



**NOV.
2019**

I V D TRUST

INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter No.29

. . . working in India to relieve rural poverty.

Integrated Village Development Trust is twenty-seven years old. In that time we have seen many changes, and it is a real privilege to have played a part in helping bring those about – with the support of many donors. Thank you for all your help. The Newsletter is a way of bringing you news of our work. It can only give you a cursory glimpse of what goes on, but I hope we capture a sense of the projects and some of our key concerns.

In this Newsletter, we talk about the way in which our relationship with our India partners is changing, slowly, carefully and with much shared discussion. This has affected the **Baliga Trust** most of all, but as you can read on page 7, it has worked out well for all concerned and we are achieving just as much as before.

We talk at some length about Climate Change, an issue with which our **MANGRO Project** is inevitably involved. The Project has been hit by two cyclones this year, a prime concern for everyone in the area. Another worrying matter for many is coastal and river erosion. I include a “**supplement**” on the village of Satabhaya, one of the “disappeared” villages.

The **Chronic Kidney Disease Project** continues to make steady progress, campaigning for changes in government policy, and supporting all those affected by the disease. And there is a brief mention of funding that our main partner **CHALE CHALO** has achieved from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to support work which continues the Barefoot Lawyers Project.

ENJOY READING!



The roots and fruits of years of hard work

We hope these pages give you some idea of what we have done with your generous donations. Thank you. One thing we would like to say to all our supporters and readers, if ever you have any ideas and suggestions, especially for our ongoing projects or sources of funding, please do get in touch. We may not be able to take everything on board, but an outside eye is often very useful; past suggestions have led to new avenues of work, and if you would like to know more about any project, please do get in touch at: helenanightingale@hotmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

HOW WE ARE DEALING WITH CHANGING TIMES

This is a time of transition for IVDT. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find large-scale institutional funding for our projects, so our income has dropped substantially over the past two years. This means that the donations we receive from individuals and smaller organisations has become ever more valuable.

There have been several reasons for the shrinkage in our donations. The Department for International Development (DfID) made the decision some years back that it would no longer fund work like ours in India. They focus on the 50 countries at the bottom of the Human Development Index. India just misses that. It means that large areas in India (such as Odisha) which would otherwise meet the criteria, fail to do so because other areas are so much wealthier. What this means, really, is that the responsibility should fall on the Indian government and on the Indian wealthy. This shift is happening, slowly, but it does leave about 300,000,000 people without sufficient resources and support to get to grips with the serious poverty that they face.

We made more than a wry smile when we heard that DfID's policy to invest in building industrial skills manifested itself in the training of baristas in Delhi! But some of the aid money does filter down to rural areas such as ours. I mentioned last year how DfID money has been used to help provide training for teachers, improving the quality of their approach, methods and resources. The positive impact of this has been significant. So, though we are no longer eligible for DfID grants, we have to acknowledge that their good work continues.

The Big Lottery has chosen to focus on Africa, and on disability, where they feel the need is greater and where they can make a real difference. Another of our funders, the Peter Cundhill Foundation, also focusses on Africa now, and on sports projects for young people. Increasingly, we just don't match the criteria for so many funding opportunities. This makes your contributions so very important, and we are so grateful to you for your continuing support.

One of the ways that we have of dealing with this situation is to encourage our partners to apply for funding within India. We do this by paying for staff time to prepare funding applications to Indian organisations. This is really important because it is so hard for our partners to cover the cost of this. It is not included in the grants that they receive, and unless they have an independent source of funds, it makes it difficult to plan for the future. It is not so bad for applying for small amounts of money, but applications for larger projects can take up to two or three months to prepare.

We have been able to do this for the Baliga Trust, as you can read about on page 7. We have also been helping CHALE CHALO prepare their own applications for some time, rather than doing it on their behalf. Our years of experience mean that we can play a valuable editing role which increases their chances of making a successful application. It is proving hard work as India develops its tradition of philanthropy so slowly, but gradually our partners are beginning to find Indian support for their work. This seems to be a creative way forward for IVDT, where we can make a significant difference to our partners for a relatively little cost. And there are still areas where our partners find it difficult to raise support for work which really makes a difference; where the costs are low, and the potential impact great, IVDT is happy to step in where we feel we can be of use.

