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1. Introduction to BJS

The Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS) (earlier name Akhil Maharashtra Jain Sanghatana), a non-profit, non-political, social service organization was founded by Shri. Shantilal Muttha in 1985 with a dignified vision of contributing towards improving the quality of life for the citizens and the society.

BJS has got diverse and pertinent objectives in the field of Disaster Management:

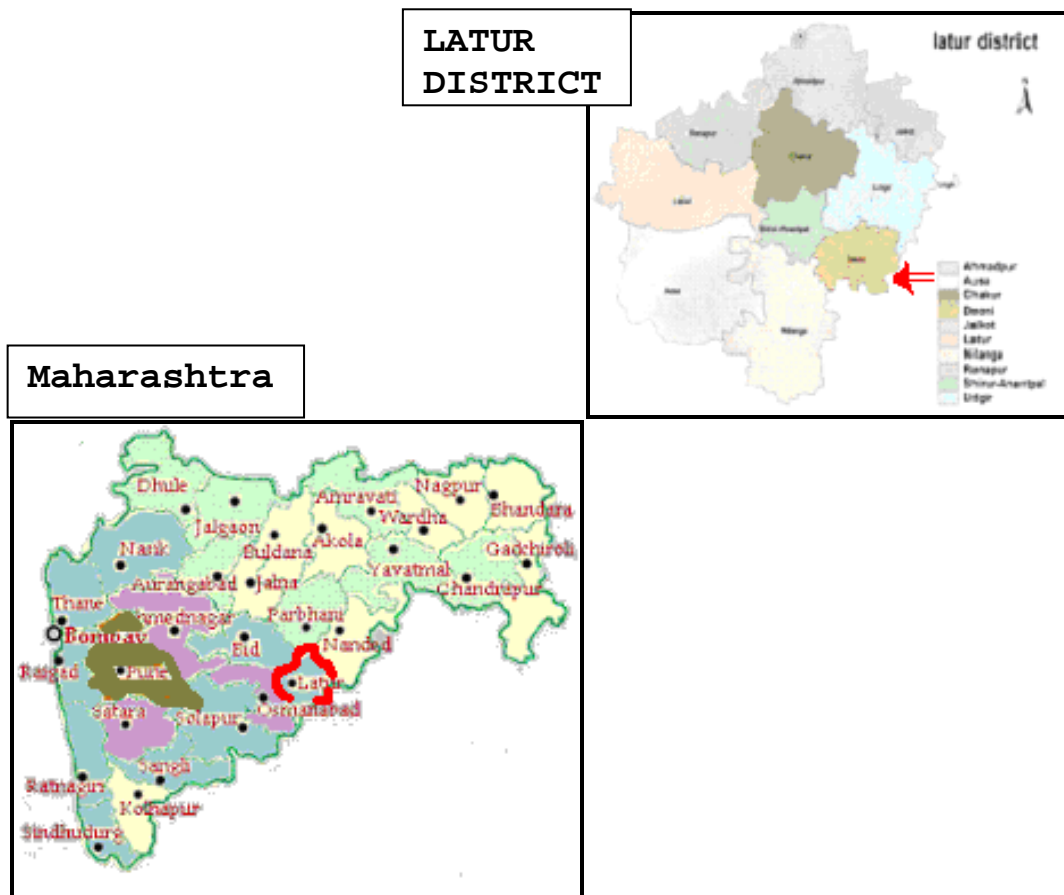
- Emergency Relief Work by setting up temporary camps serving food & essentials to the disaster-hit families
- Organizing medical & healthcare camps at disaster sites
- Re-establishing educational facilities viz. schools for disaster affected students
- Dealing with psychology of children, to avoid the adverse effects of disasters
- Resettlement of disaster-hit population by providing pre-fabricated shelters

With its headquarters at Pune, BJS has an effective network of highly trained group of volunteers and committed teachers & students of around 2500 educational institutions who are ready to handle any kind of disasters. Besides that, BJS has a dedicated team of professionals working as Disaster Management Wing working on various aspects of disasters to form towards a specialized knowledge bank, which will be a role model of its kind.



