

# The Meeting Point

A Quarterly Newsletter of AREDs

*The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intension*

Children's Special Issue - 07

May - 2010

## Inside...

- **Anti Child Labour Day**
- **Summer Camp**
- **School Enrolment Campaign**

### **Seminar on the Anti-Child Labour Day - 04.05.2010, Venue: SWATE Hall, Veerarakiyam**

**Tulir Thalir Students' Movement (TTSM): (*Movement for young students and adolescents*)** concerns over the following issue: The Indian constitution says that it is the duty of the government to impart education to the children below 14 years. However, we can see children working in hotels, workshops, fire industries, matchbox factories and textile industries. The ILO defines that all those who are below 14 years are children. As per the census taken in 2001, there are 12.6 million child labourers in India; according to the statistics given by the Tamil Nadu government, there are 508 male and 563 female child labourers in Karur district. Of the total population of Tamil Nadu, more than 2 million are children below 18 years and most of them have been deprived of education, shelter, health care and even the right to live. Why does this situation exist even though the Child Labour Prohibition Act is in effect?

**About TTSM:** In order to minimize the number of dropouts and the incidence of child labour in Karur district, AREDs has formed Tulir Thalir Students' Movement (TTSM) (*Movement for young students and adolescents*). Programmes on street theatre and cultural activities are being organised for school going adolescent boys and girls in order to bring their latent talents to the surface. Awareness on social issues, need for education and importance of preserving the environment are imparted to them. The adolescent students in Karur district view TTSM as a platform for exhibiting their talents and views.

**TTSM and AREDs Organise Seminar on the Anti-Child Labour Day:** So, with the following agenda, TTSM organized a seminar along with AREDs on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 by way of drawing the attention of the society on the Anti-Child Labour Day: Childhood is for learning in schools and not for suffering the pains of labour at workplaces. Trafficking of children for labour



and prostitution must be checked and the child traffickers must be punished under Goondas Act.

About 500 children participated in the seminar. Rajalingam, the secretary of TTSM, welcomed the participants. Mr. L. A. Samy, the director of AREDs, presided over the seminar. Mr. C. Gopal, the Assistant Elementary Educational Officer and Ms. Christinasamy, the general secretary of Women's

Front and Mr. Karuppiah, the retired teacher were the chief guests. Anusuya, the president of TTSM, conducted the entire seminar proceedings. TTSM activists also performed cultural programmes.



**Mr. Samy and Ms. Christy speak**



**Children perform cultural programmes**

**The following resolutions were passed at the end of the seminar:**

1. TTSM appeals to the district administration that Karur district must be transformed into a child labour free district.
2. TTSM resolves to work effectively to abolish child labour and put all the children in the mainstream education.
3. It appeals to the government to effective action against the industries and other entrepreneurs that engage child labourers.
4. It appeals to the district administration to take serious steps to stop child workers being transformed into bonded labourers.
5. The Child Labour Prohibition Act must be implemented effectively in the state.
6. Employment guarantee and fair wages must be ensured to the parents in poor families.
7. Trafficking of children for labour and sex must be checked and the child traffickers must be punished under Goondas Act.
8. Collecting money from the students on the pretext of building fund and so on must be stopped.
9. Special bus service must be operated for school children daily in the morning and evening on all school-days.
10. Students have the right to express their needs and wants. So, periodical/monthly meetings between the teachers and the students must be arranged in every school.
11. Every school must have laboratory, task aids and reference materials that help learning process easier.

12. All the schools must have adequate infrastructures with drinking water facility.
13. Every village and every school must have a well equipped library.
14. All the schools must have first aid kits.
15. The students from Konapparayarkulam, Mettankinam, Anna Nagar, Valaiyalkaran Pdur and Jananur have to walk for two, three kilometers per day to high schools. Therefore, bus service must be extended, linking these villages, especially on peak hours.

### Summer Camp – 2010

Since inception of AREDS, students and researchers from abroad and domestic institutions go over to AREDS to get familiar with the Indian way of life in terms of social, political, economical and cultural development and get their treasure house of knowledge enriched.

