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CONTRIBUTION TO COORG FLOOD RELIEF CAMP

“Doing nothing is a greater threat than doing something for humanity”

The district of Coorg in Karnataka state recently faced a crisis caused by flooding and landslides after heavy incessant rains over the past few days. Life and property damages were the significant losses occurred. Other than this the flora and fauna have been immensely affected. While help reached out from various sources, Mount Carmel College took the initiative to assist the affected people at ground level.

Hence a team of 51 students consisting NSS members and NCC Cadets along with the faculty member Mr. Govind Gowda HG - NSS Officer & Dr. Shantha Maria NCC Officer of Mount Carmel College departed from college to do their bit.

DAY-1: On 4th of September we left our college by bus. It was a long journey and but was nice as we had time to discuss the activities & plan the day to day programmes for the next five days. For the sake of convenience we also divided our batch into 2 groups' viz. GROUP-A which would render assistance in Madikeri consisting of 24 members and GROUP-B which would render assistance in Khushalnagar consisting of 27 members. GROUP-B reached Kushalnagar first and camped in home stay provided by the government.

Group A (Madikeri)

After travelling for about 7hrs, we were taken to a Maithree Community Hall . This place was known as Ganji Kendra where all the flood affected people were lodged. We discussed with the officials about the kind of assistance they required from us. We also planned the activities for the remaining four days of relief program. We interacted with the flood victims and heard their experiences. We also enquired about their stay and their requirements.

Next day, we went to Junior College, Madikeri, where more thousand lorry loads of relief material was stored. Here we made more than 250 toiletries kits and 250 family kits which included eatables, grains, pulses, blankets, mats, soaps and other basic items which would be required for the next six months. We also segregated clothes based on the age group and of course the gender.

The next day we were taken to the main flood affected areas. It was a sad spectacle. Seeing all the debris of the washed away houses, uprooted trees and tons of soil blocking the roads other places, we realized how unpredictable life is. We worked with the labors in repairing the damaged roads caused due to landslides. We filled up sacks with mud and passed it on to the labors which they would tie make a base for relaying the roads. We visited most affected places and there we interacted with the victims with regard to how they lost their property and its impact on their lives.. We also could get to know the government intervention to assist them. A report was made by us regarding the value so property lost which was submitted to the government for further action. The government has taken immediate suitable remedies for the affected people.

Late evening we visited another Ganji Kedra named Bala Mandir (Old Jail). Here 320 victims who are ladies, children and aged people are camped. The condition of

the place was very bad. There was no proper flooring and the roof was leaking. We brought this matter to the notice of the concerned officials. They reacted immediately to shift the victims to other places.

Next day we went to a relief camp called Jilla Panchayathi Sampalmuna Pariyara Kendra in Madakeri. Here, we spoke to all the victims and made a list of all the commodities that they required. When we were at the place, the IG Lokayuktha visited the same place and we brought to his notice the problems in that Ganji Kendra and he reacted immediately. At the same time we reported to the concerned District Commissioner to make necessary arrangements and list of basic items required by affected people. Post lunch we went to maithree community hall where we cooked and served food for the victims residing there and also washed vessels.

Group – B - Kushalnagar

On the 1st day the Group B visited the Kaalagi Kendra (Refugee Camp) at Khushaal Nagar. We got the opportunity to hear the various stories of people who lost their houses, livelihood and their family members. This was also an opportunity to understand how the government intervenes during natural disasters.

The team indulged in various activities such as:

- Cleaning the Ganji Kendras
- Encouraging parents to send their kids to school.
- Explaining the importance of education
- Assisting the cook in preparing lunch.
- Cleaning the kitchen area and sorting out vegetables.
- Keeping the kids engaged by playing various games in the evening.

The team enacted a street play topic of education, cleanliness, mutually helping each other and motivated them to face the situation. There were a number of kids who had never been to school in their life. Victims of slavery came to light.



Harshitha is five years old and has an elder brother Mani. The two children are the first in their entire family to attend school.

The government officials made sure all the children residing in the camp were sent to school.



Gangamma – A local resident of Khushal Nagar

She cleans the roads and picks bottle for a living. Her house was entirely submerged in the flood. The government played its role by providing shelter to her and her kids. Now she is back to her place and is back to her routine.

The team had the food from the refugee camp which was delicious. We were glad to see hygienic and proper food being served to the people.

DAY-2: GROUP-B We went to Valmiki Bhavana where 400 families stayed there who lost their houses during the disaster. We spoke to them and recorded a report on how the disaster happened. We took videos of the information that they were giving. We taught some people to write their names and suggested that they attend school and start studying. We later we helped in kitchen by cutting vegetables, washing utensils, cooking, serving, sweeping and mopping of the floor. In the evening we entertained them by playing with kids, presenting a skit and then we had our dinner with them and then we returned to our rooms.

DAY-3: We packed our luggage and shifted to a hotel. We began our work in a warehouse where the task was to separate clothes for different age groups and gender. Later we separated the new clothes into the same age groups like kids, men women and old age people then we made sets of each group and then we packed for dispatch. We took the sorted out clothes to Valmiki Bhavan and distributed them to the inmates. Later we retired to our rooms.

