

Caritas rolling out humanitarian response for Assam flood



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Report by Catherine Kune, Programme Officer
Edited by Patrick Hansda, Documentation & Publications



The first wave of flood that hit Assam on June 3, 2017 had taken 3 lives and affected 13000 people across the state, reported a leading media house on June 15, 2017.

Disaster Risk Reduction team was activated by Caritas India on June 6, 2017 as the situation was getting critical due to flood water rising in Brahmaputra river inundating 162 villages.

Twenty-Eight villages are affected in four districts of North Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Biswanath and Dia-Hasso of which North Lakhimpur is the most affected district.

Most of the hand pumps and water sources are submerged due to flood and people are facing lot of problems related to drinking water and health. All communication lines are disrupted and people are facing trouble especially in getting their basic needs for their survival.

Caritas team and Peach volunteers conducted need assessment of the worst affected village in North Lakhimpur. Village level meetings were organized in all the 12 villages and formed committees for Identification of beneficiaries, Purchase & Logistic and Complain committee.

Relief Distribution



Relief activity was carried out by Caritas India on June 15, 2017 with Hygiene kits for 1000 families in 12 villages covering 4560 population in North Lakhimpur. Caritas dedicated team in the field is also conducting medical camps in collaboration with District Health Department on June 16, 2017 for the affected villages.

Stress on Integrated drought mitigation measures when coping crumbles

Report by Dr. Haridas VR, Incharge - Climate Adaptive Agriculture and Livelihood

The 2nd national consultation workshop on Confronting Successive Drought: Reducing risk & Enhancing resilience of women and children organized jointly by UNICEF, National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), and the government of Andhra Pradesh in Vijayavada on June 8-9, 2017. The consultation stressed on the need for mitigating the impact of successive drought on agriculture, water stress, health, education specially relating to children and women.



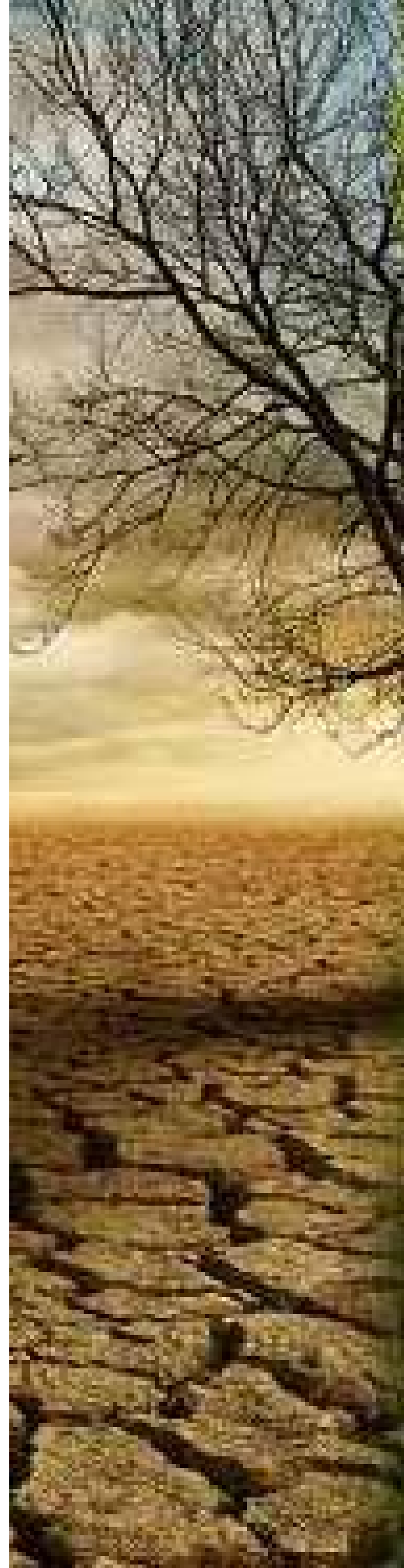
Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in his inaugural speech stated that for the last many years there were many discussions on drought situations in India and several measures had been being taken to face drought situations, mitigation based approach to reduce the impact of drought is the need of the hour. He stressed that, the mitigation based approach should also have response plan.

Appreciating the drought management practices adopted by the United States of America and Australia, he shared that Australia has stopped calling drought as a disaster and have long term plan and strategies for drought mitigation.

Addressing the gathering Mr. Lars Bend, Chief of disaster Risk Reduction unit of UNICEF India said equitable distribution of safe and sufficient water resources, usage of water saving technologies and the restoration of eco system is very important to reduce the risk of drought and this should be done on a long-term basis.

“When Coping Crumbles”, the drought assessment report of India 2015-16 was also released during the consultation workshop. Over 130 participants from across India including the representatives of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and other states along with members of various NGOs took part in the workshop. Dr. Haridas VR, Incharge of Climate Adaptive Agriculture and Livelihoods in Caritas India participated in the consultation.

Participants stressed on the need of concerted effort in reducing the effect of drought through integrated area based approach in which all the stake holders such as community, community based organisations, NGOs, Universities, Government departments, district administration etc. should take active steps in mitigating measures. Such effective models should be tested for experimentation and then replicated in more areas. Generating real time data is also important for real assessments of the gravity of the situation and the changes bring in after the mitigation measures.



Chennai flood case presented at workshop on Climate Change in Asia

Report by Dr. John Arockiaraj, SO - Tamilnadu

Growing recognition and interest on climate change as a political and ethical issue has become a scope of discussion in the recent past. The poor and the vulnerable that have generally contributed the least to the climate crisis are hit the hardest.



