



*Commitment to
humanitarian challenges*
IAG experiences in Orissa, India

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Preface

The Sphere Project was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Sphere is based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance. In 2007, Sphere Project is celebrating its decadal journey to address the human sufferings of millions around worldwide.



There is a need therefore to document and to capture the experiences from various organizations and in different contexts about how Sphere did make a difference. But given that the Humanitarian work is complex and sometimes messy, it is critical that the way we document it reflects this complexity and critically challenges it, situates the work in the broader political, social and economic context, and provokes humanitarian workers into a deeper understanding of the nature and difficulties of good and accountable humanitarian action.

Keeping in view, Sphere Geneva has decided to document and capture the field experiences for wider sharing among various stakeholders. In this context Inter Agency Group (IAG), Orissa, India has made an attempt to document the case studies and mini stories on Sphere initiatives in Orissa. This anthology of case studies is the outcome of the series of consultation with seven organizations UNDP, UNICEF Action Aid, Catholic Relief Services, Concern Worldwide, Indian Red Cross, Lutheran World services, and World Vision. We hope this document of field stories about SPHERE would be useful to many humanitarian organizations as well as to the much wider community to promote Sphere in field.

This document capture the experiences of the (Inter Agency Group's) IAG Orissa, India - IAG achievements to date and was drafted highlighting the commitments to the Humanitarian challenges by various organizations in Orissa, India. SPHERE Geneva support and encouragement helped to make this fruitful exercise to produce the document. We hope this document would help a lot to us transmit the experiences of the *Commitment to humanitarian Challenges* effectively to a wider community.

Dr. Antony Gnanamuthu
SPHERE Geneva - Focal Point
Disaster Management Delegate
German Red Cross, Orissa - India



Acknowledgement

Inter agency group in Orissa was started with lots of expectation. It has gone through a lot of churning and experimentations. It faced a lot of criticism both positive and negative. Willium Couper rightly said, “The bud may have a bitter taste but sweet will be the flower”. Today we proudly say that we are together and in business. Together we have worked in response, rehabilitation and preparedness in humanitarian programme.

We are indebted to the Sphere, Geneva and their focal person Dr. Antony Gnanamuthu when they reminded us that what is being done must be properly documented and where we have individually or together adhered to the Sphere norms must be shared with each other and the entire world. Seeing is believing and information is knowledge. I am sure this document will show to all how together we grow and together we learn.

On this Occasion I would like to express my heart felt thanks to all the organizations i.e Action Aid, Catholic Relief Services, Concern World wide, Indian Red Cross, Lutheran world services, UNDP, UNICEF and World Vision without whose active involvement the collection of these case studies would ever have been compiled.

Our sincere thanks to Mr. Shadrak Omol, State Representative UNICEF, Mr. Lalatendu Acharya, UNICEF, Mr. Sebastian, Concern Worldwide, Mr. Gyana Ranjan Dash, Program Manager, UNDP, Dr. Ambika Nanda, Program Manager, Action Aid, Ms. Kasturi Sengupta, State Representative, CRS, Mr. Sura Mahat Samal, World Vision, Ms. Sanjukta Sahani, Program Officer, Concern World Wide, for extending their full cooperation to produce the document. Without their support, our journey would have never been comfortable.

And lastly, we would also like to thank i-Concept Initiatives family members particularly Mr. Prabodh Mohanty for their exceptional work which made this document to see the light of the day.

Prof. Sibanarayan Mishra
Convener, IAG
Red Cross Bhawan, BBSR-22



Message

It is needless to say that disasters urge the need for multi-organizational and multi-disciplinary coordination. The typical response to a disaster includes independent organizations, planning and responding independently, with little grasp of how each fits into the overall response.

To address these issues, it is imperative that we have a forum to interact, identify the strengths, share experiences, draw upon lessons learnt, and support the government in plugging gaps and minimize duplication.

The Inter Agency Group (IAG) is uniquely positioned to bridge many organizations working in the field of Disaster Management for a coordinated response to crisis.

UNDP as a part of IAG extends all support to achieve the objectives. The endeavor of the Inter Agency Group in preparation and publication of these case studies for Sphere Geneva is highly appreciated.

