

HELPING HANDS FOR HOSPITALS

Report
Sundarbans Islands, India



The Sundar (beautiful) Bans (forest)

Sundarbans, a cluster of beautiful islands in Bay of Bengal spread across India and Bangladesh and famous for its unique mangrove forests is a UNESCO designated world heritage site. Lying in low coastal zone makes the Sundarbans more vulnerable to floods, cyclones, sea level rise and coast-line erosion.

In May 2020, this ecologically sensitive region became one of the worst affected areas by Amphan as the landfall ravaged this expanse. Cyclone Amphan was much



more destructive than its predecessors such as Aila and Bulbul, which occurred in 2009 and 2019. The local economy is disrupted and there is loss of indigenous livelihoods. The paddy fields, the rivers and the ponds are flooded with saline water, leaving the farmers in utter despair and the plight of fisher folks is unbearable. The paddy fields become non-fertile for Paddy cultivation for the next few years. Persistent pressures from water-related threats have made the West Bengal Sundarbans a challenging place to live, and effects of global climate change will only worsen conditions.

Other challenges in the Sundarbans concern increases in human–animal conflicts. In the case of tigers, this is because of habitat loss and the encroachment of humans into tiger territories.

As a local economy stands still at present and in under shock wondering how to bounce back, the local people do not have any purchasing power to procure essential food items. They also lack the economic, human and social capital to make permanent out-migration to urban job centres successful in the short term. Job training would be a necessary precondition for successful out-migration. The situation became miserable with the presence of COVID-19. With no monetary support and no hope in farming they are now in real distress.

The distress of people lives in Sundarbans cannot be neglected. There is an urgent requirement of providing immediate relief to these people to save their livelihood. Although the storm brought loss of livelihood and attract to food security, the problem can be solved with financial and technological support. intensive rural development is the recommended approach. With appropriate planning in urbanized areas, there would be improved options for health care, education and employment. We believe that some support for short run would help them to get back on their feet till business would develop later as Sundarbans is a hub for eco-tourism.



HELPING HANDS FOR HOSPITALS at SUNDARBANS

Target Blocks - Canning 1, Canning 2, Basanti and Gosaba



1. Village -Mithi khali Das Para & Uttar purbo Para

This village is right next to the river with 995 houses among which 792 are mud houses. Among the 1460 families, 880 are poor. 530 Families do not have a bathroom. There is no health centre nor a tubewell with consumable water in this village where majority of the population belong to the labor class. Many of them have to carry the fetched water for kilometres in order to cook.

2. Village - Pathankhali Kamar Para,



This village, which also is situated at at the river bank has a total house 225 houses. 200 of them are mud houses. 210 out of 320 families are poor. 120 families do not have bathrooms in their houses. Most of the people here are fisher men and daily wage workers. There is no working tube well in the village.

3. Village - Etabhati, Ramchandraxhali



160 among the 175 houses are mud houses. 155 families among the total 190 families do not have bathrooms. The crowd consists of labourers and fishermen as the other villages in Sundarbans.

4. Village – Sobnomaskar

This village is also situated at the bank of the river. 182 families live in 160 houses among which 145 are mud houses. There are no health centres or tube wells for pure drinking water. 95 families do not have bathrooms.



5. Village – Fulbari and Majhipara

This village is in motordhige Gram panchat. There are a total of 785 houses. Total Families are 1050 among which 675 are poor. Mud Houses are 660 in number and families that who do not have bathrooms is 325.



