

GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS OPERATING TOGETHER IN SISTERHOOD (SOUTH ASIA)

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RELIEF, REHABILITATION FOR TSUNAMI VICTIMS – NEED FOR A GENDER FOCUS

Editorial

The worst human tragedy of the millennium unfolded as the tsunami killer waves hit the coasts of several Asian countries, including the Indian Coast, in the early hours of December 26, 2004. In South India, the tsunami hit the Marina Coast of Chennai, the Eastern Coast of Tamil Nadu, and the Coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh between 9:00 and 9:15 am on the same day. The tsunami killed more than 2,20,000 people in 12 countries spanning South-East Asia, South Asia and East Africa and displaced more than 1.6 million. Though ample research has been conducted to study the impact of the tsunami on tourism, environment, and animals; very little research has been done on its impact on the poor and particularly among women.



Experiences indicate that natural disasters are discriminatory. In Nagapattinam in South India, government statistics reveal that 2,406 women died, compared with 1,883 men. In Cuddalore in South India, almost three times as many women were killed as men, The female deaths were 391 while 146 men were killed. In Devanampattinam village in Cuddalore, 42 women died compared with 21 men. In Pachaankuppam village, only women alone died.

Did more women die than men? Did the traditional role of women make them more vulnerable to the tsunami? Was the relief efforts gender sensitive? After the tsunami, were the decision-making roles of women compromised? Do the males in the family have a wider role to play now? Has the traditional gender role in the society undergone a change? In short, what are the gender-specific lessons learnt from the tsunami?



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Evidence cited above clearly indicates that more women were killed in the disaster than men. The reason, according to survivors, was that men who were fishing at the time in the mid-sea when the tsunami struck, were saved as the waves passed calmly under their boats, while women who were waiting at the shoreline to take the fish to the market, were swept away. Also,

women in their traditional role as home managers were killed while saving the lives of their children and elderly relatives.

In designing shelters, the privacy needs of women should be addressed. Toilets and kitchens should be placed at locations that are convenient and safe. Secluded areas should be created for medical examination at the shelters. Property once owned by the husband should be accessible by their widows. Relief material distribution should also be more gender sensitive.

There is evidence that gender inequality has increased after the tsunami. There are evidences that the power of women to take part in decision making has weakened. In Cuddalore, there has been an increase in the number of marriages of girls within their extended families after the tsunami. Instances have been reported of orphaned girls being married off by their extended families without their consent. Elderly women in Nagercoil collect firewood to make a living after the death of their caregivers in the tsunami. While orphaned school-going girls have to stay at home to look after their siblings; other women find themselves taking care of relatives' children.

Does the loss of women mean a more challenging role for men?. Many of the men will find themselves rearing their children as a single parent. What implications would this change in the gender roles have on the family and the society?

It is commendable that the governments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala have stationed women fire officers and police officers and women doctors in the relief camps to provide a sense of security to the women. The Kerala government has also agreed to register permanent houses owned by married couples in the names of both spouses so that one cannot sell without the consent of the other.

The aid agencies have to address the livelihood needs of the surviving women. Women make a livelihood by running small business shops, selling idlis (Indian ricecake), repairing nets, making coir, selling sea shells etc. Women have to be given access to credit and other variables to put them back in business. Equal pay for equal work, ownership of assets such as boats and houses, insurance for life, disaster and health are the other issues to be addressed while providing relief to women. Government agencies and aid agencies have to take cognizance of the needs of women and, therefore, integrate them in the decision-making process while undertaking relief efforts. Adequate attention should be given to safety and privacy issues of women.

In conclusion, natural calamities are specific to regions and gender; they are discriminatory. But relief measures need not be administered in a discriminatory manner. Though men outnumber women as survivors, the needs of the women survivors cannot be looked. Caution should be exercised that the decades of progress made since 1970's by the Beijing Process of U.N. Conferences on Women, through the Platform for Action, should not be lost.

