

## **INTEGRATION OF EMERGENCY HELPLINE NUMBER-108**

### **The Situation before the initiative**

Emergency is a sudden unforeseen crisis usually involving danger that requires immediate action and it is a situation which poses an immediate risk to life, property, health, or environment. But the worst part of an emergency is that it comes without any warning. At the time of the emergency everybody gets panicked and the first thing that happens is that we lose all our rationality and senses. During such moments a person needs assistance and therefore Emergency Help Line or Phone Nos have been developed keeping in mind the response requirement for dealing with emergencies.

However, some countries have a different emergency number for each of the different emergency services. In India, most of the departments have individual numbers viz. 100 for Police, 101 for Fire, 102 for Medical, 103 for traffic police, 104 for Health Information Helpline etc. The same was the case in the State of Assam. But, in times of crisis it becomes very difficult for the public to remember these different emergency numbers. The need was felt that an integrated one point Crisis Response Help line Number will help the public by providing timely response to the affected people at the time of exigencies in the State of Assam.

### **The Initiative**

The initiative is to have a unique number for all emergencies by integration of existing emergency numbers of different emergency service providers for providing assistance to the public. To facilitate a one point crisis response helpline for the entire state, Govt. of Assam decided to integrate three different helpline numbers of the Fire services, Police and Health under one single emergency helpline number 108.

### **The strategies used to implement the initiative**

Integration of different helpline numbers into a single universal number (108) was launched in Assam in the month of October, 2012. The idea of integration took root in July 2010 and it took over two years to get it grounded.

- The first strategy used to implement the initiative was sensitizing stakeholder departments viz. Police, Health, GVK-EMRI, Police Communication, Assam Fire Services, BSNL on the need to converge for convenience of the public in emergencies and for better delivery of services. The sensitization was done through one to one meetings as well as presentations so that all stakeholders were convinced of the need and participated in the process willingly.
- The second strategy was to select a Universal Number that the people were already familiar with. '108' was selected after much deliberation as this number was already ingrained in the minds of public through their ambulance services in the health sector.
- The third strategy adopted was to connect through PRI lines all the Police Stations and Fire Service Stations to the already existing call centre of 108. Altogether 519 Police Stations, 106 Fire Stations and 30 Hospitals have been connected with BSNL PRI lines to EMRI call centre 108 where all emergency call would be received and then diverted to the respective location based on the emergency i.e. health, fire or police
- The fourth strategy adopted was to build the capacity of the emergency responders in the Police & Fire Services on effective communication. Altogether, 4355 Emergency Response personnel of the Fire, Police and Health departments have been trained on their roles and responsibilities as well as on communication skills for successful implementation

### **Call Flow Process:**

- '108' Emergency Response Centre (ERC) is a single core centre for receiving the First call from public across the State of Assam in all emergency/ disaster situation.
- All calls are scrutinized at 108 level by the ERC Communication Officer and routed to the concerned emergency authority (i.e. Police, Fire, concern nearest hospitals, 108 ambulance, District control room, Police Stations, Fire Stations, etc)) by a dedicated desk for the purpose
- Simultaneously 100, 101 ERC centre is also active for receiving the calls parallel case