

**Asha for Education
Fellowship Application Form**

SECTION I: Personal Contact Information
Name: Senthilkumar Gopalan
Organization (if any): Payir Trust
Address: 3/256, Payir Trust, Thenur village, Perambalur District – 621 114, Tamil Nadu
Phone: +91 9047 255 25
Nominator: Ravi Venkatraman
Have you applied to Asha Fellowship Program before? If yes, when? No
Do you or your organization receive or has received any other form of financial support from Asha? If yes, please give details Yes, Payir Trust is being supported by Asha U Florida since 2009 for the School Intervention and Non-formal education program.

SECTION III: Summary of Work			
Name of Project (if any): Payir			
Location: Thenur Village/City/District, State: Thenur village, Perambalur District, Tamil Nadu			
Which communities will Nominee's work serve? Socially and economically backward rural communities, particularly women and children			
Type of work (select three maximum):			
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Teaching Methods</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Health and Nutrition</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Income Generation</td> </tr> </table>	Teaching Methods	Health and Nutrition	Income Generation
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SECTION II: Education		
Degree, Certification or Training Year	Institution	Location
B.E (Mechanical)	RVS	Dindigul

SECTION III: Experience
Please describe the top 3 most relevant experiences.
<p>I started my career with the intention of working for ten years and accumulating sufficient funds for the creation of an empowerment organisation in rural India. I worked in IBM India, and later as a technical director with Lason in the US. On completing ten years, I returned to India and set up Payir.</p> <p>In the last ten years, I have served as the founder and managing trustee of Payir and worked extensively with people in the region. I have identified and worked on the issues relevant to rural communities, such as alcoholism, migration to cities and lack of opportunities.</p> <p>I have launched initiatives in the area of non-formal education and child nutrition through Payir trust. I have also worked towards empowerment of women, healthcare, and sustainable</p>

agricultural practices.

SECTION IV: Organizational Affiliations & Memberships		
Organization	Your Role	Dates

SECTION V: References		
Name	Organization	Address/Phone/Email

SECTION VI: Proposal
<p>Please answer the following questions in the space provided. Please attach any additional documents for clarity and better understanding of your work.</p>
Name of Project (if any): Payir
Objective: Payir's vision is to facilitate transformation of the Indian villages into a socially stimulating, self-reliant, sustainable, growth oriented communities rooted in the principles of truth to realize a high quality of life and more choices for every individual of the community. Payir adopts a holistic approach where all aspects of challenges in rural life are addressed by providing health care, creative and value based education, learning centers for skill building and promoting alternate practices in agriculture.
Clearly describe the need for your work: Gandhi said that India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages. However, it is a sad fact that despite being the backbone of the country in terms of food and labor force, villages are mostly neglected and deprived of choices, facing the rough side of unequal development. This leads to turbulence in their socioeconomic and cultural circumstances, losing out on the previously interdependent and satisfied communities. The mission is to bridge the inequity in rural communities by providing sufficient choices and development opportunities. Payir has had a presence in Perambalur district for the past ten years, working closely with six villages.
Clearly describe your proposed approach/solution: The overall approach is to engage people from the local community, provide relevant training, develop their skills and prepare them to take ownership of the development of their region. → Health: Train locals as health workers to provide health care and health education. → Education: Overcome the lack of facilities in government schools by providing additional staff, learning materials and alternate methods. → Income Generation: Develop skills of locals and provide support to create and encourage local entrepreneurs. → Infrastructure: Strengthen the availability of basic infrastructure that can provide basic health, education and sanitation facilities along with space for social activities.

→ **Agriculture:** Demonstrate organic farming techniques in Payir farm and facilitate farmers to adapt the same.

→ **Nutrition:** Carry out supplementary nutrition programs in schools to improve performance of children in school as well as overall health and well-being.

→ **Local Governance:** Partner with the Panchayat in its activities and facilitate participation of more people in the Gram Sabha activities.

A secondary aim is to create awareness in all the above aspects as well as related issues like environmental protection, areas in which Payir has been involved.

I have been greatly involved in working with the local community in the above mentioned fields for the past ten years. My goal for the future is to continue to make progress in these areas, create a larger impact to bring about a positive change.

Clearly describe any background work done so far in the location of your work that will help towards your work.

Through Payir, I have completed ten years of serving Thenur and five other villages – Nathakadu, Thottiyapatti, T.Kalathur, Kannapadi, and Varadharajapuram. Before adopting each of the villages, a survey and mapping of the region was conducted to understand and analyze the need for Payir and my work. That directed my actions in the past ten years.

Thenur is a border village in Perambalur district. The village has people of 14 different castes, and the three major religions of India. Thenur had low education and health statuses, with the rate of migration to nearby towns and cities in search of work being high, as well as a high dropout rate in school. Alcoholism was rampant. The conditions in the other villages were similar.

