

# WHAT'S UP?

## DRR AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE EDITION

AUGUST 2025



OXFAM



Anjali Bohara, Municipal Executive Member and former CDMC leader from Bhimdatta Municipality-9, Kanchanpur district, Sudurpashchim Province points to the spot where her home once stood before it was swept away by the Mahakali River flood. Photo: Kishor Sharma/Oxfam

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# FROM PREPARATION TO RESPONSE IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Oxfam is committed to alleviating suffering and advocating for the rights of communities affected by crises worldwide. We operate with a rights-based approach, aiming not only to provide immediate relief but also to address the root causes of vulnerability.

Disasters are increasing in both their frequency and ferocity. DRR is crucial to saving lives and safeguarding development gains. Therefore, Oxfam views DRR as an integral part of its development and humanitarian work, aiming to reduce the damage caused by hazards through proactive measures. This integrated approach strengthens people's resilience, empowers them to voice their concerns, and helps them protect their lives and livelihoods.

In Nepal, Oxfam has been working towards increasing the resilience and adaptive capacities of communities most vulnerable to and affected by disasters. Oxfam is committed to building community and institutional capacity to withstand natural disasters, improve livelihoods, enhance food security, and foster resilience. Our various initiatives provide ongoing support to communities and collaborate with governments to improve disaster preparedness and response.

Oxfam in Nepal serves as a vital example of how Oxfam International's global vision translates into localized action. With over 40 years of presence in the country, Oxfam in Nepal has developed a deep understanding of the local context, where a significant portion of the population lives below the poverty line and is highly vulnerable to natural disasters like floods, landslides, and earthquakes.

## Key aspects of Oxfam in Nepal's contribution include:

- **Disaster Response:** Nepal is highly prone to natural disasters. Oxfam in Nepal has been instrumental in providing immediate humanitarian aid during major events.
- **Integrated Programming:** The humanitarian response is intricately linked with broader development goals. This includes programs focused on Gender Justice, Climate Justice and Resilience, Economic Justice, and Water Governance and WASH. This integrated approach acknowledges that humanitarian needs often arise from deeper structural issues.
- **Community-Led Initiatives and DRR:** Oxfam in Nepal strongly emphasizes community participation and empowerment in DRR. We work with communities to develop disaster management plans, establish emergency funds, and build the capacity of local committees, including women's empowerment centers, to lead preparedness and response efforts.
- **Building Resilience through Livelihoods and Adaptation:** Beyond immediate relief, Oxfam in Nepal supports long-term recovery by helping families diversify livelihoods adopt climate-resilient agricultural practices, and improve their ability to cope with future climate shocks.
- **Partnerships and Advocacy:** Oxfam in Nepal works in close coordination with national and local governments, as well as a network of local civil society organizations. We advocate for policy changes that reduce vulnerability and promote a more just and equitable society.

- **Anticipatory Actions:** Oxfam in Nepal uses a proactive anticipatory action strategy to manage disasters. This includes helping communities develop their own early warning systems, strengthen existing systems and advocate for cash-based interventions to provide swift assistance before a disaster hits. Oxfam aims to build a coordinated and inclusive national framework for disaster preparedness.

In essence, Oxfam's approach to DRR and humanitarian response is holistic, aiming not just to alleviate suffering in the immediate aftermath of a crisis but also to empower communities to build long-term resilience and advocate for systemic changes that reduce their vulnerability to future disasters.

Hence, acting on its humanitarian mandate, Oxfam in Nepal and its partners worked with local governments to respond to the severe floods and landslides that hit Nepal last year, between September 26 and 28, 2024. Oxfam and partners provided comprehensive support in the affected districts - Dhading, Kavrepalanchowk, and Rautahat, combining immediate relief with early recovery and protection efforts.



