Chennai, Dec 15 (IANS) An international survey has found that the Tamil Nadu government was the top relief provider in India for victims of the Dec 26 tsunami that struck nine Asian countries and Kenya last year.

Fritz Institute, a US-based organisation, Thursday made public the findings on relief to tsunami victims in a study titled 'Recipient Perceptions of Aid Effectiveness: Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation in Tsunami Affected, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia'.

After the Tamil Nadu government, two NGOs - World Vision and Social Need Education and Human Awareness (SNEHA) - were the next best in disaster mitigation in India.

The tsunami killed more than 10,000 and rendered nearly 200,000 people homeless and without livelihoods in Tamil Nadu.

Relief satisfaction level was found to be higher in India than any other tsunami-hit country.

The Fritz Institute commissioned two studies of tsunami-affected families in India. The first study probed beneficiary perceptions of aid in the first 48 hours after the tsunami, and further, during the first 60 days.

The second study elicited information from the respondents nine months after the disaster, and compared it with their earlier responses.

In India, the key respondents in the survey were adult male and female members of families affected by the tsunami.

A representative sample was taken from a 1,000 people in 93 villages in 12 coastal districts of Tamil Nadu. Their main occupation was fishing and allied activities.

In Tamil Nadu, the three most affected districts were Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Kanyakumari, where the affected families have moved from the relief phase to permanent shelters and livelihood restoration phase.

A majority of affected families in Tamil Nadu said that major assistance in the first 48 hours came from the state government and local community members.

The respondents rated the rescue efforts as above average in most places, with a rating of 3.8 against a scale of 5, especially in the worst affected districts of Kanyakumari (4.3), Cuddalore (4.1), Nagapattinam (3.9) and Kancheepuram (3.8).

In Chennai, 75 percent of the affected families were dissatisfied and rated the efforts as poor.

The affected rated the efforts in burying the dead as slightly above average, with a rating score of 3.39 on a scale of 5.

Forty percent of the affected families in Tamil Nadu reported efforts taken by the government in burying those who died in the disaster, while 24 percent mentioned support from members of the local village community.

Measures taken to provide food and drinking water supply to the affected within 48 hours of the tsunami were rated very highly by the respondents in Chennai, Nagapattinam, Cuddalore and Kanyakumari.

Over 85 percent of the respondents said there was adequate water supply, more so among those in very badly affected districts such as Cuddalore (96 percent), Nagapattinam (92 percent) and Chennai (86 percent).

The survey indicates a substantial role played by non-government agencies, members of the local community and the corporate sector in supplying clothes to the affected.

With regard to shelter, the efforts of the government followed by members of the local village community and religious organisations were prominently noted by the respondents.

Thirty-two percent of the affected families said arrangements to accommodate them immediately after the disaster were made by the local government. In the later months, less than half the affected families said shelter was adequate.

The administration emerged as a major provider of medical care across the districts of Tamil Nadu, with 57 percent of the affected families surveyed reporting medical assistance by the government.
Perceptions of the affected families surveyed indicate that NGOs (both international NGOs and local) have played a positive role in providing medical services like hospitals in the long-term rehabilitation process.

The survey found 'high level of dignity maintained while distributing relief materials in most places'.

Set up in 2002 by Lynn Fritz, a social entrepreneur, the institute collaborates with academia and NGOs to recognise that effective front-line humanitarian operations must be supported by strong backroom capabilities and expertise.