



# CASA in Action

## NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE - 2



# SURVIVAL

## of the fittest

**Once regarded a well-paid profession, the present generation of tea garden workers are now starving to death and putting up a fight for survival.**

## CASA in Action NEWSLETTER

(For internal circulation only)

### Mission of CASA



CASA actively supports and works for a just and sustainable society by creating opportunities for the participation of socially and economically marginalised sections in the development process through networking, alliance building and strengthening of their organisation. CASA also supports local self-governance, protection of human rights, peace and reconciliation and sustainable livelihood measures and responds to the environmental issues, natural and manmade disasters and strives to bring the victims to the mainstream while upholding the human dignity. CASA promotes gender mainstreaming at all appropriate levels, mobilises resources in favour of the poor and optimises all potentials and capacities existing within the organisation and other partners.

### Vision of CASA



CASA's vision is inspired by the Christian Faith and values. CASA visualises a society in which peace, justice and equality prevail and wherein all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion—live in peace and communal harmony. CASA also envisages a society where the poor, women, the marginalised and under-privileged lead a quality life with dignity and have equal opportunity for their involvement in the development process which is value based and sustainable, and also have an appropriate environment to develop their fullest potential.



On the web

Download our Issue-2 Newsletter at  
<http://casa-india.org>

## Uttarakhand We Are Responding

Heavy rainfall accompanied with cloudbursts and floods in Uttarakhand took away lives of many and shook the ground beneath the people. Victims do not have clean water to drink, food to eat or shelter to stay. CASA is extending its support to affected families with food relief camps and other facilities in the worst affected areas.



## Flood

wrecks havoc in MP

Floods have wrecked havoc in MP with heavy rains and strong water currents washing away shelters of many and killing several persons in the disaster-related incidents. The situation remains intense in the state as MeT Department predicts more rain. CASA has initiated feeding programme in the state.



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# editorial

**W**e bring to you the 22<sup>st</sup> edition of **CASA in Action** newsletter with heart touching stories across different parts of the country.

Our coverage on tea garden workers in West Bengal's Alipurduar district looks in the tale of the generations after generations of tea labourers who were brought by the British in 1860s to the dooars and settled to work for the tea producing companies – considered an asset to India at that times.

Known for 3Ts (Tea, Tousirsm, Teak), Alipurduar for long had been known for being a settlement for tea workers. Now, several years after Independence and globalization, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations of the tea garden workers are at the realm of crisis.

Starting with starvation deaths, the labour sections say that they have to find a new livelihood for themselves after having lived a part of their lives workings for the amazing tea estates.

Tea companies have abandoned these vast acres of precious tea gardens which are now rotting and are at the mercy of the cattle and zero maintenance.

The coverage brings to you the stories and conditions of these workers, who are best the pluckers in this industry, but are forced to find a new livelihood for themselves. It is the question of the '**Survival of the Fittest**' with hunger eating the living beings specially children and the elderly in these tea establishments.

On July 1, heavy rains across India triggered cloudbursts and floods in Uttarakhand, killing several people with many washed away in the strong currents.

Madhya Pradesh also faced a similar situation with floods damaging and blocking half of the important roads in the state.

CASA relief team reached the inaccessible areas to help the victims of the nature's fury and provide them the basic necessities for survival. The newsletter depicts how our relief efforts helped those thousands of victims who were either stranded in the inundated villages or were left helpless without food and clean water.

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## Students from Texas University help build Anganwadi Centre for underserved communities



Students from University of Texas along with CASA constructed an Anganwadi Centre and toilets in Nasampalli village of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh.

As many as seven students from Texas University came to India for their internship with CASA and constructed the "much-needed" Centre and toilets in the village for the 120 Dalit families.

The Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) and University of Texas - Projects for Underserved Communities (PUC) is an innovative project-based learning curriculum. The program

provides the students an unique opportunity to interact with the communities, apply their knowledge and skills to the solution of real-world problems and to experience the joy of giving.

This Nasampalli Village comes under CASA's CORE program area. The students stayed at CASA's Mukkalathur Resource Centre for a month and made good rapport with the community.

Nasampalli village has 120 families and belong to the Dalit community. The state Government has been running the Anganwadi centre at a rented building.



Therefore, the need for the hour was to construct an Anganwadi Centre for the benefit of the children and the women will conduct meeting and other activities.

## South Zone

The centre was inaugurated on 13th July 2016 and handed over to the community in the presence of Government officials.

The building was inaugurated by the District Revenue Officer in the presence of the Thasildar and ICDS Project Officer of Chittoor District.

The elders of the community expressed their heartfelt gratitude to CASA and University of Texas for providing a valuable gift to the community and assured that they will utilize it for the benefit of the children and the community members.



*Students and masons assist each other in the construction of the anganwadi centres*



## Other big stories from South Zone

### State Level Workshop on Right to Food

A two-day workshop on Right to Food was held at CASA Resource Centre in Bapatla on 21st & 22nd June. The objectives of the workshop was to sensitize the Regional Forums of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh on NFSA (National Food Security Act) - 2013 and Its implementation process to discuss issues, gaps & challenges. And prepare the community to take up advocacy leaders to advocacy efforts for proper implementation. 41 leaders were participated in which 23 male and 18 female.



## CASA's efforts in providing computer training to adolescents, school dropouts

CASA has identified 50 adolescents boys and girls to give them knowledge on computer education. The computer training centre was inaugurated under the Child Labour Free Zone Project in Polavaram village which is the center for 4 villages i.e., K.R.Colony, East SC Colony, Polavaram and Marlapalem.

The village sarpanch, ward members and local leaders came forward to support the training program. CASA has promoted CBO's, Mahila Mandal and youth groups and these groups have come forward to maintain the centre and also provide space to run the centre.

The training program will provide basic knowledge in computer education and cover topics like understanding computer, functions of computer, understanding the hardware devices in computer, type master, MS Office, Excel, Power Point, MS



Picture Manager, Photoshop and Online and Internet applications.

At present, two groups of students - one batch of boys and another of girls - are being run at the centre, with 44 adolescents/youth enrolled in the course out of which there are 23 girls and 21 are boys.

## Environment Day: Children on climate change

CASA promoted 14 children groups to conduct regular meetings on the importance for creating awareness on climate change. In a recent meeting, a children assembly was conducted and they decided to take forward their appeal for increased community participation to tackle climate change.

Later, the children went to the Senkurichi panchayat and participated in slogan shouting with staff and volunteers - majorly focusing on "save rain water, save people and land from thirst", "rain water harvest", "grow trees", "control pollution" and "save ground water."



The groups observed the International Environment Day in the entire panchayat on 5th June 2016 to create awareness on the need to uphold and safeguard and protect the environment.

## Networking and Collective Action

CASA has organized a one-day workshop for the newly selected villages in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. 30 leaders participated in the event. The Regional Forum leaders from the old areas

shared their experience and encouraged the new area leaders to form village sangam and to address the issues which they have identified.



# SURVIVAL of the fittest

## COVER STORY BY ISHA BANERJEE

Executive Programme Associate, Communications  
CASA, New Delhi

18-year-old boy seen in the picture above is a victim of severe malnutrition and apparently several years of untreated tuberculosis.

He sits with his few months old sister who is also a victim inadequate or unbalanced diet. The boy is currently on medication but his family members stand a high chance to be exposed to Tb due to lack of food and poor immunity.

People in this line settlement of closed Madhu Tea Garden were permanent or

temporary employees of the company for many years.

They received dry ration, monthly wages, PF, Gratuity, free electricity, water and other utilities.

After the garden closed, hundreds of people became jobless with no ration support along with other utilities. Some of the families also claim that they have not got the PF or the Gratuity amount.

