Draft SOP for Ward Disaster Management Cells
By Kathyayini Chamaraj
Executive Trustee, CIVIC Bangalore

References:
Karnataka State Disaster Management Plan
Pune Disaster Management Plan
Circulars issued by PRS-RD, BBMP Commissioner and Zonal Commissioners

The urban context

In the urban context, disaster preparedness, mitigation and response are affected by the following:

- high population density;
- high vulnerability due to concentration of urban housing/infrastructure associated with poorly built houses;
- inappropriate land-use planning;
- insufficient regulation/enforcement of building standards;
- urban poor and migrant poor live in slums without adequate basic amenities, usually on marginalized land that is vulnerable to hazards;
- houses built with combustible waste materials make the settlement susceptible to fire;
- unhygienic living conditions without facilities for sanitation, proper solid waste management and safe drinking water supply and waste-water treatment lead to small-scale disasters on a regular basis;
- reaching the affected areas itself is a challenge due to the unplanned settlements, encroachments and absence of approach roads of proper width etc.

- communal riots happen in cities due to lesser cohesion within the urban population;
- it is a challenge to bring together the heterogeneous urban community on a common platform and to undertake various community-based preparedness measures;
- people living in a neighbourhood may not know each other as most of them are there for a relatively shorter duration;
- extreme weather events due to changes in climate are even more unmanageable in urban areas where heavy rains cause flooding which is aggravated due to the choked and slum-encroached drainage system that fails to drain the flood water.

This urgently calls for initiatives to facilitate ward-level community-based disaster management in urban areas. It is necessary on the part of the Government to institutionalize and identify a common platform to organise the urban community, strengthen institutional systems to effectively manage disaster risks and to support effective planning for disaster management. Any disaster management initiative calls for the four steps of 'preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation'.

1. Preparedness

Preparedness alludes to activities undertaken in the short term before disaster strikes that enhance the readiness of organisations and communities to respond effectively.

1.1.   Constitution of Ward Disaster Management Cells (WDMCs)

>The ward councillor should be the chairperson of the WDMC. It shall comprise all ward committee members; the Member-Secretary of Ward Committee; representatives of the concerned AROs, AEEs, Medical Officer, AEE (SWM); the local police Station House Officer; local doctor of PHC, BESCOM engineer, BWSSB engineer and a local RWA representative;< *(> to < in BBMP Zonal Commissioner's circular*) representatives of anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, head-teachers of schools, and CSOs/NGOs working in the ward, representatives from Self-Help Groups, NULM groups within the ward, youth associations, etc.

1.2 Ward Disaster Management Teams (WDMT)

WDMTs need to be formed at the ward level with volunteers, Ward Committee members and WDMC officials to carry out the activities during emergency and for sustainable recovery from disasters. WDMTs at ward level would comprise, as far as possible, of task-based groups of 5-10 people in each group such as:
- Early Warning (EW)
- Search and Rescue Operation (SRO)
- Medical & First Aid (M&FA)

- Relief Materials (RM)
- Water & Sanitation (FAWA)
- Shelter Management (SM)
- Trauma Counselling (TC) and
- Damage Assessment (DA)

1.2A Booth-Level Committees

Since a Ward in BBMP is a large entity with populations ranging from 40,000 to 60,000, **the Ward Committee may constitute as many Booth Level Committees (BLCs) as the electoral booths in their jurisdiction.** The Booth / Block Level Committee (BLC) will be a small functional unit at the grass-roots and will consist of the BLO or any other BBMP / Government functionary/resident to be designated as coordinator by the Ward Committee and will include any other frontline workers like an ASHA worker / Aanganwadi worker / SWM / Sanitation worker and 3-5 citizen volunteers and a beat constable of police, wherever feasible.

