

People's partnership

**A Pioneering Campaign To Reduce Risks from Disasters
and Minimize impacts of Climate Change Amongst
Vulnerable People and Communities Across
12 Disaster Prone States of India**

By
Saritsa Foundation

(Kanya Kumari, Tamilnadu to Tawang Arunachal Pradesh
(Approximately 14700kms) for 60 days
from 15 October to 15 December 2008)

INTRODUCTION



Saritsa Foundation has conceptualized its mission to build capacity amongst most vulnerable and disadvantaged elements of community, especially school children, street and orphaned children, women, disabled and the poor to protect them from disasters since June 2000. It has sensitized awareness to develop safety culture by mind mapping action plans for disasters vulnerability and minimizing impacts of climate changes at individual and family levels.

India lives in villages, which extends to rural small and medium size towns. The many people of these areas are living in disaster prone states. They are most vulnerable. Saritsa Foundation contributes towards initiatives and ideals of Hyogo Framework of Action by reaching to the people, talking to the people and preparing people at their "Door Steps" with the team of experts' trainers and motivators.

In pursuance of its goals, Saritsa Foundation launched a pioneering initiative with Private Partnership in kind by like minded individuals and organizations (however these partners had no resource to support financially) with goodwill of National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India. The campaign was planned to integrate communities with awareness and capacity building in 12 states of India. The National campaign was lunched from Kanya Kumari (Tamilnadu) to Tawang Arunachal Pradesh on 15 October 2008.

It had a team of 11 experts, trainers and motivators with a support vehicle and 4 Motorcycles. The team moved across 12 states for 60 days. It was a "Mobile Campaign".

THE PATH FIND

The project was conceptualized to sensitize understanding by inputs of information, knowledge and training to reduce risks from disasters and mitigation of impacts of climate change amongst people at grass root level, especially children, women, disabled and the poor across 12 states of India who had no access and opportunity to prepare for disasters. It involved interconnectivity and forging a partnership amongst people of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds to develop capacity to respond to disasters.

OBJECTIVES

- To connect and integrate communities at individual, family and group level by raising awareness and preparedness for disaster with private partnership.
- To sensitize school safety culture.
- To make people aware about risks of climate change, environmental degradation and its link with disasters.
- To encourage participants to make use of local knowledge and skills as well as resources to minimize losses at the time of disasters.
- Guidance for forming youth force and encouraging women and children to make Family Rescue teams.
- To provide equal opportunities to disabled.
- To raise awareness at community level to adapt to impacts of climate change.
- To inspire participants to green their villages, schools, districts and states by planting and protecting trees and forests.
- To raise awareness for energy conservation and use of alternative sources of energy like “Solar and Wind Energy” and encouraging for their use.

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE CAMPAIGN.

- Creating awareness amongst participants about risks of disasters to their villages and towns by interactive and participatory workshops.
- Imparting practical training supported by mock drills, rehearsals and mind mapping action plans at individual and family level.
- Experience and knowledge sharing with participants.
- Using of local resources which has been conventionally used to save from disasters.
- Individual and family counseling & mass contact.
- Preparing family, school and community rescue teams.
- Assisting in rescue, search and recovery.
- Evacuation & First Aid.
- Methodology
- Risk Perception
- Risk analysis
- Mind mapping action plan to respond to prevent

LESSONS LEARNT

- The ignorance and lack of awareness for disaster risks reduction and impacts of climate change noticed amongst the poor and other elements of the communities across 12 states of India was alarming. It needs provisions for providing opportunity to them at local level at the earliest.
- Preparing the individuals and communities at grass root level for facing the disasters, by inputs of information for awareness and to develop culture of preparedness.
- Partnership to prepare most disadvantaged rural and urban communities to enable them to cope with disasters by reaching to their “Door Steps” where no one has reached so far.
- Reaching to people, talking to people and preparing people by reaching to remotest rural India with own resources and little support in kind by partners was most challenging as well as fascinating task for the team.
- It is learnt that National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) or State Disaster Management Authorities or International voluntary organizations and others may develop support mechanism to be partners for such innovative initiatives.

