

VEERAYATAN VIDYAPEETH BHUJ, KUTCH FACT SHEET

INTRODUCTION

Kutch, the remote northwestern region of India, is a “raan” or semi desert. Indeed there has not been any significant rain in the past two years, and thus the area has been experiencing drought. Kutch was the epicenter of a devastating earthquake in January 2001. Ninety per cent of the buildings in Bhuj (a main city in Kutch) were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable; UNICEF reported that 1500 schools became either completely or partially destroyed. It is estimated that 20,000 people died in the earthquake.

Veerayatan was one of the first organizations to set up temporary schools for over 6000 children who were otherwise literally roaming the streets. On June 10th 2001, Veerayatan Vidyapeeth in Bhuj was inaugurated to provide free formal education to children who had lost one or both of their parents in the earthquake, and children whose parents were too poor to send their children to school. The school enrolls children irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Veerayatan also runs vocational training centers in order to equip people with new skills and a renewed sense of self-confidence and stability. Classes include sewing, painting, motor rewinding, electrical wiring, speaking English and computing.

FUTURE PLANS

In a short span of time, Veerayatan established a network of educational institutions throughout Kutch. However, Veerayatan has realized that long-term rehabilitation is required and it has resolved to maintain a long-term presence in Kutch to provide the region with top quality education.

Thus, Veerayatan is establishing a permanent school, a vocational training center and a teacher training center in Jakhania, Kutch along the Bhuj - Mandvi road. This will provide long-term relief to earthquake victims and will also serve the broader population of the region. The 23-acre land for the site was acquired through generous donation. Construction will near completion in early 2003.

GETTING TO AND FROM VEERAYATAN, BHUJ

The train station and airport in Bhuj are just minutes away from the campus, and Veerayatan staff will greet you and escort you to the campus.

All listed times and schedules of planes and trains are subject to change. The VVP committee strongly advises you to check this information in advance before confirming your travel plans.

From Mumbai:

Volunteers who fly or take the train into Mumbai will be greeted by Veerayatan staff. Volunteers may then take a Jet Airways flight to Bhuj (details below) or may travel by train to Bhuj.

By Taxi or Rickshaw:

If traveling by taxi or rickshaw, please ask to be dropped off at Veerayatan Vidyapeeth, opposite Khengarji Park.

By plane:

You may book the flight yourself on the Jet Airways website (www.jetairways.com) or Veerayatan staff can reserve the ticket for you.

From Mumbai -

You may take a Jet Airways flight to Bhuj, which leaves Mumbai daily at 10 AM and arrives in Bhuj at 11:30 AM. The one-way flight costs US \$115.00 (inclusive of all taxes).

From Delhi -

You must first take a flight to Mumbai, and then a connecting flight to Bhuj. Please check above information.

By train:

You may book the ticket yourself on indianrailways.com or Veerayatan staff can reserve the ticket for you.

From Mumbai -

Daily service: Train number 9031, The Kutch Express, leaves Mumbai Central daily at 1710 and arrives in New Bhuj (the last stop) at 1000 the next day.

From Delhi -

Daily service: Train number 9106 Delhi Ahmedabad mail leaves Delhi station at 2250 and arrives in Ahmedabad at 1725 the next day.

From Ahmedabad -

Daily service: Train number 9031, The Kutch Express, leaves Ahmedabad at 0210 and arrives in New Bhuj (the last stop) at 1000.

WEATHER AND CLOTHING

Both men and women should prepare to dress comfortably for 40-45 °C / 105-115 °F during the summer (March to October) and 25-30 °C / 80-85 °F during the winter (November to February).

Shirts, T-shirts and trousers/jeans are acceptable for both men and women; women may also wear a salwaar khameez or a sari if they wish. Short skirts, shorts and tight fitting tops are not recommended.

For summer participants, wide-brimmed hats and baseball caps are recommended.

For winter participants, sweatshirts, shawls, sweaters, jackets and waterproof jackets may be worn.

Comfortable tennis shoes and slippers are also recommended for both summer and winter participants.

FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION

Tea/milk and a light food item are provided for breakfast. Two nutritious, filling vegetarian meals are provided daily on campus free of charge. They are composed of the Indian staple foods of rotli (chapatis), shaak (curried vegetables), bhaat (rice), daal (lentil soup), and chaas (buttermilk). Water filtered by Aquaguard is provided for all volunteers. Mineral water or boiled water can be provided upon request.

Accommodation is provided on site free of charge. Beds and bedding will be provided. Please check the newest brochure on www.veerayatan.org for pictures of volunteer accommodations.

All-male, all-female closed-concrete bathing quarters have been provided for all volunteers. Showers are usually cold-water bucket baths; running water is available. Buckets will be provided to all volunteers. Please bring a towel

All-male, all-female closed-concrete squat toilets and western toilets have also been constructed for volunteers. Veerayatan staff takes special care to ensure that these are cleaned regularly.

SAFETY

Veerayatan's five-acre Bhuj campus is completely enclosed by a 6-foot high wall. There is also a guard on 24-hour duty posted at the only open entrance to the campus.

To date, there has never been any type of violent crime on Veerayatan's campus in Bhuj or the surrounding areas. Indeed, even when communal violence struck places in Gujarat in 2002, there were no recorded incidents of such violence in the city of Bhuj.

However, we recommend that volunteers do not leave the campus without notifying a member of the staff. Volunteers who do so may be asked to withdraw from the program and leave Veerayatan's campus permanently.

There is also a safe available for volunteers to place their valuable documents (passport, travellers cheques, etc).

COMMUNICATION

Family and friends can contact you in the following ways:

1) Phone

- a. They may call and ask directly for you at 02832-50961/57654. Please call only after 7:00 PM (India time) as it will be difficult for us to entertain long calls during office hours (7:00 AM to 7:00 PM).

2) Mail

- a. They may send you letters or packages at the following address:

YOUR NAME
C/o Anil Jain
Administrator
Veerayatan Vidyapeeth
Behind Khengarji Park
Bhuj, Kutch
370-001
Gujarat, INDIA

3) Email

- a. There are email facilities on the Veerayatan campus, as well as Internet cafes throughout the city.

You may contact your family and friends in the following way:

1) Phone

- a. Please bring an international calling card with you. You may call directly from Veerayatan's phones using this card

2) Email

- a. You will have email access in Veerayatan's Foreign Volunteers Office.

MEDICAL

Volunteers are advised to take the appropriate vaccinations and malaria tablets before arriving in India. These include vaccinations for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Encephalitis, Meningitis, Polio, Rabies, Tuberculosis, Typhoid and Yellow fever.

There is a general dispensary on campus, which has standard non-emergency medication for colds, fever, allergies, etc. A doctor also visits the campus every morning and can provide a general check up or general medical advice.

Veerayatan is also in contact with several private care practitioners in Bhuj and the surrounding big cities of Rajkot, Ahmedabad, etc should emergency medical care be necessary.

DAILY SCHEDULE & SAMPLE ITINERARIES

Given that Veerayatan hosts a primary school, vocational training classes and a residential hostel for boys and girls, several hundred people will be present on the Bhuj campus at any given time. The school runs for six days a week, from Monday through Saturday. There is a break for the schools on Sunday, though the office will still be open.

Volunteers will be expected to work for at least 7 to 9 hours everyday, although their schedule is quite flexible. This may include administrative office work, field work (visiting subcenters, slum areas, and so on), teaching classes and/or interacting with children. Volunteers will also get several hours of free, personal time everyday.

Sample Itineraries for volunteers on Veerayatan, Bhuj campus:

Itinerary One:

Time	Activity
7 AM	Wake-up
7:30-8:00 AM	Shower
8:00-9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00-11:00 AM	Administrative work; online research and writing of field project proposal; writing articles
11:00-12:00 AM	Give tour to international visitors
12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch; free time
1:00-2:00 PM	Field work; visit Natwas colony and speak to villagers interested in attending literacy classes
2:00-4:00 PM	Visit other colonies and slum areas in Bhuj to survey interest in literacy or vocational training classes
4:00-6:00 PM	Help local teacher with a computer or English class for vocational students
6:00-7:00 PM	Work on grant to secure funds from international private organization
7:00-7:30 PM	Dinner
7:30-8:15 PM	Prartna - inspirational/motivational talk and speech contests

