

[To Rebuild Kutch](#)

Category : [July/August 2001](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jul. 01, 2001

DISASTER

To Rebuild Kutch

Recovery efforts for the massive earthquake in Gujarat's Kutch region which killed 50,000 people and damaged 7,000 villages shift from short-term relief to long-term rehabilitation

Rajiv Malik, Delhi

The game begins with one child emitting a low-pitch growl, "grrrrrrrrrr," imitating not the warning of some four-legged predator but the thunderous rumble of the Earth itself on January 26, 8:46 am. "Earthquake, earthquake," shout the other children of this remote village in Kutch, "Let's play earthquake." They all tremble and shake, some falling on the floor and pretending to be dead. After a few minutes, the "survivors" pick up the dead bodies, take them to a make-believe crematorium, and there lament the long wait as so many bodies are backed up for cremation. Other children pose as the injured and are taken to the "hospital" by "relief volunteers" of some non-governmental organization. There they are treated by "doctors," while nearby small girls sob convincingly over the death of near and dear ones. Even "injured" animals are included in their game, I was told.

It is the fourth day after the quake. An old man uses masonry

tools to repair his home. He is smiling, and when asked why, replies, "If someone else had done this to us, we would have had a cause to complain. But when God Himself has done this, we have no cause to complain."

Eighty families are on the road in Khavada village, their houses destroyed, their possessions gone. They refused to accept relief supplies, "We of Kutch are givers, not takers," they explain. Still, their need is great, and they are finally persuaded to accept some food packets as prasad, sanctified offerings, from a religious organization, and thus maintain their dignity. Later they take the government dole of ^{us}\$43 per family, but set it aside for others more needful.

A man approaches a relief worker and offers women's and children's clothes. They are no longer needed by his family, he explains, for all of them are dead. Another man offers to take in two orphans, even though every house in his village, including his own, has collapsed.

The airplanes start to come in with relief supplies to the Bhuj airport, near the center of the destruction in Gujarat State. At night their sudden roar, so much like the sound of the earth before, sends terrified people into the street, fearing

another aftershock. Frequent, real aftershocks set even the bravest relief worker fleeing for his life.

It is three in the morning, a few days after the earthquake. A group of sadhus come upon a man making little items out of soil and mud in the road. The temperature is just above freezing. A nearby policeman explains that this man from a respectable family has been so engaged for two days. A sadhu approaches him and asked what he was doing. "Oh, I have lost my house, and now I am rebuilding it," he replies calmly. "What has happened to this man?" exclaims the sadhu, who himself breaks down in tears.

Children's games, wisdom, nobility, generosity, fear, insanity such are the diverse ways, I learned, that the human psyche attempted to cope with the monumental disaster that was the Gujarat earthquake of 2001.

I, too, experienced the earthquake, unknowingly, and not in Gujarat, but in Allahabad, 800 miles away. I was in the dining hall of the Parmarth

Niketan camp at the Maha Kumbha Mela, and at the end of a week-long assignment for Hinduism Today. At exactly 8:46 am, I suddenly felt giddy, my head started to spin and my heart sank. This went on for a minute or two. I feared I had suffered a mild heart attack, but recovered quickly and attributed the experience to fatigue. Late that night, upon arriving in the town of Kanpur on my way back to Delhi, I was shocked to see the televised reports of the massive earthquake which ripped through Gujarat at precisely 8:46 am killing 50,000 people and causing ^{us}\$5.5 billion damage. Out of the 18,356 villages of the state, 7,904 villages with a population of 20 million people were affected. More than 334,000 buildings collapsed; another 775,000 were damaged.

Shortly after returning to Delhi, I was instructed by Hinduism Today's publisher, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami, to proceed to Gujarat after the initial relief efforts

were implemented and prepare a first-hand report as the transition from rescue to rehabilitation and reconstruction began. Arrangements were made for me to be hosted in Bhuj by Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), the followers of Lord Swaminarayan under the leadership of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

The Indian army was by far the most active in the relief work. Among nongovernmental organizations, the highly disciplined Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its partners, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), fielded the most volunteers. Next came BAPS,

Ramakrishna Mission, Ananda Marga, Mata Amritanandamayi Ashram and a number of other Hindu organizations. Anil Dave, a professional photographer in Mumbai associated with Dinodia Picture Agency, was commissioned to accompany me.

