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## Climate and crime: A case study of West Bengal

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### Abstract

**Background:** All facets of life are being impacted by climate change, including the labor market, food security, migratory trends, and economic output along with crime and victimization. So in this manner climate change is an influential factor in crime also.

**Methodology:** The research is supported by secondary materials that are found in reputable journals and web pages.

**Results:** The goal of this research is to assess how cyclones affect coastal areas of West Bengal's criminal activity. This case study is based on the vividly rising prevalence of criminal activity following the impacts of cyclones like Amphan, Yaas, and Aila, particularly in trafficking and child marriage.

**Conclusion:** The information is presented in a thorough analytical fashion that addresses the economic problems, cyclone-related criminal activity such as trafficking and underage marriage. It is required that there should be increased public awareness, increased support for NGOs, illicit borrowing, and an end to financial aid from the government for victims.

**Keywords:** Crime, climate, cyclone, pandemic, trafficking

### Introductions

This case study is based on the massive increasing rate of criminal activities especially trafficking and child marriage after the hits of cyclones like 'Amphan', 'Yaas', and 'Aila'. Statistical data have been shown to describe the increasing rates of trafficking and child marriage in 2018 as 2260 and in 2019 as 2278 and so on. The pieces of information are presented in a complete analytical format addressing the economic crisis, criminal effects of cyclones like trafficking, child marriage and robbery. Trafficking and child marriage are still an unbroken cause of women's suffering in this recent era. A state may overcome its loss of natural environment in a couple of months but the problems of trafficking and child marriage cannot be solved in some months without following the proper measures. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to bring out and highlight the proper measures and precautions that should be taken before and after the hitting of the cyclones so that we can save our people from these calamities.

### What are Cyclones?

In meteorology, a cyclone is a large air mass that rotates around a strong center of low atmospheric pressure, counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere as viewed from above. Cyclones are characterized by inward-spiraling winds that rotate about a zone of low pressure. Its diameter is typically around 200 to 500 km but can reach 1000 km. A tropical cyclone brings very violent winds, torrential rain, high waves, and, in some cases, very destructive storm surges and coastal flooding. The winds blow counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere [1].

### Amphan

It was a devastating tropical cyclone that caused widespread damage, especially in West Bengal, Odisha, and Bangladesh. Amphan originated from a low-pressure area covering a hundred miles (300km) east of Colombo Sri Lanka on 13th May 2020. Tracking northeastward it organized exceptionally over warm sea surface temperatures. The JTWC center informed it was a tropical depression on 15th May while the IMD informed a day after. Amphan got its intensity very severe on 17th May within 12 hours. On 18th May,

Amphan reached its peak intensity with 3 minutes sustained wind speed of 240km/hr (150mph). Coastal areas in West Bengal comprising East Midnapore, North 24 Paraganas, South 24 Paraganas, Kolkata, Hooghly, and Howrah were heavily effected by the cyclone. It also caused significant destruction in Bangladesh <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Criminology**

The devastating effect of Amphan, had made the risk of trafficking higher than ever. More than 80,000 livelihoods have been destroyed by this cyclone and the traffickers dire situations and exploit them. A number of women were rescued from Bihar by West Bengal police and brought back to north and south Paraganas because some were sold off to prostitution rackets while others were bonded laborers in factories. Along in the Hingalganj block alone, as many as 12 child marriages have taken place within a month after cyclone, as an assurance that marriage would give them social security from trafficking <sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Yaas**

Very severe cyclonic storm Yaas was a relatively strong and very damaging tropical cyclone that made landfall in Odisha and brought significant impacts to West Bengal in late May 2021. A low-pressure area formed over the North Andaman Sea and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal around May 22, 2021, and has further intensified into a severe cyclonic storm, named 'Cyclone Yaas'. Conditions in the basin favored development as the system became a deep depression later that day, before intensifying into a cyclonic storm on the next day, receiving the name Yaas. The system further intensified as it turned to the northeast, becoming a severe cyclonic storm on May 24 despite moderate wind shear. Affected areas are Bangladesh, India (Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, etc. <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **Criminology**

During Cyclone Yaas, people struggle for drinking water. Their farmlands and fish ponds were destroyed in west Bengal low death toll in a cyclone need not mean less damage, and this cyclone proves that. Millions have been affected by the cyclone. Their houses have been damaged and sources of livelihoods wiped off. The repeated cycle of disasters in the region has trapped them in poverty. The tube wells are useless as the khaara paani (saline water) has entered the ground. More than 4,500 villages were damaged. Various rural homes and agricultural lands were hard-hit, and basic needs such as drinking water, sanitation, and the like were also hard to come by. As a result for survival people adopted criminal activities. Robbery, women trafficking were very much common <sup>[5]</sup>.

