

Maternal nutrition support for humanitarian assistance



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Natural disasters like floods are devastating. Women are the worst sufferers during disasters. The impact of flooding on health varies among populations and depends primarily on vulnerability and the kind of events experienced. It severely disrupts livelihoods and has a significant impact on the health of pregnant women, lactating mothers and children. It is important that pregnant and lactating mothers have adequate access to an appropriate dietary intake as both mothers and children are disproportionately affected in crisis.

Under the humanitarian response programme of the North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), a local grassroots organisation has been extending essential maternal nutrition support to a total of 263 poor women who are either pregnant or lactating mothers from several flood-hit communities of Jorhat and Majuli. Women are provided food-based nutrition kits containing red beans, green peas, peanuts and soybeans for a period of two months. IEC materials are also distributed to generate mass awareness on the importance of nutrition in emergencies in collaboration with the local ICDS unit.

This food and nutrition drive in humanitarian assistance has been executed under the project "Humanitarian assistance and building people's resilience & adaptive capacity to floods in Assam through a techno-humanitarian approach implemented by NEADS in partnership with Humanitarian Aid International (HAI) and financial support from HCL Foundation. The Collation for Food & Nutrition Security (CFNS) is a technical partner which is working to raise awareness, foster collaboration and advocate for improved programmes to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security in the state.

The core objective of providing essential nutrition support is to assist underprivileged women under antenatal, postnatal and neonatal care in a timely and coordinated response which will prevent and treat malnutrition in a humanitarian context. NEADS has been engaged in advancing nutrition through a multisectoral approach to improve nutrition, food security and resilience in response to increasing complexity of humanitarian crisis in the affected regions.

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