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## Research Article

# AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PHAILIN AND ITS IMPACT AMONG THE FISHERMEN OF PENTAKOTA, PURI, ODISHA, INDIA

M. N. Milky<sup>1</sup> and Pinaki Dey Mullick<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Science,  
Education and Research, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

<sup>2</sup>Department of Anthropology, Haldia Government College, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India

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### ABSTRACT

The state of Odisha having severely exposed to the natural hazard, faces a great difficulty multiple times in past few years. The impact of natural disasters threatens the life and living of the local people of Odisha; repetitively raising their social and psychological resilience under a great challenge. In this context, the present study tries to explore the experiences of vulnerability and resilience among the fishermen of Pentakota - a coastline settlement of Puri, Odisha, after the cyclone - *Phailin* and its disastrous impacts on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2013.

Five Participants were selected through nested sampling design and interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. The detailed and extensive rich data have been transcribed verbatim to include the insider's perspectives of the concerned issues that led to the themes of concerned, like- (a) Sensing the Sea and Risks in Economic Living ("*Perception of the Sea and Economic Living*", "*Perception of Risks and Vulnerabilities in Daily Life*" and "*Spirituality and Resilience*"), (b) Warning, Preparation, Disruption and the Terror of *Phailin* ("*The Warning and Communication Prior to the Event*", "*Facing the Unexpected Threats of Phailin*" and "*The Perception of Loss*") and (c) The Issues of Resilience and Post-Disaster Recovery ("*The Issues of Relief, Politics, Mistrusts and Annoyance*", "*Feeling of Helplessness and Anxiety*", and "*Bouncing Back the Troubles and Getting in to the Altered Life*"). The nature of the content of the current effort is descriptive, specific and subjective that may claim to contribute knowledge for better policies and actions.

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### INTRODUCTION

India is a country adversely affected from natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones and cloud bursts; resulting morbidity and mortality. The coastal regions of India, especially the state of Odisha is predisposed to natural hazards, due to its sub-tropical littoral location, the state is prone to tropical cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis. The impact of natural disasters threatens the life and living of the local people of Odisha repetitively raising their social and psychological resilience under a great challenge.

The coastal regions of Odisha of Indian peninsula, including the tourist places, fishing villages, towns, hotels and resorts are vulnerable in the face of frequent cyclones and floods (Kumar et. al., 2010). A number of disaster researches are there in Odisha, posited from the perspectives of management and administration that intends to show the numbers and statistics of loss of lives, relief funds, and potential of government to rescue the victims (Khanna and Khanna, 2013; Bahera, 2013).

Disasters in the contemporary fast and changing world are more complex and severe (Cutter, 2005).

As a social phenomenon, disaster calls for a serious, systematic and theoretical social science perspectives (Reddy, 2011).

In this context, the present research tries to explore the experiences of vulnerability and resilience among the fishermen of Pentakota (a coastline settlement of Puri, Odisha) after the cyclone- *Phailin* and its disastrous impacts on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2013.

#### The Objectives

There are four major process and/or objectives of the current study that are as follows-

1. How the fisherman of Pentakota lives and senses the sea to earn their economic living?

\*Corresponding author: Pinaki Dey Mullick

Department of Anthropology, Haldia Government College, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India

2. What are the major risks associated with the 'everydayness' in their livelihood due to the close proximity to the sea?
3. How they orient them with the process of an entire emergency episode due to a natural hazard like- Phailin (including warning, preparation, facing troubles during and after disaster, and the perception of loss)?, and,
4. To explore the dimensions of post disaster recovery in context to the issues of resilience.

### **The Method of the Study**

Five Participants were selected through nested sampling and were interviewed using semi-structured interview and case studies. Detailed and extensive rich data has been transcribed verbatim to include the insider's perspectives of the concerned issues.

The collected data were analyzed using Narrative Analysis Method that reflects on the stories told by the individuals (Polkinghorne 1995).

### **The Findings**

After analysing the transcribed data; the following themes are identified: (A) Sensing the Sea and Risks in Economic Living ("Perception of the Sea and Economic Living", "Perception of Risks and Vulnerabilities in Everydayness" and "Spirituality and Resilience"), (B) Warning, Preparation, Disruption and the Terror of Phailin ("The Warning and Communication Prior to the Event", "Facing the Unexpected Threats of Phailin" and "The Perception of Loss") and (C) The Issues of Resilience and Post-Disaster Recovery ("The Issues of Relief, Politics, Mistrusts and Annoyance", "Feeling of Helplessness and Anxiety", and "Bouncing Back the Troubles and Getting in to the Altered Life").

