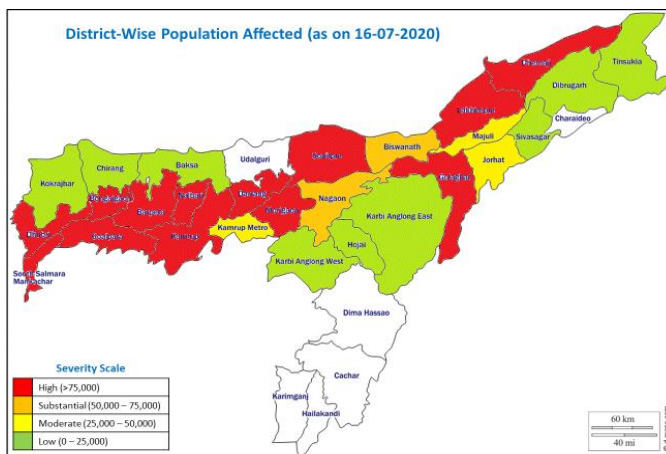


Assam, India

Floods 2020 Situation Report # 5

17 July 2020



- On 16 July 2020, 3,979,563 people, including approximately 1,591,825 children, were affected by flood in 27 of the 33 districts of Assam. Among the affected districts, Dhubri district remains the worst hit with 8,72,066 (21.9 percent) people affected.
- Dhubri, Barpeta, Morigaon, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur had the highest number of people affected in last 10 years (2010-18),
- Due to the increased rainfall in the catchment areas of Brahmaputra and its tributaries in the neighbouring states as well as in Bhutan, the flood situation is deteriorating in the state.
- A small percentage of people have taken shelter in relief camps (1.24 per cent of the affected population). District Goalpara has the highest number of people (14,766) living in government operated relief camps followed by Kamrup (6368).
- UNICEF has supported timely issuance of COVID-19 adaptive relief camp management guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures by the Government of Assam before the onset of the floods. These are supporting the District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) in operating and managing relief camps. From 22nd May to 15th July, 1,28,567 took shelter in 487 flood relief camps. Presently, there are 303 relief camps in 19 districts catering to 49,313 people.
- UNICEF in partnership with Rural Volunteer Centre (CSO partner) has demonstrated camp management as per the guidelines in two districts which had 5 relief camps operational with 612 people including 198 children in June 2020. The demonstration done has been documented as a video which is a reference to other affected districts. Currently these two districts have 9 camps with 466 people including 145 children. The Rural Volunteer Centre is supporting the DDMAs in setting up and management of these camps.
- Timely technical support has been provided in preparedness plans and in building the capacity of functionaries in Education, Social Welfare (Nutrition), and Public Health Engineering (WASH) departments to respond to floods, which has supported rapid response by these departments.
- UNICEF has also initiated internal surge mapping for providing technical assistance adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. UNICEF consultants and Civil Society Organisation partner staff have been trained in providing technical assistance during the flood. They have now been activated for monitoring relief camps.
- UNICEF has supported the Inter-Agency Group (IAG) Assam in revising and digitizing the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) format using KoBo Toolbox. UNICEF has also facilitated the orientation of 64 representatives of IAG Assam that was held on 30 June 2020, who have in turn conducted the JRNA covering 146 villages in 12 districts from 1 to 6 July 2020. UNICEF is also supporting coordination for data management, analysis and reporting writing. The finalization of the report is in progress

6552

Children in relief camps

(Source: Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Daily Flood SitRep, 16-07-2020. Total 11 of 19 districts with 27,899 of 49,313 inmates in 186 of 303 camps have not reported desegregated number of children in camps)

49,313

People in 303 relief camps in 19 of the 27 affected districts

(Source: Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Daily Flood SitRep, 16-07-2020)

1,591,825

Children affected by flood (estimated)

(Estimated as 40% of the affected population as children comprised 40% of the state's population as per Census 2011)

3,979,563

People affected by flood in 27 Districts and 93 Revenue Circles

(Source: Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Daily Flood SitRep, 13-07-2020)

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Due to the heavy rainfall since 20 June 2020, the water levels in the River Brahmaputra and its tributaries are above the danger level. The embankments in several districts have been breached leading to the current wave of floods. Though water has started receding, with the fresh spell of rainfall, the situation is intensifying. As per Assam State Disaster Management Authority's (ASDMA), Flood Report¹ dated 16 July 2020, 3,979,563 people from 3218 villages of 93 Revenue Circles (Taluks) across 27 districts have been affected by the floods. Based on the extrapolation of Census 2011 figures, it is estimated that 1,591,825 children are affected.

