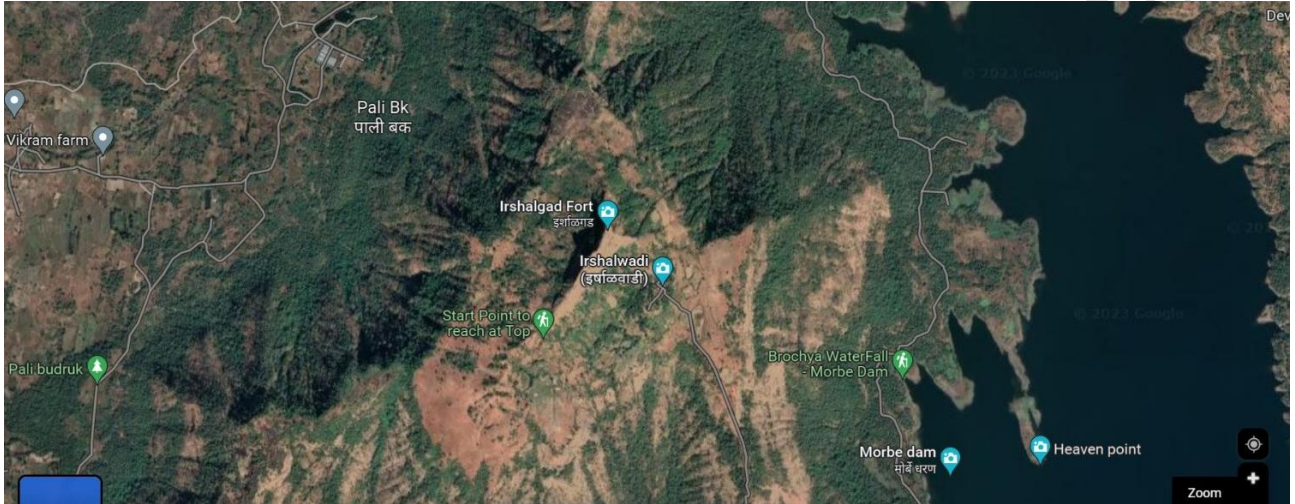


Irshalwadi Landslide Disaster: Gaps Identified & Lessons Learned

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Abstract:

This case study attempts to share some light on the landslide that led to loss of life and livelihood in Irshalwadi village in the Raigad district of Maharashtra. The authors of this case study have attempted to gather details of this incident and have tried to ensure that the lessons learned will help us in becoming better prepared and save lives in case a comparable situation arises.

Key words: Irshalwadi, landslide, disaster management

Introduction:

On July 19, 2023, more than a hundred villagers belonging to the Irshalwadi village in Maharashtra's Raigad district lost their lives under the debris resulting from a massive landslide. This work strives to get a deeper understanding of the preparedness and mitigation measures implemented by the concerned authorities and to recommend areas for future improvement.

This work is consistent with the PM's 10-point agenda (Agenda No. 9) which states, "Make use of every opportunity to learn from disasters and, to achieve that, there must be studies on the lessons after every disaster". As per the spirit of PM's 10-Point Agenda, following the tragedy, the Department has initiated a brief study of the event to identify any gaps and document the most important takeaways that can be applied to future preparedness, response, and mitigation plans as well as for better risk governance across the state which are in line with Sendai Framework Priority 4 - Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Priority 2 - Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to Manage Disaster Risk.

Both secondary and primary data have been referred to in this lesson-learned study. For the primary information, the Tehsildar of Khalapur, Shri Ayub Tamboli, was consulted, and for the secondary information, several reliable press reports and writings were used.

