



Rural Education & Action Development (READ)

Andimadam, Tamil Nadu, India

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Fiscal year April 2000- March 2001.

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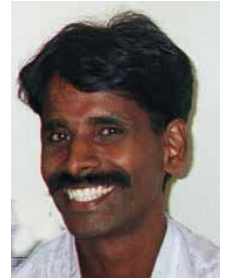
Message from the secretary

Dear friends,

I am happy to present to you the seventh Annual Report of READ. This report provides a brief account of our accomplishments and achievements for the reporting year 2000-2001. Like the preceding years, also this past year we have carried out many development activities for the benefit of poor and disadvantaged rural people, especially women and children. Although we faced occasional problems, I am happy to express here that we achieved significant progress in our activities.

The credit for all our accomplishments go to many people, including friends, philanthropists, experts, and local and foreign donors. READ likes to extend its heartfelt thanks to all of them. Without your support, we would not have been able to make progress in building a better world.

D. Selvam
(Secretary, READ)



The office staff of READ together with trainees and students on Independence Day.

Progress report:

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A. PROJECTS

Seven new projects have been funded by different donors for different projects in this reporting year. The project details are given below:

1. Infrastructure Development in Nursery schools and in Special School:

Watumull Fund, USA awarded us a grant to purchase chairs, tables and other infrastructure for our Mother Theresa Schools at Kovilvazkai and Periyakrishnapuram and to create basic infrastructure for the proposed 'ANBAGAM' Special School for mentally retarded children at Andimadam.

2. Promotion of HIV/Medical awareness, social development, skill-training and primary education.

This project was supported by a generous grant from the John M. Lloyd Foundation, USA. This project consisted of a number of programs, including HIV/medical awareness to adults and women, social awareness camps, skill training for youth, organization of women self- help groups and education to children. These programs were extensively carried out in different villages in the Andimadam Block as listed in table 1 through 3.

Table 1: Social development & HIV programs

Name of program	Number of programs/villages	Number of participants
Consumer awareness campaign	5	280
Women awareness meeting	7	672
HIV/AIDS awareness campaign	11	679
Mother and child care program	7	636
Self-help Group concept meeting	8	565
Environmental Awareness meeting and rally	3	230
National Integration camps	5	317
Drinking water conservation awareness	2	213
Health and sanitation campaign	1	93
Health education program	1	176
Self-help group leaders training	10	1100
Total sanitation program	1	125
Census concept understanding program	1	97
Self-help group accounts training	2	148
Staff orientation training	1	25
Self-help group members' training	3	315

Table 2: Skill-training programs

Name of training	Training period	Number of beneficiaries
Sewing & embroidery	6 months	11
Type-writing	6 months	10
Computer training	6 months	13
Horticulture & nursery Development	6 months	10

Table 3: School programs

Name of school	Number of children
Mother Theresa Kindergarten Schools (2 schools)	29
'Anbagam' Special School for mentally retarded children	7



Group discussion on mother & child-care at Kovilvazkkai village.

3. Promotion of health consciousness among rural mothers (Andimadam):

Karl Kuebel Stiftung, Germany, supported this project. The one-year project activity was started during January 2001, and consisted of seminars, medical camps, and training programs. General health, reproductive health and child health were the important topics that were taught to the beneficiaries. A series of seminars, 3 medical camps and daily distribution of medicines were undertaken in this reporting year. Apart from that, night schools have been conducted in the project villages for the school-going children who have no study atmosphere at home. This project will be completed by December 2001. The project was implemented in 5 villages in the Andimadam Block namely, Keelneduvai, Periyakrishnapuram, Kovilvazkai, Thanjavooranchavadi and Vilandai Colony. The women self-help groups promoted in these villages were the project beneficiaries.

4. Handicraft skill development training for rural women:

This project was supported by the Association for India Development (AID), USA. It was a six-month training program on the production of handmade greeting cards, and was conducted from July to December 2000 at READ's Training Center, Andimadam. A total of 25 women/girls were trained in this skill and employed as workers in READ's production center itself. This project supported us with the resources to equip the unit with a working table, card-holding frames and hand gloves for the workers. The card-holding frames is an innovative attempt in this handicraft work that reduces the strain for workers while holding the cards and also avoids dirt.

