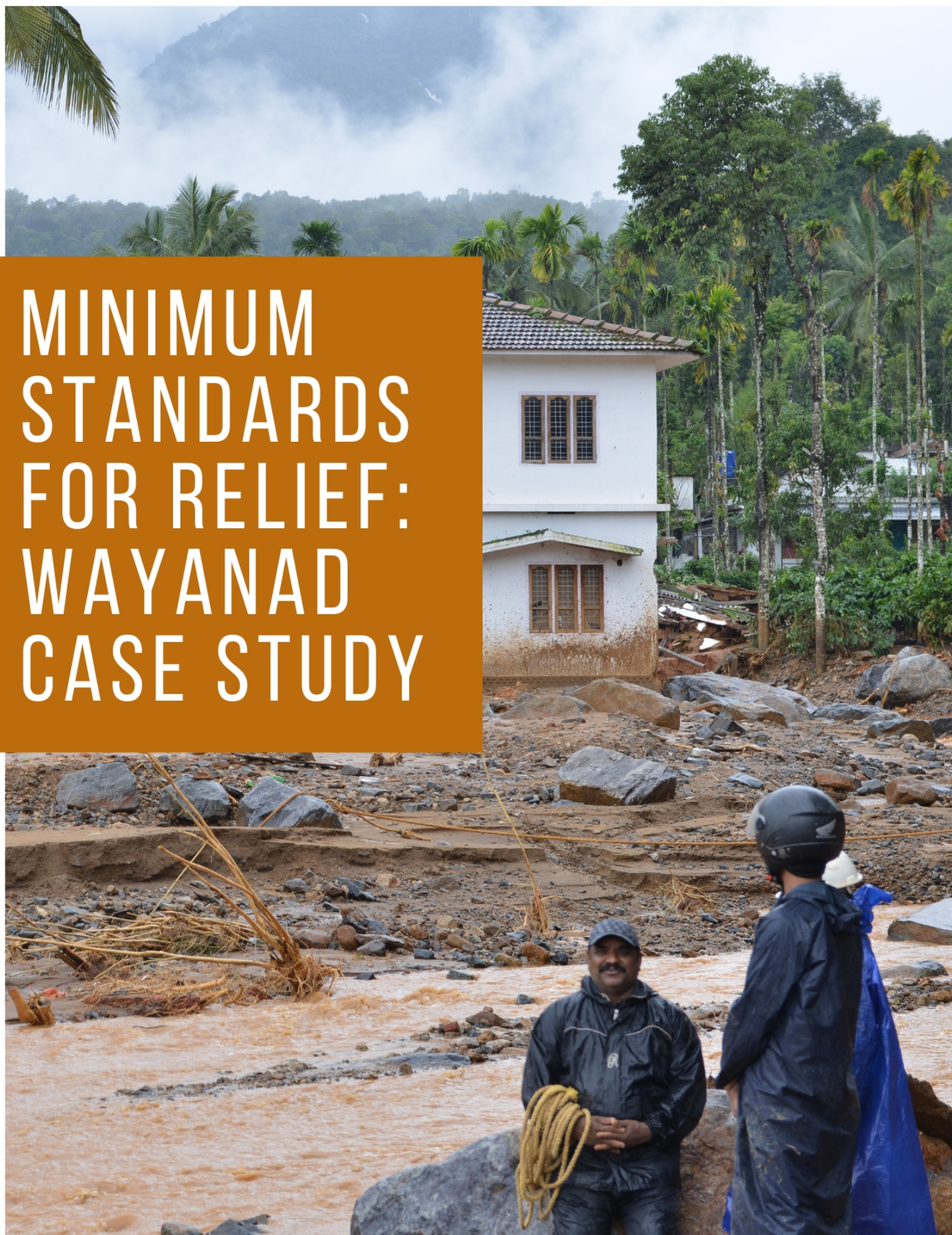


MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RELIEF: WAYANAD CASE STUDY



Relief Camp Standards & Management

Introduction

People affected by disasters or conflicts are entitled to protection, assistance, and the basic conditions needed to live with dignity. Humanitarian standards define the necessary actions to uphold these rights, ensuring that those in crisis receive appropriate support. Minimum standards in disaster relief provide access to critical needs such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare, helping to safeguard the well-being and dignity of vulnerable communities. These standards ensure fair distribution of aid and promote coordination among humanitarian organizations, playing a vital role in reducing risks and facilitating long-term recovery in affected regions. Globally, the Sphere Standards are acknowledged as essential guidelines that improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and ensure accountability in disaster response efforts, thereby preserving the dignity of those impacted.

