

**July 12, 2002**

Site visit to Brick kilns (Mrs. Lakshmi, Jeba Durai, Prasad NNV)  
Started at 4.00 PM and returned at 8.30PM.

Visited two sites towards the end of the brick-making season. More than 1000 kilns are present in the district and most of the workers come from two districts in the south (Tirumallamali and Villipuram). The workers are at kilns for six months of the year and remaining times they go back to their native place.

The places appeared clean and open. First impression is that the living quarters are less congested than in city and less polluted also.

At both locations there are children with motivators. Both the motivators have only basic educational background, but may be they are only temporary volunteers.

People at both kilns appear to know Mr. Murthy very well and are friendly to him. He also knows most children by name, their family and problems they faced.

**July 24, 2002**

Meeting at Asha Chennai home (Jeba Durai, Raja, Mrs. Lakshmi, Murthy and NNV Prasad)  
Issues discussed are

1. Murthy has been on a CRY Fellowship of Rs. 4,500/- per month for the past four years. He also took help of two other volunteers for part of the time for a small salary. His idea was to motivate the children to join the school and to achieve the minimum required literacy he provided basic non-formal to the children. He used provide this non-formal education during the six month period that the parents work at kilns. Because the children migrate with parents, he motivated parents to get TC (Transfer Certificates) when they move from one place to another. With TC the children can join in another local government school. During his four years of Fellowship, Murthy worked with workers of three kilns and admitted 75 students to the regular school. His target group is children of 6 to 14 years age.
2. As a social worker, Murthy attended numerous workshops on non-formal education to children. So he has sufficient experience in training children.
3. Murthy's motivation centers ran in the evening for two hours a day, six days a week. But the total time spent each is day is closer to four hours.
4. Murthy is familiar with TAFRE and has already identified a resource person Ms. L.S.Saraswath to train motivators. We will get more details about the resource person from Murthy.
5. Health hazards of the workers depend on the activity that they are associated with. There are mainly three tasks in brick kilns and a family will constantly work only on one of the three tasks.
  - a. The first task is kneading the soil and making bricks – here people have skin problems and back problems because their posture is always constant. Skin problems appear to disappear during the six months break and Mr. Murthy hasn't identified any long-term or short-term solution. Similarly we do not have any solution to the long-term back problem unless some modern technology or job rotation is brought in.
  - b. Second task is taking the bricks into the kilns and there doesn't appear to be any long-term effect other than fatigue.
  - c. Third task is bringing the bricks out, workers are exposed to dust pollution in this activity. One solution that they found is eating lot of bananas! Some do suffer

with breathing problems. Providing breathing masks may reduce their exposure to dust although it may solve the problem of particles.

6. To the suggestion of running a school, he felt it will require more resources and also means that he can attend a small group of kilns only. When Murthy started his CRY fellowship, his intention was to motivate the people so that they go and join the school. His idea was to move to next kiln, after the children in one kiln are motivated to go to the school. He wants to apply the same idea to the new project that he has proposed to Asha. He says, after the first five are over he will work with a new set of five. After some thought, he felt it may be still possible to keep bringing the children of different kilns and slowly transfer the children from the Asha school to government school. One issue is related to taking children to a central school. It may be possible to help some enterprising young people to purchase share-autos (can take around 8 children) and serve the routes that are not well connected. They can also help transport children at the start and end of school day.
7. One observation is that motivating girl children is more difficult and especially older girl children find it even more difficult to attend the school. His another observation was that lot of parents ask for hostel facility (This is same as Mrs. Lakshmi's initial idea. We however feel we will need to consider it more carefully based on cost-benefit ratio besides the responsibility factor).

Finally, Mr. Murthy said he will investigate the possibility of centralizing the kiln centers as maintaining quality education will be easier. Also, another issue that needs to be answered is whether the schools are big enough to accommodate all the new students that they may get. He felt that it will be possible to convince some kiln owner to give two grounds of land for a small education institute. He will get back to us with his findings.

Mr. Murthy has provided following information on Aug 9, 2002, summary from the following is yet to be prepared.

1. Project reports
2. Evaluation reports
3. Photos
4. Photocopy of the Pasumai trust status
5. Survey of kilns and workers, children information