



Rural Education & Action Development (READ)

Andimadam, Tamil Nadu, India

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Fiscal year April 1999- March 2000.

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Message from the secretary

Dear friends,

It is with great pleasure that I present you the extensive activity report of READ for the financial year 1999-2000.

As you will agree upon, READ has successfully completed yet another year in its long run of human service. The credit for all our accomplishments go to many people, including friends, philanthropists, development experts, technical persons and local and foreign donors.

READ likes to extend its heartfelt thanks to all of them. We hope that we can continue to count on your support. Together, we are making progress in building a future.

D. Selvam

(Secretary, READ)



Progress report:

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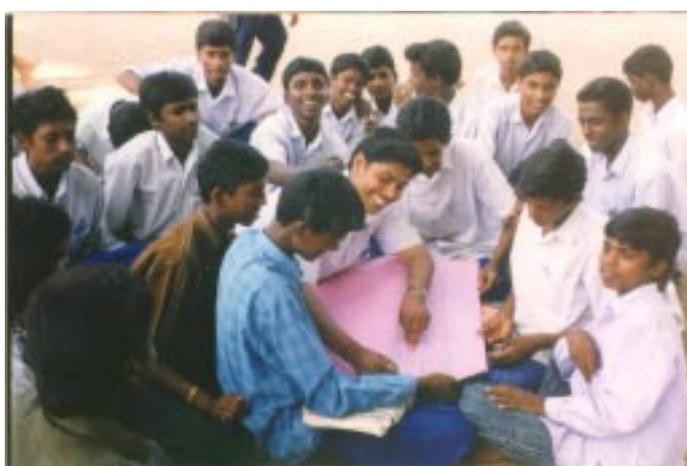
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1) . AWARENESS GENERATION:

Awareness generation is a continuous process, because our target people need to be exposed to many new areas of knowledge to develop themselves. Although READ had previously conducted many awareness generation programs on a variety of topics, many such program are still needed, as people's perception and learning process can be very slow. Accordingly, also this year we have conducted several awareness generation programs have been conducted in the form of camps and campaigns, as detailed below:

i) Educational awareness:

Educational awareness is still very low in many remote villages in the Andimadam Panchayat Union. This is evident from the low literacy level (24%) in this area. Thus, at the beginning of the academic year – June 1999 – READ conducted campaigns in several remote villages to make people aware of the importance of education, and motivate them to send their children to schools.



These campaigns have been conducted in Kalvettu, Netlakurichi, Kokkaranai, Thirukalapur villages. At least 50 parents were directly motivated by this program.

ii) Child care campaign:

This is the most needed program, as the health consciousness among villagers is at a low level, mainly because health advisors and health care institutions are not available within their immediate reach. Particularly children's health care is not given much importance, which results often in prenatal death or early child death, or the development of mental or physical disabilities. So this campaign was conducted in 5 villages at different times during July, August and September of 1999 – each a one-day program. The topics that were discussed included basic child care activities, timely immunization, and proper nutrition through locally available food materials. About 200 mothers, who were organized by the self-help groups functioning in the area, have participated in this campaign.

iii) Child labor eradication:

Child labor is a common problem in villages, which persists among poor and laborer families. To augment the family income, the children are forced into labor work, and are thus deprived of their education, childhood enjoyments and many other privileges. In this area, child labor occurs mainly in 2 forms, (1) in family-oriented works, i.e., in agricultural labor activities and (2) in other occupations like silk weaving. To reduce this child labor, the above-stated educational awareness campaign was conducted. In addition, a special



Students discussing problems of pollution during our National Environmental Awareness Campaign.

seminar was conducted for the women self-help groups, with the specific aim of reducing the involvement of children in hard labor, and increasing their opportunities for more educational and appropriate childhood development activities. A total of 75 women participated in this seminar which was held on August 10th of 1999.

iv) Health awareness through medical camp:

As a supportive program to our health awareness meeting, a medical camp was organised in Thirukalapur village on September 12, 1999 through our Mother Theresa English School. This medical camp benefitted 250 people in this village. Medical counselling and diagnosis was done by Dr.Shabiullah, and READ supplied medicines to the needy.

v) Protected water awareness:

Although a protected drinking water supply is provided by the local government, the water collection tap and the collection area are not maintained cleanly. To keep the drinking water resources clean, this meeting was held for Vilandai villagers on September 25,1999. The outcome of this meeting was appreciable and presently the water collection points and the area are maintained properly.

vi) Self-help concept understanding meeting:

Although READ has popularized the self-help concept among women in many villages, there are still many more villages in this union that need to be covered. During this past fiscal year, READ organized concept understanding meetings in 10 new villages, and this was followed by the formation of self-help groups in these villages.



