

CASA's Flood Response in Odisha 2011

More than 1.7 million people in 19 districts of Odisha have been affected with the severe flood claiming 28 lives. Out of 19 districts, 13 districts were on high alert. 877 villages were completely cut off due to flood waters. Thousands of houses damaged in the flood. Lakhs of people have been evacuated to safer and higher places. 80,720 hectares cultivated land is submerged under water.

Gop block was completely submerged due to a major breach on Kushavadra river. The preparedness of the district administration to handle a calamity like this can be gauged from the fact that there were not enough boats to reach out to the affected persons even after five days. People are still staying under open sky without food and other essentials.

Puri district was among the worst affected in the current floods. Even after 5-6 days of flooding, a large number of villages in the project area of Nuakholomara, Rahangorada and Andharaichapur Gram panchayat were inaccessible to reach.

Response from the Disaster Mitigation Taskforce Member (DMTF)

The Disaster Mitigation Task Force (DMTF) members played a vital role and rescued many people in this area. The DMTF members are divided into various groups and are trained to carry out their designated responsibilities effectively. The various groups are specialised in Search, Rescue, early warning, first aid, shelter management, food management, etc. As soon as the flood warning came from the radio and television the DMTF members had an emergency meeting to how to tackle the situation. The first work of the DMTF was to take the people to safer places; they also collected Rice, Dal and vegetables and prepared food for 120 people who took shelter in different places. They also kept close contact with the Block administration and the medical team and helped them in locating the people where they are taken shelter and also distributing the Food items to the victims of Flood. All the DMTF members had a good coordination between themselves. They were the only linkage between the affected people and the Govt. officials / other organizations.

During post flood the DMTF members did a quick Assessment with the help of the CASA Staff and also were involved in selection of Beneficiaries to provide relief materials to victims of the flood affected people. They also did the damage assessment in the area and provided it to the government to provide necessary items from them.

"The Disaster management programme by CASA in our Gram Panchayat really helped us in facing such a devastating Flood. CASA had given skill training and knowledge to our young people on how to manage disaster. These people saved my life by evacuating me to a safer place. They provided cooked food to us and also provided us with Medical assistance and drinking water." says Basudev Bhoi of Nuakholomara GP of Puri District.



Basudev Bhoi, Gabadhia

Till now the DMTF members are actively taking part in the Relief distribution programme in their area.

Manoj kumar Bhuyan a DMTF member belongs to Rescue group lives in Andhara village of AndharaichhapurPanchayat, he has a small shop in his village which is his only source of income. *“On 8th September evening when I was going to purchase some materials for my shop to Gop I heard from my friend that flood water is increasing in Kushbhadra and Dhanua River which is near to our village. I immediately contacted the other DMTF members and the village committee members and called for an emergency meeting due to the flood situation. Within no time we gathered and quickly went to the river bank to ensure not to create a breach but unfortunately the water was increasing and then we immediately informed the villagers to pack their belongings and start evacuating their houses and go to the safer places. We had identified eight places where people could go and take shelter. I was in-charge of one of the shelter(Andhara primary school)and ensure that people take shelter safely. Immediately we collected some rice and dal from each family and started a community kitchen in the place”,* recalls Manoj.



The nearest village SANAMATHA was badly affected in this Flood .The people didn't have place to take shelter in their own village, so Manoj along with other DMTF members brought them to safer place and collected rice, dal and other food items from the community, prepared food and distribute it among the people of Sanamatha village by the boat.

In this flood Manoj lost his petty shop which was his only source of income. However, he came forward to save the people of his village. *“I really thank CASA for giving me skill and knowledge by which I am able to do something for my village in the time of crisis.”* Stated Manoj.

Mr. Saroj Kumar Swain a DMTF member of Dihuda village of Andhara ichapur GP, is in first Aid group; during this flood he played an important role as he was looking after the health and sanitation where the people had sheltered. ***"I assisted the Medical team who came by boat and visited the place with the team and provided medicine, Halogen tablets (water purifier tablets) and bleaching power to the people. The place where I was in-charge was Dihuda high school where 210 people took shelter. We also helped people to come to this place and take shelter."*** He again stated that ***"My primary responsibility was to look after and monitor the health condition of the people and keep in touch with the medical team of the local PHC and CHC."***



(Saroj Kumar Swain, DMTF Member)

"This is because the training provided by CASA on first aid by which I could do something for my villager." Mr.Saroj added in gratitude.

The real challenge lies now for the DMTF members after the flood to help the affected villages to get back to the normal situation, which has been completely devastated by this flood. There will be other challenges including the outbreak of epidemics due to the decomposed carcasses of the cattle. ***"We are committed to do work for the development of our village and help them to get back to normalcy as soon as possible."*** Says Banku babu a DMTF member of Nuakholomora GP. They are in close contact with the Panchayat and the Block administration for future action.

-As reported by the CASA team in Odisha Flood Relief
