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SEA EROSION THREAT TO COASTAL FISHING VILLAGES OF VALSAD DISTRICT, GUJARAT*

Severe sea erosion had occurred in some of the coastal fishing villages like Moti Danti, Nani Danti and Udwada, situated in Valsad District of Gujarat during the monsoon period of 1986 (Fig. 1).

Although sea erosion has been a recurring phenomenon in many of the fishing villages of Valsad District, the erosion was more severe in 1986 compared to those occurred in 1968 and 1976.

The Moti Danti and Nani Danti villages are located as narrow strips of land which jet out into the sea, and fall in the drainage vicinity and mouth of the River Ambika.

In Moti Danti, one portion of the land was completely eroded by the rough sea and also by the heavy rain which made the Ambika River to be in spate and change the course, leading to erosion from the inland portion of the village; ultimately leaving a chunk of

land as island. Many of the huts belonging to the fishermen were destroyed. The fish drying yards were also washed away. A few of the damaged huts and the steps taken to foil further erosion by piling stones and sand bags are seen in Fig. 2. It was reported by the village chief that nearly 2.5 sq km area of the village was lost due to sea erosion. The stones piled up for preventing erosion along the coast were also washed away due to high tides during the monsoon season.

The Nani Danti village is located in a sensitive position along the sea coast; and its elevation is slightly higher than the adjacent villages which are said to be below the sea level. Usually during monsoon, paddy is cultivated in Nani Danti and adjacent villages. During 22nd and 23rd June, 1986, due to the high tides, sea water entered through Nani Danti village to the adjacent villages inundating almost 300 acres of paddy fields, inspite of the steps already taken to avert the erosion by piling up stones and sand bags (Fig. 2).

The dwellings of fishermen, fish drying yards and standing paddy crop were damaged. It may be also

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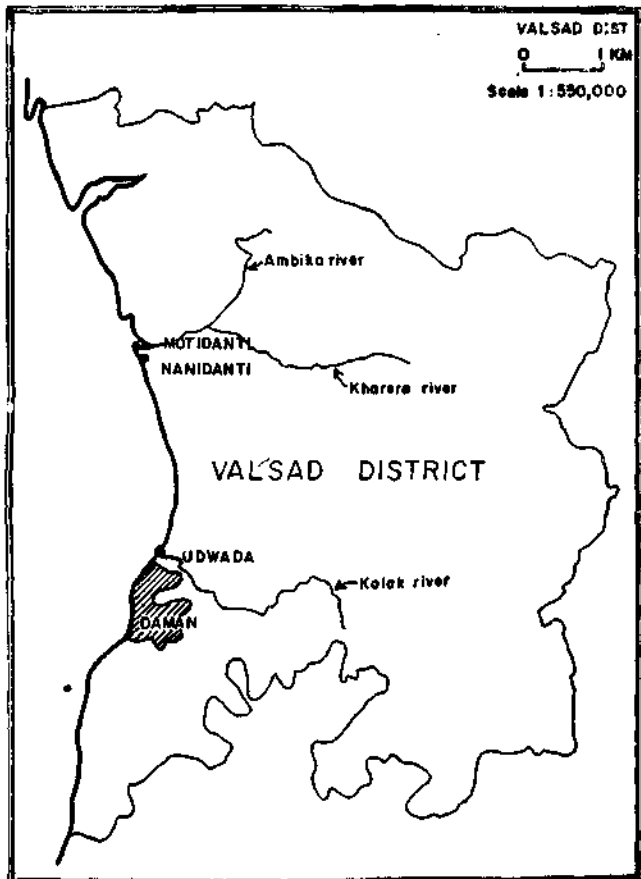


Fig. 1. The coastal villages in Valsad District where sea erosion took place.

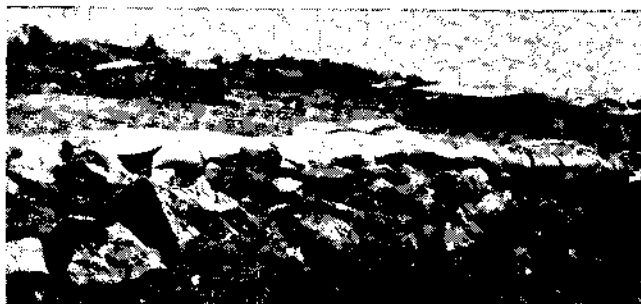


Fig. 2. A view of Nani Danti village where severe sea erosion took place.

noted that the effect of salt water would adversely affect the paddy crop in the ensuing seasons also.

In Udwada village, severe land erosion occurred in June, 1986. In the past several years, there has been continuous and progressive incursion of sea towards this village. It could be seen from Fig. 3 that many of the buildings near the sea coast are on the verge of collapse due to erosion. The elders in this village reported that about 25 years back, the sea was more than 100 metres interior to the present coast line. Due to the

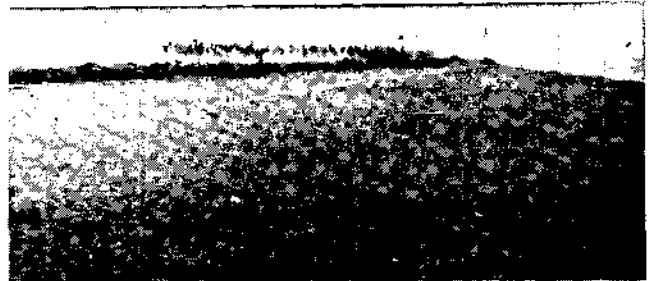


Fig. 3. The sea has entered far interior into village.

continuous erosion, several families of Udwada have migrated to other safer places during the past few years. The adjacent villages such as Kolak and Maroli are also under the grip of sea erosion.



Fig. 4. Another location of severe sea erosion.

It is felt by the villagers that if timely effective steps are not taken to stop erosion, the sea may enter into many of the villages near Nani Danti such as Kakawadi Danti, Methia, Bonsri, Dholai, Malwan, Karwa, Kar-diwa, Mutali, Durasana and Dungis which are situated below sea level and may adversely affect the crops and other cultivations in the years to come.