The self-help group of Periyakrishnapuram.

vii) National Integration camp:

This camp was conducted in two places, Periyakrishnapuram and Andimadam villages on August 15, 1999 (Independence Day). This was presided by the Additional Block Development Officer of the Andimadam Panchayat Union. The need for communal harmony, and integrity among various lingual, caste and religious groups to strengthen the nation was emphasized on this day.

viii) Consumer awareness:

Every year this consumer awareness program is being held in one village in the Union. This year, this camp was held in Netlakurichi village on 22 January 2000. The general problems of consumers, consumer rights and safe-guarding systems were discussed in that meeting, which was attended by 50 participants.

2). TRAINING:

In this reporting year, no government programs were made available to READ. However, the ongoing paid training programs of READ – tailoring, typewriting, greeting card production and



The secretarial trainees learning typewriting and computer skills.



The tailoring trainees.

computer training– were continued. These courses were provided as follows:

- Tailoring: 6 months course – 2 groups in this year – each with 25 trainees.
- Typewriting: 6 months course – 2 groups in this year – each with 10 trainees.
- Greeting card production: 6 months course – 2 groups in this year – each with 10 trainees
- Computer – 1 year course with 5 trainees.

All the trainees in the above courses were girls who had either completed school or who were school dropouts.

3). SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

i). Mother Theresa English Schools.

This is the 4th and 3rd academic year for these two schools, which are functioning in Periyakrishnapuram and Thirukalapur villages,

respectively. As given in its objectives, these schools continue their service in providing standard and functional education to the children in this area. Ten children in Periyakrishnapuram and 25 students in Thirukalapur have undergone studies in this reporting year. Three teachers and one aya (helper) are employed for this purpose.

Four special programs have been conducted in these schools during this reporting period:

- a). Parents-teachers association meeting in July, October and December.
- b). Educational tour on 26 February, 2000.
- c). Annual Day function on 4 March 2000.
- d). Staff development meeting on 10 March 2000.

ii). School for mentally retarded children.

A special school for mentally retarded children was proposed to be started in the upcoming academic year. The preparatory work, such as a survey and a meeting with the parents of several mentally retarded children was performed during March 2000. The initial survey conducted shows that there is an immense need for a special school and rehabilitation center for mentally retarded children in this area, as there is nothing available in the nearby surrounding areas.

4). OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- i) An educational tour for the trainees in our vocational training center was arranged on August 13,1999. They visited Poombuhar and Thirukkadaiyur.
- ii) A block level survey on disability was conducted



4-year old Kannan at the Mother Theresa School.



Kalaivani in the Mother Theresa School.

during Feb – March 2000 to study and assess the number of disabled people in this block. These people were listed and classified according to their degree of disability and age, and this documentation is used for our proposed special school and our proposed community-based rehabilitation activities in the future.

- iii) Monitoring of the activities in self-help groups initiated through the revolving fund received from the government: the ornamental chain production units and credit activities were monitored periodically by READ's staff to sustain these activities and to solve problems that would have arisen in the groups there.
- iv) Self-help group meetings: a meeting of 5 groups together was held on April 15, 1999, to explain the management and proper utilization of revolving fund received from the government. The Panchayat Chairman and Additional Block Development Officer, Mukkiya Sevika and Gram Sevika, participated and discussed the issues with the group members.
- v) An e-mail network of NGO's was suggested by Dr. Koen of Sahaya International Inc., USA to be initiated in our area to provide more efficient access and distribution of information,

developments and funding possibilities through the internet. In appreciation of this innovative idea, READ has organized a network of NGO's, initially with known NGOs like OSAI (Andimadam), Gandhi Gramodaya Society (Jayankondam), GUIDE (Tanjavur). In March 2000, we discussed with them the need and future realities of this network.

- vi) On February 14, 2000, an exposure visit was arranged for one of our Self help groups – Annal Self-help group of Kilneduvai - to the Udayam ornamental chain production unit at Chidambaram. This visit was educative and informative to the members, because they learned many production and marketing techniques, market perfection methods and management. This will help to run their unit at Kilneduvai.

5). NEW ASSETS:

A new computer was installed with internet access.

6). VISIT OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND OTHER DIGNITARIES TO READ:

- i). Additional Block Development Officer, Mukkiya Sevika and Gram Sevika of Andimadam Panchayat Union visited READ on April, 3, 1999 in connection to the future development of women self-help women groups formed in 5 villages.
- ii). Project officers of District Rural Development Agency of Pudukottai and Trichy, the Marketing Officer of the Tamilnadu Women Development Corporation and a representative of an NGO in Salem have visited READ and its service area on April 16, 1999. The purpose of this visit was to explore possibilities of women development training in Andimadam area, to be arranged through READ.



