

Institutional Response to Disasters: Changing Contours of the Role of an Academic Institution

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In developing countries like India, academic institutions of higher learning can contribute to disaster and rehabilitation in a variety of ways. This article attempts to capture the experiences of one such institute and its involvement in disaster situations over five decades. The changing contours of the role played by an academic institution and the gradual upscaling of its work illustrates how higher education and innovations in pedagogies can promote value orientation in the learning process, promote critical thinking and contribute to social development. The modalities of this involvement, the nature of tasks performed and the lessons learnt are discussed from the stand point of a social science institute imparting post-graduate education in practice-based profession of social work.

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INTRODUCTION

Significance of a University's Interaction with External Environment

Higher education is expected to produce benefits for society in the form of political, economical and cultural advancement. For individuals, education should lead to personal development, economic opportunities and rich satisfaction. However, in India, there is little realisation that higher education is the key to development in the country (Reddy, 1995). In contemporary globalising context, the complexity of the role of higher education is compounded as the notion of development itself is being challenged by scholars as it gets appropriated by organisations with differing or even conflicting agendas (Sachs, 1999). There is no doubt that university systems have a crucial role to play as agents of change, especially in a country aspiring structural changes through democratic means. The two Government of India documents, *The Challenge of Education* and the *National Policy on Education* (India, 1992), lay emphasis on how the

university system interacts with its external environment. In the context where rigidity of education systems has been criticised and unchanging and inflexible curricular structures precludes creative engagement or responses to the social reality, the work of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) presents some possibilities.

Most academic institutions of higher learning are well endowed in talent. Social science institutions seek to impart values and in several of the institutes or colleges of social work in India, the programme reflects a strong developmental focus. Social work education endeavours to provide professional skills to work on development concerns and problems of the poor and the vulnerable.

Higher education, especially social work education, focuses on values which go beyond information and knowledge and prepares a student for appropriate application for community building, for human well-being and for developing skills and discretion about channelling our efforts in certain directions (University Grants Commission, 1980). The directions are many, ranging from efficient service delivery, capacity building, to bringing about fundamental changes in entitlement patterns of the marginalised sections of society through a process of capacity building and empowerment. Thus, social work students contribute to a large development sector especially in countries like India.

The process of conceptualising and practising development interventions with due analysis, commitment and sensitivity has always been a challenge. Academics with strong field linkages possess the intellectual rigour and training to contribute to social work education in meaningful ways. In transmitting values, the teacher and his/her capacities in the field, the institution's stand over development concerns play a very important role.

This article focuses on the process of engagement of TISS as an academic institution, in disasters and how it has contributed to disaster management initiatives at the local level as well as at the state and national levels. The participation in relief and rehabilitation itself is used systematically as a pedagogic tool, an opportunity to learn and to teach students pursuing a Master's programme in social work. In the context of education, the way curriculum is designed and handled reflects a moral and political stand point about the kind of a society we are and what we want to make it. Enlightened teachers recognise that curriculum planning is a complex process and the social, political and economic context in which we teach are of significance. Therefore,

the value-addedness of education and its institutions must be acknowledged.

Further, social work educators' capacities in the field, their relationship with people, with organisations, with students and faculty colleagues are very critical in transmitting values. Similarly, the ethos within the schools of social work, its stand over issues that affect the constituencies that it seeks to identify itself with, all play a very important role in reflecting a value system. Therefore, in practice professions such as social work, it is the engagement with the field, with the external environment, that enables us to determine the trajectory of our curriculum and creates an institutional legitimacy to teach a subject or a substantive topic.

Interventions in Disasters: Institutional Response

To indigenise social work is to focus on our work/practice. Social work in India has continuously responded to demands emerging from the field and the diverse development agendas that social workers are committed to, both in teaching and in practice. This grounding in social realities is reflected in the dynamic and creative interaction maintained with social and development issues of the country. Responding to calamities is among some of the unique features of social work education in India, which is non-existent in the West.

