



*Paying homage on the 2nd Anniversary
of the Tsunami*

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Struggle and sorrow

As all of us were rewinding the best and the worst of 2006, and getting ready for the onset of the new-year, inhabitants of the Vairamalgai shelter were fighting with the flames that engulfed their temporary shelters.

Around 169 tsunami shelters were reduced to ashes on the 31st December 2006. This temporary shelter site, with 219 shelters was occupied by the non-fishermen tsunami survivors, mostly gypsies, dalits, and coolies. Fortunately, no lives were lost.

The Government officials and other NGOs rushed to the spot to rescue, support and console the residents. They were subsequently shifted to Shivasakthi Kalyanamandapam and Raja Kalyanamandapam. The Dairy Development Minister U. Madhivanan visited the victims in the camp and met with the inconsolable residents.

Though 'disaster preparedness' has been a buzz word and initiatives are being taken on many fronts, our preparedness for such freak fire accidents that have now been periodically hitting every shelter is being questioned. Does this show that we have failed in our efforts of instilling preparedness? Should we have broader dialogue on preparing the communities to face these mishaps? Can we continue curative responses rather than ensure preventive ones? This new year let us instill a new rethink and action on preparedness in all aspects and areas affecting our people. ■

December 26, 2006: In Remembrance

A silent procession, dove-tailed with a mass prayer by the residents of fishermen hamlets in memory of their lost ones marked the second anniversary of the tidal tragedy – the Tsunami that struck their lives on December 26th 2004. A recap of the tragedy at this juncture would be relevant: around 6,065 people including 2,406 women and 1,776 children were washed out by the giant wave 2 years ago.

Homage was paid for those who lost their lives at the tsunami memorial pillar at the District Collectorate, Nagapattinam exactly at 9.17 am, the time when the tragedy occurred. Tamil Nadu Minister for Diary Development, U. Mathivanan; District Collector, Tenkasi. S. Jawahar; Nagapattinam Member of Parliament A.K.S. Vijayan; Vedaranyam Member of Legislative Assembly, S.K. Vedarathinam; Municipal Chairperson Thiru. Thangapillai and others placed wreaths at the memorial and paid their respects. They all observed a one-minute silence, holding lighted candles.

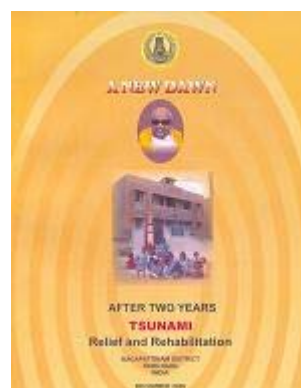
An all-religious prayer was conducted at the Collectorate and a booklet on the rehabilitation works being carried out by the district administration with the financial assistance from Central and State Government was released. Minister Mathivanan released the booklet titled “**New Dawn - After Two Years, Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation**” and Collector Tenkasi Jawahar received the first copy.

In the two fishermen hamlets of Keechankuppam and Akkaraipettai, children as well as adults took out a silent procession. The procession which commenced from the memorial at Keechankuppam meandered through Akkaraipettai where homage was paid to the 53 students of the school who fell victim to the disaster. Minister U. Mathivanan unveiled the portraits of the victims on this occasion and paid his respects to the departed souls.

People also placed wreaths at the memorial children’s park on the Nagapattinam coastline and at the memorial tower in Velankanni, where more than 1000 bodies were buried. ■



Paying homage at the beach; paying homage at the Collectorate; Prayer meeting; Book release



Mapping disasters vulnerabilities

NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (NCRC) and United Development Program, Chennai organized a 2 day workshop on Community Based Vulnerability Mapping (CBVM) on the 19th and 20th December 2006. The workshop was a platform for NGOs, Government officials and the community to discuss methods to be prepared for disasters.

Being prepared does not imply preventing or controlling disasters (especially man-made ones) but is about reducing the damages that are caused by disaster. To do this, it is necessary to be aware of the damages that happen in disaster situations. Ms. Annie George pointed out in her introductory session that damages differ from one disaster to other and even in the same disaster the damages differ from one stage to the other.

Mr. John of UNDP explained that this initiative was begun at the behest of the Government of India which wanted to evaluate themselves and draw lessons to enable better preparedness for future disasters. The views of the state level initiatives would be presented in a Workshop at National level in January 2007.