The Irshalwadi landslide incident:

On 19th July 2023, around 11 pm, a landslide brought down the Irshalwadi village, which lay in the Sahyadri mountain ranges in the Khalapur tehsil of Raigad district, most notably near the Irshalgad fort. Irshalwadi was a hilly village (small hamlet with a population of 219 people and 112 livestock) in Raigad district of Maharashtra. It was located 3,700 feet (1,128 meters) above sea level (latitude 18° 55' 58.9' and longitude 73°14' 4.1'). The fort is located between Panvel, the nearest Municipal Corporation and Matheran, the well-known hill station, and a tourist destination. The average rainfall of the area is approximately 3150 mm with a temperature that can go as high as up to 50°C. Most of the houses in the village are kutchha houses (49 approx.) with seven cattle sheds. Irshalwadi was occupied by the *Thakars*, a tribal community, with agriculture as the primary occupation. Hikers and trekkers often scale these mountains to reach the Irshalgad fort, and villagers in Irshalwadi catered to these trekkers by offering them tea and snacks, a major source of income for the community. Being a small hamlet, Irshalwadi does not have sufficient basic infrastructure including proper road facilities, electricity supply and Anganwadi. No elected representation from the hamlet to the gram panchayat meant the village remained with limited access to basic infrastructure. Additionally, many families earned a livelihood by selling vegetables in the Panvel market or working there as laborers. A few among them also worked at Alibaug, the district capital.



Photo 1: Irshalwadi Village before the landslide.

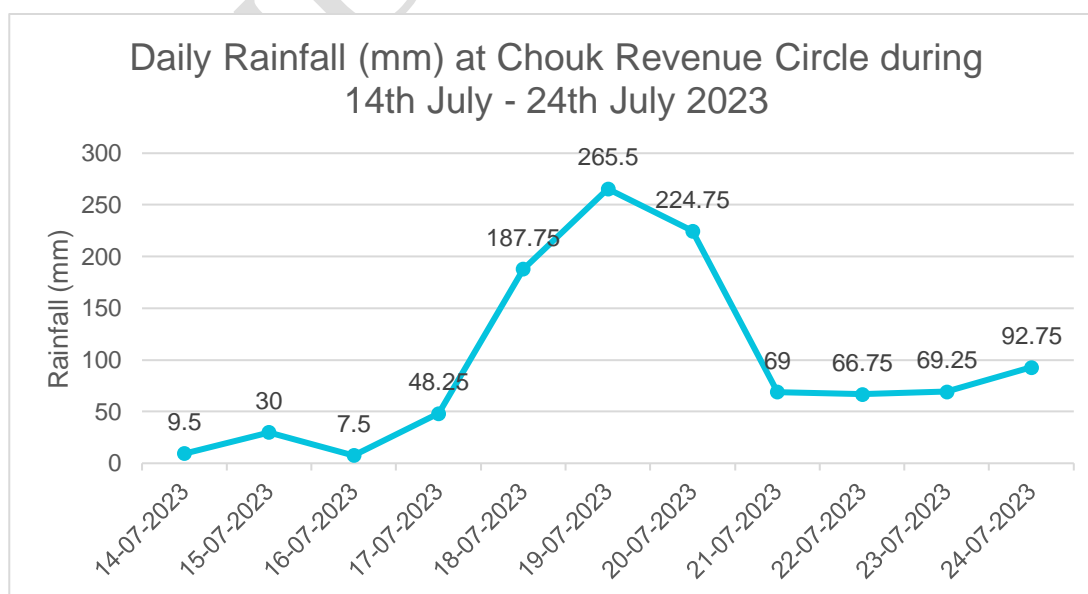
The impact of the landslide was severe as the village lay at around 1200 meters above sea level, and out of the 228 village inhabitants, residing in 49 households, only 142 could survive. Out of 49 Kuccha households, 32 houses were completely damaged while 17 were partially damaged. Owing to severe rainfall for four consecutive days before the incident, which continued for two days even after the landslide, the Khalapur tehsil



Photo 2: Irsalwadi Location

administration had anticipated the possibility of a landslide. Moreover, people in nearby villages were reporting rainfall-related incidents and asking for help, contributing to making the administration proactive. However, as Irshalwadi was not marked in the list of vulnerable villages shared by the Geological Survey of India, the administration did not anticipate it as a location for the disaster.

