



The Mumbai Floods and the TISS Intervention

A Report

In the wake of the unprecedented rains and the consequent floods of 26th and 27th July 2005, large parts of Mumbai were badly affected. By the morning of 27th July 2005, it was clear that a natural phenomenon was taking the shape of a major disaster. Given its longstanding experience in intervening in disaster situations, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) moved to respond to the disaster. Even as the Institute grappled with a large number of missing students, faculty and staff members, calls were made to the office of the Chief Secretary and the Municipal Commissioner offering all possible assistance.

It was clear from the outset that the people most at risk were those living in the sprawling slums of Mumbai, mostly in the low lying areas with poor drainage, many along overflowing drains and sewers. The M Ward in which TISS is located is home to a number of such settlements, many of which were in fact demolished in the recent demolition drive — these homeless people were particularly vulnerable.

The TISS response essentially involved the Institute playing three major roles:

- a) Relief work within the affected communities through its students and faculty;
- b) Bringing NGOs and CBOs working with the urban poor together to assess, plan and strengthen relief and rehabilitation; and
- c) Amplifying urgent relief material requirements of CBOs, NGOs and others working in the field and facilitating their sourcing and disbursement.

Relief Work

The TISS swung into action on the 28th July with its students and faculty visiting the affected areas and engaging in needs assessment and relief work. Student doctors and student social workers began collaborating with local NGOs and CBOs to organise medical camps and other relief efforts. Over the next few days, TISS students worked in and around affected areas in Chembur, Govandi, Mankhurd, Ghatkopar, Vikhroli and Panvel conducting medical camps and assisting organisations working with affected people (See Table 1 for further details).

The tasks undertaken by TISS volunteers included needs assessment, surveys, setting up medical camps and distributing medicines, health education, and so on. The medical camps reached out to over 3,000 affected families. At the same time, the TISS volunteers also began to mobilise resources needed for relief, in both cash and kind, through appeals to individuals and institutions.

Mobilising Resources for Relief

On the 2nd of August, the Government of Maharashtra (GoM) approached TISS with a request to help coordinate relief work, and particularly within the M Ward. However, the resources given to the Institute were far short of the requirement. The TISS moved into a role of mobilising resources for relief and matching them with requirements and needs of local NGOs and CBOs working in the affected areas. In order to maximise its reach, the TISS appealed for help over FM Radio Channels, the Internet, and through its extensive network of faculty, students and staff. The students of the Institute formed a small group that dedicated itself to resource mobilisation from individuals, corporations and other institutions. Over the next week, with the collective effort of students and faculty, the Institute was able to respond to a wide range of requests for help in different parts of Mumbai, even though it focused itself on M Ward.

The TISS played two different but equally important roles

- a) connecting donors directly with agencies, thereby channeling resources to where they were needed the most, and
- b) sourcing, receiving, holding and disbursing relief materials that NGOs and CBOs working in the field identified as priorities.

Some examples of the first kind included facilitating the supply of urgently needed essential drugs to locations as diverse as Somaiyya Hospital and rural Raigad (Panvel and Pen talukas) and provision of medicines and relief materials to affected families in Mumbra in Thane district. The Institute also facilitated the approval, release, transportation and distribution of two tons of food grains from the GoM within M Ward.

Thanks to the credibility of TISS and the work put in by its students and faculty, the Institute was able to secure

- ◆ significantly large donations of food grains from entities such as the National Thermal Power Corporation, Tata Power, Tata Relief, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd.;
- ◆ items of personal hygiene in form of kits from Hindustan Lever Limited;
- ◆ medicines and medical supplies from Johnson and Johnson, Wockhardt, Universal Medicare, Hexaware Technologies;
- ◆ medicines, clothes and other relief materials from a number of individual and institutional sources.

The Institute was also able to raise funds from the Tulsi Trust to prepare family kits containing essential articles in collaboration with the College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, that were distributed to affected families. The TISS has also secured a commitment from agencies like Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. to support the rehabilitation efforts (See Table 2 for more details of relief received and disbursed by TISS).

