

The Bermuda triangle (Devil's triangle)

In the third week of May 1975, the first ONGC seismic survey vessel *Anweshak*, built and fitted with offshore seismic survey equipments in the dockyards of Jacksonville, Florida sailed out for destination Mumbai. I along with my senior colleague Late Mr. Banerjee were the seismic crew members assigned to keep watch on the seismic equipment exclusively for operating and monitoring the performance of the first ever satellite navigation system of India installed on board *Anweshak*. The watch was for 24 hours for the entire journey, a long saga of endurance of 52 days at sea, known to be not quite friendly at that time of the year. Our ship sailed through the Atlantic touching ports of Bermuda, Canary Islands and Gibraltar, through Mediterranean Sea to ports of Alexandria and to Eden through Suez Canal and finally to Mumbai through the Arabian sea. It was at our first call of port at Bermuda that I heard about 'Bermuda triangle' and got a copy of the book published on the topic, and apprehensively read through it.

Bermuda triangle

Bermuda triangle also known as the *Devil's triangle* consists of a huge area located off the south-eastern coast of USA formed by the three tips of Florida, Puerto Rico and Bermuda Islands in the western part of north Atlantic. It is a fact that many ships sailing through, and aircrafts flying over the triangle have reportedly disappeared mysteriously without any trace, and for a few though oil leakage or wrecks could be found, the crew had vanished. On 6th.December 1945, an entire squadron of US fighter planes went missing over the sea near Bermuda, and a search plane sent to look for the lost planes also went missing on the same day, igniting the mystery of *Bermuda triangle*.

Several theories are propounded to explain the mystery of missing ships and planes. Strong surface currents like Gulf streams, powerful down draft of cold air, eruption of methane from large gas hydrate deposits, causing lowering in buoyancy and frequenting of tropical cyclones are some of the reasons put forward for the mysteriously lost ships and planes. By the way, Atlantic Ocean in the area is known to have some of the deepest and treacherous trenches in the world, where the ocean floor suddenly drops to huge depths that can cause disasters. Some even believe hands of aliens in the mystery.

Nevertheless, these theories could not be verified by reliable investigating agencies, including the US navy, and it has remained a baffling and contentious issue with some calling it off as myth. Incidentally, the World Wide Fund for Nature in a study in 2013 recognized the world's 10 most dangerous waters for shipping, but the *Bermuda Triangle* did not get a mention.

A recent article in a UK tabloid published in October 2016, however, claims to have cracked the mystery. From current satellite images scientists have discovered strange hexagonal clouds that are capable of creating deadly storms, with air speeds reaching up to 170 mph and waves as high as 45-feet that could cause sudden crash or sinking of planes and ships.

Wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year 2017