

TRIBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

helping tribals heal themselves



A
N
N
U
A
L

R
E
P
O
R
T

2006
2007



Craft designs by Lambadi women are marketed under the name Porgai

As Gammi and Neela struggled to get the designs right, they were wondering why Tha [as Dr. Lalitha is known here] was keen on trying to get them to remember and bring back their traditional designs. Slowly, but surely, they were able to recollect what their grandmothers and mothers had done as an everyday affair, but now the younger generation had forgotten. Lambadi embroidery was exquisite, each design and application for a particular need and reflecting the moods, motifs and colors of their life. Gradually more women became interested in what **THI** was encouraging them to do through the **Tribal Craft Initiative**; especially when they found out that these moments spent in bringing out their creativity also

brought them money.

Tribal Health Initiative is a Charitable Trust that had started working in Sittilingi valley of Dharmapuri Dist of Tamil Nadu 14 years ago. When they started work 15 out of every 100 babies died within one year of birth and many mothers died in childbirth. Buses were few and far between and the nearest hospital for secondary care was 100km away. We now have a Base Hospital which caters to more than 80,000, most of whom are tribals. We also run a comprehensive development program for about 10,000 tribals who dwell in 21 villages in 2 valleys.

Over the years **THI** began to view health from a wider perspective as the result of a mass community contact program 2 years ago. Now we are involved with the livelihoods of people, tapping into their local resources and planning programs around it.

This is how we got involved with the Lambadi women and their now nearly extinct craft of embroidery. Over the years the Lambadi women gave up their traditional dressing owing to the need to relate with the local culture. This trend

Lambadis are gypsies who have migrated from the Marwar region of Rajasthan and were wanderers till a century ago. Sittilingi is one of the southernmost destinations of their travel.

led to a gradual decline in the number of artisans practicing the craft and is close to a state of near extinction. With practice the designs came back to them and they named their venture '**Porgai**', meaning pride in their language, reflecting their dignity in reviving and perpetuating their tradition to share their culture with the world. This year they managed to export a decent shipment to Fairgrounds in UK, managing the whole venture themselves, with the money coming directly to their account. Women in the groups now earn a reasonable income on this spare-time work and are striving to become a self-sustaining enterprise

for details - porgai@gmail.com



Health Auxiliaries share a good moment

The **Health Initiative** meanwhile gathers momentum each year. This year the Base Hospital, with the upgrade of facilities last year, has seen an almost 30% increase in the patients, deliveries and surgery; with word spreading amongst the tribals in the Kalvarayan Hills about 'our hospital' in Sittilingi. The Community health work is fully planned, implemented and monitored by the Health Workers, who along with the Health Auxiliaries are all local tribal women.



This year we have started concentrating on **TB/HIV** in our valley with the help of the the Government. Awareness

programs for both diseases along with detection and treatment have started making a considerable difference in the health profiles



Learning to weigh avoids getting cheated

The **Farming Initiative** showed a sharp increase in the number of farmers now taking up organic methods. Training inputs from CIKS that included vermi-composting and organic pesticides, better marketing and good prices have brought more farmers into the fold. This year we had 45 of them growing organic cotton that the Government purchased at more than 20% above market price, because of the quality. The Women farmer groups have brought processing machines for value adding to the produce, so that more percentage of the profit stays in the valley. Their food products are sold by THI with brand name '**SVAD**' in select outlets in some cities *[see our website]*

for details - svad@gmail.com

New **village libraries** in partnership with NEST have started off in all the villages. Here tribal children can take simple and easy to understand books, kept with the Health Auxiliary to their homes and read at will. Every month the community worker, sits with them to tell stories and get more children interested in books to increase their depth of knowledge.

Meanwhile the **new Staff Quarters** has been completed and completed and families moved in. This was with support from FOS-UK. The new OP building, which MMKCT supports, is nearing completion.

Thulir, the **Educational Initiative**, has more tribal children now coming in to utilize its facility. 3 boys from the Basic Skills course have joined in to teach the youngsters. For administrative reasons, the education work will be under a separate Trust from next year.

Our vision is that the people of Sittilingi valley lead a **better quality of life**.

- To attain the **highest possible level of holistic health**
- To enhance their socio-economic status while retaining their **pride, self-respect** and **self-reliance** and ensuring their **active participation** in programs meant for their welfare
- To create an atmosphere highly conducive for the growth and **development of local cultures and customs**

Village libraries and story telling enhance willingness to learn





Medical elective student Natasha from UK; gets hands on learning experience

New programs included the **Medical Elective program** for medical students; we had 3 students from UK who completed a month each.

We also were entrusted the work of **HIV/AIDS** education for the valley by the Government which we continue doing.

We have also been able to initiate and coax the Government to give **Community certificates** to the tribal youth, so that they can pursue higher education through Government scholarships and helps them get jobs.

