

SW-TN and SOCIAL EQUITY WATCH

TSUNAMI MONITORING

As Tsunami 2004 played havoc on lives and livelihoods along the coast of Tamilnadu, SW-TN undertook various initiatives in the sphere of monitoring public policy processes on the disaster, especially accountability of the huge funds, public and private. SW-TN also helped in a few crucial coordinating and collective advocacy efforts.

In January 2005, SW-TN played a leadership role, along with Action Aid, Chennai Office and other major civil society organizations, in launching a **“Citizens’ Platform for the Tsunami Affected”** to ‘affirm the dignity of affected coastal communities and to identify ways to support their efforts to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.’ Over the next two years, the Platform played significant roles in monitoring public policy issues relating disaster management.

Again, SW-TN, by being elected as one of its conveners, provided leadership to the **Chennai NGO Coordination Council (CNCC)**, created mainly to get justice for about 4000 tsunami-affected families – most of them dalits – in Kannagai Nagar and Kargil Nagar slums at Chennai.

SW-TN closely collaborated with groups from Gujarat and Orissa, involved in disaster policy monitoring and disaster preparedness and was involved in advocacy efforts towards evolving a **“Disaster Management Act”** and a **“Relief Code”** for the state.

In November 2005, SW-TN collaborated with International Budget Partnership, Washington and the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi in organizing an Asian Consultation on **“Government Budgets, Donor Aid and Natural Disasters”** in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In the context of the Consultation, SWTN released its research study, entitled, **“Tsunami Funds: Where is the money coming from?”**

Where is it going?” The monograph attempted to monitor public disaster funds, from the point of view of State Accountability.

These various significant involvements of SW-TN in the sphere of public policy concerns in disasters led the organization to play crucial roles in the high level Consultation organized by the Government of Tamilnadu, along with the World Bank and UN Agencies to take stock of the progress of Tsunami recovery in the State. In the 2 day Consultation in September 2006 on **“Tsunami Recovery – The Past, the Present and the Future”**, SW-TN was asked to be part of a working group on Social Equity in Tsunami, intended to monitor all Departments with Social Equity as a cross cutting concern. More specifically SW-TN’s recommendations towards a “Relief Code” and “Disaster Management Act” for the State were also incorporated in the final statement of the Consultation.

SOCIAL EQUITY WATCH

SW-TN, along with like-minded national and international organizations, was quick to recognize wide-spread systemic discriminations, based on caste, gender and other social and physical disabilities, in the process of post-tsunami relief and rehabilitation.

Constant interactions among these organizations resulted in the formation at the national level of a Core Group, which developed **SOCIAL EQUITY AUDITS** as a professional tool to help communities and government agencies to organically move from social exclusion to a more inclusive paradigm in disasters. SW-TN has continued to be an active founder-member of the Core Group.

Based on the learning experiences of a pilot Social Equity Audit, in August 2005, on Church Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), Chennai, in which the SWTN Director was a chief auditor; and following the training of two batches of Social Equity Auditors through two training programmes in

November 2005 and March 2006, the Core Group undertook, during the year 2006, six Social Equity Audits on some major networks in Tamilnadu and Andhra as well as an INGO based at New Delhi. While Fr. John Kumar and Ms. Kamatchi of SW-TN acted as auditors in two audits, Fr. Manu, the director of SW-TN, besides being an auditor in one audit and an observer in another, was part of the group that continually monitored the progress of all the six audits.

On 18 January 2007, Social Equity Audit was nationally launched at a function in New Delhi. A book entitled, “**An Introduction to Social Equity Audit**”, a compilation of the learning experiences of the 6 audits and of the formats and processes of the audit, was released on the occasion.

In April 2007, SW-TN took efforts to launch Social Equity Audit at the State level during a Consultation at Chennai. On the occasion, a Tamil version of “An Introduction to Social Equity Audit” was released. The Consultation also provided an opportunity for SW-TN to introduce the concept of **SOCIAL EQUITY BUDGETING**, as an integral part of the Social Equity Audit process.

Following the various experiences related to Tsunami, the Social Equity Audit core group has evolved into **SOCIAL EQUITY WATCH**, committed to the wider task of making social equity as a central concern of all developmental and political processes in the country.

SW-TN continues to be an active member of Social Equity Watch.

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