

Nepal Earthquake: The critical first week

(25 April to 2 May 2015)

This is a preliminary report written on the basis of web reports and more importantly the staff and student observations on the ground and their voices. The objective is to share and also implement series of activities by the Nepal School of Social Work now and in the next many months.

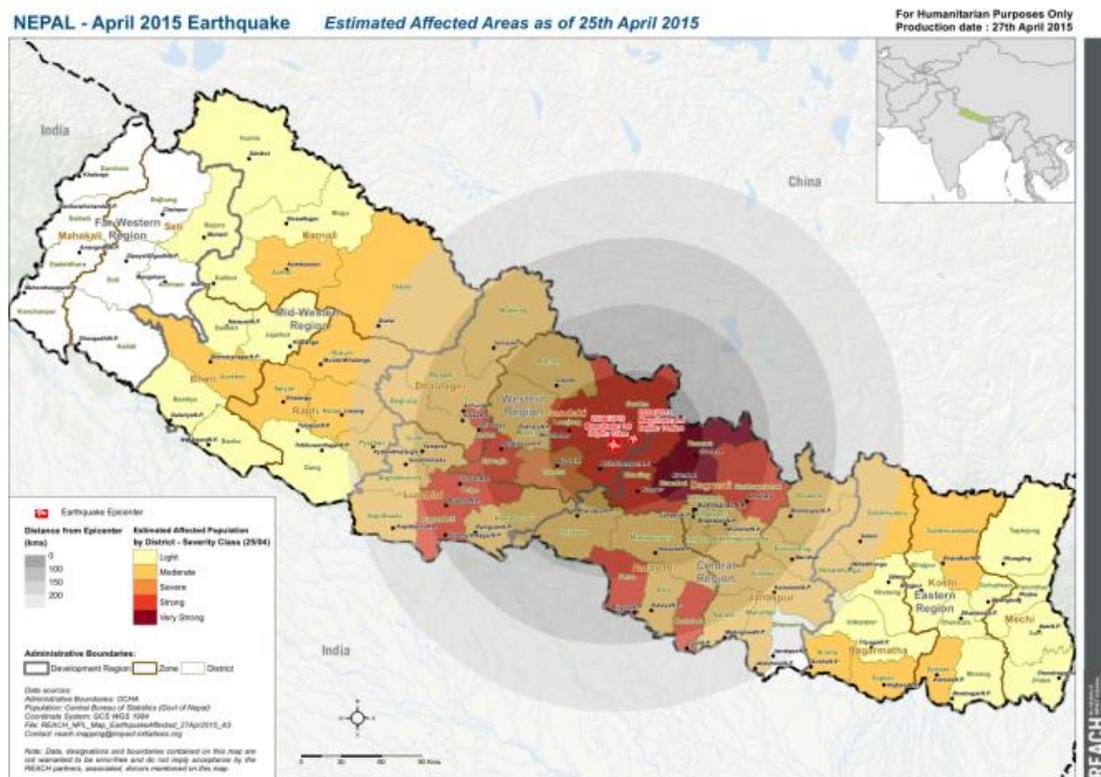
Nepal School of Social Work (NSSW) is grateful to your support and solidarity. Please contact directly NSSW colleagues if you would like to extend your help and support:

Pradipta kadambari at 009779851004578 (email: pradiptakadambari@gmail.com)

Shivani Saria 009779841403785 (email: shivani.mitr@gmail.com)

Dil kumar Thakuri at 00977 9851143056 (dilkumarthakuri@hotmail.com)

Compiled by and please Contact : Bala Raju Nikku (0060 -16 4758115) at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Social Work section, state of Penang: email: brnikku@usm.my



