

SOUTH INDIA FLOODS-TAMIL NADU JANUARY 2016

EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE



OXFAM

AN OXFAM OVERVIEW: A MONTH INTO THE PICTURE



"Oxfam came to us with a dry food kit. We cannot thank you enough!" Says Karavati from Kanchipuram.

"Our pots and pans floated away in the floods and the food in our house is moldy and destroyed, so dry rations were extremely useful as we had nothing to cook and nothing to cook with."

Oxfam is also arranging Non-food items (NFI) such as a kitchen kit comprising of essential utensils to cook with and eat on. Tarpaulin will help keep them warm in winter and protect them better than the existing thatch roof.

"All the women in our area went to sleep early, at 6 pm because it was raining heavily all day and we could not go out the entire day."

"At night, our husbands woke us up because the water levels were rising at a frightening pace all of a sudden. The electricity had gone. We just ran. Every inch we walked as we waded through the water took so much time."

"Our home was filled with water for a week. We lived there for 7 days", she pointed towards a slope.

When asked about debris floating, she exclaimed, "Living amidst floating debris was not the problem, we had snakes all around us, especially as the water began receding. They were trying to dry themselves. My husband kept my children on his shoulders at all times. They were crying as these snakes slithered around."

Many women got fever as there was no elevated place to urinate and holding on to it made matters worse. "We usually defecate in the open, but there was no empty land to defecate on, only water all around."

When asked about our Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) plans to build toilets for their community, Kalarati replied, "That will make a huge difference, especially for us women. It is so nice to help us rebuild our lives event to even better than what it was before the floods took away everything from us."



Photo: NDTV

THE STORY

The November- December 2015 Floods in Tamil Nadu have affected over 3 million people. The Central Government of India has accorded the status 'calamity of severe nature' to the worst floods Tamil Nadu witnessed in over hundred years.

The people of Tamil Nadu are fighting hard to get their lives back on track. Over the last few weeks, Oxfam, has begun mobilizing a range of essential items after conducting a detailed Needs Assessment in the worst affected areas of Chennai, Cuddalore and Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu and Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh. The floods have affect people disproportionately. The marginalised and the poor are the worst affected. The Oxfam team deployed in Tamil Nadu are making sure that immediate assistance reaches the people who need it the most.