At this time, Mr. Theo from France, Mr. Francis from Pune and Ms. Vinnarasi from Fatima College – Madurai are with AREDS on their internship training. As a part of their internship, they helped the AREDS Health Team and the Cultural Team, which played key role in arranging the camp, and observed the entire proceedings of the camp. The following is the report made collectively by the three interns on the summer camp:



**School of children participated in the summer camp**

Tulir Talir Students Movement is an AREDS-initiated **Movement for Young Students and Adolescents**. The objective of TTSM is to minimize the number of dropouts and the incidence of child labour in Karur district. Besides creating awareness on social issues, need for education and importance of preserving the environment, TTSM creates a platform for the school-going children for exhibiting their talents and views.

Most of the rural Karur district children are studying in government schools, which seldom offer opportunities for them to creative and innovative learning. Their parents are either agricultural labourers or unorganized workers and remain unaware of the importance education. The poor socio-economic status in the family and the poor learning ambience in schools together limit the learning process of the children and confine their creativity.

The small space of their villages and hamlets instills a nostalgic feeling “My village is my world”. However, as a result of following the age-old but worn-out social custom by the elders, the children are socially discriminated and gender biased. Due to the lack of chances for getting

exposed to broader reality and democratic learning, the children also become ignorant of many things.

In order to dispel the darkness of ignorance, TTSM organizes weekend programmes for the school-going children at the AREDS Children School Theatre (ACTS). Besides, TTSM organizes summer camp every year in order to help the children spend their vacation joyfully and meaningfully. These camps are organized to provide the children with a space to acquire and tune hobbies, interests and dreams and the skills to express and communicate the same.



**The camp starts**



**Mr. L. A. Samy inaugurates**



**Mr. Parthipan, NABARD, felicitates**

Usually, the summer camps organised by TTSM include cultural programmes, spoken English classes, computer skills acquisition, and general knowledge courses, playing and swimming. The summer camps motivate adolescent boys and girls to go for higher studies after completing schooling. All the children sing, play, swim, eat and stay together – irrespective of castes and religion for the duration of the camp. Besides dealing with the academic and the entertainment aspects, the summer camp inculcates self-confidence in them so that they could become competitive like their counterpart urban students with the attitude 'I CAN'.

For the year 2010, the summer camp was organized for three days from the 10<sup>th</sup> of May to the 12<sup>th</sup> at the AREDS Training Centre at Aravanampet. About 50 school-going children from Mayanur, Pamparamathanpatti, Thimmachipuram, Chinnamalaipatti, Vellalapatti, Nallamuthanpalayam, Poolampatti, Munaiyanur and Kattalai villages participated in the camp. Ms. Amutha, the programme coordinator of AREDS Health Team, welcomed them.

Mr. L. A. Samy, the director of AREDS, inaugurated the camp. Mr. Parthipan, the general manager of NABARD and Ms. Christina Samy, the general secretary of Women's Front felicitated. Mr. Muthukumar, the person in-charge of TTSM, explained the objective of the camp. Mr. Senthilkumar, the programme coordinator of TTSM, moderated the entire proceedings of the camp.

**The following items were dealt with in the summer camp:**

- Yoga and physical exercises
- The basics of Tamil (was taught according to their class)

- The basics of English grammar
- Computer skills acquisition
- Handling music instruments
- Folk arts like 'paraiyattam', 'kolattam', 'oyilattam' etc.
- Games, memory games, action songs etc.
- Health awareness and First aid techniques
- Drawing on the themes like global warming and child labour
- Awareness on child's rights
- Street theatre techniques
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (to make them realize their village realities)



