

Get Involved

Flood hazards and disasters are the product of an interaction between environmental and social process. A flood disaster is something which is viewed as upsetting and disturbing normal ways of life. The objective of flood relief and rehabilitation is to restore this normality.

We were focusing our attention and efforts to rehabilitate the children, men and women who were affected by floods in Bihar and now we are facing a similar challenge from Orissa. Flooding in the Mahanadi caused 61 breaches in the river embankments, leaving behind a trail of devastation, submerging hundreds of villages.

Lakhs of people are waiting for rescue and relief in the flooded zones. The victims of the flood in Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Puri districts are in shelters along roadsides under temporary polythene roofs, depending purely on whatever little food was supplied by the administration. As on Sunday, 17 districts were experiencing high floods and water has entered 3,683 villages.

We are now getting news about other states facing threats from floods. This is our time to act. This is a country of inclusion, not exclusion. We have to be concerned about all our fellow citizens. The Rotarian's will is an amazing thing. Time after time, it has triumphed against unbelievable odds. This 'dharma' alone has kept Rotarians together.



Flood havoc in Orissa

In order to avoid duplication of assistance or even mismanagement of funds and relief goods, the Rotary leaders in India have set up a central agency to co-ordinate relief activities. Urgent matters are usually visible. They press on us; they insist on action. They are often popular with people who wish to do something. But in Rotary, we have to co-ordinate our actions to have a clear idea of what is important and of the results we desire. This task is best done by the concerned District Governor. Hence, requests for assistance must come only from the office of the District Governor, who would have set up a crisis management team with deadline-driven procedures.

If the Rotarians in your District wish to send relief materials to any of the flood affected states, please route it through the RI District Governors who operate in those states which need assistance. If people wish to contribute

in cash please advise them about the centralized account set up for the purpose. Rotarians can draw cheques in favour of 'Rotary India Bihar Initiative for Flood Relief and Rehabilitation Fund.' This fund will also cater to Orissa and other States affected by floods.

You can also contact me or Past RI President Raja Saboo or Past RI Director Kalyan Banerjee to channelize your assistance to any area. Rotarians like speed. Don't delay. Don't be guessing. Don't doubt. When the opportunity is there, when the impulse is there, when the intuitive nudge from within is there, act. That's your job. And that's all Rotary expects from you.



*Rtn. Ashok Mahajan
Director, Rotary International*