

Fellowship Siddamma



Annual Review (2007-2008)

Organizations supporting Siddamma & BT

- **HIVOS : Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation**

- Contributes by working together with local organizations in developing countries, HIVOS strives for a world in which all citizens - both men and women - have equal access to resources and opportunities for development. Based from Netherlands, HIVOS supported funds for Sarpam Village Committees through Bharathi Trust.
- **Sarpam Staff cost** : The basic expenses to support a Sarpam Staff is Rs.2000/person for legal training, flyering, traveling expense, 1 meal during general meeting days and during attending government meeting .
- **Sarpam Expenses** is 5 lakhs (for 1 year), HIVOS supported for 10 yrs of support since 1998.

- **Asha for Education**

- **Foundation Roger Riou.**

- Part of American Cancer Society ;Helped provide help in not reachable areas.
- Provided very little support in 1998. Also helped in managing health care in schools in 2008.

Organizations supporting Siddamma & BT

- **Action Aid International :**

- Action Aid is an international anti-poverty agency whose aim is to fight poverty worldwide. Works with local partners to fight poverty and injustice worldwide, reaching over 13 million of the poorest and most vulnerable people over the last year alone, helping them fight for and gain their rights to food, shelter, work, education, healthcare and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. “
- Action AID had a 3-year plan and in the third year, was interested in working on construction only. Bharathi Trust had some spare funds from their earlier projects (livelihood projects) and requested Action AID to allow us to use these funds to employ a part-time teacher in the evening. So for a few months now, these centers have been functioning in the evenings.

- **Malteser International**

http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/en/61.03.Organisation/Organisation.htm

German based worldwide relief agency of the Sovereign Order of Malta for humanitarian aid. The organisation covers around 200 projects in about 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Currently, 19 national associations of the Order of Malta are members of Malteser International.

Helped during Tsunami Relief with Low Cost Housing Construction

Organizations supporting Siddamma & BT

- **Save the Children, Quinoa**

Bharathi Trust's Involvement (with *Sarpam* , *Save the Children* , *Quinoa*) during Tsunami Relief

- Livelihood restoration
- Selling catch in open market rather than through moneylenders
- Fishing related aid: nets, Catamarans
- Rehabilitation: Land, building houses
- Government aid

The centers in Cuddalore were being supported by **Save the Children** till Dec 2006. **Save the Children** had a two-year program to work on Tsunami Relief and Rehab program and stopped support after Dec 2006.

Bharathi Trust : Focus

- **Regions of focus** : Irula tribe in Thiruvallur, Vellore and Cuddalore districts
- Main focus of promoting and building up these communities as a collective forum, liaison with the government for obtaining schemes and programmes (patta land, group housing, hand pumps, joint cultivation etc.)
- The Trust works intensively on human right-based issues to curb/check atrocities and discrimination against Irulas. Bharathi Trust is also involved in supporting their livelihood options as they had lost everything due to Tsunami. As the condition called for immediate intervention for sustainable livelihood rehabilitation of Irulas Bharathi Trust scaled up their work in Cuddalore district.

Goal of Bharathi Trust: “A Just and Equal Society”

“Poor and disadvantaged sections of the society are empowered to realise their rights effectively and in a sustained manner”

Women's Empowerment

- One of Siddamma's key focus that Asha Austin doesnot directly support :
Women's struggle committie.
- **Who :** Supports everybody (including Irulas) . Helps low paying job holders like housemaid, unorganized workers, small vendors, cart woman, street side sellers ,quarry workers
- **When :** Help setup shelter,welfare board, licenses, housing rights,ration card, women issues like dowry,sex abuse,primary health center and women safety in jobs
- **Where :** Regions of Focus : Thiruvallur, Cuddalore, Madurai, Thirichy, Chennai

SEZ : Special Economic Zones

She is also working on raising awareness about the problems associated with Special Economic Zones.
Leather industry being set up in the neighborhood can cause environmental degradation.