From a small beginning in 1936, the TISS has grown into a Deemed University with 19 Departments and Units housing about 100 faculty members and 300 post-graduate students. Its explicit efforts have been to serve the needs of the society through social science research, education, training and field action (TISS, 2001a). In pioneering social work education, the Directors and the faculty members of this Institute have strived to achieve excellence through a dynamic curriculum focussing on critical social analysis and development practice. The action orientation of the academic institute is revealed in various ways, one of which is its role in national disasters. Responding to fellow humans in need has been a basic humanitarian value of social work.

Disasters in developing countries like India, demand quick deployment of person power for rescue and relief. This calls for resources both material and non-material. In the absence of a national disaster management policy, the state government, the armed forces and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are known to have worked to meet the challenges posed by emergency situations. In addition to

these, academic institutions of higher learning can also contribute in a variety of ways as it has a ready force of committed persons, students, staff and faculty members who work as volunteers in disaster relief work. Table 1 attempts to capture the Institute's involvement in post-disaster relief and rehabilitation over the last 30 years or so. It is evident from Table 1 that the Institute has worked not just in Maharashtra, but various parts of the country. This participation embodies and signifies both voluntarism and professional responsiveness on part of a social science institute.

For TISS, the work as Community Participation Consultant to the Government of Maharashtra after the Latur earthquake was qualitatively different from the involvement in other disasters and, therefore, discussed briefly in Appendix I.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: USING DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE IN DISASTERS

Administrative Aspects and Institutional Preparations

While each disaster is unique and circumstances within the Institute do vary in each instance, in the past, our response has been to the government's general plea to the nation for assistance. It requires mobilisation of material and human resources. A faculty meeting is convened by the Director and preparations begin.

A pilot team liaises with the Chief Minister's office to determine the logistics of the relief exercise, the role of volunteers and areas where the teams should be deployed. In the 1970s and 1980s, work was often through the district administration. In recent decades with the proliferation of the voluntary sector and international aid agencies, local NGOs have become significant players in relief operations. They too need person power and volunteers, especially trained or semi-trained.. A pilot team of faculty members make the necessary contacts and arrangements for student volunteers, identifying the broad areas of work and assessing the need in the field. For example, during the riots in Mumbai, the work was carried out under the leadership of the Governor. During the Orissa supercyclone, Action Aid provided local support and the teams worked closely with the Collector, Jagatsinghpur.

A team at the Institute works on the necessary adjustments in the academic calendar in collaboration with students', Employees' Unions and the Staff Club. This may result in the postponement of

TABLE 1: Overview of TISS Involvement in Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation

<i>Disaster</i>	<i>Location and Year</i>	<i>Number of Students, Faculty and Staff Involved</i>	<i>Nature of Involvement</i>	<i>Approximate Duration of Involvement</i>
Partition of Pakistan (Bangladesh)	West Bengal, 1971-72	30 students and 5 faculties	Organising of refugee camps; recruiting of volunteers, and streamlining aid	Four to six weeks
Drought	Parner Taluka, Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra, 1972-73	20 students and 2 faculties	Distributing cattle feed and medical aid; spraying micro-nutrients on standing crop; and assisting drought migrants in Mumbai	Two to three weeks
Riots	Bombay, 1974	20 students and 3 faculties	Initiating peace process and relief work	Three to four weeks
Cyclone	Andhra Pradesh, 1977-78	47 students and 8 faculties	Relief work in affected area	Six weeks
Floods	Morvi, Gujarat, 1980	31 students and 5 faculties	Coordinating and undertaking relief work	Two weeks
Floods	Orissa, 1982	35 students and 4 faculties	Relief work in affected area	One month in two batches
Riots	Bombay 1984	25 students, 10 faculties and staff	Coordinating and undertaking relief work; financial assistance to the affected; and reconstruction of houses	One month

