

“Great Kerala Flood and the Regional Damages: First Anniversary Assessment of Boys town, Periya village of Wayanad district

INTRODUCTION

When we look back Kerala is recovering from a major flood exactly a year after being hit by another one. Last year’s floods were described as a once-in-a-century calamity; this one was an ecological disaster waiting to happen. When we look back to the history of Kerala flood. The state has experience devastating flood in the past centuries notably

1. Great Flood in 1341

1. The flood washed away Musiris port
2. Historians believe that Kochi owes its rise as a prominent port city to the great flood in river Periyar in 1341.

2. Flood in 1924- July (16-23)

- i. Known as flood of 99
- ii. It is happened in kollavarsham 1099
- iii. Many districts of present day Kerala were deeply submerged by the flood. From Thrissur to Ernamkulam to Idukki, Kottayam even up to Alappuzha and Kuttanad.
- iv. Even a huge mountain called Karinthiri Mala was washed away by this flood and the road to Munnar also went along with it.

Recently we have witnessed the flood of 2018 and 2019. In case of flood in 2018.

3. Flood in 2018- (Aug 15-23)

- i. First time flood in August
- ii. 12 districts affected except Trivandrum and Kasargod

Total loss in flood

504 people were dead and 14 were missing, 2 lakh animals have been killed, 57000 Hecters of crops lost, 14900 houses were partially and fully distracted, 10,000 km of road damaged, 300 bridges broken out. (Source: PDNA)

Let’s have a look in to the back ground of Wayanad District

- It is located in north east of Kerala state. It sets high on Western Ghats with attribute range from 700 to 2100 km.
- Wayanad is endowed with scenic beauty and it is a renowned tourist destination. Along with this, agriculture sector also contribute to its major part of revenue.
- Large area of the district is covered by forest but the continued and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources point towards an imminent environmental crisis.
Unfortunately, the devastating catastrophe hit the Wayanad district consequently in 2018 and 2019

Estimated loss of flood damages sector wise in Wayanad district

Sector	Item	Estimated loss(rs. lakh)
Agriculture	Total and partial crop loss including yield loss	10207
Animal husbandry	Death of livestock and poultry	323.465
Forest	Road, culvert, bridges, truck road, tourist road	108.250
Industries	Land and building, machinery, raw materials, products	377.180
Housing	Fully damaged	11540
	Partially damaged	1666
Tourism		461.990
Education	Learning material	90.268

Source: District planning board Wayanad district

Boys Town is a small locality in Periya village of Thavinjal panchayath in Mananthawadi Thaluk. There are 23 families residing in Priyadarsini colony, Boys Town. According to a study conducted by geological department, the area witnessed varied types of natural phenomena like soil piping, landslip and land subsidence. These terminologies were not so familiar among common people.

Soil piping

- Soil piping is also called “soil contact erosion” or “tunnel erosion.”
- It happens when water seeps along the interface between coarse and fine soils, eroding the particles from the final layer in to the coarse layer.
- Excessive rain, strong event of underground water source and soil characteristics can contribute to soil piping.

Land slip

- Landslip is the sliding of a mass of land down a slope or cliff.

Land subsidence

- Land subsidence is the sudden sinking or gradual downward settling of the ground surface with little or more horizontal motion.

Objectives of the study are

- To analyse the lived condition of people in Boys Town after one year of natural disaster and
- To assess the role of government in course of rescue, rehabilitation and rebuild the affected area

Methodology

The study was based on both quantitative and qualitative case study.

