

**Webinar**  
on  
**Role of Police in DRM: Perspective of  
COVID-19**

**Date:** 26 June 2020, 1500 to 1630 hrs  
*using the platform of WEBEX Event provided by CISCO*

**Organized by**



## Preamble

India is signatory to the Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030) which was adopted to focus on reducing risks, preventing the creation of new risks. Apart from having a single goal and a single outcome, it has four priority of action which is understood to be adhered to by everyone; from resident to the top officials and minister. This put simply the onus of disaster risk reduction is on everyone and it logically follows that everyone must be sensitized and empowered to understand risk. One of the priority of SFDRR is to understand disaster risk which is not applicable to the community only at a risk but also, all stakeholders concerns in managing/reducing risk. Risk reduction is very much part of the police administration may it be law and order situation, responding to calamities or disaster but also have a greater role during preparedness phase before onset of a disaster

The role of police in disaster management comes to the fore front only when there is an event requiring immediate attention and action. Case in point, the massive evacuation that was carried out as a pre-emptive measures during the cyclone Vayu of 2019 or even in case of Fani, Stands as elaborate examples. However, the role of police is not limited to the phase of 'Disaster response'. Effective response in post disaster scenario can only be a success if voluntary work provided by police forces is effectively carried out for disaster victim. With the world steadily moving towards Disaster Risk Management (DRM), there is an eminent need to understand , in a definitive and elaborative manner, the role that Police can play in Disaster Risk Reduction and hence DRM

The training program aims to explore the various ways and avenues in which the mighty police force can contribute in Disaster Risk Management (DRM). Since long and according to the conventional and contemporary understanding, police force has been seen as a crucial player in Disaster Response and Pre-Emptive Response measures, but, undoubtedly the role of police in the overall gamut of disaster risk management is something that needs to be looked into.

The webinar aims to explore the role of police while orienting the participants about the basics of disaster risk management, their fundamental roles and instigating them to think of ways in which

they can contribute to the process of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and risk management keeping the current scenario of Pandemic in focus.

## Need to mainstream DRR for Police Department

With reference to the *Gujarat State Disaster Management Plan 2016, Chapter 7 'Preparedness and Capacity Building'*, five main points are identified under Police Department: (a) Ensure proper functioning of all equipment and vehicles; (b) Prepare for quick deployment of Home Guards and volunteers for providing safety to affected population and evacuated structures/ houses; (c) Prepare plan for management of terrorist attack, bomb blast, stampede, etc. (d) Train police personnel and staff of PCR van in first aid and basic life support; (e) Prepare communication plan for uninterrupted communication to all police posts and various control room and emergency centres across the state.

Apart from these responsibilities towards safe community, in the wake of rising risks from natural and man-made disasters, the *Gujarat State Disaster Management Act, 2003* has broadly defined the Role of Police in Disaster Management: (a) giving of warning; (b) carrying out search and rescue operations, and (c) carrying relief and rehabilitation operations. In addition to these, *other general functions as specified in the State Disaster Management Plan* as directed by the Collector at the time of an event of disaster in particular are: (a) Ensure that the communication system is in order, which shall be made available, free of charge, for being used for transmission and receipt of messages in connection with a disaster; (b) Identify the personnel and provide adequate training for the purposes of disaster management so that the services of such personnel are readily available; (c) Conduct disaster management drills periodically and; (d) Provide such assistance to the Authority, the Commissioner and the Collector and take such other steps as may be necessary for disaster management.

On the occasion of an event of disaster, sometimes the State & District level authorities cannot afford to wait for response of specialized forces, like NDRF/Armed forces. Moreover, on many occasions, it might not be advisable or feasible to obtain/deploy specialized armed forces and NDRF. At the same time, due to police's proximity to the incident sites, familiarity with the local

terrain, wider reach and better knowledge of background of the locality and culture, established communication system, they are one of the first and best responders to help manage any crisis situation. Hence, Gujarat Police machinery must gain expertise in effectively handling disasters through carefully designed training programmes. With above mentioned mandate stating vital role of Police in various phases of management of a disaster, it is important that appropriate time is given for capacity building at various levels of the department. This gradual upgradation of skills and technical knowhow of the Gujarat Police will gradually make the State better prepared for disasters by reducing gaps between controlled and uncontrolled crisis.

