

CASA in Action

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



COMPLETE

Freedom

Giving Kerala an edge to recover from floods

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CASA in Action

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

To talk just about the noticeable changes that primarily came with cash support is like painting a greyscale picture. What fills the colours into the image are those unnoticeable and inclusive changes within the individuals and community. Decisions were not forced upon them. In fact the community had choices to make this time, and in many different ways they collectively chose to first restore their dignity only on their terms and conditions.

While success of a program could be measured numerically, there are some immeasurable developments that may only be felt. CASA Unconditional Cash Transfer implemented in the five districts of Kerala was one such program whose success could be numerically measured and emotionally felt.

The heroes of this edition are the people of Kerala for they chose to exercise the freedom in the paving their recovery course. This second edition of CASA IN ACTION on Kerala Floods 2018 will take you through the four-month long journey of our program on Unconditional Cash Transfer with a vision to not just rehabilitate but transform lives of the people.

Till date, CASA has provided humanitarian aid in more than 500 disasters since its inception. Whether be it short-term or long-term responses, CASA has never compromised on the principles of Downward Accountability and Transparency. Our principles are not specific of any one program but inclusive of all programs. We believe that our community is an extremely important stakeholder. We believe in the equal partnership with the community. And so adhering to the principles within Unconditional Cash Transfer in Kerala was equally mandatory for CASA.

CASA's participation in events like World Forum for Democracy and Liveweek will give more recognition as a transparent and hardworking charity organisation in the eye of international and national players. CASA responded with non-food items such as clothing, utensils, tarpaulin sheets among other items in an effort to help them restore their normal livelihood.



UNITED NATIONS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
ACTION AWARDS

INCLUSION OF DALIT AND TRIBAL WOMEN WITHIN SDG 5 FRAMEWORK



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A project by

COMPLETE Freedom

The heroes of this edition are the people of Kerala for they have chosen to exercise the Right to Freedom to weave a new future for themselves. The second edition of CASA IN ACTION on Kerala Floods 2018 will take you through the four-month journey of our Unconditional Cash Transfer Program Implementation with a vision to not just rehabilitate but transform lives of the people.

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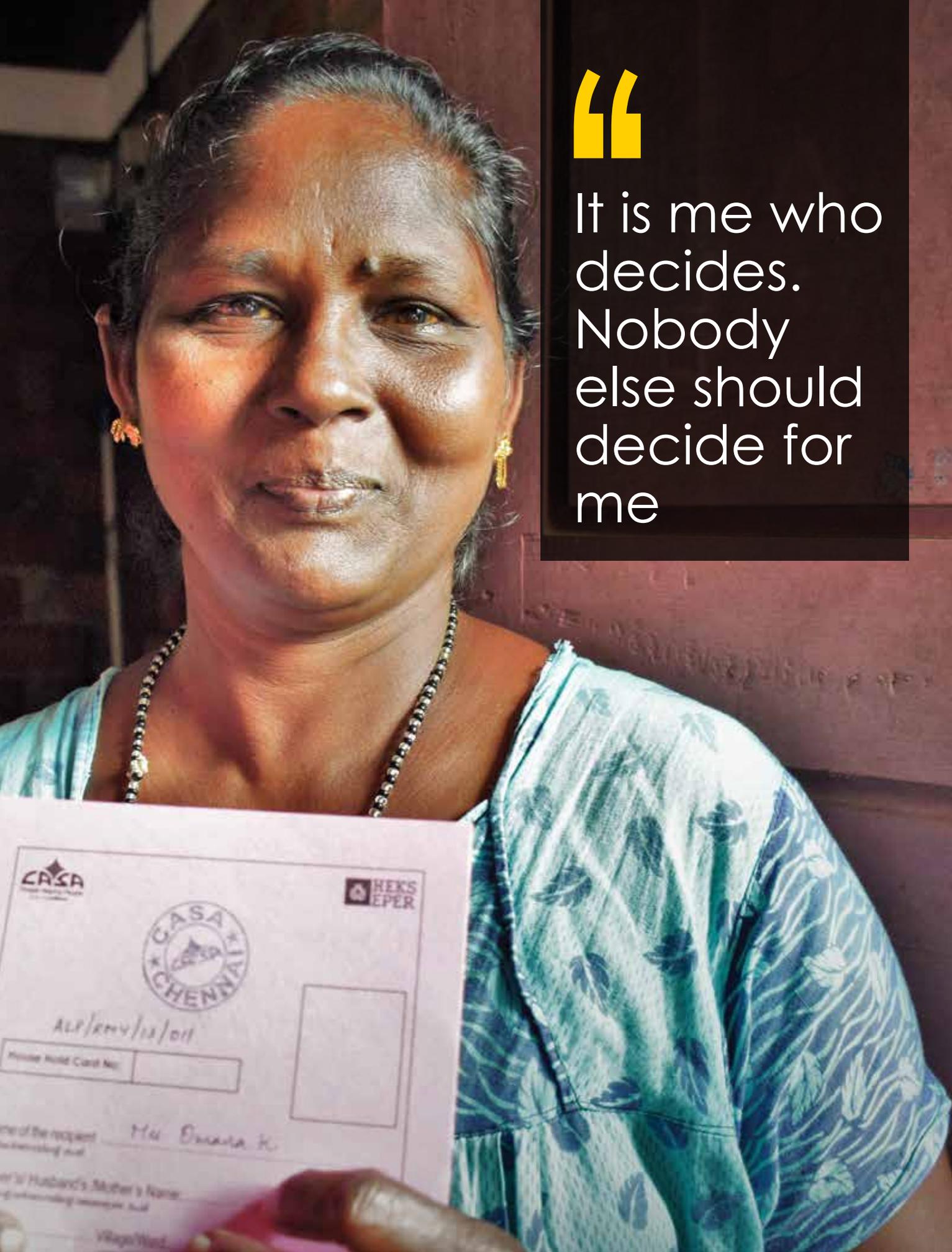
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“

It is me who decides. Nobody else should decide for me

COVER STORY

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime

Unconditional Cash Transfer implemented by CASA was one such program whose success could be numerically measured and emotionally felt

#AHandUp
NotAHandOut



By ISHA BANERJEE
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Last time we heard words *Purna Swaraj* (Complete Freedom) was in 1930 when India decided to attain complete freedom from the regime of British Government. Decades later, the same words resonate within the villages of Kerala where CASA implemented its Unconditional Cash Transfer program from October 2018. When asked about how they feel about the program, the people replied **“complete freedom.”**

Perhaps, it may be the first time that Anupamma and Omana K. were considered to make decisions on behalf of their families and communities on ‘how else would they recover faster.’ Anupamma received Rs 16,000 in November while Omana K. got Rs 8,000 into her bank account in December, 2018 during CASA’s program rolling time. Both belong to two separate villages of Kerala where flood of the century ravaged most parts of their territory and livelihood sources. Both received relief material from many charity organisations.

At one point, Anupamma had to give away the extra buckets and utensils to her neighbours and relatives who were left out in the distribution aid. “Something where I can prioritise my need” was



a wishful thinking by Omana K, whose back portion of house wall was swept in the floods.