MR PRADEEP JENA, IAS
State Representative
UNDP, Orissa, India



Message

It is my pleasure and privilege to write to congratulate the Orissa Inter Agency Group (IAG) for this booklet that contains a compilation of reports by various organizations in Orissa detailing their experience in past relief and rehabilitation efforts in response to emergencies in Orissa.

Orissa State is prone to many forms of emergencies almost on a regular basis. The most known ones are the cyclones and floods that take place during the monsoon season. The effects of the super-cyclone of 1999, which claimed many lives and destroyed properties worth many crores of rupees, are still being felt. Other causes of emergencies include droughts and heat waves. Orissa, on a tectonic fault line, is also in a potential earthquake-prone zone. In emergencies the most affected component of the population are always children and women who have special needs during emergencies.

It is therefore encouraging that development partners in Orissa have formed an IAG group with the objective of setting up a coordination mechanism to guide preparation and activities during response in pre-emergency, in emergency and post emergency situations. Also to be noted is that the IAG is actively promoting the adoption and use of Sphere Standard during emergencies. Sphere Standards are based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance. These are core beliefs values that UNICEF easily identifies with. The same beliefs are reflected our Core Commitment for Children during Emergencies and are based on two cornerstones. First, protection of human rights is intrinsic to effective humanitarian action. Secondly, participation, local ownership, capacity development and sustainability are essential considerations even in emergencies.

The compilations in this booklet include interesting and informative experiences of members of Orissa IAG in previous responses to emergencies in the state, the most recent one being the floods in 2006. It is expected that one will see the application of Sphere Standards in the various interventions captured here. With the production of the booklet, members of the IAG would hopefully reflect on efforts to meet Sphere Standards and how we can continue to work together and coordinate our efforts in future.

In conclusion, on behalf of UNICEF in Orissa, I once again congratulate members of Orissa IAG for this sterling effort. It is our expectation that this is just an initial step in the future planning and coordination towards augmenting the government emergency response capacity in Orissa.

SHADRACK OMOL
State Representative
UNICEF, Orissa



LIVELIHOOD SECURITY IN EMERGENCIES: LEARNING FROM ORISSA SUPER CYCLONE, ACTIONAID, INDIA

Introduction:

“We want security to our lives first than livelihood”; this was the statement of the villagers of Erasama Block after the cyclone. There has been a series of disaster in India since the living memory. The state of Orissa, which is located along the eastern coast of India with a coastline of 487 Kms, always finds its place in the natural hazard Map, since time immemorial. The state, which has 47% of its population below poverty line - highest in the country, & annual per capita income is Rs 6767/-, the second lowest in the country, its poverty gets more compounded with the increase vulnerability through various hazards, disasters and emergencies. Cyclone, drought, flood, heat wave, forest fire & industrial pollution have all become part of way of life of the people of Orissa.



Super Cyclone - the worst natural disaster after the great Bengal famine

14 Coastal districts on the state witnessed the horrifying death & devastation on October 29th 1999. It was century's worst natural disaster in India after great Bengal famine. The cyclone was compounded with 48 hours of rain. 25^{ft} high tidal wave through the area submerging 37-Gram Panchayat of Erasama, Balikuda and Kujanga blocks of Jagatsinghpur district and a velocity of 300kms of raced through the district. Official death toll is 9885 and unofficial estimate part is 30,000 lives, the casualty in Erasama & Balikuda blocks came to 8000+. The life & livelihood was almost paralyzed. About 8000 villagers were affected comprising 15 million people. More than 20 Lakh houses were partially or fully damaged, much of the land was recorded useless for cultivation because of salinity. About 3.7 Lakh cattle, 29,000 fishing boats were lost. Close to 52000-km road were severely damaged. It also left large number people disabled, orphans & destitute.

Livelihood restoration in the earlier disasters -learning from experience

Every disaster has differential impact & differential recovery pattern. The expenditure is often adhoc, high visibility especially on brick and mortar. The corruption and exclusion of vulnerable groups, taking no notice to the dignity of the survivor have been familiar. The Livelihood security is addressed through safety net mechanisms without addressing long-term solution to the problems through a systems approach. Relief is the buzzword, which dries up after few months.



