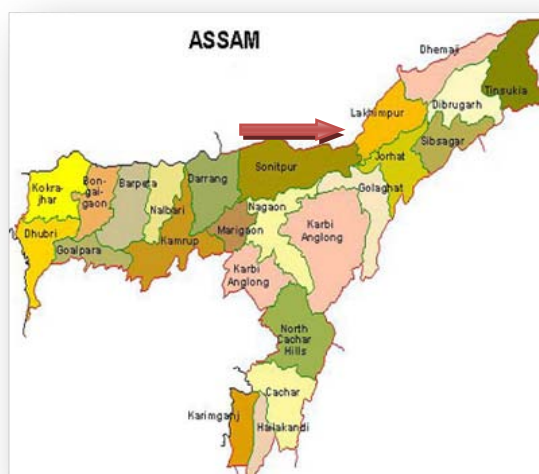


## Assam Flash Flood Response Report

The incessant rains in Assam and in the neighbouring states of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland since the last week of July till the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2011, breached the river banks and the waters surged the downstream wreaking havoc in the plains. The rain-fed Brahmaputra River and its 34 tributaries and other rivers flowing down from the upper reaches of Arunachal has swollen and breached in many places breaking the weak embankments and swept away many villages.



### 2011 FLOODING

The Flooding in Assam turned out to be a catastrophe killing more than 85 people from twelve districts. More than one third of the State population have been affected or displaced due to sudden flooding. Around 1074 villages across 12 districts were inundated by the devastating flood. More than 4,00,000 hectares of agricultural lands were destroyed posing severe threat to livelihood and economy of the state. The river Brahmaputra and its subsidiary rivers breached the embankments in 43 places in the state, damaged 17 bridges and disrupted the national high ways and the link roads, bringing a total halt in the transport and communication system for more than 5 days.

The twelve districts affected were Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Darrang, Jorhat, Golaghat, Nagaon, Karbi Anglong, Sivasagar, Dhubri and Chirang

### THE SORROW OF ASSAM – CAUSES FOR FLOODING

The Perennial problem of Flooding in Assam has a long history and geological reasons. Nowhere in India is the Flood problem more acute than in the flood plains of the river Brahmaputra and Barak basins. Every year the flooding is causing heavy loss to human lives and livelihood and the cry of the people continues. The unique geographical positioning and anthropogenic factors exposes Assam to all kinds of risks.

The incessant torrential rainfall ranging from 248 cm to 635 cm within a short span of 4 to 5 months causes the river Brahmaputra and its 34 tributaries to breach embankments and surge downstream with an alarming force that scoops out the rocky sediments along with the flow and depositing these rocky sediments in the rivers. Due to the rocky sediments, the depth of the rivers become shallow. Hence, during the rainy season, the rivers swell and even change its course of flow invading the land and entering into the bordering villages causing



extensive damage to lives and properties. The surviving villagers will necessarily have to resort to clearing more and more forest areas for habitation after every rainy season. Thus, apart from loss of lives and properties, other problems include accelerated basin erosion and deforestation (itself being a causative factor for water invasion into the villages). Further, the region being in the seismic zone makes these villagers vulnerable to the other disaster of earthquakes also. Two hundred and ninety three (293) out of Four Hundred and Twenty three (423) earthen banks on Assam rivers to prevent floods are old and have crossed their expiry period and are weak and can break down at anytime under pressure of the water currents.

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:

The Government of Assam has responded to 2011 flooding through its Revenue Department. The NDRF force used boats to rescue people from the floods. The Government officials evacuated the people to stay in safer places. The affected population stayed in public buildings and in the public grounds. Relief camps were established, food and health facilities were organised with the help of the NGOs. The Assam Chief Minister has announced a flood relief package of 100 crore for the victims of flood. The Government had distributed Tarpaulin sheets, food, water and medicine in the flood affected districts.

The Government announced an ex-gratia assistance of 1 lakh to the next of kin of those killed in the floods INR 25,000 to those who have lost their permanent residential structures.

### ROLE OF NGOS & INGOS:

The INGOS like CRS, World Vision, IGSS, UNICEF, OXFAM, AAI, CASA and other local NGOs stepped into Relief operations.. Food and other basic utensils were distributed by the NGOs. The International and Local NGOs distributed Tarpaulin, Mosquito nets, Buckets and food items such as Rice, Cooking oil, Blanket etc., Sphere has activated Inter Agency coordination group in Assam for an effective coordination and monitoring of programs.

