

## Rural Development and Recent Flood Relief in Kushmandi Block of Dakshin Dinajpur District (West Bengal)

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### ABSTRACT

Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor. It is a process, which aims at improving the well being and self realization of people living outside the urbanized areas through collective process. Rural Development is all about bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress. In this paper, it has been mentioned about the meaning of rural development, the reasons for backwardness of the peoples living at Kushmandi Block and the steps taken in the recent flood relief by the government agencies, various non-governmental agencies and other sources in a lucid manner.

### WHAT IS RURAL DEVELOPMENT?

There is no universally accepted definition of rural development. Definition of rural development may be given from various view points. It may mean the development of life quality of rural people. It means Economic, Socio-cultural and technological development of rural people. In brief, rural development is a process of development of life style and livelihood of rural people.

Rural development may be defined as overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of rural. It is an integrated process, which includes social, Economical, Political and Spiritual development of the proper Section of the society.

According to Robert chambers, rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more for what they want and need. It involves helping poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more the benefits of rural developments. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and landless.

The United Nations defines Rural Development as: "Rural Development is a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions of communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme."

### ABOUT THE DISTRICT OF DAKSHIN DINAJPUR

West Dinajpur District was created out of the erstwhile dinajpur district in 1947 at the time of partition of India. The rest of the dinajpur district is now in Bangladesh. The west dinajpur district was enlarged in 1956 at the time of reorganization of the state with the addition of some areas of Bihar. The district was bifurcated into Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur on 01.04.1992. The erstwhile Balurghat sub-

division along with Banshihari and kushmandi Block (Which were in Raiganj sub-division prior to the bifurcation) comprise the new district.

The district is drained by a number of north south flowing rivers like Atreyee, Punarbhaba, Tangon, Brahmani and Tulsi. It is predominantly an agricultural district with large area of land being under Cultivation.

Dakhshin Dinajpur is a "non-Industry" district having no large scale Industry. The first industry in medium scale sector got off to a start in the district in November, 2003. Transport and Communication facilities are not very Satisfactory. New railway line has been laid between Eklakhi and Balurghat the district headquarter. Train Services has been started on 30.12.2004. There is one state Highway with only 3 KM of national Highway no 34 falling with in district. Bengali is the principle language of the district, the principle communities are Hindus and Muslims and they constitute major portion of the population.

In 2006 the ministry of Panchyat Raj named Dakshin Dinajpur one of the country's 250 most backward districts (out of a total of 640) It is one of the eleven districts in west Bengal currently receiving funds from the backward Regions Grant Fund programme (BRGF).

Dakshin Dinajpur or South Dinajpur is a district of the Indian state of west Bengal. Created on 1st April 1992 by the division of erstwhile west dinajpur district. The district headquarters Sadar of district is situated at Balurghat. It Comprises two sub-divisions: Balurghat and Gangarampur. As of 2011 it was the least populous district of west Bengal (out of 19)

### LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Dakshin Dinajpur Spreads across 2162sq.kms of land. It lies cushioned between Bangladesh on its east and south and

Uttar Dinajpur or its north. To its west lies Uttar Dinajpur district and a part of its southern border lies adjacent to Malda district.

Latitude: 26 deg 35'15" N-25deg 10'55"N  
 Longitude: 89 deg 00'30" E-87deg 48'37"E  
 Geographical Area: 2162sq.km

**ABOUT KUSHMANDI BLOCK**

Kushmandi (Community Development Block) is an Administrative Division in Gangarampur Subdivision of Dakshin Dinajpur district in the Indian state of West Bengal. Kushmandi Block of Dakshin Dinajpur is working under the rural development programme. The concern Block receiving and adopted the several development programmes of both the state and central government such as TRYSEM, NREP, RLEGP, JRY, MNREGS, and others associates programmes. This block is composed with 8 Gram Panchayats. Its area is 310.50 square km, total population is 1,75,086 lakhs. Out of these the 89130 people are male members and the 85956 people are female members. As per (2011) Census the total Number of literates in Kushmandi Block is 1,33,240 out of which 62611 (55.29%) were males and 50,629(44.71%) were females. Near about 78 percent people are took agriculture as their profession No other scholar have explored on this topic. I think the research work on the topic will explore a new path in the process of rural development not only in the particular study areas but also in the country as a whole.

