



*PWD Minister Durai Murugan speaking at the state level consultation on water bodies in Nagapattinam*

## Inside this issue

Bridging the knowledge divide .....	1
Quality Assurance and Monitoring in Shelter .....	2
Home Sweet Home .....	3
Creating awareness on child rights .....	4
New initiatives in Nagapattinam .....	5
NGO Profile - SCORD .....	6
Consultation on Water Bodies .....	7
Events roundup - May .....	8

## Bridging the knowledge divide

Academic and research institutes are doing impressive work on extending the body of knowledge in disaster prevention measures and development. Much study has happened on disaster proofing, spatial planning, etc. Institutes like ISRO, MSSRF are recognized for their work at the international level. However much of these strides do not lead to implementation in the field. The link between the academics and implementers (the planners, decision makers) is the lacunae in the system. While the academics have a lot to offer in terms of ideas and models, they are at a loss on whom to approach with this knowledge. Implementation would require human and financial resources that they do not know how to access. Similarly the government and NGOs are not aware of the work going on at the universities and institutes.

The potential of forging the academic and implementer link is evident in the case of floods. There is ample historical data that can point us to simple solutions. We have access to rainfall data over time and its affect on inundation. This data can help us predict areas that are likely to be inundated given a certain level of rainfall. Why don't we use such data to take preventive measures? Why don't we move communities to safer areas when we know that their dwellings are likely to be at risk? Why should the community have to go through hardships? Why should the government and civil society have to scamper for providing relief for predictable calamities? As we emerge as a forerunner in global knowledge and technology why don't we use simple solutions to help our own? ■

## Quality assurance and monitoring in shelter

In September 2006, NCRC initiated the formation of the Shelter Support Group (SSG) & the Shelter Advisory Group (SAG). These bodies received the mandate of the district administration to monitor the progress and quality aspects of the permanent shelter construction.

The SAG, SSG, Shelter Sector of NCRC and the district administration holds 'Technical Clinics' every month to provide hand holding support and technical guidance to the NGOs involved in the construction of permanent shelter in the district. The SSG also conducts monthly field visits to construction sites to monitor pace and quality of construction. The findings of the SSG at each site is documented and is presented to the SAG and the district administration. Based on these reports the SAG frames its recommendations to NGOs which are disseminated during the Technical Clinics.



*Shelter support group on its field rounds, monitoring and documenting its findings*

Apart from providing hand holding support to the NGOs involved in the construction process, the team also sensitizes the field implementers such as site supervisors and masons in ensuring quality and aspects of disaster resistance.

Mr. Ganesh – Project Engineer for World Vision permanent shelter construction program stated that the technical clinics have provided a platform to discuss the issues related to construction in the district. Especially with regards to problems which were common to most sites. He mentioned that more support is required with regards to procurement and ensuring the availability of quality materials and handling the issues related to shortage in labour.

Mr. Ponraj from DPG also stated that the Technical Clinics were useful in addressing the issues related to the permanent shelter construction in the district. ■



## Home Sweet Home

More and more permanent shelters are now being built and handed over across Nagapattinam. Different NGOs have taken different routes to providing this shelter. At one end, there are NGOs who designed and built the shelter and handed over a finished product to the community. At the other, there are NGOs who followed a detailed process of community dialogue by which the community was completely involved in the design and implementation of the plans. However, irrespective of the process many felt that in the end, the coastal areas of the district would be dotted with colonies that were near identical in nature, resembling cubic boxes. But such issues are unfounded as communities on moving into the colonies have begun a spate of modifications to personalize their dwelling

Many families that have occupied these houses have started to construct extensions according to their requirements. These extensions range from beautifying the houses through tiling or putting up carved doors, putting up temporary thatched coverings for greater comfort, to making extensions towards extra rooms or to facilitate livelihoods. The communities are using their own resources to make these changes.

One of the beneficiaries owned three boat pre – tsunami and is reluctant to return to the sea. The family sold the remaining of their assets and started to construct a petty shop in the space in front of their house. Another beneficiary has laid ceramic floor tiles. He is also constructing a small room and portico in the vacant area in front of the

house, since his mother and brother is also living with him.

These changes are important to families to ensure that they are “at home” in their homes. However it is necessary to be cautious before making changes.

