

## ***Milestone - 5***

### **Housing Programme – 1978.**

Several parts of Tamilnadu especially the coastal parts received heavy rains during the months of October, November and December 1977 through the North East Monsoon. Hundreds of villages floated. Thousands of poor people lost their huts and all their household things and came to the streets. During this period the EZE came forward to provide low cost houses and thus sanctioned funds for 600 houses. The government allotted lands for house construction.



The LWF/CDS of Geneva sponsored a project to construct 200 houses for the Tannery labourers in the Ambur and Vaniyambadi areas where they had lost their houses in the flash floods of the Palar River in November, 1978. The construction of the houses was completed in 1983.

## ***Milestone -5- i***

### **Cottage, Small Industries and Self Employment Programme - 1980**



The LWF agreed to give financial support for the implementation of this programme with the co-financing of the bank through our various Rural Centres like the Short Term Crop programme. This programme was also co-financed by Nationalized Bank, on the understanding that loans to the extent of 100% will be issued to those recommended by this Council. The loan repayments were also reutilized to issue more loans to the deserving.

The various purposes for which loans were issued under this programme included, Sheep rearing, Dairying, Brick making, Lime Kiln, Soap Making, Mat Weaving, Tailoring, Coir Making, Retail Trade, Purchase of pedal operated implements, bullocks, agricultural implements, sugarcane crusher, and land reclamation.

## ***Milestone-5- ii***

### **Rehabilitation of the Landless in Keeranur, Perambalur**

Keeranur is a small village in the Perambalur District located on the Chennai-Trichy Main road. Most of the people were landless labourers living in a very poor condition. Along with the CSI Trichy-Tanjore Diocese, special efforts were made to obtain lands freely from the government of Tamilnadu for constructing houses. Sixty five families were selected. 40 houses were constructed through the housing programme with the funds provided by the EZE, Germany. The UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), New Delhi helped to construct the remaining 25 houses. Thus 65 families were rehabilitated.

## ***Milestone-6***

### **Community Drinking Water and Drought Relief Programmes**



Community Drinking Well Programme was one of our programmes organised for the people in localities where severe drought condition prevailed. Tamilnadu and southern parts of Andhra Pradesh faced severe drought conditions due to miserable failure of monsoons during the previous two years. Twenty seven new Community Drinking wells were dug and 184 existing community well were deepened or repaired in different areas. We are very grateful to COROR, Division of Social Action of the UELCI, and the Madras Diocese for enabling us

to implement the drought relief work in different areas of the Council.

### **Land Reclamation through CASA- Food for Work Programme.**

In Chittoor area, 250 acres were reclaimed for the rehabilitation of 200 persons. Thirty six community Irrigation wells were dug and a 5 km long road was laid. Through these programmes, beneficiaries were assisted in cultivating their lands through the Short Term Crop Loan programme through our Rural Service Centres in the area.



CASA was kind enough to provide Rs.50,000/= for relief work for the victims affected in the communal clashes in the Kanyakumari area, and another Rs.50,000 for communal clash victims of Villapakkam village in North Arcot District.

## ***Milestone-7***

### **Gypsies Self Help Project at Karai in Trichy District -1982.**



The Government of Tamilnadu assigned 88 acres of land to 45 Gypsy families during 1965. Since the Gypsies did not make proper use of lands thus assigned, the Tamilnad Christian Council stepped in and started working with these families since 1969. Initially loan assistance was given to dig wells and install motor pumpsets. As the needs of these Gypsy families could not be fully met, CASA was approached to provide assistance for digging more wells, installing wind mills, constructing houses, and constructing a Check Dam for water resource; providing infrastructure such as Day care Centre, Godown, Health Centre, and other needs. Loan assistance was proposed for chain making. The proposal was approved by CASA and implementation began from 1982.

The Gypsies have been organized to form a Society of their own. Work was carried out to dig eight wells. One wind mill was fabricated at RATC of this Council and installed in the

common well for lifting water for drinking. A storage tank with taps was provided for drinking water.

A check Dam was constructed to control and store more water. A Day Care Centre was also constructed to give education for gypsy children.

These gypsies were nomads moving from one place another without proper dwelling places. By constructing 45 houses, 45 families were rehabilitated and thus their social status was enhanced.



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Loans were arranged through Canara Bank @ Rs.1500/= each for chain making, under our Self-Employment programme. The repayments were regularly made.

The Field Officers visited the project area periodically to educate the Gypsies on cleanliness and co-operative living. Necessary help was given to them to cultivate their lands to induce interest in farming and make them settle permanently. A few of them also took loans to purchase animals for agricultural purposes.

It is gratifying that the gypsies were settled permanently and had shown considerable improvement in manners, social and health habits. Their children have started going to school. The transformation came gradually for better living and improved their economic status. This project continued till 1984. Through a recent visit, we found that some of the children of the gypsies are running Travel Agencies, traveling to Malaysia and Singapore.

### ***Milestone -8***

#### **The Inter Denominational Leaders Conference**

It was held from 13th October to 16th October 1983 at Vellore. About 400 delegates from all over the state participated in it. The Participants were Lay Leaders, Pastors, Women and Youth from all the denominations of our Council. The Conference was sponsored by the Christian Dynamics, U.S.A., which had the motto “to train the nationals to reach the Nations”. The Conference sessions concentrated on the training aspects of evangelical work and sharing the experiences of the Participants in their Church/Dioceses, as also identifying unreached areas in Tamilnadu. Indeed it was a great occasion witnessing various denominations come together to hear the Word of God and share their experiences in group discussions on the witness of the Church.

In October 1983, a meeting was arranged by the Tamilnadu Catholic Bishops Conference at Madurai in which Church leaders from both the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches participated. The outcome of the Conference was the formation of “The Ecumenical Council for the Repatriates and Refugees from Sri Lanka –TECRAS”. The objective of TECRAS is to come together to commit ourselves to the common mission of Rehabilitation and Integration of Sri Lanka Repatriates and Refugees.

A book entitled “The Sri Lanka Refugees and Repatriates Problem – The Church’s Response” was published bringing out the details of the deliberations of this Regional Conference.