Donors

Our major donors still are the large hearted public who form the **FOS [Friends of Sittilingi]**, from India and the United Kingdom. BCF, NEST, ASHA, MMKCT chip in vital amounts to keep our programs afloat.

Health Workers collect the 2007 Dr. Sanjivi Holistic Health care Awards in Chennai

Plans for the coming year are :

- ✓ Starting basic health work in the Kalvarayan Hills so that a good number of primary illness can be tackled before they become serious and come to the Base Hospital
 - ✓ Consolidating the farming groups and stabilizing the marketing activities.
 - ✓ Craft Initiative to become independent functionally
 - ✓ Start a workshop to initiate some basic technical training for tribal youth
- Education initiative to become administratively independent

This has been a very good year for us and we owe a special thanks to all of you for supporting us in so many ways. Do come and visit us to know us better. We would really appreciate that.

THE THI TEAM

For more information contact
TRIBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE
 Sittilingi, Dharmapuri dist.
 Tamil Nadu 636 906
 phone:: 04346-299061/ 299025
 fax : 04346- 258611
 email: thisittilingi@gmail.com
 office@tribalhealth.org
 website: www.tribalhealth.org



Reciepts - '06-'07

Opening Balance	38.35	44%
Donations [FOS]	15.31	18%
Hospital Income	14.35	17%
Grants - Health	8.03	9%
Grants - Education	3.01	3%
Farming [grant + sales]	3.01	3%
Bank Interest	2.57	3%
Corpus Fund	1.36	2%
Miscellaneous	0.65	1%
Total	86.64	100%

Expenses - '06-'07

Assets	24.57	28%
Health Programs	21.48	25%
Salaries	14.53	17%
Farming Programs	2.99	3%
Education Programs	2.74	3%
Miscellaneous	1.37	2%
Corpus Fund	1.36	2%
Admn	1.30	2%
For nxt yrs programs	16.30	19%
Total	86.64	100%

*Rupees in lakhs

detailed auditted accounts available on request

Auditor: Mr.K.Shivakumar, Gandhigram, Tamil Nadu 624 302

Bankers: SBI, Kotapatty, Canara Bank, Theerthamala, ICICI Bank Salem

THI staff

3 Doctors	15 Health Workers
5 Admin staff	24 Health auxiliaries
3 Education staff	3 Para-medical staff
3 Community Workers	4 Support Staff

Board of Trustees

Dr Regi M George
 Dr Lalitha Regi
 Prof M Ravindran
 Dr Sara Bhattacharji
 Dr Indru Tupulur
 Prof N Kamalamma
 Dr Sukanya Rangamani
 MrA.Arun



*Women groups
 now process
 the food
 products to get
 better profits*

Board of Trustees meet to discuss policies.
 Staff meetings every month to plan day to day activities

Staff pattern

Men - 11
 Women -49

Highest salary - Rs. 15000 [doctor]

Lowest salary - Rs. 1500 [fresh appointee]

Registered Public Charitable Trust No. 147/92 ,Dindigul,
 Registered under Sections 12A and 80G of the IT Act, Registered under FCRA
 to accept Foreign Donations

Friends of Sittilingi (FOS) activities continue to be enthusiastic and supportive this year. We are grateful to the numerous people who help us to work for the tribal community here and look forward to their continuing support.

Are you a member of the FOS ? If not join the FOS, who are scattered all across the globe, or write to us if you would like to start one in your area. Friends in UK can contact Dr. Carolyn Lomas [email: carolomas@gmail.com]

What we can use your donation for

Health: For the 'Distant Healer Fund' which is used to subsidise patients bills.

Farming: For creating a revolving fund for advance purchase of farmers produce

Craft: For giving training to the Lambadi women.

Corpus: For creating a reserve fund.

Please donate by Cheque/DD to

TRIBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE, SITTILINGI,
DHARMAPURI , TAMIL NADU - 636 906,

"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness". I understood the full meaning of this after seeing the work done by this dedicated team.

*Shri Muthukumaraswamy IAS
Secretary for Tribal Affairs
Govt. of Tamil Nadu*

Please use the following form to indicate your preference

----- tear here -----

YES, I want to help and be a part of the change in Sittilingi

(please tick)

- Rs to improve **Health** for tribal families
- Rs.for promoting sustainable **Farming** in Sittilingi
- Rs.for training of Lambadi women in **Craft**
- Rs.....for the **Corpus Fund**.
- Rs..... for any other purpose you see fit

I am enclosing cheque/DDno..... for Rs.....drawn on
.....

My address is

email

Signed

Phone

Cheques/DD may be made in the head '**TRIBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE**', payable at SBI, Kotapatty (6244) or Canara Bank (1128), Theerthamala or ICICI Bank, Salem

All donations benefit from Income tax exemption u/s 80G

Our thanks to ADS Fine Offsets, Salem for helping us print this report