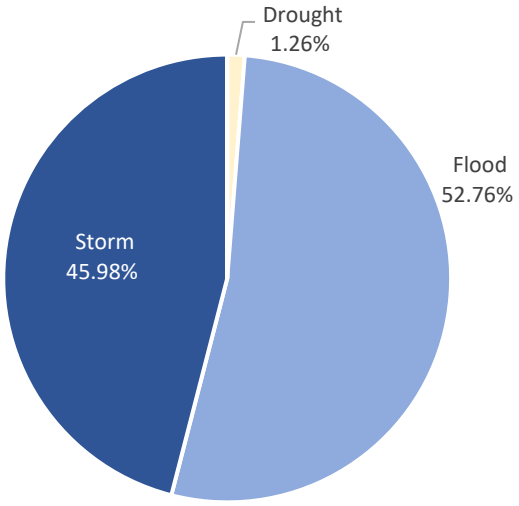
[1] *This corresponds to the number of disaster events that triggered displacement during 2019*
[2] *This corresponds to new instances of total internal displacement related to the disaster event during the year*
[3] *This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in a situation of internal displacement as of 31 December 2019 as a result of the disaster event*
[4] *This corresponds to the number of houses destroyed during the year*
[5] *This corresponds to the number of people that have been detected as pre-emptively evacuated before the disaster events*
[6] *This corresponds to the total number of people that have been sheltered following the disasters events*

India experienced storms, monsoon flooding, drought and landslides in 2019, leading to more than 4.9 million displacement movements. This figure may include various displacements of the same person in cases where the same state or region was affected by several disasters throughout the year. IDMC's total estimate of the number of new displacements includes pre-emptive evacuations. It also includes estimates based on housing destruction recorded as resulting from disasters in cases where no direct displacement estimate was available.

New Displacement in 2019 by hazard type

As can be seen in the chart below, India is vulnerable to displacement resulting from a diverse range of disasters, but floods and storms are the main disasters triggering displacement movements. Floods and storms this year may have generated about the same number of movements. The recorded evacuations resulting from storms, however, were predominantly pre-emptive, while the movements due to flooding took place after the onset of the disaster.

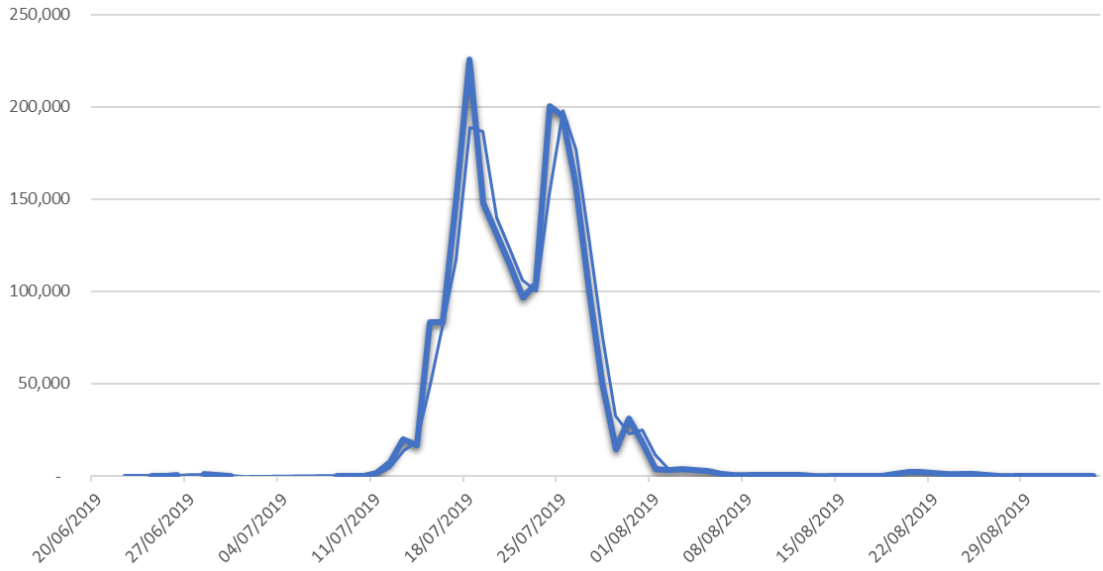
Fig. 1. Distribution of new displacements by hazard types in India in 2019



Duration of displacement

Comprehensive data on the duration of displacement associated with disasters in India is hard to come by owing to the systematic lack of data on displacements outside government-organised relief camps. Even the reporting of temporal data for relief camps is rarely done in a methodologically consistent way. One exception is the state of Assam, where the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) has made such time series data for the monsoon of 2019 available. ASDMA's data reveals that displacement to relief camps in Assam during the monsoon was relatively short in duration and tended to increase as a result of sudden onsets in flooding. Even so, this data fails to provide any indication of potentially enduring displacement outside relief camps.

Fig. 2. Trends of people living in a situation of internal displacement in 2019 following the event.



DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

IDMC's new displacement figures are based primarily on figures reported by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)/National Emergency Response Centre (NERC) or state disaster management authorities in daily situation reports and bulletins. Of about 2,555 facts representing individual displacement estimates for India in IDMC's database, about 2,531 were used for triangulation purposes. In 2019, IDMC also recorded displacement estimates for India published by a diverse array of actors, including the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Caritas International, Sphere India, SEEDS International, the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), the Humanitarian Office of the European Commission (ECHO), the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security programme (Copernicus), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the media, and many others. Where no primary reports released by the national or state government were available, IDMC's figures are based on media estimates. This was especially the case for smaller events and the drought.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

In India, the principal authoritative data sources, the government and state disaster management authorities, do not collect comprehensive data on displacements outside relief camps. In most cases, there is also no information infrastructure for systematically recording displacement associated with disasters outside of the monsoon season and major events such as cyclones. IDMC's figures are based mainly on data collected by state disaster management authorities, sometimes disseminated through NERC. They thus tend not to include an unknown number of displacements that take place outside of relief camps. This caveat is especially relevant for our estimates for the monsoon when the media tends to report very high, but unverified, estimates for displacement outside relief camps. The availability of data also tends to be greater for some disasters, particularly monsoon flooding and storms, than for others. IDMC's figures may, for example, underestimate the scale of displacement associated with drought in 2019. Since government agencies do not report on drought-related displacement, we can only rely on estimates published by media and NGO sources for our drought figures.

