

# ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011



Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

**[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)**



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## **Message from M. Susairaj...**

CECOWOR journey to reach the unreached groups had continued in the year 2010- 2011 with ever increasing commitment and enthusiasm shared by every stake holders from the grassroots people to the donors from abroad.

I kindly thank our donor cooperators, the government departments, banks, staff members, volunteers and well wishers for what they had been to us throughout the year.

There are many success stories and many more challenges through which we have learnt newer lessons. Here through this report I would like give the summary of activities during the year and a feel of what has happened. We would be very much happy to give further information and answer to any query to every one interested in knowing more about any of the aspects of the activities reported here.

As the economy grows so does the gap between the poor and the rich, making the life for the poor even more miserable. While the world is already with enough problems human created problems adds to challenges to all us who are working for the underprivileged.

In the corporate and market oriented economy our target groups specially the women and children have few choices. There are almost no options for them in the mainstream system to get elevated from impoverishment. One example would be that the growth of micro finance institution has helped lot to the bankable groups but our target groups are not considered as bankable groups. Majority of them are illiterates, and do not possess any marketable skills living on day today basis without any hope for future. Their low self esteem and ignorance of their rights often subjects them to discrimination, abuse or violence. The only hope created by CECOWOR through initiative and identification with these marginalised groups is WE SHALL OVERCOME. CECOWOR's small efforts to give education, general education, skills education and capacity building have really reduced the burden of the unreached women and children, Tribal, Gypsies and the dalits. It is really a struggle and risk to be with the poor and marginalised and we have faced so many hardship but we were aware that finally we will have a success story to tell, this feeling, your help and cooperation gave us courage to stand besides them in defending their rights.

M. Susairaj  
Director  
CECOWOR

## **1. Introduction:**

CECOWOR (centre for coordination of voluntary Works and Research is a not for profit, apolitical organization established in the year 1989. Its services are for everyone, irrespective of gender, creed, caste, class or ethnicity. It is registered under the Society Registration Act 1975 in the year 1992. Registration Number is 58/92. CECOWOR is also registered under the FCRA division of Ministry of Home affairs. It is also an approved NGOs of the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women, Tamil Nadu Government.

### **Vision**

Witness a just society for the underprivileged, especially for women and children

### **Mission statement:**

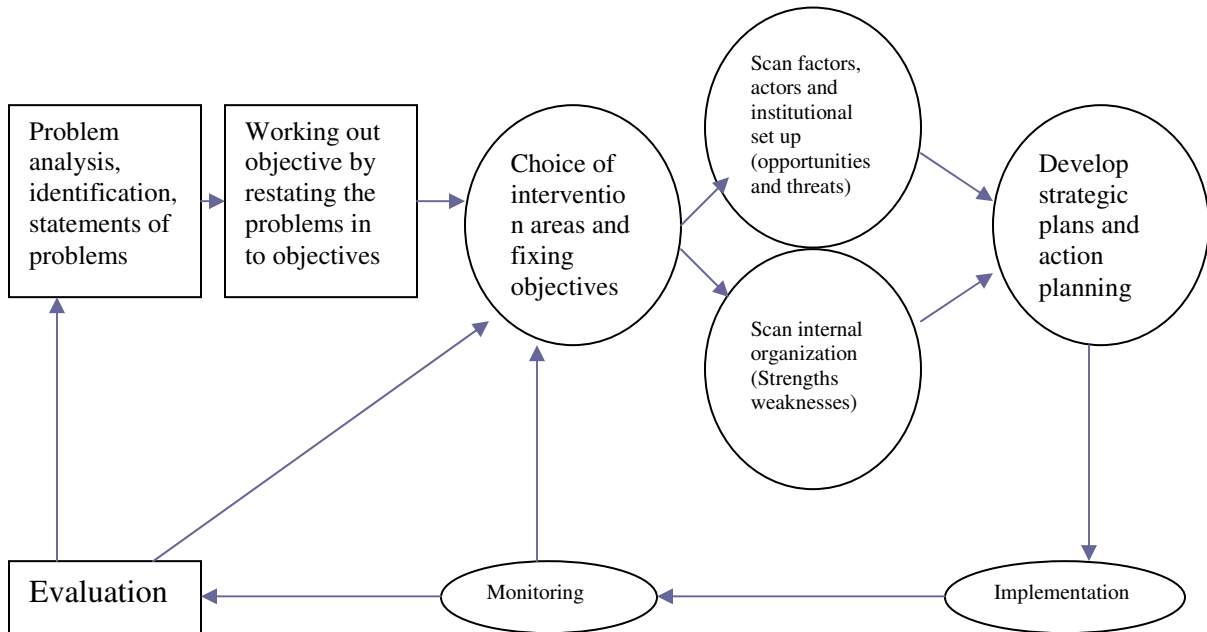
Empower, create an enabling environment and capacitate for the liberation and development of marginalized people like women, children, low caste and other rural poor.

Encourage maximum people's participation so that they have better control over their life and enjoy the benefits of combined strength and spirit".

