



# Kerala Flood 2018 Final Report

Partnership agreement between

Water Survival Box

&

Khalsa Aid International

INTERNATIONAL

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# KERALA FLOODS 2018 PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN KHALSA AID INTERNATIONAL AND WATER SURVIVAL BOX

## BACKGROUND TO THE DISASTER

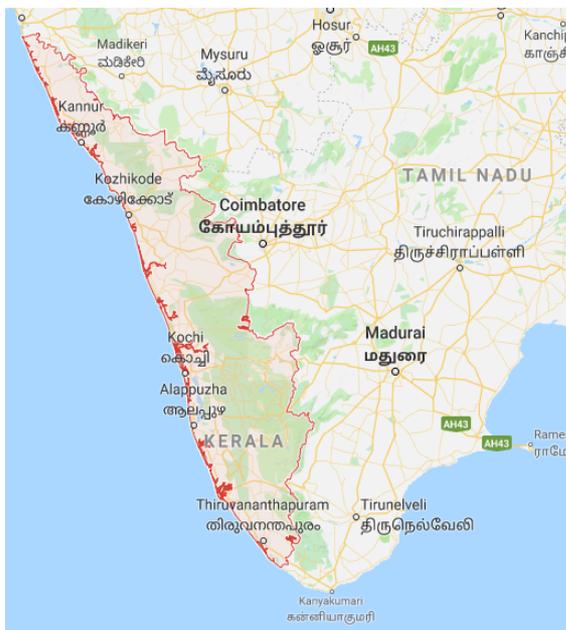
Kerala is a state on the southwestern, Malabar Coast of India. Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of Kerala and is located 200km south of Kochi, the main sea port for Kerala. The state has a population of around 35 million people and covers a land area of 38,863km<sup>2</sup> with nearly 600km of sea shoreline. Tamil Nadu is the most southern state in India, neighbouring Kerala to the east with the Western Ghats mountain range including the Nilgiri Mountains and the Anaimalai Hills creating a physical border between the 2 states and one of the main catalysts for flash floods across the state of Kerala.



Every year across southern Asia, as the seasons changes to summer, the entire region endures a significant amount of rainfall which has become known as the infamous Monsoon rains.

As the land in India and the surrounding seas warm up during the summer months, the weather patterns gain more energy and heavier rainfall starts to increase and intensify which marks the start of the monsoon season.

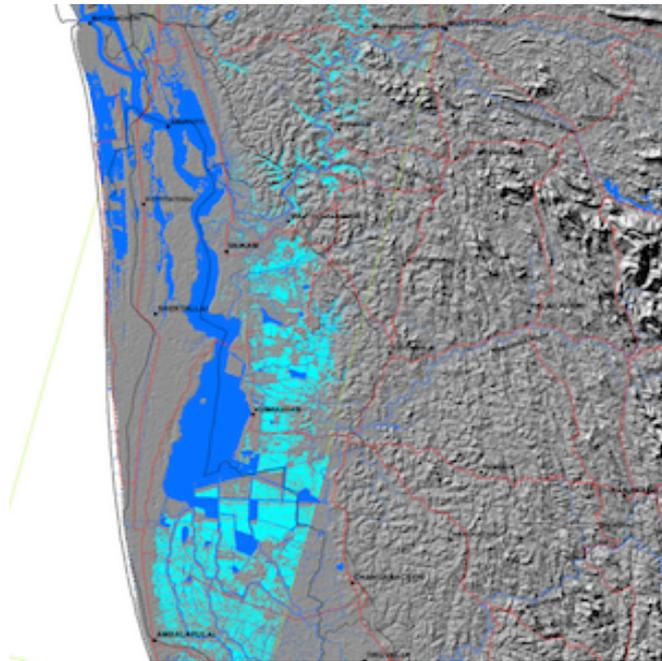
Across Southern India, the Monsoon season usually begins around early June with intense rainfall experienced until the end of September, but the season doesn't officially finish until around December.



At the start of August, Kerala experienced heavier than the usual rainfall for that time of year. On the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018, as the rain continued and intensified, Kerala experienced a 75% increase in rainfall compared to the seasonal average. By Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August, the death toll had increased to 33 people and over 60,000 people had been displaced. From Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018, the international press & community started to report & respond to the floods as the death toll dramatically rose to 105 and over 100,000 people had been displaced. As each day passed, the numbers of those affected increased, the world's media were providing daily updates and aid agencies set up relief efforts alongside the national government's response to the disaster.

