

Webinar
on

MANAGING CROWD AT EVENTS AND VENUES OF MASS GATHERING

Building a Culture of Resilience

30th Nov' 2021, 1500 to 1700 hrs

Registration link: _____

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Organized by



Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management

Introduction:

In India, increasing number of people visiting religious locations, public places and commercial establishments like malls, entertainment spots etc have largely increased. Besides, the absence of management and mitigation plans for events/venues of mass gathering, cascaded with increasing frequency of stampeded (Allahabad, 2013, Ratanagr, 2013, Malabar Hill, 2014, Patna, 2014) in las few years, is a cause for serious concern. Therefore, Crowd Management has essentially become a paramount need as recurring stampeded at places of mass gathering, including religious places, railway stations, sports/socio-cultural/political events etc are putting people are at risk.

Efforts have to be made in order to reduce mishaps that involve or possesses a potential to cause loss of life or even injury, damage to environment and property. Hence, it becomes imperative for the authorities to take all possible steps to plan ahead the events that may take unfortunate turn.

Crowd Management is an important activity and challenge faced due to the increasing population of the country and the tendency of the people to gather for a common objective or interest during specific events.

- These public gatherings may include street fairs, public rallies, music festivals, religious gatherings, etc;
- A crowd is made up by the clustering of spectators and participants, however, in cases of religious congregations the crowd is composed of devotees;
- Mass gatherings of people is defined by the World Health Organization as ‘more than a specified number of persons at a specific location for a specific purpose for a defined time’;
- Large crowd creates annoyances and difficulties to a section of the society, leading to severe traffic delays, pollution, stampede, fights among people, alteration in landscape, infrastructure damage and ultimately become the source of medical emergencies and disasters.

Keeping the importance of the subject, GIDM has constituted a Program Development and Review Committee (PDRC) on theme “Crowd Management” to elucidates the key findings from crowd management assessment under the heads of Hazards, Vulnerability, Capacities and

Exposure followed by recommendations based on the key findings and observations on the subject. Based upon the concept of PDRC on the subject, GIDM has organized various training programs, residential as well as virtual classroom based trainings, in year 2018 to 2019.

Moreover, due to ongoing pandemic situation of COVID-19, it is imperative to maintain and follow the social distancing norms as being decided by GoG. Now more than ever, mobility is undergoing a seismic shift. From parks and shopping malls to railway stations and airport terminals, city authorities are increasingly under pressure to shape the next normal within distancing guidelines and better manage the access to public spaces and large gatherings. By bringing together cutting-edge technology with tailored strategy and expert implementation, GIDM, in association with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), has developed a programmatic approach to improve basic knowledge of Disaster Risk Management with special emphasis on Crowd Management. The objectives of this webinar based training program are,

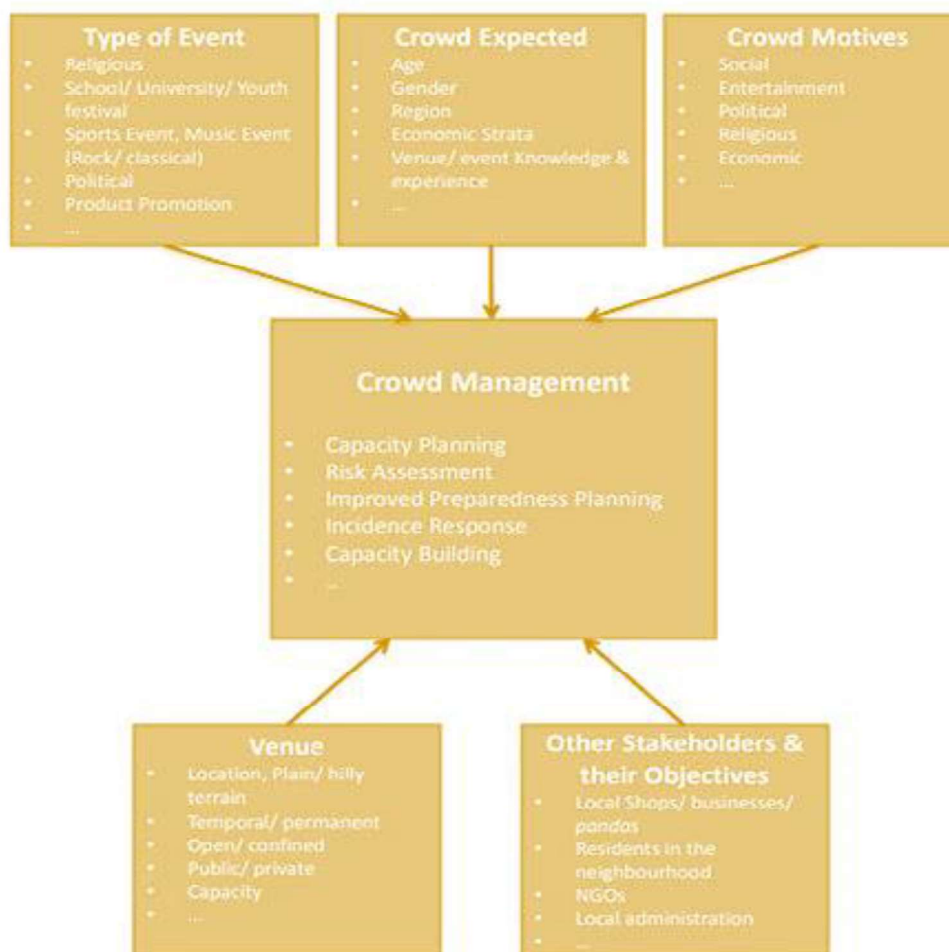
- Basics Disaster Risk Management;
- Crowd related Disasters and Management activities;
- COVID-19: Shaping the New Normal;
- Enable stakeholders and event organizers/administrators on how to manage the crowd through effective planning.

