



**Society for People's Education and
Economic Change
(SPEECH)
Madurai**



**ANNUAL WORK REPORT
2012 - 13**

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Society for Peoples Education and Economic change (SPEECH)

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ACTIVITY REPORT 2012 -2013

SPEECH was established in 1987 on non-profit basis for the poor and needy to enable to help themselves. Gender equity, dalit development, child protection, providing services for the HIV infected/affected, responding to disasters are the non negotiable components of SPEECH. Landless, small and marginal farmers, women, dalits, victims of any disaster and children are the focus /target groups. Several development initiatives have been done to bring in change in the living standards of the target communities. Aiming at sustainable development of the focus groups SPEECH follows participatory methodology /approach so that the sense of ownership is inculcated right at the planning stage. Based on the needs and priorities of the target groups programs/projects/activities have been implemented. In order to bring in gender equity the factors influencing gender discrimination were identified and multifaceted approach was used to bring in gender balance. Economic, social, and health empowerment have been directly delivered to women through ample of activities, whereas sensitization and non-threatening awareness was rendered to men. Social discrimination in terms of caste is a crucial issue in SPEECH operational area. In order to reduce the gap SPEECH gives awareness/sensitivity to the non dalits and encourages dalit leadership, economic empowerment, and availing government schemes for the dalits. Community based disaster preparedness is one of the major service delivery provided by SPEECH to cope up any sort of emergencies.

Natural resources conservation and management is yet another major program of SPEECH because natural resources are the base for livelihood and food security .Conservation of soil and water, organic farming ,alley cropping ,bio-intensive gardening ,tank de-silting, afforestation ,rain water harvesting ,micro watersheds are the activities done under NRM project.. Almost all the activities related to Natural resources conservation are implemented along with local panchayats as supplementary to panchayat schemes. Development of agro based enterprises aiming at promotion of organic products and income increase for small / marginal farmers, landless is one of the activities of NRM. As said in the aims of society to

bring under cultivation, the agriculture lands that are fallow in the operation area in order to establish self sufficiency and improved employment, almost more than 1000 hectares of fallow lands have been brought under cultivation of INGOs, Agriculture department and NABARD.

Disseminating the concept of participatory process is the expertise of SPEECH. Of course child protection is the prime program where in SPEECH tries to ensure children protection, sensitize different stake holders to provide protection to children, develop skills, leadership qualities, create opportunities to exercise to ensure child protection.

Education:

Education is mainly to improve knowledge and to develop skills. However in area like Virudhunagar District education should aim at creating awareness because the influencing factors are more towards deprivation of vulnerable communities. Children drop out of school is one the major issues in Virudhunagar and in target villages. Enrollment of drop out children using RTE, National child labor project under the support of Ministry of Labour. In the last 1 years 140 children mainstreamed in education who were earlier working in hazardous situation. Girl children continuing higher education has been a rare phenomenon due to cultural restrictions such as early forced marriage, safety issues related to adolescent girls when they go out from remote villages and more over preference for sending male children to higher education rather than female children.

Further to improve knowledge of children a disaster work has been designed in line with UNDP and distributed to rural children. All the children are thorough with disaster preparedness. In the sector of Education SPEECH project was not only particular on academic improvement but also insists on improving the extracurricular talents and during the last financial years talent competition was organized to rural children demonstrated their talents. As a result of this program at the school levels 275 children got prizes in oratorical competition.

Health and Nutrition:

Provision of balanced diet to children is deteriorated in the minds of parents. Mostly because of governments free ration scheme the diet pattern has completely changed. Almost all the families in the rural areas/target villages eat only rice for all the three meals. This mono diet pattern affects both physical and mental health. Especially the children are affected to the

maximum level. Considering this in the mind and to ensure protection as well as development right to children SPEECH provided nutrition supplement to children. The families/children are doubly benefitted out of this activity. First the children have gained weight enriched nutrition and mentally satisfied. Families have improved their health by eating fresh, organically produced vegetables. Because of the Bio-intensive garden program 2450 children health care has been checked up periodically by medical specialists. 100% of children are immunized against polio and also the antenatal women have been immunized periodically by government health department.

Water and sanitation:

Virudhunagar is a semi-arid region receives only 495 mm rainfall every year and that too fluctuates often results in low agricultural production. In most of the target villages ground water is saline and non drinkable. People particularly women and girl children have to wait go for long distance to fetch water. Several houses capitalize this opportunity and do not send adolescent girls to schools with a lame excuse of fetching water. During the year 4 bore wells were built for drinking and household purpose

Further 150 individual toilets have been constructed in 40 villages using unique technology with bigger size outlet pipes and septic tanks. On witnessing these sanitary latrines 60 more toilets have been constructed by others on their own.

Conservation water is one the major interventions under WASH sector and with the assistance of SPEECH 3 irrigation tanks inflow channels have been desilted. Due to that inflow of water to the tanks was to the maximum level.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

- Main area of intervention of SPEECH was the Land Development of the Poor. At Villages, SPEECH identified Community Lands which were not made into productive use. SPEECH at one Dalit Village called Kottam identified with people 50 acres of land. Discussions and Facilitation with people enabled Dalits to renovate the tank nearby as well renovate a barren well. Both this actions made the well to be filled by water. The Community is now access to good water even in the dry seasons.
- Community of Kottam now plant vegetables, chillies and other grains and harvest their fruits to the satisfaction to all the families. Economy of the village families has increased. Adults particularly Women care their lands. Several such land development has occurred at other villages adding sustaining income to the families. The most benefit has gone to

Dalits. Thus Land Development has freed many Dalits from the clutches of Money Lenders considerably. This has resulted in increase Savings and Credits of Women Self Help Groups as well leading the families for better housing, education and health care.