From 22nd May to 15th July, 1,28,567 took shelter in 487 flood relief camps². At present, 303 relief camps have been set up in 16 of the 27 affected districts. About 49,313 people have taken shelter in these relief camps out of which 19,725 (estimated³) are children. 2737 people were rescued so far by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) on 16th July.

Though flooding in this period of the year is common, this widespread scale of flood in early July is not usual. COVID-19 pandemic delayed certain conventional preparedness measures by the government as well as by communities in the pre-monsoon period, therefore, coping with the current flood has proven to be difficult for many vulnerable communities. For children, it has multiplied the stress. As the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) is complete, initial findings are indicating towards hardship faced by the affected communities particularly in meeting the basic needs of food and WASH. It has also been observed that a large number of affected people have not moved into relief camps and are taking shelter on roads, embankments, raised platforms, and other higher grounds without basic amenities and support services.

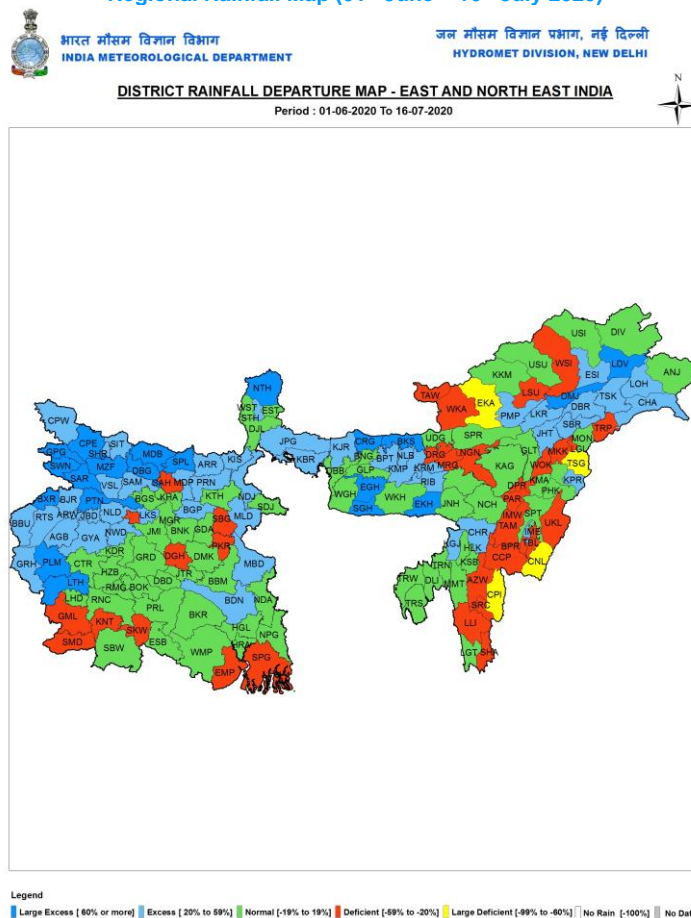
Presently, only 1.24 per cent of the affected people are in relief camps. Other than relief camps, local administration is also operating relief distribution centres to provide essential gratuitous relief to those who are beyond the coverage of relief camps. Many affected people are still either in their houses or have taken shelter in nearby higher grounds.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

UNICEF is actively coordinating with ASDMA, IAG, and other sectoral CSO partners and networks to monitor the situation. UNICEF has supported IAG Assam in revising the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) format in the context of COVID-19 and recent policy developments. UNICEF has supported converting the JRNA tool into an e-tool using KoBo Toolbox and oriented 64 representatives of IAG members on its usage. Based on the orientation, the IAG members have conducted the JRNA from 1 to 6 July 2020. This is the first JRNA in which the data collection process is fully digitized. The JRNA exercise covered 146 villages from 12 districts of Assam. Presently, the member agencies are leading the drafting process coordinated by UNICEF.

Before the onset of floods, UNICEF has led in advocating and ensuring policy level preparedness. UNICEF supported ASDMA in developing the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Relief Camp Management and Guidelines for Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) in 2020 for the COVID-19 context which is being followed by District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMA) in management of relief camps currently. Further, an assessment tool, based on the revised SoP and guidelines, has been developed by UNICEF which is also being converted to an e-tool using the KoBo Toolbox. UNICEF and ASDMA have also trained community volunteers (*Pratirodhi Bandhu*) in May 2020, they are currently deployed by DDMA to support in relief camp management in affected districts. Approximately, 112 UNICEF consultants and CSO partner staff have been trained in June 2020 on flood response. As complete lockdown has been imposed in Guwahati, some of the personnel are in containment zones. A roster of consultants and CSO partners has been developed based on their location in affected

Regional Rainfall Map (01st June – 16th July 2020)



Source: Indian Meteorological Department, Government of India
https://mausam.imd.gov.in/imd_latest/contents/statewisedistricts.php?msg=M#

¹ Source: ASDMA (http://www.asdma.gov.in/pdf/flood_report/2020/Daily_Flood_Report_16.07.2020.pdf)

² MHA (NEOC) situation report on 15th July

<https://www.ndmindia.nic.in/images/gallery/Sitrep%20Report%20as%20on%2015.07.2020%20at%202000%20Hrs.pdf>

³ Being estimated as 40% of the people taking shelter in relief camps as all districts have not reported children desegregated data for relief camps

districts. This roster has been activated to assess existing relief camps and recommend corrective actions, to the district administration, for better camp management, led by the DDMAAs.

