LOYOLA RAIN RELIEF SERVICE (LRRS) - 2015

LRRS Phase I – Outreach Department reaching out slum areas

LRRS Phase II - Loyola Camp

LRRS Phase III – Outreach Department Distribution, Meeting for outside Volunteers, LSSS distribution to Loyola Students.

1.0 Introduction:

Since the dawn of history, the world has been experiencing a series of large scale natural calamities; their ramifications for public safety and ecological conditions have grown much worse than what they were before. As we retrospect, it is quite common to observe that most of these hazards warranted emergency responses. As a matter of fact, the government is expected to be prepared in responding and taking prompt actions.

In 2015, Chennai flood devastated the residents completely. It caused immense damage; over 400 people were killed; around 18 lakh people were reported to be missing; power supplies were suspended; at least 57,000 homes in the city had suffered structural damage; holidays were continuously announced schools and colleges; scheduled examinations were postponed; and transport services remained closed. It has been the hazardous flood to strike Chennai after 100 years.

The following paragraphs discuss on how the flood state has taken a huge setback due to the persistent rainfall and how Loyola College, as an academic institution, took it as a social responsibility and played an empathetic proactive role to assist the flood victims to get back to their normal living conditions.

2.0 Background:

In November 2015, during the annual north east monsoon there was a heavy rainfall which affected the coramandel coast of South Indian Regions: Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu received a persistent rainfall which caused massive damage to Chennai and some of its north interior notable districts: Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, and Cuddalore. The overflowing flood led to low-lying territories of its capital city (Chennai) becoming inundated in waters which forced its residents to evacuate on their own to seek refuge in safe areas.

Since its inception, the institution has been extending its support to people of neighbourhood and involving itself in various relief/remedial activities whenever a natural calamity occurs. Therefore, Loyola College extended its support by distributing food and relief materials in its rain-hit neighborhood. As this flood forced thousands of residents to evacuate from their home, the college took initiative to house 2000 plus displaced rain victims on its premises.

On December 2, 2015, Rev. Dr. G. Joseph Antony Samy, S.J., Principal, Loyola College along with a few staff volunteers visited the rain affected areas located around Loyola College, Chennai. On visitation, it was found out that the neighbourhood seemed to be badly affected. The floods had gushed into the streets of Namachivayapuram and engulfed the residents and their living
conditions. The college came forward immediately to extend its support to 2500 plus people whose houses were inundated in the flood. It is quite common to observe that most of the earlier hazards invited emergency responses and the government acted promptly. This time, like Loyola College, so many voluntary organizations had to lend the rain affected people a helping hand.

3.0 Loyola Rain Relief Service (LRRS)

As there was a looming spectre of epidemics, the college management planned proactive measures to promptly address the pressing needs of the flood victims through organizing a relief camp under the name of Loyola Rain Relief Service (LRRS) that was, during November 2015 rain, initiated to provide the rain affected people living in the slum areas with food materials and clothing.

As a small beginning, the management initiated a core committee to discuss the ways and means to handle the situation with remedial measures. Initially, the student volunteers visited the drowned areas and distributed food to the people. On observing the condition of the homeless victims, the college opened up its gate to the rain affected people on Loyola premises. LRRS had 30 staff, and 250 energetic students, who volunteered themselves towards the relief measures.

The camp was started with an organized schedule. To help the people in overcoming their sorrows and to serve them in accepting their way of life, the inmates’ opinions were collected and the schedule of the camp was planned accordingly.

After the incessant rain, we were flooded with goodness. Many sponsors came forward to help LRRS out with breakfast, lunch and dinner to be distributed to the flood victims. All essential materials such as food and basic amenities were systematically collected, stored and distributed to the inmates. Further, the inmates were provided with bed sheets, mats and clothes. LRRS recognized that the affected people were in need of some important essentials to carry on their routine. The required provisions were collected from the sponsors and distributed to the people. The provisions kit consisted of clothes, paste, brush, towels, mosquito coil and sanitary napkins. To keep the children entertained and to make them forget their worries, the students conducted many fun games. Loyola Students Support Services (LSSS) engaged the woe stricken people with folk art performance too.