I reached Bhuj by air on March 21, arriving at noon on a hot and sunny day. The signs of devastation were everywhere, the debris of fallen buildings lined both sides of the road into the city. All streets had been cleared in this area, and as we reached the city proper, traffic appeared quite normal, shops were open and business was brisk. But upon close inspection, nearly every

apparently intact building showed signs of damage. The shops were only occupying the ground floor in these hazardous conditions the quicker to escape should an aftershock occur. We found the BAPS Swaminarayan temple, washed, had lunch and set out to survey the area.

Just a few hundred yards from this temple the army was gearing up to blast a dangerous building, a strategic duty they had repeatedly done during all seven weeks since the earthquake. Soon thousands gathered to witness the demolition. The building came down in minutes with a resounding bang and thud. Black clouds of dust engulfed the whole area, choking

onlookers.

This over, we moved to the interior, old city area of Bhuj, where the real damage had occurred. Once we entered this area in late afternoon, we did not see even one soul as we covered the distance of one kilometer through the once densely populated area. The water, power and sewage systems had collapsed. The government did not want people here, and thus would not restore services. Debris lay where houses stood along the narrow roads. We came across a number of small temples on this road, all in shambles. The towers were broken, and the main doors were closed.

Driving down this deserted road with not even a bird in sight, debris all over and with the only sound the car's engine was a bone-chilling experience. At many places the stones of collapsed building were so precariously placed that they could kill a passerby if one somehow slid loose. While I walked and drove through this deserted road negative thoughts kept flashing in my mind. Later I was told that no one dares visit this area at night. Locals say that the souls of the dead who are still there become vocal and restless at night.

We arrived at the ancient Swaminarayan Temple, a city landmark. The Deities of this temple

were personally installed by the great Vaishnava Saint, Lord Swaminarayan, in 1823. Construction and ornamental work continued for decades afterwards, creating a masterpiece of craftsmanship. Lakshman Jivan Shastri, one of the temple's priests, described the quake. "Our service started at 7:00 am, and just as we began the kirtan, religious singing, the earthquake struck. For some time the whole place was shaking, and then it started vibrating. There were 60 sadhus and 90 devotees present. One of the three spires of the temple came down as snow falls. It did not even shake from side to side, but just came down in a hail of debris, killing five people.

In another part, a large stone falling from the temple killed a man." The temple suffered considerable damage, and after debris rained down on the priests in an aftershock, the Deities were moved out to a safer location. Shastri believes \$10 million will be required to repair the 178-year-old temple. He wondered, too, if there would be anyone to come to the temple anymore, because the local area was deserted. A resident told me, "The old city is so badly affected that people are not even able to recognize their own place of living."

As we walked around the temple,

we came across a patch of buildings where some of the houses had not fully collapsed and people had returned to live in unstable structures. I spoke to Arun Darzi. Suddenly, an electrician working outside Arun's shop dropped a large tool. As this object hit the ground with a loud thud, I and others rushed out of the shop, thinking that it could be aftershocks or tremors again. Such was Arun's daily experience, but, with a family to feed, he and the other shopkeepers nearby felt they had no choice but to operate out of these dangerous buildings. Despite his obvious destitution, Arun refused to let us leave without

serving us tea. "We are Kutchis," he said, "we are a brave people. We have seen a lot of ups and downs in life. You are our honorable guests. You cannot go from here without having a cup of tea." And the tea offered by him was of much better quality than what is normally available in even a city like Delhi.

We spotted an old man precariously perched on top of a pile of rubble, searching for something. He was, we found out, looking for his ration card, without which it is difficult to get supplies from the government. It is endless red tape to get one replaced. "We came running to this

place," he said of the earthquake, "but the house had collapsed in just two minutes. All my belongings are in this debris. I could recover nothing. We became penniless in just two minutes." This man told us about the organized gangs of thieves, "number two people" he called them, who were systematically looting the buildings.

After we left, I suddenly saw myself likewise searching for things in the debris of my own collapsed home, a nightmare which has followed me day and night since watching that old man in a futile search for his ration card. But I could not allow

myself to be consumed by the fear and emotion which permeated the atmosphere. My job was to report on the relief and reconstruction efforts, especially in light of the approaching monsoon rains, which will complicate the situation.

