The Jammu and Kashmir state had unprecedented floods on 7th September. People in the disaster affected areas in Jammu and Kashmir are reeling under severe health problems and economic difficulties.

They require long term planning for a comprehensive health care, economic uplift through massive aid by the central government. This was the impression gathered by the medical relief team which left Ludhiana on 27th September and returned on 3rd October.

The team included Dr Arun Mitra, Dr Arun Kumar Handa from Ludhiana, Dr Shakeel Ur Rahman & Dr Satyajit Kumar Singh from Patna, Dr. Dharmakari Ramkishan from Hyderabad, Dr. Uzair, Dr Suhail from Jammu, Dr. G.M.Malik-national vice President IDPD, Dr Latif Mohamad, Dr Bashir Ahmed, Dr Aijaz, Dr Salim Khan from IDPD. Mr.Ramadhar Singh, Mr. Anod Kumar, Mr. Sanjeet as paramedical staff and Mr. Rafiq. The mission was organized by the joint efforts of Indian Doctors For Peace & Development (IDPD), Indian Medical Association (IMA) Ludhiana, Rotary Club Ludhiana Greater, Whole Sale Chemists Association, and Ludhiana Distt. Chemist Association, All India Bank Officers Association (AIBOA) and All India Youth Federation (AIYF). The team split itself into different groups and gave medical care to the people in the badly affected areas of Srinagar and villages in district Pulwama. The relief material blankets, sweaters, other garments and eatables were distributed in several areas in coordination with different voluntary groups in the valley.

In all nearly ten thousand patients were examined. Large number of population particularly women and children were found to be anemic and poorly nourished. The infectious diseases particularly abdominal, skin, allergic reactions, joint pains were in very high number as a result of staying in water for long time. Population in the affected area were suffering from anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder.
Dr A K Handa told that the team was shocked to see the two major hospitals, the Govt. Medical College and Hospital and JVC Medical College and Hospital still under water. Most of small hospitals and clinics severely damaged. Almost all the equipment in these hospitals completely destroyed.

Dr. Arun Mitra - General Secretary IDPD and Former President IMA Ludhiana, who led the team said that they found filth and silt all around the city. The whole city was stinking very badly. Many areas around the Jhelum River were still submerged under water. Most of the commercial establishments were damaged. Many people lost their houses as well as shops. The cleaning effort was found to be at a very low pace. This could pose serious health problems in time to come.

There is need for a continuity of work on the health care and economic uplift of the people. There is need for long term planning to avert and manage disasters of such magnitude by making a disaster management force of trained and effective workers with latest equipment. There is need for proper planning to preserve ecology by preventing deforestation & adopting development strategy keeping the environment into consideration to avoid any such disaster in future.

We appeal to the government to clear the city of garbage on war footings; immediately give sufficient aid to restore working of the medical institutions; to announce economic measures like interest free loans for building houses and commercial establishments. Give aid to the economically lower strata. Team also felt that the people are angry at unplanned distribution of the material by the government machinery. This should be streamlined and there should be no hesitation in accepting aid from the well-recognized international agencies to meet up the requirements of this disaster.

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