#### **Sensing the Sea and The Risks In Economic Living**

The fishermen of Pentakota spend their whole life in and around the sea, this theme tried to focus on the perception of the fishermen regarding the sea, the threats or risks from sea and the mechanisms utilized by the fishermen to minimize those risk or threats. The theme is further sub- divided into three stages- Perception of the Sea and Economic Living, Perception of Risks and Vulnerabilities in Daily Life and Spirituality and Resilience.

#### **Perception of Sea and Economic Living**

The participants considered the sea as dynamic and regarded it as their main source of survival since it provides fish, shells, gemstones etc. which in turn helps the fishermen to earn their livelihood.

*Sea has various phases and is always changing...when it is calm the wave is fragile and large wave forms when sea is fierce... Sea is life...sea is everything for us... sea is 'Rantnakar'...sea provides me with fishes, shells ...my family runs properly because of sea...*

All the participants considered sea as a mystical being with powers, which takes care of them.

*Sea is a god... he is the father-in-law of Jaganath.... He takes care of us... he creates fishes, weeds, shells,*

*pearls and other precious stones... he creates current and whirlpool...*

Apart from this view, two participants held sea as a mother and companion respectively. Kishore Rao considered sea as a mother as it nurtures and feeds him and moreover it provides him emotional support.

*Sea is my mother, sea gives me food and helps me to earn money...she talks to me and provides me peace and happiness... (Kishore Rao)*

For Dinesh, sea is more human like, he regards him as his childhood friend and like any other being; sea has its own identity.

*Sea is my buddy... I played with him... like us, he has several moods...sometimes he is calm, pleased and sometimes angry... (Dinesh Rao)*

#### **Perception of Risk and Vulnerabilities in Everydayness**

The concept of vulnerability indicates the probability of people's physical exposure to a hazard, their underlying susceptibility or sensitivity to its impacts and their capability to cope with the risk (Cutter, 2006; Few and Tran, 2010).The term, 'vulnerability' is conceptually linked with susceptibility, marginality, fragility and risk in disciplinary and interdisciplinary disaster researches in the social sciences over time and spaces (Liverman, 1989; Johnson and Finney, 1986; Alexander, 2005).

In this research, risk is viewed from two perspectives; first, since they are fishermen, to survive their economic living, the fishermen venture out to sea on a regular basis with underdeveloped technologies and second, as Pentakota is a coastline region, the habitation is dangerously close to the sea and the fishermen are living there for generations without any proper planning. On this basis, the researcher tried to understand how a community under risk for a prolonged period perceives risk and makes their living meaningful i.e. what are the strategies involved through which it sustains the risk and during natural calamities like cyclone, when the risk is maximized, what are the impacts and ways with which they cope with the conditions.

In this context, participant conceived sea as dangerous and they were mostly concerned about the occurrences of sea storm and cyclones.

*...sea is full of dangers...it has currents and creatures...the main concern are the sea storm or cyclone...*

From the conversations with the participants, it is understood that, they aren't afraid of sea or cyclone. The occurrences of storms and cyclone are considered as a natural phenomenon of their life.

*...But these events are part of live...I am used to it... (Kishore Rao)*

For Dinesh, storms and cyclones are devil which causes them harm, but if a fisherman get scared of this then he will not be able to survive here or earn his livelihood from the sea.

*...we are not afraid of storms... if I am afraid of storm, a devil or creatures of sea then how could I earn my living from it...*

Moreover, a positive view towards cyclone is evident from one of the participants, to Krishna, cyclones changes the course of life which is at times necessary; most of the time cyclones acts as an integrator which reinforces faith and social relations in the community.

*...if something is destined to happen it will... whatever happens in sea is normal for me... sometimes cyclones are essential to change the view of life...it restores faith in god...during cyclone every one cares for each other which is unusual...*

The participants expressed their deep reliance on fate. They strongly believe that the inevitable end of life is death; death through natural cause or by accidents.

