

Assam calls for a human response



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Unable to get back to their homes, many of the people displaced by the floods and the conflict in Assam are staying in overcrowded camps with no access to basic amenities like drinking water and sanitation.

Unhygienic conditions and lack of electricity has only made their plight worse.

Over 4 lakh people in Assam probably never ever imagined that their lives would one day be like this. For over 40 days, children have not attended school, not eaten proper food and have not moved out of the camp area.

While flood affected people continue to stay on “platform” (mound of land) as they call it, conflict impacted people have taken shelter in relief camps. Nearly three and half months (70 days) have passed but the situation has not eased out. The conflict has displaced people in the districts of Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Chirang, Bongaigaon where as floods have affected the lives of people living in Sonitpur, Morigaon and Nowgaon districts.

Flood is an old story in this part of North Eastern India: sometimes the river Brahmaputra is more furious than in the previous years. Like this year which is being described as the **worst floods in the decade**. From 1992 the villagers have lost their homes many times yet these villagers - largely Muslims -- continue to live by the river side as it is their lifeline and they cannot go anywhere else. Ethnic conflict has added to the woes of the displaced people in Assam. Despite every effort of government and non-government organizations normalcy is yet to return to the State.

Flood survivors as well as conflict affected are struggling to make both ends meet in the relief camps. Different agencies of the State including non-government organizations are trying to provide support to flood affected people and provide immediate relief but all that is not enough. The stagnant water, rubble of demolished houses, garbage and stench of mud, cattle and human waste doesn't make it pleasant surroundings to live in. The situation is even worse in the relief camps where the conflict affected are staying. Here, people are living under constant fear of attacks and under the protection of CRPF. In many areas, men spent sleepless nights outside the camps to take care of women inside the camps.

The children have not attended school for months, not eaten proper food and have not moved out of the camp area. It's getting worst day by day.

Oxfam India, a rights based organization working in India for 61 years, has been working closely with the flood and conflict victims to provide humanitarian assistance to them and help them rebuild their lives one more time. Oxfam India has initiated its work in three worst flood affected districts including Sonitpur, Morigaon, Nowgaon and with people staying in relief camps due to conflict in Chirang and Kokrajhar.

There is an urgent need for drinking water, emergency shelter, hygiene and sanitation, private cubicles for bathing, hygiene kits for women etc.

We can provide comfort to them by addressing the urgent need for water, sanitation and hygiene support in the relief camps. They are hopeful, will you help us fulfilling it.

Oxfam India is there, responding to these urgent needs. With your support we will:

- Provide clean, safe drinking water by building or repairing water sources.
- Rehabilitate water and sanitation facilities in the camps.
- Help people in the camps to have appropriate emergency shelter especially women and children.
- Provide safe sanitation and hygiene conditions in the camps especially women and children.

Lost Home 17 Times Help him build it the 18th time

"I first lived in Gagolmari Village. After it was inundated I went to Pholiamari and from there to Barjan Pahar and then to Kariguri village which was like a reserve forest located on a height due to clay deposits. I made a house and lived there. But even that house couldn't bear water and I had to be on move again. I kept on moving from one place to another as the river kept eroding and eventually reached Simultala. In the whole process of shifting **I had to build my house 18 times**," he says.

"We have managed to somehow collect our lives and assembled at the relief camp. We received tarpaulin sheets, buckets and a few soaps from Oxfam India. The government gave us rice and lentils at the rate of 1kg per household, three times in 45 days. This is not enough. Our paddy and whatever we cultivated are gone. We are doing odd jobs to make a living," says Ruh'ul Ameen, who has lost his home to the Brahmaputra 18 times between 1992 and 2012.

There are many like Ruh'ul who have been running from the ravaging Brahmaputra. Simultala was the name given by people who took to living by an old Simul tree. People from eight revenue villages which were lost to the Brahmaputra now live at Simultala- a non revenue village -- while a few are scattered around. The extent of damage is severe and so is the displacement of human lives. Basic amenities are scarce and water unsafe. General health of the population is affected even as the water has not yet receded.

Support Ruh'ul build his house again.....

Snippets

In Sonitpur district where Oxfam India is responding for the first time, people are moving from the relief camps in schools to make-shift homes along the embankment. "There is no land. The Brahmaputra has taken everything away. There's no land to cultivate. People work as day laborers and live on the embankment itself. Almost 40-50 villages have disappeared most were issued land *pattas* while few had no *pattas*. Schools, colleges, buildings, *madarsas*, mosques, hospitals, markets; all are under water," says Abdul Hasheem, Suaguri Gaon Panchayat under Biswanath Chariali Development Block and Revenue Circle, Tezpur.

MONEY CANT BUY YOU EVERYTHING BUT IT CERTAINLY HELPS!

Extend support not only by contributing financially but also circulating the news widely. Hundreds of thousands people are looking up to you.



Support us in providing food, water, sanitation and shelter to Assam flood survivors.....