Empowerment of Irulas

Awareness camps

- Purpose : Create awareness in the Irula community to take stock of the situation they are placed in comparison to the other communities.
- Through these camps they are taught the importance of unity among themselves, the need to fight for their basic rights. The importance of education for their children, general health and hygiene is also stressed.
- The various government schemes for them were also highlighted and the importance of the Irula community organization 'SARPAM' and its activities towards the alleviation of social problems like dowry, inequality in wages, property rights, child labour and problem of drinking amongst the men folk were explained.
- Dates of Awareness camp from Annual Report

Empowerment of Irulas

Achievements:

- Need for the unity among themselves.
- Need for their own Sangam : Both the districts were sensitised to form Sarpam Sangam.
- Creating and awakening among the Irula community to send their children to the schools instead of sending them for work as child labour.
- Their personal hygiene and better health.
- The active leaders of Sarpam played the role of motivators, leader's mentors and the role model for the Irulas.
- Role-play, street play were organised by the cultural team in the camps. The theme of role-plays was Police harassment, Non-implementation of Government scheme, Corruptions, inequality, Negligence of the officials' exploitation etc.
- Nearly 50% of the participants were woman from the villages. In Sarpam the leaders represented to the Government officers to give them Scheduled Tribes Certificate, Street lights, Ration Cards, Drinking Water facility, and land Patta etc.
- They have also managed to replicate Sarpam organisation in 18 villages in Uttukottai Taluk of Thiruvallur District Irula, 24 villages in Cuddalore District and 12 villages in Vellore district.

Outcome:

- Sarpam's leader's role in handling human rights violation issues:
- In Thiruvallur and Vellore district most of the police stations stopped registering false cases against the Irulas on the basis of local landowner's complaints.
However in some cases there are still some police stations in Vellore district which arrest Irulas on false cases. Sarpam and Bharathi Trust personal take up these issues legally and get them released.

Empowerment of Irulas

Cultural Training

- Cultural Training is an important tool to reach the community. Sarpam cultural team are given regular training in organizing cultural programs these cultural shows help in highlighting the discrimination faced by the Irula community in relation to others and the expertise they should develop to overcome the same.
- Every week on Thursday the cultural team undergoes training and new ideas were generated to liberate and sensitize the ignorant Irula in the Newly identified Villages.
- Issues regarding the procurement of the Community certificate, Social discriminations faced by the community etc were also focused.

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Districts</i>	<i>Number of villages performed</i>
01.	27.06.07	Thiruvallur	22 Villages
02.	19.10.07	Cuddalore	27 Villages
03.	23.03.08	Vellore	15 Villages

Empowerment of Irulas

Leadership Training

- In Thiruvallur, Cuddalore and Vellore District Leaders meeting will be conducted on 25th every month.
- All the leaders will meet and discuss about their newly raised issues and the future course of action that is to be undertaken.
- The leadership training also gives an opportunity to the participants to bring out their talents, understanding of the community problem.
- Dates in Annual Report

Leadership Training In Ponneri Taluk

- As a result of the above mentioned training programs the leaders were able to handle and manage any critical situation on their own. After the training 10 community members meet every week to discuss their problems. The participation certificates were issued.
- The leaders were trained to manage their Sarpam organisation on the aspects of fund Raising, collection of membership fee, planning and implementation, running the Sangam, accounts maintenance and managerial Skills.

Outcome

- The leaders of Thiruvallur and Vellore districts are now able to manage their Sarpam Sangam on their own and find out solutions for their problems.
- We started to work in the Cuddalore district only after Tsunami the leaders were motivated and trained to tackle the problems and fight for their rights on their own with the Sarpam Guidance.

Empowerment of Irulas

Public Meetings

- The purpose of the public meeting comprising of the three districts Cuddalore, Vellore, and Thiruvallur was to highlight the past activities achievements and also apprise them of the assistance they can obtain for redressal of their problem with the help of Bharathi trust and Sarpam.
- The main object of the meeting was to mobilise the Irulas so that they can get together, unite and represent their grievances



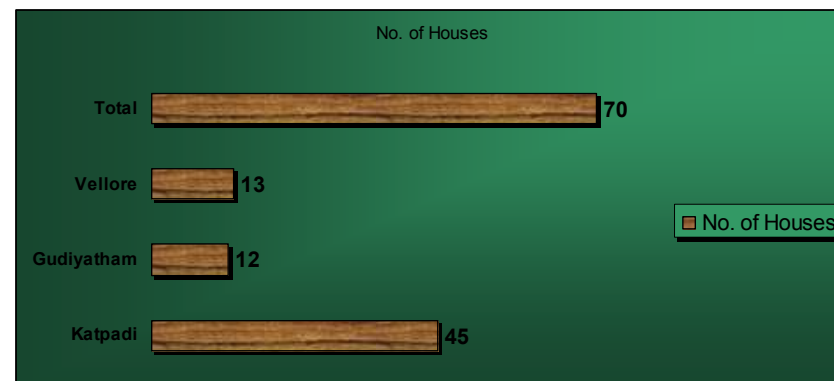
Release and rehabilitation of bonded laborers

- Focus this year was in the Vellore district

The practice of employing bonded labors is still prevalent in certain areas of Vellore and Thiruvallur districts in the **Rice mills and Brick kilns**

In the district of Vellore **22 bonded labour persons employed in the brick kiln were released** due to the intervention of **Sarpam on 24th Feb.** 2008. Release certificates were issued by the R.D.O and other officials.