Times are changing, but our commitment to provide appropriate help wherever it is needed continues. Everything that we do brings positive change, and the way in which we do it acts as a model for good practice for other organisations and institutions. Thank you to all of you for helping us to continue working in this way.

Recent funders include: *Jennifer Anderson, David Bennett, The Big Lottery Fund, Mike Deeks, The Just Trust, Gillie Howarth, Douglas McIlldoon, The Peter Cundill Foundation, Quaker Relief Grants, Religious Society of Friends (Cornwall), Ann Scott, Mary Stephens, and many others*

THE MANGRO PROJECT – summing up the work so far

In 1999 Kendrapara, Odisha, was hit by a massive super-cyclone which devastated the area and caused deaths in six figures. Immediate measures were taken to increase protection in coastal areas. Then five years later, in 2004, the Indian Ocean tsunami occurred. It had a dreadful impact on tens of thousands of communities, from Thailand to Sri Lanka, including southern India, and as far as Africa. The tsunami even reached Odisha, surging up the beaches, but at this distance there was little power left in the wave and it caused little local damage. However, having seen how great was the damage elsewhere, people along the coast in Odisha took note and began to take measures so that they could increase their own disaster resistance. It was soon apparent that those communities which had preserved their mangrove forest and coral reefs fared far better than those whose environment had already been degraded. This increased understanding and concern was what gave birth to the **MANGRO Project**.

It took a couple of years to get off the ground and we had lots to learn, but we were soon establishing local Forest Action Groups in villages in our area, and before long they were busy setting up nurseries, planting out trees, and working hard to protect them. The initial area has been transformed by the planting of **2.7 million trees**. To put this in context, the UK government is committed to planting about the same amount of trees a year for the whole of the UK up to 2022. It is failing to meet its target, and tree cover in the UK is actually falling in spite of all the concern and promises.

Our campaigning in Odisha has led to the Forest Department taking on large scale mangrove regeneration, and our education work has massively raised awareness of environmental issues. Through small-scale income-generation projects we have helped raise family incomes; training in disaster resistance has ensured that when disasters hit, the damage is reduced, particularly the loss of life. Our campaigns have helped to change government policy, and we have seen local communities organise themselves to rid their areas of illegal prawn farms and other damaging activities. Our work with Eco-clubs in schools has helped to change teaching methods, providing a model for good practice, and encouraging teachers to adopt approaches which engage the children to explore their world and care for it. Considering how much we continue to achieve, it is a very low-cost project, a shining example of what it is possible to do if one engages and mobilises the community.

All this work continues, both in our old and new areas; trees are still being planted and plantations cared for and extended; Eco clubs are supported and communities helped to increase family incomes.

One of our new and instantly successful initiatives has been to set up an Eco Radio Programme which has been broadcasting monthly for a trial period. Because of its extraordinary popularity it will be extended, and is likely to broadcast twice a month. It reaches several million people, and appeals to people of all ages. It is a brilliant way of raising awareness, and we continue to operate it on a community-radio basis that has been so successful in Western Odisha. Everyone loves taking part, and there is an ever-growing list of people, schools, organisations and communities which want to participate. Each programme focusses on a different aspect of the environment, linking with current issues, local concerns. Songs and plays are written and performed, interviews and discussions held, and critical information passed on. There is extensive feedback and follow-up. It is a wonderful way of raising awareness, and is a positive reinforcement of all our other work.

Another aspect of the work is just as gratifying. Government Education Depts. are now encouraging teachers to use a more practical, experimental and creative approach to their work. The problem is that there is little in the way of resources available. Over the years we have produced a wide range of teaching resources, and people are now desperate for them. I spent about a month this summer producing packs to be used in schools, only to have them confiscated and destroyed by the Indian Customs (why?, you might well ask), which was rather depressing, but on my next visit, early in 2020, we will make some more sets and carry out training so they will be well used in local schools.

This gives a mere taste of all the work that goes on on the MANGRO Project. If you want to know more, please contact Helena (address on the page 8).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CYCLONES

Climate Change is much in the minds of many of us these days, and most of you will no doubt be trying to reduce your carbon footprint, maybe campaigning for our government to take this matter with the seriousness it deserves. Whatever your views about the causes of climate change, there is plenty of evidence that this is going to be a constant and increasing anxiety for very many people across the world.

