



**Humanitarian  
Situation  
Update # 2  
India**

**Bihar Floods**

Reporting period: 3 to 8 October 2024

**unicef** 

## Overview

- Wide-spread flooding since 15th September in the 29 districts of northern Bihar state has affected 4.5 million people including 2.1 million children<sup>1</sup>.
- Five persons died as per the Govt. report. Local Media report much higher numbers.
- 639 Gram Panchayats (local administrative unit) affected with 280,000 people evacuated to safe places.
- 238 Community kitchens are serving food to 3,30,000 people.
- UNICEF in coordination with the State Inter-Agency Group is conducting Joint Rapid Needs Assessment, currently ongoing.
- As a core strategy, 300 UNICEF supported professionals are supporting districts administration and social sector line-departments for effective response and early recovery planning.
- 191,000 dry ration kits distributed by Government.
- More than 2100 boats are involved in Government response, including eleven boat ambulances.
- All the major rivers are currently showing declining levels of water and rains are not forecasted<sup>2</sup>.

## Key findings

### Immediate needs based on field visits & Joint Rapid needs findings from 14 districts.

- ✓ Sufficient food for Flood affected households.
- ✓ Clean drinking water
- ✓ Packed or energy dense food for children 6 month to 3 yrs.
- ✓ Safe sanitation
- ✓ Sanitary supplies for adolescent girls and women
- ✓ Child-friendly spaces
- ✓ Disinfectants.
- ✓ Community Engagement

**UNICEF requires USD 250,000 for immediate response.**

Flood Affected Districts (Phase 1 & 2)



Map to illustrate flood impacted districts: The areas highlighted in red (phase 2) & yellow (phase 1) represent those most affected by floods. In total, 29 districts have been affected.

<sup>1</sup> Daily flood reports released by the disaster management department, Government of Bihar.

<sup>2</sup> Release by the Water Resource Department, Government of Bihar

## UNICEF response

UNICEF is working with the district administrations of 19 affected districts where it has existing, multi-sectoral programmes. Focus is on strengthening coordinated action by social-sector line-departments for a timely and quality response to the needs of women and children. UNICEF response strategy include advocacy and technical assistance to strengthen government response in line with the Core Commitments to Children as follows:



### HEALTH

- Primary Health care services are disrupted across all 29 districts impacting health and wellbeing of half a million under-five children and 217,000 pregnant women particularly in hard-to-reach villages Health-outreach activities are still affected where villages are cut off. Health camps are deployed and operational in all the camps visited.
- UNICEF has positioned 200 social mobilization coordinators across nineteen districts and 50 worst affected administrative blocks to support Government health response for floods, which is helping in resumption of immunization services, care for pregnant women and other essential emergency obstetric services.
- UNICEF is coordinating with WHO<sup>3</sup> on disease surveillance, which is helping in highlighting emerging health risk for children and their families.



### WASH

- Sanitation facilities in areas where displaced people have settled is very rudimentary. Consequently, affected women and children are resorting to open defecation.
- UNICEF has advocated for construction of shallow pit latrines. In other areas such as self-settled camps and distribution centres, the toilets are not properly constructed and therefore unusable and precarious. Household toilets in the villages are also damaged (either submerged, inaccessible or destroyed).
- Community water supply systems in the villages are not fully functional either due to damage or lack of electricity supply. People are relying on shallow handpumps, wherein water quality is not assured.
- Government is supplying water through tankers in places areas where displaced people are settled in large numbers. In the camp settings, handpumps have been installed but are not adequate in numbers, which is leading to crowding at water points.
- UNICEF is advocating, coordinating and providing technical support to the office of Engineer in Chief (ENC), PHED and JEEViKA at the state level to enable timely and quality WASH response at district level.
- 61 Flood Response Support Kits (including mobile water filtration units) prepositioned by UNICEF with Government are being used to provide clean drinking water for affected people in the flooded communities. UNICEF is providing technical support for installation and is monitoring to enable access to clean drinking water which is helping reduce the risk of water borne diseases.