*Few facts are based on The Tsunami's Impact on Women. Report of Oxfam Briefing Note, March 2005

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU
Visits WWF as Chief Guest - Distribution of Rehabilitation Measures
To Tsunami-Affected WWF's Fishing Family Members
of Marina Coast, Eastern Coast of Tanjore And Andhra Coastal Areas

At a function organized by the Working Women's Forum Shri Surjit Singh Barnala, His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu, was the Chief Guest on June 28, 2005. The function was organized to distribute rehabilitation measures to tsunami affected members of the Forum, from Chennai Marina Coast, Eastern Coast of Tamil Nadu (Adiramapattinam) and Coastal Areas of Andhra Pradesh (Narasapur and surrounding villages). Benefits were distributed to 35 fishing family members of WWF including 50 SHGs from tsunami-affected Cuddalore Dt. in Tamil Nadu as part of the financial assistance for tsunami relief efforts; the rest of the benefits was distributed in each of the affected areas. The Forum has distributed relief measures worth Rs.1,17,57,667/- that it received as financial assistance from various national/international foundations such as Citibank Foundation, Rabobank Foundation and other smaller groups. Rs. 25 lakhs was distributed as immediate relief within 10 days of the tsunami. The remaining amount of Rs.92,57,667/- was distributed to 1501 tsunami affected fishing family members of WWF that included Rs. 10 lakhs to 50 SHGs from Cuddalore District. Out of the 1501 affected members 726 lost their fishing nets, 46 members lost their catamarans, 322 members lost their housing and 350 members lost their fishing trade.

The function was presided over by Justice S. Mohan, former Judge Supreme Court of India; Ms. Uma Relan, Consumer Credit Head, New Delhi along with Ms. Madhulika Gupta, Vice-President and Director Corporate Affairs, Citibank; Ms. Kalpana Iyer, Business Manager, Women's Banking; Ms. Uma Gopal, Assistant Vice President, Micro-Finance Group, i.e the core team of Citigroup participated at the function. Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President, WWF, said it is not only that a few educated members of WWF are prominently known, but each one of the members of WWF, though from poorer families, have accomplished themselves in helping their neighbourhood and communities achieve economic and social independence in their slums, villages and areas. WWF has always responded to the needs of poor women in overcoming vulnerable and crisis situations like the tsunami and other emergencies. In this era of globalization, Dr.Arunachalam thanked Ms. Uma Relan, Ms. Madhulika and the Citigroup team for the meaningful, on-going Citigroup-WWF (I) partnership, which transited from being a community support service to a micro-loan process.

Justice S. Mohan, former Judge of the Supreme Court, who presided over the function said that the single-most important aspect of this function is that women are equal bread winners, if not more, and it is through them that men are getting fishing infrastructure to go back to the sea - a rare phenomenon in the Indian subcontinent. He said Dr. Jaya Arunachalam has built the 'Pyramid' of WWF single-handedly. She and the members of her team were readily present wherever there are women in poverty, in tears and in sorrow. He thanked Citigroup for teaming with WWF for providing rehabilitation to the tsunami affected fishing family members and profoundly thanked them for their magnanimity. He said the presence of His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu demonstrates his (His Excellency's) deep concern for the poor and the vulnerable who have suffered the most.

Ms. Uma Relan, Consumer Credit Head, Citibank, New Delhi said it was her honour and privilege to represent Citigroup and to speak at this important function. She lauded the efforts of Dr. Jaya Arunachalam and the members of her team for responding with 'great alacrity' from the first day after the tsunami and taking charge of the immediate relief and rehabilitation process. She also learnt from her colleagues, who had made site visits, that the

efforts of the WWF team was ‘simply overwhelming’. She thanked,”Dr. Arunachalam and WWF for giving Citigroup an opportunity to be part of this extremely essential and meaningful endeavour”. She narrated that the Citigroup-WWF (I) partnership, initiated in 1998, for the social and economic upliftment of poor women reached new heights. The Pilot micro loan project which was started last year has been concluded and is being continued successfully.

In his speech, His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu, was overwhelmed by WWF’s response in playing an important role in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster in delivering relief to the affected families. He congratulated Dr. Jaya Arunachalam and her team for their laudable efforts in rehabilitating the members of the Forum immediately after the tsunami. He was impressed by the remarkable role of WWF in helping integrate poor women to fight poverty. He said WWF has grown into a social movement in the three southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. For future guidance, he stressed the importance of a **tsunami warning system** for avoiding loss of lives.

On a personal note, he recalled the fond memories of the public and social work of Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, ever since 1977, when he was the Agricultural Minister in the Central Government. He also recollected the days when Dr. Arunachalam called upon him when he was the Governor of Andhra Pradesh with requests of public interest and was happy to find her carrying on her social work in the same strain, now when he is the Governor of Tamil Nadu.

