

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

INDIA: ORISSA FLOODS

14 August 2001

This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.

Appeal No. 21/2001

Launched on 25 July 2001 for CHF 1,220,225 for three months.

Beneficiaries: 156,000

Operations Update No. 1

Period covered: 25 July - 10 August

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 34.4%

Related Appeals: 01.33/01 South Asia regional programmes, 01.36/01 India

Outstanding needs: CHF 800,573

The Disaster/Situation: Major challenges remain to assist vulnerable people even though floodwaters are retreating. The appeal response has been poor and activities on the ground are being hampered by lack of resources. It was also agreed that the Red Cross concentrate on areas where it had greater capacity than other organisations.

Operational Developments:

Orissa State

While floodwaters in the state of Orissa are receding in all areas, many villages remain inaccessible by road. Ironically, the lowering water levels is exacerbating the situation in some areas by rendering boat access impossible. Nevertheless, relief operations are continuing with the focus on distribution of food and temporary shelter. Government, military and INGO/NGO mobile medical teams are operating. However, many villages remain isolated.

Media reports, and information from interagency coordination meetings indicate that there remain areas that still have not received assistance. The flood waters in these areas are still at waist level, but are receding every day making access possible within approximately one week.

The Orissa government provided the following information on 4 August

- Amount of Rainfall received (up to 25 July 2001): *504.41 mm*
- No. of Districts affected by flood: 24
- Names of District affected by flood: *Angul, Balasore, Bargarh, Bhadrak, Balangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kendrapara, Khurdha, Koraput, Nawarangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Puri, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Sonapur, Sundargarh.*
- Number of village affected by flood: 18,608
- Population affected: 9,672,000
- Number of deaths: 100
- Number of Cattle lost: *17,528*
- Crop area affected (in hectares): *887,000 hectares*
- Estimated value of damage crop: *INR 6,173,050 (236,605.97 CHF)*
- Number of houses damaged: 250,615
- Estimated value of damage to houses: *Under Assessment*
- Estimated value of damage to public properties: *Under Assessment*

Government Response:

The Orissa State Disaster Management Organization (OSDMA) is providing coordination for all agencies working in the relief program. Participation at the meetings is high with many organizations sharing information, however organizational capacity is weak resulting in a large number of NGOs potentially working in the same areas.

Prime Minister Vajpayee visited the state this week, and pledged 300,000 tonnes of rice worth 2.1 billion rupees (80,490,609 CHF) from the federal government. A further 2.25 billion rupees (86,239,939 CHF) of assistance would be designated for rebuilding 100,000 houses. As government food distributions end the second week of August, many NGOs are ready to begin operations. The OSDMA is to initiate a study of lessons learnt focusing on the Flood Relief Project.

Red Cross Red Crescent action w

The Federation medical team departed 10 August for the district of Puri to deliver urgently needed medical services. The previous day Spanish RC were working in the district when they discovered a gram panchayat (grouping of villages) that had received no medical or relief assistance to date. The humanitarian situation was grim with many people suffering from diarrhoeal disease and scabies. The medical team packed supplies and immediately departed for the affected region.

Previously, the Orissa State Branch Youth Red Cross completed a comprehensive village survey over four days, in Banki and Biridi blocks. The surveys revealed that the predominant needs in these communities at present are: rice, lanterns, and kerosene stoves due to loss of fuel/firewood.

Following the assessment however, it was revealed during the interagency block coordination meetings for Biridi and Banki Blocks, that extensive overlaps existed between the Red Cross, and a number of other INGOs and local NGOs. It was also established that these other agencies had longer term rehabilitation plans for the Blocks.

An emergency meeting was held between the Orissa State branch and the Federation in Bhubaneswar, to discuss the coordination issues, and the possibility of changing the project location. It was felt by all parties that the needs in Bari Block, Jajpur District, were greater than those in Biridi and Banki Blocks. The flood waters in Bari are only just receding, and the damage to houses and farmland has been extensive.