During the past ten years, the education and health statuses have significantly improve. Through the school intervention program, the dropout rate has drastically fallen; We have eradicated the menace of illicit liquor brewing; We have collaborated with the panchayat, improved infrastructure and created livelihoods. While we consider these changes as accomplishments, since our intention is to expand into other areas, these experiences can play a vital role and serve as the background work for new locations.

What activities will be undertaken for your work?

The below mentioned activities have been ongoing, and I will look to improve and expand these services to more villages.

Health

→ Community Health Centre

Provide primary health care and clinical lab facilities, training health workers, serving as a resource center, referral center for secondary and tertiary care.

→ Field work

Run health education programs for children, adolescents and women, providing natural nutrition supplements for undernourished children under 5. Work on reducing anemia, providing preventive, curative and follow up care

→ Nutrition Program

Payir has been chosen to conduct a pilot nutrition program, providing snacks to ~4000 girls in ~19 schools. The aim of this program is to carefully study the present condition, execute the program with meticulous details, and assess the impact of the program on children's health and education. This involves preparing food, distributing it to all schools, and recording all measurable related to the study.

Education**→ Formal Learning Centre**

Run a nursery and primary school with the intention of providing value based and enjoyable education specifically to socially and economically disadvantaged children.

→ School Intervention Program

Provide additional support staff to government schools and improve primary education. Address dropout rates through counselling, and focus on improving 10th Std. exam results, working with slow learners through tuition classes and summer camps.

Income generation

Payir runs various income generation programs such as bag making, tailoring, unit, ITeS unit, food processing unit and agriculture and livestock.

Infrastructure

Provide basic infrastructure like civic facilities in schools, construction of community centers and toilets.

Agriculture

Present a model of organic farming, encouraging and facilitating local farmers to adopt organic farming.

Environment

Implement afforestation with traditional crop varieties, watershed management. At Payir, I have worked on numerous community awareness programs on health, education, environment and various other topics relevant to rural communities.

Clearly describe the expected impact of your work:

Primary Health Center

The primary health center is aimed at reaching out to villagers and providing access to basic health care. It is expected that we reach 30,000+ villagers within the next two years, if we proceed as planned. Another aim is also to reduce superstitious health behavior.

We plan to provide 2500+ referrals, conduct 60+ community medical camps, and trained more than 20 health workers. In the future, the health center will be owned and managed by the health workers, branching out to more villages and creating more empowered individuals.

Formal Learning Center

There are 47 children in the nursery and primary school, and we intend to increase the number in future.

School Intervention Program

We have a pass percentage of above 90% in 10th Std., with more than 20% children scoring above 400 marks (out of 500). In the future, we will establish a mobile science lab and take the joy of science and experiments to government schools.

Children Nutrition Program

The program hopes to improve overall physical and mental health of about 4,000 children in and around Thenur between ages 1 and 5 during 2010-2016. We hope to end this program in light of education and nutrition awareness among parents making the program redundant.

Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program

Improve overall physical, mental and awareness development of over 3,000 adolescent girls in Thenur and surrounding villages. The program foresees a generation of confident, self-aware, non-anemic adolescent girls who have the freedom of choice.

Employment Generation and Economic Empowerment Program

Provide employment to over 300 rural women and youth, making them economically stable and self-sustaining. The program foresees the full ownership transfer and management of the business ventures by the locals, as well as the employment of more number of people.

Overall, the focus of Payir is not on selected aspects of functioning, but more about human relationships, rights and duties and emphasizing each one's role within their neighborhood and society.

Describe any innovative ideas & approach:

Primary Health Center

- Have a dedicated Health Worker Program of health workers who go to every household and monitor family members' health.
- Build a sound and strong referral network
- Curative health delivered through telemedicine
- Focused community health interventions
- Establishment of diagnostic center

Education Programs (Formal Learning Center and School Intervention Program)

- Implementation of ABL methodology at the local primary schools with our own support staff
- Exposure to various knowledge forms
- ELearning Center – Expert teachers from around the world teach students in Thenur
- Breakfast scheme as means of improving attendance
- Introduction of extracurricular activities like yoga and karate
- Establishment of children's journal with contributions from government school children.

Community Solidarity Programs

- Panchayat empowerment that strengthens local infrastructure & revenues.
- Increase awareness and implementation of Government schemes in the local community, through regular sessions.
- Encourage participation in Gram Sabha.
- Youth Movement – Clean Thenur project.

Employment Generation and Economic Empowerment Program

- Work with volunteers and well-wishers to train and boot strap cottage industries / self-help groups.

Clearly describe why you will succeed:

When I started Payir ten years ago, I gave up my IT job and moved to Thenur to live within the Payir premises. Since then, I have gained a lot of experience and dedicated all my efforts towards developing Payir. The dramatic transformation that has taken place over the last ten years encourages me to carry my work forward and gives me the confidence that the desired vision can be achieved. Below are some examples that are indicative of the change in outcomes and mindset of the people.

