

# July 2019 Nepal Floods

Needs Assessment Report | Mercy Corps Nepal



Damaged house in Samsi Rural Municipality. Photo by Bhesh Parajuli on July 28, 2019.

In partnership with:

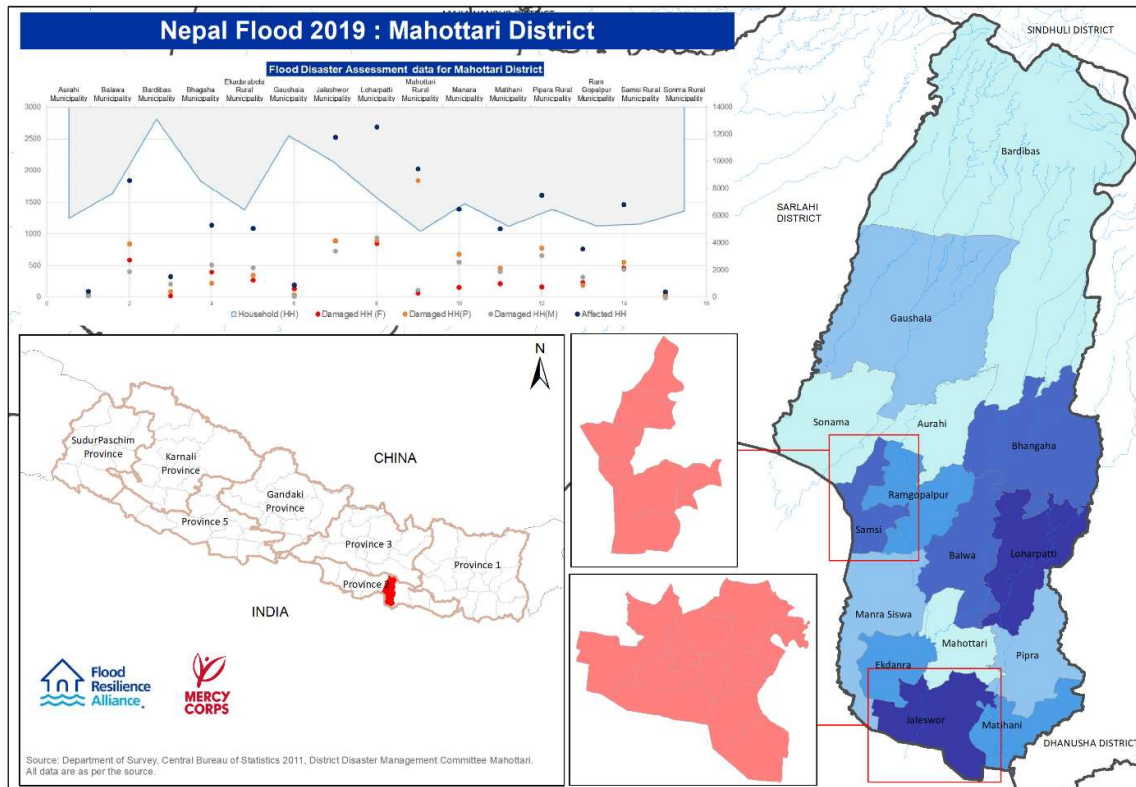


# 1. Background

## 1.1 Introduction

Continuous rainfall between July 11-14<sup>th</sup> 2019, triggered heavy flooding and landslides in Nepal. The most heavily affected areas are the districts of the southern flatlands: Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Siraha and Saptari. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs of Nepal, flooding and landslides have led to 117 killed, 38 missing, and 80 injured. 19,994 houses are fully destroyed, 41,343 houses partially damaged, and 6,096 houses moderately affected.

