

December 26, 2004

# The Tsunami

and YRG CARE's small  
initiative to help  
affected families in  
4 coastal villages  
adjacent to Chennai,  
India

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# The Tsunami



## At Chennai

Chennai, the capital of Tamilnadu, where YRG CARE is located was also hit. Among the coastal communities affected were four in which YRG CARE conducts its project in collaboration with Johns Hopkins Universities - Power Kuppam (Kasimedu) and Pallavan Nagar in north Chennai, and Srinivasapuram and Nochikuppam in south Chennai.

As news of the tsunami spread around the world, massive relief operations were set up, often without really assessing what was necessary. This led to such things as tons of grain and other raw food being delivered to some communities, far more than was needed with no storage facilities to prevent the food from spoiling.

On the morning of December 26, 2004, an underwater earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia measuring 8.9 on the Richter scale set off tidal waves that devastated neighboring countries. In addition to Indonesia, the other Asian countries badly hit were India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

In India, the tsunami affected the southeastern coast starting from the state of Andhra Pradesh and its southern neighbor, Tamilnadu state, roughly from the middle of peninsular India all the way to the cape, Kanyakumari. The devastation was progressively worse as one went southwards.



## Assessment of needs

YRG CARE carried out a week-long needs assessment survey in mid-January (2005) among these communities to understand the real, immediate and long-term, needs of the affected.

Given the general despondent mood and people's engagement with other critical issues, our survey addressed a limited sample of affected people who volunteered their time and opinion.

# Priority needs

## What we found

### Current sources of water and food

Most people had gone back to their normal source of water supply (water trucks, wells). Packaged water did not seem a critical need.

Similarly over 90% had gone back to cooking their own food.

### Medical care

87% of those who required medical care reported receiving it, mostly for conditions such as fever and upper respiratory tract symptoms.

### Housing

Almost 50% were back in housing of their own. About 32% reported sleeping on the streets, but most of these people had erected temporary shacks using wooden poles and thatched leaves by the sea side. However, fearing that more tidal waves might come during the night, they had taken to sleeping on the street pavements further inland.

## Short term needs

Respondents were asked to rank their three top short term needs. 66 chose three items, but 76 also ranked these three items in order of priority - first, second, and third.

The top need was for clothes, with a preference for new clothes rather than old. Next priority was for raw food. The third need was for water; this was unexpected, as the respondents had said they were getting water from their regular supply, but it was not possible to qualify their answers under the circumstances.

This was how the temporary needs ranked in the overall order of priority:

1. New clothes
2. Raw (uncooked) food
3. Water
4. Cots / sleeping mats
5. Blankets
6. Notebooks for children
7. Cooking oil
8. Tooth brush, paste/powder
9. Towels
10. Soap
11. Tea / Coffee
12. Medicines
13. Cooked food

The only item requested in the "Other" (write-in) section was a drug box.



Clothes, Raw Food and Water.  
Immediate needs.



## In the long term

### Long term needs

The overall top need was for cooking utensils; the second need was for access to cooking stoves, and the third need was for access to medical care. The survey form had a blank line that respondents could use to write-in any other need. 30% of the respondents used this provision to request a storage utility such as a trunk, steel box or suitcase. Other items requested included: fishing nets, catamarans, fishing boats, housing, cash, help to get re-started in a profession or vocation (including occupations other than fishing), television sets, and tools.

In order of priority:

1. Cooking utensils
2. Cooking stoves
3. Access to medical care
4. Jobs\*
5. Housing\*
6. Storage utilities such as trunks, steel boxes, suitcases\*
7. Fishing vessels (catamarans, boats)\*
8. Cash donations or loans\*

*\* these items were listed among the "others" write-in section of the questionnaire.*

Based on this survey, YRG CARE has decided to distribute a relief kit to each family. The approximate cost of a relief package would be INR 6905 (roughly USD 159).

Cooking utensils,  
stoves and  
medical care.

Long-term priorities

### YRG CARE Relief Kit

A trunk or steel box  
Cooking utensils (diff. sizes)  
Stove  
A sack of rice  
New clothing (for the family)  
Sleeping mats and blankets  
Tooth brushes and powder  
Bath soap, Washing detergents  
Notebooks for school kids

# Budget estimate

## YRG CARE Tsunami Relief Initiative, 2005

### Management Costs

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Salaries and Consultants | Nil |
| Equipment                | Nil |
| Supplies                 | Nil |
| Other Equipment          | Nil |
| F & A                    | Nil |

### Supplies

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Total no. of affected families requesting support | 425   |
| Cost per affected family (in USD)                 | 159   |
| Total Cost (in USD)                               | 67575 |
| <i>Funds available in Phase 1</i>                 | 20000 |
| <i>Families to be supported in Phase 1</i>        | 125   |

### Cost per affected family for Supplies:

Family is assumed as a unit of 4 people - 2 adults and 2 adolescents/children  
USD exchange rate: 1 USD = 43.5 INR

| DESCRIPTION              | Unit cost<br>INR | UNITS | COST<br>INR | COST<br>USD | JUSTIFICATION                                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Trunk/Steel Box          | 500              | 1     | 500         | 11          | For storage of family's belongings             |
| Cooking Utensils         | 500              | 1     | 500         | 11          | For resuming cooking and being self sufficient |
| Stove                    | 400              | 1     | 400         | 9           | As above                                       |
| Sleeping Mats (4)        | 400              | 1     | 400         | 9           | Protection against crawling insects            |
| Blankets/ sheets (4)     | 400              | 1     | 400         | 9           | Protection against crawling insects            |
| Notebooks (5)            | 100              | 1     | 100         | 2           | For children in families going to school       |
| <b>Clothes (SET)</b>     |                  |       |             |             |  |
| 2 – Dhotis & Shirts      | 400              | 1     | 400         | 9           | For the men in the family                      |
| 2 – Sarees               | 500              | 1     | 500         | 11          | For the women in the family                    |
| 2 – Skirt & tops         | 300              | 1     | 300         | 7           | For the women/girls in the family              |
| 2 – Shorts & tee shirts  | 300              | 1     | 300         | 7           | For the children in the family                 |
| Oral Hygiene products    | 150              | 3     | 450         | 10          | For entire family for 3 months                 |
| Bath & Cleaning Products | 150              | 3     | 450         | 10          | For entire family for 3 months                 |
| Raw Rice (25kg)          | 375              | 3     | 1125        | 26          | Cooking supplies (3 Mths staple food)          |
| Dhal (3 kg)              | 50               | 3     | 150         | 3           | Cooking supplies (3 Mths staple food)          |
| Cooking Oil (2 kg)       | 110              | 3     | 330         | 8           | Cooking supplies (3 Mths staple food)          |
| Kerosene (10 Liters)     | 200              | 3     | 600         | 14          | Cooking supplies (3 Mths fuel)                 |
|                          | 4835             |       | 6905        | 159         |  |

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