



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Lessons from Tsunami

Report of the National Consultation
14-16 February 2006

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Organised by

Karl Kübel Institute
for Development Education



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Karl Kübel Stiftung
für Kind und Familie



This National Consultation was dedicated to
the memory of the several who lost their
lives in the Tsunami of December 2004
and in honour of Mr. Karl Kübel,
founder of Karl Kübel institutions worldwide,
philanthropist and a pioneering spirit of international
development cooperation,
who expired in Bensheim, Germany
on 10th February 2006



Introduction

Massive ocean waves unleashed by an undersea earthquake, measuring 8.9 on the Richter scale, that had its epicentre 250 kilometres southeast of Banda Aceh in Sumatra in Indonesia, the most powerful in 40 years, cut a swathe of destruction in a coastal arc across South Asia and South-East Asia on the morning of 26th December 2004.

The total death toll stood at 159,260 with 17,958 missing, according to figures compiled by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in mid-January 2005.

In India, the Tamil Nadu coast and the Andaman and Nicobar islands took the brunt of the tsunami, or killer wave, strikes. The toll in Tamil Nadu stood at more than 3,500, including 160 deaths in Chennai, the State capital. About 2,000 persons were killed in Nagapattinam district alone, which has been a victim of cyclones year after year. The ferocity of the waves that hit Nagapattinam town was unimaginable. Water entered 1.5 km inside the town. Communications and electricity supply were cut off in the affected areas. Bodies lay everywhere on the beach.

One year after the Tsunami, and following the unprecedented humanitarian aid that flowed, and with a lot of talk on disaster preparedness, several areas have been found wanting – coordination, networking, policy and direction, financing, monitoring of relief and rehabilitation work, accountability, transparency, involvement of community members, gender integration, environmental and psychosocial impacts. Karl Kübel Stiftung für Kind und Familie (KKS) Germany, Karl Kübel Foundation for Child and Family (KKF) India and Karl Kübel Institute for Development Education (KKID), Coimbatore deemed it appropriate to convene a national consultation with the following specific objectives:

1. To analyze immediate response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and coordination efforts, their effectiveness and impact.
2. To analyze role of preparedness and long-term development interventions with emphasis on the most vulnerable groups.

3. To analyze donor-recipient relationships , issues and changes needed.
4. To analyze the role, responsibilities and impact of media on victims, NGOs, Government and donor response.
5. To understand the disaster management policies of the Government and to identify changes needed.
6. To understand psychosocial consequences of disasters and how do deal with them.

Inaugural Session

The formal inaugural session of the Consultation was held on 14th February with a host of distinguished guests on the dais, both from Germany and India – Mr. Ralf Tepel, Executive Director, KKS-Germany; Mr. Herbert Hassold, formerly of Bread for the World and Christoffel Blind Mission, the and Moderator of the Consultation; Ms. Christina Weber, Programme Officer, KKS-Germany; Mr. Roy D'Silva, Executive Director, KKID and KKF-India, and Mr. Jose Thachil and Dr. George Arickal, Directors of the Karl Kubel Foundation-India.

The inaugural session commenced with the receiving of the news of the demise of Mr. Karl Kübel in Bensheim on 10th February. Dr. George Arickal, a close associate of Mr. Kubel for more than two decades, recalled to memory the yeoman service rendered to humanity through the foundation that he had created in Germany and India, and paid rich tributes. The Consultation was dedicated to the memory of this great soul and to all those who lost their lives in the Tsunami.

Mr. Ralf Tepel delivered the inaugural address. Recalling the events of December 2004 and lauding the response of the aid community, he drove home the point of preparedness as a integral part of development intervention, while warning **“overwhelming sympathy can disempower.”**



Mr. Ralf Tepel lighting the traditional lamp marking the inauguration of the Consultation.
Looking on are Mr. Thachil, Mr. Hassold and Dr. Karunakaran

Mr. Hassold, Mr. Thachil and Dr. Arickal who also spoke dealt with the issue of preparedness and the role of NGOs.

Earlier Mr. Roy D'Silva welcomed the gathering. Ms. Christina Weber proposed the vote of thanks, while Mr. Tom Jose, Co-Moderator and Programme Officer of KKID acted as the master of ceremony.

From the Moderator's Remarks

As far as emergencies are concerned I met already years ago Major Michael and other CASA (Church's Auxiliary for Social Action) officers to see how they dealt with earthquakes and floods. As far as the Tsunami is concerned, I just recently had the opportunity to listen to the CEO of CASA. Mr. Sushant Agarwal, when he spoke at the farewell party of the longtime head of emergencies at DIAKONIA Germany, Mrs. Hannelore Hensle. He spoke in a very critical way about his experiences in the aftermath of this centennial wave. This was long before the media in Europe started their more or less enlightened reviews and "evaluations" on the occasion of the "Anniversary" in December last or January this year.

I am absolutely sure that there are lots of lessons to be learned here and in our countries of the North, which did not suffer from Tsunami. But, as we saw later, we were also hit by disasters showing clearly that the affluent societies also are vulnerable, when hurricanes, heavy rainfall, floods hit them. But there is one thing that we have in common. It is the poorest sections of society who suffer most, to be hit hardest at time like that.

What Sushant Agarwal summarized coincided a great deal with my own fears and expectations having, as a retired person, been a witness to the whole process of emergency and its follow-up - most of the time only on my home TV screen. When I rushed through my notes from his presentation, I found the catchwords, which might more or less occupy us during the hours and days we spend together here in KKID.

- ♦ The mere size of the Tsunami made us forget about other emergencies; not only the death toll of more than 300,000, but also the fact that among the victims there were many tourists from industrialized countries, which mobilized much more relief money than usual and thereby kept up the level of attention.



The Moderator Mr. Hassold

- ♦ It is irritating that warning systems are still not in place, let aside the rare instances, where a single phone call from a more distant shore or the observation of the behaviour of pigs could have saved some lives.
- ♦ After the disaster there was money enough at disposal, but for what had it been used?
- ♦ A large - irritating number - of NGOs showed up, but coordination was lacking. Lots of well-meant efforts were duplicated at some places whereas others have not been reached sufficiently. There was, to Sushant Agarwal, a lot of undue competition among helpers.
- ♦ **Local capacities were not there or were not used, even pushed aside.**
- ♦ “Freelance Evangelists” thought their time had come, which was contradictory to what CASA understands as ecumenical solidarity.
- ♦ The (western) media played a doubtful role, being biased in terms of actionist approaches or even merely selling products, which were not needed but should have been marketed.
- ♦ 50 percent of resources in the first four weeks were wasted. Toilets in the wrong places!
- ♦ Governments, NGOs and committed people were unprepared likewise.
- ♦ It could be seen quite clearly, that exclusions by class, caste, gender, social marginalization or deprivation led to exclusion or neglect in the emergency situation, too. Example: Tribals or Dalits.
- ♦ This means: **An opportunity to promote change was widely neglected. And one thing became very clear: If in the course of the vast efforts of Tsunami-relief NGOs and Governments restrict themselves to merely replacement of material loss, they will fall short of opportunities, they will miss chances of social change.**

Mr. Agarwal ended in asking the NGOs for lobbying for the people, meaning, among other things, to show respect for the capabilities and decision-making structures at the local level. While it will take time, he said, to overcome the traumata the surviving members of the communities are still suffering from, they are the ones who should take the lead and decide the directions of the reconstruction. They should be assisted in establishing a system of community based disaster preparedness as part of their efforts of development. They should be encouraged in their stewardship, meaning accountability and transparency of decision-making. They should be assisted to be healed, not to be kept as beggars.