Based on the weather alerts received from the State EOC and IMD, the district administration had taken necessary action at the district level, which included declaring a public holiday on 19th July 2023. Weather alert advisory was also disseminated through the media. The rainfall received between 14th July to 24th July period at Chowk Revenue Circle is represented in the below graph.



Source 1 : http://services.mahavedh.com/mahavedh_portal/

The Irshalwadi locals reported the landslide incident to the district authorities at 11:20 pm. The Tehsildar control room responded quickly by reaching the location by 11:30 pm, almost half an hour after its occurrence. And by midnight, they could reach the top of the debris and commence the rescue operations. The Khalapur taluka administration was quick to respond, with the SDM reaching out to the district and state-level officials, and the Tehsildar managing the ground-level operations.

The Tehsildar established contact with the public works department, police department, ground-level NGOs and doctors. Such a segregation of responsibilities ensured operational efficiency with four ambulances reaching the site of action in quick time. It also ensured that telephone calls and messages related to administrative matters were directed to the SDM, and the Tehsildar could efficiently address the operational queries.

Around 11:30 pm, the district administration asked the State EOC to provide support in the search & rescue operations. At 12:57 am, the State EOC asked NDRF to deploy their team for the rescue operation, to which the NDRF responded by assigning two teams at 1:11 am. Meantime, the local team had rescued six people. The NDRF team reached the location at 4:33 am. As heavy rains posed a challenge to the airlifting operations, the NDRF team, along with a local team, commenced the rescue operations on the ground. They were joined by the police department, a team of 100 NDRF, 25 TDRF, local NGOs, active citizens, and *Aapada Mitras*. HAM radio station was set up to ensure efficient communication.



Photo 3: Search & Rescue Operation at Irsalwadi



Rescue operations involving helicopters were also attempted, but challenging weather conditions constantly created roadblocks. Consequently, National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) suspended the search operations four days after the incident, with 29 bodies recovered, but 57 declared missing.

The Irshalwadi landslide incident follows the two similar major events in Maharashtra in the last ten years, namely Malin village landslide (District: Pune, July 30, 2014) and the Taliye village landslide (District: Raigad, July 22, 2021).

Relief and Rehabilitation:

The administration has built shelter homes at Chowk village for those rescued from the disaster site. Every rescued family has been provided with a container home with facilities that include access to electricity, tap water and round-the-clock medical facilities. Additionally, an Anganwadi center has been built for children so that their learning and nutritional needs are not discontinued.



Photo 4: Temporary shelters provided by district administration.

Gaps Identified:

1. Three sites in the Khalapur tehsil find their name in the Geological Survey of India (GSI)'s list of landslide-prone villages, and Tehsil authorities have been arranging temporary shelters for evacuating its residents as preparedness measures for a landslide disaster. As Irshalwadi was not in the list of landslide-prone areas, there was no advanced evacuation as the administration did not associate it with a landslide. Updating the GSI's list by conducting a new mapping exercise for the region is recommended to ensure enhancement in the preparedness measures before the onset of the rainfall next year.
2. The Tehsil administration often experience frequent interruptions from the common people in their rescue operations. These interruptions range from clicking selfies at the location, shooting videos to constantly asking questions to the rescue officers. There are times when people assemble in large numbers leading to chaos and confusion. The Tehsildar recommends empowering Tehsil-level officers to take strict action against people who obstruct the officers performing their duty during such disasters. The area under operation should be immediately cordoned off, and only a few important people should be allowed at the site of action.
3. While there are community settlements in the Sahyadri mountain ranges, there are no *Pucca* roads in many places, thus creating challenges in rescue operations, especially during unfavourable weather conditions. As candid feedback, the Tehsildar, Khalapur tehsil, shared that *pucca* roads should be made in every mountainous region in consultation with the Forest department so that rescue operations can be conducted seamlessly.
4. Surviving community members saw mudslides in some locations but as they were not sensitized about these early warning signs for a landslide, they failed to understand its severity. Lack of awareness within the community about these indicators has also resulted in massive loss of human life.