Expensive labour charge and repair material in an inflated market - all the reasons for Omana K to sleep in a ramshackle house with all chances of collapse in the final rounds of September rainfall. Three months after the floods, the women say they would have recovered faster had they been asked what their actual requirements were.

“No one asked me before what I want. No one asked what our community’s needs were. We also

Left page: Omana K. with her beneficiary card
Right: An elderly beneficiary shows the damaged portion of her roof to CASA inspection team. Below: Anupamma shows bank passbook indicating the cash transfer by CASA

wanted to kickstart our lives at the earliest, and different families had different needs," said Anupamma.

Cash transfers are among the most well-researched and rigorously-evaluated humanitarian tools of the last decade. Cash transfers are faithful, feasible, cheap and effective in humanitarian setting.

It's because unconditional cash flow stops migration. Children affected by disasters drop-out less, family is able to perform daily chores at the earliest besides having livelihood restored.

Very rarely will you see cash transfers done in the name of men. Even though we can't refute the important contribution of a male counterpart; however, it's always a wife, a mother, a woman who could do the best for her family.

Many women, for the first time, took active part as leaders of the

“
No one asked me before what I want. No one asked what our community's needs were

independent selection committees. They functioned vigilantly, keeping their eyes intact on the most deserving households during CASA's Unconditional Cash Transfer Program.

It is very important to understand the needs of the affected people. The needs differ from family to family. We finally realised that unconditional cash transfer will give them the opportunity to decide what they need to purchase, what they need

to acquire, to reiterate to themselves "it is me who is deciding for myself, nobody else should decide for me."

So did Anupamma, Onama and many other women and men in the villages - where CASA conducted its program. The recovery was phenomenal. Some paid for their daughters' education, some for house levelling, other for house repair - it was a huge basket of customised choices in a cart unconditionally delivered by CASA.

Having experience of responding to major humanitarian crisis for 70 years, the organisation proudly winds up its unconditional cash transfer though bank transfer program early 2019. Four months of hard-work with the communities - who only had the capacity to offer tea and seats at the time of CASA meetings, are now extending their hands for a long-term partnership. ■

UNCONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER THROUGH BANK ACCOUNTS PROGRAM BY CASA

KERALA FLOODS 2018

WHY CASH TRANSFER

Cash transfers give choices and dignity to people affected by disasters and make humanitarian aid more accountable by providing a sense of ownership and control at a time of crisis. The program comes as an opportunity to bring women-centric empowerment for the community at the forefront. Cash program stimulates local economy and employment by shifting the power from larger wholesalers to local retailers who then kick-start essential services.

2556

Households benefitted with the cash program

Funds Mostly Utilised for

- House & shed repair
- Levelling of house to safeguard from future disaster
Fences
- Education
- Furniture
Household essentials
- Health and sanitation

KERALA STATE (INDIA)

5

DISTRICTS

WHERE PROGRAM WAS OPERATIONAL

Kottayam
Pathanamthitta
Alappuzha
Ernakulam
Thrissur

Across **21** Gram Panchayats

BURSTING MYTHS ABOUT CASH TRANSFER

As per UNICEF (Myth-busting? Confronting Six Common Perceptions about Unconditional Cash Transfers as a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Africa)

CASH TRANSFERS INDUCE HIGHER SPENDING ON ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO?

A common argument against use of cash transfers, particularly unconditional transfers, is the fear that beneficiaries will spend cash on temptation goods or luxury items. Studies by charities indicate that the transfers encourage substitution into human capital-related investments and reduce poverty-related stress. In fact, transfers have potential to reduce consumption of undesirables.

TRANSFERS ARE FULLY CONSUMED (RATHER THAN INVESTED)?

A perception is often voiced that cash will be utilized for short-term consumption only and not invested (either in human capital or productive activities). Many studies and the recent program in Kerala shows that households are not only utilizing transfers for immediate subsistence needs, but also using the transfer for investment in productive activities and human capital for their children.

CASH GIVEN TO WOMEN COULD RESULT IN VIOLENCE?

There is a general perception that cash results in increased violence against women and girls. In fact, evidence shows that providing cash to women can increase their participation at the community level and gives them power to make decisions.

CASH CAUSES SECURITY RISKS?

Security risks should be considered in any response, and CASA India has committed to integrate protection into all humanitarian responses. Providing money can be less visible than large scale distribution of goods, and can be transferred through a range of mechanisms that can minimise risk to women, such as transfers to bank accounts.



Fig: CASA volunteer explaining the community in Ramonkery village in Alappuzha about the process and benefits of cash transfer program

How unconditional cash transfers support women in emergencies

Quoting a study, a major NGO has pointed that "evidence shows providing cash to women can reduce physical abuse, rates of child marriage and improve women's health and economic status."

Take for example Ms Vidya Gireshkumar from Ramankerry village in Alappuzha district. With Rs 8,000 grant, she used a large chunk of it for toilet construction and saved the remaining amount in her bank account for house repair.

The toilet was built keeping in mind her ten-year-old school-going girl and niece who didn't have access to private bathroom after floods. The children would mostly go together in the contaminated paddy fields to relieve themselves early in the morning. Although her husband - an auto driver - needed most money to repair his three-wheeler, they jointly agreed on investing a significant portion into dignity first.

Such overwhelming decisions to choose what is best and prior for a family, is one big example of how unconditional cash transfer brings gender neutrality in a family and can be extended up to a community.



“
CONSTRUCTING
TOILET WAS MY
DECISION BECAUSE
FOR ME AND MY
GIRLS DIGNITY
COMES FIRST

THE PROCESS

MEETINGS & SURVEYS

Immediately after the disasters, CASA Team conducted transect walks and survey to list down the worst affected villages. Conduct meeting with village residents and understand their needs. Team shortlists villages for response.



STEP 01

STEP 02



IDENTIFY COMMUNITY LEADERS & COMMITTEE FORMATION

Team convenes village community meetings and orient them about CASA and Cash Transfer program response. People asked to identify and recommend a team of 9 committee members – encouraged to include about 5 women reps. President and Treasurer elected by villagers.



STEP 03

SUCCESSIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

9 members re-oriented on the process of identifying beneficiaries and verification formats within different cash categories. Orient them on handling of complaints mechanism and other processes.

STEP 04



BENEFICIARY SELECTION & FIRST LIST

With the assessment tools given by CASA, the committee visits affected houses and verify damages. They list beneficiaries, collect documents, and make recommendation list, that will be handed over to CASA.



STEP 05

VERIFICATION BY CASA

The list given by Committee re-verified by CASA Team by visiting the affected houses. CASA cross-checks for deserving beneficiaries who may be missed out in the process.

STEP 06



FINAL LIST

Committee and CASA re-work on the final list. Prepare the final beneficiary list.

STEP 07



COMPLAINT HANDLING MECHANISM

CASA and committee redress grievances from community members and solve them step wise. Complete verification is done in the process.



STEP 08

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Committee collects and cross-checks bank details and personal Ids of the selected beneficiaries, and hands over to the CASA team. CASA re-verifies and enters data according to grading process.

