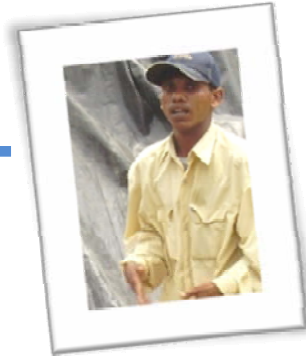


*Yes! / can do .....*



**Village: Lakshmipur**  
**Gram Panchayat: Madhusudhanpur**  
**Block: Kakdwip**  
**District: South 24 Parganas**  
**West Bengal, India**

It was cloudy hot day and unwillingly I was entering the village for a task force reformation meeting. I heard some peculiar noise from Megaphone was blowing continuously. The noise was not clear at all. I thought because of the low battery may be it is hearing so unclear. When I reached to the



meeting place I found one teenage boy is coming with the megaphone, continuously announcing something. When I met the person, I found that he cannot speak clearly and the

megaphone is functioning smoothly and battery is new. During the meeting he was raising his hand to be included. Every time our social organizer Badal asking volunteers for a particular task force team he was raising his hand. When Badal offered his name in Early Warning team; other community members protested because he cannot announce, cannot speak clearly. Every one present there also comments that he is not mentally balanced; so he can be included in some other team, but not in early warning. At the end everyone decided that as per his willingness and madness, he included in Early Warning team. He was happy!

On 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 a Mock Drill was organised for the Task Forces at the village. On the same day some media friends from different newspaper and news agency were present in the village; as we invited them to show our village level initiatives. That day most of the task force members were present. So that day he did not got any opportunity (chance) to use the megaphone and he was anxious about to get the megaphone. At the end of the day he came to tell us that he did not get any opportunity 'to perform during the mock drill. He was unhappy.



This happy and unhappy young man is Sri. Shambhu Nath Doloi, son of Mr. Monimohonand and Kabita Doloi. They are two brothers and three sisters living with their parents. He is the second elder son of his parents. Physically he was a healthy and fit and a very good student. When he was studying at class VI; he suffered in fever. After the fever he could not speak clearly and became mentally weak.

*[16<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008 : Squally winds speed reaching 55-65 kmph are likely along and off Orissa and West Bengal coast during next 24 hours. Sea condition is very rough to high along and off these coasts. Fishermen are advised not to venture into the sea. (Report from IMD)]*

After receiving the message from the IMD, the early warning messages were effectively disseminated to all the areas and to all the task forces. Lakshmipur village also got the message. The task forces were ready with all their efforts to face the disaster. All the task force members along with other villagers and Panchayat members were patrolling over the embankment. They knew it very well that if the saline water enters once from a single hole the entire embankment will collapse simultaneously and no one stop the water from coming in. The whole night they looked after the situation along with the mud sack and bamboo poll. Where ever they find a small hole with whirlpool, they put the sack with mud and repair the embankment. After six hours of their continuous effort they were success to save their village for the time being. Everyone was tired, exhausted from the work but relaxed as they felt save now. But they forget about the next attack of the high tide along with speedy wind blowing from the east (if wind blows from

the east side naturally the height of the wave increases three times automatically) . On the next day very first morning no one was at the embankment to watch. Except one: Shambhu along with his megaphone. And it was not too late. The next high tide was on its way and the embankment still weak from the last flush of water. At the end of the village Shambhu found some small hole, through which water entered into the village. After seeing the situation he was shouting in the megaphone. Some villagers thought he was making jokes, some other villagers felt disturbed and where angry with him. But few task force members like Dibakar Baidys, Kayal took it seriously, went to the place where the noise came from realised the serious situation. Immediately they took action and save the village a second time.

Everyone neglected him to include him in early warning team. No one imagine that Shambhu can give an early warning. But, Shambhu himself proved ..... Yes! I can do.....

Learning:

If we change our perception, many things can happen.

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**Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, West Bengal  
Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)**