Lessons Learned:

1. For many years, July has been the wettest month of the year in Maharashtra. According to the Indian Meteorological Department, Raigad received close to 67% of the average annual rainfall up till July 26. Throughout the month, it was either in the red zone or the orange zone. Anticipating heavy rainfall in July, preparatory measures to avoid the potential risks due to heavy rains and thunderstorms should begin well in advance, preferably in May and June.
2. Irshalwadi is situated at a height of about 1100 meters above the sea level. The emergency rescue team found it difficult to reach the affected area as most of the roads in the area were *kutchra* roads, thereby posing multiple challenges to the rescue and relief operations. With the permission of the forest department, *Kutchra* roads could be upgraded to *Pucca* roads to facilitate effective emergency response, rescue, and relief operations.
3. Strict regulations should be put in place by the government authorities to ensure that no new settlements crop up in the hilly areas, as they would lead to farming or livelihood-related activities and affect the forestation. Moreover, in addition to damaging the ecosystem, it is difficult to approach these settlements in case of an emergency.
4. Irshalwadi was never included on the list of the western ghats' landslide-prone sites according to data from the Geological Survey of India. In recent years, climate change has contributed to an increase in the risk (existing and emerging) of hydro-met hazards (erratic rainfall) and resulting geological hazards (rain-induced landslides). Therefore, Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability mapping of the area should be made a regular practice by the state so that the newly identified risk-prone areas can be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities and appropriate preparedness and mitigation measures can be taken at the taluka, district, and state levels.
5. According to Dr Satish Thigale, former head of the geology department, Pune University, cracks in the mountain surface, tilting of trees and mud flowing along with water are prominent indicators of a landslide. The local administration usually pays a visit to villages which are mapped by the Geological Survey of India as landslide prone. From this experience,

we learn that the administration should monitor the indicators of a landslide in every village, irrespective of whether they are mapped by the GSI. The department should undertake a comprehensive landslide hazard risk and vulnerability mapping exercise in the hilly regions of the state.

6. Several NGOs and voluntary organizations promptly offer food, shelter, and medical care to the affected populace. However, because they lack specialized training in emergency rescue, their involvement is restricted to offering relief. According to the Tehsildar, NGOs could be utilized more effectively if the government equips them with the right Search and Rescue equipment and gives them the necessary training. A group of volunteers could also be established. As far as the Khalapur tehsil is concerned, there are active NGOs who help when there are vehicle collisions on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. Training of NGOs, community-based organizations, and community volunteers like Aapada Mitras in relevant rescue techniques is critical. Identification of landslide hotspots and ensuring availability of heavy equipment to the local administration will help us mitigate the impact of landslides to a greater extent.

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इर्शाळवाडीवर दुःखाचा कडा कोसळला

१६ ठार; २३ जखमी, ९८ बेपत्ता, १०२ जण वाचले

खोपोली : प्रशांत गोपाळे

बुधवारी मध्यरात्री ११ वाजताच्या सुमारास खालापूर तालुक्यातील इर्शाळगड वाडीवर दुःखाचा डोंगर कोसळून १६ मृत्युमुखी तर ९८ जण बेपत्ता झाले आहे. ६ जण गंभीर जखमी झाले असून त्यांच्यावर पनवेलच्या एमजीएम रुग्णालयात उपचार सुरू आहे. एका रात्रीत इर्शाळगड वाडीत होत्याचे नव्हते झाले. एकुण ६० घरांपैकी ४८ घरांवर दरड कोसळली तर १२ घरे अंशतः बचावली आहेत. १०२ लोक डोंगरकड्याचा आवाज आल्याने जिव मुठीत घेवून धावत सुटली तेवढीच बचावली आहे. तर मदतीला आलेला अग्नीशमक दलाच्या जवानाचा हृदयविकाराच्या झटक्याने मृत्यू झाला. नातेवाईकांचा टाहो फोडणारे आवाज आणि दरडी खाली सापडले शेकडोजण त्यामुळे येथील वातावरण शोकाकूल होते.

