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“These islands source of (Pondicherry varsity's Coastal Disaster Management department)

S. Dorairaj

PUDUCHERRY: “The Andaman and Nicobar group of islands are natural laboratories where we can get all seismotectonic information relating to earthquake studies. Monitoring of active earthquake-prone zones in these islands through a network of geophysical observatory is essential for getting valuable information about the impending danger well in advance,” says noted geologist and professor of Coastal Disaster Management Department of Pondicherry University in Port Blair N. Ramanujam.)

He told *The Hindu* here on Sunday that the university, which opened the depart-

ment in June last year, had already established a well-equipped remote sensing laboratory in Port Blair, besides sanctioning Rs.3 crore to procure sophisticated geophysical equipment.

Highlighting the significance of the activities of the Coastal Disaster Management department, he said a majority of the Indian States had been affected by natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunami, landslides, floods, drought, cyclones and coastal erosion.

In recent years, the frequency of natural hazards had increased manifold with the developing countries especially in the Asian region bearing the brunt of these disasters, he pointed out. The

great 2004 Andaman earthquake, which was responsible for 2,30,000 fatalities and huge loss of property had provided a great deal to the scientific community to learn more about the tectonic implications with socio-economic development of the nation, Prof. Ramanujam said.

Disaster prevention

Experts had underscored the need to focus on disaster prevention and mitigation rather than disaster response, he added. Many countries had recognised that disasters must be identified locally and the community must be well-informed about disaster preparedness and alert in time, he said.

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Submergence of land in south Andaman owing to tectonic activities.

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