

# Temporary Relief

In the melee and panic that followed the tsunami, the victims had to leave their belongings like clothes, utensils, documents, etc and escape from the wrath of the giant waves. Many of the affected people including children, women and youth suffered from fear psychosis. The government, in its mammoth efforts to bring back normalcy, first rushed in with immediate necessities like food, water and shelter. It then geared up to offer temporary relief to those who had turned pauper with one whoosh of a wave.

The package of relief offered by the State Government was intended not only to provide immediate and temporary relief but also a long term and permanent rehabilitation to enable the victims to turn a new lease of life with confidence to eke out a decent and dignified living which will enable them to forget the traumatic and heart-rending loss of close kith and kin and damage of income sustaining tools and

implements. Depending upon the damage caused, relief was announced in different packages.

## RELIEF TO FAMILIES OF THE DECEASED

A relief of Rs 1 lakh for every deceased person was paid to the next of the kin in the family from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund. In addition, Rs 1 lakh was sanctioned



## RELIEF TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

	Relief to families		Relief to injured		Relief to orphaned			Relief to widows		Relief to SC/ST	
Name of the District	Rs.4912 package	Rs.2912 package	Severely Injured @Rs.25-000	Moderately Injured @Rs.5000	Girls 14-18 yrs @Rs.5 lakhs	Girls above 18 @ Rs.3 lakhs	Children (0-14 years)	Ex gratia @Rs.1 lakh	Pension Sanctioned @ Rs200 pm	SC	ST
Chennai	17805	26654	-	9	-	-	-	35	35	9650	-
Cuddalore	11854	8213	1	250	3	13		78	78	11115	653
Kancheepuram	7043	2818	-	24	1	-	9	17	4	447	69
Kanniyakumari	26921	17170	5	708	4	13	3	106	5	206	-
Nagapattinam	39941	49885	35	2340	7	6	179	294	108	31575	1700
Pudukottai	-	5637	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	765	-
Ramanathapuram	0	20847	-	2	1	-	1	4	-	3253	64
Thanjavur	3	5014	-	20	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Thiruvallur	4140	12883	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	4792	837
Thiruvavur	-	2633	-	3	-	-	3	14	9	115	-
Tirunelveli	630	5924	-	6	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Tuticorin	735	18880	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1867	-
Villupuram	9500	-	-	46	-	1	-	5	5	4625	55
Total	118572	176458	41	3408	16	33	197	561	250	58461	3308

from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to the next of kin of deceased persons. As many as 945 persons were reported missing. The Government of Tamil Nadu issued instructions relaxing the legal requirement of 7-year disappearance for claiming death relief so that partial relief could be availed by the kin of missing persons.

## RELIEF TO THE INJURED

Loss of limbs and eyes incapacitates the victim's ability to sustain normal income generating activities. Therefore, these victims needed a reasonable monetary compensation to lead a respectful life with economic assistance from the

Government. A financial assistance of Rs 25,000 was given to every victim who suffered loss of limbs and Rs. 5000 for grievous injuries.

#### RELIEF TO THOSE RENDERED HOMELESS (RS 4912 PACKAGE)

This package consisted of one dhoti, one saree and two bed sheets, 60 kgs of rice, 3 litres of kerosene, Rs.1000 for purchase of condiments, oils, pulses, etc., Rs. 1000 for utensils and stove, Rs. 2000 for

putting up a hut as a temporary measure, a separate rehabilitation plan to permanently shift these families to nearby safer locations with their consent and co-operation to provide pucca houses was also drawn up.

#### SUSTENANCE ALLOWANCE FOR FAMILIES

Name of District	No. of families to whom relief Package given completely (i.e. both cash and kind @ Rs.1356.50 per family for the month of					Value of package given (Rs. in lakhs) [(No. of families x 1356.50) /100000]
	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05	May 05	Total	Total
Chennai	43484	43484	43393	43418	173779	2,357.31
Cuddalore	20010	19999	19978	19978	79965	1,084.73
Kancheepuram	9861	9861	9861	9861	39444	535.06
Kanyakumari	43073	43066	43054	43032	172225	2,336.23
Nagapattinam	72738	68928	68897	72487	283050	3,839.57
Pudukkottai	5631	5631	5631	5631	22524	305.54
Ramanathapuram	20853	26507	26507	26507	100374	1,361.57
Thanjavur	5017	5017	5017	5017	20068	272.22
Thiruvallur	16983	16976	16976	16976	67911	921.21
Thiruvarur	2633	2633	2633	2633	10532	142.87
Tirunelveli	6519	6526	6531	6348	25924	351.66
Tuticorin	19615	19615	19615	19555	78400	1,063.50
Villupuram	9500	9500	9500	9500	38000	515.47
TOTAL	275917	277743	277593	280943	1112196	15 086.94

### RELIEF WHERE LIVELIHOOD WAS LOST (RS 2912 PACKAGE)

This relief package was for the families of persons whose houses were not damaged but who lost their livelihood. This package consisted of one dhoti, one saree and two bed sheets, 60 kgs rice, 3 litres of kerosene, Rs. 1000 for purchase of condiments, oils, pulses, etc., and Rs. 1000 for utensils and stove.

