

Doctor on a mission in Philippines

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BANGALORE: It was just like any other day for Dr. Edmond Fernandes. Get up, go to work, treat patients and then go home.

However, for the past few days Dr. Fernandes has not been working at the Father Muller's Hospital in Mangalore where he serves as a house surgeon. He was in the Philippines, working to ease the suffering of those displaced by last month's massive typhoon — Haiyan.

He is the first Indian to participate in the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) relief missions in the Philippines. The AMDA was involved in relief mission in Estancia, Iloilo, and other parts of the Philippines.

Dr. Fernandes, who is the chief executive, Health Concern Foundation, is the youngest doctor (23 years) to be select by the AMDA and represent India in a relief mission.

He has returned to Mangalore after spending a few days in the Philippines. He told *The Hindu* that "the suffering of the typhoon-hit people is unimaginable. People are go-



Dr Edmond Fernandes treating typhoon-hit people at Iloilo in the Philippines

ing hungry, getting restless."

The doctor, who has authored the book, *Small things that matter much*, says the people of the Philippines have demonstrated great courage, "They smile in the midst of such a catastrophe."

Recently, the people of Estancia were the victims of a major oil spill. A part of the area has now been banned to the public due to health con-

cerns.

"For the first few days we saw bodies floating on the shores. Now shores are cleaned, but the desperation is palpable," he recounts.

The doctor gained fruitful experience by running the Health Concern Foundation and conducting health, nutrition camps and public health campaigns in association with Public Health Depart-

ment of Manipal University and Mangalore City Corporation, appealed to the people to reach out to the homeless and sick, women and aged people in regions affected by typhoon.

"The selfless humanitarian service you render is something you cannot really put into words.

The effort teaches one a lot of lessons," he says.