



After the Flood: The Road Back to Food Security

**Gaye Burpee, PhD
Deputy Director, Program Quality & Support
Catholic Relief Services**

**WISHH Food Aid Conference
February 16, 2005**

A Tsunami Story

- 8,000 deaths in the state of Tamil Nadu, India
- Tsunami - 1 km inland
- Villages with 100s and 1,000s of deaths
- Village of Naluedapathy – 7 deaths
- Why was this one village spared the devastation of neighboring villages?

Trees, Trees, Trees

- Dec, 2002 - 300 farmers, 80,000 saplings, 24 hours
- Casuarina & eucalyptus, 20 ha along 1 km coast
- Coastal greenbelt, trees weakened tsunami impact
- “Every village on the coast should plant trees. We know the worth of trees, they are more precious than your life.”
Madiyazhakan, 55, farmworker



Flood



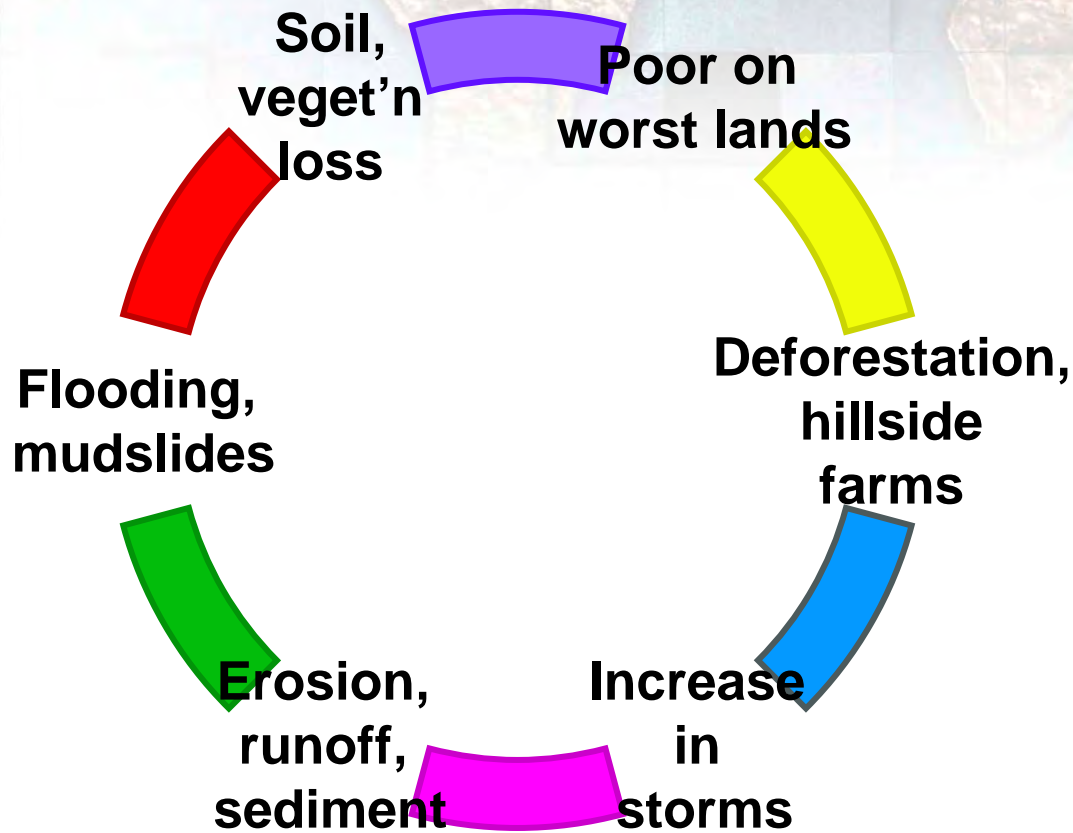
- Fast or slow onset of abnormally wet weather
- Linked to human actions
- Actions can increase or decrease the risk of disaster
- Heavy rainfall does not have to become a flood emergency

Flood is complex, results from interactions between:

- erratic, intense weather
- land use patterns
- livelihood strategies
- local socio-economic and political contexts
- people's abilities to cope
- national policies
- soil types
- vegetative cover



Flood Cycle: Land degradation, people, storms



- Poor – least resilience, least assets, least knowledge and skills to cope
- Resort to desperate survival activities earlier
- Die sooner & in greater numbers

Global Trends

- Last 10 yrs & next 10 yrs – increased coastal flooding
- Continuing w/ accelerating rates of deforestation
- 2025 – ½ world’s population in severe storm areas, subject to flooding
- Emergency relief expected to be continuous, massive

First Case: India

- 2001 floods – 107 people died in districts where CRS worked.
- 2003 floods – more severe. Yet no one died in CRS districts.
- Why?
- Communities were prepared.



