Indian People’s Tribunal on Environment & Human Rights

The Jabalpur Earthquake

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THE INDIAN PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL
ON ENVIRONMENT AND
HUMAN RIGHTS

THE SEVENTH REPORT

THE JABALPUR EARTHQUAKE
AN ENQUIRY INTO REHABILITATION AND DISASTER
MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

On May 22, 1997, an earthquake of magnitude 6.0 on the Richter scale shook Jabalpur and the surrounding areas. As a result, 39 people lost their lives and 2,421 were injured due to house collapse. Apart from Jabalpur City and the district, villages from three other districts, namely, Mandla, Seoni, and Chhindwada were affected.

The earthquake that occurred on May 22, 1997, commonly known as the Jabalpur earthquake, in reality occurred in the Narmada Basin. The city of Jabalpur lies at the junction of the Vindhya and Satpura ranges. The Narmada River flows East-West along the southern border of Jabalpur while on the eastern parts, river Mahanadi, a tributary of the Narmada flows. There are other rivers in the district like Hira, Gour etc. The greatest impact of the earthquake of May 22, 1997 was experienced at the ‘T’ junction of the Narmada and the Mahanadi.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes are not unusual in India. In the recent past, earthquakes have occurred at Latur-Osmanabad, in Maharashtra and there after in Garhwal in Uttar Pradesh and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. Previously several earthquakes have occurred in various parts of India. The main concern of the Governmental, Non-Governmental Agencies and the people has been to provide rescue and relief to the affected people. There is, however, no Nation policy as such in respect of the rescue and relief operations that should be provided immediately after such natural disasters. The permanent rehabilitation also does not receive universal treatment. Thus, earthquake-affected persons are unjustly treated in the hands of governmental authorities on the ground that the Authorities have no experience in handling such occurrences.

In the case of Jabalpur earthquake it appears that the Administration had not learnt any lessons at all form early disasters. The national media covered the calamity for a few days did not attract the attention it deserved. Very little effort was taken to utilise all kinds of media to create adequate publicity about the disaster and make the public aware. In fact looking at the magnitude of the disaster, attention of not only the public or the State, but of the entire nation, should have been attracted.

The Jabalpur Earthquake is one such instance where the idea of sharing of information and awareness in respect to the sufferings of the earthquake affected persons was particularly absent. Whatever little information there was evaporation, as time passed away.

The earthquake brought an untold rain of sorrows to over 15,416 families who were rendered homeless and more than 3,06,389 houses were partially damaged. In Jabalpur City, 67 wards were affected while the number of villages affected in Jabalpur district was 1859. In Mandla district, 289 were affected; in Seoni district 569 villages were affected and in Chhindwada district 22 villages were affected. Out of 39 deaths which occurred due to earthquake, 38 alone were in Jabalpur City and one death occurred in Chhindwada.

As per the available statistics, In Jabalpur district 2310 people were injured while in Mandla 120 persons were injured. While in Chhindwada 4 persons and 1 person in Seoni were injured.

The salient feature of this earthquake was that the urban as well as rural areas in the State of Madhya Pradesh around Jabalpur were affected.
It seems that the authorities of the Government of Madhya Pradesh have divided the damage caused to the houses as ‘A’ completely damaged and ‘B’ partially damaged. As per the assessment in the urban area the total number of houses which were fully damaged were to the extent of 15,416 while the number of houses partially damaged were to the extent of 3,06,089.

Due to this earthquake, there was much damage to public property including the Jabalpur University, Educational Institutions and other buildings of public utility. Soon after the earthquake certain Government Officials and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) went into action to provide relief to the affected persons.

