

First week end- Post-Flood Assessment Report of Mahabubnagar District



Reported by

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Acknowledgement

We thank all the community members who, despite their misery and predicament could able to spend time and share their concerns and suggestions to the team members in all the villages visited. We thank the team of Commitments Trust, Social Discrimination Elimination Project team, members of PPDS, Eco-club, AWS, SPARSH, SVK, VIP, IPWWA, and Volunteers from all across the district for their support and contributions made include visiting along with us to the field, sharing vehicles, food and more than that their commitment to tackle this disaster which itself was quite new experience to them.

We thank many holy hearts on the whole entourage to these villages, upon knowing that we are going to these affected villages, have voluntarily come forward to do whatever they could able to afford, few gave rice bags, few gave new saris, clothes, food packets, water sachets, the list can go on. This human touch and humanitarian support, and their willingness to help the people in distress will go miles and miles on how communities spontaneously come forward to support others. This spirit has inspired the team members to pledge their voluntary work for a few more weeks to come.

We thank K.S. Gopal of Centre for Environment Concerns, Dr. Balaji Utlal, Health Management and Research Institute, Sarabjit Singh Sahota, RedR India and P. Raghu of Action Aid for their spontaneous help and support all through.

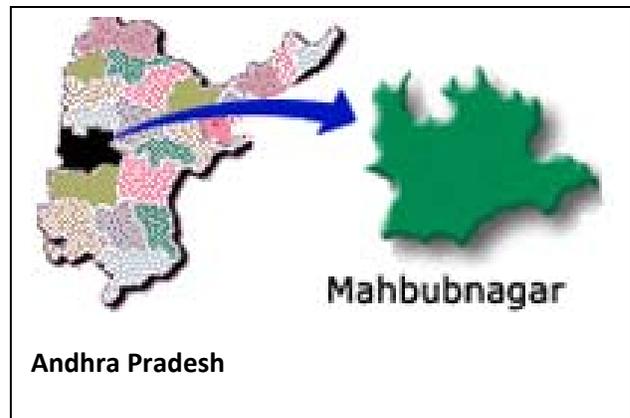
We thank the district administration and officials who were eager to help us in providing information and support although. We thank B. Rajsekhar who inspired most of us in the development sector for his inspirational work in the relief in spite of many hurdles and obstacles. We also thank A. Murali, Director NREGS for his voluntary support and addressing all the problems we faced with administration and lending his ears to all our concerns.

We thank the pilots of our vehicles for patiently spending hours and hours which usually go into late hours in driving us down to the interior flood affected villages. All volunteers at Dalit Samakya Office, who are spending hours and hours in checking quality of the materials supplied and making things ready for distribution and supporting field staff.

Background

Mahabubnagar district is known for being a drought hit district in the country and currently it is flooded. This is the worst flood in last 100 years. Heavy rain falls within a short period of time as four days only created very intensive flash floods and in addition, the release of excess water in the dams caused very destructive floods ever seen in the history of the district.

This unprecedented heavy rain between 29th September and 1st October, 2009 occurred in Northern Karnataka and Mahabubnagar and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh and release of lakhs of cusecs of water in Dams of Joorala and Srisailam led to flooding in 13 mandals of Mahabubnagar and in Kurnool district. The floods occurred within a radius of 100 km with the epicenter being the southern part of Mahabubnagar district. The Krishna too is already in spate. The Srisailam reservoir which collects flood waters from the Krishna, Tungabhadra and Hundri and few other streams from Nallamala forest is poised to handle 10 lakh cusecs which is the highest flood discharge in the last decade. The breach in Tungabhadra Reservoir at Rajoli caused submergence of the entire Alampur, Waddepally and Manopad villages and Kurnool Town. In Alampur and Manopad, the villages are still marooned in flood waters. The flood created havoc among people in the district and caused very heavy damages to human lives and properties.



Thousands of people were displaced as their houses were razed, scores of rivulets crossed their danger mark, crops submerged, communication paralysed and several men who went for work on Wednesday evening were caught in the middle of swirling rivers. This report provides a rapid assessment of response needs to support the flood victims. The report is mainly based on the actual field assessment in the affected mandals and inputs gathered by agencies working in the relief activities and from the district authorities. The report will be further updated as more information is gathered from the flood affected villages.

