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Kochi: Heavy rain, Flood hit , Flood victims

For islanders, it was like going back in time

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Kochi: After seeing Periyar in spate, Thankappan recollected how 57 years ago an almost similar situation occurred and water overflowed into their houses.

"We spent 41 days without any government support in shelter houses in the highland of Elethinkara near Puthenvelikkara in 1961 when Periyar overflowed and all houses at Kozhithuruthu inundated," recalled Thankappan (70), sitting at the patio of Government LP School at Elethinkara, one of the relief camps opened at Puthenvelikkara panchayat.

Thankappan is one among the 530 members who have been moved to the camp in the school from their houses at Kozhithuruthu, an island at North Paravur, as water entered their houses on Thursday.

"I was studying in Class VI when the flood took place in 1961. There were around 80 houses in the island in those days and each house owned a country boat. When water entered our houses, we were shifted to the mainland in boats.



Thankappan and Mani, survivors of 1961 flood, at a relief camp at Govt LP School Elenthikkara at North Paravur on Friday

There were no relief camps unlike now. Our family got shelter in a house behind this school. There was no government support or availability of grocery and all of us were in a state of poverty," recollected Thankappan.

Mani, a 66-year-old resident of Kozhithuruthu, also echoed the same.

"We used plantain stem and tapioca to cook food as no other grocery items were available. Water level continued to remain at the same level for 41 days making our lives miserable," said Mani, who moved

to the relief camp with his family.

The connectivity to the island came only recently.

"We used country boats for connectivity between the island and the mainland during our childhood. When the flood took place, we left our houses with a bundle of clothes. I don't know how many days we will have to spend here. Even when Idamalayar opened in 2013, we did not move to the relief camp. Now, almost all the houses in the island got inundated," said Thankappan.