As an effect of which the entire of population struggled to gather food on daily basis, becoming victims of starvation and malnutrition.

Most of the population in this area are seen with symptoms of malnutrition – they are either skinny or bloated with poor immunity and suffer from vision problems such as cataract or eye defects since birth, and in some cases the children are seen with inclined skinny shoulders and bloated stomach.





## Once upon a time...

The East India Company in late 1850s started to show interest in the production of CTC or black tea in Dooars region – particularly in Alipurduar (previously a part of Siliguri, but now a separate district) in northernmost part of West Bengal.

Situated on the foothills of the Himalayas, the town is still a gateway to Bhutan and North Eastern states of India. This town located in the Dooars region is known for its 3Ts – Tea, Tourism and Timber, since the colonial period.

Several British companies like Duncans and

Andrew Yule in the 19th century took over huge acres of lands, started cultivating tea gardens and manufactured strong-flavoured CTC tea.

A huge workforce was required at that time to kickstart the estate. The companies started bringing tribal clans from the neighboring states of Jharkhand and Odisha.

If you take an errand to these establishments, you would notice that a large chunk of the workers here belong to Oraon, Munda and Santhal tribes, originally from Jharkhand.

“Our grandfathers, fathers were made to settle here during that time. They were given

free ration, medical facilities, school for children, transportation, shelters near the garden. They did not know what was happening outside this tea garden world as we had all the facilities in this region,” said social activist Mohammad Nazimuddin, whose father and grandfather worked in the gardens.



“My father used to say that the British forced the tribesmen to migrate to this place and were even beaten and tortured to work here. But slowly we became used to the occupation and learnt the art of leaf plucking. This became our only home now,” he said.

The tea produced from this region and the tea leaves from Darjeeling became a rage in Britain in those days. The demand started pouring in for Dooars tea as people loved its strong taste and flavor.

The movement and transportation of labour continued in Dooars which led to a vast settlement of colonies and tea gardens. Women became experts in leaf plucking and men were mostly employed for maintenance of the gardens, including pesticide control.

Be it the top management of the tea industry or an ordinary garden worker, people left civil service posts to work as managers for these tea growing estates as it was considered a more noble profession in that era.

“Wealthy fathers preferred marrying their daughters to tea estate managers, more than IAS or IPS officers. Working in the tea industry was considered a respectful job. The condition of the labourers started improving and they lived a happy life too,” said Nazimuddin, a resident of Chamurchi tea garden.

# ABANDONED.

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*An abandoned tea factory at Madhu Garden*



*The garden in Dalsinghpara lies abandoned after the factory closed*

# HUNGER GAMES

*The closure of tea factories and non-payment of social security schemes directly affected the workers who had worked generations after generations in these tea plantations and had not thought about any alternative source of livelihood.*

*"With no official records, it is difficult to establish the scope of the problem. But anecdotal data suggests there has been an increase in starvation deaths since tea estates started shutting down in 2002, many unable to repay government loans," Al-Jazeera reported on Sept 4, 2015.*

*A medium-sized tea factory, a Dakbungalow, a small hospital, a post office, and a Bengali medium higher secondary school at Madhu Tea Estate lays abandoned amidst the settlement of about a population of 1,000.*

*Around 2,000 workers of another tea estate - Dalsinghpara Tea Garden - were left in lurch when the management allegedly fled the garden on February 9th 2006. The garden was opened again few years later but half of the workforce was sent suspension notice without any clarification; thereafter cutting off the ration and other supplies.*

*Functional or non-functional, the tea companies make sure that they do not have to bear any loss.*



After having worked for 30 years in Madhu Tea Garden, Junas Oraon finds it difficult to support his family of four. His health and vision of his left eye has been deteriorating day-by-day and he blames it on the poor diet and loss of livelihood.

"I was 14-year-old when I took over the garden work from my father. I earned around Rs 1,400 along with ration and medical facilities. But the situation is different now.

We enquired Junas what he ate for the day and he replied, "We ate ghughi (a fruit given to pigs) along with rice. We don't get food sometimes."

They told us that sometimes they survive on wild fruits or leaves, sometimes on bamboo shoots and many a times consume a local home-made liquor to fill the empty stomach.

40-year-old Sukhan Kharia used to work for the Dalsinghpara estate (considered sick) and was a permanent employee until 3 years when the company sent him, along with other workers, suspension notice.

"I have no work, no ration. I acquired the job from my father. Now I sell wood and earn Rs 100 per day. The company earlier gave me ration but now it becomes difficult for me to buy ration for the family. We survive on wild fruits when there is no food," he says.

"I have fever and cough for almost 15 days but I didn't go to hospital as I will not be able to afford expenses," he says.



Middle-aged Sushma Badai had worked for Duncans Group in Hantapara TG for 22 years. She says that after having spent her entire life amidst the tea activities, she finds it difficult to find another occupation to fill stomach of the family. "When the company was running, the wage was less but received all facilities like medical, ration and PF benefits," she says.

But she stands at a situation now where there is "no food, water, electricity, transportation, and no schooling for her children. She still plucks leaves from the gardens and sells to the nearby dealer at Rs 8 per kg."

# TRAFFICKED.

*The companies started withdrawing from the areas where they could not afford to pay wages or, as a matter of fact, run the vast acres of estates. This proved to be a heavy blow to the thousands of bread-earners who were solely dependent on these gardens.*

*As adults struggled to find different sources of livelihood, the children were purportedly lured by the labour contractors and agents to work in bigger cities like Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Punjab and Haryana.*

*With an increase in demand for work, more and more teenagers including girls dropped out of schools and joined the labour force to support their families.*

*The locals informed that the influx of labour contractors and agents "drastically" increased in the abandoned and neglected villages in the recent years.*

*A large chunk of children were allegedly trafficked to these cities where they either worked as domestic helps or were forcefully involved in flesh trade.*

*The parents of the missing minors, who were later tracked down and rescued by CASA and its partner organisations, alleged that the agents usually stopped coming to their villages or changed their mobile numbers whenever they inquired about the well-being of their children.*

*The family members waited months for phone calls from their children, but that seemed a distant wish.*

*The nexus of the traffickers weaved a web of lucrative offers around these teenagers, especially young girls.*

*The teen girls, the families of whom were hit by abject poverty, were mostly sold into flesh trade and some to domestic work.*

*Some of the girls have been rescued by CASA and local organizations, and are now continuing school and leading a normal life. However, the condition remains unchanged for many.*



"After the gardens closed temporary or permanently, the alcohol consumption among men increased in this village. There is an increased domestic violence - Husband beating wife, brother beat sister. I wanted to escape all this and I was about 16 when an agent took me to Delhi where I could earn enough. The agent who came here to recruit told me that I would earn enough. But what I thought did not come true. I lived for 7-8 months in Delhi. The owner used to

beat me a lot. Sometimes, the wounds were deep. Then I was moved to Jaipur for two months. I wanted to call my parents but the owner did not let me phone my parents. I did not get a penny of my income. I reached a lot of people for help. One day, I escaped from the house while the owners were in the party. I went to an orphanage home and stayed there for three months from where I contacted some activists who rescued me."



"An agent took me and my friend to Jammu and Kashmir for 13 months in 2015. We told our agent that we would only work together but he separated us. We both lived in separate houses with separate owners. The agents have one office in Kashmir from where the workers are distributed. Fortunately none of our owner beat or assault us, but they did not let us call

our homes. We ran away from our homes in lure of great money as the agent promised. We never got our salaries. Our families registered a case against the agent when they couldn't find us anywhere. Police and CASA team helped in tracking us. The agent is arrested and in custody. The people in village are very carefully about these situations now."