2. Occurrence of Latur earthquake

On September 30th 1993, at 3.56am an Earthquake of magnitude 6.3 struck **Killari, Sastur and Latur** Districts of Maharashtra. The impact of the disaster on human life was unimaginably high. The degree of destruction was such that dwellings in several villages of these two districts had totally collapsed. Thousands of people lost near and dear ones and became houseless. Official figures show that about 3,00,000 people lost their home and belongings. The official figures of casualty were around 10000 among which women, children and aged people were on higher side. About 3 Lac people became homeless and 5000 children in the age group 1-13 years became orphans or destitute. Since the Earthquake struck in the early hours, death toll was very high. 25 villages were reduced to rubble and 58 villages suffered severe damage.





3. Relief works at Latur

BJS (earlier named as Akhil Maharashtra Jain Sanghatana) has played a major role in September 30, 1993 Marathwada earthquake disaster relief operations. BJS responded voluntarily under the leadership of **Shri Sharad Pawar** (Chief Minister at that time), **Shri Madanlal Bafna** (former Minister, Maharashtra) and **Shri Padam Singha Patil** (Minister).

BJS **adopted nine villages** of Osmanabad and Latur districts. The names of 9 villages are Sastur, Holi, Holithanda, Rajegaon, Rebi Chincholi, Thavshijad, Pettsanghvi, Nandurga, and Katechincholi. BJS established a Main Camp at Sastur with all required equipments consisting of, generators, walky talky sets, perishable food, tents, utensils etc. In Sastur provision of electricity was not made during the first few hours after earthquake.

BJS made an arrangement for electricity through the Generator and fixed 200-halogen bulbs in Sastur village. Government officials, relief workers, and other NGOs benefited from the arrangements made by BJS for electricity. From the very first day after the disaster, BJS provided relief materials to victims. 800 BJS volunteers reached the affected area in just a few hours of the tragedy. The BJS camps were so well managed that they drew words of genuine appreciation from several national leaders.

a **Food**

BJS provided food to disaster victims twice a day for 15 days in the 9 adopted villages of Osmanabad and Latur districts. BJS provided food to approximately **30,000 disaster-affected people** over a period of one month. Decentralized cooking arrangements were set up away from the Disaster spot at Aurangabad & Barshi to reduce the load at the site and sent the food on their own to the affected area.

The American Ambassador Mr. Flynn, visited the community kitchen run by BJS at Sastur and was amazed at and fully appreciated for the safety and hygiene aspects taken care of by volunteers at the kitchen.



b Medical Aid

Medical aid was also flowed in to the disaster site from BJS side. BJS distributed essential medicines to the victims. A team of doctors was made available to provide round the clock assistance.

c Other relief material

BJS distributed various essential material to the quake affected. BJS supplied 200 utensils kits, 50000 sweaters, 10000 blankets and 4000 saris to the earthquake victims in 9 adopted villages.

They also distributed bed sheets, clothes, mats, stoves, candles, plastic containers, and lamps. BJS established a flourmill in each of the 9 villages they adopted.

d Disposal of dead

Tasks allotted to BJS, also included removal of dead bodies and their cremation. BJS undertook that extremely difficult task in adverse conditions like heavy rain and disruption of electricity. Wood was not adequately available to cremate dead bodies.

BJS volunteers therefore used damaged windows and door pieces of collapsed buildings to cremate bodies. BJS volunteers struggled to identify the dead bodies and cremated them according to their religious rites.

4. Rehabilitation works at Latur

Even though various social organizations rushed with the help for the disaster victims, BJS involvement and approach in the rehabilitation works were exceptional. BJS focused more on the traumatized children and their holistic development through quality education. Following rehabilitation works were carried out by BJS after Latur earthquake.

a Education

During his first fortnight stay at the Earthquake-hit area, BJS founder and National President **Shri.Shantilal Muttha** observed that worst sufferers of this tragedy were surviving children. So he decided to adopt and take care of all



the expenses including education of 1200 boys from the worst earthquake-affected areas of Latur and Osmanabad districts. Even though 300 girls were willing to move to Pune, BJS decided to rehabilitate only boys considering the socio-cultural factors. The Sanghatana took the requisite permission from the State Government and the parents/guardian for this. In consultation with the Chief Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar BJS carried out a survey of the children who were willing to come and whose parents had consented to send them to Pimpri for educational rehabilitation. BJS finalized a list of **1,000 such boys from 29 villages in Latur-osmanabad districts**. They also obtained clearance for starting aided Primary and Middle schools, and a Junior College for the children. MSRTC offered 25 buses to bring children from their hometown to Pune.