Background:

Crowd management is a public security practice wherein large crowds are managed to prevent the outbreak of crowd crushes, affray, fights involving drunk people or riots. Crowd crushes can cause hundreds of fatalities. Crowd control can involve management of the crowd using privately hired security guards as well as on duty police officers. As crowd disasters are local events, disaster management is primarily the responsibility of the organizers and local/district administration with the support and guidelines from state and national authorities. Most of the major crowd disasters can be prevented by use of simple crowd management strategies. The primary crowd management objectives are the avoidance of critical crowd densities and the triggering of rapid group movement. The terms crowd management and crowd control are often used interchangeably, however, there are important differences. Crowd management is the assessment of the people handling capabilities of a space prior to use. It includes evaluation of projected levels of occupancy, adequacy of means of ingress and egress, processing procedures such as ticket collection, and expected types of activities and group behaviour. Crowd control

may be part of a crowd management plan, or occur as an unplanned reaction to a group problem. It can include extreme measures to enforce order, such as the use of force, arrest, or threat of personal injury. It may employ barriers that alter the space available for occupancy and patterns of group movement. Inappropriate or poorly managed control procedures have precipitated crowd incidents rather than preventing them. For example, police reacting to a group of unruly persons at a rock concert, herded spectators into areas where there were no means of egress.

Crowd Management also involves the availability of sufficient human resources for providing all necessary facilities to all the attendees present at the venue for an event. It includes sufficient supply of drinking water, food, availability of clean rest rooms and basic medicinal facilities at or in close proximity to the venue, security measures, etc. Adequate provision of these measures helps to reduce the chances of crowd aggression and in turn any mishaps. The process of crowd management involves an integrated approach as follows,



Source: NDMA “A Guide for State Government Local Authorities, Administrative and Organiser” 2014

Details about the program:

Topics to be covered during the program will be,

1. Crowd related Disasters

Crowd disaster are those that lead to a large number of injuries to the people present in the crowd and even have the potential of causing mass fatalities. Crowd disasters mainly include crowd crushes and stampedes. They can be a result of either emotions of over excitement, panic or loss of physical space and spreads of certain rumours and miscommunication. The instances of stampedes can be effectively avoided by providing a safe, environment and by understanding the psychology of the crowd present. Crowd crushes are incidents which occur at times when a large population is present in a confined space. In both cases, deaths occur primarily due to the people collapsing over each other resulting in compression of lungs leading to death due to asphyxia.

2. Context Understanding and Scenario Setting

Crowd gathering and Scenario setting involves understanding of the impact of the crowd profile that will be attending an event, occurrence of any possible tangible and intangible incidents during the gatherings, possible changes in weather and evaluation of any unknown and emergency entry and exits strategies for the event. It involves preplanning of situations and preparedness for the same. It also helps the security agencies deployed for providing security to understand the mindset and behaviour of crowd and help to decide the measures that might be required for crowd control. There can be multiple triggers that lead to crowd disasters and their understanding with respect to the site of mass gathering is important. Contextual analysis of previous incidents at the same place or a similar place help in scenario setting for specific hazards.

3. Risk Assessment (Hazard Vulnerability Capacity Risk Analysis)

Risk assessment involves evaluation of all aspects of a planned event and preparation of strategies for unplanned and unexpected incidents that can occur during gatherings. Risk assessment involves proper inspection of all vulnerabilities of the venue, examination of crowd management plans, inspecting the infrastructure of the venue and provision of security measures. It also involves assessment of any health risks such as spread of infectious diseases and medical emergencies. Capacity risk analysis involves the study of the accommodation limit of the space and the number of people expected at a planned

event. In cases of unplanned events, risk assessment becomes very difficult and hence, preparedness in such cases is of utmost importance.