At the time of writing this report the state's official numbers have the death toll at 370, with around 33,000 having to be rescued and almost 1,250,000 people having to find temporary shelter in the 3,200+ relief camps that opened.

The damage caused by the floods in Kerala has been estimated to cost \$3.7 Billion and included all the dams breached, rivers burst their banks and mudslides came down from the mountains. All these factors combined to result in the loss of so many lives and the



displacement of so many more. Kochi's International Airport, India's 4<sup>th</sup> busiest airport, was closed as its runway became a fast-flowing river, cutting off access to the region by air. The airport would not open again until the 29<sup>th</sup> August.

Khalsa Aid International has a longstanding relationship with the Rotary Club. The charity has been helped by many Rotarians making contacts with fellow Rotarians in areas affected by natural disasters (or manmade conflicts) where Khalsa Aid International is trying to set up a new relief effort.

## BACKGROUND TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KAI & WSB



Khalsa Aid International has a very healthy and longstanding relationship with the Rotary Club. Rotary have been instrumental in the past when KAI has been looking to set up new projects around the world, using their network of Rotarians around the world to seek local knowledge and contacts for the areas the organisation is trying to work in.

During 2014, the UK faced heavy rains across the country. Somerset was hit with a month's rain in a very short period which resulted in severe flash flooding. Khalsa Aid International quickly mobilized a team and responded to the floods within hours. The local community got behind KAI's relief effort and local Rotarians shared their joy and appreciation for the help KAI brought to the community. Khalsa Aid International befriended many new residents, the local Rotary Club and met Tony Quinn from the Rotary charity - Water Survival Box.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Ravi Singh (CEO of Khalsa Aid International) and Andrew Duncan (Administrative Manager & PA to CEO) visited Tony Quinn (Chairman of Water Survival Box & Regional Co-Ordinator for Rotary) at the factory where the Water Survival Boxes are packed and stored in Radstock. After viewing the production line and storage facility, a verbal agreement was reached between Khalsa Aid International and Water Survival Box for the supply of a limited number of units to be shipped to a new disaster project Khalsa Aid International would establish in 2018.

A follow up meeting was planned and held on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at the head office of Khalsa Aid International in Slough. Both Ravi and Andrew were present, and Tony arrived with Hugo Pike (Director of Operations for Water Survival Box) to discuss the future relationship between the two organisations in detail. Again, there was a verbal agreement

reached for WSB to supply KAI with a shipment of boxes for a new project KAI would establish where a need for the boxes had been identified.

As the disaster in Kerala, Southern India, caught the world attention and the death toll was increasing on a daily basis, Khalsa Aid International had responded to the disaster by mobilizing its team of volunteers from the Punjab and the team had set up a Langar (Communal) kitchen and were providing hot meals to the victims by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

The following week, Andrew contacted Tony to discuss the potential of sending a shipment of WSB's to Southern India to help with the relief effort in Kerala. Khalsa Aid International then confirmed acceptance of the 'Terms of Distribution' WSB had supplied and signed the agreement so that the shipment of 200 units from the UK to Kochi, Kerala, Southern India, could be sent.

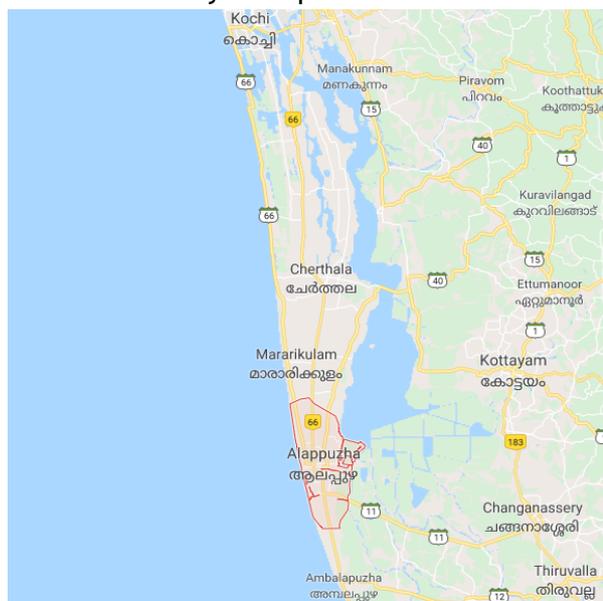
## **KHALSA AID INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE KERALA FLOODS**

### **ARRIVAL OF WSB TO KERALA**

Khalsa Aid International had agreed to take both Hugo & Tony to Kerala so they could oversee the distribution of the WSB's by our team in India. However, as both required vaccines prior to travelling to India and with clashes on their dairies, a decision was made to send the WSB's to Kochi airport without delay and DHL were contacted on the 13/09/2018.