**REASON FOR BACKWARDNESS OF KUSHMANDI BLOCK IN THE DISTRICT OF DAKSHIN DINAJPUR**

Rural development is a dynamic process, which is mainly concerned with the rural areas. These include- Agricultural growth, putting up of economic and social infrastructure, fair wages as also housing and house sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, communication etc. But a lot of reasons are responsible to achieve all these features in the said block because of the following reasons:

1. Dakshin Dinajpur is an agricultural district. In this district ancient process of cultivation is maintained and the growing of production of crop lags behinds development still. Farmers often face to the loss of finance here; though scientific process or modern process of cultivation is being maintained is some portion of this district now.
2. The area under irrigation is only 34%. A large part of the district is flood or inundation-prone. The major portion of the annual precipitation is during a very short span between July and September causing inundation and flash flood.

3. Poverty is one of the main obstacles of this district to be developed. Most of the people of this district are involved in agriculture. As a result economic development is falling down.
4. The railways and aviation facilities are still not there though railways connectivity is expected to be in place soon. By road to Kolkata is nearly 10 hours and to Siliguri is nearly 8 hours -both the thoughts have very depressing impression.
5. The main crop is paddy in this district. But to cultivate it now becomes expensive and turning into loss in cultivation. The farmers getting the just price of paddy and becoming disorder to plough it. Alternatively the cultivation of jute is growing but the jute industry in the state is also gradually declining.
6. The people of this district are not interested in the debut of industry. In this district has not available engineering industries and also mineral reserve. The modern industries like software technology and biotechnology are a far cry as the district cannot provide logistic and technical manpower support. Only a few enterprising people have so far ventured outside the traditional rice mill and oil mill sectors.
7. There is only one state highway (Road No. 10, A). It goes from Balurghat to Malda district and then it connects Uttar Dinajpur district.
8. This district is also under development in education. There is not well arrangement of lessons in school and colleges. Enough schools and colleges lack here. There is or University.

**CAUSES OF FLOOD AT KUSHMANDI BLOCK IN THE DISTRICT OF DAKSHIN DINAJPUR**

Excessive rain and landslide, Tangan and Tulai river caused terrible inundation of Kushmandi block. The water of Teesta, Torsa, Kulik Rivers started to enter into this area. As a result flood into a great Shape the water of Tangan and Tulai River over flowed canals, Kegs, Barrels of the area. The condition of the area shaped into an extreme disaster. Same flood had come into this area thirty years ago 13-08-1987.

**FLOOD AFFECTED AREA AND RELIEF**

Government, Various Non Governmental organizations had stretched their hands to help flood stricken people of Kushmandi Block. Common people also came to them that is not forgettable. Undoubtedly without the help of common people government could not control the Situation. People were shaken heartily with the deplorable condition of the areas. It is memorable that common people of that area collected rice, bread hotchpotch to serve among themselves.

**Statement showing the damage done by natural calamities such as floods, drought, rains, hail storms, heat wave etc. measures taken for relief of distress:**

1	Name of the District	Dakshin Dinajpur
2	Name of the Calamity	Flood all over the Kushmandi Block
3	Date & Time of occurrence	13.08.2017
4	No & Name of Block affected	Kushmandi Development Office
5	No.& Name of G.P. & Municipalities affected	8 GPs ( 5 fully affected & 3 partially affected)
6	No. of Village/ Ward affected	231 Mouza

7	No. of people affected	1 Lakhs 75 thousands		
8	No. of Human Life Lost	NIL		
9	(a) No. of Cattle /Livestock lost: (b) Value	.....		
10	(a) Crop damage ( in Hactor)	Aman +Veg 18192 Ha		
	(b) Loss of Crop ( in M.T )	.....		
11	Value of Damaged crop ( RS. In Lakh)	.....		
12	No. Of House damaged/ destroyed	Fully	Partly	Severely
		Apx. 6690 9 field level enquiry ongoing )	Apx. 3955 ( field level enquiry ongoing )	1610 ( field level enquiry ongoing 0
13	Damaged to properties other than crops & house (in RS.)	Snake bite – 22 nos. ( 1 referred to Raiganj, 20 treated and released ) but 1 no. of person death ( Harirampur Block ), wall collapsed – 5 but 4 treated and released 1 death, Andashu Hembram, S/O- Bajar Hambram, Balarampur ( Udaypur GP ), Electrocutation- 2 ( 2 treated and released ) , drowned -2 but 1 treated and released & 1 dead , Mahendra Sarkar of Lohaganj. 1 child of Dakshin Karanjee died of diarrhoea.		
14	No. of Relief Camps opened	57		
15	No. Of People in Relief Camps / Shelters	Approx 14500 families ,(apx 58000 people )		
16	No. Of Gruel Kitchen opened	63		
17	No. Of Persons rescued	58000		
18	No. Of Boats deployed for evacuation	10 & one speed boat ( no need for boat at present; speed boat sent to Harirampur block)		
19	No. Of Medical Teams deployed	30 in all S.C		
20	No. Of Cattle Camps opened	7 (2- Mligaon GP, Karanjee GP, 2- Udaypur GP. & 1 – Kalikamora GP.) But at present all Centres are non-functioning.		
21	No. Of Cattle in Camps	Approx 26469 cattles treated and released.		
22	Total Loss (9+11+12+13)	135 Qntrs, Chira, 2030 Kg Gur, 15488 pcs of Tarpauline, 159000 pcs of pauch water distributed . Relief materials were also distributed by political parties, NGOs, business organisation, local clubs & other organisations . In 63 gruel kitchen food was also provided with school MDM RICE & other allotment		
23	No. of Relief Measures taken			