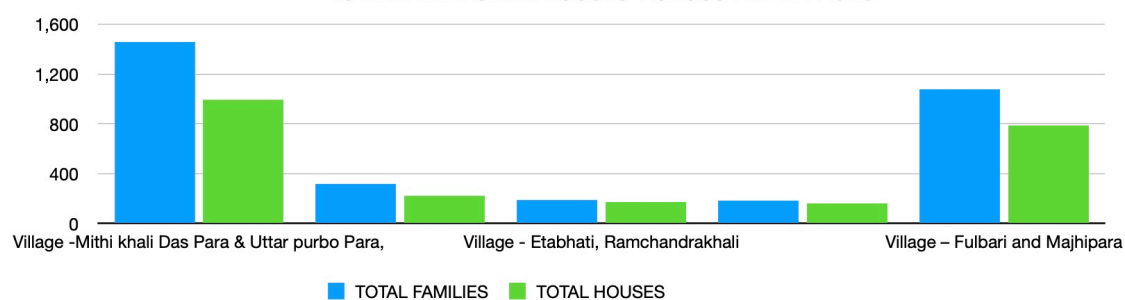
VILLAGE WISE STATUS OF IMMEDIATE NEEDS



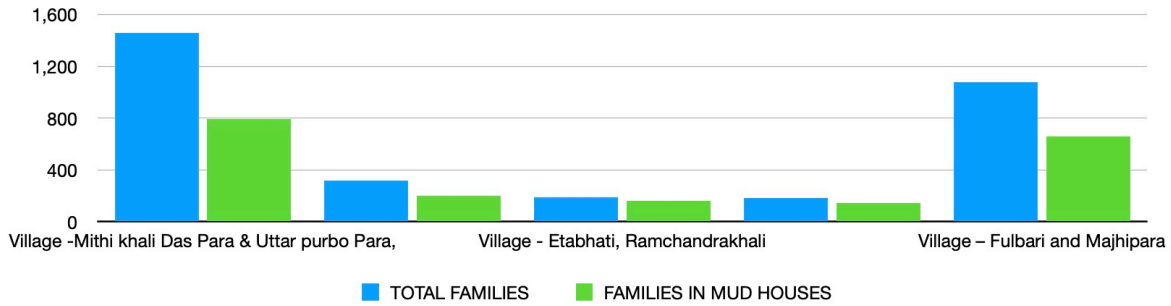
TABLE 1

VILLAGE NAME	TOTAL FAMILIES	TOTAL HOUSES	FAMILIES IN MUD HOUSES	FAMILIES WITHOUT BATHROOMS	TUBE WELL FOR DRINKING WATER	HEALTH CENTRE
Village -Mithi khali Das Para & Uttar purbo Para,	1,460	995	792	530	0	0
Village - Pathankhali Kamar Para	320	225	200	120	0	0
Village - Etabhati, Ramchandrakhali	190	175	160	155	0	0
Village - Sobnomaskar	182	160	145	95	0	0
Village – Fulbari and Majhipara	1,080	785	660	325	0	0

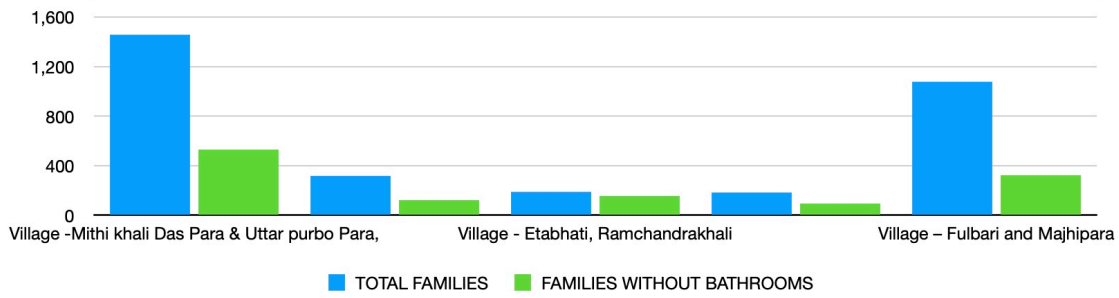
TOTAL FAMILIES AND HOUSES ACROSS THE VILLAGES



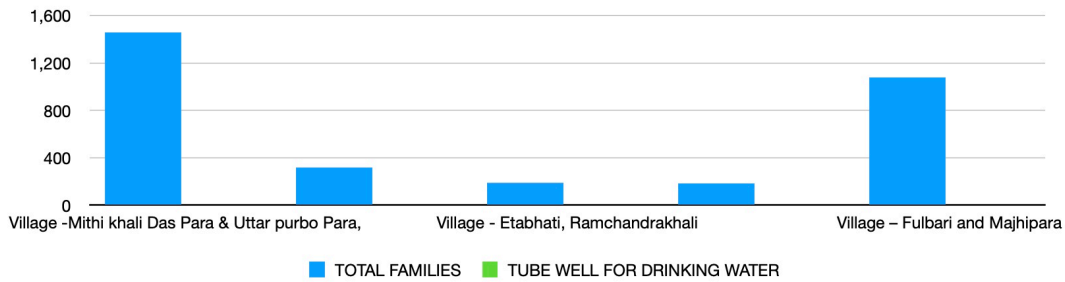
TOTAL FAMILIES AND MUD HOUSES ACROSS THE VILLAGES



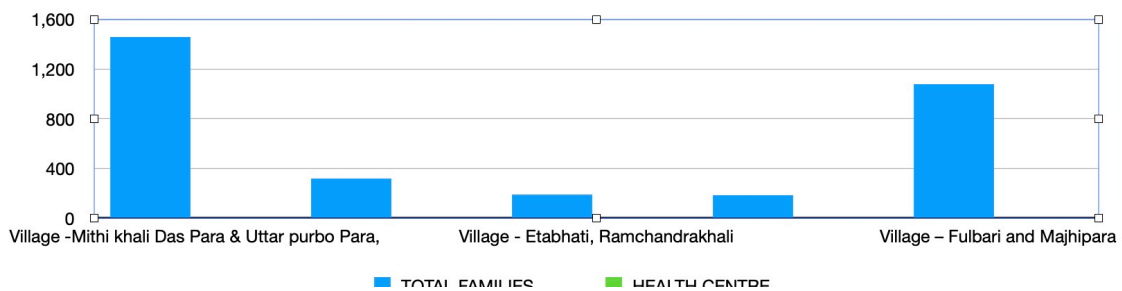
TOTAL FAMILIES AND FAMILIES WITHOUT BATHROOMS ACROSS THE VILLAGES



NO TUBE WELL WHERE THEY GET DRINKING WATER



NO HEALTH CENTRE



THE ISLANDS YET AWAITING MEDICAL CARE

Our team along with Rev Gary Van Kennen, President of NY State Council of Churches arrived on Dec 15th in Sunderbans, West Bengal after a long trip from Kolkata airport by car and then a long boat ride. Reception by Messenger Team and Rev. Aktar Molla was very cordial. Four days of medical camp in different villages in Sunderbans was a great eye opener. Messenger Team has developed a great rapport with the community which is to be appreciated.

Sunderbans need a better health care. Incidence of communicable disease, skin diseases, outbreak of Scabies, malnutrition, anaemia and various other problems are just the tip of the ice berg of the health issues.

