

NARRATIVE REPORT of CORD-Siruvani project

(From 1st April 2007 to 31st July 2007)

With Poojya Gurudev's Grace and Poojya Guruji's Blessings, the last four months have been spent usefully and significant work accomplished. A part of this time was spent in shifting and settling down into the new office premises. In the spacious office premises, taken on lease, we now have place for our various activities. The CORD office was painted fully by our workers.



A view of CORD Siruvani Office

The Project Coordinator, Dr Meera Krishna is guided by Swamini Vimalananda, Acharya, Chinmaya Mission, Coimbatore and Brahmachari Ajit Chaitanya, Secretary, Chinmaya Garden Trust. The team has a Gynecologist, one MBBS doctor, one Siddha and Homeopathy doctor, one Dentist, an accountant, two health workers, two community development workers (CDW), a vehicle driver and several volunteers from the villages.

The main area of activity is the Thennamnallur Panchayat consisting of four villages—Thennamnallur, Puthur, SandhegoundanPalayam (SGPalayam) and Kallimedu. The other areas of work are two tribal villages—Seengapathi and Sadivayal and eight other villages—Kondayanpalayam, Pooluvapatti, Naraseepuram, Madampatti, Semmedu, Nallurvayal, CGPudur, Alandurai.

The nature of the ongoing work consists of women empowerment programmes, Balavihar classes for children, formation of Self-Help Groups (SHG), training for income generation activities, health awareness programmes, sanitation activity and routine health clinics in eight of the above villages, conducted once a week and an afternoon clinic on all the weekdays in Nallurvayal (CRDC). A detailed report of the events and activities follows.

Mahila Mandal (Women groups):

The Thennamanallur Mahila Mandal has been meeting regularly and enthusiastically once a month. The monthly collection of Rs. 5 per person will be used for various activities. Two Velakku Poojas were conducted in Thennamanallur, one in Semmedu and one in Nallurvayal to make the people come together. The Thennamnallur Mahila Mandal is in the process of registering with the Nehru Yuva Kendra and opening an account in the local bank. The office bearers have been elected. They met once a month and discussed ways of solving the problem of road-side defecation and the reluctance to use toilets. During the meetings the activity for 15th August celebrations were being discussed.

The Mahila Mandal in Gandhi Colony, Thennamnallur is irregular in attending the meetings and have to be called for the meetings. An adult literacy programme has been started in Gandhi Colony in July 2007. It is mainly attended by women. 5 to 7 women attend regularly. An adult volunteer and school children teach the women on a one-to-one basis. They have made considerable progress.



Gandhi Colony MM Meeting in progress



Velakku Pooja



Adult literacy class



Thennamanallur MM

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Income-Generation Activities:

Our Self Help Groups have increased from three to four in number and are meeting once a month in the CORD office where their records are checked and guidance is given. One of the groups is ready for getting the revolving fund.

Some of the villagers have been taught newspaper-packet making and a few shops have started buying them regularly. We also got an order for making paper bags from Chinmaya Garden Trust. Our CORD workers learnt how to make the paper bags and taught it to a few villagers. When the next order is placed, we will be able to teach more villagers. We have put up a board for sale of vermicompost which is picking up slowly.



Self Help Group meeting in progress

Awareness programme:

The CORD team visited "Bharat Nirman" an awareness programme conducted by the Central and State Governments. Various stalls depicting the Government programmes and schemes for rural development were visited and information gathered.

Community Primary Health Care Programme:

Every month around 2500 patients received allopathic and homeopathic treatment in our clinics. Posters and charts showing various illnesses were used as aids for the awareness programmes conducted before every clinic. Screening for oral cancer and breast cancer has been done intensively in the last few months and a number of patients have been picked up for biopsy confirmation.



Awareness classes in progress

Members of the CORD team visited Yercaud where the tribals were screened for various illnesses at the medical camp. They also received medical treatment. The host NGO, CRNIEO, and members of the CORD team interacted and exchanged information on Self Help Group and Income Generation Activities. The health workers received intensive training on various aspects of health care.

Environmental Sanitation: We concentrated on building the 30 toilets which we had undertaken. Of them 28 are in the Gandhi and Ambedkar colonies of Thennamanallur. Of the 117 houses only 28 had toilets initially. Now, 28 more individual household latrines(IHHL) have been built. To build these toilets we procured a loan at a low rate of interest from the local Canara Bank branch. In the first batch, individuals took a loan of Rs. 5000 each and in the second batch Rs 6000 each. The total cost for each IHHL came to Rs.6500.

The toilets were built in the Sulabh soakage pit fashion where the depth of the pit varied from 6 to 7 feet and the diameter 4.5 feet. The sides of the pit were lined by boulders placed in a honey-comb pattern so that there is structural stability; the gaps between the boulders allow the water to come into contact with the surrounding soil. The bottom of the pit was left as it was. Right on top was put a single layer of bricks to level the pit. A pre-fabricated concrete slab of cement & iron rods was placed on top of the pit and cemented securely. The superstructure of 4 feet x 4 feet, 6 feet in height was built of hollow blocks with an asbestos sheet for the roof. An air-pipe was put from the pit. The basin was placed on a raised platform and a P drop was fixed in the hole meant for it. A door was fixed for ensuring privacy and cleanliness.

