

BLESS: At a Glance

Bless is a leading NGO in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu working for the betterment of marginalized sections. Bless was actively involved in Tsunami response initiatives and the recent flood situation.

Water and Sanitation



A pioneer in TRSP (Total Rural Sanitation Programme) Cuddalore district by having a successful provision of water, Sanitation and hygiene programmes carried out at Nagapanoor village of Cuddalore. This village was taken as the role model to formulate the TRSP programme for whole of Cuddalore District.

BLESS started to strengthen the water and sanitation activities after this by having created sanitary mart, and construction of 6511 House Hold toilets in 13 blocks. This strengthened the NGOs and formed the network of NGO's under the leadership of BLESS. The award for the best NGO under the banner of "SOOZHAL" and are implementing programme in Cuddalore district followed in 2005.

The motivation of SHG to take loan and construct household toilet and construct super structure over the existing toilet was great movement in the field total coverage of village sanitation. This was facilitated by Vallalar Grama Bank under bulk lending scheme. The collateral security for the whole amount was provided by BLESS and motivated the villagers to construct toilet. Under the water scheme the BLESS has provided many hand pumps and started with village rural water supply scheme.

In addition to this BLESS has provided School toilets, Anganvadi toilets 16, Soakpits 288 and compost pits 510 have been created for rural communities.

Child Care & Child Health



Soon after Tsunami, Bless-Plan established Child Care Center and is working in 25 Tsunami affected villages of Cuddalore District. The main aim of this CCC is to stimulate the children physical, Cognitive, emotional, Social, and Language development.

Educational materials notebooks, School bags, color pencils, pencil box were distributed. To all 25 centers provided with mats, First Aid box, Weighing machine, Kitchen Utensils, and chairs to children. Monthly basis SHG is allotted, Mrs. Lakshmi for Cuddalore and Kurinjipadi block (15 villages) and Mrs. Sivakalai, SHG member for Parangipettai block(10 Villages) providing all provisions to 25 centers in Cuddalore District.

In July Month “Attendance” has been taken as a issue and found factors to improve the CCC strength. In August month, Bless taken “Center Hygiene” as special issue and ranking done to all centers and awarded to top six Hygiene Centers. In September month, taken “Immunization” as month issue and conducted “Mothers Meeting & House visits” to give awareness and with the ¹help of ICDS and Public Health center achieved full immunization in all 25 centers.

Once in every two weeks conducting Mothers meeting to give community awareness on “Safe Motherhood”, “Breast Feeding”, “Child Development”, “Nutrition and Growth”, “Immunization”, “Diarrhea”. Our caretakers also making House visits as a follow-up for checking if they are following essential messages in day today life and finding their difficulties. From May-Sep 2005, totally Seventeen villages undergone taking “Disaster Preparedness Camp” and ten villages taken “SHG Strengthening “training. The Community Organizer is responsible for conducting the above said programs. The caretakers and Supervisors taken “Orientation Training”, “Capacity building Training”, “Child Rights and Protection Training”, “Nutrition and Health training”, “Disaster Management Training” and “Child Activities in Tsunami areas”.

During July month a “Children Mela” happened in Parangipettai block, in which the children skills were presented. Different program like songs, dance, drama, drawing, flower boughet making were done. In August month, “Independence Day “celebrated in a grand way. In September, “Children Procession”, “Food for Work” activities taken place. Evening activities is mainly refreshing School going children with snacks and games. Improving their skills, helping them to clear their doubts in studies, handwriting, involving them in community based services. ‘Saving’ started in four centers, Children and Adolescence club formed in seven villages of Cuddalore District.

^{1 1} Tsunami Update, ONE YEAR AFTER TSUNAMI. December 26, 2005 www.disasterwatch.net

Women Small Savings:



To make the rural women economically reliable they must be economically empowered.

In the male dominated rural society the women don't have independent decision-making in the family as well as in the society. To make them self reliant, they are organized in small groups to run a micro credit system (small savings). This system is extended to organize

women self help groups in all the target villages to promote Mahalir Thittam.

The existing women self-help groups in the community development blocks of BLESS target area.

These 1300 women SHGs consists of $(1300 \times 20) = 26000$ members whose families could directly be benefited through integrated income generating activities from 84 panchayats.

These members have made a total savings of Rs.3.13 Crore. This is used as a revolving fund to distribute loans to the members on emergency for income generation programmes for self-reliance. This credit system helps the rural women members to function united for the emancipation of the village community and supports the implementation of the economic, educational, environmental and sanitation programme through their micro-finance.

