

DETAILED DAMAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Excessive Downpour and Flood Like Situation in West Bengal

June - July, 2011

***Assessment Conducted By:
State IAG West Bengal***

Assessment Date:

04th July, 2011

Assessment Area:

Two Villages of Radhavallabpur GP under the Panskura-I block of E. Midnapore District of West Bengal

- Purba Chilka
- Paschim Chilka

Assessment Team:

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Stake holders met with in the Community:

- Community members including
 - Women and Children
 - Families living on embankment
 - Community members doing reconstruction of embankment
 - Grocery Shopkeepers
 - Vegetable sellers
 - Affected families

Government Officials met:

- GP Pradhan (Dipak Mahapatra), Upa Pradhan and Job Secretary
- Sabhapati (Indranil Chakraborty), BDMO (Lakshmikanta Dey) and other officials at Panskura I Block
- Deputy Magistrate (Tomojit Chakraborty) of Panskura I Block
- MLA (Dr. Omar Ali) of Panskura I Block

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SITUATION OVERVIEW:

- **In Panskura I, there were two incidents of ingress of water, one on the 18th and the other on the 21st June, 2011.**
- In Panskura I, a total of 3079 families have been affected, including 12428 persons, of whom, 6200 persons were in still on embankments and camps as on the first day of July, 2011. **Among them, 1547 families with 6200 persons were from the Radhaballavchak GP.**
- Regarding relief distributed:
 - According to the BDMO and Sabhapati of the Panchayat Samiti, 15300 gunny bags, 2300 tarpaulins, 140 quintal rice, 80 quintal beaten rice, 16 quintal molasses, 4 boats, 2.25 quintals of bleaching powder, 39 quintals of lime, 19 tanks of water, 3100 drinking water pouch, 60 kg of baby food, 400 dhoti, 400 saree, 500 lungi and 800 children's garments. 6 medical teams and 54 quintals of fodder has been issued for the total affected area of the Block.
 - **According to the Panchayat Pradhan and other officials of the Radhaballavchak GP, 4000 gunny bags, 1238 tarpaulins, 90 quintal rice, 66 quintal beaten rice, 13 quintal molasses, 2 boats, 1.25 quintals of bleaching powder, 20 quintals of lime, 4 no.s of '500-litre' and 6 no.s of '1000-litre' tanks of water, 2000 drinking water pouches, 36 kg of baby food, 200 dhoti, 200 saree, 300 lungi and 400 children's garments, 4 medical teams and 30 quintals of fodder has been issued by the GP.**
- With regards to agriculture, 179 Mouzas of the block have been affected including 239 hectares of Aman Seed Bed, 8 hectares of Aman cultivation and 120 hectares of Jute plantation. **12 Mouzas have been affected including 20 hectares of Aman Seed Bed and 40 hectares of Jute plantation in the Radhaballavchak GP.**

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

- Flooding has been primarily caused by breaching of the embankments; hence it is not widespread and circumscribed within specific areas.
- Affected families are living on embankments in makeshift tents of tarpaulin received from the GP office.
- The cooked food supply from charitable organizations like AIMA, Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Gouriya Math (as informed by community members) have stopped.



Mud sack is ready for repairing the embankment

- Flood waters have receded and those who can have returned to their homes and some of the others have started repairing their homes.
- The remaining people on the embankments had mud houses which have to be reconstructed.
- Repair of the breached embankments is in full swing and should be completed within the next 3-4 days according to the GP Pradhan.
- Affected families need basic relief only during the intervening period, and currently it is being provided by the government.
- The ponds were seen to have been contaminated with flood water. In places the banks of the pond was broken. Fresh water fish from the pond have either escaped or been adversely affected.
- Embankment cum link road damaged in different parts. The link roads in the villages were damaged in many places. Though temporary repair was done with mud bags, and bamboos, but that apparently would not ensure a long term solution.



The Embankment is being repaired

SECTORAL OBSERVATIONS:

Water and Sanitation:

- All the tube wells were submerged twice by the flooding water and in the first instance, all the tube wells were disinfected by health workers using bleaching powder. It did not take place after the second submergence.
- All the sanitary toilets in the affected area are damaged or not in useable condition. People living on the embankment using neighbours' toilet or going for open defecation, but there is no temporary structure for these people living at the camp or on the embankment. Meeting the sanitary needs of the women has become very difficult due to lack of private space. Many women go to relieve and clean themselves in the ponds at night, which increases their vulnerability to snakebites, etc.

Health:



Children lying on the wet floor

- There is no major outbreak of diarrhoeal, malarial or dermatological disease till now.
- Children are suffering from cough and cold because of wet floor
- Three deaths reported by the community due to snakebite and lightning (while working in the fields).
- Health Workers are having medical camps at the central location; affected people from far are not able to get the services.

- As the embankment is being repaired, the water is getting stagnant, turbid and unhygienic due to the decomposition of green vegetables and open defecation.
- The probabilities of diarrhoeal, malarial and skin disease outbreaks due to the above mentioned reasons have been shared with the GP, Block and District officials and the MLA.

Shelter:



Damaged concrete house in Purba Chilka

- More than 45 houses collapsed in the area, 4 concrete building totally damaged.
- Till now no family has received any cash compensation from the government. They have received only tarpaulin sheets.
- The assessment of house damage will be under way, once the flood water completely recedes as updated by the GP and Block officials.

