

Support to Flood Survivors in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu

The Relief Project Supported by Collective Fishing and Development & Lorient City Corporation

I. Background and Context Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu, India has an area of 3,698.68 Sq km. The eastern side of the district has a coastline of 52.5 kms along the Bay of Bengal.

On 09th November 2015, deep depression over Bay of Bengal, brought heavy rains and subsequent floods to the coastal district of Cuddalore. Gusty winds with the speed of 60-90 kms per hour were recorded throughout the day. Of the 13 blocks in the Cuddalore district, the incessant rain and floods has affected 11 blocks out of which 6 blocks are were severely affected.

More than 60 Village Panchayats comprising of more than 700 hamlets are severely affected by the rain and flash floods. Overall the estimated population affected by the flood is above 30000 households. Due to heavy flood accessibility to villages across the district is affected.

50 cm of rain and subsequent floods within 24 hours have severely affected villages located around rivers, lakes, tanks and the coast. Some villages reported rise in water level over 5 feet from the ground within 30 minutes.

Live and livelihoods of the affected population has come to a pause as they are mainly daily wage labors, agricultural labors, fish catch labors.

The affected population show loss of houses/ thatched huts, personal belongings, household items, clothing, documents, education materials as they are either lost, damaged or not useable.

The affected population mainly belongs to dalits, tribal, muslims and other backward castes and minority groups.

Losses also include more than 50 human deaths, more than 300 cattle losses, around 20 breaches in 10 lakes, more than 100 breaches in water channels, more than 2000 electric poles have been uprooted, over 20,000 ha of agricultural lands have been affected and more than 10 villages have reported boat damages and net losses and hut damages are expected to be more than 25,000. Currently there are more than 30 relief camps catering to the affected population.

Issues

- 1) In adequate availability of food, drinking and portable water due to water logging.
- 2) Water logging in low lying areas leading to loss of shelter and sleeping area, mosquito breeding and risk of water borne and insect borne diseases.

- 3) Loss of all personal and house hold belongings- documents, clothes, bedding, utensil and stoves.
- 4) Lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities.
- 5) Losses of houses, damage to agriculture lands, boats and fishing nets.
- 6) Loss of livelihood has increased the dependency on flood relief.
- 7) The health of the affected population needs to be address with adequate basic medical attention and needs to be supplemented with nutritional needs.
- 8) Shelter needs of the affected population need to be addressed by setting up new camps if necessary for unreached populations (site selection and location for these camps is crucial)

Needs based on damage to habitation and lack of access

Immediate Rescue, Relief and Recovery Phase

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- 1) Food and water (Based on requirement and feasibility)- dry ration, cooked food, fuel, utensils, stoves, storage requirements, drinking water requirements
 - 2) Water, sanitation and hygiene requirements- Addressing mosquito breeding, water logging, contamination portable water with fecal sources- by providing addressing portable water source, women's hygiene kits, buckets, mugs, chlorine tablets, aid agencies providing public health services.
 - 3) Shelter- tarpaulin for water proofing and rope, tents, temporary housing materials.
 - 4) Basic needs- clothes, mats, bed sheets, tarpaulin sheets, medicated nets education materials.
 - 5) Smooth transition form Relief to Recovery phase. This requires addressing the needs of affected population based on their capacity to delink from the Relief process.
 - 6) Camps need to continue for affected populations and areas where population who have lost habitation, houses/ huts and access, with no alternatives.
 - 7) Real time and regular review the relief process and the need feedback loop from the field will help access relief coverage and recovery status and needs. Ensuring a smooth transition into the recovery phase ensuring the need is not under or over estimated.
 - 8) Comprehensive assessment of the relief process for effective recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

II. Areas Studied and Selected

Cuddalore is a coastal district in the state of Tamil Nadu has a coastline of 52.5 K.Ms. covered by

the Bay of Bengal is frequently hit by cyclonic floods. In the months of November and December 2015 many villages in the district have witnessed unprecedented rainfalls along with and gusty winds with the speed of 60-90 kms per hour.

