

#### SITUATION IN NUMBERS

- On 3rd July 2020, 1,326,815 people including an estimated 530,726 children have been affected by flood in 20 of 33 districts of Assam. Among the affected districts, District Barpeta is the worst hit with 741,458 (55.88%) people affected.
- The number of flood-affected districts has reduced to 20 from 25 districts from 29 June to 3 July 2020. Though the situation has improved in the Upper Assam districts such as Dibrugarh and Dhemaji, it has worsened in the Lower Assam districts such as Barpeta and Goalpara.
- Indian Meteorological Department has further predicted continued heavy rainfall in Assam and other NE states for the next few days
- Usually, widespread floods are reported in Assam towards July end. This year there has been an early onset of flooding, and a majority of districts have been affected. However, there is a possibility of another round of intensive flooding towards the end of July or the beginning of September
- Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, conventional flood preparedness measures like repairing and restoration of embankments by the local administration could not be completed. This is one of the main reasons for the rapid spread of floods in many districts.
- Community and family level preparedness such as repairing of houses, stockpiling, etc were also affected in the vulnerable areas due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19. This has impacted the coping abilities of these communities and aggravated their vulnerabilities to the impact of floods.
- 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. Presently, there are 92 relief camps in 11 districts catering to 11,741 people
- UNICEF in partnership with Civil society Organisations has demonstrated camp management as per guidelines in two districts covering five camps. This demonstration is providing insights to other DDMAs to implement these guidelines.
- For managing surge needs, UNICEF supported the Government of Assam in mobilizing and training 10,000 Community Volunteers (Pratirodhi Bondhu). Along with COVID-19, these volunteers were also trained on their role in relief camp management. These volunteers are providing support to DDMAs in camp management and relief distribution maintaining physical distancing to ensure that flood response reaches the affected people both within and outside the relief camps.
- All UNICEF sectors have been coordinating with respective government departments providing necessary technical support as per need. A sectoral response strategy has been developed. Timely technical support has been provided in preparing preparedness plans and in building capacities of functionaries of Education, Social welfare (nutrition), and Public Health Engineering (WASH) departments to respond to floods which have 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 CSO partner staff have been trained in providing technical assistance during the flood. They have now been activated for monitoring relief camps.

### 4 July 2020

**714**

# of children in relief camps

(Source: Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Daily Flood SitRep, 03-07-2020. Total 6 of 11 districts with 8636 of 11741 inmates in 64 of 92 camps have not reported desegregated number of children in camps)

**11,741**

# of people displaced due to floods and are taking shelter in 92 relief camps in 11 of the 20 affected districts

(Source: Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Daily Flood SitRep, 03-07-2020)

**530,726**

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

**1,326,815** (20 Districts, 49 Revenue Circles)

# of people affected by flood

(Source: Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Daily Flood SitRep, 03-07-2020)

## Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Following heavy rainfall since 20th June 2020, the water level in the River Brahmaputra and its tributaries is flowing above the danger level. Consequently, embankments in several districts were breached leading to the current wave of floods. As per the Assam State Disaster Management Authority's (ASDMA) Flood Report[1] dated 3rd July 2020, 1,326,815 people from 1636 villages of 49 Revenue Circles (Taluks) across 20 districts are affected by the floods. Based on the extrapolation of Census 2011 figures, it is estimated that 530,726 children are affected.

At present, 92 relief camps have been set up in 11 of the 20 affected districts. 11,741 people have taken shelter in these relief camps out of which 530,726 (estimated) are children. 1189 people were rescued on 3rd July by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams as they were stranded in flood.

Though flooding in this period of the year is common in the state, this widespread scale of flood in late June is not usual. Since, COVID-19 pandemic delayed certain conventional preparedness measures by the government as well as by communities in the pre-monsoon period, coping with the current flood has proved difficult for many vulnerable communities. For children, it has multiplied the stress, as they were already undergoing much due to the impacts of COVID-19. As the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA) process is undergoing, initial observations are indicating towards enormous 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 still not resorted to relief camps and are taking shelter on roads, embankments, raised platforms, and other higher grounds without basic amenities and support services. Presently, only 0.88% of the affected people are in relief camps. Other than relief camps, local administration is also operating relief distribution centers to provide essential gratuitous relief to those who are beyond the coverage of relief camps.

