

Flood Update IX from *Water Initiatives Odisha*



25th September 2011

Flood situation in Northern Odisha rivers still grim

Dear Friends/Co-sailors,

The flood woes of Northern Odisha rivers have worsened since we sent our 8th Flood Update on 23rd September. As per the latest report available from govt. sources, 8 districts (Anugl, Balasore, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Kendrapada and Mayurbhanj) have been affected by the latest spell of the disaster. However, what the govt. report misses out is the flood in Sundergarh and Deogarh districts. Media houses and other sources have reported massive flood damages in these two districts too.

As we compile this update at 2 pm on 25th September, 2011, the latest update on Floods released by the Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA) mentions that **more than 1.5 million people have been affected by these floods; 7 people have died and more than 3 lakh livestock have been affected.** What is important to note here is that, **in the earlier spell of floods, the final report for which was compiled and released by the Govt. the total livestock damage was only 1667. However, this time it has crossed more than 3 lakhs.** The number of **marooned villages has been put at 992. While 2362 villages in 510 Gram Panchayats of 46 Blocks of the 8 reported districts have been affected; the urban habitations affected have been reported at 47 Wards in 8 Urban Local Bodies.** You can get the complete list at http://www.osdma.org/Download/Flood_2011Update_Status_240911.pdf. **However, we are sure; the real figure of damages is much more since the OSDMA report does not take into account the affected figures in Sundergarh and Deogarh districts.**

As the rivers of Northern Odisha flood yet again, the debate around Flood Control and Management abilities of Dams have resurfaced. In the LEAD section of this Update, we have given some basic analysis of how the Rengali dam has not been properly managed and we have argued how it has become **UTMOST ESSENTIAL** to prepare a Flood Management Policy for the government that takes care of several integrated issues like sound flood forecasting, river basin management pithing in co-ordinated action with people and states involved, and the need for Flood Plain management. **While we keep the note in the LEAD section brief, a detailed note on the Rengali dam and flood management has been attached to this update.**

Then we have our regular NEWS, STATS and METSPEAKS sections in this short update.

Once again, we would like to inform you that, at the moment, it's occasional and we may come up with these updates as and when we can, given our limited manpower and resources. However, with your inputs and support, we are sure; we shall be able to ensure regular flow of this update.

We request you to send in your reports of activities, your views; and any other interesting and relevant article, books, photographs, and anything that you feel we should cover in this Update. It's YOU who is the most important FUEL of this effort.

Look forward to listen from you and your continued support.

Thanks and regards,

Ranjan Panda

Convenor, Water Initiatives Odisha

STOP PRESS: *By the time we despatch this Update, reports had started coming in from govt. sources that the flood devastation has affected about 2.2 million people already. The loss of live has been counted at 17 and affected livestock has already gone up to more than 4 lakh. We shall post the detailed information in our next update.*

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LEAD

Different Designs, Same Management

‘Did we manage the Rengali dam the way we managed Hirakud?’ asks Water Initiatives Odisha, as it brings a special note on this issue in response to the latest spell of the flood disaster in northern Odisha Rivers.

The latest spectre of floods over Brahmani and Baitarani has once again brought the Dam Operations and Management systems of the state into question. This time the focus goes to the Rengali dam. Before going further to the discussion, we would like to bring to your notice the water storage level that was maintained in the Rengali dam on select dates as against the recommended Rule Curve for that dam.

Select Date	Recommended Reservoir Limits (by Rule Curve)	Maximum and Minimum	Level at which the Reservoir was kept
1 st July	109.72 M / 109.72 M		114.84 M
1 st August	115.85 M/ 115.85 M		114.91 M
1 st September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		122.36 M
7 th September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		122.87 M
14 th September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		123.54 M
20 th September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		123.66 M
21 st September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		123.55 M
22 nd September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		123.56 M
23 rd September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		123.56 M
24 th September	122.50 M/ 121.95 M		124.39 M

As can be observed from the above, even as warnings of depression/low pressure were coming in (and in fact that has historically brought rain at this time of the year over Brahmani and Baitarani river basins), the Reservoir was kept consistently at a higher level. On 23rd September, when we sent out our 8th Flood Update for this year, the Govt. of Odisha’s Water Resources Department’s website shown the Rengali Reservoir Level at 124.15 M, that’s 0.65 M above the recommended FRL, which was 105.4%! Even though Rengali, unlike Hirakud, is touted as a dam whose design has a specific space devoted above the designed water level for the project, the multi-functionality of the project makes it controversial each time floods have come. Further, the incomplete canals have also added to the woes as water from the reservoir could

not be drained out faster than envisaged. At the crux of it, the dam authorities should never have allowed so much of water to stay in the reservoir till the last moment. This is how we managed our reservoir and let the flood devastate about half a million people by design. Another thing that comes to light with this is when we note that , on 23rd September, the OHPC site, which has been quoted in the above table, shows a lower actual reservoir level than what the WR department records. This shows how effective is the coordination among various departments and institutions responsible for flood management in our river basins.