### RELIEF TO FAMILIES AND SUSTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Family cards were distributed immediately to the families of the affected persons who had lost their belongings including family cards. An additional 10 litres of kerosene to the cardholders from the month of January 2005 was announced.

Besides, the government released a sustenance allowance of Rs. 1000 and 30 kg of rice, provisions, kerosene, etc., valued at Rs 526 per month for each family for four months from February to May 2005 to the tsunami-affected. About 3 lakh families benefitted from this scheme.

Families rendered homeless were provided with temporary shelters valued at Rs. 8000 each and improved later with Rs. 2000 each. Tamil Nadu Government provided 14,343 shelters and NGOs provided 18,035 shelters.

### RELIEF TO FISHERMEN

The tsunami exacted a heavy toll on coastal communities and especially the fisherfolk in the region. To enable the fishermen to undertake fishing operations without loss of time, a relief package consisting of the following was announced: replacement of gill nets for vallams (medium size boats) at Rs. 20,000 per unit, replacement of gill nets for catamaran at Rs. 10,000 per unit, depending upon the extent of damage a sum of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 was given towards repair/ rebuilding of catamarans. A separate package for providing outboard motors and relief to mechanized boats and trawl nets that suffered damages was sanctioned.

### RELIEF TO STUDENTS

Students in the affected areas who had lost their textbooks, notebooks and uniforms in the disaster were given free notebooks and textbooks. The Director of Government Examinations and Universities issued duplicate certificates free of cost to the persons in the affected areas who had lost their educational certificates. Students who had to relocate and get admitted in different schools were promptly issued Transfer Certificates.

The tuition fees and special fees payable by the students of tsunami affected families for the period from 01.01.2005 to the end of the academic year 2005-06 was ordered to be borne



by the State Government. In addition, the students were exempted from payment of examination fees from March 2005 to the end of academic year 2005-2006.

A separate public examination was held for the students studying in 121 tsunami-affected schools. This resulted in better pass percentages of these students compared to the State average in both the 10<sup>th</sup> and Plus-Two exams. The percentage was 79.38 compared to 76.9 in Plus-Two and 81.31 to 77.81 in the Tenth Standard exams.

#### RELIEF TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Orphaned adolescent girls were admitted into service homes run by the State Government. Two new service homes were opened in Kanyakumari and Nagapattinam districts. Unmarried orphaned girls over 18 years of age were admitted in service homes and given technical training to acquire vocational skills. Some of the life skills imparted to the girls are tailoring, computer, type writing, embroidery and plastic wire products. A unique scheme was launched by which a sum of Rs 3 lakh is invested in fixed deposit in the name of unmarried orphaned girls over 18 years of age for upgrading their education.

#### RELIEF TO DESTITUTE WOMEN

Before the tsunami, majority of the women and girl children were engaged in sustaining life and livelihood of their male fish workers by taking care of their basic needs and that of the future generation. Traditionally, women of fishing communities have been playing important roles in marketing fresh fish and processing surplus catch for sale at a later date. When tsunami struck, many of them were left destitute. Women workers in processing, vending, auctioning and other fish related activities of the fishing communities were offered special relief packages through the grants for purchase of lost assets and forming them into groups as they completely lost their livelihood. Ongoing pension schemes were extended to cover all those rendered destitute by the calamity. Old age pension was sanctioned to 242 persons, physically handicapped pension to 80, destitute widow pension to 380, destitute agricultural labourer pension to 50 and destitute wives pension to 14, totalling 766 persons.

#### RELIEF TO FARMERS

Approximately 11,400 farmers were given relief for their damaged crops covering an extent of 5211.79 hectares. Towards reclamation of sand cast and saline agricultural lands affected by tsunami a relief of Rs 12,500 per hectare

#### RELIEF TO ORPHANED CHILDREN

A number of children were rendered orphans by this tragedy. All these children were adopted by the Government and were given adequate protection. The Government opened Child Care Centres in the districts at Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Nagercoil (Kanniyakumari) with facilities to maintain a hundred children at each centre. Caretakers and teachers were appointed to take care of the children at these centres. Play materials, other equipment necessary for the development of the children besides medical facilities were provided at these centres.

The Government made it clear that the State is not in favour of displacing these children but would only permit adoption of the orphaned children by private individuals/organizations as per procedure already in force. Counsellors were sent immediately to the affected areas to enable the traumatized and aggrieved children to get psychological and emotional support to return to normal life at the earliest.