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INDIA INVOLVEMENT



Habitat for Humanity India responded to Assam floods. A Program staff attached to the HRC Delhi was deputed to assess the impact of the floods and the shelter needs of the affected population. On reaching the flood affected site, the program staff underwent a rapid assessment and collected all the relevant information on the extent of the damage, actual needs on ground and the modalities to reach the flood affected site. In close coordination with the local IAG the assessment team was able to reach the needy areas and validate the information on the shelter needs of the communities.

The Coordination body Sphere IAG has requested Habitat to help 150 families who are residing in the interior villages and those who were not covered through the Government and NGO relief program. Based on the request, Habitat DR team had visited the villages and found that the families were most deserving.



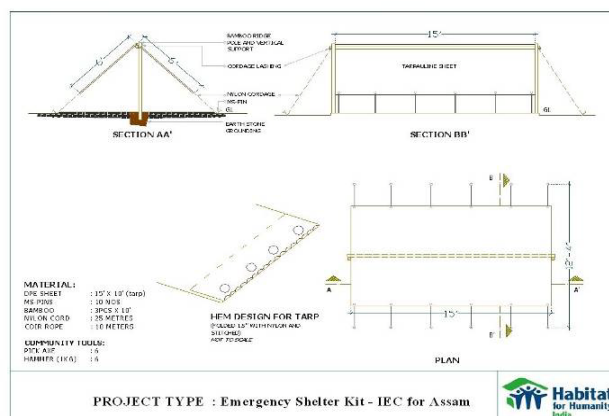
The assessment team visited Alichiga patna waia, Sumdirimukh, Khaga Jugalpur and Naharani villages in Lakhimpur district. The initial plan was to help people in Dhemaji district as this district was very badly affected by the flood waters. The INGOs and NGOs acted promptly in this district and provided all the relief materials to the affected population. When habitat was invited to Lakhimpur District, neighbouring district of Dhemaji found that the villages were scattered and the roads were very badly affected and relief measures had not reached the community. Many houses were submerged under water and the families were living on the embankments and in the relief camps.

The surroundings were totally contaminated and the people were struggling to get drinking water and sanitation facility. The women and children were suffering from fever and cold. The IAG coordinated with other organisations to mobilise water and health facilities.

### RAID ASSESSMENT

The immediate need was a safe and decent place to live. The families who lost everything wanted to put up a transit shelter to safe guard their families from sun cold wind and dampness. Those families whose houses were partially damaged needed shelter materials to repair/upgrade their houses using Emergency Shelter materials. The DR team along with the HFH India management has decided to help these families with the Emergency shelter Kits. The HFH Technical Assistance Centre has developed an Emergency Shelter design plan and the materials were purchased from the bulk suppliers as per HFH Purchase procedures.

Materials	Quantity
Tarpaulin sheets	1 (15 x18)
Bamboo poles 6"	4
rope	25 meters
Mats	2
Wooden Pegs	10 nos
Community Tools	



The table below shows the villages, Grama (village) Panchayat and the districts and the number of families served through Habitat Flood Response program:

Sl. No	Name of the Village	Name of the GP	Name of Block & District	Total ESK & mats Distributed
1	Alichiga patna wala	Luit Khabolu	Telah, Lakhimpur District	90
2	Sumdirimukh	Uttar Telahi	Telahi, Lakhimpur District	29
3	Khaga Jugalpur	Uttar Telahi	Telahi, Lakhimpur District	40
4	NO:2 Naharani	Ghunasuti	N Lakhimpur, Lakhimpur District	10
			<b>Total number of Families served</b>	<b>160</b>

### PROVISION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER KITS

The HFH staff team along with volunteers validated the information received from IGSS and the local Government Officers. A token was given to each family and the ESK materials were given to the needy families. The IGSS and the IAG helped Habitat by providing local volunteers who helped in transporting these materials to the flood affected areas by truck, country boats and mini vans. This was a real challenge for Habitat to transport the materials to the flood affected sites.



### ORIENTATION TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS



An Orientation program was organised to help the community members on how to use the ESK materials. The family members were helped through the onsite practical training to use the hand tools and shelter materials. The community members helped each other in making their transit shelter safe and some used the tarpaulin sheet to prevent roof leaking and some used it as wall for privacy.

HFH Intervention has helped 850 people from 169 families affected by the flood to protect themselves from sun & cold wind. The shelter intervention helped these families to gain confidence to work together towards bargaining for a permanent housing solution. The women and children were much relieved for the privacy and for the secured environment.

### PHOTOGRAPHS



Onsite orientation to community members



ESK materials were used to protect from leaking & making Transit shelter



Community members receiving ESK

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