Odisha was already a disaster-prone area, with the problems ranging from one extreme to the other. On the one hand there are regular droughts in inland Western Odisha; on the other the coastal area is prone to serious floods and cyclones. Over the past twenty years it has been observed that the climate has become increasingly unpredictable, with more extremes being recorded. The monsoon has regularly failed, and when it does rain it is usually a total deluge, causing floods. The area also suffers from extreme heat in the summer where a weather system gets locked and temperatures climb higher and higher. Schools, offices and transport systems are closed down to protect people from sunstroke and heat exhaustion. There is a fear that this is a taste of what might be in store.

This year two serious cyclones have hit our project area. The first was Phani, in May, making landfall about fifty miles south of the MANGRO Project. Then in November Cyclone Bulbul was headed up the Bay of Bengal when it suddenly lurched towards Odisha, hitting exactly where the MANGRO Project works. Odisha is familiar with cyclones. But as temperatures are rising, so does the sea water in the Bay of Bengal become warmer, increasing the ferocity of cyclones and tidal surge, and maybe the frequency too.

Tree-planting is an obvious way of mitigating the impact of storms, but it is also vital to provide shelters where villagers can take refuge for the four or five days of a storm, or longer. Food and support is provided by volunteer committees which are trained and equipped for this eventuality. It is probably this more than anything else that has reduced the death toll with which we used to be familiar. But Cyclone Phani caused widespread damage to roads, crops, trees, homes, livestock and electricity supplies. And when everyone had just about begun to get life back to some kind of normality, along came Cyclone Bulbul undoing much of the work of the past six months. Up to 60% of the harvest is wasted and much damage done to buildings, but only one life has been lost. Who knows what the future holds, but it is important that these vulnerable communities are able to protect themselves in every way they can. This is one of the main aims of the MANGRO Project, and we continue to help vulnerable communities face these challenges.



With tidal surge and torrential rain built up behind them, the embankments eventually give way, and before long the road will disappear.

Water is perhaps the most terrifying aspect of the storm but the wind tears off roofs, brings down power lines and trees, blocking access for emergency help. It is sad to see these trees destroyed, and exhausting work clearing them, but good use will be made of the valuable timber.



CYCLONE BULBUL

The following email was received as Cyclone Bulbul had just passed over our MANGRO Project area. Ranjit, our partner's Director, happened to be paying a visit to the MANGRO Centre, so was able to help Rama, the MANGRO Project Manager, help coordinate getting people to the Cyclone Shelters and prepare the Centre for the cyclone. It gives a very vivid description of what it is like to be caught at the centre of a cyclone. They had a particular concern for the new roof, which had been rebuilt after Cyclone Phani, though that had been for age, and not because of cyclone damage.

*Ranjit Kumar Swain
Sat 09/11/2019 14:54*

Respected Helena Jee,

Greetings from MANGRO Centre, Madanpur, Rajnagar!

Cyclone Bulbul has become very severe and serious here in MANGRO project areas beyond prediction... Rama and me at MANGRO CENTRE at Madanpur, Rajnagar for last two days. Rain water and winds entering into all rooms forcefully Thatched roof severely damaged. We have been trying our best to remain safe in ceiling office room. No electricity. Dark and dangerous sounds of speedy strong winds and very heavy rains last night and today morning... We have been alert throughout the night. Then the wind speed increased in the mid of night and we were very scared and waited for the morning light for moving to more safer place to neighbor's Pucca house.... The cyclone passed through this area between 10 am to 12 noon Indian Time towards West Bengal and Bangladesh. With difficulty we could manage get back to the MANGRO Centre. I will be in touch from time to time with more news.

Most of the plants uprooted and branches broken. The main gate blocked completely with uprooted and broken plants and poles. Nobody knows when the electricity will be restored. We are managing the water from tube well with hand lifting water and having a kerosene lamp brought from a neighbor's house. Terrible, but a different and unexpected and unpredictable experience.

Tomorrow, when the rain stops we will clear the main gate and clear the broken and uprooted plants and then after couple of sunny days, we go for repairing of this time severely damaged thatched roof. Bulbul had done the damage to MANGRO centre and this area that the Funny (Cyclone Phani that hit earlier in the year) failed to do... We expect normalcy after couple of days. I think God has saved this area from total damage. It has now moved to West Bengal and Bangladesh with slowly losing its power after passing over coastal Odisha. I will send the photos and more news once the rains stop and we are able to come out from the room. All the rooms have water from damaged thatched and through windows as the wind speedy and rains last night and today morning were very severe.

