**SNEHA** means love in Sanskrit and in English it spells out who we are – the Society of Nutrition, Education & Health Action. We are a voluntary, secular, non-profit organization founded in 1999 by a group of concerned doctors and social workers to address the special needs of women and children beyond the four walls of hospitals and offices.

**VISION**

SNEHA is built on love, trust and commitment. We value every woman and child. We dedicate our energies, expertise and resources to ensure quality nutrition, education and health care of women and children in urban communities.

**MISSION**

We will look for innovative solutions to problems in nutrition, education and health in urban slums. Our initiatives will build sustainable and replicable models of intervention and partnerships that will empower women to change their lives and those around them.
Flood Relief Activities

IT WASHED MUMBAI OFF ITS FEET
It came, it saw, it conquered. The deluge of July 26, 2005 broke all records and every prediction of the rain-man. A cloudburst came (all of 944 mm/37.2 inches – highest ever recorded on mainland India) and washed Mumbai off its feet. This wrath of nature caught India’s commercial capital, completely off guard and wrecked havoc in the metropolis, bringing about heavy losses (in crores) to both property and lives, to both the rich and poor.

The statistics after several days of persistent rainfall were frightening:
- Death toll over 500
- Approximately 600,000 houses damaged… slum dwellers forced to evacuate their homes
- Areas most affected in Mumbai were Bandra, Khar, Kalina, Chembur, Borivali, Kandivali, Thane, Kalyan amongst several others.

The devastation spread, swallowing Mumbai, where people lost their houses and belongings, their clothes, furnishings and even their basic necessities to the floods. It was an ordeal to experience, where every household waited for their kin to return home. Some did and some did not. And like so often, it was the most vulnerable who suffered the most.

Many came forward with aid in cash, kind and with various humanitarian relief measures.

THE RESPONSE
With devastation so humungous, any relief work extended had to reach the right place/people at the right time. For us, our efforts were only a continuation of our efforts under our City Initiative for New Born Health (CINH) Project, an action research initiative. Under this project, we had done a baseline survey of the vulnerable localities in 6 wards of Mumbai, assessing the health and hygiene conditions in the slums – drainage, toilets, access to medical care, living conditions etc. We had also built communication lines with the local communities.

As the devastation that started on July 26th increased exponentially over the next two days and it became increasingly clear that overcoming this disaster would require unprecedented relief effort. Flooded with phone calls from individuals and organizations wanting to help, we reached out with every available data in hand, to work very broadly in two phases:

- First, single-handedly extending immediate relief in six wards, and
- Next, as the nodal coordinating agency for G/North and F/North wards
PHASE I: IMMEDIATE RELIEF  
July 29th – August 6th

SNEHA immediately involved itself in a range of relief activities, after making a Rapid Assessment of the type of relief to be delivered and where. We,

- As a first step, supplied cooked food (khhichdi) and distributed clothes received from donors
- Next,
  - Distributed food and grains at Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Bhimnagar, Shantinagar, Dhorwada and Dharavi,
  - Conducted medical camps (10 camps benefiting over 2500) across most slum areas of Mumbai, Shastrinagar, Rafiq Nagar, Indira Nagar, Kamala Raman Nagar, Azad Nagar, Ragiv Gandhi Nagar, Anandnagar, Jogeshwari, Gulshan Nagar, Anna Nagar and others in Wards A, B, C and D.
  - Preventive measure, Health messages
  - Supplied chlorine, ORS and bleaching powder to Patthar Nagar, Islam Pura, Indira Nagar, Bhim Nagar, Kamala Raman Nagar, Anna Nagar, Shivgam Nagar, Shivalnagar, Ambedkar Nagar, and the six wards we had worked in

Assisting SNEHA at this stage with cash, kind, doctors and volunteers were UNICEF, INNER WHEEL, Friends of SNEHA, Trustees and other individual donors.

PHASE 2: COLLABORATING AND CO-ORDINATING  
Post August 12th

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in its endeavor to manage this catastrophe felt it necessary to use the network of NGOs to provide a more effective, focused relief to the worst affected areas. Working with and keeping in sync with the activities of NGOs and CBOs working in the slum areas, the BMC set up a Coordination Committee (CC). At the CC meeting on August 12th, SNEHA was delegated the role of nodal agency for two wards – G/North and F/North.

Continuing to partner with UNICEF in our relief efforts, we also coordinated with the BMC and 33 other NGOs, CBOs and individuals to work in two areas, namely health and ration distribution.

HEALTH

Curative
Undertaking various measures, we:
- Supported the medical camps set up by Sion Hospital in the designated wards
- Coordinated the activities of Sion Hospital and local CBOs and NGOs
- Provided medicines to the various Health posts and dispensaries along with the BMC

Preventative
With much of the city’s water treatment facilities adversely affected, we at SNEHA were particularly concerned with preventing the rise and spread of epidemics resulting from water borne diseases. We took it upon ourselves to:
- Survey the slum areas in the G/N and F/N wards and identify, the ‘danger zones’ requiring immediate attention to prevent epidemic.
- Assess the ration requirement covering 1423 household in 6 chawls with the help of 30 students of the Raheja College of Architecture.
- Visit health posts and dispensaries in G/N ward and inspect the status of work accomplished, examine problems - if any - and report the same to the concerned ward offices.
- Distribute a one-page leaflet designed in conjunction with UNICEF, informing households of simple preventative measures to avoid potential fatal health risks.
- Coordinate medical camps in the Dharavi area between the PSM (full form?) department of Sion Hospital and the local NGOs.
- Distribute medicines to the 14 intervention health posts in 6 wards.
- Coordinate distribution of 1.5 lakhs of chlorine tablets/sachets donated by IMPACT India, to the most vulnerable households across G/N and F/N wards.

RATION DISTRIBUTION
Further to the Government of Maharashtra’s initiative to distribute ration to the flood affected households, it invited many NGOs for meetings on August 17th and 19th to discuss their plans. The Ration Officer explained the ‘Government Resolution’ in this regard and enthused all to support this endeavor. SNEHA heeding this,

- Conducted a survey in the G/N and F/N wards and identified 35,000 households in dire need of ration and communicated the same to the Ration Offices (ROs).
- Delivered the ration coupons received from the ROs personally to the 18,728 family beneficiaries in the F/N ward with the help of 13 NGOs.
- Ensured that police protection was provided at all ration distribution centres with the staff of SNEHA always at hand making certain that ration was distributed in a calm, orderly fashion, from August 31, 2005 until September 6, 2005 until late, 12 midnight, almost every night.
- And to not miss anyone, we again went back to identify families who had not received any ration and ensured that the same was given.

- It was a heartwarming experience to see the involvement of individuals, organizations, the BMC, and the Government of India come together and work for the relief of victims of the disaster. SNEHA was fortunate to be involved in this endeavor.