



---

## Community Approach to Flood Management Implementation Phase – Nepal

Field Report Presented to  
Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS), Nepal  
By  
Rajendra Pandit – Sociologist  
Ram Chandra Dangal – River Engineer

The eastern Terai of Nepal was severely affected due to the flood caused by heavy rainfall from July 6 to 13, 2004. As we came across the news of flood inundation on more than 90 VDCs including Banjaraha VDC of Rautahat district through electronic media i.e. radio and television as well as print media due to the heavy rainfall since July 6, 2004 onwards, We got prepared to move at Banjaraha VDC, our manual test project VDC, to provide some support for flood victims through JVS. But due to flood, the eastern highway portion was damaged and isolated from the capital Kathmandu. On the way due to interruptions of highway roads at Mugling Narayanghat portion, bridge damaged near Heatauda and Chandranighapur, a portion of Chandranighapur to Gaur road was breached at Shivanagar and similarly, the causeway at Subgadaha within Gaur municipality was also broken. So that it took 3 days to arrive at our project area, Banjaraha VDC from the capital.

Before departure for the field, we were in close contact with our social mobilizer about the flood situation of the project site and received required information through telephone as well as other sources. When the flood situation reached in normal, we left for project site and reached Gaur, head quarter of Rautahat, on July 15,2004.

In the same day, informal discussion were carried out with the stakeholders like Red Cross and others regarding the flood damaged, rescue and distribution of relief materials to flood victims. In the same discussion the Red Cross authority informed us that they have developed criteria for the relief package to victim family and it should be applicable for all the flood victims within the district for the social justice. About 90 VDCs were flood affected which is very big for one single GO/NGO to solve the problem immediately after flood. The stakeholders of the district have been focusing only on the physical relief materials distribution. During discussion, we felt that they are expecting it from our organization too. Thus, we found that they are not convincing to our concept of CFMC and their strengthening. And it is also informed us that they have set a criteria for those VDCs/areas in which a GO/NGO has been involved in flood relief, no other organizations are allowed for the same purpose to maintain uniformity.

Meanwhile, we sent the message through our social mobilizer to gather the committee members and other community at the site for a discussion meeting next day.

The next day, our team including Engineer, Sociologist and Social mobilizer moved to Banjaraha VDC early in the morning on foot. By wearing half-pants and slipper as per suggestion of our social mobilizer, we forwarded to the VDC. On the way, we saw loam covered on the flood plain of Lal Bakaiya River. Due to 1-1.5 feet loam covered on the village road trail on which our foot palm was punched on the land, we took off our slipper and forwarded with barefoot. After one and half hours walking we reached at the left bank of Lal Bakaiya River, then we crossed the river by boat. It was found that the boatman, who is one of the members of the flood management committee, was involved in the rescue operation using with his own boat while the village was in flooding.

When we arrived in the primary school near about the center for the villagers, Flood management committee members as well as other villagers including flood victims have been presented there. We met the six families who are living as flood victims in the same school with their cattle. We were informed that,



the houses of those six families were completely damaged due to the flood. About three hours meeting was conducted with their full participation. During the meeting, we found more information on pre-flood preparedness, during flood rescue operation and post flood activities that the newly formed CFMC performed.

The following activities performed by the newly formed Community Flood Management Committee (CFMC)

***Pre-flood preparedness activities carried by CFMC:***

1. The previously formed ad-hoc committee finalized the sample constitution amendments appropriately by cluster wise meeting and discussion.
2. The main CFMC has been formed on June 15, 2004, according to the amendments constitution. While formation of main CFMC some significant personality have been participated. Such personalities are ex VDC Chairman, VDC Secretary and Assistant Technician of the VDC, School Management Committee Chairman, and Chairman of Nepal Red Cross Society Village branch Banjaraha etc. Thus, The newly elected committee members of the CFMC are as follows:

Chairman	Mr. Grisnandan Kumar Singh	-Ward no. 4
Vice-chairman	Mr. Jiyalal Baitha	-Ward no. 5
Secretary	Mr. Intajar Khan Paithan	-Ward no. 1
Joint Secretary	Mr. Abadha kishor Singh	-Ward no. 2
Treasurer	Mr. Jayaram Shah Baniya	-Ward no. 5
Member	Mr. Pradeep Kumar Singh	-Ward no. 8
Member	Mr. Surendra Mahara Chamar	-Ward no. 8
Member	Mr. Tahir Khan Paithan	-Ward no. 1
Member	Mr. Harendra Shah Kanu	-Ward no. 5
Member	Mr. Ramadhar Sahani	-Ward no. 4
Member	Miss. Siya Devi	-Ward no. 2

In the same community general assembly, three members co-ordination committee has also formed to assist main CFMC in each ward.

