

# Field Report from Andamans

SEEDS, Port Blair. 29 December 2004. 1800 hrs IST

The SEEDS field assessment team reached Tamil Nadu on Monday. We realised that there are some credible NGOs extending aid there. Meanwhile the toll in Andaman and Nicobar was rising and no assistance had reached there due to logistics problems.

As such, we have moved to the Andamans and have established two relief camp in Port Blair where evacuees from Hathbay and Car Nicobar Islands are being given shelter. We have about 1000 people in the camps right now and expect to have about 1,000 more by tomorrow. The latest update is as follows:

1. There is still no other NGO doing relief work in Andaman and Nicobar. Only the administration and some small local groups are working. They are grossly inadequate. Some NGOs have come for reconnaissance work.
2. Nicobar area is worst hit. The people were washed out, and these being islands in the middle of the ocean, many bodies did not wash back ashore. From back calculations (by counting heads and assuming missing persons as dead), the rough estimates of casualties are about 15,000 in this group of islands alone.
3. There is no major damage in Port Blair. In fact, the administration is evacuating people from vulnerable areas and bringing them to Port Blair under fear of another tsunami.
4. Taking relief from the mainland is a difficult process. Moving to remote islands is virtually impossible. For the time being SEEDS will run the two relief camps for evacuees in Port Blair.
5. We have started talking to the administration about long term needs of reconstruction. We will study this need and work on a plan for this after dealing with the immediate priority of relief.
6. SEEDS is currently operating the relief camps from the premises of the Nirmala Senior Secondary School and the School Line School. About 1,000 persons are being provided shelter, food, toilets and basic cleanliness and sanitation services.
7. Some locally rented tents and necessary items have been set up. Food is being partly procured from the government and partly from local groups and Port Blair residents.
8. There is an acute shortage of water as the pipe from the dam to the treatment plant has got damaged. Even hotels and restaurants in Port Blair are closed due to lack of water.
9. We are rushing more SEEDS staff to Port Blair from our Gujarat office to assist in managing the relief camps. We are rushing staff and volunteers to Chennai from our Delhi office to organise procurements and shipment of relief items. They will be in place by tomorrow.
10. We are preparing estimates of the relief teams and materials required, and will include it in our next report.

We are procuring food and clothing locally as far as possible, and procuring the rest in Chennai, and then moving it to Port Blair. Current indications of needs are as follows:

Short Term	Long Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Drinking Water</li><li>▪ Torches and batteries</li><li>▪ Soap and toiletries</li><li>▪ Foot slippers</li><li>▪ Expandable bags</li><li>▪ Sanitation facilities</li><li>▪ Bedding (mats and sheets)</li><li>▪ Temporary Shelter</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Housing</li><li>▪ Livelihood re-establishment</li><li>▪ Community facilities</li><li>▪ Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness programmes</li></ul>

It is expected that the relief camps will be operational for about two weeks. After that the phase of reconstruction of houses and community facilities will start. Preparedness and mitigation measures for future disasters will be built into the rehabilitation phase.