In India, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) publishes guidelines for minimum standards of relief, which are aligned with the various global standards for relief and accountability to affected population. These national guidelines are further contextualised at the state level to ensure local cultural and context specificities. For Kerala, the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has developed the Orange Book of Disaster Management for State Minimum Standards of Relief. These guidelines are formulated and contextualised according to the guidelines for minimum standards for relief by NDMA. The book outlines Standard Operations Procedures (SOP) and Emergency Support Functions Plan (ESFP) to be implemented by the concerned authorities in the event of a disaster.

In the case of Wayanad, during landslide event, the district authorities were activated and followed the guidelines laid out by the Orange Book of Disaster Management. This document aims to capture the various processes and measures undertaken by the district authorities to attain and maintain the recommended minimum standards of relief following the Wayanad landslides.

Background

On July 30, 2024, devastating landslides struck the villages of Mundakki, Chooralmala, and Vellarimala in Wayanad District, Kerala, after days of heavy rainfall. The landslides caused severe damage, claiming lives, destroying homes, and affecting infrastructure. According to the State Emergency Operational Centre (SEOC) Kerala, 231 bodies and 212 body parts were recovered. In total, 630 people were injured, 214 rescued, and 119 remain missing. Rescue operations began immediately, and 3,069 people were moved to 63 emergency camps set up to provide shelter and safety for those affected.

Following the landslide incident, camps were promptly established on 30th July 2024 in pre-identified shelters. Initially, 63 camps were set up to accommodate rescued individuals from the landslide area, as well as the evacuated population from flood and landslide-prone regions. In total, 93 camps were operational across the district due to the landslide and subsequent flooding. Specifically, 10 camps were designated for the Chooralmala incident, which later expanded to 17 in the following days. These camps were set up at various locations, including GHSS Meppadi, St. Joseph Girls Higher Secondary School, Mount Tabore School, Kottanad School, St. Joseph UPS Meppadi, Nellimunda Ambalam Hall, GHS Thrikkaipetta, Kappamkolli Aroma Inn, RCLPS Chundele, St. Thomas Church, and SKMJ HSS Kalpetta.

At the peak of the disaster, around 10,000 individuals took shelter in 93 relief camps across the district after the severe landslides and floods in Wayanad, where district authorities, in coordination with local volunteers and NGOs, ensured the provision of all basic necessities, maintaining minimum standards of care.

The dispersal of camps began on 04th August 2024, with Nellimunda Ambalam Hall being the first to close. By the evening of August 24, 2024, all relief camps in Wayanad, including GHSS Meppadi, had successfully dispersed. Most camps operated for approximately three weeks, providing uninterrupted facilities throughout.

The relief camps followed Kerala State Minimum Standards for Disaster Relief, ensuring proper care for those displaced. These standards cover essential services like safe living conditions, sanitation, healthcare, and more. Details about these best practices are provided in the following pages.

Sector-wise Camp Management Practices

Temporary Shelter

Temporary Shelter			Wayanad Camps	
S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
1	Shelters are pre-identified by district authority	Shelters are pre-identified by district authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	In the relief centers, 3.5 sq.m. of covered area per person	In the relief centres, 3.5 sq.m. of covered area per person		<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Facilities needed in any relief camps:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Water supply – safe water		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Toilets		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Hand washing facilities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	Facilities for solid waste management		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	Basins, tables, chopping block, knives, can opener etc.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9	Facilities for utensil and dishwashing		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10	SOP on food security and safety		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11	Anti-Rodent and Anti-Pests measures		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12	Flashlight with extra batteries, candles and matches in waterproof container		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
13	Cooking gas or other fuels for cooking		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
14	Shovel, hammer, nails, rope, cord etc.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15	Register maintenance (including list of people who needs special attention such as PWD, PLWHA, malnourished, pregnant women, lactating mothers, infants, chronic diseases, elderly)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
16	Power supply to relief camps by KSEB		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Temporary Shelter			Wayanad Camps	
S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
17	Separate areas for men, transgender and women inside the camps		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
18	Two police officers to ensure the safety & security of the inmates.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
19	Helpline numbers of the police, health and DEOC should be displayed in the camps		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
20	PWD Friendly Shelter	PWD Friendly Shelter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Best Practices



