

Hindu

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Edathua; Flood-hits

The floods hit this farmer more than meningitis did

Differently abled fish farmer suffers loss of ₹9 lakh as rain washes away his model fish farm at Edathua

SAM PAUL A.
ALAPPUZHA

At the age of 22, he suffered meningitis that left him in the ICU for nine months and permanently paralysed both his arms.

Despite having physical limitations, he overcame all odds to become a successful farmer.

But Sham Roy, 50, now feels that he is finally defeated by nature's fury as he has lost everything after floods washed away his model fish farm spread over 1.65 ha, plantains and livestock at Edathua in Kuttanad.

"We had suffered losses last year and were looking towards a bumper harvest from the fish farm to compensate it. However, the floods have shattered all our dreams and thrown our lives into total disarray," he told



Sham Roy in front of his model fish farm ravaged by floods at Edathua in Kuttanad.

The Hindu.

Mr. Roy, winner of several awards for best practices in the farming sector, had been

growing 1.7 lakh fish, including Catla, Rohu, Anabas, Grass Carp, and Tilapia.

"Except Anabas, the rest of the fish had attained growth and were ready for harvest. Although, we made

arrangements including fencing to prevent the flooding of our farm, the floodwaters have swept everything. We have suffered a loss of ₹9 lakh, including ₹8 lakh in fish farming alone," he says.

As he count the losses, the spectre of loan recovery from banks is looming large over his family.

Government subsidy

"I am eligible for 50% government subsidy, which comes to around ₹2.5 lakh. The government has already provided ₹75,000 and the rest will only be received after harvest. Now, I'm not going to get that amount. Further, I have taken two loans, ₹4.5 lakh from the Kalavoor Cooperative Society and another ₹95,000 from the Kerala State Handicapped Persons

Welfare Corporation. The Corporation has already served a notice with a deadline of July 31 to pay ₹1.17 lakh," Mr. Roy says.

Preliminary report

Fish Farmers' Development Agency (FFDA) project coordinator Aruna S. Andrews said that they had submitted a preliminary report to the State

government. "Model fish farms in 37 ha have been destroyed. We are on the process of determining the damages," Ms. Andrews said.

The floods have affected all kinds of farmers in the Kuttanad region.

According to the Agriculture Department officials, crop in 9,765 ha has been damaged either due to bund breaches or by flooding.