A total of 70 free concrete group houses were built for the homeless Irulas particulars under the **IAY Scheme**.



Link to **IAY Scheme** : <http://business.mapsofindia.com/rural-economy/development/indira-awaas-yojana.html>

Release and rehabilitation of bonded laborers

ACHIEVEMENTS

- All the rice mills are now registered and obtained license from the government (Earlier not even a single rice mill was registered with the license before this issue has been exposed).
- The bonded labour working in the rice mill is having regular working hours pursuant to the discussions the R.D.O had with the concern owners.
- Regular meeting are conducted and discussions carried out between bonded labour and Sarpam project workers.
- The rice mill owners have written off debts of the release bonded labors.
- The piece rate has been increased from Rs 8 to Rs 15 per gunny bag of paddy.
- Less harassment in the rice mills the employees are treated with human dignity.
- A basic amenity like bore well for drinking water and street lightning was installed.
- Due to the advice of Sarpam leader's children of bonded labour re compulsorily persuaded to go to schools regularly.

AWARNESS CAMPS

- Awareness camps was organized and conducted on 04.07.2007 in Thiruvallur bonded labour Irula villages.
- Steps have also been taken to train them on Labour law, human rights issue, Civil rights and various laws related to women.

Outcome

- In Vellore we were able to release three families from the Brick kiln unit.
- Thiruvallur district people were motivated and acquired the strength to struggle against the bondages levied on them by the owners.

Livelihood Project

Besant Nagar, Chennai

The materials to be given to the beneficiaries under this scheme have been ordered and payment effected and the supplies are awaited soon. The details are given below:

1. Vessels required for idly shop.
2. 3 Tri cycles for vending
3. 3 Fish carts
4. 1 Four wheeler hand cart for food vending.

Livelihood project at Thiruvallur

- a) Fiber Boats - 3 Nos. Each fiber boat shared by 7 beneficiaries.
- b) Thoni - 4 Nos. Each Thoni shared by group of 3 persons.
- c) Fishing Nets provided for the users of Fiber boats and Thoni's.

All the beneficiaries were affected by Tsunami and were residents of North Pichavaram, South Pichavaram and Agaram Pudhu Nagar of Chidambaram Taluk.

Fishing nets have been provided to 150 families of Vanjivakkam, Kaanji vayol, Senji amman Nagar, Edakkandigai, Putlur and Indra Nagar.

Education of Irula Children

Background

- The senior members of Irula community are illiterate and only a very negligible percentage of their children are first generation school goers.
- To make them aware of their basic rights and also socially and financially as viable citizens, they need to be encouraged to acquire the basic knowledge in educational field through constant motivation and involvement.
- The condition of the children is very poor and they do not possess any knowledge. The society does not provide them the opportunity to learn hence they lack the basic knowledge.
- Sometimes even after enrolling in the government school they were de-motivated by the teacher's attitude and parent's apathy shown towards their education.

Efforts to educate the kids

- To involve them in education requires motivation and support. Hence basic education has to be provided by the education motivation centre to train them to acquire the basic knowledge for the purpose of getting enrolled in government schools.
- The basic language and arithmetic skills can be installed in them through the simple techniques. We train the student with twigs, stones and available material in order to attract their attention. In Addition other activities like Drawing, Painting, clay work, Simple dance steps with rhymes were also included in the curriculum in order to build creativity and interest in learning.
- We also provide nutritious food to the children to provide stamina and energy. In the centers we also provide nutritious care and health care. These centers also help the working mothers of this community as they can leave their children in the centers and go about their work .Otherwise it will be difficult for them to take the children to their work spot.

EMCs & Child Care Centers

- EMCs are run for **three years** and its students will be enrolled in government school in the successive academic year.
- **Children > 13 yrs** cannot be enrolled in government school hence after **training them with needed knowledge** we will arrange their learning through correspondence course. The grown up children will be trained in skills according to their preference and needs.

