

Nursing With A Difference

TRUST Established in Delhi 1998

"Let Each Day Be Your Masterpiece". Galatians 6.9

GUJARAT IN 2002 - A MICROCOSM OF THE WORLD

Sonia D Kapoor

STATE PROFILE

Gujarat, one of India's most wealthy and extremely religious States is a major industrial power handling a substantial amount of cargo that passes through the international borders, provides an up to date scenario with important lessons for every Nurse in every State in India and the Nations of the world.

IN GUJARAT DISASTERS HAVE ALMOST BECOME A WAY OF LIFE

Bordering on Pakistan it is a recognized war zone.

A major seaport and long coastline render it vulnerable to Cyclones with winds that have peaked 235 km per hour leaving at least 4000 dead, 200,000 houses damaged and 30 billion rupees worth of losses.

A National Oil Refinery, shipping and chemical industry render it vulnerable to disaster through Industrial accident

Surat

Designated the
'Diamond City of India'

That also sports one of the largest textile industries in the world.

Is a classic example of disaster due to environmental neglect and to overall degradation of man's capacity to think and act with wisdom and integrity.

22 September 1994

Hospitals started reporting deaths due to plague.

Within forty-eight hours over 600,000 people

Including
Large numbers of doctors,
Had fled the city.

With these people

The suspected plague organisms also spread to other parts of the nation and the world.

This behavior gave rise to justifiable international panic.

The lack of a safe water supply, and the presence of at least 25 known epidemics raging unabated in 2002 strongly suggests that money at all costs is the only god to be considered. It also indicates the vice like grip of money and power over commitment to health and welfare of the peoples.

It begs the question 'Of what real value in terms of health to the Nation is the high cost of Medical Education and Services or the acumen of Educated Businessmen'?

Geographically the Rann of Kutch is located in the Very High Damage Risk Zone with the rest of the State in the High or Moderate Risk Zone i.e., 6.5 to 8.0 on the Richter Scale. 21 January 2001 a massive earthquake measuring 6.9 struck Bhuj the capital town of Kutch.

The dead are recorded as 17,000 to 20,000 with more than 500 dead in Ahmedabad, 400 k.m. from the epicenter of the Quake. Reported damage to property was estimated at Rs.21, 000 crore

In addition, the massive Rann Kutch desert and extreme climatic conditions cause drought and floods.

Within one decade the peoples of Gujarat have been the victims of plague, cyclones, massive major and many minor earthquakes, gas spills and gas spill rumor, constant communal tension, riots and genocide, floods and droughts, and massive epidemics of which at least 25 were spontaneously named by Nurses as being a constant reality in Gujarat.

What is the Nurse's Primary Health Care role in this disaster volatile State?

RELIGION

Primarily Hindu and Muslim, but with large congregations of Christian and other religious groups; the peoples of Gujarat are known for their religious fervor; holy festivals and pilgrimages. The gentleman, unbeknown to me, who had been assigned by the railways to help me with the modules on arrival in Gandhidham, stated *“Gujarat is the most religious and the wealthiest State in India”*.

Yet all the religion has not removed fear as is evidenced in the behavior of large numbers of the elite, educated and wealthy when the Surat plague broke out, and during the recent carnage when much industry was shifted out of Gujarat to safer States!

JUST THINK NURSE

Religion has not given man a conscience toward
man, health or his environment

Therefore

Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the Lord. Let us lift our hearts and
hands

To God in Heaven,
We have transgressed and rebelled;

Lamentations 3:40-42

Animal and human sacrifice while illegal and not openly referred to, are an accepted part of life. As a guest in a Nurse's home I witnessed the arrival of her nephew early one morning to report that two brothers and two goats had died in two days! My thoughts centered on possible medical causes of the mysterious deaths.

My colleague did not have to think, she knew. Non-conformity to Tantric expectations demands human sacrifice even when the Tantric is a close relative.

Her simple explanation of a not uncommon factual reality even as the State was still being rocked by genocide riots, opened yet another window into what Nurses confront in their own lives as well as in trying to help the peoples who come to them.

RELIGION VERSES FAITH IN ACTION

The birthplace – Porbandar; focal point – Sabramati Ashram; Gujarat was the launching pad of Mahatma Gandhi's contribution that stands unrivalled and of unparalleled significance to the world.

Mahatma Gandhi began his life as a timid boy who used to run home from school lest the boys tease him or poke fun at him. This timid boy became one of the world's bravest men, defying social custom and confronting empires with unbreakable courage.

While not accepting the person and therefore the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Mahatma lived the “Sermon on the Mount” found in the Gospel according to Mathew Chapters 5, 6, and 7. All Indians know from class IV school texts, that he considered this essential reading for every person of every race.