The shipment of 200 units were sent to London Heathrow on the 15/09/2018 with WSB's arriving at Kochi Airport on the 18/09/2018.

The Asia-Pacific Director, Amarpreet Singh, for Khalsa Aid India was able to get the WSB's cleared through customs within one day due to his contacts at the airport. Transport was arranged, and the WSB's were safely transported and delivered to Khalsa Aid's Warehouse



in Alappuzha town.

## LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Khalsa Aid's India Team had arrived in Kochi and initiated their relief effort for Kerala on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018, just one day after the international community and press had finally recognised the scale of the disaster facing the region.

By the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> August, the team had started their Langar Kitchen (Communal free Kitchen in Sikhi) and had served nearly 8,000 meals in the first 24 hours.

Post our Langar relief in Kochi, the team travelled 50km south to Alappuzha District, which was recognised as one of the worst affected districts in the entire region. The team then began the distribution of dry rations, hygiene items (such as tooth brushes & soap), sanitation items and other basic household necessities that the victims needed.



The team then moved a further 20km south as our relief effort was concentrated in and around the Kuttanad district and the surrounding region, which is known as the “*rice bowl of Kerala*” owing to high productivity of rice from this region.

Once the shipment of WSB's had been confirmed and sent from London Heathrow, the team on the ground discussed the criteria which would be used to identify the beneficiaries for the Water Survival Boxes (WSB). The criteria agreed were:

1. Medical conditions arising from a lack of clean drinking water.
2. Families identified as living below the poverty line [e.g. marginal farmers, fishermen, manual labourers et al]
3. Families with severely damaged homes due to flood waters.
4. Families that had lost their livelihood due to flood waters.
5. Targeting the most vulnerable people of the local communities like single mothers, widowers, and the elderly.

Our team in India have a vast amount of experience from previous projects when it comes to researching the needs of beneficiaries and identifying the neediest in a community. We relied on the local administration records to shortlist the potential beneficiaries. With the help of our associates on the ground the potential beneficiaries were fully verified and a final list of 200 beneficiaries was created and we were ready to start the rollout of the WSB's.



2. Stainless Steel plates and spoons
3. Solar lantern
4. Toothbrush and paste
5. Claw Hammer and nails [*widely used by beneficiaries*]
6. Insulation tape
7. Tarpaulin

The cooking and cutlery items received the most favourable feedback as this allowed them to visit the kitchens established by NGO's (like our own Langar Kitchen) and use these items straightaway. Those with food rations were able to use the cooking tools and start cooking food for their own family. The solar lantern was very popular, especially during the night, and the items to help create or maintain the temporary structures were very popular (the tools, tape and tarpaulin).

## CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW WE TRAINED THE VOLUNTEERS WITH THE BOXES?

Khalsa Aid India have a wealth of experience when responding to natural disasters or man-made conflicts in the region. With almost 10,000 volunteers in the Punjab alone, training for the volunteers is an important process for Khalsa Aid.

We received feedback from Hugo at WSB from previous groups trying to use the water purification kit and making basic mistakes when trying to test it with the beneficiaries.



After instructions were received from the head office in the UK, every volunteer who was deployed for the Kerala Flood Relief effort, was duly trained on the functioning of items in WSB, by our Project Coordinator at the Warehouse facility, as a part of volunteer induction in Alappuzha.

A KHALSA AID TEAM LEADER WITH A VOLUNTEER UNDERGOING TRAINING ON THE MAINTENANCE AND WORKING OF AQUAFILTER PURIFIER. IMAGE DATED:

Special emphasis was laid on the training of the working and maintenance of the Aquafliter purifier. After watching YouTube videos and numerous demonstrations on how to use the kit, the volunteers were encouraged to raise any questions or queries during the demonstrations before dispatching the boxes to the community.

## **HOW DID WE ORGANISE THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BOXES? (FROM THE FIRST BOX TO THE LAST BOX)**

As explained when we assessed the local needs and based on the set criteria agreed by the team leaders, the volunteers went out to complete the assessments and identify the neediest & vulnerable beneficiaries in the worst affected region of Alappuzha district.