Following the meeting, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Orissa state branch secretary, IRCS national headquarters assistant director and Federation disaster preparedness delegate traveled to Bari Block in Jajpur District and established that no other INGO was working or planned to work in Jajpur.

The capacity of the Red Cross to respond to the situation in Jajpur is better than most NGOs, and the proposed relief and health projects would be equally, if not more applicable to Bari, compared to Banki and Biridi.

It was therefore decided by the Orissa state branch and Federation, that the Red Cross should relocate its efforts by working only in Jajpur District, addressing more acute humanitarian needs, eliminating any previous duplication, and allowing other NGOs to be more effective in Biridi and Banki Blocks. As before, the relief and health projects will be implemented in the same areas, to make efficient use of logistical and personnel capacity. The intended caseload is to be between 11,000 and 15,000 families. The Spanish Red Cross will continue to deliver relief to 15,000 beneficiaries in Puri district.

Meetings were held with other INGOs to explain the Red Cross decision. The Secretary of the State branch attended the OSDMA meeting and urged any other INGO/NGO intending to work in Jajpur to coordinate directly with the Red Cross in Bhubaneswar.

The Red Cross relief team made a trip on 6 August to Jajpur, to meet all potential stakeholders, to secure working arrangements. The proposed project area is clearly identified between two major rivers, where the flooding had been the worse. Indeed, the flood waters are only now just receding, allowing access by cars and small trucks. The use of boats should be considered to access those villages still marooned by flood waters. A logistical assessment is planned for 8 August, to determine an appropriate location for a warehouse/base in Jajpur, and to plan an approach for distributions in this area.

From a Red Cross viewpoint, the improved coordination mechanisms have resulted in a major shift in the program due to the potential duplication with several NGOs. At this point in time, the relocation of the project to be exclusively in Jajpur is considered to be more focused, addressing humanitarian needs that are more acute. It is logistically more challenging, but by building on the existing excellent collaboration between the IRCS, Orissa state branch and Federation, the Red Cross is confident it can meet the challenge.

An NGO Mapping Meeting was called on 4 August by UNDP to clarify the geographical areas covered by each organization, and to address the issues of overlapping.

A list of the blocks, and the gram panchayats which will be covered by the OSB in Jajpur District is as follows:

Block	Gram Panchayat	Village	Affected Population
BARI	GAMU		3'214
	MAHAKALPADA		3'478
	AMATHPUR		4'236
	RALNAGIRI		7'324
	MANDARI		5'039
	SERAPUR		5'466
	CHANDANPUR		5'886
	DHARPUR		6'016
	SAHUPADA		5'648
	ISANPUR		3'713
	BALIA		6'419

	SWAINKAND		5'749
	GOLAKUNDA		6'219
			Total 68,609
			(Approx 14,000 families)

The villages will be selected following a comprehensive needs survey to be conducted this week.

Relief Distribution Objective 1:

To distribute emergency rations, BP5 high energy biscuits, to marooned and unassisted communities within the next two weeks.

During the period of 7 to 30 July, the combined relief distribution efforts of the Orissa State Branch, the Spanish Red Cross, and the Federation were as follows:

Objective 1 - Distribution of Emergency Rations

BP5 high protein biscuits: 24 000 packets are expected to arrive in Orissa by the end of the week.

Total distributions to date:

A total of 4,000 families in the Puri, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara districts received:

Flat rice	7008 kg
Sugar	1400 kg
Biscuits	4040 Pkts
Candles	4020 Pcs
Match boxes	4200 Pcs
Salt	22 kg
ORS Powder	100 Pkts
WP tablets	1000 Pcs

The distribution of emergency rations has been completed until the main relief program commences. The tentative start date will be 15 August.

Relief Distribution Objective 2:

To provide 11,000 families with relief packages.