The loan taken by the people is being repaid at the rate of Rs. 50 per week, i.e. Rs.200 to 300 per month. The people pay most of the weeks but are unable to do when they are out of work as they are daily-wage agricultural laborers or construction workers. The money paid by the people is paid into the bank by the CORD workers weekly. The subsidy money for which we have applied (Rs.1200 per toilet) will also be paid into the loan account.

After the inaugural function on 15-07-2007 which was graced by Swamini Vimalananda and attended by the Panchayat officials and the beneficiaries, the village people have started using the toilets instead of dirtying the road. A bucket, mug and toilet brush was provided by CORD to each of these beneficiaries to keep the toilet clean.

People from the nearby Panchayats and Panchayat officials have approached us for building similar IHHLs.





One IHHL being constructed

Our garbage collection vehicle has been put to use in the Gandhi colony where we will be separating the biodegradable and non-biodegradable rubbish at source. One of the women from Gandhi colony will be taking it from house to house. The ditches and stagnant water areas are being cleaned by the people, Panchayat workers and CORD workers.



Our garbage collection vehicle



The ditches being cleaned

Balavadi and Balavibar (Personality development classes): Eleven Balavihar classes are continuing in the various villages. Children from 3 villages come to CORD office so that on Sundays we have 60 to 80 children gathering in the office. We have procured more material for the games, sewing and other hobbies.

Regular tuition classes are being held in the nearby Govt. school in Thennamanallur after school-hours. Children who are very poor in their studies are taught their basics and those who are better have their doubts cleared. Tuition classes are also being conducted in Nallurvayal.

In the tribal areas with poor access, the children, in addition to being taught through games and stories, also have a medical check-up. Various illnesses are treated after the class. Vitamin supplements and deworming agents have improved the health of several of them who were visibly anemic.



Balavihar class



Volunteer with tuition children

Community-based Rehabilitation(CBR): Mr Senthil, a physiotherapist, has been coming to Thennamanallur village and giving physiotherapy to several needy villagers. He is also teaching the CORD workers so that they can help the physically challenged on their own.



Physiotherapy being given to a hemiplegic



CBR for a paraplegic

Yuva and Yuvati groups have been formed in Thennamnallur village and S G Palayam and have been registered with the Nehru Yuva Kendra. The groups are encouraged to participate in various social and developmental activities. The youth of the village helped in the various activities.

The CORD team attended the cultural programme held in Coimbatore city to celebrate Poojya Guruji's birthday in which the Life of AdiSankara was enacted by the Chinmaya Vidyalaya children.

Panchayati Raj:

The CORD team and the MM members have participated in the Gram Sabha meetings held in the various villages. We have contributed ideas and suggestions during the meetings.

Networking and Training:

The villagers and the CORD team members network with various Govt. and Non-Govt. Organizations—

- Mr Kalimuthu, a patient with advanced cancer of the face was taken to a charitable hospital for diagnosis and treatment. Since he has advanced Merkel Cell carcinoma, he will have to be taken again for palliative care
- Another patient who is a paraplegic for 6 months after a fall from a tree is receiving home care for his bed sores. We found a sponsor for his daughter's education and by Gurudev's Grace, we plan to get him a wheelchair and teach him some income-generation activity.

Volunteers:

We have had volunteers from India and abroad who supported the activities by giving their valuable time and also helped in cash and kind.

- Mrs Kamala and Mrs Vembu from Thennamnallur are continuing to give a lot of their time for Balavihar and MM activities. Mrs Kamala helped us conduct Velakku Poojas and guided us in other activities.

- Mr M. Mani of Microbiological Laboratory, Coimbatore has helped throughout with laboratory tests at cost for the villagers.
- Mrs Prabha Shivasamy from Thennamanallur has volunteered to take the adult literacy classes every night from 8 to 9 PM
- Mrs Premalatha Venkatachalam of Alandurai has been coming regularly to monitor the Self Help Groups and check their records
- Mrs Annapoorani and Mrs Neelaveni are helping regularly with the Balavihar classes. Mrs Annapoorani has also been helping in the office and in events like the Velakku Pooja.
- Dr Deepa from Hong Kong was here with us from 24th to 30th June. She participated in the various activities and we exchanged ideas & information.
- Mrs Nalini Narayanasamy and her daughters Janani Naidu and Rubini Naidu from Detroit were with us for four days in July. They participated in all the activities, helped with the Velakku pooja, visited patients in the hospital and homes, assisted Dr Meera in the clinic and conducted Balavihar.
- Dr Sweta Adata, M D, from Jamnagar was with us from 20th to 30th July. She visited our clinics and gave her expert opinion on problematic cases. She also guided us in the running of the clinics. She visited various patients who were bed-ridden and gave her consultant services.
- In July this year, we had the good fortune to have Dr Arundhati Sundar from Singapore. Dr Arundhati, a physiotherapist, who started the physiotherapy in CORD Sidhbari, visited several physically challenged patients in their homes. She analysed their problems and taught them exercises. She also guided the CORD workers and a local physiotherapist so that we could continue the treatment.



Dr Arundhati and Dr Sweta in the CORD office.

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