House owners should ensure that the changes are only cosmetic in nature and no structural changes are made without consultation with experts. If house owners break walls, or make extensions that go against technical norms, there is great risk of the house being unable to support such changes, leading to collapse. For instance, for vertical expansions, the rods need to be of 12mm since 8 mm rods would not support the extended structure. Soil analysis is also required to ensure that the structure is on a sound base.

It is the NGOs responsibility to ensure that during handover the community is made aware of the dos and don'ts in making changes to the structures. They should be informed on what type of changes can be done without expert

advice and what type need experts to approve. NGOs must realize that given the difficulties faced by a disaster hit community; given the time, effort and resources that have gone into shelter construction, the shelter must, in addition to comfort, also ensure stability and safety far into the future. ■



*Shelter extensions of different shapes and sizes*



### Creating awareness on child rights

The children's sector of NCRC has been facilitating the process of rehabilitation of affected children in the district by coordinating the efforts of several NGOs working with children. One of the main objectives has been to build the capacity of the various stakeholders, through field level one-day workshops in addressing issues related to children. These workshops are aimed at strengthening and sensitizing the Village Watchdog Committees (VWC) on the issues related to child rights and protection.

Two such workshops were conducted one each at Sembanarkovil and Sirkazi – Kollidam. The Village Information Centres have been successful in bringing together the various NGOs, children, parents, members of the VWC and community leaders under one roof.

One of the salient features of the workshop has been the participation of the community and the community leaders in actively probing and discussing the issues related to child rights and protection in the area. Children actively participated in the discussions and the group work. It was very



encouraging to note that the views of the children were being accepted by the elders in the group.

At the end of the workshop volunteers from each village were identified. The role of the volunteers would be to sensitize the community on the issues of child rights and protection. These volunteers would receive regular training and their capacities to address the issues related to children would be nurtured in the future. ■



## **New initiatives in Nagapattinam**

In October 2005 NGOs working with children in the district decided to hold a joint celebration of the Children's Day. A Core Group consisting of representatives from various NGOs and NCRC was formed to organize this programme. Based on the success of this joint effort by all the NGOs the Core Group continued to meet on a regular basis to facilitate sharing of experiences, learnings and resources. In order to further facilitate coordination and networking and to effectively work toward the integrated and long-term sustainable development of children in the district the Children's Core Group decided to institutionalize and register a 'Child Secretariat'.

On 3rd April 2007, the Executive Body of the Child Secretariat was elected. The District Collector Thiru. Tenkasi S. Jawahar I.A.S, is the Chairperson of the Child Secretariat. On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2007 the Child Secretariat was registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1975. Membership to this body is open to all NGOs working with children.

We take great pleasure in congratulating the members of the Child Secretariat and wish them success in their endeavors.

Names and designation of the members constituting the Executive Body

President: Sr. Mercy Joseph - Chief Functionary of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Nagapattinam.

Vice President: Mr. Ganesan - Chief Functionary of the NGO CREATE.

Secretary: Mr. Jerald Siluvai - Administration Manager of NCRC.

Joint Secretary: Mr. Ashok – Chief Functionary of Leonard Cheshire International.

Treasurer: Ms. Dhanalakshmi – District Coordinator of SNEHA.

Board Member: Ms. Revathy – Chief Functionary of the Vanavil School, Nagapattinam.

Board Member: Mr. Alfred – Program Officer of REAL at Nagapattinam. ■

The Natural Resource Management Centre has been initiated by NCRC to focus on sustainable disaster proofing in agriculture.

The impetus for the initiative is interesting to trace. NCRC was involved in mapping the vulnerabilities in agriculture since this sector faces disaster constantly – facing floods and salinity. The vulnerability mapping pointed to the state of water bodies in the district, in which traditional water bodies, due to encroachment, silting, negligent management were no longer operational. Many traditional drainage systems suffered the same fate, blocking the ability of water to be drained off, leading to floods.

NCRC also was witnessing the dependence that the disaster had created on the community. The community became so used to the support available from NGOs that they increasingly stopped relying on their indigenous knowledge and coping mechanisms. Once these NGOs wrapped up their initiatives the ability of communities to continue these initiatives was uncertain.

