

# Orissa Needs Rotary's Help

Past RI Director Kalyan Banerjee has just returned from Orissa. He has surveyed the extent of the damage caused by the floods and has had extensive discussions with the Government officials on the scope of rehabilitation package that needs to be put together.

The immediate operation of rescue is over. The victims have to be rehabilitated soon. Shelters have to be built for people who have no roof over their head. With the knowledge gained by us after the Gujarat earthquake and the Tsunami that struck the coastal belts of South India, it is imperative that the rehabilitation package should include schools, community centres, health care posts and other essential public utility buildings.

With the onset of winter in the next few weeks, the displaced people will need blankets, sweaters and clothing. Medicines are needed in large quantities to cater to the people, especially children.

The first step would be to build large halls and rooms which can function as schools and can also be used as shelters during cyclones and storms. Orissa has been bearing the brunt of cyclones frequently. The Government of Orissa may be willing to allot land for construction of shelters. Rotarians who are architects and civil engineers can volunteer to



*PRID Kalyan Banerjee interacting with the victims of flood affected area at Banki, Orissa.*

design such buildings. The rehabilitation trust can then find ways to finance the construction with the support from Rotarians.

The dispensaries and health posts can also double up as shelters during emergencies. There is a need to build schools with proper sanitation facilities for girls. As many houses are damaged beyond repair, it is suggested that the homes must be rebuilt completely as just doing cosmetic repairs will not serve any purpose.

Agricultural lands have been inundated with flood waters and sand has been deposited in these fertile areas. Experts in the field need to assess the extent of this damage and find solutions to make the land fit for cultivation. Rotary clubs need to

take up the task of sinking bore wells or wells in areas that need drinking water. This seems to be an urgent task.

There are many towns which do not have Rotary clubs and relief has not reached these areas. Rotarians from neighbouring areas must visit these places. The District Governor of RI in this place will be required to bring the areas under the fold of Rotary's service. The RI Rehabilitation Trust will come out soon with a plan of action.



*Rtn. Ashok Mahajan  
Director, Rotary International*