### **Programs focus:**

1. Promotion of literacy, basic education and General knowledge.
2. Child rights promotion and Prevention of child abuse in any form.
3. Develop life skills, livelihood opportunities and self help self reliance.
4. Strengthening civil society, capacity building and advocacy for participative democracy, good governance, human rights promotions and poverty alleviation
5. Work for quality of life among Dalits, tribals and other marginalized groups like Gypsies, Washer men, Bamboo basket weavers, Potters, quarry workers, migrant workers etc. with special focus on women and children.
6. Capacity building of target groups on ICT and motivation for maximum utilization of ICT for the human rights promotion and poverty alleviation.
7. Cross cutting issues are Gender equality, cultural understanding, environmental protection, Sustainable changes.

## Methodology



## 2. Target Population and the background:

Children, Women, Tribal, Gypsies, Dalits and Other dehumanised sections in Gingee Taluk of Villupuram district are the priority target population of CECOWOR.

District	: Villupuram
Taluk	: Gingee
Blocks	: Vallam, Melmlayanur and Gingee
Villages	: 181 villages and 439 haitations.

Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu is surrounded on East and South by Cuddalore District, West by Salem and Dharmapuri District and on the North by Thiruvannamalai and Kanchipuram District. At present Villupuram district comprises of 1490 Revenue Villages, 4 Revenue Divisions, 8 Administrative Taluks, 22 Blocks, 15 Town Panchayat Unions, 1104 Village Panchayats and 3 Municipalities. Villuppuram district has a total population of 2960373 (as per 2001 Census), of which males account for 1492442 and females account for 1467931. The Urban population according to 2001 census is 426917 and rural population is 2533456. The density of population of the district per sq. km. is 410. The people are primarily agrarian. The Literacy rate of Villupuram District is 64.7 % ( male 75.5% and for female 52.5%) compared to the State figure of 73.47% in the year 2001. The dropout rates are recorded as 40.39%. Total number of children at the age group 0-6 is 373175 (Male190257 and female 182918)

CECOWOR office is situated at Gingee town. Gingee is located 150 kilometers south west Chennai the state head quarters.

Gingee is a town of about 25,000 people 150 km south west of Chennai (Madras) in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India. Our offices are in the town but we do most of our work in the surrounding villages, where we work with marginalised and exploited groups like Gypsies, Tribal people, Dalits (untouchables), women and other rural poor.

### **Economy**

This is a particularly backward area with few opportunities for employment. 90% of people in the villages depend on agriculture, but very few own any land. They have to work as day labourers for the land owners and earn very low wages. Lack of skills, unemployment and poverty are serious problems of target group. Ignorance about their life and surroundings makes them much more disadvantaged and prone to exploitation. Due to lack of job opportunity and appropriate education many young people are unemployed

### **Education**

There is a high rate of illiteracy among the groups we work with. Parents cannot afford to send their children to school and often keep them at home to work or look after young ones. Some of the children have to work for debts of their parents. There is no training at all for those who drop out of school. Those who passed 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard are not able to afford admission to a technical school, a teacher training school college or other colleges.

### **Lower Castes**

In this area roughly a third of the people are low-caste (Dalits). All forms of discriminations like prohibitions to public services like water tanks, schools and clinics, forced labour menial works, abuses, atrocities, physical violence are very common in this area.

### **Women**

Low caste women are twice discriminated in the system both by the high caste people and by the male dominated society.

## **3. Direct Beneficiaries during the 2010-2011:**

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Tribal	954	1358	2312
Gypsies	148	109	257
Widows, Dalits and others	1784	9239	11023
Total	2886	10706	13592

### **Children**

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Tribal	306	278	584
Gypsies	129	117	246
Widows, Dalits and others	432	494	926
Total	867	889	1756

#### 4. Children Programme

##### ***Education support programme for the children of widows:***

The programme provides opportunity for quality education, better environment for education of 150 children (children of widows, orphans and children of abandoned wives). It ensures dignified childhood, develops the self confidence and motivation in the children. It also acts as catalyst to combat abuses and discriminations and defend their rights.

The following are activities carried out in the year 2010-2011 under this programmes

##### **Activities:**

- i.* ***Children home facility:*** Provided safe home; boarding and lodging, three times meals, shelter, reading facility, care and love to 25 male children and 25 female children. These are the children who do not have the possibility to stay with their mothers and even struggle for food. If this opportunity is not provided they will easily become child workers or street kids and are more vulnerable to abuse. This programme rescued them from abusive environment and restored their right to education and right to childhood.



*Children at Dinning at the newly build CECOWOR children home*

They were also given support to buy books, note books, school uniform, and stationeries and to meet out the school fees expenses. The male children were accommodated in the home run by CECOWOR and female children in other homes specifically running for the girl children. The children who are living in the newly constructed building and all the children and the CECOWOR team is very happy and thankful to ACA Denmark for supporting the purchase of land and construction



*A view of the children during study hours*

### ***The case of Pugalenti and his brother Purushothuman...***

Mr. Balakrishnan (70 years) and Sakunthala (60 years) are the grandparents of the twin children Pugalenti and Purushothuman who are in the CECOWOR children home. Balakrishnan and his wife Sakunthala are poor coolies belonging to the Konalur village. They had two daughters. The eldest one is Amudha (mother of the twin children) who got married to Ragulan. Both of them have been working in Chennai in the construction industry, leaving the children at the care of the grandparents.

