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THE IMPACT OF CYCLONE ALONG THE WEST BENGAL COAST IN NOVEMBER '88*

A severe cyclonic storm with a velocity of 250 km/hr swept through the coastal districts of 24 Parganas and Midnapur in the midnight of 29th November, 1988 which caused extensive damage to public and private properties. The cyclone played havoc with the crops like coconut, paddy and banana. Thousands of trees were uprooted and communication was totally disrupted. It was reported that, at least 245 people died in 24 Parganas. Maximum number of death occurred at Gasaba, Basanthi and Canning in the district of 24 Parganas. The loss of crops, livestock and fisheries amounted to Rs. 8,00,000. Three mechanised boats along with 37 crew members were missing from Kalisthan.

Social impact

Fishermen who get advances from traders usually repay during the fishing season but due to

cyclone and the consequent dislocations they were not able to do this in 1989. Besides, these fishermen had taken advances for repairing their boats and huts which also they could not return.

Relief and rehabilitation measures

Government of West Bengal arranged relief work promptly. Affected fishermen were given money and material in the form of craft and gear. Bamboos and hogla were supplied to them for the reconstruction of their huts. Essentials like clothes, blankets and food were supplied by Amarabati Grampanchayat.

* Reported by P. B. Dey and S. S. Dan, Field Centre of CMFRI, Contai, West Bengal.

Table 1. Extent of damage due to cyclone

Sl. No.	Name of Place	No. of persons affected	No. of persons missed (fishermen)	Nets damaged		Boats damaged				Dry fish lost		Boats missed (mech. & non-mech.)		Nets lost		Fishermen's shed destroyed		Total
				No.	Amount	Mech.	Non-mech.	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	Kg.	Rs.	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	
1.	Bakkhali (Canal)	30	—	1GN	250	1	800	—	—	400	2,000	—	—	—	—	10	5,000	8,050
2.	Bakkhali (stand)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3.	Frazergunj	200	—	4GN	1,200	—	—	1	300	2,000	10,000	—	—	—	—	25	30,000	42,100
4.	Kalisthan	300	20	38BN 8BN	600 1,600	—	—	4	1,200	4,000	20,000	2	60,000	4	8,000	40	80,000	1,70,800
5.	Kaylaghata	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(mech.)	—	—	—	—	—	—
6.	Namkhana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7.	Kakdwip	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8.	Beguakhali	250	—	7BN	1,400	—	—	6	1,800	3,000	15,000	—	—	—	—	30	45,000	63,200
9.	Zambo	400	25	15BN	4,500	5	5,000	—	—	9,000	45,000	2	80,000	3	6,000	50	10,000	1,50,500
10.	Raydighi	—	2	1GN	3,000	1	8,000	—	—	—	—	(mech.)	—	—	—	—	—	11,000
11.	Diamond Harbour	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12.	Junput	400	—	20BN	4,000	1	3,000	4	800	2,000	10,000	—	—	—	—	40	8,000	25,800
13.	Digha Mohana	250	—	10GN	3,000	30	15,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	40,000	50,000
14.	Digha	500	—	4GN	12,000	60	18,000	—	—	4,000	20,000	—	—	—	—	45	90,000	1,40,000
15.	Jaldah	—	—	63 10BN	6,300 2,000	7	21,000	22	4,400	1,200	6,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	39,700
Total		2,330	51	85	39,850	104	70,800	37	8,500	25,600	1,28,000	4	1,40,000	7	14,000	260	3,08,000	7,09,150

Remarks: 1. Bakkhali (Canal): Fishing activities at Bakkhali Canal have been reduced drastically this year as most of the fishermen who used to make Bakkhali Canal as their fishing base have shifted to Kalisthan and as a result the loss from spoilage of dry fish at Bakkhali is less compared to Kalisthan.

2. Digha: A dry fish business has been started this year at Digha beach for drying fish from trawler fishing.
GN — Gill net; BN — Big Bag net.

Damages in fishing villages

Generally the fisheries sector is one of the worst affected by the cyclone especially in the districts of 24 Parganas. Fishing villages most affected are Gasaba, Basanthi, Canning, Raydighi, Bakkhali, Kalisthan,

Zamboo and Gangasagar. About 2,000 huts were blown away by the wind exposing dry fish stock worth Rs. 4,00,000/-. Loss of life and property and boat in the district of Midnapur by this cyclone was comparatively less. The extent of damage caused by the cyclone is presented in Table 1.

