

RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

(Severe Flood in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh)



An Integrated relief work

in

Paschim Champaran, Bihar

An Update of the Relief Initiative Undertaken

This year 19 districts of Bihar and 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh have been severely affected by floods. Governments of both states have undertaken rescue and relief activity in these affected districts. As a part of non-governmental initiative some INGOs as well as Local NGOs are working for the relief of affected people.

As a part of observational visit of flood situation, there are some micro level relief initiative taken by ASK team members along with the team of local NGO known as SAVERA from August 07th to 10th. The following initiatives were undertaken as mention below:

1. Mobilizing Relief stuck at Panchyat Level:

The river flood in the villages of Bihar has left many families without food. During the visit it was seen that there are families which did not even have a single grain or very limited food in the flood situation. The state government had sent 25 Kg wheat or rice for each household of flood affected areas as relief. But in our visit it was found that the relief was lying with the Panchayats for 8 - 10 days while people were sleeping without having enough food.

Shyampur, Bantoli and Sirkania : These villages were very badly affected by the flood. When the Sarpanch was asked why the grains were not being distributed, he said that he feared a violent situation would erupt in the village. ASK team and the local NGO could convince the Sarpanch of two villages to distribute the grains by giving assurance that if anything goes wrong we'll help you. At the

same time ASK and Savera team also interacted with villagers and empowered them to question to Sarpanch about why food grain are not being distributed.

JaralPur, Khutwania, Navalpur, Dhadwa: In another case it was found that the relief material is lying with Block Development officer. Hence the team approached the Block Development Officer (BDO) and expressed the desire to volunteer in relief distribution in the areas where the government was finding it difficult. The effort led the BDO to get into action and within a day the distribution began in many villages.

During our visit we realised that some Sarpnach or BDO's would distribute the relief only when they have some pressure from above or if people asked questions. The effort of ASK and Savera team helped many hungry flood affected people to get the food which was their right. We believe that *people should get relief as a matter of their right*. It also helped in making the local NGO (Savera) realise the importance of bridging the gap between relief material and the beneficiaries.

2. Fund Raising:

The ASK team demonstrated how to the local funds can be mobilised for the relief for which we engaged the Savera team in raising funds from the local shopkeepers of the town. Such strategy of raising funds was to respond the emergency specially the health of infants, children and women. It has also helped the local NGO realise that in an emergency situation one can't afford to wait for the proposal to be sanctioned by the donors. Instead the NGO should also be ready to raise funds from the local people at whatever possible extent.

The one and half hour fund raising activity done by ASK and Savera team could raise fund to meet the expenses of medicine and the rest expenses were borne by the local agency. The funds were used to organise a health camp for the flood affected children and women. In order to raise the fund, a banner was developed and teams visited series of shops available in the district town and explained them the need of their contribution and how it will help children and women to cope with the illness.

3. Health check-up cum relief camp:

The flood had affected the health of the children and women. ASK and Savera decided to organise a health camp focusing on infants, children and women. After the flood various diseases have increased. Some of the diseases are fever, cough, body ache, skin diseases, ear infection and many water borne diseases.

Our team approached the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and briefed the health condition of children and women of Bariyarpur of South Telhwa and requested him to send a qualified doctor and an assistant for the health camp. As a result DCMO passed order to one of the doctor and compounder. The Bariyarpur village was informed of the Health Camp one day before. Around 450 people including infants, children and women from *Khap Tola, Barai Tola, Banwa Tola, Khutahin, Bariyarpur and Nauraheen Tola* came for the treatment.

Keeping everything in order in the camp was a challenge because huge number of patients turned up for the treatment. The camp was conducted on the embankments (*Bandha*) where people had shifted and staying due to flood situation. Logistical arrangements such as table, dari and chairs were arranged from the community. In all 194 patients including children and women received treatment. Event could not cover the entire community as the time was less but

the local NGO – Savera assured that this activity will be continued in the next couple of months.

It was an important effort to avoid an outbreak of any epidemic in the area. Local people also considered it as an immediate need and appreciated it. This effort of ASK and Savera got media attention as it became a news in a daily, “Dainik Jagran” and “Hidustan”.

It has been noticed that there are several villages that are left out of the appropriate relief specially the children, women and the elderly.

After completing the mentioned activities it was realised that the effort of the government can not fulfil the variety of needs and may not able cater all stakeholders of the community such as children, women and elderly as the magnitude of problem is high in Bihar. Keeping this in view ASK and SAVERA planned an integrated relief work for one of the villages of Paschim Champaran district known as Tolia Tola. This particular village has been flooded because it is located near the river Gandak. In order to take up this relief work, professional approaches were adopted as given below:

- √ Rapid Risk Assessment was done.
- √ Proposal was prepared including expected result, activity, input, strategy, budgeting and timeline and action plan.
- √ The community was involved in the process of planning and also in the implementation.

Integrated relief work has already started in the community known as *Telia Tola*. The activity wise details are as follows:

- 1. Evacuation:** As the water level of the river is increasing and houses and land are getting washed away the need of evacuation was felt. In order to accomplish this smoothly one boat has been mobilised from the Panchyat and one is hired on Rs. 600 per day. Out of 65 families, 54 families needed evacuation have reached a safe place.
- 2. Distribution of Cilpaulin Plastic Sheet for shelter:** Since the houses are badly damaged, the shelter and water became priority for the people. Taking this into consideration, as of now, cilpaulin plastic sheets have been given to those all 44 families whose houses have been completely damaged. This plastic is different from the normal one and serves purpose of shelter as well as drinking water through rain water harvesting. The process is still on. The team is not only distributing the sheets but also helping the families to fix the sheets for rain water harvesting.
- 3. Distribution of mosquito nets:** During our rapid appraisal it was found that though people are shifting to the embankments but they are not able to sleep properly because of mosquitoes. All 44 families who shifted to the *bandha* and do not have nets have been given one. This will also help to avoid an outbreak of epidemic of malaria in the area.
- 4. Trauma Counseling:** This would be the first initiative in the entire district. Families lost their houses and agricultural lands got traumatised and also fell ill. As a part of the relief work it was decided to provide trauma counseling to such cases and the president of Savera has experience on the same. This activity will cover women, children, the elderly and adults. So

far 32 cases including children, women and elderly have been identified and process of counseling will continue till they recover. This initiative will help them to cope with this difficult situation and lead their life after flood. For children, one child entertainment center has been established with the help of community. This center is equipped with the toys, colours, drawing sheets etc so that children enjoy normal childhood and free from the fear of flood, damages etc.

5. **Health Check up camps:** It has been noticed that crisis of health itself becomes a major problem for entire community. Children and elderly are highly prone to it. In order to cater health needs, ongoing health checkup camps have been established. Four checkups will be done in the next two months so that people can get regular supply of medicines and get cured completely. *In Uttar Pradesh our major engagement with PGSS was on health camps. ASK team volunteered for the Porvanchal Gramin Sewa Samiti initiatives and conducted three health camps in the districts of Maharanjganj and Sidharth Nagar.*

6. **Diet to Pregnant Mother:** There are five pregnant mothers in the community and getting a balance food is biggest challenge for them. Team thought that this will also have an impact on the child. Taking this into consideration all five pregnant mothers have been given dry nutrition. This support to the pregnant mothers will continue for next two months of so that the nutrition level of the mother and the children can be maintained and that will lead to safe delivery and healthy child.