

## Conversation with Siddamma

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### Tsunami Rehabilitation

Cuddalore – Livelihood rehabilitation is continuing in full swing and with the help of save-the-children the villages have been able to get boats and nets. We are also working on small agro businesses, petty kadai, etc. We now have land for housing for all communities MGR Nagar (purchased land for 70 families), Agaram Pudu Nagar (purchased land for 130 families), North Pichavaran, South Pichavaram (purchased land for 28 families). In Tiruvallur we were able to get land from the government, however, government land is available in Cuddalore in this area and we had to purchase the land.

Q: What is the situation about schools in the villages?

A: There is no government school in the villages since they don't even have homes. We are running a motivational center for the children.

Tiruvallur – Most of the work of Tsunami recovery is almost done. We are working on follow up work with Action AID. Some villages have also received land from the government and some support for housing. In Palavakam government has also started a balavadi center.

### Resource Center

There has been heavy rain in the resource center. Some of the peanuts, etc were washed away. Of the 5 farmers who had expressed interest, two have started working with the staff to transform their land.

There has been one development for housing for the released bonded laborers. Housing has been approved by the government for the released bonded laborers 72 houses in Rs. 32,000 each. Work order is not usually through the community itself and through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party and a good part of the funds get lapped up between the contractor and the government official. The construction will go through the community instead of a contractor. During the process of construction the released bonded laborers who are staff at the resource center need to be at their village to help with construction.

Q: Why will the staff come back to the resource center if their home is 30 km away?

A: Housing is being provided will suffice only for a joint family gets housing not everyone. They will help with the housing for their brothers and family.

We are continuing to work on making sure that the government scheme to provide 2 acres of land will happen. Not just for the Irulas, but for all poor. To make such a scheme actually useful each staff member should become a resource person. We are working towards this goal.