

***DISASTER THAT
HIGHLIGHTED HIDDEN
SOCIAL DISASTER***

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Details

No. of death - 8,601

No. of Missing - 1126

No. of affected - 10,27,996

- Fisheries - 87 %

- Agriculture - 5 %

- Traders - 5 %

- Tourist - 3 %

First Days of Tsunami

In some area :

- all worked together irrespective of caste or creed
- In Nagai area Muslims – rescued Hindus, helped to bury the dead
 - But in other areas there was discrimination
 - The fishing community did not allow any help to Dalits

RELIEF & REHABILITATION

- RELIEF & REHABILITATION was denied in the name of 'MOST AFFECTED' As the Fishing Community claimed, them to be.
- Dalits – agriculture coolies / labourers also lost land, livelihood. Even their huts were damaged. But this was not counted.

Social Exclusion or Social Disaster

- This paper highlights the social exclusion or social disaster that is hidden in the society and which came out forcefully during this Tsunami. Also something that has to be mitigated.

Caste and Community

- Schedule Castes (SC) – all the socially, culturally and economically oppressed communities and castes (who are now known as *Dalits*) were included in this list.
- Schedule Tribes (ST) – are the Tribal Groups known as *Adivasis*.
- Backward Castes (BC) – this includes all the economically backward communities
- Most Backward Community (MBC) – names of the most economically backward castes were incorporated in this list.
- Other Castes (OC) – all the other castes not included in any of the above categories otherwise referred as the Forward Castes.

DALITS & SCs

- 16.2% Indian Population
- among them 48.11% live under poverty.
- Literacy rate of SC 32% (2001 census)
- About 71% of Dalit women are agricultural labourer
- Many live in coastal belt.

Source : Strategy Paper – Christian Aid

Historically

Historically

Dalits,

Adivasis and

women

have been denied equal economic opportunity.

Dalit live outside the main village / hamlet.

Evidence of Discrimination during Tsunami

- In Veerapandiapattinam, the dominant castes were sheltered at local school.
- Dalits were not allowed. Until another Dalit gave his marriage hall in another area.

- Dalits were not allowed to board the buses that came for rescue. Dalits and Adivasi had to walk to safety.
- In many places marriage halls and cinema theatres were denied to Dalit – sheltered others.
- Dalit lived on roads using only saris for shelter.

Source : KALAM Network of Dalit NGOs assessment of NESAs.

- In many places relief materials meant for Dalit were confiscated by Fishing Community. Many of these communities had 2 or 3 stoves and other materials, while Dalit did not get anything.
- Some NGOs had to ask authorities, police to fight these discrimination.

- In many places NGOs who were in a hurry did not realize these and went along with the demands of the fishing community and neglected the Dalit.

- Most NGOs who had not addressed issues of the vulnerable – Dalits, Adivasis, Women and Children and definitely not worked in a disaster and did not realize these vulnerable community and the discrimination shown to them.

- Authorities also were in hurry, swayed by the visible and powerful fishing community and neglected the others affected by Tsunami. Some evidence are given here from a study.

Table 1
STATUS OF OCCUPATION – PRE AND POST TSUNAMI
(From the Study)

Type of Occupation	Pre Tsunami	Post Tsunami	Lost opportunity	
			No.	%
1. Non-ocean fishing	7635	4104	3531	48
2. Coastal Agriculture	1962	269	1633	80
3. Para fishing	1041	188	853	75
4. Back water fishing	3756	1460	2296	65

Source: Luis M. Report of the study. Vulnerabilities and Livelihood Security Options of the Non-ocean fishing Communities affected by Tsunami in Tamil Nadu. (2005) Peoples Watch, Tamilnadu.

Table 2
NATURE OF COMPENSATION AND THE EXCLUDED

Types of Compensation	Families that were excluded
Relief Rs.2,000/-	32.93%
Relief Rs.4,000/-	31.5%
Relief for maintenance Rs.1,000/-	17%
For Death Rs.1 lakh	22.73%
For land Replenishment	83.88%
Veterinary Hospital Assistance	84.62%

Source: Luis M. Report of the study. Vulnerabilities and Livelihood Security Options of the Non-ocean fishing Communities affected by Tsunami in Tamil Nadu.(2005), Peoples Watch -Tamil Nadu

Main findings

Relief and Rehabilitation process across Tamilnadu have been carried out with a glaring disregard for the Human Rights of all survivors, including their right to equality / non-discrimination, right to food, right to health, right to participation and information, right to adequate housing.

Despite the outpouring of aid, benefits had not reached all affected people. Relief assistance and compensation had not entirely been based on comprehensive need assessment.

Women suffered the greatest brunt of the Tsunami disaster, but relief and rehabilitation policies instead of addressing their concerns often served to increase discrimination against them.

Livelihoods of affected people had still not been restored, and in many areas people had not been able to resume work. This had resulted in despair, frustration, and insecurity.

Gender concerns have not been focused on, and neither have special needs of vulnerable populations such as refugees, widows, disabled people, minorities and children. There is also an apparent disparity in the treatment of different district and ethnic communities who survived the Tsunami.

- “A strikingly disturbing feature of most compensation policies is that of maintaining the status quo: the poorest had nothing, so they received nothing”.
- “Top-down mitigation does little to reduce the level of vulnerability faced by the poor majority. Instead it often serves the interests of rich and powerful groups and may even create conditions for increased vulnerability and further disaster”.

Experience from Gujarat Earth Quake

- Communities that believe in their ability to transform their environment and those that have already worked successfully together will be better able to help each other recover from a disaster than communities that are fatalistic and incapable of doing anything by themselves.

- Vulnerability has three progressive levels; root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions, according to vulnerability analysis model by DMP called Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis (CVA).
- Root causes include macro factors such as lack of access to power and resource structures and the dominance of political and economic processes. They reflect the distribution of power in a society.

- With proper training opportunities, appropriate skills, local institutions and resources, together with the inability of poor people to influence crucial issues such as deforestation, declining soil fertility, population growth and urbanization, which make them even more vulnerable.

- Many NGOs had done to assess vulnerability and provide support

- *Provide Shelter*

- *Relief Materials*

- *Skirts*

- *Sanitary Napkins*

- *Under wears*

- *Boats & Nets*

- *Food & Other Help for Dalits*

- *Livelihood Support to Dalits, Vulnerable Women*

- *Repair or rebuild Damaged Dalit Hunts*

- If recovery and rehabilitations measures taken include upgrading of this vulnerable community after disaster by
 - ensuring their housing and
 - livelihood sustainability,they would be put into the real road to recovery and development.

This is the need of the hour. Only if these are ensured the social disaster can be tackled.

Thank You...