

## **Why School Safety.....?**

The earthquake on January 26th, 2001, and disasters around the world have adversely affected lives of thousands of school children.

In each disaster, school buildings are destroyed, taking away precious lives of children and teachers; it takes a long time for such institutions to recover. Often, when disasters strike, children are unable to escape in time, leading to stampedes. The fire tragedy in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, in July 2004 is a gruesome reminder.

With proper guidance from trained teachers, awareness and regular practice, children's lives can be protected.

Moreover, children are a dynamic and powerful force of change and supporters for creating awareness in the community. They can contribute in a unique manner with energy and vision to find local solutions and enlighten their elders and parents urging them for safety against disasters.

The Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) jointly with SEEDS is now initiating, for the first time in India, a comprehensive school level safety programme, Gujarat School Safety Initiative (GSSI). As part of the project, selected schools would be invited to participate in the activities to promote a culture of disaster safety in school communities.