Our volunteers, with the help of local associates, verified potential beneficiaries by visiting their homes and gathered information about their basic household needs.

The first of the Water Survival Boxes were distributed on 28/09/2018 coinciding with the arrival of a new team of volunteers from the Punjab.

Every week, 30 beneficiaries were identified, and a distribution schedule was prepared, with consideration given to the other on-going relief activities in the area.

The 1<sup>st</sup> WSB kit was distributed on 28/09/2018 and the final 200<sup>th</sup> WSB kit was distributed on 07/11/2018.

## **KHALSA AID INTERNATIONAL FEEDBACK ON THE DISTRIBUTION**

### **WHAT WENT WELL AND WHAT DIDN'T GO WELL DURING THE DISTRIBUTION?**

The participation and enthusiasm of the community during our demonstration of Aquafilter Purifiers was very heartening to observe and be a part of. The youth were quick to learn and understand how to set up the purifier kit and took the lead in assisting & supporting the elderly and non-literate community members who found it too difficult to understand the working of the Aquafilter.

There was a sense of community learning and sharing of information on the usage of the items in the survival boxes.

The only constructive feedback we can offer was to do with the time to demonstrate the box to each individual family. Our volunteers understood the importance of ensuring the beneficiaries understand how to use the equipment correctly had to spend considerable

time with each individual beneficiary taking them through the contents of the box and demonstrating how to use the Aquafilter properly and confidently. The exercise was especially time consuming during the distribution in and around the Kainakary region, which was only accessible by navigating through narrow backwaters in a dinghy and not the easiest way to transport multiple boxes.

Twitter handle link of a short clip capturing the demonstration of working of Aquafilter to the beneficiaries - [https://twitter.com/khalsa\\_aid/status/1045967915957268481?s=21](https://twitter.com/khalsa_aid/status/1045967915957268481?s=21)

## **DO WE HAVE FEEDBACK FROM THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE BOXES?**

The feedback from the beneficiaries was overwhelmingly positive and had a powerful impact on each of the recipients. The majority of the beneficiaries were from Kuttunad and Kinakary region which is quite remote and difficult to access - several locations in Kainakary were only accessible after 2 hours ride in a dinghy or a boat.

The beneficiaries were very thankful to receive the Water Survival Boxes. Mainly the cooking vessels and tools were highly appreciated contents of the box. Clean drinking water is also a major concern in the region and Aquafilter filled that gap.

It was also heartening to see sharing of items of the box among the community.

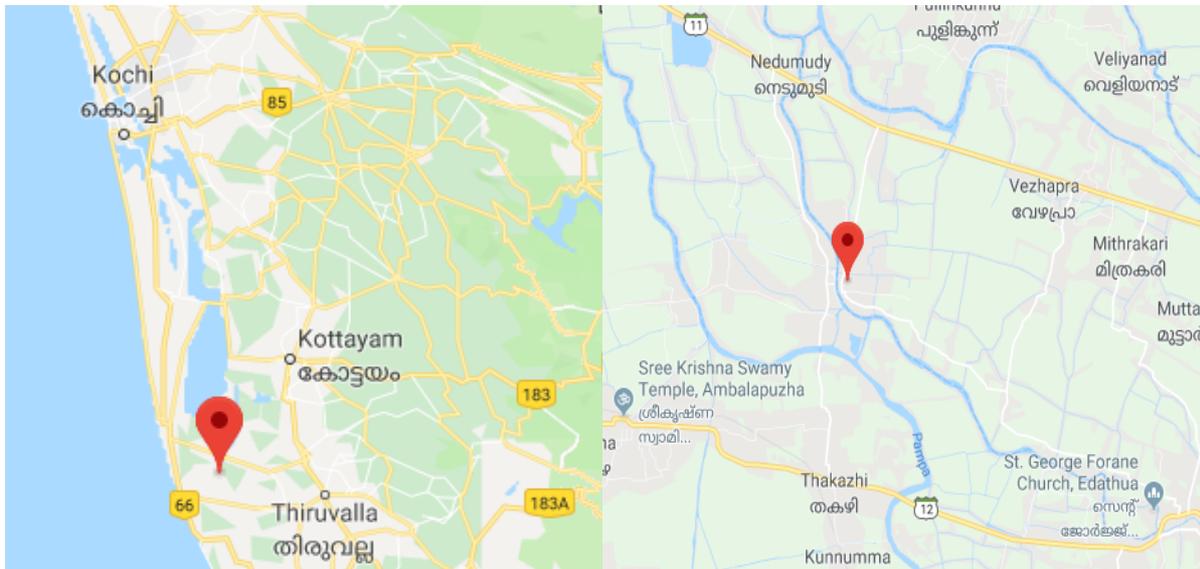
## **INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDIES - RECIPIENTS OF A WSB**