While there were only 4-5 graduates in the region at the time, the presence of Payir has spread the message of the need for higher education, resulting in a higher number of graduates. It is satisfying to see that Payir has enabled 45 people to have employment in their own villages throughout the year, despite their varying levels of education. Further, several of the team members have absorbed the motivation and warmth of Payir and come forward to envision developmental activities for their own villages, thus becoming future leaders of their communities. Women, who represent the majority of Payir team, have successfully made the transition from housewives to empowered individuals and garnered respect from themselves from their fellow

villagers.

The district administration has seen fit to seek the assistance of Payir in the implementation of some of the developmental schemes of the district. This can be seen as a nod of approval of our efforts and the resourcefulness of the Payir team. My work has also received widespread recognition through the *Times Now Amazing Indians* program.

Over the years, the entire community has come to be involved in this goal of improving the lives of everyone through sustained efforts. The experience gained over the years, the passion that I have been carrying and the bonding that has emerged among the community makes me confident that I will be able to achieve my goals.

How do you propose to track the impact of your work (data collection, interviews, etc)

Primary Health Center

- Community health records are maintained by health workers on a weekly and monthly basis.
- Track the number of patients treated and referred for advance care.
- Track the number of community awareness health programs conducted.

Education Programs (Formal Learning Center and School Intervention Program)

- Track the number of students enrolled in Formal Learning Center.
- Track the number of schools included in School Intervention Program.
- Track the number of students and teachers trained in School Intervention Program.
- Track the attendance of students.
- Track the pass percentage of students appearing for public exams in X and XII Stds.

Children Nutrition Program

- Monitor the height and weight of students enrolled in the program.

Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program

- Monitor the height and weight of adolescent girls enrolled in the program.
- Monitor the anemia status.
- Monitor vocational skills learned.
- Monitor school drop outs, and assess the reasons for the same.

Employment Generation and Economic Empowerment Program

- Track number of rural enterprises bootstrapped.
- Track number of rural women and youth employed.
- Track profit / loss status of the rural enterprises.

What are the intermediate milestones:

The following milestones are targeted by the end of 2016.

Primary Health Center – Expand our Primary Health Work to 1 more village. Determine the number of community awareness programs that can be conducted by the health workers autonomously, and create educational materials.

Formal Learning Center – Target an enrollment to 50 kids in 2016/17, and reduce the dropouts.

School Intervention Program – Expand our reach to one more government school and set up a functional mobile science lab.

Children Nutrition Program – Strengthen nutrition awareness programs for parents of children between ages 1 and 5.

Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program – Expand our reach to 500 adolescent girls in

Thenur and surrounding villages. Create active adolescent groups and intensify their awareness programs.

Employment Generation and Economic Empowerment Program – Increase profit of bag making unit, and start one more rural enterprise.

What learning from this work can be applied elsewhere & where:

The issues and community being targeted here are in fact, a representation of the whole of India. All the learning from this work can be applied to holistic development of more villages or adopted by other organizations interested in working towards rural empowerment. This work can be used to inspire urban youth to consider opportunities in villages, as well as inspire rural youth to give back to their communities.

The methods and results of the nutrition program, intervention program, primary health center, agricultural initiatives and employment generation schemes can be extended to other places as well.

List the current financial resources, including any other grants or fellowships, available for the project/work:

Payir's expenses are largely met with the help of individual donors. Payir receives an annual grant from Asha UFlorida.

List any organizations, including universities, international agencies, NGOs, etc., involved in the work:

Asha UFlorida (www.ashanet.org/uflorida)
Tribal Health Center (<http://www.tribalhealth.org/>)
eVidhyaLoka (www.evidhyaloka.org)

What level of funding are you requesting from Asha for Education (stipend, project funds, etc.). Please give details about amount requested per month and duration.

As I now have a life partner who is also dedicated to working fulltime in Payir, I would be grateful if Asha For Education could provide Rs. 25,000 per month and enable us to uninterruptedly concentrate on work. I would like to mention that I am not a recipient of any other fellowships.

SECTION VIII: Declaration

- I am 18 years of age or older.
- I am prepared to commit at **least 80% of my working time** to the proposed work
- I am prepared to commit to a **minimum of 3 years** to the proposed project starting _____
- I am not proposing an academic research project.
- I am not a prior recipient of Asha for Education Fellowship Program funding.
- The proposed project/work is not affiliated with any religious or political organizations.
- The proposed project/work is an independent and autonomous project.
- The idea proposed is my original idea.
- I have attached a resume and other pertinent information to this application.

I certify that I have answered all questions truthfully. I understand that if I have misrepresented myself or my proposed work, Asha for Education may disqualify my eligibility.

Signature: Senthilkumar Gopalan
Date: 01-Feb 2016