Mercy Corps Nepal deployed its Emergency Response Team to Mahottari District between July 19<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> and provided non-food items (NFIs) to 1,074 affected families in Jaleswor Municipality and Samsi Rural Municipality, including 232 with fully damaged houses. In Jaleswor, the NFIs were distributed together with Save the Children and Restless Development through Ratauli Youth Club, a local NGO. Moreover, Mercy Corps Nepal conducted an assessment to understand the immediate needs, gaps, and challenges of the most affected communities in Mahottari District. The main findings are presented to help inform government, international organizations, civil society organizations, and donors, in planning their next steps as the situation transitions to early recovery.



Map of assessment area: Mahottari District.

## 1.2 Methodology

The assessment targeted the two severely impacted municipalities of Mahottari District, Jaleswor Municipality and Samsi Rural Municipality, between July 21-30<sup>th</sup>. A questionnaire gathered information from 283 households; respondents were 167 women and 116 men. Key informant interviews were conducted with seven key stakeholders: focal officer of the Mahottari District Disaster Management Committee; president, three ward representatives, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) focal officer of Samsi Rural Municipality; and DRR focal officer of Jaleswor Municipality.

## 2. Needs and Gaps

- Although 86% of household respondents have received food aid, **critical challenges for food security exist**. 30% of affected households do not have food stock. 23% have food stock for a few days, 26% for a few weeks, and 22% for a few months.
- Temporary shelters for affected households will continue to be necessary in the mid-long term. **Financial, material, and labour support is necessary for reconstruction of damaged houses**. 90% of fully damaged households lack funds to meet challenges related to shelter. 65% do not have required skills and 62% do not have appropriate materials to construct houses.
- **Chlorine tabs enable household access to clean drinking water**. 76% of households used chlorine tabs to purify drinking water.
- Children, elderly, people with disabilities, lactating women, pregnant women, and daily labourers, are at **high risk of epidemic outbreak and malnutrition**.
- Only 22% of households have received non-food item (NFI) relief. **High needs exist for items such as dry wood, cooking gas, kitchen utensils, mattresses, and mosquito nets**.
- Agricultural damage is severe as the floods coincided with the harvest season of the paddy planted in April; and the current paddy and vegetable (cucumber, pumpkin, okra) planting season. Grain and wheat, which are usually stored in houses, were also inundated. **Severe damage to the agriculture sector has mid-long term implications on livelihood as well as challenges for food security**.
- Local governments are first responders in an emergency. Disaster risk reduction activities, such as hazard risk assessments, evacuation drills, delegation of roles and responsibilities of line ministries, need to be planned and implemented at the local levels to ensure effective and efficient response. **The District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan should be updated annually to reflect such activities**.
- There is need of immediate actions for **the safety of children** which should focus on **stabilizing their psychosocial wellbeing**.

## 3. Summary of Findings by Sector

### 3.1 Nutrition and Food Security

- 30% of affected households do not have food stock. 23% have food stock for a few days, 26% for a few weeks, and 22% for a few months.
- 86% have received food aid; 14% have not received food aid.
- 89% usually buy food grains from the local market.

### 3.2 Livelihood

- Agricultural damage is severe as the floods coincided with the harvest season of the paddy planted in April, and the current paddy and vegetable (cucumber, pumpkin, okra) planting season.
- Grain and wheat, which are usually stored in houses, were inundated.
- The fishery sector is also affected; flooding destroyed infrastructure of fish ponds, leading to fish escaping.

### 3.3 Housing and Shelter

- Only 22% of affected families have received non-food relief items (NFIs).
- 90% of fully damaged households lack funds to meet the challenges related to shelter.
- 65% do not have the required skills and 62% do not have appropriate materials to repair houses.
- 94% of affected houses were made of bamboo, 1% from brick and mud, 1% stone and cement, and 1% from wood frame.
- 45% expect to need shelter for more than six months.

### 3.4 Water and Sanitation

- 10% lack access on clean drinking water.
- 76% use chlorine tabs to purify drinking water, 12% boil water, and 4% drink water without purification.
- 9% do not have usable toilets, and 29% have toilets that are partially damaged.
- 10% lack access to WASH facilities.

