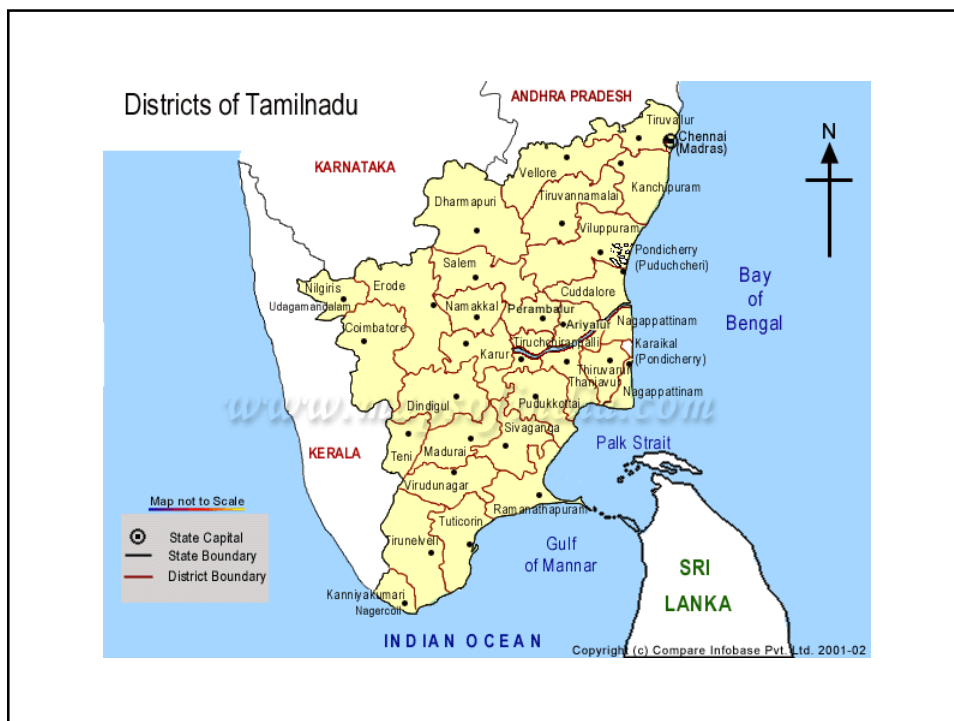


# Where there is no psychiatrist: Community Based volunteerism in providing psycho-social care

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## Pondicherry Science Forum

- Involved in Science communication / Popularisation
- Implemented Literacy Program
- Experiences in Rural Technology
- Interventions in Alternative Agriculture
- Lobbying for Public Policy
- Member of All India People's Science Movement

## Other Partners

### Medecins Sans Frontieres

- Emergency Medical INGO
- Implemented the Program in 2005
- Provided trainings
- Financial support to volunteers

### Democratic Youth Federation of India

- Dynamic Youth Movement
- Involved very much in rescue operation
- Provided volunteers

## Rescue Phase

- PSF-DYFI were involved in rescue operation from 26<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2006
- Mobilized volunteers from nearby areas to rescue bodies, remove debris and provided food, water etc in the relief camps
- Involvement of volunteers during this phases was tremendous

## Assessment by MSF

- On Jan. 11-13, 2005, an initial assessment was made by MSF Expat team in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam districts
- Dialogue was initiated with the partners to carry forward the MH Program in Tsunami affected villages

## Sensitisation Training

- Volunteers of Pondicherry Science Forum, Democratic Youth Federation of India participated in the sensitization Training
- About 53 volunteers were trained on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

## E.Q. of Volunteers

- Most of the volunteers are having 10, +2 passed
- Only few volunteers are graduated

## Mental Health Awareness Week

Feb. 7-12, 2005

- Awareness program was initiated because of 'stigma' associated with Mental Health in this community
- Brochures/Posters explaining the symptoms were widely distributed in the community
- Campaign was conducted in 40 villages covering two districts of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam
- This was the first kind of cultural event after Tsunami in all coastal villages of both districts
- Most of the events were organised by local youths, including dance, skits, songs etc.

## Trainings

- **Counsellors** – 18 days training has been completed: ( 2 days sensitization, 5 days counselling training, 3 days on group session, 2 days on 'help the helper' seminar, 3 days on alcoholism , 3 days on women and children by NIHMANS)
- **PSWs** – 14 days training has been completed : (2 days of sensitization training and 3 days of group activities and program plan; 2 days on 'help the helper' seminar, 3 days on drama as therapy, 2 days on hygiene promotion and disaster preparedness, 2 days on games and community approach by NIHMANS)

## Supervision

- Weekly meetings
  - Review of the work
  - Sharing experiences of difficult cases
  - Data collection
- On the field
  - To support the volunteers with help of psychologists
  - To administer therapeutic techniques
  - Co-ordination and Referral to other NGOs

## Role of Counsellors

- Individual counselling
- Group Counselling
- Sand Play
- Art Therapy
- Breathing Exercises
- Referral to Psychiatrist

## Role of PSWs

- Around 27 PSW's were working in both the districts collecting baseline data on mental health status
- Working among "Target Groups" includes, single women, single men, orphaned children and fishermen
- Involved in Group Activities like Games, Sports, Songs, art therapy and exercises, in few places vocational training was provided with the help other NGO

## Output

- No. of clients - 836
- No. of discharge - 715
- No. of referral - 24
- No. of drop-outs - 25

## Challenges at the field

- Psychologists have difficulties in accepting the **quality of work** by lay counsellors
- Access to referral services are difficult
- Abnormal situation in normal condition in the community
- Redefining disaster-emergency in terms of mental health component

## Conclusion & Recommendations

- Lay counsellors can provide counselling through periodical support from professionals
- De-professionalization is needed at the community psycho-social program
- Large amount of volunteers are trained by different agencies, we need to utilize them for broader mental health issues
- Empowering lay counsellors through more resources (offering certificate/diploma courses on MH by nodal institutions)

**“ Thank You ”**