From all the 200 units of WSB's which had been distributed to the victims of the floods, we have 4 x individual case studies of families who received and benefitted from a WSB.

### **CASE STUDY ONE**



<b>Name: Sivan</b>	<b>Family members: 5</b>	<b>Occupation: Welder</b>
<b>Medical condition:</b> Sivan is asthmatic	<b>Location:</b> N09° 24'27.65" E76° 24'50.49"	
<b>Grievance:</b> Side walls and the roof of his home were severely damaged. Sivan is the only breadwinner in the family home, to three adolescent daughters		
<b>Benefit from WSB:</b> The East side wall of the house was badly damaged during the floods. The roof is precariously perched on the dilapidating wall and in danger of collapsing at any moment. The family had built a temporary shelter using the tarpaulin, tools and nails from the WSB. Without our support via WSB the family would not be in a position to construct the temporary shelter which they call home and would have been living in one of the temporary camps.		



## CASE STUDY TWO

<b>Name: Saraswathi Vadakkeparambu</b>	<b>Family members: 6</b>	<b>Occupation: Shopkeeper</b>
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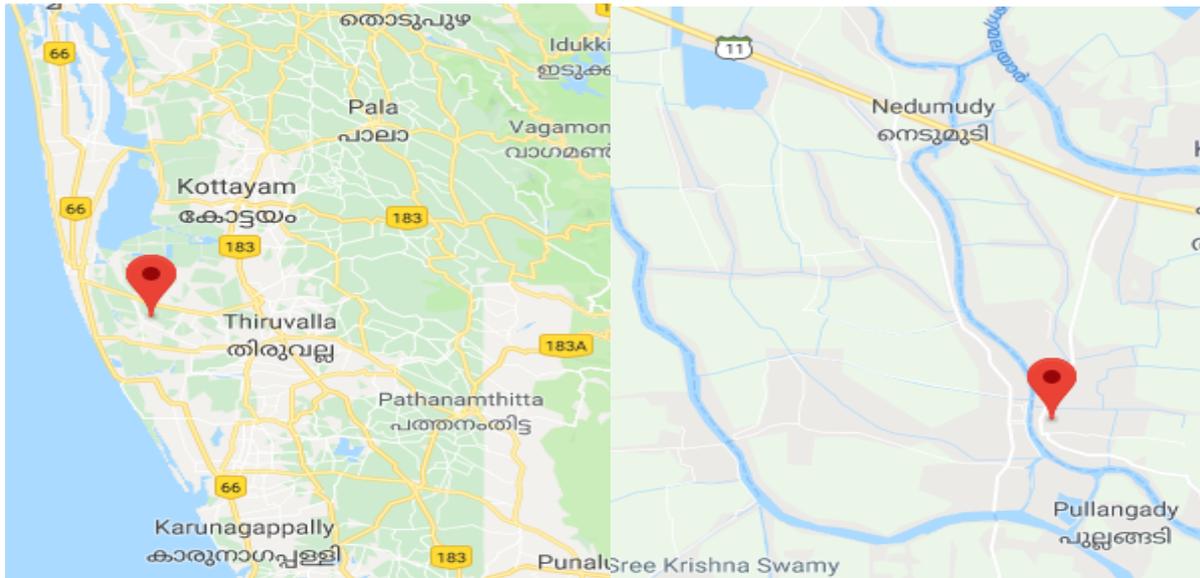


