



*View of part of the village from the hill top*

## Drinking water brings respite to survivors of Parori Village

As the wave of relief materials turns to a trickle more than three months since the disaster struck, Parori village in Jaunpur block of Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand breathes a sigh of relief with the first surge of clean drinking water that come through pipes laid down thanks to the support from NTT Data, a Japanese software company.



*New drinking water pipeline fixed with support from NTT Data*



**“This is probably the first major support we’ve received apart from the immediate relief of food and clothing,”** said Pratima Lekhwar of Parori village, Jaunpur Block, Tehri Garhwal District of the drinking water pipeline restoration project undertaken by ActionAid and implementing partner Uttarakhand Jan Jagriti Sansthan.

**“Our children were developing rashes on the skin and suffering from dysentery. The officials who visited us promised that we would be resettled in a safer area and clean drinking water, but there is no clarity still on where and when that would be,”** she added.



*Pratima Lekhwar of Parori village, Jaunpur Block, Tehri Garhwal District at the meeting with staff of NTT Data Women and men of Parori village in a meeting with NTT Data staff*



*A school girl filling a can at the community tap (left) and a young girl filling up a bucket in her home (right) in Parori village. Photo Credit: UJJS*





*Part of Parori village visible on the right from the road above.*



*Landslide down the middle of the village*

## Water - a precious resource – especially in the hills

“We are very grateful that the new pipes have connected us to the nearest drinking water source which is a long trek from our village. It was too difficult for us to fetch water from there every day given how difficult the terrain is,” said Pratima whose house is completely destroyed and has taken up a rented house for INR 2000 per month in Thathyur, the nearest town.

Pratima is back in Parori to tend to her livestock that is tied up in a neighbour’s yard that was relatively less affected. She cooks for herself in her old house during the day and is trying to salvage what she can but in the night she goes to sleep in a neighbour's house. Her two daughters and one son are living in the rented house in Thathyur and too afraid to come back to Parori.

A village with 125 families nestled in an idyllic but treacherous slope of the hill next to the river Aglad, Parori is 32 Km from Dehradun, roughly about two and a half hours drive.





*Ramesh Lekhwai, former village head, Parori*

**“The government has not been helpful at all. Some pipes were put here and there but not connected to our village. UJJS and ActionAid listened to us and put this together fairly quickly and now we’re getting water,”** said Ramesh Lekhwai, 45, former village head, of Parori, also living in Thathyur on rent and comes home to try and salvage what belongings he can.



*NTT Data staff interacting with villagers of Parori and ActionAid partner staff*

### **Our Precious Supporters and Partners**

Travelling with ActionAid staff on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2013, were the staff of NTT Data, Alpesh Mehta and Satyedra Singh who had volunteered to visit the project site supported by the company’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) division with a contribution of INR 2,35,050 for the purchase of rubber and PVC pipes to be laid down from part of the adjacent hill which housed the source of water up till the concrete water tank on the highest reach of Parori village and then connecting the tank to the village below.

**“I did not expect to see this scale of disaster. I wish we’d reached them earlier,”** said Alpesh Mehta after the visit. **“It is really heartening to see that our support has made a difference in the lives of affected villagers. Supply of safe drinking water is a basic need and can help to avoid people falling sick. So this pipeline is a lifeline,”** he added.

Aranya Ranjan, Uttarakhand Jan Jagriti Sansthan, partner NGO of ActionAid added that in fact this is a good time for well wishers like NTT Data to come and support in the rebuilding efforts. **“The issues of the survivors in villages like Parori are no longer on the priority list of the media. Their basic issues and needs are no longer getting their due coverage.”**

Aranya Ranjan, hailing from Chamba has been stationed in Thathyur with his team since last three months, coordinating relief work, giving moral support to those affected and helping the villagers in Parori and adjoining villages develop and strategy in dealing with the situation at hand and for their future course of action.



*River Aglad. The original course of flow visible on the right and the new course on the left.*

## More villages in need of drinking water

**“We are glad that we managed to get timely support from NTT Data in setting up the pipelines for Parori. Once winter sets in, it gets too difficult to work in the region as Musoorie and Dhanaulti which are on the way receive a lot of snowfall and the roads leading to Parori and other villages get blocked,”** said Debabrat Patra, Regional Manager, Uttarakhand. He also shared that there are six more villages, namely Bangar, Papara Malla, Papara Talla, Sirwa Malla, satagad and Saudi with a similar need for drinking water pipeline restoration. **“The people in these villages are using unhygienic rubber pipes for drinking water supply, some are depending on open natural sources ranging from 1 to 3.5 kms away from their homes,”** he added. **“We’re looking for similar support as we got for Parori village soon. So that we can complete this work before the winters set in,”** added Mr. Patra.

**“Women and children are forced to walk for hours in a day negotiating steep and rough terrain just to collect a few buckets of water that are not even hygienic enough to drink,”** helping them restore these pipelines is one of our key priorities at the moment,” said. Mr. Patra





*View of meeting place of Parori village towards left.*



*NTT Data staff, Alpesh Mehta and Satyendra Singh with ActionAid partner staff and villager at the newly laid pipeline*





*Alpesh Mehta, staff of NTT Data at the newly installed tap*



*Banner announcing the Parori village drinking water pipeline restoration programme supported by NTT Data, Uttarakhand Jan Jagriti Sansthan and ActionAid*





*Satyedra Singh, Aplesh Mehta of NTT with Debabrat Patra of ActionAid and Aranya Ranjan of Uttarakhand Jan Jagriti Sansthan surveying the source of water and the new pipeline*