This first level online course aims to assist Gujarat Police machinery to mainstream the Disaster Risk Reduction Mandate under Disaster Management Plan of the Gujarat state. The course covers following topics:

**a) During Response to Alerts,**

- Establishing Contact with District Police Control Room, SEOC, DEOCs and other Control Rooms
- Ensuring Coordination with Other First Responders viz. Fire Brigade, Health Services, District Administration, NDRF, etc.
- Assessing the Air Operations
- Coordinating Mobilization/Transport of Specialized Equipment and Machinery to the Affected Areas
- Issuing an Alert to the Police Force in the surrounding Districts and Advise them to be in the State of Readiness for Deployment, if Needed

**b) Evacuation and Law & Order**

- Evacuating and Shifting the Affected people to pre-identified Sites (Forced Evacuation, if needed)
- Ensuring Smooth Transportation of injured to the Hospital
- Traffic management to allow the Rescue and Relief agencies to function
- Crowd Management to avoid cases of Stampede and other Issues

- Providing Security and Maintaining Law and Order in affected areas and affected sites, Relief Camps and Temporary Shelters to avoid cases of Human/ Child Trafficking, Thefts, etc.
- Ensuring Security Arrangements for VIP Visits
- Providing Security to Warehouse/ Storage Spaces and Transportation of Relief Material

### **c) Management of Relief and Reconstruction**

- Assisting District Administration in Distribution of Relief Materials to the Affected Population
- Assisting District Administration in Setting up Field Hospitals and Transporting Victims
- Assisting District Administration in Establishing Temporary Shelters for the Affected Population
- Providing Security to the Officials Distributing Relief Material and Maintaining Law and Order during the Relief Activities
- Providing Security to Sites under Reconstruction
- Helping the District administration in Addressing issues of Encroachment
- Reconstruction of Police Buildings
- Addressing Law & Order related Issues
- Ensuring Rehabilitation and Psycho-Social support for the Affected Police Personnel and their Families

## **Background**

The role of police in disaster management comes to the forefront only when there is an event requiring immediate attention and action. Case in point, the massive evacuation that was carried out as a pre-emptive measure during the recent cyclone Vayu of 2019 or even in case of Fani, stands as elaborate examples. However, the role of Police is not limited to the phase of 'Disaster Response'.

With the world steadily moving towards Disaster Risk Management (DRM), there is an imminent need to understand, in a definitive and elaborative manner, the role that Police can play in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and hence, DRM.

No matter what the event is, police officers will inevitably be the first to respond, given its proximity to the incident site and relationship with the affected local people. Apart from responding in such situations, owing to its familiarity to the area under their respective jurisdiction, they can play a very important role in disaster preparedness and development of local strategies of disaster risk reduction.

Target E of Sendai Framework talks about developing local DRR strategies which are in line with the state or national level strategies. The police force can play an integral role in development of such strategies, however, they are mostly relegated to be used only during the Response phase. Thus, this training program would stimulate the involvement of police in the process of disaster risk management and not merely be at the forefront of response.

#### *Crowd Control*

Disaster situations draw crowds. There are people hoping for a glimpse of the unfolding drama. Family members and friends of the victims show up, hoping to glean information about their loved ones. The people involved in the situation also mill around, sometimes while injured or in shock. The police cordon off areas and work to keep crowds under control.

#### *Public Safety*

Officers might go from house to house searching for the injured or those who need help. They can offer transportation, emergency medical care and be a bridge between citizens and rescue personnel. They can check credentials and identification to see if someone really needs to be in the area. They may warn people when electric wires are on the ground, when dangerous pests are lurking or when unstable people are nearby.

### *Directing Traffic*

Many disasters wipe out infrastructures such as electricity, making an unsafe situation for traffic and pedestrians. The police can close unsafe roads where downed wires, trees or flood situations might make travel unsafe. They direct citizens through nonworking traffic lights. They reroute random traffic to safer roads and try to keep out all unnecessary traffic. They can put roadblocks in the areas where the crisis is underway.