Initially large numbers of Non-Governmental Organisations were working in the affected area. Amongst them were:

1. Society for Resource Integration And Development Action(SRDA)
2. OXFAM
3. Tarun Sankar
4. MIWCYD
5. Bargi Bandh Visthapit Sangh
6. Giants Group of Jabalpur
7. Mannulal Trust
8. Rotary Club
9. World Vision
10. Church of Social Action
11. CARE India
12. Jamat-e-Islami Hind
13. Bharat Sevashram Sanghatan, Calcutta
14. Laghoo Udyog Sangh
15. EMC
16. Samanvya Pariwar

Initially these NGOs provided building material for temporary sheds and shelters in different villages as the Government authorities did not reach in time. Some of the organisations have contributed in building confidence amongst the affected people. They also distributed the food packets for a number of days. Soon, however, the NGOs like the Government authorities also lost the initial initiative and at the time of our visit we hardly found any NGOs operating in the field.

The Chief Minister, Mr. Digvijay Singh, the Minister in charge of District, Mr. Rajan Prasad Sukla, as well as the Chief Secretary flew into Jabalpur and surveyed the situation. An announcement was made for an ex-gratia payment of one lakh rupees to all survivors of the deceased and a sum of Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 10,000/- to the injured persons.

The next of kin of the 39 deceased persons were given an ex-gratia payment of one lakh rupees as announced. Some of the injured persons were also given monetary assistance.
Teams of Government officials were sent to rural areas to assess the damage caused in the most affected areas. The Government seems to have taken a policy decision to provide a sum of Rs. 3,000/- to the quake affected families, modifying the guidelines under Revenue book Circular 6(4).

With regard to the impact of the earthquake, certain short-term and long-term strategies were adopted. The most acute problem was to provide temporary sheds to the quake affected people. Especially since the monsoons were to begin in the month of June.

The worst affected areas were in Jabalpur City. Also a large number of villages were affected. However, about 42 villages spread over different districts, were badly affected rendering people of the entire village homeless. As a temporary relief measure the Government was to provide free bamboo poles for erecting temporary sheds. Relief was also provided in cash in amounts ranging from Rs. 400/- to Rs. 3000/-. The affected families could use the money to purchase utensils, clothing or even to erect temporary sheds and shelters.
SEISMIC ZONAL POSITION AND ITS UNDERSTANDING

The area where the earthquake occurred was around the Narmada Basin. The Narmada Basin is usually classified as a Zone of seismicity and in the recent past there have been many earthquakes of significant magnitude in this area. A case in point is the “Satpuda Earthquake” measuring 6.25 on the Richter Scale that took place as far back as 1938. The city of Jabalpur is in seismic zone III, according to the National Building Code, 1970. In view of this, the buildings should have been made in accordance with the prescribed construction mode, which should have been as follows:

1. Mortar mix not less than 1:6 in cement/sand;
2. Box type construction;
3. Symmetry in plan;
4. Good quality bricks;
5. Roof band.

It seems, however, that building construction even in the city of Jabalpur was not up to standard. The Government as well as private builders have not followed with care, the construction requirements for earthquake prone area.

REHABILITATION MEASURES

I – Temporary Measures & Their Utility

As lakhs of people were affected, the work of rehabilitation assumed immense importance. Such a natural calamity like this earthquake requires temporary as well as permanent measures. The temporary measures should be to provide shelters, medical assistance, drinking water, sanitation, educational facilities and psychological treatment to the affected people for the shock they have received. Such shocks are likely to continue for a long time as recurring tremors occur and are likely to remind the people of the impact of the earthquake, which occurred earlier.

Initially the entire damage could not be assessed and the Government authorities have assessed the damage on a small scale. As the number of deaths were 39 the impact of the earthquake was considered to be of a small magnitude. However, viewing the damage caused in the rural areas where the houses in 42 villages had been razed to the ground and in more than 2000 villages the houses were partially damaged, it is possible to say that the damage was on a large scale.

This Jabalpur earthquake occurred on May 22, 1997 during the hot summer season. Due to the heat most of the people in the villages were asleep outside their houses and hutments. Thus inspite of major house collapses the death rate fortunately was limited.