The assessment was carried out by a team constituted by a voluntary group of individuals hailing from the district who are working in different agencies in social and economic development sector. These individuals formed into a group to provide assistance to the aid agencies, volunteers and NGOs in the district in relief work.

Impact of flood in the district.

Floods in the district affected 16 mandals (revenue blocks each consisting of 20-25 villages) and 131 villages. The affected population is 601,363 with more than 19,000 houses fully damaged and the standing crops in 5,584 ha are affected. The government report mentions that 28,424

families and 138,172 persons have been evacuated by the government due to floods. A rapid assessment by a noted rights based NGOs in Kollapur, Weepangandla and Pebbair mandals show a contradictory report, with reported 53 deaths in the assessed 20 villages in these mandals, where as the government figure puts it at 22 deaths in 97 villages in 15 affected mandals. It was reported by the government agencies that, 41 villages are fully submerged. Many villages in Weepangandla, Alampur, Dharoor, Maganoor and Waddepally mandals are marooned.



Road were swept away due to floods, near Beechpally

Rail and road transport were affected in the districts of both the states. Kurnool district in

Andhra Pradesh is still cut off as the Tungabhadra Bridge connecting the NH 7 was washed away. The death count in both the states is likely to go up as many flood -hit areas are still to be accessed in Andhra Pradesh.

Sl.No.	Mandal	No. of villages affected	No. of families evacuated	No. of population Evacuated
1	Kollapur	7	1061	5305
2	Amrabad	1	185	925
3	Itikyal	4	1174	5870
4	Gadwal	8	2617	
5	Manopad	7	2549	12745
6	Dharur	1	312	1560
7	leeja	4	1050	
8	Alampur	9	3380	13520
9	Waddepally	9	4298	21490
10	Maganoor	7	1680	8420
11	Narva	3	318	1590
12	Makthal	6	4265	21325
13	Atmakur	9	1307	6535
14	Pebbair	13	3338	16690
15	Weepangandla	8	886	3862
	Total	96	28420	119837

Source: Dist. Collector Office, 6-10-2009

Objective of the assessment

The teams looked at the following aspects in the assessment

- Accessibility and availability of clean water, sanitation, food security, nutrition, health, livelihoods, shelter
- Impact of the floods immediately to restore normalcy in the villages
- Perception of the community in terms of assistance rendered for rescue and relief.
- Needs and immediate support required by the affected people.

Villages and Mandals visited by the team

The team joined the NGOs and other volunteers and made visits to the following villages and the assessment findings are based on these village visits.

Name of the Mandal	Villages visited
Pebbair	Gummadam
Kollapur	Manchalakatta, Somasila, Amaragiri
Dharoor	Nagardoddi, Upperu, Nettampadu
Waddepally	Rajoli
Manopad	Korivipadu
Alampur	Alampur, Seripalli
leeja	leeja town
Weepangandla	Gaddabasavapuram, Ayyavaripally, Jatprolu

General Observations

Due to the sudden outburst of rains in the district since 29th September and release of flood waters from the dams, the District Administration was bewildered with spate of the floods.



Damage to N.H. 7 at Rangapur near Alampur

138,000 people are evacuated and kept in 91 camps and distributed food and water in these camps. 200 persons from Army in 2 boats, 2 Air Force helicopters and 107 National Disaster Responsive Force (NDRF) members in 23 inflatable boats, 9 Navy Officials and 3 Navy boats have pitched in for assistance to the district administration in rescuing people struck in marooned villages and towns in the district. People had prepared themselves and shifted to safe locations with whatever they could able to gather. At many places people have moved to elevated places. These Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have moved to either government organised camps

or made their own arrangements such as moving to their relatives living in safer places in the

neighbourhood, make-shift tents on elevated grounds etc. The government has promised a relief package comprising rice (20 kgs), kerosene (5 lts), Rs.1000/- for utensils per family. Orders were issued to provide Rs. 4000/- to the fully damaged house and Rs. 3000/- for the partially damaged houses.

Various NGOs, political parties, religious institutions, youth clubs, media publication institutions, individuals have spontaneously sent relief materials to the affected villages. Due to breach of roads, many marooned villages were not reached by these agencies but they have distributed relief in accessible and affected villages.