Ms. P. Egammai, Secretary WWF proposed the vote of thanks. While Ms. Asha R compered the programme Dr. Sudhersena. A. announced the rehabilitation fishing infrastructure distributed by His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu.

RESPONSE OF WORKING WOMEN’S FORUM (INDIA) TO THE RECENT TSUNAMI DISASTER

The worst human tragedy of the millennium unfolded as the tsunami killer waves hit the Marina Coast of Chennai, the Eastern Coast of Tamil Nadu, and the Coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh on December 26, 2004 between 9:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. The tsunami waves caught the people by surprise and the devastation was of severe magnitude.



The tsunami disaster affected nearly 2000 members of WWF, pursuing fishing occupation as their livelihood. This disaster was a traumatic experience, often recurring in more than one place as a result of which the fishermen and fisherwomen were reluctant to leave the relief camps. Even if they wanted to return to their own places from the camps, their own places were slushy with fallen and deserted houses, collapsed walls and abandoned villages. This is because in some areas, the sea and the habitable places of some fishing families are at the same levels. Also, many of the fisher folk have lost very valuable assets like fish tubs, huts, fish nets, poultry, plastic mats, catamarans, fiber boats, fish ice boxes, catering vessels and other such productive and utilitarian assets. Some of us as volunteers from WWF, and the President visited the affected

members immediately after the disaster occurred and assisted them with clothes to adults/children, foodstuffs, bed sheets and small cash, particularly to those living in isolated areas of the Eastern coast of Tamil Nadu (in Adiramapatinum), Marina Coast of Chennai and the Coastal Areas of Andhra Pradesh. The transportation of relief measures to the affected areas has been a hurdle as the roads were rugged and not motorable in many places.

WWF used its meager resources to help victims in the beginning. Though relief measures have been offered from all over the world to WWF, but until it comes to us, we are quite sceptical.

After we finished the phase of relief work – within 4 weeks, WWF volunteers took up the counseling and advocacy work, before doing the needs assessment for the rehabilitation/reconstruction of livelihoods, as friends and well-wishers came forward in a big way to assist WWF’s fisherwomen members.



We will be failing in our duty, if we do not acknowledge the visits of distinguished persons for visiting the tsunami-hit areas and lending their support:

The President of WWF and Ms. Madhulika Gupta, Vice President and Director Corporate Affairs Citibank inspected the tsunami hit areas of Appar Nagar, Pattinapakkam in the Marina Coast and North Chennai on January 22, 2005. She heard the tsunami affected members narrating their experiences. Members said that WWF(I) was the first organization to come forward with immediate relief and assistance in their area.



Interacting with the members, Ms. Madhulika Gupta, said that Citi group was very happy to be one of the partners with WWF (I) and they would do their best and would render all help necessary.

Later, Mr. Bob Annibale, Global Director, Micro-Finance Division, Citigroup, on February 5, 2005 visited the tsunami-hit areas of the Chennai Marina coast at the Foreshore estate. He said it was the President of the Forum who informed them the news of the tsunami disaster. He was happy that his colleagues were able to organize the relief measures quickly. He said he could provide the Forum with whatever help that is required.



Ms. A. Sudhersena
Ms. R. Asha
Program Coordinators

TSUNAMI REHABILITATION WORKSHOP FOR THE VICTIMS OF WWF FISHERWOMEN MEMBERS (JANUARY 29 – 30, 2005)

The responsibility of counseling the tsunami victims was taken up by the WWF team in a two-day workshop, where 103 members affected by the tsunami attended. The coordinators of WWF, the tsunami area service facilitators, along with the President and Board Members took upon the role of seminar facilitators. WWF was happy about the outcome of this two-day workshop. It has helped in removing the fear and the traumatic experiences of the affected members. Also a rehabilitation program to provide assets and assistance including fishing infrastructure, house repairs, children education etc., was drawn up; based on the needs assessment of the members. WWF being aware of the importance of the economic role of women in the overall fishing economy, has taken up steps to assess the needs of fisherwomen families, through women members only. Even if the men are getting the infrastructure facilities today in those families, it is a demonstrated fact that only through women the entire family gets the benefit. The rehabilitation measures were distributed by His Excellency, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, on June 28, 2005.