Along with food supplies and stress busters to the people, their medical needs were also identified to a greater extent. A medical team consisting of 8 doctors offered medical treatment for nearly 1750 flood victims housed in Loyola premises. In addition, about 7 doctors from private hospitals and 2 doctors from Corporation of Chennai visited and offered medical assistance to the victims. A number of donors sent a lot of emergency medicines needed for the people who stayed in the camp. A special medical team support from Apollo hospital consisting of 4 doctors and 4 volunteers too visited the camp.

Volunteers found the tasks of distributing basic amenities to flood victims in other affected areas to be much challenging and demanding. Thus, a rescue team of Loyola was formed and sent to other affected areas of Chennai – Velachery, Mudichur, Pulicat, Urappakkam, Nandhabakkam, Ramapuram, etc. and other parts of Cudalore, Thiruvalloor and kanchipuram districts. They rescued
the flood victims and distributed food, water, clothes and also medicines to the HIV patients identified in a few areas. The much interiors of the Otteri area was reached by our rescue team.

The rescue team won the admiration of common people as it was first team to visit those areas. The NCC cadets of Loyola College provided security for people who spent their days and nights in the camp. Thus, the volunteers of Loyola had put their maximum effort for the relief measures.

The people who were safely sheltered at Loyola had to start their life from their initial stage. Focusing on this, Loyola took its next step on rehabilitation and reconstruction. The materials worth of Rs. 8,000 each relief kit that were sponsored by donors such as clothes, candles, mosquito repellents, sanitary napkins, utensils, bed sheets, etc were distributed to people inside as well as the affected ones in the outer parts of Chennai. It was believed that the relief kit systematically distributed by the volunteers would be a completely new startup of life for those hutments. All donors and sponsors were also invited for distributing the startup kits. The victims were overwhelmed with gratitude and thanked the LRRS team for their good gesture.

4.0 Accomplishment of the basic needs

4.1 Food

Breakfast was contributed by Jain Community, Snacks were supplied by Loyola Alumni Association and Lunch was catered by various volunteers and organizations including MCC Old Boys Group, Tamil Nadu Rotract Club, Nature Lovers, Namma Chennai, Crystal Garden Welfare, Only Kollywood, and Brownstone Apartment. Loyola Staff members and student volunteers distributed them.
4.2 Shelter

With the assistance of police officials, the college managed to provide shelter for the needy. They were sheltered in the New Commerce Block. Area Councilor was of assistance in mobilizing the people.

4.3 Medical Facilities

The college provided various medical facilities for the affected people to prevent them from the epidemics of water-borne illnesses to occur. The Volunteers distributed the medicine and basic sanitation materials to women and children. Dr. Shanthi, Dr. Ramala, Dr. V. Madhusudan and various other doctors from the Corporation of Chennai have rendered their service to eight hundred people. Sufficient medicines have been supplied by the donors.

Thus, it was a well-timed and effectively organized camp for the flood victims at Loyola College. Completely impressed by all media persons, it was hailed as a model camp for the others to take a cue from this. Further, many donors commended the team upon the yeoman service rendered to these flood victims.

5.0 Committees

The success of LRRS depends on effective and prompt functioning of various committees:
LOYOLA RAIN RELIEF SERVICE

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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Outside distribution</td>
<td>Mr. Raja / Student Volunteers</td>
<td>LOCO</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Documentation and communication</td>
<td>Dr. K.S. Antonysamy, Prof. Jai Dinesh, Prof. Renitta, Prof. Michealammal</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Floor management</td>
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5.1 DOCUMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Documentation and Communication committee entered the list of donors and their contribution in ERP entries and also the list of materials dispatched and distributed to rain affected people outside Loyola Camp. It further prepared the list of volunteers and stock. Reports on daily basis were prepared in English and Tamil.

The committee constantly kept in touch with reception desk and camp registration desk to update the list of inmates of the camp and donors list and their contribution and materials dispatched to outsiders. It was actually the coordination of the various committees that really enabled the officials to render full-fledged service to the victims.