Following alterations to the Spanish Red Cross budget for family packages, standardization between the two programs is no longer possible. However, the differences between the packages is minor and recipients for each package are based in different areas. As the main need of affected communities now is food, the IRCS has made a decision to increase the quantity of food distributed in the family package. Clothing was omitted, as Red Cross surveys reported these items were a low priority compared to food. Procurement of items for the relief packages is well underway and was done in accordance with IRCS Headquarters and Federation standards. The process was coordinated by a procurement committee comprising of IRCS Orissa state branch, Federation, and Spanish Red Cross.

It is anticipated that all items will begin arriving at the Orissa state branch warehouse on 10 August, in order that repackaging, where necessary, can be completed before the planned start date.

A total of 11,000 tarpaulins will arrive in Bhubaneswar in several stages; the first batch of 3,000 to arrive this week, another 6,000 next week, and a final 2,000 the following week.

Relief Distribution Objective 3:

To prepare for a potential response to floods in other states.

A Federation disaster response delegate arrives 14 August to coordinate Federation support for IRCS operations in response to floods or other humanitarian disasters in India.

Bihar State

In Bihar, 10 people are reported to have died and more than 500,000 people from 15 districts are marooned by flooding. Continuing rainfall has caused major rivers to rise above danger levels and though reports indicate that the flood waters have begun to recede, large portions of the affected districts remain under water.

The flood so far has damaged 22,000 houses and standing crops worth about INR 11,000,000 (CHF 396,000). Senior officials from the national and state level are surveying the situation and are expected to finalise their report 10 August.

In response, IRCS Headquarters has sent to the Bihar state branch, INR 2,000,000 (CHF 72,000) cash, 1992 kgs of BP5 high protein biscuits, 3000 tarpaulins, 2000 kitchen sets, 1958 towels, 4000 cloth sheeting, 2000 blankets and 2000 articles of clothing.

Assam State

Recent flooding has displaced 30,000 persons. The IRCS and Federation are monitoring the situation where an IRCS and Federation pilot project is underway (see national society capacity building).

Water Sanitation

Objective 1: To provide water purification tablets for 26,000 families and other affected communities

A shipment of six million water purification tablets arrived 3 August and will be distributed by the health team.

The Red Cross is encountering a greater need for water sanitation than predicted. The possibility of a watsan component being integrated into the health program is being explored, and may consist of purification of water sources (tubewells) in affected villages, as well as the spraying of stagnant water around villages for vector control.

Health:

Objective 1: To assess the health risks to the affected population and implement appropriate action.

Subsequent to the floods, the main health concerns in affected communities are still the spread of diarrhoeal disease and the increased risk of vector-borne disease, particularly malaria, which is endemic. Large amounts of stagnant water are still present in flooded villages, providing a breeding ground for vectors. Contamination or destruction of water sources is common in many villages due to the floods, and access to safe drinking water is a major issue. There is a risk of cholera outbreak in these communities due to poor sanitation and unclean drinking water sources, and one confirmed case has been reported. Mobile medical teams deputed by the state government are reporting large numbers of patients with acute respiratory illnesses and skin diseases, particularly fungal disease. Cases of jaundice and snake bite are also being reported.

The IRCS has donated 200 vials of Anti-Snake Venom to the Directorate of Health, and will also donate two cholera kits, which are arriving by truck from Bhuj on 8 August. Four New Emergency Health Kits have arrived in Orissa on 3 August from Bhuj, and these will be utilized by the IRCS mobile medical teams. If supplies are adequate, some of the kits may also be donated to IRCS dispensaries or the Directorate of Health. The decision will be made when the mobile teams have been operational for one or two weeks, and the needs in the field have been gauged.

Mobile IRCS medical clinics are planned to commence work the week of 13 August in the Jajpur district. A medical team coordinator is now employed by the Orissa Branch. Volunteer doctors will be working on a roster system with a pharmacist, assisted by Youth Red Cross volunteers. One or two teams will be mobilized depending on availability of doctors.

Two high volume water purification units arrived in Bhubanaswar, together with a Red Cross specialist, to service the units and prepare them for field use. Both units will be sent to Puri District - one in Konasa village, and one in Asthran - an area where the Spanish Red Cross are working for the flood relief. The units will be operated by AKSS , a local NGO, at Konasa and CARE at Asthran, who are being trained by the Red Cross specialist.