Mahatma Gandhi used the Sermon on the Mount as a constant guiding principal thereby living Christ in this world of sin and suffering until his death.

“One of the secrets of Mahatma Gandhi's strength was his ability to hold in a living blend and balance strongly marked antitheses. He was a combination, a meeting place of currents. And yet he was no mere patchwork of qualities gathered from here and there. The ensemble made him unique.”

Uniqueness, Blend and Balance in Nursing!

Each Nurse is a unique creation with a unique function. Neither her uniqueness nor the uniqueness of Nursing can be realized without a deliberate effort to stand back, analyze and collaborate in action.

HISTORY – THE TOUCHSTONE FOR LIVING TODAY

A combination of East and West, the soul of Mahatma Gandhi was intensely Eastern and his mysticism was intensely practical. If it had not been so he could not have achieved for India and the world what no other human being has done.

But Gandhi has gone, the political and religious pundits have discarded his advice and the Sermon on the Mount; and in doing so, have rejected God's Eternal message of love and life through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gujarat in 2002 has been burning on all sides for many months. The fires have been fuelled by fear and calculated greed for power that is determined to exterminate all who do not conform to the already dominant Hindu religion thereby desecrating the sanctity of the Indian Constitution and the sanctity of God given *life* and *will* to all mankind.

From a sociological perspective all that modernization and consumerism have done to the practice of blood sacrifice, is to alter the orientation. Bali is related to the economy, while in Dev worship, power is concentrated in blood, the symbol of reproduction and regeneration, therefore while the law prohibits blood sacrifice for religious purposes; people's sentiments are another and stronger force.

A few of the many other negative effects of religion seen in hospitals and health institutions are cows, many sick dogs and pigs, all part of the establishment! Where does health teaching begin when even in Medical College hospitals Nurses are compelled in the present situation, to step over cow dung, crossing from one corridor to another, avoid cows and dogs in the corridors and spend time chasing pigs out of their hostel kitchen?

The appalling internal and external state of the Large Medical College Hospital and Mental Hospital in the 'Cultural Capital of the State' showed very clearly that there is no positive relationship between culture and health.

Mahatma Gandhi has many important lessons for Nurses in Gujarat and in the world.

INSIGHT

My peregrinations took me into Central and Local Government, Military, Railway, Industrial, Christian and Moslem Institutions, the few Private Hospitals out of hundreds that employed Nurses, as well as Schools and Colleges of Nursing. The valuable input from so many Nurses, brings to focus some of the immediate issues to be confronted by Nurses in Gujarat.

It behooves all Nurses everywhere to unite in objective meaningful prayer and to contribute professional support, skills and encouragement in professionally sound and useful ways.

What has and continues, to happen to Nurses during all this trauma even as they stoically press on each day may be addressed on the basis the following question and statement:

JUST THINK NURSE

WHY

Are so many Nurses so oppressed with such an
Overwhelming sense of powerlessness?

WHEN

The desire to be effective team members and leaders is not
lacking!

THE FACT IS

**Desire alone cannot transform a powerless Nurse
Into becoming a powerful Nurse.**

Thus the first priority in Disaster Mitigation for Nurses must commence with the Nurse her/himself addressing the very real issue of Powerlessness which in itself, is a major Disaster in Nursing.

Without addressing this very real issue of *powerlessness* as the first priority, Nurses are unable to *initiate* or *direct* their own preparation for *effective disaster mitigation*.

Living history has proven the fallibility and inadequacy of sticking plaster, strikes and salary increases! Military Nurses put on combat uniform; Civilian Nurses change the uniform color and put on a white coat, only to find Powerlessness continues to prevail.

STANDING IN THE GAP

It requires a leap of faith to stand in the gap. To stand in the gap without making a wall is courting disaster;

God's word through Ezekiel the Prophet is a constant challenge to us in Nursing:

Challenge to Nurses in 2003

“So I sought for a man (Nurses) among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, (our Profession and the Health Services) that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” Ezekiel 22:30

Nursing with a Difference Trust has chosen to create this Website as one means of standing in the gap and helping to make a wall by addressing the reality of sensitive issues in Nursing from a Scriptural perspective and in so doing to help each other draw on the riches of God's storehouse to give us the victory in Nursing over all the crippling effects of our own limitations as well as the many evil principalities and powers of this world.

We believe that as you read on, our Heavenly Father will reveal all that He knows you need from what we have to offer; the Holy Spirit will encourage and enable you to receive and use that which will strengthen your effectiveness as a Nurse, in your home, institution and community; and also enable you to make your own special contribution much wider by sharing with us.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

“I called on Your name O LORD,

From the lowest pit.

You have heard my voice:

Do not hide Your ear

From my sighing,

From my cry for help,

You drew near on the day I called on You,

And said,

“Do not fear!”

Lamentations 3:55-57