Food Security and Livelihood:

- Food grains were last received two weeks back according to the community members; the household stock is fast depleting and although vegetables and fruits are available in close proximity, their prices have doubled.
- There is scarcity of the fuel wood and kerosene oil. The government is not supplying the kerosene oil and it is also unavailable in the PDS shop presently.
- People were able to save their cattle but now fodder for those cattle is a problem. Fodder for livestock is scarce with grass under flood water.
- The area is known for vegetables. However the vegetables fields, seed beds, jute and betel plantations and fishery have been badly damaged. Regarding the fishery, the extent of damage is still being assessed by the FEO. Fresh water fish from the pond have either escaped or been adversely affected.
- With the significant loss to agricultural livelihoods, other livelihoods in the area are at risk of being affected as well.



Animals at Shelter ... - Not enough Fodder

- Male family members of the households are already migrating to the other district or state for their livelihood. In all the three villages, people informed that migration has started. Many people have already migrated to cities like Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata to work as construction labours or in factories. Some said that they would leave in a week to other districts to work as agricultural labours.
- On a positive note, 60 lakhs worth of project under MGNREGA has been submitted for necessary repairmen of Link Roads and Embankment by the GP Office to the Block.
- The ADO has submitted requests for 10000 Paddy Minikits and 10000 Fertilizer kits for the Panskura Block.

Children and Women:

- 3 ICDS centres are running. Mid Day Meal is temporarily stopped in some of the schools as some families are still staying although the schools have reopened. The student attendance is irregular. There are 14 Primary Schools, 5 SSKs, 1 Junior High School and 2 High Schools. Out of these, MDM is not running in 3 Primary Schools, 5 SSKs and 1 High School. In the last one, it had stopped before the present situation due to internal problems.
- The fireworks industry is continuing and a few children are going to work.
- Most of the children have been sent to the relatives' houses in nearby areas and further in other districts as well.
- No special attention from the local self government for the special groups like elderly, pregnant mothers, lactating mothers, and woman headed families, etc.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION TAKEN BY THE TEAM:

The key observations and recommendations have been shared with the elected members, Pradhan, Sabhapati and officials of Block and GP as well as the MLA met by the team. The short and long term recommendations are enumerated below:

Short Term Initiatives And Cash For Work (MGNREGA)

Repairing of vital Community and Family Level Infrastructure and providing temporary employment opportunities:

1. Link Road and embankment repairing through Cash for work:

Link roads serve as roads as well as concentric rings of embankment. Most of these roads are damaged and needs immediate repair and reconstruction to reduce vulnerability to floods and to improve communication and transportation of goods, services and people.

2. Repairing the Houses:

At the most people are putting mud patches here and there to be able to just return back. However immediate assessment, repair and reconstruction of houses through cash for work to enable people to return and also for injecting liquid cash in the local economy is a recommendation.

3. Drinking Water

In the five Moujas which have been affected the most in the Radhaballavchak GP, there are 46 tubewells for a population of about 8,850, implying approximately 185 people depend on one tube well for drinking water. The procedure of cleaning the tube wells were communicated to the community members and the same was informed to the GP Pradhan, members and officials. However they need to be decontaminated immediately.

4. Water for Daily Needs:

There is an immediate need for temporary toilets for women and adolescent girls and some designated private space for addressing their sanitary needs. The surface water needs immediate cleaning and decontamination.

5. Education and Child Protection:

All the ICDS centres need to be reopened. They can be taken up in the neighbouring houses for the time being. The schools have opened. However the Mid Day Meal scheme needs to be restarted immediately.

Regarding the children who are unable to attend because of lack of books and/or uniforms, some immediate initiative can be taken up in the form of NFEs on the embankments. There is also an Untied Fund in the hands of the Panchayat Samiti

that can be used here. The book grant given by SSA can also be utilized for books of the students. The DI also needs to assess the situation immediately.

Long Term Initiatives

1. Food Security And Livelihood:

a. Income Generation Activities:

To enhance vocational skills and promote alternative livelihood through trainings linked with the Government Organisations and line departments with the potential support from experts and Civil Society Organisations is the recommendation in this regard.

b. Providing seed and manure when water goes down:

Seed and manure is needed as soon as the water goes down and the fields are ready to be cultivated.

2. Water & Sanitation:

The recent flood has destroyed latrines that were established under NIRMAL GRAM PRAKALPA. Taking lessons from this, low cost latrines could be built on a raised platform with ramps so that they do not get washed out in similar flood situation and all sections can access them. These low cost latrines could be at family level and also at the community or institutional level where it can be constructed in a common public land.

Besides erecting low cost toilets, the community should be made aware about the benefits of hygienic practices. These need to be done regularly through meetings at different levels and training.

3. Awareness On Trafficking, Migration And Child Labourer:

The community needs to be made aware on issues of migration and human trafficking. Post disaster situations are likely to give rise to these, when people are compelled to move out of the village in search of work. Also the community needs to be aware on dependence on risky livelihood like making crackers.

4. Proper Plan Preparation At All Level:

As this area comes under the DRMP II Project, we have a great scope for preparing District to Village level Plan preparation with integrated components of DRR and linked with the PRI mechanism.