*At the end we all have to die... some may die in natural way, some in accidents and some dies in storms and cyclones...*

### **Spirituality and Resilience**

The approach of fishermen towards the risks could be understood from their religious belief. The participants have intense faith in Lord Jaganath. Jaganath is considered as a care taker of the world, who is responsible for each and every happenings of the universe.

*...Jaganath is the care taker of the world...everything in this world is happening due to the will of Jaganath, even the occurrences of cyclone...*

For the participants, Jaganath is a savior, they consider themselves as helpless or powerless being and only Jaganath can protect them from events like cyclones.

*...only Jagannath saves us from the fury of cyclone...the eyes of Jaganath always remains open and he watches everything which approaches Puri...Jaganath hits cyclone away like Sachin Tendulkar hits sixes in cricket matches...Whatever happens, will be the desire of Jaganath... for Jaganath we are like flies - 'patinga', a blow of wind will kill us, the being who can protect us is Jaganath...*

For Rama, every act of Jaganath is considered as virtuous; he even perceives calamities as a punishment from god for his sins.

*...he will do what is best for us... If he wants to punish us for our wrong doings, cyclone will cause destruction ...*

Moreover, from the account of Jaganatha Rao it is understood that he 'blindly' believe in Lord Jaganath. To him nothing devastating will ever happen in Puri due to the ulterior motive of Jaganath, which is to remain as the king of Puri. He further says that if cyclones destroys Puri then his followers will die and he will no longer be the king, so to remain as king, Jaganath protects Puri every time.

*...Jaganath is compelled to save us from cyclone... if cyclone isn't diverted, then all the followers of*

*Jaganath will die and no one will worship him and he wouldn't be king anymore, so he will save us...*

In contradiction to these views, Kishore asserts that, Puri has a special advantage from natural hazards due to its geographical location as it is situated farthest away from the sea when compared with other coastal regions like Paradip and Gopalpur.

*Puri has a benefit from cyclone from other regions of Odisha... it is situated inside...*

### **Warning, Preparation, Disruption and Terror of Phailin**

This theme aims to encapsulate the warning phase, how the participants availed the warning about the Phailin and their response to it? How it was encountered by them and what were the impacts of Phailin upon them? The theme is sub divided into three phases- The Warning and Communication Prior to the Event, Facing the Unexpected Threats of Phailin and The Perception of Loss.

#### **The Warning and Communication Prior to the Event**

Evacuation is the primary protective action utilized in large-scale disasters such as cyclones, floods, tsunamis, eruptions and releases of hazardous or nuclear materials which involve the withdrawal of persons from a specific area because of a real or anticipated threat or hazard. Although often precautionary, protecting human lives by withdrawing populations during times of threat remains a major emergency management strategy. Evacuation behavior is often closely associated with officials issuing warnings, people often spontaneously evacuate (evacuate without an official order) or refuse to comply with an evacuation order for a variety of reasons (Lindell & Perry, 2004).

Phailin reached Pentakota on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2013. A day before the events, the participants received warning about the cyclone on 10<sup>th</sup> October through local administration and mass media.

*Day before the cyclone, police cautioned the area and instructed people to evacuate the place... The warning was given by the coast guard offices and television.... Precautions were taken by the government...(Dinesh Rao)*

From Jaganath's account, it is understood that the participants and the other members of the community depended on their traditional warning systems along with the modern warning technologies. They relied on a sacred text, written by Lord Jaganath and maintained by high Priest, contained information regarding the Phailin and other forthcoming storms and cyclones; he stressed that the administration confirmed their prediction of Phailin from the text.

*...the occurrence of Phailin was mentioned in the sacred text, written by Jaganath and read by priest...and from there police had confirmed the information of Phailin...*

In the warning process, the sea – beach, hotels and lodges were evacuated, though no such steps were taken for the fishermen community; the fishermen were strictly instructed to stay away from the sea. The military and other forces were deployed; few reliefs such as drinking water and dry foods were delivered.

*...Army looked after the area...hotels near the beach were evacuate... some dry food and water was provide... life guards manned the beach...police managed the marine drive... fishermen were strictly instructed to stay away from the sea...*

The warning about Phailin and the evacuation procedures created a chaos; the transportation system was under pressure; tourists and inhabitants tried to leave the state. In the community, many rushed toward the market for the procurement of food, medicines and kerosene while others went to the Jaganath temple, seeking mercy and protection.

