



**ENSURING
HOPES IN HAVOC**

The background image shows a massive, dark, rocky debris field from a glacier burst. In the foreground, a yellow and orange heavy-duty vehicle, possibly a bulldozer or loader, is parked on the debris. Two workers in safety gear are visible near the vehicle. To the right, there is a large, arched concrete structure, possibly a tunnel entrance or a dam, with some blue and white markings. The overall scene is one of a major disaster site.

**UTTARAKHAND
GLACIER BURST
RESPONSE REPORT**

SEWA INTERNATIONAL

www.sewainternational.org



BACKGROUND

Located in the lap of the high Himalayas, rising to an elevation of 3700 metres above sea level, lies the beautiful village of Raini in Uttarakhand. Till a few days back, the village used to offer serene landscapes, artisans practising 'Ringal', farmers toiling their land, and families taking care of each other and the animal husbandry.

All this changed on the strenuous morning of 7th February. The silent shining morning was soon left with rubble with the river ferociously sweeping the villages, ramming everything in her way with massive rocks of stone and ice. All that left were the incomplete families, broken homes, desolated farms, and traumatic memories of how their lives got devastated in just 30 minutes of flash floods. With 12+ villages affected, people in these villages have lost 30+ lives, continues to have 100+ missing and more than 300 livelihoods destroyed. The trauma that followed the material destruction is immense, and we witnessed this firsthand with the affected districts being the workplace of Sewa International.

Being on ground zero, Sewa International was the first to respond to the situation.

Sewa International

Sewa International is a 'not-for-profit' organization registered in the year 1997, inspired by the noble tradition of "Service before Self", working for providing disaster relief and rehab during calamities, promoting volunteerism among all, empowering children and youth through skill development and education, reaching out to the underprivileged in the remote hilly/tribal villages of India, and supporting grass-root efforts that promote cultural and moral value systems in the society.

Our work in Uttarakhand



We have been working in the state of Uttarakhand for more than 7 years, working towards community-led development of the region. With our 390+ SHGs network and the support of 18000+ community members, we are working towards bringing holistic development in the area.

Sewa has been working towards empowering the community in the areas of disaster management, health, skill development, women empowerment, agriculture, and environment and has been piloting and scaling multiple innovative developmental projects.

What happened on 7th Feb



Sewa Onground

10:38 am

First Information to areas downstream, domestic and international media, government officials.

11:00 am

Team went to Raini bridge

11:30 am

Mobilization of people to safer place

12:45 pm

SDRF team arrived at the site

01:00 pm

Sewa Aarogyam arrived at NTPC

10:30 am

Alaknanda river washes away under-construction Tapovan-Vishnugad hydropower project on Rishiganga

10:15-10:30 am

A swollen Dhauli Ganga flows down to Vishnuprayag

10-10:15 am

Glacier bursts in Raini Village

10:55 am

Srinagar

10:55 am

State disaster response force sounds high alert as river moves down to Devprayag

Source : Times of India

01:15 pm

Volunteers reach tunnel for supporting rescue operations.

02:00 pm

Sewa Aarogyam provided First Aid to those rescued

08:30 pm

Food and accomodation arrangements made for the displaced

06:30 pm

Team Meeting held to discuss next day's plan

03:30 pm

Food Packets distributed to ITBP, Army, SDRF



DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE GLACIER BURST

The sudden floods after the glacier burst caused large-scale devastation in the valley areas of Tapovan, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, and Srinagar in Uttarakhand, leaving 300+ families in utter despair, shock and trauma. The deadly flood has caused massive damage to both the lives and livelihoods.



LIFE LOSS

200+

FAMILIES AFFECTED



INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE

350+

PEOPLE MISSING



LIVELIHOOD LOSS

600+

PEOPLE FROM 15 VILLAGES



Fatalities and Infrastructure Damage - Survey tells More than 350 people from 15 villages are missing, dozens found dead and more than 200 families affected. houses were damaged along with schools temples, community centres and 150+animal sheds.



