

SATCOM on Heatwave Preparedness and Response

2nd May, 2022 | Time: 02:00 pm – 04:00 pm

Background:

Scorching and sweltering hot weather has become a significant matter of concern for all, especially with its increased incidence, severity, and span which is no longer a prediction but has already turned into the reality due to anthropogenic climate change and global warming all around the world. India has also observed a steep rise in temperatures in the past century and the rate of rising temperatures was higher in the past two decades compared to earlier as reported by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) recently. IMD in the same report also reported that 12 out of 15 warmest years in the history of India were between the year 2006 and 2020 and despite being under nationwide lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the previous year 2020 turned out to be the 8th warmest year in the history of India since 1901. Different parts of India have seen an increase in warming at different rates and have faced perils of heat accordingly.

The state of Gujarat has a largely hot semi-arid climate and because of that, spells of extreme heat weather events during summer are no surprise in Gujarat. But, despite acclimatization to local climate and weather conditions, the immediate risks of adverse effects and impacts of extreme summer heat on health and livelihood may go further high because of the growing population, increasing rate of urbanization, poor housing conditions, and phenomenon like urban heat island. The good part here is that these immediate risks of extreme heat can be minimized to great extent with proper planning, preparation, and management for the upcoming summer season in advance. And the first step of planning against extreme heat begins with knowing the temperatures forecast of upcoming summers for any particular region to devise the preparation and management strategies.

The IMD has issued the seasonal forecast for the initial summer months March, April, and May of the year 2022 and the forecast predicts above normal seasonal maximum and minimum temperatures in several parts of India including the state of Gujarat in the western part of India.

looking at the temperature forecasts for the ongoing summer season, it becomes essential to repeatedly brush up the planning, preparedness, and management strategies against extreme heat in the Gujarat state. And therefore, it is necessary to periodically train the key professionals from departments and civil society organizations that directly or indirectly play an important role in preparedness and management against extreme events.

High temperatures and extreme heat can cause children to become sick very quickly in several ways. It can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat stroke, which is a medical emergency. High heat can also contribute to irritability both for children and their caregivers. And with extreme heat increasing in areas of the United States due to climate change, "eco-anxiety" can cause emotional distress.

Tips to beat the heat

If you are going to be outside, there are several steps you can take to beat the heat and protect your child from heat-related illness and hazards:

- **Stay hydrated:** Encourage your children to drink water frequently and have it readily available even before they ask for it. Take water bottles with you if you go out. On hot days, infants receiving breast milk in a bottle can be given additional breast milk in a bottle, but they should not be given water, especially in the first 6 months of life. Infants receiving formula can be given additional formula in a bottle.
- **Dress lightly:** Dress your children in clothing that is light-colored, lightweight, and limited to one layer of absorbent material that will maximize the evaporation of sweat. Kids have a lower capacity for sweating than adults. Be sure to use plenty of sunscreen.
- **Plan for extra rest time:** Heat can often make children (and their parents) feel tired. High heat can not only cause people to feel tired, but it may also contribute to irritability. Come inside regularly to cool off, rest, and drink water.
- **Keep your cool:** When your child is feeling hot, give him or her a cool bath or water mist to cool down. Swimming is another great way to cool off while staying active. Remember that children should always be supervised while swimming or playing in water to prevent drowning.
- **Never leave your child in a car:** The inside of a car can become dangerously hot in just a short amount of time, even with the windows open.

The Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM) registered as an autonomous institute has been entrusted with the responsibility of human resource development, capacity building, training, research, and documentation in the field of disaster risk management by the Government of Gujarat. Enhancing the understanding of disaster risk among all of the institutions and sections of the society is the first step towards identifying, reducing, and managing disaster risks of various natural and man-made hazards and GIDM has been rigorously working in this direction since its inception.

Among all other hazards, GIDM has carried out several capacity-building training programs for preparedness and management of heatwaves in Gujarat state as well. The institute has also given valued contribution in “Gujarat State Action Plan: Prevention and Mitigation of Impacts of Heat Wave 2020” developed by the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority. Currently, GIDM is working on developing a Gujarat State Heat Action Plan that will have district- wise heat vulnerability index and temperature thresholds to enable the authorities of Gujarat State to take evidence-based informed decisions of extreme heat risk prevention and mitigation planning for the future.

GIDM has also developed a subject-specific “Training Module on Extreme Heat Prevention and Management” to help trainers use it for the training of participants working in various government and non-government organizations and have a direct or indirect role in protecting the health of people from extreme heat during summers. The module is a guide for the trainers to train the participants on the key areas necessary for planning the prevention and management of extreme heat to minimize its impacts on the health of the people. With the commencement of the summer season of 2021, GIDM utilizing its resources has already started the capacity building program for heatwave preparedness and management in the state and to ensure the continuum of capacity to fight against extreme heat among various stakeholders in the state, following **webinar as part of capacity building training programs** for the heatwave has been planned by GIDM.

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Aim & Objective:

At the end of the webinar participants will be able to:

- Understanding Heatwave & forecast this year for Gujarat.
- The impact of Heatwaves on children's health
- The local/school level preparedness and response to heatwaves.

Schedule:

#	Topic	Speaker	Time
1	Introduction	GIDM	15 Minutes
2	Opening Remarks	Representative from Education Department	15 Minutes
3	Understanding heatwave & forecast this year for Gujarat and Impacts of heatwave on children	Dr. Abhiyant Tiwari, Associate Professor, GIDM	45 minutes
4	Local/school level preparedness and response to heatwave	Dr. Bina Vadalía, Assistant Director, Family welfare, CoH office	30 minutes
5	Q&A Session Closing Remarks	GIDM	15 minutes