

# ASSAM SHELTER RECONSTRUCTION





**A HOUSE ABOVE THE REST**

*“Last year my house was completely submerged and washed away. But this year, since the house was high, I could somehow survive.”*

**Maity Narzary**, Pakuriguri, Jonai Block, Dhimaji district, Assam

Maity Narzary is one of the survivors of the devastating floods in 2012. This year, while most of her fellow villagers fled the area during flood time, Maity stayed at home with her 16-year-old son. She tells the story with a smile. For as the water levels rose, so did her spirits. Her source of courage was the new house built by SEEDS. The specially designed structure ensured that the house remained high above the water.

Being a widow and a daily wage earner, life is difficult for women like Maity. The vegetables picked up from the jungles and the few chickens and pigs farmed are just enough to keep her family alive. The ‘cash-for-work’ scheme of SEEDS helped Maity get a new house that can now keep her family safe.

As more and more villagers wake up to the reality of annual floods, specially designed houses like this one are giving them a new gleam of hope.





**A SAFE PLACE FOR A PARALYSED  
MAN TO CALL HIS OWN**

***“Earlier, we used to drag him to a safe shelter during the floods. However, this time my uncle could stay here itself because the water level did not reach above the floor.”***

Rajen Hazong, Nepali Patthar, Sissiborgon, Assam

Niranjan Hazong breathes a sigh of relief as he tells his uncle's story during the recent spate of flooding this year. Rajen has been paralysed for the last four years and is cared for by his nephew. Afraid for his life during the floods of 2012, he sought refuge on the elevated platforms built by SEEDS in these villages. In 2013, he received his own house with an elevated floor. It has been a major relief for him and his family.





**SHELTERING THE  
ELDERLY AND NEEDY**

***“Would I buy food or buy bamboo to build my house with my little money?”***

**Rasendra Hazong, Ajarbari, Assam**

60-year-old Rasendra Hazong is one of the senior citizens of Assam. Over a decade ago, he lost his eyesight due to a critical eye infection. He became completely dependent on his wife Shefali Hazong and his six children.

Over his lifetime, he has witnessed houses being washed away by floods every year and the hard earned money of these families being swept away by the waters. In 2012, Rasendra became one of them. However, the elderly man had no finances to build back his shelter. When asked at that time, how he would face the crisis, Rasendra’s simple answer was that it was a choice between food and shelter. The shelter support has been invaluable in such conditions.





**WATER WATER  
EVERYWHERE...  
YET STILL SAFE**



***“During the floods this year, I was protected from the water and could even store drinking water in my house.”***

Gyaneshwari Hazong, Nepali patthar, Assam



Access to safe drinking water is a major concern during the floods. Most of the families don't have access to drinking water and run the risk of being contaminated. Gyaneshwari Hazong averted this crisis during this year's flood. She is one of the woman beneficiaries of the shelter support programme of SEEDS and received a house as part of the scheme. The safe shelter meant that she was not only protected, but could store drinking water safely!



**A NEW FOUND CAREER**



***“Using my training, I have started helping others to build!”***

Brajen Chutiya, Kesukhana, Assam

25-year old Brajen received mason training as part of his housing support. Now, he has found a new career. Using these skills, he extended his own house and has now begun building for other families in the community. This has given him newfound confidence and a new source of income





**TURNING HIS CALAMITY INTO A CAREER**

***“I have been fortunate to be able to make a career out of my calamity. Now I am engaged in big projects.”***

**Gokul Sarargary, age 27** Pakuriguri, Jonai block, Dhimaji, Assam

The annual floods of Northern Assam spell doom for most of its people. Yet but it also means a new beginning for some. People like Gokul Sarargary have had it be a turning point in their careers.

Gokul used to earn his living by working as a unskilled mason. After participating in a mason training programme by SEEDS, he put his skills to use and rebuilt the house of a flood survivor. From then on. There was no turning back. The house stood firm during the flood and was a high-enough level to let the family live inside safely. It made Gokul famous in his village. The 27-year old Bodo man is now an accomplished mason, and is engaged in big projects. He is even working on a school building.





**TRAINED TO  
FACE THE FLOOD**

***“I have built my own house and it is one of the best in the area.”***

**Dipak Hazong** Ladamguri, Sissirbargaon block, Dhemaji district, Assam

Dipak Hazong, a father of three, was a mason by profession. However, he lacked the technical know-how required to build a flood-proof house. Every year his house would get destroyed by the Lali river. This year, however, Dipak turned the tables on nature.

He received special training from SEEDS to build his house. The NGO taught him the technicalities of modern architecture; blending traditional wisdom in the lessons. Armed with the new-found knowledge, Dipak built his new house which protected him from the floods. The bracing system ensured that the house was built on pillars that provided a strong base and kept the house high above the water levels.