The father doubted the character of the mother, and so there has been a lot of quarrels between them. The mother is put in to physical harassments as a result she committed suicide. Due to this the father never came even to see their children in the village. The old grandparents only have to take care of the children.

The younger daughter of Balakrishnan went to Bangalore to work as a domestic servant where she developed sexual contact with a man without marriage. As a result she became the mother of two children (Gowri, 3 years female baby and Darshna, 2 years male baby) and the father of the children abandoned the mother and children. So she left the children at the care of the father, who went to work as a domestic servant in Chennai.

So this old couple is overburdened with caring of four children without any income. The only income on which they survive is out of their work in the agricultural fields, but as they are old they are not able to go to work every day. So at the request of the grandfather we have admitted both Pugalenti and Purushothuman in the children home. Now these children are happy studying in the St. Michael school.





*Balakrishnan, his wife and the four grandchildren in their house*



*Close-up view of them*



*Pugalenth and Purushothuman at CECOWOR children home*



*At the St. Michel's school*

- ii. **Support children living with mothers:** 100 children of widows who are not able to meet educational expenses were given assistance to buy books, note books, school uniform, and stationeries and to meet out the school fees expenses.



*A child and his mother receiving the educational supplies from SI of police Mr.Saravanan and Tasildar Mrs.Parimala*



*View of the children and parents gathered to receive the educational supplies*



*Educational supplies ready for distribution*

**iii. Self confidence, advocacy and support services:**

Trainings and get-togethers to raising the awareness and motivation to build the self confidence and promote leadership skills for the 150 children has been organised for duration of three days

The following topics covered in the trainings are:

- Self development
- Confidence building.
- Building trust
- Creative thinking and innovation
- Listening and communication skills
- Social analysis
- Planning and team building
- Leadership style

**iv. Other activities:**

- One day Picnic was organised to see Sathanur dam.
- Awareness education on environment and motivation for action on waste disposal.
- Counselling and support services for the defence of the rights on the widows and the children have been continues activity.
- Facilitation of government schemes and childe welfare services.

**Informal Education centres:**

The objectives of the programme in brief is to reduce dropouts and all its evil consequences like child labour, street children, early marriage and abuse of children by providing informal supplementary teaching on important and difficult academics subjects like mathematics, science and English to the

- a) Dropouts at the 10<sup>th</sup> standard level
- b) The early year's dropout who wants to directly write the 10<sup>th</sup> Standard government examination.
- c) And the school going 10<sup>th</sup> standard children who will be writing their exams in the currents year

Besides teaching in the academic subjects' introduction to basic computers, promote leadership skills, managerial skills and functional general knowledge for life, Life coping skills, interpersonal relationship, self confidence and communication skills among these children are also part of the information education. Involve them in useful social activities and prepare them to be useful citizen with a value of concern for humanity and environment.

The following are the impacts of the activities carried out:



*Analysis of news,  
practical general  
knowledge*



*Informal education  
centre at Palapadi  
village*

No	Activity	Impacts
1	Regular tuitions and coaching classes in 7 seven villages for two hours a day	238 children have attended these classes out this 131 are female children. Total pass percentages is 84%, 40 children scored above 350 marks
2	Counselling and motivation to the children and family to continue education	29 children have re-entered in to schools. Out of this 27 are female children

3	Capacity building and improvement of competency	Training given on leadership skills, managerial skills and functional general knowledge for life, Life coping skills, interpersonal relationship, self confidence and communication skills for 210 children. Now the children developed long term vision for life and social consciousness has raised i.e. Two children are organising evening classes for the small kids on their own on voluntary basis in their villages. Girl children are more assertive now than before to continue their education.
4	Introduction to computer & ICT	Rural children got acquainted with computer and the need for information technology in every day life. For 98 percentages of the children it is the first time they had chance to touch a computer. Some of them are wishing to become software engineers in future.
5	Social and environmental involvement	All the children planted at least one tree. Now the children know how to dispose the waste in their control. Some of the children are growing plants in their houses out of the waste water from their house.
6	Career guidance and linkage	Online registrations at employment exchange were done for 150 children. 34 children were guided to join the vocational trade courses. Scholarships were facilitated to 27 children and educational loans were facilitated to 7 children.

