

Weathering the Storm in Ersama – Important Questions

Q. How did Prashant manage food for village people?

Ans. Prashant along with his group put pressure on the merchant to part with his rice, branches were gathered to light fire on which the food was cooked and served to the survivors. He asked the children to lie on the sand with utensils on their stomach to pass the message to those in helicopters that they were hungry and needed food.

Q. How did Prashant, a teenager, help the people of his village?

Ans. Prashant organised a group of youths and elders into small groups and assigned different roles and responsibilities to them, he resettled the orphan children in their own communities and overall provided a moral support to all villagers to start afresh.

Q. Which program did the women in the shelter join? How did Prashant engage the children?

Ans. The women at shelter joined food-for-work programme started by an NGO. Prashant engaged the children in sports. He himself loved to play cricket, and so he organised cricket matches for children.

Q. What did Prashant do for the orphans?

Ans. Prashant decided to help the orphans. He brought them together and put up a polythene sheet shelter for them. Women were requested to look after them properly and they were resettled in the communities itself.

Q. What was the distance between Prashant's friend's village and Kalikuda? What scenes did Prashant witness while wadding through the water to reach his village?

Ans. The distance between Prashant's friend's village and Kalikuda was 18 km. Prashant witnessed macabre scenes while wadding through the water to reach his village. He had to push away many human bodies – men, women, children – and carcasses of dogs, goats and cattle that the current swept against him as he moved ahead.

Q. Why was the government plan to set up institutions for widows and orphans resisted by Prashant and the youth?

Ans. Prashant and the youth force at the cyclone shelter resisted the government's plan to set up institutions for widows and orphans because they felt that the children would grow up without love and widows would suffer from stigma and loneliness in such institutions. This would never their wound and loss.

Q. How were the orphans and the widows resettled?

Ans. Prashant opposed the idea of setting up separate institutions for widows and the orphans because he felt that in institutions the children would grow up without proper love and care while the widows would suffer from stigma and loneliness. He wanted the orphans and widows to be resettled in their village and community. He wanted to create foster families made up of childless widows and children without adult care. So, in this they were settled.

Q. What havoc had the super cyclone wrecked in the life of the people of Orissa?

Ans. A super cyclone hit Ersama on 27th October 1999, killing thousands of people and damaging hundreds of houses. Ancient trees were uprooted. There was brown sheet of water all over. The roads and houses were all submerged in water. Animal carcasses and human corpses could be seen floating everywhere. This havoc lasted for thirty-six hours, leaving people homeless and starving. The neck deep water shattered the people. Hundreds of children became orphaned and many women were widowed. People were depressed as there was no hope of survival.

Q. Why do Prashant and other volunteers resist the plan to set up institutions for orphans and widows? What alternatives do they consider?

Ans. Value Points: I he felt-orphans would be devoid of love-growth to be hampered I widows would suffer from stigma and loneliness Detailed Answer: Prashant and other volunteers resisted the government plan to set up institutions for orphans and widows. They felt children in such institutions would grow up without love and widows would suffer from loneliness. Prashant and his group felt that children should be resettled in their own community probably in such families where the widows had no children. This would solve the problem of widows' loneliness and orphaned children would get all the love and care.

Q. Describe the destruction wrought by the super cyclone in Ersama in 1999.

Ans. In the evening of 27 October, 1999, a dark and menacing storm quickly gathered. Winds beat against the houses with a speed and fury that none had witnessed before. Heavy and incessant rain and a wind of 350 km/hour uprooted the ancient trees and crashed down many houses. Air was filled with screams of people who were washed away. Trees crashed on Prashant's friend's house and the rise of water in the house compelled them to take refuge on the roof. As Prashant waded through the waters, to reach his family in Kaliguda he had to push away many human bodies — men, women, children — and carcasses of dogs, goats and cattle that the current swept against them as they moved ahead. Eighty six people of Prashant's village had died. All the ninetysix houses had been washed away.