Time the government looks into the management of dams and river basins afresh; and opens up its Flood Management policies to public of the state and come up with a Flood Management Policy for the state which is not only technically advanced (including integration of climate change scenarios) but also transparent and involves all sections of the society through proper river basin management, reservoir operations and flood plain management activities.

(The detailed note has been attached to this Update and has also been posted at

<http://climatecrusaders.blogspot.com/2011/09/special-note-ii-on-odisha-floods-2011.html> and

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/66269507/A-Note-From-WIO-on-the-Rengali-Dam-and-Flood-Management-24th-Sept-2011>)

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NEWS

992 villages remain marooned in flood-hit Orissa

With flood situation in four north Orissa districts remaining grim, the state government on Saturday started air-dropping of food packets as 992 villages continued to be marooned for the second consecutive day.

"It is not practically possible to open free kitchens in worst-hit Jajpur district as flood water had submerged all the places in four blocks. Air-dropping of food packets is the only alternative left with us," state Revenue and Disaster Management minister S.N. Patro told reporters.

Stating that two helicopters had already been pressed into the service, Patro said four more choppers are likely to be deployed in relief operation. Though the second spell flood had affected eight districts, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Keonjhar had been severely affected due to very high flood in Brahmani and Baitarani rivers.

Balasore district was also hit by flood water of Subarnarekha river while Angul and Dhenkanal districts were affected due to flood in Brahmani river, he said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik held talks with Home Minister P Chidambaram and Defence Minister A.K. Antony seeking more choppers and boats for rescue and relief work.

"This is a very strong flood in Jajpur, Kendrapara and Bhadrak districts," Patnaik said, adding that the state government was taking all possible steps to provide succour and relief to 15.40 lakh population in the eight districts.

"I tried to speak to the PM on the flood situation. But, it was not possible as he was abroad."

Senior officials were deputed to supervise rescue and relief operation in these three worst-hit districts where people were trapped on rooftops with their houses submerged by flood water of Brahmani and Baitarani.

Meanwhile, six persons died and another went missing in flood waters. While two persons died in Jajpur district, one each died in Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Mayurbhanj districts, special relief commissioner P.K. Mohapatra said, adding that 58,664 people has so far been evacuated.

This apart, a large number of snake bite cases were reported from Kendrapara district, but there was no casualty due to timely intervention of medical teams, he said.

Jajpur district has been cut off after an old bridge collapsed at Sathipur Friday while the alternative road through Panikoeli area was under water. The administration was facing difficulties in transporting relief materials to the affected area, he said. Flood situation in Jajpur, Kendrapara and Bhadrak is grave," the SRC said, adding that above 400 villages in Jajpur district were marooned followed by 135 villages in Bhadrak district, 163 villages in Kendrapara district and 74 villages in Mayurbhanj district.

<http://m.indiatoday.in/itwapsite/story?sid=152584&secid=175>

Orissa airdrops food as floods get worse

Orissa on Saturday started airdropping of food packets in marooned villages as a fresh round of floods triggered by heavy rains in the past four days got worse, officials said. "One helicopter has started airdropping in the districts of Keonjhar and Jajpur. Another chopper will join the operation soon," special relief commissioner PK Mohapatra told reporters.

The state flood control room said the latest round of floods triggered by heavy rains following a depression over the Bay of Bengal has so far marooned 911 villages in Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Kendrapada, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj districts.

Thousands of people have already taken shelter in high-rise buildings, river embankments and on roads. However, the surging flood waters have made it difficult for many in the marooned villages to travel to safer places.

While the latest floods in Brahmani and Baitarani rivers have hit Jajpur, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, and Keonjhar and made the situation worse, the Mayurbhanj district has been affected severely due to high flood in the Budhabalanga river.

Floods triggered by heavy rains and release of huge quantities of water from Hirakud dam had earlier this month killed at least 42 people and affected about four million in Orissa's 19 districts, including in the regions affected by the fresh floods.