<i>Disaster</i>	<i>Location and Year</i>	<i>Number of Students, Faculty and Staff Involved</i>	<i>Nature of Involvement</i>	<i>Approximate Duration of Involvement</i>
Industrial gas leak	Bhopal, 1984	130 students and 30 faculties	Identifying of victims and affected persons and assistance in rehabilitation planning	Six weeks in batches
Fire	Mankhurd, Bombay, January 2, 1987	25 students and 4 faculties	Identifying affected persons and initiating and coordinating relief	Three weeks
Floods	Jambhulpada, Maharashtra, 1989	40 students and 6 faculties	Channelling material and medical aid; damage assessment and coordinating relief	Two weeks
Riots	Bombay, 1992-93	40 students and 5 faculties	Identifying affected people; coordinating disbursement of compensation paid in north-east Bombay; reconstruction of houses; and assisting victims in legal and police matters	Four weeks in batches
Earthquake	Latur, Maharashtra, September 1993	200 students, 20 faculties and 67 staff	Identifying affected persons; surveying the damage; determining and developing rehabilitation parameters; conducting impact studies; coordination of relief distribution, and so on	Eight to ten weeks
Earthquake	Latur, Maharashtra, 1993-97	Dept. Of URCD and field staff of 10	Community Participation Consultants to GOM	4 years

examinations, shortening of vacations or working later through weekends and holidays. This overwhelming spirit of cooperation witnessed during this period ensures that student examinations and the academic schedule are not greatly disturbed. Sometimes relief work is treated as part of field work or rural camp or block field work. This is especially so when the involvement extends beyond relief to include damage assessment surveys as was the case after the Bhopal gas tragedy and the Latur earthquake.

Teams of volunteers also work on resource mobilisation, on organising railway tickets and preparing for working in disaster-hit areas. Immunisation against likely epidemics is made compulsory for volunteers, especially for flood relief work.

To prepare students and volunteers for the work in the area, brief orientation meetings and workshops are conducted by experienced faculty members. The responsibility of faculty members is high and all this requires a great deal of coordination and a capacity to work together as a team.

In the Field: Nature of Tasks and Outcomes

What is expected in the field can never be predicted, but here too, carving out tasks for students, ensuring that the volunteer teams play a meaningful role in relief work is a challenge. Managing the teams, keeping up the morale, and inspiring them through all the apparent chaos and confusion can be exhausting and requires a high degree of maturity, sensitivity to field realities and interpersonal skills. In short, all the qualities of a social worker are tested in various situations. It is always heartening to observe students' commitment and responsibility in the field.

In providing field support, generally, the following structure is followed with some variation, depending on the context:

- Usually students work in villages in small groups of 2-10, depending on the size of the villages.
- « If the number of volunteers is large, two camps are set up.
- Students either stay in the village of their operation or are transported from Base Camps to the villages every day, depending on the local situation.
- Each team or group of students works under the broad guidance of a faculty member who keeps in touch with the overall coordinator.

The kind of tasks performed by students are illustrated in Table 1. A student is placed in a situation where he/she must respond and this entails decision-making, team work and sometimes close collaboration and consultation with NGOs and the local population. Appendix II provides a summary of tasks performed by the TISS team of volunteers in the Gujarat earthquake. It is evident that these tasks demand analysis and sensitivity on part of the students. At the end of our involvement in a disaster, implications for public policy have always been drawn and taken up with the state.

Our work has been commended by local people, community-based organisations (CBOs), NGOs, district officials, State Secretaries and some of the Chief Ministers and Governors. The reasons for our effectiveness are varied. Apart from the general ethos of reaching out and helping the victims, social work as a profession already possesses the tools/techniques and the methods of working with people. Application or the use of these during post-disaster relief and rehabilitation with appropriate sensitivity proves to be an inherent asset. Schools of social work have demonstrated this in various calamities such as Bhopal, Latur and more recently in Gujarat where the role of social work institutes and colleges has been appreciated. In response, the demand from NGOs for employing social workers in rehabilitation work has also been rising.

The insights gained into institutional functioning and administrative decision-making are very significant in enabling social workers to produce operationally usable knowledge on the one hand and on the other, to translate these insights into appropriate curriculum in social work education. During disasters, development knowledge, the entire experience of working with people, insights into the functioning of government bureaucracies and the ability to provide direction to student volunteers comes into play in very significant ways.