Source: relief web

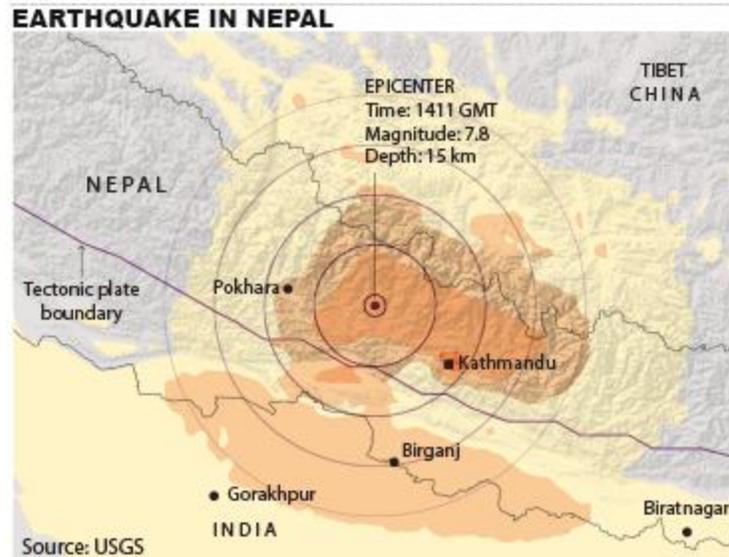
The aftermath of an earthquake in Nepal measuring 7.9 magnitude which struck west of Kathmandu on Saturday (25 April 2015, it is a holiday in Nepal so children are not in the schools and workers are in the offices) causing buildings to collapse leaving many injured. The main hospital in Kathmandu has received many patients with broken limbs and other injuries sustained from the quake, though it is unclear how many have been injured. The epicentre of the quake was 50 miles (80km) north-west of the capital and is the worst tremor in the Himalayan nation in over 80 years. Currently family members are searching for survivors in the rubble of a destroyed building after an earthquake. (it came in the 11.48 am in the morning). The quake brought scenes of panic in the Kathmandu city. Hospitals reported hundreds seeking treatment for injuries from falling debris in the city.

The Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Sikkim, which each share a border with Nepal, have reported building damage. There have also been reports of damage in the north-eastern state of Assam.

Nepal suffered its worst recorded earthquake in 1934, which measured 8.0 and all but destroyed the cities of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan, killing more than 8,500 people.

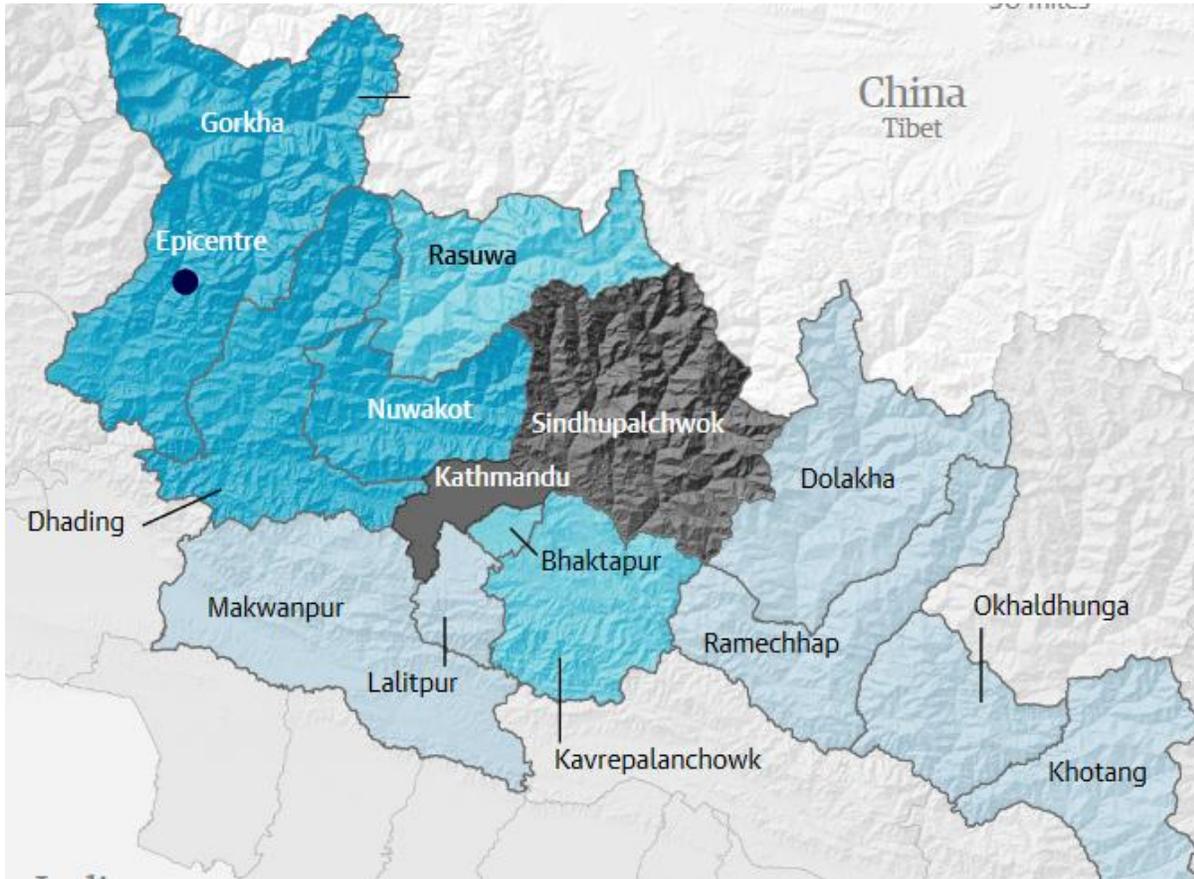
AFFECTED POPULATION

Estimated intensity*	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Perceived shaking	Light	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Severe	Violent
Estimated population affected (million)	14.7	102.5	29.2	3.7	1.0	0.7



