

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 3 | JULY 2014

MAN, MACHINE AND MISHAP

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CHENNAI, JULY 2

Although nearly ₹300 crore has been allocated for disaster management in Tamil Nadu since 2010, Chennai is still not equipped to handle an emergency like the Porur building collapse.

It has taken authorities five days to rescue 27 people and exhume over 47 bodies and they are still working to reach out to more. Not surprising when the Chennai corporation does not have even basic equipment like floating water pumps, reflective jackets, searchlights, high-end generator sets, gas cutters for metal, wood and concrete, movable tents or inflatable lighting tower systems for use in emergencies.

The city also lacks a uniform emergency communication wireless system integrating the police, fire force, corporation and ambulance services, a digital radio system that can work in tunnels and underground railway

Tower Light

This equipment helps to light up surrounding areas that are otherwise dark and with no illumination and is supported by a generator.



Communication Phone

In times of dealing with crisis situations it becomes vital to maintain communication with all stakeholders involved in the disaster response.



lines, and highway digital notification boards that can divert motorists from a disaster site. "Multi-purpose cameras and life detectors are now an essential part of disaster

ELECTRIC CUTTER



An equipment that is useful in cutting metal, concrete, shutter and other similar metal objects.

Digital Board It can be installed in highways and arterial roads informing motorists to divert in case of accidents and disasters.



management and they don't cost very much," says Mr Anoop Madhavan, founder, Survival Instincts, an NGO working on disaster response and search operations.

The Porur accident being a structural collapse disaster requires high expertise and equipment assistance, according to him. "For instance, certain life detectors support a micro-



Wood Cutter

A handheld light weight instrument that can cut any wood or branches of a tree. It is useful during storm that uproots trees.



Thermal Camera

Also called an infrared camera, it is a device that indicates a human presence using infrared radiation as a result of the heat generated from the victim's body.

phone, a speaker and LED lights and can rotate 360 degrees.

Their cameras with extended probes can send images when inserted into rubble, helping to identify

those trapped and also allowing the victims to communicate," Mr Madhavan explains.

Recalling that in 2003 the corporation budget had called for establishing a wireless network among its field staff, but shelved it later due to high input costs, former deputy mayor, Karate R. Thiagarajan, says this was a mistake as in case of disasters a wireless network can speed up rescue operations.

"In 2005, when a building collapsed in Santhome it took a long time to contact corporation officials for the rescue operation. Local bodies need to be more technologically advanced," he stresses.

When contacted, a corporation official said that the civic body was equipped with earth-movers, gas cutters and tree cutter to deal with disasters, but admitted it lacked equipment like generators, searchlights and concrete cutters that were essential too in such situations.