In the recent past there was an earthquake at Latur-Osmanabad districts in the state of Maharashtra. The damage caused was to the extent of more than 11 crore rupees. The damage assessed by the authorities in the Jabalpur earthquake was also to the extent of about 11 crore rupees. However, at Latur the death toll was 8,000 while there were only 39 deaths in Jabalpur earthquake. The problem of rehabilitation by the authorities in the Government of
Madhya Pradesh was considered on the basis of the deaths and not on the basis of the total damage caused by the Jabalpur earthquake. Though the loss by way of life was less, the loss by way of damage was large. The question of rehabilitation should not have been considered on the basis of the loss of life but should have been considered on the basis of damage.

In such a natural disaster, which is always sudden and unpredicted the entire locality, irrespective of loss of life or loss of property, receive a severe psychological shock. To think of providing rehabilitation merely on the basis of loss of life is not correct nor is it proper. Humanitarian consideration requires considering the rehabilitation in such an event like an earthquake on the basis of damage caused as well as the mental shock received by the people. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has not considered the problem seriously in view of the damage caused to the localities when providing immediate relief to the affected people. The temporary shelter provided and the immediate assistance given for the loss of households, goods and chattels was very meager and was not befitting the measure require for temporary assistance to be given after such an eventuality.

For the people whose houses were totally damaged, some assistance was given to them by way of polythene sheets, bamboo and other material. Such material was given to the people whose entire village was affected and the houses and hutments razed to the ground. In some places parts of the wall were still standing even after the earthquake. The people took the benefits of these walls and erected small tents of about 4 ft. in height made from polythene sheets and bamboo. This can be seen in the photographs, which have been annexed with this report.

These shelters are of no assistance to people at all. They cannot be said to be sunproof nor can they be said to be rainproof. I had the occasion to visit some of these tents erected by the people, on my visit to the area on August 15-16, 1997 especially in villages of Vasantnagar, Dhatapur, Sarai etc, it was impossible to stay in such tents even for a short while. The heat of the sun inside the tents was more torturous than the heat outside. The tents could not be said to be a temporary shelter at all. The height of most of these tents was not more than 4 ft. We had to bend down to get in the tent and once inside one could not stand erect in the tent. The small size of the hutments was apparent. The people living inside these hutments also cook their food inside. As their hutments are made of bamboo and polythene sheets they are inflammable and a serious fire hazard. Thus these shelters are not only inhuman to live but also a threat to life.

In such an eventuality one may think of permanent settlements or permanent rehabilitation of the affected persons. The permanent rehabilitation of such affected persons is always likely to take long time and it could take years.

The temporary shelter therefore must assume a semi-permanent nature. The authorities working for the rehabilitation of Jabalpur earthquake victims are totally unmindful of this aspects while granting relief to the people to construct their temporary shelters.

In the city of Jabalpur the earthquake affected a large number of houses and localities. The Jabalpur University area was worst affected. The Government has constructed couple of Transit Camps made of tin as a temporary shelter. There are a few such Transit Camps. Each Transit Camp has to accommodate thousands of people and this was constructed with a view to provide temporary shelter to the affected citizens of Jabalpur City.
These huge tin sheds are constructed without considering the psychological and social background of the Indian society. When the permanent shelter is not likely to come up in the near future the temporary shelter has to be used by the victims for many months and in most cases for many years as well. Community living for thousands of people in one tin shed is not befitting especially in the Indian background. The whole family life gets disturbed and there are sociological problems amongst the people who are made to live in such a community tin shed for a long time. Such tin sheds for hundreds of people were erected in rural areas also. These Transit Camps can be occupied by the people for short period i.e. for few days only but the life in India requires a shelter for family and not for group of families or for the community as such. Such huge tin sheds erected at Jabalpur remained unoccupied by the affected people. These community tin sheds in the villages have not been occupied by the people for living and are used by the children for playing. In the city of Jabalpur most of the affected people have found shelter on their own, however, poor the person may be.

II – Monetary Help

The immediate monetary assistance given in Jabalpur City and Jabalpur district was to the extent of Rs. 3,000/-. While monetary assistance of Rs. 1,500/- was given in other districts namely Mandla, Seoni and Chhindwada inspite of the fact that the damage in these district was complete. One fails to understand as to why discrimination was made between the people of Jabalpur City and district and other districts where the suffering was the same Infact even the assistance of Rs. 3,000/- is not enough.