5. National Environmental Awareness campaign:

This campaign was supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India through the CP Ramasamy Iyer Foundation, Chennai. This campaign was conducted during March 2001 on the topic "Keep clean our environment". The program components of this project were seminars to women, a students' rally and public meetings.

Around 650 women, students and general public have participated.

6. Tamil language development:

This was supported by the Central Institute for Indian languages (CIIL), Mysore – a Government of India Institute under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Right usage of words, phonetics and pronunciation in Tamil language were being taught to villagers in two villages. Sixty semi-illiterates and illiterates were the beneficiaries.

7. Training of Self Help Group members:

This was supported by the Tamilnadu Corporation for the Development of women Ltd., Chennai. The animators and representatives from the SHGs promoted by READ were trained extensively to manage self-help group (SHG) activity and the micro-crediting activity. Members from 250 SHGs both from Andimadam and Senthurai Blocks were trained systematically on different occasions throughout this reporting period.

8. Survey on disability:

An extensive survey was conducted to enumerate the number of disabled children in the District and in the Block, particularly mentally disabled children. This is both to understand the disability situation in this area and also to inform parents on the institutional service available at READ for mentally disabled children. These survey data were compiled which gave us an idea to go for a community-based rehabilitation program in the future.



Self-help group members discussing their activities.



National Service Scheme students together with their coordinator during the 'clean village day'

B. GENERAL PROGRAMS

The training and other programs that were already operating were continued in this reporting year. In addition, several new programs were also undertaken. These are the details:

1. Awareness on Disability:

Based on the above survey, awareness education camps were organized in villages in the Andimadam Block on the causes of disability and the remedial action. This education is very much needed, because the disabled persons are denied even basic care and love due to ignorance of the people on this subject.

2. 'Clean village day':

As an action program, a one-day Bazaar cleaning program was executed along with education to business people and shop-owners in the Bazaar at Andimadam, on the subject 'keep our environment clean'. This program was

organized by READ and NSS (National Service Scheme) students from the local Government Higher Secondary School, Andimadam. Students from this school, READ, other NGOs in the area and the local elected Panchayat leaders all participated in this program.

3. Women's Day rally:

On World Women's day, a rally was organized. All women in the Self-Help Groups in the Block, around 3500, participated in the rally followed by a meeting. The District Collector, Project Officer and other Government dignitaries addressed the audience on women's right, the role of women in development, constitutional privileges and protections and other topics. This was a mass awakening program for rural women who gathered like this for the first time in this area. This project was jointly organized by READ and OSAI (Organization for Social Action and Improvement), Andimadam.



Many women participated in the rally and general meeting on World Women's Day

4. Consumer awareness meetings:

A series of Consumer awareness meetings were organized in Women Self-Help Groups in this Block all through the reporting year. Each of the 90 SHGs in this Block, had one such meeting. Although rural consumers are a majority in numbers, they are unaware of many facts on consumerism. Common problems of rural consumers include under-quality products, prohibited drugs, dyes, altered food items, fertilizers and pesticides etc., and date 'expired' products. But these problems were not taken seriously so far by the people because they are totally unaware. This program gave an awakening to consumers. This program has to be repeated and intensified.

5. Parents-Teachers meeting:

This is a regular feature of our Kindergarten schools and Special school. Every three months, this meeting was organized to keep the parents informed of the progress of their children and to involve parents in their children's education and development. In this reporting year, 3 such meetings were conducted successfully.

6. AIM Network:

READ has a vital contact with Sahaya International Inc., USA headed by Dr. Koen Van Rompay. Sahaya International Inc., had suggested a new idea of having groups adopt a new NGO in India under a program called 'India NGO Adoption Program' (INAP). To share information with other NGO's regularly on development issues, an NGO network was promoted by READ named as AIM Network. At present 6 NGOs – OSAI, GGS, GUIDE, SUBIKSHA, READ and Y-NEEW from Ariyalur, Perambalur and Thanjore Districts are members of this network. Collective action on several common subjects, such as HIV/AIDS prevention and control, are the immediate concern of this network. At present 'READ' is the moderator of this network, and will lead, correspond and negotiate on behalf of the network.

