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### Preface

We are happy to present a short resume of the service activities carried out by Sewa International during the past one decade between 1998 & 2007. Sewa International is a voluntary service organization working with the cooperation of our brothers and sisters living in several countries all over the world, with centre at Delhi in Bharat. All the workers are motivated with the ideal of selfless service to our brethren in distress and sufferings of all kinds, may be because of Poverty or deprivations of the basic human needs or discrimination or because of calamities either man-made or natural.

Human beings are gifted by God with the faculty of Compassion which makes a person respond to the sufferings of others and motivates that person to do something to mitigate the misery of the sufferers, which brings some personal satisfaction and peace of mind. This has given birth to many philanthropic individuals and Charitable organizations.

The Hindu seers, sages and saints have all exhorted and made it obligatory for every

person to offer selfless service or Sewa to all beings as a bounden duty with a noble attitude of mind “Serve man Serve God”, rising above mere Compassion or just Charity. Sri Guruji Golwalkar, the second chief of the Rashtreeya Swayamsevak Sangh has given a most beautiful and significant guide line, for every Sewa worker, very succinctly in a letter written to me on 14th of January 1970. It will be beneficial for all to quote that particular portion in his own words:

“Let our workers keep their minds free.... and work for our people, our Dharma in the right spirit, lend a helping hand to all our brethren who need help and strive to relieve distress wherever we see it. In this service no distinction should be made between man and man. We have to serve all, be he a Christian or a Muslim or a human being of any other persuasion; for, calamities, distress and misfortunes make no such distinction but afflict all alike. And in serving to relieve the sufferings of man let it not be in a spirit of condescence or mere compassion but as a devoted worship of the Lord abiding the heart of all beings, in the true spirit of our Dharma of surrendering our all in the humble service of Him who is Father, Mother, Brother, Friend and everything to us all. And may our actions succeed in bringing out the glory and effulgence of our Sanatana-Eternal-Dharma”.

This is the basic philosophy which is inspiring the workers of Sewa International all over the world. It may not be wrong to mention here that the humble and selfless services being rendered by Sewa International has been recognized and appreciated by some eminent persons, including a few holding responsible positions in the Governments of their respective countries. Still much more remains to be done. We are stretching our efforts to the extent of the available resources of men and material. With the extended cooperation of our brothers and sisters all over the world we desire to do more. I pray the Almighty to bless us with the strength of mind and body not only to carry on the Sewa work in a selfless and efficient manner, but also to motivate and mobilize greater support for Sewa International from more and more number of people around.  
-- K. SURYA NARAYANA RAO

## **INTRODUCTION**

Former Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair delivering his lecture on ‘Faith and Globalisation’ during The Cardinal’s Lectures 2008, Westminster Cathedral, London, on 3rd April 2008 said, “We can think of the great humanitarian enterprises which bring relief to those who are suffering - the Red Cross, the Red Crescent or Islamic Relief, CAFOD and Christian Aid, Hindu Aid and Sewa International, World Jewish Relief and Khalsa Aid - all the charities which draw inspiration from the teachings of the different faiths.”.

To be quoted by a person of the eminence that of former-PM of Britain did not happen without such a measure of Sewa offered by the volunteers of Sewa International in Britain as well as in other parts of the world. Starting from oblivion just less than a decade’s period, little did the world comprehend that a plush tradition of “service without self” flourished for centuries together and the modern manifestation of this tradition continues with the same spirit even through the era of globalization. The ostensible elite of modern India did not have the time & patience to understand what one of the tallest personalities of last century Mahatma Gandhi tried to impress

on the masses. Mahatma Gandhi went from city to city, village to village collecting funds for the Charkha Sangh (an organization he established to promote cottage industry producing raw cotton yarn). During one of his tours he addressed a meeting in Orissa. After his speech a poor old woman got up. She was bent with age, her hair was grey and her clothes were in tatters. The volunteers tried to stop her, but she fought her way to the place where Gandhiji was sitting, "I must see him", she insisted and walked up to Gandhiji and touched his feet. Then from the folds of her sari she brought out a copper coin and placed it at his feet. Gandhiji picked up the copper coin and put it away carefully. The Charkha Sangh funds were under the charge of Jamnalal Bajaj. He asked Gandhiji for the coin but Gandhiji refused. "I keep cheques worth thousands of rupees for the Charkha Sangh", Jamnalal Bajaj said laughingly "yet you won't trust me with a copper coin." "This copper coin is worth much more than those thousands", Gandhiji said. "If a man has several lakhs and he gives away a thousand or two, it doesn't mean much. But this coin was perhaps all that the poor woman possessed. She gave me all she had. That was very generous of her. What a great sacrifice she made. That is why I value this copper coin more than a crore of rupees." The Hindu tradition encouraged every citizen irrespective of her/his wealth accrued to help others and the indigent persons like the old lady who struggled to reach Gandhiji to join hands offering whatsoever belonged to her, caring little for her own welfare. Since Vedic period this tradition is abundant of such instances and quotes, and find mention everywhere, whether recorded or unrecorded. The paradox that the inheritors of this tradition have gleefully and even might be conveniently, have elapsed this tradition is certainly a painful verity.

Yet, we find that a soul or two, or even many together, extend a helping hand to the needy and the distressed that too without any expectation whatsoever, prepared to sacrifice one's interest, nay, risking one's life. That the society, in midst of modern hankering for acquiring boundless bounty, still in continuum produces such categorical sacrifices devoid of any name - fame or record, has a memo to be understood. We heartily appreciate the contribution of the commoners who try to give away whatever little he can out of his/her smaller earnings and the number of such people is in appreciable number.

Serving the people in distress during calamities deserves a special happens cross the boundaries with expanse turning into proximities, the yearning to reach out to the people in distress scoring over the physical distances, not only in terms of funds but volunteers of all ages, physically joining in the relief & rehabilitation.

However, the pain felt through each and every moment does not go unhindered for Sewa International. Where there is a need, there is "Sewa International!" Supporting the good cause is a passion with it. The modern challenges that the world and particularly developing countries like Bharat (India) face, need to be tackled vigorously, and SI did not shirk away from this momentous task, sharing the responsibility with partner organizations.

Reading through the following pages, one can understand how a philosophy has been put to practice - a "vision in action" - like scenario. We are quite aware that this is just the beginning and what has been achieved is not sufficient. However, the precious virtue called 'voluntarism' is something that we value most and sincerely feel that this be preserved even in the age of 'professionalism.'

It was news to H.E. The Governor of Louisiana Kathleen Blanco that more than 500 volunteers of Sewa USA and Hindu Swyamsevak Sangh registered themselves for relief work during Katrina hurricane relief in USA. These 500 expatriates had no reservations in applying for leave from their jobs and serve the cyclone affected people. She was delighted that 500 volunteers from among the Indian expatriate community had already enrolled as volunteers and served the Katrina affected and also raised funds for the relief program.

The success-story & growth of Sewa International that is elaborated in the following pages did not happen without challenges. The propaganda against Sewa International and its associated organizations consumed much positive energy that proved useful for serving the downtrodden as the allegations were rejected by the society and some government agencies later on. Our supporters, who keep supporting financially, extended their hand to fend off the allegations and we appreciate their support in those testing times.

True to the motto that we proudly display, “Sewa hi Paramo Dharmah”, Sewa International assures the supporters and readers that serving the communities without any discrimination as eulogized in the motto-serving others selflessly is the highest form of Dharma - that we would continue to tread this path we have so fondly chosen.

As Swami Vivekananda explains:-

***“The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted let there be your God, know that service to these people alone is the highest religion.”***

We thank all of those who have been contributing to this noble cause in whatever they can.

The famous Jordanian philosopher Khalil Jibran says-

***“There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.***

***And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.***

***And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue;***

***They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.***

***Through the hands of such as these God speaks. And from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.***

***It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding;***

***And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving.***

***And is there thought you would withhold?***

***And you shall some day be given;***

***Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours and not your inheritors”.***

We thanks Just. (Retd.) Shri Jitendra Vir Ji Gupta, the first Chairman of SI Bharat who guided the organization in initial stages and provided encouragement at every step. His untimely demise has been a great loss for us. Ma. Shri Suryanarayana Rao, the founder author of the trust has inspired all the activists of SI by guiding and engaging them in the Sewa activities and still continues to do so in the capacity of a member of international Advisory Committee.

We Also thanks to all of those who have been contributing to this noble cause in whatever way they can.

--Shyam (K.G.) Parande

## **Chapter 1.**

**I Sewa International in Action: Ongoing Projects** *Building self reliant society is a challenge for Sewa activists. "Once a beneficiary always remains a beneficiary" is the thumb rule for everyone around. SI stands out differently on this issue having turned beneficiaries into benefactors and the beneficiaries start serving the society as well*

### **1. Empowering Women Through Micro Enterprise Development in Kutch, Gujarat.**



#### **Handicraft women artisans at work.**

The economy of Kutch suffered a severe blow on account of the devastating earthquake on 26th of January 2001. Clusters of industries, households and cottage industries disappeared, not just disrupted. The earthquake also had major adverse impact on the rich traditional handicrafts of the region. After the devastating earthquake, about 19,000 handicraft artisans in the district of Kutch were left in the lurch; the death of about 20,000 cattle caused heavy loss of earnings of many people. The most important challenge faced by the developmental organizations was that of restoring their lives and livelihood.

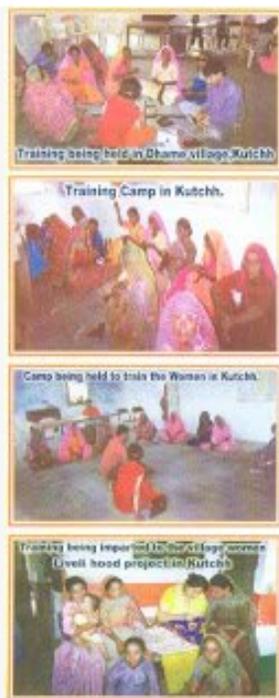


As a joint initiative of Sewa International and Centre for Bharatiya Marketing Development (CBMD), supported by India Development & Relief Fund USA, a project on “Micro Credit to Micro Enterprise Development through Entrepreneurship Development Training” at Kutch, Gujarat was envisaged and initiated. The year 2005 was designated as the Year of micro enterprise development by the United Nations and this is why SI launched this project in the same year. Remarkable achievements have been made so far in the last three years journey.