Community members receiving relief materials.  
Photo: Oxfam



# DISASTER RESPONSE – FLOOD AND LANDSLIDE RESPONSE



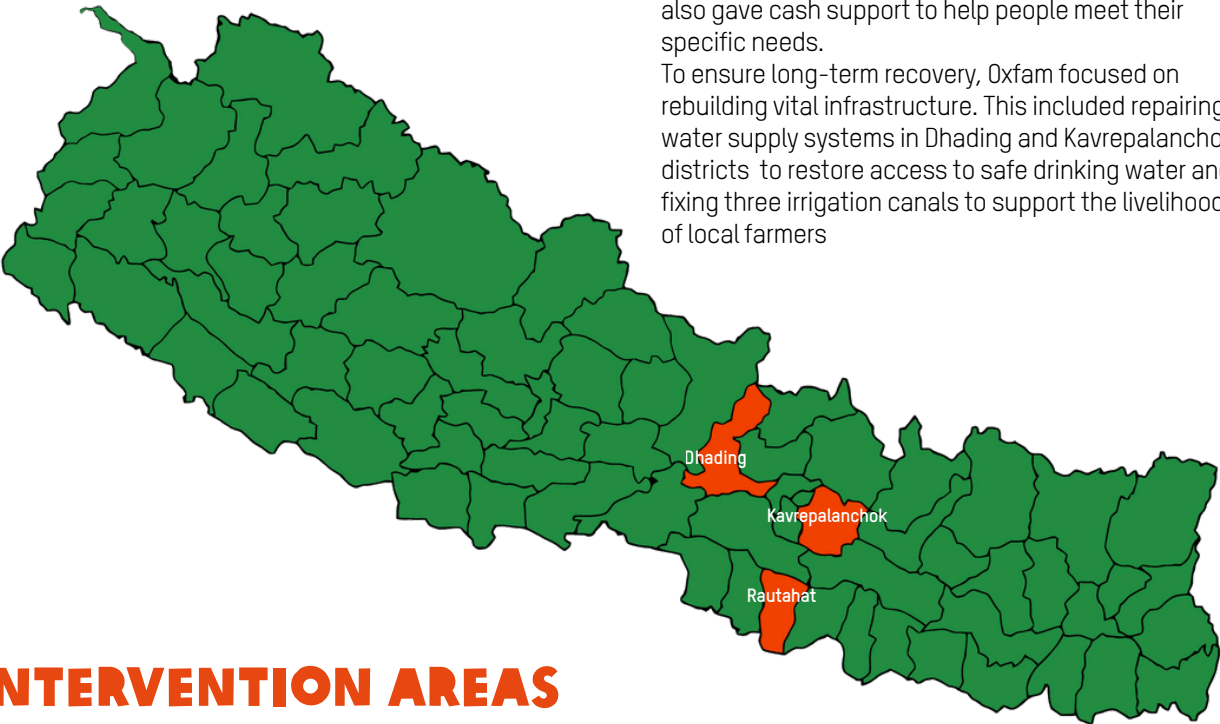
House destroyed by the September 2024 flood in Roshi River in Kavrepalanchowk district. Photo: Suresh Bhandari/Oxfam

## IMPACT

In September 26 and 28, 2024, Nepal was hit by severe and prolonged rainfall, leading to widespread flooding, inundation, and landslides across several provinces. This disaster had a devastating human toll with 249 fatalities, 178 injuries, and 18 individuals reported missing. The crisis also caused immense damage to homes, with over 5,916 houses completely destroyed and more than 12,477 partially damaged. Approximately 10,807 households were displaced, highlighting the extensive nature of the catastrophe.

Following this, Oxfam immediately teamed up with partners – FOCUS Nepal, RDC Nepal, and Shanti Jana Adarsha Sewa Kendra to provide support in the affected districts particularly Dhading, Kavrepalanchowk, and Rautahat. Their combined efforts supported a total of 75,484 people in the districts of Dhading, Rautahat, and Kavrepalanchowk.

From September 2024 to July 2025, Oxfam did more than just provide immediate relief after the devastating floods and landslides. In addition to distributing relief supplies, dignity kits, and winterization sets, Oxfam also gave cash support to help people meet their specific needs. To ensure long-term recovery, Oxfam focused on rebuilding vital infrastructure. This included repairing 38 water supply systems in Dhading and Kavrepalanchowk districts to restore access to safe drinking water and fixing three irrigation canals to support the livelihoods of local farmers



## INTERVENTION AREAS

Dhading	Kavrepalanchok	Rautahat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Benighat Rorang Rural Municipality</li><li>. Jwalamukhi Rural Municipality</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Namobuddha Municipality</li><li>. Bethanchowk Rural Municipality</li><li>. Temal Rural Municipality</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Paroha Municipality</li><li>. Rajdevi Municipality</li><li>. Gaur Municipality</li><li>. Yamunamai Rural Municipality</li><li>. Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality</li></ul>

