

Tsunami Early Warning System – India’s Success Story

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The Great Sumatra Earthquake of 26th Dec 2004, of magnitude 9.3 (second strongest earthquake ever recorded on a seismograph) lasted for about 10 minutes, probably the longest lasting earthquake in the history. This generated the famous Indian Ocean Tsunami (IOT) causing approximately 230,000 people dead or missing. This is one of the deadliest and devastating tsunamis in the world. After its occurrence, it was felt that had there been an early warning system, the catastrophic effects could have been mitigated to a great extent. As an initial step for the International Early Warning Program during the United Nation’s conference in Kobe, Japan in Jan 2005, the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System was agreed to. India took rapid strides in that direction by establishing the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) at Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Sciences (INCOIS) at Hyderabad. The reason for setting up of the ITEWC is to predict the occurrence of a tsunami which will give time for the administration to prepare for the mitigation. This center of India, over the years, developed very fast to predict the risk expected in the coastal area, probable height of the waves to hit the coast, all in “real time”. Thus, presently the center is one of the most modern Tsunami Warning Centers in the world. The paper will depict in detail how it has reached the present position thanks to the untiring efforts of the scientists & the technocrats in India.