Some NGOs working in the district have formed a coalition and started a Voluntary Organisations Collective Information Centre with contact details and e-mail facility so that it can act as common information collection and sharing centre for the relief work.

This report focuses on the following thematic issues.

- Shelter
- Water and Sanitation
- Public Health
- Education
- Food Security
- Livelihoods
- Gender and Child protection



As this report was based on short field visits and brief interaction with highly distressed victims of the calamity, the assessment of the situation reflects our first-cut observation and understanding only. However, our future reports will be based on more inputs from the affected communities about their felt needs and reflection of the aid received so far.

Shelter

- The government's press release on 6th October stated that 3,063 houses were fully damaged and 19,460 houses are partially damaged, in total 22,423 houses were damaged due to floods in the district.
- Most of the people displaced due to floods have returned back to the village only to find their houses collapsed or damaged. They either moved to nearer their homes and established temporary settlements using tarpaulin sheets or moved back to shelters, relative's places with whatever remaining items left over in their houses.



- Though the detailed assessment of houses damaged in the entire area is still going on and more information would be available in the coming days. The concern highlighted was that many mud houses/ walls are still water soaked and they might collapse in the near future.
- All important documents including bank passbooks, PDS cards, Arogyashree (health insurance) cards, land patta documents were lost.
- Children lost their books and all reading materials and are not attending school. In some cases, the school buildings have also collapsed. While we were visiting few villages, already it was noted that 7 schools have collapsed due floods and rains.
- Household articles, like utensils, livelihood assets are lost.



Few lucky ones, drying NREGS cards

Recommendations

- Temporary shelters could be provided to the people who are displaced and provisions for safe sanitation facilities are also provided nearer to their settlements.
- In the long term, safe construction works in elevated places with structural measures to cope with such hazards in future.



Water and Sanitation

- In all the 40 odd marooned villages, the entire villages are still covered with mud and water. The animal carcasses are still lying open in the fields, near the houses, on the trees, even some on the electricity poles. Even after a week, the dead animals are neither removed nor burnt by concerned authorities or by the volunteers. Few volunteers were supporting the district administration in removal of carcasses in the villages and burning them.



Collecting contaminated water for drinking

- Sanitation facilities are affected severely. Most of the pour flush pit latrines constructed have been washed away in the floods. In some places, where ever the facility is available, the pits are filled up and the facilities are not in a usable condition.
- Lack of adequate latrine facilities in the temporary shelters and the villages, open defecation was rampantly practiced. However, construction of temporary sanitation facilities has not been considered by the authorities or aid agencies. None of the aid agencies have yet to start any initiative even after a week

after the disaster struck.

- People are still using flood waters for drinking purpose. The hand pumps were either damaged or submerged in the flood waters.
- Where flood water has receded, people are still seen using surface water for all purposes including for drinking, cleaning, bathing and washing. Surface Water is being used for livestock too.
- The government and other donors have distributed packaged water in completely marooned areas but is inadequate in comparison to the daily requirement of the people. Each person requires at least a minimum of 3-4 liters of water, where as the distribution by government and others is meeting one-tenth of the need.



Collecting flood water for drinking

Recommendations

- All the villages need to be sanitized and cleaned up. We are suggesting that cleaning up of the villages could be done under NREGS and also provide employment opportunities for the affected people. Alternately, the donors can initiate food/cash-for-work for the affected people ensuring minimum and equal wages in addition to providing the required tools and implements necessary for doing the work.
- Temporary latrines need to be constructed or established in temporary camp sites and where ever IDPs are located or moved. The same also applies to the villages where water has receded and people started living near the habitation.
- Village wise community orientation programme is needed for promoting safe drinking water and hygiene practices. The team observed the lack of hygiene and sanitation and strongly felt the need for promoting hygiene and sanitation through social mobilization activities using tailor made IEC material.
- Supply of chlorine tablets for purifying water for drinking and cooking. Orienting people of its proper usage is also essential to ensure safety.
- The RWSS/ Aid agencies need to set up Sintex water tanks (500 – 2,000 litres) in affected areas and supply it with mobile water tankers regularly till safe drinking water supply is ensured in the village.
- This area needs more attention as many tube wells are still contaminated and availability of safe drinking water is a problem. Hence Water sources are to be disinfected and source-safety should be ensured to avoid recurrence of the problem.

