

Lesson 1

The Prince of Panidihing



You all know what happens when it rains heavily during the monsoon season and floods come. In groups, note down five problems brought by floods, and five things we should do to save ourselves. Then share your points with the rest of the class.

Here is a story of a flood in a rural area called Chitolia and how people responded to it. After you finish reading, compare your answers with the story. How many things were similar?



It rained heavily all week. The swelling water of the Brahmaputra continued rising. Panic gripped Chitolia and its neighbouring villages. Khagen's own village Borgaon was not far from there.

That morning, a loud roar alerted the riverside villagers. They realized that the worst had happened; the embankment at Chitolia village was breached. Horrified, they braced themselves for what was to come.

In moments, huge waves of water broke into the villages. The water rolled over some of the house-tops. The air quickly filled with the cries and wails of the village folk huddled on roof-tops of the *chang-ghars* and the mad bellowing of the livestock being swept away.

Khagen, a young man of seventeen, quickly grasped the seriousness of the situation and swung into action. The village folk and even his classmates at Nitaipukhuri College called him the Prince of Panidihing. “He’s a brave fellow,” they often said.

“Ramen, hurry up!” Khagen shouted to his friend. “There’s no time to lose! Get hold of the others. Where are Dambaru, Dhan and Abbas?” Ramen ran towards him. “You know....”

Cutting him short, Khagen said, “We need a few rafts of banana trunks. I’ll bring along my father’s boat. We must rush to Chitolia.”

In no time, five rafts were ready, each one steered with long poles by two boys. The fleet of rafts with Khagen’s boat in the lead now raced towards Chitolia. The marooned had to be rescued in no time.

By the time the people of Chitolia had been evacuated to the high grounds of the school building, Khagen and his friends were exhausted. But there remained the work of making arrangements of food and water for the men, women and children sheltered in the school building. The civil authorities at Demow also had to be informed immediately.

“Hey Khagen!” Naren *kai* shouted from across the stretch of flood water. “Doctor Hatibaruah and his wife are stranded in their hospital quarters at Kotiori. Do something, will you?”

“Ok! Naren *kai*,” shouted Khagen. “Dambaru, hop into the boat. We’ve got a job,” he called out to one of his friends. Then he steered the boat towards the dispensary. He had a knack for solving all kinds of problems.

Half an hour later, the boat reached the doctor’s house. It narrowly missed crashing into the railing of the verandah of the doctor’s house. The doctor and Moni *Baidew* heaved a sigh of great relief.

“Step into the boat, Sir and *Baidew*,” Khagen stretched out his hand towards *Baidew*. The doctor was helped into the boat. *Moni Baidew* was greatly scared to step into the boat rocking in the water. Somehow, she was also helped into the boat. Two of the doctor’s men also got into the boat.

“We have to go upstream for some time,” Khagen told the doctor. The boat was now quite heavy, with six persons and the doctor’s bag. But it moved on steadily.

“Are you still scared, *Baidew*?” Dambaru asked the doctor’s wife playfully. She smiled. “No! Not when you two are around,” she said.

The boat took a U turn now. It began to move swiftly with the current. Khagen and Dambaru altered the course of the boat to negotiate a sharp fall. But the next moment, a strong undercurrent almost pulled at the boat like a magnet. Caught up in a whirlpool, the boat capsized, throwing everyone on board into the flood waters.

Once again, Khagen was quick to respond. In the semi-darkness of the evening, Khagen spotted *Moni Baidew*’s head popping in and out of the water as she was carried along by the current. An expert swimmer, Khagen dashed towards her like an otter. He caught her by the arm and helped her to keep afloat until they reached a mound above the flood water. The doctor was also rescued and carried to the mound. Dambaru and the two other men somehow managed to catch hold of the capsized boat that had almost been swept away. They also managed to bail out the water with the tubs tied to the boat.

The boys picked up the doctor and his wife and flung them into the boat. The crisis was over!

“Khagen! You have saved our lives, given us a new life. We shall never be able to repay what you did today!” exclaimed the doctor, patting Khagen’s back. *Moni Baidew* touched his arm gently and said, “Thanks, Khagen.”

“Sir!” Khagen said emotionally. “You remember, my mom and I had visited you in hospital three or four times when she had a serious ailment?”

“Oh yes! I remember her. How’s she now?”

“She’s fine by the grace of God and your help!”

“That’s wonderful! What do the people of the village call you? Some Prince.....?”

“The Prince of Panidihing,” reminded Dambaru.

“You’re a real Prince,” the doctor patted Khagen’s back once again with a smile. The bright moon lit up the muddy flood water like gleaming silver. The boat bent its way towards the school building gracefully. The doctor knew that he would be the only doctor in the newly set up relief camp. But with Khagen and the others around, there wouldn’t be many problems, thought the doctor.

