

Case-Study

Pathanee - A widows struggle to rebuild her life



“It was at *sehri* when the flood water came and surrounded everything. The fields, our livestock everything was submerged under water right before our eyes”, narrates Pathanee w/o Pehalwan about the fury of the floods that enveloped huge swathes of Pakistan last year leaving death and destruction in its path.

The floods only added to Pathanee’s ordeal. Before the flood as a widow she was struggling with the loss of her husband. As a farm worker she would toil away in the fields owned by local village feudal making a paltry income of PKR 3,000/-. The income she made was hardly sufficient to cover her expenses, for which she had to seek loans from the local shop keepers to get daily essentials.

On the fateful day when floods struck the tiny hamlet of village Jamal Hajano, District Matiari, she along with her four sons and daughters took whatever they could and ran in haste. “I was terrified by the sound of the waters. I would keep my children in front of me to make sure they were doing fine”, she recounts.

The bereaved family sought refuge in a camp setup by OSDI in the nearby village Talho Khan Laghari. Food rations, Shelter, NFIs, Health care and WASH facilities were given to the flood victims there. Her daughter-in-law was not only pregnant but also suffering from a mental illness got treatment from the OSDI’s medical staff at the camps.

A return back to the village was hardly any relief to Pathanee as she witnessed her village still submerged in water and a destroyed home. “We cried when we saw our homes .We thought we would never have a home again”.

Hope came in the way of a joint program by OSDI and UNOCHA to provide One Room Shelters under the ERF plan. The program was specifically tailored to the embattled community of Jamal Hajano. Under the program vulnerable groups such as widows, female headed households, senior citizens and Households with high dependency rates were to be given priority in house reconstruction.

Within a span of five months, by virtue of this program she moved into her newly constructed One Room Shelter. What seemed an unattainable dream, in the wake of the

floods is a reality now. “We are finally at rest”, she smiles within the confines of her newly built shelter.