

# A Heavy Price

The cyclonic wind that swept through the shores of the Indian state of Odisha in the wake of Cyclone Fani have razed the livelihoods of many fisherfolk

**O**n 3 May 2019, as Cyclone Fani swept through the coast of Odisha on the eastern seaboard of India, many homes were either badly damaged or completely shattered. Thousands of trees were uprooted. Most businesses and infrastructure were also destroyed, including the fishing industry, which is the economic backbone of the state's fisherfolk community of around 600,000-strong.

Fani affected over 200,000 fisherfolk. About 11,000 fishing vessels anchored along the Odisha coast were damaged in the gusty winds under the influence of the cyclonic storm. Many fishing vessels collided with one another and many were tossed over, said Prasan Behera, secretary of the Odisha Traditional Fish Workers' Union (OTFWU).

Hundreds of houses in the fishing hamlets were damaged and, as a result, large numbers of fisherfolk are now living under the open sky, added Behera.

"We underestimated the intensity of Cyclone Fani and paid a heavy price," said Apala Raju, a fisherman

Paradip, Kharinashi and other areas. Penthakota, with a population of 15,000, was the worst-affected fishing village in Odisha, said Iswar Rao, a local marine fisherman.

In a bid to conserve fish stocks at sea during the breeding period, the government of Odisha had imposed restrictions on fishing by mechanized fishing vessels from 15 April to 14 June in the state. The 60-day-long fishing ban had stopped all fishing activities in fish-landing centres and fishing hamlets, as large numbers of fishers and fishworkers had gone to their villages in Andhra Pradesh and other areas, leaving behind their fishing vessels and gear in the fishing hamlets. These boats got damaged in the cyclone, said P Aparajita, a fisherman of Penthakota.

The Odisha state government has announced a compensation of Rs 9,600 for each damaged boat and Rs, 2,600 for damaged fishing nets. These are not expected to cover the cost of even minor repairs, said M Suribaba, a fisherman of Penthakota.

The gales of wind that swept through the shores have razed the livelihoods of many fisherfolk. Electricity has not been restored and people have very little access to drinking water even a week after the cyclone, said M Jagadish of Penthakota fishing village.

"I renovated my fishing boat by spending around Rs 50,000 two weeks ago during the fishing holiday period. As ill luck would have it, my vessel was damaged in the cyclone," said Ramana Rao, a fisherman of Chandrabhaga fishing village. "Fani damaged my boat and my house all at the same time," said 45-year-old Gopi of Chandrabhaga. "Our thatched house was damaged in the cyclone. Now we are staying in a nearby school," said Durga Ma, a fisherwoman of Penthakota.

**A large number of fishermen suffered heavy losses for not taking precautionary measures to keep the fishing boats safely away from the beach.**

in Penthakota fishing hamlet in Puri district. Raju was not alone. A large number of fishermen suffered heavy losses for not taking precautionary measures to keep the fishing boats safely away from the beach.

Fishing vessels were damaged in Penthakota, Chandrabhaga, Chilika,

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“Cyclone Fani crossed Puri with wind speeds of 175 kmph. On May 3 it destroyed and damaged thousands of fishing vessels and related infrastructure, causing a loss of over Rs 110 million as per our preliminary survey. Up to 6,390 fishing vessels were damaged in the cyclone in the state; 4,620 fishing vessels in Puri, 1,514 in Chilika, 78 in Kendrapara, 76 in Jagatsinghpur, 54 in Balasore and 48 fishing vessels in Bhadrak. About 7,240 fishing nets have been damaged. Fish-landing centres at Markandi in Ganjam district, Saran in Puri district, Bandara in Jagatsinghpur district, the fishing harbour in Paradip, fishing jetties at Jamboo, Kharinashi and Talacua in Kendrapada district have been damaged by Fani. Hundreds of boats are lying scattered on the beach. The fisherfolk are helping us in our work,” said Pratap Ranjan Rout, joint director of Fisheries (coastal) Department of Odisha.

“Our department is preparing support measures for fisherfolk, providing essential fisheries inputs and assisting in the repair of damaged fishing vessels and damaged fishery

infrastructure. It is the fighting spirit and the past experience of the fisherfolk in many seaside fishing hamlets that made them leave their coastal homes to safer places to save their lives. Around 41 persons died in Fani, but no fisherfolk have so far been reported dead in the state in this cyclone.”

#### For more



<https://www.icsf.net/samudra-news-alert/articledetail/58452:cyclone-fani--the-worst-is-over,-but-picking-up-the-pieces-won%E2%80%99t-be-easy.html?language=EN>

#### **The worst is over, but picking up the pieces won't be easy**

<https://www.icsf.net/en/samudra-news-alert/articledetail/58431-Cyclone-Fani-hi.html?language=EN>

#### **Cyclone Fani hits Indian coast, a million people evacuated**

<https://dc.icsf.net/en/component/dcnews/articledetail/13860.html>

#### **Fishermen vulnerable due to frequent cyclonic events**