1.3 Guidelines for Formation of Ward Disaster Management Teams

Formation and composition of teams shall consider the following broad guidelines:
- A sense of voluntarism and capabilities to be part of the specified team among the members, being selected to form the team, including NCC and NSS cadets, home guards, civil defence personnel, etc.;
- Adequate representation of vulnerable sections of the community including women, children, differently-abled, elderly etc.;
- The specialized wings should include members with expertise in IT / data profiling, humanitarian service, legal expertise and CSOs and have gender balance**.**

1.4 Capacity Building on Basic Disaster Management Skills

Responsibilities of the municipal administration to support WDMC in training:
- Share awareness generation communication material;
- Extend training to WDMC on their mandate, important data points, reporting formats, and SOPs;
- This will also include conducting sensitization meetings for elected representatives, orientation programmes for emergency service providers, joint workshops for community groups and municipal administrators and mock drills are some of the capacity development activities;
- WDMCs to develop a strategy and calendar for awareness generation which can include focus-group discussions in the community, media advertisements, mass meetings, school

awareness and safety programme, competitions among school/college students; social media campaigns / FM radio;

- Depending on the nature of hazards, vulnerability profile of the location and prevalence of risks, the teams shall be provided specialised training.

1.5 Ward-Level Disaster Management Plans

1.5.1. Develop Ward Disaster Management Plan (WDMP) through a transparent, participatory and consultative process by doing the following:

- Organize a Ward Sabha to take inputs on what should go into WDMP subsequent to sharing information and records related to funds available, expenditure incurred and norms of line departments;
- Prepare a draft WDMP and share it widely with all residents by mandatorily displaying it in the public domain through both online and offline modes such as notice boards, wall paintings, etc.;
- Provide a notice period of 21 days for residents and public to give suggestions on the WDMP;
- Incorporate suggestions received and/or record in writing the reasons behind suggestions not being incorporated. The final plan should then be in the public domain, along with the statement recording the status of every suggestion received;

The above protocol is to be repeated annually to incorporate any updations in the WDMP as well.

1.5.2 WDMP should contain the following:

- Composition of the WDMC and their contact details;
- Methodology by which the WDMC will assess damages caused on account of disaster;
- Potential disasters that could strike different regions of the ward, and enumerating the risks that the disaster will result in;
- List of "safe spaces" such as community buildings, schools, kalyan mantapas and any other government infrastructure within the ward which can be used before, during and after disasters to provide social, economic and in-kind relief to persons affected by disasters;
- SOP to be followed by WDMC to respond to particular types of disasters;
- Mapping (Database) of vulnerable and special categories of people living in the ward which includes but is not limited to the elderly, single women, specially-abled, children, orphans, transgenders, daily wage earners etc, and the specific support that they will need at the time of a disaster;

1.6 WDMC Contingency Fund

- In order to facilitate the activities of the WDMC and teams, the city/district authorities may delegate some minimal financial powers to make emergency purchases in case of a disaster. Appropriate criteria will be developed to utilize the same. It can be at the disposal of the WDMC, with appropriate ceilings and guidelines for its utilization.

- WDMC will also raise funds amongst the residents of the ward voluntarily for the purposes of a WDMC Contingency Fund which will not exceed Rs 5,00,000. The funds will be maintained for the use of the WDMC at the time of a disaster. The WDMC will place in the public domain the list of contributors who donated to the contingency fund, expenditure incurred from that fund which will include number of items, rate, contact details of vendors, etc.

1.7 Resource Inventory

- The WDMC shall maintain a stock of disaster relief items such as food, drinking water, medicines, bleaching powder, firewood, lantern amongst other things which can be immediately deployed by the WDMC at the time of a disaster. The statement of stock available of the above mentioned items must be publicly disclosed;
- There should be provision for medicine for the aged and chronically ill, suitable mobility aids and/or accommodation including provision of toilets for the PWDisability; nappies, bedclothes, milk, small nutritious treats, etc for infants and age specific activities for children; specific diet supplements for pregnant, lactating and menstruating women and girls, plus the provision of the specific requirements of these.
- They shall have the details of shops/ wholesale dealerships of all necessary items and shall maintain working arrangement with them for supply of items during the time of emergency.