### *Organizing Search Teams*

Disaster situations often lead to family members being separated. Elderly and single people are at risk if they have no one to check on them. If these citizens wander around, problems may result. The police can set up search teams and put together systems where loved ones can check on one another. They can set up command centres where the victims and family may be reunited. They work with emergency personnel to list the various medical facilities used for treating sick or injured people.

### *Looters*

There are those who take advantage of a chaotic situation. When people are evacuated from homes or neighbourhoods, houses are unsupervised and opportunities to commit crime may be rampant. Police presence may help to deter looting. If looting does occur, the police are ready to apprehend suspects.

## **Objectives**

This webinar would,

1. Help the participants to understand what disaster risk is and how it is a function of existing / new hazards, different dimensions of vulnerability and the exposure of the people / assets at large;
2. Help participants to understand the role of police in the whole gamut of DRM, stimulating them to actively participate in capacity building and preparedness phases, which includes *being a part of assessment of risks and vulnerabilities at the local level, make action / contingency plans for an emergency / extreme event;*

3. Orient the participants about the Role of Police in COVID-19 Pandemic and how they are dealing with the situation;
4. Bring the participants and their individual perspectives to discuss impediments & enablers in the system and lay down a way forward in disaster risk reduction and not merely disaster response.

## About the Webinar

It is very essential that the Students, Faculty/Staff members, who are going to join the force or teaching various subjects, be oriented towards looking at this pandemic (COVID-19) through the lens of Disaster Risk Management, and thereby broaden their spectrum of analyzing the present as well as the future developments and consequences.

In order to build this culture of looking at a crisis, such as this, in a holistic and comprehensive manner, it is absolutely essential that the concerned stakeholders be explained how the prevalent understanding of Disaster Risk fits into the present scenario and how the systemic nature of Risk would affect every sector.

The 'webinar' has been designed to be in three segments:

1. The **first segment** would talk about COVID-19, answering the most obvious and the most frequently asked question to put the queries in one's mind at ease;
2. The **second segment** would show the participants how to view this crisis through the lens of DRM thereby tinkering their preparedness for the near future;
3. The **third segment** would talk about the possible Roles of Police in DRM with special emphasis on COVID-19.

## Participants

The participants will be the Students, Faculty/Staff members of Raksha Shakti University.



## Schedule

- 14:45 – 15:00 --- Online Reporting ---
- 15:00 – 15:05 **Opening Remarks**  
*Shri P.K. Taneja, Director General, GIDM*  
*Assisted by: Ms. Charu Mishra, TSPM, GIDM*
- 15:05 – 15:10 **Introduction to the webinar and GIDM-RSU collaborative capacity building**  
*Shri Subhash k Ruhela (Ex-CISFofficer)., Associate Professor, RSU*
- 15:10– 15:30 **Introduction to COVID-19**  
*Dr. Abhiyant Tiwari, APPM, GIDM*  
*At the end of this session participants will be able to:*
- *About COVID-19*
  - *Terminology, Origin, Transmission and Symptoms*
  - *Basic Do's and Don'ts*
  - *COVID-19: Response by India and Gujarat*
- 15:30 – 15:45 **COVID-19 and Disaster Risk Management**  
*Mr. Sumedh Patil, OSD, GIDM*  
*At the end of this session participants will be able to:*
- *DRM perspective of COVID-19*
  - *Risk Analysis: HVCRA to COVID-19*
  - *DM Act 2005 and various provisions*
- 15:45 – 16:15 **Role of Youth and Volunteers during COVID-19**  
*Mr. Bhawani sihn Rathore Assistant. Professor,RSU*
- *Roles and Responsibilities of Police in DRM*
  - *Assisting in daily needs of the Community and Social Distancing/Crowd Management*
  - *Community Surveillance, Field Supervision and Home Quarantine*
  - *Logistics and Supply chain management*
- 16:15 – 16:30 **Question Answer, Feedback and Conclusion**  
*Dr. Chintan Pathak, APPM, GIDM*  
*Ms. Charu Mishra, TSPM, GIDM*