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF will prioritize services to children affected by floods, especially those in relief camps. The Emergency Management Team of Assam Field Office met on 28 May 2020 where sectoral anticipated response strategies were discussed and agreed. UNICEF sector specialists are now supporting their government counterparts in guiding sectoral response based on preparedness actions already taken. Due to the partnership established before floods, CSO partner Rural Volunteer Centre (RVC) has worked with DDMAAs of Majuli and Dhemaji to establish 5 model relief camps (all camps that came into existence in these two districts in the second wave of the flood). This experience has also been documented.

In the current situation, as new camps have come up, UNICEF partner Rural Volunteer Centre is supporting District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAAs) of Dhemaji and Majuli in the relief camp management, including the operation of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS). Currently these two districts have 9 camps with 466 people including 145 children. UNICEF's technical support also enabled DDMAAs of many flood-affected districts to operate CFS in relief camps. Initial estimates by ASDMA suggest that around 7 flood-affected districts operated CFS in the current wave of floods catering to over 400 children in June, while data on the operation of CFS in the current wave is awaited. UNICEF has also activated sector consultants for assessing relief camps and is supporting real-time monitoring by sectoral departments to review their response and issuance of subsequent instructions.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response (by Government and technical assistance by UNICEF)

UNICEF Sector Specialists/Officers are working with department teams to assess the situation and respond as required. A brief overview of the initial observations is as follows:

Health

The sector is at the front of the response to COVID-19. 146 sub-centres have been reported to be affected by floods so far. The Health Department is continuing the COVID-19 response through the 2nd phase of the Community Surveillance Program and Infectious disease outbreak. The pre-positioning of ORS-Zinc tablets has been integrated into this surveillance activity. No major disease outbreak has been reported to date. UNICEF Sector Specialist is coordinating with NHM to provide necessary technical support in ensuring health measures outlined in the SOP for Relief Camp Management and Guideline for CFS in the COVID-19 context. The sector has also identified consultants and partners who will be oriented to provide technical support in relief camp monitoring.

Nutrition

Anganwadi centers have been inundated although they are already closed due to ongoing lockdown due to COVID 19. On 13th July, Nagaon DDMA has reported full submergence of 17 while partial submergence of 17 Anganwadi centres. Similarly, Sivasagar district has reported submergence of 53 Anganwadi centres. The cumulative figures will be known once the flood recedes and the department undertakes a detailed assessment. Nutrition services were disrupted due to the COVID-19 outbreak which will be further affected. Gratuitous Relief (dry ration) has been distributed in relief camps and through relief distribution centers. Between May 22- July 7, 34,082.08 quintals of rice, 6,906.62 quintals of dal, 1,815.80 quintals of salt, 57,322.78 litres of master oil, other items such as baby food etc has been distributed to the flood-affected people by the government⁴. Nutrition Sector in UNICEF is coordinating with the Social Welfare department to assess the situation at hand and explore the need and possibility for support. The sector is supporting the department in keeping track of any instances of the IMS Act violation and facilitating appropriate action by the department. To further prevent violation of the IMS act, UNICEF facilitated the issuance of advisories from both Dept of Social Welfare and NHM Assam. The advisories focus on reinforcing optimal Infant feeding practices during floods and reinforce the implementation of the IMS act during flood season and in the context of COVID19. Further, the sector has worked with the Department of Social Welfare and partner district administrations in supporting the capacity building of district and sub-district staff on flood response on 25th June 2020, which has helped in rolling out the response on the ground rapidly. In addition, the nutrition Sector has reached out to two partners, including academic and CSO partners to support monitoring of flood response in two districts.

WASH

As reported by Public Health Engineering Department on 2nd July 2020 (initial estimates), 1154 Spot Sources (mainly hand tube well), 30 Piped Water Supply Schemes (PWSS) and 17967 Individual Household Toilets (IHHL) have been affected by floods. Public Health Engineering Department has so far installed 51 spot sources in relief camps and other areas where people are taking shelter. 370 spot sources have been disinfected and 68,800 drinking water pouches have been distributed in the affected areas. 25 452 chemical packets and 311,561 halogen tablets have also been distributed among the affected communities.