A technical session on Nagapattinam District Scenario on Disaster vulnerability was taken by Mr. Mantharachalam, DPO – Disaster Risk Management program (DRMP). This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Arumugaraja, District Fire Officer. The latter said that after tsunami their department has been referred to as “Fire and Rescue Department” instead of “Fire Department”. He emphasized that post tsunami their disaster preparedness efforts have included pre-identifying groups to support tasks like warning, searching & rescue, first aid, disposal of dead body, injured, resettling the shelter less, like wise. He pointed out that there should be accountability, and planning even in times of emergency. Alertness and practicing rescue techniques would only yield to effective rescue during disaster.

Ms. Annie George explained that in any disaster visibility of the affected differs and often few of them are not identified or identified later. For example, in the tsunami the focus was on the fishermen and few people were looking at the plight of farmers or the dalits. So it is necessary to pre-identify such vulnerable groups and rank them in order of visibility so that even the least visible are not excluded in the future.



Rescue techniques demonstrated



PRA in progress

Based on the discussions the participants of the workshop mapped the affected and vulnerable at different stages of relief & rescue, rehabilitation, and development. A Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise was carried out in two hamlets Keezhatincheri and Nambiar Nagar.

Some recommendations of the workshop:

- Vulnerability differs from one stage to another and also on the other socio-economic variables all of which need to be considered in disaster preparedness.
- Data is critical to planning preparedness. Updated demographic data related and that related to variables of vulnerability should be available. This must include vulnerable groups such as women, elders, orphans, and differently abled. Extensive surveys need to be conducted to build this MIS.
- Organizations that have their own disaster task force should be coordinated and networked village wise.
- Village level community groups should be formed and trained in preparedness to ensure community led initiatives for preparedness.

Actions were evolved for initiating community based district risk management

1. Identifying NGOs involved Disaster Risk Management
2. conduct a house hold survey to gather data
3. Conduct village level Participatory Rural Appraisal to map the vulnerable. ■

Gyan Kendras - lighting the future

On 14 December 2006, Project Concern International (PCI) and the Avon Foundation inaugurated the first of eight 'Centres of Knowledge' at the PCI Multi Service Center in Thirumullaivasal village. Known as 'Gyan Kendra's', these centres offer critical skills and services needed to help empower women and girls, such as literacy and computer classes.

This multi facility centre houses an Information Communication and Technology centre (ICT), Vocational training centre, non formal education centre wherein tuition will also be given in the evening, a crèche, pre-school, kitchen and storeroom along with the office space. The centres offer computer courses, health and legal referrals, and job placement assistance. There are more than 240 women who are taking advantage of the computer course which they will complete in March 2007 and will be placed with jobs in local businesses at the neighbouring urban centre.

The centre also aim at disseminating information on early warning systems.

Mr. Panneer Selvam, Member of Legislative Assembly, Sirkali Constituency; Mrs. V. Suseela, Dist. Educational Officer; Mrs. Malarvizhi, Chairman; Mr. Sella Sethu Ravikumar, Vice Chairman; Mr. Arul Sivaramavel, President (Local Self Governance – Elected), Thirumullaivasal; Dr. Henry Alderfer, Country Director, PCI India; Mr. Rishi Wadhwa and Mr. P Venkatraman, Avon India; and Fisherman village panchayat of Thirumullaivasal and Thoduvai were present during the inaugural.



The highlight of the inaugural was a skit, 'Life after Tsunami', performed by local children. The Representatives of PCI, Avon Foundation India, and government officials, as well as locals from the area had the opportunity to tour the new facilities and get acquainted with the services. To symbolize new beginnings as well as commemorate the two-year anniversary of the disaster, a Neem tree was planted on the site.

Women at the centre expressed their happiness on being offered computer literacy, awareness about health and other general issues, and opportunities to earn extra income. ■

"Two years ago we lost everything in the tsunami. We had no hope. But today, it's different. Centers like this have given women like me, and my children, hope of a better future."

- Punitha, a member of the Gyan Centre



"We've already received incredibly positive feedback from women involved in the Avon Foundation-funded programme. They tell us they are happier at home, earning more income at work, and looking forward to a bright and prosperous future. These are women who lost everything only a few years ago."

- Dr. Henry Alderfer, Country Director, PCI India

NGO Profile - Project Concern International (PCI)

Project Concern International is a U.S. based non profit organization established in 1961, primarily to promote community health and integrated development in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America, established its presence in India in 1997. It operates in 13 states having programmes in the areas of: HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support; polio and leprosy eradication; water, sanitation and the environment; disaster management; micro enterprise, and organizational training and support.