## WASH RESPONSE

27,896 individuals were reached



**WASH Kits** 10,050  
individuals received WASH kits



**WASH Awareness** 1,392  
individuals received orientation on WASH and water purification



**Water Supply Schemes** 16,544  
individuals benefitted through repair and maintenance of 38 Water Supply Schemes in Dhading and Kavrepalanchowk district

## FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS

20,202 individuals were reached



**Food** 7,816  
individuals received food items



**Cash Support** 9,284  
individuals received cash in the form of unconditional, multipurpose and cash for work



**Irrigation Canals Repair and Maintenance** 1551  
individuals benefitted with the repair and maintenance of 3 irrigation canals

## SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

30,409 individuals were reached



**Winterization Kits** 17,079  
individuals received winterization kits



**CGI Sheets** 13,330  
individuals received CGI sheets

## GENDER & PROTECTION

4,022 women were reached



**Cash for GBV survivors** 80 GBV  
survivors received cash support



**Referral Pathway Orientation** 2,692  
women received orientation on GBV referral pathway



**Dignity Kit** 1,300  
women received dignity kits

**75,483**

Individuals Reached  
(37% women)

**DHADING** 20,871  
**KAVREPALANCHOWK** 27,821  
**RAUTAHAT** 26,791

# RESTORING WATER: BHAKUNDEBESI WATER SUPPLY SCHEME REPAIR

The incessant rainfall on 26-28 September 2024 caused widespread destruction in Kavrepalanchowk district, located on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Flooding along the Roshi River and other confluences in the district severely impacted a 22 km stretch of the B.P. Highway, a crucial 160 km route connecting Kathmandu with Nepal's Eastern Terai.

Beyond the highway damage, the continuous rainfall triggered numerous landslides across the district's hilly regions. This resulted in destroyed homes, impassable roads, disrupted water supplies, ruined farmlands, and profoundly disrupted the lives of residents.

The floods further caused extensive damage to water infrastructure. The Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority reported damage to 1,678 federal and provincial water supply systems. Locally, Kavrepalanchowk district's Namobuddha Municipality's preliminary assessment revealed that every single one of its 119 water supply schemes was either fully or partially destroyed.

The flood destroyed the transmission line and swept away the water pump of the lifting system at Bhakundebesi Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme (WSS), located on the bank of Roshi River in Namobuddha Municipality.

Bhakundebesi, a key market center in the municipality, through which the B.P. Highway passes, is rapidly establishing itself as a dominant business hub, fueling an increased demand for water.

To meet this demand, the Bhakundebesi Water Supply & Sanitation (WSS) scheme operates two sub-projects: Sano Soti WSS and Chaukidanda Fedi WSS, both of which pump water from sources for transmission and distribution.

Previously, Sano Soti WSS, the primary water source, delivered 2 liters per second of drinking water to 410 households for three hours every other day. The Chaukidanda Fedi lift system was anticipated to significantly boost this supply.

The Chaukidanda Fedi Lift WSS, a federally funded project designed for an 8 liters per second discharge, was projected to supply water for four hours daily, meeting the demand of an additional 200 households (totaling 610 households), the Municipality Office (65 staff), and an army barrack (2,010 staff).

However, the Chaukidanda Fedi lift's source structure and 12 km of transmission lines were destroyed before completion by the flood. This, coupled with a decline in Sano Soti WSS's water discharge, severely impacted residents. Post flood they received drinking water for only half an hour every other day.

Immediately after the flooding, a rapid WASH assessment was carried out by Oxfam in Nepal and its district partner, Shanti Jana Adarsha Sewa Kendra (SJASK), in three municipalities of Kavrepalanchowk district – Temal Rural Municipality, Bethanchowk Rural Municipality, and Namobuddha Municipality.

An urgent need to support the Bhakundebesi WSS was identified. However, repairing the Chaukidanda Fedi lift posed a significant challenge, as the under-construction project, worth 40 million NPR, had already sustained approximately 10 million NPR in damages, making emergency intervention difficult.