UNICEF is coordinating with the department to assess the situation. DRR and WASH sectors have worked with the PHED for building the capacity of district and sub-district staff on flood response on 5th and 12th June 2020 reaching 199 officials from district and sub-district level. Further support was also provided on the issuance of supporting GO compiling and synthesizing the roles and standards of the department as per different manuals and guidelines. The UNICEF sector specialist has worked with PHED to ensure WASH parameters/ standards as mentioned in the "Guidelines in the relief Camp

⁴ Cumulative (22nd May, 2020 till 07th July 2020) data based on Situation Report by MHA, Gol dated 7th July
<https://www.ndmindia.nic.in/images/gallery/Sitrep%20Report%20as%20on%2007.07.2020%20at%202000%20Hrs.pdf>

Viz-a Viz flood and COVID-19” have been rolled out in the districts. Further, depending upon need support will be provided to PHED for relief camp management monitoring for WASH access. The sector will continue supporting the PHED, for accurate loss and damage reporting. The sector will also work with partners to address communications on safe WASH in the relief camps and CFS supplies to address water purification and disease control. Further, 365 master trainers were trained on COVID and Flood response on 9th July who will in-turn train Swachhagrahis (WASH) in the district which will provide surge support to the department to deliver essential WASH services to flood-affected communities.

Education

Schools have been inundated in many districts. On 13th July, inundation/damage to schools were reported from Lakhimpur (3), Golaghat (14), Majuli (53), Udalguri (5) and Sivasagar (14). As schools are already closed due to the COVID related lockdown, there is no direct disruption of education services attributed to floods. However, school Mid-day Meal and e-learning services have been affected due to the floods. The department is proposing to undertake to assess the situation of schools to respond more efficiently. A review meeting has been conducted by the department including UNICEF to discuss the disruptions caused. Further, UNICEF was requested to support the monitoring of the situation and developing an appropriate response plan. As a response, an orientation was conducted of all district level heads of the department on flood preparedness and actions to be initiated. A strategic response plan for flood preparedness and response at the state level has been developed along with advocacy for teacher deployment in relief camps to support children. The response has been reviewed by the department Principal Secretary on 3rd July, including the sharing of initiatives and challenges by district-level education authorities. A follow up meeting with the Education department took place on 8 July 2020, where UNICEF highlighted critical areas of focus for the department and pushed for teacher deployment in all relief camps as a mandatory measure. A letter has been issued to all Deputy Commissioners with approval from Chief Secretary on 13th July, 2020 to address deployment of teachers in relief camps for operating child friendly spaces along with other areas as advocated by UNICEF.

Child Protection

As families had to abandon their homes due to the sudden onset of the flood, their exposure to protection risks increased. Still, a large number of affected people are beyond the camp purview and hence beyond formal monitoring channels. Further safety and security monitoring have become difficult as roads are disrupted.

So far, there are no reports of childcare institutions getting affected from the flood-affected districts. The Sector is coordinating with multiple CP related departments and agencies within the government. Further, the sector will work with Police Department to ensure security parameters as mentioned in the “Guidelines in the relief Camp Viz-a Viz COVID-19” and also for increased vigilance of the nearest transport points to identify the movement of both accompanied and unaccompanied children. The sector will also work with the office of Commissioner Disability and State Child Protection Society (SCPS) and relevant District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) to ensure Special arrangements for Children, women, physically challenged and elderly parameters of the relief camp guidelines.

Social Policy

The Social Policy Sector has started assessing the reach of the MGNREGA Scheme amongst vulnerable families in the select Gaon Panchayats in the flood-affected districts of Goalpara, Lakhimpur, and Biswanath Chariali districts. Further, it will collaborate with P&RD based on the assessments to ensure that the livelihood options for the families are available.

Safety and Security

With new forecasts for heavy rainfall for the next few days, water levels will again increase in places where water had started receding. Guwahati (the state capital city) has been locked down since 29th June till 19th July. A weekend lockdown has been imposed in all urban areas of the state (under Urban Local Bodies) and night curfew has been imposed throughout the state from 7 PM to 7 AM. Official Travel restrictions are in place for all UN personnel.



Image 1: Flood situation in Barpeta district as on 11th July 2020. (Source: IAG Assam)

Image 2: Anganwadi Worker conducting recreational activities with children in a CFS in the Dhemaji district on 11th July 2020. (Source: RVC)



Image 3: An ASHA conducting hygiene promotion activities with children in Lakhimpur district. (Source: IAG Assam)



Image 4: CFS in a relief camp in Dibrugarh. (Source: District Administration)

UNICEF India: <https://www.unicef.org/india/>

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