

# Case Study - Cyclone Nargis (Myanmar) [LEDC]

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Cyclone Nargis formed in the middle of the Bay of Bengal. It then tracked west towards India before turning north east and tracking straight to the Irrawaddy delta in Burma. The Tropical Cyclone was formed earlier in April 27th, 2008. This cyclone was a Category 4, running at 135mph (215kph) and putting pressure of 962 mb.

In May 2008, Cyclone Nargis formed in the Bay of Bengal as warm tropical waters heated the air above. This heating caused rapid evaporation which created storm clouds and heavy rainfall around the low pressure weather system. Due to the very low air pressure, a storm surge was created. This meant that the sea level rose by 3.6 metres. The fact that the storm hit the coast at high tide meant that flooding was more extreme. In addition, the strong winds whipped up waves reaching a height of 7.6 metres, which drove the flood water inland and engulfed the densely populated coastal areas.

138,366 people were killed, around 20,000 - 50,000 were injured seriously as winds reached 215 km per hour, flattening trees and buildings in its path. 800,000 homes were damaged. As a result, around 3.2 million people were displaced and left homeless. Flooded land meant that much of the rice crop was destroyed. This meant that there was a shortage of food. Many people had health problems brought on by diseases spreading in the flood water. Flood water became polluted as it mixed with sewage. Consequently, diarrhoea was a major problem as water supplied became contaminated. 75% of the health centres in the area were affected. This meant that people were unable to receive immunisations, which was likely to lead to an increase in future health problems for the people of the area. There was a huge economic loss of \$10 billion (Nearly 53.5% of GNI) and a whole farming sector was devastated.

Government initially declined aid. First aid flights arrived on 7th May but rescuers found it hard to obtain visas. UK was the biggest single donor with about \$33.5 million. The UN requested a total of \$841 million in aid to help victims, but only about \$190 million was ever collected from donor countries.