Swami Brahmaviharidas of the BAPS was my host here in Bhuj. He is responsible for coordination of the BAPS relief efforts in this area, and is a distinguished monk of this organization. When I first spoke with him from Delhi, I shared my concern that my presence might somehow interfere with their relief work. He replied, "Rajiv, we have

been serving hot meals to 37,000 people, so it would not make a difference if there are 37,001. We will help you in all possible ways to cover the current scenario." BAPS provided transport and translators from their extremely professional team.

The BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Bhuj was bustling with activity. Every visitor was greeted with enthusiasm by the benediction "Jai Swaminarayan!" There was a constant flow of people approaching the reception counter in connection with the

ongoing relief work. All visitors were treated courteously by the polite volunteers, and tea and meals were served to one and all. During my entire stay in Bhuj, Swami Brahmaviharidas, his fellow sadhus and volunteers worked around the clock with negligible rest and sleep. Every night at 11:00, the sadhus gathered to discuss the relief work in detail. The democratic functioning, transparency and openness of this group is very impressive, and all give credit to their guru, Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

I was fortunate to interview Pramukh Swamiji, and that, too, on my birthday. Swamiji explained how he regarded the earthquake. "Natural calamities like earthquakes have been affecting mankind since time immemorial. It is a natural phenomenon, like rain. It is not the wrath of God. So, whatever has to happen, happens. The good and the painful all are a part of life, and we should accept both with equanimity. When people are facing difficulties and sorrows, our Indian tradition is to offer them solace. We feel that by serving the human beings we

serve the Lord Himself." I asked him about the issue of last rites for those who died, especially when the body could not be recovered. Swami said, "The body is not all that important in such circumstances. Still, because our Hindu tradition says that the fire ritual for the body should be done, we have to consider the issue. When such calamities take place, and the body cannot be recovered, then we can offer a prayer to God to bring the soul to His feet. This special prayer is equal to the fire rituals."

Sadhu Brahmaviharidas explained how this was implemented. "On the thirteenth day, when the prayers are traditionally done for someone who has died, we held a Vedic ceremony, tarpan vidhi, at the Jubilee Grounds in the heart of Bhuj. We called in many Vedic scholars and our own senior swamis. All the leaders of the different communities participated in lighting the flames of the yagna. Whether it was harijans or brahmins, they all sat together. We invited leaders of

other religions also. The families who had lost somebody kept coming throughout the day to pay their offering to the yagna. Tarpan means "satisfaction," and is intended to convey that they may go on to their next life, knowing their duties will be continued by the remaining family members. Sanctified water was sprinkled from the yagna upon the collapsed buildings in the hope that, found or unfound, everybody should continue with the journey to the next life. Such a

yagna had an intensely good feeling for the people."

The outside relief organizations tended to specialize, I soon learned as we toured the area. Some provide only materials, others worked just for children or women, still others did medical care only, and some worked just for the welfare of a particular religion or community. The major Hindu organizations the RSS/VHP, RK Mission and BAPS provided

material relief, psychological support and religious succor all together. Now, eight weeks after the quake, I did not come across a single Christian organization still at work, though many had been there to provide short-term relief. It was only these Hindu organizations, the government itself and the UN who stayed to provide long-term solutions. There were charges in the press of selective distribution of relief material to certain areas or castes, and of interference of Christian

workers by Hindus. None of these charges were supported by the relief workers I met.

I visited the villages of Khavada, Soyala, Anjar, Ratnal, Dhaneti, Modsar, Bachaau and Kanderai. BAPS was most active in Khavada and Soyala; the RK Mission in Dhaneti, Modsar and Kanderai. The scene was almost the same, large-scale devastation and destruction.

In each place, people voiced their concern over the indecisiveness by the government and administration on formulating and implementing long-term rehabilitation policies for their resettlement. Highly ramified issues of land ownership are confounding attempts either to relocate villages or to rebuild in the same places. Debris removal can only be done under government control, and it is not proceeding satisfactorily,

I was told. Now the concern is the impending monsoon rains. Thousands of bodies lay beneath the debris, plus rotten food stuffs. "What will happen," people ask, "when water seeps into all this?"

