

# *TISS RESPONSE TO TSUNAMI*

*Presentation By*

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## TISS RESPONSE TO TSUNAMI

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has long held the tradition of reaching out to support people affected by natural and human-made crises. Even in 1947, the Institute had sent a faculty and student team to Kurukshetra to work with refugees from Pakistan. The late Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had observed the TISS team at work, recalled the work that was done during the inauguration of this TISS campus in 1954:

*“We found the difference in their work and the work of many others who were earnest and had done their best, but who did not have the training to do it well. There is a difference between the trained workers and the merely enthusiastic workers.”*

Since then, TISS has responded to various crises such as floods, riots, cyclones, earthquakes and industrial disasters in different parts of the country. TISS works together with civic organizations, local government administrations, institutions of higher education, and the corporate sector in order to sustain the immediate relief work given to the affected persons and to ensure long term rehabilitation.

The Institute’s work centers around relief management; providing psychosocial support to women, children and other vulnerable groups; the assessment of loss and impact to lives, property, livelihoods, environment and infrastructure; the rehabilitation and development needs of the society; the mobilization of human resources for relief and rehabilitation work; facilitating community participation in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process; policy and programme development support to government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); coordination of civil society participation; training and capacity-building of personnel

engaged in relief and rehabilitation work; publication and documentation; and conflict resolution and peace building initiatives.

With regard to the Tsunami affected areas in the state of Tamil Nadu, TISS worked in collaboration with 29 Colleges of Social Work in Tamil Nadu- which involved about 1,500 postgraduate student volunteers and over 100 teachers- to complete an assessment of loss to lives, property, livelihoods, environment and infrastructure. It assessed the need for rehabilitation, development, and psychosocial counseling to affected women and children. This assessment covered about 100,000 families in 279 villages and spread over 11 tsunami-affected districts. Village-specific reports, along with data, are being provided to government and non-government agencies engaged in reconstruction and rehabilitation work.

The TISS proposes long-term involvement in the villages selected by the Tata Relief Committee for housing and livelihood rehabilitation. Possible areas of support are facilitating community participation in decision-making, implementation of housing and livelihood programmes, psycho-social support, and other initiatives.

Villagewise data have been put on a CD that will be released on the 23rd June by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. This gives us a clear picture of the situation as to the need for continued developmental and rehabilitation work at each village that was adversely affected. As these CDs will be easily accessible to us, those of you who are interested may take them with you to use this information for the benefit of the disaster affected people.

In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, most islands in the Nicobar area were devastated by the tsunami waves. The Institute was involved in relief work on Katchal Island. Following this, it carried out an assessment of resources and livelihoods affected by the tsunami in Car Nicobar, Nancowry Group of Islands, and Katchal

Island. This was carried out in collaboration with the National Institute of Disaster Management, Government of India and Pondicherry University.

TISS's long-term plan in this area includes provision of psychosocial recovery support to affected people on two islands - Katchal and Teressa. TISS is also collaborating with Butterflies, a children's rights organization, for conducting a training programme on children's rights based development work in the islands. It aims at training the youth from the affected community with basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills to work for the community's development with a specific focus on child rights.

Further, TISS is working with the local administration to create a cadre of development workers on each of these islands by organizing training sessions for the educated youth on the islands in order to plan, implement, and monitor development and welfare programmes. They will work with the people to link resources available from government and non-government agencies. The detailed proposal is being worked out for five years.

To support the tsunami-affected people in Sri Lanka, TISS deputed 5 faculty members over a period of 3 months to train volunteers in psychosocial support and trauma counseling in the affected areas all over the country. In the coming months, TISS will be deputing 2 faculty members to strengthen Sri Lanka's capacity to provide long-term psychosocial support to women and children, as well as to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Institute of Social Development in Colombo to effectively respond to disasters.