STEP 09



BANK TRANSFER

Funds are transferred. Beneficiaries are intimated about the transfer by Committee through mobile messages or bank statements. Follow up with bank if fund not transferred.

STEP 10



POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

After the release of funds to the beneficiaries, CASA team monitors the utilisation of the funds.

SOME CRITERIA FOR BENEFICIARY SELECTION



Flooded houses



Elderly people



Daily wage labours & Marginal farmers



Women headed households



Disabled



Damaged houses



Tilted houses



People with medical conditions



Director Dr Sushant Agrawal talks about reasons to go ahead with unconditional support in Kerala and decision to give power to the people to choose their recovery course.

Ques: Much has been talked about cash transfer process and the need for such kind of program in a vulnerable region ravaged by floods. Why did CASA go for this program?

Ans. It is very important to understand the needs of the affected people. We went around the villages, and could see different needs of different families. If needs differ from family to family, it was important to come to a conclusion what kind of support could be given to family that was family exclusive. We realised that unconditional cash transfer will give them the opportunity to decide what they need to purchase, what they need to acquire on priority basis and also it will give them the sense of ownership.

Ques: What was CASA intending when it decided for 'unconditional' and not 'conditional' support?

Ans. When I say Conditional, you are already pre-deciding that this cash transfer is exclusively going for shelter repair, or for so-and-so expenditure. The beneficiary will have no decision to make. Unconditional is apt in this situation because the need of different families were different. We saw greater involvement of women in the decision making within the family and community. So unconditional gave more power as to how they should use this money more meaningfully for their respective family.

Ques: Moving on to one of the most talked about points of the program – Giving More power to the people. Do you think

unconditional cash transfer program has transformed the perception of how we give aid to the people at the time of emergencies?

Ans. I think this is not exclusive of CASA. There is a global trend and a greater understanding that people are not objects. We are not helping a victim but a person who is affected by a disaster. For that I have personally experienced, that conditional or unconditional cash transfers are gaining more ground and they have been very useful at the time of emergencies. Next time, during Inter-Agency Groups (IAG) assessment, the agencies will have to hear the voice of the community who will demand for cash transfer, and I am very much sure that this will become a point for discussion.

Ques: The program is coming to a conclusion. What visible transformational impacts do you expect to see in the lives of the people?

Ans: We are coming to a conclusion of the program only from the point of resource. In the last few months, we have created enormous amount of confidence in the lives of the people and I am very sure that it will be a new beginning for them. So, the program is not coming to an end. Program is going to be now run by the people in the future by what they have learnt from this whole intervention. I am very optimistic in that way, I never think that a program ends. A phase of the program could conclude but a new phase of the program can start. ■



ORGANISED, PREPARED, FOR THE FUTURE

"This is a major experience of my life. We will keep running the committee and work for the development of our village." This is how Jose Chacko, General Secretary of Committee formed by CASA in Komanchira Village during the unconditional cash transfer program, lists the possibilities.

A few months after the flood situation, the communities had nothing to hold on to. Some returned to their homes only to find the pieces of structures. Four months of the intervention, the community members say they have "the reason and strength to believe that they will get back on their feet a little sooner."

A newly installed notice board at the village entrance is proof of the communities' mettle in overcoming the trauma and loss. "We will conduct committee elections and organise our activities the same way CASA taught and organised for us. We learned a lot, I learned a lot," said Jose, a daily wage labourer.

Never before, Jose said, that he or any of his community member came across a program that helped them in many different ways. "Empowerment does not just come by physical distribution of material; it comes from making the choices that will benefit us in the longer run."

Better prepared for all eventualities, Jose and his committee President friend Ravindran are planning to carry out a campaign to register names of every resident for their Village Development Committee. Furthermore, he promises that "next time CASA team visits his village, they might be able to meet a woman President or General Secretary."

Above: CASA staff orienting selected committee members on the transfer process. Below: Jose Chacko, General Secretary of Komanchira village committee.

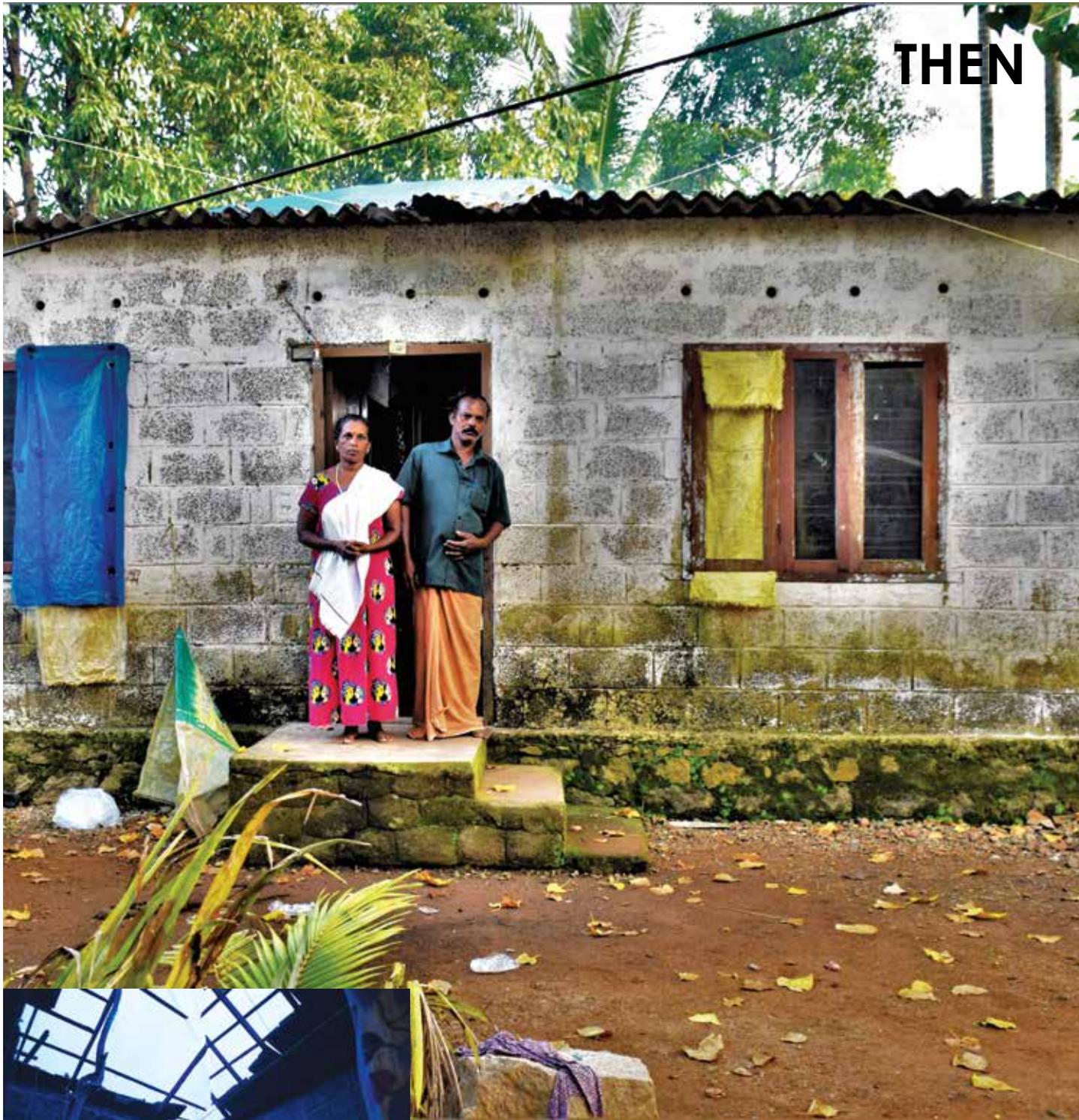
“The program is not coming to an end. Program is now going to be run by the people in the future by what they have learnt from this whole intervention.