ACTIVITIES

1. Answer the following questions to check your understanding:

- Why did the people of Chitolia and the neighbouring villages panic?
- What happened when the embankment at Chitolia village was breached?
- What action did Khagen and his classmates take to rescue the villagers of Chitolia?
- How did Khagen and Dambaru rescue Dr. Hatibaruah and Moni *Baidew*?
- Why did the people of the village call Khagen ‘The Prince of Panidihing’?

2. How much of the story do you remember? Answer these questions quickly.

- Who was Khagen? How old was he?
- ‘It rained heavily all week.’ What was the result?
- ‘In moments, huge waves of water broke into the villages.’ – What is this situation called?
- “Khagen! You have saved our lives, given us a new life.” – Who said this? Why did he say this?

3. Complete the following sentences in your own words:

- (a) The water rolled over some of the house-tops and _____

- (b) By the time the people of Chitolia were evacuated, _____

- (c) Half an hour later, the boat reached the doctor's house _____

- (d) The boat took a U turn now and _____

- (e) Dambaru and the two other men somehow managed to catch _____

4. Read the following. Use the clues to write a summary of the situation of Panidihing to be published in the local newspaper. Give a suitable title.

- it rained heavily
- panic gripped the village
- the embankment was breached
- villagers took shelter on house-tops
- villagers from neighbouring villages rushed to help
- the civil authorities were also informed
- in no time rafts and boats were made ready
- hundreds of villagers were rescued along with their livestock

5. (a) Let's learn some grammar:

Here is the opening line of the story you have just read.

It rained heavily all week.

The word 'heavily' gives us more information and adds something more to the meaning of the verb 'rained'.

Read the following sentences from the story:

"He's a brave fellow," they often said.

The civil authorities at Demow also had to be informed immediately.

It narrowly missed crashing into the railing of the verandah.

In all of these sentences, the words often, immediately, and narrowly tell us more about the verbs (said, informed, missed).

Words such as often or immediately that give us more information about a verb are called adverbs.

There are several types of adverbs. The most common adverbs are:

(i) **Adverbs of manner**

boldly, bravely, quickly, slowly, heavily, etc.

It rained heavily.

(ii) **Adverbs of time**

ago, since, before, early, soon, already, yet, etc.

Khagen and Dambaru are coming tomorrow.

(iii) **Adverbs of place/position**

here, there, near, up, down, everywhere, etc.

Khagen sat near Dambaru.

(iv) **Adverbs of direction**

left, right, towards, etc.

Khagen turned left at the crossroads.

(v) **Adverbs of frequency**

always, ever, never, often, everyday, etc.

Khagen is always ready to help.

(vi) **Adverbs of degree**

very, too, very much, enough, so much, of course, rather, hardly, extremely, etc.

They narrowly missed crashing into the railing of the verandah.

(vii) **Interrogative adverbs**

when, why, how, etc.

How is she now?

Now read the lesson again and underline all the adverbs. Also find out the verbs to which they are adding new information.

(b) **More practice with adverbs:**

Underline the adverbs in the sentences below and say what types they are.

- (i) Khagen quickly grasped the situation.
- (ii) He will stay here.
- (iii) The civil authorities at Demow had to be informed immediately.
- (iv) He had done it already.
- (v) He is strong enough to steer the raft.
- (vi) Since when has the doctor been stranded?
- (vii) Moni *Baidew* is too afraid to board the boat.

6. (a) **A large number of words in English begin with two or three consonants. Many such words begin with the consonant 's' followed by one or two other consonants. Practise saying aloud these words beginning with the sound /s/.**

speak	steered	spade	space	stand	smile
school	stranded	stitch	stare	stretch	storm
smoke	smooth	scared	smell	style	stream
strike	steadily	strong	spring	straight	spectacles

(b) Which of the words given in the box in Activity 6 (a) can you find in the lesson? Read aloud the sentences that contain the words. Then make five sentences with any five words from the box and practise reading them aloud.

7. Work in groups to make five sentences with the word cards. Your sentences should match the events in the story. You may use a card more than once. After you have completed, read out the sentences. One is done for you.

That morning a loud roar alerted the riverside villagers.

HOUSE

THEY

SO

INTO

ALERTED

A

LATER

LOUD

GOT

OR

REACHED

AN

THE

HOUR

BOAT

HALF

ROAR

DOCTOR'S

MORNING

STEERED

RIVERSIDE

VILLAGERS

SHE

THAT

8. (a) Read this news item carefully:

Two die in Assam floods

Anil Nagar, July 16: Two persons, a man and a woman were drowned in a devastating flood caused by heavy rains in Anil Nagar, Kamrup (Metropolitan) district, Assam. Most of the flood affected people were however rescued and taken to the relief camps. The district administration sought the help of paramilitary forces in the rescue operation. Many NGOs also offered their help in the operation.

