

community
impact



India

Disaster risk reduction: Small change, big difference



*Once the people of Kasarwadi recognized the causes of some of the challenges their community faced, they were able to take action to change the situation, including construction of effective drainage in the village.
Photo: Indian Red Cross Society*

Background

Kasarwadi village is located in Barshi of Solapur district. Like any other vulnerable community this community has also survived many disasters. Since 1971, floods have been a part of the yearly cycle in this village. Flooding usually affects the area during September each year. The community of 1,400 people has also suffered after effects of the Latur earthquake in 1993 and cyclones in 2002. Open drainage and open defecation has made the area both unpleasant and unhealthy. The community lacked basic awareness of cleanliness, due to which the village has high health hazards.

The 300 year old village has displayed exceptional improvement following DRR interventions by Indian Red Cross Society. Prior to this project, the village had no outlet for rainwater or waste to flow out. Water used to flow down along roads; open drainage added to the unhygienic condition resulting in high breeding of mosquitoes. In recent years, the community has suffered plague, gastroenteritis and chikungunya.



Thanks to this programme, community members themselves took the initiative to organize clean-up sessions throughout the village.
Photo Photo: Indian Red Cross Society

Programme action

Balchandra Gunda, one of the senior citizens of the village, excitedly said, "Our area used to be so bad. It used to stink; all the dirt remained on road and we used to get such negative feelings due to sickness. Many times we didn't feel like returning home, but we are happy now; we are progressing!" With the support of Indian Red Cross Society, the community laid underground drainage pipeline of approximately 1,500 feet and constructed chambers to manage the outflow sewage water. Community and Red Cross volunteers took the lead role in implementation of the activities.

Interestingly, the villagers understand the impacts of the unhygienic conditions, but could not address them due to lack of funds. Prof. Karad, a volunteer of Indian Red Cross Society said, "The community didn't help until we procured the pipes for the drainage system, then they supported in implementing the activities in terms of labour and in kind. The villagers them-

selves have dug up the area and put down the pipelines. It was completely participatory model." The village community is now happy and ready to go even further with such projects.

Laxmi Shinde, one of the community's committee members smiled as she shared, "The malaria and diarrhoea cases have really gone down since the time we have put down the pipeline. We were aware of the cause of these diseases, but couldn't act due to lack of resources and motivation. When the Red Cross approached us with this project, our apprehensions grew – was this only a discussion or will something actually happen. They really supported us in big way. We feel as if we can do anything now and we are ready to cope with upcoming disasters."

The villagers drew inspiration from these activities and also adopted risk reduction activities in their households. Using support from local government, they constructed individual lavatories at the rear of all homes in the village, to help further hygienic practices. The water quality of bore-wells was tested and it was restored to maintain good drinking resource.

Outcome

Indian Red Cross Society and the IFRC strive to reduce risk in vulnerable communities with the help of volunteers. Now, the people of Kasarwadi village have come to believe that "A stitch in time saves nine."

The Kasarwadi community expressed thanks to the Indian Red Cross Society and IFRC for their technical support and also to Hong Kong Red Cross for their financial support to implement this community project.

"We feel as if we can do anything now and we are ready to cope with upcoming disasters."

*Laxmi Shinde
CDMC Kasarwadi*

Supported by



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