At least one person was reported dead in the flood water in Kendrapada district on Friday.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Orissa-airdrops-food-as-floods-get-worse/Article1-749548.aspx>

Flash floods snap state road links, inundate areas

RANCHI: Communication with neighbouring states like Orissa and Chhattisgarh snapped and property worth several crores were damaged as flash floods submerged many low-lying areas after incessant rain hit Jharkhand in the past three days.

Road links were cut off on Friday when water started flowing over the bridges on Marda and Koel rivers on National Highway 23 and 78 that connect the two states with Jharkhand via Gumla.

Officials in the state road department said hundreds of vehicles were stranded on both sides of the rivers. "There is high current and the water is flowing at least two feet above the bridge. No vehicles will be allowed to cross the bridge till the water recedes," said an official.

Source:http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-24/ranchi/30197677_1_danger-mark-flash-floods-low-lying-areas

Oriasa Congress unit to submit special report on floods to Centre

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) chief spokesperson Arya Kumar Jnanendra on Friday informed that the OPCC would submit a special report to the Central flood damage assessment committee regarding the devastating floods, farmers' suicides and Sindhoh project in the state.

Briefing newsmen here, Jnanendra said that a meeting was held under the chairmanship of the senior party leader Sriballav Panigrahi on these issues on Friday.

Most of the District Congress Committee presidents alleged that the state government has failed to monitor properly the release of water from the Hirakud reservoir.

The state government has submitted a flood assessment report to the Centre stating that only 3.24 lakh hectares of agricultural land has been affected in the floods, but it is a totally wrong assessment.

The Congress' assessment is that more than 10 lakh hectares of farmland has been affected.

The OPCC urged the state government supply Rabi crop seeds free of cost to the affected farmers, waive Kharif loans, provide loan without interest for Rabi cultivation and pay adequate compensation for the flood and droughts victims.

Source: <http://orissadiary.com/CurrentNews.asp?id=29359>

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STATS

Live Storage Filling of Major Reservoirs as on 25-Sep-2011

HIRAKUD	RENGALI	BALIMELA	MACHHKUN D	UPPER KOLAB	INDRAVATI	SALANDI
96.0%	111.9%	24.2%	94.5%	34.6%	34.7%	79.7%
Time: 1200 hrs	Time: 1200 hrs	Time: 0800 hrs	Time: 0800 hrs	Time: 0800 hrs	Time: 0800 hrs	Time: 0600 hrs

Reservoir Level & position wrt. Full Reservoir Level

RL: 629.04ft	RL: 124.56m	RL: 1466.7ft	RL: 2747.8ft	RL: 850.63m	RL: 632.19m	RL: 78.94m
(-) 0.96ft	(+) 1.06m	(-) 49.30ft	(-) 2.20ft	(-) 7.37m	(-) 9.81m	(-) 3.36m

Reservoir Inflow & Outflow

I: 187133Cusecs	I: 11171.03Cumecs	I: 190.35CumeCS	I: 29.08CumeCS	I: 62.35CumeCS	I: 165.2Cumecs	I: 89.18CumeCS
O: 142661Cusecs	O: 12041.35Cumecs	O: 89.75Cumecs	O: 57.33CumeCS	O: 33.24Cumecs	O: 174.73Cumecs	O: 2.5Cumecs

Live Storage capacity & Live Storage available

Cap: 482155 Ham	Cap: 341371 Ham	Cap: 267600 Ham	Cap: 96993 Ham	Cap: 93500 Ham	Cap: 148550 Ham	Cap: 55650 Ham
LS: 462918 Ham	LS: 381991 Ham	LS: 64713.61 Ham	LS: 91623.8 Ham	LS: 32386 Ham	LS: 51475.02 Ham	LS: 44373 Ham

The **RED** line corresponds to **Full Reservoir Capacity**

Source: <http://www.dowrorissa.gov.in/Flood/ReservoirGraph.htm>

Met Speaks

From 0830 hours IST of yesterday to 0830 hours IST of today, widespread rainfall has occurred over east Uttar Pradesh and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal & Sikkim; fairly widespread over Bihar, northeastern states, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; scattered over east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Orissa and isolated over Himachal Pradesh,

Weather Forecast: Scattered rain/thundershowers would occur over east Madhya Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Orissa and south Chhattisgarh.

Source: IMD

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Water Initiatives Odisha: *Fighting water woes, combating climate change...* more than two decades now!

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Please join our group 'Save Rivers Save Civilizations' at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/220598744649462>

Kiss the rain when you can, because water and abundance are falling apart...(Ranjan Panda)

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Water Initiatives Odisha (WIO) is a state level coalition of civil society organisations, farmers, academia, media and other concerned, which has been working on water, environment and climate change issues in the state for more than two decades now.