Public Health

- The IDPs and the flood victims returned back to the village are facing severe acute respiratory tract (ART) infections and skin related diseases.
- The government is organising health camps by pitching the services of 104 HMRI's mobile health units to the flood affected villages. Doctors were deputed on these vehicles and were conducting health camps in the camp sites and in the villages, where flood water receded. Even it was noticed that these vehicles are holding camps in market places. In spite of these units reaching to remote places and stretched working hours, the information of such camps has not been communicated to the people

adequately. In most of the cases, the most affected villages are reached very late in the evening and unable to find the people demanding the service, as most of them have left the village to stay in nearby camps.



Aged Woman attending health camps

- There have been possibilities of increase of Diarrhoea and ART infections. With poor sanitation and lack of safe drinking water sources there is a definite risk of water borne diseases.
- There would be a definite rise in Malaria cases and other vector borne diseases due to water stagnation in most places.
- The Health department has no immediate plans for vector control measures. It is observed in those places where sanitary workers are spraying bleaching powder, they are not taking the required precautions and thus exposing

themselves to health hazards and spreading infections.

- There are enough stocks of ORS, Halazone, Bleaching powder at the field and its distribution to the affected populace needs to be strengthened. In most of the villages none of these items were used or stored.
- Supplementary nutrition for pregnant and lactating women and children is not restored even in those villages where water is receded and villagers have returned. These services are not planned at the camps. More information is needed here.

Recommendations

- Disinfecting water sources and sanitizing the surroundings and the village has to be taken up on war footing.
- ORS, anti-diarrheal, halazone tabs, PUR sachets, Bleaching powder, water testing kits, anti snake venom, medicines for minor ailments and medical teams have been mobilized and stocks are available at the PHC and sub-center levels.
- Cleanliness drive for entire villages should be started after waters recede. Engineering & biological methods of control of mosquito breeding with community participation can help. Provide assistance in form of “food for work for hygiene & cleanliness in villages.”
- Ensure stock of ORS, geoline/chlorine tablets and water purifiers at remote locations, especially low-lying areas.
- Special community awareness programs on malaria and diarrhoea need to be carried out for all communities. Awareness programs need to be backed up with supply of anti-malarial drugs, bed nets, and ORS and anti-diarrhoeal drugs.
- The health surveillance at community level needs to be strengthened to reduce the risk of water-borne, water-washed, and vector-borne diseases.
- The provision of these was also reported as a problem in the marooned villages especially in the camps where people are staying but there is no data on the position of



the pre-positioned material there. Daily surveillance is going on but needs strengthening in marooned areas. ASHAs are in place and their involvement in emergency response and relief works especially in health aspect needs to be strengthened and pre-stocking of the key medicines with ASHA would make it easily accessible to the community.

- Supplementary nutrition services are to be planned in all the shelters so that there is proper care for both the mother and child.

Medium to long-term plans

- The medium and long-term intervention should focus on education on personal hygiene and sanitation. The sanitation programme should be aimed at children and women who spend most of their time in the village settlements. The major efforts for medium and long-term response should be through the following:
 - Construction of raised hand pump platforms above the flood level as a permanent solution for selected critical hand pumps in these villages.
 - Advocate for speedier implementation for toilet construction under central government total sanitation campaign.
 - Advocate promotion of local youth as public health workers with the state Government. Under such scheme, female health workers should be encouraged to participate for easy access of public health awareness programmes for women.



Education

- Most schools in affected areas are being used as temporary shelters. There are reports of school books, writing and reading materials being washed away.
- In some places, school buildings are damaged (15 school buildings; mainly kutcha). Local teachers say that schools would resume only after a week to 10 days provided that further rains do not happen and the people shift back to their homes.
- The mid day meal program has not been resumed after the Dushera vacations.