Migration, starvation deaths, beggary, suicide, illness and traumatized people are all manifestation of disaster. A study found 40 percent of the Latur earthquake victims of black Tuesday, September 30th, 1993 had turned suicidal and 60 percent suffered post trauma stress (India Today, February 12th, 2001). The drought hit KBK districts of Orissa reel under migration & starvation death for years.

ActionAid India (AAI) & Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) partnership Erasama and Balikuda blocks of Jagatsinghpur district

Soon after the cyclone AAI & BGVS in partnership resolved to work in the worst hit Super Cyclone ravaged areas of Balikuda and Erasama blocks of Jagatsinghpur district. The intensity of damage, support from the district administration and poor economy base of these blocks were the guiding factors for concentration. It will be appropriate to analyze the pre cyclone economy and social structure and institutions and the intensity of the damage of the area that form the basis for designing appropriate livelihood strategy.

The basic premise on which the project was designed is as follows.

Looking at the overall scenario the project was designed to address the situation comprehensively and in an integrated manner on a long-term basis as follows:

- Long-term solution minimum 3 years direct commitment followed by 7 years through local CBOs.
- Clear “Taking Sides” with socially excluded dalits, marine fisher folk, Bengal migrant, person with disability (PWD) uncared aged, children & women at risk. Decision & control directly in the hands of target groups
- Planning & implementation by peoples committees through a hamlet approach
- Strong emphasis on equity, rights, dignity of survivors
- Peoples Audit of all expenditure
- Community based caring institutions
- Systems approach to livelihood security

Understanding about the Livelihood economy of the Area:

It is necessary to understand the issues, dynamics, problems and livelihood situation of the area. Hazard causes damage to economy and environment. But the existing condition, occupation pattern, employment pattern, resource base analysis is necessary to design strategy and intervention.

The planning and coordination of Govt. of Orissa on 1994 categorize 314 Blocks in Orissa based on indicator of education, health, livelihood & Communication. Erasama falls under backward whereas Balikuda falls under developing block. Balikuda & Erasama blocks being worst hit its economy was ravaged much ahead of cyclone. The flood, drought, cyclone, soil erosion, embankment construction & its



repair, depletion of mangrove etc. had already devastated the economy. Since 1955, there has been 8 times recurrence of flood and cyclone in the area.

Soon after the decision the project activists visited the vulnerable hamlets and studied the situation and condition of the people. With the support from DFID a participatory vulnerability study was also conducted. Different problems, issues and dynamics relating to livelihood and impoverishment are as follows:

The livelihood economy is also concentrated on primary sector and resources relating to it. The Marine, forest, river and coastal ecosystems along with expanse of alluvial plain led to diversified pattern of livelihood system in the area. The agriculture is the mainstay of all the occupations.

Classification of Main Workers	Erasama		Balikuda	
	Number	%	Number	%
Cultivator	21087	68.2%	21513	51.4%
Agricultural Laborers	5369	17.4%	6402	15.3%
Livestock, Fishing etc.	434	1.4%	523	1.2%
Mining & Quarrying	4	0.0%	14	0.0%
Manufacturing, Processing etc. in HH Industry	469	1.5%	722	1.7%
Manufacturing, Processing etc. in other than HH Industry	399	1.3%	6461	15.4%
Constructions	51	0.2%	33	0.1%
Trade & Commerce	1100	3.6%	1636	3.9%
Transport, Storage and Communication	203	0.7%	362	0.9%
Other Services	1791	5.8%	4196	10.0%
Total	30907		41862	

Ecosystem & Common Property Resources (CPR)

The important CPRs of the area are community forest, pasture and wasteland, pond/tank, river and rivulet, watershed drainage/river bank, tank beds, groundwater, saline embankment, coastal belt plantations and sea and seabed. Almost 20% households being landless, 91% households being small farmers and below and limited expansion in tertiary and service sector there has always been pressure on CPR. With the pressure on land & productivity most of the coastal belt was cleared of the forest. The advent of cashew crop unsuited to resist the cyclone and prawn culture entirely upset the ecosystem leading to depletion of mangroves, which was protecting cyclone & increasing fish catch. With out any scientific & deeper analysis of the situation the social set up gets much these on blaming different ethnic groups & stakeholders like Bengali-Oriya prawn Mafia. In the absence of proper maintenance, control by the people & rapid expansion of prawn, the saline embankment is damaged leading to incursion of saline water every year.