### 3.5 Health

- 18% of surveyed households have lactating women, and 6% have pregnant women.
- Children, elderly, people with disabilities, lactating women, pregnant women, and daily labourers, are at high risk of epidemic outbreak and malnutrition.

### 3.6 Protection

- 8% have faced some kind of violence and abuse.

- 20% do not feel safe in their current environment. Out of this 20%, 19% indicated the reason to be due to housing damage, and 14% responded the reason to be flooding.

### 3.7 Preparedness

- The District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan had not been updated since 2016. This led to a lack of delegation of roles and responsibilities of line agencies and other stakeholders, delaying immediate response and the roll out of a rapid needs assessment.
- The targeted municipalities had allocated funds for disaster management; however, none had been used for disaster risk reduction activities and planning due to lack of personnel and knowledge.
- In Jaleswor Municipality, residents did not know where and when to evacuate after receiving an early warning from the security forces because no planning had been done beforehand. The early warning for flooding also reached residents one day after heavy rainfall had started, making it difficult for people to evacuate. However, the DDMC together with security forces in the district have worked to open the roads, rescued people from the affected areas to the shelter using boats.
- The municipality, DDMC and province government were able to purchase food and NFI kits and distributed from their own funds, however, more proactive and preparedness efforts are needed to reduce negative impacts of floods on lives and livelihoods.
- In Samsi Rural Municipality, no early warning was disseminated. Most of the residents evacuated to schools or elevated roads.
- Embankments are necessary in the Ratu River of Jaleswor, and Jangah and Bigihi Rivers of Samsi, to mitigate river cutting and inundation.

## 4. Recommendations

- Continued support for food items, through cash distribution, can be effective to ensure food security for the affected households. Although food relief has reached 86% of households, 30% do not have any food stock. 89% of respondents answered that they purchase food grains from the local market.
- Health and hygiene promotion interventions are needed at the community level to prevent potential epidemic outbreaks.
- Financial, material, and labour support for housing reconstruction is necessary for affected households to move out of temporary shelters and into the security of their own homes. Mercy Corps staff who distributed NFIs in the target areas noticed most of the recipients were women, as men are working abroad as migrant workers.
- Cash support interventions need to be designed and implemented in the early recovery phase as 88% of the respondents expressed need for cash support programs.
- The District Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan should be updated every year to delegate roles and responsibilities of line agencies and relevant stakeholders for effective response.

- Dissemination of early warning systems are critical; however, practice is necessary to translate information into action. Evacuation drills need to be organized with residents so they are aware of when, where, and how to evacuate to a safe shelter.
- The District Disaster Management Committee members, local disaster management committee members from municipality and wards should be trained on conducting initial rapid assessments to immediately mobilize post-flood and understand gaps and needs.

# Annex

## Data on Housing Damage:

Name of (Rural) Municipality	Completely damaged houses	Partially damaged houses	Minor damaged Houses	Total affected Houses
Jaleswor M	891	903	734	2528
Bardibas M	27	96	209	332
Gaushala M	138	39	20	197
Aurahi M	38	36	26	100
Loharpatti M	852	891	945	2688
Ram Gopalpur M	242	196	326	764
Balawa M	590	844	411	1845
Matihani M	214	465	407	1086
Manara M	160	680	553	1393
Bhagaha M	400	224	514	1138
Pipara RM	171	779	661	1611
Mahottari RM	66	1846	120	2032
Ekadarabela RM	275	351	468	1094
Samsi RM	467	556	442	1465
Sonma RM	31	57	1	89
Total	4562	7963	5837	18362

Source: DDMC Mahottari, 30 July 2019

## Photos from Assessment:



Inundation and local mitigation measures in Samsi Rural Municipality. Photo by Bhesh Parajuli on July 28, 2019.



Damages on tube well in Samsi Rural Municipality. Photo by Bhesh Parajuli on July 28, 2019.