Based on the knowledge it gained through the studies and experiences from the field, NCRC decided to float an organization NRMU, to work in sustainable natural resource management whereby communities are empowered to look at choices and make decisions. NRMU will vest responsibility of the management of the initiative with the community.

Some immediate areas where NRMU will work in is participatory management of water bodies, and support for viable and sustainable enterprise promotion strategies to enhance the traditional livelihood support mechanisms of the marginalized communities engaged in NR based livelihoods.

Initial work for NRMU has commenced. The project design has been developed. ■

## NGO Profile ~ SCORD

Society for Community Organization and Rural Development (SCORD) is a registered development NGO started by a group of progressive social minded youths in 1990 with the mission of “uplifting” socially marginalized and deprived section of the society. SCORD is managed by an Executive Committee of 7 members. Alangottai, a small village near Mannargudi is the Headquarters of SCORD, consisting of basic infra structure such as Training and Communication Logistics and Administrative Personnel.

### Mission

Establishment of equality and justice through empowerment of rural poor and voiceless community by capacity development.

### Aims and Objectives

- To organize the poor and disadvantaged rural community
- To educate on social concepts and create awareness
- To empower with adequate capacity building and leadership qualities
- To link them with the mainstream of the society with equality and gender justice.

### Vision

Establishment of equality and gender justice without caste, creed, region, religion ethnicity or gender bias among the society is the Vision of the Organization.

### Area of Coverage

SCORD is at present working in Mannargudi, Kottur Blocks and Mannargudi urban slum settings in Thiruvarur District, Madhukkur and Thiruvonam Blocks in Thanjavur and six panchayats including Chandrapadi, Manickapangu, Pillaperumalnallur, Kalamanallur, Maruthampallam and Vanagiri in Nagapattinam District.

### Major focus areas

- ❖ Strengthening the Local government,
- ❖ Synergy between traditional Panchayat and elected Panchayat,

- ❖ Strengthening Women and empowering them
- ❖ Disaster preparedness
- ❖ Development for marginalized, disabled and aged.
- ❖ Awareness programme on Total sanitation, Waste management.

### Vocational Education

Vocational Education is provided to the aspiring women entrepreneurs on different trades and skills. A Tailoring Institute in Maruthampallam trains women who are also being linked with the Bankers for their credit needs to start such micro enterprises.

### Equality and Gender Justice

Women’s capacity is also built for able leadership and community participation by updating knowledge and information on equality, gender justice and other social, educational, environmental and cultural issues.

### Child Development, Persons with Disability & Community Mental Health Programme

Mental illness is a severe and serious problem in the target area and mental health care is a specific project of SCORD. Within this there are counseling services, medicine supply and treatment. Empowerment education and assistance is provided to the disabled persons. SCORD has helped 120 persons in accessing Government ID card and 84 of them have been helped to get the ADB loan for livelihood assistance.

### Supplementary Education (future plan)

This is a programme in which the slow learning first generation children are provided supplementary education through volunteers.

For further details SCORD can be contacted at  
Website: <http://www.indiga.org/scord> Email: [scordindia@hotmail.com](mailto:scordindia@hotmail.com) ■

## State-level Consultative Meeting on Coastal Water bodies in Nagapattinam District

On 25 April, 2007 NCRC held a state level consultative meeting on coastal water bodies in Nagapattinam district.

The meeting was meant to share findings of its study on coastal water bodies. This study was the outcome of recommendations of an earlier workshop, in August 2006 that sought to look at ways to reduce the vulnerability of agriculture to frequent disasters.

Participants to the meeting included Mr. Durai Murugan (PWD minister); Dr. A. Vaidyanathan (Former member of the planning commission); Mr. Deenadayalan (Consultant government schemes); Dr. R. K. Sivanappan (Consultant on water resource management and leader of the study team); Mr. S.

Ranganathan (General Secretary of the Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association); Mr. Diwakar (Remote Sensing Service Centre, ISRO) and Ms. Annie George, (CEO, NCRC)

Mr. Durai Murugan released the study report.