PCI envisions a world where abundant resources are intentionally shared and communities are committed and able to ensure the health and well being of their members. Their activities in Nagapattinam include the following:

Care and educational Services

Providing quality infrastructure and learning environments through care and educational service to children. PCI has a special mission of providing educational assistance, scholarships to school and college going children; enrolling drop-outs back into the formal school and conducting intensive training programmes on health and hygiene and anti-trafficking. To encourage the sportive spirit of the children fancy dress, speech and drawing competitions and various other competitions are held. They supply nutritional supplements to children monitor their growth. They also run a crèche, pre-school, non-formal education and tuition centers.

Gyan Kendra – Information, Communication and Technology centre

Empowering the Tsunami affected women, toward improving the lives of women globally, PCI has joined hands with Avon foundation to improve and enable more than 240 women. These women attend a six month course focusing on the computer and internet literacy.

Health and Sanitation

Through their aim of 'Saving lives and building healthy communities' and focus on the maxim 'health is the wealth for all' PCI reaches various affected sectors in the communities.

The mobile medical team serves door to door in the interior villages. A joint venture with Department of Health Services, the ANMs provide



general health services in the villages; the team of professional counselors help create a new life for individuals. They provide care and protection to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) through home based care and medical assistance. General Health camps and specialty camps organized by PCI on ENT (Ear, nose and throat), dermatology, gynecology and pediatrics cater to address distinct and prevalent diseases in the community. Focusing on sanitation, they have established solid waste management system in all its working villages. To create a mass awareness among all the age groups, they have produced a training module on health and hygiene which deals with personal hygiene, environmental hygiene, mal-nutrition and anemia, HIV/AIDS/STI, solid waste management.

The water treatment plant at Thirumalaivasal needs a special highlight as it focuses on reaching out of 5000 population of Thirumalaivasal, Thoduvai, and Koozhayar villages and other neighbouring villages. There are 120 people registered for regular service of water supply. 25 liters of water is distributed beneficiaries at Rs. 2 for local villagers, Rs.3 for neighbouring villagers and Rs. 5 for commercial purpose. The project is named as 'win thuligal' (the drops from heaven).

Livelihood Assistancess



PCI believes in “providing livelihood opportunities as a means to individual upliftment which leads to community development in future.” Towards

this they have succeeded in creating self employment opportunities through its loan disbursement activity. The self-help group women are equipped to undertake alternative employment like fish business, animal husbandry, petty tiffin centre, agriculture, grocery, petty vessel shops, tailoring, cosmetic and beauty parlour and laundry.

To provide innovative approach in training people for micro enterprise, PCI has established 16 vocational trades training centers including 3 Cashew nut units, 3 Coir Making units, 2 door mat units, 1 grass mat unit, 2 fashion technology units, 2 cell phone service unit and 1 Arecanut plate unit. Besides these they also provide loans to the villagers and SHG for boat repair.

Anti- trafficking / Vigilance Committee

A village level anti trafficking committee has been formed in each of the PCI working villages, that organizes mass awareness programmes, seminars, procession, street theatre programmes on the issue; take up issues related to trafficking and conduct competitions and exhibitions depicting related to trafficking. A Vigilance Committee has been formed at the district level to monitor and address these issues. It functions in collaboration with child line, department of social defense and NGOs working on these issues and directly involves in rescuing rehabilitating the affected children and women.

Contact PCI at:

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Tel: 04365 249325, 249326 pcinagai@yahoo.co.in ■

Events Roundup - December

Shelter construction review meetings

1, 11, 19 and 26 December 2006

Review meetings to take stock of construction of permanent shelters in the district were held at the mini Conference Hall, Collectorate. The meetings stressed upon speeding up the process of construction. The NGOs were reminded to insure the permanent shelters in the name of the beneficiaries. NGOs that were not willing to start construction were informed that even government was willing to take up the construction work.

Mapping of Water Bodies

5, 13, 19 and 27 December 2006

The Agriculture Sector of the NCRC had its review meeting on the study ‘mapping of Water bodies’. The format on village level infrastructure data collection and the methodology and selection of villages were discussed. The participating NGOs - TOFARM, VENTURE, CEE, CCD, and Kudumbam – presented the data they have and further had discussions on the formats and constraints on data collection.

Children’s core group meeting

21 December 2006

The monthly meeting of the core group for children was held at NCRC rooftop, Nagapattinam. Ms. Girija, child rights consultant and Mr. Kannayiram consultant UNICEF along with Child core group participated in the meeting to discuss and finalise the guidelines that was formulated by the Children’s core group. The two guidelines i.e. for orphans who are in the home and orphan children living in the community were discussed. The group also discussed the future of the Children core group, and the structures of Child Secretariat – its functions and other legal structures. The group planned to meet again by first week of January.