### ***Preschool centres and after school clubs***

Early childhood care and education to the children below six years and organising after school club activities for the 6-12 years children are the major aims of the program  
Activities and its results are presented below:

No	Activity	Results
1	Crèche and preschool activities	Early childhood care and education to 79 children (39 are female) children of age group 3-5 years. Provision of clean and safe day care services for the poor working mothers. Provided snacks to all the children. Functioned as centre of motivation and the physical, mental, social and emotional needs of the young child met through a clean and healthy environment. Nurtured the habit of school going from early childhood.
2	After school clubs	81 children of age group 6-12 years (out of this 44 are female children) benefited. Better study environment and help with home works. Promote practical general knowledge and improved

		confidence and self esteem. Developed regular school going habit.
3	Awareness and advocacy	<p>Twenty one pregnant mothers were given training on postnatal and prenatal care and care during pregnancy and at various stages in the child's development</p> <p>150 Parents were given training on positive.</p> <p>0% dropouts, 100% enrolment and 12 dropout children re-enrolled at the primary level.</p> <p>Increased awareness on locally available nutritional foods.</p> <p>Increased awareness on the schemes and child welfare activities of the government.</p> <p>100% children are immunised and vaccinated.</p> <p>Water and sanitation awareness given to the parents</p>

### ***Children sponsorship:***



*Maria joy darwin  
sponsor child  
with his family*

Totally 36 children were supported through the sponsorship support from ACA Denmark. 14 of the children staying in hostel were supported with school expenses, uniform, books & note books, stationery items and also boarding and lodging expenses to stay in a hostel. 22 children studying from home have been supported with school expenses (annual fees, monthly fees, exam fees) uniform, books & note books, stationery items etc. Besides this Danish India child care (DICC, Denmark) specially supported 30 poor girl children with educational supplies like books, note books, uniform, school bags and school fee.

### **5. Human rights/education support for Tribal people:**

We kindly express our sincere thanks to Just Trust and the Four Acre Trust for their support in the year 2010-2011 for the continuation of the project "Human rights education and educational support for Tribal people in 27 extension villages and to continue some of the activities in the original 7 villages in the Melmalaynur block of Tamil

Nadu, South India.” It is the final year of the partnership project for which are very thankful to Graham Prescott for his genuine guidance and advice which has been instrumental in witnessing some concrete changes in the life of the Tribal people. Facilitation to have better access to human rights, to become economically better, and education support to their children are thrust areas of the programme.

Activities and achievements during the year are given below:

**Awareness/Access to Rights/Economic Betterment:**

- Folk media and street theaters have been used to raise the general societal awareness of the tribal people so that they become conscious about various actors and factors which have influence on their life. Also these theaters set vision for change in their situation mainly among the youngsters and children. 3 programmes in each of the four clusters of villages have been organized.
- Trainings conducted and number of participants.

Topic	Male	Female	Total
Human rights & assertiveness	126	234	360
Orientation on Prevention of atrocities Scheduled caste & scheduled tribe act, dowry prohibition act, Child labour act and right to information act.	125	255	380
Income generation activities orientation	126	247	373
Total	377	736	1113

- After the trainings the tribal people are confident and are more assertive in establishing their rights. These people feel and see changes happening in the attitudes of the other caste people. For example In the village Reddipalalyam village 78 families are living Mr.Elumalai son of Muniyachetti belonging to a high caste had sexual relationship with Tribal girl Malar as a result the girl became pregnant but the boy ran away to the Chennai city. But boy’s parents with the help of village heads were compelling the girl to accept small monetary compensation. The girl and her family were motivated to file case in the police station. With continued follow-up the boy was brought from Chennai and the boy and his family was explained with the consequences they will face legally for raping the girl. Finally boy and his family did not have any other option than marrying the girls and accepted the girl in their family and marriage registration was arranged in the police station itself. This set an example for the tribal people in the surrounding villages and two more inter-caste marriages (one in Muruganthangal village and another one in Jombothi village) have taken place after same kind of legal battle. After this rape and having sexual intercourse with tribal girls on falls promise of marriage has reduced.
- Others things facilitated are as follows:
  - Family cards obtained from civil supplies- 257 families
  - Community certificate - 612
  - Voting rights -284
  - Maternity assistance – 45 pregnant women
  - Old age pension -126
  - Welfare board identity cards- 338 families
  - Registration of birth and death- 132
  - Free one light-114 families
  - Government group house - 136 families

- 47 new Self Help Groups amount to 32,90,000 Rupees out of this 8, 65,000 is a subsidy.

**Educational Support:**

- 273(female 130) children were given school bags, note books, uniforms and educational material.
- 25 children (13 female) were motivated and facilitated to enroll in schools and 13 dropouts (5 female) were facilitated to re-enroll in schools.
- 8 Informal education centres are functioning in the villages providing the facilities of supervisory studies and help with homework and educational entertainment. Social education, leadership and self confidence building trainings are also conducted from these centres. The following is the list of children at present attending the centres:

Name of centre	Number of Children		
	Male	Female	Total
Jambothi	16	25	41
Mel nemeali	16	17	33
Kapplambadi	13	08	21
Kottapoondi	19	17	36
Melacherri	21	17	38
Vadapalai	24	15	39
Gnanodayam	22	18	40
Gandhi Nagar	12	13	25
Total	143	130	273



*Education centre at Jambothi*

As a result of functioning of the centres children are more regular in attending school than before and also their performance in the school exams has improved. Out of the total school going children 11 children come to first 3 Ranks in their respective classes.



