

# TRAINING OF SURAKSHA SAATHI

Venue – Bhachau & Dwarka

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## Overview

A "Suraksha Sathi" is essentially a local development worker who, in addition to other development tasks, will be prepared and equipped to respond effectively to disasters, providing essential support to the affected community before, during, and after the disaster. The Suraksha Saathi training aims to empower local community leaders to act as disaster response facilitators. These individuals are equipped with knowledge and practical skills to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

The focus is on building a cadre of volunteers capable of conducting rescue operations, providing first aid, and restoring essential services like water and electricity. Participants at community level are trained in various scenarios, such as CPR administration, handling injuries, responding to fires, and using emergency resources effectively. They also learn about disaster management structures and are encouraged to adopt leadership qualities essential for community mobilization.

Suraksha Sathis obtain the skills and knowledge for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, such as identifying risks, creating management plans, and mobilizing resources. They include technical abilities like rescue operations, first aid, CPR, and handling emergencies, along with leadership development, effective coordination, and equitable relief efforts, fostering community resilience and enabling the community to act as first responders within the local community.

Suraksha Saathi play a significant role in safely evacuating residents and restoring essential services like electricity and water. A Suraksha Sathi is a trained volunteer who assists the community during disasters, prepares them in advance, and provides immediate care to affected families and individuals. They are trained to carry out rescue operations and identify risky structures and assets in their villages, prepare accordingly, and identify individuals, equipment, and organizations that can assist during disasters. They play a crucial role in reducing the impact of disasters by providing timely rescue and first aid, ensuring that necessary services are activated after the disaster, and helping return the situation to normalcy.

In 2024 – 25 two trainings of Suraksha Saathis were conducted in

- Bhachau: 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024
- Dwarka: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Both training sessions were conducted in different regions of Gujarat, where the hazards and risks associated with disaster events differ significantly due to geographical locations. These regions face diverse challenges in terms of risks, vulnerabilities, and exposure to various natural and human-made hazards.

## **Local Hazards**

**Dwarka** - Dwarka, located along the western coastline of Gujarat, faces significant hazards due to its proximity to the Arabian Sea. The region is highly vulnerable to cyclones, storm surges, and coastal flooding, particularly during the monsoon season. Sea-level rise and coastal erosion further exacerbate these risks, threatening the livelihoods of fishing communities and infrastructure like roads and housing. Dwarka also experiences seismic activity, as it lies near the tectonically active Saurashtra region, posing a risk of earthquakes. Saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources due to over-extraction of groundwater is another challenge, impacting agriculture and drinking water supply.

**Bhachau (Kutchh)** - Bhachau in Kutch is part of a high-risk seismic zone. Additionally, the region's arid climate makes it prone to droughts, severely affecting agriculture and water availability. Bhachau is also vulnerable to flash floods given its low average height and poor drainage systems. Coastal areas near Bhachau face the risk of cyclones and storm surges, which can disrupt communication, electricity, and transport systems. Industrial activities in and around Bhachau introduce additional risks, including chemical accidents and air pollution, affecting local health and safety. Salt pan workers in the Bhachau region face risks such as extreme heat exposure leading to heatstroke, dehydration and skin burns from prolonged salt contact.

## **Key Training Modules for Suraksha Saathi Program**

Preparedness for a disaster involves creating and implementing comprehensive plans to manage potential risks effectively. This includes assessing risks, developing response strategies, and training individuals in emergency procedures. The goal is to mitigate impact and ensure timely, coordinated responses during a disaster.

Resources available in a village during a disaster may include local volunteers, first aid kits, community shelters, and emergency contact lists. Effective use of these resources, along with coordination with external agencies can enhance disaster response and recovery.

Training in basic life-saving techniques and emergency responses to common incidents like accidents, fires, and heart attacks is critical for community resilience. Proper handling of the injured like using spinal boards for individuals with suspected back injuries, ensures safety during rescue and recovery efforts.

The government structure for disaster management includes various agencies and plans. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) provide specialized response teams. Taluka and district-level disaster management plans guide local response efforts, ensuring coordination and effective management during emergencies.

Suraksha Saathis play a vital role in ensuring safety and resilience in villages and even during non-hazard situations. Their training equips them to handle various emergencies effectively, helping sustain normal life during disruptions. For instance, in accidents like car crashes, they assist in safely extracting injured individuals while stabilizing their spine to prevent further harm. During fires, they apply appropriate measures based on the fire type, using water for Class A fires, foam for flammable liquids, and dry chemical extinguishers for electrical fires, thereby mitigating damage and ensuring safety.

They are also trained to manage critical medical situations, such as controlling severe bleeding by applying pressure or using tourniquets, providing initial response to electric shocks by disconnecting power sources, and performing CPR when necessary. In the case of strokes, they recognize early symptoms like numbness or confusion and ensure immediate medical attention.

These efforts make Suraksha Saathis invaluable in maintaining preparedness and protecting lives during everyday emergencies.

A "Suraksha Sathi" should possess the following leadership qualities. The leader should have knowledge, empathy, and an adaptive behaviour. Everyone has the potential to become a leader. Leaders are not born; they are developed and nurtured. A leader is someone with a unique vision, dreams, and the ability to rise above personal ambitions. A good leader is one who does not limit their efforts to personal expectations but works towards achieving the organization's goals and objectives. However, a leader's aspirations should not be limited to their own personal success.

Preparedness is critical to minimizing the impact of disasters, ensuring that all systems and resources are functional before a hazard strikes. This involves conducting regular drills, checking the integrity of shelters, maintaining communication networks, and ensuring that emergency supplies are stocked. Effective preparedness measures also include training personnel, coordinating with local agencies, and establishing clear protocols for rapid response, thereby reducing the risks associated with disasters.

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, it is essential to identify and rescue the most vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, children, and those with disabilities. These individuals are often at a greater risk and require prompt attention to ensure their safety. Rescue efforts should prioritize getting them to secure locations where they can receive the necessary care and protection, minimizing the loss of life and reducing trauma.

Post-disaster relief distribution is another critical component that must be managed efficiently to ensure that aid reaches those in need. This includes coordinating with local and international organizations to distribute food, water, medical supplies, and other essential items equitably. Effective distribution systems should be transparent, organized, and responsive to the needs of the affected communities, preventing shortages and ensuring that all individuals receive the necessary assistance.

To maximize the benefits provided by the government, it is crucial to ensure that affected populations are fully informed and able to access these resources. This involves clear communication about the available services, simplifying application processes, and providing

support to those who may face barriers in accessing aid. Government outreach efforts must be inclusive, considering the diverse needs of the population to ensure no one is left behind.

The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) are vital financial resources deployed by the government during and after disasters. These funds are activated to support immediate relief efforts, including rescue operations, relief distribution, and rehabilitation activities. The NDRF and SDRF enable swift mobilization of resources, ensuring that response efforts are adequately funded and that the affected populations receive timely assistance.

# Suraksha Saathi Training in Bhachau





## Suraksha Saathi Training in Dwarka