The main CFMC has registered under Water Resource Act; however, the certificate of registration is yet to be received. The authority was informed CFMC to held meeting for certification on July 11, 2004. However, it is blocked due to flooding during that time in the whole area. But it is expected to receive certificate of registration soon.

3. In the same meeting, they decided to operate Bank account with joint signature of Chairman and Secretary of CFMC.
4. The meeting has also decided to organize advisory committee to advise CFMC as per requirement.

In the next executive meeting, held on June 20, 2004, the following decisions have been made:

1. In this meeting the committee has decided to operate Bank account in joint signature of Chairman and Treasurer instead of Chairman and Secretary decided previously on general assembly.
2. The meeting has decided to fill risk assessment form by collecting the name list and related information. In this decisions, the executive committee members have expected from all the members to co-operate for collection of materials like foods, clothes, tents, other related materials and management of a boat which would be used for pre-flood preparedness.
3. One decision has been made about time interval for executive committee meeting. According to this decision, monthly meeting from April-May to September-October would be hold and bi-monthly



meeting would be hold for the remaining time. But additional meeting would also be hold whenever it is necessary.

4. In one decision, CFMC Office was proposed to put at sub-health post of Banjaraha VDC.
5. In one of the decision, they have decided to request all the related organization including JVS for getting support on flood fighting materials.

In the executive meeting, held on June 27, 2004, the following decision has been made:

1. In this meeting, they have decided to operate the bank account at the national commercial bank (Rastriya Banijya Bank, Gaur shakha), Gaur Branch

They have collected the information of their village those are in risk. In the previous visit, we had oriented them to go ahead through the finalized community flood management manual. We had also practiced them to fill up the risk assessment form-1 presented in the manual. However, they were filled it, which is attached herewith. A small fund is collected with the community members to mobilize the committee. These above mentioned all activities shows the satisfactory functioning of the committee at the initial stage regarding the pre-flood preparedness.

#### ***During flood Activities:***

As reported by CFMC members and local community people, Flooding in the area was started at 8.00 PM on July 6, 2004. Ground floor of houses was inundated about 1-2 feet. In the periphery of houses, it was inundated about 2-3 feet and similarly it was inundated 3-6 feet in the cultivated field in an average. This inundation was continued up to July 13, 2004 fluctuating up and down the level of water every day 1-1.5 feet. At July 13, 2004 night, the ring bund of international boarder between India and Nepal was broken at three location (380 ft at south-east, 100 ft at south and 150 ft at south-west of the village). Then after, flood depth was rapidly recessed as reported by committee members. As reported by the committee members as well as key informants, the flood has inundated the area for 7 days long (may stay for several other days if the ring bond was not broken), which was occurred such large flood after 50 years.

The Police announced warning message for impending flood with mike within Gaur municipality. But, no warning was arranged in Banjaraha area. However, they were aware themselves by hearing the radio report of the weather. The entire district was affected due to the flood at a time. Hence, there was no possibility to assess in the whole flood affected area by the outsider for the purpose of support to flood victims. As recommendation suggested in the manual prepared by JVS as well as the motivation done through the JVS personnel before the flood, the CFMC members were found aware in the matter and convinced that CFMC committee itself could be prepared during flood situation for flood fighting. As a consequence, the CFMC members have made optimum effort in rescue and operation during flood and saves life and property effectively as reported by the community.

In this flooding duration, total ten people of the area were died. Two of them (Kanchan Kumari 2 years old and Sabil khan 30 years old) were washed away with the flood. And the remaining eight were died due to inaccessibility of hospital for the immediate treatment of other diseases.

Though outsiders would not go there for help, the main CFMC members and coordination committee members from each ward were participated in rescue operation. One member of the main committee with his own boat was fully participated to rescue the people whose houses was being damaged during flood time. They had shifted many families from hazard area to safe area as reported by them. We found the six families living in the school at the time of visit whose houses were completely damaged.

