

## Thanks flood, you made me realize that I am in fact special...

Two-week long incessant rain that began since mid July 2007 has resulted in heavy toll on lives and property across the country. Flood hit Chora Koyalpur, a remote eastern village of Dhanusha district affecting thousands of population starting July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007.



Mandodari Devi, 24, is 8 months pregnant, though doesn't look too heavy.

When CARE staff noticed that she was not very comfortable standing in the queue, they realized that she was pregnant. She was standing on the line to get the rations that was being distributed by Nepal Red Cross Society, Dhanusha.

She did not seem aware that, the assigned day for ration distribution for her village was not on that particular day. The turn was for some other village but Mandodari was just standing in the queue with other villagers. When the Red Cross volunteer started calling persons based on the data of assessment carried out by the village level Red Cross unit, her name never got called.

They had their own house and life was more or less easy for her small family of 4 persons prior to the flood, Mandodari expressed. The indifferent, incessant rain however, left them helplessness completely destroying the small mud house of Mandodari of Chora Koyalpur village. She with her family currently live in the neighbor's cowshed. The arrangement is for the time being. However, Mandodari thinks it would be unethical to congest the neighbour's cowshed for too long although her neighbors had not declared a notice. They were too nice to do that. She thinks, if her husband gets to work, they could quickly make a low cost house.

Mandodari seemed uncomfortable standing under the strong heat of the sun. We requested the Red Cross to attend to Mandodari with the rations first despite it not being her turn that day. We advocated on her behalf and Red Cross volunteer provided her 5 Kgs of rice, 2 Kgs of beaten rice, 1 Kg of sugar, 1 kg of salt and a packet of Noodles. She also got a tarpaulin for temporary shelter as she had lost her house.

When she got priority to receive the relief materials, she said, "I actually didn't know that pregnancy gives you privilege till now". She always used to hide the fact that she was pregnant. As she was a daily wage earner, she normally could not find work when she revealed the situation of her pregnancy. This disastrous flood, though took away her home, it at least gave her an opportunity to realize that she, in fact was fulfilling a social duty that every woman from rich, medium and poor class fulfill. She expressed her thoughts "Thanks flood, you made me realize that I am in fact special!"



*Information collected on: 7<sup>th</sup> August 2007. Photographs and the story have been provided by Rita Dhakal, Project Manager – DIPECHO SAMADHAN, CARE Nepal. The story has been edited by Aparajita Acharya, Information Officer, CARE Nepal.*