*...everyone was tensed after hearing the Warning about the Phalin ...Bengalees and Oriyas tried to leave the state...trains and buses were over crowded...private cars couldn't match the demand...several of us rushed to the food and medicine stores, petrol pumps.... Many went to the Jaganath temple for his protection...*

### **Facing the Unexpected Threats of Phailin**

On 11<sup>th</sup> October, Phailin hits the area with a velocity of 200-220 km/hr. accompanied by torrential rain. The fishermen were scared and they gathered near the sea beach and offered flowers and milk to the sea and prayed for protection and lesser damage. As the situation worsened, many fishermen rushed back to their homes.

*...Phailin hits the area, environment was engulfed by clouds and darkness...huge wave formations were seen...we got 'scared'...it was horrifying.... We gathered near the beach to watch the events of sea and prayed for lesser damage, for keeping everyone safe, and offered milk and flower to please the God... when things went bad many of us went back to our homes... (Kishore Rao)*

From the account of Rama Rao's, many of the fishermen were roaming in the beach. The ambience was dark with low visibility. They were scared as well as curious; they wanted to see the magnitude of the cyclone. Seeing this, the police cautioned and instructed them to vacate the place; to this they felt dejected, as they have nowhere else to go, they were on the beach and their home was near the marine drive; rather being at home sitting ideal, they decided to stay at the beach as long as possible and helped the clueless tourists and life guards.

*...the environment seemed as it has been surrounded by clouds and darkness...visibility was low...we wanted to feel the majestic cyclone... police and military forces ordered us to vacate the place, run away... we asked them- where we will go, if we have to go somewhere away from the sea....so we roamed near the beach, instructing the tourists to stay away from the beach... we even had to hoot away people with stick... many tourists were very excited to experience the cyclone... when we failed to convince the adamant tourists, the police interrupted in the situation and took them away to a safer place.... as the situation deteriorated, we went to our home...*

For Krishna Rao, the condition at home was worse; there he actually realized the intensity of the cyclone. There was no electricity, phones were out of order, and the family members were very scared.

*... at home every one was tensed and scared...all the doors and windows were closed, a candle was burning in the middle of the room, we all gathered near the candle and sat down... the surrounding was very gloomy, only roaring sounds of the wind echoed everywhere... [Sigh] my grandchild god scared and asked me when it will stop? I just said 'soon'...we all prayed to lord for sparing our life, shedding his mercy... we are very weak... wind can kill us... if something falls upon us we will die, so save us, we don't have the power to combat with cyclone...[Sigh] we spent the whole night praying to Jaganath....*

His pause in between the conversation gave the sense of him being scared of the event. I was also struck by his thought about himself. He considered him and every one so feeble and miserable.

For Dinesh and Kishore Rao, the condition was more or less similar. At home they were scared, they gathered together and prayed for the safety of every one and prepared themselves for the worst.

*...the area was flooded...the wind was blowing with a whistling sounds....thunders were producing terrors and thud of felling trees shook us from the core ... thoughts were running in my mind- does the tree fell over a house? Is every one okay? How long will it continue... we all sat close and spent the night together in each other's company... prepared ourselves for the worst... I told my wife and children that 'everything will happen according to wish of God, if we die today we will die together and if we survive, we will live together... (Dinesh Rao)*

*... at home everyone was worried...my neighbor came to our house to spend the night... we stayed awake... the children couldn't sleep due to the noises... the blasts of glasses of windows along with the roaring sounds wind and thunder petrified us... I was worried about the wellbeing of my loved ones and was thinking about ways to confront the cyclone's effect....as time passed, the cyclone grow stronger and the torrential rain flooded the area... water entered my house... we all shifted to the first floor...everyone was hungry... we consumed puffed and pressed rice.... Around 2 o'clock in the morning, the intensity of cyclone decreased...everyone tried to sleep... (Kishore Rao)*

As the situation stabilized, Jaganath Rao was anxious to visit the beach; he was shocked by seeing the volume of damages that has occurred from the cyclone.

*...around 4 o'clock I woke up and went near the marine drive... I was stunned... I couldn't recognize the area... the road was hidden beneath the thick layer of sand... the wind displaced the topmost layer of the shore and had exposed black sand, pebbles and stones...the shops were destroyed... some zones*

*appeared so deserted that the presence of human and its activity couldn't be traced... uprooted trees were laying all over the roads ...*

By his narration and expressions, it seemed that he couldn't believe that such damages, caused by a cyclone could ever occur in Puri.

