



HAND IN HAND
TAMIL NADU



Mentor Communications

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Dear Mentor Communications, Habit and all the winners at Habit Fashion Awards,

Thank you for your generous donation to Hand in Hand Tamil Nadu to support the Village Upliftment Programme. The programme implements activities that fall under Hand in Hand's five focus areas, namely Child Labour Elimination Programme, Microfinance/Women's Empowerment Programme, Citizens' Centres, Health and Environment. I am pleased to present the 3-month update for the Panchayat¹ supported by your donation, Thimmanpettai, located in Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu.

About Kancheepuram District

Kancheepuram District is situated on the northern coast of Tamil Nadu and is adjacent to the Bay of Bengal and Chennai city. It is bounded in the west by Vellore and Thiruvannamalai districts, in the north by Thiruvallur district and Chennai district, in the south by Villuppuram district, and in the east by the Bay of Bengal. The district has a total geographical area of 4,43,210 hectares and coastline of 57 kilometers.

Kancheepuram, the temple town, is the district headquarters. It is famous for being the city of a thousand temples with its history as the capital of the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Rayas of Vijayanagar empires, making it a place of great historical significance and a major pilgrimage centre.

It is also famous for its renowned Kancheepuram silk saris that were originally weaved for the temple gods. Today, Kancheepuram silk saris are highly coveted saris that are worn for traditional events, such as weddings or religious occasions. The high demand of the saris has led many weaver families to enlist their children to work in the industry to supplement the family income rather than attend school. Therefore, Hand in Hand launched in Kancheepuram with the original aim of elimination child labour.

Selection of Panchayat

Thiammanpettai is a Panchayat with 3 villages located in Walajabad block of Kancheepuram district. Weaving and Agriculture is the main occupation here. This Panchayat needs interventions in the form of specialised health programmes such as eye camps and community toilets. Besides this, 100% of the village children must be enrolled and retained in school. The

¹ A Panchayat is a cluster of two or more hamlets. It is the lowest administrative unit in India.



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village is totally unaware of sanitation and environment issues. 120 weaving unit are present and they have been registered as a cooperative called “Murugan Cooperative”, but business is very dull and they are earnestly looking out for orders for existing weaving unit and additional income generation activities. These are some of the reasons why this Panchayat was selected for your VUP project.

Hand in Hand staff spoke to villagers and was assured of support from the local government (Panchayat) president and the villagers.

Hand in Hand believes that there is a need to build the capacity of the community to understand priorities and articulate its needs to local government for eradicating poverty.

Implementation Strategy and Orientation Activities

The following activities were carried out since January 2010 in Thimmaiyanpettai Panchayat.

Introduction

To improve community participation and community ownership of the project, an orientation was given to self-help group members about the goals and expected outcomes of the Village Upliftment Programme.

Social Mapping and Survey

Hand in Hand carried out a survey to identify the existing welfare services, problems, issues etc in the Panchayat. Through this exercise, Hand in Hand is able to find out all physical and population demographics of the community and how Hand in Hand can help most effectively.

The process began with a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and a door-to-door survey.

Key Findings of PRA

All sources of drinking water	Over Head Tanks- 5; Street taps- 22; Household Connections- 414; Ponds- 2; Borewells- 7
Availability of waste disposal bins	NIL
Availability of waste collectors	NIL
No. of Day Care Centres (Balwadis)	3
No of Govt. Schools	2
No of health centres	NIL
No of existing SHGs (both HiH and others)	13+144=157
Main occupation	Weaving, Agriculture and other Labours



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No of libraries	1
No of computer centres	1
No of Govt. Fair Price Shops	2 (full-time and part-time)

Key Findings of Survey

Number of household	701
Total Population	2877
Men	1468
Women	1409
Boys (0-18 years)	443
Girls (0-18 years)	388
Total 0-18 years children	831
Total 6-18 years children (B&G)	586
Total 0-5 population (B&G)	245
Children going to Anganwadi centre	71
Literacy Rate Male (6+ population)	73.5%
Literacy Rate Female (6+ population)	62.7%
School-going children (boys and girls of 6-18 yrs)	83.6%
Drop-out children (boys and girls)	10
% of Scheduled Caste/Tribes	16%
% Engaged in Agriculture / other labour	43.4%
% Engaged in Service (govt. and pvt jobs)	13.02%
% Engaged in Business/Self employed	42.6%
No. of Household Toilets	235

Launch of VUP

The VUP programme was launched, when the entire community gathered in the village square. All HiH activities were displayed at stalls through posters, models, pamphlets etc.

At the end of this, a cultural show was organized to explain our five-pillar activities. Dances, plays, etc were organized to describe the social problems where HiH makes a positive intervention.

A Village Development Committee (VDC) was set up with community volunteers. The VDC is explained below.



MOU Signing

A Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) was signed by HiH, the Panchayat President (the elected leader of the village), and the self-help group members promoted by Hand in Hand. This MoU signifies the beginning of the Village Upliftment Programme. The MOU symbolizes a commitment by both the local government and Hand in Hand to work together.

