



# CIKS TSUNAMI RELIEF REPORT

(December 2004 - June 2005)

## A WORD OF THANKS

*Dear Friends,*

*Ever since 26th December 2004 when the East Coast of India was struck by Tsunami, we have been inundated with offer of help. We started receiving phone calls and e-mails enquiring about our safety not only from other parts of India but from the well wishers all over the world. We have also received generous contributions by way of both money, materials and volunteers who offered time both from within and outside India. This is a brief overview of our effort in this area.*

*Countless people have supported our Tsunami relief effort in several ways - contributing time, money, resources, encouragement and support. We have printed a list of donors and volunteers on the last page of this report. However, this is not a complete list of everyone who has contributed to the effort. We are extremely grateful to all those who have helped us out in ways too numerous to mention - and whose names do not appear on the list. Your valuable aid is not forgotten.*

*A.V. Balasubramanian  
CIKS, July 2005*

## RELIEF AND REHABILITATION RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

A large number of agricultural lands in the coastal areas of Nagapattinam district and other districts have been disturbed and damaged due to influx of sea water. However, this has not drawn any kind of attention that it deserves, perhaps partly because the damage to agriculture is not so visible and dramatic as in the case of fishermen. Nevertheless large tracts of agricultural lands have had their standing crops destroyed and are currently unfit for cultivation unless remedial measures are taken. Our Centre has decided to work long term in this area and in this connection some of the following activities have been initiated.

- We have commenced a survey to assess the nature and extent of damage to agriculture in the Sirkazhi and Kollidam blocks of Nagapattinam districts. These survey include – gathering of data regarding agricultural lands along the coast from village and government records, interviews with farmers and survey and spot visits to the affected areas.
- From selected areas, we have commenced collecting soil samples and water samples to assess the nature of the damage.
- These samples are being analysed at the Soil Testing Laboratory of the Agricultural College of Annamalai University at Chidambaram.
- We have commenced the survey and collection of plants and weeds that are found in the affected areas after the tsunami and comparing it wherever possible with baseline data with the kind of vegetation that existed before the tsunami.
- A. V. Balasubramanian visited the Central Soil Salinity Research Institute at Karnal in Haryana and had discussions with the Director and technical staff regarding the technologies that they have developed for reclamation of salt affected soils.
- Subhashini Sridhar and Krithika from the Sirkazhi field station visited the A. D. College for Agriculture in Trichy which is part of the All India Coordinated programme on reclamation of saline soils and had discussions with the faculty of the college.
- We also had discussions with the scientists in the Agricultural College of the Annamalai University and Scientists in the Environmental Science Department of the Tamilnadu Agricultural University for undertaking collaborative work and investigations.
- At the invitation of the Department of Science and Technology, A. V. Balasubramanian and Subhashini Sridhar had participated in a meeting that was held at Chennai in February wherein proposals were invited for technology packages for relief in tsunami affected areas. A concept paper was presented for agricultural relief and rehabilitation in the affected areas in Nagapattinam district. The DST expert committee approved the concept paper and subsequently a full fledged proposal has been submitted.
- Training programmes have commenced for farmers on cotton cultivation in tsunami affected areas.
- Tests are also being carried out for examining the traditional paddy varieties that are suitable for cultivation in tsunami affected soils. Ground nut and vegetable varieties are also being experimented with.



*Subhashini Sridhar of CIKS was felicitated on the occasion of International Women's Day for her work in the relief operations in Sirkazhi, Nagapattinam District.*

## RELIEF WORK AT CHENGALPET

In Kanchipuram district, areas like Mamallapuram and Kalpakkam, were badly affected by Tsunami. In these areas, there was inundation by sea water upto 0.5 Km which affected more than 20 villages. The people in the affected areas were provided refuge in schools, colleges, municipal buildings and temples by about 12 noon in Chengalpet and Thirukazhukundram blocks. They stayed in these camps till 29<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

CIKS staff visited the 12 camps in the Chengalpet and Thirukazhukundram blocks and studied their immediate needs. Based on that they contacted the head office at Chennai for the inputs. The Chennai office staff collected old clothes, bed sheets, blankets from several parts of the city and sent them to the field office at Chengalpet. The field staff distributed the above to the affected people in the camps. On 28<sup>th</sup> December, the field staff announced the requirements in the surrounding households. They immediately provided vegetables, rice and other groceries which were collected and used for cooking food. These were packed and distributed to the camps. Young volunteers went around the households to collect old clothes, mats and blankets. The field staff of CIKS explained the situation to a cloth merchant "Karpagam Silk House" in Chengalpet. They provided a discount of 50% for sarees and also offered 100 sarees free of cost.

After three days, the people returned to their respective villages. The field staff visited the villages to survey which are the most affected areas and whether relief materials are being provided in that areas. They found that Uyallikuppam and Pudupattinam villages were the most affected. Due to their close proximity to the sea, relief materials from Government and private agencies did not reach these villages. CIKS staff visited these villages and spoke to the people to find out their immediate needs. The people replied that they had adequate clothes and raw materials but they were in need of fuel for cooking. Based on the needs 200 kerosene stoves, 50 sarees, 50 dhothies, 40 kg rice, 20 kg gram, 8 kg sugar, 10 kg milk powder and used utensils were distributed to these villages through Panchayat heads and VAO.