Display of essential services contacts



Dissemination of New Passbooks to the camp resident



Help desk by DLSA



Volunteer Management

- Teams of volunteers were organized in each camp to collect key data, including demographic details, service utilization, and feedback from camp residents. This data was compiled in a master tracker, closely monitored by higher authorities to ensure efficient camp operations.
- To maintain connectivity and proper information dissemination, BSNL distributed phones and SIM cards to 35 residents of various camps.
- The District Legal Services Authority established a help desk to provide assistance with legal matters.
- Document recovery was facilitated by different banks, which set up help desks in the camps.

Food Nutrition & Security (FNS)

S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
1	Sub-committee for food and water to manage the kitchen		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	Potable water for drinking :2.5 to 3 l/person		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	Sufficient steps are taken to ensure hygiene at camp kitchens.	Sufficient steps are taken to ensure hygiene at camp kitchens.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	The date of manufacturing and expiry of materials used for cooking were monitored.	The date of manufacturing and expiry of materials used for cooking were monitored.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	steel/glass Plates and glass are used in camp		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Camps are supported by community kitchen		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	minimum 2400Kcal/day (adult), 1,700 Kcal per day (Children) in food	Minimum 2400 Kcal/day (adult), 1,700 Kcal per day (Children) in food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	Milk and other dairy products are provided for the children (0-12) and lactating mothers	Milk and other dairy products are provided for the children (0-12) and lactating mothers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9	provision of 3 meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) and three times tea/coffee.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10	Timely meals for Diabetic patients, patients with cardiac illness, hypertensive patients		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11	Food shall be served to be eaten in the shelters		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12	Breast feed substitute: Infants under six months who cannot access breast milk		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
13	Nutrient supplements for pregnant and breastfeeding women.			<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Sufficient measures shall be in place to ensure food-related hygiene at community and camp kitchens.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15	all cooked food is kept covered until served.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
16	Raw materials are stored properly		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
17	Cooking medium: LPG		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Best Practices



Community Kitchen



Food Packets



Vegetables for Camp



Camp Residents in Dining Room

- Camps provided unlimited bottled water (1-liter bottles) and boiled water during meals, ensuring an adequate supply under the supervision of camp officers.
- Camps were also equipped to meet the specific dietary needs of interstate migrant workers.

Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

Water

S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
1	Boiled water is suggested for drinking purposes			<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Minimum supply of drinking water is 2 litres per person/per day (adults)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	identify appropriate water sources for shelter camps		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Tested the water within 24 hours of establishing the camp to ensure the safe drinking water		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Water should be tested and certified by health officials, mainly for E. coli and Coliform bacteria.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	The distance from the nearest water point shall not be more than 500 m	Minimum distance from water source shall not be more than 500m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	Water for livestock shall also be provided at the camps		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	If water supply is insufficient, safe water could be made available in camps via water tankers.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Water Supply				
10	Water intake (drinking & food) 2.5-3 litres/day	Water intake (drinking & food) 3 litres per day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11	Total basic water needs 7.5-15 litres/day		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12	Hygiene practices 2-6 litres /day		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Sanitation & Hygiene