Initial assessments reveal a total of 53 Village Panchayats comprising of 219 hamlets and 29000 households severely affected with loss of lives numbering to 42 as per local project partners.

The assessment by the civil societies and District administration shows that. Most of the affected communities are Dalits, Irulas, Muslims, fisher folk (inland and marine fisher folk) especially single women and women fish workers and Daily Labourers. Nearly 29,000 people have been displaced.

The immediate needs are food, clothing, blankets or tarpaulins, space sanitation facilities health care.

Most of the flood affected populations have lost their houses and they are in need of relief measures to re build or repair their shelters, Schools etc (thatched houses with mud walls or tiles). Issues like lack of privacy, overcrowded houses, inadequate cover and living in the streets or road sided without protection and continuous water loggings have become common.

Majority of the population had their livelihood were agriculture related works, daily labours and animal husbandry and fisheries. In the floods the 20, 000 hectares of lands are marooned with water and 300 cattle are dead. 425 boats have been washed away and 250 to 500kgs of nets from every coastal village have been lost.

Water sources have been contaminated due to water logging

Reasons cited for the inundation are the poor drainage systems and the encroachments of farm lands for conversion into residential flats over the drought years. The low water carrying capacity of the lakes and silting in the bar mouth of estuaries and river basins have led to serious disruption of the functioning affected society and their ability to cope with it using its own resource.

This district was also severely affected during the 2004 Tsunami, followed by Nisha cyclone in 2008, Nilam in 2010 and Thane in 2011.

Rationale of selection of project location :

Government was not prepared to handle the situation. The delayed response by way of distribution of food and relief package was inadequate and on the protest of the people who complained to the media that they were without food and basic clothes and grocery for many days. NGOs are still looking up to the international donors for their support. The spot visit made by relief team revealed a pathetic situation in which people were starving and women and children remain unfed for days.

Only on Friday 4th December two truckloads of relief material worth Rs. 33.12-lakh was sent to the

Cuddalore district administration for distribution to the flood affected people. Trucks mostly carried perishable food items such as bread, cakes, and other necessities. NFI support slowly started to trickle in form of clothes - sari, dhoti, blankets, towels etc thanks to contribution from general public however it was still insufficient. Sanitary needs were to be addressed.