7. Children's club:

Children need a healthy development, physical and mental, because they are the base to build up the nation tomorrow. Keeping this view, READ organized six children clubs in Vilandai,

Keelneduvai, Periyakrishnapuram, Thirukkappur, Kovilvazhkkai and Thanjavooranchavadi. These clubs were involved in different kinds of activities like conducting sports and games, inducing them to better education, giving awareness on general issues, etc. The field staff assisted and motivated the children in every aspect of their club activities.

8. Census Enumerators' Training:

For the purpose of "Census 2001 (India)", READ has also conducted census enumerators' training. Mr. D.SELVAM, the Executive Director of READ, was the chief resource person of this training program. The beneficiaries were the Government officials, teachers and those who are involved in the census activities. He had given training to the target group (approx. 250 participants.) in every aspect of conducting this survey for the Census 2001.

C). INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS

1. Vocational training courses:

Like in previous years, training on several vocations has been provided in READ's training center.

- a) **Tailoring training:** 80 girls from different villages were trained in two batches each for 6 months in this reporting period on sewing, embroidery, dress making and other technical matters in tailoring.
- b) **Handmade greeting card production:** Apart from the AID and Lloyd Foundation-sponsored project training, this training was given as a continuation of previous year's training. 10 women have been trained in this reporting year under the self-help development scheme of READ.
- c) **Typewriting training:** 15 girls have been trained in English and Tamil typewriting and sent for the government technical examination. All of them passed in the examination and received their certificates.
- d) **Computer training:** 12 boys and girls have been trained on MS-DOS, Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Pagemaker, Coral draw, C++ and other office requirements. They were given a Diploma in Computer Application after



READ offers training classes, including sewing, computer training and greeting card production.

- completion of the six-months course.
- e) Mat production work: This was organized in the Amman Self-help group of Periyakrishnapuram village. 10 Women are involved in this work. The product is marketed locally.
- f) Ornamental chain making unit: This was started in the Women Self-Help Group of Keelneduvai Village. 15 women are regularly employed. A revolving fund to start this unit was provided by the state government. The products are marketed locally.
- 2. Schools:**
- a) Mother Theresa Kindergarten schools: Two schools are being run at Thirukalapur and Periyakrishnapuram villages. A total of 29 children receive education in these schools from 3 Teachers.
- b) 'Anbagam' Special school for mentally retarded children: Because such special schools were not available in the whole district, this school was started in June 2000. At present 7 mentally dis-

abled children with various levels of disability have been admitted and are being trained. Two special educators and one caretaker are serving these children. This school is located in Andimadam.

D). RECOGNITION AND ACCREDITATION GIVEN TO 'READ'

1. The Tamilnadu Corporation for the Development of Women Ltd., Chennai (Government of Tamilnadu Corporation) accredited READ under its Mahalir Thittam (Women Development Scheme) to promote women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Andimadam and Senthurai Blocks and to train them extensively to develop themselves.
2. The Tamilnadu Voluntary Health Association (TNVHA), Chennai, recognized READ and accorded it the status as 'District Information Center' for Ariyalur and Perambalur Districts, as far as health issues are concerned.



The Mother Theresa Kindergarten Schools at Periyakrushnapuram (left) and Thirukalapur (right).

3. The Government of Tamilnadu – Directorate of Rehabilitation – has permitted READ to run a Special School for mentally retarded children at Andimadam. This is the first step before awarding ‘Recognition’. Our Special School ‘Anbagam’ is the first of its kind in Ariyalur and Perambalur Districts.
4. The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) of District Administration has extended the Ex-officio member status to READ for its Council also in this year.

E). CAPACITY BUILDING TRAININGS TO ‘READ’ STAFF

1. Herbal medicine training :

This was conducted by Tamilnadu Voluntary Health Association (TNVHA) at Trichy during January 2001 and at Chengelpattu during March-April 2001. Four of our women staff – Ms. Jayambika, Ms.Chitra, Ms.Dhanakodi, and Ms. Kiruthikaikumari have attended this training.

2. Reproductive and child health training:

This was also conducted by TNVHA during June 2000 for 3 days at Andimadam in which one of our staff, Ms. Jothimani was trained.