An example of the situation in villages: SHANMUGANAGAR

Shanmuganagar seems to be a model village at the level of the living space, the sanitation and the education. A park garden and a school are already available. 62 families (approximately 300 persons) live here; so 31 houses (two families per house) are building by BLESS. Population work free to built their houses. A good system of rotation of crews gives part time at people.

Two self help group (SHG) are efficiently in Shanmuganagar. Before migrate people, the Shanmuganagar population is become fisherman. The sandy soil around the village is occupied by farmers of others villages. So a program to give work at SHG is essential so that women find money. Actually one SHG (approximately 20 members) arrive to save from 200 at 300 Rupees per week.

Their interests are only used to buy rice. The actual project allows SHG to obtain a wage to save money.

WATSAN and PHP Programmes



Bless has carried out the following works under the sector of water and sanitation after Tsunami in Cuddalore block, Kurinjipadi Block, Parangipettai and Keerapalayam. We have carried out provision of water supply by providing 77 new hand pumps. Along with provision of hand pumps rejuvenation of hand pumps were carried out for 128. Five new borewells were drilled and connected to the water supply scheme. Two over head tanks

were constructed with a total capacity of 40,000 liters in two villages.

On the sanitation part temporary bathing cubicles and toilets were provided in different shelters. 461 bathing cubicles were constructed, 368 individual toilets were constructed. About 123 bathing cum toilet unit were constructed. We also constructed 3 individual eco san toilets and 4 eco san school toilets also have been constructed. 5 Community toilets were provided to five shelter areas. Child friendly toilets are being constructed at four shelters. Effective Micro organisms were sprayed in regular intervals near the shelter to prevent and avoid spreading of diseases due to contaminated collected water around the water supply and shelters. 2 Inseminators were provided to two villagers.

EMERGENCY RELIEF

Debris removal and spray	12 villages
Food packets distribution and community kitchen	6 villages
Community toilets and bathing facilities	3
Installation of hand pumps	9
Hygiene Promotion Programme	2 villages
Medical camps	30 villages
Milk supply for infant	3 relief centers
Distribution of provision kits	1060 families
Psycho-social training	30 village volunteers
Hygiene kits distribution	17000 units
Cloth kits	5000 units
Utensil kits	5000 units
Provision of dust bin	262
Installation of inseminator	2

Provision of cupboards	643
Construction of Community halls	2
Provision of net shop	5
Provision of utensil shop	5
Provision of three wheeler	3
PHP programs	18,000 people
Hygiene training	42 schools
Teachers hygiene meeting	9 locations
Cultural program	1650 people
Hygiene melas	5000 people
IEC materials	10,000 individuals
Compost pits toilets	400
Saok pits toilets	100
Eco-san toilets	74
Community toilets	18
Child friendly toilets	10
Usage of Effective Micro organism Leach pit cleaning	10 villages
TOT trainings	4 villages

LIVELIHOODS

Distribution of FRP Boats	116
Fishing Nets	131
Thoni's	103
Catamarans	100
Fish vending Equipment	700 units
Petty shops	12
Micro enterprises	2
Agriculture Activities	over 1500 acres of land under experimentation
Livestock Development	120 number of goats
Training camps - Alternative livelihood	12
Fish Processing units	2

CHILD CARE AND HEALTH

Day time child care centers (covering 1000 children from 2-5 yrs)	25
Evening Classes (covering 2400 children from 8 to 15 yrs)	25
Medical Camps	20
Child Mela	10

SHELTER PROGRAMME

Permanent housing	135 units
Semi-permanent housing	179 units
Temporary shelters	200 units

SHG'S AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

New (post-tsunami) Women SHG's formation	190
New Men SHG's formation	10
New Adolescent SHG's formation	5
Training programme for SHG's capacities	20
Training on Psycho-social care	30
Women Solar drier and allied activities training	40
Total amount of new SHG's getting loans from Banks	150
Total amount of borrowings by new SHG's from banks	60 lakh rupees

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Cash for work programme	Rs 20 lakhs worth
School infrastructure development	2
Hospital infrastructure development (district primary hospital)	1
Transportation infrastructure	1 ferry

FLOOD RELIEF ACTIVITIES

Installation of New Hand pump	30
Renovation of New Ponds	6
Restoration of existing HP	18
Drainage system (in meter)	2000
IM II Hand pipe	6
Note Books	1500
Cloths for children	3000
Milk Animal	90
Mats and bed sheet	3300
Veterinary camp	8
Utensils	1300
Units Sanitary napkins	3300
Units Community kitchen	7500
Individuals Dry ration- Rice/ greens	40,000 families

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