### **The Perception of Loss**

In most disaster the major concern of the peoples are the fatal<sup>c</sup> and non-fatal injuries and material loss.

The concept of loss has been conceived by the participants subjectively as well as differently.

For Rama Rao, the major concern during the cyclone was the loss of boats and fishing equipment. According to him, a fisherman is inadequate without his boats and fishing gear; interestingly, for him loss of these is equivalent to death.

*I am a fisherman, my boat, fishing nets and motors are everything... during Phailin I was worried about the damages that had occurred to the boats... boats were anchored at the beach and it took the direct hit... if I lose all these then I may not be able to sustain me and my family... (Rama Rao)*

Jaganath Rao perceives loss differently; he considered life as more valuable than materials. For him materials could be replaced but life is irreplaceable.

*I was worried more about the life of my children and grandchild...things like boat, house, motor and nets is replaceable but if someone dies, it can't be replaced by anything... life is more valuable than any other object of the world....(Jaganath Rao)*

While for Dinesh, both life and materials such as boats are equally valuable; losing either of them is considered as the end of life.

*Both life and boat is important to me... if me or my family members die then what is the purpose of boats and fishing gears...and if I lose my boat and fishing gears, replacement of those things will be difficult and I would be unable to take care of my family and possibly we will die.....(Dinesh Rao)*

For Kishore Rao, loss of any kind is perceived as a work of Jaganath. They readily accept the condition and try to move on in the life.

*...everything lies upon the wish of Jaganath ...Everything, my life, family, money is given to me is by Jaganath, and he will take it back at anytime, anywhere and by any means... if I lose my boat, my family, my life it is alright...(Kishore Rao)*

Krishna Rao account indicates that, apart from loss of material and life, disaster has a direct impact on his business. Huge proportions of loss occurred in his fishing business as his fishing activities came to halt during cyclone due to the governmental actions. He was frustrated with the notion of banning fishing during the cyclone. According to him, catch is good and if a fisherman is willing to take risk during cyclone, government shouldn't interfere.

*Material and lives are important... but during Phailin, my fishing business disrupted... govt. banned on fishing... I could go to sea for 15 days... you can understand the extent of my loss... [sigh] government shouldn't ban fishing... during cyclones, fishes are more... if I am willing to take risk of my life what is the problem with the government...*

### **B. The Issues of Resilience and Post Disaster Recovery**

This theme explores the dimension of post-disaster recovery, emphasizing on the issues of relief, politics and resilience. The issues include of Relief, Politics, Mistrusts and Annoyance, Feeling of Helplessness and Anxiety, and Bouncing Back the Troubles and Getting in to the Altered Life.

#### **The Issues of Relief, Politics, Mistrust and Annoyance**

The relief provided by the government reached the fishermen on the 15<sup>th</sup> day after the event. Dry food, drinking water, medicines and fuel were given to the fishermen as relief. In addition to those, fifty kilograms of rice and five hundred Rupees was allocated. The amount of Rupees three lakhs fifty thousand was given to the family members of the deceased as ex gratia by the state and central government.

*...food packets, water, kerosene, medicine, 50 Kilos of rice and Rs.500 was given to everybody...some people died...Rs. 5000 was offered to the family of the dead...later an amount of Rs.200000 and Rs. 150000 is given to them as compensation by central and state government...(Dinesh Rao)*

Along with the government, missionary NGOs and political parties helped in the relief work. Missionary NGOs and political parties distributed medicines, blankets, clothes, fishing nets and motors to severely affected families.

*...a missionary NGO had also helped the affected persons by providing relief materials...the political parties engaged themselves in the relief work too...(Rama Rao)*

As evident from the conversation with Rama Rao, the parties helped the community aiming benefits during the forthcoming elections.

*After the calamity the activity of the political party increased... they engaged themselves in the relief work, not for the purpose of helping people but for gaining more votes during election...*

As the relief was distributed on the 15<sup>th</sup> day from the event, the participants went through several crises.

Krishna Rao explained that, as relief was provided on the 15<sup>th</sup> day, most of the household exhausted their ration, goods were scarce in the market and the prices of available products were skyrocketed. To fulfill the basic needs, the participant and others borrowed money from money lenders with high interest.