Difficulties faced includes

- Migration to distance places to find jobs is still a problem.
- Superstitious beliefs about different aspects including health are still very strong and the tribal people are very much emotionally tuned to this. Very slow changes are happening in this aspect (that to only among youngsters).
- Habitation and occupying of river banks and grazing lands is challenged in the Courts and still pending in the court and this makes it very difficult for us to assist the Tribal in gaining legal rights to the places they occupy.

## **6. Gypsy education and advocacy programme**

Children from two locations i.e. MGR Nagar and Kalaiyur have been given the following educational supports

- 88 (female 37) children were given school bags, note books, uniforms and educational material. 8 children (3 female) were motivated and facilitated to enroll in schools.
- Continues motivation and counseling to the parents and the children was given.
- Edutainment, social education, leadership and self confidence are also conducted for these children.
- Facilitated scholarship from Gypsy welfare board to five children.

Other welfare measures facilitated to the Gypsies are

Family cards obtained from civil supplies- 2 families

Voting rights -4

Welfare board membership- 15 families

Maternity assistance – 1 pregnant woman

Relief for death of family haed-1

Government group housing site - 2 families

Three Self Help Groups have been given guidance one group availed the direct loan of 1 Lakh from the Indian Bank.

## **7. Bio intensive garden :**

This garden is being promoted at HRD centre at Aniladi from here

- 150 Herbal medicinal plants are grown and nurseries of herbal as well as endangered plants are being thought green house method.
- Spirulina is being cultivated
- Vermi compost is being prepared
- And training are given to other NGOs and self help groups on medicinal plants raising, vermin compost and spirulina cultivation.

## **8. Skills training**

21 Young girls who were dropouts were given training on dress making and embroidery. 12 Girls who have completed their 10<sup>th</sup> standard education were given one year training on female nursing assistant and on completion of the course a diploma certificate has been awarded to the girls. There is a high demand for nursing assistant and so all the girls have secured employment and earn at least a minimum Rupees 3000 per months.

We are happy to acknowledge here that DICC( Danish Indian child Care) has supported the cost of training equipments and material.

There is high demand for the girls who completed the female nursing assistant training both in the local clinics and big hospitals. This is evidenced from the fact that 38 girls (one who did not join employment due to her own reasons) out of 39 girls who completed the trainings in the last two year have got some job. Many of them are absorbed in the hospitals or clinics where they got their trainings during practical training period.

The details are furnished below.

S.No	Place of work	Name of the Clinic/hospitals	Number of girls working	Monthly salary range
1	Marur village	Self employed	1	Rs.6000 to Rs.8000
2	Gingee	PRK Hospital, Sandanam clinic, Rajendra clinic, Sankari clinic	8	Rs.2500 to Rs.3500
3	Aniladi	St .Joseph hospital	1	Rs.2500
4	Tindivanam	St .Joseph hospital	3	Rs.2500 to Rs.3500
5	Thiruvannamali	Grace hospital	3	Rs.3500 to Rs.4500
6	Pondicherry	Venkateswara hospital, Padmavathi hospital, Cluny hospital	13	Rs.3500 to Rs.4500
7	Villupuram	E.S. Hospital	3	Rs.3500 to Rs.4500
8	Chennai	Balaji hospital, Vignesh hospital	6	Rs.3500 to Rs.4500

### **Tears of Joy.... Mrs. Revathi's Case:**

I am 36 years old; belong to a village called Thiruvampattu a village in Gingee Taluk. My father left my mother and my mother was struggling even to give food to me and myself. Due to my family conditions I was not able to continue my studies after 10<sup>th</sup> standard. My Mother married me to Mr. Murugan from Villupuram 46 kilometers from my villages soon two male children are born. The elder son is physically handicapped 16 years old and the second child aged 13 years is mentally retarded. This is the major reason for the separation of my husband. He never goes to work regularly and spent major portion of the money earned on the liquor. Everyday was hell for me there has been always fight and quarrels in the family. I underwent all the abuses and kept on staying with my husband because if I separate from him I cannot do any thing. Even the small occasional income he brings will be lost then I and my children have to starve and also my mother was not able to support me.



*Revathi at clinic*

But on the unfortunate day my husband chased me away from the house and I was left with no option than returning to my mother with my two children. I wanted to give good food, clothes and education to my children but my low qualification and no skills pushed me to work as agricultural labourer for wage of Rs. 60 per day that to was also not a regular income.

At this time in the year 2007 I came to know that CECOWOR organization is giving training to the girls on female nursing assistant. In the beginning I was little hesitant to join the course due to my age (all the other girls were very young) and married status (usually girls will not be allowed to study after marriage). Also there were discouragements from the community but CECOWOR staffs continually persuaded me and built my confidence to take the course. So I did join the one year course and completed practical training for three months at the Sankari clinic at Gingee.

