

ICG has offered consultancies to several major industries, government organizations and small-scale industries. The Schools of Biological Sciences, Biotechnology, Energy, Environment & Natural Resources and the Departments of Materials Science and Sociology have solved several problems of different industries. In recent years many industries have sought the help of the School of Biotechnology. MKU has formulated well-defined guidelines for undertaking consultancy

work. The faculty members who have been involved in consultancy work have not compromised on their academic responsibilities so far.

Realizing the importance of 'information technology', MKU has recently signed MoU with the Electronic Corporation of Tamil Nadu (ELCOT) to set up a technopark in the university campus. This will pave the way for several entrepreneurs to develop software for export market. Needless to say that such an

interaction will also provide job opportunities for several people.

I. Balaram, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 77, 1381-1382.

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Impact and imprint of Orissa supercyclone

A cyclonic storm battering the east coast (called the Coromandel coast) is a common meteorological phenomenon during the SW and NE monsoon periods. Storms are 'abnormal weather systems' with unpredictable movement originating in bay islands in the Indian Ocean. They originate in the open sea initially as low-pressure areas and then gradually increase in dimension and intensity, as depression, storm or cyclone depending upon the energy and speed of the abnormal weather system. Since the Coromandel coast falls within the tropical cyclone tract, there is no escape from the fury of nature. The east coast is generally deltaic, with more bays and underlain by thick pile of sediments than hard rock, and hence is more vulnerable for impact as the entire coastal tract is without any physiographic eminence.

As the sea is said to be a consumer of sand, wherever the coast is more sandy and underlain by sedimentary strata, the impact and damage is worst especially between Point Calimere and Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu) Ongole and Chirala (Andhra Pradesh), Bhubaneswar and Paradip (Orissa). The abnormal weather systems are usually associated with high velocity wind and heavy precipitation and normally the cyclones get dissipated

only after crossing the coast. The configuration of the coast more or less controls the movement of the cyclonic storms and their destiny. From the coastal geomorphologist's point of view, only tidal marsh, beach ridges and dune complexes ranging in elevation between 0 and 20 m for a stretch of 20 km from the coast towards inland are seen in the coastal tract. Such low relief landforms cannot withstand the fury of 'megaton energy' weather systems with rain and wind.

Before the imprint of the cyclone devastation gets obliterated, it is essential to have sequential aerial photographs of the devastated terrain, so that the imprint of the cyclone can be clearly demarcated and a photomosaic map can be prepared which can be utilized for future mitigatory and long-term planning. Even with advanced technology and sophistication through satellite imageries, to track the movement of the weather system, the habitants are caught unaware to face the fury and deluge, owing to the unpredictable movement of cyclonic storms. In addition, the coastal tracts are normally unapproachable due to poor communication systems and it becomes very difficult to evacuate people during a cyclone. This calls for a multidisciplinary, long-term coastal disaster management system and

study to withstand the fury and mitigate the loss to both life and property.

It has been reported from the impact of recent cyclones that modern constructional and architectural codes could not withstand the fury, while ancient rocks made of laterites and khondalitic rock were intact. This calls for a new code of architecture to be adopted for dwellings in the coastal areas. Perhaps the Orissa supercyclone has been the worst of its kind. Detailed large-scale photomosaic of the devastated terrains has to be made immediately for long-term mitigatory measures.

The coastal environment is a fragile dynamic ecosystem and hence is more vulnerable to erosion and cyclones. The challenging situation posed by the dictates of nature cannot be solved overnight by constructing a sea-wall along the low relief coastal stretch but can be alleviated or mitigated only by human will and endurance, with tolerance and adaptation.

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