1.8 Coordination

- WDMC is to be a single-point local contact for the BBMP war room, local hospitals, police, local community volunteers and citizens (top-down and bottom-up coordination) and any third party engaged in relief and rehabilitation during and post a disaster must consult with the WDMC of the concerned ward before planning any interventions to mitigate the same;
- State, District, and municipality/PRI-level Disaster Management Authorities will be responsible for monitoring the functioning of these cells.
- The City/PRI Disaster Management Authorities can have a mobile technical secretariat that can move between WDMCs and provide hands on support to them on an ongoing basis. It will visit every ward in the City and interact with members of the WDMC, as per a pre-determined calendar that will be uploaded on the Mahiti Kanaja.

- In their interaction with the WDMC, the technical secretariat will provide technical support to the WDMC for them to be able to carry out their duties as mandated. They will also document requirements stated by the WDMC for their improved functioning, and submit the same to the District Level Committee which shall include it in their bi-annual reports;
- The reports that the WDMCs submit to these Authorities should be public. If any citizen/resident has grievances against the WDMCs, they can report it to the DDMA/State Executive Committee.
- The State-Level DMA/State Executive Committee must oversee the functioning of the WDMCs operational in the State, and suggest recommendations to strengthen their functioning;
- The City DMA/DDMA must ensure that they visit all WDMCs to assess their functioning, in their district at least once in six months. The reports of the physical assessments conducted by the City/District DMA must be uploaded on the Mahiti Kanaja, as well as shared with the State-Level DMA.
- The WDMCs should have institutional linkages with Line Departments. Line Departments should keep WDMCs informed of circulars/orders issued and WDMCs should have a nodal officer within the Line Department who they can interface with when they submit applications and grievances on behalf of their constituency.

1.9 Information and Communication

- The municipality shall provide the following categories of information to the WDMC, which should simultaneously be uploaded on the Mahiti Kanaja:
  o List of residents of the ward;
  o List of government infrastructure available in the ward which can include but not be limited to buildings, land, water bodies, assets, offices, shops, etc.;
  o Field functionaries of Government and Police deployed in the ward;
  o List of affected persons, as identified by Government;
  o All circulars, orders and guidelines that have a bearing on the implementation of Government schemes and policies in the concerned ward;
  o Nodal officers of all relevant departments, emergency service providing agencies, forecasting agencies, civil society organisations and non-government organizations;

- **Ward-level helpline:** A helpline should be set up at ward level to which citizens/migrants can inform about their needs for food, rations, medicines, etc.
- The WDMC shall be responsible for sharing information with residents of the ward on a continuous basis including relevant public records such as local disaster management plan, zoning and building norms, etc.;

- The WDMP shall be disseminated in various community level meetings, which include but are not limited to residents' association meetings, parents-teachers association meetings, etc.;
- Information that should be disclosed by the WDMC:
- All local information is to be digitally accessible to the WDMC through an all-in-one information dashboard, neighbourhood/community portal, to aid planning, coordination and prioritisation of action. This is estimated to drastically reduce ambiguity, chaos and duplication of efforts;
- The Mahiti Khanaja should be used as one minimum platform on which all information relevant to the current crisis and long term functioning of the WDMC should be hosted and disclosed;
- The kind of information that should be made public that can help these WDMCs work better should be uploaded on Mahiti Khanaja;
- Website – All govt programmes, schemes , circulars must be uploaded; data / grievances to be uploaded and facility for complaining and tracking response;
- An online database of the WDM teams shall be developed and maintained at the municipal administration level;
- WDMC, through its volunteer team, is to be the one-stop shop for disseminating authentic, live, relevant information for people in the ward:
  - Composition of the WDMC and its contact details;
  - List of grievances filed by the WDMC and status of its redress (individually);
  - List of safe spaces identified by the WDMC;
  - Information with regard to the disaster, programmes / schemes, registration of the vulnerable, filing complaints, update on response.

- Specifically in the context of the pandemic, data points to include:
  - Tracking spread of coronavirus patients
  - Quarantined individuals, buildings, areas
  - Tracking food supply pipelines and demand areas
  - Location of vulnerable people and their needs (older people, people with ailments, urban poor, migrant workers, etc.)
  - Timings and availability of essential services (grocery shops, chemists, doctors, hospitals etc.);

- Information display in public places on social distancing, quarantine protocols, contacts, etc.