The State Government announced an unique scheme by which the State would invest a sum of Rs 5 lakh as fixed deposit in the name of each orphaned child and orphaned adolescent girls rendered homeless. This amount will be available to them when they attain the age of 18 for further studies, self employment, etc.

covering an extent of 8460.34 hectares was given. For the horticultural lands affected by tsunami a relief of Rs 12,500 per hectare has been given for 669.82 hectares.

Timely phasing out of the relief into recovery has been closely associated with the release of the rehabilitation assistance for livelihoods and productive activities. Since the recovery of livelihoods is the foundation of rehabilitation, getting people back to work was the key to getting the local economy moving again.

#### **PARTNERS IN ACTION: NGOS / INGOS/CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN TSUNAMI RELIEF AND REHABILITATION**

The scale of the disaster was unprecedented and the response too was out of the ordinary. Relief poured in from government and non-governmental organizations, religious organizations and corporates.

Fortunately, organizations with experience in disaster recovery realized that relief and rehabilitation that is uncoordinated is a disaster by itself and, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2005, an NGO coordination centre was set up in Nagapattinam. Later, a similar centre was established in Kanniyakumari and a tsunami rehabilitation knowledge centre was designated by the district

administration to oversee coordination of activities in Villupuram district.

The role of NGOs can be looked at from various angles. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, the Tamil Nadu government took the lead in rescue and relief operations with the State Relief Commissioner's office working through the District Collectors. The government machinery is systematic and centralized. Cabinet ministers and senior officers of the Government were sent to the field to oversee rescue and relief. There were areas where the NGOs helped and their decentralized set-up made response time quicker. Also, being tuned to the community's immediate and actual requirements, NGOs were able to respond to specific needs— whether it was food, utensils or hygiene kits. Their need-based response really made relief faster. The relationships of NGOs with donor agencies meant that funds were quickly made available; their relationships with corporate entities meant that sourcing of items such as large-scale requirements of disinfection agents was faster as was the mobilizing of debris removing equipment such as bulldozers and earthmovers. Similarly, some NGOs, because of their previous contacts and work with certain communities, were able to identify those left out and attend to their needs. In general, it was easier for the administration to work with the NGOs for rapid response and to ensure that the maximum numbers of affected people received due relief. It was easier for the NGOs to be effective because of the support they received from the government.

Many NGOs have worked in the relief phase, setting up and/or repairing/refurbishing dozens of temporary shelters for those whose homes were destroyed as well as providing them with some components of support such as food, medical aid, water supply, etc. Some of them showed great speed in completing



Childrens Park at Muzhukkuthurai





construction of permanent houses in the various districts as well as the medical and other support provided for the needy. Groups working with children set up child care centres and supported orphaned children as well as those going to school with books and uniforms. They were also at the forefront in helping with trauma counselling.

Fishing communities were most affected with the loss of boats and engines. Some of the NGOs set up centres for boat and engine repair as well as manufacture of boats, ensuring high quality of work done as well as in micromanaging construction activities and livelihood restoration. NGOs worked for reclamation of salinated land in the tsunami affected areas paving the way for further packages of assistance from Government.

There have been mixed reports of people getting multiple quanta of aid or of being left out. This is not really surprising considering the number of players who poured into the affected areas offering relief. The NGOs made two-way information flow on the requirements of the villages and the materials available with the

Government. During the first month of relief operations, they ensured a transparent relationship with the Government Officers on a daily basis, which then continued with regular meetings between the NGOs and other organizations with the District Administrations. Sectoral groups—such as for shelter, women, children, water and sanitation—were organized with NGOs already working in those areas taking the lead. Important corporates have also been active using innovative technologies such as the setting up of desalination plants to provide drinking water to the communities, repair of engines, desalination of salt affected lands, etc. The CII/Southern Region played a significant role in all these efforts.

In the rehabilitation phase, some of the NGOs have been promoting alternate technologies in building and alternate livelihoods by conducting workshops and meetings to share expertise apart from their NGO coordination activities.

Shelter reconstruction is the largest ongoing activity in the rehabilitation phase. The Tamil Nadu government decided on certain



minimum requirements in terms of area of the house, ownership patterns, location and costs. With large numbers of organizations coming forward to construct houses, the Tamil Nadu government decided to have formal MoUs (Memoranda of Understanding) with the organizations wanting to participate. NGOs are able to work closer with the community and rebuild according to the community's requirements and aspirations. Quality control and adherence to guidelines is likely to be stricter and accountability better, as these are relatively short-term activities.

It appears a nearly ideal mix – the blending of the short term quick and appropriate response by the non-governmental organizations coupled with the wider coverage and sustained activities by the government – in responding to a disaster of the magnitude of tsunami. It is also clear that coordination and information sharing is essential right from zero hour

on to ensure that resources (both human and material) that are available are optimally used. Perhaps, the most important outcome of the tsunami disaster is the realization that governments and non-governmental organizations can work in partnership, and that too, successfully. As we approach the first anniversary of the tsunami disaster, it is time to recapitulate, to see where the response was right and what was left out, where, so that the next time around, the response could be even better.