*White pipes bring the water from the natural source across the river towards Parori village.*





*NTT Data staff interacting with villagers of Parori and ActionAid partner staff*



*NTT Data staff interacting with villagers of Parori and ActionAid partner staff*





*Children from the primary school fill their bottles from the newly laid pipeline that is being connected to the water storage tank.*



*NTT staff with children at temporary school for primary education. The public health centre at Parori village has been turned into a school since the school building collapsed in the flood.*





*NTT staff with children at temporary school for primary education. The public health centre at Parori village has been turned into a school since the school building collapsed in the flood.*

#### **Background and an account of the journey so far**

Of 80 houses, belonging to 125 families in Parori village, 16 have been completely destroyed. The government has given INR 2 lakh each for 16 of these households. All the affected families in the village have got INR 5400 as compensation. Many people have cleared out the silt and rocks and other waste washed into their houses by the flood, but with the rains letting up many are seeing cracks develop in their houses. They are very scared that the houses may crumble and fall over their heads.

The agricultural fields are either destroyed or sand and stone casted. One can see the remnants of the fields in the villages. About 2 hectares (200 nali – one nali is 1/20th of an acre) of land is destroyed in the village. The government compensation per nali is as low as Rs 500/- and most of the households have small patches of land so the amount of compensation is pitiable. Villagers say that their income per nali was as high as INR 15,000 per year. The main crop in the village was potatoes, paddy and seasonal vegetables.

The primary school in the village is damaged. About 25 children of this school have to walk 6-7 km to attend the school in the nearby village. Some of the younger children have been accommodated in the hospital building within the village with two teachers and one cook (for providing mid-day meals).



*Photo Credit: UJS*



The studies have been hampered and they have lost all the study materials. They have lost their playground and wherever they are in relief camps there have been special requests to provide them with play materials.

In our initial engagement with the villagers we also learnt that the road to the village was cut off, and the village being situated farther from the nearest market, it had been neglected for a long time while the relief distribution was going on. Apart from the distance, some of the villagers also complained that there had been a discrimination against Dalits (most marginalized in this area) in the distribution of relief supplies. Since the relief supplies only reached the market which is under the hold of the dominant castes, they did not let much of the relief supplies reach the remote villages and especially to the Dalit households.

In a meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, attended by about 30-35 men and women of the village with Mr. Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, ActionAid India, Mr. Debabrat Patra, Regional Manager, Uttarakhand, ActionAid India and other colleagues from the disaster response team of ActionAid and partner organization, UJJS, the women in the village requested for urgent action on repairing their drinking water pipe line.

The fresh water source is about 1.5 km away this could be restored by connecting pipes from the river source to the village. But the government had shown no interest in doing this and the people feared that it would be months before the government moved in to restore the water source here.



*Photo Credit: UJJS*

The young people of the village said that they will contribute their labour but they had no resources for purchasing of pipe so it was decided that ActionAid and UJJS would provide PVC pipes and other materials and village people would contribute their labour for repairing of the broken pipe lines.

#### **Other issues that came up in the meeting:**

- Rubber pipe provided by Water Authority (Jal Sansthan) for the drinking water is not sufficient for the whole village and adjoining hamlets.
- Demand for reclamation of agricultural land, footpaths and disposal of debris.



- Repair/provision of drinking water pipe line came up as the top priority.

**6 August 2013**

A Village meeting was organised for repairing of drinking water pipe line and a resolution was formally passed by the village people that request for repairing of pipe line. A committee was formed at the meeting for the implementation of repairing of Pipe line.

Committee members included:

Mr. Shrikrishan Badhani - Gram Pradhan (village head)

Mr. Jayendra Lekhwar - Drinking water pipe line fitter

Mr. Jagdish Kohli (Scheduled Caste (SC) Family Representative)

Mr. Rajiv Nayan Lekhwar (SC Family Representative)

Mrs. Yashoda Devi (SC Family Representative, Woman member)

The issue of drinking water facility for the school children and for Mid-day meals was raised as the Primary School is now functioning at the hospital building since the school building collapsed in the disaster. Bhojan Mata (the cook at the school) had to fetch water from a distance of 1km for Mid-day Meals.



*Photo Credit: UJJS*

**9 August 2013**

NTT Data Global Delivery Services Limited showed interest in supporting our work in Repairing of Drinking Water Pipe Line in Disaster affected village Parori, Jaunpur Block, Tehri Garhwal and a proposal was submitted and clarifications were given.

**23 August 2013**

Guidelines/MoU draft shared by NTT Data

**29 August 2013**



MoU signed between ActionAid and NTT Data for water restoration project.

### **3 September 2013**

Market Survey for procurement of materials was done by two members of village level committee and one villager along with UJJS volunteers.

Quotation for PVC pipes and other materials were collected.

### **6 September 2013**

A contribution cheque of INR 2,35,050 was received from NTT Data Delivery Services Limited towards the Water Restoration Project in Parori Village.

### **13 September 2013**

A committee meeting was organized for starting of implementation work.

A resolution was passed for request for using of 500 mtr best quality rubber pipe as the geographical condition necessitated this. Rubber pipes would be used for some distance and for the rest PVC pipes. This will be done under the same budget. Rubber pipes are used in extremely difficult terrain for sake greater maneuverability.

One other resolution passed for connecting temporary school for drinking water.

The order for rubber, PVC and other materials had been placed already and the material would be reaching the village by evening of 17 September 2013.

We would be starting the repair work by 18 September 2013 and the work would be completed by the end of September month including the wall for visibility with all the details.



*Photo Credit: UJJS*