I started treating small wounds, pains, snakes and insects bites and giving first aid within the villages and in turn the villagers paid me fee. From the knowledge and experiences gained from my practical training at the clinic I also started functioning as birth attended in the villages.



*With her children*

Having seen my service the people from the neighboring villages also started coming to me. So my reputation has increased and my services are very much needed in the villages where there are no frequent transport facilities and first aids during emergencies and treating minor ailments that are common to the villages.

On an average I earn an income of Rs.200 to 300 a day. Now I have set up a small clinic in a near by village Marur and I was able to buy a small place for my house. My elder son is studying 11<sup>th</sup> standard in a private school in Gingee. My husband is also considering joining me again. I never thought that this skills training I got from CECOWOR will completely turn my life from complete hopelessness to hope and from degrading life to lucid dignified life with self respect. I recommend this course to every poor girl as it will definitely help to stand on their own feet.

While Mrs. Revathi narrates her story **tears are rolling over her eyes. ...The tears of joy..... the tears of hope for future..... the tears exhibiting achievement.**

## **9. National girl children day**

**The massive genocide:** The Indian government planned to observe January 24 (the day Mrs. Indira Gandhi took over as the first woman Prime Minister of India in 1966) as the National Girl Child Day to raise public awareness on the deep bias against the female, regarding sex-selection abortion and female infant abandonment. The census 2011 shows that the sex ratio among the children 0-6 years is 914 female babies for 1000 male babies. It has been the trend since the 1961 where it was 941 female babies per 1000 male babies. This shows that there is a massive genocide taking place quietly but not many are concerned about it. Despite the ongoing various empowerment programmes by various organizations including the government there is steady decline in the female population.

This leads to the inferences that:

- These empowerment programmes were not able to address the issue well enough at the grass root level.
- The loopholes in the legislations (example PNDT act) are safe heavens for the offenders to escape from the legal actions and misuse the system.
- In a community where the discriminations (gender bias, economic inequality, child trafficking, child labour, female feticide, and child marriage) are so strong, most of the time having cultural and religious sanctions and are internalized both by the male and female, raising the awareness level alone will not bring in the desired result but a strong political will to enact and enforce more stringent laws to protect the girl child and punish the offender are needed.
- The problem of declining female population is not only the result of lack of awareness, in fact many people seem to be aware of the problems but it is more of the result of socio economic implications of having a female child in the family.
- So the problem is needed to be addressed from a different angle to i.e. legitimize the ownership of development and technological progresses in favour of the female population so as to result in a socio economic change that is leading towards gender equality. Without doing this observing a national day will be only a ceremonial one.

So at CECOWOR we organise series of events and activities to observe the National girl children with strong commitment to witness change in the attitude and it has been supported by DICC (Danish Indian Child Care) Denmark. The following were the objectives;

- To raise public awareness, sensitization of civic society and various stake holders' on the deep bias against female children and on their girl rights.
- .Hopefully this will also raise public awareness to change in attitude of male baby preferences, of sex-selection abortions and female abandonment.
- Promote understanding and awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications to the girl children situation.
- Impart knowledge to the stake holders on the role-responsibilities in child protection initiatives in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

**Activities carried out:**

**Village level birthday events:**

Birth days of the girl children born on the 24<sup>th</sup> January were celebrated in 30 villages of Gingee Taluk. The birth days were effective the medium to reach and involve the people. This really reached big number of people as it was a novel one very much different from the stereotyped observation of the days. It has trickled up enormous amount of motivation and encouragement in people, children and parents beside the spread of awareness

Speeches were given speeches, posters were displayed, and bit notices distributed. Villagers were gathered at one place in their villages to celebrate the day as public event. Loudspeakers were also hired. The respective PLF and SHG were actively involved in the organising the event. For many girls it will be first time they celebrate the birthday because they are seen as unwanted liability to the family. According to our plan we have celebrated birth days in 30 villages for the girl children born on the born on the 24<sup>th</sup> January. In a few villages there were two children born on that day where we celebrated the day combined



*Birth day event*

Child Name : Suguna .S  
 Village Name : Nadupattu  
 Guest : Kaliyaperumal

The following the information given in the villages:

- Discriminatory conditions of the girl children from womb to the graveyard.
- Rights of the girl children.
- Discrimination starts at home
- Existing laws for the protection and on the rights of girl children.
- Families and other duty bearer's responsibilities.
- Girl child abuse and poverty as a threat to girl children rights.
- Cultural attitudes and practices curtailing the rights of the children.
- Challenges and opportunities in promoting the girl children rights.