I assume that all of you who have come here to this workshop want not only to reflect their own involvement in all the actions taken, but also to learn from each other, from our faults.

One final word on the role of the media - notwithstanding their necessity and efficiency in building awareness, mobilizing huge funds for the charities and thereby benefiting lastly the Tsunami-stricken people. But we cannot deny, that the media also created some very unhelpful, sometimes even counterproductive side effects. Just to name a few of them here:

- ♦ The media - especially TV - tend to dramatize, often in an undue manner. They "direct" people, "stage" situations following ready made templates or storyboards.
- ♦ They tend to prefer mere "actionism." They are biased in relating rather to the pale-faced country-citizens than to the local people in charge.
- ♦ And, **the same way the media beat the drums to generate relief funds, they put pressure on the charities or relief agencies to produce "immediate results," meaning speeding up the spending of the accumulated funds unduly or channeling it into telegenous window-dressing, thus failing the real needs of the communities, which might be interested not just in replacements of buildings or boats, but in long-term sustainable development, which benefits the whole community.**
- ♦ And - the empire strikes back - what we always have shortly after the big TV-fund drives and telethons is the negativist approach, denouncing nearly everything or - with an investigative claim - insinuating that there is only misuse of funds and corruption and incompetence at work wherever you look. Then the media pretend that they are the only ones who know.

I am sure, that you, who are actively involved in the relief programmes on the spot, have had to deal with the repercussions of these misinterpretations and lack of understanding indirectly, and sometimes in a very direct way. I am thinking of situations, wherein communities, which were used to take responsibility, also economically, structures were corrupted by give-aways, also because of false competition among charities.

So – and this is my last remark at this point – I am also sure, that we from Germany and from Europe, representing NGOs and relief organizations there, shall take home much "food for thought" for the homework still before us - ourselves, our PR- and FR Departments and the media to deal more sensitively with Tsunamis and other emergencies time.

Consultation on Disaster Preparedness – A Report

Disasters can be mitigated if local communities and Government are adequately equipped to handle them was the key message that emanated from a three-day consultation on “Disaster Preparedness and Response: Lessons from Tsunami,” held at the Karl Kübel Institute for Development Education, Coimbatore, from 14th to 16th February 2006. The seminar was organized as a remembrance gathering and stock-taking exercise after one year of work in the Tsunami-affected areas of coastal India. While appreciating the overwhelming solidarity with the victims of Tsunami, the participants asserted that local communities must be capacitated to spearhead any relief and rehabilitation operation in the wake of a disaster in a participatory manner.

Keynote Address

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. T. Karunakaran, Vice-Chancellor of the Gandhigram Rural Institute, Madurai, said that **had there been a scientific approach to the building of structures along the sea coast and had the local people been aware of the dangers of a receding sea, several hundreds of deaths could have been avoided.** He was quoting from the examples of stilted houses raised in flood-prone areas of South East Asia and of school children’s drill in Japan.

Dr. Karunakaran delivering the keynote address



Dr. Karunakaran's presentation was broadly divided into two sections – the first being technical specifications of safe housing in coastal and disaster prone areas, and the second being the social and community involvement highlighting the Pazhayar experiment in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. As for safety, he drove home the point that **“what really matters is the height of the house site compared to sea level, not just the distance from the sea.”** Going into the technical details of construction, Dr. Karunakaran argued for construction of walls and edifices that would allow the gushing waters to find its course. The point was illustrated with instances of stilted structures and porous compound walls.

The Pazhayar SHELTER experiment is a people's expression of “Shelter, Livelihood Training and Environmental Reconstruction” implemented jointly by CARE India and Gandhigram Rural Institute. In this experiment, there was total community participation from the selection of sites to designing of houses to formation of layout and other matters regarding shelter. People's participation in the entire process ensured that livelihood opportunities were made available to those with skills of masonry and allied activities while at the same time ensuring satisfactory and quality construction.

In concluding his presentation, Dr. Karunakaran said that what is needed is the creation of “hazard-resilient bio-regional communities” with emergency reshuffle plans handled by fully-equipped and well-prepared Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committees of village clusters. He also said that it is not out of place for each panchayat raj to create some kind of emergency corpus funds so that people can have immediate access to relief. This would enhance their self-esteem make them proactive in times of disaster, concluded Dr. Karunakaran.

The Consultation observed that one year after Tsunami, most of the close to 2 million people who lost their homes are still living in temporary shelters and that the pace of reconstruction has been disappointing. Although the massive volume of aid money helped overcome problems immediately after the tsunami which killed more



Dr. Karunakaran has all the attention of his audience

than 280,000 people, it also contributed to a lack of coordination between smaller, less experienced agencies and the more seasoned charities, thus hampering the long-term recovery effort, said one of the key presenters at the Consultation. One participant observed, **“Turf wars between competing agencies also discouraged cooperation in the relief effort. The aid groups all have plenty of money and they have been racing to stake out their ground.”**

Key Inputs



Paul Bhaskar on 'Response, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction'

Paul Bhaskar, Chairman of Peace Trust, Madurai, initially focused on the 'Response, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction' activities in Tamil Nadu following the Tsunami. After pointing out the achievements and shortcomings in each of these three phases, he went on to identify the immediate needs to combat any further deterioration in disaster management and effective reconstruction as the installation of early warning systems; streamlining of relief distribution system; launching public awareness campaigns; and issuing guidelines to relief workers.

Paul Bhaskar also dealt in detail the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification of 1991. Although this was introduced to protect the coast and the traditional fisherpeople who are dependent on the coast, sea and the resources, the regulations are being regularly and continuously amended and diluted to suit the vested interests of powerful lobbies, especially that of the hotel and tourism industries.