We are reaching out to

- 1,10,400 flood and conflict affected people to enable them to get access to safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and emergency shelter.
- At least 50 per cent women of 3,000 vulnerable households (16,200 population) will benefit from improved income through cash transfer support
- 9000 households take preventive measures for safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene related diseases.
- Providing hygiene kits to 4500 households, including mosquito nets.
- Constructing segregated communal bathing cubicles for women and children.
- Providing buckets for water storage.

ACT NOW, DONATE

Help us to:

- Provide safe drinking water
- Provide hygiene sanitation
- Provide shelter and household support to displaced people
- Provide emergency food and livelihood

Amount	Support
Rs. 5000	Shelter support for 5 families
Rs. 3000	Hygiene and Sanitation for 3 families
Rs. 2400	Drinking water for 5 families

Assam in Crisis!

Oxfam India extends humanitarian assistance to people displaced by the conflict in Assam

Oxfam India has decided to extend its humanitarian assistance to people displaced by the conflict in Assam who are staying in the relief camps and who are in urgent need of water, sanitation and hygiene support. This is in addition to the humanitarian assistance that it has already been providing to the flood survivors in the three districts of Morigaon, Sonitpur and Nagaon.

“The North-Eastern state of Assam is reeling under the impact of “twin disasters” -- even as the flood survivors are struggling to make both ends meet in the relief camps, lakhs of people have been displaced by the conflict in the State,” says Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India, adding : “we have been reaching out to the flood survivors since July providing them with humanitarian assistance in the camps. Now we have decided to reach out to the people affected by conflict as well.”

While the floods in the State -- described as the worst in the past decade -- have affected over 20 lakh people, another 4 lakh have been displaced due to conflict. The flood survivors and people affected by conflict are staying in the relief camps spread across the different districts in the State where there is urgent need for water, sanitation and hygiene support. Lack of these is leading to death and disease.

Oxfam India assessment in Kokrajhar and Chirang has revealed that many of the camps where people displaced by the conflict are staying are overcrowded, clean drinking water is not available and people are defecating in the open increasing the chances of outbreak of disease. Based on the assessment, Oxfam India has decided to reach out, to start with, to 4000 households in Kokarajhar and Chirang districts.

As part of its relief package, Oxfam India is reaching out to the affected population in the relief camps to provide clean, safe drinking water by building or repairing water sources, rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in the camps, help people in the camps to have appropriate emergency shelter especially women and children and provide safe sanitation and hygiene conditions in the camps especially for woman and children.

In so far as the floods are concerned, Oxfam India has already been providing vital humanitarian support to 80,400 worst affected populations (12,000 households) in the flood affected Morigaon, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Jorhat and Golaghat districts of Assam. The current first phase of the response programme (phase one) is reaching out to 50,000 people (8,000 households) in Morigaon, Sonitpur and Nagaon districts while Oxfam India aims to reach out to 30,000 population (4000 households) in the second phase of its response programme.

Oxfam India is working closely with its two local partners in Assam, Morigaon Mahila Mehfil (MMM) in Morigaon and Nagaon districts and Promotion and Advancement of Justice, Harmony and Rights of Adivasis (PAJHRA) in Sonitpur district covering approximately 40 villages within 3 districts of Assam.

Oxfam is working on supplying clean water and sanitation to nearly 80,400 people affected by the recent flooding. It is also assisting in providing clean potable water to two of the worst affected districts of Morigaon and Sonitpur districts. Oxfam also has plans to help people get access to food and income and is developing projects to enable people to earn an immediate income to tide over the present crisis, in addition to plans to provide shelter repair assistance to households who have completely lost their homes.

About Oxfam India

Oxfam is marking its 61st year in India this year (2012). In 1951, Oxfam Great Britain came to India during the Bihar famine to launch its first full scale humanitarian response in a developing country. Over the past 61 years, Oxfam has supported the growth of many civil society organizations across the length and breadth of the country.

In 2008, all Oxfams came together to form Oxfam India. Oxfam India, a fully independent Indian organization (with Indian staff and an Indian Board) is a member of a global confederation of 17 Oxfams. Oxfam India is now registered as a Company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (bearing corporate identity number U74999DL2004NPL131340).

The Oxfams are rights-based organizations that fight poverty and injustice by linking grassroots programming (through partner NGOs) to local, national and global advocacy and policy-making. All of Oxfam's work is framed by our commitment to five broad rights-based aims: the right to a sustainable livelihood, the right to basic social services, the right to life and security, the right to be heard and the right to equality: gender and diversity.

Oxfam India's vision is to create a more equal, just, and sustainable world. The overarching vision of Oxfam India is ``right to life with dignity for all''. Oxfam India will fulfil its vision by empowering the poor and marginalized to demand their rights, engaging the non poor to become active and supportive citizens, advocating for an effective and accountable state and making markets work for poor and marginalized people.

Oxfam India works in partnership with over 180 grassroots NGOs to address root causes of poverty and injustice in the four areas of 1) Economic Justice, 2) Essential Services, 3) Gender Justice and 4), Humanitarian Response and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Oxfam India's program is focused on seven States - Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand - and four social groups - Dalits, tribals, Muslims, and women.

For details log on www.oxfamindia.org

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