“We will keep running the committee formed by CASA by the name of Village Development Committee with full transparency and dedication.



Field staff Priya James translates in English about the damages narrated by the affected people to CASA Director

THEN



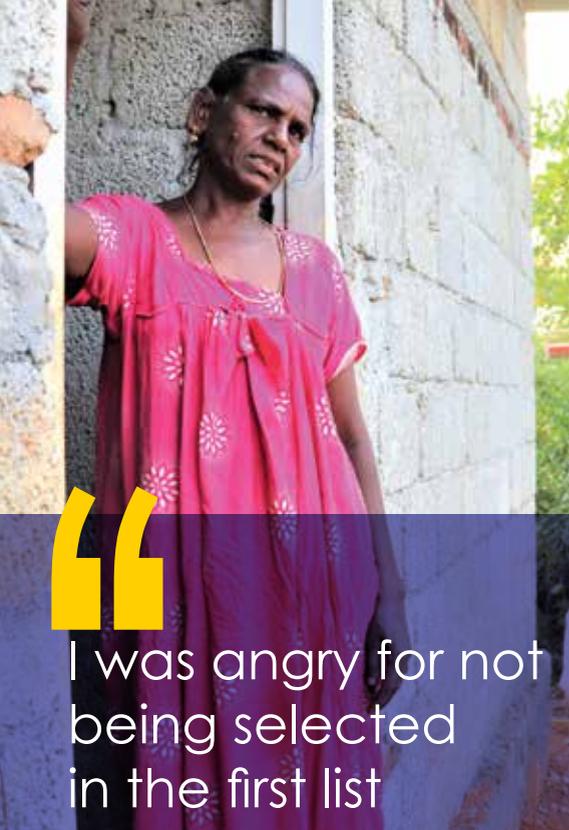
November 2018: This time 54-year-old Anandvilli intended to raze her damaged house to the ground and shift into a much safer asbestos shed by levelling it to a few inches above the ground. She hopes that by doing so she will withstand inundation the next season as her house is just 10 steps away from a backwater canal. However, her only problem was that her family did not have the kind of resources needed to buy material or pay labour charges.

Picture within: Anandvilli shows the damaged roof of her house to CASA staff in November 2018.

NOW



January 2019: Anandvilli stands on the same spot of her house. Only this time she used the unconditional cash support to buy asbestos sheets to be used as roofs, level the foundation of her house, hire labour to bring down her dilapidated structure – walls and rooftops of which were caving in every day due to intense pressure borne by the floods. All she has to say now is that “my family can sleep peacefully under a solid roof and within a stronger foundation.”



Missed at first, included at last

For 53-year-old Sudha, it was when she returned to her village after spending four months at her relatives' house that she came to know about unconditional cash transfer doing the rounds in her Ramankerry village.

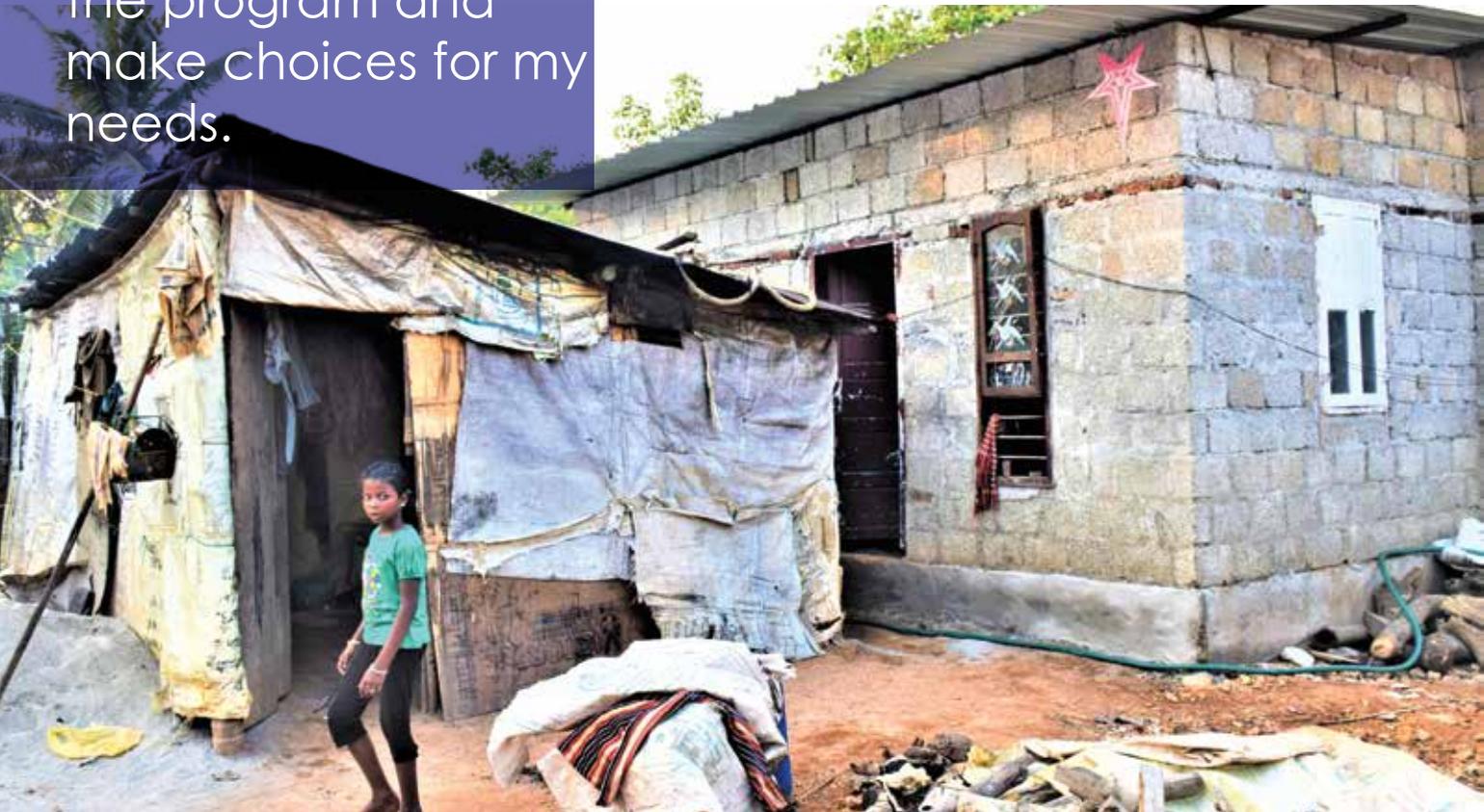
"For whole one month my house was filled with flood water. We had to leave the house as early as possible. Being closer to the paddy areas, my house was affected the most and inundated for a longer time. For all I knew, I considered myself the most deserving beneficiary," said Sudha in her desperate claim. Desperate to safeguard her family from the next spell of heavy rains, she "needed cash" to purchase material to level ground and strengthen the foundation of her house.