DAY -4: We went to those victims place where the houses were destroyed by landslides. Roads were destroyed and earthquake had occurred before we visited that place. We observed in many places moss was growing on the roof and on bridges indicating that water was standing up to that level for also longtime. Then after visiting this place we came back to the warehouse where we worked the

previous day and we separated the day to day requirements into separate groups like tooth brush tooth paste soap powder oil etc. We made separate kits all required basic items for family and distributed to needy people.

DAY -5: It was the time to leave and we were returning to Bangalore on that day so before we left to Bangalore we had a small trek to other affected areas in coorg. First we visited Harangi reservoir area. Then we visited another dam called chiklihole dam. We saw the water flowing strongly in that place after the heavy rains. We then went to Tibetan golden temple where we could see people from other countries staying there and we could interact with them and see how they were helping in the flood relief. We also heard their experiences.

We also got featured on a local news channel where few of us were interviewed and an article was published in the newspaper based on our activities at the camp.

The government schemes and operations are doing the needful for the people. The people are getting back to normal routine gradually. But most of them have lost their houses. We had made a list of some of the areas. This problem has to be dealt with and government and plans should be implemented as soon as possible.

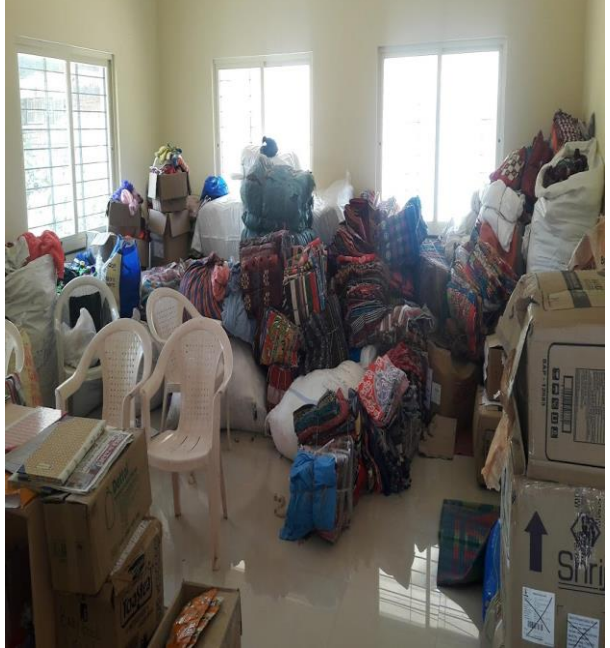
This camp has been a great opportunity for all to learn a lot of things and most importantly help the needy. It gave us immense satisfaction helping them. We were glad to share their problems and console them. We also made them laugh and have fun during our stay. We have learnt many values and made new memories which will be cherished lifelong.

It was an overall good experience. I would like to thank the Management of Mount Carmel College, the government, Madikeri District Administration and all the officials for given us this opportunity.



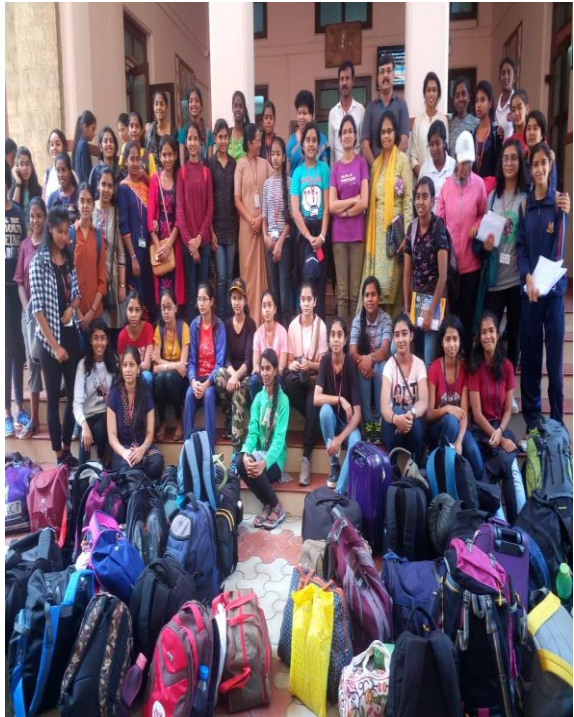




























Sri G.T. Devegowda was the chief guest of the event. The Guests of honour who graced the occasion were Prof. N. R. Shetty, Chancellor Central University of Karnataka, of how their roots are only a feet deep under the soil but well connected. The event ended with the Vote of Thanks by Dr. T. Kampanag, Director Academics.

Mount Carmel College- Contribution to Relief Camp in Coorg

Mount Carmel College (Autonomous) had sent 51 NSS/NCC students volunteers from 4th September to 8th September to a flood relief centre, to aid the unfortunate situation overshadowing Coorg. They went around evaluating the situation in the Ganji Kendras and interacting with the flood victims and engaged in preparing and serving food for the crowd. It was a great opportunity for the student volunteers to retrospect the situation so closely and understand humanity by practice. The students were headed and assisted by Mr. Govinda Gowda HQ, NSS Programme Officer and Dr. Shantha Maria, NCC Officer.



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