### **Story of Trisha and Salima**

Story of Trisha and Salima – Growing up in the Sundarban delta, the life of these two cousins is not such easy they have endured five severe cyclones one after another in their childhood. These devastating cyclones are one of the main reasons behind their property. Salima's family is the victim of both Amphan and Yaas. Salima's four-member family reached the breaking point on May 20, 2020, when cyclone Amphan made landfall on the West Bengal coast. Amphan caused a massive tidal surge, washing away their house and all their belongings within minutes. Salima's mother, who used to work as a farm hand for 2,000 a month, was

rendered jobless as the saline water inundated farmlands made them unfit for cultivation. Tisha's entire family worked as daily-wage agricultural laborers and could hardly make ends meet. The woman claimed to be from our village and worked in Delhi. She offered us jobs of domestic help in the national capital at a government official's house, Tisha recalls. It unbelievable offer: a monthly income of ₹10,000 each, with free lodging and food. But when they reached Delhi on September 10, 2021, they realized that the offer was a ruse. The woman had sold them to a buyer in Delhi's Shakti Vihar for ₹5 lakh each for forced prostitution, recount Salima and Tisha. Young girls like Tisha and Salima are the preferred victims of human traffickers whose network has been growing because of frequent cyclones and consequent chronic poverty in South 24 Parganas and the neighboring regions <sup>[6]</sup>.

### **Aila**

Severe cyclonic storm Aila was also the tropical cyclone of the 2009 North Indian Ocean cyclonic season. It was the worst natural disaster to affect West Bengal and Bangladesh since cyclone Sidr in November 2007. Aila started with intensify and organize sustained with the wind speeds of 110 km (70 mph). Aila became a severe cyclonic storm on May 25 and made landfall at its peak intensity (60kt, 967hPa) between 08 and 09 UTC. Affected areas are coastal arrears of Bangladesh, and some parts of West Bengal <sup>[7]</sup>.

### **Criminology**

Cyclone Aila transformed a mainly self-sufficient agricultural society in the Sundarban into a market-based one, but without the tools needed to survive the change. One particular effect has been an uptick in child trafficking in a massive way. Most of the incidents were not recorded <sup>[8]</sup>.

### **Remedies steps**

As we all know that cyclones have devastating effects on the natural environment and human health and mind. It can affect the social and political aspects of the state also. Thus, we need to think more about the remedies to save ourselves from this cyclone and also help others to save their family from this disaster. Practically, we all think that after a cyclone the most important is to save our loss and the surrounding natural environment. But the cases in the coastal districts are not only this along with this they also face many different problems such as trafficking, child marriages, etc. Thus, we can save ourselves from these evils and disasters by taking some precautions before and after very carefully, and also people need to take serious initiatives to stop this woman's sufferings during these calamities. Therefore, the precautions and remedies are more or less known to us but the major problem in our society is a lack of interest. People need to take this very seriously and note that following such rules would save them from very big disasters. Also, a part of education plays a very important role in this context. The major cause behind these women's sufferings is the lack of education and huge burden of tax along with poverty.

### **Discussion**

This study uses crime data and observed climate records gathered from the case study to show the significant impact

of the cyclone, on crime rates. The previous sections have shown that there was cause to suspect that, in the immediate wake of the cyclone, all the components of a crime against humanity were present in the affected area.

### **Conclusion**

The occurrence of crimes against humanity does not merely establish that there is a duty to protect. They are international crimes in and of themselves, for which people are subject to criminal prosecution. Invoking the responsibility to protect to approve coercive measures during a future crisis would constitute a finding that one of the triggering offenses was taking place. This section will look at the potential repercussions if it is determined that there is evidence of crimes against humanity. It will go over potential trial locations, including the prospect of setting up a brand-new hybrid tribunal for West Bengal. The recommended scope of such a hybrid tribunal will also be briefly discussed.

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