A team of students were engaged in videography and photography of the entire process. It was a strenuous job for the volunteers to catch every single moment to be documented. Another group constantly was at editing the video and photography to be immediately displayed in the Display TVs all over the campus and especially the one that was kept by the side of the reception desk located in front of Library Building, the materials procurement and distribution point.

In addition, media both print and visual like Thanthi TV, Puthiya Thalaimurai, Times Now, News 7, BBC, Makkal TV, Satyam TV, The Hindu, City Express, etc. were received during the camp,
assisted to have visuals and bytes from the officials and victims, and briefed of the arrangement of the camp.

A brief write up the camp was regularly uploaded in Loyola College official FB and LRRS whatsapp group to update the public and donors about the activities of the camp. It was prepared methodically and uploaded regularly to be accountable for the materials received from the public and donors. Moreover, thank-you sms and email were sent to every donor who visited Loyola College.

A regular updating of the report was done in Loyola College website for the public to view the camp activities. Even, well-timed videos of the camp were uploaded in the College you tube.

All these were done mainly to record the events, to be transparent to the public and also invite those who were interested to come forward in taking part Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction measures.

5.2 STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

The students of Loyola were given a chance to contribute themselves towards the flood relief measures. LRRS had many students, who volunteered themselves towards the relief measures caused by the deluge in the city.

The volunteers were mostly from Loyola Hostel for Men, Loyola Hostel for Women, Brothers of Berchman’s Illam, LICET students, NCC Cadets, NSS, FOP, and AICUF members, and PULC students. Students from other Colleges like Ethiraj College and some of the donors themselves served as volunteers. These volunteers were given identity cards to avoid unnecessary misgivings.
6.0 Methodology

6.1 Evaluation Meeting – A strategy for the success of LRRS

Rev. Dr. S. Lazar, SJ, Secretary & Correspondent, Loyola College conducted committee meetings regularly and initiated discussion for betterment of the camp. At the end of every day, the officials and committee coordinators met to evaluate the strategies employed in the materials procuring and distributing to the rain affected people. Suggestions were invited from all the members and incorporated duly for the improvement of the camp. As it was a disaster management, there were initially lack of coordination and miscommunication but this kind of evaluation meeting helped the members to overcome the hiccups.

The points for improvement were noted clearly and passed them on to the volunteers concerned on daily basis. Action taken report was also maintained and it was consequently ensured that such suggestions were followed where applicable.

6.2 Field Study Undertaken

A committee comprising Dr Gladston Xavier, Head, Dept of Social Work, Dr Vimala Kumari Kalaiarasi, Head, Dept of Zoology and Prof. Alex Parimalam, Dean of Students was constituted to make a study of the affected area, Namachivayapuram before decisions such as resettling of the people in their dwelling places and distribution of relief materials and so on were made. Some of suggestions forwarded by the committee were instrumental in the process of helping rain affected people to move to their places and distributing relief materials. Hence, LRRS volunteers planned to

- Spread the word of imminent return to the relief camp to mentally prepare them.
- Incentivise the return process by giving them tokens for kits.
- Come up with a clear plan to deliver the relief kits.
- Discuss the procedure of distribution
- Identify the people outside Loyola for whom the relief kits to be distributed
- Bear in mind the academic concerns and take a quick decision to ensure their safe return to their houses.
- Chalk out a contingency plan in case of the threat of rains in the following two days.

Accordingly, the volunteers planned on the 8th day of the camp (Dec 09, 2015) for their safe return and smooth distribution of the relief kits.
7.0 COMMENTS FROM THE MEDIA

7.1 TIMES NOW

“Chennai has been crippled after the floods in the city. And, many still remain stranded. Several stranded citizens of the city have taken refuge in Loyola college where volunteers carry out relief operations.”