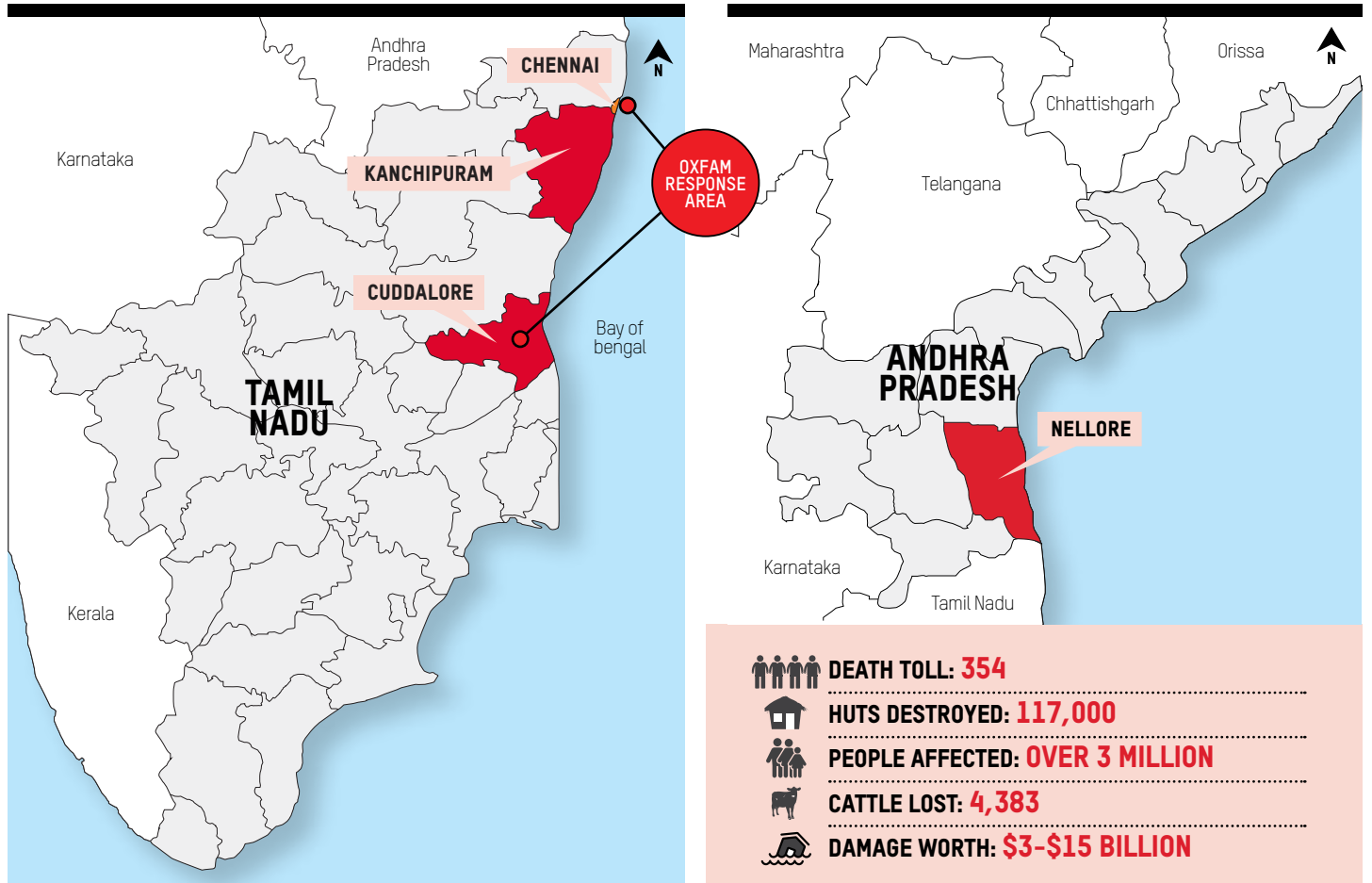
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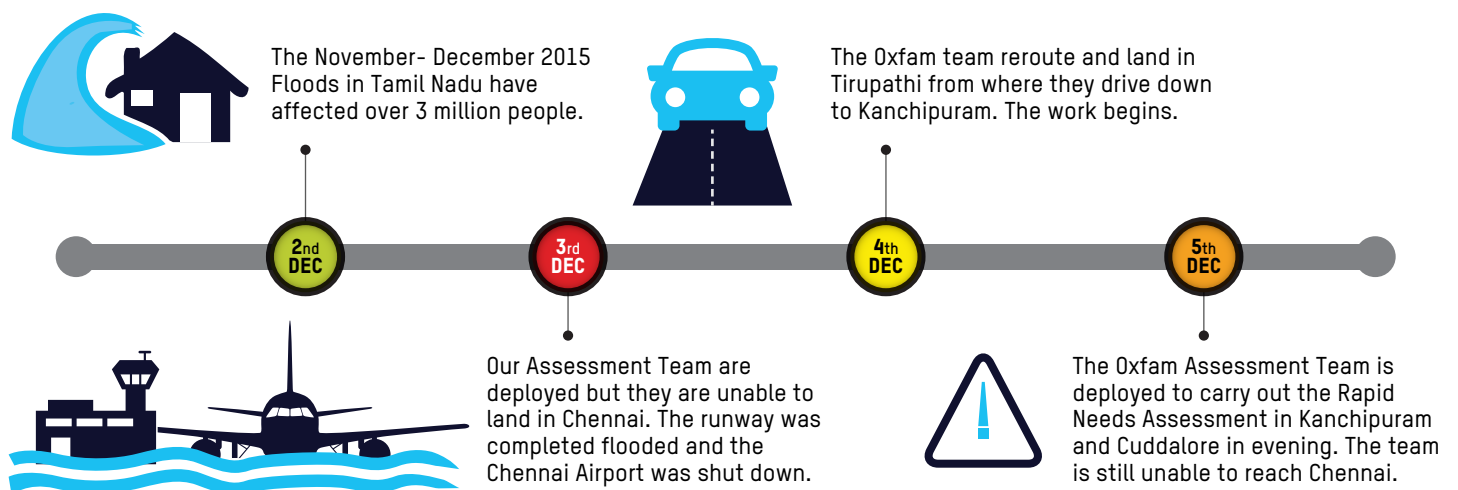
EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE



OXFAM IS RESPONDING IN TAMIL NADU & ANDHRA PRADESH



OXFAM'S TIMELINE OF EVENTS



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EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE



DECEMBER, WEEK 2



On 8th December, the Oxfam contingency from Orissa reaches Tamil Nadu! We have a ready supply of urgently needed buckets, mugs, chlorine tablets, groundsheet and tarpaulin to distribute to provide rapid assistance to vulnerable communities who have lost their homes and access to safe drinking water.



Oxfam also begins distributing Dry Food Kits in Cuddalore.

As the water begins to recede, Oxfam begins debris cleaning in the sludge filled slums of Chennai as a part of the solid waste management work.



Our Response Team is deployed to respond to immediate needs.



By 11th December, Oxfam extends immediate assistance by distributing hygiene kits and shelter kits to the flood affected communities.

DECEMBER, WEEK 3



Oxfam also successfully completed the detailed Livelihoods and Rapid Gender Assessments in Chennai, Cuddalore and Kanchipuram. This helped us in targeting help to the most affected and marginalized and making sure that our programmes.



Our Public Health Promotion (PHP) activities begin once our volunteers are trained. Our PHP activities in the affected villages and slums are focused on hygiene promotion, good hand washing techniques as well as raising awareness on best food hygiene and personal hygiene practices. A lot of diseases are preventable and our PHP Team is doing their best to ensure that they are!



We have our very own base set up in Cuddalore from where operate in collaboration with our local partners.

Oxfam coordinates actively with the state IAG to ensure we are responding in locations where assistance is required most, and to ensure there is no overlap of same assistance with other humanitarian agencies.

DECEMBER, WEEK 4

● We have a full-fledged staff network in place after intensive staff recruitment



● By the end of December, we covered 2000 Households with our NFI Kits

JANUARY, SO FAR

● It is the first week of January and we have begun the selection process for Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs). UCTs are given only on need basis to the most vulnerable – women headed households, households with a physically disabled member or chronic illness as well as elderly people with no support whatsoever.

● Oxfam has also initiated latrines installation in Kanchipuram, Cuddalore and Chennai after being given the green signal from local authorities.

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

THE PROBLEM

Every day, 1400 children die from diarrhoea caused by dirty water. This is just a proportion of the 4 million deaths from water-related diseases and poor sanitation each year.

Worldwide, more than 700 million people lack access to safe water and more than 2 billion do not have adequate sanitation.

"It was a completely different experience working in my own village! For the first time, I felt a sense of ownership."

As a canal cleaning worker under the Government's NREGA scheme, Kalaimani would have to walk for miles in the blazing heat to work elsewhere. This time, she was delighted to have the opportunity from Oxfam to make her own village clean.

"It makes me very happy to see the children of our community playing in a clean environment."

At Ambedkarnagar village, Cuddalore.

In emergencies like the South India Floods, many more lives are put at risk by inadequate water supplies and poor sanitation. It's estimated that each person needs 15 litres of water per day for drinking, cooking, and washing in an emergency. This makes providing clean water a massive task requiring the sort of specialist skills and equipment Oxfam India has.

OUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE: HYGIENE RESTORATION

Debris kept piling up as the water began to recede. Villages were surrounded by sludge. Water sources were destroyed or contaminated. Stagnant, debris-filled water in the slums and the huts left an unbearable stench in addition to health risks such as malaria, typhoid and diarrhoea.

Our immediate interventions based on our Rapid Assessments included the distribution of chlorine tablets in priority regions which were worst affected. We also carried out extensive debris-cleaning drives in Chennai and Cuddalore.

Oxfam's detailed Needs Assessment in consultation with the communities, partner organisation, local authorities and Public Health Engineer have identified priority areas of work including hygiene kit distribution, adding new water sources while rehabilitating existing ones and latrine installation.