In the localities and villages where houses were totally damaged, household articles and clothing were lost. With the help of some bamboo, polythene sheets and Rs. 1,500/-(and/or Rs. 3,000/-) the people could not build a proper temporary shelter or obtain a basic standard of living and daily food even for a few days.

III – Permanent Rehabilitation Policy

The Government has categorised the damage to the houses as total and partial. Engineers and competent persons did not survey the houses in several villages. Instead the village officers who did not even have the elementary knowledge of assessing the damage to the houses surveyed the houses. In most of the rural areas the damage to property is surveyed and assessed by the village officers and not by the surveyors, junior engineers or any other competent authority. It is these people who categorise the houses as partially damaged or totally damaged hence reliance cannot be placed upon their assessment. The Government has formulated a scheme for permanent rehabilitation especially of those whose houses have been totally damaged. Before permanent rehabilitation is undertaken it is desirable that a competent authority surveys the houses.

Where the houses are totally damaged the Government intends to assist the affected persons by building a new house on the same site. For that purpose the Government desires to give assistance under “Indira Aawas Yojana” and to give assistance to the extent of Rs. 15,000/- by including the names in the list of persons below poverty line. The “Indira Aawas Yojana” is applicable to the rural poor and covers the people below poverty line.

People above poverty line will be given assistance to the extent of Rs. 15,000/- as a repayable loan. The earthquake had caused considerable damage in the city of Jabalpur itself where the people living in zopadpattis have also been affected. As the “Indira Aawas Yojana” is not
applicable to the urban poor. The persons below poverty line but living in the city of Jabalpur and other urban areas will not get the benefit at all but will have to obtain loan like other people. For the urban area the Government intends to extend the scheme buy giving assistance to the extent of Rs. 15,000/-.

From the interviews, which were held in the villages and the urban areas visited by us, the people do not desire to obtain the loan because of the practical difficulties and delays involved in the procedure. The authorities of the State Government have informed us that the procedure is being simplified and loans would be made easily available.

It is admitted that a large number of people living below poverty line even in urban areas mainly reside in zopadpattis. The people living in zopadpattis are practically homeless. It would be a futile effort to assess their houses on the basis of total damage or partial damage. Zopadpattis itself cannot be considered a house and the people residing in these shelters should be considered homeless people. Their rehabilitation, therefore, assumes greater importance as they belong to the lowest income group. People living in zopadpattis should be considered on par with people living below poverty line and assistance must be on par.

The Government has no scheme to deal with the problems of the people living in zopadpattis. For all practical purposes, they are the persons who are almost disqualified from obtaining a loan. The scheme for rehabilitation on the basis of a loan would result in great hardship to these persons living in zopadpattis in urban areas. The resultant discrimination made between the rural poor and the urban poor are contrary to social justice.

As already stated. Practically there is no temporary measure made to rehabilitate the affected people. The shelters, that have been provided, are not worthy of human inhabitation at all. It cannot provide shelter from the heat nor from the rain. Proper semi permanent tents and shelters must be provided for the persons whose houses are totally damaged immediately before it is too late. The shelters must be accompanied by civic amenities.

Apart from loss of property 39 lives were lost. Thousands of people were injured during the earthquake. For the kith and kin of the deceased persons the Government had given the assistance of on lakh rupees and for the injured, as per the scheme, an amount of Rs. 2,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- was to be provided. In interviews with the injured persons especially where the entire village is dislocated we have found that people spent amounts above Rs. 10,000/- on medical care, as transport facilities were unavailable. For medical assistance they had to spend money from their own pockets. In other villages people have complained that though they were injured, they were not given any medical assistance and had to treat themselves.

In the matter of rehabilitation of affected people, the Government authorities have not given primary assistance to the people. Temporary shelters provided for them were uninhabitable. Damaged public buildings like schools, temples, mosques; community halls have not been repaired at all. In some villages where school buildings had collapsed, small communal tin sheds were provided for schooling and for residence. This makes learning impossible. Education, which is a primary concern of a society, is left in despair.