This is just a quick note on the Bulbul Cyclone impacts as I have the laptop with fully charged battery and luckily the Jio tower not damaged. I will be in touch with you with more news

*With Kindest Regards
Ranjit*

We are waiting for a more detailed report, but have had a few photos from Ranjit, and have managed to glean some information from internet reports. Though our project area was the most seriously hit, with 135 kmph winds, eight inches of rain, and tidal surge, plus consequent floods, most people were evacuated, and only one life was lost. We will obviously help with repairs to the roof of the MANGRO Centre, and see how we can best help with wider needs in the area. We might even review our decision to use thatch for roofing the Centre, but it's worth pointing out that we made that decision to keep the carbon footprint of the building as low as possible. One room has a concrete ceiling to protect people, equipment and books, and the thatch and roof poles (bamboo) are easily renewable. Though it gets a bit exhausting if we have to do it too often!

THE CKDA PROJECT – DEALING WITH CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE IN RURAL ODISHA

We have good news and bad to report on this project. The sad news is that we have failed to establish a direct link between the levels of heavy metals in the drinking water and the incidence of CKD. This was a real disappointment and also a puzzle because it seemed to many of us that this was a very likely culprit. We are taking some time to think about the results that we got and how we might be able to take this forward. We are so grateful to the Quakers who funded this and have provided us with advice and support.

One thing is certain, and that is that high levels of fluoride in the water have serious health consequences some of which certainly might exacerbate CKD. About one third of the villages in our area are affected by high fluoride. We have tested all the drinking water sources, and passed the results to the local water supply authority and ensured that they take action by supplying filters and maintaining them. So we are no nearer to finding the cause of the CKD in our area, though we are doing everything we can to minimise the risk of contracting CKD by addressing every possible cause, including campaigning for clean water, and promoting safer use of pesticides.



Carrying out testing for fluoride in the water

So that's the bad news out of the way. On the positive side, the team have achieved much, doing what they do best: setting up CKD Action Groups in 42 villages, and providing them with training (961 members) so they can raise awareness of the disease, provide support to the affected, and campaign for better services from the medical and government departments. This is the core of the project's activity, but its heart surely lies in Laxmi, on the left in the picture below. Laxmi has worked with CHALE CHALO for years, and is ideal for this team. She knows the area like the back of her hand, and many of the people. She goes round the villages tirelessly, talking to people, passing on information about CKD, and about all the services that villagers might be entitled to. She identifies those with the illness, talks them through all their options, and does everything she can to help them get the care and support that they need. And she keeps a valuable record of all those affected, the circumstance of their illness, their treatment and the support they receive. Her role is vital. Apart from anything else, early diagnosis and treatment can help slow down the progress of the disease and help people maintain a reasonable quality of life as long as possible. The support that she has given to many hundreds of people is quite extraordinary.

Providing this personal care is so important, but just as important is the work that is being done to fight for the better provision of medical services. We have persuaded the local Medical Dept. that this is a real issue (which they previously denied), and that is a start. We have provided training to medical staff at all levels in the area, so they are more aware of the disease, and with their greater support we are campaigning for better medical provision in the area – free diagnosis and treatment, local treatment facilities, a nephrology unit with a specialist in the District Hospital, and weekly clinics at the Health Centre in Khariar. Slowly things are improving; there is still a very long way to go, but the team – staff, volunteers and activists are well informed, well organised and passionately committed.



Laxmi, left, and some of the team

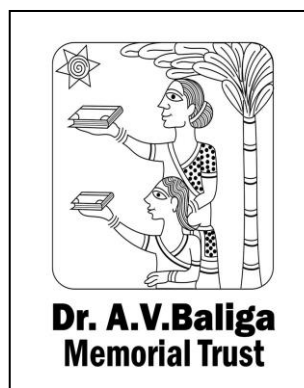
CHALE CHALO GETS FUNDING FROM THE PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION

Over the years we have been lucky to find large-scale funding for work such as our Step-up and Community Radio Projects, and the Barefoot Lawyers. The organisations that have provided the money (DfID, the BIG Lottery, and the Peter Cundhill Foundation) have all changed their funding policies, so we are no longer eligible to apply. And many of the smaller funders have very narrow criteria into which we just don't fit. So it is a real joy when we find a source of support that works. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has a branch which funds work in India, and, between us, IVDT and CHALE CHALO developed a project in Western Odisha which would take forward the Barefoot Lawyers work, and employ some of the staff which had been responsible for achieving such excellent results on that project.

