

CLASS NOTES

Class: IX

Topic: WEATHERING THE STORM IN ERSAMA

Subject: ENGLISH

Chapter at a glance

Prashant was a young boy of nineteen years of age. He belonged to Kalikuda, a village in the coastal state of Odisha. He had lost his mother seven years ago. On 27 October 1999, when he was visiting a friend in Ersama, a super cyclone hit the area. There was large scale devastation. The gushy winds and rains continued for two days. They remained on the rooftop of the house and survived on the tender coconuts from the coconut trees that had fallen on the roof. As the rain stopped, Prashant left for his home as he feared the worst for his family. He took a stick to help him find the road. At times, he had to swim through the flood waters. On the way he met two friends and their uncle and the group moved together. They came across dead bodies of human beings and animals which floated with the current. As they crossed villages, not even a single house could be seen. Prashant's house was shattered too and he saw the belongings hanging on the branches of the trees. He wept as he felt that he had lost his beloved. He went to the Red cross shelter in search of his family. There Prashant met his maternal grandmother. She was elated to see him alive as they had not expected that he would have survived the storm. Prashant saw a crowd of 2500 people at the shelter. Many had lost their families in the disaster. They were grief stricken as the catastrophe had snatched everything. For the last 2 days they had survived on coconuts but they were running out of stock. Prashant took control of the situation. He formed a group with some elders and young people. They forced the merchant to give them the stock of rice and were successful. After 4 days the crowd ate a meal. Then the group of volunteers cleaned the shelter and tended to the injured people. Prashant engaged the widows to work in the NGO named "Food for work". He engaged the children by arranging sports matches for them. The volunteers managed to set up foster families comprising of the widows, orphaned children and lone men who would form a family and support each other. Like this Prashant overcame his grief and learnt to smile even in the face of adversities.

1. What havoc has the super cyclone wreaked in the life of the people of Orissa?

Ans: The super cyclone led to mass destruction. People lost their homes. Many people lost their lives too. Children lost their parents, women became widows and were rendered homeless. The people were left with nothing.

2. How has Prashant, a teenager, been able to help the people of his village?

Ans: Prashant helped the people in the following ways -

- He formed a group of volunteers and got rice for the people.
- They cleaned the shelter and tended to the injured.
- They sent messages to the passing helicopters demanding food and other necessities.
- Prashant guided the widows to work in the food for work NGO.
- He arranged sports events for the orphan children.
- Prashant and the volunteers set up foster families for them.

3. How have the people of the community helped one another? What role do the women of Kalikuda play during these days?

Ans: Under the leadership of Prashant, the people of the community came together and decided to help each other. They went to the local merchant and got his stock of rice. They cooked the rice on a fire burned with the branches from the trees and ate a meal after four days.

They signalled the military helicopters for food and help. The widowed women looked after the orphaned children and the men arranged food and other necessities.

4. Why do Prashant and other volunteers resist the plan to set up institutions for orphans and widows? What alternatives do they consider?

Ans: Prashant and other volunteers resisted the plan to set up institutions for orphans and widows because they felt that isolation would increase their grief. They wanted to settle them in foster families of their own community where they would love and support each other.

5. Do you think Prashant is a good leader? Do you think young people can get together to help people during natural calamities?

Ans: Yes, Prashant is a good leader. He overcame his grief and took charge of the situation. Young people can get together to help others during any calamity. They can use their strength and energy to help others in times of need.

6. Talk about the preparedness of the community for a natural disaster.

(You can talk about evacuation plans and rehabilitation; permanent safe shelters; warning system; relief efforts; building materials to withstand cyclone/flood/ earthquake, i.e. safe housing; peoples' organisation of their own rescue; the survival instinct, etc.)

Answer:

We are the part of community. Natural calamities may occur any time. We have witnessed many such natural disasters which caused devastation all around. Occurrences of such calamities is not under our control but to prepare ourselves to face such devastation is under our control. If precautions are taken timely, the effects of such calamities may be reduced.

For this purpose we should adopt the following points and discuss them :

- Evacuation plans
- Rehabilitation process
- Permanent safe shelters
- Warning systems
- Relief efforts
- Building materials to withstand cyclone/ flood/earthquake
- People's organisation of their own rescue
- The survival instinct etc.