Child Friendly centre Thiruvallur, Vellore and Cuddalore District

- In Panankatteri village, Vellore district the total population of the village is 325. The total number of children studying at present is 50(Boys 26, girls 24). Two teachers Kalai selvi & Kumudha are the staff of the school.
- Two child care centers are being run in Nandiambakkam and Senjiaman nagar, Thiruvallur District. Number of students studying in Nandiambakkam is 70 and in Senjiaman Nagar is 40.
- The government authorities have now started now a school in Nandiambakkam village, Thiruvallur district.

Financial help given by Bharathi Trust for Higher Education.

- Ms.G.M.Reka of Vellore wanted to pursue higher education in the government college of women at ranipet. As her parents could not offered to pay the fee Bharathi Trust offered to bare the expenses on their representation.
- Mr.M.Saravanan project co-ordinator of Bharathi Trust was given financial help to pursue his post graduation studies in law.

Child Development Centers in Cuddalore

- There are **11 child care centre functioning in at present Cuddalore district.**
- The teachers working with these development centers conducted **24 meetings at the Bharathi Trust office during the period from March 2007to April 2008.**
- The following subjects were discussed:
 - Assessing and improving the talents of the students by the Teachers.
 - Improving the knowledge of the junior students by interaction with the senior cadre
 - Periodical assessment of the knowledge by conducting Test regularly
 - Mutual discussion of the teachers, student carrier guidance holding of special classes during the vacations.
 - Education on the aspects of Hygiene, Health & English knowledge etc.
 - Sports and Participation in the games.
 - Creating Awareness to the parents of the Balwadi children to admit them in the regular schools.
 - Conducting regular sports activities to build up a spirit of competition.
 - Conducting Awareness camps for the parents to persuade children to schools.
 - Informing the parents about various schemes of the government for the students and how to obtain this assistance.
 - Conducting special cultural programs and sports activities on national holidays and award prices to the winners.
 - Parent, Teacher association meeting are conducted regularly and teachers offering their dedicated efforts to give their best for the improvement of the schools
 - All kinds of educational assistance provided for the students by Bharathi Trust and concern parents have shown their appreciation.
 - Training conducted for the teachers to explain to the students their role and rights towards the society.
 - During the month of November 2007 there were several programs of sports competitions, debates, painting competitions were held and prices were awarded to the winners.
 - Awareness camps were conducted for parents whose children were dropouts from the school. And 40 of such students were readmitted.
 -

Medical Camps at the CDCs in Cuddalore

- Health camps for discovering disabilities like **defective vision, back teeth, heart problems** and **autism** and then admit them in near by hospital for necessary treatment.
- Selva rani of 8th standard studying in the **Bharathi School M.G.R Nagar** had a problem in the eye due to which her vision was affected. Surgery was advised and due to financial help provided by Bharathi Trust vision was restored after the operation.

Community Resource Center

Target Group

- The target group or anticipated beneficiaries of the resource center are:
 - Farmers, Women & Students
 - private as well as government teachers
 - peasants and artisans, educationists
 - non-government organizations engaged in various developmental works including education and community at large.

Facilities provided by the Resource center to village folks

1. **Indigenous alternate method of income generation and economic development** – organic farming, artisan skills in weaving, rainwater harvesting, tailoring and embroidery, pottery, carpentry, bee-keeping, dairy, vermin culture etc.
2. **Alternative teaching methods** blending the formal and non-formal education methods
3. **Health & Nutrition** – Research and application of traditional methods of herbal medicine and nutrition
4. **Documentation , Research & Resource** – Documenting the activities of the villagers, culture, music, art and history of the communities in the area. Maintain a network of resource persons with similar ideas and skills.
5. **Training** the community in different skills such as pottery, weaving, tailoring etc.
6. **Involvement with the community** - The community will be involved with the working of the resource centre. They will find employment as artisans and develop their skills. They will also help in the construction of the resource center. The total involvement of the community shall ensure the success of the center.

Resource Center

Improvements in Organic Farming

- **Better cultivation in the land** adjoining our land at resource centre by the following methods:
 1. Provision of electricity for their agricultural use.
 2. Distribution of seeds for cultivation.
 3. Advise on the use of organic manure and procedure for preparing the same to them.
- It may be mentioned that prior to this step being taken the lands were kept in barren condition.
- **Better storage of water for cultivation.** Check dams were constructed in various places where the surplus water flowing are channelised and diverted to the pits. Due to this there is a vast improvement in the under ground water table.