Formation of Village Development Committee

To implement the programme effectively, Hand in Hand focuses on strengthening grassroots democracy, increasing community ownership, and ensuring programme sustainability. This is done by setting up a community volunteer group in each VUP Panchayat called the Village Development Committee (VDC). Members of the community consisting of, SHG members, village youth, government officials etc become members. The Panchayat leader becomes the VDC advisor. Hand in Hand believes that all outcomes can be achieved by involving the community right from the planning stage. Hence, we work closely with the community and Panchayat leaders as key stakeholders.

In Thimmaiyanpettai, the first VDC meeting was held. The meeting was facilitated by HiH. VDC members and the Panchayat leader. All the members were asked to list out the needs of the community. These needs were then classified as those that can be met by the local Panchayat, those that can be met directly by Hand in Hand, and those for which Hand in Hand can represent the community for solutions at the district/state level. This brings clarity to the community about HiH's role and the VUP project.

Needs that came up from the VDC:

To be met by the local Panchayat:

1. Street lights
2. Electricity connection for Anganwadi
3. Electricity connection for SHG building
4. Common Bore Well

To be met directly by HiH:

1. Public toilets renovations
2. Dustbins
3. Skills training
4. Library and computer centre
5. Adult Education Centre
6. Micro Finance loans

For which HiH can represent the community:

1. Public Health Care Centre
2. Old Age Pensions

HiH's five-pillar activities were again explained to the VDC. Activities such as tree-planting, waste collection, citizen centres etc were explained by HiH staff to create awareness about the lack of these in the Panchayat. It was explained how HiH would introduce these schemes through VUP.

Staff Training

One field staff has been appointed and trained.

Case studies



Vadasuram with a saree woven by him and his wife.

Mohana (45) and Vadasuram (50) are a couple from the ThimayanPettai village in Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu. They have a son Siva (30) and 2 daughters Bhavani (28) and Valarmati (30). The family business is weaving. Both Vadasuram and Mohana have studied only till Class 5. Their son Siva has also studied till the 5th. The daughters have done higher studies. Bhavani went for night school, while Valarmati graduated from college. They have four power looms, each costing around Rs 50,000. They employ other people also. The business is run by Siva, and they make only silk sarees. They take 15 days to make one saree. In a month, they are able to weave 3 or 4 sarees. Their monthly earnings are around Rs 6,000.

The couple believes that if they can sell directly in the market, they can double their earnings, especially since they do not belong to any co-operative society. The raw material or silk thread is provided by the middle men, who also place the orders. The couple is paid only for their labour,

an amount that is very low compared to the market price of the sarees. The couple specialises in making designs for sarees. The design frames are created and used by them.

Poor electricity supply is a big problem for them, and they presently use battery-powered invertors for running the power looms.

Vadasuram and his family seem fairly happy with the support they receive from the Panchayat. Their only concern is the low labour charges they are paid. They want to know how to sell their products better and how to sell directly by eliminating the middleman. They would also like to be trained in other vocational skills for extra livelihoods, although they are scared to venture into new businesses. They want HiH to help them increase their sales, and provide training in other vocational skills.



Theinmozhi (30) and **Selvaraj** (31) are a couple from the ThimayanPettai village in Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu. They have a son Sanjay Kumar (2) and a daughter Vijaylakshmi (5). The family business is weaving. Both Theinmozhi and Selvaraj have studied only till Class 5. Their daughter Vijaylakshmi is currently studying in the Balvadi. They make silk sarees. The orders are given from the co-operative society. Their monthly earnings are Rs 3,000. The material is provided by the co-operative society. The material is not of good quality, so the sarees

they produce are not that good. They do not get frequent orders from the society. She says that the society does not function properly, so their monthly income is not the same every month.

She also wants to provide her children with good education. The Balvadi does not have a fan, and the electricity supply is irregular. The children have to sit outside and study.

Thenmozhi wants to get vocational training so that she can start her own enterprise. She would like to start a tailoring business and some business in handicrafts. Her husband has a sound systems business. He provides speakers for weddings and other village functions. She would like financial help from HiH so that her husband could set up a shop and increase business opportunities.

She would like to see the village water tank to be fixed. The pipes are broken, so they have to be repaired. The family does not have a toilet. Assistance to build a toilet is needed.



Rajamanickam (67) weaves a cotton fabric (locally known as lungi) worn by the men folk. He uses a traditional handloom weaving machine. He wishes to use better technology and find export opportunities, so that the next generation can continue this business.



HiH staff and VDC members discussing the need based activities in the Thimmayanpettai Panchayat and the immediate interventions to be taken up.

The next progress report will be a 6-month report that will be sent to you in July 2010. Subsequently, we will submit reports in January 2011, July 2011 and January 2012.

Once again, we would like to thank you for wanting to create change in the life of the poorest of the poor by supporting Hand in Hand. Should you have any questions, please contact me at shinu.singh@hihseed.org or +91 9884810445.

Best regards,

Shinu Singh
Grant and Donor Reporting Manager