

NARRATIVE REPORT of CORD-Siruvani project

(From 1st August 2007 to 30th November 2007)

With Poojya Gurudev's Grace and Poojya Guruji's Blessings, in the last four months the following activities have been carried out. The CORD office has been rearranged and has a beautiful garden now.

Poojya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda visited the CORD office and blessed us all.

The main area of activity continues to be 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 had been meeting regularly and enthusiastically once a month. The monthly collection of Rs. 5 per person will be used for various activities. To increase the tempo of the activities, the members are now meeting once a week in Thennamanallur CORD office. On the 2nd of October, the women attended a Human Rights awareness programme in Coimbatore City.

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

Our Self Help Groups are meeting once a month in the CORD office where their records are checked and guidance is given. The villagers have been taught newspaper-packet making and many shops have started buying them regularly. Women of two SHGs were taken to the areca bract plate making industry for gathering details. One of the groups is applying for a loan to start making biodegradable plates. One of the CORD workers was sent for training in vermicompost technology in the Tamilnadu Agricultural University. One other worker attended a course for tribal people of Seengapathy in which the women were told about various income generation activities. 45,000 tags were made ready for export within a record period of 24 hours by the villagers of our Panchayat, which showed the coordination by our workers and the cooperation among the villagers.

Awareness programme:

The CORD workers attended an exposition on Diabetes in Coimbatore city. The information gathered and way the information was presented is being communicated to the villagers. Regular awareness programmes on health and sanitation are part of our clinics in the various villages. The local eateries are being sensitized on the need for proper hygiene.

Community Primary Health Care Programme:

During the last four months around 12000 patients received allopathic and Siddha 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, cervical 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.

With the help of Sankara Eye Centre, a diabetic retinopathy screening camp was conducted in our CORD office. 60 patients attended the eye camp. Free blood sugar testing was done for those needing it. In the month of September, 19 patients were identified for cataract surgery in another general eye camp conducted in our CORD office. Many others requiring specialized eye care were taken to the main Sankara Eye Centre in Coimbatore city. There they received the necessary treatment at highly concessional rates.

Environmental Sanitation: We concentrated on building the 60 toilets which we had undertaken. Of them 38 are in the Gandhi and Ambedkar colonies of Thennamanallur. Of the 117 houses only 28 had toilets initially. Now, 38 more individual household latrines(IHHL) have been built. 11 toilets have been built in the rest of Thennamanallur village, 9 in the Gandhi colony of Puthur and 3 in S G Palayam, that is a total of 61 toilets. 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.

A bucket, mug and toilet brush was provided by CORD to each of these beneficiaries to keep the toilet clean. The villagers got together and cleaned the existing toilet complex.

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

To set an example for the villagers, we segregate the rubbish generated in the clinics and office. The compost pit, the place for burning the small amount of non-degradable rubbish and the needle destroyer and syringe cutter help us demonstrate the right method of waste disposal.

Tamilnadu Water And Drainage Board (TWAD) conducted a training session to test the quality of water in which CORD Siruvani participated. Dr Meera attended the World Toilet Summit in Delhi between 31-10-2007 and 3-11-2007. She presented a paper on the experiences in building toilets in Thennamanallur village. She also gathered a lot of useful information which will help in future work.

In the month of October 2007, 50 trees were planted along the roadside in the four villages of our Panchayat. Tree guards were put and the trees were watered. 150 hardwood

and fruit saplings were received from Isha Yoga and distributed to the people of various villages.

Balavadi and Balavibar (Personality development classes): Eleven Balavihar classes are continuing in the various villages. The classes of one and a half hours each are being held in the respective villages on Saturdays and Sundays. The Third Annual Balavihar programme was held in the Chinmaya Maheswarar Temple in Nallurvayal on 17-10-2007. Poojya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda and other dignitaries graced the occasion. 120 children of various villages presented dramas, folk dances and Bhajans to display and enhance their talents. All the participants were given prizes to encourage them.

Regular free tuition classes are being conducted in Nallurvayal for the poor children of the locality.

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.

Community-based Rehabilitation(CBR): Mr Senthil, a physiotherapist, has been coming to Thennamanallur village and giving physiotherapy to several needy villagers.²¹ He is also teaching the CORD workers so that they can help the physically challenged on their own. A wheelchair and waterbed were procured as donation from Soundaryam Comfort Homes of Coimbatore and handed over to the beneficiary who is paralysed from waist down. Regular visits and the water bed have helped heal his bedsores and regular visits by the physiotherapist are continuing.

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. One of the CORD members attended a meet organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra to discuss the " Role of Youth in Panchayat". NSS volunteers from PSG college Coimbatore stayed in our village for a week and with our workers cleaned up the village, planted trees, created awareness in various topics and put up various cultural programmes.

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—

- The CORD team members and women of the village attended a meeting organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra on 2nd October 2007. Information about consumer rights and protection was given at this meeting.
- Dr Meera attended a one-day programme for adolescent girls of the nearby villages. This was arranged by Tulsi Seva Trust.

- Students and Professors of the Social Welfare department of Amrutamayee University visited Thennamanallur village. Our workers interacted with them and exchanged information. We took them around the village.

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.

- Ms Moira of New Zealand visited the CORD village and participated in the activities. She runs an NGO in New Zealand and it was very encouraging to interact with her.
- Mrs Sarojini Sukumaran, a Physics professor came to our Balavihar classes and taught the children. She has promised to come whenever time permits.

Dr Meera Krishna, MD., DGO
Project Coordinator,
CORD Siruvani,
4/109, Boluvampatti Main Road,
Thennamanallur Post,
Coimbatore—641 109
Phone: 0422-2906164; 98941 33424; 99421 17357.
e-mail: cordsiruvani@gmail.com

HARI OM