"This is a kind of program which most NGOs do not come up with, and getting cash support without any obligatory conditions was a huge benefit for me because I could use it to repair my house and level the ground, which was always one among my urgent requirements," she said.

Sudha approached the village committee who in turn explained her about the complaint mechanism process. "I wrote a letter to CASA and days later they visited and surveyed my house. They asked me questions like whether am I or not an active participant in village development decisions, what is my family's livelihood source, if my husband is out of job for the time being, and what do I plan to do with the cash transfer." One month later, Sudha received the grant with which she initiated ground levelling and foundation work of her house. (Pic: With the money provided to Sudha, her family has started with the house repair and ground leveling work. In the meantime, the family has constructed a makeshift home where they spend their nights.)

Left: Sudha in front of her house. credit/ Arushi Narchal
Right: Beneficiary putting complaint in complaint box. credit/ Arushi Narchal

I was angry for not being selected in the first list and desperate to get support. The Complaint Mechanism helped me get included in the program and make choices for my needs.



COMPLAINT MECHANISM

Why the need for Complaint Mechanism?

Complaint mechanism was introduced by CASA with a very clear understanding that communities' ownership over the process of recovery will have to be enhanced. A complaint box gives a second chance to the people to express their grievances and vulnerability to CASA and committee members, that further become reasons to be included in the cash transfer program.

2 TYPES OF COMPLAINTS



COMPLAINTS MADE THROUGH LETTERS
For those who can give written complaints



COMPLAINTS MADE THROUGH PHONE CALLS
For those who cannot Read and Write

STEP 01

PUTTING LETTERS IN COMPLAINT BOX

Weekly, CASA staff open the complaint box in presence of at least two committee members and collect all the received complaints.

STEP 02

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee members sit together and register all complaints in a book and submit to CASA staff with recommendations.

STEP 03

ACTION AGAINST COMPLAINTS

CASA team then registers and digitizes all the complaints and conducts an analysis on the types of complaints received. Discussions held on immediate actions on the types of complaints which demand immediate attention.

STEP 04

COMPLAINTS VERIFICATION

CASA staff along with committee members conduct house-to-house verification of the complaints which require attention. In case, the complaints are beyond the scope of committee members on issues like code of conduct, misuse of funds, favouritism etc., CASA verifies it directly.

STEP 05

INCLUSION AND REJECTION OF COMPLAINTS

After the household survey, there may be some inclusion of the beneficiary and exclusion as well. During re-verification and after receiving the complaint, the team verifies the vulnerability and damage of house. Based on the fulfilment of the criteria, complainants may be included.

STEP 06

CASA GIVES FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON COMPLAINTS

After going through the final list of verification, CASA gives the list to committee and village community members for intimating the households who have been included in the program list against the complaints.



Unconditional Support: Like Filling Colours in Picture

To talk just about the noticeable changes that primarily came with cash support is like painting a greyscale picture. What fills the colours into the image are those unnoticeable and inclusive changes within the individuals and community. Decisions were not forced upon them. In fact the community had choices to make this time, and in many different ways they collectively chose to first restore their dignity only on their terms and conditions.

While success of a program could be measured numerically, there are some immeasurable developments that may only be felt. CASA Unconditional Cash Transfer implemented was one such program whose success could be numerically measured and emotionally felt.

Ramankery village will always be remembered by CASA for its women participation rate. Eight out of nine committee members nominated were women whose strong sense of dispute solving approach and speedy processes were very much appreciated. Village Committee President Sandhya believes that having "learnt a lot from the program and its approach, I feel I should take on bigger roles now."



