

super cyclone of orissa 1999

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this is the strongest storm ever on earth. Storm is also called cyclone....

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On October 29 (Friday) 1999, a super cyclonic storm hit the coastal districts of Orissa like Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Bhadrak, some parts of Puri and Khurda and adjacent areas along the Bay of Bengal with a velocity of more than 300 kmph.

The cyclone was so severe that it took the lives of more than 50,000 people and 10 lakh domestic animals. The cyclone, as reported by the Meteorological Department at Bhubaneswar, Orissa, was the strongest ever to hit Orissa, more powerful than the any other storms of other years, even than the 1971 cyclone that hit Kendrapara taking the lives of about 10,000 people.

As the epicentre of the cyclone was 5 kms. Away from Paradip Port in the sea, the port town Paradip was worst affected by this cyclone. The sea water from Paradip Port rose to such an unbelievable height that it inundated a large area extending upto Erasmus - a distance of about 22 kms from it. The total area was under sea water about 20-30 feet height and thousands and thousands people were drowned, hundreds and hundreds houses were perished and lakhs of domestic animals were washed away.

The worst affected were the fishermen who had gone deep sea for fishing and their family members remaining at the hutments at the beach that day. Nobody was expecting that severity of the storm would reach such an alarming alacrity.

Neither the fishermen nor their family members were able to take a safe shelter. Within some hours all were perished by the tidal wave that rose unto six to seven meters height. Large areas were inundated in the coastal regions. There was no road link and no electricity and other means of communications were disrupted for days together. Ten coastal districts from Puri to Belabored were cut off completely for several days from rest of the country.

In the capital city Bhubaneswar itself, which is about 60 kms from the Puri coast helpless people became mute spectators to this ferocious and devastating agony of the nature. Within a short span of time lakhs of trees were uprooted, electricity and telephone poles were flattened down and koochar houses of slum dwellers were blown away like puff balls.

There was no light, no water supply, no means of communication and no supply of day-to-day commodities. The roads were blocked by uprooted trees and electricity and telephone poles. A total standstill situation prevailed in the capital city that continued for a week. Nights became calm and quiet without electricity amid deep den of darkness.

The devastating cyclone though continued twenty two hours at a stretch and its ferocity subsided next day morning, but the effects of devastation remained as a scar even for next twenty two months to recover to normalcy.

Adding to the cyclone the river waters of Belabored, Mayurbhanj and Bhadrak districts rose to certain heights that the flood situation made the condition worst. Nearly ten million people or one-fourth of the population of Orissa spread across eleven districts had been severely affected and around 2.5 lakh houses had been perished.

The worst affected were the domestic animals. An estimated 3 lakh cattle were dead and 3 crore trees had been uprooted making the whole area a burial ground after the cyclone and bumper standing crops of a lakh hectares of land spreading across the area were completely mingled to the soil.

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The post effects of the cycle were much severe than the effect during cyclone itself. There were carcasses scattering here and there of human, cattle and other animals. Roads were blocked by uprooted trees and electric and telephone poles.

The ponds, wells and tanks were filled with garbage. Even, when the sea water arose and inundated a large area, the salinity of cultivated lands increased making these unfit for further cultivation and the increased salinity of water's of tanks, well and ponds made their water unbootable. A foul smell prevailed for long due to putrefaction of carcasses, leaves of uprooted trees and other materials.

There was no food, no light, not shelter and no water to drink. Even epidemic like cholera and diarrhea broke out in some areas by drinking dirty and foul water and by taking nonedible things. The situation was quite grim which could not be imagined by a normal man.

Relief operations though started almost immediately i.e. after 24 hours of the cyclone but the problem was that there were no means of communication by which the materials could be reached to the people. The roads were blocked and at some places these were washed away. Hence aerial droppings were started the army started Operation Sahayata and nearly 2000 army personnel were deployed.

The Army Medical teams of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff camped in the coastal regions and started extending the medical services. The soldiers began laying makeshift roads. The damage bridges were repaired. The carcasses were recovered and burnt down not to pollute environment.

Military helicopters and the Air Force started dropping food bags. The Navy Personnel were engaged in rescue operations. Many Volunteer Organizations like Ram Krishna Math, Anand Margi and others came forward with relief materials of food, clothes and medicines. Some organizations started distributing prepared food day and night to the affected people for so many days.

Some neighboring State governments even extended full support of all sorts to the affected areas without hesitation. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Mr. Chandrababu Naidu immediately sent food, clothes, polythene-water packets and medicines and rescue party including doctors, engineers, electricians, paramedical teams and volunteers. Relief materials started reaching from other States also.

The West Bengal government donated Rs. 50 lakhs while the Bihar Chief Minister Mrs. Rabbi Devi gave Rs, 10 crores and the Kerala Government Rs. 50 lakhs as relief contributions. The Maharashtra government announced a Rs. 5 crore help while the M.P. Government sent in Rs. 50 lakhs in cash and food items. Relief materials poured' in form other States like Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and U.P. The Centre released Rs. 100 crores from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund describing the cycle as a national calamity. In addition, an advance support of Rs, 200 crores was arranged for the Orissa Government.

Reliefs from abroad also started to reach. Japan Govt. announced a \$ 25,000 donation to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, while the US pledged an assistance of Rs. 10.07 crores. The British Government announced Rs. 2.3 crores as a grant to the victims of cyclone hit areas, while the German Government donated Rs. 3.2 crores. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Denmark, Norway, France and Russian governments also announced donations for the cyclone victims.

The Orissa cyclone - 1999 was so severe, so ferocious and so devastating that hardly anybody could believe by simple talking. Only a victim could realize what was that - a super cyclone' in reality.

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