Recommendations

- A proper assessment of schools and children IDPs to be carried out and identify class-wise school going children staying in relief camps and temporary sites. School buildings should be assessed for the damage to the structures.
- Restore education through supply of text books, note books, study materials (e.g. slates, pens, pencils etc.) to school going children.
- Continuity of schools in camps and temporary sites needs to be ensured by involving NGOs and other volunteers. Alternately, the District Administration can depute teacher-trainees to these centres to revive schooling.
- Promotion of hygiene-education and play-way learning can be initiated in these camp-based schools.

- Once the temporary camps are closed, cleaning of surroundings and sanitization to be carried out.
- Renovate the damaged school buildings before reusing them.

Food security (human and livestock)

Rice is the major food crop. Farmers also grow jowar and bajra. Rice is grown in almost 70% of the agricultural land both in rain-fed and irrigated land. It is planted during the monsoon in June–July, and harvested from October until December. Other crops are cotton, millets and pulses. Some vegetables are also cultivated during the monsoon and in the irrigated areas. As the stored food grains have washed away the affected people are seeking assistance for food aid. Currently, both the government and philanthropic agencies are providing cooked food and some dry food to the affected people. Government agreed to release rice to the affected families. It is inadequate as the food also requires other items like vegetables, oil etc.



Children eating food supplied by NGOs

Malnutrition is a common phenomenon due to lack of balanced food. The food pattern says that it is mostly carbohydrate rich. The necessity of other essential components (minerals, vitamins etc.) is less fulfilled. However, the general consumption of food, which is also nutritionally deficient under normal circumstances, has been reduced by almost half due to the effect of flood. This is quite evident from the following matrix of food security at household level. There is no special provision of food for pregnant women, lactating mother and young children.

Markets. Immediately following the floods, basic food items like rice, pulses and vegetables were scarce in local markets. Due to limited supply, the price of these commodities have increased 300 to 500 percent. In leeja, upon enquiry it was informed that rice per kilogram was sold at Rs. 100/- a kilo gram. This was too expensive for the poorest in the community. Households in remote areas, which had been cut off due to flooding and other damage often, had no access to local markets.

Cattle Feed and Impact of Floods

The cattle are usually fed with husk powder mixed with cooked rice water. They are also given straw. But as the impact of this flood, it is observed that husk powder is reduced by half and feeding of straw has been substantially reduced, almost nil. Grazing is the only alternative in this situation.

Livelihoods

We have observed a few specific livelihood groups as given below:

Fishing communities (Village Manchalakatta and neighbourhood)

- They are dependent on the backwaters of river Krishna
- Precarious existence on the banks, low lying areas that are flooded due to rains upstream
- Houses (mostly constructed in paved stones, lime and mud) collapsed and household effects washed away
- They could save their fishing implements (bamboo tub like boats and nets), but some of them are damaged
- Unorganized fishing activity, marketing in Pentlavelli (a large village about 10 kms away, the biggest weekly haat nearby) through middle men
- No value addition at present
- Seasonal activity when water is adequate
- Children's education affected (temporarily)



Fishing communities of Amaragiri, Kollapur

Weavers (villages: Rajoli and neighbourhood)

- Traditional weavers producing cotton and silk handlooms
- Large number of families dependent on weaving in Rajoli (80%)
- Village destroyed completely due to the breach of retention wall adjoining Tungabhadra river
- Mud houses, mostly belonging to weavers razed to ground. While other houses suffered heavy damage.
- Looms destroyed, beyond redemption. Raw materials and finished goods lost, in large quantities, resulting in severe burden for the weavers. Appears they are unlikely to return to low-return weaving activities.
- Household goods and valuables washed away.
- Children's education drastically affected. Parents wouldn't be able to pay their fees (for those in Private schools) and purchase books and meet other education needs. They may even drop out of schools.



Damaged looms in Rajoli, Waddepally

Agriculture (Irrigated and rain fed areas)

- Agriculture in the flood affected areas is mostly irrigated and partially rain-fed (in uplands)
- Standing crops have been fully damaged. We have seen paddy, cotton, jowar and bajra fields being sand casted.
- Fertile soils (black cotton and red sandy), are inundated with flood waters, leaving thick layers of sand. This sand casting makes restarting agriculture very difficult in the following Rabi season.
- Agriculture labour is also affected as a consequence, as they are dependent on agriculture. They have also lost heavily in terms of their houses and household goods (as observed in Rajoli and neighbourhood)
- Infrastructure (such as canals, drains, ground water sources, electric lines and pumps etc) has also been damaged. Some farmers have also lost most of their livestock (cattle, sheep, and goats). The carcasses of the dead animals are still lying in their courtyard or struck in fields.
- The artisans and craft people dependent on agricultural economy (potters, smiths, carpenters) will also lose their livelihoods, at least temporarily. They have lost their implements and equipments in flood waters.