It took a long time and a great deal of hard work on Ranjit's part, but eventually a two-year programme was agreed. This is a "trial", but if the PHF are happy with the work, then funding would be provided to take it forward. The project started on the 1st April this year. It is working with women, who have been trained under the project, and who are carrying out an assessment of the water needs of their communities. This is a drought-prone area where water-supply for all purposes – drinking, domestic and agricultural – is a serious problem, exacerbated by issues such as high fluoride levels. The results of this community-based study will then be used to campaign for provision of a proper safe water supply, which is a right by law. We are all delighted that CHALE CHALO has achieved this funding, especially since the PHF is based in India and the PHF has the reputation of being a very supportive organisation. We look forward to hearing about its achievements, and will continue to do all we can to help CHALE CHALO find funding support for its excellent work.

The BALIGA TRUST

When we first came across the Baliga Trust we were so impressed with the quality of their work and it has been a delight to have supported them for fifteen years. Thousands upon thousands of children have benefitted from the projects that we have been able to fund with your support. It is really gratifying to meet some of them, now adults, confident, some with university degrees, and some who are now giving back to the areas where they were raised, through the Baliga Trust, or in other ways – as social workers, teachers, members of voluntary organisations. It is extraordinary to remember this when we see how children, similar to those in the photo below, attending one of the Remedial Education Centres, children born with so few opportunities to make a good life for themselves, and we know that they too can have their future lives transformed.



**Dr. A.V. Baliga
Memorial Trust**

When the funding from the Peter Cundhill Foundation Finished, we were devastated at the thought that our twenty-five centres would have to close because we didn't have the money to support them any longer. We decided to make a grant to the Trust which would cover part of the salary of Ashok (Director, on the left in the picture), plus some additional support funding to keep on a few of the key Step-up staff. Our contribution to Ashok's salary was intended to cover the time needed to write funding applications which could keep the valuable work going.

We are totally delighted with the way in which this worked. Very soon the money had been found to keep ten of the Classes running, and then within a few months there were more centres than we had had before. So now over one thousand children a year are receiving high-quality educational support which enables many of them to become top of the class and start to form a future full of promise. Well done to Ashok and all at the Baliga Trust!

SUMMARY of IVDTrust accounts for 01.04.18 to 31.03.19

Balance on 01.04.2018

Nat. West Bank	44,537.73
COIF	<u>233.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>44,770.73</u>

Income for the year

Covenants & donations	11,653.26
The Just Trust	5,200.00
HMRC Gift Aid Refund (for 2 years)	5,910.85
VAT Refund	112.91
Interest (COIF)	<u>0.96</u>
TOTAL	<u>22,877.98</u>

Expenditure for the year

MANGRO & EIEIO	19,726.00
Misc. Projects in India	450.83
BAREFOOT LAWYERS	20,582.00
CKDA	11,364.00
GRAMODHAYA SSS (for Just Trust)	2,200.00
UK admin., memberships, etc.	420.95
Bank transfer charges	<u>118.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>54,861.78</u>

Balance on 31.03.2019

Nat. West Bank	12,552.97
CAF	<u>233.96</u>
TOTAL	<u>12,786.93</u>

Please note: As usual, though it appears that we had a large balance at the end of the year, the April payment to projects reduced this to about £3,000.

Our thanks to Mike Deeks for examining our accounts.

GIVING to IVDT

Without your help it would be impossible for us to continue with our work, so all donations are always very welcome.

GIFT AID - If you are a taxpayer, then you can make it possible for us to reclaim the tax on your gift – it gives us an extra 25% on top of your donation, and that can make a tremendous difference.

REGULAR GIVING by Direct Debit – Regular giving makes it much easier for us to plan our work. If you feel that you could manage to give in this way, we would be especially grateful.