The Central Government had declared the coastal stretches of seas, bays estuaries, creeks, rivers and backwater influenced by tidal action (in the landward side) up to 500 meters from the High Tide Line (HTL) and the land between the Low Tide Line (LTL) and the HTL as coastal Regulation Zone and imposed restrictions on the setting up and expanding in the Zone. However, they have been more observed in its breach than its compliance. But the Tsunami of 2004 was indeed a wake up call. (A longer write up on the CRZ is found at the end of this report.)

Non-Structural Measures: For Overall Advancement

For the environmentally safe and sustained growth of the coastal areas strict implementation of the coastal zone regulations is a *sine qua non*. **Capacity building of the local people and the administrative personnel should be aggressively pursued using cutting edge technology. Public awareness campaigns through radio stations, TV stations, newspapers and other media throughout the coastal areas should be given prime importance.** Rural knowledge centres with Internet, community radio and library should be established for better networking against future calamities. Special training and education have to be given, with regular drills, to the fishermen, coast guards, fisheries department officials, port authorities and local officials for disaster preparedness and management.

Some Shortcomings

Very few NGOs cared to give psychological or psychosocial support and awareness campaigns to bring the affected people back to normalcy. Children needed the most attention, as the shock would have lasting impact in their psyche. Many NGOs were more interested in publicity stunts than in educating the masses. The affected people were not made aware of their rightful share of relief outlay and very little transparency was evident in the huge amounts that some agencies received, the amounts actually spent and the specific geographic location and identity of the real beneficiaries of such handouts. All this caused a fomenting of discontent throughout the entire target area of relief and rehabilitation efforts. Genuine organizations had to overcome this feeling of animosity in most areas of operation.

Future Needs for a Safer Morrow

- ♦ Early warning system for cyclones and tsunamis to be set up at the earliest.
- ♦ Relief distribution system in disaster areas to be streamlined.
- ♦ Capacity building of affected people must be taken up as emergency measure.
- ♦ Public awareness programmes to be devised.
- ♦ Guidelines for relief and rehabilitation workers must be issued and strictly implemented.

Misplaced Enthusiasm

Several government departments, NGOs, institutions and individuals rushed in for relief and rehabilitation work with very little knowledge of the locality, the communities and the need of the hour. A Karnataka Parliamentarian sent 60,000 chapathis to victims in Cuddalore where people ate only rice; truck loads old clothes from all over the world came in and rejected by the people and thrown all over the place; state of the art commodes arrived from overseas for people not used to western toilets. The Good Samaritans were indeed going berserk!

From Paul Bhaskar's presentation

Doubts linger on the practicality of pushing the fishing communities far inland than what they are used to. For one, their fishing implements need the security and cannot be transported to their dwelling areas.



Aloysius James on "Community Based Disaster Risk Management"

Mr. Aloysius James, Development Consultant spoke on "Community Based Disaster Risk Management focusing on the vulnerable groups." He said that disaster risk is a global concern and observed that in the first five years of the last decade (1990s), an average of 213 million people every year were affected, while in the second half, the number rose to 303 million per year, representing an increase of 40 per cent. He went on to observe that 80 per cent of India's geographical area is vulnerable to disasters

It is a tragic fact that the combination of poor socio-economic conditions and disasters has created a vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability. **Human development goals can be achieved only if disaster risk management concerns becomes part of development planning, said Aloysius.**

The focus of his presentation was on Community-Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP), which, he said was being practiced under different names - Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDM), Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM), or Community-Based Flood Mitigation Programme (CBFMP). In practise, all these programmes have the same purpose – to reduce the negative impact of disasters. He went on to demonstrate that Disaster Risk is highest when there is a combination of vulnerability and hazard, as was amply seen in the Tsunami incident, and that the risk can be mitigated only by 'manageability' or the capacity to deal with it. "It is the level of vulnerability of those who are exposed to the hazard that increases risk and, thus, the likelihood of a disastrous occurrence," he emphasized.

Making a case for CBDP, he pointed out that it:

- Addresses root causes of vulnerability, while transforming or removing structures that generate inequity or underdevelopment;

Disaster Risk

$$\text{Disaster Risk} = \frac{\text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability}}{\text{Manageability (capacity)}}$$

Risk is the expected losses (lives lost, persons injured, damage to property and disruption of economic activity, education, social) due to a particular hazard. Risk is the product of hazard and vulnerability. The risk of a disaster depends on the nature and magnitude of the hazard and the vulnerability.

Hazard is any phenomenon that has the potential to cause disruption or damage to people and their environment. A hazard has the potential to do harm.

Vulnerability is "the degree to which an individual, family, community or region is at risk of experiencing misfortune following extreme events." The more vulnerable a community, the greater the physical, economic and emotional costs of a disaster. Exposure to a hazard need not necessarily mean disaster. It is the level of vulnerability of those who are exposed to the hazard that increases risk and, thus, the likelihood of a disastrous occurrence. Vulnerability also includes the biological or physical aspect, i.e., the specific relative weakness of certain individuals in relation to the difficulties that may arise after the disaster. It also encompasses the socio-cultural political economical, and environmental factors that may place certain groups in difficulty.

Vulnerability comprises of two aspects: **Susceptibility** – the degree to which a community is exposed to hazards; and **Resilience** – the community's capacity to cope with hazards. So it is possible for a community to have either high or low susceptibility and resilience.

Who are the vulnerable? They are the people living on the edges. In the context of Tsunami, the highly susceptible and vulnerable groups are the fisher community, particularly those using kattamaram (traditional fishing communities), fish-vending dalits dependent on fishing, agriculture labourers, salt pan workers, women, widows and the tribal community in inland fishing.

The option is to reduce vulnerability and build capacity if risk has to be mitigated. Vulnerability reduction requires vulnerability assessment to describe the problems and opportunities; emergency prevention and mitigation (to reduce susceptibility), and emergency preparedness (to increase resilience).

From the presentation by Aloysius James

- Has a development-oriented approach, with long-term goal to promote sustainable development;
- Is a basic human right to live in disaster-safer communities

The burden of his presentation was to drive home the point that **sustainable development can only be achieved by integrating CBDP/CBDRM in all developmental plans and initiatives and those affected most by disasters are the poor and socially disadvantaged as they are the most vulnerable and least equipped to cope with the situation.**



Max Martin on Disaster Management Bill, 2005

One key input was on the Disaster Management Bill, 2005, by Mr. Max Martin, editor of indiadisasters.org. He said that the legislation seeks to institutionalize disaster management in India at the central, state and district levels to ensure a swift response to both natural calamities and human-made disasters. A notable aspect of this legislation is that local bodies will have a major role and responsibility in implementing disaster management plans during a crisis. Although a crucial amendment was the decision to have the zilla parishad (district governing body) chairman as co-chairman of the district disaster management authority along with the District Collector, much needs to be done for the involvement of local communities and decision-making bodies. The new Act also provides for the setting up of a National Disaster Response Force and the National Institute of Disaster Management, National Fund for Disaster Response and National Fund for Disaster Mitigation, with similar funds at state and district levels.