Preparedness Phase I

- Women's solidarity group savings & credit (SHGs)
 - Civil society training
 - Mobilization of vulnerable group
 - Empowerment
 - Increase financial assets (also social & human assets)
- 500,000 women SHG members
- 3,000 groups in flood-prone Orissa
- Ripple effect – groups forming groups to saturation
- Platform for all other development

Preparedness Phase II

- Mobilizing entire community – community identified most needy & vulnerable BEFORE the disaster
- Community mapping (resources, safe zones, vulnerable points & people)
- 7-day reserves (food, fodder, fuel, water)
- Integration w/ govt. Plans
- Conflict transformation



“Mock” Drills



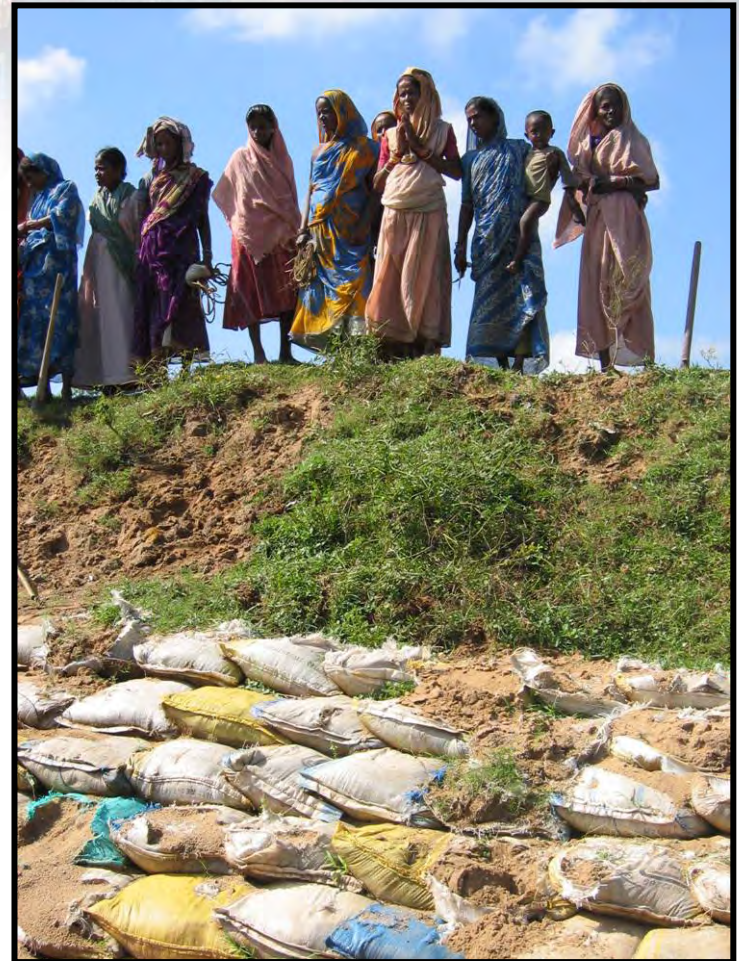
Preparedness Phase II

- Task forces (early warning, rescue, food, water, first aid, livestock safety)
- Investing in homemade life jackets
- Making boats and rafts
- Sandbagging banks
- Recording due dates for pregnant women (they are rescued first, taken to pre-determined safe area)
- Disbursing relief food aid to remoter villages, as they had enough
- Relief disbursement – faster, cheaper

