

Flood Relief Update Report 1

(August 4th 2004)

Report by: Sewa International Delhi

The flood fury of Assam, particularly in Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley, was unprecedented and a nightmare for the people. The pre-monsoon shower during the months of March and April was very severe and unexpected. Due to this early rainfall all the low-lying areas and wetlands were filled up and rivers were in high spate. The June-July rainfall was very high and intensive. Silt deposits in the rivers were very high as there has been continuous silt deposition over the years. The rainfall in the catchment areas like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Bhutan and even China has caused this unprecedented flood. Another associated reason being the unscientific and haphazard construction of the embankments by different agencies of the Government for two decades, blocking the inlet and outlet systems of the wetlands in a number of cases. The flood is a cumulative effect of the apathy of the administration, high silt deposits in rivers and wetlands during earlier years and breach of embankments in higher reaches including Bhutan.

The intensity of the flood, in Assam could be imagined from the fact that 26 out of 27 districts are affected. More than 15 million people have been seriously affected and displaced and took shelter in 1900 relief camps. At least 300 people have died so far. As many as 20 relief workers have also lost their lives while on relief work. In as many as 134 places the embankments on the rivers and the tributaries were breached. The National Highway No. 52, No. 37, 31 and 36 at different places have also been severely damaged, forcing a halt to communication link. For around 15 days the rail link between Guwahati and Dibrugarh were completely cut off. The agricultural land of both the valleys was completely covered by floodwater. The standing crop and the seedlings were completely damaged.

In response to the unprecedented devastation and misery of the flood victims, volunteers of Sewa Bharati, National Medicos Organisation, Akhil Bhartiya Kalyan Ashram and Bharat Vikas Parishad jumped into the service of the suffering people with their all might, ignoring the sufferings of their own kith and kin. Thousands of workers started relief work systematically particularly under the banner of "Seva-Bharati Purvanchal". Different State units of above mentioned organizations collected relief materials including medicines, baby food, vitamins, food materials, disinfectants, water purifier, tents etc. were sent by flight to Sewa Bharati Purvanchal's office at Paltan Bazar, Guwahati.

The floodwater is now receding and new pattern of problems are surfacing. The diseases are spreading because of non-availability of clean drinking water. Vast cropland has become uncultivable, suitable seed and seedlings are not available. Hence the pattern of relief required is also different. Affected people will have to be helped at least for a period of six months. Workers are rendering services with altruistic devotion and distributing relief materials round the clock.

**Medical camps held and relief materials distributed through
Sewa Bharati, Purvanchal:**

Medical Camps: More than 100 medical camps were held till at following places:

District	Places
Kamrup	Ramdia, Hajo, Mulkatol, Chandchoki, Rangia, Khusabari, Tulsibari, Tarani, Kanchus, Barigog
Barpeta	8 villages
Nagaon	35 villages in Nagaon districts, 8 places in Hojai, 3 places in Kamrup
Marigaon	Borgaon, Mayang, Buraburi
Dhubri	Bilasipara, Salkhocha Chapar, Dhubri Town
Dhemaji	20 places
Jorhat	3 camps in Majuli

Relief Materials Distribution:

Items	Quantity
Rice	150 Quintals
Chira	180 Quintals
Gur	10 Quintals
Sugar	13 Quintals
Gram	3 Quintals
Biscuit	100 cartons
Salt	12 Quintals
Oil	20 Quintals
Water Packets (300 ml.)	30,000
Fodder	40 Quintals
Match Boxes	2000
Candle	2000
Mosquito nets, Utensils, tent, construction materials, paper, pen	2000