Dr. Sekar on "The Critical Need for Psycho-Social Care following Disasters"

Dr. K. Sekar from the Department of Psychiatric Social Work of NIMHANS (National Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences), Bangalore stressed on the need for psycho-social care and counseling of disaster victims. Describing India as a "theatre of disasters" with a never-ending chain of floods, earthquakes, communal riots and so

Disaster Management Bill

On 28 November 2005, the Indian Parliament passed the Disaster Management Bill.

The phrase 'disaster management' is defined elaborately. It means a continuous and integrated process of planning, organizing, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for the following:

- ✓ prevention of danger or threat of any disaster;
- ✓ mitigation or reduction of risk of any disaster or its severity or consequences;
- ✓ capacity-building;
- ✓ preparedness to deal with any disaster;
- ✓ prompt response to any threatening disaster situation or disaster;
- ✓ assessing the severity or magnitude of effects of any disaster;
- ✓ evacuation, rescue and relief; and
- ✓ rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Interestingly, the legislation defines words that may seem common. Thus, 'mitigation' means measures aimed at reducing the risk, impact or effects of a disaster or threatening disaster situation. 'Preparedness' refers to the state of readiness to deal with a threatening disaster situation or disaster and the effects thereof. 'Reconstruction' means repair or construction of any property after a disaster. And 'resources' include manpower, services, materials and provisions.

"The Bill is detailed in planning and execution. There are certain aspects which have been ignored. The Bill has detailed listing of all the government ministries and departments right till the local authorities that will be responsible for executing the provisions. But **a basic lesson that all disaster situations have taught us is that without the involvement of the local people and the affected community, the implementation of any plan is not possible,**" said one of the respondents to the Bill.

on, he said that **psychosocial care should be integrated into the development planning and processes as much as gender and environment concerns have been.**

Dr. Sekar explained that some of the most common forms of trauma could manifest as giddiness or instability, panic attacks, general anxiety, somatic symptoms, emotional problems such as irritability, apprehension and numbness, and increased use of alcohol. Prolonged continuation of biological responses following stress may lead to an inappropriate pairing of the traumatic memory with distress, and then initiate a cascade of secondary biological alterations, including structural changes of the brain, said Dr. Sekar.

Psychosocial care is needed not necessarily immediately after the disaster but after a period of six months, and up to two or three years, when the tragedy turns to become a personal nightmare, he said while observing that several NGOs have already left the field after the initial activity of relief and rehabilitation. The first seven to 14 days, psychological/emotional first aid is important, followed by psycho-social care for about six months, psycho-social rehabilitation for about two years and maybe a lifetime of rebuilding survivor population.

One of the most vulnerable groups is children who may be traumatized and would need a long time to recover. Children who have lost either one of their parents, find it difficult to accept the loss of the parent. Single-parent children constitute about seven percent of the normal population in India and in disaster situations, the proportion goes high. Issues of single-parent children depend on the age and gender of the child, and their reactions vary, depending on the loss – father or mother. In such situations, they should be encouraged to speak about their loss and reassured with support from the surviving parent and siblings, instead of avoiding the issue totally. The cases of orphans and widowed women, psychosocial care will have to be considered appropriately. On the whole, psycho-social care involves five levels of intervention as follows:

Level 1: Help people help establish contact with affected people;

Level 2: Support to be extended by family, community level workers and panchayat raj institutions;

Level 3: Help from institutions and community-based organizations;

Level 4: Social welfare system, health services, education, NGO support, and

Level 5: Psychiatric treatment, hospital/medical treatment.

A study by Dr. Allen R. Dyer, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the East Tennessee State University (USA) showed that “compared to the villages which had



All ears!

Strategies for Effective Psycho-Social Care

1. Move the agenda from emotional first aid through psycho-social care through psycho-social rehabilitation to disaster mental health.
2. Strengthen the referral system to the secondary and tertiary care levels.
3. Conduct psycho-social autopsy of attempted and successful suicides.
4. Include psycho-social care in the community-based disaster preparedness programming.
5. Address life-style changes and arrest or prevent certain deviancies such as family violence and increased alcohol consumption.
6. Network with, and develop, district-based psycho-social care resource centres.
7. Prepare national/regional/state level community level volunteers for disaster psychosocial care activities.
8. Making available capacity building materials in all regional languages.
9. Care for the carers through stress management programmes.
10. Integrate psychosocial care as basic curriculum in all welfare education, health and medical education and in schools of social work.
11. Pursue psycho-social care policy changes and developments.
12. Build-in psycho-social competence among individuals, families and communities.

From the presentation by Dr. Sekar

received psychosocial interventions (in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam), these camps (at Chennai) [are] stuck in a state of trauma and despair and unable to move forward.”

Dr. Sekar also laid emphasis on training local communities in handling stress and trauma situations and urged the NGOs to make it an integral element of their development interventions.

The roles of the media, the governments, both state and central and of the donor agencies came in for criticism from several participants. Mr. Maalan, formerly of Sun TV



Roy D Silva introducing Maalan who spoke on the Role of Media in times of Disasters



An attentive audience

Network and currently a Media Advisor to Hunger Project observed that **NGOs and donor agencies were vying with each other for publicity and some quarters of the media were insensitive to people's feelings and totally ignorant of development processes.** He quoted the example of a leading channel anchor holding up a child and making a story of how that child and several others like it were for adoption, as though it was a commodity for sale. Participants urged media representatives to see the other side of human tragedy and invited them to work in cooperation with the civil society to highlight the needs of people, both in times of disaster and otherwise.

Prefacing his presentation on "Disaster and Development" Mr. K. Gopalan of Oxfam India, observed that when disaster strikes in India there is extensive loss of human lives and also public and private properties, while in other parts of the developed world both these are minimal. The answer, he said, lies in the fact that "disaster response programmes are not holistic and are not interconnected with development issues." Disaster response programs focus only on the impact and not on the root causes. He went on to argue that **nature's fury alone does not cause disaster. What really causes disaster is human apathy and the failure "to put in place strategies to prevent the impact" of nature's wrath.** In the case of an earthquake, what was proved



K.Gopalan "Disaster and Development"

Tsunami – An Unprepared Press Awakens

When the Tsunami struck, most Western journalists were not in their newsrooms. International correspondents had to come thousands of miles, either from Beijing or Bombay, Jakarta or Johannesburg. The tsunami was an unanticipated crisis. The scale of the damage, in distance and degree, was also unprecedented. So the initial reports were sketchy, contradictory in the death toll, and confusing.