On October 25, 1993, the auspicious day of Dassera Chief Minister **Sarad Pawar** and Governor **P.C. Alexander** flagged off convoy of 25 buses transporting children to Pimpri, Pune. In addition to the 1,000 children screened an additional 400 children boarded the buses. Temporary provisions for their stay were made in Pimpri. Arrangements for 800 children were made at Atmanagar complex owned by Muttha associates, which had 120 rooms on the ground floor. The Divisional Commissioner, Mr. V.P. Rane, inspected the building. Arrangements for the rest of the children were made by PCMC. Subsequently PCMC allowed BJS to shift the children to the newly constructed four storied school at Sant Tukaram Nagar, Pimpri. Presently the basement of the building was being used as mess, 25 rooms as residential quarters and rest as classrooms.

Leading Psychologists and behavioral scientists namely, Sudhir Kothari, P.G. Vaidya, Pustraj Atre, Vijay Parulkar, Vasudev Parlikar, Mohan Agashe, Medha Dhawale, Bindu Patani and Jyoti Ronghe, met and discussed the probable psychological problems and interventions for the children. Dr. Mohan Agashe, head of psychiatric department at the B J medical college, Pune and Director of the Maharashtra Manksi arogya Sanstha endorsed BJS effort and



suggested that given the trauma the children had undergone they needed a change of place and education.

On October 26, 1993, 1200 children from earthquake-affected areas reached Atmanagar, Pimpri, Pune. Children came from villages like Madaj, Maichakur, Kashti, Arni, Pethsanghvi, Holi, Ekondi, Udatpur, Taushigar, Kanegaon, Makni, Mangrul, Dendkal, Talni, Killari, and Limbala from Osmanabad and Latur Districts. Mr. Muttha brought 14 teachers from quake-affected area to provide a sense of belonging. Elders also accompanied children from villages.

Jain Sanghatana members made elaborate arrangements for children at Atmanagar. When they reached Pimpri local students with flowers welcomed them. At least 120 rooms in the apartments were furnished with beds, mattresses and household items. A Medical Aid Center, Grocery shop, kitchen and dining arrangements were made in the premises. A team of 25 volunteers worked during day and 5 during night. Dr. Mohan Agashe, head of the department of Psychiatry of the BJ Medical College, accompanied by three other doctors met the students the next day for psychological study.

Children from standard fifth to tenth (9-15 yrs) were kept; younger children were left behind following the advice of psychologists. State government sanctioned a Primary and Secondary and a Junior college. Out of 1421 children, at least 70 were orphaned while some of the others had lost one of their parents BJS had conducted one comprehensive survey for this children to track their living conditions and educational progress

BJS started its School on October 26, 1993 with the permission of Chief Minister Sharad Pawar who has promised to convert it into a recognized school. He also promised to give about seven acres of land free of cost to the school to construct its own building. Classes were started in shops. Within 15 days PCMC provide a huge school building school and hostel. Within 2 days classes were started with the help of social workers. Within a month teachers and other staff were recruited.



BJS undertook the challenge of providing education, lodging, food and other expenses to the children they brought from Latur & Osmanabad. **The task of providing education to the children from class 5 onwards right up to graduate level is probably one of the most challenging tasks ever undertaken in the country as part of a rehabilitation programme after a natural calamity.**

Students' mental condition improved soon after they reached Pune. Even though only 30% students had passed from the school of BJS in first SSC exam after the earthquake, they started showing interest in attending school and got some hope and ambitions in their life. More and more parents came forward to take admission for their children in the school.