Highlighting issues on justice, Climate Change Desk (CCD) of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) Office of Human Development organised conference workshop on June 11-12, 2017 at Bangkok. This served as a culminating activity of the climate change research project undertaken by CCD in the year 2016.

The research followed "Case study approach" involving sites in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam.

Research themes focused on, extreme weather events and farming, urban flooding, sea-level rise and the coastal communities, drought and livelihoods in the upland, indigenous culture and forest conservation, renewable energy use, and disaster-risk reduction and interfaith collaboration.

This conference workshop was a combination of technical inputs and case studies presentation on impacts and good practices and interactive discussion. The overall goal of this two-day event was to

help sustain the gained momentum and contribute in turning knowledge and established collaborations into more strategic and collective climate actions in the region. Brainstorming and planning sessions that explored potential partnerships gave suggestions to FABC to formulate a roadmap and a regional climate change strategy in Asia. It was concluded that the poor and the vulnerable that have generally contributed the least to the climate crisis are hit the hardest and hence climate change should be a political and ethical issue.





Dr. John Arokia Raj, State Officer of Tamil Nadu of Caritas India facilitated the research team and presented a case study on “Urban Flooding in an Emerging Economy in Asia: A case from the coastal city of Chennai, India”. He said “In December, 2015 what nature gave was not a disaster but excessive rains to the water starved Chennai city. But it became a very big human made disaster due to poor preparedness and lack of co-ordinated mechanisms in place”.

While talking about illegal encroachment, he said that where human law is preoccupied with licences, nature's law is concerned solely with location. He continued that learnings from disasters should become vibrant and applied for future correction; Disaster is a new normal with increase in number, frequency and intensity ;DRR is collective responsibility towards humanity with inclusive approach ;Resilience is not only bouncing back but leaping forward -Building back better; Focus on Proactive strategy: Prevent and prepare rather than repent and repair; “Your neighbour is going to be your first respondent”; Partnership is inevitable and it is not a choice; Build on local capacity of the Communities and Initiatives; Adaptation to traditional local practices and indigenous knowledge and hence make investments on communities for effective Control, Command, Communication and Co-ordination.

Following are the major recommendations given to address the flooding in Chennai:

- For donor agencies: to support ‘soft projects’ that provide platforms for the science community to collaborate effectively with development practitioners and policy makers, transmitting knowledge or scientific findings into government decision-making, highlighting the science-policy interface.
- For the government: to review and enforce its regulations against building in floodplains and other flood prone areas, and craft policies ‘with teeth’ designed for the preservation of wetland ecosystems, and the protection of watercourses (with due regard to Chennai’s history relevant to this aspect).
- While urban flooding impacts the rich and the poor, the latter’s resilience and capacity to adapt cannot only be built by their ingenuity. The government and other service providers have to construct the necessary infrastructures (such as mechanisms linking them to water networks, and relocation sites or evacuation centers among others), as well as basic health care services that require funding they cannot generate themselves.
- An integrated approach in flood control and management is called for which can be done by creating a unified flood management agency which acts as a nodal group to carry out the functions of planning, co-ordination and monitoring of all existing relevant bodies like CMDA, Corporation of Chennai, Slum Clearance Board, CMWSSB, and others in addition to the disaster management agency.

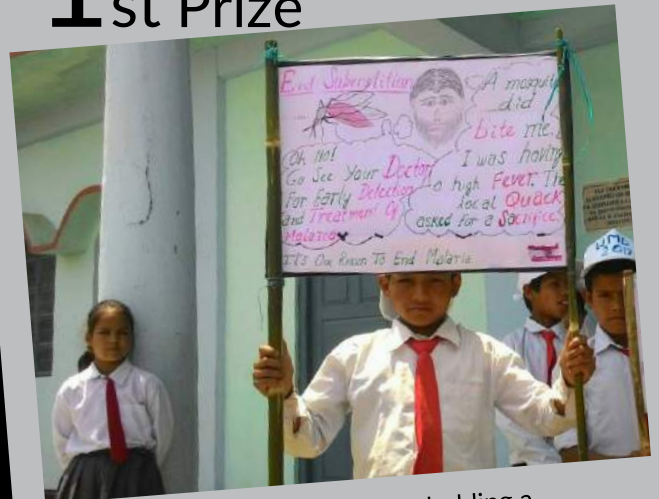
IMCP – III Photography Contest Results 2017

On the occasion of World Malaria Day 2017, Caritas India and the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme jointly conducted an online photography contest. It was an opportunity to share the best moments captured through lenses illustrating the commitment and the efforts to fight malaria. There were 3 themes:

- a) End Malaria for Good – Community in Action!
- b) Saving Lives – Colors of courage!
- c) Prevent mosquito bite – Keep malaria out!

Participation from various parts of India with 130 photographs were received. A selection committee comprising officials from National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme and Caritas India selected 5 best photographs.

1st Prize



Doing My Bit, A School student holding a placard in Namdong, Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya by Marilyn Kharkong



Community Consultation Message Dissemination Session in village Gurujang, Deogarh, Odisha by Ranjita Satpathy

2nd Prize

Good night sleep smiling face Use of mosquito net malaria free life - At home in Delhi by Leeza



Village Cleanliness drive in village Sibida, District Angul, Odisha by Patitapaban Naik

3rd Prize



Community sensitization- through rally in Badarma, Sambalpur, Odisha by Anjali Rabana)