

An appeal on flood disaster at Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu

Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu lies in the coastal line is one of the most backward districts frequently hit by natural disasters. The district has a population of 2600880 (2011 census) with the sex ratio of 984 female for every 1000 males. Cuddalore district has been experiencing disaster after disaster every year after the Tsunami of 2004. The district at the tail end and the draining points for more than 5 rivers and number of tributaries, water discharge and draining from Neyveli Lignite Corporation, deep depressions in Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean making Cuddalore District as a regular disaster prone zone of TamilNadu.



Due to the continuous downpour of rainfall at Cuddalore district starting from first week of November, 2015 to till date and large-scale flooding the damage caused to human and their belongings are innumerable. About 2,000 electric poles were uprooted, snapping power to most of the villages. Out of the 13 blocks in Cuddalore district, 11 blocks have been affected by flood and 7 blocks (Cuddalore, Kurinjipadi, Panruti, Bhuvanagiri, Keeralpalayam, Kattumannarkoil, Kumaratchi) have been put under the most affected list.

The district witnessed the human loss of 54, thousands of cattle, 50000 damaged huts (fully dilapidated/washed away), over 24000 hectares had been completely *damaged* due to the cyclone, food and cash crops submerged, Fishing boats anchored in the Gadilam river at Devanampattinam in Cuddalore district were dragged away to the sea by the huge waves, and 53 villages had been surrounded by flood water with no accessibility to basic needs including water and food.



About 43,000 people in rural areas and 6700 in urban areas have been accommodated in relief centers. Community kitchens have been opened at 32 centers to supply food and drinking water to around 50000 flood affected people.

Flood Disaster and Risk Reduction Measures:

i. Status of Disaster Management and Preparedness:

The Disaster Management and Preparedness programme in Cuddalore District supported by UNAID through Government of India, Government of Tamil Nadu, had been instrumental in building the capacity of Government Line Department Officials, School Teachers and Students, Vulnerable section of the community, Civil Society Organizations, Collection and compilation of resources data locally available, DMP Mapping, Disaster Management Plan at School, Village, Panchayat, Block, City/ Town and District during 2010-11.



The status of the DMP and subsequent DRR has not been noteworthy, since the stakeholders involved in Disaster Management Plan preparation have neither the time nor the inclination to pursue the DMP measures. The lack of involvement has resulted in rushing to the Disaster occurred areas (Cuddalore Flood of 9 November 2015) and evacuating the most affected, providing immediate food etc.

Besides, there is no *Preparedness* on the part of the Government and also the Community. The Government Line Departments and the affected communities panicked and rushed to pillar and post and timely management of disasters is still a dream.

ii. Status of Early Interventions taken by the District Administration:

Literally there was no early intervention, except the warning given by the Metrological Department and the Cuddalore District Administration, since there was no Preparedness to manage the disaster of flood. Villages marooned under and surrounded by 3 to 6 foot water, became non-accessible for more than 5 days and providing relief supplies to the affected became impossible. Most of the people affected by the flood had no accessibility to food, water and sanitation. The women, adolescent girls, children, the aged and disabled became more and more vulnerable.

iii. Role played by NGOs, CBOs, CSOs:

As expected the staffs and representatives from NGOs, CBOs and CSOs were the first to reach the water marooned villages, apart from some media, and distributed emergency food supplies and water to the affected. Government on its part had arranged shelters in schools, marriage and community halls and fed the people from the central kitchen.

iv. Role played by the Community:

The community in all affected areas had become one in seeking redress and also sharing the relief measures. But as usual there was no sharing of resources between the higher and lower castes and the worst affected are the people from downtrodden communities (SC and ST)

v. Status of Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction:

The status of Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction measures had not been not at all adhered to, though Disaster Management Plans at Village, Panchayat, Block, District and School levels had been done and the capacity of the stakeholders had been built up on DMP and DRR measures.

The people's Need

Due to the heavy flood and continuous rainfall, the people lost their huts and belongings, there is no employment, there is no fair food and clothing besides the danger of outbreak of deadly diseases. So the people are in need of temporary shelters, (later permanent shelters), clothing, food, hygienic drinking water, employment opportunities for further sustenance once the situation is normalized.