Initially, hundreds of stories were the “how did it happen” ones. Visually, both print and television in Tamil Nadu competed in showing images of gruesomeness and pathos. Sun News was repeatedly showing bereaved women crying helplessly. *Dinamalar* had a colour picture of a dog nibbling a dead child.

The very large presence of NGOs impacted the nature of media reporting. In fact, sometimes NGOs set the news agenda. After being briefed by NGOs, reporters focused on orphans and on the importance of psychological counseling.

As days went by, the political and human interest stories dried up and the media started looking for other leads. One of the commonest of them was disaster preparedness. Almost all media across the globe, particularly in the countries having a coastline carried stories on tsunami preparedness strategies. Headlines screaming, “Could this happen to us?” dominated the newspapers.

Readers and audiences may have a million grievances against media on its tsunami coverage. But it must be credited for its commitment to disseminate information against its odds.

The media's role in the aftermath of the tsunami has become that of informant, fund-raiser, even family locator. Media efforts have changed from solely reporting news to helping rebuild, locate and inspire hope.

When the American public, moved by what they saw on television and read in newspapers, sent their contributions, George Bush announced a relief aid of 15 million dollars. *Guardian*, a British newspaper, compared this with US spending in Iraq, which was 148 billion US dollars. Picking up from *The Guardian*, the American media lambasted the Bush Administration. A senior official at the UN remarked that the US was stingy in its contribution. In order to save its face, Collin Powell, then Secretary of State, came on the TV and announced an additional 20 million dollars in relief aid. American print media questioned the generosity of the Bush and charged that it is insensitive to emergencies. Later, Bush announced a relief of 350 million dollars. Media thus played an active role in raising the aid package from 15 million dollars to 350 million dollars. Even this amount, according to *The Guardian*, is only equivalent to one and a half days' expenses for America in Iraq.

Media also had an eye on the channels of aid money and was skeptical about the involvement of politicians in relief measures. As a result, in most places, co-ordination committees were formed and the district administrations took charge of the distribution. NGOs were encouraged to play a predominant role by the media.

It must be admitted that many a time the media went overboard in their frenzy for ‘human interest stories’. They had simply ignored the trauma of the people concerned in presenting a ‘good story’. NDTV broadcasted a story in which the reporter held a cute infant and said on prime-time television that “these babies could be yours for adoption. For all such orphan babies, the need of the hour is a secure, loving home.”

In the last few years, the Tamil Nadu government had been trying to relocate several fishing hamlets in Chennai to landlocked areas six to eight kilometers from the shore to “beautify” the beach. The fisherfolk had been resisting this. The media was hardly interested in reporting these developments. Now, too, when the government is using post-tsunami rehabilitation as an opportunity to push fisherfolk away from the shoreline, the media has not shown any interest in such issues.

From the presentation of Mr. Maalan

to be disastrous was the low quality of housing and the failure to take into consideration the geophysical features of the region. Thus there is a need to understand the factor of interdependencies and interrelationships between nature's action and its impact and our role in preventing such impact, said Mr. Gopalan.

The interdependent factors are basically poverty and vulnerability level. In the case of the Tsunami, it was the fishermen and dalits living in the coastal areas and river banks or the resource-poor agricultural and salt pan farmers or agricultural laborers and who were dependent on agriculture wage employment or other coastal resource-based livelihood practitioners who were the most vulnerable. In spite of all the talk of mitigating disaster, our civil society leaders, our politicians and development practitioners have not learned any lesson, contended Gopalan. He went on to add that it was because "Disaster Response Programmes do not have long-term vision and approaches, critical for prevention of such disasters and achieving and sustaining growth."

Mr. Gopalan called for a universal commitment to:

- ♦ Address the causes of disaster by integrating the development strategies into disaster response programmes, rather than just addressing the impact of nature's action making the disaster response programmes politically right;
- ♦ Integrate disaster preparedness strategies at all levels – be they community, civil society organizations, Government, technical and research institutions or global bodies;
- ♦ Recognize and protect people's rights; and
- ♦ Acknowledge the duty of every citizen to play their role in the building up of responsible civil society.

Mr. Gopalan concluded saying that what leads to the continued disadvantaged situation of the vulnerable groups is the non-recognition and non-appreciation of people's rights disaster response and development programmes.



Active participation from the floor

Case Study Presentations

Interspersed with the key inputs were a number of case study presentation on how local relief and rehabilitation-providing organizations responded to the Tsunami.

The first of such case studies was by Sr. Alice Lukose of WIN (Women's Initiatives Network), working in the coastal belt of Alappuzha district of Kerala. This was one of the areas in Kerala deeply affected by Tsunami leading to the loss of livelihood of several thousands of coastal families. Sr. Alice shared the strategies developed by WIN following the Tsunami in meeting any kind of disaster.

Sr. Alice spelt out the WIN strategy as:

- ◆ Measures aimed at Disaster Mitigation focuses on building livelihood skills, knowledge enhancement, support in market linkages, supply of raw material supply, improving access to basic necessities, psychological capacity-building for current and future disaster management.
- ◆ Focus on long-term capacity building interventions by providing livelihood diversification through targeted loans for sustainable income-generating activities and vocational training and career counseling for youth of affected families.
- ◆ Innovation in financial services and products to suit needs of affected by way of targeted interest-free loans to improve access to drinking water and toilet facilities, mediclaim for health insurance, demise fund for protection of households during "shocks", interest-free loans for priority needs of household such as education of youth, and school upgradation and other educational programmes.
- ◆ Facilitating community's access to information and resources from external sources, both public and private, which in the context of Tsunami includes assistance for Tsunami affected, guidance with legal and administrative procedures, training for skills upgradation, facilitating linkages with markets



Sr. Alice Lukose on Strategies
adopted by WIN Society

(for finished products, and raw material supply) and awareness-building on Coastal Zone Regulations and global warming.

Sr. Alice said that “Lessons Learned” from all this exercise post-Tsunami show that **active participation of affected communities at all stages of intervention, is very important, to prevent “disempowering” and that wherever possible we have to use empowering processes, such as in the use of local skills and labour.** She went on to say that as NGOs, we should concentrate on what we do best, and that is, strong linkages with local community and continuity of contact.

Although immediate relief activities are important, this should not be at the cost of long-term capacity building interventions and one should never undermine the importance of regular monitoring and impact assessment, she concluded.

The second case study was presented by Fr. Jose Koolipurackal of Samagra Vikas Social Service Society working in the Arattupuzha Panchayat of Alappuzha District, Kerala. This is a project area in the coastal belt where fishing and coir-fibre making are the predominant livelihood earners. In the aftermath of the Tsunami, over 1500 household lost their dwelling units and the entire population of over 27,000 resident in the three wards of the project area were affected. Samagra Vikas is one of the NGOs working in that area, and is engaged in rehabilitation of a limited number of families through housing, livelihood programmes, formation of self-help groups, etc.