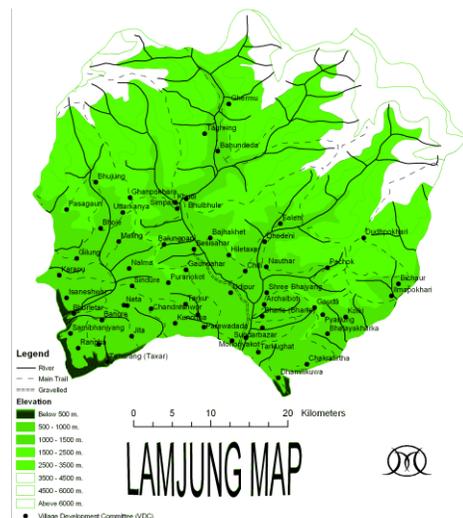
Lumjung : epicentre of 25 April Earthquake

The hard hit districts are reported to be Lamjung (considered an epicenter of the earthquake), Gorkha, Dhading, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Nuwakot, Dolakha, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Ramechhap.



source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2015/apr/29/extent-of-the-destruction-from-nepals-earthquake>

About Lumjung District : Lamjung, a district that falls under the western development region, lies in the Gandaki Zone of Nepal. Besishahar as a district headquarter. The district, which is the home of approximately two lakhs (200,000) people, has a literacy rate of 56%. There are **61 Village Development Committees (V.D.Cs)** in this district. Five campuses, 15 higher secondary schools and 268 schools have been established to advance the education sector.



The 70 Megawatt Mid-Marshyangdi Hydroelectricity Project (MMHEP), the second largest hydropower project in the country has started operation from December 14, 2008. The then PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal had inaugurated the project. The project was started in June 2001 with joint investments of the government of Nepal and Germany and Nepal Electricity Authority.

Gorkha District :

Hundreds of villages have been destroyed around the epicentre in Gorkha, which is a difficult region to navigate even when the roads are clear. Helicopters are now delivering food aid to areas. Two villages of Gorkha, Barpark and Larpark have been totally flattened out. While the initiatives for Barpark seem to have started, nothing has been possible for Larpark since the relief helicopters could not land. Larpark is notably a Gurung village. Very less is known about Rasuwa. The helicopter survey shows all washed out village and completely ruined Langtang National park where the number of trekkers are either stranded or not have survived. Exact number of casualties is not verified and known. This district is home to Tamang, Gurungs and Sherpa indigenous community.

For Dhading, Rasuwa and Sindhupalchok (see the map above) we are collecting further information. For example Sankhu (within the kathmandu district) , just an hour's drive from Kathmandu, was completely destroyed by the earthquake.

Preliminary damage assessments:

Different GO, NGO and Donor, Volunteer, media and academic and outside observer groups¹ in Dhading, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchok, , Kavrepalanchok, Makwanpur, and Bhaktapur, Lalipur Kathmandu Districts are making their assessments. Some statements about the progress and limitations of aid, rescue and relief are:

- Tens of thousands of people in Nepal have been forced to live and sleep outside for fear of further aftershocks following Saturday's earthquake (April 25, 2015) which killed more than 6,000 people. The number of dead is still rising as more and more reports are coming from all the affected places. Most of the deaths occurred in the districts of Sindhupalchuk (1,376 and more) and Kathmandu (1,039 and more).
- At least 2.8 million people have been displaced - either because their houses have been destroyed or because they are too afraid of aftershocks to remain at home.