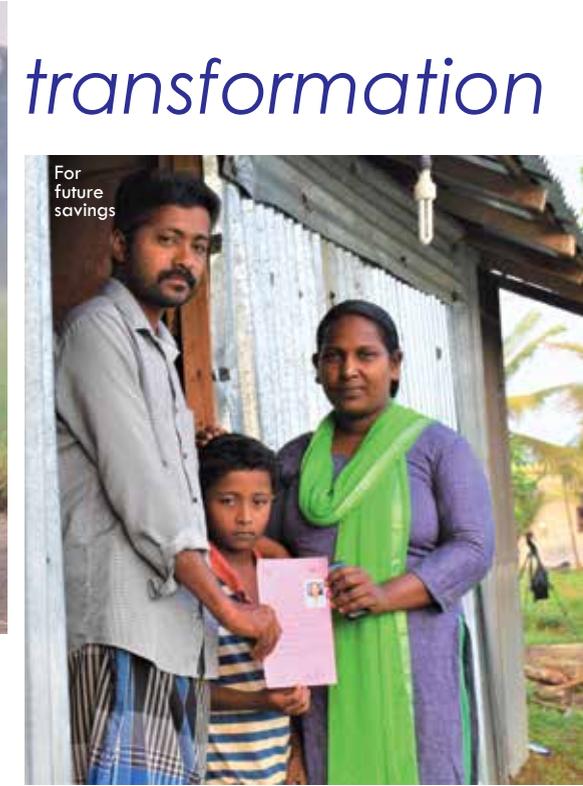
many



Build Disabled Friendly Toilet

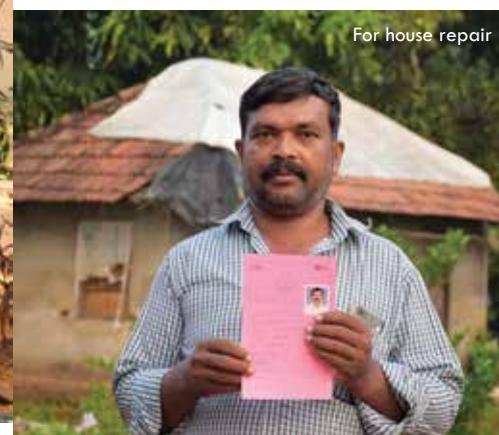


Cycle for school children

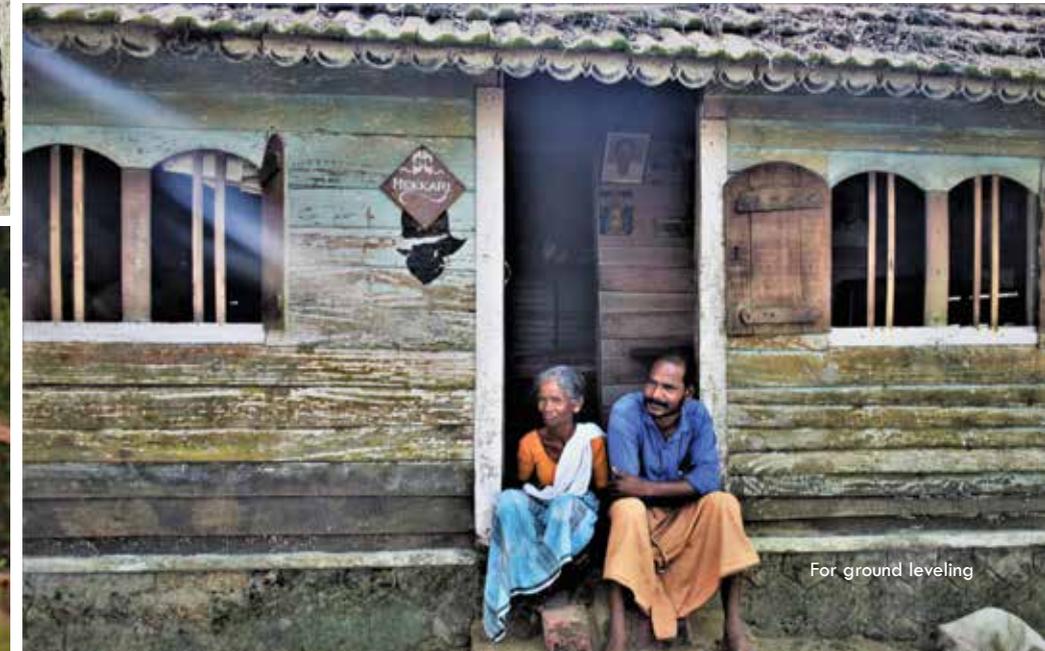


For future savings

faces of

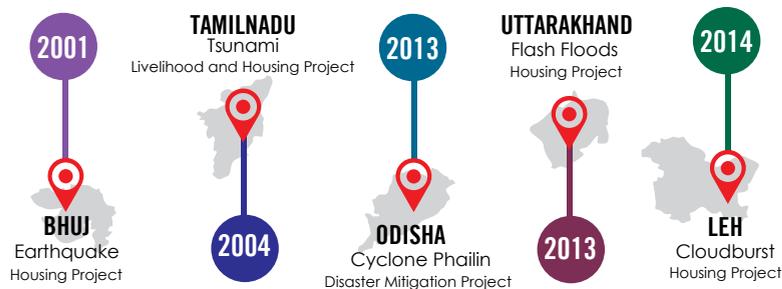


For house repair



For ground leveling

Some of CASA's major long term disaster relief interventions



70 Years of expertise

Till date, CASA has provided humanitarian aid in more than 500 disasters since its inception. Whether be it short-term or long-term responses, CASA has never compromised on the principles of Downward Accountability and Transparency. Our principles are not specific of one program but inclusive all programs. We believe that our community is an extremely important stakeholder. We believe in the equal partnership with the community. And so adhering to the principles within Unconditional Cash Transfer in Kerala was equally mandatory for CASA.



For livelihood regeneration



For house repair



For household essentials



For window panes

Stories From North-East

The program starts in three north-eastern states in the first phase of its nationwide implementation.



To empower women, digitally

A training on digital literacy and online safety programme for girls and women was organised in Shillong on 11 December 2018. The programme was implemented by Cyber Peace Foundation in association with National Commission for Women (NCW), Government of India and funded by Facebook. The objective of the training programme was to digitally empower the female participants.

Keeping in mind the long years of service and massive coverage/presence of CASA India in the northeast, CASA was approached to extend the coordination to support

the training programme. CASA-NEI extended full support in identifying the institutions (schools, colleges, NGOs and churches etc) and mobilization of girls and women participants with the help of two CASA project partners in and around Shillong.

The program highlighted the importance of digital empowerment in the 21st Century. Seventy women participants were given training on the aspects of maintaining their safety and privacy over the Internet. They were given lessons on how at the time of violations, they needed to be fearless in approaching cyber crime authorities.



Stories From East Zone



Meeting on project progress in North-East

CASA India Director Sushant Agrawal holds a meeting with the staff on the progress of developmental and humanitarian projects of CASA across all north-eastern states, including challenges and future plans. Citing examples of equality and equity from the gender perspective, Agrawal spoke about the need to increase the bandwidth of inclusive growth across CASA's programs in the region.



Strengthening Disaster Risk Management training program

CASA India organised a Strengthening Disaster Risk Management (SDRM) training program at its Banamalipur Centre in Odisha. Thirty-four community leaders took part in the training on the methods of search, rescue and evacuation - useful during disasters - from highly trained Civil Defence personnel. The training program was organized in two batches which also included school children of Standards 9th and 10th. The program mainly focuses on the school-going children and vulnerable communities by providing knowledge, awareness and practical training on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).



26 Schools & its adjoining 26 vulnerable communities in Astaranga block in Odisha will be given knowledge, awareness and practical trainings on disaster risk reduction. By strengthening their capacity, it will automatically help them to reduce the risk and enable them to cope up with the situations. If one child will be trained then the generations will be trained and safe.

- Ms Inakhi Patra, one of the Coordinator (Operation) of Strengthening Disaster Risk Management (SDRM) Project in Odisha, CASA India

Sakhi Bhoj - an online food catering service was initiated by all women's group in November 2017

About 93 orders per month received by Sakhi Bhoj since January 2017

Sakhi Bhoj does a business of Rs. 30,000 per month on an average

Delivering Dreams

These women from a small district of Madhya Pradesh didn't imagine that the fuel they use to cook in their kitchen would give fire to their dream- from homemakers to becoming entrepreneurs of a successful all women E-catering business.



Against all odds 'Sakhi Bhoj' was launched in November 2017 in Satna. Their first online order of Rs. 17000/- from IRCTC was just the first step on the ladder of success. "It was a very happy moment for us who are engaged in Sakhi Bhoj Programme", said one of the members.

Although the journey from the first order to a successful online catering business was not smooth, but they were able to make Rs. 1000/- per day. "We only started as a small business, but we never knew that our business would grow so fast", says one of the partners of the Sakhi Bhoj thrilled with the achievement.

"Some women of the group prepare khurchan (Sweet dish from milk) at their home and send it to the catering shop at Satna through which we made Rs. 5.5 lakh by the end of December. We are experiencing better results everyday and this has elevated our social and economic status."

By linking the group directly to IRCTC, CASA paved the way for these women to become self-sufficient and put Sakhi Bhoj at the threshold with other famous restaurants in this business.

Each day these women have kept their nose to the grindstone to make Sakhi Bhoj a triumph earning Rs.30,000 per month today. Who says heroes are only those who wear capes, some wear aprons too. ■



The women of Satna, Madhya Pradesh organised a Self Help Group to commence their own business. When Jamuni Bai and Munni Saket, leaders of the group shared their vision, CASA along with Anupama Education Society became genies for them and gave the platform to showcase their talent for a livelihood.

They collected information about the E-catering of the Indian Railways (IRCTC) and members of the group were given proper training to improve their skills in making meals and marketing.