The relief materials received by TISS were distributed among NGOs and CBOs working in affected areas on the basis of a collective and participatory needs assessment that involved a number of organisations working within the ward coming together to take stock of what was available or what was needed and decide where it was most needed and who was best equipped to reach it to the affected people. On the basis of these meetings, as well as constant updates received from NGOs and CBOs working in the affected areas, the TISS dispatched relief materials to affected communities. The TISS also received help from volunteers from SOSVA, TCS and Tata Power in this effort.

Coordination and Advocacy

On the 2nd of August, the TISS convened and hosted a meeting of NGOs, CBOs and aid agencies from across Mumbai in an attempt to make an assessment of the overall extent of damage and priorities in terms of relief needs, as well as to outline specific measures that the government and the city administration needed to take. An advocacy group was formed at the meeting with a mandate to begin a dialogue with the government on key issues, such as provision of temporary shelter and food-grains, medical assistance, compensation and other rehabilitation needs in areas of housing, food security, health and education. This group proceeded to draft a detailed memorandum to the Chief Minister, GoM and this formed the basis for further ongoing dialogue with the GoM regarding relief and rehabilitation.

At the same meeting, it was decided to adopt a decentralised approach to coordination and an attempt was made to establish loose mechanisms at the ward level. It was also agreed to reconvene ward-wise on a regular basis to share information and other resources and meet as a larger group later to review the situation.

Since then four meetings of NGOs, CBOs, citizens' groups and other institutional entities located or working within M Ward were convened at the TISS, between 5th and 11th August. Officials from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and the administration were also invited to some of these meetings to enable a direct and collective dialogue and quick problem-solving. These meetings have become the basis of decision-making on the ward-level strategy and have also guided the Institute's own relief efforts.

The Institute continues to play the role of a forum, seeking to bring together NGOs, CBOs, the administration and other actors in order to ensure effective relief and rehabilitation of the affected families.

TABLE 1: Areas Where TISS Undertook Relief Work

<i>Location</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>No. of Affected Families (approx.)</i>
Suman Nagar	Chembur	800
Netaji Nagar	Ghatkopar	1,000
Maharashtra Nagar	Mankhurd	Over 1,000
Jai Ambe Nagar	Mankhurd	500
Padma Nagar	Mankhurd	800
Mandala	Mankhurd	1,500 families
Panvel	Raigad district	Over 1,000
Rahul Nagar	Ghatkopar	Not known
Bhim Chaya Nagar	Vikhroli	Over 800 families

TABLE 2: Summary of Relief Materials Received and Disbursed by TISS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Details of Quantity of Relief Materials Allotted</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Name and Contact Details of Organization</i>	<i>Sources</i>
1-8-05	Medicines	Suman Nagar Netaji Nagar Maharashtra Nagar Mandala	TISS, Manav Mukti Morcha and NAPM	TISS, Rotary Club, Deonar
2-8-05	Medicines, Biscuits	Mandala Panvel Rahul Nagar Bhim Chaya Nagar	TISS and NAPM	TISS, Rotary Club, Deonar
3-8-05	Medicines	Kandivili - PS Borivilli(E) Dahisar(W)	Nirmala Niketan	Rotary Club, Deonar

4-8-05	Medicines	Mandala	NAPM	Wockhart, Parel; Universal Medicare
5-8-05	1 carton multivitamins, 10 litres of oil, 50 kg rice, 20 kg of dal, biscuits, 1 can of lyzol, 1 sack bleaching powder, band aid, savlon, and clothes	Chembur Shivajinagar	Stree Mukti Sanghatna	Universal Medicare, Johnson & Johnson, and Individual donors
5-8-05	2 cartons multivitamins, 1 can lyzol, 1 sack bleaching powder, and clothes	Raigad District Panvel / Pen	Samajik Adhahar Manch and Dr. V. Rao	Universal Medicare, Johnson & Johnson, and Individual donors
6-8-05	2,000 kg rice and 500 kg dal	Islampura	ALERT India	GoM, Gems & Jewelers Assoc.
6-8-05	5 sacks bleaching powder, 3 cans lyzol, 4 boxes multivitamins	Maharashtra Nagar	Apnalaya	Individual Donors, and Universal Medicare
7-8-05	200 kg daal, 1,000 bedsheets and Clothes	Mandala	Manav Mukti Morcha, NAPM	Individual Donors, and Gems & Jewelers Assoc.
7-8-05	500 kg atta, 200 kg daal and Clothes	Vashi Naka Bharat Nagar Shastri Nagar, Nimboli Bagh Chembur Colony (1550 families)	CORO for Literacy	Individual Donors and Gems & Jewelers Assoc.