Gradually, this involvement in disasters has led to the upscaling of the Institute's activities in rehabilitation work and providing policy inputs. This expansion of work has been discussed in the last section on the changing role of the Institute.

Some Institutional Prerequisites

Experiences within TISS, suggest that if academic institutions are to get involved in disaster relief work, it requires some critical factors. These institutional prerequisites are summarised below:

Institutional Support and Flexibility

- The top leadership must be positively inclined to the participation of its staff and students in disasters, A certain amount of risk is present and it is the institutional culture and ethos that determines the extent of participation.
- Facilitating rescheduling/changes in academic calendar.
- Temporary reorganisation of work-priorities of those who volunteer.

Faculty Initiative and Commitment

- Teachers must be role models, especially in practice-professions such as social work. Teachers must be willing to take initiative and assume field responsibilities.
- Capacity for hard work is essential. Teachers often get used to a certain set of working hours and a lifestyle. Disaster situation requires a capacity to 'rough it out' and to survive in difficult living conditions. Willingness to work beyond 'duty hours' is essential.

Development Knowledge and Sensitive Intervention

- In a developing country like India, understanding how poverty, vulnerability and implementation of government policies and programmes intertwine to perpetuate exploitative conditions is critical for effective outreach.
- A capacity for fieldwork is vital. This includes planning, liaising, organising and 'thinking on your feet'. Teachers can demonstrate these only if they have strong and positive links with institutions, an ongoing interface, as part of their work, Teachers engaged only in classroom teaching are likely to be less effective.

Capacity for Resource Mobilisation

- This depends largely on credibility that institutions and faculty members enjoy.
- Once the positive role of an academic institution is established, resources are offered by well-wishers, even without seeking them.

Capacity to Work Together

- Within academic institutions, teachers and staff members must have a capacity for team work.

- This initiative requires tremendous coordination skills among participating members.
- A range of preparatory work is called for (as mentioned earlier, immunisation, railway bookings, student workshops, faculty workshops, and so on).
- The team's or students' performance of an administrative task requires positive interpersonal skills which are subject to assessment by direct observation by other stakeholders.

This is not an exhaustive list but merely an indicative one of the nature of preparedness that is called for. The next section underlines the pedagogical significance of student participation in disaster-related relief work

PEDAGOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: STUDENTS' LEARNING

Linking Disasters and Development

Enhancing student learning in the field is a very complex task. Drawing critical linkages between development and disasters is one of the most crucial learnings which precludes most technical experts who are called in to provide emergency aid. For example, although the disaster is a great leveller, the caste and class dynamics became very visible and do operate. Absence of social infrastructure, marginalisation of remote villages, the absence of maps showing locations of settlements — all of which are development issues that impinge upon relief and rehabilitation processes. The gaps in government proclamations and ground realities are also better understood in the field, through listening to people, their own experiences and through an effort to reach out. Further, the powerful role that media can play in communication, in advocacy, and in building public opinion is emphasised in social work education and often borne out in disaster situations.

Disasters cannot be viewed solely as emergencies. Recognising that the magnitude of disasters is an outgrowth of underdevelopment and poverty, which in turn are the root of vulnerability, is a realisation that comes from actual experiences in the field. Students learn by experiencing the demands of the situation. When they are in the village they have to begin work from where the community is and get involved in whatever is demanded by the situation. Faculty members guide this process and activities could range from extricating bodies to distributing relief to preparing lists of what is required and organising for it. Locating villages, preparing maps and providing them to

Relief Commissioners in the districts (as in the Orissa supercyclone) and organising activities for children in hospitals (in Kachchh, Gujarat earthquake) are development functions that volunteers can perform.

Further, involvement in disaster relief always means that students and faculty stay together, under difficult conditions, and this very experience of living and working together, besides bringing them closer, also promotes values of team work and cooperation. In fact, it sensitises students to human conditions in crises. When students meet as a group during late evenings or interact with faculty members, typically intense and animated discussions take place about:

- The state of development of the region (absence of roads, absence of access to basic facilities such as drinking water, adequate housing and livelihood systems, ration cards, corruption — all of which pose major constraints in distribution of relief and damage assessment).
- The human spirit and capacity to cope with adversities.
- The micro-macro linkages and policy weaknesses.
- Aid — its appropriateness, its administration and its politics.
- The value of networking and the difficulties posed by organisational politics.
- People who exploit, even disaster situations.