The following the table shows the number of participants in event

Number of village	: 30
Number of children whose birthdays were celebrated:	32
Important personalities	: 72
Number of villagers participated	: 1923 (1128 female)

- The programmes were organized with the involvement of the women groups in the villages and PLF in the villages.
- Besides all the villagers the participants of the programmes are ( it varies from village to village) ,women group members, panchayat presidents, Panchayat council members, youth, public servants like nurses, nutritional organizers, and the school children have participated. In one village called Klathampattu the MLA (Member of legislative assembly) of Mel malyanur constituency has participated. He happens to be native of this village.
- The illustrative posters were pasted in the villages, loud speakers hired, cakes and candies and gifts were bought for the children. The whole day was a celebration the loud speaker playing music before the actual event and the children and whole village getting ready for the event.
- The programme as whole gathered the attention of every one as we expected because it was a novel one and developed curiosity to what it is actually not only among the our intended audience but to a wide spread audience.
- It is well received by every one and even among various caste groups. No one in the villages was aware of this day and this the first time that they come to know about the National girl children day.
- All most 90% of the children and their families forgot the date of the birth. Some of them even do not know the date of birth. Only through this programme they come to know about the day.
- Now there is general feeling in the village that girls children do have rights. And many of the rights they came to know the first time. Previously they did not realize it or they were ignorant about it. Some of them have openly accepted their guilty feeling for what they have been doing for the girl children before
- The villagers have got the awareness on the rights of the girl children in general and information on the protections available under the national and international law.
- It developed self confidence in the children and the parents of the girl children.
- In some of the villages the participants mainly the youngsters have taken pledge and oath to against all the discriminations prevailing in their village and monitor the situation within their village.

### **Ever lasting memory in my whole life.....-Women story.**

My name is Lilly I originally belong to Chetpet. Me and my sister are two female children to my Parents my father died when I was 6 years old. As mother often falling sick she was not able to go for work and so my elder sister has to stop her education and go for coolie work to feed three of soon she also went way with a man. So me and my mother have been suffering for food. At that time I was 15 years old and the only option available to me was to go for work in the construction. I know what it means to be a female in a male dominated society.

At the work place I got attracted to the nice words of a man I became pregnant and soon we started living together in village called Mavananthal and got two kids one female Saranya and one male Gopi. Within a few years my husband developed contact with another woman and left us alone to live together with that woman. My attempts to live with him again failed. So from this one can understand that how bitter full my life is as I am born as female. I always hated myself for being born as women and also my daughter

I developed inferiority complex and very low self esteem. But this birth celebration has created lasting memory in my life that I will remember far ever for making me not feel bad for having daughter but I feel proud. I am happy to see that many important people and CECOWOR staff celebrating my daughter's birth day. This has given me courage to face difficult situation. I going to celebrate my child's birthday every year and I do not feel inferior for being born as female.

**School awareness programmes:** Organized between 21<sup>st</sup> February and March 6<sup>th</sup> 2011 in 30 schools in Gingee taluk to raise awareness of the school children on the condition of girl children and their rights. Total number persons reached is 6709 ( this include Male teachers 147, female 79, male children and 3484 female children 2999

Head masters of all selected 30 schools have given full cooperation and enthusiastically participated in the programme.

- Awareness programmes were organised in the respective school campuses.
- Both the male and female have participated in the awareness program.
- Beside speeches, songs cultural performances were organised on the girl children conditions and rights.
- Participatory and brain storming methods were followed. The teachers and children were also asked to share their views and experiences.
- Illustrative posters and charts were displayed in the school premises.
- Written information on the girl children rights were given out.
- The entire school has taken pledge to respect the girl children rights and spread the messages to their families and neighbours.



*The school children perform in school awareness programme*

**Oral evaluation & feedback.**

- We understood the depth of the girl children problems.
- It is the first time that such a practical problem is being discussed in schools and we realise that these kind of awareness should be continued every year.
- Our perspectives on gender have changed.
- We students can make real change and ensure good future for the girls.
- So far we have been taking all the problems for granted. We have been sticking to serotype roles. We as girl were not able to speak out many of our problems but today you spoke for us.
- The girl children say that get lot of confidence because now only we know that many of the decimations are against law and against the rights of the girl children.
- Hereafter we will treat our fellow girls' children equal, previously we were not even aware that what we are doing is wrong.

**Federation leader's training on advocacy for girl children rights:**

This training for the women self help group federation leaders training took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 on advocacy for girl children rightsGingee. Totally 45 women leaders have participated in the trainings

**Objectives of the training are:**

1. Discuss conditions of the girls' children and options of actions to restore the rights of girl children.
2. Motivate and provide them with necessary information and tools to take actions. Some of the commonly found problem of girl children in this region:
  - Abandoning the female children
  - Discrimination in food and health care.
  - No play or recreation instead has to assist the mother in household works.
  - Education denied
  - Not allowed to take decisions
  - Early marriage and compelled marriages
  - Not allowed to ride bike or motorcycle and restrictions on dresses.
  - Not provided opportunities for higher educations and technical educations..
  - Denied the rights over ancestral properties
  - All forms of abuses (physical, mental and sexual).



Following is the summary and conclusion for the discussion on what they want to do:

As an Individual

- We will not under go or encourage any of our family members to under go sex determination test.
- Here after we will treat our children equally. Ensure the rights of girl children within our families
- Give education to both the children.
- Here after we will not insist on serotype roles. Not to impose male dominated values on the girls children
- I will make my family realize the importance girl children and will see to it there is a gradual change in their attitude especially among male members.
- I will assert the rights of my girl child.