¹ See :

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PDC_Nepal_PreliminaryDamages_02MAY15_8%20districts.pdf

- Without safe ways to dispose of waste, drinking water is in danger of being contaminated by fatal bugs. In some places, public toilets are overflowing. Hence there is need for close monitoring regarding any outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases including infections such as cholera. According to some observers though things aren't near outbreak proportions as of now, the coming rainy season could make things worse if the country is not prepared.
- The country's Information Minister, Minendra Rijal told the Associated Press news agency that Nepal needed 400,000 tents but so far had only been able to hand out 29,000.
- Katrin Kisswani, medical co-ordinator for MSF arrived in Kathmandu two days after the quake hit. She told the BBC: "The most difficult thing is to reach the people most at need
- Many victims and survivors are very, very shocked and traumatised. "Many have lost their livelihoods, their relatives and sometimes almost entire villages are gone." Psychological and Psycho social help is what required very urgently
- Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat said the country needed better food aid. "We have received things like tuna fish and mayonnaise. What good are those things for us? We need grains, salt and sugar," Mr Mahat told AP.
- Unicef has also warned that children in the worst-affected areas have been left "homeless, in deep shock and with no access to basic care", with monsoon season just weeks away.
- Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN's cultural organisation, Unesco, said there had been "extensive and irreversible damage" at the world heritage site in the Kathmandu valley. Seven monument zones in the valley make up the world heritage site. The three urban zones at the site are Durbar squares - meaning "noble courts" - in the settlements of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan. These three complexes as "almost fully destroyed".



- Unicef has also warned that children in the worst-affected areas have been left "homeless, in deep shock and with no access to basic care", with monsoon season just weeks away.

Nepal School of Social Work (NSSW) efforts

Day 0 : April 25

After two hours of the earthquake, phone calls and email have started coming in and Bala Raju, Pranita who were living in Penang at that time made initial contacts with his extended family members and NSSW colleagues and came to know that many of them are safe. It was very unfortunate that one of the faculties of NSSW lost his house and another faculty who came from Dhadhing also lost his house. The NSSW library and some computers and photocopying machine are damaged. In addition some students have gone through the minor damages and injuries. Also the people and families around the rented building in which NSSW housed are also consulted and people who needs basic water, shelter are invited to use the NSSW classrooms, electricity, water and battery to charge their mobile phones etc resources.

Day 1 : April 26

Contacts made with Prof. Lena and Prof. Vimla of IASSW and Dr.Rory, Dr. Mariko Kimura of IFSW. Dr. Fentiny and Prof. Akimoto of APAPSWE and many other colleagues to seek their inputs and support. School of social work from all over the world have sent their support, solidarity and prayers which are conveyed to NSSW staff and students through phone calls, emails and web postings.

Day 2 : April 27

Prof. Lena Dominelli of Durham University and IASSW helping to establish a virtual helpline net work. This is to enable people who cannot go to a disaster site/should not go to a disaster site (especially as it stresses scarce resources in all their senses further). Anyone who has been trained in social work can do this. These guidelines have been published in Dominelli, L (2012) Green Social Work (Cambridge: Polity Press)

Day 3 : April 28

The NSSW faculty members though were also part of the disaster and they have to tried first to cope up and looked after their families and immediate neighbours. Pradipta madam called

all the students and faculty members to NSSW to support each other and trying to make an assessment of what happened to the NSSW building and students and staff. The international conference (May 6-8, 2015) under the aegis of APUCEN and NSSW has been postponed to July 6-8, 2015.

As of 28 April, **39 out of the total 75 districts** of Nepal have reportedly been affected, **11 of which are mentioned as severely affected**. Moreover, up to 90% health facilities in the districts of Gorkha, Sindhupalchok, Ramechapp and Nuwakot have been severely damaged.

Day 4 : April 29 :

NSSW students with Aroh volunteers visited **Sindhupalchowk** (outside the Kathmandu valley) to assess the situation and raise support for the most hard to reach victims and their families. According to them:

Many people reported painful/ broken bones. Some may be facing the threat of crush syndrome - where the kidneys start to fail. This is when the body releases toxins in response to massive and sustained injuries- and these can overwhelm the kidneys as they try to flush them out. Hence more medical teams with medical instruments like Dialysis Units - artificial kidney machines – urgently needed. There is huge need for medical assistance to fix broken bones, injured spines and head trauma.

In addition to health and basic needs, the housing/ shelter is a top priority for many families, especially the old and the children.

1. Dead reported: 38
2. Collapsed houses reported: 1110
3. people affected : 7000 (female 4000 plus and male 3000)
4. appropriate, reliable and useful help yet to reach
5. only 7 police officers are in the police station.
6. Immediate requirement is medical help and basic food supplies.