**Basics of Tamil is taught**



**Basics of computer is taught**



**Children learn 'kolattam'**



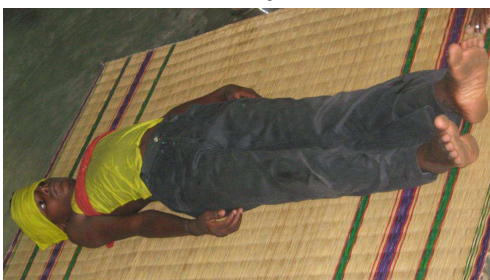
**Children learn 'paraiyattam'**



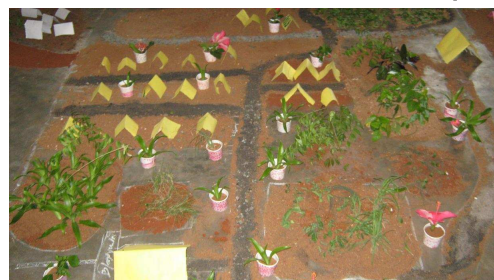
**Children learn 'oyilattam'**



**Children learn street theatre techniques**



**First aid techniques are taught**



**PRA done by the children**

### **Feedback from the children:**

- The children were capable of identifying the issues and problems in their villages and they resolved to face them with the support of TTSM.
- They mingled with each other irrespective of caste, religion and economic disparity.
- Each child was given an opportunity to appear on the stage and as a result, they cast off stage fear away.
- The camp was joyful, enthusiastic and stimulating

### **Our suggestions (the suggestions made by the three interns):**

- The number of summer camps may be increased so that all the members of TTSM could get benefited.
- The camp days can be increased for extending the opportunity for more learning.
- An exhibition of the children's handy works can be arranged for their parents' perusal at the last day of the camp, which would make the parents understand the potentials of their sons and daughters and motivate them to get their wards educated up to higher level. Further, they will feel proud of their children and happily send their children to the camps organized by TTSM.
- Innovative ways must be explored in teaching the basics of Tamil and English.
- The children must be divided into groups at the outset of the camp and each group must be assigned works like keeping the meeting hall clean, reporting on the previous day happening and occurrences.

### **School Enrollment Campaign**

In order to minimize the number of dropouts and the incidence of child labour in Karur district, AREDS has formed Tulir Thalir Students' Movement (TTSM). As a part of its regular interventions for the spread-out of education to the children at grassroots level, TTSM organized school enrolment campaign in June 2010 in Karur district.

The campaign was done as follows:

Date	Village	School	Participants
11.06.2010	Kattur	Government Primary and Middle Schools	162 students, 4 teachers and 16 AREDS staff
14.06.2010	Pillapalayam	Athi Dravidar Welfare Middle School	148 students, 6 teachers and 12 AREDS staff
15.06.2010	Munaiyanur	Government Middle School	98 students, 3 teachers and 13 AREDS staff
16.06.2010	Lalapet	Government Primary School	196 students, 8 teachers and 14 AREDS staff
16.06.2010 (Evening)	Kattalai	Government High School	92 students, 5 teachers and 16 AREDS staff
18.06.2010 (Morning)	Melamayanur	Government Primary School	48 students, 1 teacher and 15 AREDS staff
18.06.2010 (Evening)	Kattalai	Government Primary School	68 students, 4 teachers and 13 AREDS staff
21.06.2010	Palyajayangondam	Government Primary School	182 students, 4 teachers and 13 AREDS staff

A procession and street corner meetings were part of the campaign. The teachers and the students of the local schools and AREDS staff took part in the procession with enthusiasm and determination to eliminate illiteracy. Generally, children drop out of school after 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> standard

due to the poor economic condition of their families. So, an appeal was given to the parents through the campaign to get their children educated, at least, up to school final level.

Ms. Lieslot and Ms. Katrine, who are teachers by profession, visited India for observing the life of people in a city and in a village. For studying rural life, they came to AREDS and made their study in a few villages in the operational area of AREDS. These two teachers also took part in the campaign conducted in Katur.



**Outcome:**

- The teachers became aware of TTSM and its functioning
- Two students volunteered themselves to be TTSM activists
- Two dropouts – one male and a female – have been put back in school

**Last but not the least:**

We take this opportunity to thank all those partners who have made their annual contribution to the efforts of AREDS-SHARE. Their sincere and generous help is the one that moves our commitment and to reach out. Your timely contribution made out of your personal sacrifices can be sent to the following accounts of AREDS SHARE:

For Belgium Partners

**Account N°: 000 - 0000034 - 34 of ENTRAIDE ET FRA TERNITE  
32 Rur du Gouvernement Provisoire B 1000 BRUXELLES**

For Partners in France and the rest of the World

**Centre L.-J. Lebret  
▣ en France, (uniquement en EURO) sur BNP PARIBAS – Compte 10039291  
IBAN FR76 3000 4001 8700 0100 3929 110 – BIC: BNPAFRPPRG**

**Yours in solidarity,**

L. A. Samy