Member of Opposition Canadian Parliament, Canada visits WWF



On 7th April 2005 Mr. Ted Menzies Member of Opposition Canadian Parliament, Canada visited WWF and the tsunami-hit areas. The purpose of his visit was to know more about micro-finance and its beneficiaries, and to tell his government that more resources should go to help MFIs who would in turn assist their poor members. He visited the tsunami devastated areas of Pattinapakkam in Chennai and interacted with the members. The President said that she and her team

have made all efforts in their hands for the victims to get back on their feet and added that rehabilitation work has been started.

ANNUAL PLANNING AND REVIEW MEETING

The yearly Annual Planning and Review Meeting which was originally scheduled to be held from Dec 27-29, 2004 was postponed to Feb 3 – 5, 2005 due to the tsunami disaster. Review of credit, training and membership was done and a plan was drawn up for the coming year.

The 2nd day of the Annual Planning Meeting was inaugurated by the Global Director Citigroup, Mr. Robert Annibale. The President of WWF(I) addressed the gathering and welcomed the chief guest and other dignitaries. The President briefed the gathering on the significance of the three days of the Annual Planning Meeting. She further added that all the branches will be reviewed in detail, outcome will be analyzed and necessary steps would be taken to rectify inadequacies, if any.

Dr. Mohan, Deputy General Manager from Royal Sundram Alliance Insurance briefed the gathering on the importance of Royal Sundram Insurance Scheme. He explained the benefits of the scheme that could be derived by paying a premium of only Rs.34/-, and as their contribution distributed the relief amount from Royal Sundram Insurance Scheme to few members affected by the tsunami. Dr. Mohan, on the special request of the Forum and its

members, brought out a scheme exclusively for the benefit of poor women members, to meet such unforeseen contingencies. ***The Sakthi Insurance Scheme exclusively for women, wherein Rs. 1500/- would be paid in the wake of natural calamities to set up a trade was started.***

The Annual Planning Meeting was wound up successfully on the final day with the presentation of shields to the best branches. In this context, Kancheepuram in rural TamilNadu, Bangalore in Karnataka state and Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh were selected as best branches.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board Contract Labourers Union Meeting was addressed by the President of WWF, as a Chief Guest, on January 8, 2005. President urged the unions to look after the interests of labourers particularly those belonging to the contract/piece-rate sector. She stressed the role of the National Union of Working Women, WWF's trade union wing, in creating a social platform for poor women entrepreneurs.

On January 19, 2005 the ***Jewel of India*** Award was conferred on Dr. Jaya Arunachalam at New Delhi by the International Institute of Education and Management, Delhi. This award is given to honour outstanding industrialists, educationalists and business magnates for their spectacular performance in their chosen areas of activity.

On February 1st 2005 a team of WWF, along with the President, met the Governor Sri. Surjit Singh Barnala at Raj Bhavan and handed over the information on their recent Tsunami relief work to his Excellency. His Excellency evinced a great deal of interest in the activities of the Forum.

On February 14 and March 2, 2005, Dr. Jaya Arunachalam was interviewed by Dinamalar, a prominent Tamil Daily. Dr. Jaya Arunachalam provided in the interview an overview of WWF's activities. Also, the personal experiences of the supervisors were narrated. This interview was in connection with the Global Leadership for Economic Development Award of 2005 conferred on her by the Vital Voices Global Partnership in the U.S.A.

On 5th March 2005, the President was a guest speaker at the ***Information and Communication Strategy for an Effective Promotion of Human Resource Development at the Grassroots*** at the School of Information and Communication Studies University of Madras. She spoke in detail about the structure of the Forum, initiated as a new innovation of counter culture, and the use of information technology that played a prominent role in providing information to the grass roots and to similarly reach the President and her team directly.

On 12th March 2005 the Deputy Director General Mr. Sen from CII visited WWF to study the work of the Forum and the development that took place in the lives of the poor women. WWF team appraised him of the work and activities of WWF.

Ms. Uma, Assistant Vice-President, Micro-Finance group Citibank NA Chennai visited WWF branches at Kanchipuram and Vellore on April 12, 2005. The main purpose of the visit was to assess the possibility of furthering the Partnership of micro-loan process by Citibank. Several new steps were initiated as a departure from normal practice in the Partnership. Visits

were made to the homes of silk weaver artisans. Ms. Uma was satisfied with the progress made by the women entrepreneurs, both in Vellore and Kanchipuram.