The area of our study was Priyadarsini colony in Boys Town. The area selection was based on purposive sampling technique because this area includes different categories social groups. Namely SC, ST, OBC and general. Another reason for selecting this area was due to the severe catastrophe that occurred consequently for second time. We conducted a qualitative data collection by visiting the Chunkam Parish hall camp using survey method for 16 families. In survey method we used a structured questionnaire and conducted one to one

interview with the refugees in the camp. Apart from survey method, we also visited the Boys Town area as part of field visit in order to gain more qualitative information about the affected area. The study also includes various secondary data like PDNA, RKDP, PAO wayanad (The Pay and Account Office), District Coordinator Life Mission, DD tourism

Analysis

1. Economic status of social groups: From the study it is found that the area include most of the social groups including 6 SCs, one ST, 5 OBC and 4 general categories. All SC families belong to BPL categories out of this 3 are AAY card holders. 2 general and one OBC families are APL and one ST belong to AAY.
2. In case of Land holdings: All SC families have land below 12 cent. Smallest land holder is one of the reason for decreasing agriculture in this area. Highest areas of agricultural land are held by general family ie.2.5 acres. The nature of the residential area is steep slope area.
3. They are facing the problem Pattayam: out of 16 families 12 families have pattayam issues. They are still waiting for the final hearing from the court.
4. In this area a new spring emerged in the area after the flood of 2018. Resulted in a strong underground erosion which intensified the damages in 2019.
5. The incessant rains created havoc among residence in Boys Town area in both 2018 and 2019. From the 16 samples surveyed from Chunkam Parish Hall Camp we found than in 2018, 12.5% of houses were fully destroyed while in 2019 the % lose to 43.75. Whereas the number of houses that were partially destroyed in 2018 was 75% and in 2019 it was 43.75%. In both the years 3 houses were facing threat of destruction. Based on social group classification in 2018 one SC house were fully damaged and in 2019 this number rose to 3. In ST category also one house was completely destroyed in 2019. Among OBC in 2018 1 house destroyed and in 2019 3 houses were destroyed. General categories were also facing partially damages to their houses.

In short, despite of various social group classifications in their area, almost all categories were equally affected by this catastrophe which shows a secular nature of disaster.

- **when we look in to the case of Employment:** Majority of the members are daily wage earners. Include estate workers, construction, painting, salesman, hostel warden, cook etc. these people lost many days of their work during flood. We calculated the loss of work for 20 days in august 2018. and it account Rs.149, 000/.
- **Flood also had a severe impact on Agriculture;** Major agriculture crops in this area are tea, coffee, rubber, banana; pepper etc. farmers incur huge expense due to the crop failure from heavy rainfall in both the years 2018 and 2019. Total agricultural loss in the area is around rs.3,90,000/. Apart from this loss the attacks from various wild animals also added extra loss to the agricultural sector. The main sources of water in the area are well and pond. 50% of the water resources damaged during 2018. Most of them renovated during that time. But it again destroyed in 2019.

In most of the places transportation facilities are partially damaged in 2018 due to the landslips. It took months to make the way reusable. But in the year 2019 road transportation almost destroyed due to the land slips and land subsidence.

All families in the Priyadarsini colony give greater importance to education. In 2018, children had lost many of their school days by spending in camps. But in 2019 the parents sent their children to their relative's house because they are worried about their education and learning environment in refugee camp. So far we discussed about the loss and damages caused by 2018 and 2019 flood. In order to overcome from these

- The immediate relief assistance was provided by government to only few families in this area. Out of 16 families only 4 SC categories got Rs5000 and 2 OBC's and one general got Rs10,000 as immediate disaster assistance. Thus, only less than 50% of the families i.e., 43.75% got the financial assistance from the government.

Apart from the immediate relief assistance, the government also provided a sum of Rs2,50,000 to one OBC and one SC whose house was completely destroyed.

Conclusion

Based on our field visit and the study conducted on this area we found that the people in the camp were frequently shifting from one camp to another due to unavailability of a permanent place. The rehabilitation process by the government was not executed systematically. Moreover there was also severe flaw in the part of compensation by the government. Out of 16 families, only a few people in the camp received the disaster assistance which directly depicts the failure of compensation.

By the word rebuilding it doesn't mean just a reconstruction of the destructed areas but to look for the methods to avoid future destruction. But this study shows that the rebuilding in same affected vulnerable place and thus it failed to mitigate the risk occurrences. It also found that the catastrophic equally affected all the social groups residing in this area which intern shows the secular characteristics of the disaster. Thus, rebuilding is not just repairing but to create a resilience nature to face the natural disasters with precautions and mitigation measures to reduce its intensity to the maximum.