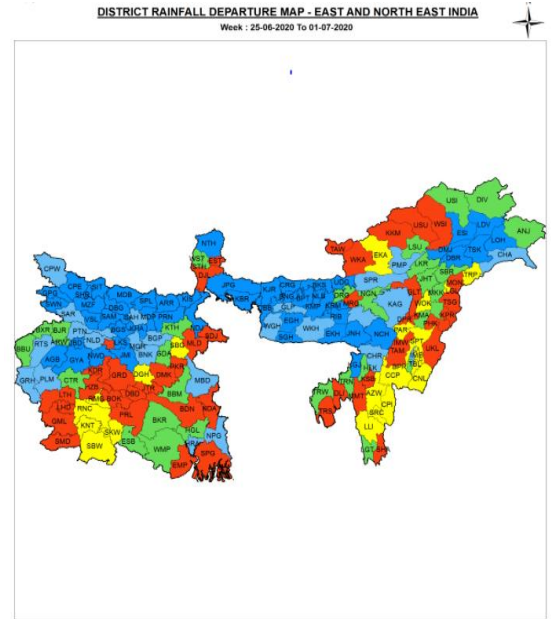
## Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

UNICEF is actively coordinating with Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Inter-Agency Group, and other sectoral Civil Society Organization (CSO) partners and networks to monitor the situation. UNICEF has supported Inter-Agency Group (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 initiated the JRNA on 1st July 2020. This is the first JRNA in which the data collection process is fully digitalized.

Before the onset of floods, UNICEF has taken leadership 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 Bandhus) in May 2020, they are currently deployed by DDMA to support in relief camp management in affected districts. 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 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 DDMA.

## 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 partnership established before floods, CSO partner Rural Volunteer Centre worked with DDMA of Majuli and Dhemaji to establish 5 model relief camps (all camps that came into existence in these two districts in the current wave of the flood) which catered to around 400 people including 100 children. This model is currently being documented for wider sharing with all DDMA. UNICEF's technical support also enabled DDMA of many flood-affected districts to operate Child-Friendly Spaces in relief camps. Initial estimates by ASDMA suggest that around 7 flood-affected districts operated Child-Friendly Spaces in the current wave of floods catering to around 2000 children[2]. UNICEF is also supporting real-time monitoring by sectoral departments to review their response and issuance of subsequent instructions. One such meeting with the Education department took place on 3rd July, where UNICEF highlighted critical areas of focus for the department and pushed for teacher deployment in all relief camps as a mandatory measure.



Weekly rainfall map for east and NE India (25 June-1st July, 2020)  
(Source- Indian Meteorological Department)

## 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. Presently, there is no detailed information on the number of health centers affected by floods. However, multiple Wards in Dibrugarh city have been inundated. 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. As per ASDMA's flood report (25-06-20)[3], 14 Anganwadi Centres in the Sivasagar district are reported affected. Further, one more has been reported on 3rd July[4]. 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. 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 will be supporting the department in keeping track of any instances of the IMS Act violation and will be 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.

### 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 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,

### Education

Schools have been inundated in many districts. 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. Corrective instructions have been issued following this review.

### 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 29 June till 12 July. 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: Teachers conducting recreational activities with children in CFS in the Nalbari district. (Source: ASDMA)



Image 2: Teachers conducting hygiene promotion activities with children in a CFS in Golaghat district. (Source: ASDMA)



Image 3: Teachers conducting recreational activities with children in CFS in the Majuli district. (Source: RVC)



Image 4: ANM and other staff return to duty in a Sub-Centre which was inundated in flood for 4 days in Darrang district. (Source: IAG Assam)

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Who to contact for further information:

**Dr. Madhulika Jonathan**  
Chief of Field Office  
UNICEF State Office for Assam  
Mob: +9435049790  
Email: [mjonathan@unicef.org](mailto:mjonathan@unicef.org)

**Sweta Patnaik**  
WASH Specialist & Emergency  
Focal Point  
UNICEF State Office for Assam  
Mob: 91 9717894435  
Email: [spatnaik@unicef.org](mailto:spatnaik@unicef.org)

**Anand Kanoo**  
DRR Officer  
UNICEF State Office for Assam  
Mob: +91 6900524478  
Email: [akanoo@unicef.org](mailto:akanoo@unicef.org)

**Purvi Malhotra**  
Communications Specialist  
UNICEF State Office for Assam  
Mob: +91 9810039283  
Email: [pmalhotra@unicef.org](mailto:pmalhotra@unicef.org)