In rural areas the traditional drinking water system remained unaffected after the earthquake and people were utilising the system even after the earthquake.
In the villages where there has been total devastation farmers and agricultural labour have been so affected psychologically that they have lost interest in farming at least temporarily as life in the villages has been dislocated. The cattle on which they were dependent hid after the earthquake and have also been affected. The material required for farming was also washed away. No special care has been taken to assist the farmers and agricultural labour to carry on their regular activities.

IV – Lessons from Latur – Osmanabad Experience

After a natural calamity like an earthquake, relief and rescue operations have to be followed in a planned resettlement programme depending upon the magnitude of the calamity, resources in the form of men, money and materials and proper mobilisation of resources. The objective in such a situation has got to be comprehensive and satisfactory resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected people in urban and rural areas has to be borne in mind. The resettlement objective must be to ensure socially, culturally and economically self-sustaining community with a scientific approach to providing housing and civic amenities. Such an objective was apparent atleast on paper in the Policy Statement of the Government of Maharashtra dealing with the rehabilitation, rescue and relief work for the earthquake affected persons of Latur in the year 1993. It is absent in the rehabilitation programme after the Jabalpur earthquake of 1997.

In Latur, immediately after assessing the damage assistance was sought worldwide. It is true that loss of life during the Latur and Osmanabad earthquake of 1993 was more than caused by the Jabalpur earthquake, which might have psychologically affected the donors. However, the damage to property and the psychological effect on the people were almost the same at Jabalpur as in Latur. In the matter of rehabilitation, the magnitude of devastation and the loss of community life have to be considered. The rescue and relief operation must be provided with the same magnitude irrespective of the loss of life.

For rehabilitation after the Jabalpur earthquake the World Bank has not come forward to give any assistance to the victim of the earthquake. The donor agencies have also not come forward for the reasons best known to them. For permanent rehabilitation an all-round effort has to be made by the Government of Madhya Pradesh to make a permanent rehabilitation programme financially viable and to find donors for such a programme. If inspite of best efforts donors and institutions like the World Bank are not willing to finance the programme, then this situation should be brought to the notice of the Government of India and other State Governments. The State authorities could organise the necessary funds for rehabilitation.

In Jabalpur City the damage in certain areas is very extensive. The damage to Jabalpur University, Govind Bhavan Colony, and other areas was caused due to lack of care taken at the time of construction of these buildings. The norms that should have been followed during construction have not been followed and excessive construction was permitted. Quality control, which should have been maintained, was not followed in the least.

In respect of the construction of the Madhya Pradesh Housing Board Colony, Govind Bhavan, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur, a report was made available to me of UNIQUE CONSTRUCTIONS dated 10th July 1997. In respect of house- MIG 29 – in the said colony it was observed that the brickwork was not good and mortar mix in brick is of poor quality. This observation is based on the Test Report annexed alongwith that report.
V – Adherence to National Building Code

As already pointed out Jabalpur is in seismic zone- III (National Building Code, 1970). The same position is continued even after the National Building Code 1970. Since, Jabalpur was in a seismic zone III (NBC 1970) at the time of construction should have been done in accordance with the prescribed norms namely:

1. Mortar mix not less than 1:6 in cement / sand;
2. Box type construction;
3. Symmetry in plan;
4. Good quality bricks;
5. Roof band.

Municipal rules regarding granting permission should be brought on par with the requirements of the construction bearing in mind that Jabalpur is in seismic zone –III as per National Building Code, 1970. Strict compliance is necessary so that the construction in Jabalpur is done with earthquake resistant components.

After the earthquake at Latur, the Government of Maharashtra had envisaged a programme for rehabilitation of villages completely dislocated and where the houses were totally damaged. The programme consisted of re-building houses by the Government by relocating the village sites and practically building a new village. Such is not a policy of the Madhya Pradesh Government after the Jabalpur earthquake. The Madhya Pradesh Government created a policy to provide assistance to the affected persons to build their own houses on the original sites itself even when the village has been completely devastated and the houses are totally damaged.

