

INDIA: BUILDING CAPACITIES

22 December
2000

appeal no. 01.55/2000

situation report no. 1

period covered: 1 January - 30 June 2000

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) has been active in disaster response, providing assistance to victims of the cyclone in Orissa and to drought affected communities in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Three community based disaster preparedness workshops were held over the period and the National Society continued its health activities including the Bhopal health and hygiene project and work in MCH. With a recent change of Secretary General, the National Society is focusing more on capacity building of the headquarters and branches.

The context

India is the second most populous state in the world with over a billion inhabitants, 73% of whom live in rural areas. Some 34 % of the total population lives below the poverty line. Social indicators show life expectancy of 63 years. The infant mortality stands at 72 per 1,000, while 53% of children under five are underweight - the second highest rate in the world. The literacy rate is 52.11 percent and approximately 20% of the population has no access to safe water.

The geo-climatic conditions of the Indian sub-continent place the country as one of the most vulnerable disaster zones in the world. Of 32 States and Union Territories, 22 can be characterised as disaster prone. River floods are most frequent and also the most devastating disasters in the country. Some 55 % of the total land mass is prone to seismic activity and 16 % of the total area is drought prone. India's long coastline makes it vulnerable to cyclones. Furthermore, as the country is heavily industrialised, there is a permanent risk of industrial disasters.

Latest events

Economic reforms have been praised in certain quarters for opening up the insurance sector, making leaps forward in information and technology, adoption of a new telecommunications policy and of critical economic bills, together with lower interest rates in the country. However, fiscal discipline at state level remains poor and in last two years (1999-2000), the income-expenditure imbalance (revenue deficit) of all states has more than doubled from USD 3.5 billion to USD 9.1 billion. Over the same period, the total debt of all state governments increased from USD 54 billion to USD 91 billion. The first half of the year was also marked by the visit of US president Bill Clinton -- which facilitated Indo-US relations. The period was also marked by various security threats which attracted international attention, including the hijacking of an Indian Airlines Airbus, constant insecurity in Kashmir valley and various bomb attacks in old Delhi.

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) welcomed a new Secretary General in the first week of March. Dr. (Mrs) Vimla Ramalingam is a pediatrician with expertise and interest in the field of blood transfusion and HIV/AIDS. The Secretary General has set targets for the National Society as regards empowerment of women, the holding of a General Assembly, an increase in blood donations and community level HIV/AIDS prevention programmes.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Disaster Response •

Orissa Cyclone

A violent cyclone hit India's eastern coast on Friday, 29 October 1999. Winds of up to 260 kph (155 mph) raged for over 36 hours. The winds caused a 7 metre tidal wave which swept more than 20 km inland and brought massive destruction and death to a number of coastal districts in the state of Orissa. It is estimated that more than 10 million people in 12 coastal belt districts were affected by the cyclone. More than 10,000 people lost their lives .

The IRCS responded immediately with an emergency relief operation. In mid-November 1999, the Orissa state branch, with the support of the Federation, extended the emergency relief operation to a three month relief operation which was completed on 31 January 2000. Assistance to the affected population, however, continues through the rehabilitation phase of the operation.

Drought in Gujarat and Rajasthan

A severe drought is affecting 11 of 27 Indian States and Union Territories to a varying degree while the States of Gujarat and Rajasthan are considered to be among the worst hit. Approximately three million people are currently affected in these states. Rainfall in Gujarat was almost 40% below average last year. The government has declared over 9,000 villages in 17 of 25 districts as drought-affected. The State of Rajasthan received around 20% less than average rainfall last year and has declared over 23,000 villages in 26 out of 32 districts as drought-affected.

An assessment was carried out by a joint IRCS/Federation mission in May. The Indian Red Cross Society branches in the affected states are meeting the needs in a number of ways with operations varying from small-scale food relief to medical support and the provision of fodder. Some branches, particularly those in the traditionally drought-prone areas of western Rajasthan, have experience in drought relief work. However, the resources of these branches are limited.

An appeal was launched in early July to assist 80,000 beneficiaries in India and Pakistan.

Disaster Preparedness •

Community-based Disaster Preparedness and Response Programme (CBDP)

The National Society has been conducting five day training programmes to prepare the community level volunteers in the field of disaster preparedness. Between January and June 2000, three CBDP workshops were held Bhopal, Bombay and Thiruvananthapuram with 100 participants. The topics included disaster terminology, IRCS disaster management structure, community participation models for disaster preparedness, vulnerability and capacity assessment.

In addition, a course facilitated by the IRCS was organised by the Indian Institute of Public Administration. This course targeted senior government officials in the field of disaster management and relief. Together with HUDCO (Housing & Urban Development Cooperation), the IRCS also facilitated a workshop on urban disaster mitigation for government officials. The Indira Gandhi Open University (IGNOU) has decided to introduce a post graduate diploma course in disaster management. The IRCS has been included in the committee of experts designing this course.

Health •

Bhopal health and hygiene project

This is a new project which was not presented in the Federation appeal 2000 for India. The Indian Red Cross Society has planned this pilot project in Bhopal since the launch of the World Disaster Report 1998. The project will be implemented by the Madhya Pradesh State Branch with substantial involvement of the local community. After the initial three years, it will be handed over to the community.

The project began in August 2000 with support received from the Norwegian Red Cross Society. The New Zealand and Canadian Red Cross Societies have also shown interest in this project which needs external financial support which will lessen each year over the three year period. However, from the start, there will be a contribution from beneficiaries (partial cost-recovery through the levy of a nominal fee), the local community and the State Red Cross branch.