### EDUCATION

- Approximately 40,000 schools (approx. one thousand damaged) across all 29 districts are affected and education disrupted as schools are inundated, inaccessible or are being used as relief centers, which is impacting 1.2 million children.
- UNICEF coordinated and successfully advocated with Samagra Shiksha (National Flagship scheme for Education) to issue advisories to the affected districts to ensure: (i) continuity of education (as appropriate) through safe alternative learning spaces, (ii) ensure safety of children and teachers in affected communities, (iii) conduct damage assessment of Teaching & Learning Material, textbooks, and infrastructure in affected schools where possible in readiness for school reopening. As a result:
  - Frontline workers (Shiksha Sevaks cadre) are organizing safe learning spaces for children.
  - Government has allocated INR 50,000 as contingency funds for each school for minor repairs and sanitization of spaces.

<sup>3</sup> WHO supported Government led disease surveillance

- UNICEF and education alliance and four UNICEF supported coordinators are helping education departments in planning and implementation of the school cleaning and resumption of learning activities.



## NUTRITION

- Food security is a serious concern, resulting in a precarious nutrition situation. Paddy crops currently in the fields are completely damaged across all affected districts. Since the farms are still waterlogged and not likely to dry up in next couple of weeks, seed sowing for winter crop is likely to be delayed. Since more than 80%<sup>4</sup> of the population in Bihar is dependent on agriculture, food security at household level is likely to be acutely impacted affected for a long time since large tracks of land have been inundated. Loss of arability of land due to sand casting will further exacerbate the food productivity.
- Nutrition and Early Childhood Development services are disrupted as AnganWadi Centres (AWCs) are affected across all twenty-eight districts since most villages are cut off and centers are inundated. This has impacted the supplementary nutrition programme that targets all children particularly those with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Further disruption is likely to result in more children with MAM and SAM.
- In the camp sites, supplementary nutrition services are not available for children 6 months - 3 years old. Mothers are dependent on the cooked food distributed in the camp or community kitchens. There is no provision for breastfeeding corners which are likely to affect the nutrition of children (0-6 months).
- The school Midday meal programme in elementary schools (which is a source of additional nutrition for school going children) has been discontinued due to closure of schools, which is impacting over 1.2 million school age children. This is likely to exacerbate the malnutrition situation, which is already high (23% children are wasted in the age group of 0 to 5<sup>5</sup>) in the state.
- UNICEF is advocating and providing technical support through 15 number of experts to the office of the District Programme Officers (DPOs) and Child Development Project Officer (CDPOs), for resuming the services of AWCs at appropriate and safe locations.
- UNICEF is also coordinating with World Food Programme regarding the food insecurity situation.



## CHILD PROTECTION

- Two million children are estimated to be affected by the floods. Displaced children are living on the embankments or in the designated camps or any safe space that they found mostly on the roadsides. Even though the majority are with families, these children are vulnerable to neglect and abuse with potential risk of being trafficked.
- Inter-Agency Group (IAG) and UNICEF have created five Child Friendly Space (CFS), which are being accessed by four hundred children. These spaces are created on the embankment of rivers Koshi and Kamalan Darbhanga and on roadside in Sitamarhi district. Anganwadi worker (frontline worker for nutrition and ECD) from the affected AWCs are conducting activities for the children and ensuring supplementary food in Sitamarhi district. This model will be replicated elsewhere by Government.



## SOCIAL POLICY SOCIAL PROTECTION

- The Government of Bihar has announced gratuitous relief of INR 7,000 to 430,000 affected families through direct cash transfer. This was initiated on 3 October 2024 and government is targeting to reach the remaining 470,000 families by 9 October 2024.
- UNICEF through its partners has initiated coordination mechanisms with the local panchayats to ensure all affected families are included and no one is left behind especially female headed households and families with persons with disabilities.

<sup>4</sup> This includes 97% small and marginal farmers.

<sup>5</sup> NFHS-5

## Funding & Surge Support.

UNICEF Bihar response has been initiated with focus in 19 focus districts.

- As of now USD 20,000 funds have been repurposed for provision of technical support to government.
- Surge capacity received for Emergency coordination and Social & Behaviour Change have been deployed to support the field office.

## Gap - USD 0.25 MILLION

An initial USD 0.25 million is needed for various sectors to extend technical support to Government in the worst affected districts.

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