### **Training Workshop and Products.**

**Project Operational Area:** Sewa International & CBMD are working in Kutch district of Gujarat with its offices and Staffs located at Bhuj and Lodai. The project is operational in 10 villages of Bhuj taluka, 5 villages of Rapar taluka and 3 Villages of Nakhatrana Taluka of Kutch District, selected on the basis of level of poverty and backwardness. Some of the villages are Lodai, Dhrang, Khengarpar, Kotey, Zikadi, Mota Varnora, Bhirindiyara, Hodka, and Sanosara of Bhuj Taluka. Navi Dhamay, Vyaar Village of Nakhatrana Taluka and Gagodar, Khirai, Bidada of Rapar taluka.



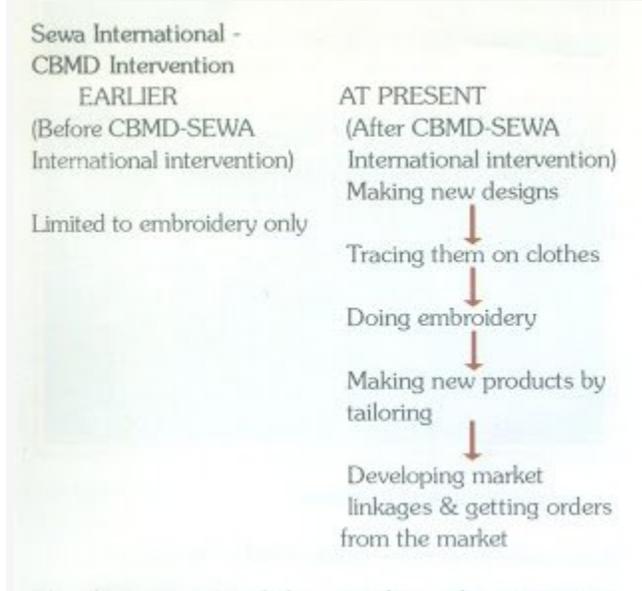
The selected self help groups after initial training have further been clubbed into a producer group. Each group has its own skills and capabilities. The whole group is divided according to their expertise. Each group takes care of procuring raw materials, tracing on the cloth, Inspection while working, quality checking, packaging etc. At present, 150 women are directly & 150 indirectly associated with the project. Rise in income of the beneficiaries could be seen clearly from the amount of work they do presently. Earlier they didn't get proper returns for their embroidery work because it had become out of fashion. After the proper training through this program they have now bulk orders from the exporters and wholesale dealers and are receiving reasonable profit for their work. A woman earns about Rs. 1000 - Rs. 1500 per month by doing embroidery work apart from attending their daily chores at home. Three of the SHGs so far have availed loan of Rs. 25,000 from Kutch Gramin Bank & all the three groups have paid back their loan within stipulated time. Apart from embroidery work 10 women are now experts in tailoring and are engaged in production. Likewise, SI has developed other producer groups in other villages too.

#### **Objectives Achieved Through.....**

**“Training Programs”:** The main objective of these training programs was up-gradation of technology and skill of artisans in this sector so as to improve their efficiency, productivity and their income. The trainings were on design development, colour combination, market friendly products etc. The impact of Training Programs could be seen easily in the work quality of beneficiaries as compared to the day when SI had started this project. “Capacity Building & Legal Literacy Workshops” had a deep impact on the beneficiaries as they helped them to develop their hidden talent & skills.

**Capacity Building Workshops at Gagodar, Lodai, Keshav Nagar, Hodka, and Sanosara** showed an active participation of the beneficiaries. “Exhibition Exposure” helped the beneficiaries to provide marketing linkages by way of connecting to the customers,

eliminating middlemen and providing direct technical, financial and marketing facilities, creating a market network for their products and developing a proper enterprise for them. SI organized exclusive exhibitions at Hyderabad, Thane, Mumbai and Delhi to provide the artisans an opportunity to explore the immense opportunities for their overall growth and development, information on current trends and likely changes in the future. Exposure to four “Swadeshi Melas” helped them to know the present market trend and demand and to produce accordingly. Apart from these activities CBMD-SI in association with Rural Technology Institute, Gujarat organized three training programs at Lodai for the skill up-gradation of the artisans.



The above mentioned diagram shows the progressive working process of women employees in the last three year. Apart from their skill up-gradation, their socio-economic condition has also improved.

**2. Promotion of Alternative Energy Sources: Bio diesel:** It is cheap and renewable alternative energy source. There are about 20 species of trees whose seeds can yield acceptable Straight Vegetable Oil (SVO) and of these, Pongamia (Karanj) has many advantages.

Recently, Dr. Robin Joseph Abraham of Sewa International, Delhi traveled to rural tribal villages of Jharkhand, where Karanj trees are found in large numbers. His aim was to create awareness among the tribal people about bio-diesel as an alternative fuel. The response of the tribal people was very encouraging and it was decided to take this movement to more villages in Jharkhand and Orissa, two least developed states of Bharat.

**Advantages of Bio-Diesel:**

- Bio-Diesel plants are found in abundance in many parts of the country and can be grown with minimum investment.
- A large number of people can be benefited by this.
- Bio-diesel is safer to store (less inflammable).
- It requires no new technology to run engines.
- Bio-diesel plants do not release much carbon dioxide.
- Bio-diesel plants have a long shelf life.

- g. Bio-diesel suites to the engines.
- h. Bio-diesel is biodegradable.

Apart from promotion of alternative energy sources among people, Sewa International is engaged in providing consultancy through media and meetings with an objective to bring this issue to the mainstream.

### **3. Sewa International in Quest of Alternative Energy**

Energy crisis world over is a challenge, especially in the developing and underdeveloped countries. While the energy sources are drying up, experts are looking for alternative and eco-friendly sources of generating energy. Searching for such alternative energy source, Sewa International decided to put in efforts for relatively unknown technique of Biomass Gasifier. Active cooperation of Shri Naresh Sharma from USA and aided by Sewa USA & IDRF USA, the dream of generating power locally has turned into reality. Karansinghji Ki Khedi, an obscure remote village in Bhilwada district of Rajasthan with a population of less than thousand, became an ideal venue for the experiment. People of the village responded positively to the inspiring call by Shri Rameshwarji.

Dr. Robin Abraham of Sewa International did the whole exercise well to convince the concerned. Officials of Ministry for New & Renewable Energy Sources recognized the importance of the project instantaneously with an offer of subsidy.

The first phase of a bio-mass gasifier project was inaugurated by the local MP Shri V. P. Singh at Karansinghji ki Khedi in Bhilwada district of Rajasthan on 16th of October, 2007. The project has been setup by the Sewa International with the help of Madhav Gau Gigyam Kendra, Bhilwada, Rajasthan. The fuel source for this gasifier is in the form of wood stalks. This village has a population of about 500 and 90 hut-dwellings. But sufficient electrical power was not available for crop production and many families were forced to migrate to the cities in search of livelihood during the dry season. Biomass gasifier has changed the situation. Migration to other places has come to a naught. They are now willing to engage themselves in agricultural activities in dry season also. The wild Babool, which grows extensively in the region is most suitable to be the fuel for the gasifier and an area of about 300 acres was earmarked for babool extraction. The entire project is divided into two phases. The first phase stands completed with gasifier commissioned. In order to reduce further dependence on wood, phase-II of the project would include a bio-gas plant and a briquette making machine. Some of the crop residues which are burnt in the field can be mixed with the output of bio-gas plant and briquetted for fuel into the gasifier. There was an overwhelming response from the farming community. Involvement of the villagers and their satisfaction is an important indicator for this project. Other factors that encourage SI are the number of queries from all around to know and understand the technology, and the offer by the concerned Ministry to extend subsidy to similar projects in more villages. Sewa International's resolve for sustainable development is amply proved by the Biomass Gasifier that generates energy to run 4 motor/ pump-sets of 5HP for irrigation in Karansinghji Ki Khedi.

### **4. Seemajan Chhatravas - Serving Border Villages of Rajasthan.**

The border regions of Rajasthan face multiple problems such as drought, illiteracy and even problems like untouchability amongst the castes. The Seemajan Chhatravas

(Hostel) was started with mere 10 students in the year 1991 in the premises of Adarsh Vidya Mandir. Presently, it has 42 students staying in the Chhatravas.



#### **Selection procedure and achievements:**

1. Students should belong to the villages and towns situated on the Rajasthan borders.
2. Students must be from economically and socially backward families.
3. The students are selected through an entrance examination and interview

#### **Achievements of the project-**

For the first time a student of Jogi Tribe has passed his High school examination by staying in this Hostel. He has set an example for other students of his tribe to follow suit.

Chaohatan block situated in the area of Rann of Kutch is largely inhabited by Koli Tribes. Some students of this tribe are now pursuing higher studies who have been alumni of this hostel. Establishing bond with the families of the students and their villages. The villagers of these villages get to know various on-going activities of the area and these people are now motivated to participate in the relief activities in the famine struck area and take part in developmental activities. The sense of patriotism is imbibed in the students, staying in the hostel. These students influence their parents on similar lines and the parents are also ready to join hands with army units located along the Indo- Pak border.

**5. Vocational Training Center for the Urban Youth in Delhi:** A Vocational Training Center was run by the Sewa International in association with Sewa Bharati, Delhi between 2001-2004 for the youth & women especially from the slums, at Jhandewala. Learning various technical trades like electric & electronic courses, TV repairs and tailoring classes for the women folk benefited more than 950 people. Several trained students have started small businesses, in the area of their specialization. SI is delighted that many of the pass outs from this training centre spend time to volunteer for the center to achieve its mission of self reliance.