Livelihood loss - As per survey 290+ Residents' livelihood affected as agricultural activities are totally destroyed by the farm areas blowing away the existing agrarian infrastructure, animal husbandry. Many families have lost the only bread earners and available livestock in the family.



Immediate Response: 'Save Lives' 0 to 20 Days



As the flash floods hit the Tapovan area of Uttarakhand on the morning of 7th February, the immediate response was to alert the downstream communities of the incoming danger, evacuate some villages, and alert the officials of the unfolding disaster. We soon joined hands with the disaster relief teams on the rescue. Our health teams were on the spot, our volunteers serving food for the impacted villages, and our team members providing trauma counselling to the grieved families.

First Alert: People, Govt., & Media

The first alert to the world came from our team-member Manvar Rawat Ji's live video from Tapovan, which has been seen by more than 37 Lakh people now, directly on his timeline. Most international agencies like Reuters, CNN, NY Post, AFP etc have used the same clippings.



3700000+

**Views of the first
live information
on the disaster**



Supported Rescue & Relief Activities

Experienced in the terrain and geography, our team was one of the first to find out the ways to reach out to trapped workers inside the tunnel. Sewa volunteers guided the way to the NDRF /rescue team to reach out to them for the rescue.

4000+

Meals Served

Initial Medical Support

Our Mobile Medical Unit(MMU), Sewa Arogyam was actively involved in providing medical services at the rescue site. It also organised first aid camps at Raini and Tapovan villages where hundreds of people were treated. Later on, MMU has been organising health camps at different locations in the impacted area.



60+

**Patients
Attended/Treated**



Immediate Counselling

We provided immediate counselling to hundreds of families who were traumatized by the horrific incident. With more than 30 affected villages, more than 60 team members are currently engaged in these services.

120+

**Blankets
Distributed**

Supply basic amenities

While the rescue work still on, tens of families have gathered at the tunnel area, with almost no facilities. In the tune of hundreds, these have no arrangements for food and accommodation. Sewa has created temporary shelters, running community kitchens for the migrant families coming from across Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.



100+

**Ration kits
Distributed**

Short Term Plans **0 to 3 Months**

'Heal the wounds'



The team at the ground level is working 24X7 trying its best to reach every household. In our goal of healing the wounds of the disaster with relief operations. We are providing continuous medical support for the injured, counselling for the trauma-struck families, essential supplies for those who have lost an earning member or source of livelihood, and livelihood support for those who need it in the impacted area.

Once the rescue operations are over, the immediate response by Sewa is to heal the wounds of the disaster. We plan to continue supporting the communities with healing support in essentials, health, and livelihoods.

Health Services: Medical

Our Mobile Health Van is Tapovan and Raini village area, with trained medical professionals and required villages. We are providing multiple services in the impacted area including First Aid, ECG Check, X-Ray Machine, Oxygen Supply, Medicines.



Health Services: Counselling

With the 30-minutes of floods, hundreds of families have lost their loved ones. Finding their loved ones missing or dead, seeing their years of hardwork destroyed have left hundreds in a state of trauma. Our team of 60+ volunteers in at the ground-zero talking to them, consoling them, and emotionally supporting them in these times of distress.

Community Kitchens

With some villages losing their farms, livestock and other sources of livelihood, our team is running community kitchens across multiple locations for the impacted communities.



Essential Supplies

The team is working restlessly to help every life and fill every possible gap between the affected people and their basic needs by distributing food items, blankets and toiletries.

Long Term Plans **0.5 to 3 Years**

'Bring Back Livelihood'



The memories of the disaster would probably decades to heal, but we are working towards reducing the economic implications of the disaster by reinstating livelihoods in the impacted region.

ave the strategy and plan of action for the possible long-term rehabilitation programs in the area, like, long-term trauma counselling for the aggrieved, livestock support (goats, poultry etc) for immediate/reliable livelihoods, skill training for knitting, computers etc, and financial literacy for appropriate usage of any government grants in terms of running small sustainable businesses. financial literacy for appropriate usage of any government grants in terms of running small sustainable businesses. financial literacy for appropriate usage of any government grants in terms of running small sustainable businesses.

Trauma Counselling

We are taking formal counselling services from trained professionals, and wish to reach out to the villages via e-clinics and our medical vans in the same area. We are also training some community volunteers for the same.



Skill Development

We aim to provide extensive skill training for livelihoods in organic farming, knitting, computers and other relevant options in the Tapovan area.



Livelihood Support

With the floods, livelihoods for a lot of families got washed away too. These include losses in the form of livestock, farms, small shops/businesses, and secondary employment from the dam site. We plan to provide financial and handholding support to re-start their livelihoods.



Community Development

To build a long-term peer support system in the community for the strengthening of the ecosystem, we plan to nurture community groups in the form of SHGs, village committees, children-panchayats, and community farming.



Environment Rehabilitation

It's not just the humans that suffered the tragedy. We also lost hundreds of fully-grown trees in the area, which would require thousands of young saplings to compensate for the damage to the environment, and also act as a preventive force for future landslides and avalanches.





Stories from Ground Zero

I just returned from Bhangyul village. It's a village which has now been cut off the road route by the glacier burst. We had conversations with multiple affected families on the ground, and their stories of experiencing the disaster have left us numb.*

Both mentally and emotionally. None of us could have imagined this, sitting just a few km away in our office of what I may mean to go through the hour-long trauma of the flash floods, arising from the glacier burst. They saw the disaster unfold from the silent peaceful morning to the loud noise of **glacier bursting, and rumbling distant sound of the river**, and the roaring waters that took away their loved ones in a matter of minutes. We met the family of Manoj, who like always was honest and hardworking towards his role as a **safety guard at the hydro project**. While he always ensured that the project remained safe, he **couldn't save himself** from the gushing waters. His body was recovered yesterday from the tunnel by the NDRF team yesterday. The five days of tensed sleeplessness in his home, coupled with prayers for his safety, have now turned to an atmosphere of grief, and despair. He was the **only source of income for his family of 6**. His father is an old man with severe health problems, and now has just looking at the river, silent since he performed the last rites of his son. His last wish was just to see the marriage of Manoj's sister which now seems far, **given the loss of their son, the small farmland, and all their savings**. All washed away with the river they have played-in since ages.

As Manoj's mother describes her son, with teary eyes and a trembling body, her situation has left all of us shaken for the future of their family ahead. In this moment of deep pain, Manoj's family is one of the 350+ families which have shaken the entire area and the nation of the devastating effect of the flash floods in Uttarakhand. Our team of **Sewa International is present at the ground zero**, in the Tapovan area at the **15+ impacted villages**, and is continuously trying to reach out to every person in need and **supporting them with all essentials** from taking care of their food to health to overall livelihood. For continuing this support ahead, **we need your help**.

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***Real Story with changed names.**

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Raini village of Uttarakhand has been a home of the brave. With a lot of homes being of serving/retired army men, the villagers are known for their courage and determination. The stories of the struggle for saving the trees by Gaura Devi, during the Chipko movement is still alive in the hearts of the people from Raini village.

While trees often don't figure in the development parameters of the village, Rohit Negi from Raini village now credits his life to the trees in the vicinity of his village. He has pledged to never cut any tree, and actively stop people from doing it in the area.

When we met Rohit Ji, he was just rescued from a tree branch on the shore of Alaknanda river, close to the dam site. He was washed with the flash floods from his farm and caught a tree branch on the banks. After 6+ hours of wait amidst a heavily flowing river, **he continued to hold on to the tree, while the rumble continued to bruise his legs.** Later at the hospital, he cried for hours recollecting the trauma of witnessing the disaster unraveling before his eyes. He had spent years working in the construction sector, **cutting trees for building hotels and homes**, during the minutes when he had no hopes left of his life, a **tree came in between and gave him a new life.**

While this tree saved Rohit's life, hundreds of trees got uprooted in the flash floods. This is permanent and long-term damage to the entire environmental ecosystem, with implications on future floods and landslides.

Sewa International is planning an environmental rehabilitation drive in the area, with **massive afforestation efforts, and replanning the village farms** to reduce future damages and **rebuild the lost environmental resources**

*Real Story with
changed names.

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