Mrs. Indramma, Co-ordinator, WWF Programs in Bangalore, and Ms. Indumathi, Staff from ICNW, Bangalore attended the **Content Development Workshop** for developing a curriculum to reduce gender-based violence held at New Delhi on April 27th and 28th, 2005. The workshop was organized by The Independent Commission for People's Rights and Development (ICPRD), New Delhi in partnership with "Engender Health".

In this workshop, twenty-two participants from 3 states – Delhi, Rajasthan and Karnataka attended the workshop. The concept of gender-based violence in respect of abusing both emotional and psychological was highlighted. There were group presentations on types of violence and the various programs to be undertaken to spread the message of awareness on violence. Steps to reduce the **gender-based** violence in the society were also discussed.

On May 30, 2005 Ms. Bastavee Barooah, Manager ICICI Bank Ltd., Mumbai, Ms. Nidhi Gogna, Rural and Agri Business Group, ICICI Lombard General Insurance Co. Ltd., Mumbai and Mr. R. Surendiran, Retail Agri Business Group, ICICI Bank Ltd., Chennai visited WWF to discuss micro-insurance. The visitors were explained the activities of WWF and the role of micro-insurance products.

From June 1 – 6, 2005, 15 staff of WWF, Bangalore branch took part in the **Entrepreneurial Training Program** conducted by the Small Industries Service Institute (SISI), Bangalore. The staff were provided training to make liquid detergent, cleaning powder, perfuming of agarbathi, wax-candles and dhoop sticks. The training workshops continued to the grass-root members of Bangalore slums and Chennapatna. The number expected to be covered will be 18,070.



STUDY TEAMS VISIT WWF

On February 15th 2005, visitors from NISIET visited WWF on a study tour. The women delegates, from 9 developing countries of Africa/Asia, were senior officials from different Ministries, NGOs, Entrepreneurs, Women Associations Universities and Department of Women Development and Child Welfare. They interacted with the staff of Indian Co-operative Network for Women (ICNW). Later the President of the Forum briefed them on the activities of the Forum and about the structure of the organization. Dr. C. Rani, NISIET coordinator said that she was highly impressed with the work done by the Forum and added that these exposure visits are meant to spread the work done by the Forum to other countries.





The German team visited WWF (I) on February 21st 2005. Prof. Brunhild Landwehr, Department of Education from Lunenburg University, headed the team. The main purpose of the visit is to study the cultural set-up of India and compare it with the German culture. They were briefed about micro-finance and the training programmes provided to the members. Later, the WWF team briefed them on the work and structure of WWF. The students interacted with the

staff and members of WWF. The next day they visited Kancheepuram branch

On 11th March on 2005, Ms. Joy Deshmukh - Ranadive Research Fellow from Centre for Women's Development Studies Delhi and her team member, Ms. Sarmisthra, visited WWF to take an oral history of Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President of WWF, on her life and history. They also had first-hand information on the micro-credit programme, development of women members in the last 25 years and future plans of the Forum. The session started with the President answering the questions put forth by the visitors on topics of history of the Forum and its progress. The work lasted for nearly 10 days.

Dr. Rajarajeshwari, an university professor from France, visited WWF on April 25, 2005 for an exposure visit. She was given an overview of WWF's activities and programmes. She interacted with the members of WWF. She was not only inspired by the activities of the forum but was proud to see women being confident and financially independent.

On June 7, 2005, Professors from various universities in USA like Ohio/Kentucky /Indiana states, belonging to the consortium "World Affairs Council of Greater Cincinnati" visited WWF along with Ms. Deborah Kittner, Director of Program and Education, World Affairs Council of Greater Cincinnati. They visited the tsunami-affected members of the fish market



at the Marina Coast and interacted with the members of fishing families and also attended an area meeting at Pattinappakkam. At the meeting the members narrated their tsunami experiences. The team , later, sat with the WWF team and had an overview of the origin, growth and activities of WWF and how the counter culture is responsible for the same.

President WWF Visits Europe to Participate at the Business Week Celebrations and U.S. to Receive the Award of Global Leadership for Economic Development of Vital Voices at Washington D.C.



