



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

INDIA - Floods

Date: November 12, 1985

Location: Coastal areas of Tamil Nadu State

No. Dead: 130

No. Affected: 500,000 in nearly 2,000 villages

Damage: Extensive damage to homes, croplands, and irrigation systems; disruption of essential services

The Disaster

Storms lashed the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu in early November, dumping over 100 mm of rain in coastal areas in a one week period. Over half that amount fell between November 12 and 14 when the tropical depression responsible for the deluge was most intensive. Flash flooding and gale force winds destroyed thousands of huts in the low-lying sections of Madras City and in the countryside, leaving at least 130 people dead and 400,000 homeless. Sixty lives were lost in a single incident when a bus was swept from a road near the rain-swollen Thondiyar River in Cuddalore.

Normal rail, road, and air traffic came to a virtual standstill in most parts of the state, and all shipping operations in Madras port were halted for four days. Power was cut in a wide area around Madras City. The agricultural sector was seriously affected by the flooding, as more than a dozen irrigation tanks were breached in Thanjavur, Chengalpattu, and South Arcot districts, and thousands of hectares of rice croplands were submerged.

Action Taken by the Government of India (GOI) and the Government of Tamil Nadu (GOTN)

Government troops, ships, and aircraft joined the search for survivors and helped evacuate the thousands of people stranded by rising flood waters. In the evacuation centers set up in schools and community buildings, flood victims received food packets and inoculations against

cholera. Some 150,000 evacuees were still being sheltered in relief camps in Madras by November 19. The central government promised a quick allocation of the Rs. 91 crores (approximately \$76 million) in emergency relief requested by the state government.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

In view of the extensive damage caused by the flooding in Tamil Nadu, U.S. Ambassador John Dean determined on November 15 that a disaster existed in which U.S. assistance was appropriate and warranted. He exercised his disaster assistance authority to contribute \$10,000 to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. In addition to the Ambassador's cash donation, Catholic Relief Services made available on a non-replacement basis 130,813 kg of Title II foods from regular program stocks to feed 73,150 disaster victims. The P.L. 480 commodities were valued at \$48,640, inclusive of ocean freight.

TOTAL \$58,640

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CRS - diverted food commodities from P.L. 480 Title II stocks for emergency feeding. (See USG Assistance.)

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported