



**Inter Faith delegation
visited Assam Flood
Humanitarian Response**

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A team of Inter Faith delegation comprising Global Interfaith WASH alliance, Interfaith Humanitarian Network, Brahmakumaris, Islamic Relief, World Vision and Caritas India travelled to Assam to review the flood response and express solidarity with the affected communities. The delegation was led by former founder member of NDMA, GoI and present consultant of Caritas India for DRR, Prof. Vinod Chandra Menon.

The visit was aimed not only to review the current flood situation but also plan joint intervention in future. It helped in strengthening the IAG Assam in its coordination effort for flood responses in Assam along with strengthening of civil society organisations relationship with Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

It was for the first time that under the initiative of Caritas India such delegation from different faith based organisations came together to review the flood situation. The delegation had a combined meeting with Inter Agency Group (IAG) Assam with 23 members from different organization to get informed about their relief activities in Assam.

“The purpose of our visit to Assam is to review the current flood situation in Assam through interaction with IAG members, govt organizations and community people and to strengthen the IAG Assam in the long run in its coordination mechanism and its relationship with government”, shared Fr. Frederick D’Souza, Executive Director of Caritas India with the IAG members during the three days visit from August 4-6, 2017.

“Among the NGOs in Assam Caritas India was the first to respond in Assam with its hygiene kits in 12 villages of Nowaboicha block of Lakhimpur district”, shared IAG Coordinator, Mr. David Kujur during the interaction meeting. Every NGO representatives shared their flood response activities, detailing their geographical area of operation, household reached out and sectors

addressed. The purpose of IAG and its usefulness in reducing duplication of responses in terms of area and sector was shared with the delegation.

The interfaith delegation met the Chief Secretary, Government of Assam Mr. Vinod Kumar Pipersenia and the Commissioner and Secretary, Revenue, Government of Assam Mr. Rajesh Prasad who is also holding a charge of the CEO, ASDMA. The two-hour meeting at Assam Secretariat gave overall understanding of Assam flood situation from the perspective of Govt. and it gave mileage for the team and Caritas India for future collaboration with ASDMA. The team visited same day Caritas India team visited Bharaltup village in Morigaon district to interact with the flood affected community.

The delegations on August 6, 2017 visited Sukatiputa village, Morigaon district to review the flood situation and witness the relief distribution by Caritas India. The team interacted with the affected community and took stock of the flood impact situation. The interfaith groups appreciated Caritas India for its effort in reaching out to the flood affected people in the remotest villages of Morigaon district.



Beneficiary satisfaction, the nucleus of effective Humanitarian Response

Report by Lee Macqueen, Manager- Advocacy & Child Rights

Timeliness and appropriateness are crucial factors in humanitarian response, and so is the need to be transparent and accountable to the beneficiaries. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM), a mandatory process for Caritas India is purely an organisational requirement, an additional requirement to ensure transparency and accountability, supplementing other humanitarian standards in place. Undertaken by professionals who are not part of relief distribution, PDM aims at deciphering satisfaction levels and concerns of the beneficiaries with the quality of aid in particular, and their feedback on the entire response process, in general. The questionnaire is administered to a sample of randomly selected beneficiaries (10% of the total households), women as main respondents. PDM allows direct interaction with the beneficiaries at a time when they have developed familiarity with the processes. Here is when they articulate their views on everything more freely. After all, emergency relief is a matter of right and dignity of the affected people, for which Caritas India will go extra miles.

Disasters or no disasters, gauging beneficiary satisfaction and impact measurement in the processes including decision making, across levels, is the cornerstone of the people led and empowered development approach. Caritas India draws its relevance from this very approach, where it has over the years, grown into ensuring centrality of people's agency in deciding for themselves. The spirit of community empowerment assumes the centre stage in Caritas India's emergency responses, across various processes, starting from needs assessment to quality and accountability to the community by finding out how they felt about the entire response. Caritas India does this through various tools and methods, and most specially, through Post Distribution Satisfaction Monitoring (PDM).

The state of Assam in the North East India has been gripped by unprecedented floods this year. Whilst an annual occurrence, this year's monsoon flooding exceeded people's capacity to manage it. Of the worst affected districts, Lakhimpur was one that was severely affected, leaving scores of people marooned and homeless, particularly those residing in the low-lying areas –engaged in wage labour. By 6 July 2017, flood waters had submerged more than 993 villages under 49 circles in 14 districts (including Lakhimpur) affecting more than 397,583 people; rendering 22,641 homeless; and three dead (Assam State Disaster Management Authority).

It was important to reach out with critical lifesaving assistance, particularly those vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation even in a disaster scenario, prioritising reproductive health and hygiene needs of women and adolescent girls. This was made possible with START Fund, which enabled immediate assistance to 1600 Households within 45 days. Caritas India with CAFOD responded with Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) kits and unconditional cash support of INR 2000 across 11 villages in Nowboicha block of Lakhimpur district of Assam.

