

15 July 2018

Wayanad, Flood Affected Areas, Heavy Rainfall



The difference between road, river and field can hardly be made out in flood-affected areas like Parakkuni in Wayanad | MANU R MAVEILL

Oh monsoon, quiet come thee

ESTIN ABRAHAM @Panamaram

The younger generation of Panamaram, a village in Wayanad, cannot remember the last time it rained so heavily. Some have a faint memory about the monsoon of 2005. Still, according to them, it wasn't heavy as this. Water level rose and a few were shifted to the relief camps. That's all.

But this time, rain has been furious. Heavy rains lashing the district over the past few days have inundated the low-lying areas in the district, especially in Panamaram and Manantavady. Thousands of people in these areas have been shifted to relief camps. Water bodies are overflowing, roads are inundated and houses have collapsed. There is a huge loss in the agriculture sector. Above all, transportation has been affected in many parts of the district. Buses have stopped services in certain areas - such as Koyler, Vallyoorkkavu and Valad - where the roads are under water.

The scenes at various relief camps in the district are distressing. Thousands of people are living in a school compound along with their families. They had all run out of their houses when water started rushing in. None of them had anything in their hands except what they were wearing. Nor were they sure if anything will be left in the houses when they return.

It was just two months back that Leeni had given birth. Now, along with her husband Sankaran, she is in a relief camp. Residents of Parakkuni, they have no other place to go. They are currently staying in a classroom of the Government Higher Secondary School, Panamaram.

Leeni and Sankaran were brought to a relief camp on Wednesday night. They do not even have an extra pair of

“The Thamarassery Ghat road caved in twice. Movement of vehicles on the ghat road has been restricted. This has affected the movement of goods to and from the district, leading to a shortage of necessary goods too. Prices are also going up,” he said. Dileep said all arrangements have been made to supply food for people in relief camps. “Panamaram is one of the low-lying areas in Wayanad. Many of the places in the block panchayat are inundated. Houses have been destroyed. We had also made arrangements to supply dresses for the people,” he said.

Apart from Panamaram, many places within the Mananthavady block are also affected. Buses have stopped services to many places underwater, like Vallyoorkkavu and Thavinjal. As in Panamaram, people in these areas have been shifted to relief camps.

The natives are worried about being isolated as the rain continues to vent its fury. “With many roads inundated, it's impossible to travel on two-wheelers. Only cars and buses are seen moving. But it will be difficult for even buses if the rain doesn't stop. In such a scenario, the entire area will lose connectivity with other parts of the district. Already, it has become difficult for people in Valad and other areas to get to the urban areas,” said Balan, a native of Koyler. According to him, monsoon in Wayanad has not been this heavy for the past two decades.



The relief camp at Govt. HSS for the flood-

They do not even have an extra pair of dress in their hand. Their two-month-old baby is seen wrapped in a woollen cloth, lying on a wooden bench in a small classroom packed with people. With the rain continuing to lash the district, there is little clue as to when they will be able to return home.

Kuttan, a native of Parakkuni in Panamaram, said water entered the house on Wednesday. They were brought to the relief camp the same day. “Around 75 families from our colony are here (at the relief camps). Water has risen to the height of a three-layer brick. Yet, many in the area are yet to come to the camps,” he said. Panamaram Block Panchayat President T S Dileep Kumar said heavy rain has isolated Wayanad district as a whole.

the relief camp at Govt. HSS for the flood-affected in Panamaram | MANU R MAVEILL

Wayanad in numbers (As on July 14)

Rainfall (past 24 hours): 71.44 mm
Rainfall (cumulative during monsoon): 1,580.15 mm
Partially damaged houses: 333
Totally damaged houses: 12
Water level at Banasura Sagar reservoir: 773.8 MSL
Water level at Karappuzha reservoir: 759.5 MSL
Number of relief camps: 32
Number of inmates in relief camps: 2,444

(Source: District Revenue Department)