- Community groups identified and educated for capacity building were genuinely keen to develop skills to protect themselves, their families and communities. They also affirmed that they shall make more people aware.
- It was experienced during the campaign that people do not want to remain isolated as marginalized communities in the country about their safety. It is disliked by them with anguish.
- The team members with their expertise, commitment and dedication made the campaign highly purposeful and successful in spite of hardship and challenges at each step of the campaign.
- It is a definite possibility that such campaigns with public and private partnership can be made effective tool for capacity building of the people where state authorities and local organizations can not reach due to paucity of resources and committed experts, trainers and motivators.
- It was a small effort to contribute towards strengthening guidelines and directions of Hyogo Framework of Action, UN ISDR and National Disaster Management Authority of India for local level implementation.
- It is a unique initiative which can be replicated nationally and internationally. The scale and size of such National campaign instilled social cohesion and inspiration amongst people to be equal partners in the process of disaster management.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Saritsa Foundation chartered this campaign carefully and objectively for the advocacy of disasters risk reduction and adaptation to climate change impacts at lowest level, where no one so far has reached to provide opportunity to the most disadvantaged people in rural villages and towns.

It has a small contribution to make Hyogo Framework of Action which become a useful tool and initiative to protect most vulnerable communities from disasters.

It had an impressionable influence on the participants groups all across 12 states varying from the people from coastal areas of Kanya

Kumari, Tamilnadu to high hills of Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh who have different kinds of challenges from different disasters.

Saritsa Foundations has conducted 32 school (11500 students) workshops and 20 programs for communities which had about 2500 women, poor and common people. It also conducted a workshop for 67 disabled people of 5 institutes, their parents and teachers to sensitize preparedness to mind map action plans for vulnerability of disasters in their areas of villages, towns and states.

It was a campaign to translate national and global commitments in to action for the most disadvantaged in a very humble way and which touched hearts and impacted minds of the people.

It proved to be a step ahead towards hope to minimize risks to the needy, hope for an idea where poor, children, women; disabled citizens in rural pockets of remotest areas with diverse range of cultural and

social backgrounds became partners of learning and training. There was a noticeable urge in the souls of these participants.

Participants welcomed inputs of information and education for preparedness at their schools, community get together and counseling sessions. They were eager to make their concerns heard in their districts and talukas with the same sincerity as they experienced during the campaign.

Sensitizing mind mapping action plans amongst rural and poor, especially people at lowest ladder of learning, who never had an opportunity to visualize such an education in the simplest manner by reaching to their levels of understanding and training inspired and motivated them.

Encouraging use of household and local resources, knowledge inherent in social experiences to respond to disasters was accepted and liked as a valuable tool to harmonize timely response drills by individuals and families. Some of the example of household and local resources to make floaters for floods are empty cans of 10 or 20 ltrs, tubes, improvised floaters of Banana tree trunks, floaters made of empty bottles of 2 ltrs each in to a floater belt, rafts by using tubes or cans. Also for protecting most vulnerable part of the body, that is head in an emergency of an earthquake, school children can protect their head with school bags while running out of the building or the teacher could use her plastic chair or her purse or a book or a register. A housewife working in kitchen can protect her heads with flour needing steal utensil or frying pan or a Tawa. Incase of a fire emergency a house wife could use a blanket of thick cotton cloth to wrap around herself or role on the floor of the house which may extinguish fire.