*Reported by Chengalpet Field Station Team, CIKS*



*Ottadai, a traditional paddy variety, being tested on tsunami affected soil.*

## RELIEF AND REHABILITATION WORK AT SIRKAZHI

The Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu was the worst affected of all. There was enormous loss of life and property and the damage was enormous. The death toll was highest in Nagapattinam district. Since the CIKS field station is located at Sirkazhi, which is one of the Taluk headquarters within this district, we decided to help in the relief and rehabilitation measures in whatever small way possible.

The very next day after the waves (December 27<sup>th</sup>), we collected old clothes with the help of some of our contact farmers from the neighboring villages like Murugamangalam, Agani, Aduthurai etc. and distributed them at the relief camp which was set up at Sirkazhi. Subsequently, old clothes were also sent by *Samanvaya*, Chennai, which were distributed in the affected villages namely, Thirumullaivasal, Nayakkarkuppam, Poompuhar and Pudhukuppam. Fifty-five new bed sheets were bought and distributed at six relief camps. We also distributed sanitary items like paste, soap, brush and oil to around 225 people. We helped in the distribution of medicines provided by the government to the affected people. We helped the team from Gujarat distribute kitchen utensils and school bags to people at Pudhukuppam and Keezhamoovarkarai. Nearly 125 stoves have been distributed at Keezhamoovarkarai.

With the help of student volunteers from IIT, Chennai, we carried out surveys in some of the affected villages in the Sirkazhi Taluk regarding the death toll, the loss of assets etc. in order to get a rough idea about the kind of damage and the type of immediate help required.

In many villages there was a lot of cleaning up that needed to be done. Hence we at CIKS along with volunteers who had come from Chennai, Raipur and Gujarat got into the act immediately. We helped remove the debris with the help of a JCP and also did a lot of manual cleaning especially in the villages of Pudhukuppam and Keezhamoovarkarai. Stocks of bleaching powder and lime were bought to aid the process.

**Pudhukuppam** was one of the villages in which CIKS has worked intensively. We started a community kitchen for this village at the Nagarathar Mandapam. CIKS and SOS supplied provisions and vegetables for this kitchen jointly for 11 days (from 30<sup>th</sup> December to 9<sup>th</sup> January). We arranged water supply for this village through a tanker that came from Bangalore with a capacity of about 1000 liters. We constructed a community shed for the people of Pudhukuppam with a dimension of 100 feet by 12 feet. To construct the temporary shelters for the fishermen of Pudhukuppam village, we have entered into a contract with their community to lease land for one year. The total area is 4.5 acres.



*Temporary shelters constructed at Pudukuppam*

SOS supplied light roofing sheets for the construction of these shelters. One hundred and forty three such temporary shelters (16 feet by 11 feet) have been constructed. This effort was funded by SOS. The cost of each house was around Rs.9300/-. Each house has been provided with one electric bulb and water supply has been arranged for these entire set of houses and three taps have been fixed. The street boards for the newly constructed shelters have been fixed. Thirty temporary toilets have been constructed. A child activity center (30 feet by 20 feet) has also been constructed. Family packs were distributed at Pudhukuppam. Each such family pack consisted of 20 kgs of Rice, Dal and other provisions.

We have carried out surveys in the villages of Thirumullaivasal, Koozhaiyar and Thoduvai. The main idea behind these surveys is to get an idea regarding the kind of work that is currently going on in these villages and identify whether there are certain areas in which we can help and also gather information which can be provided to other NGOs who may be keen to help. Survey work has been completed in the villages of Pazhaiyar and Vanagiri.

We helped **GSS (Gram Swaraj Sangh)** a group from Gujarat identify volunteers for their child activity centers. As of now, two volunteers each have been identified in the villages of Thoduvai and Keezhamoovarkarai and one volunteer has been identified in Pazhaiyar and Nayarkkarkuppam respectively.

Apart from all this CIKS has also helped certain affected individuals on a case-to-case basis. Till now five persons have benefited in this manner. They are:

1. **Mr. Ilayaraja**- This boy belongs to Pudhukuppam and lost his mother in the Tsunami. He is currently studying B.Sc Chemistry at the Poompuhar College. CIKS has been providing accommodation for him at the Sirkazhi office temporarily and has been completely taking care of his needs which include food, transport and also his college books and education.

2. **Mr. Selvaraj**- This boy also belongs to Pudhukuppam and is currently a student of M.Com. CIKS has taken care of his college fee and is also helping him complete his project. We also intend to create some job opportunity for his mother and also help out the family with some medical expenses, which include performing an operation for him for night blindness.

3. **Ms. Naveena**- This girl belongs to Melamoovarkarai. She is a 11<sup>th</sup> std student whose leg was badly injured when she tried escaping the Tsunami. CIKS has taken complete care of her medical expenses and even ensured that she is taken to the hospital regularly for her check-ups and also has promised to help her with her educational expenses.

4. **Ms. Usha**- This girl belongs to Thoduvai. She has a semi blind father and a handicap mother and three sisters. This family lost their house and all their belongings in the Tsunami. Since this girl knows tailoring and her sister was previously into this business, she has been bought a tailoring machine so that it will provide her an opportunity to earn some money and support her family. Both her parents are now completely dependent on her since the other three sisters are married and no longer with them.

5. Four students in the village of Koozhaiyar have also been provided with 8<sup>th</sup> standard textbooks.

*Reported by Sirkazhi Field Station Team, CIKS*



*Relief materials being distributed.*

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