**6. A Bal Sanskar Kendra in Delhi-** Young mind is the most impressionable and the values and habits that are inculcated at an early age help build up a personality. This scheme was implemented in Delhi between 1999-2000 with the support of volunteer youths who spare two to three hours in a day for this noble cause. Kids were brought together at some convenient place in slums and backward villages for imparting moral education. SI succeeded in getting 500 children admitted to regular school through these centers who otherwise could never go to school.

#### **7. Health at Doorstep: Mobile Medical Van**

Mithapasvaria is one of the 14 villages rehabilitated by Sewa International in Gujarat post earthquake. After handing over the houses to the beneficiaries, SI deputed a Doctor, who has been provided a residential accommodation in the village itself.



#### **Key Handing-over ceremony at Mithapasavalia**

Since 2001 when earthquake occurred, a mobile medical van has been operational serving 21 villages around Mithapasvaria on a regular basis. Free treatment and medicines are being provided to the patients.

**8. Jivaram Memorial Medical Centre in Delhi: Dispensing Free Health Care to The Poor:** Jivaram Memorial Medical Centre was started in April 2007 at Sarai Rohilla (near Daya Basti) in Delhi by a group of local activists of Sewa International.

In the beginning, a survey was also conducted by several local karyakartas including Shri Achyut Pathak, Shri Jagat Pal, Shri Avadhbihari and Shri Prahlad for the identification of operational area, resources, infrastructure etc. A local businessman of North Delhi Shri Ramesh Ralhan provided rent-free space in his house for this centre. This allopathic medical centre runs twice a week (every Tuesday and Saturday) with the help of Dr. Yogendra Singh, an experienced medical practitioner and committed Swayamsevak. Medicines are provided free of cost to the patients. About 20-25 patients visit the Centre for treatment on Tuesdays and Saturdays respectively. The Centre dispenses medicines of Rs. 10,000/- per month.



*Dr. Yogendra Singh prescribing medicines to the patients at Jivaram Memorial Medical Centre run by S.I. Delhi*

## **Dr. Yogendra Singh prescribing medicines to the patients at Jivaram Memorial Medical Centre run by S.I. Delhi**

### **9. Empowering Youth With the Spirit of Sewa.**

Sewa is probably one virtue that attracts youth in good number. On the other hand most of the voluntary bodies experience paucity of human resources.

There are two programs that we are looking at, one aiming to draw youth from abroad, provide them with opportunity of serving while the other aiming at the local youth from abroad, provide them with opportunity of serving while the other aiming at the local youth and encouraging them to serve the society. Yuwa for Sewa is drawing youth from abroad to Pune while Youth for Sewa is working in Bangalore.

‘Youth for Seva’ started in 2007 by a few volunteers who felt the need for a platform for the youth with strong desire to serve the underprivileged and the needy. The project is aimed at inspiring youth to volunteer and to connect them to the grassroots NGOs which are selected on the basis of their track-record and ability to efficiently utilize the time and talent of the volunteers. ‘Youth for Seva’ is a project of the ‘Hindu Seva Pratisthan’, which has been in the forefront of social service for nearly three decades in the state of Karnataka.

‘Youth for Sewa’ conducts orientation program for student volunteers before deputing them to various projects or to organizations. An orientation program was held on 12th September, 2007 which received overwhelming response. 84 girls registered for the program which was organized in collaboration with the NSS chapter of a local college. On the 29th September, more than 50 students from another college registered for volunteering. ‘Youth for Seva’ is working hard to engage more NGOs and initiate more projects in the near future.

“Yuwa for Sewa” Exposes Youth to tangible Indian Life. Six University students from USA and Europe have participated and completed their terms of 3 months of voluntary service in one or the other project in and around Pune in Maharashtra till now. Two American students also have worked at Pune in Maharashtra. Here is a comment from Sarah Elswik that speaks for her program in India. She writes, “So much to say about this village visit. My focus of study in anthropology provided with the facts about the life of villagers of a tribal group. But this field visit provided the opportunity to see, smell, taste, hear and learn first hand what tribal life is about. I thought it was a chance

of a life time, and the family was so generous. Of course, but I also experienced cultural shock, and missing home because it is so different. I know that tribal life is a different matter because they are so close to nature that I'm envious, and so kind to everyone. Life is so simple in my terms in the village, but they ask for nothing more because really they have what the basic human needs are, which are food, water and shelter. I have a much different perspective from this visit.”

Responding to interactive session during the initial orientation program Katherine Pierson writes: “I liked these sessions because we got to actually leave the flat and go out to see where these people work and what they do. They were easily able to show us pictures, power point presentations, etc. because they had the resources right there in their office. These sessions were really good because they taught us specifically about what we would be doing on our individual projects, and allowed us to ask questions to better understand them.

**10. Empowering Youths of Jammu & Kashmir:** Sewa international took up the challenging task of empowering the youths of trouble torn state Jammu and Kashmir in the year 2004. It opened a computer centre at Gopalpora, in the Badgam district, initially with two computers and seven students. The computer centre was named as Madina Computer centre. SI made frequent visits to the project site to bolster confidence among the students, as it rarely had any presence in the valley earlier. Finally, its tireless effort yielded a good result. Out of the 22 boys and girls who passed out last year, five have got Government job in various Govt. institutions and nine of them have got placement in good private companies. Now the local people have requested for a bigger institute with more space, as large number of students are approaching for admission every year in spite of SI's own constraints.

**11. Survey of Voluntary and Non-governmental organizations:**

Sewa International conducted a survey in the year 2000, of voluntary as well as non-governmental organizations that have been working in various fields and in various geographical locations throughout the country. Many of these organizations have offered yeomen service to the society and established norms for such organizations. Sewa International, in an effort to connect to such organizations, surveyed the activity of these organizations and has prepared a data of their activities, personnel, trustees and their publications. Till now, SI has surveyed more than 700 organizations throughout all the states of India and has gathered all the data available for these numbers of organizations including their printed materials. The available data at Sewa office has helped many of our grass root organizations as well as the donor willing to sponsor a project or activity by providing specific information in minimum time.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Relief and Rehabilitation**

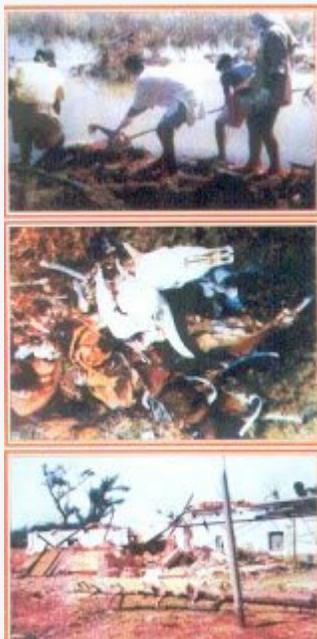
Some questions are always raised when volunteers responding to a calamity - whether natural or man made-act all by themselves, without being asked by anyone to act or without any benefit whatsoever in their mind. What exactly inspires these volunteers? The Answer is very clear and simple. They draw inspiration from our deep-rooted culture and civilization.

Sewa International has been a privileged organisation so as to say, getting more and

more people to join hands in this noble cause and many a times from most unexpected quarters. Here are some of the incidents and experiences.

**Gujarat Cyclone -September 1998** The cyclone hit some coastal districts of Gujarat in September 1998 killing over 3000 people and causing an estimated loss of over Rs. 3000 crores, apart from the loss of livelihood. Sewa International took up the task of relief instantaneously with the support of local volunteers and provided assistance by distributing food, necessary household goods and medicines. As immediate relief, a mobile medical van was pressed into action, which catered to the victims of more than 30 villages around Jamnagar district headquarter by visiting on regular basis with a team of doctors, paramedical staff & medicines. Sewa International UK raised funds for this project through public appeal. Bhatia village near Jamnagar was taken up for partial rehabilitation as part of the village was left shattered due to the fierce cyclone. Sewa International took up the task of developing all infrastructure for village community like satsang hall, primary school, 3 community halls along with village gate, construction of roads, and the crematorium. The best achievement of the project was developing a new team of volunteers drawn from the village itself which had effectively worked for the rehabilitation program. The inspired volunteers of the village have succeeded in changing outlook of the whole village.

**Orissa Super Cyclone- 1999** A super cyclone hit coastal areas of Orissa state on 29th of October 1999, devastating 12 districts, amounting to the loss of over 9500 lives and leaving over 5000 people injured. Over 3.55 lakh cattle deaths were reported.



Sewa International with its affiliate Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (UBSS) responded to the catastrophe and over 350 volunteers were rushed to rescue the affected victims. The immediate tasks involved removing debris, extricating injured, removal of dead

bodies, assisting hospital authorities in nursing the victims, distribution of food, water and relief supplies, setting up tents to provide temporary shelters, trauma recovery and overall comforting the bereaved families including counseling.

**The toughest job no one wanted to do.**



*The toughest job no one wanted to do*



*Temporary structures being erected in Orissa*

### **Temporary structures being erected in Orissa.**

SI's volunteers assisted the army personnel and the Government officials in execution and distribution of relief materials as the whole machinery was in disarray. Roads and the communication systems were badly affected in the coastal region making the rescue and relief a daunting task. Nevertheless its volunteers dared to reach the affected areas and serve them.

Over 50 mass feeding camps were set up in Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack and Puri districts which were worst affected and served free food to over 10,000 people everyday for almost a month. This relief activity was funded by India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF), USA.

### **Mass feeding camps**





Home kits being distributed.

S.I.'s volunteers assisted the survivors in erecting over 3000 thatched houses as part of rehabilitation activities and built a residential school at Gatirautpatna, Cuttack district to educate the children who were either orphaned or who had lost their bread earners.

**Helping the Kargil War (1999) Victims** Kargil war, forced on Bharat from across the border, resulted in the displacement of many families and rendered many orphans or destitute in the border districts of Jammu & Kashmir state. Many families lost their means of livelihood in those districts. We salute the brave soldiers of Bharat who sacrificed their lives for protecting the Bharatiya border.