Kalaimani, using the Oxfam bucket to collect and store water. She covers it with the red lid at all times after chlorinating it with the Chlorine tablets she received from Oxfam.

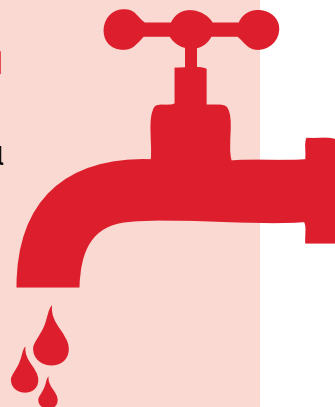
DRINKING CLEAN WATER

Reduces diarrhoeal deaths by nearly **25%**

prevents **2.2 MILLION** child deaths per year (about **6,000** per day!)

cuts preventable child deaths by up to **57%**

reduces chronic malnutrition by **40%** and reduces school absenteeism among girls by **50%**



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PUBLIC HEALTH PROMOTION



MOBILISING COMMUNITIES TO TRANSFORM VILLAGES

Oxfam recruited 25 persons from Ambedkarnagar village for debris cleaning, but another 8 members from the community immediately joined in voluntarily because they were extremely enthusiastic about making their own village better! Together, we filled up 5 trucks full of debris and garbage after working from 7:30 am till 3 pm.

"We were able to do something for our own village and at the same time, our earnings from this has really helped us. This initiative from Oxfam will help us get back some of the things we lost at home and at the same time, it has restored cleanliness outside our homes", says Bhavani, one of the debris cleaning participants.

OXFAM'S RESPONSE SO FAR

- ▶ **2200** households from Chennai slums, and villages from Cuddalore and Kanchipuram districts received **60** Chlorine tablets each, ensuring immediate access to safe drinking water for a month after the floods.
- ▶ So far, we have completed debris cleaning in **5 VILLAGES** as well as in one of the worst affected and severely congested slum in Chennai, Koyambude slum.
- ▶ We have reached out **800** households with Hygiene Kits. Oxfam has also been doing intensive hygiene promotion work with our trained volunteers in the areas of handwashing and safe sanitation.

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE



OF THE 1 IN 6 PEOPLE IN THE WORLD (2.5 BILLION) THAT DEFECCATE OPENLY, 665,000,000 LIVE IN INDIA, MAKING IT THE COUNTRY WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO DEFECCATE IN THE OPEN.

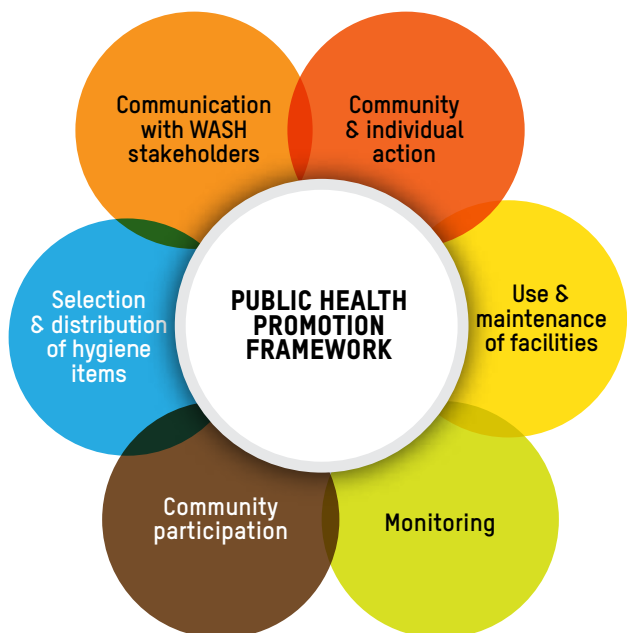


“We face humiliation as women to defecate in the open. We have to wake up so early so that we can go when it is still dark”, says Dhanalakshmi from Panakari village in Cuddalore.

Oxfam has initiated the installation of latrine cubicles in Palakarai. Dhanalakshmi cannot wait for them to be operational. She and her community will do their best to maintain them and keep them clean.

“We will keep the toilets as clean as we keep our kitchens.”