*Few days after the Phailin, our food ran out...we didn't have the relief..... During this period the commodity prices had increased as very few product were available...we had to borrow money from moneylenders to fulfill our basic needs and if a person*

*borrowed Rs. 1000 or more he or she had to pay with an interest of Rs.5 per day.... (Krishna Rao)*

In case of Dinesh Rao, the condition was similar with Krishna Rao, he too ran out of food; they sustained on puffed rice due to the economic condition, procuring food from the market was impossible for him. He considered that steep rise in the prices of commodities were caused by the distributors and the 'black market' which in turn disrupted business system and economic balance; the government was unable to curb the raising prices, more over due to the disrupted transportation system, the importation of goods from the different part of the country was interrupted.

*...we only consumed puffed rice... buying food from the market was out of question because most of the products were already stocked and only few shops were selling food and cost was so high that it was out of my ability... it's not like, they are not charging high for more profit but they were compelled to do it as the distributors were upsetting the system and economy... everything was controlled by the black market....the govt. was helpless... it can't do anything as the import of products from other states was interrupted due to the transportation service... the train tracks were submerged under water, highways were blocked by the uprooted trees... (Dinesh Rao)*

All of the participants described about corruption. They emphasized that corruption during Phailin increased immensely. Corruption was evident in every sector.

According to Kishore Rao, economically, politically and locally dominant people availed relief quicker; persons who could bribe the relief distributors, availed more relief.

*Among all this, corruption was increasing everywhere...who was rich, had connections, got relief quickly...Corruption made its way in relief work too... persons who could fill the pockets of relief distributors acquired more relief... (Kishore Rao)*

Rama Rao considered that the political parties of the locality curbed the relief of fishermen and traded them in the 'Black market'.

*Corruption increased because of political parties... they took our relief materials and sold them in the black market...*

Jaganath Rao mentioned about the presence and the activity of political brokers, who are recognized as 'Super Dalal'. The brokers, supported by the ruling political parties, got involved in the relief distribution processes and seized relief of five hundred fishermen, including fifty kilograms of rice, kerosene and cash.

*Relief was sanctioned to 4270 individuals but the broker of BJD seized the relief of 500 individuals...also managed their share of kerosene provided by the government to the effected people... they are not just 'Dalal', they are 'Super Dalal'...*

From the conversations with the participants, a sense of discrimination based on 'ethnicity' was noticed.

*...no one likes us... (Dinesh Rao)*

*...nothing is done for us... (Jaganath Rao)*

*... Bengalis and Oriyas were first instructed to evacuate the Marine Drive... Police looked after them... but nobody cared for us [sigh]....(Rama Rao)*

*...relief was first given to the Oriya and Bengali inhabitants and later to us... we are always differentiated because we are Telegu fishermen... (Kishore Rao).*

Besides this, according to Krishna Rao and Kishore Rao, the ruling political party took revenge from the fishermen community, as they fought against them in the last election, by delaying the relief distribution in their community and charging remunerations.

*You know... the BJD has taken revenge from us during Phailin.... because we fought against them in the last election... they delayed the relief distribution process here... (Krishna Rao)*

*...the relief distributors were the representatives of the ruling political party and our community fought against them in the election... so they were taking revenge of that ... they intentionally delayed relief distribution in our area.... Some of them even charged fees for providing the relief... (Kishore Rao)*

### **Feeling of Helplessness and Anxiety**

Amongst all these the participants felt helpless; lots of destruction had occurred, houses and roads were damaged, peoples hadn't eaten properly for days, all were fear stricken from the ferocity of Phailin and were waiting from the situation to settle down. Everyone was very much worried about the wellbeing of their relatives as they had no communications with them. After the cyclone, the commodity price increased which even caused more trouble for the participants. During the distribution of relief process, the participants informed about the doings of the distributors to the local administration, but didn't availed proper response; they just had to wait.