(Report collected from Office of the Block Development Officer, Government of West Bengal, Kushmandi Block, Dakshin Dinajpur, From CA- II, Cumulative Report as on 20/09/2017)

#### Preliminary report of Inundation due to heavy rainfall & overflow “Tangan” and “Tulai” river occurred on 11th. To 12th August 2017 at Kushmandi block

Sr. No.	Name of G.P affected	No. of Mouza affected	Aman paddy (in ha.)	Vegetable (in ha.)	Total area affected (approx.) in ha.
1	Akcha	30	2150	50	2200
2	Karanjee	23	2405	45	2450
3	Udaypur	30	2850	60	2910
4	Kushmandi	25	2325	75	2400
5	Deul	26	2030	512	2542
6	Beroil	26	2606	294	2900
7	Klikamora	18	2906	94	3000
8	Maligaon	34	2450	100	2550
		212	19722	1230	20952

With reference to the subject cited above, the undersigned sending herewith the preliminary report of inundation due to heavy rainfall & overflow of “Tangan” and “Tulai” River, occurred on 11th to 12th August 2017 at Kushmandi block are as follows:

(Above information collected from the Office of the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal, Kushmandi, Dakshin Dinajpur)

#### Status report on flood situation as on 01.09.2017 up to 5-30 pm Animal Resources Development, Govt. of West Bengal

##### Daily Report of Flood Like Management (Annexure- A)

Dist rict	No of block affected	No of GP affected	Cattle & Buffalo	Sheep & goat	Pigs and others	Poultry & Ducks	No of cattle rescue camp opened	No of animal sheltered at camp	No of cattle death/missing	No of goat/s heep death/missing	No of poultry /Duck death/missing	Total no. Of animal/birds missing
												g+

DAKSHIN DINAJPUR DISTRICT	Hili	5	1200	2700	150	1000	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Balurghat	11	18000	12000	210	35000	2	30	3	0	0	3
	Tapan	11	5000	3000	100	4000	0	0	3	2	118	1233
	Kumarganj	8	8000	18000	2000	25000	0	0	104	212	9903	10219
	Gangarampur	11	10000	6000	959	45000	0	0	12	40	21430	21482
	Banshihari	5	14540	8675	1310	42270	4	195	161	408	2775	3344
	Harirampur	6	14000	11000	500	50000	3	510	30	187	40000	40217
	Kushmandi	8	35000	45000	1750	100000	2	60	7	48	81	136
	Total	65	105740	106375	6979	302270	11	795	320	897	74307	75524

(Above report on the status of Animals during flood, collected from the Office of the Block development Office, Kushmandi. Dakshin Dinajpur)

**Road Damages occurred due to heavy rainfall-cum-flood**

Report of Flood affected Road of Kushmandi Block, collected from the BDO office, Kushmandi Block, dated 14.12.2017.

Name of the Block	Number of affected road	Actual length of damaged portion ( In Km )	Approximate cost Involved ( In Lakhs )
Kushmandi Block	248 ( Include 8 GP )	43.986	563.185

**EFFECTS OF FLOOD**

In the last round of floods in August,2017 families have lost their homes, as well as their agricultural produce, personal valuables and livestock, all of which they depended on for their livelihood. Without access to clean water, food and shelter, flood survivors are particularly vulnerable at this time. Hand

pumps are contaminated with flood water; open defecation and debris have become matters of concern. Stagnant water too poses the risk of water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, malaria and dengue.

**MAJOR RELIEF WORK**



Food packets and drinking water distribution by various NGOs to flood affected peoples



Flood affected area in the Kushmandi Block, picture of Berole Primary School



Medical Camp in the Flood Affected area of the Kushmandi Block arranged by Head Teacher Mr. Bibhas Das, Berole Primary School.



