

Tamil Nadu

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A human touch to disaster management

Staff Reporter

Now, the 1000-member youth task force better equipped to handle calamities

CHENNAI: Twenty-three-year-old Gajendran can tie a bandage like a senior doctor. He would easily help you into your lifejacket, in case of emergency and he would tell you not to worry. Gajendran is no expert or social activist.

He is one of the thousand members, who are part of the youth task force operating in Cuddalore.

After the attack of tsunami waves last December, volunteers from the Academy for Disaster Management, Education, Planning and Training (ADEPT) trained these students on various physical, psychological and emotional aspects of managing disasters. Apart from these, women, adolescent girls and children have been receiving various forms of training since last December.

Evacuation easier

"It was awful initially. Whenever I closed my eyes, I would imagine a giant wave attacking me. It was like that for most of us. Even now, when the floods hit our areas, we were reminded of those bad times. The only difference is that we are better equipped to handle such calamities. Evacuation was so much easier this time," said Gajendran.

In the course of the year, over 1400 community counsellors were trained.

"We trained more women than men, as the role of men in those areas was defined in a very limited sense. Women performed several roles and we therefore thought it would be apt to train them," said U. Gauthamadas, director, ADEPT.

"Distribution of relief material is just one aspect of disaster management. We decided to give the entire process a human touch. Providing physical and emotional support structures is vital," said K.M. Shyamprasad, executive director, NLMHB.

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