3. Animators and Representative Trainers’ training:

This was conducted by the Tamilnadu Corporation for the Development of Women Ltd., (TNCDW), Chennai to equip our Field

staff to conduct trainings to SHG women in villages. 5 staff have attended this at Perambalur for one week. The staff are 1. Mrs. E. Sumathi, 2. Ms. T. Amutha, 3. Ms. P. Jothimani, 4. Mr. D. Selvam, 5. Mr. Mahendiran.

4. Trainers of Trainees training:

This was also conducted by TNCDW for 5 of our field staff to equip them to train the field staff that gives training to local SHGs. This was also a one-week training held at Perambalur. The staff who attended were 1. Ms. Sumathi 2. Mr. Thiruganavalluvan, 3. Ms. Jothimani, 4. Ms. Amutha, and 5. Mr. Selvam.

5. SHG accounting training:

This was yet another training by TNCDW for 5 of our women staff on accounts and book-keeping to be maintained by SHG in villages. Since lot of financial matter are involved in local SHGs in their savings and micro crediting activities, they need proper guidance. So this training was given to our staff to help those SHG leaders. The Staff attended were 1. Ms. Amutha, 2. Ms. Jothimani 3. Ms. Sumathi, 4. Mr. Selvam and 5. Mr. Mahendiran.

6. Cluster coordinators training:

This was yet another training conducted by TNCDW for 5 of our staff to coordinate clusters in SHGs and to regulate their activities. The staff trained were 1. Ms. P. Jothimani, 2. Ms. T. Amutha, 3. Mr. D. Selvam, 4. E. Sumathi and 5. Mr. Mahendiran.



The students at the Mother Theresa get instruction in many disciplines, including yoga.

F). CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, MEETINGS & TRAININGS ATTENDED BY THE SECRETARY OF READ

In this reporting year, the Secretary of READ has attended several programs in the capacity of Chief Executive Officer of READ as detailed below:

1. National AIDS conference at Tirupathy – May 7 – 10, 2000.
2. Tamilnadu Voluntary Health Association (TNVHA) resource persons' meeting at Trichy – June 19, 2000.
3. TNVHA District Committee meeting at Trichy – June 22, 2000.
4. SAM (Social Action Moment) State level network meeting at Madurai – June 28, 2000.
5. District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Council meeting at Collectorate, Perambalur – July 26, 2000.
6. TNVHA Health workers' Convention – July 29, 30, 2000.
7. District Collect's meeting at Perambalur.
8. FIAN members meeting at Madurai – 3-4 August, 2000.
9. National Environmental awareness campaign (NEAC) Orientation meeting at Chennai – Nov. 27, 2000.
10. Census Enumerator Training, TNVHA, Chennai – Nov. 28, 2000.
11. TNCDW Mahalir Thittam Review meeting, Perambalur – monthly meeting
12. Cluster level Coordinator Training at IFFAW of TNCDW, Perambalur- Dec. 21-22, 2000.
13. National Seminar on atomic energy, Trichy-

Feb.8, 2001.

14. Water Day conference at Cuddalore – March, 18, 2001.
15. District Project Coordination Committee meeting headed by Collector at Perambalur- March 28, 2001.
16. FEVOD – NGO network meeting at Trichy- Feb.10, 2001.
17. Arokiam Net Seminar on water conservation at Trichy –Feb. 2001.
18. KKS Small Project Holders' meeting at KKID Coimbatore – March 9-11, 2001.
19. Mahalir Thittam Project leaders' meeting at KKID, Coimbatore organised by TNCDW – Tamilnadu Corporation for Dev. Of Women Ltd., - March.14-15, 2001

G). VISITORS

1. Mr. Rajaraman, I.A.S., Executive Director of Mahalir Thittam TNCDW, Chennai.
2. Mr. M. Chandrahasan, Project Officer of Mahalir Thittam (State Government Project), Perambalur.
3. Mr. Paramasivam, Mr. Sivasamy, Ms, Roslin Daniel, Assistant Project Officers, Mahalir Thittam, Perambalur.
4. Mr. Malligarjun, Joint Coordinator of Mahalir Thittam TNCDW, Chennai.
5. Mr. Ramu, CARE, Chennai.
6. Mr. Sarangapani, District Rehabilitation officer, Perambalur.
7. Mr. Kumar, Zonal Officer, TNVHA, Chennai
8. Ms. Brit Marie Strandal, Sweden.
9. Ms. Monica, Sweden.
10. Dr. Koen Van Rompay, Sahaya International

Inc., USA.