Participation in disaster relief leads to crucial insights, as social and political dynamics become visible. Guiding both discussions and interventions through these complex field realities is not easy and teachers have a challenging task. Understanding students' difficulties and continuously assessing the nature of tasks in the field and the efficiency with which they are performed, is crucial in order to be relevant and effective.

At the end of every involvement in a disaster, implications for public policy have always been drawn and taken up with the state. Finally, when the students return to the Institute, a workshop is organised to share experiences and consolidate the learning. Invariably each one speaks about how participation in disaster relief has touched them in very deep and personal ways. Substantive anecdotal evidence is presented to illustrate this.

Learning about People and their Strengths

Effective small group teaching, according to Newble and Cannon (1989), requires active participation, face-to-face contact and purposeful

activity. All these are inherent in post-disaster work. In review workshops, students typically mention the following which constitute insights gained about people and their strengths.

- People's resilience and coping strategies are highlighted. Every disaster has demonstrated that people who are severely affected, but possess resilience, a capacity to carry on and emerge as stronger human beings.
- Similarly, although literature on development emphasises that people do not panic or get hysterical in the face of crisis, to actually see and hear from them, what actions they actually took, is truly a learning experience for most students.
- Understanding the extent of local mobilisation, of community participation, dispels the myth that people are helpless. Year after year, students talk about how they had presumed that people must be helpless and waiting for outsiders to come and assist them. For students and other volunteers, it is always a matter of great pride that our fellow human beings, in their own way, had started picking up the threads of their lives and had already begun salvaging, temporarily reconstructing, and coping with the disaster.
- A significant extent of community bonding and solidarity is evident, especially during rescue operations, and people talk about the help, the support and mutuality experienced during the emergency phase.
- Students always reflect on how it has enhanced their understanding of the meaning of 'providing emotional support' and what being a good listener actually entails. For example, during the relief period, students invariably come across people who report that even after 15-20 days, they (the students) were the first people to have come and inquired after them. Others, if they had reached had merely dumped relief material and left. In some villages people also report that nothing had reached. Coming face to face with the pain and sufferings which are very raw and very real enables students to understand the value of being a good listener or the meaning of providing emotional support to the victims.
- Sometimes the hospitality of the affected population is to be experienced to be believed. For example a week after the Gujarat earthquake a group was in Chobari, a village where over a 1,000 people had died. We met a 50-year old lady in the midst of a pile

of rubble, retrieving what she could and when some members spoke to her, they found that she had lost two of her young daughters. At the end of a 40 minute conversation, she offered the group *mava* (milk cake), that they make as a pastoral community, for sale. And as the group was leaving, on asking whether she needed anything, she politely declined. A woman standing in the middle of what was once her house and everything around her destroyed, and could still say, 'I don't need anything', reflected a spirit that was very inspiring to the group. Such encounters during relief work touch the volunteers in very fundamental ways and while it is depressing to see the extent of devastation, what is learnt about the human spirit during disaster relief work, no amount of engineered fieldwork can ever teach.

The centrality of people in interventions is a basic principle that needs to be translated into all relief and rehabilitation programmes. Knowledge about society, understanding systemic issues and political dynamics are almost always better comprehended in real life contexts than through classroom lectures. Within social work education, the field work component is based on this very principle. One of the alumni lucidly recounts, 'As students, we often criticised the Institute for its various shortcomings, particularly what we saw as its "pro-establishment positions". All this changed after our involvement in riot relief work. The spontaneous act of the Institute and what we saw of our faculty members during those days, the way they interacted with the bureaucracy and local people, the way they managed all the dynamics, reaffirmed our faith in the human will to act, faith that sensitive and conscientious people within a system can make a difference to society!'

