

Report

Mock Drill at Vivekananda Rock Memorial (VEM), Kanniyakumari

1. Introduction

A mock drill was held on Friday, the 12th Sept. 08 based on the Disaster Management Plan of Kanniyakumari town, assuming an earthquake near Anandman Sea leading threat of Tsunami.

An orientation seminar was organized on Thursday, the 11th Sept.08 at Hotel Singaar International, Kanniyakumari to discuss the scenario and clarify roles of every organization as per the pre-decided objectives. It was attended by 45 persons from various organizations. Also, decided the observers and their locations. There were 10 observers at 8 locations as follows:

Sl. No.	Location	Observer
1	Manager Cabin of Poompuhar Shipping Corporation (PSC)	Mr. Subhash Chand Under Secretary Ministry of Labour & Employment Govt of India
2.	Ticket Counter of PSC	Mr. A Alvin J Anand Asstt. Engineer Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board, Nagercoil
3.	At Jetty	Mr. Rainar All, Educationalist Swedish Rescue Services Agency, Sweden and Mr. A.Y. Sundkar Asstt. Director National Safety Council, Mumbai
4.	Vivekananda Rock Memorial	Mr. Leo Heileman Head Business & Industry Unit United Nations Environment Programme and Mr. P. Gunasekaran Project Manager and Safety Officer Heavy Water Plant, Tuticorin

5.	Near All Women Police Station	Dr. Arun Bapat Tsunami Expert, Pune
6.	Railway Station (Identified Shelter for Tourists)	Mr. G. Rajan President Govt. of India Tourist Guide, Kanniyakumari
7.	Govt. Hospital	Mr. M.M.Kulkarni Director National Safety Council, Mumbai
8.	Road between PSC Gate and Jetty	Mr. Krishna Pillai President Tour Operators Triveni Toures and Travels, Kanniyakumari

2. Scenario

Scenario is enclosed as Annexure 1.

3. Drill

The drill exercise started at 11.00 am. The District Collector, through Emergency Operation Centre at Nagercoil, communicated receipt of Tsunami warning through wireless system to Village Administrative Officer (VAO) at Kanniyakumari. Simultaneously, the warning went to all the 32 locations along the sea coast of Kanniyakumari District. The VAO, in turn, informed over phone to PSC Manager, Police Station, Fire & Rescue Services and the Govt. Hospital.

At 11.00 am the Manager, PSC received a call from VAO about receipt Tsunami early warning. Immediately, he informed the Staff at Ticket counters and at Jetty through walkie-talkie and over phone to the Supervisor of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial (VRM) at the Rock about warning and evacuation of tourists. He, also, informed the State Transport Corporation for organizing buses to take the tourists from Jetty to Railway Station i.e. Shelter for the tourists. Immediately, he organized to make an announcement on Public Address System about Tsunami and requested tourists to keep calm. The supervisor closed the ticket counters. About 150 tourists were in queue to buy tickets and they were sent back. At 11.01 am Police arrived at Ticket counter in two jeeps and asked people to go back and closed the main gate. One Police jeep went to the Jetty. At 11.03 am all the ticket counter area was completely evacuated by the

Police. At 11.03 am two ambulances of the Health Department along with Dy. Director Health arrived at the Gate and went to jetty. At 11.04 Fire and Rescue team arrived at the Gate and went to jetty.

Those tourists at Jetty waiting to board the ferry were sent back by the Police. The Police, Medical and Fire & Rescue teams boarded the ferry and went towards the Rock Memorial to rescue the tourists and victims.

At the Rock Memorial siren was blown at 11.00 am. The Police, Medical and Rescue teams reached at the VRM by 11.07 am. The first evacuation ferry arrived at Rock at 11.11 am. All tourists including injured were put in the ferry and sent back to the jetty at shore. Total six services of three ferries were used to evacuate all the tourists from the VRM and two ferries were used to take rock memorial staff and response personnel. Entire VRM was evacuated within 36 minutes and at 11.37 siren was blown to inform the drill is over.

The Rescue, medical team and police played very positive role. The rescue team brought all the injured at ferry point where medical team provided first-aid and sent them to the hospital.

At the hospital, the patients were treated and categorised as follows:

- i) Black Ribbon band – dead
- ii) Red Ribbon band – urgent treatment
- iii) Green Ribbon band – can treat later (light injury)

At the Jetty, the PSC supervisors were receiving the tourists and guiding them to board the buses. The State Transport Corporation provided 4 buses to take the tourists from Jetty to Kanniyakumari Railway Station. All the tourists were taken in six buses. The medical team along with ambulances and nurses & doctors were providing the first-aid to the victims and sending them to the Hospital.