11. Mr. Noordeen, District Fire Officer, Ariyalur.
12. Mr. Idimannan, Project Officer, District Rural Development Agency, Perambalur.

H). CELEBRATIONS

1. Independence Day – 15 August, 2000:

This day was honored by the police Inspector of Andimadam who hoisted the National flag. A speech was delivered on National Integration to all our staff and public.

2. Republic Day –26 January 2001:

This was celebrated by hoisting our National flag at our office. Dr. Koen Van Rompay was our chief Guest on that day.

3. Annual Day of READ -Jan. 24, 2001:

This was celebrated at the community center at Andimadam. Mr. Chandrakasan, Project officer of Mahalir Thittam, Mr. Idimannan Project officer of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), District Fire Officer Mr. Noordeen, Fire service staffs, Mr. A.V.M. Panchayt President and Dr. Koen Van Rompay, USA were the dignitar-

ies to glorify the day. Cultural programs (dance & drama) were performed by our trainees and staff. Course certificates were distributed to the trainees who had completed the courses in computer training, tailoring and greeting card making training.

4. Annual Day for Schools during March 6, 2001:

The Mother Theresa Kindergarten Schools at Thirukkalapur and Periyakrishnapuram jointly organized the Annual Day on March 6, 2001. The students of both schools performed dance, speech, drama and fancy-dress show. All the parents and local public participated in this event.

I). FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

As regular fundraising efforts, we produce handmade greeting cards, which are being sold in USA and Belgium by the family and friends of Dr. Koen Van Rompay, the network of Sahaya International and the Oregon chapter of the Association of India's Development (AID). The sale proceeds are sent to READ to meet its administrative and other development costs.



The READ trainees performing dance at the Annual Day of READ (Jan. 24, 2001)

J). OPENING OF NEW FIELD OFFICE

To implement the Mahalir Thittam program (promotion of women Self-Help Groups) and other development programs in Senthurai Block, a new field office was opened at Senthurai during November 2000. Four women staff are functioning in this field office, namely Ms. Senthamilselvi, Ms. Dhanakodi, Mrs. Karpagavalli, and Ms. Malliga.

K). STAFF

To execute all these activities, we had a very good team of staff as detailed below:

1. Office staff	-	4
2. Field staff	-	12
3. Teachers	-	12
4. Skill trainers	-	6
5. Consultant	-	1
6. Volunteers	-	5

L). CONCLUSION

This year we have accomplished so many programs exclusively for rural women. The prime program is promotion of women self-help groups in villages in Andimadam and Senthurai Blocks. Generally the rural women are subordinated and are denied development chances in education, economy, politics and many other rights. This is a common problem of our country. To build their capacity, to bring out their inner talents and to involve them in personal, family and social development, the self-help development concept was introduced to them extensively. This worked well and we have made dramatic changes in this area. The women's rally on World Women's Day itself is a fine example to demonstrate the emancipation of women in this area after our programs. We wish to continue this development program and also many other programs particularly related to children and other disadvantaged groups. We hope to execute them in the coming year with further enthusiasm and zeal for the fullest benefit of rural people.

At this juncture, I must thankfully place on record the services rendered by our staff in achieving all these programs in this reporting year.



Two students performing during the annual day of the Mother Theresa Kindergarten Schools

Also I thank all the Executive Members who have guided us with valuable suggestions and information in our work. I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to all the donors referred in this report particularly the whole team of Sahaya International Inc. USA, Ms. Geetha Ravishankar (AID, USA) and CEVA who were instrumental in mobilizing the resources for projects referred in this report. We are ever grateful to the family and many friends of Koen Van Rompay and Raman Singh in the USA and Europe for their continued support in our development efforts. I do also thank all our friends, supporters, philanthropists who have guided us and donated resources for the development causes. My heartfelt thanks to each of you.

D. Selvam,
Secretary