

**FINAL REPORT**  
**ON**  
**WASTE LAND DEVELOPMENT AT THAMARAIKULAM**

**BACKGROUND :**

SPEECH with a clear vision of empowering the deprived communities in Thiruchuli area started building up the power of them through various means. Natural resources conservation and management has been the one of the major activities of SPEECH because 95% of the people dwell in Thiruchuli area depend up on Agriculture for their livelihood. In spite of that the conservation measures have not been properly done either by the farmers or by the government. The frequent monsoon failure made the people to loose interest in farming. Subsequently non-availability of pro agricultural policies, like in agricultural input, lack of draught animals, low agri returums, low price for agricultural produces had also influenced the small and marginal farmers not to continue the agricultural operations effectively. The negative impacts of green revolution have also been the additional factor of farming communities deprived of income from lands. In mid of 1980's land alienation seemed to be the crucial issue because of the intrusion of multinational companies, non-resident Indians through politicians. Whole lot of lands were purchased by them for non agricultural purposed in order to avail subsidy from government. Many small and marginal farmers found to be victims, sold their small holdings and became landless, started migrating to neighbouring states for search of employment.

Having realised all these problems the focus group faced, SPEECH started involving very actively in natural resources conservation and management. The partnership with German Agro Action was through a small experimental Project – Promotion of Bio-intensive Gardening in 1989 and then land development activities. The last project supported by GAA was wasteland development at Thamaraikulam. The total period of the project was three years starting from 2002 to 2004 covering 137 acres of 70 small and marginal farmers.

**I. IMPORTANT CHANGES AND OCCURANCES**

## **1.1 Project Holder:**

The project was evolved with the participation of Thamaraikulam farmers and it was decided to appoint a watershed manager with an educational background of agriculture plus experience in watershed development project. Secondly to monitor the program as well to mobilize people's participation it was planned to have a community organizer in Thamaraikulam project who should be a bachelor degree holder with a minimum experience of 5 years working as community organizer. Thirdly it was decided to appoint an accountant with the basic knowledge of accountancy.

As decided 3 staff members have been appointed and were effectively involved in implementation of the project. Capacity building of staff members as well the project partners is one of the prime activities of SPEECH and the Thamaraikulam project staff members had chance to attend training on globalisation and its impact on farmers, dalits and women, organic farming, animal husbandry /goat rearing, agro based micro enterprises, HIV/AIDS awareness, sensitisation training on gender, child rights protection etc. During the project period one of the staff members of SPEECH got the opportunity to attend international training on participatory monitoring and evaluation with the assistance of GAA.

Vehicle purchase was not one of the planned activities hence it was not done. However the old vehicles bought in the last project were used to speed up the project work.

In terms of office equipments with the support of other donors new computers have been purchased and the old one was upgraded during the reporting period. It was planned to construct a counselling centre in the premises of Thiruchuli field office with assistance of CHRISTIAN AID. But due to delay in fund transfer that has not been completed.

It was planned to take the assistance of external consultant for effective implementation of project. However proper terms of reference was not finalized but at the same time the roles were finalised. As planned external consultant such as Mr.Gnanasuriyabagavan, of BHUMI trust, Mr.Mohan of CIRHEP Organisation and government personnels were used during the project period.

A Compact Disc – CD on land related issues and role of People's organizations to bring the barren lands into cultivable lands, was produced which was not included in the initial planning. The external training organized by GAA and fund raising was yet another program

which was not included in the initial planning. South exchange program was organized by IDS LONDON and RCPDS in which the Thamaraiikulam partners had chance to present a case study about their project. In the Executive Committee of SPEECH Mr.Murugan has been elected as Treasurer. Other than that there was no change in the board of SPEECH. SPEECH staff team immediately responded to the Tsunami devastation in Tamilnadu particularly in Nagai district where the death toll was high. A team of 12 members are appointed / transferred to continue rehabilitation activities, and field is opened at Nagai. The Executive Secretary and the Project Director on rotation involved in monitoring and guidance.