Since IRCTC is tied up with a lot of renowned restaurants for E-catering, it was not easy for a new fish in the pond to survive.

Total Workforce in Satna
CASA's intervention District in MP



Source: Census 2011



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With inputs from
CASA Bhopal Sr. Prog.
Coordinator, Tapan
Chandra and Partner
Anupama Education
Society



The e-catering initiative was launched by the IRCTC in 2015

Source: Census 2011



The railways provide 12 lakh meals every day, 7,000 meals on average provided through e-catering.



The ministry also caps the prices of food items sold by licensed private vendors.

Source: Census 2011



Railways have tied up with restaurants like McDonald's, Pizza Hut and Domino's and apps like Foodpanda henceforth increasing the competition for small E-catering businesses.

Healing Wounds

14

years after
Tsunami



The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 hit the coasts of several Southern and South-Eastern Asian countries in December. CASA team revisits the places of intervention and its people who were helped and rehabilitated by the organisation and how have they really moved on with their lives after 14 years.

Housing and dignity for the Dalits

It's been exactly 14 years after Tsunami. Rajendran has a house, a stable livelihood, could afford his son's college education and daughter's marriage.

Now he works as a farm labourer, and on the other days he works as a boat labourer – an occupation which he could not take up due to his Dalit caste.

Housing by CASA and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) proved to be a great boost for many Tsunami-ravaged people like Rajendran who had to re-start their lives from ground zero.

CASA had built houses for 15 landless-Dalit families in Vellunagar village (Koolaiyar village in Nagapattinam District), which were adjacent to the fisherfolk houses.

Earlier, the Dalit settlement was at least two kilometres away from about 90 families in Koolaiyar village of fishermen.

CASA gave concept of 'pucca makaan' (brick houses) to the Dalits, who could not afford more than thatched houses previously. With concrete walls to live in, savings tendency among people came out in a different way. The money used for repairing their thatched houses every year was now being utilised for children education, re-starting small businesses and others. The proper housing gradually became a symbol of dignity for Dalits. Housewives and adolescent girls from this community started feeling safer in the CASA houses even when their husbands were on migration.

The Dalit women were able to concentrate on their children's education, with some successfully initiating other livelihood options like small grocery shops, goat rearing and poultry. ■

Words by Isha Banerjee
Inputs by Joseph Sahayam



Re-settlement colonies for the fishermen

In Koolaiyar village, the fishermen community faced a greater jolt as their housing was just on the shoreline within 200 – 500 meters from the sea, leaving them exposed to Tsunami. The fishermen community had not just lost their shelter but also the mode of livelihood - boats and other fishing gear. Within hours of Tsunami, the fishing community - who were once known for their ardent spirit of fighting waves at the sea and their stable income - came to a status of nothingness.

The fishermen community now fell in the most vulnerable sections. CASA built houses for the fisherfolks, Dalits and agricultural farmers. As the whole livelihood of the village was dependent on fishing and other related activities, CASA provided fishing boats, nets and other implements to the fishermen groups so that they could resume their labour again. Besides, CASA teams also conducted vocational training like boat engine mechanic training for the community.

Now 14 years after the disaster, the locals say that the new settlement built beyond the 500 metre mark from the sea, (now around in km in some cases) proved to be a "shield from cyclones and floods which have occurred in the recent past." Some of the fishermen have brought their own boats while others are still working as labourers in groups and some go for short term assignments to Singapore.



From being boatless/landless labourers to owners

L. Munishvaran (32) owns a boat which yields him a fairly good income, especially when the fishing season is at its best. Now he uses his savings on children education and other needy aspects. But this was not all rosy for Munishvaran at the time of Tsunami. Having lost his house, his savings and his livelihood as a boat labourer - it became difficult for him to cope up with the pressure.

CASA identified the neediest in the affected villages and provided boats to fishermen groups. One such boat was given to Munishvaran's group and this was the start of his transformation - 'From a boat labourer to a boat owner'. He used the CASA boat for almost 6 years after which he purchased a boat. Now he earns "more than 50,000 a month during fishing seasons."

"Fishing is what we do best. CASA has helped save our traditional livelihood. If CASA wouldn't have given fishing boat to me, then I would have continued my work as a fishing labourer and never would have owned a boat," said Munishvaran.

Munishvaran also was actively associated with the Disaster Mitigation Task Force as a first line Leader which CASA promoted the CBDRR. Fishermen also participated in the vocational training like motor work training given by CASA in the village. Now he claims that "he can do some minor repair work in mid-sea."



Bringing back small businesses

During the same period of rehabilitation, CASA gave assistance to people who owned small businesses like salon shops or the landless farmers for whom their implements like elements like crowbar, spade, saw, etc, earned them their daily bread. The assistance helped them in overcoming their business losses during the disaster as they could once again think about initiating their livelihood.

Velmurugan (34) had his salon shop in Koolaiyar village which was left ravaged in 2004. It was difficult to get back to his business with the overall village economy coming down in the aftermath of Tsunami.

"At that time we were running to save our lives and get a safe shelter. It was pained to see that my salon implements were washed away and damaged. I remained in a state of anxiety the following days as I had no work do to in the village. CASA inquired about my losses and decided to support me at a time when I did not have the capacity to purchase anything to restart my business," he says.

Now after 14 years, Velmurugan has built a place for himself with a hoarding on the top of his salon. The wooden chair and equipments - which CASA supported him with - encouraged him to establish a shelter though a thatched one.

International Participation



Pic: World Forum for Democracy event being held in France in November 2018. Courtesy World Forum for Democracy FB Page

MAXIMIZING IMPACT

Routing as a vintage charity in 1947 to a dynamic charitable trust, CASA has started to grapple world's attention with its effectual work. Having forged a vast network, it becomes essential for an organization like CASA to imprint its visible ground work on International and expedient platforms and make its presence felt in the influential funding space.

Competing in the forums is not intended only for rewards, but also for recognition and ensuing support.

CASA was nominated and shortlisted for the 'Democracy Innovation Award' in The World Forum for Democracy, held in France in November 2018 and had participated in one of its Innovation Labs on "What if she runs? Better representation through higher female participation in elections" in the context of the Women

Democratic Leaders, represented by Mrs. Joycia Thorat, Project officer of the West Zone.

WFD is known for its unique debating-and-solving platform for major political decision makers and activists, and highlights the key challenges worldwide at grassroots level, providing innovative solutions.

CASA's unique approach integrated towards women-centric issues was accentuated in the WFD's gender equality themed platform, this year. The organization led gender inclusive initiatives were commended at the forum.

One of the other major international participations by CASA was bookmarked by CSR Summit participation in the USA. With the recent CSR regulations on profitable companies, there is a rise in the making of NGOs and amplification of interests in issues of literacy,

church's auxiliary for social action

EDUCATION 1.58 Lakh children enrolled in schools	LIVELIHOOD 20 Lakh farmers given livelihood support	HEALTH 24.6 lakh health assistance	HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE more than 500 disaster responses till date
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women empowerment, sanitation, etc. CASA's impact was benchmarked by appreciation of the organization's projects by potential funders and corporate heads.