IMPROVING COMMUNITIES BY CHANGING MINDSETS



Understanding the needs of the community and the local environment is of key importance in Oxfam’s hygiene promotion activities.

Our Public Health Promotion Team is on the field creating awareness about hygienic practices especially among the women and children. Many of the people living in the slums and villages do not know the importance of washing hands with soaps. Along with soap distribution, our public health promotion team and volunteers have been demonstrating the best hand washing techniques. Our objective is to make handwashing with soap a sustainable practice among the communities we work with. So that once they have finished using the supply of soap bars we provide them during our response, they continue to wash their hands with soap because they not only know that it’s a good hygiene practice to have, but they know ‘why’ it is important.

Our Public Health Promotion Team is also creating the interest, need and demand for hardware such as latrines, the community will be keen to use them and maintain them once we install them. It is important to create a feeling of stakeholdership among communities, so that they do not just use the community latrines that they have been given, but also continue to maintain them for years after our response.

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EMERGENCY FOOD, SECURITY AND VULNERABLE LIVELIHOODS



Rani Mari, holding newborn daughter Dachini, who was born during the floods in the last week of November narrates how no other community came to help them because they were Tribals.

She thanks Oxfam for coming forward with the food support.

The Irular tribe in Manimangalam, Kanchipuram are famous for capturing snakes for snakeskin leather in the past.

At Manimangalam village, Kanchipuram.

FOOD SECURITY AND SHELTER ASSISTANCE

Immediately after our Rapid Assessments, Oxfam began the distribution of the dry ration food kit to the most vulnerable households who had lost all their ration supplies in the floods. Oxfam will also be distributing smokeless chulhas. Since many households lost their utensils in the floods, Oxfam will be distributing kitchen kits to make it a little better for affected households.

Oxfam's groundsheet and tarpaulin distribution are helping households to protect themselves from the elements of weather while blankets are preparing them for winter.

OXFAM'S RESPONSE SO FAR

- ▶ We have reached out to **2961** Households already with Emergency Shelter and NFI Kits containing tarpaulin sheet, groundsheet, fleece blanket, bedsheets, mosquito net and kitchen utensils to the most affected communities. These will help in protecting them from the mosquitoes and elements of weather.
- ▶ We have also distributed smokeless chulhas to **1900** households. Many homes lost their chulhas which were made of mud during the floods. Our smokeless chulhas are not only a more fuel-efficient option, they will not cause respiratory problems like the previous ones they were using!



Selvi along with 3 other family members live cramped in a 10x6 square feet tent.

"The groundsheet makes such a big difference to my tent. Even though the days ahead might be difficult for us, we are extremely grateful to Oxfam for the good sleep we get at night."

At Ambedkarnagar, Cuddalore.

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OXFAM



Sugandhi holds her husband's damaged fishing net while another community member holds a tyre that is worn around their waist during fishing.

Sugandhi had two fishing tyres before the floods and now, she is left with only one. This is seriously compromising her household's earning capacity.

At Manimangalam village, Kanchipuram.

LIVELIHOODS RECOVERY



There was a significant loss and damage to mobile and immobile assets such as paddy, fishing equipment, livestock and others valuable capital. Be it paddy, cane or cashew growers, their crops were destroyed at the flowering stages ahead of the harvest. Many more suffered from a significant loss of working days as people's homes were flooded for over a week and cleaning the houses upon return took another week. While Government compensation would be able to help the flood victims to some extent, the process is slow. This would leave them vulnerable for too long without their livelihoods.

HOW WILL OXFAM HELP?

From Oxfam's detailed Livelihoods Assessment, emerging needs such as fishing equipment, livestock, paddy and farming equipment need to be taken care of for those communities who have lost all their access to livelihoods in the floods. Livelihood reconstruction in the form of kitchen gardening and small-scale petty trades will also help communities explore alternative earning possibilities.

CASH TRANSFERS

Short-term injections of cash can tide a community over during a crisis, and enable it to recover more quickly.

Oxfam will be giving out Unconditional Cash Transfers to the most vulnerable affected households, such as :



women-headed households



households with only elderly members



Households with a physically disabled or chronically ill member

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