(b) Look at the kinds of information that are mentioned in the news item and find answers to the following questions:

- (i) Where did the flood occur?
- (ii) How many people died in the flood?
- (iii) Where were the flood affected people taken to?
- (iv) Who helped the flood affected people?

(c) Imagine you are Khagen. Working with your partner, write a newspaper report on the floods and how they affected the lives of the people in your village and the neighbouring villages.

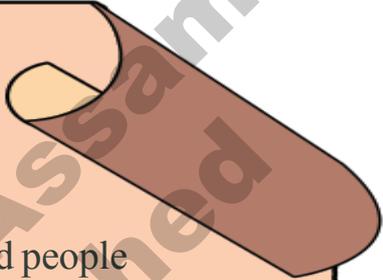
Your report should include the following:

- (i) The headline
- (ii) The dateline
- (iii) Where and how the floods occurred
- (iv) Damages caused to life and property
- (v) How the people of the village responded to the crisis
- (vi) How rescue operations were carried out
- (vii) Where relief camps were set up
- (viii) How many people were shifted to the relief camps
- (ix) What steps the government took to provide relief and rehabilitation to the people

Use information given in the lesson to complete your report.

9. What would you have done if you were Khagen? Write a diary entry describing your experience and actions on the day the floods occurred in your village. Use the information from the main text to write your entry.

Your diary page may include the following points:

- 
- (i) Date and time of making the entry
 - (ii) How you alerted the people about the breach in the embankment
 - (iii) What steps you took to help your family and people of the village (including alerting the civil authorities)

10. **Project work:**

Imagine your village has been inundated by the flood waters of the Brahmaputra. Discuss in your group what steps you will take as volunteers to provide relief to the flood victims of your village. Draw up a plan of action.

The plan of action may include the following:

- (a) Collecting donations, including clothes, food and other items of daily use for the flood affected people
 - (b) Writing to various NGOs for help
 - (c) Writing to civil authorities for aid, on behalf of different individual victims and so on
 - (d) Giving company to the affected children and the elderly victims
 - (e) Providing first aid to the flood affected people
11. Prepare a notice to be hung on your school noticeboard informing the students about a free health camp to help the flood victims.

For the Teacher

Children in Assam are familiar with floods. The warm-up activity just before the lesson is meant to help students communicate their experience of floods. The Post Reading Activities 1, 2, 3 will help the teacher assess learners' understanding of the lesson. These should be discussed orally at first to help students practise speaking in English. The teacher may encourage learners to first speak in their school language to check their comprehension of the lesson. The teacher can then help them to give answers in English.

In Activity 3, the teacher can help learners to write the details of the situations to complete the sentences provided. This activity is meant to help the learners develop the ability to express their understanding of the story in writing. This writing exercise will also help learners to write news snippets in Activity 4 with suitable titles for publication in local newspapers.

In the section 'Let's learn some grammar', learners will be introduced to 'Adverbs' and their types. The teacher can help them to identify all adverbs in the story and find out the verbs to which they add information. In Activity 5 (b), learners will be able to identify adverbs and mention which type they belong to.

Activity 6 is a practice activity for consonant clusters beginning with 's'. This activity will require a lot of oral practice on the part of the individual learners so that they pronounce these words correctly. There is a common tendency to pronounce words like 'speak' (one syllable) as 'ispeak' (two syllables). The teacher should take care to utter the words provided in the list in Activity 6 (a) correctly so that the learners can follow and pronounce the same accurately. Children cannot be expected to be able to pronounce such words accurately at first, but repeated practice and encouragement will help them improve their pronunciation.

The teacher can divide the learners into groups and help them to frame sentences with the word cards provided in Activity 7. Learners may use the words more than once. Activity 8 is designed to enable learners to write a newspaper report on floods. The teacher can guide the learners to complete the report by using information given in the lesson.

Learners have learned to make diary entries in Class VII. Based on this lesson and their experience, they will write a diary entry with the help of points given in Activity 9.

In Activity 10, the learners should be encouraged to work on their own as they prepare the plan of action for providing relief to flood victims of their village. The teacher can monitor them while they prepare a notice about a free health camp to be hung on the school noticeboard.

Learning Outcomes:

The learner:

- speaks about objects/events in the class/school environment and outside surroundings
- reads excerpts, dialogues, poems, commentaries of sports and games, speeches, news, debates on T.V., Radio and expresses opinions about them
- reads textual/non-textual materials in English/ Braille with comprehension
- identifies details, characters, main idea and sequence of ideas and events while reading
- reads, compares, contrasts, thinks critically and relates ideas to life
- writes short paragraphs coherently in English/Braille with a proper beginning, middle and end with appropriate punctuation marks
- writes answers to textual/non-textual questions after comprehension/in reference; draws character sketch, attempts extrapolative writing
- writes e-mail, messages, notice, formal letters, descriptions/narratives, personal diary, report, short personal/biographical experiences, etc.