

**REPORT**  
**REVIEW AND PLANNING WORKSHOP**  
*Of*  
**FLOOD RESPONSE PROGRAMME – 2007**

**Venue: Collector's Conference Hall, Balasore**  
**Date: 13.11.2007**

**Background:**

Due to the heavy rain during first week of July and subsequently in September 2007 in the northern region of Orissa and upper catchment area of 2 major rivers in this region, i.e. Subarnarekha and Budhabalanga, the water level of these rivers and their tributaries went up much beyond their danger level. As a result the area was flooded. Unprecedented in the area, the flood took many human and cattle lives, destroyed thousands of homes, washed away *kharif* crop in thousands of hectares and caused devastation to lives of lakhs of people in the area. Between July and September 2007 people of north Orissa met with 4 consecutive floods with high intensity and devastation. Unnayan, in collaboration with Oxfam took up humanitarian response programmes in the worst affected villages of Basta, Jaleswar and Sadar blocks of Balasore district and Rasgobindpur block of Mayurbhanj district. Support in terms of tarpaulins, construction of temporary shelter, dry food, sarees, health and hygiene promotion measures were provided as emergency shore up. At the same time, a process has been initiated to address the issue of disaster and its related dynamics on a sustained basis through involvement of people from all sectors in this area and establishing a peoples forum called Subarnarekha Suraksha Sena. The entire flood response programme has been done with a process oriented approach involving the district administration, PRI, local volunteers, women SHGs, other CBOs and village community. This humanitarian response programme conducted by Unnayan-Oxfam was not only challenging in terms of reaching out to the worst affected people in a fair manner against the hurdles of village and political dynamics, but also a good learning process for us.

In order to share our experiences, review the process and plan for future strategies, a “Review and Planning Workshop” was organised at Balasore Collector's Conference Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2007.



**Participants:**

PRI representatives, Local Volunteers, District Administrative Officers, MLA of Balasore Sadar constituency, Zilla Parishad Chairman, Renowned members of civil society, Women SHG members, NGO representatives, representatives from print and electronic media and members of Unnayan, Oxfam and Subarnarekha Surakshya Sena participated in this workshop.

The programme was presided over by Sri Sudarsan Das, Founder member of Unnayan.

**Inauguration:**

The programme was jointly inaugurated by the collector of Balasore Sri A.C. Padhiary, MLA of Balasore Sadar constituency Sri Arun Dey and ZP Chairman Sri Girish Ch. Das. It was followed by a development song presented in chorus by members of SHG and Unnayan's staff.

**Opening Addresses:**

Sri Bhanu Prasad Panigrahi, director of Unnayan welcomed the esteemed guests and participants of the workshop. In his welcome address he thanked people from all walks of life, especially people's representatives and PRI members and district administration for their cooperation in the process of flood response programme undertaken by Unnayan-Oxfam. He requested the participants to openly

present their constructive remarks and valuable suggestions that would strengthen the work of Unnayan and Oxfam and pave the way by planning for future with appropriate strategies.

Smt. Rashmi Mohanty, secretary and Chief Functionary of Unnayan gave a power point presentation on the whole exercise of flood response programme conducted by Unnayan, the processes adopted and learning thereof. She gave a brief and complete overview of the entire programmes and processes starting from the first week of July when the first flood hit north Orissa till date. She also presented the future perspective of this flood response programme and appealed to all the participants to extend their full cooperation and involvement in the future work that would be carried out by Unnayan.

Smt. Mamta Pattnaik, representative of Oxfam presented a brief background of Oxfam and its development initiatives and how the response could be possible because of its prior preparedness. In her deliberation she said that the aftermath consequence of any natural calamity is much dangerous than the disaster itself. Thus health and hygiene promotion measures are the primary focus of Oxfam in any disaster response programme along with other supports such as shelter, food, clothing and livelihoods. Fortunately, there has been no big outbreak of epidemic in our operational area after this flood.

All the guest speakers of the occasion; the MLA, the Collector, the ZP chairman, acclaimed the timely support provided by Oxfam and the process adopted by Unnayan in reaching out to the most affected and vulnerable. All of them also supported the idea of a long term strategic intervention for flood control in this region of Orissa.

### **Open House Discussion:**

The guests and participants took part in an open house discussion reviewing the flood response programme conducted by Unnayan-Oxfam and areas that need to be looked in to for a strategic intervention. Many comments and suggestions cropped up in this discussion. Some important highlights of comments and suggestions are given below:

- The timely response and the process adopted are really commendable.
- The hard work done by the volunteers and staff are worth praising.
- Though the support has been provided in a very fair manner, still many deserving people were left out.
- More cooperation from people was required.
- Looking in to the intensity and extent of damage, the support is very less.
- Govt.'s assessment not done properly and support was quite inadequate and untimely.
- Women could not be involved in the entire process to the extent it was desirable.
- Coordination among support agencies, NGOs, civil society and administration was lacking.
- As Oxfam and Unnayan have done creditable work, they should also have been awarded along with the district administration (*Note: Balasore district administration has been awarded by the state for its admirable work in flood response.*)
- Community level preparedness and action is vital and imperative.
- Tribal communities to be given priority in any further rehabilitation programme.
- Agriculture need to be given priority in livelihood support programmes.
- Roofing material support is required.
- Cyclone shelters need to be constructed.
- Media has a major role to play in disaster preparedness and management.
- NREGS should be implemented properly and in its true spirit. This should be linked with flood control and post disaster livelihood measures.
- Schemes like NRHM and SSA should be integrated with disaster management.

- People at village level and PRI representatives should take adequate steps in order to make rice under Antodaya and BPL schemes available to people properly.
- There can be no substantial change in society unless there is a change in people's mindset.
- The central govt.'s assessment team should take in to account people's views while planning for any response.
- There should be proper coordination between irrigation and revenue departments for any flood control and response measures.
- Flood is eventually more dangerous than drought as it hits suddenly. So proper vigilance and preparedness is required.
- Time has come to work for a permanent solution of flood in this area.
- A master plan needs to be devised for flood control.

The workshop ended with a formal vote of thanks given by the programme coordinator of Unnayan Sri Arup Abhishek to all the guests and participants.