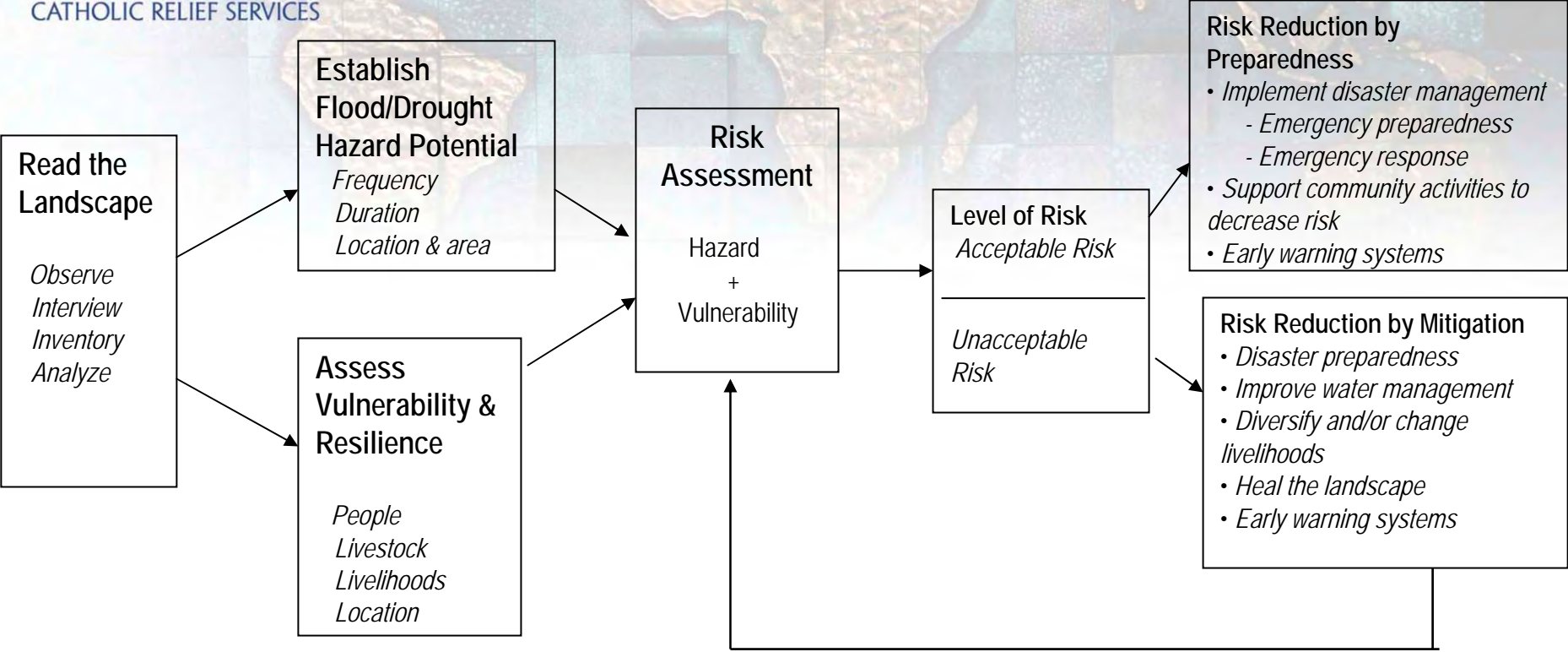


Mitigation & Transition

- Community collaborates w/ local government:
- Raising tubewells, building raised structures, clearing drainage areas, bolstering embankments
- Planting perennials and multi-purpose trees, increasing agroforestry
- Diversifying livelihoods and assets for resilience
- Food aid – key during recovery/rehabilitation before livelihoods up to speed



Framework for Flood/Drought Management



Second Case: Africa

1. Disaster triggers 2 food security responses:
 - Food aid response first
 - 2nd – agricultural recovery & local food production
2. Standard agricultural recovery intervention:
 - Distributions of seeds & tools
 - High logistical costs, slow disbursement
 - NGO makes decisions about crop seeds/varieties farmers need
 - Assumes that availability of seed is the problem
 - Imported seed from international sources did poorly in local environments

Second Case: Africa



3. Availability vs. access

- Even in the worst situations, seed is often available
- Under persistent, repeated disaster in Ethiopia (drought) and Burundi (conflict), seed is available
- Farmer seed storage systems prevail and provide adequate quantities in most situations
- Access is the problem

Seed Fairs & Vouchers

How it works:

- Seed fair – specific day & location
- Vulnerable HHs get vouchers of specific cash value
- Can exchange vouchers for seed from registered sellers
- Sellers– farmers who have saved seed & local commercial growers, where available



Seed Fair Results

- Fairs used for 5 countries in conflict
- 13 countries in drought
- 2 countries in flood
- 30,000 participants, cost of \$9.53/participant
- Average of 730 participants/ seed fair
- 33% of seed sellers –women
- 45% of farmers buying seed – women
- Seed quality rated good, crop/variety selection adequate

Seed Fair Benefits

1. Farmers & local communities at heart of process
2. Farm families best placed to manage process of recovery by accessing seeds of their choice
3. Seed aid – opportunity to support informal seed systems (farmer saved seed) and stimulate recovery of rural economies



Seed Fair Benefits

4. Rapid response
5. Open, transparent, equitable process
6. Increases appreciation of the productivity & resilience of farmer seed systems





CRS Framework for Integral Human Development (IHD)