1.10 Grievance redressal

- The WDMCs should have the power to file grievances through Sakala;
- 24-hour redressal mechanism, delivery of service and reporting;
- Dedicated telephone no – for complaints and as helpline to connect persons;
- File grievances faced by the residents of the ward through Sakala subsequent to which it will be governed by the due process under Sakala;
- The WDMC shall participate in the Ward Committee meetings of the concerned ward. In the Ward Committee meetings, the government will publicly share the status of redressal of grievances filed by residents of the ward, including the ones filed by the WDMC;
- Residents having grievances in the functioning of the WDMC, can register their complaints with the District-Level DMA. Each grievance will be acknowledged by a dated acknowledgement receipt. Each grievance will be responded to within 7 days of the same being filed.

2. Response

Response involves activities undertaken immediately following a disaster, devoted to reducing life-threatening conditions, providing life-sustaining aid, and stopping additional damage to property.

Specifically in the context of the lockdown and pandemic: *(from > to < from circulars issued by BBMP and Zonal Commissioners)*

>The WDMC/Relief Team shall identify problem areas and provide effective solutions for time-bound implementation of plans/decisions/policies issued by the BBMP Commissioner and the state government in their respective wards.

The WDMCs will thus take co-ordinated steps to:
- Ensure that the orders issued by the Govt. of India are followed;
- Ensure strict implementation of all rules, orders and instructions that are issued, and that may be issued in the future, by the government and BBMP are followed carefully without violating them;
- Combat the pandemic including effective implementation of lockdown;
- Ensure that no crowds gather within the ward's jurisdiction;
- Help authorities track COVID-19 cases and those quarantined;
- Ensure that the non-residents who have come from other countries are quarantined;
- Help in enforcing the Covid-19 buffer zone and containment zone;

- Help cordon off certain buildings/streets/areas of a ward that have more cases;
- Set up systems for handling high-contact zones like supermarkets;
- With the help of or in coordination with the concerned engineer, take immediate measures to paint squares or circles at 1 metre distance in front of all markets, shops and Indira Canteens;
- In coordination with the police ensure that one metre social distancing is maintained without any fail wherever this is necessary and file a report on this daily;
- Ensure proper disposal of garbage and bio-medical waste;
- Manage waste from COVID-19 infected households. This is bio-medical waste and must be treated with caution, following defined protocols;
- Ensure proper spraying of disinfectants;
- Ensure adequate drinking water supply in the ward's jurisdiction;
- Ensure that landlords of rented accommodation/property shall not demand rent for a period of one month from workers, including the migrants, who are living in rented accommodation within the ward;
- If any landlord is forcing any workers or migrants to vacate the premises, the WDMC shall take action by taking help of the local police to give protection to such people through the Member-Secretary, after bringing it to the notice of the Zonal Commissioner;
- Identify migrants and other homeless people on the streets who are without shelter and food; shift them with the help of Marshals to the 100 shelter homes set up by BBMP with the cooperation of the Social Welfare Dept.
- In cooperation with NGOs and local donors, mobilise ration kits, masks, fruits and vegetables to the needy persons;**<**
- Deliver at the door-step of the needy and vulnerable, homeless and migrant workers, universal allocation of ration kits to last a period of 1 month including 10 Kg rice/wheat flour/ragi flour, 1.5 Kg pulses, 1Kg cooking oil (per person per month), plus jaggery, masala powders, soap**,** including sanitary napkins to women, irrespective of whether they have ration cards or not. All details of distribution of food including names of persons to whom distributed including quantum of distribution must be disclosed by the WDMC in the public domain and uploaded on the Mahiti Kanaja;
- Ensure the delivery of rations to anganwadi children and midday meal rations to school children at their houses. All details of distribution of food including names of persons to whom distributed including quantum of distribution must be disclosed by the WDMC in the public domain and uploaded on the Mahiti Kanaja;
- Ensure availability of cooked meals twice daily. Kitchens for cooked food can be set up at schools, anganwadis, Indira Canteens, shelter homes, stadiums, school grounds, etc. List of kitchens serving food must be disclosed in the public domain;

