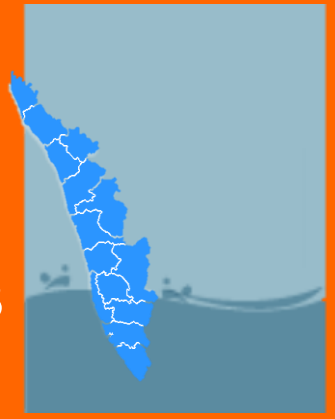




Kerala Floods -- Rescue and Relief

18 Day Report – Aug 14 - Sep 1, 2018



200,000 volunteers plan mass cleaning program on September 1

Join Hands With
SEWA INTERNATIONAL
To Rebuild



Rescue Operations

Into the third week of torrential rains and catastrophic flooding (Pic 1.) in the aftermath of the severe southwest monsoon, over 59,000 people continue to live in 305 relief camps across Kerala. As per the latest reports, the biggest flood disaster in a century has claimed 483 lives and left over 1.45 million people displaced. The devastating floods resulted in 537 landslides, 221 collapsed bridges, and damaged over 6,000 miles of road, resulting in estimated losses of over \$3 billion.

Over 57,000 hectares of agriculture crops have been destroyed affecting over 260,000 farmers. At the height of the floods, an estimated 1.45 million people were sheltered in 3,965 relief camps across the state.

[Sewa International](#) in the US, along with its India partner, [Sevabharathi Keralam](#), continued to work round the clock, running a 24x7 hotline in the US and multiple helpline centers across Kerala. Over 120,000 volunteers are involved in rescue operations (Pic 2-3), offering medical help, helping at community kitchens, cooking and serving meals, and cleaning wells and buildings. Sevabharathi volunteers cleaned 27,600 houses, 210 places of worship, 400 hospitals, schools, bank offices, and other buildings, as well as thousands of wells filled with debris.

Sewa International has released a grant of \$50,000 toward flood relief, a significant part of which were used to operate medial camps and relief cleanup. Four Sewa volunteer doctors from Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, and Patna are now camping at Chenganur, Kerala, working 16-hour shifts treating over 300 patients a day, with support from local medical staff.



Pic 1. Rains, floods and landslides washed away homes and submerged entire villages and towns.



Pic 2. Volunteers rescued a senior flood victim using a large cooking vessel as a makeshift boat.



Pic 3. Flood victims travel home from a relief camp after floods started receding

Globally Distributed Help Desk

Sewa volunteers monitored a 24x7 US hotline number, while a complementary round the clock help desk with 15 volunteers was set-up in Thrissur district with constant communication with the US counterpart (Pic 4). Leveraging technology and social media tools helped sharing real time data between the Indian and American teams.

Sewa volunteers in the US coordinated the requests that came over the 24x7 hotline and dedicated WhatsApp group, and closed 51 requests from anxious relatives in the US conveying desperate rescue calls from their counterparts on the ground in Kerala, as well as calls from victims on the ground in Kerala wanting to be rescued. Of special mention is the rescue of an elderly couple in Thrissur, and 100 people stranded on the rooftop of Thiruvalla Chethenkery Government Hospital, Chengannur.

Fishermen Jump in as Saviors

Sevabharathi mobilized volunteers for the rescue operations from all districts, especially the fishermen community who were familiar with the local terrain and geography. A major challenge faced by all government agencies was surface water transportation to rescue people from isolated places. Over 350 boats were deployed in the rescue work where thousands of lives were saved.



Pic 4. Sevabharathi volunteers handling queries at the helpdesk.

"Thanks to Gopakumar's and Gokul's* timely help, we were able to rescue my in-laws and they are now safe in our relative's home in Thrissur. Thanks also to Achalesh*, Sachin* and the entire Sewa support team. Really proud to be part of this team."*

-- Sanjay Poduval, whose in-laws in Trichur were rescued by efforts of *Sewa volunteers in the US.



Pic 6. Sevabharathi volunteers rescuing victims from their flooded home



Pic 5. Sevabharathi volunteers rescuing a victim despite rain and flooded rivers

Rescue Operations

Rescue operations were carried out across all the 14 districts in Kerala by 14,100 volunteers who directly involved in rescue activities using 350 boats, 75 ambulances and 300 transport vehicles.



Distribution of Food Grains and Clothing

Three mega-warehouses catering to the state's needs are being run by Sevabharathi, and 210 warehouses and sub-centers are operational across the 14 districts in the state (Pic 7-8). 2,155 tonnes of food grains, clothing and household essentials were collected and distributed to 105,000 families.