DONATIONS can be made online using Paypal through our website: **www.ivdtrust.org**

or by post to:

47 Brome Place, OXFORD OX3 9LR or
7a Rosewin Row, TRURO TR1 1HG
with cheques made out to 'IVDT'.

Gift Aid and Direct Debit forms are included with the newsletter. Thank you.

We will continue to send out newsletters by post to those on our mailing list, but we are trying to reduce our costs, so if any of you would be happy to receive the newsletter by email, please do let us know, and we can make sure that that happens in future.

Contact us at:

helenanightingale@hotmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy reading about our work and all that our projects are achieving with your generosity. We feel very proud of what we help happen, bringing positive change to the lives of so many people, and it would not be possible without your help. The need for support continues – there are always more ways to spend money than raise it! Please help if you can. Your donations make a tremendous difference to the lives of people and communities.

Details for making a donation are given on the last page. Thank you to everyone.



Assessing the damage after Cyclone Bulbul

IVD Trust, Charity No. 1013316. Registered Address: 47 Brome Place, Oxford OX3 9LR

Trustees: Zinat Bennett, Zara Bieler, Kim Devenish, Gabriel Grouas, Erskine Holmes, Helena Nightingale

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SUPPLEMENT - THE LOST VILLAGE OF SATABHAYA

*Satabhaya is a village just up the coast from our MANGRO Project area, When I first visited it about twelve years ago, all the signs of a dying village were there. This article tells its story of what has happened to it over the years. As you will see, it has not been alone; village after village has disappeared over the years, and more are destined to follow. Apart from great sadness at the loss of such a beautiful village, I pass it on because there are villages within our project area which are under the same threat. In particular is a village called Pentha; I have written about this village in our newsletters several times over the years, and it is mentioned below. A very large amount of money has been spent by the World Bank-funded Orissa Coastal Zone Management Project, building embankments and installing geo-tubes along the beach. But each year the sea takes its toll, and more work has to be carried out to try and hold back the sea. This is exacerbated by climate change, the increasing strength of storms as the Bay of Bengal warms and cyclones become more frequent and more powerful. It is probable that Pentha cannot be saved in the long run, but, possibly because of the fate that it faces, it is one of the most active communities in our MANGRO Project, especially the school and Eco-club which have one several awards for their environmental work. **IVDT** continues to work with its partner, **CHALE CHALO**, helping to ensure that the people of Pentha face a better future than those of Satabhaya.*

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/sinking-ship-how-cyclones-sea-erosion-changed-the-fortune-of-coastal-villages-in-odisha2234213-2234213.html>

Sinking Ship: How Cyclones, Sea Erosion Changed the Fortune of Coastal Villages in Odisha

The National Center for Coastal Research (NCCR) reports an erosion of 34 percent in the country's coastal lines in the 26 years. Environmentalists blame global warming and developmental work around coastal lines for it.

Swati Dey | News18.com [@swatskat](#)

Updated: July 17, 2019, 3:46 PM IST



Kendrapara, Odisha: Disasters come and go, but not without leaving their footprints in time. Sometimes they alter the course of an entire settlement. This is what happened to Satabhaya, a coastal village in the Kendrapara district of Odisha. The village ceased to exist, after it was completely submerged in the sea, leaving behind a trail of villagers who have been shifting homes for generations.

"This was not the case some decades ago", recalls Sushmita Das, the former Panchayat head of the village. "We grew rice, quality of which matched Basmati. Every villager possessed land to cultivate rice, vegetation, and/or fish ponds, and reared cattle to sell milk."

The National Center for Coastal Research (NCCR) reports an erosion of 34 percent in the country's coastal lines in 26 years – highest in West Bengal (63 percent) followed by Puducherry (57 percent), Kerala (45 percent) and Tamil Nadu (41 percent). At Paradip, a port located at about 90 km from erstwhile Satabhaya, the erosion is taking place at the rate of 1.03 mm per year. Environmentalists blame global warming and developmental work around coastal lines for the sea erosion.

The residents say that Satabhaya – which means 'seven brothers' in Odia – was named after seven coastline villages that were steadily eroded from the 1960s. Satabhaya was one of the five villages that was formed out of the earlier seven villages. Others being: Kanhupur, Barahipur, Rabindrapalli and Magarkanda. Three decades later, Satabhaya, too, met the same fate as the brother villages. Satabhaya's end began with the Super Cyclone in Bay of Bengal of 1999, which swallowed a considerable portion of the settlement, including little tenets of history such as a local school that stood erect since 1875.