- Vegetables, fruits, eggs, meat can be delivered through Hopcoms;
- Street vendors can be assigned to particular streets to deliver fruits and vegetables;
- Mobile health clinics should be made available at every zone where the guest workers (migrants) are living;
- Keeping an eye on localities that have patients on recovery, people with symptoms, etc.;
- Setting up infrastructure for testing temperature;
- Regulating mass gatherings that don't follow safety protocols;
- Meet the needs of the aged, chronically ill, persons with disability, children, and women especially those who are pregnant, lactating, and those of reproductive age;
- Accompany representatives of the Government, police and armed forces at the time of relief and rescue;
- >In order to take all measures to prevent spread of the Covid-19, conduct WDMC meeting every Monday to plan, assess and monitor; the Member-Secretary to report the resolutions passed by the meeting to this office.
- Periodic meeting with Commissioner.
- Zonal Special Commissioners and Zonal Joint Commissioners shall monitor and make sure the above directions are followed.< *(from > to < from circular of BBMP zonal commissioner)*

3. Recovery

Recovery involves short-term and long-term activities undertaken after a disaster that are designed to return people and property to at least their pre-disaster condition of well-being.

- The WDMC is responsible for assessing the damage caused on account of the disaster. The WDMC shall assess the extent of physical, social, ecological and economical damage caused on account of the damage. The assessment prepared by the WDMC shall be shared publicly for a period of 7 days to invite inputs from the residents of the ward. Upon receiving inputs from the residents of the ward, the assessment of damage occurred will be considered final.
- Carry out relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the affected area in accordance with the State Plan and the District Plan.
- The trauma counseling team is responsible for counseling the victims to ease them of their trauma and help them get back to normal living. Health professionals, professional counselors and teachers could be part of the team for effective execution of this function.
- Ward committees already have a mandate 'to mobilise voluntary labour and donation by way of goods or money for implementation of Ward Development Scheme and various programmes and schemes of Corporation'. This may be leveraged to channelise local

philanthropy towards specific needs in the neighbourhood – for residents, for PPE kits in hospitals, etc.

- Another mandate of ward committees is to approve the list of beneficiaries for Corporation's schemes.
- On a monthly basis, identify list of all individuals eligible for benefits under different government programmes but not availing them. The WDMP should facilitate such persons in applying for benefits. A monthly status of the list of such individuals and the status of their application, shall be forwarded to the District Level Committee while also disclosing it in the public domain
- Help people file grievances with public authorities, and keep them informed on the status of their applications;
- Issuing ID cards to those who do not have them.

4. Mitigation

Mitigation involves sustained activities undertaken in the long term after one disaster and before another strikes, that are designed to prevent emergencies and reduce damage. How these WDMCs should function from now onwards so that the next time a crisis of any magnitude hits, these cells are institutionally equipped to provide support.

Long-term mitigation measures

- Ensure all construction projects under it or within its jurisdiction conform to the standards and specifications laid down for prevention of disasters and mitigation by the National Authority, State Authority and the District Authority;
- Ensure compliance in construction with local building codes and byelaws that pertain to construction, flood and fire hazards;
- Encourage compliance by the contractors and inspection by local authorities; organise training with respect to these;
- Identify properties located in disaster-prone areas e.g. flooding areas, landslides prone areas etc.; recommend shifting them and purchasing safe sites in return.
- Encourage households to undertake not only corrective repairs, but also preventive repairs;
- Assist in providing technical guidance to rebuild or retrofit houses for flood-proofing, etc., like elevation, drainage, etc., through local government or private building contractors.
- Make source documents such as local disaster management plan, zoning and building norms, etc., available to local communities in the local language and ensure that the same is uploaded on the Mahiti Kanaja;

- Piped drinking water supply and water quality monitoring;
- Promotion of personal and community latrines;
- Introduction of sewage and drainage systems;
- Improving solid waste management systems;
- Drain desilting and vegetation removal at vulnerable locations;
- Removal of encroachments in water ways, widening & regrading of drain bed to increase the carrying capacity;
- Construction of Kacha earthen drains to drain out water from low lying areas;
- Providing chain link fence to prevent dumping of debris/garbage into SWD and also any accidents;
- Desilting & development of existing water bodies;
- Formation of service roads on either side of drains to facilitate for routine maintenance.

******