The productivity of the CPR has gone down with less species variety. There is a decline in diversification of the CPR products as well. Although mangroves have been depleted due to pressure from prawn mafias and ownership, still the reality shows that people hardly get direct tangible and immediate return from the mangroves. The challenge in future remains improving mangrove technology on production of multispecies and choosing species suiting to household need. As seen above access to common property is a natural choice of the poor who are either landless or possess little land. Access to CPR not only contributed substantially to household subsistence, but also meant less dependence on the rich for loans or other kind of support. With the decreasing dependency and grabbing of CPR by rich, the vulnerability increases. The use of different chemicals in the feed near about thirty two required ingredients accumulate at the surface bottom of pond causing deposits of algae and bacterial which effects the oxygen balance of water. The caste, ethnicity and gender divisions overplay differing access to and control of CPRs.

In Ramtara village out of 10 remaining acres after encroachment by elites, the SCs access 1 acre. In Gandamunda village, 75% of the land is put over to betel vine cultivation, the remaining 25% being used for grazing. The poorest scheduled caste households are not able to access to the CPR, however they are employed in the betel vineyards.

Participatory vulnerability study

Land

The primary sector being the most important source of income, land plays the pivotal of the resource. 20% of the households are either landless or possess land less than 0.02 hectares. Average size of operational holding comes to 0.940 hectare. The plight of the land less or small farmers gets more compounded with the disaster and the damage caused by it. Although it is difficult to substantiate through the data, the bulk of the area in Erasama Block suffers from soil erosion, water logging and salinity. The cases of land alienation are very common with socio-economically poor sections of the community.

Land use in these two blocks is broadly classified into three categories.

- Production of rice, pulse & vegetables, mostly in irrigated area of Balikuda
- Land for cash crop -mostly for betel vine, cashew
- Common Property Resources (CPRs)

Depending upon soil type the land has 4(four) classification.

- Fertile Soil (Grade no1) - Used for both Kharif & Rabi crop
- Low Land (Grade no 3) - Less productive & Kharif crops grown
- Saline Soil - Rarely used for cultivation
- Forest & Sand, Soil - Used for betel vine & Cashew (Balikuda)



The Land distribution being skewed in favor of upper class & upper caste & more & more land being encroached for prawn farming; the poor have to resort to wage labor & share cropping sometimes.

Agriculture

Paddy, pulse, vegetable, constitute part of staple food cultivation & horticulture crops (coconut) are important agricultural crops. Betel vine & cashew nut are the main cash crop. Sugar cane & groundnut are available in some patches of Balikuda blocks. Over the years the cropping pattern has been changed. Winter crops have replaced autumn crops, which are harvested in the pre cyclone period. Saline resistant varieties have not been improved over the years along with soil salinity. More over economics matter a lot. Erasama & Balikuda have lowest productivity of paddy i.e. 6.24 and 9.25 quintal respectively.

The example here put the net income of paddy and prawn.

I acre unit (Paddy)	In Land	Coastal
Investment	4770	2770
Gross Income	9000	5000

Most of the Bengali migrants are land less and even do not have Record of Rights (ROR) on harvested land.

Betel Vine

Four varieties of betel vine i.e. Halda, Mitha, Sadha & Kali are cultivated. The most common is Sadha because it requires the least maintenance, but the best variety is Kali. The quality of the leaves attracts traders from other parts of the country like Mumbai, Venaras etc. Men are involved in the marketing of the betel leaves and raising and maintenance of the betel vineyards and the women are involved sorting of the betel leaves and maintaining the betel vineyard. In the coastal plains, for the women it is the most important source of income.

Fishing & Prawn

Prawn production in Orissa has increased to 10 lakh Mts. from 84000 Mts., but 50% of the production comes from large farms owned by power full business groups. Jagatsinghpur is the largest fish-producing district in Orissa. Fishing from river, harvesting from human made ponds & prawn cultivation are wide & spread through out the area. Marine fisher folk & traditional fisher folks are engaged in fishing. Bengali migrants largely depend upon fishing & prawn cultivation. Over the years fish catch is reducing. Outside trawlers from Balasore, Paradeep & Andhra Pradesh trawl for fish off the coast. Poor fisher folk who cannot afford improved fish catching equipments work as daily wage labor.

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