In face of the incoming disaster, several fishermen and farmers voluntarily moved to nearby villages of Barahipur, Magarkanda, Ishwarpur. However, they kept returning – crossing a crocodile infested Baunshagada creek – for their land and cattle that fed their families.

35-year-old Rajinikanth Behra was one of the many who shifted to Ishwarpur. He was also a part of protests carried out by villagers in front of the collector's office back in 2013. "It was then that Revenue Secretary Tara Dutt announced to rehabilitate us," Behra says.



Bagapatia village/ Swati Dey

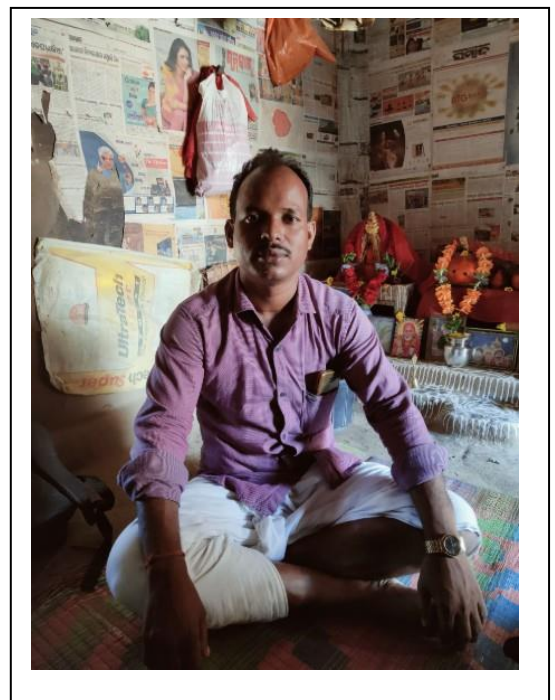
The state government then announced to relocate 571 families with a relief package. The families were granted Rs 1.5 lakh per household under the Biju Patnaik Pakka Ghar Yojana, along with ten decimal land (0.1 acre) in Bagapatia in the Rajnagar block of Kendrapara, nine kilometers from Satabhaya.

The remaining 148 families, including Behra's, wait for their turn. Those who shifted from the sinking village maintain that the grant barely compensates for their loss.

"We had our house, space to keep our cattle, land to graze them and fishing and farming options in Satabhaya. Here, we are expected to get squeezed in a decimal land with our cattle, without any land to cultivate," says Sudarshan Rout, who is Das' husband.

"Since Bagapatia is a low-lying swampy land, we had to spend all the given money in ground levelling," says another resident who refused to be introduced fearing administrative retaliation.

A document dated December 6, 2016 accessed by News18 from the Rajnagar tehsil office, shows that the authority is aware about these issues and that under road rehabilitation, an estimate of Rs 3.1 lakh for "earth filling" was submitted by the RD (Rural Development) department.



With no options to livelihood, Behra and others have opted to be labourers and carpenters in Kerala. There are many still, who continue to risk their lives by going back to Satabhaya to cultivate from the left overs – battling restrictions imposed by the forest department – on their way. “Other than the plea to rehabilitate the remaining 148 families, we seek for the transfer of land records on our names and increase the allotted land to an acre at least,” Behra says.

According to the state government’s plan, apart from these 571 families, additional 247 households will be rehabilitated at Bagapatia. This will include 71 families from Charigharia, a village encroached within the Sunei Rupei Forest Block of Bhitarkarnika National Park.

The blueprint for the village, as accessed by News18, proposes several community-based utilities such as government offices, educational institutes, and even a cyclone shelter. Apart from this, bus stands, burial grounds and even a land reserved for a temple has been allotted.

An iconic Durga temple of Satabhaya has been relocated to Bagapatia. Ironically, the temple was once infamous for animal sacrifices on Chaturtha Purnima (one of the full moon days) done to be saved from the wrath of sea.



The shifted Panchu Barahi temple at Bagapatia/ Swati Dey

On approaching the collector’s office to get the current status on these schemes, News18 learnt that the files have been lying unattended for years. There is no single officer in-charge and the transfer of land records will be decided by National Board of Wildlife (NBW).

