

Tsunami Project:

Development programmes at Irrukam, Vaenadu (Islands) and at Parameswara Mangalam (near Kalpakkam).

The Relief and Rehabilitation of Dalit victims in 3 villages/islands namely Irrukam, Vaenadu and Parameswari mangalam affected during Tsunami were undertaken during the years 2006 and 2007. Although we have been implementing rural development programmes for the past 40 years in various places in Tamilnadu State, yet this was the first project done in islands. We have gained lot of new experiences as we launched innovative programmes and implementing the project to new communities.

The primary challenge was motivating these communities living in most isolated places, which are cut off from the main stream of waters. To redeem them from a de-motivated living condition to respond positively to the projects was much more challenging and pains-taking and time and energy consuming.

To win their trust and confidence at the early stage was very difficult because of the negative opinion many NGOs who visited these villages implanted in the minds of the people by false promises and non-existent plans and projects. Only through our sustained visits and assistance and implementation of various activities, we were able to build rapport with the communities and gain co-operation.

Irrukam: is an island surrounded by water. It is located 12 kms away from the main land and will take 45minutes to an hour by boat to reach this island. Four different communities reside in this island. The upper caste people are the land owners and they reside only temporarily and they own houses in the main land. The fisher men communities reside at the edge of the island and some of them own boats and nets. The dalits and the tribal are the labour communities. They work as bonded labourers for the upper caste people. They are under the mercies of these upper caste people. There is no regular school, no medical facilities and no proper shops and so on.



Vaenadu is also an island but a bridge was constructed to connect the island with the main land but the road is a mud and rugged road. It will take nearly one hour to reach the island from the main road. The conditions of the people is similar to those of Irrukam.

Parameswarimangalam: is not an island but is a dalit village located near the river that joins the sea. The lands were affected during tsunami. The dalits are the daily labourers working in the paddy fields. They were indirectly affected by tsunami.

I. Construction of Community Centres

A, Irrukam

A community centre measuring 41ft x 21ft was constructed to enable us to conduct programmes. The land was given by the local community. The centre was



constructed with many difficulties. The transportation of the materials took lot of time and incurred huge expenses. Every material has to be transported from main land to the island through boat and that incurred 3 transportation expenses – (mainland to shore; from one shore to other shore by boat and from the shore to the project site). Masons were from the main land and they charged, travel and food expenses apart from their labour charges. Additional expenses are; to dig bore well, purchase motor pumpset for water; construction of toilet and bath room. Fencing of the place was also done. Electricity connection was obtained.

B. Vaenadu:

A Community Centre measuring 45ft x 26 ft was constructed. A bore well was dug; a motor pumpset was installed. Toilet and bathroom were constructed.



C. Parameswari mangalam:

A Community Centre measuring 41 ft x 21 ft was constructed. Here RCC roofing was done as per the request of the local community.



II. Medical Camps:



A. At Irrukam - 7 Medical camps were conducted at Irrukam. Medicines were supplied for fever, cold, blood pressure, skin diseases, worms, etc. Iron tonics and general multi vitamin tablets were supplied for malnutrition. Treatment is given from small child to elderly people. First-Aid medicines are kept in all the 3 Centres.

B. Vaenadu – 4 Medical camps were conducted.



C. Parameswari Managalam



Regular medical programmes are undertaken by DELTA Nursing College, Kaddalur. The nursing students along with staff visit the village once or twice in a week as per their convenience and give treatment to the sick people. They also regularly check the pregnant women and give guidance.

III. Skills Training Programme:

Candle making, Phenyl, soap power, cleaning powder, Blue, computer incense sticks, basket making, preparing pickles, jams were some of the skills taught.

Here, I wish to inform you that the people at Irrukam, Vaenadu & Parameswari mangalam were not aware of any skills. When we informed them that training on the above skills will be given and they can prepare the products and sell.



In Irrukam and Vaenadu, first they accepted it. Basing on that training was given. After the training they said that they will prepare the products but wanted us to sell the finished products. They accepted to do it on labour basis. We requested the youth



group to take the responsibility to sell the finished products. But they did not come forward to do so.

Then we thought of introducing embroidery programme because the business people, who will give the orders for embroidery work, will take the finished products and pay the money according to the piece rate. Thus the marketing problem will be solved. Only thing is that they should learn and do the embroidery work properly. In the beginning about 15 girls/women attended the programme. But later on they declined and only 6 girls learnt the embroidery for 4 months. The problems were –(1)- they never attend the class regularly and go for daily wages as they need money. (2) They require quick money- and wanted it everyday.

At Vaenadu



Embroidery programme:

The embroidery work picked up very well. Now more than 35 girls/women are learning Embroidary. The instructor who conducts the course supplies the materials and takes it back after the embroidery work was done. He also pays small amount. They will be paid according to the piece rate. It is very encouraging. I met those girls on 21st-22nd of March (during Good Friday and Holy Saturday)

and they are attending the classes regularly. They also looked very happy and are gaining confidence.

At Parameswarimangalam

At present the women groups and the youth groups are preparing the products such as phenol, soap powder, cleaning powder, candles, etc as part time business.



IV. Tailoring Courses

Irrukam



Tailoring training was conducted for one year. 4 Sewing machines were provided. Mr. Mariadoss, the tailoring instructor taught tailoring regularly. More than 20 girls/ women joined the course but only 8 girls completed the full course for one year. They stitched the uniform for the pre-school children. At present the girls do come to the centre and do the tailoring work. It is planned to distribute the sewing machines to the girls who are continuously requesting for the sewing machines.

V. Tuition Centres



The children were provided with slates, charts and play materials.