The field poses major challenges, presents vast pedagogical opportunities and the skill with which these are handled by teachers, reflects their capacity to work with diverse systems — their own university systems and the systems within the government. The teacher's ability to inspire, innovate and uphold quality education are reflected in these situations.

THE CHANGING CONTOURS OF THE INSTITUTE'S ROLE

Higher education is expected to contribute to national development through dissemination of specialised knowledge and skills. Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, these institutions should be dynamic and constantly entering uncharted areas.

Over the decades, the regular involvement of TISS in national disasters had translated into enriching the curriculum at the MA level. For example, the TISS introduced a course on Disaster Management at the MA level in the 1980s within its social work programme. Participation in disaster relief has also resulted in faculty members contributing to training and documentation. They are also invited to serve on expert committees of the government and providing policy support.

This reflects the changing dimensions of the role that educational institutions of higher learning can play. In many of the academic institutions, policy support, especially with a focus on the vulnerable, has been emerging as an important area of contribution by social work educators.

Its appointment as Community Participation Consultant to the Government of Maharashtra (1993-1997) in the World Bank aided rehabilitation programme was a result of its involvement in relief work. The Institute took up this responsibility as a field action project. Contribution to rehabilitation policy and facilitating participatory methods in implementation were key highlights of this World Bank aided programme of the government after the Latur quake of Maharashtra.

Similarly, after the Gujarat earthquake of 2001, a group of students were placed with Bidada and Bhojai hospitals in Kachchh district. Other groups worked in villages through local NGOs (Appendix II). Impressed with the nature of student and faculty inputs, the Trustees of the hospital are pursuing the idea of setting up a social work training institute in the region with TISS support. Similarly, the Government of Gujarat has approached TISS for a more proactive role in monitoring the social aspects of rehabilitation work. Several of the faculty members continue to provide programmatic and monitoring support to hospitals, NGOs and corporates involved in rehabilitation work in Gujarat. In fact, the demand is far beyond the capacity of the Institute to respond.

In addition to the above, faculty members are invited to serve as experts on disaster management bodies in the country. Similarly, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, TISS has recently prepared an 'Approach Paper on Community Participation in Disaster Management'.

As one of the oldest social work education Institutes in the country, at the TISS, training and extension are interwoven with the teaching-training programme. Various training programmes have been

organised by several Departments and Units of the Institute for NSS coordinators, for NGO personnel and for corporates. University Grants Commission Refresher Courses for teachers, films on disaster-related themes, focus on trauma counselling and monitoring social aspects of rehabilitation are the newer areas of contribution. Apart from the reports and manuals produced for specific rehabilitation projects, documentation of the work of academic institutions is attempted by *The Indian Journal of Social Work* in bringing out special issues on the subject of disasters and through papers presented at seminars and workshops. The Government of India has also commissioned projects to document relief and rehabilitation activities.

What is evident from the above is a gradual upscaling of the Institute's involvement from providing relief support as volunteers and carrying out damage assessment to providing policy and field action support to the rehabilitation programmes of the government. The Institute now demonstrates an institutional capacity for training, research and policy support, which it further seeks to consolidate through the establishment of a full-fledged Centre or Department of Disaster Management. The contours of the Institute's role has been changing in response to the needs of the country's field realities.

CONCLUSION

There are a variety of ways in which an academic institution can respond in disaster situations and enhance the relevance of its curriculum as well as the educational process. According to Rao (1998: 66), one of the goals of education is to 'provide a climate for the nurture of values, both as a personalised set of values forming one's character including necessarily, social, cultural and rational values, so as to have a context and meaning for actions and decisions in order to enable persons to act with conviction and commitment'. This action-oriented teaching has been a strength in institutions of higher learning that are regarded as centres of excellence. The TISS has continuously worked towards making itself relevant and accountable to society without compromising on academic integrity.

In a classroom, the traditional lecture-centric approach is 'you learn what we offer', while in the field, the approach is 'you learn what you can, what you are capable of and we facilitate'. The teacher, in fact, has a particular responsibility and is not merely 'an accompanying person'. While the patterns and styles of functioning may vary, the teacher becomes an important role model and facilitator, and

his/her enthusiasm and involvement impinges on students' motivation and learning. Therefore, it is important that the teacher feels comfortable with the field, that is, with people, with communities, with NGOs and with the bureaucracy — all of who are important stakeholders.