Majority of the materials collected came from outside the state through Sevabharathi's sister organizations across the country and was made possible by the tremendous efforts of volunteers and wellwishers from across the country.

Special district-wise teams are constituted to coordinate the activities. The collected materials are transported to the relief camps, and the rest of the materials are distributed to households in the flood affected areas.

Over 600 vehicles were deployed in transportation and distribution of food, water, clothing and medicines from and to various district warehouses and subcenters (Pic 9-10). Community kitchens were setup by volunteers with children as young as eight years seen lending a helping hand.



Pic 7. Arrival of relief material for distribution to the flood victims.



Pic 8. A district warehouse with relief material stocked up.



Pic 9. Distribution of food grains to flood victims.



Pic 10. Sewa volunteer Dr.Dhanjay Sagdeo (left) distributing food grains to a tribal woman in Wayanad.

Medical Services

To cater to the needs of the flood victims, a team of 650 experienced physicians, ably assisted by paramedical teams, provided medical services at over 1,000 relief camps (Pic 11).

Patients were treated for common cold, fever, body ache, fungal infection, and skin allergies (Pic 12-14).

Veterinary doctors provided medical care and immunizations as a preventive measure to animals in the flood affected areas.



Pic 11. Sewa volunteer doctors in train -- an hour before they landed in Chengalur where they are volunteering. From left, Dr. Vishal, Dr. Narendra Paliwal, Dr. Viren Naik and Dr. Lipi.



Pic 13. Patients consulting physicians at a medical camp.



Pic 12. Dr. Baburam treating patients at a medical camp in Wayanad district.



Pic 14. A medical camp at a remote village in Wayanad.

Cleanup Drives and Sanitation

Across Kerala, about 120,000 men and women volunteers from Sevabharathi Keralam cleaned upto three feet thick mud deposits in 27,600 homes, 210 religious institutions across faiths (pic 16-17), 400+ hospitals, and hundreds of schools, bank offices and other buildings. Volunteers supported household members in cleaning their homes, disposing waste material, providing chlorination, and cleaning of wells and toilets (Pic 15). Together with the police and other government officials, Sevabharathi volunteers cleaned other public places, bank offices (Pic 18), buildings and roads.

Mass Cleaning Program on Sep 1

A mass cleaning program is planned across all districts of Kerala on September 1 involving 200,000 volunteers engaging youth, women, eminent personalities, academicians, and politicians. The program is planned as a precaution against transmission of communicable diseases.



Pic 15. Volunteers pumped out slush and contaminated water from wells, chlorinated them, and cleaned other public places.



Pic 16. Sevabharathi volunteers cleared up slush and cleaned a church after the waters receded.



Pic 17. Sevabharathi volunteers helped in cleaning a mosque as the waters receded.



Pic 18. Branch Manager (left) of Federal Bank Wenmony, Allapuzha thanking the Sevabharathi volunteers after they cleaned the bank premises.



Appeal

- Sewa International has already released \$50,000 for immediate rescue and relief operations.
- Sewa set a target to raise \$ 1 million towards Kerala flood relief, and has raised \$250,000 to date.
- Sewa will continue to engage for several months through the relief phase, and over the next 3-5 years in the rehabilitation phase.

“We commit 100% of donations to the victims of Kerala floods with a low 3.3% overhead expenses¹ -- the lowest among NGOs in our category. Charity Navigator² has classified Sewa as being ‘100% transparent’ financially. Please donate generously.”

-- Prof. Sree Sreenath, Ph.D., M.B.A., President, Sewa International

In this hour of need, Sewa urges everyone to donate generously

1. Online: <https://sewausa.org/donate>
Select “Kerala Floods” in the projects dropdown
2. Checks:

Make to “Sewa International” and mail to:
Sewa International,
P O Box 820867,
Houston, TX 77282-0867

**Many employers in the US match donations of their employees,
doubling or even tripling them.**

Your contribution may qualify. Please check with your employer or contact us.

Sewa International is a nonprofit organization registered under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), and all your donations are tax-deductible. Tax Id # 20-0638718

Contact: 708.U.S.A.SEWA or info@sewausa.org



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¹ Overhead is defined as Administration expenses to revenue ratio. Admin expenses are: general administration expenses such as accounting and HR, officers’ salary, rent, bank transfer fees, legal, auditor, and other office expenses.

² The premier and the largest NGO rating agency in the USA.