

# Holistic Approach to Community in Crisis

Sandip Shah, MD

## KEYWORDS

• Earthquake • Mental health • Posttraumatic stress disorder • Volunteers

## KEY POINTS

- After a devastating event, instead of waiting for the approval by authorities, treatment should be started as early as possible to increase the possibility for positive outcomes and shorten the transition period to recovery.
- For better acceptance and results, one should integrate mental health approaches into local traditions and customs.
- Mental health efforts should first reach the rural areas and those without television coverage.
- The period of transition from relief to recovery is the most critical for mental health.

## BACKGROUND

The Kachchh district in Gujarat, with an area of 45,652 km<sup>2</sup>, is the largest district in India (**Fig. 1**).<sup>1,2</sup> The administrative headquarters is in Bhuj, which is geographically in the center of the district. Other main towns are Gandhidham, Rapar, Nakhtrana, Anjar, Mandvi, Madhapar, and Mundra. Kachchh has 966 villages (**Fig. 2**). According to the 2001 census, Kutch district had a population of 1,583,225. According to the 2011 census, this grew to 2,090,313, indicating a population growth rate of 32.03% over the decade 2001 to 2011. Kutch is a growing economic and industrial hub in one of India's fastest growing states, Gujarat. Its location on the far western edge of India has resulted in the commissioning of 2 major ports Kandla and Mundra. In 2001 there was only 1 general hospital staffed with a single psychiatrist and 8 psychiatrists in private hospitals, reflecting the low awareness of mental health in Kachchh.

## EARTHQUAKE DETAILS

The earthquake that hit Gujarat (see **Fig. 2**; **Fig. 3**) on the morning of January 26, 2001 left in its wake a trail of death and destruction, leaving a population of close to 500,000

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Department of Psychiatry, SBKS MI&RC, Sumandeep Vidyapeeth, Vadodra 391760, India  
E-mail address: [researchdirectorsvu@gmail.com](mailto:researchdirectorsvu@gmail.com)

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**Fig. 1.** Map of Kachchh.

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