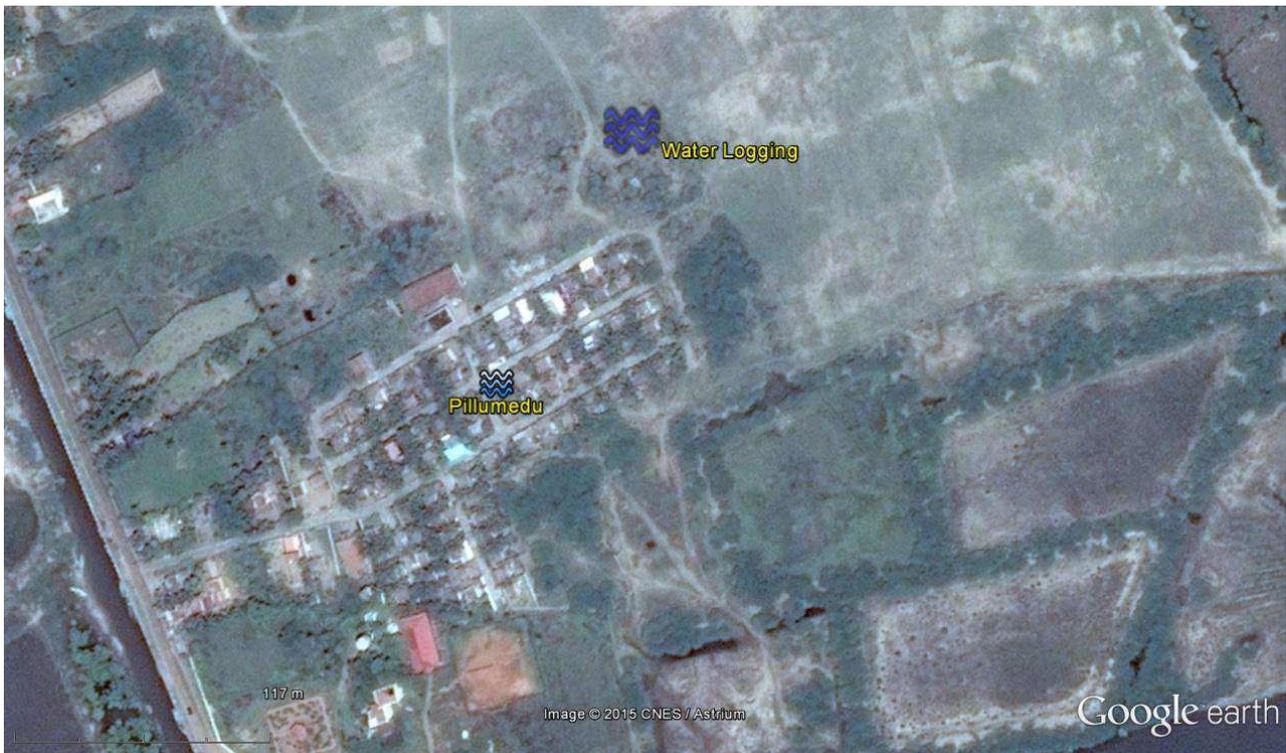
SNEHA worked in coordination with the local organization in the relief operations. We worked with women fish workers of the coastal communities and is intervening in 12 habitats of non-fishing population (dalits, Irulas, Muslims, Arundhathiyar, washer men, handicapped in Killai town panchayat and Parangipettai town panchayat in Chidambaram block and supporting single women and women fish vendors in 26 fishing hamlets of Chidambaram and Kurinjibadi block.

We made this request as the women fish vendors in 26 fishing hamlets of Chidambaram and Parangipettai block, who really need support are left out in the whole process of relief. This was just a request for a minimum support of Dry ration and sanitary materials.

The Status of the Villages as on 24.11.2015

1. Pillumedu - Killai Town Panchayat

Food : The community is finding it hard to procure their food for their households as they are dependent on fishing for their livelihood. The current flood and rains have brought a pause to their livelihoods and hence doesn't have the capacity to buy ration to feed their families. Thus there is a request for dry ration to secure their nutritional needs.



Housing and Shelter : There are 12 thatched houses and 7 concrete houses that have been damaged by the floods. The affected population reports that no government official has come to enumerate their loss. **Water Source :** Drinking water needs of the community needs to be addressed as they report turbidity caused due to water logging and suspects contamination from fecal sources.

Water logging and Stagnation : The habitation is situated in a low lying area causing water logging and stagnation. The area in and around the habitation is currently waterlogged to a height of less than 1 feet. The water logging and stagnation has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and is currently infested with mosquitoes.

Livelihood : The livelihood of the affected population has been severely affected as the communities primary livelihood is fishing and fishing related activities E.g. Dry fish vendors, fish catch labourers and fishworkers themselves. Currently after the depression and rains, the community livelihood has come to a standstill hence they are unable to meet their basic need of procuring food.

Health and Sanitation : 12% of the current population of children has developed fever, cough and cold. The area that is currently waterlogged is also the area that used by both men and women for open defecation and other sanitation needs. Currently the water logging and stagnation has affected the women of the habitation the most, as they are now finding it hard to access the area for their sanitation needs. The open defecation area is close to the hand pumps (nearest one is 5m from the open defecation area) which is the drinking water and potable water source of the habitation, putting the population at risk of water borne and insect borne diseases. **Government Relief and Action:** The government has not yet enumerated the house damages here, please verify as the affected members report that they have not received any compensation.

Community Requests : 1) The community is requesting dry ration as aid. 2) They also want their damaged nets and ice boxes to be compensated.

