

A 2-Day Non-Residential Classroom-based Training Program  
on  
**Understanding Disaster Risks in Rural Gujarat  
and  
Way Forward**

24-25 January, 2023

**Organised by**



**Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management**

## **Understanding Disaster Risks in Rural Gujarat and Way Forward**

### **Background**

There are around 18000 villages in Gujarat comprising of 57.40% of total population (GSDMA). Past two decades has seen number of hazards converting into disasters resulting tremendous loss of lives, property and ultimately slowing down the pace of development. Owing to its geo-climatic, geological and physical features, Gujarat is vulnerable to all major natural hazards namely, drought, flood, cyclone, earthquake, tsunami etc. The State is also under constant threat of various human made hazards like that of industrial (chemical) hazards, transportation accidents, terror attacks, epidemic, road accidents, etc.

At present, there is an acute need for capacity development of panchayat functionaries to react institutionally in an effective manner to emergency situation(s) and it is the district administration, which retains the basic responsibility of handling crises situations with the Collector playing a pivotal role. Grass root/Field level responses on behalf of the government in rural areas are by the nearest police, revenue and/or panchayat functionary (viz. Talati-cum-Mantri/Talati/Sarpanch, PRI members, etc.). Priority should be given to training and capacity building of these stakeholders, particularly Talati-cum-Mantri working with Panchayat, Rural Housing and Rural Development Department, GoG to effectively implement DR strategies at grass roots' level.

### **Rationale**

This training program has been developed based on the current need and discussion among the Talati and experts. Disaster Management is an upcoming stream which overlaps with lot of disciplines ranging from science, engineering, social sciences, humanities, etc. Most of the people gets confused between hazards and disasters. Conceptual clarity will not only increase their knowledge but will help them to spread awareness. The different concepts of the session will explain the various controllers of disaster risk and elaborates on how they are related to each other. Care has been taken to explain these crucial parameters as lucidly as possible. Starting from the fundamentals, the training builds upon and gradually talks about the different aspects of disaster risk management. In addition to this, national and international arrangements have also been discussed like the relevant statutes at national level, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), Sustainable Development Goals which include 17 goals, the Paris Agreement etc.

In order to integrate the provisions in decision making, topics such as Risk-Informed Gram Panchayat Development Plan and Village Disaster Management Plan will be addressed. Basically, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) brings together both the citizens and their elected representatives in the decentralised planning processes. GPDP is expected to reflect the development issues, perceived needs and priorities of the community, including that of the marginalised sections. As per the training module developed by National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), development of a village disaster management plan is a process through which every unit in the village is made aware of the various facets of disaster preparedness and response and their capacity is enhanced to meet the exigency. During times of crisis, contingency plans are often developed to explore and prepare for any eventuality. When we talk of a village disaster management plan, we refer to a list of activities which a village agrees to follow to prevent loss of life, livelihoods and property, in case a disaster strikes. The plan strives for effective coordination of human and material resources which may facilitate a better response thus helping in saving precious lives. It also identifies in advance, actions to be taken by the individuals in the community to prevent hazards from becoming disasters. Every village is different in terms of its inhabitants, geography and resources and its way of arriving at community decisions. Hence, a village disaster management plan will vary from village to village.

Climate change is making extreme weather events more frequent and intense. This will be exacerbated if global warming surpasses 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Our broken relationship with nature also increases the likelihood of tragedies, as ecosystem degradation drives disaster risk and makes us increasingly vulnerable. But natural hazards don't need to result in human and environmental disasters. Our planet has a natural defence system that, when cared for properly, protects us i.e. biodiversity. As villages are surrounded by rich biodiversity, role of panchayats becomes very essential to protect them. Apart from this the Panchayat Act 1993 is being explained along with different provisions of disaster risk management for district panchayat, taluka panchayat and village panchayat.

This training highlights, the flexibility and innovation required for the role of Talati-cum-Mantri in DRM activities. Further, it underscores the need for greater engagement with people and a better understanding of their Disaster Risk and Resources. This program will assist the local Government officials in decision making and planning activities for preparedness, response and relief phase at the grassroots level through practical components in training.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- I. Understanding basics of Disaster Risk Management
- II. Understanding risk to biodiversity, natural resources and forest produce
- III. Familiarise with RIGDP, VDMP and 9 themes SDG.

The training is in relevance with the Prime Minister's 10 Point Agenda on DRR w.r.t. imbibing the principles of DRR in development sectors and emphasised on building local capacity (*Point 1 & 8*). The training includes outcomes which are structured around the four Priorities for Action of the Sendai Framework. The outcomes are namely, understanding DRM, strengthening PR system, preparation of VDMP, etc. The training addresses the SDG (Agenda 2030) to work towards sustainable cities and communities; climate action; and conserve life on land and water (*SDG 11, SDG 13, 14 and SDG 15*). Lastly, the program is in relevance with all four priority areas as mentioned in Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The training also includes practical activities on one days of training for greater participation and peer learning. The care has been taken to combine theories and empower the officials to implement in practical sense. During the group activity, nine themes of SDG, an initiative by Ministry of Panchayat Raj will be undertaken. The Training Needs Assessment (TNA) has been conducted of Panchayat Raj Institutions & Rural Development on mainstreaming DRR at Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management dated on 17/02/2021. It is a collaboration between GIDM and SIRD to conduct Two Hour Orientation Program on Heat Wave through BISAG. This module gives a brief and detail information on Heatwave Preparedness. Program Development and Review Committee (PDRC) meeting has been conducted for Community based Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation dated on 02/06/2022. It mentioned mainstreaming of risk reduction elements in the development planning at the village level contributing to SDGs. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with State Institute of Rural Development and Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management for Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Disaster Management dated on 03/12/2018. The objective is to organise training programs, workshops, etc. for the personnel of rural development and Panchayati Raj departments and various target groups. On 22/12/2022, a state level multi stakeholder consultation meeting on CBDRM has also been attended by various government agencies and NGOs. Prior to this training, a batch of 63 participants from 11 districts of Gujarat have been trained.

### **Expected Outcome**

At the end of the program the participants would be able,

- I. To get conceptual clarity of disaster risk management, terms and trends
- II. To integrate VDMP and RI-GPDP
- III. To effectively use the natural resources and take actions for biodiversity conservation.

### **Way Forward**

The impact of disasters on people living in vulnerable areas and losses to their property can be minimised by a proactive role played by local government officials and communities at grassroots levels. DRM needs to be an integral part of development processes for sustainable development. Apart from great organising skills, it may call for courage and leading from the front, the local government officials and community members can play a role of leadership in Disaster Risk Management at all stages. At the village / grass roots level, the DRM Team will be constituted, which draws up the plan consists of local authorities, government functionaries including doctors/paramedics of primary health centres located in the village, primary school teachers and elected representatives of the village. Eventually each village will have a DRM Plan. In this way the whole purpose of the training program is linking with the development programs and strengthening a decentralised approach.