Dilip Deshmukh, local head of the RSS for Kutch, told me, "Rain is not just around the corner; in Rapar it rained today. The government does not want to spend money on

debris removal. They want people to shift outside the city, where earthquake-proof houses would be provided to them. These new houses would cost the same as removing the debris of one house in the city."

Victims I spoke with said they felt the immediate relief work was satisfactory, thanks to the 500 nongovernmental organizations which

descended upon the region in the immediate aftermath of the calamity. In fact, so much material was delivered that many truck loads were simply unloaded on the side of the road, and their drivers hurried back to Mumbai for more supplies. No doubt much material was misappropriated. Still, massive quantities reached the area.

The Bhuj collector (a high government official), Sri Anil Mukim, appealed to me to highlight in this article that the continued receipt of so much material was leading to strange and complex problems. For instance, many common laborers had collected food sufficient for a year, so they were not willing to work hard to clear the debris. Before the earthquake they would work for \$2.17 per day, but now they wanted \$8.70 because

they could manage without working at all.

Thousands of temples lay in ruin, and their reconstruction or repair is not considered urgent. At Anjar's ancient Omkaleshwar temple, the priest's son, Dinesh Giri Hira Giri, was highly critical of the government and even the RSS and VHP for not paying any attention to the rebuilding and reconstruction

of temples.

Brahmaviharidas said, "In the whole of Kutch area, thousands of temples would have been damaged. The priority at the moment is to look after the human beings. They do not have a place to stand on. They do not have a place to sleep. First they have to get their own selves set. With the temples it also depends on government

policies. Once the government decides whether they have to relocate Bhuj or keep it here, that will affect the temples. We are going to restore some of the Hindu temples."

The RK Mission handled huge quantities of relief material, according to a senior monk, Swami Jitatmananda. They would go first through an affected village on foot,

handing out coupons door-to-door to needy people. Then material would be distributed on the basis of these coupons, thus keeping the greedy at bay.

According to Deshmukh of the RSS, their volunteers, swayamsevaks, already highly organized into local chapters, began to arrive in the affected region even before any official program

was set in motion by the RSS. They were instrumental in assisting the emergency hospital set up in the Jubilee Grounds in Bhuj, which treated so many of the injured. "The biggest job our workers have done," said Deshmukh, "is the extraction and cremation of over 3,500 bodies from the rubble." Even on the 50th day after the quake, they were still doing this, extracting rotting bodies. They also distributed 2,000 truck loads of relief

material. At its peak, 25,000 RSS workers were engaged in rescue and relief operations.

The situation two months after the quake was summarized by Anil Mukim. "The entire relief operation and the behavior of the people of the Kutch is a unique example for society to learn how harmonious a disaster situation can be. There have been cases of

Muslims and Hindus who told agencies, 'We have sufficient supplies. You go to the next village who need it now.'"

Dalits say you give it to Hindus. Hindus say you pass it on to Muslims. Now I tell you that this relief thing should come to an end. We should get out of this relief mentality. We should encourage more and more people to stand up and start working and begin rehabilitating themselves. Then, I can assure you, if you

come here after one year, you will not be able to make out whether an earthquake had ever hit this place."

Voices

Kusum Dinesh Mahicha,
Bhuj: When the earthquake struck, I was combing my hair and

getting ready to go to the temple. I was on the ground floor of a seven-story building which collapsed around me. Sixty-two people died in that very building. The people living on the upper floors shouted, "Save us, save us," but no one heard them. Finally, only their dead bodies were pulled

from the debris. The ceiling of the first floor was just a few inches above me. When everything became calm and silent at night, I chanted Hanuman Chalisa. The night watchman heard me, and the next day the Swaminarayansadhus, the army and my husband came to rescue

me, digging a twenty-foot tunnel. Finally, after 57 hours, they pulled me out. I came out laughing and had not a scratch upon me. Somehow, all along I had the feeling that I will be saved, as I had full faith in Lord Swaminarayan. I have become more religious, and even quite popular,

with people coming to see me from distant places and interviews on television.