Dr. (Mrs) Jaya Arunachalam President WWF left India on 18th April 2005 after the warm send-off dinner by the Citibank officials at Marriot Hotel Juhu / Bombay. Later she left for Netherlands on 19th of April and reached Schiphol on 20th April morning. On 20th April at 11 a.m. she met the Board members of **Doen Foundation** at Amsterdam where she narrated on the two main activities of the forum through ICNW i.e. Micro-credit and Micro-enterprise development among the poor women and also explained the institutional

measures of National Union of Working Women of ICNW that made women to participate in the social action process. On 23rd Mrs. Arunachalam met the members of the Board of Rabo Bank particularly **Ten Cate** a prominent member of the board with infallible interest in co-operatives and later the CEO **Mr. Bert Heemskerck** who evinced keen interest enabling closer relationship with WWF. On 24th of April, she met her old friends Ms. Jose van Hussein (still a serving officer of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs) and Professor **Mr. Hans Schenk, Ms. Loes Schenk-Sandbergen, and Hanke Koopman** (former member of Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs).



Later, Mrs. Arunachalam left for US on 24th April forenoon to receive the **Global Leadership Award for Economic Development Awarded by the Vital Voices** Washington. On 25, April at 11.15 a.m. Dr. (Mrs.) Jaya Arunachalam along with two other Honorees left for a luncheon meeting at the **council of foreign relations**, Washington. There was a wide-ranging discussion on the life-time work and accomplishments of the honorees i.e., **Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, Dr. Latifa Jbabdi** and **Mu Sochua**. While Dr.

Latifa Jbabdi highlighted her struggle to reform and bring in land mark changes in the Muslim personal law particularly to make provisions for the right of Muslim women to divorce husbands, right to petition for custody of their children. Mrs. Arunachalam quoted a case study of particular health worker of WWF who accomplished what she wanted by going on herself to lead the mosque on a Friday and requested to save an Islamic family preventing the man marrying for third time just to save him, and his two wives. She further shared the women's struggle to fight patriarchy and poverty. Later at 12.30 p.m. all the three honorees along with **Melenne Vermeer** the chair of the **Vital Voices** Board of Directors met a group known as **women's right group moving forward**. Around 5.00 p.m. all the three honorees had a meeting with **Ms. Paula J.Dobriansky, Under Secretary, Global Affairs U.S. State Department** Washington. At late evening the **Ambassador of Morocco** received all the honorees at his residence for a reception dinner. On 26th April Dr. Jaya Arunachalam with other honorees had a discussion meeting with the **World Bank IFC**. At the World Bank

meeting Mrs. Arunachalam spoke on the impact of globalization. Later the honorees had meeting with press representatives. They had one to one question and answer session with the members of different press like Washington Post. They left for **John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts** to acquaint themselves of the place where they will be honoured. At 6.00 p.m. along with **Dr. Latifa Jbabdi, Mu Sochua** and **Dr. Jaya Arunachalam** were received by members of the press and the public of U.S. to the award ceremony and were escorted to the packed theater. The **award** was presented to all the three Honorees at 6.30 p.m.

Dr. Arunachalam was introduced to the audience by Ms. Michel Norigs, a prominent and well-known Journalist of U.S. who had won several awards. After receiving the award in her acceptance speech she said that “in honouring me, you are honouring the 7,00,000 poor women in India who are standing behind me”. She told the audience at the Kennedy centre that “these poor women may not be here in person but are there in spirit with her. Their stories, their struggles and their triumphs echo throughout this hall – these are the women of Forum they are determined women who had to fight for their rights – in their households, in their communities, and in the market place”. Further she said “I created a social platform for poor women through this organization that the poor women through collective consciousness and vision could visualize a better future for their children and themselves besides a socio-political environment”. As a message at the end, she said “as one of the pioneers of the women’s movement in India, the Beijing process has brought women together from around the world, transcending barriers of caste, religion, race, age together. Madam **Hillary Rodham Clinton’s** speech in Beijing inspired me to open more new chapters in the lives of many other women who were vulnerable and powerless”. At the award ceremony **Mrs.**



Arunachalam and other honorees shared the dais along with **Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Mr. Thomas Kean, Ms. Madeleine Albright, Ms. Sandra Willett Jackson, Ms. Andrea Mitchell, Mu Sochua, Judy Collions, Yana Deiringer, Sally Field** and **Oksana Horbunova**. It was a crowded theatre with full of audience on 26th April 2005.