## Kargil war & militancy affected people in Jammu & Kashmir.

Sewa International with the aid from India Development & Relief Fund (IDRF), USA rehabilitated the injured military personnel in the Kargil war and other affected personnel due to the militancy in Kashmir after the Kargil war.



Financial assistance to victims or families of the victims for setting up their own business was provided. Air Marshal R.C. Bajpai, on behalf of Sewa International honored 53 disabled personnel. He appreciated the sacrifice of the military personnel and presented them shawls, certificates of their heroic deeds and monetary aid. Relatives of the war victims and the injured were invited to Jammu on 18th January 2000 and were commemorated by Air Marshal Bajpai. The beneficiaries were overwhelmed by the social solidarity when they understood that people from NRI/PIO community have extended this help.

**Shawls, certificates and monetary aid for the ex-servicemen being presented.**



SI contributed Rs. one lac (Rs.1,00,000/-) to Sena Sahyog Sangathan, to set up Shaurya Prashikshan Kendra at Purkhoo, Jammu district. This project was also funded by the India Development & Relief Fund (IDRF), USA. This centre trains people in civil defense in those border areas and helps the victims of terrorism. In addition, 48 children belonging to war victim families were identified and adopted for providing education under the Education Aid scheme.

**Drought Relief in Rajasthan - 2001** Followed by continuous dry spell, Rajasthan experienced a severe drought in the year 2001. Sewa International started relief activities near Jodhpur by providing medical assistance in far flung villages close to the Indo-Pak borders. Temporary cattle sheds were erected in the affected region to provide fodder to the cattle. Veterinary assistance was also provided while supplying drinking water for the people as well as the cattle of the area. Tractors with water tanks were deployed to carry the water to the water starved villages.



One of the worst droughts of independent India



Drinking water being carried on a Donkey



One of the worst Draughts Drinking water being carried on on record Donkey



This activity continued for a period of three months to tide over the prevailing drought conditions. With the aid from India Development & Relief Fund, USA and Sewa International, UK two hostels for boys were started in the Jodhpur district, one in Chauhattan with 28 Boys and the other at Lalsagar with 20 Boys with a view to provide good education to meritorious students drawn from various villages along the Indo-Pakistan border as these villages were affected by the drought. All these villages along the Indo-Pak border are devoid of good educational facility and many even do not have a school facility.

Flood Relief in West Bengal - 2001

Flood is common phenomena witnessed almost every successive year in West Bengal but the flood of 2001 swept extensive areas. 19 districts were engulfed due to the high rising flood water, bringing the life to stand still and devastating lives and property worth millions of Rupees.

Thousands of huts & small houses perished due to the floods.

### Relief Activities

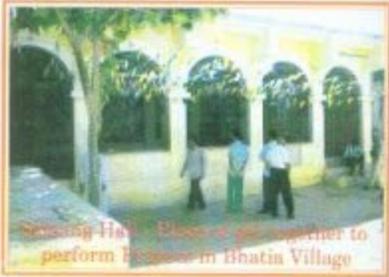
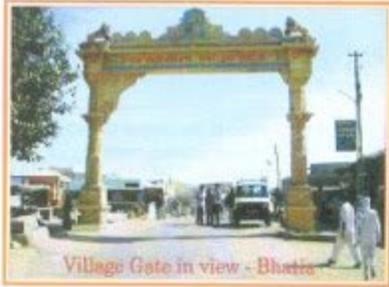


Sewa International was swift in action to attend to the affected people and started distributing relief materials like food, cloths, utensils in the affected areas. A mobile medical van was immediately pressed into action to cater to the health needs of the affected people, which operated in and around the city of Kolkata covering the slums & nearby shantytowns. Free check-ups & distribution of medicines was immediately taken up. Health camps were conducted in different districts with the help of team of Doctors. Children were worst affected due to the floods washing off their text books and note books.

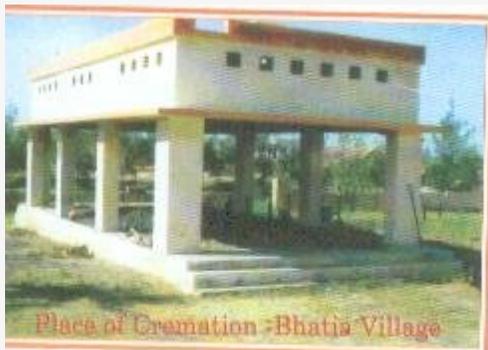


Sewa International through the local partner organization Sewa Bharati, West Bengal distributed free text books in the 19 affected districts to students of standard 5 to 10. This program continued for next 5 years supporting more children every successive year by distributing the old books collected from the pass outs & distributed to new students, in addition to the new sets of books.

**The Killer Earthquake in Gujarat - 2001** The 2001 Gujarat earthquake was reportedly the most devastating earthquake in the history of modern India. It occurred on January 26, 2001, which coincided with the 51st Republic Day celebration. The epicenter of earthquake was Bhuj, Gujarat state. Measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale, the quake killed more than 20,000 people, injured another 55,000 and rendered about a million people homeless across Gujarat.



Because of its intensity and location, this quake was dreadfully destructive in terms of lives lost and damage to property. The quake destroyed thousands of houses in Bhuj, several schools and hospitals. Considerable damage occurred also at Bhachau. In Ahmedabad more than 50 multistory buildings collapsed and thousands of buildings developed cracks. The quake destroyed 75% of Kutch. Total property damage was estimated at \$5.5 billion. Sewa Bharati Gujarat aided by Sewa International sprang into action to provide immediate relief to those affected, by conducting mass feeding camps, opening health centers, clearing of the debris, collecting the dead bodies and performing the last rites and over all distribution of essential commodities of day to day use like cloths, lanterns, candles, match boxes, food, plastic buckets, mugs and tarpaulin sheets etc.



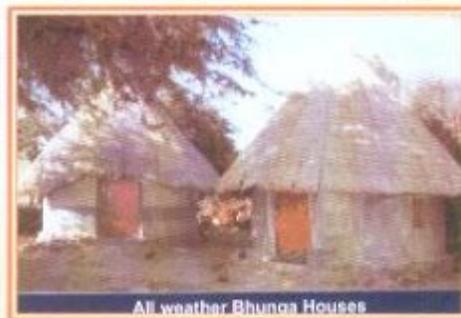
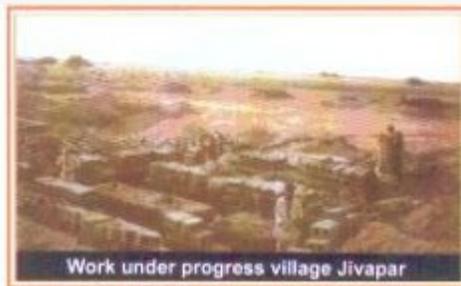
A temporary hospital named Dr. Hedgewar Hospital was made operational in Bhuj treating for the victims of earthquake, which had expert team of Doctors from neighboring state Maharashtra. Many injured patients were operated at the hospital. Apart from this, two mobile medical vans started operating immediately after the

earthquake to cater to patients by visiting one village after another and providing medical assistance at their doorsteps.

There was a dire need to provide a roof over the head of the victims as the houses had collapsed due to the earthquake. 85 Bhoongas (Kutch traditional houses) each costing approximately Rs. 40.000/= were taken up for construction. The hamlets where Bhoongas were constructed are- 13 in Juna, 6 in Sadhara, 5 in Kharda, 14 in Dinara, 22 in Daddar and 25 in Andho, all in the Bhuj Taluka of Kutch.

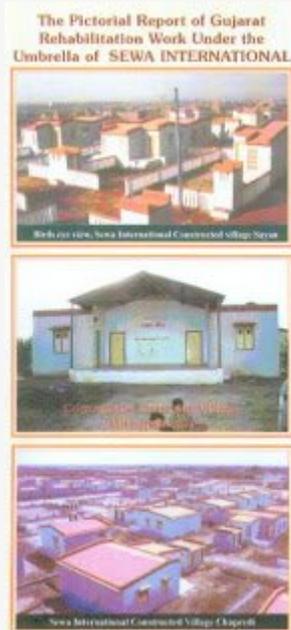


**Shri Shanti Bhai Mistry, Chairman, S.I., U.K. with an ambulance van in Jamnagar.** Sewa International in association with Sewa Bharati took up the task of rehabilitating 14 villages completely with other infrastructures like school, community center, health center, water facility, drainage facility, boundary wall, electrification, main gate, compound wall, cremation ground and chabutra (common place) & bird feeding place-Chotra. More than 1400 residential houses were constructed through this rehab program.



Apart from this, 62 new schools were built in the affected areas & 264 schools were repaired which had been damaged due to the earthquake.

## The Pictorial Report of Gujarat Rehabilitation Work Under the Umbrella of SEWA INTERNATIONAL



## Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Work:



### Mass feeding camp

Tsunami 2004 was probably the worst disaster hitting the coastal states of Bharat and other countries on 26th December 2004. Several thousands of people perished and millions were affected across Asia and Africa. Next only to Indonesia, Sri Lanka was the worst hit with over 50,000 deaths. Devastation in Tamil Nadu was no less with over 20,000 casualties and widespread destruction across the coastal districts. Volunteers from Seva Bharathi Tamil Nadu, Jan Sankshema Samithi, Vivekanand Kendra, Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram supported by Seva International had started massive relief works in affected regions right from December 26, 2004 when the disaster struck the Indian

coastline. In all these regions, 5824 volunteers were engaged in relief works. In the worst hit state Tamil Nadu, 125 relief camps were set up distributing relief materials to more than 25,000 families. In Andhra Pradesh where the damage to the means of employment (like fishing) was more as compared to the loss of lives, fishing nets to 5000 fishermen and boats to 300 of them were donated. Financial assistance for repairing of fishing nets and diesel engines that are used in boats was provided. Temporary shelters were erected for more than 3500 families. In Kerala, more than 5000 persons got fishing nets, boats etc. A team of 20 doctors was also engaged in relief works. In order to help traumatized victims, 30 counselors served in Tamil Nadu alone.