One of the major problem areas during the relief work period was lack of coordination among NGOs and interference of local political party bosses. The latter has forced many a deserving fisherman from being assisted by NGOs and they used the tragedy to enhance their political clout in the area. This dividing of the community prevents any meaningful participation of the people as a whole in reconstructing their livelihoods. Lack of alternative sources of income for the women in the fishing community is also seen as a major concern.

The role of Samagra Vikas has been to build capacities of the local community in



Fr. Jose Koolipurackal
on learnings from the
west coast of India

disaster preparedness and finding alternative sources of income. Coir-spinning units have been set towards this purpose and over 60 women's self-groups have been formed to enable women to seek alternative sources of income. A village executive committee comprising members of the self-help groups oversees all projects.

However, some fundamental issues are still to be addressed. One of them is the question of land. Fishermen who lost their huts have lost their land too for it is too perilous to build close to the sea again. Moreover, the Government does not permit any construction on the western side of the road, which is the beach, and the alternative sites allocated to them have been far inland. This has left several beneficiaries out of the loop of rehabilitation and they continue to live in temporary shelters.

The major learning from the one year of rehabilitation work has been the resilience of the people. Not willing to be treated as mere aid beneficiaries, they are ready to look at alternatives provided concerned authorities play their part.

Ms. Christina Kamp, a free-lance journalist from Germany who has been in India for over a year, spoke on "Conflicts and Threats in the Post-Tsunami Tourism Scenario on the East Coast of Tamil Nadu." Citing examples of displacement and altered use of coastal belt, she listed the following as current threats:

- ♦ Displacement/strategic eviction of local coastal communities to make way for tourism. In the guise of the welfare of fisherfolk, whole communities are being pushed inward and then the coastal belt being handed over to business lobbies for the construction of resorts and parks.
- ♦ Loss of access to resources: Drinking water is a key concern in coastal areas. With the development of tourism and increased population movement the local communities have lesser access to potable water. While tourism enterprises have the financial capacity or the political power to "manage" water problems, local



Christina Kamp on Threats to the East Coast of Tamil Nadu posed by Tourism



communities often don't. Changed use of coastal belt not only leads to water scarcity but also depletion and pollution of ground water resulting in the commodification of water.

- ♦ Loss of livelihoods/income: Tourism is an extremely vulnerable industry, which becomes evident especially in times of disaster (or even “perceived disaster” or risk even in other places), and if people are dependent on it for a livelihood sacrificing traditional modes, the vulnerability factor goes high.
- ♦ Environmental degradation of coastal ecosystems: The violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone is a major concern in this regard. It is only the poor who are asked to shift, while the rich, it appears, would be safe. The violation of the zone should be considered a threat to the coastal ecosystem whether it is perpetrated by the rich or the poor.
- ♦ Social problems such as begging, prostitution, commercial sexual exploitation of children, school drop-outs and drug-related problems have already become a major concern in most of the locations where five-star tourism has replaced traditional livelihood activities, be they in the coast or elsewhere.
- ♦ Insufficient local support systems from both the Government and the private sector as far as rehabilitation is concerned. The Tourism Minister of Tamil Nadu is reported to have told the displaced communities: “We have 40 acres of land here. If we give you 20 acres, how can we develop tourism with the rest of the land?” If this is the state of response from a Government official, could one expect from the private sector?

Ms. Kamp concluded her presentation with a four-point action agenda:

- ♦ **Awareness-raising/sensitization** of coastal communities and Panchayats with regard to hidden agendas, foreseeable developments and likely impacts.

- ♦ **Networking** among coastal communities and with relevant support systems (such as trade unions, NGOs, etc.) to share local experiences, identify common threats and take joint action.
- ♦ **Monitoring** and critical analyses of tourism and other “development” along the coast, including planned and proposed projects and hidden agendas.
- ♦ **Publishing** and disseminating the findings of monitoring activities.



Johnas on impact of Tsunami on livelihood of casual labour

Johnas, a student of the University of Bonn made a brief intervention on the “Impact of Tsunami on Livelihood of Casual Labour,” based on his research study in the affected areas of Andhra Pradesh. It was observed that there was a shifting pattern in some areas. Fishermen who received vast sums of assistance had bought autorickshaws and began to ply them as owner-drivers, thus threatening the livelihood of other traditional auto drivers. Some of them took to other forms of casual labour such as cigar-binding, which again is an incursion into the roles of a traditional community. This shifting pattern has had produced moments of tension in the local community, observed Johnas.

Mr. C. Nambi, Director of Centre for Social Education and Development (CSED), Coimbatore shared the experiences of his organization’s work among the Tsunami-affected in Kanya Kumari. Focussing on psycho-social care for the traumatized, the CSED team zeroed in on raising awareness-building and capacity-building of coastal region people in mitigating disaster. Over a period of eight months the team trained 841 persons with inputs from the NIMHANS-Bangalore. A ten-day state-level puppetry yathra moved through the coastal belt performing in 35 locations.

One of the key learnings in this process has been how to make use of the power of the mass media in imparting knowledge on psycho-social care. One other key lesson learned was that a quick and effective communications system must be in developed in



C. Nambi of the experiences of having imparted psycho-social care and counselling

order to combat such disasters. The focus of the intervention of CSED was the child and in this regard, it is being recommended that school children must be equipped with information and skills in dealing with disaster situations. As a concrete measure, all children living in the coastal regions must be taught swimming, said Nambi.

Nambi concluded by saying that the principles enshrined in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child must be upheld and enforced at all times, and in times of disaster the principle of “quick and immediate response” must be applied in the case of children based on the UNCRC principle of “first call for children.”

Dr. Anish is a medical social worker attached to the CSI Medical College in Karakonam of South Tamil Nadu. The Medical College has a special outreach team which plunged into immediate action following the Tsunami. They were involved in the fields of medical care, psychological rehabilitation and socio-economic programmes. The medical team camped in five villages offering medical aid and treating the wounded. The outreach team is engaged in a Community Based Rehabilitation Programme “combining both medical and social rehabilitation to influence active integration and participation



Dr. Anish sharing the experiences of a medical outreach team

of people with disabilities in the society to the fullest possible functional level.” Programmes on community empowerment is carried out through awareness-building programmes, career guidance, and through the distribution of pamphlets containing vital information.

Following the Tsunami, it was the school counselling programme, the psychosocial counseling and the specialized mental health services using the CBR approach that was proved to be of great value. At present there are five Community Support Centres in Karakonam area where this is continued.