Lakshman Jivan Shastri,
Priest of Old
Swaminarayan Temple,
Bhuj: Almost everybody had the name of God on their lips. Many people who got saved

experienced the darshan [sight] of prakash [divine light]. We are extremely touched by the fact that people living abroad have helped us in a big way.

Jyotsana Shailandra
Choksi, Bhuj, Camp
Resident: All the
buildings of our

neighborhood collapsed. Some of our relatives could not even recover a spoon from their house. Every morning in this camp we worship the Lord and offer Him a plate of food. Then a few religious songs are sung, and they keep us in a cheerful mood throughout the day. Evening prayers are also

held. Both religious and social activities keep us quite occupied. In this camp here we try to take advantage of the latent talents of everybody.

Jivan Lal, Bhuj, Camp Resident: Here in this region there was a saying that if you have to do a job, then serve

the government, and if you have to become a sadhu, then you must go and join the Swaminarayan sect, because the sadhus were supposed to get lots of laddoos (sweets) to eat. But during this disaster, I saw that the temple provides laddoos to everyone. The sadhus worked hard for the

people. If the Swaminarayan people were not there, it would have been a difficult situation in the Kutch region to manage the relief work. My impression about these people was different before this calamity, and I am admitting this to you.

Mrs. Ruksmani Himmat Lal, Khavada Village: That morning, I was cleaning utensils outside my house. I thought that, as we are living on the border, maybe Pakistan exploded a bomb. Before my eyes, our house collapsed, but we were saved. We are people of Kutch, and Kutchi people are very brave. If

something like this would have happened with you, then you would be sitting here holding your head with both your hands, thinking what to do. Though our houses have collapsed, still we have so much strength.

Jyotindra Dave, Bhuj,
BAPS volunteer: My first

impression on January 27 was that Bhuj had been hit by a nuclear bomb. People were just dumbstruck. They were not crying or shouting as happened in many calamities in India and abroad in the past. In Mexico, many people who were alive committed suicide after the earthquake. Here

people were very unhappy, but they never said to anyone, "Why did God do this to us? Why are we so unfortunate?" No one said anything like that.

Thakkar Jamnadas Velji,
Bhuj: Six members of my family died, and I did not know where to cremate

their bodies. If I took so many bodies to Lohana, my home village, more of my relatives would have died from shock. Thesadhusconsulted Pramukh Swami, and he allowed the bodies to be cremated here, right on the temple grounds, in the traditional way. Pure water was offered to the dead by the saints with

their own hands. And by having the bodies cremated here, the family also felt somewhat better.

Heera Lal Thakkar:By the second day, only the Muslims of the neighboring area had come and checked up with us about our needs

and requirements. The Muslims approached us in the spirit of brotherhood. They even came with a tractor loaded with wood for us.

Jitendra Mehta, VHP leader, Kutch: At the relief camps of RSS and VHP there has been no discrimination in the

distribution of relief material. Whosoever comes is a human being and is needy. I can give you video coverage of the fact that we had queues in which 500 Muslims were there, and we never bothered about religion. Our saints gave relief material with their own hands.

Funneling Global Assistance to the Victims

Somuch immediate relief assistance poured into Gujarat after the earthquake that the various relief organizations have

actually had to ask for it to slow down. This marvelous success in providing immediate help was spearheaded by the international branches of many India-based organizations, as well as individual

nonresident Indians
in other countries.
For just one
example, the Vishwa
Hindu Parishad,
which works in close
partnership with the
RSS in India, has a
strong international
presence and is
actively raising funds

for long-term
rehabilitation efforts.

The VHP itself fielded
some 7,000
volunteers in India to
bring relief work to
250 villages. Now,
they propose to
adopt five villages

for reconstruction, at a cost of ^{us}\$250,000 to \$800,000 each, depending on size. The RSS, BAPS, RK Mission, Mata Amritanandamayi's group and others are each adopting villages which have suffered extreme

damage and are in need of major help. At the time of this report, the situation in the urban areas remains so complicated by issues of debris removal and relocation that reconstruction efforts

cannot begin.

Internationally, a great deal of effort is going into raising funds for rehabilitation of this region, no doubt in part

because of the
widespread
diaspora of
Gujaratis, who can
be found in just
about every
country of the
world, and many of
whom keep close
ties with their

ancestral villages in
India.