In the SHG and in the community:

- We will discuss with all the SHG members on the thing we learnt today. Give information on the rights of the children to all the self help group members. First of all bring about the change in the attitude of the members of the self groups
- Draw a resolution in the SHG to respect the girl children rights. Support each other when issues are taken up by any women group
- Any member not sending her child to school will be removed from the SHG.
- Wherever possible we will give small support to girls' children going to school.
- Will make representation to make toilet facilities for girl in the schools.
- Wherever possible we will attend the parents teachers meeting and gramsabha to represent the women rights in general and the girl children rights in particular.
- Take up issues at the village level and help the victims.
- Whoever find a violation will immediately inform to the care providers
- Give awareness on the child help line and women help line

#### **Impacts of the programme:**

- i. The programme has created awareness among the villagers and schools. Directly reached 2057 persons (1923+30+32 girls children+72) through birth day programme. 176 teachers and 6483 school children were directly reached by the school awareness programme.
- ii. 45 women leaders are now capable of analyzing the girl children rights and able to identify the issues.
- iii. So far about 160 women groups have passed a resolution that they will send their girl children to school same like their male children
- iv. Every SHG to become eligible for CECOWOR facilitated loans they have to send their girl children to school and should not send their children to work.
- v. From what has been reported from the SHGs 29 dropout children rejoined the school in the last academic year.
- vi. Groups from Alamoondi village, Melselambadi village and Gingee town have organized and enrollment campaign.

- vii. In the Kilvailamur Panchayat the village president passed a resolution in the Grama Sabha to celebrate the National Girl children day every year on behalf of the panchayat. The president also made a representation at the village president's association about this girl child day.
- viii. In Viramanallu village with the help of the SHG and the CECOWOR Muniyammal has filed a police case for her husband's dowry harassment. The husband was arrested and after counseling nowadays he is not harassing the wife. This created a fear in many of the people around the villages.
- ix. The women groups in Gingee helped to rescue 7 child workers from the tea shops and restaurants.
- x. In Pakkam, Alampoondi village area 3 girls below 18 years were rescued from prostitution and with the guidance of CECOWOR they got short term training mobile phone mechanism and now they are working in assembling unit.

## 10. Women Development Programme

Poverty alleviation and social empowerment among women through self help group methods are the two major aims of this program. We work in cooperation with Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of women Limited, various departments of government and Banks to realize this aims. The major cooperating nationalized banks were State bank of India, Indian bank, Punjab national banks, Indian overseas bank and cooperative banks at various levels

The following is the Status of the self help groups during the year 2010-2011:

Groups from last year	: 538
New women groups formed	: 9
Total number of groups	: 547
Savings turnover during the year	:Rs.10837840
Revolving fund facilitated	:Rs.4800000(800000 is subsidy)
Loans for economic activity	:Rs.6300000(1312500 is subsidy)
Direct loans availed	: Rs.4040000



*A women group receiving direct loan*



*Women  
leaders  
meeting*

These SHGs also have functioned as pressure groups to initiate changes, take up issues of common concern and defend the rights of the members in the village level.

#### **11. Other activities**

a. CECOWOR has organised the following campaigns

- Child labour eradication campaign
- Breast feeding campaign
- Aids Awareness
- National girl children day
- Compulsory enrolment rally and

All important days like women's day, Independence Day Human rights day, AIDS day, May Day, Child Labour day etc were observed.

b. Magalir Pongal. Usually Pongal festival (Harvest festival) is celebrated for four days and this year to respect the women's contribution in the agricultural fields we have celebrated a fifth day of pongal calling "women Pongal" along with the Self help group members.



*Magalir  
pongal at  
Kalarpalyam*

- c. CECOWOR continued to be effective member at
- DPCC District project coordinating committee
  - Block level bankers committee
  - Gingee Town schools committee
  - Female infanticide and child abuse prevention and vigilance committee in 3 blocks
  - Free legal aid cell.
  - Tamil nadu Ngo Alliance for Empowering panchayat Government

## **12. Challenges and future focus:**

- Every year we beginning with new challenges and unmet challenges of previous years which are our future focus, they are;
- Capacity building of Tribal, dalits, Gypsies, women and the marginalised rural poor in this region through life education skills to alleviate poverty by ensuring their basic needs fulfilled.
- Ensuring their the civic participation in equal footing with others to ensure their civil rights and economic, social and cultural rights are protected
- Providing to every child in the region equal quality education. Ensuring the practical general education combined with some skills for the illiterate to equip themselves to earn living in the global economy.
- Protection of the environment and help with target group to for adaptation and mitigation of global warming.
- Human rights promotion, protect the marginalised groups, women, children and female children particular.
- Ensuring rightful position of minorities and indigenous people in the society.

Your Comments, suggestions, advice are most welcome.

**Compiled by M.Susairaj, Director, CECOWOR**