

## EFICOR

### “Amphan” Cyclone – West Bengal - May 2020

#### **Information About the Disaster and its impact:**

The super-cyclonic storm AMPHAN began its landfall at around 2.30 pm on 20<sup>th</sup> May, destroying thousands of houses, damaging buildings, uprooting trees, electricity poles and killing at least 86 people in Bengal<sup>1</sup>. Embankments were breached in the low –level areas because of massive storm surge. One of the worst storms over the Bay of Bengal in years, AMPHAN has left a trail of destruction in Bengal and Odisha. Cyclone, whose eye was about 30 KM in diameter made landfall with gusting winds of up 185 kmph and waves were about 15 feet tall.

Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of Bengal on Friday told reporters that the cyclone must be treated as a national disaster. “This is more than a national disaster. I have not seen such devastation in my life. Sixty per cent of people have been affected in West Bengal. More than six crore have been directly affected,” Entire south Bengal is badly hit and devastation is



beyond the expectation she said. “It will take some time to restore normalcy... It’s a catastrophe... severe disaster. We are fighting three challenges — there is lockdown, then there is Covid - 19 , and now this disaster. The villages have been entirely devastated,”. I would request to provide humanitarian relief, the chief minister added. Most



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#### **Central and State Government Response:**

- The West Bengal government has evacuated 5 hundred thousand people, two hundred thousand from south 24 Parganas alone.
- 14 NDRF, teams and 4000 SDRF members were deployed in the districts who are doing the restoration work by cleaning the roads and bringing the situation to normal.
- Government is running the evacuation centers and providing the food.
- Government planning to dispatch all the dry rations and tarpaulins to the affected areas.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/cyclone-amphan-weather-forecast-today-live-updates-6423306/>

## Summary of Situational Assessment:

A reverse migration is taking place because of the novel coronavirus with tens of thousands of people returning to the Sunderbans. The storm is like a death knell for these people who are already dependent on government and NGO support for survival. Mud embankments in the Sunderbans delta, a UNESCO site, were breached as the surge whipped up by the cyclone inundated several kilometers of the Island. With seawater entering agricultural land, officials now fear more 2 lakh farmers could be severely affected.

EFICOR staffs Mr. Samerndranath Bag and Mr. Chirnjit Tesra who are from affected area and now working in Bihar state, had telephonic inquiry about situation with their relative and community leader. The key findings are as follows:

- All the agricultural lands were destroyed due to entering the saline water and the crops were collapsed.
- Almost all thatched houses are marooned in the flood water, all the furniture were destroyed and nothing is left in their hands.
- All the people are in the evacuation centre and consuming the food that is available in the centre.
- People are unable to maintain the social distance due to the crowd in the evacuation center. Due to this, people are fearful and in trauma.
- Health & Hygiene: The affected community is inundated with water and after three days slowly water began to recede and due to this high possibility of spreading the water borne diseases, skin infections, mosquito breeding and snake bites etc.
- The sanitation is a big challenge as most of them are practicing open defecation near highway and rail embankments. Mainly women and children are the most vulnerable to have easy access to various facilities like sanitation, drinking water and the issue of safety and security as most of them are living in relief camps.
- Many livestock have been washed away in the floodwater, which is one of the household incomes of affected families. In most of the houses they rear the livestock as an alternative source of income, the most of the HHs, which have lost their livestock, are completely dependent upon their livelihood.
- The most vulnerable are women, aged, disable and children as they are deprived of access to various facilities and food assistance

<https://www.livemint.com/mint-lounge/features/cyclone-amphan-a-grim-snapshot-of-india-s-climate-change-future-11590636237757.html>