

From Systems to Societal Resilience: Learning from Nagaland's Leadership

1. Introduction

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI), in collaboration with the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA), convened a virtual roundtable on “*Towards a Safer and Resilient Nagaland: What we do, why we do, and how we learn*”, on March 30, 2026. The roundtable brought together **65 participants** from government, international organisations, and civil society to reflect on ongoing efforts in Nagaland to strengthen disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and resilience.

The session also marked the **launch of a special issue of [Southasiadisasters.net](https://southasiadisasters.net) on “Towards a Safer and Resilient Nagaland: What we do, why we do, and how we learn”**, highlighting field experiences, policy insights, and local practices. The discussion reinforced the need to move beyond response-oriented approaches towards **risk-informed development** and integrated systems of resilience.

“Resilience is not built after disasters—it is built before them through the decisions we make today.”

2. Setting the Context: Why Nagaland, Why Now

The roundtable opened with reflections on the increasing frequency and complexity of climate and disaster risks. Nagaland's experience was presented as both timely and instructive, offering lessons for other regions.

Dr. Johnny Ruangmei from NSDMA emphasised that disasters are no longer isolated events but part of a broader system of risks shaped by climate variability and development pressures. He highlighted Nagaland's shift from a **reactive disaster response approach to predictive and risk-informed governance**, supported by science, technology, and institutional coordination.

3. Key Insights from Speakers

The roundtable featured key insights from government and international perspectives, reinforcing the importance of linking policy with practice.

Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia from UNDRR highlighted the central role of **capacity building and training** in disaster risk reduction. He emphasised that while frameworks and tools exist, their effectiveness depends on how well they are understood and applied at the local level. Drawing from experience in Nagaland, he noted that structured training programmes significantly improve knowledge and application of disaster risk reduction practices, with measurable gains among participants.

Dr. Johnny Ruangmei presented Nagaland's **technology-driven and systems-based approach** to resilience. He outlined initiatives such as the Nagaland State Disaster Management Information System, Nagaland Center for Disaster Management and Atmospheric Research - climate modelling through specialised centres, AI-enabled analytics through ELIONA – a supercomputer of NSDMA dedicated for risk predictive modelling, and the use of parametric insurance for financial resilience. These efforts reflect a shift towards integrating **data, governance, and finance** in managing disaster risks.

Across the discussion, a common message emerged: resilience is not only technical but also **institutional and behavioural**, requiring sustained coordination and learning.

4. Key Themes Emerging from the Roundtable

The roundtable highlighted a clear transition from disaster response to **risk-informed development**, where resilience is embedded within planning, infrastructure, and governance systems.

A strong emphasis was placed on linking **early warning to early action**, ensuring that data and forecasts translate into timely decisions at the local level. Participants noted that strengthening this connection remains essential for reducing losses.

The importance of **capacity building and continuous learning** was repeatedly emphasised. Training programmes, knowledge platforms, and peer exchanges were identified as critical tools to improve understanding and application of disaster risk reduction measures.

The discussion also underscored the growing role of **technology and data systems** in improving preparedness and decision-making. Initiatives such as real-time data platforms, climate analytics, and digital tools are enabling more effective governance.

In addition, **financial resilience mechanisms**, including disaster risk transfer and parametric insurance, were recognised as important innovations for managing risks and supporting recovery.

Above all, the roundtable reinforced that **community-centred approaches remain fundamental**, with local institutions and community responders playing a key role in building resilience.

5. Concluding Reflections and Way Ahead

In his concluding remarks, **Mr. Mihir R. Bhatt**, AIDMI, emphasised that resilience must be built through **systems, partnerships, and continuous learning**, rather than isolated projects.

He highlighted the need to embed risk into development planning, strengthen the connection between early warning and early action, expand financial resilience mechanisms, and invest in platforms that support continuous learning and knowledge exchange.

He further emphasised that resilience must remain **community-centred**, with local ownership as a key driver of sustainable outcomes.

Nagaland's experience was recognised as an important example of how **science, governance, and community action can come together** to build resilience effectively.

6. Conclusion

The roundtable successfully created a platform for dialogue, reflection, and knowledge exchange on disaster resilience in Nagaland. It highlighted that building a safer and resilient future requires aligning policy, practice, and community action.

The **launch of the *Southasiadisasters.net* special issue** further strengthens this effort by documenting experiences and enabling wider learning. Nagaland's approach offers valuable lessons not only for Northeast India but also for broader national and global contexts.

The session concluded with appreciation to all speakers and participants, and a shared commitment to continue collaboration and learning for building safer and more resilient communities.

“Resilience in Nagaland is built not by reacting to disasters, but by anticipating risk, embedding science in governance, and ensuring today's investments reduce tomorrow's vulnerability.”