Children in BJS School became emotionally more stable and developed aims and hopes in their life even 2-3 months after the Quake. Returning to Pune after their first Diwali vacation, the students found that the school highly comforting. Reasons like ruined homes, schools and fields, shattered family members, after shocks in the area brought about a sea-change in the boy's attitude. Under the care and supervision of 26 trained and committed teachers, they could see that the Pune school was much more rewarding. The physical and emotional status of the earthquake affected children improved very much, by the first anniversary of earthquake.

Children being educated at Pimpri School got inspired by the BJS Work and wanted to do social work in their native places. They decided to plant trees and find remedies for the shortage of water in their villages

On October 1997, some students completed four years in Pimpri School. More children from Melghat & Jabalpur were added to the existing strength. Some children who were not showing any inclination to progress were sent back home.



b WERC

A land of 10 Acres was purchased and a building for Wagholi Education & Rehabilitation Centre (WERC) was built on it, which would serve as a permanent solution to cater to the needs of various disasters in Maharashtra. On recommendation from the Government of Maharashtra, the World Bank granted fund for the Wagholi Education & Rehabilitation Centre (WERC). A large state-of-the art building along with all facilities like hostels, laboratories, classrooms, library, of 3 lac sq. feet was built by the World Bank and handed over to BJS.

WERC was Inaugurated on **29th Nov 1998** by former chief minister of Maharashtra Shri. **Manohar Joshi**. Hostel of WERC has capacity of 1500 student All the 1200 children were shifted to WERC and their education started. The children were given free education and housing. The children were provided **education up to graduation level, lodging, boarding, medical facilities, holistic development, counseling as well as disaster management training.**

Major objectives of the WERC project were the following:

- To rehabilitate orphan & destitute children affected by the earthquake.
- To provide food, shelter, clothing, Education, medical and health support for a period of ten years.
- To provide education and vocational training so that they can, if they so desire, return to their village and contribute to the socio economic upliftment of the area.
- To provide emotional support to reduce traumatic effect.
- To provide clean safe environment for all-round progress.
- To provide adequate facilities for extra-curricular development.
- To provide moral & value based support.
- To help making these boys responsible citizens by instilling in them a sense of responsibility.



- To train these children to enable them providing help in similar disasters in the future

Most of the children brought from disaster-hit area have **taken up professional education & have created a future for them**. Many children have been supporting other relief & rehabilitation activities, thus helping people get the actual benefit of their own experiences. Managed professionally by a team of seasoned academicians and specialists, WERC is aimed at devoting itself wholly and solely to the betterment of the children under its care. The children have got a chance to contribute to the society in a meaningful and constructive manner.

5. Appreciations Received

Hon. President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, visited 'WERC' when he came to Pune. During his visit, he interacted with students of WERC. He, along with many eminent officials, praised the enormous efforts taken by BJS, to rehabilitate disaster hit children.

Former Prime Minister Mr.P.V.Narasimha Rao, Mr.Sharad Pawar, Mr.V.P.Singh, Mr.George Fernandes and Ms.Sonia Gandhi had appreciated the relief work done by BJS.

BJS also received appreciation from opposition leader Atalbihari Vajpeyee, Loksabha speaker Shivraj Patil, Mr.Janardan Reddi and Veerappa Moily.

American ambassador Mr. Flynn visited and appreciated community kitchen run by BJS at Sastur, Osmanabad.

Chief Minister of Maharashtra at the time of Marathwada earthquake, Mr.Sharad Pawar and former Prime Minister Mr.Chandra Shekhar also visited BJS School on January 25th 1994. Mr.Pawar emphasized the need of separate building on an independent plot for BJS to carry out its social activities

Loksabha speaker Mr.Shivraj Patil visited BJS School at Pimpri on its first anniversary. He appreciated BJS efforts and said that the responsibility of running the school should not be entrusted solely to either BJS or the PCMC.



State home minister Padmasingh patil, Nagarsavek minister arun gujrati, legislator kishan rao jadav, mayor rangnath phuge, shri srinivas patil , Dy mayor smt. Mangala jahdav, PCMT president smt urmila kalbhor and educational committee member Kumardev were also present in the function.

