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Article For Reading – Preparing for the worst: On Cyclone Fengal, the future

It is not uncommon for the southern peninsula to experience heavy or very heavy rainfall during the northeast monsoon, which is also important for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. But when Cyclone Fengal crossed the coast, close to Puducherry, on the night of November 30, neither Tamil Nadu nor Puducherry expected the magnitude of **devastation** that occurred. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said nearly seven million families and 15 million individuals have been affected. Sixteen people, including four in Puducherry, lost their lives. A landslip in Tiruvannamalai claimed seven lives including five children. Unusually heavy rainfall (40 cm-50 cm) was recorded in many places in Puducherry and the northern and north-western parts of Tamil Nadu on a single day. An initial estimate puts over 2.21 lakh hectares of farmland including 10,000 hectares in Puducherry to be under water. The cyclonic storm later weakened and crossed coastal Karnataka, adjoining east central Arabian Sea. Though many southern parts received rain, Puducherry and several districts in Tamil Nadu **bore the brunt**. What worsened the **plight** of people in some districts was the flood in the otherwise-dry South Pennai river; on Monday, it had a flow of 2.4 lakh cusecs.

Mr. Stalin has sought an immediate release of ₹2,000 crore from the Centre. The Puducherry Chief Minister, N. Rangasamy, has announced assistance of ₹210 crore.

It is time that the authorities concerned prepared themselves to face extreme weather events, given the rising frequency of very high rainfall. Last year, Kayalpattinam in Thoothukudi received 95 cm, whereas, this time, northern and northwestern districts faced a similar experience. A 2022 **monograph** by the India Meteorological Department concluded that, on an average, four depressions or cyclonic storms could be expected to affect the southern peninsula every season. The authorities should intensify their concrete and **tangible** long-term steps beyond the routine ways of providing relief and **rehabilitation**. Even though Chennai was not hit badly this time, the State government must make public the report of the Advisory Committee for **Mitigation** and Management of Flood Risk in the Chennai Metropolitan Area, led by former civil servant V. Thiruppugazh. Other measures such as a strengthening of bunds, regular removal of silt from water courses and a **relentless** drive against **encroachment** of water bodies must be carried out. Only such steps will be purposeful to the people; **taking pride** about age-old irrigation management is not enough.

Summary –

Cyclone Fengal caused significant devastation in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, with heavy rainfall (40-50 cm in a day) and floods affecting nearly 15 million people and claiming 16 lives. Over 2.21 lakh hectares of farmland were submerged, and damages were severe in several districts. Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin sought ₹2,000 crore in aid, while Puducherry announced ₹210 crore in relief. The event highlights the need for better preparation for extreme weather, including flood mitigation, removal of encroachments, and strengthening water management infrastructure. Authorities must adopt long-term measures beyond routine relief effectively .

Vocabulary –

1.Devastation(Noun) (विनाश)

Meaning: Great destruction or damage.

Synonyms: Destruction, ruin, havoc.

Antonyms: Restoration, repair, recovery.

Example: The cyclone caused widespread devastation in the regions.

2. Plight (noun) दुर्दशा

Meaning= a dangerous, difficult, or otherwise unfortunate situation.

Synonym: Predicament, quandary

Antonym: Advantage, solution

Example: The plight of the homeless in the city centre has worsened over the winter months.

3. Monograph (noun)(एकल विषय पर विस्तृत अध्ययन)

Meaning = a detailed written study of a single specialised subject or an aspect of it

Synonym: Treatise, essay

Antonym: Summary, synopsis

Example: She spent several years working on her monograph on medieval French literature.

4. Tangible (ठोस)

Meaning: Capable of being touched or felt; clear and definite.

Synonyms: Concrete, real, perceptible.

Antonyms: Intangible, abstract, vague.

Example: The tangible results of the project motivated the team to work harder.

5. Rehabilitation (Noun)(पुनर्वास)

Meaning: The process of restoring someone or something to a good condition after damage or suffering.

Synonyms: Restoration, recovery, reparation.

Antonyms: Neglect, destruction, abandonment.

Example: The government focused on the rehabilitation of flood victims by providing temporary shelters.

6.Mitigation(Noun)(शमन)

Meaning: The act of reducing the severity or seriousness of something.

Synonyms: Alleviation, reduction, relief.

Antonyms: Aggravation, exacerbation, intensification.

Example: Mitigation measures helped minimize the impact of the disaster.

7. Relentless (Adj) (डिग)

Meaning: Showing no signs of stopping or weakening; persistent.

Synonyms: Unyielding, unremitting, persistent.

Antonyms: Lenient, intermittent, forgiving.

Example: The relentless rain worsened the flood situation in the affected areas.

8. Encroachment (अतिक्रमण)

Meaning: The act of intruding on someone else's territory, rights, or property.

Synonyms: Intrusion, invasion, trespass.

Antonyms: Withdrawal, retreat, respect.

Example: The encroachment on water bodies has exacerbated the flood situation.

9. Bunds (noun) बाँध

Meaning = embankments or barriers built to regulate water flow or to prevent flooding, often seen in agricultural settings ()

Synonym: Dikes, levees

Antonym: Breaches, gaps

Sentence: The farmers constructed bunds to protect their fields from the seasonal floods.

Idioms & Phrases

1. Bear the brunt –

Meaning - To suffer the worst part or the strongest impact of something negative.

2. Taking pride

Meaning– Feeling satisfaction or pleasure from one's own achievements.