"My wife worked in Duncans tea gardens for almost 20 years. After a while it was closed due to which the influx of labour contractors and agents increased in the village. My wife was also allegedly lured by an agent to Delhi and then to Dubai. After two years of agreement was over in Dubai, she came to Delhi for work. We last heard from her some 5-6 months. Her mobile has been switched off since and we have not received any communication from her side.



## Amidst the gloomy gardens... some happy Tales

### What keeps Andrew Yule tea company going...

“ It is called tea estate because it's like a mini-city. Here, I have to maintain the permanent benefits and the social security of the permanent employees. We have a proper structure to implement it as we have to take a social responsibility towards these workers. ”

**A**ndrew Yule Tea Garden was established in 1898 during British era by English businessman George Yule, the founder of the company. This was one of the biggest tea companies during that period. Eighty per cent of the world tea was important by Andrews Yule from the duars region.

The Tea Division of the Company produces more than 12 million kilos of quality CTC and Orthodox Black Teas from its 15 premium Tea Plantations spread over the well known tea growing areas of Darjeeling, Assam, and Dooars of North Eastern India.

*(Source: Andrew Yule website)*

In the Dooars region, AY have plantations in Banarhat (CTC), Karballa (CTC), New Dooars (CTC) and Choonabhutti (CTC) tea gardens which are running with full-fledged workforce.

In Choonabhutti factory, there are as many as 1,500 tea pluckers who get an average of Rs 132 per day along with ration, medical benefits, electricity and other facilities.

“If any worker gets bitten by a snake, we bring her to our hospital and give them immediate attention. We make sure that our tea workers get full support from our

end,” said the clerk of the company TG.

The manger of the Choonabhutti TG believes that the reason why this tea garden (brought under Central govt) is still successfully functioning is that the company “re-invests whatever profit they get from this sector. This keeps the company keep going”.

“We invest back. Our first aim is not make profit, also not make losses. Whatever profit we make, we re-invest into it. With the private companies, even if they make profit they don't re-invest to secure themselves during crisis or transformation period,” the manger says.

#### Workers' benefits

- There is a dispensary and a hospital for the workers. They receive medical attention by a MBBS doctor and a nurse at the dispensary
- The workers receive Provident Funds, Gratuity
- A plucker has to collect at least 22 kg leaves. They get more money if they pluck above the mark.
- A total of 8 working hours
- Retirement age is 58. After retirement, employment given to their heir.



*Women pluckers line up at the weighing station where leaves-filled sacks are measured*



*AY factory worker segregates varieties of tea granules*

# Who was Duncan?

**W**alter Duncan, a young Scottish merchant, comes to India in 1859 sets up the Playfair Duncan company to cultivate the 'honey brew' of the Darjeeling slopes-tea.

The company begins the export of high quality tea to a growing market abroad, and within years the name Duncans become synonymous with tea.

Business expands, the Duncan Brothers Limited is formed, and the first seeds of diversification is sown- the Birpara Tea Company in Alipurduar.

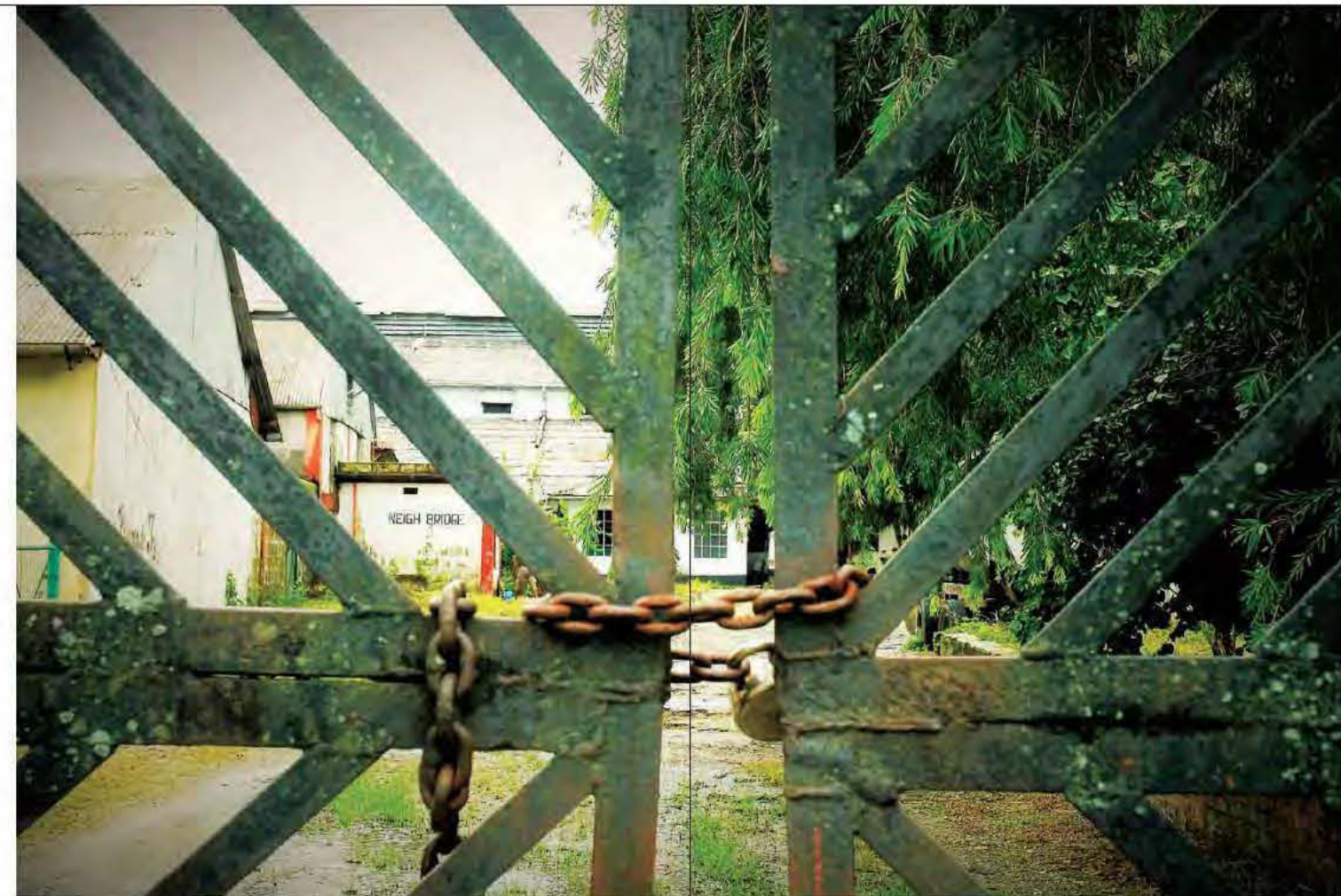
Around 1951, G P Goenka takes over operations of the Group's tea gardens and by 80's Duncans established itself as a major packet tea player in India.

With the demand for Duncans' tea on the rise and expansion potential exhausted in the existing gardens of Darjeeling & Doars, the company decided to expand its tea-growing base.

In 1990 Duncans acquired about 2,000 hectares of land in Dinajpur & Jalpaiguri (including Alipurduar) districts of North Bengal creating direct and indirect employment for the people of the region. *(source: Duncans Tea website)*



The abandoned Duncans tea garden and factory in Alipurduar's Lankapara Area. The place was vacated by Duncans some 4 years ago.



