



MSSRF -Tsunami News

Life Beyond Tsunami: Relief and Rehabilitation

Greetings

This is the first newsletter from MSSRF – Tsunami desk. In this edition we have made an attempt to give a consolidated picture on MSSRF's efforts related to tsunami relief and rehabilitation activities. Contribution from the Programme Directors of the respective areas to prepare this newsletter is well appreciated.

I look forward to receive your valuable feedback.

Tsunami waves hit the Indian coast on 26th December 2004. The waves affected coastal districts of three states, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Among these states Tamil Nadu was the worst affected. The impact was huge in terms of human loss, natural resources and basic livelihood assets. Immediately after the tsunami devastation multiple agencies like Government departments, NGOs, civic organizations, corporate companies, local communities etc. have been involved in relief measures.

The need to rebuild the ecological foundations and livelihoods of the tsunami victims is a Himalayan task. Already government and several organizations are there in the field to bring the situation back. In this context M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation is making initiatives for medium and long term rehabilitation programmes based on its long time experiences in the coastal villages. The framework suggested by Prof.M.S. Swaminathan Chairman MSSRF (in his article published in The Hindu January 17,2005) 'Beyond Tsunami: An agenda for action' focusing on

- (i) strengthening the ecological foundations of sustainable human security,
- (ii) rehabilitating livelihoods and fostering sustainable livelihood security and
- (iii) putting in place knowledge centers

was taken to design and implement the activities.

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Immediate relief measures

M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation took part in a modest way in relief measures at Cuddalore and Nagapatinam districts. The MSSRF team conducted a rapid assessment of the situation in the tsunami-affected villages of Pichavaram, Parangipettai and Pazayar areas on the next day of tsunami (27th December 2004). On the basis of the assessment, as a first step towards relief, MSSRF helped in organizing the following activities

- Community cooking in Killai village, where a relief camp for fishing families was organized. Similarly the same arrangement was made in two *Irula* settlements.
- Transport facilities were provided to the affected families for shifting to relief camps.
- Organized the distribution of relief materials to the needy villages provided by various organizations.
- Collected and distributed medicines that were needed by the Primary Health Centres and also relief camps.
- Extended support to Association for Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA), Japan to organize medical camps in 25 tsunami affected villages, which benefited more than 6000 injured people.
- Medical camps in the villages twice an interval of 10 days were organized and medical relief was provided for external and internal injuries and bone injuries along with immunization with TTP.

MSSRF also facilitated the UN World Food Programme tie up with different NGOs and the district administration in the tsunami affected districts of Tamil Nadu for distribution of 350 tonnes of fortified biscuits to tsunami-affected families. Apart from this 29 tonnes of biscuits were distributed to students of classes VI-VIII in Nagapattinam district.

In the immediate aftermath of Tsunami, a relief team, Swiss Humanitarian Aid under the auspices of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) arrived in Chennai. SDC sought the help of MSSRF to provide the necessary facilitations for the team in terms of working out the logistics, liaisoning with the relief and rehabilitation nodal officers of the Government of Tamil Nadu. MSSRF provided the in-house expertise and support to the team specifically in areas concerning damage assessment, trauma counseling, water & sanitation, medical supply and housing for the affected. MSSRF also hosted a satellite secretarial office for the SHA team and people associated with them in the relief work for three months.

Exploratory Survey and Situation Analysis

The extensive fieldwork carried out in the tsunami affected villages in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam districts helped to understand the community's perception on post Tsunami relief measures



and rehabilitation plans. These visits helped us to understand the extent of damage in terms of human loss, natural resources and basic livelihood assets.

Meetings with the men and women of the affected families, village leaders, Panchayat leaders, local government officials who are involving in the relief measures and NGOs working in these villages were held. The visits also helped us to observe the actual situation and collect at first hand information on the relief measures and the communities' perception on restarting the livelihoods and ecological foundation.

Restarting the livelihood through catalytic interventions in selected villages

MSSRF has been working in a modest way to support the tsunami victims to restart the livelihoods in the following three hamlets which were very badly affected

1. Samiyarpettai (Cuddalore district)
2. Muzukuthurai (Cuddalore district)
3. Madavamedu (Nagapattinam district)



These hamlets were also found to be appropriate for synergizing MSSRF's three pronged approach of rebuilding ecological security, livelihood security and knowledge empowerment over a period of time. Need assessment has been carried out and the following three aspects were prioritized for immediate action.

1. Support to buy boats and Nets
2. Repairing of damaged boats and engines (catamarans and small boats)
3. Starting of traditional microenterprises (fish vending by women,)

Subsequently Community based groups were formed in each of the village with representation from leaders of elected Panchayat, meenavar Panchayat, women SHG leaders, government officials, representatives of other NGOs working in the village and MSSRF. A Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) was signed between MSSRF and the local community.

Based on the prioritization MSSRF extended the support to engine repairing, net making (*Kavalavalai*, and *Vaalavalai*) and revolving fund to women SHGs. This helped the fishermen to revive the livelihoods activities and the women to start the small scale fish vending business.