*...Phailin had destroyed many house, blocked the roads...It seemed like everything stood still... (Kishore Rao)*

*...we have to wait till everything is back to normal... (Dinesh Rao)*

*...many things occurred which was not in our control...we had no news about our relatives...we were just sitting idle... (Jaganath Rao)*

*...my children were hungry... I told them to drink water... I couldn't buy food from the market as the prices were hiked...everything was controlled by the black market....the govt. was helpless... it can't do anything.... I told the police to help me, provide me relief, they told me to talk with the distributors... everyone was concerned about himself... no one cared for us... (Rama Rao)*

*...It seemed like we trapped in here and is waiting to be rescued... as relief arrived, we were discriminated, but couldn't do anything about it... we had to wait for our turn... and we did....(Rama Rao)*

### **Bouncing Back the Troubles and Getting Into the Altered Life**

The participants tried to cope with their situations. They didn't lose hope and waited for the things to settle down.

*...many houses were destroyed, Families who lost their houses took shelter in their neighbor's or relative's houses...some constructed temporary shed with the help of tarpaulin sheet....(Rama Rao)*

As the conditions stabilized, the participants went back to their daily routine and one of them even took up a part-time job to meet the additional expenses.

*As days went by... roads were cleared...the market stabilized...schools reopened...the activity of police decreased...we started fishing again...*

*...we again returned to our usual life but with some tensions about repaying the loan taken from money lenders (Dinesh Rao)*

*I worked as a helper to bear the extra expenses of the household... (Kishore Rao)*

As the time passed the impact of Phailin fade away and for the participants it is like a bad incident.

*... as days went by, the impact of Phailin fade away from our heart....and now it's just a memory or bad dream...*

### **Concluding Observations**

This endeavor tries to represent that the fishermen at Pentakota are at constant risk in terms of their livelihood. They are economically, technologically, socially and psychologically vulnerable. The fishermen are living in Pentakota – a coast line settlement, for generations without proper planning. The one storied houses with asbestos and tin roofs are dangerously close to the sea, and as the fishermen solely depend on fishing for survival; on a regular basis, they venture out to the sea with under developed technologies and equipment, in order to earn a modest income.

During any natural calamity, such as Phailin, the community already under risk, faces several difficulties, as the vulnerabilities increases; fishing is banned during the event and even few days after it. The commodity prices increases, procuring food becomes difficult, but somehow they managed themselves and faced the Phailin and its impact.

Phailin hit Pentakota on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 with a velocity of 220km/hr. The warning about the cyclone was generated by the local administration and mass media, along with these, the fishermen deeply relied on a sacred text for the confirmation of the upcoming storm. The fishermen gathered near the sea and offered flowers to their god, seeking protection. Like other natural calamity, Phailin disrupted the electricity supply and communication system, causing panic in the community, but interestingly the spiritual and mythical knowledge of the community helped them to sustain the cyclone. They deeply believe in Lord Jaganath, they consider themselves feeble and depended on Jaganath's mercy for protection. If something damaging happens to them, they perceive it as Jaganath's punishment for their sin. Moreover they have a notion that they

are immune from hazards since they are the followers of Jaganath, they say if every one dies from cyclone then, Jaganath's follower will die and no one will worship Jaganath, so for Jaganath's own benefit, they are safe. Therefore it is understood that the faith in Lord Jaganath and in his doings aids the fishermen to respond positively to the threat. Furthermore, the fishermen, conception of loss during cyclone is mostly about the material loss, they that regard losing boats and fishing equipment may deteriorate their condition of living, which may eventually lead to nihilism; while few consider life more precious than materials.

Besides these, the fishermen experience several difficulties in recovering from the devastation, due to corruption in relief distribution processes, involvement of politicized middle-men and the social structuring. The relief reached the community on the 15<sup>th</sup> day from the event, by that time; most of the fishermen had to borrow money from money lenders with high interest for sustaining themselves. Furthermore, they claimed that reliefs were given to those persons first who were economically, politically and socially wealthy, apart from this, the politicized middle-men also apprehended the aids of many fishermen; they were socially discriminated, the aids were first distributed among the Oriya and Bengali residents and later to the Telegu fishermen; along with this, the ruling political parties took vengeance for the past issues during the recovery processes by extorting money for aids and delaying the distribution.

Therefore, it can be said that the fishermen of Pentakota are at constant risk and are vulnerable. During any hazard, this vulnerability increases and they try to cope with it through their mythical and spiritual knowledge; though with great difficulty, so in order to minimize the risk of the fishermen of Pentakota, the policies and the structuring of the pre-disaster preparations, relief and post disaster recoveries must be scrutinized keeping the cultural back drop in mind.

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