

Assam's floods demand more than sympathy



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Flood-affected families take shelter on higher ground along a roadside in Sivasagar district after the devastating floods on July 28, 2026. Photo: UB Photos.



Banjit Sarmah 29 July 2026 Updated 29 Jul 1135 views

Every monsoon, Assam prepares for floods. Yet each year the scale of human suffering still comes as a shock. As I look at the images emerging from the flood-hit districts, I am reminded that behind every photograph lies a family whose home, livelihood and sense of security have been swept away.

The Brahmaputra and its tributaries sustain Assam for much of the year. During the monsoon, however, they also become the source of recurring devastation. This year, districts including Sivasagar have witnessed one of the worst flood disasters in recent years. Thousands of families have seen their homes inundated, crops destroyed, livestock swept away and years of hard work erased within days.

The situation worsened after exceptionally heavy rainfall in parts of Nagaland caused rivers to swell rapidly, leaving many people with little time to escape. Lives were lost, many people remain missing, and countless families continue to face an uncertain future.

The damage extends far beyond houses and roads. Students have been left without textbooks, school bags, certificates and other documents essential for their education. Farmers have watched months of labour disappear beneath floodwaters. For many rural families, the loss of livestock has meant losing an important source of income as well.

Behind every submerged village is a human story—a family waiting for relief, an elderly person searching for shelter, a child uncertain about returning to school, or a farmer wondering how to begin again.

The floodwaters may recede within days or weeks. The hardship does not. Families continue to struggle for safe drinking water, food, healthcare, shelter and the means to rebuild their livelihoods. Recovery is a long process, especially for those who have already been living on the margins.

Once the national headlines fade, thousands of flood-affected families will still be rebuilding damaged homes, reclaiming farmland and trying to restore some sense of normalcy. Their struggle deserves continued public attention, not only during the disaster but long after it has passed. Every genuine effort—whether by governments, voluntary organisations or ordinary citizens—can make a meaningful difference.

At the same time, relief alone cannot solve Assam's recurring flood crisis. The state needs sustained investment in scientific river management, stronger embankments, improved flood forecasting, erosion control and better watershed management. Preparedness must become as important as relief.

The people of Assam have rebuilt their lives after one flood after another for decades. Their resilience is beyond question. But resilience should not become an excuse for accepting repeated disasters as inevitable.

Assam's floods should concern the entire nation. Development is measured not only by economic progress but also by how a society responds when its people are in distress. Relief helps people survive. Good policy helps them avoid living through the same disaster again. Assam deserves both.

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