

REPORT OF THE STUDY ON,

**“VULNERABILITIES AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY
OPTIONS OF THE NON-OCEAN FISHING COMMUNITIES
AFFECTED BY TSUNAMI IN TAMIL NADU”**

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In Kovalam, Tamil Nadu, a Dalit village located 3 kilometres from the seashore, but adjacent to a river connected to the sea, 15 wooden catamarans (used for crab fishing) were totally damaged and tools for crab fishing were lost after the Tsunami. The Dalits reported all the losses to the collector; however, the collector made clear that the compensations were only meant for the ocean-fishermen. The case was reported to Peoples Watch-Tamil Nadu (PW-TN).

When the Tsunami struck on coastal districts of Tamil Nadu, India on 26 December 2005, the focus of the international media and the Indian State was entirely on the human and material losses of the ocean-fishing communities. As shown by the above case from Kovalam village, the relief and rehabilitation aid provided succeeding the Tsunami mainly targeted these communities. In contrast the non-ocean communities, who mainly consisted of Dalits, tribals and other marginalised people, did not experience great human losses and their material losses and disruption of their livelihood sources did not receive much attention. The rights of these communities in terms of relief support, rehabilitation and compensation for the losses were largely violated.

Peoples Watch-Tamil Nadu has been one of the few organizations, which has been committed to protect and promote the interest of the marginalized and vulnerable communities affected by the Tsunami, in particular the non-ocean fishing communities. PW-TN responded immediately by providing relief and rehabilitation to these communities and was moreover the first organization to conduct studies in relation to the Tsunami-affected areas, starting with the “*Rapid Impact Assessment*” and followed later by for example the study on: “*Discrimination and Exclusion in State Relief*”. The studies have become a point of reference for many NGOs and INGOs and have been used as a starting point for further research.

The most important of PW-TNs studies so far is the study at hand: “*Vulnerabilities and Livelihood Security Options of the Non-Ocean Fishing Communities affected by Tsunami in Tamil Nadu*”. The study documents the losses and rights violations of the non-ocean communities in 6 districts and provides recommendations and practical advices to both the government and the NGOs, for example in relation to support to re-establishment of disrupted/damaged livelihood sources and systems. Thus, whereas the ocean-fishing communities could take up their livelihood activities immediately after the provision of boats, the impact of the Tsunami on the livelihood systems of the non-ocean communities was in many cases more devastating and long-term, for instance with regard to the coastal agriculture due to the salination of land. Since the desalination of the land takes between two to four years, the agricultural farmers and labourers are left without a livelihood source for a long period. It is problems like these the study at hand documents and seeks to find solutions to. Through this report and through the work of Peoples Watch Tamil Nadu, the poor and marginalised people of the non-coastal communities of Tamil Nadu have a voice to make visible their losses and violation of their rights.

-Pernille Sørensen, DanChurchAid, Food Security Advisor



-Henri Tiphagne, *Executive Director, People's Watch-Tamil Nadu*

People's Watch-Tamil Nadu was established as a Program unit of the Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns (CPSC) in 1995 and is headquartered at Madurai. For its decade long commitment in protecting and promoting Human Rights, it has been widely recognized as a credible national organization, which now works in more than 10 states in India. 'Humanity' being the basis for Human Rights, People's Watch – Tamil Nadu (PW-TN) had also responded spontaneously when the tsunami struck Tamilnadu on 26th December 2004 by deploying 14 staff teams into various locations to gain first hand knowledge about the disaster and to see what immediately was required for the victims. Almost all the 14 teams were present at one or the other Tsunami affected village on the same evening of 26th. Beginning with this, PW-TN has been very active in the areas of relief, rehabilitation, rehabilitation monitoring, research and coordination.

All of its research studies beginning with the 'Rapid Impact Assessment' to the current one on 'the non-ocean fishing communities' were well taken by many NGOs and INGOs and have become a point of reference for many regional and international organizations. PW-TN takes pride in saying that all of its studies were first of its kind in relation to the Tsunami in Tamil Nadu and that they have created a platform for many others to research on further. However, for having committed to protect and promote the interests of the marginalized and vulnerable communities, PW-TN considers the 'Vulnerabilities and Livelihood study' as the most important one among all the other studies.

The Study would achieve its purpose if the Government of Tamilnadu and the NGO Community divert at least a sizable portion of it resources; if not all, towards the "affected".

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