Group Discussions and Recommendations

After listening to a series of inputs from a large number of activists involved in the post-Tsunami relief work, the 70-odd number of participants divided themselves into working groups to prepare guidelines on what could be the best practices, both in terms of preparedness and response to disaster, both natural and human-made. They examined the roles of the NGOs, INGOs/Donor Agencies, the State and Central Governments, Media and of professionals, especially those in trauma care and counseling.

One Group dealt with the involvement of local level Governing bodies and discussed issues for advocacy and lobbying on matters related to Disaster Management. Among their recommendations, discussed in the backdrop of the recently adopted Disaster Management Bill called for:

- Mapping of Disaster Zones;
- Early Warning Systems to be installed in vulnerable zones;
- Community Communication Systems;
- Resource and Risk Mapping at Ward/Hamlet levels, and not merely at the district level;



Group discussion in progress



Another Group discussion in progress

- Locally appropriate prevention measures such as bio-shields, sea walls and other measures must be erected to prevent further erosion and disasters;
- A Disaster Preparedness Plan must be drawn up for action at various levels and must be part of the Annual Development Plan;
- There must be Regular Disaster Preparedness Drill at community and institutional levels (Orissa Model) on fixed dates to prepare local communities in disaster-preparedness;
- Government officials must be easily accessible and available on all days (even on holidays) in times of Emergency, as in the days following December 26, 2004.

The participants also called for a critical examination of the new Disaster Management Act and opined there is very little scope for the involvement of local communities in the responding to disaster. The group working on this recommends that the concerns and apprehensions of the those working in local level in Tsunami-affected areas must be conveyed to the Members of the Parliament and the State Legislatures and lobby with them to enter into dialogue with the civil society and the panchayat raj institutions while framing rules for the Disaster Management Act to ensure that there is adequate local community participation and representation in the local authorities prescribed therein.

The groups working on the best practices and expectations from the media and donor agencies noted with pain that there have occurred unethical and unwelcome practices of competition and attention-getting even at the worst time of human tragedy. The INGOs and Donor agencies are called upon to work in close collaboration with local NGOs taking into consideration their strengths and capacities rather than planting new agencies in the areas.

As for the media, it was observed that they have played a proactive role as “fund-raisers” and “people-locators” moving away from their traditional role of mirroring the society, as news reporters. Incessant coverage of the tragedy helped the people at large to contribute to the relief work undertaken by the State and private agencies. In some cases, pictures of people, either dead or living in temporary camps, that appeared in some newspapers or television channels helped families reunite. While the positive role of the media was lauded, the negative aspect of turning a mammoth tragedy into a commercial venture was harshly criticized. The race to be ‘on the spot’ by some reporters, while the news is unfolding, has led to insensitivity to handling the traumatic situation of the people, whose very plight they have come to cover.

The following are the specific recommendations for the media:

- Media houses to have specific disaster cells / desks in times of disasters..
- Media should be continuously involved in the development process and constantly engage themselves with the civil society to get a feel of the ‘ground realities’.
- Media should handle disasters in a scientific way rather than on a superficial and commercial level

The group working on the need for Psychosocial Preparedness strongly felt that psycho-social preparedness must be an integral part and parcel of the development planning and process, as much as gender and environment concerns have become in the recent past. The group also recommends that:

- The potential of an individual in the local must be recognized first and foremost.
- Continuous motivation should be encouraged by the trained bare foot counselors.
- The individual should be empowered with appropriate information on disaster preparedness and given opportunities to further their inputs.
- Facilitate overall psycho-social interventions in the development process.



Mr. Jose Thachil, Director, Karl Kübel Foundation-India brings greetings



Dr. George Arickal, Director, Karl Kübel Foundation-India brings greetings



Mr. Hassold, Consultation Moderator addressing the press conference.



Ms. Christina Weber, Programme Coordinator, KKS-Germany, briefs the participants

From the cultural evening staged by students



From the cultural evening staged by students

From the cultural evening staged by students



Tom Jose, Co-Moderator of the Consultation and Senior Programme Officer, thanks one and all. The KKID team of volunteers are behind him.

Coastal Regulation Zone Notification

In 1981, the then Prime Minister wrote to the Chief Ministers of all the coastal States directing them to keep clear of all activities up to 500 metres from the water at the maximum high tide along the coast. In the wake of this direction, the then Department of Environment set up a Working Group on "Environmental Guidelines for Development of Beaches." This Working Group was to address issues relating to land/marine interact eco-system and to prepare guidelines for environmental management of beaches. It comprised experts in Pollution Control, Town and Country Planning, Tourism, Oceanography, Ecology and Human Settlement. The report of the Working Group submitted in June, 1983 was prepared after a scientific study taking into account the coastal and marine environment, natural hazards, socio-economic problems and developmental activities.

These guidelines were prepared in consultation with the coastal States and Union Territories. These guidelines also suggested that construction along the coast, irrespective of their location, i.e., even beyond 500 metres of the high tide mark, should be subjected to environmental impact assessment studies. These guidelines were circulated to all coastal States and Union Territories in March, 1984. However, at that time, none of the States or Union Territories prepared Environmental Management Plans for coastal areas as suggested by the Department of Environment.

As neither the Prime Minister's directive nor the guidelines issued by the then Department of Environment were followed by the State Governments, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) issued a notification under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 regulating developmental activities in the coastal area.

Issue of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 1991

Keeping in view the degradation of the coastal environment and rampant construction activities along the coastal areas, MoEF issued a draft CRZ Notification twice inviting

suggestions and objections from the public on June 27, 1990 and 18th December, 1990.

Based on the suggestions and objections received, the Ministry issued the CRZ Notification declaring coastal stretches as Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) and regulating activities in the CRZ. As per this, the CRZ area is defined as coastal stretches of seas, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers and backwaters which are influenced by tidal action (in the landward side). As per the notification 500 metres on the landward side from the High Tide Line (HTL) and the land area between the Low Tide Line (LTL) and HTL including 500 metres along the tidal influenced water bodies subject to a minimum of 100 m on the width of the water body, whichever is less is declared as CRZ area. Based on the ecological sensitivity, geomorphological feature and demographic distribution, the CRZ area is classified into four categories namely, CRZ-I (sensitive and inter tidal), CRZ- II (urban or developed), CRZ-III (rural or undeveloped), CRZ-IV (Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands).

Prohibited and Permissible Activity

The Notification regulates developmental activities in the CRZ area by prohibiting certain activities and permitting the essential activities. The prohibited activities include setting up of new industries and expansion of existing industries, manufacture or handling or storage and handling of hazardous substances (except specified petroleum products in port areas), fish processing units, disposal of wastes and effluents, mining of sands, rocks and other rare minerals and mechanized drawing of ground water. The permissible activities include those activities that require water front and foreshore facilities such as construction activities related to defence requirements for which foreshore facilities are essential (e.g. slipways, jetties, etc.), operational constructions for ports and harbours and construction of hotels and resorts in specified areas.