#### ***Post flood activities:***

Immediately after the flood recession, The CFMC was found worked as follows:



- They prepared the list of damaged property by filling the form-2 provided in CFMC manual.
- They helped to distribute the VDC received relief packages (dry foods) equitably.
- They wrote a letter to DNDRC (District Natural Disaster Relief Committee) for getting the relief packages. This shows establishment of linkage of CFMC with the stakeholders, which we motivated them through manual.
- They demanded the medicine at District Health Office by writing letter.
- They made the health assistance of their village functional and active because he is also elected as the ward coordination committee member.
- They took photographs of damaged houses, which are attached herewith.
- A meeting was conducted on July 17, 2004 with us (JVS personnel- Engineer, sociologist and social mobilizer). In this meeting CFMC executive members as well as about 30 people of the community were participated. At the start of the meeting, we took the information how and to what extent they coped with pre, during and post flood situation. Then after we informed them about the support of thirty thousand rupees to CFMC through JVS immediately. And we discussed how it could be used, what are their presents essential needs that is must. However, they decided to keep the thirty thousand with the CFMC treasure Mr. Jayaram Shah and put in the bank immediately after operation of the account. In the meeting, one another decision has been made on the preparedness of next impending flood to buy some relief materials namely commander torch 2 nos., large size Umbrella 2 nos., Tents large size 2 nos., rice 200 kg, and necessary stationeries and stored them in the CFMC office. Finally in the last agenda, they decided to demand medicine for primary treatment from District Health Office Guar.

***The immediate physical needs that they requested us are mentioned below:***

- One private boat, which they have used during that flood, could not sufficient for the immediate rescue operation. Therefore, the CFMC preferred to have at least two boats with them as CFMC's property for flood fighting and rescue operation.
- The project area is out of telecommunication facility thus; the CFMC felt great need of four number of mobile phone. If so, these phones will be kept in the convenient four locations of the area, which might be eased to communicate within the community as well as district level stakeholders at headquarter and outsiders during flood time. Due to unavailability of communication facility, they could not get warning message of that impending flood. Thus, these phones can also be useful for flood forecasting and warning purpose for impending flood.
- The community felt that very uncomfortable due to lack of latrines in the high lands especially to the women, children, old age and sick people during flooding. Hence, 10 nos. latrines are very essential to make at high land.
- They felt need to have some pipe tube-wells in high land because all the tube wells were submerged in the last flood and the recession of flood also tube-well water got polluted due to the flood water.
- Because of the lacking of multi-story permanent RCC building within the area, the community need felt strongly to have a multi-story and multi purpose (VDC office, Health post, Red Cross, School, Training Hall etc) community building within the convenient location of the area linking with raised village trail which can be used as a flood shelter during flood time.

***Conclusion and Recommendations:***

Based on the discussion with CFMC members as well as community, the following need based conclusion and recommendations are drawn for the community who want to support them.



- 
- Boating, swimming, running, first aid, drinking water after purification etc. trainings are must for CFMC officials & ward wise co-ordination committee members.
  - For the institutional development of CFMC, account keeping and appropriate office management trainings are essential.
  - Resource generation based trainings should be provided to CFMC officials as well as community for building their self-help capability.
  - Minimum three-year financial and other material support to CFMC is must for the sustainability of CFMC.
  - In the context of Nepal, the mobile phones are very expensive. Hence, community could not afford to use year round. Therefore, firstly mobile phones arrangement should be done from the outsider's help only for the rainy season use. In the other hand, if the community is interested, these phones can be used as an income generation by using public call to the community in the remaining time, which could make up the initial cost within one year.
  - At least two boats should be provided to CFMC for flood fighting and rescue operation.
  - Some latrines should be made in the high lands especially to the women, children, old age and sick people during flooding.
  - Some pipe tube-wells should be installed in high land.
  - A multi-story and multi purpose (VDC office, Health post, RED CROSS, School, Training Hall etc) community building having basic infrastructure should be made within the convenient location of the area linking with raised village trail.
  - Introduction of Community Approaches to Flood Management concept within the GO/NGOs stakeholder should be highlighted compulsorily. This approach can be made efficient by organizing National level seminar and workshop involving concerned government and non-government organizations.