In such a scheme it is left to the affected persons to build their houses on the same site. Instead of giving of assistance in terms of money the Government may give assistance in the form of material which may be used by the person.

It is, therefore, left to the affected people to re-build his own house on the same site. He may use the local materials as per his choice in addition to the material given by the State Government. Devastation of the village and total damage to the houses were caused during the earthquake as the construction of the houses in the village in old days was done without bearing in mind the requirements of earthquake resistant houses. If the earthquake resistant designs are not provided for and not implemented then the likelihood of building new houses in the same old fashion is not ruled out. The Government has, therefore, to obtain a design of the house, which would be earthquake proof. Such a design has to be prepared in consultation with the villagers of the concerned villages taking into consideration their requirements. In accordance with these earthquake resistant building designs must houses and buildings be constructed and assistance for building these houses be provided.

Where the total village is required to be reconstructed, instead of building an old type village, the design should be in accordance with the re-settlement objective, namely, to ensure socially, culturally and economically self-sustaining communities in an environment which includes proper housing with civic amenities. In old constructions sanitation and other civic amenities were not provided for.
Environmental requirements were also not considered. While providing a new design care has to be taken to bear in mind sanitation and environmental requirements. Rural life was unmindful of these factors whilst constructing houses or hutments in the past. While reconstructing the house these factors must be provided for and they must be impressed upon the villagers to ensure their fulfillment. As this would be in accordance with scientific requirements in respect of the health and sanitation these components are absolutely essential for giving a new look to rural life. These factors should not be ignored on the ground that the villagers in the past were not using them.
DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICY FORMULATION

After the Latur earthquake the Government of Maharashtra worked out plans for immediate assistance as well as for permanent rehabilitation by way of short term and long term actions. The temporary sheds were erected not on the basis of community-wise occupation but for the purpose of providing a temporary shelter to a family. Tins and other materials to erect small tin sheds for the occupation of a single family were provided. The Madhya Pradesh State Government has not made such an effort. The concept of family living was not been taken into account at all. Transit Camps cannot be substitute for family living, as the family is likely to occupy the temporary shelter for a considerable period probably over months and years.

So also in the matter of permanent rehabilitation building of houses was taken on a priority basis and a policy was adopted. At Latur the layout plans for the settlement of villages were prepared with the help of villagers and experts. The designs were obtained from experts. The worst affected villages were to be relocated on new sites and the beneficiaries in such relocated villages were to be provided freely with plots of 250 sq.ft. carpet area i.e. core house. Any area in excess required by the family was to be given on the basis of a loan. The layout for relocated villages was designed to reflect the villagers’ views coupled with a modern outlook i.e. having civic amenities of electricity, drainage, roads alongwith public buildings such as schools, temples, mosques and community halls.

In villages where the houses were fully damaged and had become uninhabitable these were to be demolished and reconstructed. For building such houses the upper ceiling limit of entitlement was fixed at Rs. 54,000/- which was estimated to be the average cost of a house of 250 sq.ft of carpet area in the village. In addition to the damaged houses there was some damage done to the other houses in different villages in 13 districts. A programme of retrofitting was undertaken in the shape of giving monetary as well as material assistance.

After the Jabalpur earthquake there has been a total absence of State Policy on disaster management as far as permanent rehabilitation is concerned.

Except for announcing a decision to give assistance for building the houses under “Indira Awas Yojana” and making it partially applicable to the urban areas the Government had not planned anything.