Shelter support group visit **19 to 21st December 2006**

The Shelter Support Group met and visited 22 permanent shelter sites. The team consisting Sanitation experts – Mr. Tency Baetens and Mr. Gilles Botelicot from Auroville and Mr. Deepen Shah of Institute for Habitat Development (IHD) inspected and observed the gaps in the permanent shelter construction. They submitted a report to the Shelter Advisory group and the District Administration on the 22 December 2006. Subsequently, a meeting was arranged with the NGOs and the Shelter Advisory Group to discuss the gaps that were projected by the Shelter Support Group and discussed with them and suggested solutions that could be implemented.

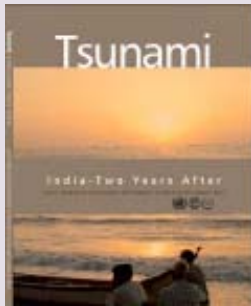
Capacity building program on child right's at Sirkazhi **22 December 2006**

The Sirkazhi and Kollidam cluster organised a one-day capacity building workshop on child rights in the Hotel Sathabishegam, Sirkazhi. The community, NGOs and other people who work with children from Kollidam and Sirkazhi cluster attended the program. Mr. Kannayiram of UNICEF explained the need for awareness on Child Rights and also on Human Rights. Ms. Girija, child rights consultant spoke on Juvenile Justice Act 2000 and its relevance in post tsunami. 3 child labourers shared their experience and narrated their struggle to study. The audiences were further split in to groups to discuss the issues and problems faced by children of their community, the solution for such problems, and how to form a child protection committee at village level and who should be in the committee. After the presentation, 2 groups were identified to implement and child protection committees in their respective clusters.

Tamil Nadu Disaster Management System training **22 December 2006**

Mr. Sridhar of UNDP, Mr. Suresh of TNTRC and Mr. Swaminathan of PricewaterHouse Coopers gave an orientation on the IT facilitation that can monitor tsunami activities. They have launched a website for the same - <http://www.tndms.Gov.in/Tsunamiundp>. The key feature of this includes ability to monitor and track relief, recovery active progress and individuals; role based access and it would be accessed by the community and even the petitions can be sent through this website. IT facilitators from Thiruvavur, Thanjavur, Nagappatinam and Pudukottai had attended this with other government officials and NCRC staff. ■

Tsunami: India - Two Years and After **A Joint Report of the VN, the World Bank and ADB**



This report - "Tsunami, India – Two Years After", is a joint initiative by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations, to critically reflect on the pace and extent of progress in Tsunami recovery efforts in India over the last two years. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the

achievements, constraints and lessons learnt in relief, reconstruction and recovery efforts since the Tsunami struck in December 2004. The report is written not only for all those who are interested in the support that multilateral agencies provided to Tsunami recovery in India, but also for our donors, partners and all stakeholders involved.

The first section of this report recalls the disaster and the social and economic impacts it effected on the lives of those living along the southern coasts of India as well as on those living in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. This is followed by a brief introduction to the relief and recovery efforts undertaken in India – which are led by the Government and supported by multi-lateral organisations. Next, there is a sketch of the frameworks that underpin the recovery efforts of each of the multilateral agencies covering this report, explaining their respective approaches, intended outcomes, guiding principles and financial contributions. There are immense challenges to ensure the sustainability of programmes for each multi-lateral agency involved, especially given the enormity of the tasks at hand. This is also true for all UN agencies involved - namely UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, ILO, FAO, UNFPA and UNESCO - which are operating in a joint programme for Tsunami recovery in India, as one (inter-agency) administrative unit. A brief description follows to provide a glimpse into the coordination mechanisms in place, as well as the principles and instruments that guide the agencies' work.

The second, and main section of the report, is devoted to making a critical two year appraisal of progress made across each of the sectors that the UN, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are working in. Much of this section is based on an inter-sectoral mid-term review exercise led by the Government of Tamil Nadu in August and September of 2006, supported by all multilateral organisations. However, much is also built up from a collation of data from each agency's specific experiences in the field. Each sub-section aims to provide a snapshot view of the achievements, constraints and lessons learnt in each of the sectors in which multilateral agencies have been active – Shelter and Water and Sanitation, Infrastructure, Health and Nutrition, Psychosocial Care, HIV/AIDS and Trafficking, Child Protection, Education, Livelihood, Environment, Disaster Risk Management and Information and Communication Technology.

The report closes with an overview of recommendations culled from various studies, analyses and mid-term review exercises. It is hoped that these recommendations will inform and outline rehabilitation efforts in the next phase of Tsunami recovery.

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