दोन वर्षांपूर्वी २३ जुलै २०२१ च्या मध्यरात्री अशीच दुर्घटना महाड तालुक्यातील तळिये गावात घडली होती. यावेळी डिगान्याखाली ४०

प्रचंड पावसामुळे घडली दुर्घटना

खालापूरत सोमवार आणि मंगळवार दोन दिवसात ४४४ मिलिमिटर एवढा तुफान पाऊस झाल्यानंतर बुधवारी संध्याकाळी पाच वाजेपर्यंत ९७ मिमी पाऊस पडला होता. जवळपास ५४१ एवढी पर्जन्यवृष्टीमुळे इर्शाळगडाचा माथ्यावरचा काही भाग इर्शाळवाडीच्या घरांवर कोसळला. जवळपास ४८ घरे या ठिकाणी असून अडीचशे पेक्षा जास्त लोक वस्ती आहे. गडाचा कडा कोसळल्याचा आवाजाने अनेकाने घराबाहेर पळ काढला. तर झोपेत असलेल्या अनेक कुटुंब काही कळायचे आत मातीच्या डिगान्याखाली गाडले गेले. घटनेची माहितीवाडीतील मंदिरात बसलेल्या काही तरुणांनी चौक गावात दिल्यानंतर प्रशासन तातडीने कामाला लागले. खालापूर तहसीलदार आयुब तांबोळी यांनी सर्व यंत्रणांना सूचना देत घटनास्थळी धाव घेतली.

घरे सापडून ८४ जणांचा मृत्यू झाला होता. याच घटनेची पुनरावृत्ती दोन वर्षांनी खालापूर तालुक्यातील इर्शाळवाडी गावात झाली आहे. खालापूर तालुक्यात इर्शाळगडाच्या पायथ्याशी तीन किलोमीटरवर ही वाडी आहे. ही वाडी चौक गावातील मुख्य रस्त्यापासून सहा किलोमीटर उंच डोंगरात आहे. इथे जाण्यासाठी रस्ता नाही केवळ डोंगरातील पाऊलवाट आहे. मोरवे घराण्याच्या वरच्या बाजूला असलेल्या

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मृतांची नावे

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जखमी इसमांची नावे

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- वयें रामी रामु पारधी, (वय: ७७ वर्षे)
- कमली महादु पारधी, (वय: ५० वर्षे)



रायगडचे वादळ

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इशालगडाच्या पायथ्याशी असलेल्या इरसालवाडी आदिवासी पाड्यावर काळाची झडप; दरड कोसळल्याने शेकडो आदिवासी बांधव ढिगा-याखाली अडकले;

प्रशासनाने व सामाजिक संघटनांनी मदतीसाठी घेतली धाव !



नरेश जाधव / जिल्हा प्रतिनिधी:

खालापूर तालुक्यातील मोरबे घराण्याच्या वरच्या बाजूस इशालगडाच्या पायथ्याशी असलेल्या आदिवासी डाकुरवाडीवर काल रात्री 11:00 ते 11:30 वाजेच्या दरम्यान सतत संततधार पडत असलेल्या पावसामुळे दरड कोसळली असून यामध्ये मोठ्या प्रमाणात जिवितहानी झाली असल्याची माहिती समोर येत आहे. तर रात्रीच्या सुमारास दरड कोसळल्याने मातीच्या ढिगाऱ्याखाली अडकलेल्या आतापर्यंत 16 जणांचे मृतदेह बाहेर काढण्यात यश आले. त्यामध्ये एक लहान बाळाचा देखील समावेश आहे. तर येथील लोकवस्तीची अंदाजे 200 ते 250 लोकसंख्या असून 100 ते 150 जण ढिगाऱ्याखाली असल्याची माहिती समोर येत आहे. ढिगाऱ्याखाली अडकलेल्यांना बाहेर काढण्यासाठी शायीचे प्रयत्न सुरू आहेत. त्यामध्ये जेष्ठ नागरिक यांसह महिला, पुरुष, वयोवृद्ध, तर लहान बालकांचा देखील समावेश आहे.