7.2 THE HINDU

*College offers succour to residents*

A doctor examines a senior citizen at the relief camp at Loyola College. Photo: R.Ragu

On the Loyola College campus, about 200 student volunteers and 25 staff have been formed into committees to look after the needs of the 2,000-odd flood-hit residents who have been accommodated there, there is a help desk at the entrance, and relief materials are distributed room-wise to all, said public relations officer, K.S. Antonymsamy.

“We have no problems with regard to food, water or bed sheets. We do require other materials such as clothes, schoolbags and books,” said B. Latha, who, along with A. Sulochana, had been rescued by boats from East Namasivayapuram in Choolaimedu.

S. Chinnamma, who has a wound on her left forehead from slipping and falling while trying to retrieve a few possessions from her home, said she had consulted doctors at the daily medical camp run at the college with volunteers and Chennai Corporation doctors. “We lost everything — fridges, beds, mixers and grinders — all gone,” she said.

P. Gajjalakshmi, who worked as a salesperson at the Poorvika mobile showroom in Kodambakkam, was worried about her school certificates. “I couldn’t see my house — it was completely drowned in the water,” she said.

With schools and colleges possibly re-opening on Monday, the residents are worried as to where they will go and how they will get back to their old lives. “We are already hearing that we may have to leave on Sunday. But what will we do? We have no homes or possessions,” one resident said.

Mr. K.S. Antonymsamy said the college’s reopening may be delayed by a day or two as they did not want to pressure the residents to leave.

Where relief does not reach them
At Jaigopal Garodiya School in Saidapet that now houses residents who used to live along the Adayar river in huts near the area, they are unsure of what to go back to.

“Everything, including my ration card, clothes and valuables, has been washed away. We were living there for the past 13 years, waiting for our Housing Board apartments which we were allotted more than a decade ago,” said A. Kuppusamy, a 62-year-old resident.

People in the camp, which houses over 200 people from the nearby areas who fled their homes after water levels rose on Monday, say that other than food, they have not got any relief materials. “Since a large number of people have been affected in this area, they line up on the main roads and stop the relief vehicles or even get into the relief trucks and take away things before they can reach here,” said L. Kaniammal. Stating that there were many infants at the camp, she pleaded for relief workers to provide for milk and baby clothes.

Many other persons in the camp said that only on Saturday, after much pleading, had they got access to water. The camp in itself paints a picture of squalor and neglect with stagnant water and slushy grounds which, they fear, will lead to an outbreak of malaria or dengue.

7.3 THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Loyola College formed a task force, Loyola Rain Relief Services (LRRS) consisting of Outreach Department staff, officials of the college and students to reach the rain victims during the incessant rainy days and fulfill their immediate needs. Contributions from the management and alumni to the tune of ₹20 lakh were immediately used to provide the people in Amma Nagar and Anju Kudusai Slum in Chintadripet, Namaehivayapumm, Saidapet with food packets, bread, biscuit packets, mats, tarpaulin, bed sheets, towels, etc. The college also plans to organize medical camps for them using the voluntary services of the doctors.

8.0 STATISTICAL DETAILS

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CLOTHING MATERIAL
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## Loyola Rain Relief Service Report

### Toiletries

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### CLOTHES-FOR-INFANTS

- **2 BABY INNER WEAR**
- **1 Baby carrier**
9.0 Relief Materials distribution by Outreach Department

The department of Outreach having identified the felt needs of the rain affected people of 34 slum areas like Choolaimedu, Chinthathripet, Tenampet, Pudupet, Saidapet, etc. distributed relief kits on December 12 &13, 205. Totally 5700 families benefitted from this measure. Student volunteers and the staff of Outreach Department systematically planned the distribution and made the entire process smooth and hassle free.

10.0 Relief Materials distribution by LSSS

About 325 rain affected families of Loyola College students in and around Chennai were distributed rain relief kits on 22.12.2015. A counseling session was organized by AURA club to motivate and empathize the students of these families. Subsequently, the officials of the college, a few donors and members of Alumni association distributed rain relief kits that contain bed sheets, night gown, rice, dhal, etc. to these students. Earlier the staff in charge of various clubs had visited these families to express the solidarity of the college community. One of the important donors present over in the programme was the owner of Pothys.

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