In Sadraskuppam near Kalpakkam helped self help groups to take poultry farming with the support of Venkateshwara Hatcheries. The other partner in this effort is TamilNadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, which provides the necessary technical inputs. Another income generation activity of mushroom production was started in the hamlet.

Bioshields for ecological rehabilitation

Work has been initiated to develop bioshields in Chidambaram region in two villages (Muzhkuthurai,

Samiarpettai) and mangrove nursery preparation in one village (MGR Nagar). Discussion is going on with the men and women of these villagers for preparing a detailed action plan. Multi-tier plantation has already started in Sadraskuppam with the support of the local community.

ICT based Village Knowledge Centres for Strengthening the Ecological and Livelihood Security of Coastal Communities

The Village Knowledge Centers (VKC) located in the coastal areas of Pondicherry played a major role immediately following the first Tsunami attack and in post-tsunami relief. The public address network in these VKCs helped to distribute the Tsunami relief materials to the affected community in an effective way.

The process of setting up VKCs in the Tsunami affected coastal districts of Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Kanyakumari was initiated with the help of Tata Relief Committee, Microsoft, Canadian International Development Agency and OKN. Till now four VKCs have been set up in Kovalam (Kancheepuram District), Akkaraipettai (Nagapattinam District), Kadiapattinam and Keelamanakkudi (Kanyakumari District). Need assessment was carried out through group discussion with fishermen leaders, youth groups, SHG members, children and schoolteachers, research institutions, and NGOs.

In Kovalam VKC it is planned to organize a course on 'birds of the local region' to the children and approached Institute of Bird Studies and Natural History, Rishi Valley, Andhra Pradesh. Also, with the help of Azim Premji Foundation, they initiated a Computer Aided Learning Programme in Kovalam and Akkaraipettai. Training programmes were organized to the knowledge workers of Akkaraipettai and Kovalam. With the help of Tata Consultancy Services initiated an Adult Literacy programme in Kovalam and Akkaraipettai centers.

Similarly, with the support from the Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India a Village Knowledge Centre was opened by Dr.M.K.Bhan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India and Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Chairman Atomic Energy Commission on 11.6.2005 at Sadraskuppam.

Exposure visits to village Knowledge Centres: Based on the discussion held with the villagers of Samiarpattai, Mzhkuthurai and Madavamedu and the interests shown by them an exposure visit to Pondicherry was organized. Around 34 men and women members were taken for exposure visit. They visited the hub and a few VKCs located in the coastal villages and interacted with the men and women in the villages and also with the local animators who are managing the VKCs. After the return they hold a meeting in the respective villages and informed their interest to establish such VKCs in their villages. MSSRF has already initiated the work and the centers would be inaugurated during the third week of June 2005.

Later similar exposure visits were organized for the villagers of Kzhavanjoor and Pattinamcherry of Karikal region in Pondicherry.

Action plan for New Andamans

Tsunami created unprecedented magnitude of loss of lives and livelihoods damage in the Andaman

and Nicobar islands. H.E. Professor Ram Kapse of Andaman and Nicobar Islands requested MSSRF to prepare an action plan for *New Andamans*. Subsequently a spearhead team consisting of MSSRF scientists under the leadership of Prof.P.C.Kesevan was constituted to make field visits, study and prepare the action plan. The team members visited different parts of the islands, made field observations, interacted with the officials of government departments, scientific institutions, local leaders of grass root institutions, the captains of tribal councils, NGOs, financial institutions etc and prepared the action plan. The action plan was submitted to the Andaman and Nicobar administration and the Union government.

Meetings and Conferences

Consultation on Post –Disaster Management and Prevention Strategies with the objectives to identify a range of priority areas for research, and to identify current and potential research organizations that are interested was organized by MSSRF and IDRC on 13-14 May 2005. The workshop participants were from outside India from Tsunami affected countries, national and regions NGOs, senior bureaucrats who are administering tsunami relief programme and academicians etc.

IFAD and MSSRF jointly organized a programme of Stakeholder consultation workshop on April 4-5, 2005 at MSSRF. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the draft project strategy on livelihood rehabilitation programme for the communities impacted by the tsunami disaster. The participants of the meeting represented the Government department, NGOs, subject experts and bankers.

MSSRF staff contributed as resource persons to the workshop organized by state Directorate of Rural Development, Tamil Nadu state on Tsunami rehabilitation programme to the Project officers and the Panchayat leaders on need assessment and developing operational plan at State Institute of Development (SIRD), Maraimalai Nagar, Chennai.

Foundation participated in the exhibition on tsunami relief and rehabilitation organized during Mr. Bill Clinton's (special envoy of the United Nations Secretary – General for tsunami recovery) visit on 27 May 2005 at Collectorate, Nagapattinam district.

MSSRF team is providing inputs to the organizing committee, which is going to organize an international conference on Building new future: CII Tsunami Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation operations with the support of National and International stakeholders.

Back to Normalcy: MSSRF has organized a play `The New Wave' in collaboration with Nalamdana a Chennai based NGO for psychological rehabilitation at Sadraskuppam on 7th June 2005 to the tsunami victims. The play focused to help the fishing community to overcome the fear of sea, and some of the social problems like a breaking social relationships and institutions in the post tsunami context.