Sandcasting

Possible support and interventions (short and long term) in Livelihoods

- Provision of equipments (to replace the lost implements, tools etc), such as looms, potter-wheels etc.
- Provision of working capital (grants, revolving funds etc) to revive their occupation
- Working sheds (to start collective workshops, as the houses are damaged and they will be living for most of the time in next 5-6 months in temporary / makeshift houses)
- Opportunity for technology upgradation and exploring alternatives
- Opportunity for collectivisation (to strengthen their livelihoods) of crafts people, fisher folk, etc
- Providing immediate work for labour (e.g. through intensification of NREGS in the villages, scope to influence NREGS to approve works for clearing debris, cleaning of the entire village, removal of sand casted in their farms, restoring communication i.e. roads, restoring bunds in their farm land, etc)
- Providing better housing for the needy (to withstand any such calamities in future)
- Renovate and strengthen the irrigation tanks (to facilitate movement of water, reduce the impact of likelihood of floods due to climate change, strengthen agriculture by providing assured irrigation, promote pisciculture for the poor communities)

- To restore agriculture, provision of seeds and equipments etc immediately so that they can restart agriculture activities in the coming rabi season.

Gender and child protection

Women and children are living in unhygienic conditions in the camps and in the villages for last 7 days. Water entered into the village and they were forced to vacate their houses, as the levels of water constantly keep on increasing. They left the villages in a hurry and left most of their belongings, which were swept away by the flood waters.



The women are the most vulnerable group of the community.

- Those women who are living in a group or common places were facing a lot of problems. They were forced to depend on others for cooking.
- They feed their family first then they eat.
- They did not have privacy
- Had toilet problem and hence they eat less
- No sanitary napkins with women during monthly menstrual cycle.
- Adolescent Girls
 - No privacy
 - Face problem during menstruation
 - Defecation in the open
 - Inadequate food intake
 - House hold work burden
- Pregnant women face the problem of child delivery.
 - Not getting sufficient treatment.
 - Lacking of a hygienic place for delivery
 - No privacy
 - In critical condition they rush to the PHC with the help of 108 service
- The temporary shelters are overcrowded and there is very little privacy for women. Children were seen playing in flood waters and are on the roads/embankments making them more vulnerable to different skin ailments. Further, very little clothing available to them, causing exposure to rain, heat and mosquito bites.



Inadequate space in camps – lack of privacy for women and girls



- Knowledge of people regarding personal hygiene and health awareness, disease causation, household methods for water purification etc. was very poor.

Recommendations

- Health and hygiene facility to community that includes cleaning and disinfection of hand pumps, health camp, sanitization of the surroundings, awareness regarding health and sanitation.



- Nutritional food relief to the community keeping in context the requirements of women.
- Facilitate the health department to organize the health checkup camps with special attention to pregnant and lactating women with prior information of schedule and venue of these camps.
- Temporary Toilets must be constructed both at the villages and in the camps for hygiene and safety of women.

- Sanitary napkins with belts must be provided to women and adolescent girls.
- Provide opportunity to involve women in decision making processes in relief and rehabilitation,

Conclusions

Mahabubnagar is a resource poor district, which is reeling under drought and the current floods have impoverished it further. The affected communities are finding it difficult to cope with these two disasters simultaneously. However, in order to meet their minimum needs at this time, support should be mobilized from different sources. We hope that humanitarian agencies will come forward to help the victims so that they can recover to their normal lives and also build their capacities to face similar disasters in future.

About the Team

The team of a opinion that the felt need for more detailed information from most sectors as the government is still collecting the requisite details. We will be bringing weekly updated report and share it across with all stakeholders and friends of poor communities. The team members will be continuing their voluntary work in the district and will be working with the communities and the voluntary agencies working for their relief work. We continue to support the agencies and will render our services to our fullest capacity.

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