IDMC has not been able to access a full breakdown of the number of new displacements and the amount of housing destruction per location/over time for many disasters. This limits our ability to use triangulation to verify these figures and, overall, decreases the reliability of the data. Since the great majority of the recorded displacements resulting from storms and cyclones in 2019 were evacuations, it is also possible that a sizeable share of the displacement movements lasted for less than 24 hours. There is no temporal threshold on the definition of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. This does not mean that the affected people were not displaced. The impact of being displaced for a short period of time, however, is likely less than the impact on someone whose home was destroyed and who remained displaced for several months.

Our stock estimation in 2019: Providers of disaster displacement data tend not to include information about when, how and for how long people were displaced. One of the main gaps and challenges in accurately estimating the number of IDPs is the lack of measurement of return flows. Nor does data tend to be collected on people who have achieved durable solutions by integrating locally or resettling elsewhere in the country.

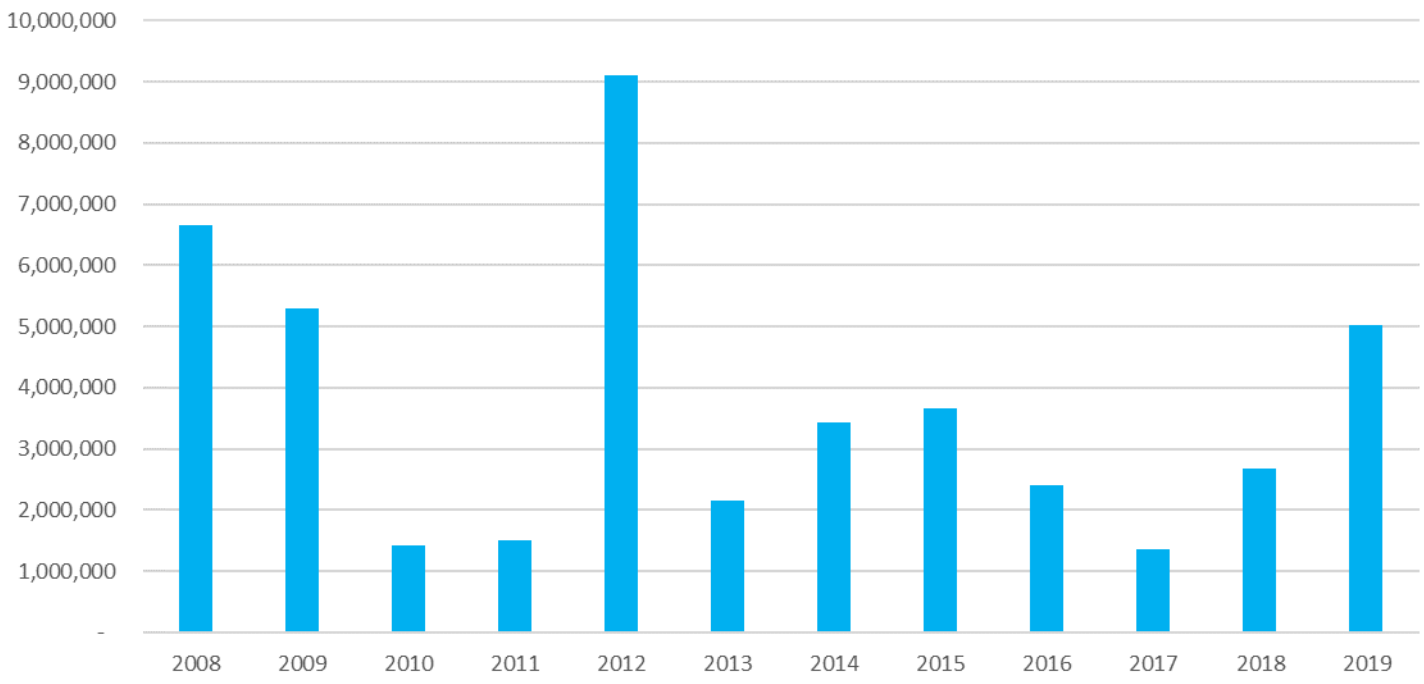
Our year-end estimate is based on time series data and housing destruction data for specific disaster events, as well as aggregated figures about the number of people displaced by disasters recorded by governments and other stakeholders. (more information on - http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2020-GRID-methodology.pdf)

CONTEXT

The graph below shows annual displacement recorded in India during the last ten years as a result of disasters. IDMC's disaster displacement risk model estimates that about 2.3 million people are likely to be displaced by disasters in India in any given year, of which about 1.94 are displaced as a result of flooding. As is visible from the data, new displacement resulting from disasters tends to be consistently high, especially from a global perspective. In 2019, IDMC recorded the third highest number of displacements in India since 2008. The fact that a large share of the displacements were pre-emptive and designed to save lives, however, represents a positive development. Overall, IDMC's figure analysis highlights the need for additional primary data to better understand the scope of out-of-camp displacement, as well as the temporal duration of displacement, following disasters.

Trends analysis 2008-2019

Fig 3. Historical displacement trends in India



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