**Rehabilitation Programme for Tsunami-Affected States:** A multi million investment rehabilitation program was chalked out in all the states which were affected by the Tsunami. Rs. 7 crores have already been spent on various relief and rehabilitation work in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and union territory of Andaman and Nicobar. Through the rehabilitation program 210 houses were constructed in the Keechankuppam village of Tamil Nadu and were handed over to the beneficiaries on 6th July 2006. In the state of Kerala 20 houses were constructed under this program. The other major projects taken up were the construction of a damaged temple at Poompuhar and an Anbu Illam (a home for destitute children) in Nagapattinam district of T.N. and vocational training centers and a Vocational training center at Nagarkovil & Simlivillai in Kanyakumari district. Some other projects like running a hospital are in the pipeline.



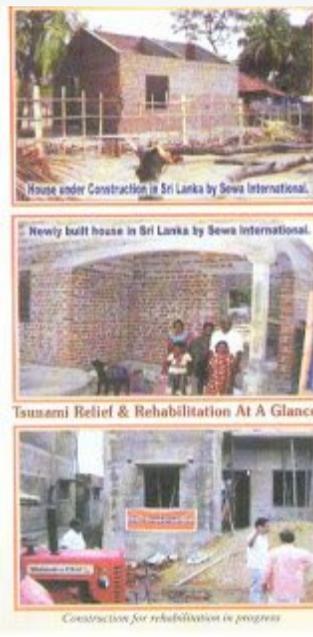
In the state of Andhra Pradesh, SI in partnership with Sewa Bharathi Andhra Pradesh, has started a School on wheels in the Nellore district and a Mobile medical van in Kakinada district of Andhra Pradesh. The school on wheel operates six days a week traveling to far flung hamlets with a teacher and educational kits providing education to children in their own village. Everyday the vehicle covers three places and in total of 18 places in a weeks time.

The mobile medical van operates in the Kakinada district on a regular basis. It serves over 30 villages of the district providing health care with the help of a Doctor and an assistant.

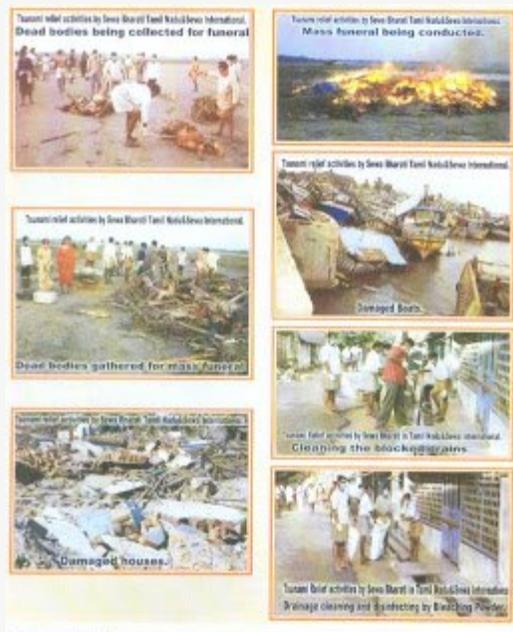
### **Sri Lanka- A New Initiative**

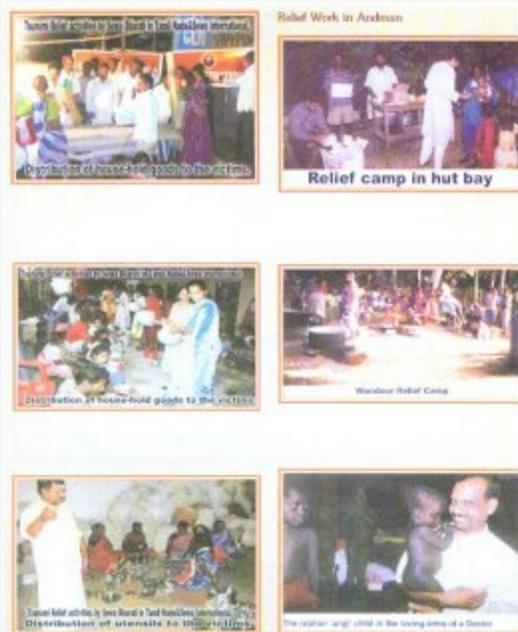
Sri Lanka was the worst affected country due to Tsunami killing more than 50000 people. SI was quick in reaching the Tsunami affected areas in that country providing succor. It was a challenge of establishing a unit in Sri Lanka while simultaneously providing the relief to the Tsunami affected. It is worth mentioning here that SI's

volunteers did the magnificent job on both fronts with proficiency. Relief was provided to the affected through 14 relief centers in the two districts of Batticaloa & Ampara and consequently took up construction of 100 permanent houses as rehabilitation task. 76 houses are completed in the first phase, out of which on the 9th of February, 2006, 10 beneficiaries were handed over the keys of the newly constructed houses by the Lord Mayor of Coventry Shri Ram Lakha. Remaining houses were also handed over to the beneficiaries in November 2006.



### Tsunami Relief & Rehabilitation :





## Initial Relief Activities

- Rescued 115 people from the jaws of death.
- Cleared about 1800 corpses out of the 3378 deaths in Nagapattinam alone.
- Conducted 68 medical camps in 13 affected districts of Tamil Nadu.
- Distributed 93 tons of Rice, 10 tons of Dal and 16 tons of Vegetables.
- Supplied 5,00,000 litres of bottled drinking water.
- Offered 10,000 blankets and 18,000 mats.
- Mobilized 5524 male and 300 female volunteers.
- Performed last rites with dignity for over 1000 unidentified corpses.
- Mobilized 75 Doctors and 5 Ambulances for the medical relief work.
- Operated 15 relief centers on 24 hours basis for nearly three weeks.
- Provided food to 30,000 people daily for fifteen days.

## Initial Rehabilitation Activities

- Providing Family kit containing the most essential items for survival to 26,860 families.
- Counseling sessions offered to 113 villages for trauma recovery.
- Special counseling sessions for women and children.
- 1200 Temporary houses constructed at Keechankuppam village by the third week of January 2005.
- Ganga- Mata Yatra conducted from Chennai to Kanyakumari to restore the confidence of the fisher folks and enable them to venture to the sea.
- Number of tuition classes, tailoring and computer classes in the affected area.
- Helping men and women earn decent income by providing them livelihood kits.
- Donation of fishing nets to fishermen.
- Repairs of over 300 boats that were damaged by the giant tsunami waves.

- Erecting a Memorial in memory of the victims of Tsunami.
- Repairing of damaged houses in Andanam & Nicobar Islands.

### Major Rehabilitation Projects

- Construction of 400 permanent houses at Keechankuppam village in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.
- Construction of damaged temple at Poompuhar, in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.
- Construction of Vocational training center at Seemlivilai in Kanyakumari district of TN.
- Construction of Anbu-Illam (Orphanage) & Vocational Training center at Nagerkovil, in anyakumari district of TN.
- Construction of 51 houses in Alappuzha district of Kerala.
- Drinking Water Project at Maya Bazar, Edavanna Kadu in Ernakulam Dist., Kerala
- Mobile Medical Van at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh
- Construction of Girl's Hostel to accommodate 100 students at Bakultala in Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar
- Construction of 100 Permanent Houses in Ampara and Batticaloa Dist., Sri Lanka.

### Present Status of Major Rehabilitation Projects Undertaken

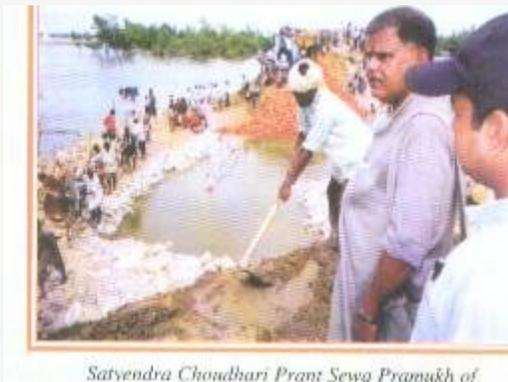
- Vocational Training Center at Seemlivilai has been completed & was handed over on the 20th of January 2006.
- 26 houses at Allapuzha Dist, Kerala have been completed and were handed over to the beneficiaries by the RSS Sarsanghchalak Man. Shri K.S. Sudarshan in the month of February 2006 and 25 more houses were handed over on 25th September 2006.
- Handing over of 10 Permanent Houses at Pandirupu in Batticaloa Dist., Sri Lanka on 9th February, 2006 and another 67 permanent houses have been completed and were handed over on the 25th of November 2006 by Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary of Sewa International.
- First phase of 248 permanent houses were completed & handed over on the 6th of July 2006.
- Construction of Anbu-Illam & Vocational Training center at Nagerkovil, Kanyakumari, District was completed & handed over on the 13th of July 2006.
- Construction of a Temple at Poompuhar which is situated 70 kms from the district headquarters of Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, completed & handed over on the 9th of February 2007.
- A girls hostel at Bacultala, A&N has been completed in the month of July 2007, and has become functional.

### Free Medical Camp By Sewa-International in North-Eastern States of Bharat



### **Flood Fury of 2004 - Bihar and Assam:**

North Bihar experienced a severe flood in year 2004, paralyzing lives in 20 districts and affecting more than 8,000 villages, leaving 683 dead and 22 million affected. 125 villages were completely washed away from the map of Bihar. One million houses destroyed. The worst affected districts were Shivhar, Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Khagaria, Supaul and Saharsa.