The last few years have Goenka groups. Increased workers large sums on gratuity and several Group allegedly left the thousands of workers dependent on the square meals a day.

been harsh for Duncan debt and owing its account of provident fund, months of back wages, the gardens ailing and leaving jobless, who were solely company for their two



The Duncans CTC tea bag served in Assam - New Delhi Rajdhani

## LOOKING BACK



- **Feb. 19:** Court interim order asks Duncans to deposit Rs 4 crore to clear a part of worker dues, failing which Duncans petition will be rejected
- **Feb. 24:** Duncans moves division bench against the order, which refuses to hear the company. Matter sent back to single bench, which was hearing the case
- **Jan. 28, 2016:** Union govt invokes Tea Act to take control of seven gardens associated with Duncans. Asks Tea Board to manage gardens
- **March 15:** Court dismisses Duncans petitions, approves central takeover of gardens
- **Feb. 3:** Duncans moves Calcutta High Court against the order

Source: Telegraph

Battling an escalating financial crisis, the Duncan-Goenka group of industrialist Gouri Prasad Goenka is looking to sell its 1,200-hectare (ha) Demdima tea garden in West Bengal's Alipurduar district. – LIVEMINT (Nov 10, 2015)

The Centre has authorised the Tea Board to take over the management control of ailing seven gardens of the G.P. Goenka-headed Duncan Industries in Doars, saying they "are being managed in a manner highly detrimental to the tea industry and to public interest". TELEGRAPH (Jan 29, 2016)



The lavish manager bungalow, which is located amidst the vacant Lankapara tea garden, is seen in a dilapidated condition. The house is here since British era when the tea industry was a full-fledged enterprise. The wooden flooring and window panes of the house were burnt and valuable items were stolen by the locals who vandalised the property in anger after the garden's closure.



In the absence of a fixed source of livelihood, the former tea garden workers are always on a lookout for a permanent or a temporary source of income.

The situation is worse for the 3rd generation of tea workers, whose grandfathers and fathers have never looked beyond these gardens for income generation.

Now the workers of the closed gardens and those who are "placed under suspension notices by the companies", are moving out of their villages to find a job or may be a daily-wage labour.

Jaigaon - an Indian town adjacent to Bhutan's Phuentsholing city - is a route for many tea workers trying to find a livelihood in the cement factories or other related activities. In the process of finding a new living, the art which they had acquired over decades from their fathers and forefathers lies waste.

There is an immense pressure on the labourers in this Bhutanese city where their daily wage is dependent upon their daily performance.

"I worked in Bhutan when the gardens closed here. My job was to carry the stones on my head through the steep mountains for a cement factory. I had to make at least 20-25 rounds in a day. My health started deteriorating. On failing to perform my rounds, the companies would deduct money. I lived in the Bhutan city for 6 months but after physical pressure, I ran away from a mountain route and returned to my land," said a young worker (Name not revealed)

Many men and a lot of women are migrating to other parts of the country as well to earn enough money that is manageable for a living. 12-year-old Surajni, a resident of Lankapara, says that she misses her mother and father as they are now in Kerala in search of work.

"I live with my aunty and uncle. They worked in the (Duncans) gardens but when the gardens closed they went there this January. Me and my brother Kapil go to school and eagerly wait for our parents to return. We talk to them twice on phone every day. We tell them to come back," she says.

Other than the migration aspect, the workforce employed in the ailing tea producing factories complains of poor implementation of social security schemes. Miri Kumudni (50) has been working in the tea garden since 1984. "We are just working. We do not get shelter, only the wage. No ration, no shoes, nothing. The shelters are not being repaired, the company gives a plastic sheet to save ourselves from rains. The money is not enough to maintain our living. The doctors do not visit here. When we are sick, they give us tablets. That's all. During work hours they just provide us with an umbrella," she says.



Pallav Kumar Goswami, one of the Supreme Court State Advisor to the SC commissioners who visited the ailing and sick gardens along with our network members, reported on the condition of the workers: "From talking with the workers and their families, the staff, the officials of DBITA (Dooars Branch of the Indian Tea Association) and going about the gardens physically while comparing them with the TGs operating healthily it was not difficult to gauge the extent of suffering being faced by the workers of the non-operational gardens.

"Despite announcements, AAY has covered only the permanent workers leaving the

vast majority of the non-permanent workers getting NO RATIONS. Chronic water scarcity plagues the garden inhabitants since long back. But as a result of disconnection of power supply to the pumps in some TGs the situation has become precarious. The quality and standard of MDM varied, however the mindset of providing some nutritious and tasteful meal other than a sort of gruel did not seem pressing.

"Due to non-categorisation of TG workers in the BPL category benefits like pensions, NFBS, IGNOAPS etc are being denied to the deserving TG inhabitants. Optimum use of the MGNREGA scheme for providing

employment is a far cry in many areas and generally. The enormous quantum of Provident Fund contributions, undistributed gratuity, LIC premium deductions misappropriated have never been even raised a ripple of action from Regional Provident Fund and other central authorities.

"Trafficking young girls and women has assumed serious proportions as unable to bear the pressure of their parents helplessness, young girls seeking jobs have been abducted to Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Bangalore, Kolkata, Bhutan etc. Some have been retrieved but many remain missing."

CASA along with its partner organisations in the Dooars region of Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri are working along with Centre and state governments to address the prevailing issues in these gardens.

**Debojyoti Chakraborty, Assistant Project Officer**

CASA West Bengal, has been closely monitoring the situation in these areas.

He notes, "Since British period Tea Garden owners are taking care of the workers by providing free ration, medical facilities, shelter, education and transport....but now-a-days

the employers are shredding off their responsibilities due to their shift of interest from the tea garden alone and tactically bringing notice of "Suspension of Work" which in turn gives them a relief from taking the "social responsibilities" as mentioned in the Plantations Labour Act, 1951."



1 CASA and its partners have identified special children like Aman Mohali, who are the victims of disability and their parents having lost their tea garden livelihood

to support their family and children education. We have achieved in giving disability certificates to kids like Aman so that they can continue their education, get proper diet and other facilities.

2 CASA and its partners have helped in forming women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the closed or sick gardens to continue the work of fair and

good quality of ration distribution. The Groups ensure that everyone gets quality ration and no one dies of hunger.



3 CASA team and its partners have been working extremely hard to put a check on traffickers and their movements. Our response team members are in

constant touch with Railway Police Force (RPF) in tracking down trafficked girls from trains and uniting them with their parents. Women activists are very active in this area of work.

4 CASA and its partners have been very active in identifying patients with tuberculosis, one of the most common diseases seen in these in the ailing

gardens. We have tied-up with the government in getting them required treatment and other medical benefits.



# The world celebrated International Day Against Child Labour on June 12

The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the World Day Against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. ILO states that this year, the focus is on child labour and supply chains. With 168 million children still in child labour, all supply chains, from agriculture to manufacturing, services to construction, run the risk that child labour may be present. CASA's Bridge school in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh is an effort to provide formal primary and secondary education to children engaged in labour activities since childhood.





## Advocacy initiatives by community at Sheldhara for drinking water

**M**arathwada region of Maharashtra has been facing drought for the past consequent three years. However, the situation was worst this year which affected many households in Latur district specially villages like Chera, Lali, Dhamangoan, Gawhan and Sheldhara.

The state government this year announced various measures to address the drought issue - like supply of drinking water, setting up cattle camps, provision of fodder for cattle, MGNREGA, food security, free education for school children, and reduction in electricity bills for the affected families.

But in reality the story in villages of Latur was bad. While the local NGOs and Forums assessed the implementation of Government's program it was a different scenario. It is very unfortunate that the Government support had not reached the real needy households in Latur.

Jalkot block of Latur district happens to be one of the four new Core Program areas since 2015 where CASA is working in 30 villages. CASA staff from Jalkot, members of local NGO'S, Shri Madhav Moriba Kamble and Shri. Madhav Tukarak an ex-Sarpanch shared the information about the Government's response to this situation in the village meeting and personally visited the acquired bore well sites they were shocked to see that there was very little water in the bore wells and that it won't be able to suffice to the needs of the people.