## **1.2 FRAME WORK CONDITIONS:**

The village Thamaraiikulam comes under the taluk of Virudhunagar district, which was bifurcated, from Thiruchuli taluk in the year of 2001. Thamaraiikulam is situated in the easter corner of Kariapatti. The people have to go to taluk headquarter to complete their legal aspects interms of land registration, Veterinary care, purchase of subsidised agri inputs, birth and death registration etc. At the time of planning not much of personnels were appointed in the government departments since those were recently formed. Even today there are not much difference and services rendered by the mainstream government is not up to the quality. Subsidies for agriculture, animal husbandry were available at the time of planning. Subsequently during the project period around 70% of the subsidy schemes were rooted through a central government scheme called SGSY (Swarna jayanthi Swarajhor Yojna) that for through women self help groups. The policy change had really disrupted the farming practices to certain extent in Thamaraiikulam.

The average annual rainfall at the time of planning was 600 mm but Thamaraiikulam / Kariyapatti taluk did not receive the average rainfall during the project period was only 478 mm. Which had created negative impact on crop production ultimately resulted in back of food security.

The price like was not anticipated at the time of planning. However the prices of essential commodities went high which till today not have reduced. This is also yet another influencing factor on the lives of farmers / people of Thamaraiikulm at Virudhunagar district.

The nanayam groups (women self help groups) have availed a loan of Rs. 6,70,000/= during the project period through which the farming families were able to cope up the drought. The Security card program introduced with the assistance of CHRISTIAN AID has been very

useful to meet out the emergency needs of the families in terms of purchasing rice and other cooling items agricultural inputs. The cards were useful to treat the diseases in nearby private hospitals.

### **1.3 TARGET GROUPS :**

There has been no changes with regard to the target group and location. The small /marginal farmers who were part of initial planning continue to be the project partners. Even at the final phase 70 small and marginal farmers have been the partners of Thamaraikulam wasteland development Project.

### **1.4. OTHER PARTNERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED:**

As per the initial planning the following activities were planned to be implemented with the support of other parties.

1. Land demarcation
2. Land survey for well, bore wells - Revenue department & Registrar
3. Geophysical survey
4. Water divining
5. Test bore
6. Shallow ponds - Agricultural engineering department
7. Soil testing
8. Water testing - Soil testing Laboratory
9. Inter cropping }  
10. Vetiver } - Agriculture department
11. Seedlings raising
12. Tree planting - Horticulture department
13. Purchase of goats
14. Veterinary care - Veterinary department
15. Capacity building - Fellow NGO's

During the project period as expected the revenue department extended its help to survey the overall lands of project area and also spotted the place for well/ bore well construction.

The registrar department was helpful in registering the lands allocated for water bodies.

The agricultural engineering department of Virudhunagar contributed their person power in completing topography. Survey, find out water potential, sinking of bore wells, and deepening of shallow pond.

The soil and water analysis have been completed by soil testing laboratory. The Veterinary doctor of Thiruchuli Veterinary centre helped in partners identifying quality goats subsequently they extended their support in developing local barefoot Veterinarian for follow up. The Agriculture department supplied hybrid seeds, for intercropping and Vetiver for check soil erosion.

The NGOs like BHUMI Trust, CHIREP, and MYRADA were actively involved in equipping project partners to be more effective and efficient.

The participation of the government and other parties was excellent during the project period. As said in the project planning through the top down approach exists still, they have been very close and cordial to the Thamaraiikulam farmers. The gap between the government system and Thamaraiikulam is reduced. This can be understood from the linkage diagram of Thamaraiikulam prepared recently.

## **II. ASSESMENT AND PERSPECTIVES OF ATTAINING THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

To improve the living standard and livelihood system of small and marginal farmers in Thamaraiikulam and surrounding areas in the set objective for land development program of Thamaraiikulam. Of course the objective has been achieved to the maximum with the support of partners and other stakeholders. Due to external factors the impacts are stunted but at the same time the positive changes happened in Thamaraiikulam will be sustained by the partners in the future also.