Dozens of
organizations are
collecting money. A
listing is given on
page 26. Those
best able to work in

Gujarat have a major local presence, while other organizations will funnel money through locals.

Lord
Swaminarayan'sHo

ly Relief Team

In our ancient holy scriptures we hear the story of Satyakam. He was told by his guru to go alone with 400 cows into the forest

and come back
when they
numbered 800. It
felt like that kind of
request when
Pramukh Swami
told me personally
to go to Bhuj. There
were 400 other
sadhus to choose

from, but he said,
"You go to Bhuj." I
thought about
when
Subramuniaswami
[Hinduism Today's
publisher] visited
our sadhus in
Ahmedabad in
1996. He said there

are three rules for a disciple: "Obey your guru. Obey your guru. Obey your guru." I arrived in Bhuj the very evening of the day of the earthquake.

Later, I realized that by being sent there, I was not helping people, I was helping myself. A part of me changed. I grew closer to religion, grew closer to God, closer to my Guru. I

saw that Hinduism encompasses every form of life, every event.

I arrived here on the night of January 26. The scene was shocking and

horrific. In one of the aftershocks, even I ran with the people. I realized that night that an earthquake is different from other disasters. In a flood, people suffer, but they

know that the flood is not going to come back. In a war, there are places of safety. Even in famine, at least you can foresee where it is going. But here the uncertainty

weighed so heavily that it disoriented people. They did not know when or how many times the shocks would happen. They did not know whether it was safe for them to be in their

homes, but they would not leave their homes because their possessions and valuables were inside.

The first thing

Pramukh Swami instructed me was, "Do not ask names. If you ask names, people become conscious that they have lost everything. They will feel hurt." He told us to sleep

outside, in the tents with the people, even though our temple there was intact. He said, "You will find out their suffering." On that first day I decided to give one blanket

to each person. But it was so cold that I had to use three blankets to stop shivering. Then somebody came and asked me for two blankets, and I said, "Take them." Just one blanket for

one person, this is what the government would do, and this is what the other organizations would do. Because we slept outside with the people, we became sensitive

to their needs.

The next day,
Pramukh Swami
said we should
start serving hot
meals. I said, "How
can we cook hot
meals in this

situation?" He replied, "Imagine if your own mother gave you cold food three times a day. You would feel that, although she gave you food, she really does not love you." So we started

with 5,000 hot meals, which grew to 37,000 at the peak.

The RSS, VHP, RK Mission, Ananda Margis and many others the whole of

Hinduism has
gotten together to
help out those who
are suffering here.
NGOs like
ourselves are more
successful than the
government,
because our
sadhus and

volunteers have been moving in this area for over two hundred years. The people trust us.

Pramukh Swami said to not only help the needy, but

help the helpers as well. So at one time, more than 400 Red Cross people were eating at our place. We provided vehicles to the rescue teams, including the British and

French. I got the
German Motor
Management team
tankers from as far
away as
Ahmedabad to help
them provide water
to people not at
BAPS camps alone,
but to anybody.

This has been the system of Swami, and that is why BAPS has been appreciated by everybody.

Our organization is unique in that there

are no administrative costs. Every volunteer who comes covers his own expenses and brings his own vehicle. The Israeli team joked to me, "Swami, even in

the best international aid organizations, if one donates a shirt, the needy gets just the sleeve, because the other costs are absorbed in the administration. But

here, with your group, if one donates a shirt, you add a tie."

In the Semitic religions they have this concept of the "fury" of God, to

which they attribute such disasters. But in the Hindu system, it is not the fury of God. You cannot equate nature with God. Nature is the energy of God. The earthquake is not

the fury of God, for both good and bad people suffered together. We explained that it is not a question of how you die, but of how you live. If you have not lived well, not performed

good deeds,
accumulated bad
karma, then even if
you have died in a
healthy way, what
does it matter? We
do not believe that
life ends with this
death. That is the
beautiful part of

Hinduism.

There are no words
by which I can
thank Pramukh
Swami Ji and all the
sadhuis that have
been working here.