The local people appreciated the play; hence it is decided to discuss further about replicating the same to other villages/districts where MSSRF works for tsunami rehabilitation.



Tool kits and Capacity building

Tool kits on Coastal Biovillage, Bioshield and Village Knowledge Centre

Three tool kits meant for field level workers engaged in the development works on Coastal Biovillage has been published, the other two tool kits one on Bioshield, the other on Village Knowledge Centre are under preparation.

The coastal Biovillage toolkit deals about the process involved, village level institution building and the skill development for sustainable use of natural resources and need based skill enhancement to improve the livelihoods of the artisan fishers, small and marginal farmers and labourers.

The tool kit on Bioshield focuses on mangrove forests and plantations of other appropriate species, which could help to mitigate storms, cyclone and tsunami.

The third tool kit on Village Knowledge Centre depicts the step by step process of establishing the center and importance and supply of need driven local specific information to the different sections of the community.

Orientation and training

A training plan is under preparation to organize orientation programmes on Bioshield, coastal Biovillages and Village Knowledge Centres to different implementing agencies. It is planned in such a way that it covers at the state level for government officials and bankers and at the district level for the officials of the relevant government departments, representatives of NGOs, and at local level to the Panchayat Raj Institutions and Community Based Organizations etc.

Long term projects

The following are the long term projects MSSRF has taken up for implementation to address the problems of ecological rehabilitation, rebuilding the livelihoods of fishing and farming communities in the tsunami villages and to develop a grid of Village Knowledge Centres in the tsunami affected districts of Tamil Nadu. These project would be implemented in a process mode with the active participation and collaboration of other stakeholders like the village communities, Panchayat Raj Institutions, government departments, NGOs, banks etc.

a) Microsoft tsunami contribution

Microsoft corporation has sanctioned a project 'Microsoft Tsunami Contribution' for a period of 30 months. The projects aims to develop bioshield, soil reclamation of agricultural fields affected due to sea water inundation and training the villagers on green and organic manuring methods, rebuild the shattered livelihoods of the all affected communities and also to establish Village Knowledge Centres in the selected tsunami affected villages. In addition the project would also support to construct a training center to enhance the capacity of the fishing and farming communities in the region.

b) Long term Educational and Nutritional Support for children orphaned by tsunami

On an invitation from Bharat Soka Gakkai (BSG) MSSRF prepared a proposal with objectives to provide financial support necessary for education and nutritional support to the identified children orphaned by Tsunami in the state of Tamil Nadu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The proposal has been accepted; Mr.Manu Gupta representing the BSG visited MSSRF and finalized the MoU. It was planned to hold the first steering committee meeting during the second week of July 2005 to launch the programme.

In the mean time we have generated exhaustive database on orphaned children and the NGOs working on the issue and the facilities provided to the children in Nagapattinam district. It is planned to conduct a survey to identify the most appropriate children for the programme.

c) Department of Biotechnology has sanctioned a project for undertaking ecological and economic rehabilitation activities in four Tsunami affected villages. These villages have been selected based on the nature of the damage to the villages, occupation of the villagers as well as opportunity for ecological and economic rehabilitation. The broad areas in which MSSRF can undertake activities with DBT support includes (a) Establishment of Village Knowledge and Weather Forecasting Centres; (b) Ecological Restoration, (c) Economic Rehabilitation of the local communities for sustainable livelihoods through training and capacity building as well as ensuring market linkages.

d) Similarly MSSRF and Department of Atomic Energy (IGCAR/BHAVINI) have decided to undertake ecological and economic rehabilitation activities in a few selected tsunami villages. The ecological rehabilitation would have two components; mangrove plantations and multi layered coastal bioshields along the coastline of the IGCAR region. Economic rehabilitation would address sustainable livelihoods of the local communities through training and capacity building for enterprise development with definite market linkages. The project also would establish Village Knowledge Centres in 8-10 villages as a cluster.

Others

The Hindu Media Resource Centre (HMRC) has prepared a film on tsunami '*We Shall Over Come... (Duration: 9 mts - A docu drama expressed through background music and illustrative charts with out voice over)*'. This docu drama recalls the tragedy and narrates two positive incidents that happened in both Pichavaram and at Pondicherry. In Pichavaram the mangroves saved them and in Pondicherry the communication systems at the Rural Knowledge Centre helped to forewarn people to escape from the vulnerable places. The docudrama also explains the initiatives taken up by the foundation after tsunami for building hopes in their life.

Proposal submitted

A proposal submitted to Barret Foundation, USA through Cosmos Ignite Innovations Pvt. Ltd for the supply of 1000 Solar powered LED lights for tsunami aid in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam districts of Tamil Nadu. The proposal has been accepted.

Proposal development stage

A proposal is under preparation to submit to Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for establishing Coastal Village Resource Centres with an integrated approach to ecological and livelihood rehabilitation issues of tsunami affected areas of India and Sri Lanka.