

Flood Situation Eases but the Misery Continues

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A devastating flood

As per Government statistics as many as 5,312 villages in 134 blocks of 23 districts have been declared flood-hit so far. Around 33 lakh people have been affected, 45 deaths due to the flood and 97 livestock casualties have been recorded. The flood waters still inundate villages in coastal areas as the high tide caused by the full moon of 10th August has caused the sea to swell and thus the rivers are unable to empty their load into the Bay of Bengal. Rivers continue to flow over



the danger mark even as 20 gates of the Hirakud Dam remain open releasing 3.45 lakh cusecs every second into the Mahanadi system and rains in North Odisha complicate matters. A new depression set to cause more rains in Central and North Odisha with high gusts of winds in Coastal Odisha will render the sea more turbulent besides causing water levels to rise in the rivers of the area.



People of Kendrapara and Puri districts bore the brunt of the devastation as flood engulfed more and more areas. In Kendrapara alone, at least 2.37 lakh people remained marooned out of the total affected population of 3.35 lakh. The number of marooned villages in the district stood at 449. Another coastal district, Puri, was equally hit as over 97,000 people were surrounded by the flood water in 199 villages. (Tidal waters slows down flood water discharge, The

New Indian Express, August 11, 2014)

Livelihoods lost

As per preliminary assessment, around 16,000 houses have been damaged (a figure that is expected to increase substantially as the continued submergence will take a heavy toll) in

the floods which affected crops in over 2,08,911 hectares of agriculture field, sources in the SRC office said. (Flood situation marginally improves in Odisha, Hindusthan Times, August 8, 2014). According to the 7pm OTV news bulletin of 10th August around 3.08 lakh hectares of agricultural land have been submerged. Besides paddy and vegetable crops, shrimp farms, fresh water fisheries and fish



enclosures have been inundated. Farmers fear total crop-loss if water does not recede within a day or two. It is unlikely to happen as the sea is violent due to full moon day. "The tender paddy saplings will rot if flood water is not drained out. We have no seed left for another round of cultivation," said farmer Prasanta Behera. Deputy Director of Agriculture Gangadhar Pal, who toured a few villages of flood-hit Sadar, Basta and Nilagiri blocks, said there will be at least 40 per cent crop-loss this year (Farmers fear crop loss as land remains under water, The New Indian Express, August 11, 2014).

Misery in Puri: Diarrhoea and snake bites add to woes



At Puri the waters continue to inundate 300 villages in 30 GP's of Kanas, and Delang blocks. The situation is particularly bad in Delang block of Puri district as breeches in the River Daya has caused flood waters to enter villages of 9 GP's of the block. The lack of boats has hampered relief operations and the inhabitants are without cooked food for six days in a row. Cases of

diarrhoea and vomiting have surfaced and snake bite patients have been admitted into the Puri and Delang hospitals. Lack of drinking water haunts the marooned. At Kanas block villagers await hunger deaths as they have no access to food. The flood waters are here to stay for some days as the swollen Chilika is pushing the waters back. Drinking water and polythene is yet to reach the villagers whose agricultural fields have been inundated and crop loss is certain (Water recedes in rivers but rises within villages, Sambad, August 11, 2014).

Kendrapara natives go without food



At Kendrapara the blocks of Marshaghai, Mahakalpara, and Garadpur have been severely affected. Over 3.35 lakh people have been affected of which 1 lakh spending days without food as the scant relief material are reaching the district are not able to reach those in remote areas. The plight of livestock is acute as grasslands are inundated and feeds are soaked rendering them unfit for

consumption. Of the 500 villages in the district affected by the floods the situation is critical in around 300. More than 5000 mud houses have collapsed. People have taken shelter in rooftops or in river embankments. Tube wells and water sources are under flood waters and drinking water is not available. The plight of the people is not expected to improve soon as the flood waters would take another 2 to 3 days to recede. Post flood the villagers will have to grapple for food and resources as they will take stock of the damage suffered (Lakhs go without food in Kendrapara, August 11, 2014).

Floodgates of misery opened

The floods have destroyed the livelihoods of farmers and fishermen by inundating agricultural lands, shrimp farms, fresh water fisheries and fish enclosures. According to Fishery Department, 40 per cent of fisheries were affected by the deluge. Fishermen have not been able to go out to the sea due to rough weather and high tides since August 2 (Flood Pours Misery over Fishermen, Labourers, The New Indian Express, August 12). Dairy farmers have been affected as livestock are going without food and hundreds have perished or washed away. Daily wage labourers are out of work as business enterprises and manufacturing industries remain closed due to the floods. Thousands of people have lost their homes and belongings. The lack of drinking water and abysmal sanitation conditions is leading to increase in diseases in populations weakened by exposure to elements, lack of food, and the stress that calamities bring. Already fevers, colds, and diarrhoea have gripped the populations. Clearly the floods have opened the floodgates of misery for the people of Odisha.