

Andhra Pradesh:

Frequent Cyclones and Recurring Droughts Apathy of Central and State Governments

The never ending irony in the lives of people of AP is that while some districts reel under recurring droughts, other districts are victims are frequently struck by cyclones. Both the state and central governments took little measures to change this situation, rather they want to sustain it.

The state government declared all most all the mandals in Anapoor (63/63), Chittoor (63/66), Prakasam(56/56), Kadapa(51/51) and Nellore (46/46) as drought hit. The deficit rainfall during the South West monsoon ranged between 47to 55 per cent. Though the scanty rainfall was reported in the middle of august it took two months for the government to declare the drought hit areas. Immediate relief measures are yet to be take off, while the state and central governments are engaged in blame game. Meanwhile people in flocks are migrating in search of livelihood. Many villages in these districts wore deserted look.

The four districts of Rayalaseema region along with upland areas of coastal districts of Nellore and Prakasam are chronically drought prone. The upland areas of other seven coastal districts face frequent droughts. For nearly seven decades since the transfer of power, despite thousands of crores of rupees spent on irrigation projects, these areas continue as chronically drought hit. The coastal AP faces cyclones, big and small, every year. After the bifurcation of the state, it was struck by cyclone Hudhud in 2015, Pylin in 2017 and now by cyclone Titli. On October 12 cyclone struck Srikakulam district causing devastation. It destroyed five lakh coconut trees in 18,000 hectarres and paddy in 1.64 lakh hectares. As a consequence of heavy rain, floods of Vamsadhara and Bahuda rivers inundated villages in four mandals. The official estimate of loss is Rs. 3435 crore.

The apathy of the state government can be understood when the Chief Minister announced that arrangements are made to disburse the compensation amount of around Rs. 40 crore to 1.17 lakh farmers who lost their crops due to heavy rains in last November on October 29 this year, along with the crop loss compensation for the present Titli cyclone affected farmers. The date line was postponed to November 5. No one knows when the compensation would be paid to the affected people.

The Chief Minister claimed that he would utilize cyclone as a opportunity to usher in development, which he perceives as building road parallel to coast to promote tourism. This development as the past experience proved would violate all the rules of coastal regulatory zone. No one can stop cyclones. But certain measures like tree coverage along the coast line would subdue the intensity of cyclones. In the name of development all the CRZ rules are being floated resulting more and ore devastation when the cyclones came.

The leading members of Rytu Cooli Sangham (AP) visited the cyclone affected areas immediately on October 13 and again on October 22 to take stock of the situation. It called upon the people to unitedly struggle to get implemented the short and long term measures that give protection to the people from cyclones.