8:15-9:00 PM	Research and write budget for field project proposal
9:00-11:00 PM	Free time; play games with and tutor hostel children;

Itinerary Two:

Time	Activity
7 AM	Wake-up
7:30-8:00 AM	Shower
8:00-9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00-12:00 AM	Plant trees in Veerayatan's newest school in Rudrani, Kutch
12:00-1:00 PM	Prepare to teach English speaking class to Veerayatan's teachers
1:00-2:00 PM	Lunch; free time
2:00-4:00 PM	Teach English speaking course
4:00-6:00 PM	Assist local doctor with physicals on hostel boys and girls
7:00-7:30 PM	Dinner
7:30-8:15 PM	Prarntna - inspirational/motivational talk and speech contests
8:15-9:30 PM	Study Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism with Veerayatan's sadhvijs (renunciates)
9:30-11:00 PM	Free time; play games with and tutor hostel children;

Itinerary Three:

Time	Activity
7 AM	Wake-up
7:30-8:00 AM	Shower, breakfast
8:00-12:00 PM	Visit village in Kutch to distribute clothing, food, school supplies; survey villagers for interest in vocational training courses
12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00-3:00 PM	Visit other non-governmental humanitarian organizations in Bhuj; meet administrators to help secure additional funding, resources
3:00-4:00 PM	Visit bazaar to buy supplies, check email
4:00-6:00 PM	Hindi and Sanskrit tutorial session
6:00-7:00 PM	Play cricket and Frisbee with the hostel children
7:00-7:30 PM	Dinner
7:30-8:15 PM	Prarntna- inspirational/motivational talk and speech contests
8:15-12:00 AM	Join Veerayatan staff to prepare clothing, supplies for next village distribution

Itinerary Four (Sunday):

Time	Activity
7 AM	Wake-up
7:30-8:00 AM	Shower
8:00-9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00-11:00 AM	Help design next Veerayatan brochure or documentary
11:00-3:00 PM	Visit Mandvi Beach; have lunch on the beach; tour local landmarks, temples
3:00-4:00 PM	Roll rotlis, peel potatoes, cut tomatoes to help cooks prepare for night's dinner
4:00-6:30 PM	Play soccer with hostel children; help them with homework
6:00-7:30 PM	Dinner, free time
7:30-8:15 PM	Prarntna - inspirational/motivational talk and speech contests
8:15-10:30 PM	Experience "mela" near Khengarji Park; visit booths, food stands

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS AND SHOPS

In the heart of Bhuj city there is a large lake without water, which proves to be a gathering point during many yearly festivals. Additionally the campus is located about 1.5 hours away from the oceanside, which has a lively beachfront. Volunteers can visit the royal palace of Kutch's prince and princess, where parts of the Hindi film *Lagaan* were shot. There are also movie theatres in Bhuj, which play both Hindi and English films.

Veerayatan staff may even organize a field trip during your stay, taking you to see the sights of Kutch.

The campus is also ideal for morning runs and volunteers can also take a walk in the adjacent Khengarji Park.

The campus is close to shops where volunteers can buy personal items such as toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, batteries, camera film, computer disks, and so on or get a haircut, head massage and a shave.

LANGUAGE

The predominant languages spoken in the area are Kutchi, Gujarati and Hindi. These are also the predominant languages spoken by the Veerayatan staff, though the administrators also converse in English. Veerayatan's children (who live in the residential dormitory on campus) speak and understand Gujarati, Kutchi and Hindi.

SOME PHRASES IN GUJARATI

Hello/How are you -	Kemche/kemcho.
Jain Greeting -	Jai Jinendra.
I am fine/not fine -	Mane saru che/saru nathi.
I am great-	Hu majaamaa chu.
What is your name? -	Taru naam su che?
My name is Tom -	Maru naam Tom che.
Where are you from? -	Tame kyathi avya cho?
I am from America -	Hu America thi avyo/i chu.
Goodbye -	Avjo
Yes -	Ha
No -	Na
Thank you -	Aabaar/Dhanyavaad/Thank you
Do you speak English -	Tane English bolta avre che?
Please say that again -	Pachhu bol.