### **Satyendra Choudhari Prant Sewa Pramukh of North-Bihar observing the flood damage in Bihar.**

Volunteers of Sewa Bharati, Seema Jagaran Manch etc. once again proved their mettle by providing unmatched dedicated service. They went all out for rescue and relief of flood victims. In 18 flood affected districts they operated 78 relief camps and 50 medical camps. To coordinate the whole effort 'Badh Peedit Sahayata Samiti' was formed assisted by more than 1200 local volunteers. Each relief camp distributed 2000 to 5000 food packets daily. More than 8 lakh food packets, 281 quintal of food grains, 27000 sets of clothes were distributed. Apart from food, drinking water and medicines were also provided from these camps. 50 medical camps served 400 to 500 patients daily. With the receding flood waters, 400 badly affected families were identified, who were allotted a low cost house each, covering four districts. **The flood fury of Assam**, particularly in Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley, was unprecedented. The pre-monsoon shower during the months of March and April (2004) was very severe and unexpected. Due to this early rainfall all the low-lying areas and wetlands were filled up and rivers were in high spate. Silt deposits in the rivers and heavy rainfall in the catchment areas like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya,

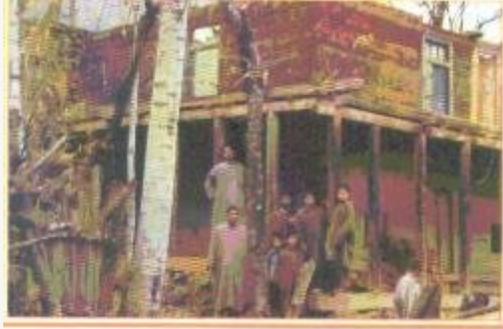
Bhutan and even China caused this unprecedented flood. Another important reason was the unscientific and haphazard construction of the embankments by different agencies of the Government for two decades, blocking the inlet and outlet systems of the wetlands in a number of cases. The intensity of the flood in Assam could be imagined from the fact that 26 out of 27 districts were affected. More than 15 million people were severely affected and displaced and took shelter in 1900 relief camps. At least 300 people died. In as many as 134 places the embankments on the rivers and the tributaries were breached. For around 15 days the rail link between Guwahati and Dibrugarh were completely cut off. The standing crop and the seedlings were completely damaged.

In response to the unprecedented devastation and misery of the flood victims, volunteers of Sewa International, Sewa Bharati, National Medicos Organisation, Akhil Bhartiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Bharat Vikas Parishad and other local organizations jumped into the service of the suffering people with their all might, ignoring the sufferings of their own kith and kin. Hundreds of workers started relief work systematically particularly under the banner of “Seva-Bharati Purvanchal”. Different state units of above mentioned organizations collected relief materials including medicines, baby food, vitamins, food materials, disinfectants, water purifiers, tents etc and sent them by air to Sewa Bharati Purvanchal’s office at Paltan Bazar, Guwahati. SI operated the flood relief centre for a period of six months so that it could serve the maximum number of victims.

**Jammu & Kashmir Earthquake: Relief and Rehabilitation Work:** “Misfortune does not come alone”, a local proverb appropriately matched to Jammu & Kashmir (J & K) State during the earthquake in 2005. While on the one hand, people of J & K stand battered by the terrorism from across the border, causing insecurity, fear and reign of terror, on the other hand, earthquake of 8th October 2005 made life miserable. Nature’s fury in the form of Earthquake, which occurred on 8th October 2005 at 9 a.m., caused havoc on both sides of Line of Control, with an intensity of 7.6 on Richter scale. On the Indian side of LoC about 1500 people died, thousands of houses collapsed and some partially damaged, thousands of people rendered homeless and were exposed to cruelly cold winter. Can death be so cruel, so fatal and so devastating? This was a rare and devastating natural calamity.



Secretary Sewa Bharati, J&K, Sudeshpal with his co-workers launching a mobile medical van.



Relief work: Sewa International in association with Seva



**Relief work:** Sewa International in association with Sewa Bharti J&K responded to the calamity immediately. A team of volunteers was deputed to the worst affected areas of Kashmir division and Poonch in Jammu division. The survey was conducted to assess the human as well as material loss and needs of the suffering populace. Shelter (tents), warm clothes & blankets, food, and medicine were needed most urgently and SI decided to provide these as quickly as possible. Sewa Bharti under the banner of "Shezar" and "Rashtriya Muslim Movement" mustered nearly 40 volunteers to provide medicines, clothes, food, milk and cereals to the indoor patients in Srinagar Medical Hospital, brought from the affected areas. Dr. Manish Tayal a Sewa International volunteer from UK also offered his voluntary services for 15 days in the affected region & conducted six camps treating the patients & providing them free medicines. SI's volunteers worked shoulder to shoulder with military personnel in

providing relief to the villages in the border areas. A team of qualified Doctors/Staff with an ambulance containing medicine worth Rs.50,000/- visited twice in the affected areas in Kashmir covering nearly 37 villages in Titwal & Tangdhar in Uri sector and Kupwara sector, where free medicines and consultation was given to the injured and other patients.



In Poonch sector, Jammu division Sewa International and Sewa Bharti mustered a large number of volunteers who reached the remotest corners, where even the Government agencies could not reach till then and distributed nearly 1500 blankets, utensils, clothes, etc. among the victims of earthquake. Monetary help to 95 families was also provided for getting their damaged houses repaired. The enthusiasm of the volunteers and their courage is worth appreciating here as they were serving in a terrorist-infested area with most hostile climatic conditions. A constant effort of all social voluntary organizations and Government agencies helped in the normalization of the situation. In spite of limited resources, the zeal, enthusiasm, dedication and painstaking spirit of Sewa Bharati & SI's volunteers had encouraged it to add more feather in its rehabilitation work. Hence, Sewa International and Sewa Bharati J & K planned to construct a community hall-cum-rescue center, one school and one dispensary at 3 places in Poonch in Jammu division and 3 places in Kashmir division (Uri, Tangdhar, Kupwara). This construction work was completed by September, 2006. Sewa International had sponsored a mobile medical van immediately after the earthquake to serve earthquake victims. In a hostile terrain where there is hardly any transportation available, a mobile medical van with a team of expert medical professionals catered to the health needs and also served the purpose of carrying relief materials to the affected areas. SI has also undertaken a project for Boys' Hostel construction at Katra, the foot hill town of Mata Vaishno Davi shrine, which would accommodate 50 students drawn from the families of earthquake victims. Presently, 42 inmates have already joined the hostel that is being run in a rented place.

**Sewa International Contributes in the Relief and Rehabilitation of Katrina Hurricane Affected People in Louisiana, USA:** Hurricane Katrina struck on August 23, 2005 and caused devastation along much of the north-central Gulf Coast. The most severe loss of life and property was witnessed in New Orleans, Louisiana, which was flooded as the levee system catastrophically failed, after the storm moved towards inland. At least

1,836 people lost their lives in Hurricane Katrina and in the subsequent floods, making it the deadliest U.S. hurricane.



**Shri K. G. Parande, Secretary, Sewa International handing over a cheque worth \$15,001/- to Louisiana Governor, Kathleen Blanco, also in the picture is Dr. B. K. Agnihotri**

Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco had all praise for the timely efforts of Sewa International USA (Sewa - USA) volunteers in the aftermath of the disastrous Katrina hurricane in the Gulf Coast. Sewa USA, an organization whose commitment and primary focus is on providing voluntary services to disaster-afflicted, joined hands with local NGOs for serving the hurricane affected people in various cities of Louisiana State. These areas included the worst-hit New Orleans and different parts of the United States including Houston, Texas where many victims took shelter. Gov. Blanco expressed her views when a high-level delegation of SI led by its Secretary, Shyam Parande, met the Louisiana Governor at Baton Rouge in the first week of October 2005. The delegation that included the former NRI Ambassador-at-Large Dr. Bishma Agnihotri and Shri Saumitra Gokhale, Coordinator of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), USA, presented Blanco with a donation of \$15,001 for Katrina survivors. In Baton Rouge, Dr. Agnihotri was actively involved in relief and rescue operations, while in Houston SI - USA and HSS, USA together was at the forefront of the voluntary work on behalf of the large Indian-American community, primarily of Hindu heritage. Volunteers in Houston and elsewhere worked with the American Red Cross, other non-profit organizations and FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In reference to his meeting with Gov. Blanco, Shri K.G. Parande said that the governor had expressed appreciation for the invaluable voluntary work rendered by Sewa - USA and HSS USA for the Katrina survivors. Shri Parande conveyed the governor's plea to displaced survivors, requesting them to return to New Orleans. "Gov. Blanco would like to see residents return to a place where there is no major demographic change" said Shri Parande. The governor was also curious about \$1 added to the donation of \$15,000, he added. The delegation explained that it was Hindu tradition not to give money ending in a zero. "The '1' at the end is expression that the contribution is only the beginning and not an end," Shri Parande explained. Shri Parande was in USA on a three-week, 20-city visit in the US, to thank people who had lent support during the Asian tsunami.

In an earlier letter to Gov. Blanco, Sewa - USA offered help for the post-Katrina relief

works offering the State of Louisiana assistance from software training companies to provide computer-based training. Sewa - USA national coordinator Shri Srikanth Konda who organised the meeting between the delegation and the governor, has had extensive experience in providing voluntary leadership for over ten years, including one year in the Caribbean. "In terms of community support, we were overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of so many reaching out to help those who were desperately in need. Over \$100 000 was raised by Sewa-USA, mainly from Hindu-Americans, for Katrina hurricane relief," said Konda.

**Flood Relief - 2006**  
**Flood in Surat (Gujarat):** Over 600 volunteers rushed to carry out rescue & relief operations from different parts of Gujarat including the flood affected district of Surat and adjoining areas. Till 10th of August 2006, the volunteers of Sewa Bharati distributed 80,000 food packets, 4,500 milk sachets, 1,11,000 water sachets in the flood affected areas. Relief centers at four places in Surat were started to meet the needs of the affected people without any delay. Shri Nand Kishor in Jain Nagar, Shri Rajeshbhai Shah in Miranagar Udhna, Shri Raj Kumar at Bathar Road and Shri Ajaybhai Desai at station road Surat took care of & provided guidance at the relief centers where collection & distribution of relief materials was being carried out round the clock. Relief materials were distributed to 5225 people. Apart from this, temporary shelter & food were provided to the people of slums in Sishu Mandir School - Udhna, Vrindavan Hall and Uma Bhawan. A truck loaded with relief materials was dispatched from the RSS office at Ahmedabad for Surat carrying 4500 kg of Sukhri (dry food cake), 5500 kg of salted edible materials, 6000 packets of biscuits, 2000 kg puris, 10,000 water sachets, 100 kg Pickles, 900 packets candles, 600 packets Match boxes, 165 bundles of ropes etc. 50 centers at Ahmedabad were busy preparing food packets under the supervision of Shri Laveshbhai.