"We'll need at least 8 million NPR to immediately rehabilitate this project's structure, and we're advocating with both federal and provincial governments for support," states Uddhab Prasad Humagain, Chairperson of Bhakundebesi Water User Committee.

He gratefully adds, "But we've been very fortunate to have the support of SJASK and Oxfam during a crucial time."

Oxfam in Nepal and its implementing partner, SJASK, collaborated on a survey of Bhakundebesi WSS system. Oxfam also provided technical support for designing the water supply infrastructure and transmission pipeline. Separately, SJASK facilitated coordination meetings with the municipal office and Bhakundebesi Water User Committee.

To secure an immediate supply of drinking water for the community, three new water sources were identified, and a joint plan was developed. Oxfam and SJASK supported the construction of intake structures at these three sources, a central collection chamber, an interruption chamber, a 59-meter suspended crossing, and a 4 km transmission pipeline using 90mm and 75mm HDPE pipes.

A three-party Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalizing this effort was signed between SJASK, Namobuddha Municipality office, and Bhakundebesi Water User Committee. The total estimated budget for this vital scheme was NPR 3,826,839, with Oxfam contributing NPR 1,558,826. Namobuddha Municipality contributed NPR 929,841 towards this repair and maintenance work.



The community too contributed a total of NPR 1,338,182 to the water supply scheme's repair, comprising NPR 340,000 in cash and NPR 998,182 in in-kind support.

With the addition of new sources, the water supply scheme now collects 86,400 liters of water daily (at a discharge rate of 2 liters per second for 12 hours), almost doubling its original capacity. This surplus allows the Water User Committee to plan direct water distribution to the army barrack and the municipality office.

"There's growing demand from approximately 200 households in the periphery of this area," shares a representative of the Water User Committee, "so we're planning to enroll these households into our Users' Committee with the surplus water."

The surplus water supply has now directly benefitted 410 households in Bhakundebesi Bazaar (ward numbers 2, 3, 4, and 7), the municipality office, and army staff with three hours of water supply per day (on alternate days), meeting immediate emergency needs.

The switch to a gravity-fed system means a substantial cut in the user group's operating costs, making the water supply scheme much more sustainable.

Oxfam in Nepal has so far supported the repair and maintenance of 16 water supply schemes across Kavrepalanchowk district (5 in Temal RM, 6 in Namobuddha M, and 5 in Bethanchowk RM).

To combat waterborne diseases, Oxfam also provided training to five Water User Committee members in local chlorine production, alongside promoting hygiene and sanitation.

Additionally, Oxfam conducted gender-based violence (GBV) reduction and referral mechanism orientation sessions with women's groups in all three administrative units in the district.

Furthermore, Oxfam provided immediate relief by distributing winterization items, hygiene kits, and unconditional cash support to highly vulnerable households.



*Newly constructed water tank under Bhakundebesi WSS. Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam*



*Water filtration unit constructed under Bhakundebesi WSS. Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam*



*The area that receives drinking water supply under Bhakundebesi WSS. Photo: Rachana Mukhia/Oxfam*



# BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH LIVELIHOODS AND ADAPTATION- GROUP CASH TRANSFER

Oxfam in Nepal in partnership with NEEDS Nepal launched Group Cash Transfer (GCT) initiative in Kanchanpur district of Sudurpashchim Province. Oxfam has become a strong advocate of this community led approach since the success of its pilot programs in four countries (Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Lebanon, and Poland) in 2021.

Group Cash Transfers (GCTs) provide funding to unregistered, emerging, or self-organized community groups, empowering them to implement projects that address the immediate survival and recovery needs of populations affected by crises.

In Nepal, four distinct GCT initiatives were implemented in areas populated by marginalized and diverse communities in Kanchanpur district. The target communities along the Mahakali River were chosen based on criteria jointly established by the local government, Oxfam, NEEDS Nepal, and the communities themselves. These communities are characterized by high levels of poverty, exclusion from mainstream development efforts, food insecurity, and extreme vulnerability to natural disasters.

Nearly NPR 34,99,000 (USD 25,000) was distributed among four selected groups to support a variety of community-driven projects, including those focused on livelihoods.