2. Pattarayadi - Killai Town Panchayat

Food : Currently the community is fishing for shrimps in the adjacent Pichavaram River as alternative livelihood to support them with their monetary needs. This village is finding it hard to procure their food for their households as they are dependent on fishing for their livelihood. The current flood and rains have brought a pause to their livelihoods and hence don't have the capacity to buy ration to feed their families. Thus there is a request for dry ration to secure their nutritional needs. **Shelter and Housing:** There are 10 thatched houses that have been damaged by the floods. The affected population reports that no government official has come to enumerate their loss.



Water Source : Drinking water sources such as bore wells and taps are at the risk of contamination by water logging and mixing of sewage and open defecation sources with the drinking water and potable water source. Hence it is necessary to make the necessary arrangement to provide accessible drinking water and clear the water logged areas as the water sources such as hand pumps are within the water logged area.

Water logging and Stagnation : The habitation is surrounded by low lying areas which show water logging and stagnation. The water logging and stagnation has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and the habitation is currently infested with mosquitoes. Children are developing rashes on their skin due to mosquito and insect bites.

Livelihood : The livelihood of the affected population has been severely affected as the

communities primary livelihood is fishing and fishing related activities E.g. Dry fish vendors, fish catch labourers and fishworkers themselves. Currently after the depression and rains the community livelihood has come to a standstill hence they are unable to meet their basic need of procuring food. The community members here are self employed and hence are finding it hard to procure dry ration. Health and Sanitation: The area that is currently waterlogged is also the area that is used by both men and women for open defecation and other sanitation needs. Currently the water logging and stagnation has affected the women of the habitation the most, as they are finding it hard to access the area for their sanitation needs. The community is requesting for medical camps as the children are susceptible to infections and are currently developing rashes due to mosquito bites.

Government Relief and Action : The government has not yet enumerated the house damages here, please verify as the affected members report that they have not received any compensation. Community Requests: 1) The community is requesting dry ration as aid. 2) They also want tarpaulin sheets and ropes to waterproof the roof tops of their houses. 3) There is a request for a medical camp to treat insect borne and water borne infections.

3. Chinnaivaikal - Killai Town Panchayat

Food : This village is finding it hard to procure their food for their households as they are dependent on fishing for their livelihood. The current flood and rains have brought a pause to their livelihoods and hence don't have the capacity to buy ration to feed their families. Thus there is a request for dry ration to secure their nutritional needs. Shelter and Housing: There are 2 concrete houses that are leaking and 2 houses are still water logged after the rains and floods. The affected population reports that no government official has come to enumerate their loss. Water Source: Drinking water sources such as bore wells and taps are at the risk of contamination by water logging, mixing of sewage and open defecation sources, which are coming in contact with the drinking water and potable water sources. Hence it is necessary to make arrangements to provide accessible drinking water and clear the water logged areas. As the water sources such as hand pumps are within the water logged area. It is observed that the water has become turbid after the floods. People from the community are purchasing water cans for drinking water if they can afford it. The people who cannot afford to buy water cans continue to use the turbid water source for drinking and household uses.



Water logging and Stagnation : The habitation is situated in a low lying area which shows water logging and stagnation. The water logging and stagnation has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and the habitation is currently infested with mosquitoes.

Livelihood : The livelihood of the affected population has been severely affected as the communities primary livelihood is fishing and fishing related activities E.g.: Dry fish vendors, fish catch labourers and fishworkers themselves. Currently after the flood and rains the community livelihood has come to a standstill hence they are unable to meet their basic need of procuring food and hence seeking assistance in terms of dry ration.

Health and Sanitation : The area that is currently waterlogged is also the area that is used by both men and women for open defecation and other sanitation needs. Currently the water logging and stagnation has affected the women of the habitation the most, as they are finding it hard to access the area for their sanitation needs. The stagnating water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other infections. It is necessary to address the mosquito problem in the habitation.

Government Relief and Action : The government has not yet enumerated the house damages here, please verify as the affected members report that they have not received any compensation. Relief Required: 1) The community requires aid in terms of dry ration 2) Mosquito, personal and menstrual hygiene kits need to be provided. 3) Medical camps need to be conducted to address the rising instances of fever, cough and cold.