**Flood Relief Activity in Maharashtra:** Heavy rains and consequent floods caused tremendous loss in various parts of Maharashtra in 2006. Jankalyan Samiti in Maharashtra undertook the task of rescue & relief for the flood victims in the affected areas of the state.

In Mumbai, drinking water bottles, food packets, food grains, and medicines were supplied to thousands of affected people. In Nanded town which is located on the banks of river Godavari, people from four localities (Gangachawl, Degavchawl, Nallagutta and Golchawl) were shifted to government schools during floods, Sewa International activists supplied drinking water and food packets. All these localities were cleaned up after receding of water and disinfected with DDT and other disinfectants. Health camps were organised and a survey was also conducted to assess the loss. In Kolhapur, Shirol tehsil was worst affected. In 21 villages medical camps were started. Two mobile vans pressed into Service. Essential items such as utensils, clothes, bedspreads etc. were distributed. In Kolhapur city, free health camp was organized.

### **The Godavari Flood Disaster- Andhra Pradesh: Aug, 2006.**

The month of August in 2006 proved to be most ominous for so many people who were living on the bank of rivers Godavari and Sabari in Andhra Pradesh. Especially, Khammam, East and West Godavari Districts were badly affected with flash flood. Usually Godavari floods steadily, but August 2006 was totally different. Within few hours the height of the water level of the Godavari ascended to 67.7 ft. Thousands of people ran away from their houses to safer places without being able to protecting their valuables, not to talk of paddy and other food materials. In Khammam District, Chintoor, Kunavaram, Vara Ramachandra puram, Kukkunuru, Velerupadu and Boorugumpadu were badly affected blocks. Chintoor, V.R.Puram and Kunavaram were affected by the aggravated river Sabari, a tributary to Godavari. It came like a tidal wave and wiped away the villages, crops and permanent buildings also. 60 villages were submerged for more than a week. In East Godavari district, Mummidivaram, Inavalli and Katrenikona mandals were inundated in Godavari Water for six days. Forty villages were worst affected and Katrenikona mandal still flooded for another week. Seva Bharathi, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Bharat Vikas Parishat activists and RSS Swayamsevaks immediately rushed to the affected villages and distributed 25 quintals of rice, 2 quintal of Dal, five thousand food packets, five thousand milk packets, six thousand bread packets and ten thousand drinking water sachets for three days with the help of boats. In Khammam District, Seva Bharathi provided medical services. In Chintoor and VR Puram Mandals approximately 1600 patients were treated.

### **Sewa International Serving the Flood Victims in Bihar: 2007**

On the fateful day of July 29, 2007, flood water started spreading all over North Bihar. Darbhanga, Madhubani, Samastipur, Saharsa, Begusarai, Muzaffarpur, Madhepura were the worst affected districts of the region. A huge loss of lives, properties, cattle and other belongings took place and the affected people were desperately waiting for relief for mere survival. Observing the intensity of the situation, the volunteers of Sewa Bharati took the initiative in providing immediate relief led by Deepak Kumar Sinha, Secretary and coordinator of Sewa Bharati. It was resolved that for speedy and effective relief, volunteers from all like minded organizations should work together. On 31st July, relief centers started operating in six different localities of Darbhanga town. Displaced people in large number turned up at the relief centers and availed services like food, clothing, temporary shelter, medicines etc. Relief material was collected by the volunteers of Sewa Bharati through door to door collection from the society. To review the ongoing rescue and relief work in the above mentioned flood affected areas, the important functionaries had a meeting on the 8th of August 2007 in the presence of Mr Chandra Mohan Roy, the Health Minister of Bihar. He appreciated the volunteers of Sewa Bharati for their exceptionally hard toil in serving the flood victims. He had a proposal for permanent rehabilitation in the area as the floods have been devastating the region almost annually. SI is glad to inform that many NGOs joined the relief and rescue operations drawing motivation from the Sewa Bharati. More than

50,000 houses were completely washed away by the flood water. The flood had a very devastating effect this year, as the state witnessed floods five times in a consecutive period of two months and the water remained logged for a longer duration. The water logging destroyed the standing crop and several houses and practically bringing the life to standstill. Sewa International organized regular health camps in the affected districts to prevent widespread of diseases.

### **Chapter 3**

**Memorable Moments And Heroic Deeds** The heroic deeds of the unsung heroes during the calamities are infrequently recognized. Well, it is true that on the one hand they never expect any reward for themselves on the other, rest of the world does not have the time to pause and watch these sacrifices. S.I. has tried to catch some such incidents to understand these heroic deeds and to appreciate them. In reverence SI bows to them.

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Sewa Bharati Tamil Nadu volunteers Valavan and Shastri saved 78 persons from the jaws of death while they were engaged in relief work in Nagore, Nagapattinam District on Dec. 26, 2004 the day of Tsunami.

- At Kilinjalmedu near Karaikkal (Pondichery Union Territory), Gnanasekaran, a well experienced volunteer made several trips into the turbulent sea and carried 2 persons every time back to shore. In this manner, he saved the lives of 25 persons.
- In the same place, Ganesh and Arulmurugan climbed on to a boat that was being tossed by the waves, rowed into the sea and brought ashore 6 people who were struggling for their life.
- At a place near Kalpakkam, where river Palaru meets the sea, the force of the current was the dangerous. Volunteers Ramesh and Mekkavan found two persons being snatched away by the receding rush of sea water; they managed to rescue both after a hard struggle. Thus, volunteers saved the lives of a total of 114 persons all along the Tamil Nadu coastline.
- Paramankeni (Kanchipuram District): Various organisations and individuals had dumped relief material in this costal village. The villagers found that blankets were sufficient for requirement. They decided to pass them on to other needy people. They carried the bundles of blankets and distributed them among the worse affected men and women residing there.
- At Neelangarai, a fishing village in South Chennai coast, Sewa Bharati team went round distributing food packets on the evening of the day when Tsunami struck. The residents of the place requested the team to serve food to the residents of the adjacent village where no relief had reached by that time. They told that they had taken food but their neighbours were hungry".
- In Aiyambakkam, a hamlet situated on the Cuddalore-Chidambaram route, volunteers distributed relief material. They also met families who had lost their near and dear and consoled them. But the villagers told that they were particularly sad because they were not in a position even to provide refreshments to them who had taken the trouble of coming to share their grief."

- Thirvottriyur (Northern Chennai): Tsunami afflicted people from many fishing hamlets in northern Chennai in need of relief materials were requested by the volunteers of Sewa Bharati to fall in line and be seated which they followed with pleasure. A piece of camphor and matchbox were distributed to each of them. All of them were requested by the volunteers to light the camphor and pray to the Almighty to bestow peace to their departed dear ones. The effect was simply inexplicable in words. A deep silence that prevailed for few minutes clearly made those present there feel and experience the current of profound emotions that was running in the hearts of each and every Tsunami affected person. Soon after, when volunteers asked the people whether some of them could come forward to join the relief and rehabilitation activities, they raised their hands as a sign of their readiness. Thereupon, 3 men and 3 women were selected as volunteers for every hamlet. Thus the beneficiaries were turned in to the benefactors- probably the best example of charity.
- Chinnanur (Salem District): Sewa Bharati volunteers residing in interior districts provided the most essential relief material collected from door to door. Volunteers of Chinnanur found an old woman who was dressed in rags approaching the cart loaded with relief material collected from the village. One young volunteer, who thought that she was asking for alms, told her to go away. But, to his astonishment, the old lady extended her arm holding a tiny cloth bag (surukku pai) containing some cash from her own precious savings. She was, in fact, offering all her savings for the sake of the suffering sons and daughters.
- Ambattur (Chennai): The management, staff faculty members and students of Saraswati Matriculation School decided to cancel the annual day celebrations and donate Rs. 30,000/- to the relief and rehabilitation work of Sewa Bharati Tamilnadu. The representative of the school who came to Sewa Bharati office at Chetpet, Chennai, to hand over the cheque, was so impressed by the sincere and systematic efforts of Sewa Bharati that he made, additionally, a personal contribution of Rs 10,000 on the spot.
- Avalurpet (Vellore District): Several coastal villages in Tamil Nadu hit by Tsunami left behind many children as orphans. Volunteers started finding out shelters to take care of these hapless kids. Raja Desingu School is one of them where few orphaned kids could stay for study. The volunteers learnt that the school was already home to a few orphans. But the newcomers were also received there with a warm welcome in the spirit Sewa by the school management.
- A district level functionary of the Congress Party in Northern Chennai found Sewa Bharati Volunteers successfully inspiring even the Tsunami hit people to shoulder the relief and rehabilitation work. That made him feel about hundreds of such volunteers who were volunteering at one of the 15 relief camps run by Sewa Bharati Tamil Nadu, for two days at their own expenses. He had gone to the camp, in fact, meeting his grandmother who had volunteered to join others in distributing clothes received from the public.

**Tsunami Rehabilitation Initiative** By the efforts of Sewa Bharati Tamilnadu, seven eminent Hindu spiritual groups including the All India Movement for Sewa (AIM for Sewa) of Swami Dayananda Sarawati, the Ramakrishna Mutt, The Art of Living (AoL) team of Sri Sri Ravishankar, Yoga followers of Shri Jaggi Vasudev, devotees and volunteers of Mata

Amritananadamayi Mission Trust, etc, came together, formed Tsunami Rehabilitation Initiative (TRI) and started working in unison.