In Pragati Tol, Bhimdatta Municipality-13, Kanchanpur district, GCT group members chose to use the funds to rehabilitate a roadside water channel and construct a nature-based embankment using locally sourced materials like bamboo and sand. They also raised the road level in some areas to protect it from flooding. The 125-meter embankment, built on both sides of the channel, contains and channels floodwaters, preventing them from overflowing onto the road and into settlements.



*Rita Dhanguada from Paragati Tol, Bhimdatta Municipality-13, Kanchanpur district showing the recently constructed nature based embankment in her village. Photo: Shreeju Shrestha / Oxfam*

Similarly, in Sonapur Village, Bhimdatta Municipality-13, GCT group members used the funds to construct community toilets. Three toilets were built with the goal of improving local WASH facilities.

In Beldadi Village, Beldadi Rural Municipality-5, Kanchanpur district, GCT funds directly benefited 15 households by enabling the creation of a community fishpond, transforming previously unusable marshy, waterlogged land into an income-generating opportunity.

A fourth GCT initiative, a vegetable garden project, was launched in Dodhara Chandani Municipality-3, Kanchanpur district. Spearheaded by an all-women group, the project now provides a steady income for local women who previously lacked such opportunities. The women themselves conceived the idea, discussed it with the community, and then leased land from a government school at a low cost.

Various vegetables, including cabbage, cauliflower, radish, coriander, and potatoes, have been planted within a fenced area, protecting them from both domesticated and wild animals.

The community members involved in the vegetable garden earned an average income of NPR 15,000 (USD 115) from their first harvest.

**The GCT program demonstrated remarkable success in efficient fund utilization.** For many community groups, managing and mobilizing financial resources was a novel experience, empowering them and providing valuable learning opportunities.

This initiative prioritized empowering communities to lead their own disaster preparedness and response efforts, with a strong focus on the inclusion of women and marginalized groups. As the funding was given directly to Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), they were able to quickly activate their members and use their expertise to plan and execute activities. Local community members were given leadership roles and equipped with essential skills through training in financial literacy, project management, and disaster preparedness. These efforts aimed to cultivate effective leadership and foster community ownership. This transformative approach to local leadership promoted social cohesion by integrating indigenous knowledge into program activities and strengthening community bonds.

# FROM SILENCE TO LEADERSHIP: WOMEN SHAPING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

In many societies, including Nepal's patriarchal one, women and girls are more vulnerable to disasters due to existing social and economic inequalities. This is particularly evident in Sudurpashchim Province, where cultural norms and limited education often discourage women from speaking up and participating in public life. This disparity extends to their access to vital information on topics like disaster preparedness and hygiene.

While Nepal's constitution guarantees equal rights, gender inequality persists because of the weak implementation of these laws and a lack of supporting infrastructure. Consequently, women often face a higher risk of injury and death during a disaster, as well as an increased vulnerability to gender-based violence and limited access to aid in the aftermath. Their exclusion from decision-making widens the gender gap and prevents communities from developing truly equitable and effective disaster response strategies.

## Empowering Women for Community Resilience

In a collaborative effort to address gender disparities and build community resilience, Oxfam in Nepal and local partner NEEDS Nepal are working in four municipalities of Sudurpashchim Province – Bhimdatta, Dodhara Chandani, Parshuram, and Beldandi Rural Municipality. This joint initiative, which covers 22 wards and 40 Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), prioritizes gender-inclusive participation by actively involving women, single women, and persons with disabilities. Through a series of capacity-building trainings on topics such as Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership and Disaster Preparedness, Oxfam and NEEDS Nepal has successfully encouraged marginalized women to engage in public discourse.

These initiatives have enabled them to confidently share their perspectives and meaningfully contribute to local disaster risk reduction strategies.

Now in its fifth year, the initiative has yielded significant results. In an inspiring shift from previous norms, women now lead 22 of the 40 CDMCs. These female leaders are actively submitting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans to ward chairpersons and participating in crucial planning processes. Moreover, they have collectively strengthened Emergency Relief Funds to over NPR 1.7 million, which has been mobilized to assist 709 individuals from 215 households.

Anjali Bohara, a Municipal Executive Member and former CDMC leader, reflected on the experience, saying, "Earlier, I never thought I could speak in front of a crowd, let alone become a ward member. The leadership training opened my eyes. Today, I work with the municipality to include women's voices in every planning process."