The people from Sheldhara village had to walk miles 5 to 6 Km to fetch water for their daily consumption and women and children were mostly engaged in this job. This is affecting the education of the school going children, women's health and increased migration.

The concerns of the community was discussed with the Sarpanch, Panchayat members and the Panchayat Samittee. There was no favorable response. It was clear that the Government Officials had

acquired the water sources without any assessment and agreed to pay a royalty of Rs.15,000/- per month to the owners of bore wells. It also emerged that there was some kind of understanding between the officials and the bore well owners.

The group visited the Block Development Officer's office at Jalkot and discussed about the situation but he too refused to do anything in this regard to help the affected villagers as the money was already paid. A meeting was held after the visit to the Tehsil. The entire matter was shared with the community and the people decided to go on Hunger Strike in front of the Jalkot Tehsil on 9th April, 2016 till their demands for supply of water

through tankers was addressed. Action was taken and within six hours the Tahsildar approved 12000 Ltrs. through Water tankers per day for this village. The community decided to collect the water in a common water tank and distribute it through water taps to the people.

The Advocacy initiative of the people paid off at last. Since 9th April 2016, 160 families of Sheldhara village are getting water through water tankers daily. The issue of water has thus been resolved because of people's participation, and willingness to fight against corruption and through community mobilization done by CASA.



## JAL HAL YATRA in drought hit latur



People take out march in the drought-hit Latur region in Maharashtra

**A** campaign to address the issue of drinking water unemployment and mid-day meal not being provided to school children during summer vacations was organized by Swaraj Abhiyan, Ekta Parishad, National Alliance of People's Movement and Jal Biradari called 'Jal Hal Yatra'.

Shri Yogendra Yadav, Politician and Social Activist led the yatra to create awareness about the recent Supreme Court order on the following demands and the failure of the government to address these concerns at villages.

(a) Provide ration to people who do not have ration card and who are not coming under priority category as per norms of FSA 2013.

(b) Provide 150 days' work within 14 days and arrange wage payment within 15 days under MGNREGA.

(c) To provide Rs. 5,400/- as support who have lost their crops during drought

(d) Provide mid-day meal during summer vacation to anganwadis and primary and secondary schools.

(e) Stop recovery loan from debtor's farmers.

The local NGOs and Lok shahi Jan haque Andolan Maharashtra interacted with the people of the villages which revealed that the people were not receiving the five kgs of food grain per person and even the schools were not providing free mid-day meals to their children.

15 members from Lok shahi Jan haque Andolan Maharashtra, members from Gramin Vikas Karyakarta Parishad, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad and

Mukhed (old progareras) and Jalkot from Latur district (new area) joined the yatra on 20th May, 2016 to support the above cause.

The yatra commenced from Somvati in Latur district and covered more than 20 kms passing through various villages of Latur including Babhalgaon and Katpur on 21st to 25th May, 2016 and then move to Bundelkhand.

The yatra received a good response as they were able to explain to the farmers their rights and how the government had neglected them. The Lok shahi Jan haque Andolan Maharashtra and GVKP shared the Supreme Court order with the farmers at our operational areas thus creating awareness among the farmers on their rights.

# # IndiaFloods2016



A portion of state road in Pithoragarh district, which leads to Darchuda in Nepal, collapsed due to the cloudburst followed by landslide on July 1. The traffic on the route was affected for several days.

# Uttarakhand Floods: Nature's Fury

With the onset of monsoon, the state witnessed heavy rainfall triggering cloudbursts and landslides in several parts of Uttarakhand on July 1. The incessant rains and floods washed away many houses in two of the worst-hit districts — Chamoli and Pithoragarh.

The water level in Alakanda, Mandakini and other major rivers in Uttarakhand rose to danger mark following the flash floods. The cloudburst in Chamoli district caused mudslide in the region; thereby damaging houses and taking lives of many locals.

Heavy flow of water mixed with rubble gushed toward Ghat town in Chamoli, leaving acres of farms inundated. Hundreds of villagers in the remote areas were cut-off from the mainland as torrential rains blocked all the important roads in the hills.

While the injured were taken to base hospitals, hundreds of homeless were shifted to make-shift shelters in nearby hospitals and schools.

According to Rediff.com heavy rains lashed most parts of Uttarakhand throughout for few days throwing daily life out of gear. The state Met office said that the rain activity will continue at least till Sunday evening and issued an alert of heavy to very heavy rainfall at few places.

The rains also triggered recurring landslides which blocked National Highways leading to the Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines. The Rishikesh-Badrinath highway (NH 58) was blocked at Lambagad and Kanchan Gana in Chamoli district while the Rishikesh-Kedarnath (NH 109) highway was blocked between Sonprayag and Gaurikund, according to the reports.

Pilgrims going to Badrinath were temporarily stopped at different places in Chamoli district due to road blockades.

The rains also led to a rise in the water level of major rivers in Uttarakhand including Ganga at Haridwar, sparking fear of floods in the low-lying areas of the state, they reported.



The landslides occurred in the first week of July and shook Uttarakhand after which people were left homeless. The army, para-military and the state police force rescued the people specially those living in kaccha houses.

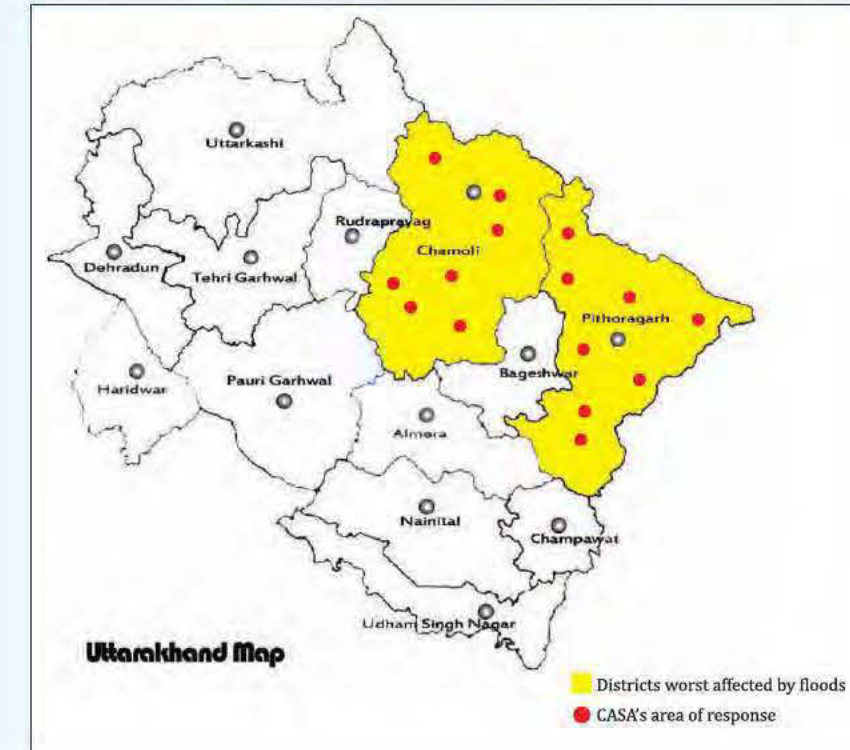


CASA was one of the early responders to the disaster. It immediately started a feeding programme in the remote areas and breaking all barriers.



CASA also distributed immediate relief kits, which included dry ration, tarpaulin sheets, torch, and other material to the affected families.

# sweeps Land of Gods



## CASA responded within hours of the disaster

### Immediate response by CASA

Within hours of the disaster, the CASA staff reached the people in the areas which were inaccessible due to massive landslide. Most of the routes leading to Chamoli and Pithoragarh were left damaged.

