

Training Program on Holy Dip Site Safety and Disaster Preparedness in Gujarat

Concept Note

Taking a holy dip in sacred rivers & waterbodies is a long-standing tradition in Gujarat. Pilgrims gather at sites like Gomti Ghat, Bindu Sarovar, Triveni Sangam, and Damodar Kund during special days. However, overcrowding, deep waters, and strong currents pose risks of drowning, stampedes, and health issues. Past incidents highlight the need for better safety, including lifeguards and crowd control. A disaster management training program is essential to protect pilgrims and ensure safer religious gatherings.

To safeguard devotees while maintaining the sanctity of these sites, a comprehensive disaster management strategy should be in place. This approach must include water safety, crowd management, medical preparedness, and environmental conservation. Deploying trained lifeguards, rescue boats, and floating safety barriers in high-risk areas can significantly reduce drowning incidents. Marking deep-water zones and installing clear warning signs will help guide pilgrims toward safer areas. Encouraging safe bathing practices through public awareness campaigns can further ensure their well-being. Managing large crowds effectively is equally important, and this can be achieved by establishing regulated entry and exit points to prevent overcrowding, using CCTV surveillance, public announcement systems, and crowd monitoring for better control, and deploying police and security personnel like GRD, Home Guards, civil defense and other volunteers to maintain order and prevent stampedes.

Another critical aspect of disaster preparedness is addressing the issue of missing persons, especially children and elderly devotees. Setting up help desks and lost-and-found centres will provide immediate assistance in such cases. Providing identification wristbands for children and elderly devotees can make their identification easier in crowded places, while training volunteers in emergency handling and first response techniques can ensure that the situation is managed effectively. First aid and medical readiness are also crucial, and placing ambulances and mobile health units near the dip sites can provide immediate assistance. On-site first aid teams must be equipped to handle injuries, hypothermia, and other medical emergencies. Conducting health screenings for elderly and vulnerable individuals before they enter the water can help prevent medical crises. Environmental conservation should be an integral part of managing holy dip sites. The increasing use of chemical offerings, plastic waste, and non-biodegradable materials during religious rituals can lead to severe pollution of sacred water bodies. Promoting eco-friendly rituals and biodegradable offerings can help maintain water quality. Setting up designated waste disposal areas

and encouraging pilgrims to avoid littering can prevent environmental degradation. Organizing post-event clean-up drives with the help of local authorities and volunteers will further contribute to preserving the purity of these holy sites.

The success of disaster preparedness at holy dip sites depends on active participation from religious institutions, civil defense volunteers, local communities, NGOs, and volunteers. Additionally, training programs for temple staff, security personnel, and local guides will enhance on-ground preparedness and response efficiency. Ensuring the safety and sanctity of Gujarat's holy dip sites requires a proactive, well-coordinated approach that integrates modern safety measures with traditional spiritual values. By learning from past incidents and implementing structured disaster preparedness strategies, Gujarat can protect pilgrims while preserving the divine significance of these sacred waters. With proper planning, community involvement, and sustainable practices, holy dips can remain a spiritually fulfilling and safe experience for all devotees.

Details of Proposed Trainings are as follows:

S. No.	Holy Dip Site	Location	Date
1.	Gomti Ghat	Dwarka	08.04.2025
2.	Chanod-Karnali Triveni Sangam	Vadodara	16.04.2025
3.	Kabirvad	Mangleshwar, Bharuch	23.04.2025