Source: Damaged villages of Sindhupalchok district, 75 kilometers from Kathmandu. More than 1,260 people were killed in the area and 416 injured . Photograph: NARENDRA SHRESTHA/EPA

Day 5 : April 30

Also NSSW with the help of Bonita jee (in the USA University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work) started coordinating with Deepali jee of Hamro Chahana Nepal. They had a meeting on April 29th to discuss further issues: Deepali writes in an email :

I am here at Nepal School of Social Work discussing on the first step that we will be taking for Rescue and Relief in Dolakha District. A team of 6 members (4 from HCN and 2 from NSSW) will be leaving for Dolakha tomorrow. An immediate Budget will be prepared and sent to you. Thank you, Deepali.

Another important issue is aid delivery to these remote places. For example:

*Tensions are rising in Nepal over the slow pace of aid deliveries. About 200 people blocked traffic in Kathmandu after many faced huge queues for free bus rides out of the city. The protesters confronted police and there were minor scuffles but no arrests. There are confirmed reports 4 days ago that survivors broke into government offices in **Dolakha district** to demand relief supplies.*

If any of you want to reach Hamro Chahana Nepal and would like to know the status of Dolakaha district please call them at : Deepali Thapa's phone number 9841202065 and Suvechya 9841208217 from Hamro Chahana Nepal

Appeal for Funds for NSSW:

Our colleagues Dr. Lindsay of University of Utah College of Social Work and Dr. Sharvari of Ohio State University school of social work extended their support to raise funds for NSSW to continue its work. They connected us to GoFundme.org and we are very thankful to all of them.

Day 6: May 1

As of 1 May, the Government of Nepal reported 6,250 deaths and 14,357 injured people. More than 160,000 houses were destroyed and 143,673 damaged. Burning/ cremation of dead bodies according to the cultural practices is another big issue that families and government are grappling with. NSSW students are trying to understand on these practices and in some cases helped bereaved families in their neighbourhoods.

Human Resource Planning:

NSSW placed 5 students involved in the Sindhupalchowk work. We do not have more than 30 students at the moment to work in the relief program (as many of our parents are not willing to send their wards to this relief work as their own families need to be taken care and we do understand the security issues for girl students. If NSSW is able to raise further resources for the Nuwakot district, we need to mobilize/ train another 5-7 more students.



Source: People cremate the bodies of the victims in Bhaktapur, Nepal. Photograph: Navesh Chitrakar/REUTERS

Day 7: May 2

Planning and Coordination continued both from NSSW colleagues from Kathmandu and Bala from Malaysia and suggestions are collected from other colleagues. Information was given to other colleagues in India who would like to raise some support.

Day 8 : May 3

Colleagues from TISS, India (Dr Jacquleen Joseph, Dr Abhijeet and Dr Parivelan, Dr Asha Banu Soletti and Dr Srilatha) are arriving in Nepal to assess the situation as well as begin some specific support. NSSW will be coordinating with these colleagues who are experts in disaster management.

NSSW plan of action for the next few weeks:

1. Prepare to move another 10 member team five each from NSSW and Aroh to Sindhupalchowk district.

NSSW is currently working with Aaroh, Mamatma Gandhi Foundation, Galkot Samaj , Japan ; Manav sewa Trust; Marwadi Samaj and Vishal Group. Government deployed the senior officer (Joint Secretary) in each affected district and electoral region (Nirbachan Chhetra) for monitoring and providing effective the response mechanism/services. Pradipta madam is getting in touch with them to further co-ordiante the activities of NSSW.

2. Continue our work with TATA trust Program: 25 students will be placed with the TATA trust program in trauma counseling after the training.

2. Four Nepalese doctors and most probably a team of Indian doctors with their mobile treatment facility (to reach out new families and also the dead reported: 38 Collapsed houses reported families : 1110)

3. Continue Food supplies rice and lentil (5+2) kg for each family

4. First phase with aim to support food and medical help for 10 days.

5. The team of Aroh and NSSW at Kathmandu then network with the authorities to mobilize the supplies coming to Nepal. There is need of reference letter from the CDO to get the materials.

6. The team will do the secondary need assessment for the 2nd phase plan of action of action

7. Find external and internal funds and kind supporters from the well wishers / community including: a. Bishal group; b. Century bank; c. Aroh donors; d. few more from Shivani madam and her family contacts and e. one prospective from Mr.Elson contacts.

8. Appealing / asking people to donate one sack of rice to distribute and find ways to transport these relief materials

9. Coordinate with other volunteers on the ground and government personnel



Health workers take care of injured people outside the Manmohan Memorial community hospital after an earthquake caused serious damage in Kathmandu, Nepal (Photograph: Narendra Shrestha/EPA)