Reddy (1995) has stressed that universities and institutions of higher education need to prepare a cadre of leaders with appropriate attitudes and professional competence to initiate a process of change. They should possess the 'sensitivity to comprehend and anticipate the changing social reality and cultivate a dynamism within its organic whole which can make its responses quick and effective.'

The TISS has endeavoured to work in this direction and the role that an academic institution can play is sought to be illustrated in this article. Such participation in disasters creates an institutional environment that effectively promotes a value orientation in the learning process, stimulating critical thinking. Education can, thus, play an interventionist and catalytic role in facilitating change and promoting experiential learning.

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APPENDIX I: TISS Involvement in Latur Quake (1993)

The work of TISS in this disaster was qualitatively different and entailed a higher degree of involvement primarily because the TISS Rural Campus (RC) is located at Tuljapur, 40 kms from Sasur, one of the most seriously affected villages in Osmanabad district. Our RC staff were among the first to reach the earthquake-affected villages in the district. During the relief phase, the Institute was engaged in a range of activities on its own initiative for a period of four months. These were:

Phase I: Relief Work (4 Months)

- Panchanama work done with local officials.
- Survey covering over 34,000 households in 69 seriously affected villages.
- Damage assessment data analysis and report writing and producing village-wise data.
- Assisting District Collectors in NGO coordination work.
- Direct involvement in Rajegaon village where Tata Relief Committee was rebuilding houses and community infrastructure.

Over 200 volunteers worked for 20 days and participated in the survey and Panchanama work. Faculty members from the Mumbai Campus and RC staff continued the work.

Phase II: Community Participation Consultant (3 Year Project)

In the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase, the Institute was engaged by the Government of Maharashtra as Community Participation Development Consultant to facilitate the participatory processes in economic and social rehabilitation in 52 villages selected for relocation. The project was aided by the World Bank. This involvement lasted for a 3 year period. The project was managed by the Department of Urban and Rural Community Development in TISS, with a field team of 10-15 members based in Latur and Osmanabad. The activities in this phase were:

- Rapid Appraisals for policy inputs.
- Demonstration and suggestions on participatory implementation of the rehabilitation project of Government of Maharashtra.
- Liaising with construction consultants and village level committees.
- Trouble shooting in villages especially on issues related to land acquisition, bifurcation of villages, and disputes regarding beneficiary lists.
- Ongoing monitoring and feedback.

The TISS as the community participation consultant was involved in a wide range of activities: building a strong enabling presence in the field, demonstrating the participatory process wherever possible, building the capacities of government and village level committees as well as monitoring and assessing the rehabilitation programme on

an on going basis. The consultants were active in a cyclical process of obtaining people's views on the various rehabilitation packages, clarifying issues of concern to them, making periodic recommendations to the government and actively assisting the state authority in conflict resolution in the villages. All this meant understanding village specific problems, issues and social dynamics and working closely with policy makers at the state and district levels.

After the Latur earthquake, the appointment of TISS as Community Participation Consultants by the Government of Maharashtra was a landmark which now equips the Institute with insights, not just in relief, but also in rehabilitation processes.

APPENDIX II: Work of TISS Volunteers in Gujarat

Abhiyan

Forty-eight students were placed in 24 sub-centres of the Abhiyan in pairs. Each of the sub-centres was coordinated by an NGO member of the Abhiyan. Students were placed across five talukas. A team was also placed with the information desk of the Abhiyan.

Abhiyan Information Desk

- Dissemination of information on Abhiyan and its role to other local/national/international NGOs.
- Attending the meetings held in Abhiyan and preparing its minutes.
- Updating the data on different sectors like relocation, health, education, and so on.
- Helping the Abhiyan team in making the daily/weekly presentations to the government officials.
- Providing the data to all the Sub-centre Coordinators.