On 27th April Dr. Jaya Arunachalam met Ms. Yolanda and Ketty Jaramilo at the centre for **Population Activities**, as the Alumni of the centre at 10.00 a.m. Later the honorees had discussion with the members of the **board of Governors of Vital Voices**. In the afternoon Mrs. Jaya Arunachalam met the press correspondent of **Washington Post Nora Boustany at Madison Hotel** where she said that her women are today role models in a community and gave a long interview – where she said “You can’t live on your past glory forever. It is true we got rid of 200 years of colonization, but no one was thinking of economic freedom. Politicians exploited the poor, brainwashing them but my activism was born out of disgruntlement”. Later the honorees had dinner at the residence of **Kathy Hendrix** the women leader of the delegation from U.S. to Beijing in 1995. On 28th Mrs. Arunachalam along with the other honorees had discussion with Justice Sandra Day O’ Connor of Supreme Court. Later at 6.0’ clock Alyse and Susan Wobst accompanied Dr. Jaya Arunachalam to the dinner at the Normandy where it was hosted by **Mahinder Tak** in honor of Jaya Arunachalam among the Indian community. Later, Alyse bid farewell to Dr. Jaya Arunachalam and Latifa Jbabdi on the 29th.



Visiting her friends in Houston on 30th April Mrs. Jaya Arunachalam reached New York on May 1st forenoon, addressed the **Citi Group** employees on May 2nd in a luncheon meeting and had a detailed discussion on the future course of **WWF-Citibank Micro-Finance Partnership Program** with **Mr. Bob Annibale, the Global Director**, Micro-Finance, City group. On 3rd May she addressed at the **Indian Trade Consulate** which was attended by 200 people. On 4th forenoon Mrs. Jaya Arunachalam had a

meeting with **Ms. Marge Magner**, Chair Citygroups and **Chip Raymond**, the Chair of the Foundation. She also met many top officials of the Citibank who were responsible for the Citibank – WWF Partnership and the entire programme was excellently co-ordinated by **Bob Annibale**, Global Director, Citigroup Micro finance group. **Anita Gupta**, Vice President Emerging Market, Public Affairs, Citigroup took special interest to introduce Dr. Jaya Arunachalam to the participants and facilitated the entire U.S. programme. On 6th May Mrs. Jaya Arunachalam met Prof. Sanyal and Prof. Rajagopal at Boston and departed for India on May 7th 2005 after a hectic time in Europe and U.S.

One more feather was added to the cap of Dr. Jaya Arunachalam when she was invited on June 1st 2005 by the **Vital Voices Global Partnership** to join the **Vital Voices Global Advisory Council** – a prestigious group consisting of 35 women leaders from around the world recognized for their pioneering work to advance in the economic, social and political progress of women.

President Attends the Pan Asia Forum, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The **Pan Asia Forum** was organized by **The Foundation for Development Corporation (FDC)** from **June 13-15 at Colombo, Sri Lanka**. The President of WWF was invited to speak on the responses of Micro credit to crisis situations, particularly in the recent tsunami disaster. Throwing light on the experiences of WWF, Dr. Jaya Arunachalam not only highlighted on the activities of the Forum but also narrated on the measures undertaken by the volunteers and herself in tackling the situation. She further added that the natural disasters, calamities diseases, droughts, floods rain, earth-quake and cyclones including the recent tsunami disaster are region specific to South and South East Asia.



Dr. Jaya Arunachalam spoke on how WWF responded to the recent tsunami disaster that hit the Marina Coast of Chennai, the Eastern Coast of Tamil Nadu, and the Coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh on December 26, 2004 between 9:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. She also highlighted about the counseling, advocacy and tsunami disaster relief work undertaken involving huge number of volunteers of WWF and experts from Marine Engineering and Oceanography to encourage the fishing families, who were in a trauma of the tsunami disaster, to go back to fishing. To facilitate the rehabilitation / reconstruction of livelihoods, a two-day “Tsunami Rehabilitation Workshop” for the victims of WWF fisherwomen members was organized to assess the needs of the affected families.

WWF, having originated out of a flood crisis that hit Chennai in 1997 committed itself to promote the social and financial independence of poor women and to reduce their vulnerability. Facing severe crisis was part and parcel of poor women’s daily life. WWF strived to embolden these women to fight poverty and other natural calamities.

*Tsunami Devastated Areas of Tamil Nadu Coast
Distribution of Rehabilitation Measures by the Governor of Tamil Nadu*