The PDM not just provided insights into beneficiary satisfaction or concerns over quality of aid; timeliness; sufficiency of orientation about the utility of materials provided; decision making and control over cash support and challenges faced by women; but also, helped understand what the beneficiaries' feedback on the conduct of the aid workers. Behaviour of the aid workers during the emergencies is a vital area of study as heightened expectations and related stress can cause burnout. Aid workers also comprised the trained volunteers of EU supported PEACH programme.

Likewise, PDM was undertaken in all 11 villages covering 160 households during the last leg of relief distribution in Lakhimpur, initiated on 26 July. In some villages, FGDs were also conducted as part of the PDM to gather collective feedback from the beneficiaries who has now started limping back to normalcy. And the findings confirmed the intended utilisation of cash for supplementing food, medical and clothing requirements. The interactions also warranted the need to have WaSH promotional activities around the affected geography in a campaign mode. Whilst sharing of concerns strengthens the pursuit to respond effectively in diverse challenging scenarios, appreciations and rewards in the form of smiles and hospitality of the beneficiaries fuels the commitment and confidence of the team at work. Learning happens in both ways, and Caritas India is committed to it.

Caritas India has a robust safeguarding policy which defines the code of conduct and protects programme participant from abuse and exploitation. However, the responses from the PDM helps Caritas India to make its humanitarian response people centred and driven through such mechanisms of PDM and complaints mechanisms, which inform subsequent strategies for greater responsiveness.



Caritas India launched Cross Border Anti-Human Trafficking Programme

Report by Leeza, Thematic Manager - Anti Human Trafficking



Caritas India with support from Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) have launched a Cross Border Anti-Human Trafficking programme 'Swaraksha' in Gorakhpur and Lucknow on July 31, 2017.

India is among those few countries which is the source, destination and transit for women, men and children who are subjected to trafficking for different purposes. Sharing such status makes it more imperative to address this issue in a serious manner.

'Swaraksha' will work on the prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership for the trafficked person in 25 villages, 5 slums and Sonauli, Tutibandi and Rupaidiha border areas of Uttar Pradesh.

The launch witnessed the participation of 87 representatives from different like-minded organisation to build partnership in the fight against cross border human trafficking issues. The speakers were mainly from Police, UNICEF, Save the Children, Maiti Nepal, Child Welfare Board- Nepal, Mahila Sammam Prakosht (AHTU) Lucknow, Child Welfare Committee- Lucknow, Fr. Frederick, and Mr. Jitendra from DEHAT.

"We need to come together and form strong network by using technology to combat human trafficking issues", said Former DG, Ms. Sutapa Sanyal to the participants during the launch. She also released a research report on Human Trafficking titled 'A Close Look at Indo-Nepal Cross Border Child Trafficking' which is published by Caritas India.

Ms. Leeza, Thematic Manager of Caritas India shared that the research report has recommendations on topics like Prevention is the best intervention, Reinterpreting "Run Away" children, Strengthening victim assistance services, networking with different stakeholders, training and capacity building of police, AHTU, SSB etc.

Ms. Sutapa said "It is not enough to have laws and legislations but we need to change our mind set". Sharing about the role of police she added that the person who has been trafficked has right to receive services as they should not be revictimized.

Disclosing the findings of the research book Fr. Frederick D'Souza, Executive Director of Caritas India shared that in Nepal people selling the children just for only Rs. 5000/.

Mr. Aftab Mohammad from UNICEF suggested to develop flow chart detailing the roles/actions of police and NGOs when a person is trafficked and rescued. He insisted to work with Police, BDOs, CDOs and other stakeholders to work on the issue of human trafficking.

Mr. Keshav Koirala from Maiti Nepal expressed his willingness to support for this program and work with Caritas India and her partners at the borders to combat human trafficking.

The programme is unique in terms of its holistic approach and we can work with organisations from Nepal on prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking and build a strong network" shared Mr. Jitendra from DEHAT.

Similar launch was done at Gorakhpur on August 4, 2017 at Nautana, Saunoli border area of Maharajganj District. It was attended by Chief Guest Sub Divisional Magistrate, Nautanwa Vikram Singh & special guest SK Ravi -Circle office, Nautanwa & Ajay Paul Deputy Commandant SSB, Naila Khan Chairman Municipal corporation & former Chairman Guddu Khan, Abhishek Pathak Senior coordinator Child India Foundation Delhi, Vinod Chairperson CWC Maharajganj, Zaki Ahemad Child Protection officer, Shyam Singh coordinator ChildLine Maharajganj, Father Varghese, Director PGSS & team.