

Tsunami relief: Central, State initiatives hailed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Dec 14: The government has played a significant role in rescue and relief operations in tsunami-hit states in India when compared to that of Sri Lanka and Indonesia, says a study by a US-based NGO.

Fritz Institute, in partnership with TNS, a global social science research organisation, had undertaken the study in two parts - after 60 days of the tsunami and after nine months of the disaster.

"Compared to the other two countries, the state and the Central Governments had carried out immediate rescue and relief operations in India," says the study. A survey was conducted among 2,300 affected persons in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India as part of the study.

While NGOs were regarded as the key players in rescue and relief operations in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, in India it was the government which was ranked at the top.

Even almost a year after the tragedy, the affected were leading a life far from normal, says the study report that was released here on Wednesday.

Though the prime concern for the tsunami-affected persons was restoration of livelihood and shelter, a vast majority of them were still living in temporary shelters or relief camps in the

three countries.

While in Indonesia, 100 percent of the affected families were still living in camps or temporary shelters, the statistics said it was 92 percent in India and 78 percent in Sri Lanka.

According to the findings, the livelihood restoration programmes were not satisfactory. "While in Indonesia, the government was rated second in restoring livelihood of the affected persons, in Sri Lanka, the government's performance

ing all the three countries and focusing on the beneficiaries.

"We got the response directly from the tsunami-affected persons," she claimed and said that the review of the government and the NGOs was done without any bias. "We also need to think how the funds were channelised during the tsunami. There was lot of funding," she added.

Though the study had already been released in the US and the UK, the findings

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was below par. It stood at the bottom. However, in India, the satisfaction level among the affected persons about the work done by the government and the NGOs was relatively higher," says the study.

The study adds that the affected persons were still devoid of permanent shelters. Nirmala Stephen, research director of TNS-India, said, "People are not happy in temporary shelters."

Anisya Thomas, managing director of Fritz Institute, claimed that it was the first time that such an extensive study was undertaken cover-

would be discussed at an international conference on "Performance and Preparedness: Lessons from the tsunami and the Response Strategies for Way Forward" to be held in Chennai on Thursday.

"Representatives from NGOs, media and the government will discuss their roles in disaster management. The findings of the study will be compared, and we will find out what has not been done and what needs to be done. A comprehensive report on the tsunami will be prepared at the end of the conference," Anisya said.