7. Keeping a check on fodder prices.

Long Term Measures:

1. Building check dams at local level.
2. Rejuvenating lakes and ponds as well digging new tube well with a view to higher yield of water.
3. Establishing early warning systems for timely warning.
4. Provisioning and experimenting crops cultivation and time cycle.
5. Plant protection measures as well as plantation of hardy trees and plants which can survive with lesser water.
6. Continuous research with support of government agencies.
7. Encouraging roof top water harvesting.
8. Sanitation and hygiene education.
9. Raising awareness about crop insurance schemes.
10. Building capacity to take care of live stock – water, fodder and alternative grazing sites/ regions.
11. Planning of ground water recharging provisions.
12. Diversifying livelihood looking beyond the villages.
13. Planning fodder cultivation wherever possible.
14. Educating and preparing people.

Conclusion:

Natural disasters such as droughts take a heavy toll on all including livestock. Children, women and elderly people are more vulnerable. What has to be taken care is raising the level of awareness of people and educating them to be equal partners in the process of prevention, mitigation and preparedness. ■

– Prof. Smita Kadam,
Executive Director of Saritsa Foundation, Mumbai

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

START: Two Decades of Impact in Asia

START, the global change SysTem for Analysis, Research, & Training, was founded in 1992 to build the scientific capacity of developing countries to understand and respond to global environmental change. For the past 23 years, START has been active in Africa and Asia providing 450 research grants, 160 fellowships, 200 young scientist awards, and 420 training opportunities for scientists and policymakers to address climate challenges from monsoon risks to urban planning to agricultural forecasting.

Over the past two decades, START has enhanced human resource capabilities in Asia through training, and engagement of early career stakeholders in academia, practice and decision-making communities, in regional research programs on global environmental change.

START alumni are in Asia are now in leadership positions in academia, governmental and non-governmental organizations in Asia. A significant number of START alumni contribute to the international endeavors such as the assessments done through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and are active in climate change adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction challenges. Indeed, START alumni are the real impact of START in Asia and elsewhere.

When interviewed, alumni often credit START with providing critical skills, experiences, and connections to other researchers at pivotal times in their careers. Hendricus Andy Simarmata participated in two Cities at Risk training events and says, "The START program helped me to understand global issues, to meet international experts, and to learn from other countries' experiences. This has helped me to understand and define development needs for my own region."

START has over 700 alumni in Asia who have benefitted from a START program. Consistent with our "train the trainers" philosophy, we look for ways to re-engage alumni with new projects, like in the case of Prof. Rodel Lasco. Prof. Lasco joined the START family as a Principal Investigator for an international project on adaptation to climate change (AIACC). Now, as Scientific Director of the Oscar M. Lopez Center in the Philippines, Dr. Lascois a vital partner in an alliance fostered by START to implement the Pan-Asia Risk Reduction (PARR) Fellowship Program. Dr. Lasco is building the capacity of the next generation of climate scientists in Southeast Asia.

We look forward to increasing our impact in Asia by adding new people to the START family and re-engaging alumni in the future with programs like PARR. ■

– Ms. Abby Gwaltney, Outreach and Communications Specialist *and* **Dr. Hassan Virji,** Executive Director, International START Secretariat, Washington DC, USA