4. Identifying the Hazards

Identification of hazards are a part of risk assessment. It includes understanding of the event to be held and cross verification of occurrence of any mishaps in similar events in past if any. It helps to provide an idea about the type of behaviour that can be expected from the crowd during the event. Other hazardous incidents such as occurrence of stampede and crowd crushes should also be evaluated for better crowd management strategies. Hazards that can resulted due to the venue include accidental fires and collapse of structures. Preplanning and evacuation strategies need to be discussed briefly before conducting any event.

5. Identify who are at the most at Risk

In places where large gatherings are bound to occur, during any cases of mishaps it is of utmost importance to identify the population among the whole which is the most vulnerable. Identification of those most at risk during any case of accident helps to reduce the number of casualties. Generally, the people who are aged such as senior citizens and children are the most vulnerable and prone to maximum injuries. People with medical conditions such as asthma and claustrophobia tend to be affected the most in places where there is a high crowd density. Also, avoiding cases of molestation and assault are of high importance and priority when it comes to women safety during an event. Hence, formulation of safety plans for those at risk is an important aspect in crowd management.

6. Identify Existing Capacities

Identification of the maximum capacity of the venue and of the amenities before their exhaustion is important for providing sufficient facilities with respect to the expected footfall. Their assessment helps to provide a clear picture to the stakeholders so that they can prepare alternative strategies or can plan for more facilities. Capacity identification also helps to determine whether there will be a need for more security measures.

7. Assess the Risk

Risk assessment in any event is prerequisite by the law. It involves study of all trivial and major hazards that can occur and the worst-case scenarios that can happen throughout the event. It involves prioritizing the possible hazards and planning precautionary measures for either controlling the impact or completely eliminating the possibility of that hazard. It

involves meticulous planning of the situation at hand and to verify each and every detail from the start to the end of an event so as to minimize the risk arising from a hazard and to reduce its impact on the mass gathering present. Risk assessment should be carried out by skilled professional who have proper experience in the field for accurate assessment and planning.

8. Risk Evaluation

After assessment of risk and ensuring proper precautions, the amount of threat still persistent which needs to be assessed comes under risk evaluation. Based on the probability of occurrence of a hazard one can analyse the severity of the circumstance caused and can therefore, estimate the damage caused because of it.

9. Crowd Disaster Risk Management Processes

The process or causes of crowd disaster can be varied based upon the events. However, few causes leading to crowd disasters can be mentioned as follows:

Structural failures: They are incidents in which the permanent structure or any temporary structures built such as buildings, stairs, etc. collapse due to damage. These incidents can cause a large number of fatalities and hence need to be properly inspected before conducting an event.

Fire/ Electric disasters: They can occur in area where there is poor management of venue and electric cables are not properly insulated. On occurrence of such incidents a lot of man power is required for controlling the crowd and for proper extinguishing of the fire. In such cases, the number of casualties is also high due to deaths occurring due to various reasons such as burning, asphyxia and shock.

Inadequate Security: Inadequate security results in poor management of the event and thus in cases of crowd aggression, causes panic. They can also result in incidences of violence since there would be a lack of law and order for implementation of discipline.

Lack of Co-ordination: Lack of co-ordination within Stakeholders or even within the crowd can result in large mishaps. These are one of the major causes of deaths in crowd disasters.

10. Record the Risk Assessment Findings

After risk assessment and evaluation, it is important for the stakeholders and the security providers to have an accurate and updated record of all possible hazards, the risks arising due to these hazards and the possible outcomes in each of the scenarios. This is not only

helpful for crowd management planning but also helpful as a future reference for all agencies which deal with disaster management, security providers, stakeholders, etc.

Target audience for this program is as below:

The targeted participants for the webinar includes various levels of coordination officials/members involved in crowd management, working with Revenue Dept. (Mamlatdars, Dy. Mamlatdars, Dist. Project Officers), Home Dept. (PIs, PSIs), Health Dep't. (RMOs/Superintendents, Medical Officers), Sports, Youth & Culture Dept. (Youth and Volunteers), Gujarat Tourism & Dev Sthan Management (Managers and Administrators), Private Security Agencies, Pilgrimage Trusts, NGO's, Temple Trusts, Organizers of the events and Festival Fair Organizers etc.

Expected Outcomes:

At the end of the program, participants will be able to inculcate and demonstrate Basics of DRM principles, better understand COVID-19 situation from DRM perspective, effectively plan and manage the crowd during any situation and efficiently apply DRR strategy on field.