

NewsUpdate

A Caritas India weekly

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- Ranju Sharma, 26, from Dezoo
Chapori village, Lakhimpur





Ranju was standing beside the school wall watching people queue to receive their relief but her name was not in the list. At an age of 26 she had become widow with a mother of one-and-a-half-year-old daughter. She only thinks about her daughter's future.

Her house was washed away in the flood and now the mother and child lives with her husband's relative at Dezoo Chapori village in North Lakhimpur, Assam. She helps in house work but always worried as anytime they can ask her leave the house.

"We wanted to raise our daughter by giving her quality education but our dreams remained as dream", exclaimed Ranju. She used to stay happily with her husband Madhav Prasad Sharma and daughter in their house close to the river but never thought that the same river will take their house one day.

"Madhav had a medical shop which was their only source of livelihood. After his death, the shop is closed and whatever income used to come has stopped," narrated Ranju with tearful eyes.

Every one affected by flood has their own story of pain which only brings back the moments of deprivation, confusion, hurt, loss and psychological trauma.

Ranju came to know about the complaint box installed at the distribution point for grievance redressal, so she dropped her application in the box mentioning her case for support. The village committee along with Caritas India personnel reflected on the application and considering her vulnerability had decided to extend emergency relief support to her.

"I will use this money for the admission of my daughter in school and reconstruct my house" said Ranju. She further plans to reestablish her husband's closed medical shop to become independent so she can provide good education to her daughter.

The complaint redressal mechanism of Caritas India during emergency is an effective step to invite community to submit their confusion, complains and feedback for redressal and improvement. It not only creates space for community to express their views but also brings accountability, transparency and participation.

Every day after distribution of relief materials, the village committee and Caritas India personnel sits with the community and open the complaint box to hear the issues and unanimously decide for its redressal.

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My evening school for disaster resilience

Report by Jonas Lakra, ZM - Northeast
Edited by Patrick Hansda, Documentation & Publications

Education is greatly slashed by the recent flood in Assam and schools are closed for indefinite duration due to infrastructural damage or unconducive environment. Though, enrollment rates at the Lower Primary Schools are high i.e. approximately 80% but the attendance in the class is very low before and even after the flood.

In Assam Flood 2017 Phase II, the HCL Foundation had supported Caritas India initiative “My Evening School for Disaster Resilience” under education sector. The initiative is catering to 1000 children from 12 flood affected villages of Lakhimpur District to have continued study culture during the flood period and prepare them to save themselves and their study materials.

This is one of the unique evening school where apart from formal text based classes, children will learn about disaster situation, children’s safety and preparedness measures to face floods. It is also planned to form children clubs based on their interest and age group so that they work as a group for any issues related with children and disaster preparedness.

The programme will also focus on building awareness

of the community on the disaster preparedness including health awareness, awareness on disaster risk reduction/preparedness and prepare the community to better face the upcoming floods. Interested youths will be identified and motivated to work as volunteers during disaster to help the community as required. Volunteerism will be introduced in each village and train the selected people in this line. All the school going children will be given awareness program on the preparedness to protect their education materials.

The programme was launched with the recruitment and orientation of field staffs on July 20-21, 2017 at Lakhimpur, Assam. The selected staffs conducted village level survey for collecting students profile through face to face interaction with the parents, identifying school centers and seeking permission for using govt. schools for the evening school.

The programme envisions to train 70% of the school going students have taken disaster preparedness measures on protecting study materials. It also aims to prepare communities to face the annual flood and reduce at least 50% of loss and damages of lives and properties.



Drawing development perspective for Odisha, Chhattishgarh and Jharkhand

Report by Alexander, Thematic Officer - Tribal Development
 Edited by Patrick Hansda, Documentation & Publications

In the changing challenging context of development sector Caritas India called the social development partners of Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to draw the development perspective of these states.

Organised on July 21, 2017 at Puri, the strategic meeting discussed the needs for revisiting the development perspectives and explore ways to meaningfully address the issues by Caritas India and her partners.

The discussion at the meeting dwelt on development thought and action, Diakonia, Tribal identity and ecosystems, People Led Empowerment -Empowering Animation, volunteerism and local resource mobilization in the regions.

Fr. Frederick D'Souza, Executive Director, Caritas India insisted all the local partners to address and support tribals for their development. Through participatory discussion he explained the trend of development approaches: "Charity", 'Institutional intervention' and 'Justice' with the partners.

Sharing about Charity or charitable act of kindness, Fr. Frederick said, it is rooted in the church's Vision and Mission from its inception to support the poor, downtrodden and needy which is mostly based on donation of good and finance. However, Institutional efforts aims towards building the capacities of community institutions who are in turn engaged in the capacity building of the people. Sustainability of any development intervention depends on the people, their needs, their approach to address and resolve the needs and devising ways for the sustainability. Justice being the epitome, envisions to bring societal change for any development intervention.