- While SPEECH assisted Dalits with Land Development, they at the same time assisted Non Dalits with other helps such as goat or sheep rearing. Thus they matched development at the different communities in the villages. The renovation of common tanks helped all Communities in the Villages and brought every one accept SPEECH intervention.
- In addition an allied activity to agriculture animal husbandry was promoted in a village called Sivandipatti in which 52 families are earning sustainable income and children's health is improved.

Sustainable Livelihood Development:

Sustainable livelihood development activity is one of the prime activities evolved by women to help themselves, and supported by SPEECH. The self Help groups promoted in early 1990's has brought tremendous result in terms of women all round empowerment. The women started in a small way in target villages by joining together and started sharing their own resources whatever they had in their hands. The basic attitude of sharing mutual concern, safety and security were the core of self-help groups. More than that, their loyalty towards the groups, trustworthiness, and ownership had motivated to broaden the boundaries. When they grew financially they took extra care for monitoring and management. While they were active in their own affairs SPEECH motivated to mobilize several other resources. In partnership with Tamilnadu government SPEECH extended financial assistance to selected women aiming at improving the family income permanently and to essentially establish micro enterprises.

Environment

Environment pollution degradation is so common in Virudhunagar district because of industrial development. Originally the District was under drought prone area program-DPAP where agriculture subsidies, were to be given to the farmers. Now that it is stopped and subsidies are allocated to industrial development. SPEECH with a clear vision of ensuring food security to the small/marginal farmers and other vulnerable communities involved in reclamation of lands. 75 adolescents children were taught about organic farming principles/practices, leased in land for updating practical knowledge.

SPEECH tries to rebuild the attitude of farmers towards using organic materials in agricultural fields aiming at “**Food Safety**”. In line with this 60 compost pits have been set up which serve as models to many farmers. In the modern trend, changing scenario, strong mind set about chemical inputs, changing their will towards using organic inputs has been difficult. However the models of compost pit have set up a lead to convert their practices. This activity has created double impacts. One hand the environment sanitation is clean, also the cultivable lands are not polluted and chemical free yield is taken.

CHILD PROTECTION

- SPEECH started to give vocational training to Children. It provided Tailoring Skills, Simple wiring and Two Wheeler Mechanism to young boys and girls. Thus the Children and young ones were turned away from hazardous activity to safer activities.
- All this had resulted in the redemption of Children from fire industries more in the SPEECH working area. The enrollment at local Schools increased. Teachers gifted “Child Labor Children” responsibilities in talent competitions at Schools and at inter Schools.
- SPEECH to sustain the initiative moved by this time from the approaches of Relief to the Rights of the Children. “Child Rights” continued as focus from then on to take the message of importance of Schooling and health care. SPEECH staff with the help of Communities used cultural programmes and made the Schooling a regular duty of Children and Parents.

CHILDREN RESOURCE CENTERS

- The effective Child Rights approach has widened into the villages with starting up of Children Resource Centers. While these Resource centers are primarily tuition centers, more concentration is given in the developing of talents of these children. With spaces for buildings generally contributed by Community, SPEECH has built up several Children Resources Centers in the form of an accessible building to all Children of the Communities.
- Play things have been installed to ensure that all Children irrespective of their age come and enjoy the swings and the ladder. Little Children joyfully oscillate in the swings has turned a regular feature in the villages.

SPEECH has developed good and healthy rapport with the various line departments, which include the Collectorate, the Health Department, the Department of Social Welfare, Tamilnadu Women Development Corporation and Public relation office and is part of the NGO co-ordination cell at Virudhunagar At the District level and at the state level SPEECH has close links with a number of likeminded NGOs and these linkages have been utilized to the maximum in some of the combined and collaborative ventures we have undertaken. The services and expertise of SPEECH in child development is extensively used by state and central government of India

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



School Notebook and Uniform Distribution



Established Children Park in A. Lakshmiapuram

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



17 ICDS centers received educational materials such as baby chairs, slates, floor mats, water drums and cooking vessels etc



244 school children / teachers were oriented on the concept of school safety in ETH Government Middle School

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



Communities members from 6 program villages received information on right to education and child protection through auto campaigns using hand bills (ALAK, KMP,SK, PP, GUN, RP)



328 children from all program villages participated in a block level sports meet of which 60 children received medals for various track events

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



68 young mothers took part in three separate trainings focusing on infant feeding



135 children who are in the sponsorship program had their health checked up of those 8 children were followed up for minor ailments.

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



240 packs containing variety of country vegetable seeds have been distributed to 240 houses for back yard gardening



110 community members from ETP village participated in a training program on SWM

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



Constructions of 50 toilets spreading in 5 villages are over.



Construction of a solid waste collection point is over in ETP village

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



45 traditional farmers from ALP participated in field training on organic farming methods.



18 Nanyam group representatives took part in a books/records keeping training.

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



68 young mothers took part in three separate trainings focusing on infant feeding



SHG members benefited through training and learnt the following trades Soap Oil, Soap Powder Cleaning Powder Phenol and Incense Sticks



Petty Shop run by SHG member



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ACTIVITY PHOTOS



Plantation of 700 Neem, 650 Pungai and 750 Flame of the forest trees completed, this activity has been well executed by the Reps of CMCJ in their respective villages.



Pond renovation in Paraipatti Village



Water Tank Construction in Chellaiapuram Village



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ACTIVITY PHOTOS



21 PRI members from intervention Panchayat participated in child rights training



3 PLF meetings held in which 87 members participated; in one such meeting the atrocities in Sumangali Scheme was discussed in detail.