The entire drill was completed within 55 minutes. About 760 tourists were evacuated from the Rock Memorial. The Collector arrived at jetty at 12 noon and visited the VRM. Thereafter, the Collector went to the Govt. Hospital, met and enquired the injured persons. The Collector also visited the Shelter place (Railway Station) and listen the grievances of the tourists.

4. Debriefing Meeting

The debriefing meeting was held by the Collector at Hotel Singaar International at 1.30 pm wherein all the observers, other officials and role players participated. The Collector thanked all and congratulated for the success of the drill. The observers presented their observations.

Everybody took all these observations for their further improvement. The representatives from UNEP, SRSA, IHRA, NSCI and Union ministries of Labour and Tourism witnessed the drill and appreciated the performance of all agencies.

5. Observers' recommendations for improvement of the response

- The siren was not audible on the VRM rock side facing the Indian Ocean. It is necessary to relocate or provide new siren of high range so that it can be heard at all points of the rock memorial.
- Feasibility whether two ferries could wharf at the VRM to be worked out so that people can evacuate quickly, particularly during such crisis. It was observed that tourists were boarding in one ferry and another was waiting at sea to approach the VRM.
- At jetty point, tourists were jumping from the ferry. A moveable step should be kept ready at both the exits of the ferry, so that tourists can get down from the ferry without causing injury.
- Some vehicles had been parked on the road between jetty and the ticket counter of PSC. These vehicles were obstructed for free movement of state transport corporation buses and ambulances. During crisis care to be take to keep the road free of such obstacles.
- During crisis time all vehicles should be stooped at the entry point of the Kanniyakumari town Panchayat, so that there would be no difficulty in moving the response vehicles on the main road.
- Feasibility to be worked out, whether the road between PSC Gate and Town Panchayat Office would be widened so that response vehicles move fast without any hindrance.
- The buses had difficulties in turning at the corner because of security cabin of PSC. It may be relocated.

**Drill at Kanniyakumari
On Friday, the 12th September, 2008**

1. Objectives:

- i) To test the effectiveness of Communication
- ii) To test the procedure of evacuation of tourists
- iii) To test the Medical Preparedness
- iv) To test the effectiveness of Rescue operation
- v) To test the Transportation of tourists to Shelter (I.e. Railway Station)

- 2. Scenario:** Early warning of Tsunami has been received from the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Nagercoil informing that there is an earthquake near Andaman Islands region and a Tsunami warning received from the State Govt. The tourists from the Vivekananda Rock Memorial are to be evacuated to the Shelter at the Kanniyakumari Railways Station

3. Description of the activities

Stage – 1

It is a normal day i.e. Friday, the 12th September 2008, the tourists would be visiting the Vivekananda Rock Memorial. The Poompuhar Shipping Corporation (PSC) operates the ferry services between the Jetty and the Vivekananda Rock Memorial from 8.30 am at regular intervals. At around 11 am the Village Panchayat Officer at Kanniyakumari receives a warning from the EOC and in turn he would inform Police, Fire & Rescue, Govt. Hospital and Manager of PSC.

Stage – 2

Immediately, the PSC Manager informs their ticket counter Supervisor to stop issuing the tickets of ferry services on all counters and also informs their employees on both ferries through walkie-talkie as well as to the Officer of Vivekanda Rock Memorial over telephone. He then also informs to the Police Station, Govt Hospital and State Transport Bus Service. The Supervisor immediately instructs the Security Personnel to stop the tourists. In advance, he also makes arrangements to put up a notice on a board outside the booking office as well as the entry point as well as announce on the Public

Address System informing disaster drill in three languages i.e. Tamil, Hindi and English.

Stage – 3

Accordingly, the security personnel of PSC stop the tourists near the Gate and also at the Rock Memorial entry point. The information also is given on their public address system about the drill and instruct tourist to stand in a queue and bear inconvenience. Security personnel would be deployed near queue so that there is no rush or commotion. First batch of tourists will be taken to ferry and dropped at the Jetty. These tourists will be taken by from the jetty. In between the State Transport Buses will arrive at Jetty and all tourists would be transferred to Railway Station. After receiving the information, the Police will come to the Jetty and also at the Memorial for maintaining law & order and help.

In an anxiety, few tourists' falls down while getting down from the ferry and gets them injured while another tourist gets giddiness. They would be taken by the ambulance to the Government Hospital for treatment

Stage – 4

AT 1144 a.m. a telephone call received from the Emergency Operation Centre informing that the Govt has withdrawn the Tsunami warning. The Manager, PSC announced at 1145 a.m. that the normal service would be resumed as the drill is over.

4. Observer Posts:

1. Manager Cabin, PSC
2. Ticket Counter of PSC
3. Jetty
4. Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Ferry Entrance Point and on the Rock
5. Railway Station
6. Govt. Hospital
7. All Women Police Station
8. Road between PSC Gate and Jetty
