Removal of Single Use Plastics from Riverine Sunderban Area after Severe Cyclone -"YAAS"

<u>Context:</u> After the Super Cyclone YAAS on 26th May, 2021, a vast area of the Riverine Sunderban was flooded due to overflow or breach of embankments. More than 3 Lac people took shelter either in Flood Shelters or in Camps at School buildings. **Huge Plastic Pouches and bottles of Drinking water** were distributed. Food items either Cooked or Dry were distributed **in Plastic Plate, Carry bags, bowls etc.** on behalf of many NGOs/Organizations etc. Riverine Sunderban-Eco system faced a challenge with Tons of Plastic Wastes. Due to Flood situation, other wastes also mixed in River water and Water Pollution was visible everywhere in all 8 worst affected Sunderban Blocks.



Plan: On their visits Government Officers and local Environment Workers had seen this. Worried District Administration immediately planned a mission to remove Maximum Plastic Wastes from Sunderban. We utilized our experience of Solid and liquid Waste management work during GangaSagar Mela. The District Magistrate, South 24 Parganas made a Coordination meeting with SDOs, BDOs, Panchayats, Police, Media, NGOs and Solid Waste Management Experts and from 08th June, 2021 Teams were formed to Clean and Collect Plastic Garbage from Para/mahalla wise with as many numbers required for a particular area.



Co Ordination Meeting at Kakdwip attended by Hon'ble MIC, Sunderban Affairs

<u>Execution</u>: Targeted wastes, **especially Single use Plastics** were focused for urgent removal. Almost **1.0 crore water pouches**, **20 Lakh Drinking water Bottles** dropped in the Sunderban Areas in excess of regular plastic utilities, which **all floated in flood into Rivers or Tanks**. Special Teams were formed for following works-

- Teams Cleaned Water bodies and General Plastic Wastes and accumulated at one place
- Special Cleaning in River, using Nets and Boats
- All Plastics wastes including Pouches, bottles ,bags were taken to a central Point for its Ultimate Dispatch from islands through KABADIWALAS
- All Bio degradable wastes were dugged properly away from the Water line.



An Expert Organization in Solid Waste Management "AMRA SUSHAMA JALAPRAPAT" was engaged by the district. Their workers guided the works of our general cleaning Team.



<u>Community Mobilization:</u> Community mobilization was a good tool to force in common folk.



Women members from Self Help Groups, ward wise Vector Borne Disease Control (VBD) Teams were mobilized. Mikings were done and hundreds of Volunteers worked together led by Pradhan, Block Development officers and NGO persons. Responses were huge from common people. Different NGOs took leading Role, Supported by the District Administration, their Volunteers launched an announcement of "Plastic Exchange".



Plastic Bottle Exchange

In exchange of a Kilo of Plastic waste, One Good Quality Pet Bottle was offered. People were astonished to have their Waste to Wealth. Awareness generation and Mass gathering became easy, as most people could see and feel the Menace, if not attempted to remove out.





<u>Achievement:</u> Cleaning work was taken up in all 69 YAAS affected Gram Panchayats in 9 Blocks of this district at a time from 8th June. After rigorous work of only 10 days huge success came for the Workers-

Sl No.	Block name	No. Of GPs affected	No. of Teams deployed	No. of Used Plastic Bottles Collected(Approx in Lakh)	Total Volume of Plastic waste in MT
1	Kakdwip	11	44	1.0	0.806
2	Namkhana	7	28	1.2	0.602
3	Partharpratima	15	54	0.8	1.862
4	Sagar	9	32	1.2	1.405
5	Mathurapur-II	6	30	0.5	0.142
6	Kultali	9	31	0.8	0.497
7	Basanti	12	32	0.5	0.501
8	Gosaba	14	78	3.6	3.278
	Total	83	329	9.6 Lakh	9.093 MT

All Garbages are stored first in the SWM Units (Namkhana, Sagar, Kakdwip) or in a Central Location in protected place in Bags or in Mosquito Net Coverage, so that, Nothing washes away again. 3.5 MT Plastic wastes are already transported from Riverine areas through Town based KABADIWALAS. Rests will also be removing step by step very soon by the Agencies. For far Island areas, to encourage KABADIWALAS, District administration will provide Transport support to the Agencies.







Transportation of Garbage

Work is still going on. We are determined to save and clean our pride-Sunder ban.