We find that many people in the villages and in the city of Jabalpur are repairing their houses, which were damaged in the earthquake, and the repairs are being carried out in a traditional way. Even in Jabalpur where repairs are being carried out by the persons individually the opinion of experts as to whether the building is capable of being repaired as earthquake resistant is not obtained. The grievance of some people is that they had not met the Government officials and tried to obtain certification with regard to the capability of the building being repaired to withstand earthquakes. However, no helping hand is given by the Government authorities in this matter and after waiting for a considerable time they had no option but to repair their buildings to make living possible in the house. The repairs, which are being carried out at the village site, are still more dangerous because the repairs are being made using materials obtained from the debris.
In fact, the Government has not obtained a design from experts for the construction of the houses, which may be constructed, by obtaining Government assistance of Rs. 15,000/-. The assistance of the Government should be made dependant on the fact that the affected persons will build the house as per the approved designs so that the public funds will be properly utilised in building quake resistant houses. Such designs are required to be prepared in consultation with the village communities but having a scientific outlook on the basis of expert’s advice. Such care and caution is not being taken and such schemes are not planned at all. Giving monetary assistance to the extent of Rs. 15,000/- either under the “Indira Aawas Yojana” or by way of loan with part of the assistance being paid in cash and part in material may not ultimately be able to provide quake resistant homes. This indicates the lack of awareness on the part of the Government authorities in respect to disaster management.
I Have already indicated that a large number have collapsed in the city of Jabalpur because of lack of quality control. Monitoring is required with regard to construction with Government assistance by private individuals similar to that of the constructions carried out for the Government buildings. The Government should open an avenue by way of Consultancy Services to the people in the matter of constructions to be carried out hereafter of the houses damaged as well as of other houses. A strict watch should be maintained on the use of materials supplied by the Government by way of assistance. Such avenues by way of Consultancy Service should be available easily to the urban as well as to the rural population in the affected areas.

After the earthquake some assistance was given to the injured persons who suffered from injuries caused by the earthquake but the problem does not rest at that. A large number of patients have developed psychological problems after the earthquake. Dr. Harish Shetty, who had accompanied me during the inquiry for some period, has submitted this report, which indicates that some of the so-called healthy people also suffered psychologically due to the earthquake. Many have developed insomnia and fear impending earthquakes. Many suffered because of sadness and flashbacks. There is no scheme formulated for helping such people especially in rural areas where medical facilities are not available at all. The recurrence of such things is likely to develop a trauma by way of permanent feature.

Health problems could be properly understood if the case of the survivors of the family of Arunkumar Shrikaran is considered. A family residing in Amanpur area of Jabalpur lost four members. The family was not shifted to another site but is still living in the same house where the deaths occurred because of the collapse of the wall of the neighbouring house. After this tragic incident the wife of the deceased has been unable to sleep or relax. The surviving daughters are terrified and are plagued by horrifying flashbacks. In spite of approaching the authorities, a sort of medical counsel has not been provided. The surviving daughters are not in a position to go to school. The lives of minor children are likely to be ruined unless a medical counsel is provided to assist them and bring them back to normal life. Similar is the case with small children whose parents both died in the earthquake. The two minor children were suffering from disturbed sleep. Assistance of one lakh rupees to the kith and kin of the deceased may not be of any use unless their future careers are not looked after by society.

Public buildings and other civic amenities are parts of modern life. An earthquake of such intensity causes damage to roads and bridges and other public buildings also. So also it affects the irrigation structures and water supply. A proper survey must be made in respect to roads and bridges. The repairs of damaged culverts and minor bridges and roads are necessary for proper access to the villages. If necessary culverts and/or bridges may require demolishing. The same should be rebuilt. The earthquake not only in Jabalpur City but also but also in rural areas affected a large number of school buildings and other public buildings also. The buildings are being repaired especially in rural areas without considering the capability of the buildings to withstand the effect of an earthquake hereafter. Before repairing the buildings, the opinion of experts in construction with this aspect was necessary to be obtained to make the use of such public build safe for humans.
As per the policy of the Madhya Pradesh Government the people will be left to build their house on their own. All the more this makes it necessary to provide proper training to the local people involved in building in respect of earthquake resistant constructions. The people must be made aware of the fact that they are getting assistance to build a quake resistant construction and, therefore, it is in their interest to build in accordance with the prescribed design taking into consideration the local needs as well. It would be otherwise dangerous to allow people to carry on construction with Government assistance without there being a proper design, training and monitoring.
**IN CONCLUSION**

I was requested by the Indian People’s Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights to hold an enquiry into the process of rehabilitation of the Jabalpur earthquake affected persons. Accordingly I visited some villages such as Kosanghat, Sarai, Kudriya, Jantara, Dhanariya and some areas of Jabalpur including the Jabalpur University. The visit was undertaken for the purpose of this inquiry from August 15-16, 1997. The photographs annexed along with this report indicates the damage and the inhuman conditions which the affected people are made to live- unattended and uncared for.