Amendments to the CRZ Notification

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has been receiving proposals from the coastal States/Central Ministries, industry associations, local communities and NGOs requesting for amendment to CRZ notification on certain specific issues. The Ministry after examining the proposals had constituted Committees to examine the specific issues. Based on the recommendations of the Committee/request made by the various agencies the Ministry had amended the CRZ Notification, 1991 as per the provisions laid down in the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Some of the amendments constituted to look into specific issues are:

S.O.595(E), dated 18th August, 1994 – Relaxed Coastal Regulation Zone area to 50 mts along the tidal influenced water bodies. This was based on B. B. Vohra Committees

report. However, the Supreme Court in the Writ Petition 664 of 1993 quashed the above amendment.

S.O.73(E), dated 31st January, 1997 – Permitted mining of sand and drawal of groundwater in the Coastal Regulation Zone area in Andaman and Nicobar.

S.O.494(E), dated 9th July, 1997 – Permitted reclamation within port limits, constructions for operation expansion and modernization of ports. Development of public utilities within Sunderbans areas and storage of 13 POL products within port limits.

S.O.730(E), dated 4th August, 2000 – Permitted storage of LNG in the inter -tidal area and exploration and extraction of oil and gas in Coastal Regulation Zone areas

S.O.329(E), dated 12th April, 2001 – Permitting setting up of projects and Department of Atomic Energy, Pipelines and conveying systems in Coastal Regulation Zone areas.

S.O.550 (E), dated 21st May, 2002 – Permitted non polluting industries in the field of IT and other service industries in the Coastal Regulation Zone area of special economic zones. Housing schemes of State Urban development Authorities initiated prior to 19.2.1991 was also permitted.

S.O.110(E), dated 19th October, 2002 – Permitted non conventional energy facilities, desalination plans, air strips in Coastal Regulation Zone of A&N and a Lakshadweep. Storage of non-hazardous cargo such as edible oil, fertilizer and food grain was also permitted.

S.O.460(E), dated 22nd April, 2003 – Project costing more than 5 crores requires clearance from Ministry of Environment and Forests.

S.O.636(E), dated 30th May, 2003 – Permitted construction of embarkation facilities for Lakshadweep in Coastal Regulation Zone –I areas.

S.O.725(E), dated 24th June, 2003 – Permitted construction of trans -harbour sea links passing through Coastal Regulation Zone –I areas.

S.O.838(E), dated 24th July, 2003 – Relaxed No Development Zone to 50 mts from 200 mts from HTL in A&N and Lakshadweep for promoting tourism based on Integrated Coastal Zone Management study. Based on the reports of the above committees and the requests made by Central Ministries, State Governments and NGOs, the Ministry had from time to time carried out amendments to the CRZ Notification.

Working of the CRZ Notification

Neither the Ministry nor the State Governments had taken serious note of the CRZ Notification. A Writ Petition was filed in the Supreme Court in 1993 by Envir-o-Legal

Action Group against the Union of India regarding non-implementation of CRZ Notification, 1991. The Supreme Court, in its order in April 1996, directed the State Governments of coastal States and UT Administration to prepare the Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs) and get them approved from the Ministry within three months. The CZMPs submitted by the State Governments/UTs were accorded approval by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on 27 September 1996, subject to the incorporation of some general conditions and other conditions specific to each coastal State/Union Territory. Each of the coastal States/UTs were required to prepare the revised CZMPs incorporating the suggestions and modifications which are still pending.

For preparing the CZMPs, demarcation of the HTL/LTL is required to be carried out in the Coastal Regulation Zone area. For this purpose, the Ministry has authorized seven institutes for demarcating. Guidelines have also been issued for demarcating HTL and LTL.

Those projects, which are permissible as per the provisions of the CRZ Notification are examined and environmental clearance procedure similar to that under EIA Notification is followed for approval of such projects.

Enforcement and Monitoring of Coastal Regulation Zone Notification

The Coastal Zone Management Authorities (CZMAs) are responsible for enforcement and monitoring of the CRZ notification and the CZMPs. For taking punitive action against the violations Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, powers have also been delegated to the Authorities.

Positive Aspects of the CRZ Notification, 1991

The CRZ Notification has created awareness among the decision makers and the people regarding the importance of the coastal environment. The Notification has been responsible in maintaining *status quo* by not permitting major developmental activities along the coast. It has established the traditional rights of fishing community. It emphasized the need for planned development of the coast. By disallowing polluting industries and controlling effluent/sewage disposal, the stage has been set for the control of pollution of the coastal areas. Protection of life and property from natural hazards such as erosion, flooding, sea level rise etc., has been largely ensured. All these measures will have positive impact on fisheries, which will ensure the economic development, fisherman community in particular and the coastal areas in general. The protected coastal environment has envisaged in the CRZ is expected to enhance the tourism potential of the coast.

Violations of the Notification

The violations of the CRZ area include destruction of CRZ-I areas such as mangroves, coral reefs, breeding sites of endangered species, etc., Illegal constructions coming up in No Development Zones of CRZ-III, construction in CRZ-II areas without adhering to the norms laid down in the Notification and constructions within CRZ-I areas are some of the major violations of the Notification. The State Governments have insufficient infrastructure facilities to take action against such violations. Further there is lack of will of the concerned and inadequate enforcement machinery. This is one of the reasons for the high number of cases pending in various Courts in the States and Supreme Court.

Constraints/Problems

The precautionary principle approach of the Notification, which lays down uniform regulations for the diverse coastal environment, is one of the major constraint areas for implementation of the notification. This is the reason why the Ministry has been, time and again constituting expert committees with eminent scientist to address some of the problem areas and carrying out amendments based on the recommendations of the reports. Some of the constraints faced by the implementing agencies include ambiguities and lack of clarity of terminologies existing in the Notification. Further, the Notification is badly structured. A lay person cannot easily understand the Notification and hence put into great difficulties even for undertaking a small dwelling unit.

There had been lack of agreement on satisfactory definition of the coastal zone. It has been criticized that the CRZ lacks a scientific approach. The State Governments and development agencies complain that the notification is too restrictive in nature and lacks statements on the objectives expected to be achieved. Though, there is enormous private investment in coastal area the notification treats it as a common property resource. The Notification does not provide sufficient information to take decisions and there is no motivation for conservation of the ecosystems. Lack of awareness, lack of enforcement, lack of funding and attitudinal problems are enlisted as some of the reasons for the difficulties in implementing the CRZ notification.



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