S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
1	1 toilet per 20 persons.	1 toilet per 30 persons.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	Separate toilets for men and women.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	Water supply: 20 liters per person per day.	Water supply: 18 liters per person per day.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Dignity kits (Sanitary napkins, disposable bags, soap.) provided		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Toilet distance: No more than 50 meters from camps.	Toilet distance: No more than 50 meters from camps.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Pit latrines, at least 30 meters from groundwater sources source and the bottom of any latrine must be at least 1.5m above the water level.	Pit latrines, at least 30 meters from groundwater sources source and the bottom of any latrine must be at least 1.5m above the water level.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	hygienic toilet use and immediate disposal of children's feces.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	Handwashing facilities are ensured and water supply.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9	Accessibility: Toilets for all, including PWD.			
10	Separate Toilets For men and women	Water intake (drinking & food) 3 litres per day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11	Personal hygiene items including Soap, oil, toothbrush, etc are provided		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12	Water storage: If toilets lack internal water supply.			<input type="checkbox"/>
13	E-toilets/Bio-toilets: Near shelters, including PWD-accessible options		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Best Practices



Personal services provided by Barbers' Association



Bio-toilets provided at camps



Septage treatment unit of WASH Institute

- As per the Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief by National Disaster Management Authority, each relief camp should have one toilet for every 30 persons. To attain this, Suchitwa Mission set up 39 bio-toilets in camps with the help of Mathrubhumi and Event Management Association of Kerala in major camps.
- Kerala-based Barber associations provided free services, including haircuts and shaving, to support personal hygiene of relief camp residents.
- Washing machines were installed in major camps to support laundry services and cleanliness.

Waste Management

S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
1	Sufficient number of dustbins are available in temporary shelters		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	Refuse containers are available in toilets for the collection of used sanitary napkins.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	Appropriate solid waste management were done by Kudumbasree/LSGD/Suchitwa Mission		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Medical wastes are disposed of separately in an operated pit or incinerator as available.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Construction of landfill pit for additional requirement		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Waste disposal site is 150m away from the drinking water distribution point		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	Waste dispose area is free from rodents and other pests		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	Use appropriate method for different types of wastes, Bio-degradable wastes, Kitchen Wastes-Land fill, Burial		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9	Rubbish-Burial, incineration, land fill.			
10	Non- biodegradable wastes-Recyclable wastes should be separated		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11	Medical wastes-incineration			<input type="checkbox"/>

Best Practices



Sock pits constructed Suchitwa Mission with help of locals



Haritha Karma Sena involved in waste management



Community incinerator



Windrow compost of Kalpetta Municipality



Biomedical waste collection and transportation



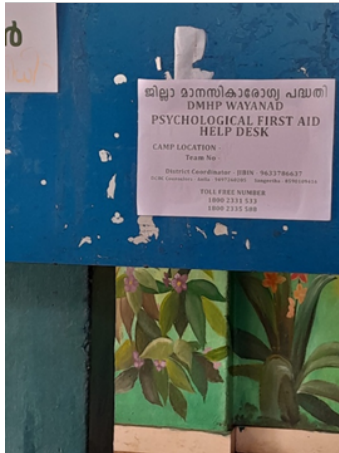
- Biomedical waste was collected in separate bins and handed over to agencies which are responsible for the safe disposal of biomedical waste namely, Aakri and Image. These are leading agencies in biomedical waste management in Kerala.

- Biomedical wastes were collected twice a day and kept in yellow bags. Collection and storage were done by trained volunteers. This was then handed over to the agencies for disposal.

Health

S. No.	Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief	Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority	Attained	Not Attained
1	Stock sufficient amount of medicine medical equipment before by Health department.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	Vaccinations are arranged in camps via PHC		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	Insulin and other emergency medicines were arranged.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Continuous monitoring of disease outbreaks and reporting to IDSP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Female health volunteers are available in the relief camps.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Medical assessment for diseases such as HIV, non-communicable diseases, TB etc were done		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	Give medical check-up within 24 hours on reaching the camp if not emergency for Pregnant women		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	Availability of Iron and Folic acid tablets, tetanus injection		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9	Nutritional assessment for Children below 5			
10	Regular medicines for People with diabetes, hypertension, cardiac illness, bed-ridden, dialysis patients		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11	Facilities for psychosocial support were arranged in the camps.	Facilities for psychosocial support were arranged in the camps.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12	Service Package for reproductive health (facilities for safe childbirth, facilities for blood transfusion and provide contraceptives.) provided	Arrangements for safe delivery		<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Mobile medical teams shall visit relief camps to attend the affected people.	Mobile medical teams shall visit relief camps to attend the affected people.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
14	Necessary steps were taken to prevent communicable diseases.	Necessary steps were taken to prevent communicable diseases.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15	A doctor is assigned to every temporary shelter who should visit the shelter once in a day.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
16	A JPHN is present in the camp for 24 hours duty.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Best Practices