सविस्तर माहिती असे की खालापूर तालुका हद्दीतील मोरबे घराण्याच्या वरील बाजूस इशालगडाच्या पायथ्याशी असलेली हे इशालगड डाकुर आदिवासी समाजाची अंदाजे 40 ते 50 घराणी मोठ्या प्रमाणात वस्ती असून या गावाची लोकसंख्या अंदाजे दोनशे ते अडीचशेच्या दरम्यान असल्याची माहिती येते. उपस्थित असलेल्या नागरिकांकडून मिळाली. तर इथे ये जा करण्यासाठी नाजिकडी गावच्या वरील बाजूने इशालगडावर व इशालगड येथे जाण्यासाठी देखील ह्याच रस्त्याचा वापर करून डोंगरावर चढण्यासाठी पाणी रस्ता असून खूप मोठ्या प्रमाणात चढ उतराचा सामना करीत इशालगड व त्यानंतर गड असा रोजचा दैनंदिन प्रवास येथील श रहिवासी व पर्यटक यांच मार्गाचा वापर करीत आहेत. पण काल रात्रीच्या सुमारास गावावर जी दरड कोसळून त्यामध्ये येथील नागरिक यांसह निष्पण जीवितका देखील बळी गेल्याची दुर्दैवी घटना घडली आहे. हे ऐकून साऱ्याची मने खुण झाली. मार्गाला दिवसापासून रायगड जिल्ह्यासह अनेक तालुक्यात पावसाने मुसळधार