As the roads were completely washed away, the team crossed the remote hills and forests to reach the families most affected by the disaster.

CASA has so far extended support to many people with food relief camps and dry ration kits. Food Distribution camps were organized from July 4-7 in which cooked food along with clean drinking water was served to the people two times a day.

1. Ready to eat food to 1146 persons 2 times a day from 4th - 9th July 2016 in Jakhni, Ghat and other villages.
2. 110 families supported in RT Fund - 110 dry ration kit, 110 solar lantern, saree, dhoti, utensil set and 550 pcs. of fleece blanket.
3. Rs. 8,87,800.00 was approved in HAF Mechanism to Gomti Prayag Jan Kalyan Parishad for support of 300 families with non food items and dry ration kit.

**FRANCIS JOSEPH**  
Project Officer  
CASA, New Delhi



In situations like these, lack of communication makes it difficult for us to understand the ground reality.

We make sure that we immediately reach the remote parts of the regions to do the disaster's impact assessment. We choose the worst affected and remote parts. In floods and landslides, where most of the roads are fully or partly damaged, there is always a risk of moving ahead as landslides and mudslides can occur anytime at any point of time. Many a times when there is a road blockade, we walk our way to the ravaged areas so that the actual needy people receive the help.

**SURESH SATAPATHY**  
State Coordinator  
CASA, Uttarakhand



Humanitarian response in geographically-challenged areas like in Chamoli

district in Uttarakhand, where there are no roads, proper communication or electricity requires very strong inner will power to visit the affected areas and do proper targeting so that the actual needy are benefited. It is very important to understand the local dynamics and politics and then take an informed decision about who gets the very essential relief items.

# Floods wreck havoc in Madhya Pradesh;

**M**adhya Pradesh received unprecedented rainfall within a short duration this monsoon. In The city of Bhopal recorded rainfall of 125% within 20 days, which was above normal.

This was the third heaviest rainfall in the city in last 45 years. On the night of 9th July, Bhopal received 51.78 cm rainfall in a single day which triggered flood across the state.

The sudden and heavy rain on the night of 9th July led to flooding in almost all part of the Bhopal affecting the people

severely. The most affected areas included slums or jhuggi like Vikas Nagar, Anand Nagar, Baghmugaliya, Baghmugaliya Bus stand and Ganesh Nagar etc.

The area is mostly occupied by construction workers, scavengers, house maids, masons, carpenters, house paintings among others. Their 'kachha makaan' were left devastated in the incessant rains and flood caught the people unaware.

The drains, rivulets, nallas were inundated and flood water had entered

the houses. It was on this dark night when people were asleep; their houses were flooded with heavy water. They were not able to protect their essentials as they evacuated their only shelter immediately.

The Bagmugaliya (Samasanghat) slum which is situated behind the Rameshwaram colony was submerged and around 100 houses had water up to 8 fit inside.

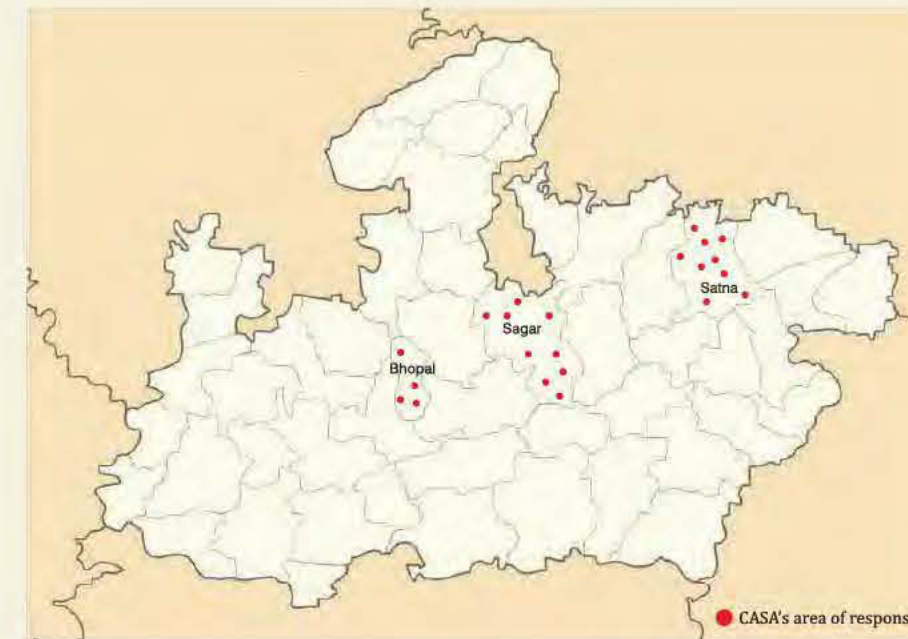
The incessant rains affected the normal life of the people as they were not able to join their livelihoods immediately after the floods.



Above left: people are vacating their houses after flood water enters the slum area in Vikas Nagar  
 Above right: a house inundated after heavy rains and flood water  
 Down: CASA staff distributing relief material to the affected people



# Thousands rendered homeless



**T**eam of the CASA Bhopal immediately responded to the situation. It organized feeding programme for the affected communities in six places of Bhopal for four consecutive days starting from 11th July 2016 to 14th July 2016. A total of 200 food packets were distributed to the affected families each day.

### CASA Response:

1. Rs. 3,00,000.00 was approved for feeding program in Anand Nagar, Vikas Nagar, Baghmugaliya where 2000 food packets were distributed.
2. Rs. 9,67,300.00 was approved under HAF for 300 families in Sagar district where 300 dry ration kit and 300 non food items were distributed.



**TAPAN CHANDRA KUMBHAKAR**  
 Senior Programme Coordinator - CASA

Since the floods affected many areas of the state, it was a challenging task to make exact assessment of immediate needs of the people as the degree of effect varied among the affected communities. The affected villages and slums were inaccessible due to incessant rains and disrupted roads due to floods. Continuous rains rendered the organisation of feeding programme difficult due to lack of appropriate space for the programme in the affected communities. We tried covering the areas where the affected people suffered a lot.