#### **Chapter 4**

**Visiting Delegations** The good wishes of S.I.'s well wishers are its strength and not merely the accolades. It has been receiving delegations from across the world to visit its projects and see its work themselves as seeing is believing. S.I. is glad to mention that all the visitors and delegations were satisfied with the quantity & quality of the work. Our brethren outside India have responded immediately to the disasters- natural or manmade - by extending a helping hand. Many of them tend to reach the affected place immediately to take stalk of the situation and even volunteer for a certain period. Such a response has helped Sewa International create a place in the hearts of the people across the length and breadth of Bharat and  
abroad.

**Visitors**

- Subodh Thaker ( London) Bharat Vadukul (Birmingham) and Rajkamal Patel (Leeds) visited Gujarat on 28th Feb and returned on 9th March 2001 to have the first hand information regarding the ongoing relief activities. The British Airways donated fares for two of them. They also guided and showed SI's work in Gujarat to a team from BBC radio 5 (a reporter and Producer) and BBC world news (reporter and cameramen) who were making documentaries on the earthquake rehabilitation. ]



- Shri Dharam Vir Dhanda visited Orissa on the 3rd of February 2000, after the super cyclone which had devastated many coastal districts of Orissa. He toured extensively with local volunteers to assess the damage and assured of Sewa International's support in building the school "Saraswati Vidya Mandir" at Gatrout Patna, Cuttack. The school today has over 200 residential students and 200 day scholars.
- SI's volunteers from overseas did not leave any stone unturned to collect funds and relief material and send the same to Gujarat. Some young volunteers from UK and USA even joined the relief & rehabilitation programs. 6 members of Parliament from Britain, including Mr. Barry Gardiner joined Shri Arjun Lal Sharma of Sewa International in campaign for collection of funds in UK.

- Sewa International UK delegation visited Sewa International's earthquake rehabilitation sites:
- Sewa International carried out a massive relief and rehabilitation activities after the devastating Gujarat earthquake on 26th January, 2001. SI UK reconstructed 6 villages and more than 100 schools.
- A delegation of 7 Members of Parliament from Britain visited the rehabilitation sites in Gujarat in the month of March 2002. The delegation called on Chief Minister of Gujarat state Shri Narendra Modi on their way to rehabilitation villages in Kutch District of Gujarat. CM Modi briefed the delegation on the overall rehabilitation activities carrying out in the state.



- The MPs delegation comprised of Berry Gardiner, Andrew Love, Dari Taylor, Paramjit Dhanda, John Mann, James Purnell and Stephen Pound. The Delegation visited two villages, Mitha Pasvariya and Chapredi that were adopted by SI UK for reconstruction. The delegation had an opportunity to interact with the local beneficiaries who expressed satisfaction with the progress of the rehabilitation program.
- On completion of the rehabilitation, Sewa International, UK organized a tour of major donors and representatives of community associations from UK. 52 delegates arrived in New Delhi on 24th of January 2004. Three-day stay at Delhi included visits to four different welfare projects and Republic Day celebrations. On 27th morning the delegates left for Gujarat for a four- day visit to rehabilitated villages and schools. On 27th Jan.2004, Mr. V. Thirupuzh, Joint-CEO, Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority presented before the delegates an overview of the rehabilitation work. Delegates also called on the Hon. Governor of Gujarat Shri Kailash Pati Mishra and the Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Narendra Modi later in the evening. From 28th, January morning to 31st January evening they visited Mithapavaria, Chapredi, Rampur, Jakhotra and Rapar villages and several schools located at different places.



- On 30th January, 2004 a press conference was held at Rajkot where all the delegates expressed their satisfaction with the rehabilitation work done by Sewa Bharati Gujarat with support from Sewa International UK. Lord Mayor of Coventry Mr. Sucha Singh Bains and Ex-Mayor of Derby Mr. Ashok Kalia, Dr. Tasaruddin Wali from Edinburg, Mr. Dinesh Patel from Federation of Patidar Associations and Chairman of Sewa International UK Mr. Shantibhai Mistry were among the 52 delegates.



- A three member delegation from Sewa International USA visited the Tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu to witness the rehabilitation work in progress. The team comprised of Mr. Radhey Shyam Dwivedi, Mr. Srinarayan Chandak and Mr. Srikant Konda. They toured to the affected areas from the 9th of January to the 14th of January 2006 and were very satisfied to see the progress of work at various sites like the Temple at Poompuhar, the houses at Keechankupam in Nagapattinam and many schools. They even distributed new pair of cloths to 70 volunteers.
- Delegates from UK visited Sewa International's Tsunami Rehabilitation Projects in India and Sri Lanka: (4th of Feb.2006-15th Feb.2006.)
- A delegation from UK comprising Lord Mayor of Coventry (UK) Shri Ram Lakha, Mr. Sanjay Jagatia (PRO, Sewa International, UK), Mr. Leonard Evans, Mr. Babu Mistry and Miss Minnakenny Chauhan visited India for assessing the post-Tsunami rehabilitation work in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. The delegation visited various rehabilitation projects in Nagapattinam and Kanya Kumari Districts of Tamil Nadu. SI has constructed 210 houses and the Sewa Bharathi Tamil Nadu is running an Anbu Illam -an orphanage - for the Tsunami affected girls in Nagapattinam district. Presently the orphanage has 16 inmates and the building for the project is under construction. A vocational training center for girls, a computer training center and a community health center is also run by the Sewa Bharathi in

Nagapattinam. In Kanyakumari district, the delegation visited the vocational training center for girls, an Anbu Illam- an orphanage- for boys with 35 inmates and some other projects. The visitors were extremely pleased to visit all these projects under Tsunami rehab program in Tamil Nadu. The delegation visited Sri Lanka for a brief tour to the rehabilitation sites on 9th and 10th February 2006. The Lord Mayor Shri Ram Lakha was overwhelmed by the hospitality of the beneficiaries as he visited many homes after handing over keys of the completed houses at Pandiruppu village in the Batticaloa Dist.

- SI UK had sponsored reconstruction and rehabilitation of 14 villages and even more number of schools in Gujarat after the devastating earth quake on 26th January 2001. The worst affected district by the earth quake was Kutch and the focus of the rehab was obviously the district. The delegation had also planned to visit those rehab sites for reviewing the status of beneficiaries. Some of the schools reconstructed then are still being supported by SI UK still. Four more volunteers from Coventry, UK joined the delegation in Gujarat where they visited Chapredi, Mithapasvaria and Rapar villages. The delegation did not miss an opportunity to visit 4 schools in the area which were then sponsored by SI UK.
- Dr. Manish Tayal a Sewa International volunteer from UK offered his voluntary services for 15 days in the earthquake affected state of Jammu and Kashmir in the month of May 2006. He conducted six camps in difficult terrain, treating the patients and providing them free medicines. Our volunteers worked shoulder to shoulder with military personnel in providing relief to the villages in the border areas.
- A seven member delegation from Nottingham, UK visited the Tsunami affected district of Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. They represented an organization ATANN (Asia Tsunami Appeal of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire). The team constituted Mr. and Mrs. Pawan Joshi, Lord Mayor of Nottingham Honorable Mohammad Munir, Mrs. Sudarshan Kumari Mohindra, Mr. Sudheer Gupta, Mr. Surjit Johal , accompanied by a BBC correspondent Brady Haran. From 15th of January 2007 to 19th January 2007, they toured to various Tsunami affected areas in Tamil Nadu and also visited projects being rehabilitated by Sewa International in the Nagapattinam district. They were very happy to witness the valuable work done out of their contribution and inaugurated 16 houses in the village Keechankuppam for which ATTAN had contributed through Sewa International.
- On the request of SI, Dr. Malathi Koli, from the USA, a leading psychiatrist started counseling services for the victims of tsunami in Tamil Nadu. The treatments provided, helped thousands of victims regain confidence and start a living for themselves.
- A 23 member Leh trekking team from UK visited India from 1st of July 2007 to 17th of July 2007 with Shri Satish Shah as Trek Coordinator. The group reached Leh, altitude 3500 meters on 1 July. After four days of acclimatization the 8 day trek commenced from village Choksi and ended at village Stok. They crossed two high mountain passes, namely Palam Peak 5360 meters high and Stok Kangri 6114 meters. The Trek was conducted to raise funds for projects in India and Africa and have raised GBP 40,000. On the way back from Leh trekking, the whole group visited Sewa International's office at Delhi on the 15th of July 2007. They were

showed three welfare projects of Sewa Bharati in Delhi. They were very impressed to see the good work being done for the needy and neglected people.

- Mr. Copp Doughlas, head of American Rescue Team International had flown to Kutch directly from El Salvador. He stated that the tranquility of the Gujaratis was amazing. That was so remarkable that he had not seen that anywhere in the world. The magnitude of the disaster that struck Gujarat was very overwhelming. He further said "Look at the composure of the people here. I can bet even in my own country, we would have been wailing and mourning but here, Kutch is all set to get up and get going. The efforts have already begun." "I don't know where from this tranquility has been derived but after such a disaster too, the calmness of the common man perplexes us. May be it is the Indian way of living or philosophy but this tranquility will help Kutch to start off again not only faster but on a positive note."
- Mr. Rameshbhai Pau, from Coventry, UK was in Ahmedabad at the time of the fatal earthquake that struck in Gujarat. He appreciated the relief work done by the SI and said that within a short span of time Sewa International's volunteers had reached there to be coordinating the work among affected people. There was mayhem in the streets but these SEWA volunteers were extremely well organized, they helped regulate traffic. They were the first people who reached the affected area and did everything possible to help these poor victims of the earthquake, who were left in a state of shock. It was again the Sewa International's volunteers who tried to contain the situation. It is a matter of pride that the work SI's volunteers have been doing is now being recognized by the world-community.
- One of our senior member and co-ordinator for the London region, Dr Suraj Jain was in Bhuj area when the earthquake struck and he stayed there for one more month before he returned to UK. He commented: "Field hospitals there needed a lot of help from Sewa volunteers, who were very willing to help with all their capacity and proven skills." As a surgeon and anesthetist Dr Jain was very useful in the field hospitals where he saw external agencies working 'hand in hand' with Sewa Bharati. 'Truly whole world as one family' - was in action!