



MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

Press Release

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Drainage works to continue: Dr. Reddy

Protecting communities and villagers from the threat posed by the nature such flooding will not be undermined despite the various challenges faced by the Waterways Ministry during the lockdown period caused by COVID 19.

This was relayed by the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy assuring that drainage and de-silting works will continue in the relevant areas assuring that affected communities will be protected and safeguarded from the threat posed by flooding.

Dr. Reddy added that despite various restrictions on movement, the Ministry of Waterways has continued to provide their services with their continuous drainage and flood protection program in the Western and Northern divisions for communities who were severely affected by the flood.

To further corroborate this, the Ministry of Waterways under the Drainage for Rural Residential Program, has completed the drainage and de-silting works at Naivavuni settlement in Rakiraki which has benefited close to 500 Fijians from the Naivavuni settlement and Naivavuni village.

According to the 57 year old resident of Naivavuni settlement Mr. Jitendra Prakash, flood waters used to enter in at least 7 houses in the settlement with water up to waist level.

"Flooding had been a major concern and a threat for at least 7 houses here in the settlement and in the village as well whenever there was continuous rainfall with flood waters remaining on road for almost 2-3 days," he said.

"Movement of people in and out of the settlement and in the village also affected as because of flood waters, road gets blocked for all movement,"

We used to carry elderly and the sick people on shoulders to the main highway whenever they got sick during the flood to get them to the hospital as access for the vehicles was halted during the flooding time.

"Mr. Prakash reiterated that farms and crops were also damaged as most of the villagers have their farms beside the river.

"Most people especially the villagers are heavily dependent on the Agricultural activity and whenever the flood comes, their produce gets affected which directly affects their food and income security," he said.

He said the residents are very satisfied and are thankful for the Ministry of Waterways for coming forward and complete the work despite the current situation being faced with the COVID 19 restrictions.

According to one of my 73 year old Itaukei brother from the Naivavuni Koro, no government has ever assisted the community with the drainage works, highlighting that this is the first time he saw a government to desilt the drains with their machines

The Ministry of Waterways completed the drainage works recently for the village and the settlement under the "Drainage for Rural residential" program to assist the residents and to ensure that households were kept safe and agricultural activity was not adversely affected as well as the daily livelihoods was maintained.