



IIMC CASE RESEARCH CENTRE (IIMCCRC)

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DOCTORS FOR YOU: ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

21ST SEPTEMBER, 2008, PATNA AIRPORT

A dejected Dr. Ravikant Singh was getting ready to board the flight, which was to take the mortal remains of his dear and long-time colleague Dr. Chandrakanth Patil, back to Mumbai. Dr. Singh's thoughts went back to the contagious enthusiasm of Dr. Patil for participating in the rescue mission of 2.3 million flood-hit people in Bihar. On 18th of August that year, the Koshi river had breached the threshold limits, causing it to flood both the banks. A vast area of the State of Bihar was badly affected. The Government and NGOs had started major rescue operations, but the main challenge was the non-availability of doctors to help the flood-hit victims. Dr. Singh along with his team of 45 doctors came with all haste from Mumbai to join the rescue teams, and work together with the Government representatives, as well as other organisations like Mercy Malaysia, TISS Mumbai, Delhi School of Social Work and Art of Living foundation. On the fifth day of the operation, unfortunately a mishap struck them in the form of the accidental death of Dr. Chandrakant Patil. Dr. Patil was undoubtedly the most dedicated and enthusiastic member of the team, and his sudden demise quite naturally shook everyone's confidence.

While Dr. Singh was busy in Mumbai for the last rites of Dr. Patil and arranging compensations for his family, he received the devastating news that all other doctors of his team had left the flood affected areas and had returned to Mumbai, thereby quitting the rescue operations which was so diligently and earnestly led by Dr. Patil. Dr. Singh simply

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couldn't accept the idea of abandoning this mission.

"I was determined to go back to the flood affected areas to continue the rescue operations." recalls Dr. Singh, President of Doctors For You (DFY), "So, I formed a new team of doctors and went back to the flood affected zone in Bihar in order to work along with the volunteers from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). That day, it was a rebirth of sorts for the Doctors For You (DFY) foundation."

From then on, DFY has established itself primarily as a Disaster Management Organisation, with a cult of its own and not just another NGO participating in relief work. In 2010 Dr. Ravikant Singh, President of DFY, received the prestigious SAARC YOUTH Award for outstanding work done in the aftermath of natural disasters (for the Bihar floods in 2008).

Today DFY has more than 500 members and more than 1000 volunteers who work in the area of organised disaster management which is still a big challenge in India. Though most developed countries have been approaching disaster management from the prevention and capacity building perspective, India, until very recently, has been confined to the relief based disaster combat mode.