In the villages and in the localities of the City of Jabalpur, many people accompanied the team went have supplied information and assisted in the inquiry. The names of such people could be found in the minutes of the enquiry.

Dr. Harish Shetty has independently submitted his report on the health conditions and the mental trauma after the Jabalpur earthquake.

We have interviewed the male and female members in the villages and in the City of Jabalpur and have also seen the damage caused to property and houses in the rural and urban areas. Some of the injured persons were also interviewed. Their statements have been recorded in the minutes of the enquiry.

On August 16, 1997 in the afternoon I had a meeting with the Commissioner of the Division (Shri Ram Sanjeevan) who is incharge of rehabilitation, at his residence with some of my colleagues. I also had a meeting with the Additional Collector, Jabalpur (Shri B.L. Kanta Rao) in his office on the same day alongside with some of my colleagues. Both of them have given valuable assistance and information, which have helped me a lot while preparing this report.

I am thankful to all the persons who accompanied me, the people of OXFAM at Nagpur and the Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights for giving me this opportunity to submit a report on an issue of great importance in connection with the rehabilitation of the people affected during the Jabalpur earthquake.

Indian People’s Tribunal on Environment & Human Rights
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   Language of publication: English

Second Report The Status of the Manibali Oustees
   By Justice B.G. Kolse Patil (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
   Language of publication: English

Third Report The Marathwada Earthquake Report – An Enquiry into the Relief Measures
   By Justice R.A. Jahagirdar (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
   Language of publication: Marathi & English

Fourth Report Rajaji – A Preliminary Report on the Rajaji Park
   By Justice P.S. Potli (Former Chief Justice, Kerala High Court)
   Language of publication: Hindi & English

Fifth Report Forced Evictions – An Indian People’s Tribunal Enquiry into the Brutal Demolitions of Pavement and Slum Dwellers Homes
   By Justice Hosbet Suresh (Retd. Judge Bombay High Court)
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Sixth Report Wounded Valley…. Shattered Souls An All Women’s Fact-Finding Commission in to the Plight of Women an Children in Kashmir
   Team Members: Dr. Kamakshi Bhate, Dr. Smita Puniyani, Katy Irani & Hasina Khan
   Language of publication: Marathi & Hindi

Seventh Report The Jabalpur Earthquake – An Enquiry into the Rehabilitation & Disaster Management
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Indian People’s Tribunal on Environment & Human Rights
The Indian People’s Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights

The Indian People’s Tribunal (IPT) was formally launched on June 5, 1993, World Environment Day, at the Workshop on Environment and the Law held at Bangalore. The IPT will focus its attention on the survival and ideological issues being thrown up by people’s groups throughout the country. Its secretariat is funded by such groups.

OBJECTIVES

1. TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPERATIVES OF EQUITY AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE, VISION FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR JUDICIARY, by interpreting existing legislation and documents such as the Constitution of India in a manner that protects individual and collective environmental and social rights particularly those of adivasis and dalits—rather than the convenience of the establishment.

2. TO HIGHLIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES being perpetrated on communities and individuals by the ruling elite in pursuance of unsustainable ‘development’ objectives.

3. TO ENCOURAGE VICTIM COMMUNITIES TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS by empowering them with information…putting them in touch with legal counsel…. And presenting them with test cases against which they can evaluate their own varied circumstances.

4. TO SENSITISE PUBLIC OPINION through the media to the fact that issues of environment and human rights are inextricably linked.

5. TO HIGHLIGHT THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN UNSUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AND DEGRADATION; so as to awaken the public to the fact that the spirit and ambitions. Needless to add, the IPT will also serve to network groups around the country.