**Medical condition:** Sarawathi is bedridden since giving birth to triplets.

**Location:** N09° 24'27.42"  
E76° 24'50.26"

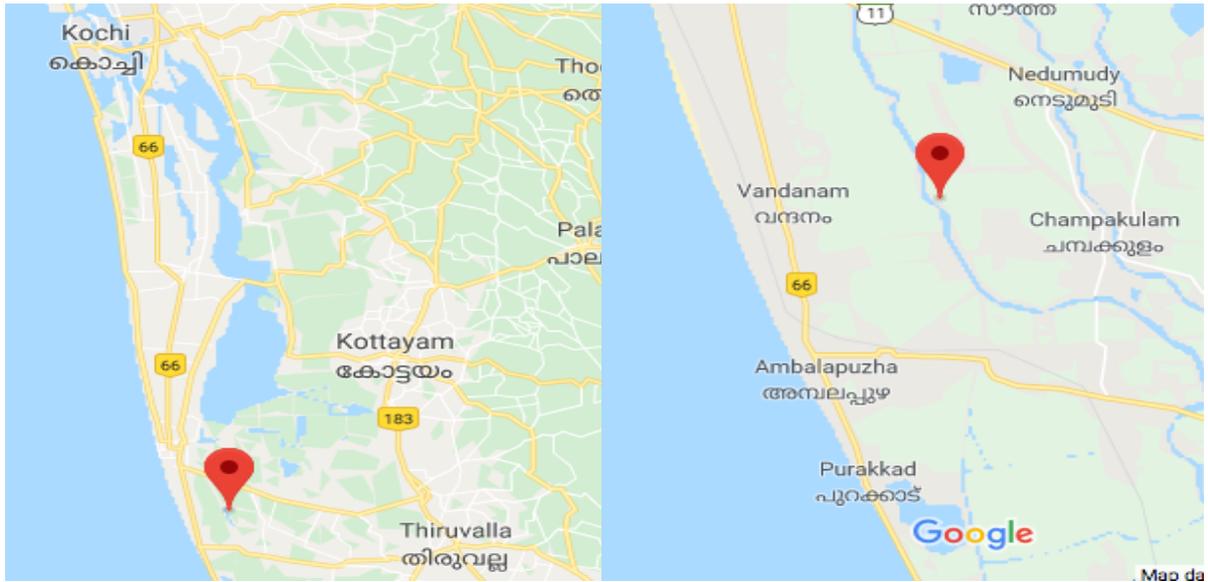
**Grievance:** No fixed home due to financial conditions. Since Saraswathi had her second birth to triplets, she has faced numerous medical expenses that has bankrupted the family and has resulted in them living in a shack prior to the floods.

**Benefit from WSB:** In the wake of the floods hitting the area, the family lost all of their household items in the rushing water. All their day to day items, especially the cooking pots and vessels, were washed away when the floods first hit and they do not have the monies to start replacing these items. Therefore, the WSB represented a ray of light during a very difficult and emotional period for the family. Something as simple as the stainless-steel cooking items provided, were the need of the hour for the family of six. They also didn't have a reliable lighting appliance or access to power, so the solar lantern was extremely handy for the whole family and especially the children to complete their school homework at night.



### CASE STUDY THREE

<b>Name:</b> Shajivahan	<b>F a m i l y</b> members: 7	<b>Occupation:</b> Contract Farmer
<b>Medical condition:</b> Shajivahan suffers from atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease.		<b>Location:</b> N09° 25'05.5" E76° 22'44.6"
<b>Grievance:</b> Foundation for the family home was laid a decade ago but due to a lack finances/funds and recent medical conditions has resulted in the construction of the home to not be completed beyond the foundations. Now the situation has been made far worse with the floods water washing away their personal items and damaging the foundations of their home.		
<b>Benefit from WSB:</b> The family lacks a reliable source of clean drinking water. The water filtered via Aquafilter is acting as the only source of clean drinking water for the extended family and the new cooking & cutlery items were incredibly valuable to the family.		



## CASE STUDY FOUR



<b>Name:</b> Viji Girija	<b>F a m i l y</b> members: 4	<b>Occupation:</b> Contract Farmer
<b>Medical condition:</b> N/A	<b>Location:</b> N09° 25'7.01" E76° 24'47.74"	
<p><b>Grievance:</b> The family have been living in a home constructed out of wooden panels and they do not have access to proper toilet facilities. The house survived the rising flood waters and the damage to the house was limited compared to others in the area. Overall, the family have little wealth and they were fortunate the flood waters didn't do more damage.</p>		

**Benefit from WSB:** The family lacked a reliable source of clean drinking water and had no choice but to rely on handouts. The water filtered via Aquafilter is acting as a source of clean drinking water for the extended family and now means they do not have to rely on handouts and have been empowered to become self-sufficient. And the cooking utensils were a blessing as they lost all their own items.

