

# The Annual Kangra Earthquake Anniversary School Safety Shake-Out Drill 2012

4 April 2012, 107th Anniversary of the 1905 Kangra Earthquake



In Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, West  
Bengal, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh,  
Delhi & Haryana

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**Background:** The annual Kangra Earthquake Anniversary School Shakeout is an earthquake preparedness drill which has been organised by GeoHazards International (GHI) and GeoHazards Society (GHS) in collaboration with various other regional organisations. This is to commemorate the anniversary of the 1905 Kangra earthquake that killed over 19,700 people and to generate awareness of the earthquake hazard in their location. GHI & GHS started the initiative as the 'Tibetan School Shakeout Drill' in collaboration with Library of Tibetan Works & Archives (LTWA) in April 2009 and have been organising earthquake drills in Tibetan Schools across the country with increased numbers of participating schools every year.



Awareness at TCV Chauntra, HP



Awareness Programme in Ghaziabad, UP

**The Annual Tibetan School Shakeout Drill:** In the year 2009 the drill started with schools from Central Tibetan Schools (CST), Sambhota Tibetan Schools (STS) and Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) schools, with participation of 7500 students in the States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Meghalaya. The initiative started spreading to new states and schools with increase number of participants in 2010 to 16,500 and in 2011 it reached 17,500 in 37 Tibetan Schools covering new states like Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim, West Bengal, and Arunachal Pradesh. With more awareness of this annual event, many non-Tibetan Schools also expressed interest to take part in the drills.



TCV Majnu Ka Tila, Delhi



STS Selakui, Dehradun

### The 4<sup>th</sup> annual School Safety Shakeout

**Drill:** This year the drill included several non Tibetan Schools within the country who had been trained over the last year in comprehensive school safety by GHI & GHS. One of the schools that had been trained by us in Bhutan also decided to take

part in this event, ensuring that the drills start influencing schools outside India as well.

At 11:00 am IST on Wednesday the 4th April 2012, School children in 37 Tibetan Schools (in J & K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh), 8 schools in Kanpur, 15 schools in Ghaziabad, 3 schools in Delhi and 1 school in Thimphu (Bhutan) took part in this mass earthquake preparedness activity with active participation of 28,410 students and staff members.

Though many schools carried out the drills differently in accordance to their preparedness plan, the underlying theme was to test and enhance the levels of awareness and preparedness among the staff and students. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of April at 11:00 am a special siren/ bell/ drum beat is sounded in the participating schools. Students immediately did the **Drop, Cover and Hold on** exercise and waited for the second signal, before starting to evacuate, as planned, under the guidance of the teachers and School Safety Committee members. Once students were evacuated to safe areas, teachers took a roll call of the students in their care, to ensure that no one was missing or injured. In cases where children were 'missing' or found to be 'injured' a Search & Rescue mission as per plan was despatched or First-Aid administered. In most schools the staff members have been preparing for the drill



*CST Manali, HP*



*Drop Cover Hold in Ghaziabad School*



*Evacuation in Jigme Losel School, Thimphu*



*Evacuation in Ghaziabad School*



*Evacuation in DAV School, Gurgaon*

days before with sensitization of the new students, re-assigning responsibilities to the staff and defining the evacuation routes and assembly area.

The local government agencies and Disaster Management authorities of the concerned districts also played an important role in carrying out the activities. District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Kanpur and DDMA, Ghaziabad have taken the initiative to collaborate with us to mark the anniversary of the earthquake that once had affected their districts albeit moderately. Officials from agencies like Department of Education of Tibetan Government in Exile, the Central School for Tibetans, Sambhota

Tibetan Schools, and Tibetan Children's Village Schools also played an important role in coordinating with all the participating schools.

The preparation of conducting the drill began many months before, with distribution of resource materials on earthquake safety including colourful posters on how to do *Drop Cover Hold on* and the training sessions. Before the actual drill all schools conducted awareness programmes for their students.

In words of Ms. Dorjee Dolma, Headmistress Sambhota Mewoen Petoen School Gangchen Kyishong "I would like to say that this preparedness drill helped make the children much more aware to protect themselves during emergencies."

Sambhota Tibetan School Paonta reports "During practicing for this drill, the school has established the School disaster Management groups which can prove extremely invaluable during any natural disasters." According to Mr. Namdol Tashi, Principal T.C.V. School, Chauntra, "To give practical training to the students and staff to



*DAV Public School, Gurgaon*



*Saraswati Bal Mandir, Delhi*



*Roll call at STS Selakui, Dehradun*



*Roll call at Mewoen Petoen, HP*



*First Aid at TCV Upper Dharamsala, HP*

practice Drop, Cover and Hold on techniques to protect themselves in the event of a major earthquake and to get them all out safely is most important.”

Principal of Sambhota Tibetan School Chauntra feels “The drill was successful preparedness against any possible earthquake in future.” The class IX students of Mewoen Tsuglag Petoen School in Dharamsala feel that as precaution measures should be taken before the earthquake, the drill is an excellent opportunity to check these measures. They also felt the drill would spread awareness among students, staff and family members on how to face natural disasters like earthquake.

One of the prominent non Tibetan school participated in this year’s drill was DAV Public School Sector 14, Gurgaon with 3200 children and 245 staff. Other schools in Delhi like Saraswati Bal Mandir and Balvantrai Mehta Vidya Mandir also conducted drills efficiently. The Jigme Losel school in Thimphu is the first school outside India to take part in the drill, but surely will not be the last as many more schools across Bhutan will be taking part in 2013 Shakeout. A total of 866 students and staff members took part.

With the success of this massive drill in generating awareness about the seismic hazard, GeoHazards International and GeoHazards Society, India are planning to expand the reach of this drills to other regions and also to take up a massive drill to mark the anniversary of another earthquake that has affected India, Bhutan and Bangladesh; the 1897 Shillong earthquake.

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