The health promotion teams will commence distribution of a health package on 15 August, consisting of oral rehydration salts, chlorine tablets and soap, which will be distributed on a house to house basis, accompanied by education regarding their usage. Two teams of St. John Ambulance volunteers will operate simultaneously, with a coordinator employed by the Orissa State Branch.

Logistics

Objective 1: To provide transportation for volunteers and delegates working in the affected regions

The IRCS has dispatched three, three tonne trucks. A four-tonne truck and a nine-tonne truck are also pending. Vehicles are being hired locally as an interim measure until the trucks arrive.

Objective 2: To transport relief goods to Orissa from IRCS warehouses and local and international suppliers

A rubhall (temporary warehouse) has been erected on the grounds of the IRCS Orissa State Branch compound, with the assistance of the rubhall technician from Bhuj. As part of this process, the technician instructed local Orissa State Branch volunteers on the construction procedure, to enable them to respond quickly in the event of another emergency. It is anticipated that the rubhall will remain in Orissa after the project is completed, as part of the disaster preparedness equipment stock.

A second rubhall has arrived from Bhuj. This will be erected either as a secondary warehouse in the Orissa State branch compound, or in Jajpur District, Bari Block, as a field warehouse and coordination office.

The logistical capacity of the operation will change to reflect the new project location. It is anticipated that lighter trucks, cars and boats will be used due to the poor condition of roads and large expanses of water.

Telecommunications:

Objective 1: To provide telecom equipment and support Red Cross volunteers and staff working in the field.

A Federation I.T. Delegate from Bhuj arrives in Orissa on 11 August to set up the communications system between the office and the field. With the focus on Jajpur District and the inherent logistical difficulties that entails, one additional satphone and four additional VHF handsets will be required to implement the relief and health projects in Bari Block.

Communications, especially by e-mail, are very poor. It is only possible to log on to the internet server for a few minutes, once a day. The IRCS has applied for an additional telephone line but this process will take several weeks.

National Society Capacity Building:

Objective 1: To strengthen the disaster relief and preparedness in national headquarters and state branches located in regions affected by floods.

The Federation is assisting the national headquarters and state branches to build disaster relief and preparedness capacity through a disaster preparedness (DP) program.

A pilot project focusing on flood preparedness and response is underway in Assam. Disaster preparedness stocks are now in place, and initial training is underway for 15 volunteer team leaders. Key staff have also been recruited to manage the project and the identification of locations for community based DP project targets is underway. The IRCS has identified the undersecretary general for disaster management as a counterpart for the project,

Objective 2: To develop capacity of IRCS in disaster relief operations.

The Federation Relief Delegate arrived in Bhubaneswar 31 July for a period of three months to support the Orissa state branch.

The procurement officer from national headquarters, Federation Disaster Preparedness Delegate and Spanish Red Cross Country program coordinator visited Orissa from 31 July to 3 August to assess the situation. While there, they supported the Orissa state branch in resolving the geographic location of the operation.

In addition, new staff members have been or will be recruited by the IRCS state branch to implement the project including a relief coordinator, a mobile medical team coordinator, health promotion coordinator and a logistic manager.

Coordination:

NGO Response/Coordination Issues:

The UN has compiled a database of NGO involvement in Orissa, detailing which organizations are working in each Gram Panchayat, their activities, and the lead organization in each area.

The OSDMA Coordination meetings continue to be held in Bhubaneswar.

Outstanding needs

As the relief distributions get underway in the next days, outstanding needs will be identified by the relief team.

For further details please contact: Martin de Vries, Phone : 41 22 730 4320; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: devries@ifrc.org

Donors providing in-kind relief in response to large-scale emergencies are urged to contact Birgitte Stalder-Olsen, ph 41 22 730 4245, in the Federation's Logistics and Resource Mobilization Department to avoid any unnecessary delays in the clearance and delivery of emergency relief assistance.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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