

Ramakrishna Mission, being a philanthropic organisation, has a century long history of Humanitarian response throughout the world, be it in normal or emergency situation. Humanitarian response has been conceptually reinterpreted from relief / welfare capacity development. Ramakrishna Mission with all its good intentions responded disaster with relief support in all possible ways, the intention of Ramakrishna Mission has been reenergized and converted into capacity development of community for understanding the level of vulnerability and risk situation in which people can be severely impacted by Natural Disaster.

Ramakrishna Mission is now committed to take necessary steps to reduce the Disaster Risk at community level and is now focused to create a lesson-learning environment on the issues of Community Based Disaster Preparedness. The disaster prone community will access the impact of disaster and its effect and will identify the available resources within the family as well as community to survive for five to seven days, immediately after the disaster hits.

Ramakrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad, the Rural Development wing of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur Kolkata-700103, has been working in Sundarban area for more than four decades. Primarily, relief work started in Sundarban area in 70,s as part of basic Humanitarian Response of Ramakrishna Mission, after Natural Disasters.

All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves...

Swami Vivekananda



The introduction of structural Rural Development work started as a part of immediate relief work after the devastating natural calamity of cyclonic flood during mid 80s. The authority felt that the capacity building of the people is more important for the long term development. The Rural Development Project was launched in Sundarban area with the financial assistance of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action) Bonn, Germany. In various phases the development activities are done.

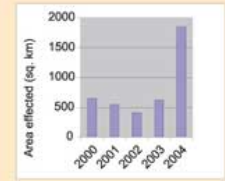
Experience of more than three decades in Sundarban says that there will be at least one severe natural disaster after every 3-4 years. Being such a situation Ramakrishna Mission has felt the need of shift of paradigm in it's strategy for Disaster Management in Sundarban Area. Strengthening people with their own and local wealth and effort are appeared to be more important than to make the affected people relief-prone. Ramakrishna Mission in collaboration with DIPECHO and Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action) Bonn, Germany has decided to conduct a pilot work in selected villages of Sundarban.

Sundarban is the conglomeration of 102 islands in the southern most part of West Bengal in the lap of Bay of Bengal (21° 32' N latitude – 22° 40' N latitude and 88° 05' E longitude – 89° 00' E longitude). The Indian part of Sundarban covering 40% of the total Sundarban has human habited islands and 48 islands under Reserve Forest. There are 19 blocks, namely known under Sundarban area with a population of 3.75 million, population density of 952 per square km and male - female ratio of 1000: 945 with a varied literacy of 63% for male and 32% for the female. The area is covered under 1064 number of villages containing about 5,40,000 families of which 85% depends on agriculture and also 41% families area under below poverty line.

Topographically, Sundarban is a typically low-lying area (61% low land, 28% medium land and 11% high land) with an average rainfall of 1920mm and with a total river bund length of 3500km.



One can easily understand the vulnerability of the Sundarban areas to Natural Disaster if s/he experiences the frequency and the loss. From the Sub-divisional sources it is found that on an average every year either cyclone or heavy rainfall or tidal surge or severe erosion of river embankment make 394732 population vulnerable affecting an area of 813 sq. km. of 149 villages. The loss of wealth per year is also calculated as 2340 houses 4223 hac. of crop land.



Keeping geographical situation of Sundarban area, the frequency, intensity and vulnerability of Natural Disasters in mind, four villages of Sundarban have been selected in this Community Based Disaster Risk Management Project, viz. Shibpur, Mahismari, Beguakhali & Lakshampur, in collaboration with DIPECHO and Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action) Bonn, Germany.

Sl.No.	Name	No.of Family	GramPanchayat	Block
1.	Shibpur	365	Bhablat	Sagar
2.	Mahismari	414	Gangasagar	Sagar
3.	Beguakhali	845	Gangasagar	Sagar
4.	Lakshampur	185	Mahusudanpur	Kakdwip