Based on the study and consultation the Natural Resource Management Centre, set-up by NCRC will begin an action research to understand the issues at the field level, facilitate the community to identify solution, support the community to test the solutions and learn from the process for future decision maker. The process will follow the loop of action, reflection and action. The action research is likely to feed into replication of the model at a larger scale. ■

TELEPHONAL

THE HINDU • THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2007 \*\*

# Irrigation canals need widening: study

## Mapping of coastal waterbodies conducted in Nagapattinam

Special Correspondent

**ERODE:** Widening and desilting of irrigation and drainage channels to the required capacity, dredging all river mouths, linking of drains and providing proper location of in-fall points of minor drains into the main drain are among the recommendations made by a study conducted in Nagapattinam district.

The "mapping and study of coastal waterbodies," done by the NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (NCRC), Nagapattinam, pertained not only to mapping the coastal water bodies but also ways to use floodwater for agriculture and drinking water supply and recharging the groundwater table.

Another suggestion was that maximum floodwater from the catchments in the upland tracts lying southwest of the delta should either be detained in the upland itself through watershed development, or the runoff should be diverted to areas other than the Varanar sub-basin.

The groundwater table could be recharged by constructing deep borewells and pumping the water to flush saltwater out to the sea. Improving soil fertility and water management and introduction of advanced irrigation methods are among the other recommendations.

The four-month study covered 92,851 hectares in all taluks, except Mayiladuthurai, out of the district's total area of 2,71,583 hectares. It covered 148 revenue villages, including 779 hamlets. The aim was bringing agriculture to the forefront of priorities and debating various approaches to the best sustainable solution for Nagapattinam.

PWD Minister Durai Murugan



**CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS:** PWD Minister Durai Murugan going through a report on coastal water bodies in Nagapattinam district, which he released in Chennai on Wednesday. Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association general secretary S.Ranganathan (left) and senior consultant on water resource management R.K. Sivanappan are in the picture.

— PHOTO: M. VEDHAN

released the report on Wednesday. The first copy was received by S. Ranganathan, general secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Association.

R.K. Sivanappan, senior consultant on water resource management, who was the leader of the team, said Rs.1500 crore would be required for the works, which could be completed,

in phases, in 10 years. The cost would have been about Rs.1,000 crore in the early 1980s. Hence, early action was needed.

The Minister said his department would go into the study. Formulating a scheme and implementing it over the next three-four years in phases might be possible. The World Bank had come forward to

provide assistance.

He said the Government was considering prosecuting those who encroached upon PWD land.

Earlier, Tsunami Relief Information Network (TRINet), on behalf of the NCRC, organised a State-level consultative meeting on coastal waterbodies in Nagapattinam district.



## Events - May

### **Greviance Day**

**4 times in May 2007**

Greviance days were organized at the Collectorate for the Tsunami orphans and children living with single parents. This initiative started in April after it was realised that there were orphan and semi-orphans who were excluded from the government's list. As such, these children could not claim any benefits. NCRC facilitated the inclusion by identifying the excluded children and conducting these sittings where the children could show their documents and get included in the government list.



*Greviance day for children at the Collectorate*

### **Staff orientation for NRMC**

**15-16 May 2007**

All the staff of NRMC were oriented on the project and thier roles and responsibilities.

### **Registration of the Child Secretariate**

**17 May 2007**

A milestone achievement, the Child Secretariat was registered on 17 May under the Societies Registration Act. With this, the functioning of the group will smoothen. The secretariat will have its own office and will now focus on developing a strategy for its functioning and for supporting intitives towards children's development in Nagapattinam.

### **Handover of permanent shelter by SIFFS**

**21 May 2007**

SIFFS handed over the 451 houses at tarangambadi of the first phase of its shelter reconstruction initiative. Union Minister, Shri. Mani Shankar was the chief guest. ■



*The Tarangambadi site, ready for possession*

Kalangarai Vilakkam is an NCRC publication, developed purely for information purposes. The information contained herein has been collated from various sources and NCRC is not responsible for its accuracy or any actions taken based thereon. To subscribe to Kalangarai Vilakkam visit [www.ncrc.in](http://www.ncrc.in)

NGO Coordination and Resource Centre, No. 31, South Palpannaichery, Mahalakshmi Nagar, Nagapattinam. Ph: 04365 252618/252681.

NCRC Front Office: No. 313 Collectorate, Nagapatinam, Ph: 04365 252547