



Annual Report
(April 2000 to March 2001)
Vardaan Foundation, Baroda



This year the organization much of its efforts for the disaster and crisis management activities occurred as a result of the 26th January 2000 earth quakes in Gujarat. During the current financial year the organization had done the following activities:

Continuing the previous years Rescue and Relief work done during the earthquake: It lasted June 2000. During the period sum of Rs. 22,381 was collected in donation from different individuals for the earthquake relief activities in Gujarat. Besides, several articles like old cloths, tarpaulin sheets, medicines etc were received in kind for the relief activities from national and local donors. From the funds collected, the organization have collected the needy materials which are as follows:

The organization came in contact with St Joseph hospital and had asked their demand. The key person over there had asked medical relief materials such as cotton, Bandage, implants and tents. With the little resources and what ever collected in kind supplied all the said materials to the hospital

Team of senior trustee members helped the victims in the following:

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- a. With the help of international rescue team, Indian Army and Navy, helped in taking out the living individual buried under debris.
- b. Excavating the dead bodies from the debris and send them for last ritual for funeral.
- c. Shifting the affected people to the relief camps
- d. Guided external Aid agency for the distribution of materials and relief work to the actual victims
- e. Handed over the orphan children to the police and district administration.
- f. Created help-line via mobile (after 7 days) to make victims to contact their relative living in different district and states of India.
- g. Helped the victims to get Government assistance for their medical relief and treatment.
- h. Helped other external agencies and like minded individuals for the distribution of cloths, food grains, blankets etc

Initial survey on Disaster Management: The organization had done a spot survey on the disaster and crisis management for the first three days. Major findings of the spot survey undertaken by the organization for the devastating earthquake in Gujarat, are as follows:

- The initial estimates shows that a worth of over 1000 crores property was destroyed by making toll of 50,000 and 1 lakh injuries. Mostly the lower-upper limbs and head caused major injuries.

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- Major failure in the early mitigation efforts (rescue and relief work) by the state authority. The civil society took major efforts in rescue work.
- Mental trauma was on height among the victims and also those who have witnessed the horrifying situation. The aftershock affects of earthquake were also one of the major reasons for the high mental agony. Media over projected the tragic scene, caused major mental tension and agony among the mass.
- Poor management between combating authority in the public distribution system. Besides, Poor or knowledge about such natural disaster and crisis management leads to utter confusion and chose among the authority and local people.
- There was strong national and international response for the relief and rescue materials. But poor distribution system restricted for the optimal use of it.
- The study highlighted to establish Integrated Disaster Management Plan for the entire state of Gujarat that will give early projection, emergency mitigation system, and preventive system.

Owing to the above studies, the organization had framed a project on disaster and crisis management and submitted to Dept of Disaster management under ministry of Agriculture for the necessary financial support. The Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, Gandhinagar, forwarded the project to the ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi.

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Framing Project on Disaster and Crisis Management: During the last two decade, Gujarat has brought prosperity in the shadow of many uneven events that are too frequent. The famine and drought in 1987; followed by Surat Plague (Sinha, 1997) that points out the need for establishing Urban Disaster Management System. This was widely accepted and followed up by many (operation clean and operation demolition) bold steps taken in the city to restore the normal life. However after four years, in 1998 the unexpected cyclone in Kandla of Kutch district resulted severe loss of both man and material. It is said that the communication gap and confusion occurred in jurisdiction responsibilities between district administration and the authorities of Kandla Port Trust, were the major reasons for this natural catastrophe (Sinha, 2000). A year later in 1999, the flood in the major parts of Gujarat resulted due to inefficient planning to which authority was not well prepared. In the city, the high rise building were found to be boon in saving life and property of the people. While after two years, the same building found to be curse to the people. The very recent earthquake (2001) caused by the released of energy from the plate tectonic movement with the intensity equivalent to 224 hydrogen bomb and made the entire state administration stand still. It is said that, this is perhaps the greatest natural disaster in the history of India.