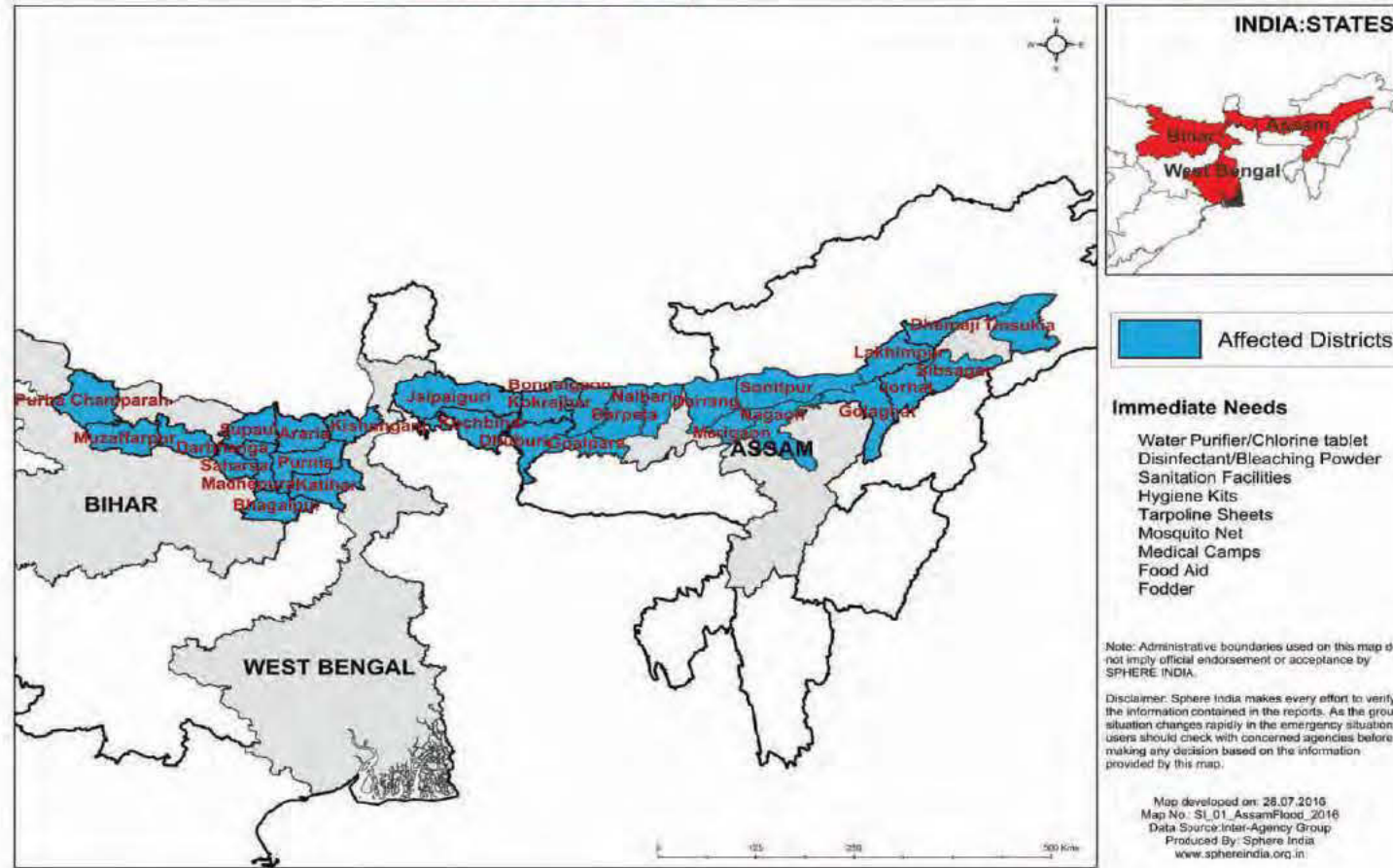
**ANAMIKA**, Program Associate, CASA - Bhopal

Being a woman in the response team during disasters makes me more assessable to affected women and adolescent girls who are at the high risk of personnel safety during such incidents. They connect with me and share their stories to me very easily.

During disasters I make sure that I reach to as many girls and women as possible. Some of the affected women take us to their homes to make us see their sufferings during natural calamities.

I am most concerned about their safety. During the recent Bhopal floods, we provided tarpaulin sheets to the women members of the family which gives them a private space for themselves.

**INDIA: FLOOD AFFECTED DISTRICTS  
(as on 28.07.2016)**



## Flood washes North & East India

Assam is hit by devastating floods triggered by rainfall, claiming at least two lives and has affected over five lakh people in 14 districts of the state. The situation is likely to deteriorate in the next few days as the mighty Brahmaputra River's water level is rising beyond the danger mark.

Meanwhile, incessant rains in Nepal have caused floods in Bihar, claiming nine lives and affecting around 2.92 lakh people. The flood situation is likely to worsen as water resources department said there is forecast of heavy rain in Nepal over the next two days.

Torrential rains and floods have also rendered many homeless in North Bengal with districts like Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar badly affected. The tea Gardens in Dooars remained inundated and shelters of many tea workers were ravaged in the rains and floods.

Rs. 6,99,740.00 were given under DKH-HAF to CASA to carry out relief work in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. We have so far helped 620 families.

The Assam Inter Agency Group, of which CASA is part, has carried out a joint assessment of the region in view of the present emergency situation.

Heavy water flow has submerged agricultural fields and inundated houses leaving many homeless. As many as 1,039 villages in these districts have been submerged. People were seen taking shelter on roads, bridges and relief camps, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said.

Flood water of Brahmaputra entered through the broken Ring Bund at Bhogerpar in Barpeta district where the river has created panic by eroding thousands of hectares of land, he said.

CASA co-coordinated with the District Administration, local churches/institutions and village committee from the affected villages and were involved in assessing the situation and coordinate the relief response.

CASA also identified several worst-affected areas where it seeks to provide food items

and temporary shelter material like tarpaulin sheets to the vulnerable and displaced families, via ACT RRF appeal which is subject to approval.

In Bihar, an alert has been issued in East Champaran, West Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Vaishali districts of Bihar following heavy rain in catchment areas of Nepal, according to news agency ANI.

Disaster management department (DMD) Principal Secretary Vyasji conducted an aerial survey of the flood-hit districts on 25 July and later briefed Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar about the situation. The affected districts are Purnia, Kishanganj, Araria, Katihar, Madhepura, Supaul, Darbhanga and Bhagalpur.

CASA has provided water filters, plastic buckets, hygiene kits, dry ration kits, tarpaulin sheets, ground sheets, blankets, dhotis/ sarees and utensil sets to 1415 families in Purnea district and 1425 families in Kishan Ganj district of Bihar.



A mother and her children gather themselves on a floating bamboo raft as the flood water inundates their home in Assam



Person gathering the left overs after the massive floods in Assam destroys his house



The entire village in West Bengal's Tea Garden district of Jalpaiguri gets submerged in heavy flood water



# Leave No One Behind

## 17 goals to transform our world

A three-day talk was held in Kolkata from July 28- 30 which sought to integrate all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s – adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 – within CASA's work. The senior-most CASA staff across India analysed the relevance of SDGs with our current programme strategies and chalked out a future roadmap for India on SDGs.

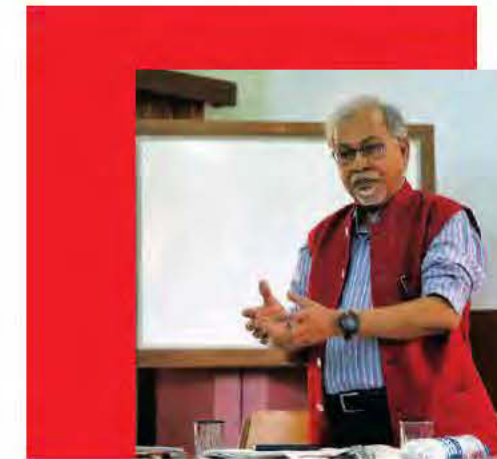
On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit – officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

A discussion was held on the difference between SDG and MDG (Millennium Development Goals).

On Day 2, senior Advocate and social worker Ajay Jha moderated the discussion and gave a detailed presentation on how SDGs defines the need of the hour. He said that the MDGs were not rooted in human rights standards whereas SDGs have been designed in such a way that they are inclusive and just and involves people's participation.

All the members were divided in the groups of four, who later gave presentations on the relevance of these goals for CASA, what CASA is going or should do in the framework of the selected goals and what CASA can do differently regarding the goals.

The groups agreed that the 4 SDGs – No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Gender Equality and Climate Action- were attainable by CASA.



**Dr. Sushant Agrawal**  
Director, CASA

Elimination of poverty cannot be taken as a sole challenge if 'dignity of life' is not considered into the challenge. 'Life and Dignity of life' must be present in the goals and our targets.



**Dr. Jayant Kumar**  
Head of Programme, CASA

The SDG goals are not just quantitative but also qualitative. As an instrument, civil society organizations have an important role to play in attaining these goals.



Up: Head of Emergency Nirmal Singh, Director Dr. Sushant Agrawal and Head of Programme Dr. Jayant Kumar addressing a gathering on SDG goals in West Bengal.

Down: senior advocate Ajay Jha explains the SDG goals and gave a detailed presentation in the meeting.



