

CHAPTER - VII

TSUNAMI

The killer tidal waves of "Tsunami" triggered by series of earthquakes of unprecedented scale off the Indonesian Coast struck the coastal areas of the Union Territory of Pondicherry on the early hours on 26th December, 2004. The Tsunami waves hit the coasts of south India with such ferocity and suddenness that turned out to be the deadliest natural disaster in the recent history, bringing huge devastation of catastrophic proportions. Coastal fishing community and some of the poorest people living in the coastal regions were the most affected, with huge loss of lives as well as fishing crafts and tackles and destruction of habitat and houses. Children and women were affected most adversely as they were the least able to resist and were dragged into watery graves. The estimated 30,000 people became homeless in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The current death toll is 599, that is, 492 in Karaikal and 107 in Pondicherry.

16 villages in Pondicherry and 17 villages in Karaikal have been affected. 17,432 people in Karaikal and 26,000 in Pondicherry are displaced. The Standing agricultural crops in 792 hectares of land were damaged. Owing to the tsunami 10,061 houses were damaged. Twenty-two relief camps were set up in Karaikal and twenty-six in Pondicherry, to take care of the relief operations of about 30,000 victims of Tsunami during its peak period of functioning.

The bridge connecting Karaikal town and villages located on the southern side of Nagapattinam over river Arasalar was substantially damaged. It has been temporarily restored by construction of Bailey bridge by Indian Army. Government Primary School at Kalikuppam in Karaikal was totally destroyed and many other schools suffered minor damages. There were extensive damages caused to the transformers, HT poles and LT lines which resulted in breakdown of power in the coastal area. Power supply was restored after attending to the urgent repair immediately.

The people evacuated in Pondicherry and Karaikal regions from coastal areas were accommodated in the nearby schools, marriage halls and Community buildings. School kitchens and modernised Midday Meals Central Kitchen were operated. More than 5.00 lakh food packets were distributed with the assistance of the Revenue, Local Administration and Education Departments. Headmasters and teachers of the schools provided assistance in the form of conducting census and other supervisory work and they functioned as link officials in tsunami affected villages.

A catastrophe of such magnitude and ferocity has never been experienced in the living memory. The devastation has stunned the people and left them under psychological and mental distress. Women and children are the most affected. Doctors, Nurses and para medical staff of Health Department counselled them and gave them psychological support. Orphaned children and widows were enumerated for special relief measures.

The fishermen community has borne the brunt of Tsunami. The losses incurred

by them are heavy both in terms of lives lost and damage to the fishing crafts.

Immediate Relief Measures:

- Government of Pondicherry announced the following urgent relief measures:
 - a. Ex-gratia payment to the family of each deceased @ Rs.1,00,000/-
 - b. Cremation expenses to the family of each deceased @ Rs. 5,000/-
 - c. Medical expenses to each injured person @ Rs. 5,000/-
 - d. Housing subsidy for each house irreparably damaged / destroyed @ Rs. 10,000/-
 - e. Grant of financial assistance per affected fishermen family to purchase utensils, Clothes etc., @ Rs. 2,000/-
- Supply of 70 kgs. of rice to affected families.
- Supply of two dhotis, two sarees, two towels and a bed-sheet to each affected family.
- Quantum of financial assistance for the loss/damages to fishing boats are as under :
 - a) Fully damaged mechanized Boats (Wooden Hull) Rs.4.50 Lakhs
 - b) Partly damaged mechanized boats (Wooden Hull) Rs.3.50 Lakhs
 - c) Fully damaged mechanized boats (FRP Hull) Rs.2.00 Lakhs
 - d) Partly damaged mechanized Boats (FRP Hull) Rs.1.75 Lakhs
 - e) FRP catamarans with OBMs Rs.1.00 Lakh
 - f) Catamarans with OBM Rs.0.50 Lakh
 - g) Catamarans without OBM Rs.0.20 Lakh
- Rs.3750/- per hectare for loss of standing crops as compensation for 792 hectares of tsunami affected land.
- Compensation to farmers who have suffered loss of cattle and poultry ranging from Rs.100 to Rs.10,000/- depending upon the nature of animal.

Long Term Rehabilitation Measures

It is proposed to implement Tsunami Emergency Research Project through PIA with the assistance of World Bank. The total cost of the project is Rs.158.28 crore. The project has four components namely (i) Housing Reconstruction (ii) Restoration of Livelihoods (iii) Technical Assistance and Training and (iv) Implementation support. The details are given under Externally Aided Projects.

Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package for Tsunami affected areas

Government of India have announced Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package for Tsunami affected areas under which an amount of Rs.155.62 Crores was sanctioned towards loan and subsidy components. Government of India had so far granted Rs.70.83 Crores.

Financial Expenditure incurred due to Tsunami

In connection with various rescue, relief and rehabilitation process to the tsunami affected areas Government had incurred the following expenditure:

➤ Central Assistance	Rs.7083.00 lakhs
➤ State Funds	Rs. 544.53 lakhs
➤ Chief Minister's Welfare Fund	Rs.1,014.00 lakhs

Total	Rs.8,641.53 lakhs
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State Plan

Planning Commission allowed Rs.100.00 crore in the Annual Plan 2005-06 for infrastructure development in the Tsunami affected areas and the same will also be maintained in the Revised Annual Plan 2005-06. Rs.200.00 crore has been proposed for development of infrastructure facilities in the Tsunami affected areas in the Annual Plan 2006-07.

Last year a decision was taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to provide Rs.50.00 crore to Union Territory of Pondicherry for construction of houses for the fishermen in the Tsunami affected coastal areas and lands are being identified for this purpose. Voluntary organizations are also encouraged for construction of houses for fishermen in the coastal areas. The U.T. Administration approached the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to release Rs.30.00 crore for the above project in the Revised Annual Plan 2005-06 and Rs.20.00 crore in the Annual Plan 2006-07.