Participation in the global events like these has equipped the staff with the knowledge and tools to deal the country-level issues. Participation in such events helps to widen the network of alliances, benefactors, opportunities and hence, the significance and spirit of the organization's work in the global arena.

For example, the experiences with global firms like the Act Alliance have provided the CASA staff with insights on global level policy development and decision making processes. CASA has sought accreditation for international, inter-governmental conferences like CoP for climate change and via this and other governmental associations, it has represented the concerns of the country, which could not be earlier spotlighted on. ■



By JOYCIA THORAT
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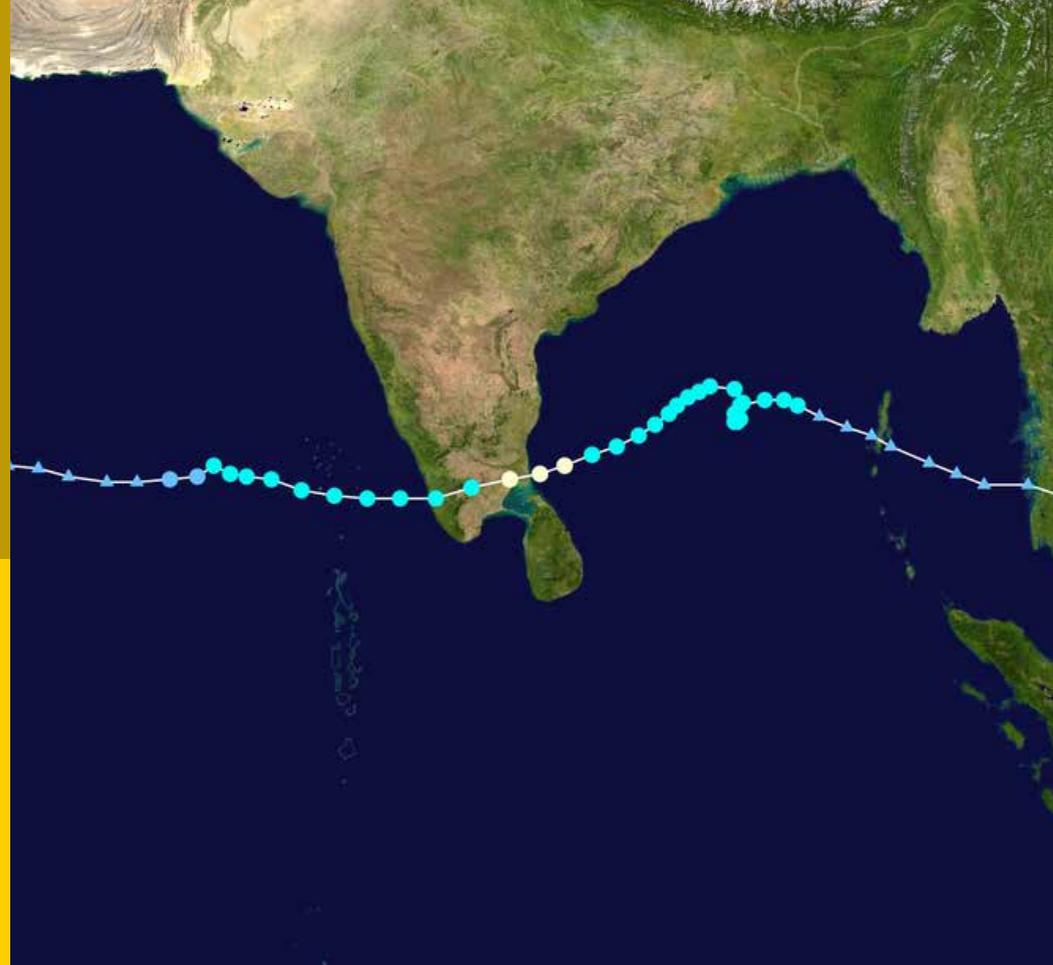


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Stories from South Zone

Cyclone Gaja response 2018



Cyclone Gaja made its landfall with a wind speed of 120 – 140 km per hour leaving a trail of Destruction in November 2018. It claimed lives of around 63 people with even cutting off the access to the 8 affected districts of Tamil Nadu. The subsequent rainfall added to the miseries of the people affecting around three lakh people in total. Severe Cyclonic Storm Gaja was the fifth named cyclone of the 2018 North Indian Ocean cyclone season, after cyclones Sagar, Mekunu, Luban and Titli.

It left 12,298 cattle dead, nearly damaging two lakh house. It uprooted about 1,482,686 forest and fruit bearing trees, which was the source of livelihood for agricultural labourers and small famers.

Damage Assessment

(As per report submitted by CASA Gaja Assessment Team)



Above: Map plotting the track and the intensity of the storm, according to the Saffir-Simpson scale

Below: Cyclone Gaja nearing South India on November 15
Pic Courtesy Wikipedia

CASA RESPONSE

1300+ Families

Safe Drinking Water

Hygiene essentials provided to adolescent girls and women

Dry Ration, Hygiene Kits, Blankets, Utensils, Clothes and Mats

■ Worse affected districts in Tamil Nadu
■ CASA's response districts in Tamil Nadu

Map of Tamil Nadu

CASA responded with non-food items such as clothing, utensils, tarpaulin sheets among other items in an effort to help them restore their normal livelihood. CASA was able to help more than 1,300 families by its effort.

The mosquito nets help protect the victims against mosquito-borne diseases prevalent during the cyclone. Waterproof tarpaulin sheets are an effective alternative to the weak hay and ruined roofs after the cyclones.



EVENTS



Mr. KRP Kosala, who Headed Finance department for 11 years, retired from the services of CASA in January 2019.

Formation of new Board of CASA 2019-2022

The society meeting of CASA held on February 7, 2019 constituted the National Board of CASA for the next quadrennial. His Grace Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios was elected as the Chairperson, Bishop Subodh C. Mondal and Rev. S C David were elected as Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer respectively. Moderator of ALC, the Most Rev. K.F. Paradesi Babu was elected as the Chair of Membership Committee, whereas the moderator of CNI, the Most Rev. Dr. P C Singh was elected as the chair of The Project Screening Committee. It was for the first time that CASA Board included women and were placed in the executive Committees.



CASA fundraising and communication staff at various church events spreading awareness on CASA's work



CASA India short film 'NEGLEGT' capturing the lives and journey of Lymphatic Filariasis patients in India was the OFFICIAL SELECTION at Woodpecker International Film Festival which was screened on November 24th, 2018 at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi. We are thankful to all our contributors and well-wishers for beautifully capturing a widely neglected tropical disease prevalent in our country.



Dinesh Chandra Vyas (extreme right), Sr. Programme Coordinator CASA, participated in world's biggest summit on Climate COP24 as one of the Co-Chair for Climate Change Group (CCG) of ACT Alliance in the first week of the conference. Along with the internal coordination of the CCG, Mr. Vyas followed up the progress on Global Stock Take and Loss & Damage related issues under Paris Rule Book.



**WE BELIEVE IN THE
POWER OF STORYTELLING
TO BRING CHANGE**

First in any charity organisation