August 19th 1996, central rural development and employment state minister chandradev varma visited Pimpri School. Maharashtra government's chief secretary Mr.Dinesh Afzalpurkar visited BJS School and said that Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS) has done a splendid job in the field of education for earthquake-affected children of Marathwada. He said NGOs could do better job in social, educational and rehabilitation fields than government because NGOs have the elasticity in decision-making and implementation.

Former Chief Election Commissioner T N Seshan visited the BJS School on 30th Dec 1996. He announced a cash prize of Rs 2,000 seshan, to be given every year to the best student of the school, in memory of his mother, sitalaxmi.

In 1997, July 30, Mr.Arun Bongirwar, secretary to the state chief minister visited BJS School at Sant Tukaram Nagar; Pimpri. BJS requested government to provided hostel and food facilities for the students.

On October 28th 1996,Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, Dinesh Afzalpurkar visited BJS Pimpri school and gave assurance that quake-hit children would be rehabilitated before June, 1997. He also lauded the role of voluntary organizations in lending their efforts towards effectively combating the disaster related issues.

6. Lessons learnt

1. Being first experience of handling disaster, need of understanding time, space and complexity of disaster was felt.
2. Strong need of effective communication systems and electricity in managing disaster was felt.
3. Volunteers need to be trained for facing difficult situations & hardships like sleeping in open, bathing once in three days, scarcity of water etc.



4. Need of periodical rotation of volunteers at disaster site was felt.
5. Need of well-organized supply of relief material at the disaster site.
6. Need of effective coordination between government, NGO and media was felt.
7. Need of pre-planning and preparation to manage the disaster was strongly felt.
8. It was noticed at Latur that victims from well to do families were not easily willing and come to accept charity in the form of food or relief. They needed a lot of efforts by BJS volunteers to make them ready to accept any kind of help.
9. Children were the most psychologically impacted strata after Marathwada earthquake. Necessity of engaging children through education immediately after disasters was also comprehended at the time of Latur disaster.

7. List of BJS participants at Latur Relief & Rehabilitation works

The following BJS dignitaries and hundreds of BJS volunteers generated resources and participated in providing faster relief to the victims and supplemented Government efforts.

1. Shri.Shantilalji Muttha
2. Shri.Madanlal Bafna
3. Shri.Gautam Sancheti
4. Shri.Halpawad
5. Shri.Lalchandji Chordia
6. Shri.Prakashchandji Surana
7. Shri.Vijayakumar Ved Muttha



8. Documents available on BJS Role and Experience in Latur

a. CDs

BJS CDs (13 Nos) narrated by Mr. Shantilal Muttha – CD No. 9,10 & 13 are describing more about BJS experiences in Latur earthquake.

b. Newspaper Reports

Several newspaper reports are available in English, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati about the exceptional relief and rehabilitation works done by BJS in Latur, visit of important personalities to WERC, appreciations received by BJS from various people and about the physical and mental improvement of rehabilitated children.

Some reports are included here:

Dainik Parshwabhumi 7th September 1993

This article states that BJS adopted 9 major earthquake affected villages for rehabilitation.

Maharashtra Herald, 26th October 1993

This report is about the arrival of Latur disaster hit children to Pune and the warm welcome they received from Puneits.



Loksatta 27th October 1993
Heartbreaking article describing how Earthquake effected children wrote letter to their parents saying don't worry about them.

Indian Express, 14th November 1993
This report is about the enthusiasm and hope showed by children who were brought to Pune by BJS just two weeks after their arrival.



NavBharat, 30th March 1999
**This report is about background on the establishment and efficient
working of WERC**



c. Photographs

Mr.Muttha reached immediately at Latur disaster area with his dedicated karyakartas and loaded trucks of relief material ready for distribution to the earthquake affected victims.



BHARATIYA JAIN SANGHATANA buses with its hard working volunteers. Buses were arranged to bring orphan children from Latur to WERC Pune. WERC School was build for educational rehabilitation of disaster-affected children



BJS believes in the holistic development of children through various activities enhancing their Physical, as well as Mental Health in addition to providing Quality Education