

INTRODUCTION

This area with its vast network of rivers is prone to natural disasters like flood and erosion which has a negative impact on overall development of the state. The Brahmaputra and Barak river with more than 50 numbers of tributaries feeding them, causes the flood devastation in the monsoon period each year. 2022 was no different. The floods started in the month of may and have not subsided till now. A total of 627,874 people, in 506 villages, across 11 districts of the state, continue to suffer due to the flood, the local disaster management agency stated in its report.



OUR RESPONSE

Our team made the decision to travel to this area to aid those affected by the recent natural disasters since we knew that many of them would be left without even the most basic essentials. We therefore began our investigation to determine the areas where the most impacted populations are not being served by other organizations and not even by the state government. After doing extensive study, we came to the conclusion that we needed to help the residents here because the area had been badly hit and no one had offered assistance. Therefore, we made the decision to travel to this location. Since we were aware that the journey would never be simple, we were prepared to assist these families in any circumstance. As a result, with assistance from Impact Nations and our local churches, we were able to organize all we needed for our journey. On the morning of the 26th, a team of six individuals set out in two cars.

THE SUPPLIES

- Ration for two to three weeks
- Basic Medical emergency kit
- Hygiene kit
- Tarps
- Mosquito nets
- One Water Filter per village

THE CHALLENGES

Unreached because unreachable

We were really excited to travel to the district and assist those people as we set out on our tour. And the voyage grew challenging as we approached the borders. Roads were deteriorated, and occasionally there were no roads at all. We had to cross undeveloped areas or jungles. We had to push our cars forward as they got stuck in the mud. We had never taken a trip like that, and it was very challenging. We discovered as we travelled farther that the district was inaccessible due to the road's severe damage. We learned that the trip would require a 10–12 kilometre trek. We had rations, filters, and all other necessary supplies. We made the choice to proceed. We then started the journey on foot after taking the ration. We weren't prepared for such a challenging road, but we had faith that God would support us and provide the strength we required, and He did. When we eventually arrived in the village, the joy on the people's faces was indescribable. To help them, many more individuals returned with us so we could bring additional food and other supplies.



TRAVELLING MILES EVERYDAY

The area around here was completely devastated and we could not find any kind of ration shops, or anything to eat around the area. We had to travel miles to daily to buy the things for distribution and to distribute the bought things. We also could not find any place to stay. Everyday was a journey with a lot of hurdles. The cars were always stuck and we were basically living on packed food. We were tired and hungry. But each morning we got up from our beds and started the journey with the hope that today also we'll be able to help and feed many people, and that's what we did. We started to feel what these people were going through. This trip taught us things that we never thought we'll be experiencing.

NO COMMUNICATION

After entering the lands, we started having signal issues and as we moved further we were completely lost. There were no signals on our phones. We didn't had any way to communicate back home that we reached and were safe. The things were becoming difficult. It was after three days that we went to a place where we got the signals and we told everyone that we were safe and sound. This trip not only tested us but also our families. Being in the unknown state and not knowing what's going to happen next day and unable to talk to your family and tell them what's happening was really a difficult time. But in all those moments God was with us.

The Aftermath

As we all know floods bring a lot of diseases along with it. Keeping everyone on our team safe and secure also became a very big challenge for us. Everything went bad when one day while going to village some insect bit one of the team leaders. By night his whole leg was swollen and he could not feel a thing. He was unable to move his leg. There were no medical facilities available. The only thing we could do was pray. The next morning the swelling reduced but he was still unable to move his leg. But we knew we need to move. We had to go to a village to install water filter. So, we got up and moved and by the grace of God by the evening his leg was fine and things came back to normal.

These were some of the major challenges that we faced in this journey. It had some other challenges too in which language barrier was a common one. Because of the language barrier many times we went to wrong directions and got lost. But it was a memorable journey and we learnt so many things in it.

THE STORY OF PUVALI

One day we went to a village and while distributing the ration we found a small boy crying. When asked that boy told us that when the flood hit his mother and younger brother moved up in the mountains and he was left alone. He didn't know if they were still alive or not. The boy was completely shattered. Our team decided to go up and search for his mother. We knew it was a difficult task but we also knew that our God will show us the way. So, we started the journey to the mountains and took a local boy with us. We kept on searching till evening but could not find them. We were broken and didn't know what to tell that little boy. On our way back we saw a small village and thought of checking there because that was our last hope. And, we did find what we were looking for. The mother had thought that she had lost her other son so she decided to settle in that village because that was the only way they could survive. We brought the mother back to the village and she met her son. The mother and the children were very happy after being reunited. We could not believe what we were able to do. This incident motivated us to go to more villages and help as many people as we can because we knew that there were many out there who have been victim to this flood and were separated from their loved ones.



THE PEOPLE OF HALUARY

As we were going from village to village we came across one village where the people were hungry from two days. The NGO that helped them went back and they ran out of food. So now they had nothing to eat. They tried looking everywhere but could not find anything to eat. When we arrived these people were very happy. When we started distributing dry ration and other supplies to them, one of them told us that they cannot cook food as they don't have any dry wood. We knew there was one more group of people residing around 3-4 miles from there. So, we went to them with dry ration and cooked food for this village. Finally after two days they had something to eat. We also arranged some dry wood for them from the nearby villages and local markets, so they can cook food till the sun comes.



THE LAST TRIAL

On our last day when we went to one village our car got stuck in the mud. By now we were used to it and knew that we will be able to take care of the situation. But this time the problem was big. And as we were trying to take the car out of the mud the transmission broke and we got stuck. The car was full of ration that was to be distributed that day. We had to unload the whole car in heavy rain. Things were becoming challenging. We didn't knew what to do. There was no one in sight. We were completely stuck. So, we took our other car and went in search of mechanic. We could not find any mechanic that day and we had to leave the car there. Next day we took a mechanic with us and we had to tow the car. We were running out of money and the last we had left we had to give to the mechanic. We didn't knew how we were going to pay for the repairs and also travel back home. And when we were completely stuck we knew who would help us and that's the time Impact Nations came to the rescue. With the help of Impact Nations we were able to pay for the car repairs and also come back home safely. We cannot thank Impact Nations enough for helping us when we were in desperate need. Finally after a remarkable and successful journey we came back home.