

THE REHABILITATION NEEDS

Despite having reached out to so many families, we at Pragya are aware that there is much more that needs to be done to sustain the people of Leh and lead them to recovery. The floodwaters washed away much of the standing crop as well as the fertile topsoil that permitted agriculture to take place, and the lands have been covered with rubble in many places. Most canals that bring water from distant sources (springs or glacier-fed streams) to the village fields have been destroyed. Next year's crop would require immense effort and the harvest would likely be very poor. Loss of livestock and cattle has been extensive and given the agro-pastoral lives that the people of Leh lead, the road to recovery looks onerous.

THE WAY AHEAD

Given below are some of the few measures suggested for Reconstruction and Sustenance of the region and its people [*involving both physical inputs and capacity building measures*]:

Physical Inputs

- Large rocks will have to be cleared off the farmlands and debris removed using heavy earthmoving equipment. The lands would also require considerable inputs of manure and other nutrients, for rejuvenating them and making them cultivable again. Equipment support and soil nutrients would have to be provided to the marginal farmers.
- For restoration of irrigation facilities, the government is expected to repair the main canals, but work will still need to be done to connect the canals to individual fields. The smaller *kubhs* (channels) that cater to the individual fields would need to be repaired locally. Wherever water cannot be channelized from the main irrigation canal due to change in water-course as a result of flood damage, water storage structures [*zing*] would have to be built between the water source and the fields for storing water for subsequent use. These activities would require support for material and some external labor that may be required.
- Seeds of cash crops would be procured and distributed to the needy farmers for the coming sowing season. For sustained cropping, Seed Banks would need to be established at cluster level for exchange and storage of seeds- of both cash crops and food crops.
- Pre-fabricated weather resistant warehouses need to be provided to villages to store their food grains and cash crop for the harsh winters, as well as a safeguard against future events of the same nature.



Capacity Building Measures

- Extensive training on Disaster Management issues [both mitigation and post disaster] needs to be undertaken in the Ladakh region and in other parts of the Himalayas that are prone to such environmental risks. Since, the region is very remote and many villages are inaccessible at most times, it is necessary to build up a trained cadre of first aid / casualty workers across distant villages, to ensure effective disaster response.
- Small and marginal farmers in the Himalayas are being increasingly affected by recurrent droughts and floods, and resulting crop loss. Training on improved agro-techniques and cropping would help them adapt their farming practices to these changes, and reduce the risks to their livelihoods.

We at Pragya sincerely hope that we will continue to receive your support for our efforts at making a difference and would request you to access our site at www.pragya.org for updates on our latest activities and events.

Gargi Banerji
Director
Pragya