## Women Leaders Emerge

The empowerment fostered by this effort has led to the emergence of powerful women leaders within the community. Several women who were once confined by social silence have now become confident public figures, representing their communities in significant leadership roles:

- **Padma Sunar**, a CDMC secretary, from Kamari CDMC in Beldandi Rural Municipality-3.
- **Raj Kumari Rana**, from Jhilmila in Beldandi Rural Municipality-5, is now a Deputy Mayor.
- **Anjali Bohara**, from Santanagar Khalla in Bhimdatta Municipality-9, is serving as a municipal executive and ward member.



*Anjali Bohara is a Municipal Executive Member and former CDMC leader from Bhimdatta Municipality-9, Kanchanpur district, Sudurpashchim Province. Photo: Kishor Sharma/Oxfam*

- **Babli Sunar**, from Mahakali CDMC in Dodhara Chandani Municipality-10, now serves as a Ward Member.
- **Laxmi Rana Xetri**, from Samaj Kalyan CDMC in Dodhara Chandani Municipality-3, is now a Ward Member.

These transformations are built to last. The women-led CDMCs have institutionalized practices for planning, managing funds, and coordinating with government agencies. With ongoing support, these leaders are now empowering other women, creating a ripple effect of positive change. By integrating women into disaster governance systems, the initiative has created a foundation for sustainable, community-driven resilience.

The success of this initiative underscores the power of inclusive leadership and serves as a powerful call to action. By institutionalizing women's participation in disaster risk management and dedicating budgets to women-led initiatives, we can build stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive communities.

"We were used to being silent. But through continuous encouragement and learning, I found the courage to stand up and now serve as the Deputy Mayor," says Raj Kumari Rana, reflecting on her journey.



# FROM PANIC TO PREPAREDNESS: COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE



CDMC members providing kitchen utensils to displaced household. Photo: NEEDS Nepal

Kamala Khadka, a 38-year-old mother of three, lives with her family in Sundarnagar, Kanchanpur district, Sudurpashchim Province. Like many in her community, they depend on farming to survive. However, floods have long plagued her community, washing away crops and homes each monsoon season. For families like hers, this has meant a constant cycle of loss and dependence on external aid. The absence of effective early warning systems and a coordinated disaster response leaves them especially vulnerable, often cut off from help when they need it most.

To strengthen Sundarnagar's resilience to disasters, Oxfam and NEEDS Nepal are working together in the community focusing on 125 vulnerable households, particularly marginalized and Dalit families. A key part of this effort involved establishing the Sundarnagar

Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) and training specialized task forces in early warning systems, first aid, and search and rescue. This locally-led group, that includes more than 600 individuals, became the cornerstone of a new approach to disaster preparedness. This initiative fundamentally shifted Sundarnagar's disaster response from a passive reliance on outside help to empowering the community to manage its own safety and prepare them to respond to future crises.

Kamala recalls a night when their new system was put to the test, "On the night of July 7th, 2024, when the Jogbuda River swelled, panic engulfed our community. Thanks to the CDMC, we were prepared. I joined Prem Rokaya (member of Search and Rescue Task Force) in warning others and rescuing community belongings. The siren we

sounded saved lives. I've never seen such unity and strength in the face of disaster. Without the training and funds, we would have lost everything."

Sundarnagar residents now have access to crucial disaster risk reduction (DRR) information and a community-managed emergency relief fund. The Department of Hydrology and Metrology provides three-day monsoon forecasts, which the Local Emergency Operation Center disseminates to vulnerable communities via WhatsApp and Facebook. Early Warning Systems, including DRR portals and WhatsApp updates, allow for timely responses. Additionally, flood-resilient farming practices and alternative income sources, such as livestock farming, have been introduced to lessen economic vulnerability.

As a result, the community has significantly reduced losses of lives, assets, and biodiversity. Regular training, preparedness drills, and municipal support have solidified the CDMC's work. Ongoing monthly savings and emergency relief funds enhance financial resilience, and by linking disaster response with livelihood improvements, Sundarnagar is now better prepared for future challenges.

Prem Rokaya, a member of Sundarnagar's Search and Rescue team, shares, "This initiative has transformed our community. From living in fear, we now have systems in place to mitigate risks and respond swiftly. It's not just about saving lives—it's about restoring hope."

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