### **III. RESULTS/OUTPUTS, ACTIVITIES AND IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS:**

The following results were planned during the planning phase and subsequently these have been achieved to the maximum.

#### **RESULT – 1:**

##### **137 ACRES OF CULTIVABLE WASTELAND OWNED BY 70 SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS WILL BE EFFECTIVELY BROUGHT UNDER CULTIVATION.**

- Though there has not been increase in the yield by 30% as planned, there was 20% increase in crop production.
- As planned 50% of the project have established access to fodder for their goats. Now the partners graze the goats in the lands during the lean period and take fodder like neem Acacia nilotica pods, prosopis pods, groundnut leaves, cotton fruits, subabul and other wild varieties from the project area. However the scope for feeding the animals over a period of two years would be bit difficult.
- The groundwater level has not increased rather depletion has taken place because of monsoon failure.
- A monitoring committee has been set up whose role is also involving in marketing the produces jointly. But the functioning of committee in terms of marketing was effective due the less returns from the lands.
- Two bore wells with a deep of 227.ft 6.5inches and on open well with a specification of 28.5ft long 27.5 ft broad established the participation of project partners and other stakeholders.
- As anticipated the ground water level increase was not rapid and also the quality of the water is not good to irrigate the basic crops.

#### **RESULT -2:**

##### **FAMILY INCOME INCREASED THROUGH SUPPORT FOR CROP ROTATION, USAGE OF APPROPRIATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES AND LIVESTOCK SUPPORT.**

- The income of the families increased through the support of animal husbandry program.
- The population of goats have increased to the tune of more than 60% compared to the early stages. As of now there are 391 goats including the off springs in Thamaraiikulam. The approximate value is Rs. 4,00,000/= and the partners have already sold 97 male goats to the tune of Rs.1, 45,000/=. Adding to this the partners have earned Rs. 5,000/= through penning the goats in wetlands.
- Awareness level of project partners have also increased on maintenance of soil and water conservation structures, joint marketing, conflict resolution, project monitoring liaison and linkage.

### **RESULT – 3 :**

#### **INCREASED AWARENESS LEVEL OF THE FARMERS OF THAMARAIKULAM ON MAINTENANCE OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION STRUCTURE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, PROJECT MONITORING LIAISON AND LINKAGE.**

- The water and soil conservation structures are very well maintained by the farmers. The monitoring committee plays a major role in rearranging the structures wherever necessary.
- Since the local associations are strong the conflicts are handled by them along with Panchayat Raj Institution members. Hence local conflicts are comparatively reduced and in the last three years no cases have been registered in police station.
- The nanayam groups have availed a loan of Rs.6, 70,000/= from State Bank of India Thiruchuli and also 39 members have availed rural housing loan to the tune of Rs. 14,50,000/=. The partners still maintain very good rapport with the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Agri – engineering and horticulture departments. In addition to that Thamaraiikulam is a member of governing council. An article on Thamaraiikulam goat rearing is going to be published in International Institute of Environment and Development LONDON.
- The partners still have contacts with the MYRADA Watershed farmers, which is very effective in sharing the experiences among the farmers themselves.

### **ACTIVITIES :**

In order to achieve the results and the set objective the following activities were planned and implemented in Thamaraiikulam wasteland development project.

- 1.Land cleaning
- 2.Land demarcation
- 3.Geo physical survey
- 4.Deep ploughing
5. Bounding
- 6.Gully plugs and vetiverplanting
- 7.Soil testing
- 8.Manure application
9. Nursery raising

10. Inter cropping
11. Water divining
12. Test bore
13. Water testing
14. Land registration & well digging
15. Motor installation
16. Motor room construction
17. Tree planting
18. Digging of shallow ponds.
19. Training on goat rearing
20. Purchase of goats
21. Insurance
22. Veterinary care
23. Trainings /Exposure