IMPACTS THE PARTICIPANTS

- During the campaign in Andhra Pradesh it was heartening start, where a student of class IX, Swapna of Little Angles High School” was so inspired by the preparedness workshop that she guided the team of Expert to conduct a programme for staff and employees of Power Grid Corporation of India at Nellore, where her father worked as Senior Engineer. She spoke to her Father to conduct a programme for their staff and employees. The programme was accordingly conducted for these employees which was attended by The Chief Engineer and his Staff at Nellore.
- The principal of Sahiti Vidhyaniketan High School at New Hafeezpet - Hyderabad wrote in his appreciation for the workshop conducted for students of a high school where children are from the poorest families and most vulnerable in Hyderabad on 25th October- “It was a quite enlightening and informative and will be very helpful to children, teachers and parents alike in times of Disasters to save their own and others lives as well. The concept is quite worthwhile as it equips one - especially a common man to act in dependently and confidently in the most unexpected situations of Disasters.”
- Mrs Ajita Gohain, Project Officer of VAANI, Deaf Children Foundation, Assam, who participated in a workshop organized at Assam Autism Foundation, Guwahati where children with different disabilities, teachers and parents of 5 institutes took part in the workshop, she express her views by stating “ The workshop on disaster management conducted by Saritsa foundation was very educative considering that the organization “Vani Deaf Children Foundation” that I work for it would be very beneficial if the deaf children are also empowered on how to manage themselves during disasters. Surely, it will be very helpful for them too. Provided they are all covered in such workshops in a language in which they understand. We hope such workshops continue to get everyone empowered. I wish Saritsa Foundation all success.
- Mr N Sivanand, Principal, Little Angel Public school, (Affiliated to CBSC, New Delhi) Sardar Nagar Chillakur, Gudur, Nellore Dist. (A.P), felt that “ It was very informative for the children and created awareness among the children how to develop life saving skills and to gain

confidence to protect from disasters like earthquake, tsunami, cyclone, flood, drought, water and scarcity etc”.

- Father Lukose Cheruvalel SDB Founder Director, Snehalaya (a Home for destitute children Dhirenpara, Guwahati, Assam wrote in his appreciation “The children understood and learned various emergency measures to save themselves with available recourses when natural or manmade disaster occurs. The Snehalaya authorities are very grateful to and appreciative of the services of Saritsa Foundation.
- Kavita a student off class X, GBM School KishanGanj, Hospital Road, Buddha Nagar, spoke on the conclusion of the workshop that “I was always scared of disasters, but on having learnt many things from this workshop,now I feel that I can protect myself and my family members.”
- A tea planter labor woman of Siliguri, and women of Nomad community (Banjaras) Hinganghat, Nagpur, women of Kanganghat village on the bank of river Ganga at Patna, expressed their happiness that some one has reached to them to create awareness to prepare for earthquakes, floods, fire and climate change impacts. They were also happy by using their household resources to protect themselves as per training and mock drills.

MEDIA SUPPORT

National print media as well as regional papers took active part in its coverage for the campaign in each state and significantly highlighted the importance of preparedness of people and communities in villages and towns to develop resilience for disasters (Reports in English, Hindi and regional languages are attached) as annex -B

THE GOOD PRACTICE

The initiative is one of the pioneering good practice to be replicated by private partnership to reduce risks from disasters and climate change by reaching to the most vulnerable at their “Door steps”. It is direct transformation of Hyogo Framework of Action into action for the most disadvantaged and the poor. The same has been appreciated by Mr Salvano Briceno, Director, UN/ISDR, Switzerland.

THE WAY AHEAD



The campaign stirred and sparked the conscience of the participants to be prepared at individual and family levels. This view of the campaign has been shaped up with overwhelming enthusiasm of hundreds of people belonging to remotest rural and urban poor areas, with different regional, social and economic groups each with different cultural practices.

“Sowing the seeds of awareness, which shall become a culture of safety” across 12 states of India has strengthened the resolution of Saritsa Foundation to reach to the most needy. Each interaction was valuable and enhanced our experience and resolution. It added to our understanding of the importance to make Hyogo Framework of Action work at the lowest level for the poor and disadvantaged.

This momentum for the cause, is, most important to continue transformation of Hyogo Framework of Action in to action, because heart of effective risk reduction are the people, at lowest level who are most vulnerable. It needs a unification and integration of institutions / academies based preparedness initiatives as well as sensitization of front line civil society organizations with equal opportunities of resources to them who reach to people and prepare people.



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