He reiterated that Justice is what ensures human dignity in the society, hence communities should be empowered to the extent where they are dynamically engaged with different stakeholders in maintaining justice and uphold human values that dignify human existence.

Fr Paul Moonjely, Deputy Director, Caritas India explained Diakonia (Jesus's love to the world). He shared that Christian love is rooted in Christ who came to the world and gave his life for the humanity. He built capacities of

the people, he solved their problems, healed them and showed them the ways to resolve their own issues. He said, our work must be exemplary to the world so a self-reflection of our social development initiative must be looked at in the light of Diakonia.

Three-dimensional analysis on the issue of tribal Identity were discussed to reflect on their problems and possible ways to address the issues. Fr. Paul remarked that the church community specially the partners of Caritas should embark upon a new thinking process on development approach with tribals and critically analyze the outcomes. As the resources for development work is drastically reduced due to number of reasons it becomes imperative that we look at local resource mobilization.

The recommendation was made urging the partners to consider Local Resource mobilization as a very important component of Development process with the community. There should be a sense of accountability by the larger community to the issue of social concerns. Setting new example from Caritas India the encouraging results of Ashakiranam (Cancer Campaign in South India) where communities have shown proactively contributing attitude and hence this process in a way is substantiating a giving community.

He added, "Local resources is not limited to only the Monetary aspects but it extends beyond finance. In the context of Tribal communities, if we reflect, we find that they are a communitarian society which is more equitable. They contribute in kind, labour and material component. The end line is that as facilitators, as leaders of the community development we should be innovative in looking at different aspects of Local Resource mobilizations and opportunities in the community where one is operating."

It was urged that partners should look at Volunteerism as one of the possibility that will be a game changer. It is a movement for image building in the challenging times and leaders of the community have the duty and the obligation to share our vision in the best possible manner that reflects in our action and Ministry to the people we serve, so, that our mission of caring for the Creation is also served.

Imparting tailoring skill for life skill

Report by Dr. John Arokiaraj, SO - Tamilnadu
Edited by Patrick Hansda, Documentation & Publications



People at low education levels have little chances of securing a job in the formal sector; they are looking for options to generate income to sustain their families. Local communities especially the rural women, find themselves inept at supporting their family due to absence of any professional skill.

Caritas India under Udhayam programme realised this need and decided to empower the people of target villages especially youth, women and disabled. In this direction, a tailoring training centre for women was initiated which is run by Salem Social Service Society (SSSS) at Koneripatti of Athoor Block in Salem district, Tamil Nadu.

One of the core objectives of empowerment is on skill enhancement and employability of the target village people. Successful training interventions will address the skill demands which derive from the specific socio-cultural and economic environment with a focus on the need to participate in economic and social processes. The programmes need to be designed to have high local relevancy and in-built flexibility.

Supported by Caritas India, the centre is functioning since May, 2017 to train 15 women of which 60% belongs to dalit community. Under the guidance of the full-time instructor Ms. Uma, the women are learning nuances of tailoring like names and functions of parts of sewing machine, cutting, stitching and designing. More than learning technical skills, they are learning time management and inter personal relationship in the centre.

To enhance participation, the trainees pay minimum fee of Rs. 100/- per month which is used for meeting out partial salary payment of teacher.

"I am able to balance between my family and the training without any hassle", says Mr. Pavitthra one of trainee at the centre.

"The reason behind attending this training is to prove my family that I can also contribute to the family in terms of money", shared Ms. Princia.

Ms. Kalaivani, 28, a young widow and mother of 2 children says that this training has raised her confidence level. "I am stitching uniform for government school boys and girls. I take the order from the schools in the local vicinity and stitch 50 sets per week and earn @ Rs.20/- per uniform. Through this I am able to make around Rs.3000/- per month." She is a happy mother who can provide good life to her children. Like other trainees, she also expresses her wish of extending this training to six months so that she can become an expert and establish her own independent business.

"Skill training can raise the economic and livelihood opportunity of people with no access to formal education and training", shared Dr. John Arokiaraj, Caritas India Tamilnadu State Officer after interacting with the trainees. This initiative had opened opportunities for the people from poor socio-economic backgrounds, irrespective of their education, who rarely enter formal training because of expensive fees and high opportunity costs caused by long training durations. Rural women who often suffer from social access barriers, young mothers, persons with disabilities, adults who want to upgrade or learn new skills can make use of such opportunities to venture into a meaningful career, he added.