Psychological Helpdesk



Helpdesk



Providing Psychological Counselling

- In addition to the available medical facilities, mobile clinics were made available by different private hospitals from different parts of the state.
- Separate help desks were established for various treatment systems, including Ayurveda and Homeopathy.
- Hindi-speaking counsellors were assigned to the SDMLP School and GHS Rippon relief camps to address the needs of inter-state migrant labourers.

Child Friendly Spaces



Kuttiyidam



Exhibition of artwork by children in the camps

Camps had designated areas for children, known as "*kuttiyidam*," to enhance the child-friendliness of the environment. These spaces helped alleviate stress and provide emotional support for children, featuring play areas, toys. Child-friendly activities such as art-based therapy were also provided by trained facilitators. Libraries were also setup in some camps with the help of NGOs.

Recreational Activities



Gopinath Muthukad (magician and motivational speaker) interact with camp residents and performs magic tricks



Vinod Kovoov (Actor) interacts with children in camps

The relief camps promoted various recreational activities, including television programs beyond news channels, to encourage socialization and relaxation among residents. Also, various celebrities visited and conducted entertainment programs such as magic shows, skits etc.

Conclusion



In Wayanad, from the initial stage to the dispersal of the relief camps, the state authorities and associated humanitarian organisations and volunteers worked to attain and maintain the minimum standards in all aspects of relief such as temporary shelters, WASH, food and nutrition. For all the listed indicators across sectors, almost all of the criteria were met in all the camps. However, some indicators such as the required minimum space per person could not be met. This was due to space constraints in schools as well the requests for families to stay together for emotional support following the disaster in some instances. In other instances, such as setting up of medical wastes incineration, specialised assistance was sought to collect and dispose medical wastes in a systematic manner.

Despite numerous challenges for disaster relief in a challenging scenario, the Wayanad example has demonstrated a commendable ability to implement and uphold minimum standards of humanitarian assistance for people affected by a disaster. While certain key aspects, such as ensuring the minimum required personal space per individual, boiled water for drinking, could not be fully achieved, the district found innovative alternatives to maintain quality and dignity in the relief efforts. Despite these hurdles, Wayanad remains an exemplary model for how minimum standards of relief can be effectively implemented from the initial phase of disaster response. The district has shown that even in the face of limitations, it is possible to maintain dignity and ensure that basic human needs are met during a disaster.

References

- [1] Kerala State Minimum Standards of Relief
- [2] Guidelines on Minimum Standards of Relief, National Disaster Management Authority
- [3] Report: Waste Management in disaster areas, Wayanad, Suchitwa Mission, 2024
- [4] Photos: Waste Management in disaster areas, Wayanad, Suchitwa Mission, 2024
- [5] Photos: Public Relation Office, Collectorate, Wayanad
- [6] Information provided by LSGD District Empowerment Officer (Chief Camp Officer)

Sphere India is a National Coalition of Humanitarian, Development and Resilience Actors in India. The strategic outreach of 155 full members includes key nodal organizations from UN, INGOs, National NGOs, CSR, Academic Institutions, Sector Networks, Expert Individuals, and State IAGs/Networks. The local outreach is evolving with 805 associate members as Sphere India Locally Empowered Organisations Network (LEON) and 1,80,000 community volunteers (CDRF -Community Disaster Response Force) mapped for varied capacities all over India. Sphere India facilitates multi stakeholder coordination, knowledge & capacity sharing and collaborative advocacy for enhancing accountability to affected and at-risk population.

sphereindia.org.in 
info@sphereindia.org.in 

Supported by:

HCLFoundation

amazon

unicef 
for every child