Six slum areas (Sai Baba Nagar, Indira Nagar, Krishna Nagar, PC Nagar Mira Nagar and Ishwar Nagar) have been selected, based on criteria of poverty and lack of existing facilities. Over 80% of the residents in the selected area are labourers, with a total number of beneficiaries of over 5,200 families or 26,000 people. There are high levels of malaria, viral fever, diarrhoea and occasional outbreaks of cholera in this community. Community mobilisation and participatory appraisal are important elements of the project.

A new clinic serving the project area will be housed in an existing community centre which is being refurbished. The project will also include the provision of an ambulance, initially supplied by the Red Cross branch. The vehicle will be used for carrying equipment and personnel and for hospital referrals. A baseline survey is being conducted and a strong health surveillance system will be established. Doctors and community health workers at the clinic are to maintain comprehensive records of their activities through patient registration.

The project will build on the existing community volunteer system. The aim is to have one community volunteer responsible for 30 households. The volunteers will be trained in health, hygiene and first aid. The project will also train residents in these areas. Volunteers who pass the Red Cross first aid exam will be provided with first aid boxes and will act as community based first aiders.

The project will initially be run by a new project officer under the supervision of the State Red Cross Branch. Monitoring will be conducted by the Project Director (located in the branch) with the assistance of the IRCS headquarters. Evaluation will be conducted jointly by the IRCS headquarters, Madhya Pradesh State branch and the Federation .

Uttar Pradesh Hills Maternity and Child Welfare Project

This project was not presented in the Federation appeal 2000 for India. Until 1995, the Uttar Pradesh Hills project was jointly funded by IRCS and the government of India. It was then implemented as a bilateral project between the Canadian and Indian Red Cross Societies. In January 2000, however, the Canadian Red Cross decided to continue implementing the project through the Federation. The Canadian Red Cross Society undertook a two week evaluation mission in May. The objective of this evaluation was to provide the IRCS and the Federation with recommendations on future options.

The project is implemented in four hill districts (Teri Garhwal, Dehradun, Nainital and Almora/Pithoragarh) of Uttar Pradesh through basic health care facilities. These were established over the past 46 years when there were no other institutions or facilities in the region. At present, the IRCS is running 4 hospitals (one 10 bed facility built by the Japanese Red Cross) at district level, 21 mother and child health care sub-centres and 13 Bal Vikas Kedras (nursery school and training centres) at village level. The mother and child health care sub-centres offer antenatal, natal and post-natal care, family medical care, immunisation services and family welfare services. The Bal Vikas Kedras offer nursery education, nutritional programmes for children under five, adult literacy courses and handicraft classes for women. The programme also trains traditional birth attendants.

Assam Health Project

In 1999, the Japanese government awarded a grant of CHF 66,000 towards procurement of equipment for the maternity hospital and diagnostic centre in Guwahati, Assam. The objective of the programme was to replace some of the essential equipment in the maternity hospital and to improve and upgrade technical facilities at the hospital. Procurement was carried out and the hospital re-opened in September 2000.

Humanitarian Values •

World Red Cross Day was observed by millions of IRCS members and volunteers on 8 May. Throughout the country, the IRCS branches organised rallies, runs, seminars, relief distributions and medical camps. At the national headquarters, humanity awards were presented to Red Cross volunteers. The Goa State Branch started a new campaign to prevent misuse of the emblem by approaching all pharmacies and the medical council.

Two inter-state junior Red Cross/youth Red Cross (7-10 day) camps were organised. Three hundred students took part in these camps. The main objective was to promote humanitarian values among the junior and youth Red Cross members. Sessions were conducted on the fundamental principles, international humanitarian law, first-aid and disaster preparedness. One national integration camp was also held in Shimla for 150 youth volunteers.

The Punjab State Branch of the IRCS enrolled all eligible residents of Devi Nagar Village (Patiala) as Red Cross members. The villagers have taken upon themselves to spread the Red Cross message to their adjoining villages.

Capacity Building •

Institutional Development - Phase 1

The IRCS and the Federation have discussed in detail the steps required to strengthen the National Society. A strategic planning workshop was held in July attended by senior headquarters management and all State Branch Secretaries. The aim of the workshop was to draw up a development plan for the National Society identifying the key areas for Federation technical support and capacity building role.

Finance Development Programme

The Federation regional delegation finance team continues to work with the national headquarters and the branches on improving the quality and timeliness of financial reporting.

Outstanding needs

The Appeal 2000 for capacity building of the Indian Red Cross Society has received very little donor support. Under new leadership, the IRCS is ready to change and to build on its significant internal potential.

Appeal coverage stands at 3.1 per cent only and lack of funding has seriously constrained programme implementation.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

In February, the Government of India appointed a committee for preparation of disaster management plans in India. The Indian Red Cross Society is a member of this committee and will participate in discussions on health and disaster mitigation.

WHO joined the Federation to disseminate the Red Cross Red Crescent theme for this year - *Safe Blood Starts With Me*. The IRCS branches organised rallies, seminars and other activities to mark this initiative.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

India						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.55/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			12/22/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,998,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 3.1%
Balance carried forward from 1999				(35,986)		
CANADIAN - GOVT/RC		40,000	CAD	43,765	20.03.00	
INDIA - PRIVATE				273	30.08.00	
NEW ZEALAND - RC		18,855	NZD	14,595	22.06.00	
NEW ZEALAND - RC		1,706	NZD	1,362	30.06.00	
NORWEGIAN - RC		200,000	NOK	37,881	27.04.00	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				61,890	CHF	3.1%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
PIN160						