लावल्याने अनेक भागात पाणी साचून काही ठिकाणी नदी, नाले यांना पूर आल्याचे देखील पहावयास मिळाले. तर काही ठिकाणी पुरपरिवृत्ती निर्माण झाल्याने जनजीवन विस्कळीत झाले आहे. पण कालची घडलेली घटना ऐकून अनेक जणांच्या काळजाचा ठोका चुकला. तर कालची रात्र म्हणजे वैयाची रात्र असे म्हंटले तर वावगे ठरणार नाही. का कुणस ठाऊक निघतीला काय मान्य होते ? डोंगरभाग, रात्रीची वेळ, काळाची झडप, अनेक जण गाव झोपत असल्याने निघतीने गाड झोपेतच त्यांचा घात केला आणि एका क्षणात होत्याचे नव्हते झाले. दरड कोसळली, दुर्दैवाखाली अनेक माणसे, मुलेबाळे व त्यांच्यासह सुकी जनावरे देखील कोणताही आवाज न करता कायमची गाड झोपी गेली. जणू काही काळाने त्यांच्यावर झडपच घातली असा सर्व गाव शीत झाले. पण, या प्रसंगातून याच गावातील अंदाजे दहा ते बारा घरे सुरक्षित होती. तर काही सुले ही गावातच असलेल्या शाळेत बसून मोबाईल वर पयली नेम खेळत होते. त्यांना दरड कोसळली हे काहीतच पताचच त्यांनी त्यांच्या काही नातेवाईक यांना संपर्क साधला. मग इथून सर्व खुबे हलली. बहुतेक ही घडलेली गोष्ट सर्व ठिकाणी वाऱ्यासारखी पसरू लागली ही इशालगडावर दरड कोसळून सर्व गाव मातीच्या ढिगाऱ्याखाली अडकला. हा हा महत्त्वाच बातमी वाऱ्यासारखी पसरली. तर काही व्होडसअप ग्रुप वर देखील याचे अपडेट चर बसल्या सर्वांना मिळू लागले. अपघातग्रस्तांच्या मदतीसाठी या ग्रुपच्या माध्यमातून अपडेट मिळताच ज्यांना जसे जमेल तत्सर्वे मदत कार्य करण्यास सुरुवात झाली. जिल्हाधिकारी कार्यालय टीम, प्राताधिकारी, तहसीलदार व त्यांची टीम, रायगड रस्त्यावर व त्यांची संपूर्ण टीम, एनडीआरएफ टीम, टीडीआरएफ टीम, आयपा मित्र टीम, अनेक संस्थेची टीम, अनेक सामाजिक संघटना टीम, प्राताधिकारी, तहसीलदार व त्यांची टीम, रायगड जिल्हा व कर्जत खालापूर तालुका पोलीस येरणा, आदिवासी संघटना टीम, अनेक सामाजिक संघटना, राजकीय नेते, मंत्री, शासकीय यंत्रणा, जिल्हा आपत्ती व्यवस्थान, यांसह नातेवाईक मेडकी यांच्या वतीने मदत घेत संपूर्ण टीम ही घटनास्थळी म्हणजेच दरड कोसळलेल्या ठिकाणी पोहचत मदत कार्य सुरू झाले. पण रात्रीचा गर्द अंधार व मुसळधार पडत असलेल्या पावसामुळे पुढे काय करायचे ? कुठे असतील घरे व त्यामधील माणसे? कसे शोधणार ? काण साळकीकडे अंधारच असल्याने काही गोष्टीचा अंदाज येत नसल्याने रात्रीचे मदत कार्य थोडक्या सळकी शोध मोहीम सुरू झाली. पावती तर काय दरड कोसळून जवळजवळ संपूर्ण डोंगराचा भागच कोसळल्याने या गावातील बहुतेक घरे व त्यामध्ये असलेली माणसे, मुलेबाळे व सुकी जनावरे ही या मातीच्या ढिगाऱ्याखाली सापडली असल्याचे कळताच मदत कार्य करण्यास सुरुवात झाली. अनेक ठिकाणी शोध सुरू झाला, उपस्थित टीम यांच्या माध्यमातून खोदकाम सुरू करून ढिगाऱ्या खालून खोदून मुतांना बाहेर काढण्यास सुरुवात झाली. तर उपस्थित नागरिक व रहिवासी यांच्याकडून देखील सामाजिक संस्था व जवान यांनी माहिती घेत मृतदेहांचा शोध लावत खोदकाम करून ते बाहेर काढण्यासाठी प्रयत्न करण्यात आले असून आतापर्यंत तेरा मृतदेह बाहेर काढले असून त्यांची योग्य ती चौकशी करून व तपासणी करून मृतदेह हे त्यांच्या हद्दीत दफन करण्यात येत आहेत. तर काही जखमी यांना त्वरित जागेवर उपचार करीत पुढील उपचारासाठी हलविण्यात आले असल्याची माहिती नागरिकांनी दिली. तर यामध्ये अंदाजे एकूण शंभर ते दीडशे लोक ढिगाऱ्याखाली अडकले असल्याची माहिती समोर येत आहे. तर त्यांना बाहेर काढण्याचे काम युद्धपातळीवर सुरू असून अंधार झाल्याने शोधकार्य रात्रीपरिचालन आले आहे.

साप्ताहिक

सामान्य नागरिक

मुद्रण संस्था - सावित्र वेवर् को.८८०५२८८०५८

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१०० हून अधिक लोक अडकल्याने राज्यातील अनेक आपत्कालीन यंत्रणा कामाला

आपत्कालीन यंत्रणांनी मोरबे डॅमच्या वरच्या बाजूला असलेल्या इशालवाडी येथे अतिवृष्टीमुळे दरड कोसळल्याने बचावकार्य चालू..

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महाराष्ट्र

36 तासांची मृत्यूशी झुंज अखेर यशस्वी!
ढिगाऱ्याखालून महिलेला जिवंत बाहेर काढलं