## KAM MANGO ABHIYAN – The Right to Livelihood

CASA Amrapara centre organized a programme on MGNREGA and its implication under the HPD Human Potential Development aspect of the FSCM programme on 18th of May. Beneficiaries under the programme for the villages of Salpatra, Gogajor, Sijuwa were called for the programme and briefed of the issues of MGNREGA.

People took keen interest in implementing it to address the issues of livelihood security and infrastructure development in the villages. The programme was aimed with an objective to build community understanding of the issues and also motivate community to apply for the scheme. The meeting was addressed by DISTRICT LOKPAL-MGNREGA, Pakur, Mr. Ram Jiwan Ahari, Ms. Jyoti Malto, India Unheart, Sahebgunj.



The locals taking out a rally in demand for livelihood opportunities

## The Solar village



Locals setting up solar panels with the help of technicians in Kalikapur village

The situation in this Dalit and Adivasi village of Kalikapur started becoming worse due to frequent floods and drought conditions. The livestock was on the verge of downfall.

In an adverse situation like this, the community took an initiative to reduce the disaster risk to some extent through change in cropping pattern, diversification, using stress tolerant resilient varieties seeds.

Given the experiences, there was a need for a shape at the ground level to climate smart disaster risk management, building on the ground level experiences.

Understanding the present livelihood status of the target community and the working intensively to facilitate various linkages required to strengthen the poor villagers and develop resilience is the common strategy in the extension phase II.

Finally The villagers with access to supply of water to their small farm which will sustain all in time of water shortage and saving a big amount on hiring of pump set and buying of diesel at an exorbitant price.

## The importance of DRR



Workshop on Developing Implementation Plan for Bihar DRR Roadmap in progress

Bihar Progressive Alliance (BPA), a forum of NGOs and People's Organisations from 15 districts of Bihar, was promoted by Bihar State Secretariat organisations.

56 NGOs and 23 People's Organisations are affiliated with this platform.

This forum has been formed by the like-minded NGOs and Networks to become a part of planning and implementation of programmes.

### Interventions:

1. With PGVS one of the members of BPA, a workshop was organised to

initiate a state level forum for Small and Landless Farmers and their land rights.

In Bihar a huge number of small farmers and landless agricultural labours do not have the access to the rights and entitlements in normal time. Situation of this sector becomes miserable in any disaster like drought or flood.

2. Bihar has become first state who has DRR Roadmap, CASA's Bihar State Secretariat is now a member of RISU (Roadmap Implementation Support Unit). It was involved in planning and enactment of

workshop of stakeholders to facilitate implementation of DRR Roadmap.

3. "State level Consultation on Rights of Sharecroppers in Bihar" was organised by member of BPA. Sharecropper's problems were discussed in detail. sharecroppers and landlords. It was understood that the present provisions of acts and policies are not in favour of landless farmers and landlords also. List of amendments were suggested to the present acts and policies of government.

# REMINISCENCES

(A glimpse of CASA's Newsletter in this quarter way back in 1964 and 1966. Then CASA was known as CORAGS (Committee on Relief and Gift Supplies) and was a programme of the NCCI (National Christian Council of India)

## ✝ INFORMATION BULLETIN

COMMITTEE ON RELIEF AND GIFT SUPPLIES  
NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF INDIA

4, Mathura Road  
Jungpura - A  
NEW DELHI - 14

JUNE 1964

### FLOOD RELIEF PREPARATIONS :—

As the rainy season approaches Bases at Ferozepore, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jullundur, Khanna and Patiala in Punjab and Gorakhpur, Lucknow and Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh have been alerted to gear up the preparations in their areas for meeting the flood emergency if and when the flood hits their areas. They are again reminded to mobilise local resources and keep the teams ready for action.

### NEICC Relief Committee

The Adhoc Coordinating Committee of Gauhati has been replaced by the North East India Christian Council Relief Committee's Executive Committee with the following members :—

Rev. E. Stafford (Convenor)	Rev. Halvershrud
Rev. N. Kirkwood	Rev. Edward Singh
Dr. R. L. Cunville (Treasurer) Ex-Officio Member	Mr. Richard P. Andrews (Executive Officer) Ex-Officio Member.

They are doing an excellent work in giving relief to East Pakistan refugees through the local sub-committees — Tura Christian Relief Committee at Tura and Nishangram Christian Relief Committee at Dudnai.

The work in refugee Camps at Garo Hills and Matia camps in pictures :—



Hot meal is being served to refugees at Dudnai, enroute to Matia Camp. The meal is prepared and served entirely by Christian volunteers of Nishangram Christian Relief Committee. CORAGS spent over Rs. 10,000/- toward this project.



Tura Christian Relief Committee organised medical teams under the leadership of Dr. D. S. Dawns. CORAGS has supplied medicines and money for these teams.



"TEA FOR TRAVELLERS"  
Tura Christian Relief Committee has set up a canteen for tea, for serving refugees during the journey. Tea and snacks are served at this centre.



Distribution of Utensils, Clothes and Blankets collected by YMCA, YWCA, Christian Hospitals and Churches in India, with additional Supplies, from CORAGS

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NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF INDIA

4, Mathura Road  
Jungpura - A  
NEW DELHI - 14

JUNE 1966

## Here and there ...

### RELIEF FOR FIRE VICTIMS OF NIZAMUDDIN CAMP

The National Christian Council Relief Committee has donated Rs. 40 each, as an immediate relief, to nearly 80 families of labourers affected by a fire which broke out in the Kali Khan Sarai Camp, near Nizamuddin railway station in New Delhi, on May 1.

Negligence on the part of a camp resident, while disposing of a glowing splinter, is reported to be the cause of the fire which destroyed 80 huts of labourers while most of them were out in town to earn their bread.

Seeing the flames rise high, children ran and managed to bring buckets of water from the only tap in the colony with over 2,000 people, but not before the fire had raised the thatched roofs to the ground.

"Before the shrieks of the children and the feeble cries of the old could penetrate through the mud walls, we were overtaken by flames and whatever little belongings we had were burnt", Bashiran, a resident, told Mr. Stephen Mathai, Director of CORAGS, who went to the spot with Mr. S. D. A. SunderRaj, Special Emergency Relief Officer of CORAGS, to assess the loss first hand.



The ruins left by the fire which destroyed 80 huts in the Kali Khan labourers' Camp, near Nizamuddin railway station in New Delhi.

### They Share Their Little

A cheque for Rs. 51 has been received by CORAGS from the Vidarbha Maharogi Sewa Mandal ( Leprosy Institution ) in Amraoti, Maharashtra, as a "humble contribution" of the institution's members towards the needy in the country.

The members have further decided to contribute, from their pocket expenses, five to fifteen paise per head every month and to forward the amount thus collected to CORAGS for use in emergencies.

In their meeting held on April 18, the help rendered by the National Christian Council Relief Committee, by way of food gifts, was recorded with profound gratitude. "This charity from such a long distance can never be forgotten", it was observed.

This laudable gesture highlights the readiness of the people, who are themselves in need, to share with others from the little they have.

### New Seed for Impossible Conditions

A paddy seed, which keeps its head above water even when the depth increases, has been found in Assam. Destruction of paddy by flood waters in monsoons will be reduced considerably owing to this discovery.

Faced with the problem of cultivation during the wet season, Mr. A. V. Jacob, CORAGS Administrator in Assam, conducted a survey and discovered the seed with farmers in a village separated from the Garo Hills by vast waters of the Brahmaputra river. CORAGS has purchased Rs. 11,000 worth of this seed for sowing in the Garo Hills where its Land Reclamation unit has cleared first 621 acres, of which 591 have been ploughed and harrowed by the tractor unit and sowed with deep water paddy seeds.

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