The Annal Women self-help group of Keelneduvai is receiving training in ornamental chain production



The women self-help group of Thanjavooranchavadi.

- iii). Assistant Project officer (Industries) of District Rural Development Agency, Perambalur visited READ on September 15, 1999 to study the possibilities of small industrial activities for the women self-help groups in READ's service area.
- iv). Mr. Thomas from CEVA, Trivandrum, an appraisal NGO for KKS, a funding organization from Germany, has visited READ and inspected its service area on September 21, 1999 in connection to the project proposal that was submitted by READ to KKS, Germany.
- v). Dr. Koen Van Rompay of Sahaya International, Inc., USA who is our well-wisher and supporter, volunteered for READ for almost one month from 9 December 1999 to 3 January 2000. He has worked out several project proposals, contacted many funding agencies and was involved in our administration and field activities during his stay here at READ.

7). AWARDS TO READ:

READ has been elected as the NGO representative for the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Perambalur's Working Committee for one year. We were notified of this

special recognition by the District Collector of Perambalur District on April 20, 1999. This Committee will study, appraise and plan the activities of DRDA funded projects in the District.

8). MEETINGS/SEMINARS/TRAINING PROGRAMS ATTENDED BY READ:

Mr. D. Selvam, the Executive Director of READ has attended the following programs on behalf of READ:

- i) State level meeting organized by Water Resource Organisation of Public Works Department (PWD) on June 11, 1999 at Chennai. The topic of this meeting was water resource management.
- ii) District level meeting organized by District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) on their new Scheme – SGSY – on July 13 at Jayankondam.



The women self-help group of Vilandai Colony.

- iii) DRDA's Working committee meeting held on September 28, 1999 at Perambalur.
- iv) Human rights Education workshop organised by FIAN in Madurai on Nov.10-11, 1999.



READ has a sister organization in California (USA), with the name of "Sahaya International". This non-profit organization was started in 1999 by Dr. Koen Van Rompay and his friends and colleagues. Sahaya International aims at improving the socio-economic and educational conditions in developing countries, especially India. **Sahaya International** helps READ with fundraising activities in the USA and Europe, and assists READ in submitting project proposals to other funding agencies. Please visit our website at www.sahaya.org or e-mail us (kkvanrompay@ucdavis.edu).



Example of the embroidered greeting cards produced by our trainees.

9). CELEBRATIONS:

- New year 2000 was cheerfully celebrated by READ's staff at its office with a get-together and feast, in which Dr. Koen Van Rompay, USA participated as a special guest.
- Independence Day was celebrated on 15 August 1999, with a National Integration pledge and a meeting by our staff.

- v) Curriculum building for Post-Graduate Course on Human rights Education, arranged by FIAN at Madurai Kamarajar University on Nov.12-13, 1999.
- vi) Child labor prevention workshop at Chennai on November 19,1999.
- vii) One-day orientation for NGOs on National Environmental Awareness Campaign organised by CP Ramasamy Aiyer Foundation at Chennai on Nov. 26, 1999.
- viii) International Conference on AIDS-India 2000 at Chennai during Dec.4-8,1999.
- ix) Environmental Conference organised by CP Ramasamy Aiyer Foundation at Chennai during March 15-18, 2000.

10). NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS:

This year no new Government projects have been obtained. However several new project proposals have been prepared and sent to various funding agencies to seek foreign support. The following are several of them:

- Project proposal on health through self-help groups submitted to KKS, Germany through CEVA, India.
- Proposal for training program on making greeting cards, sent to AID, USA.
- Income generation project to ODA, British High Commission.
- NIWANO Peace Foundation on communal harmony and peace.

It is unfortunate that we did not get Government funds in this fiscal year. However, our activities could be continued with the support of many individuals. I like to thank the family and friends of Dr. Koen Van Rompay, and the network of Sahaya International who are tirelessly working on marketing our greeting cards in the USA, Belgium, Sweden and Ireland, and contacting funding agencies. We are also very grateful for the philanthropic support rendered by our local well-wishers and friends at the time of our need. I do thank them also for all their help and support in our mission. Finally, I like to thank all of READ's staff and the Executive committee, without whose service READ could not continue its efforts in the area of rural development. I thank one and all of you, and I hope that all of you will continue to provide your support, suggestions and service in the coming year. Together we mark a stamp in the service of the poor and needy.