Abhiyan Sub-centres

- Helped set up the sub-centres of Abhiyan in the villages that were to act as information centres for the villagers and as coordinating agents for all rehabilitation efforts.
- Conducted a rapid need assessment survey and shared the villagers' views to the local NGOs for future policy decisions.
- Formed *gram samitis* (village committees) for the rebuilding efforts.
- Conducted various de-stressing exercises with the school children.
- Observed the irregularities in the Public Distribution System and relief distribution and reported it to the concerned authorities for further action.
- Discussed the problems of not possessing ration cards with the district authorities and presented the villagers' cases.
- Surveyed the sites of watershed management and visually assessed the damage done to these structures because of the earthquake, and submitted the report on the same to the local NGOs.
- Started a fodder depot in one sub-centres where there was an acute shortage.
- Convened meetings of the Dalits and other minority groups and noted their views/problems regarding rebuilding as well as relocation.

- Collected data regarding schools in one taluka and submitted a proposal to funding agencies through the local NGOs to rebuild schools.
- Helped Save the Children in gathering information about the aanganwadis and supervised the actual setting up of aanganwadis.
- Helped widows in villages and other dependents in understanding the government forms regarding pension and compensation.
- Meeting government officers to clarify the villagers' doubts regarding government policies or to urge them in taking necessary actions.
- Identifying specific problems of the villagers, like those of ration cards, health, schools, fodder, and so on.
- Conducted a detailed house-to-house survey for a village.
- Undertook social and resource mapping for some villages.
- Initiated the process of organising women into mahila mandals.
- Visited houses of the people where there were deaths due to the earthquake

Save the Children Fund

- Surveyed the present condition of Primary Health Centre (PHCs) and aanganwadis in Bhuj.
- Set up tents for aanganwadis and provided all the material required for restarting its functioning, and talked to the aanganwadis workers.
- Set up tents for PHCs, persuaded doctors to start using them, mobilised and transported material, including medicines and medical examination equipment needed to provide health care.

St. Xavier's School

The TISS students carried out play activities and created an enabling environment in the classroom. This helped children come back to a degree of normalcy. Students conducted short skits, held discussion sessions and took classes. For the senior classes, assistance was provided for subjects such as Maths and Science.

Shree Bidada Sarvodaya Trust

- A need assessment survey was carried out in 120 villages in six talukas to assess the immediate needs of villages and vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled and the elderly.
- Psychosocial assessment of patients with disability was conducted at the Bidada and Bhojai Hospitals.

Work in the Bidada Hospital

- Supervised group work with women, children and caretakers of patients through use of recreational activities like games, art and craft.
- Activities like drawing and craft work with children was used on various themes related to cleanliness, the earthquake and the losses they had incurred. Children started drawing on various themes given to them. Antakshari, games and game shows were also organised for the children. This brought all the children together, which helped them to overcome their fears.
- The women were given the required material to do embroidery work to occupy themselves and to promote optimism and to identify alternate sources of future employment.

- Brief discussions with caretakers on the burden faced in care giving, coping and future plans were held, wherein they were given a forum to address these issues.
- Casework with individual patients and their family members.
- Teamwork with psychologists, homeopaths, and liaisoning for identification and referral of those with psychological problems. The team also coordinated with the psychologist and doctors at the hospital and provided feedback received from the patients.

ANANDI, Rajkot

The team at Saurashtra worked with Anandi, an NGO working in several districts of Gujarat. They undertook work in Maliya taluka of Rajkot, which is a poor taluka, compared to the others. Here, the students undertook the following tasks:

- Conducting a rapid appraisal in 37 villages.
- Analysis of relief received by villagers and identifying gaps in relief.
- Addressing these gaps by informing relevant government authorities of NGOs.
- House mapping and social mapping to initiate rebuilding.
- Conducting gram sabha and mahila meetings to discuss issues related to relief, reconstruction and relocation.
- Working on community dynamics in collaboration with government officials.
- Initiating gender sensitive planning approach for the rehabilitation process by involving women in discussions and working on house maps.
- Information dissemination on government packages to the villagers.
- Conducting health camps in villages in coordination with the Red Cross.