Organizations:

What They Plan to Do in India

Hindu

Ananda Marga
Universal Relief
Team Had
hundreds of

volunteers in the area within days

BAPS Earthquake

Relief Fund Huge Swaminarayan organization centered in Gujarat, leading efforts

Federation of
Gujarati
Associations of
N. A. No
website for
information, but
contacts
provided

Gujarati Samaj
of New York
No website for
information, but
contacts
provided

India American
Cultural
Association No
website for
information, but
contacts
provided

India Development and Relief Fund Raises funds for Indian NGOs such as Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram

Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America With VHP of India and RSS, the largest volunteer force in Gujarat

Indian

India Abroad
Foundation
Emergency
Appeal

Sending cash to India through various agencies

National

Council of Asian Indian Associations Working through Embassy, IDRF, AID, Red Cross and CARE

Nat. Fed. of
Indian-American
Associations
No website for
information, but
contacts
provided

Network of
South Asian
Professionals
Small,
channeling
money through
Indian
organizations in

Gujarat

The Association
for India's
Development
Relatively small

contributions so
far, but well
connected in
India

Volunteers for

India
Development
Small
organization
working
through other
relief agencies
in India

Secular

American Red Cross

Hundreds of Indian Red

Cross volunteers supported by international aid

AmeriCares
World's largest
private relief
organization
collects medical
and relief
supplies

CARE Working with local Indian businesses and organizations in Gujarat

CRY Distributes supplies, working with local Indian organizations

Direct Relief International Ships medical supplies, including large shipments to India

Doctors
Without
Borders
Nobel-prize
winning
organization
providing tons
of supplies and

some doctors

International Relief Teams Plans to send supplies

through local
Indian agencies

Operation USA
Hollywood-aligned
group ships

millions of
dollars of
supplies each
year

Oxfam America

UK-based
organization
famed for
long-term
solutions sent
its specialist
team

Save the
Children
Secular,
US-based
organization,
working
through
unidentified

local group

United Way
International
Works with
local United

Way in India

US Fund for
UNICEF
Supports United
Nations

Children's Fund, on the ground in Gujarat

Jewish

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Garners funds
from
governments
and others for
long-term relief
programs

American Jewish World Service Accepting donations for India, runs long-term programs

B'nai B'rith
Disaster Relief
Fund Raising
money for
sending to
India, no
indication of
whom it goes to

Christian Do relief work as a service

Catholic Relief Services

Sending food given by US government's Agency for International Development

Christian Children's Fund Focus on children, relatively small program slated for Gujarat

Church World Service Sending some money through CASA in India

Concern Worldwide Sending some money and specialists to India

Lutheran World
Relief Working
through
Lutheran
church partners
in India helping
35,000 families

United
Methodist
Committee on
Relief
Middle-road
Christians, web
site indicates
no special

program for India

Evangelical Do
relief work with
intention of
conversion

Adventist

Development and Relief Agency Seventh Day Adventist Church, works through local churches

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Working with Evangelical Fellowship of India

Commission on Relief

Food for the
Hungry
Supporting the

Evangelical Fellowship of India and other local churches

Latter-day Saint

Charities The "Mormons," no specific India relief program listed

International
Aid Their web
site says,
"Church-focuse
d with a heart
for evangelism"

MAP International Working through the Christian Emmanuel Hospital Association in

Gujarat

Salvation Army World Service Office Donations

going through Indian branch of Salvation Army

World Concern

"Sharing the message of God's love is the heart of our ministry."

World Relief
Seeks "to
provide a
vibrant
Christian
witness in this
needy region of
the world"

World Vision
"Bear witness
to the good
news of the
Kingdom of
God."

Many
organizations
appealed for
funds after the
earthquake.
The Embassy
of India in
Washington,

D.C. posted the
following list:

[www.indiane
mbassy.org/n
ew/gujarat_01](http://www.indianembassy.org/new/gujarat_01)

[/ngo.html](#)

with the
advice that
benefactors

check into
each group
before
donating.
Hinduism
Today did
just that, and

was surprised
to find the
presence of
evangelical
Christian
organizations
who,

according to
the
statements
on their own
web sites,
included
conversion

efforts as
part of their
relief work.
As well, the
BAPS and
RSS relief
workers in

Gujarat
recognized
only Ananda
Marga, VHP,
Red Cross,
Care, Doctors
Without

Borders, Save the Children and UNICEF.