



FRANCO-INDIAN PROJECT OF RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE TSUNAMI

PROGRAM FOR 2006

Note on Kameshwaram: One year after Tsunami and Continuation of Project FIR

Letter from Mr. Subburaman, Director of NGO SCOPE



Remembering loved ones....

Kameshwaram is a little village on the coast in the Nagapattinam district. It is a peaceful community formed of merchants, farmers and fisherfolk.

Kameshwaram is fast returning to normalcy in some sense, though it will take quite a long time for all the people, who have lost many of their dear and near ones and a lot of their worldly possessions in the tsunami.

Furthermore, this year, the Nagapattinam coast was terribly hit by heavy rains and floods in the last week of October as well as in November. Kameshwaram had to limp back to normalcy after two floods and one

cyclone, which fortunately was not a strong one.

The village is now again very active, with all busy in fishing and related activities.



Busy fishing village life in Kameshwaram

People are back to their business of fishing in the A zone. There are enough boats in the coastal village, to keep everyone who knows sea fishing busy. All the men folk are going to sea in the early hours, and returning after 24-48 hours depending on the weather and catches. Usually the boats come back around 11 a.m. and the seafront becomes agog with activity. The women as usual take the catch spread it on the sand, and the middlemen come, fix a price and take it back. The season has just started and they are hoping to have a good season.

The permanent shelters are coming up fast, and are constructed by KARAM, a group of industrialists from Coimbatore. We found that the construction to be good, but the fishermen oppose the idea of having the toilet in the main hall and very close to the kitchen, and want a door for the house. We have taken up the matter with the KARAM authorities and the Nagapattinam Collector. The women folk are busy with their usual work of fishing.

A small fish-drying yard has been constructed in Kameshwaram village with assistance from CARE organisation. We are working with CARE in other villages also.

Both of us, Subburaman and Ganapathy, of SCOPE, visit Kameshwaram regularly. We have staff permanently posted in Kameshwaram and they are interacting with the villagers regularly.

What is needed in Kameshwaram = What can be done by Project FIR in 2006

As you know, we completed the base line survey of the villages and documented its needs last year.

Today what the fishermen need most badly is a fish market yard so that the fish landed from boats could be spread on the cemented yard. At present the fish is spread over the sand, and this reduces the quality and hence the price of the fish. The cost of the market yard is about Rs.50,000. **This will be the first initiative of Project FIR.**



Fish being dried on sand.

There is also need for putting up an ice plant in the village, which the fishermen want very badly. I am in contact with the ice plant installation group to find out the logistics and cost of the same.



Mr.Subburaman and Mr.Ganapathy discussing plans for ice plant with villagers

We are finalizing the plan to take a selected team (ten men and ten women) to Cochin for an exposure visit to fish processing units.

We are also in touch with agriculture extension units in order to take the farmers to a research centre and expose them to modern agricultural practises.

The adolescent girls are keen to go for an exposure trip to Tiruchi. We are also working on this project to identify a suitable university partner so that the girls from Kameshwaram village may make friends with a team of girls from the university in the city and become more aware of options available to them. This will be followed by a study of what they might be able to do in terms of small family businesses.

BUDGET

1. The cemented fish market yard = Rs 54,780.00
2. 3 Exposure Visits (15 fishermen to fishing Sector for 15 fishermen, 45 farmers to agricultural extension centre, 20 adolescents plus mothers to university, experts and staff) = Rs 50,000 (approximatively)
3. Staff at village and overheads for 2006 = 72,000 Rs

******Details available with Shyama V. Ramani.**

Note on Areas around Pondicherry

**Letter from Lucas,
Director of AuroAnnam**

******Two of the zones in which Project FIR hopes to make a difference are the Dalit (formerly termed untouchables) zones of PMC (Periya Mudaliyar Chavady) and CMC (Chinna Mudaliyar Chavady). Both are next to Auroville, the international community in the outskirts of Pondicherry. The Auroville foundation is engaged in projects in the fishermen quarters of CMC.*



Dr. Lucas Dengel of AuroAnnam

With respect to the areas north of Pondicherry, the following is a summary of the relief and rehabilitation programs conducted by the Auroville Tsunami Relief office. For further details, please consult the website www.auroville.org/tsunami.

(1) There was one program of boat and engine repair, run early in 2005.

(2) There have been livelihood programs. For instance, one is a workshop that taught women how to make --- the "tsunamika" doll. The success of such programs clearly cannot run beyond people's readiness to respond to the marketing of a disaster, but in the meantime the

women will have had ample opportunity to learn new skills. Another program is one for enterprise development loans and for higher studies loans.

(3) Auroville Water Harvest is running a small Unicef-sponsored program for the construction and upgrading of public toilets/bathrooms and solid waste management facilities in six temporary shelters. Unfortunately the quality of infrastructure will not be up to Harvest's expectations as the budget got reduced after they had made a commitment.

(4) As regards permanent shelter rehabilitation, Auroville has designed a few shelter types, with two village-kuppam communities (including CMC). There has been consultation and final decisions are pending. - Discussions are going on as to which extent Auroville's human resources will be involved in rehabilitation construction.

(5) Ecological restoration is ongoing in six villages, i.e. planting of coastal belts of salt-tolerant tree and shrub species, also in CMC.

(6) ICDS - Integrated Child Development Centre - program sponsored by the NGO "Save the Children".

--- (a) Design and building manual developed for four districts plus Pondicherry.

-- (b) Construction of ICDSs in 26 villages in Villupuram district and one village in Kanchipuram district is ongoing, CMC and Bommayapalayam are amongst them. About half of the IDCs will be completed by January end. A large-sized photo of the ICDS at Bommayapalayam was published in "The Hindu".

This program has been a success, aesthetically, functionally, in appropriateness, delivered fast and at low costs, well managed in the interface with district, blocks, panchayats (local government) and villagers. Mrs. Suhasini, the architect who has designed the buildings and is co-ordinating the project, is one of the most prolific architects of the Auroville community.

**What is needed in PMC and CMC =
What can be done by Project FIR in
2006**

We completed the base line survey of the villages and documented its needs last year in collaboration with Nicolas Drusne of Association INDES.

However, we have not heard from Nicolas since then except for one meeting in November where he outlined how the 2000 Euros will be spent on:

- *A painting program for children in collaboration with schools in France and in Bangalore. This will be on specific themes and serve to build creativity, a competence little encouraged in Indian schools, especially the ones for the poor. The paintings would be made into posters and exhibited in Grenoble and Bangalore and in the villages. Revenue raised*

would go to improve the sanitary facilities in the school.

- *A water purification program. (Also financed by other programs).*
- *Two pilot projects to test the possibility for a micro-venture capital fund. One is for a sewing machine for a woman in PMC to make school uniforms. The other is for the "Youth Club" to buy a Hi-Fi music system to rent out during temple festivals, birthday parties, weddings etc. The project would develop the "grid" for evaluating the market potential for a business idea. It would also develop the "routines" needed to accompany a potential business. Finally, to develop a rules for re-payment according to the paying capacity of the individual concerned and the potential revenue of the project.*

Unless we hear from Nicolas in the near future, the French partner to implement these programs will be the Student Association SOS along with researchers from the University of Grenoble (including the coordinator) and French volunteers of Project FIR. The water purification program will be conducted in collaboration with AuroAnnam.