The NBW on September 24, 2016 denied to provide the Record of Rights (RoR) for the land and advised the state to apply afresh. The Rajnagar Tehsil document states that the “preparation of ROR made by the settlement authority during 1970 and subsequently taken up during 2014 has not yet been completed due to want of clearance from Forest and Environment Department, NWB and Government of India.”

The file that discusses the question of their livelihood is held with the District Rural Development Office (DFDO), as per the official source in the collector’s office.

The Kendrapara district is not the only region bearing the brunt of sea erosion and the recent havoc wreaked by cyclone Fani in other districts has worsened matters. Water Initiatives Odisha (WIO) convener Ranjan Panda wrote to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on July 8, drawing his attention to the residents of Udayakani and Tandahara villages in Puri district, where Fani’s devastation was maximum.

As per the letter, the sea has marched 5 km inland in 50 years. “The invading sea has forced the villagers to relocate from the village thrice since 1999 when the entire village went into the sea forcing people to move to their farmlands. During Phailin in 2014, they had to shift inlands again after the village got sandcast. While they had been under tremendous stress after losing their homestead and farm lands, the recent cyclone Fani worsened their condition further by making their remaining land and water sources saline,” the letter stated.

Panda went on to highlight the faltering economic conditions of the villagers, with their source of livelihood dwindling, especially for farmers and fishermen.

“Due to severe salinity in the wind and water, the fruiting gets affected... those who used to get at least 50 coconuts per tree every year fail to get even a couple of it,” the letter said. Flagging the post disaster health hazards, he added, “Most villagers are affected by hypertension and skin diseases due to constant consumption and use of saline water.”

Through his letter, Panda also urged the government to “improve the rehabilitation package for Bagapatia inhabitants by speeding up the provision of basic amenities like water supply, toilets, good roads; providing them croplands and grazing lands; and, ensuring them access to local forests for their daily needs.”

These provisions, he said, will foster local forest protection and ensure that local youths don't have to migrate in search of jobs.

No Policy for Rehabilitation

In 2016, responding to Kendrapara's former MP and BJD-rebel Baijayant Jay Panda, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change stated in Parliament that 8.19% of the Odisha coast is facing 'high to low' erosion. However, the NCCR assessment from 1990 to 2016 reports an erosion of about 154 km, which stands at 28 percent of the studied area.

In another response to the Parliament recently, the Union government stated 'that the trends of sea level rise is estimated to be 1.3 mm per year along the Indian coasts during the last 40-50 years' with trends higher in the coastline areas of West Bengal (3-5 mm per year).

The response also talked about some control measures like geo-tube embankments. However, these geo-tubes that have been installed along the beaches of Odisha are in bad shape, with the ropes tied to the rocks loosening.



Geotube at Pentha beach of Kendrapara/ Swati Dey

K Nageswara Rao, Professor (Emeritus) in Department of Geo-Engineering of the Andhra University, rejected the idea of geo-tubes as it blocks the natural process of deposition and erosion; and advocated for beach restoration.

Echoing the same, Panda said, “Geotubes alone can't provide solutions but facilitate the coastal erosion at the corner where the tube stretches. Instead, a green corridor of mangrove and casuarina is needed, both at the back, as well as in the coastlines adjacent to it where the energy of the sea will move after a wall is built.”

Environmentalist Norman Myers in 'Climate Exodus' (1995) identified 7.1 million coastal-dwellers living within 6,500 km of low-lying and subsidence-prone coastline of India at risk. He estimated the figure to swell to 20 million people in 2050. Yet, India lacks any national policy as a preventive measure to address the displacement of people due to coastal erosion. The two-time MP Jay Panda during his first term brought a private member Bill, The Citizens Affected by Cyclone, Super Cyclone or Tsunami in Coastal Areas (Compensation, Rehabilitation and Welfare) Bill in 2009. It talked about taking preventive measures for soil erosion and undertaking rehabilitation measures by a formation of 'Coastal Areas Natural Calamity Assistance Fund', jointly by the Centre and the respective states. However, the Bill never saw the light of the day.

If you would like to know more about Pentha or any of the other villages in our area which face the same future as Satabhaya, please do contact us, and we can tell you is being done to help support these communities.

Contact: Helena Nightingale, IVDT, at helenanightingale@hotmail.com

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