Flood affected area of Kushmandi Block



The Berole F.P School of Kushmandi Circle (East) Bibhas das distributed necessary food and articles to the flood victims of his school area. Dr. Bhaskar rou Janashastro Committee was brought from Kolkata to this area by Bibhas Das to treat helpless flood affected peoples.(31 Aug 2017)

There were Dr. Subbojit Bhattacharjee (General Physician), Dr. Suman Chatterjee (Kalyani Medical College and Hospital) and also six pharmacist M.I. Bangur Hospital in this Medical team. 607 flood affected peoples were treated free of cost from this medical team.

Bibhas Das aided the flood Affected people with his own Amount. He spends 10,700/- .This amount to buy dry food. Five families took shelter in his school.

Khantapara Hindu Milan was also at help for the flood affected area. They gave Support to them in this helpless condition. They collected rice pulse potato and others necessary things and cooked hotchpotch and distributed to the helpless, hungry people. They distributed these to the stricken who took shelter in Jordighi Junior High School and Dasul Primary School. Besides this, they also aided with hotchpotch and drinking water. The people who came to on Mahipal road to take shelter. Though they could not fulfill their Journey with necessary things in compression to excessive demands among themselves. It can be said that they had done so much in this condition of the people who were vary helpless to the nature which can destroy any thing its own play and can make us slave to her this disaster of nature proved that to make us helpless and to destroy fertile land which was suitable for cultivating .

We, some friends and teachers collected 12000 thousand rupees and this amount helped us to buy 1 Quintal , 10 kg beaten rice , 1 Quintal 10 kg parched rice , 40kg molasses and 1200 pouch drinking water ( 21.08.2017) which provided to flood affected people , in 8 No Gram panchayat of Kushmandi block. Block Development Officer of Kushmandi block, Amullya Chandra Sarkar arranged tractor to carry these things were given at Maligaon, Gobrabil, Chandoil village of 8 no, Gram panchayat.

#### Relief Table

Gram panchayat	number of Village
2 No. Karanje G.P	4
3 No Uhaypur	7
7 No Kalikamara	2
8 No. Maligaon	2
9 no. Kushmandi	5

6000 breads, 5 packets beaten rice, 2 packets parched rice, 40 quintal(rice) hotchpotch 8 packets biscuits, Medicine, Polythene, Bleaching powder were distributed in these twenty villages. In this relief team the member of it were thirty. Free Medical Camp was established in some flood affected areas.

#### GOVERNMENTAL HELP

Those people, who had lost their houses for flood, will be given houses under MGNREGS as per government report and also those lands come under damage of crop will be given necessary crops and seeds to affected people from government.

#### HELP OF NGOS

Thirty NGOs come to help the helpless flood affected people. Various dry foods, biscuits, Clothes had been provided to them.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] [www.ddinajpur.nic.in/district profile/district profile. Html](http://www.ddinajpur.nic.in/district%20profile/district%20profile.html)
- [2] The Indian Express 21st August,2017
- [3] Report of Flood Damage collected from the Office of the Block Development , Kushmandi Block, Dakshin Dinajpur.
- [4] Pictures are collected personally during the flood relief and various camps.

We, some friends and teachers collected 1200 thousand rupees and this amount helped us to buy 1 Quintal , 10 kg beaten rice , 1 Quintal 10 kg parched rice , 40kg molasses and 1200 pouch drinking water ( 21.08.2017) which were distributed to flood affected peoples , in 8 No Gram panchayats of Kushmandi block. Block Development Officer of Kushmandi block, Amullya Chandra Sarkar arranged tractor to carry these things were given at Maligaon, Gobrabil, Chandoil village of 8 no. Gram Panchayat.

#### CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

Though it was learnt that the state government will provide financial assistance to farmers in the state who have incurred loss due to floods. Miss Mamata Banerjee the Chief Minister of West Bengal after her visit to the flood affected area in the North Bengal said “We are providing shelter and relief materials to the flood- affected people. We will again have to build the infrastructure like roads, bridges, houses, schools and medical establishments which has been destroyed in the floods. First we are rescuing the people and providing them relief. Next we will restore the infrastructure. There will be no paucity of relief materials from the state government” (The Indian Express, August 21,2017).

Kushmandi Block is a rural block and most of the people are farmers and deals in cultivation. Cultivation is the main base of economy. Major portion of this area is on the border of Bangladesh. Because of flood every things has damaged. So helpless people are going to another states of India in search of work for their livelihood.