

#SOCIAL ISSUES

FLOOD RELIEF DONE RIGHT

Essentials beyond clothes and rice

As the country grapples with severe flooding, displacing thousands of people, who now find themselves without food or shelter, everyone is trying their best to help. Some are donating clothes in bulk, while others are providing staple foods like rice and lentils.

Although our intentions are noble, it's important to be well-informed about what flood victims need. Below, we suggest a few critical essentials to consider when donating to those affected by the floods.

Food supplies

Food shortages become a harsh reality with fields underwater and supply chains disrupted. Eliza Chowdhury, a student at Dhaka Art College and member of her college's flood response team, emphasises the importance of providing dry, ready-to-eat food.



"One of my team members went to the flood-affected area with rice but could not distribute it as there is no way for people to cook such items. On top of that, there is no dry place to keep them," she explains.



Providing non-perishable foods and setting up community kitchens to serve warm meals can offer not just nutrition but comfort to those who have lost everything.

Clothing and hygiene kits

While many are distributing clothes, Eliza advises focusing on children's essentials and personal hygiene. "Many girls, who have their periods, had to leave their house without any preparation. So, we are requesting everyone to donate sanitary pads along with other necessary items as well."

Clean clothing for children and hygiene kits, including sanitary pads, soap, hand sanitisers, and toothpaste, are vital. These

items help maintain health and dignity, offering comfort in difficult circumstances.

Medical supplies and first aid kits

Flood conditions bring increased risks of injuries, infections, and the exacerbation of chronic health conditions. Basic medical supplies and first aid kits with bandages, antiseptics, and pain relievers are essential for immediate care.

Eliza also highlights the need to prepare for disease outbreaks post-flood.

"There will be an outbreak of flood-related diseases such as diarrhoea and malaria. Therefore, it would be wise for us to gather and donate as much saline as

possible." Mobile health units with doctors and nurses can provide essential care and vaccinations, keeping communities safe.

Communication tools

Amid a disaster, staying informed can be a matter of life and death. Radios, mobile phones with solar chargers, and community notice boards can keep people updated on weather conditions, safety measures, and available relief services. Communication tools not only help coordinate rescue and relief efforts but also connect families separated by the chaos, offering reassurance and hope.

How to get aid to those in need

Md Adnan Hossain, Founder and Executive Director of It's Humanity Foundation (IHF), shared insights on how to distribute aid effectively. He recommends using volunteers, having a clear route plan, coordinating with local communities, ensuring the use of safety equipment, and collaborating with other NGOs to maximise outreach. Communication with local armed and rescue forces is also vital for effectively distributing food, water, and other essentials.

Hence, by providing essentials such as food, clothing, and medical care, we can help flood victims survive and find the strength to rebuild their lives. In times of crisis, our collective humanity shines brightest when we extend a helping hand to those in need, ensuring that no one is left behind.

By Ayman Anika

Photo: Shahriar Kabir Heemel

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