

Flash Flood Devastation at SKUAST-Jammu; Damage Crosses ₹100 Crores

A catastrophic flash flood struck the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-Jammu) on Tuesday severely impacting both the campuses at Chatha and R.S. Pura. The Chatha campus was the worst hit where water levels rose to nearly seven to eight feet submerging buildings, roads, parapets, vehicles, agricultural fields while the R.S. Pura campus also reported significant damage.

The floodwaters caused widespread devastation with initial estimates suggesting losses of around ₹100-120 crores. Apart from costly research equipment, vehicles, IT infrastructure, records, experimental fields and livestock units, the university suffered extensive damage to roads, boundary parapets, power house, internal pathways, drainage structures, playgrounds, library, sports facilities, stadium, student centre, Community Radio Station and e-studio etc. Of grave concern is the potential loss of invaluable research data, experimental trials and breeding material which form the backbone of the university's academic and research mandate. Significant losses were also reported in the assets created under various research and development initiatives such as the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project in Jammu & Kashmir (JKCIP), hi-tech greenhouses, polyhouses, ex-situ gene bank and modern farm machinery including gensets and tractors.

Ground floors of all major buildings including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, hostels and administrative blocks were inundated. Vehicles belonging to staff and students were seen floating across the campus. Nearly 500 individuals, including students, faculty, staff and labourers were stranded in different parts of the campuses. At Chatha, many students and employees were seen struggling as water levels rose dangerously while others took refuge on higher floors and rooftops waiting for rescue. They were trapped inside and had to be rescued after an hours-long struggle. In a coordinated operation, the Indian Army, CRPF, NDRF and SDRF assisted by university officials and local volunteers carried out massive rescue efforts. Timely intervention of rescue agencies and locals averted a major tragedy and demonstrated their continued commitment to public safety and disaster relief.

Amidst the crisis, Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu, personally monitored the situation from the onset of flooding until the last stranded student and employee was safely rescued. He remained in constant coordination with rescue agencies, faculty and staff to ensure that no life was lost.

Prof. Tripathi commended the swift action of the Army, CRPF, NDRF, SDRF and the courage of university staff who supported evacuation operations.

Expressing deep concern over the damages, Prof. Tripathi stated, “The loss is enormous; not only in terms of property and equipment but also in terms of invaluable research data and ongoing experiments. However, I want to assure our students, faculty and the scientific community that SKUAST-Jammu will recover from this disaster with renewed strength. We will rebuild our infrastructure, restore our research fields and continue our mission of serving the farming community of Jammu and Kashmir.”

The aftermath of the flood remains grim as submerged soils, debris and silt deposits have damaged infrastructure, research farms, experimental plots and seed production units threatening years of scientific work. Faculty members expressed anguish over the damage to critical laboratories and data but reaffirmed resilience.

The University administration has initiated a comprehensive damage assessment across both campuses and a consolidated report is being prepared for submission to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to seek immediate relief and restoration support. To assess the situation on the ground, a high-level team from the Agriculture Production Department comprising the Secretary, Special Secretary, Director Planning, Joint Director Planning and Deputy Secretary visited SKUAST-Jammu. As per preliminary estimates, the losses have been tentatively assessed at ₹100-120 crores including civil works (electrical and mechanical), laboratory equipment, furniture, IT equipment, glassware, chemicals and consumables, playgrounds, library, sports facilities, stadium, student centre, Community Radio Station, e-studio, vehicles etc. Detailed item-wise information is being compiled and the consolidated report will soon be submitted to the Government for necessary action.