Very good yield this year with respect to the following crops

1. Banana
2. Sunflower
3. Paddy
4. Ground nuts
5. Vegetables

- **Training** : Mr.K.Nammalvaar explained in simple language that the training will provide knowledge to the farmers for production of non chemical, economical and protective farming methods. He also answered the queries of the farmers.
- A **cultural programme by the cultural team (Viduthalai Kalai Kulu)** of Thiruvallur was also held and the salient point of organic was conveyed through songs and drama.
- The co coordinator of Bharathi trust resource centre Mr.Theni V.Shanmugavel explained by visual aids about the preparation of natural manure by earthworm (vermicompost) and other composting methods.
- The farmers attended the meeting appreciated the training programme and assured that they have also been motivated to follow methods in their lands.

Other efforts supported by Asha

- Fire Accident in Bharathi Nagar
- Flood Relief (Detail updates in a following meeting)
- Low Cost housing in Bharathi Nagar, Thiruvallur and Cuddalore (refer annual report)



Significant Events in 2007-2008

- **Siddamma's visit to US**
Hurricane Katrina – Tsunami Exposure Trip
- ActionAid US in collaboration with ActionAid India's International Emergencies and Conflict **Team and the National Tsunami Response Program Team**, designed an exchange program that brought together 20 activists, grass-root workers and people who faced the fierce winds of hurricane Katrina and the giant waves of the tsunami. The visit was supported by Mott Foundation in USA.
- In May 2007, a ten member delegation arrived from the US to begin the **first half of the exposure visit** in India. Some of these delegates comprised of survivors of the hurricane and belonged to the African American communities from New Orleans and Mississippi who faced the brunt of discrimination and denial of rights by the US Government. They visited around 15 coastal villages of Puducherry, Cuddlore and Nagapattinam and shared their stories of discrimination with the equally marginalized dalit and tribal communities who were affected by the tsunami, along with NGOs and Social activists involved in the tsunami reconstruction process



Significant Events in 2007-2008

- ***Siddamma's visit to US***
Hurricane Katrina – Tsunami Exposure Trip
- The second half of the exchange a team of Indian activists and grass-root workers visited Hurricane Katrina affected areas in New Orleans, Louisiana and Biloxi, Mississippi in August 2007. The Indian delegation met with habitants of the Public Housing structures, the Vietnamese community in New Orleans, Grass-root organizations such as Hope House, Common Ground, etc. government officials involved in the reconstruction processes and many other activists working towards the rebuilding process in the post Katrina scenario. The group also had the opportunity to participate in the second commemoration of Hurricane Katrina on August 30, 2007.



Significant Events in 2007-2008

- *Siddamma's visit to US*

Hurricane Katrina – Tsunami Exposure Trip

The Indian participants:

- Siddamma from Bharathi Trust works with the Irulas, an Adivasi community who were initially forest dwellers.
- Shibhu from CWBC who works largely with workers from the unorganized labour sector
- Alex Tuscano from Praxis, an organization that works with the fishing community in KanyaKumari
- Nicholas from Dalit Mannurimai Kuttamaippu, Puducherry
- Thomas Peter from the Fish Workers Association in Kerala
- Amar Jyoti Nayak ActionAid International India
- Michelle Baxter ActionAid International India

Visit to Asha Austin , Boston, Chicago , Detroit, CNJ, NYC

Recognition

- In recognition of her work in this front, a US-based organization "**Free the Slaves**" (www.freetheslaves.net) recently nominated Siddamma as recipients for 2 of their awards:

a) The William Wilberforce Leadership Award

- In 2009, one Award named after William Wilberforce will be given to an individual who has moved a major institution, government, business or large groups of people to significant action to fight slavery. \$10,000 to be awarded over two years, to use as he or she sees fit.
- For more details, check out this link : www.freetheslaves.net/wilberforceleadershipaward

b) The Harriet Tubman Award

This award will be given to a community-based anti-slavery organization that is demonstrating how slavery can be dismantled and destroyed. This organizations will be working to prevent and eliminate slavery, and bringing survivors to lasting freedom.

The Harriet Tubman Award will go to an organization working within communities to make the most significant and transformative contribution to ending slavery. The winning organization will receive:

- A grant of \$25,000 a year for two years.
- A technical assistance package worth \$15,000 for each of two years.
- A tour to share experiences with relevant organizations.
- A short documentary produced by Free the Slaves about the activities and work of the organization.
- For more details, check out this link : <http://www.freetheslaves.net/Page.aspx?pid=423>