In Vaenadu – Pre School programme is going on – About 30 children are regularly attending the school. Salary is given to the teachers.

In Parameswari mangalam – Pre-School programme is going on – About 25 children are regularly attending the school.



In Irrukam – Two Catholic Nuns are conducting regular primary school. Evening play session is going on.

VI. Motivation and Capacity Building

For Women: The Director along with resource people regularly met the women and discussed on various issues. Trained staffs from the head office and from other fields also visited the women and youth groups and held discussions. A staff (Mr. J.Gunasekar) was appointed for the project in the islands and he conducts Adult literacy classes in the evenings – 3 days in Irrukam and 3 days in Vaenadu. He also conducts regular meetings for women.



For Youth: The youth (both boys and girls) from the Chennai city were taken to Irrukam and Vaenadu and organised programmes for youth in those places. Two such programmes were conducted at Irrukam and one programme at Vaenadu. Bible study,



personality development, dialogues and discussions; sports and games were conducted.



In Vaenadu a dalit youth forum was formed and was affiliated with the dalit forum at Hydrabad. Some of the youth attended dalit meeting held at Hydrabad last year.

Sports materials were provided for the youth at all the 3 centers. YMCA Sports School, Nandanam, Chennai agreed to give systematic coaching in June this year.

V. Rehabilitation: This was done according to their needs.



1. In Irrukam the total number of beneficiaries – 40 women/families.

- 8 women were given milch buffaloes - Rs. 64,750/-
- 30 women were given young buffaloes



- & goats - Rs 90,000/-
- 2 women were given sewing machine - Rs. 8,000/-
- 3000 Coconut seedlings were distributed-Rs. 35,000/-
- Sports material - for youth - Rs. 3,000/-
- * 3 more girls will be given sewing machines.



2. In Vaenadu the total beneficiaries- 35 women/families

- 18 Embroidary cots

shared by 32

- women/girls -Rs. 93,169/-
- Tiffin Shop - 1 woman - Rs. 5,000/-
- Buffalo - 1 woman - Rs. 3,000/-
- Sewing Machine - 1 woman - Rs. 4,000/-
- Coconut trees distributed - Rs. 24,000/-
- Sports materials - Rs. 3,000/-



3. In Parameswari mangalam

- total number of beneficiaries -20 women & youth/ families

- Soap powder, phenoyl making, candle making, basket

making, incense sticks making - materials purchased

and handed over to women groups and youth groups

- 14 families - Rs.19,000/-

- Sewing machines - 6 families - Rs.38,656/-

-Sports materials - Rs. 3,000/-



During this year, we took some of the girls from the CSI Girls Hostel, St. Thomas Mount to do community programme at Irrukam. They spent two days meeting the community, playing with the local children and conducted devotions. They distributed snacks to the children after the programme. Both the girls from the hostel and the children from the community enjoyed the programme. The girls



also enjoyed boat riding.



Apart from this, we have conducted medical camps, women programme, youth programme during this period.

2. Community Development Programme at Irrukam & Vaenadu Centers.

Youth Programme was conducted at Irukam. About 27 youth participated in the programme. Mr. Kannadasan, Community Organiser, ARP was the resource person.

Two women programmes were conducted for the women groups mainly to motivate the women and to inform about their health and



hygiene. 35 to 40 women attended in each programme.



Through the Rotary Club and TNCC selected 51 persons physically handicapped persons from Irukkam & Arambakkam and distributed tri-cycles (30) wheel chairs (6) and hearing machines (15) for them on 1st July 2012 and 15th of August 2012 (Independence day).

Eye

Camp programme: 245 people came for eye check-up. 175 spectacles were distributed the patients. Rotary Club and TNCC distributed 16 hearing machines to the selected members including children.



Community Development Programme: - Irukkam and Vaenadu Islands



The Director along with resource people regularly visit the Island and meet the women and discussed on various issues. Our staff (Mr. J.Gunasekar) was appointed as the Community Organiser for the project in the islands and he conducts Adult literacy classes, Tuition for children, Sunday Schools, etc. He also conducts regular meetings for women.

i. Medical & Dental Camps:

2 General Medical camps; One Dental Camp and One Eye Camp were conducted. Medical Doctors along with nurses conduct the medical camps. Medicines were supplied for fever, cold, blood pressure, skin diseases, worms, etc. Iron tonics and general multi vitamin tablets were supplied for malnutrition. Treatment is given from small child to elderly people. First-Aid medicines are kept in Centres.



At Irukkam & Vaenadu Centers

Organised Youth meeting and about 25 youth attended the programme. Rev. J. Alexander was invited as Chief Guest. He spoke on unity among youth and to show love towards one another and have concern for others. He also informed of the various Government schemes that are available for the youth.

-40 persons physically handicapped persons from Gummidipoondi and the surrounding villages were selected and distributed tri-cycles through Rotary Club.

Helped many sick people to get admitted in the hospitals for various kinds of treatments. For example, Mr. Thangadurai, was affected by the TB was admitted in the TB Hospital, Tambaram and got the treatment.

On 15th of August, hearing machines were distributed to 23 deaf persons through Rotary Club.

Mr. Kanadasan, Social Worker, Andhra Rural Poor, was invited to speak for the Self Help women groups. He informed of the various Government Programmes

Conducted Christmas Programme at Irukkam village. Pastor Kumar, Pastor Devanesan, Pastor Johnson Babu were invited. They also conducted sports for the children and youth and distributed prizes.

Flood relief programme – 5 kg of rice along with dhal and oil was distributed to 275 families with the help of Rotary Club.

HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme was conducted with the help of Government Hospital and Sri City Hospital at Arumbakkam.