

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

Answer: The cyclone brought heavy rains and strong winds. As a result, majority of the houses had blown away and only the strong cement houses were spared. Dirty water covered the land as far as the eye could see. Many people lost their lives. There were floating human bodies and bloated animal carcasses all around. Even the strongest of the trees had been uprooted. The scenes were gruesome. Many people lost their relatives and many children had become orphans. There was shortage of food. People were sad and helpless and a pall of gloom had descended on the people all around.

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

Answer: Prashant helped the people of his village by first getting a grip over himself because he was initially shocked on witnessing the after effects of the cyclone. He decided to step in as the leader of his village. He organized a group of youths and elders to jointly pressurize the merchant to give rice for the people living in the shelter. He was successful in this task. His next task was to organize a team of youth volunteers to clean the shelter and to tend to the wounds of the people who had been injured because of the cyclone. Prashant also brought a number of orphaned children together and constructed a polythene shelter for them. While women were mobilized to look after them, the men secured food and other essentials for the shelter. When he realised that the women were becoming too grief-stricken, he persuaded them to start working in the food-for-work programme, which was initiated by an NGO. He also organized sports events for children.

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

Answer: The people of the community got together and began to help one another under the leadership of young Prashant. Together they pressurised the merchant to part with his rice for the people in the shelter. They gathered branches from fallen trees and lit a fire, on which they cooked rice for all to eat.

When the military helicopter dropped some food parcels but did not return, the youth task force gathered empty utensils from the shelter and made the children lie in the sand with the utensils on their stomachs to communicate to the passing helicopters that they were hungry. The message went through and the helicopter made regular rounds of the shelter, airdropping food and other basic needs.

Women were mobilized to look after the orphans, while the men secured food and materials for the shelter. In spite of being grief-stricken the women started working in the food-for-work programme started by an NGO.

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

Answer: The plan to set up institutions for orphans and widows was resisted because it was believed that in such institutions children will grow up without love and affection and widows would suffer from stigma and loneliness. Instead, Prashant and his group suggested that the children and widows should be resettled in their own community where they can get a homely environment. They suggested setting up of foster families made up of childless widows and children without adult care.

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

Answer: Yes, Prashant is a very good leader. Though he himself was too grief-stricken, he got a hold of himself and decided to step in as the leader of the village. He carried out his role effectively and helped the people of his village in every possible manner.

Yes. Young people can definitely get together to help people during natural calamities and otherwise. They can use their strength and vigour to help people.