8-8-05	800 family packs, 860 hygiene kits, 8 boxes biscuits, 2 sacks bleaching powder, and Clothes	Sathe Nagar Matangrishi Nagar New Mandala Jaihind Nagar Gautham Nagar (950 families)	Anyay Nivaran Kriti Samiti	Tata Relief, HLL, and Individual donors
8-8-05	276 family packs 280 hygiene kits 1 box biscuits	Sant Gadgemaharaj Chawl, Khardeo Nagar (276 families)	Sant Gadgemaharaj Rehvashi Sangh	Tata Relief, HLL
8-8-05	10,000 kg rice, 5,000 kg sugar, 145 tins oil, 2,000 kg salt, 1,000 kg tea, 200 kg dal 1,550 hygiene kits 10 boxes biscuits 2 sacks bleaching powder, and Clothes	Vashi Naka Bharat Nagar Shastri Nagar, Nimboli Bagh, Chembur Colony (1550 families)	CORO for Literacy	NTPC, Tata Relief, HLL, and Individual donors
8-8-05 and 9-8-05	315 Hygiene kits, 1 sack bleaching powder, 1 tin oil, 2 boxes biscuits, and Clothes	Indira Nagar No 2 (300 families)	Mohala Committee Trust, Gharkul Trust	HLL, Individual donors, and Tata Relief
9-8-05	1,200 family packs 700 hygiene kits 1 box biscuits	Gaekwad Nagar, Shramjeevi Nagar	Pragathik Vidyarthi Sangh	Tata Relief, HLL, and Individual donors
9-8-05	Clothes, 1 box biscuits, 450 family packs, 350 hygiene kits and 4 boxes biscuits	Shivajinagar (450 families)	Samyadeep Vichar Manch, Apnalaya	Individual donors, Tata Relief, and HLL

9-8-05	300 family packs, 300 hygiene kits		Sthri Mukti Sanghatana	Tata Relief, HLL
9-8-05	1,500 family packs 500 kg dal 500 kg rice, and 2 boxes biscuits	Mandala, Jai Ambenagar, Maharashtra Nagar (1,700 families)	Manav Mukti Morcha, NAPM	Tata Relief, BPCL
9-8-2005	17 boxes biscuits 2 tempo loads of Clothes, Towels and Bedsheets	Vakola, Santa Cruz	Tri Ratna Mandal	Indian Hotels, and Individual Donors
9-8-05 and 10-8-05	1,430 kg rice 75 kg atta, 110 kg dal, 50 kg sugar, 8 boxes biscuits 503 hygiene kits	Khardeo Nagar (503 families)	Ekta nagar Rahivashi Society, Satyanrayan Society, Sanjay Smriti Society, Lalwadi Rahivashi Sangh, Adarsh Seva Mandal	Tata Power, HLL, and Individual donors
10-8-05	130 Hygiene Kits	Pen	Samajik Aadhar Manch	HLL
10-8-05	108 Hygiene Kits, bedsheets, towels, utensils	Jogeshwari (E)	SAHER	HLL, Indian Hotels, and Individual Donors
11-8-05	5 Sacks of Bleaching powder	Mumbra	Tata Relief	Individual Donors

12-8-05	Medicines	Chembur Kurla Raigad District	NASEAOH, Pragatik Vidyarthi Sangathan, OASIS, IIT (Powai), Chembur Citizens' Forum, Niramaya Health Foundation, Samajik Aadhar Manch	Hexaware, and Individual donors
12-8-05	3 cartons of assorted medical equipment, and 3 cans of paracetamol and multivitamins	Chembur Govandi Mankhurd	Apnalaya Dispensary	Johnson & Johnson, Universal Medicare, and Individual Donors