Though these natural calamities with varying intensity were quite evident even before hundred years in the State, there was a void regarding the flow of right information among the people. The rumors that generated phobia in the minds of

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people before and after the calamities, led to mass exodus that is very common phenomenon that still persists even in the computer age of 21st century. The ignorance of the people regarding the high-risk factors leading to natural or man-made disasters are subject of concern. How disaster could have been avoided? Where to take shelter? Where to contact the concerned persons for compensation? Who/which are the people/institution responsible in the disaster mitigation? How to stop the psychological trauma among the victim? (Trauma Counseling) etc., are some of the questions of public interest. Responses to such emergencies are typically based on contingency plans. However, unexpected events can occur during the operation that affects safety and/or effectiveness of the activated response plan. Latest advances in communication and information technology can then assess the potential impact of such events and decide if and how to revise the planned course of action to maintain safety and efficiency of the operation through joint venture of authorities and the community residing at the grassroot level.

The organization from the very beginning had a keen interest in developing different types of case studies in the matter of disaster and crisis management. Looking the trend of disaster in the Gujarat state and also some of the major catastrophies, the board of trustees have decided to write different cases studies based on own experience, literature and Internet survey, and including the views of experts. The following are the case studies planned during the current years and would like to include more in the coming years if any major disaster observed in the country.

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- a. Surat Plague Epidemic
- b. Devastating Kandla Cyclone
- c. Management of drought and flood in the state of Gujarat.
- d. Orissa Cyclone.
- e. Hijacking of IC-814 Flight
- f. Gujarat Earthquake.

The project was framed with main objective as to understand the role, responsibility, and the reaction occurred in different strata of the society during the recent earthquake. It also analyzes the similar attributes for the combating authorities in the field of disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts during the tense period of crises management. The following questions can provide a useful analytical focus for specific objectives:

1. Under what circumstances the earthquake had occurred in Gujarat? What was the real life situation at the time of disaster that had hit the entire state of Gujarat?
2. How complex inter-organisational political system perceived and responds to an impending disaster?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the concerned combating authorities in the management of crisis situation?
4. How public, press and politician reacted in atmosphere of panic and fear and what roles were initiated in the mechanisms to evolve to cope with the crisis?
5. What impact it had created in different strata of society at regional (local), national and at international level?

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6. How economy was affected and what proportion of losses (both in terms of men and material) had occurred by the devastating disaster?
7. How communication networking helped in either diffusing or exaggerating the crisis situation and mobilising the resources at the crucial juncture?
8. What politics was involved in decision-making process?
9. How people, NGO, scientific community and other experts reacted?
10. What regulatory responses does Gujarat's natural devastation suggest to the authorities at the local, national and international level?
11. Can there be implication for a model (Conventional or Computer based) of how political, administrative and social institutional system interact in a disaster?

Participation in National/International Workshop; Conference and Seminar:

Dr. Harshit Sinha was invited by World Health Organization to attend three days workshop on sharing experience by various agencies during the rescue and relief operation at hotel Airport. About 100 participants attended the workshop and share their experience on the following topics.

- a. Rescue and relief operation taken by NGOs;
- b. Reproductive Health Situation during crisis time.
- c. Initiatives taken by District administration for coping up disaster.
- d. Conceptual frame on Disaster and Crisis Management.
- e. Aspects of Structural Engineering during such disaster.
- f. Future collaboration for rescue and relief operation with WHO.
- g. SUMO: A Logistic support system used during crisis time

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Dr. Harshit Sinha was invited by Health Commissioner Services Govt. of Gujarat in ILA Urban Leprosy workshop for the release of his book based on his Ph.D thesis work titled: *Leprosy in India*, Published by Rawat publisher with the support of publication grant given by Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. Former W.H.O. Leprosy Programme Director Dr. S.K. Noordeen released his book on 25th March 2001 in the presence of City Mayor Bhartiben Vyas and Health officials from Health Commissioner, Gandhinagar.



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PRIORITIES Set for 2001-2002

During the fifth financial year of the organization had set the following priorities as listed below:

1. To explore the funds for taking the project on disaster and crisis management.
2. Under the Community Initiative Disaster (CID) Programmes, the organizations intend to train the common citizen to combat the uneven situation during any disaster or uneven situation. The organization is keen to establish Training Center for Disaster Preparedness and Research. The organization had already developed concept of RESCUE ELEVEN and currently engaged in developing different module of training under CID Programmes.

In order to undertake such innovative project the organization will explore the financial support from individual donors, national and international agencies. We look for the kind cooperation for the aforesaid priority projects of the organizations. Owing to the set priorities, we are ready to work in any part of the country - all over India.