4. Killai Meenavar Colony - Killai Town Panchayat

85% of the community here comprises of people above 60 years of age.



Food : This habitation is finding it hard to procure their food for their households and are requesting dry ration as aid. The current flood and rains have brought a pause to their livelihoods and hence don't have the capacity to buy ration to feed their families.

Shelter and Housing : 15 houses have been damaged due to the floods and the rain; the community is looking forward to being provided with compensation.

Water Source : The community members continue to use the existing hand pumps, taps to meet their drinking water and potable water needs.

Water logging and Stagnation : The habitation is situated in a low lying area which shows water logging and stagnation. The drainage system within the habitation has water logging and stagnation becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes and the habitation is currently infested with mosquitoes.

Livelihood : The livelihood of the affected population has been severely affected as the communities primary livelihood is fishing and fishing related activities E.g. Dry fish vendors, fish catch labourers and fishermen themselves. Currently after the flood and rains the community livelihood has come to a standstill hence they are unable to meet their basic need of procuring food and hence seeking assistance in terms of dry ration.

Health and Sanitation : The area that is currently waterlogged is also the area that is used by both men and women for open defecation and other sanitation needs. Currently the water logging and stagnation has affected the women of the habitation the most, as they are finding it hard to access the area for their sanitation needs. The stagnating water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes and

other infections. It is necessary to address the mosquito problem in the habitation. Government Relief and Action: The government has not yet enumerated the house damages here, please verify as the affected members report that they have not received any compensation.

Relief Required : 1) The community is looking forward to relief such as dry ration. 2) They want regular medical camps to address cold, cough, fever, and headache. 3) They are also requesting for fishing nets, ice boxes.

III. The support from Collective Fishing and Development & Lorient City Corporation

This project was supported by Collective Fishing and Development & Lorient City Corporation to do relief for the affected families in a few villages in Chidambaram and Kurinjibadi blocks. The following villages were identified for relief distribution.

1. Killai Pattaraiyadi, Killai Town Panchayat, Parangipettai Block.
2. Killai Meenavar Colony, Killai Town Panchayat, Parangipettai Block.
3. Cinnavaikkal, Killai Town Panchayat, Parangipettai Block.
4. Pillumedu, Killai Town Panchayat, Parangipettai Block.

1. **Identification and Finalisation of affected people** : The beneficiary list was finalized with the affected communities and the local village committee in consensus with the village panchayat. Beneficiary card/token was given in advance to the identified to avoid confusion and for transparency. The distribution was intimated in advance to the beneficiaries and was done in a systematic and transparent manner.

2. **Protocols Followed** : Protocols were finalized and followed in Procurement, Volunteers, Field distribution, Logistics to be followed, Communication and the like.



3. **Procurement Procedure Followed** : The Purchase Committee discussed and decided to purchase the food items and the sanitary items which were produced by the CBOs; the orders were given to them and the Committee checked the quality of all products.

4. Relief Distribution :

4.1 Food & Nutrition : SNEHA distributed the following items to 247 families in these selected villages.

Our focus was only on the families of daily fish vendors, who are left out from the whole ambit of relief.



Dry Ration : (Rice – 10 kg, Thuvar Dhal - 250 gms, Tamarind – 250 gms, Oil- 1 kg , Tea – 200 gms, 1 packet of packaged spices) was distributed to 247 Families. This provided them the nutrition support for atleast 15 days.

4.2 Sanitary Items

We also distributed sanitary items to these families. The items were 2 Bathing Soaps, 1 Ltr Dish Wash, 1 Ltr Toilet Cleaner, 1 Bottle Phenyl.

In total our Relief Kit contained 16 items with dry ration and sanitary items.

IV. Results/Outcome :

1 247 families were supported with adequate nutrition for at least 15 days

2 247 families were supported with essential items, sanitation and hygiene items to enable them to survive and recover with dignity.

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