



Chennai Metro Water MD Chandramohan (extreme right) getting stagnant water removed

Officers who were knee-deep in flood relief

■ DER SUGUMAR

CHENNAI: The flood in Chennai wrung out people's lives, took their belongings and means of livelihood. But there were many government officials who rose to the occasion to make reparation to the needy, extended comfort, medicines and napkins round the clock.

The floods that submerged Chennai were unprecedented, visiting untold misery on thousands of people. However, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa mobilised the entire official machinery into providing relief for those affected. Almost everybody among the authorities need commendation, but a few stand out. The offices of Ms. Sheela Balakrishnan, a former chief secretary of Tamil Nadu and current adviser to J Jayalalithaa, and Chief Secretary Gnanadesikan functioned like control rooms, passing on the Chief Minister's orders to the field officers over the phone.

Chennai Metro Water Managing Director Chandramohan seemed to be omnipresent, stood in knee-deep water, umbrella in one hand and a walkie-talkie in the other. Like a police officer speaking into his wireless, Chandramohan was always in touch with junior officers and encouraged them to clean the stagnant water in their areas. Dayalan, Executive Engineer, Metro Water, Adyar wondered whether his boss, Chandramohan, had slept at all in the last few days. Most Metro Water officers looked unshaven and sleep-deprived.

Higher Education Secretary, Selvi Apoorva known for her humanity and helpfulness, was feeding the hungry and providing medicines and clothes to people in her area without any fanfare. Her generosity was like manna from heaven for the needy. She co-opted her family members, relatives and friends too into the noble activity. Even journalists she knows well were not spared. Health Secretary Dr. J

Radhakrishnan started his day at 7 am, visiting all the hospitals and medical camps, speeded up the distribution of medicines and napkins that the government provided. People who work in the medical arena say that they had to be alert 24x7 since they didn't know when the Health Secretary would make a surprise visit.

Mudichur, which was hit hard by the deluge, is under the control of Labour Commissioner Amudha, who was involved in the relief effort. Those who were marooned by the floods gave her a new name — 'Mudichur Daughter' — and they want her to reside there permanently after the flood waters recede. She alone had the guts to clear all the encroachments on the banks of the Adyar river, running through Mudichur, Varadharajapuram, Perungalathur and



Labour Commissioner Amudha

the West Tambaram municipality area.

The Secretariat Information Department, headed by Secretary Rajaram, Director Kumaragurubaran and officers, including Additional Directors Ezhilazhagan and Thanappa, worked round the clock, carried news of all the aid extended by the government to newspapers and TV channels. They stayed in their offices in the last few days. Apart from all these people, the unsung heroes were the sanitary workers of the Chennai corporation and other corporations and municipalities who deserved all appreciation as they were cleaning the entire city, day and night. Kudos to all these officers: time will not forget their efforts in the city's hour of need.