



Fellowship Siddamma

Annual Review for June 2022 - May 2023

Budget Proposal for 2023-24

Asha Austin

June 27, 2023

Background

- ❑ Asha supported various projects with Siddamma since 2004 and Asha Fellow since 2005.
- ❑ Social worker and activist: worked extensively to empower the Irula Tribe and Unorganized Labor.
- ❑ Instrumental in the release of bonded laborers from rice mills in the Red Hills Area.
- ❑ Community Resource Center created by Siddamma promotes the use of the natural/organic cultivation systems and traditional seeds. She has trained 1000s of local farmers and students on tradition organic farming practices.
- ❑ Creates coops, social program and advocacy programs
- ❑ Provides education to children, women and farmers through Bharathi Trust (since 1990)
- ❑ Awarded Trafficking in Persons Hero – 2006
- ❑ **Project Page** <https://ashanet.org/project/?pid=579>

Kari Siddamma

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Geographical Spread

Tamil Nadu
Andhra Pradesh
Karnataka

Active Period

ASHA since 04
Over 30 years

People Serving

Irula Tribe

Women &
Children

Farmers

Laborers

Bigger Causes

Labor Rights

Women
Empowerment

Organic
Awareness

Irula Rights &
Integration

Irula
Empowerment

Need Based Efforts

Tsunami

Cyclones

COVID

Dispute
Resolution

Lifelong pursuit, Selfless, Committed, Overcomes (Personal & Societal) Hardships

Mission and Vision

❑ Mission of the Fellow :

- ❑ Uplift and empower the Irula Tribe. Create a society where life and livelihood is possible for all
- ❑ Make them aware of their rights (understanding that laws exist for the people to earn minimum wage)
- ❑ Community based resource center to educate economically disadvantaged, provides skills to sustain. Revive traditional/organic farming methods.

❑ Vision :

- ❑ Setting up rice mill at the Farm and having the Irulas own the rice mill
- ❑ Bring basic amenities electricity, gas, housing and water.
- ❑ To train local leaders to represent the community and ensure equitable development for the community and ensure that funds from the Tribal Welfare Board is used effectively.

Strengths and Weakness

☐ Strengths :

- ☐ In the field – heavily connected and involved with the community she serves. Knows of all the daily issues they face and is present with them to resolve issues/conflicts
- ☐ Empowering women leaders in several villages and enabling them to resolve their own issues

☐ Weakness :

- ☐ Siddamma is a one-woman army – she does not have a team going out to seek funding for her or providing any administrative help to her.
- ☐ Dependence on only Asha for funds.

Recent Updates and Progress

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- ❑ The Tribal department director has been very good with the Sarpam Sangam
- ❑ The Tribal Department Director is actively working on giving pattas to Irulas in several districts/villages.
- ❑ Three to four months of travel to many villages and meetings to identify people who do not have pattas
- ❑ Several people living on objectionable land that don't have patta.
- ❑ Many Irulas in Kanchipuram and Cuddalore don't have patta.

Cuddalore – Agaram Pudhunagaram

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- ❑ Sarpam leaders have successfully obtained pattas for several of the Irulas in Cuddalore
- ❑ Shown in the picture here is the Regional Division Officer handing over the patta to the Irulas



Panapakkam Irula Village Meeting

- Celebration for pattas given to several Irulas in Panapakkam



Pettai Irula Meeting

- General meeting in Chidambaram Taluk in Cuddalore where 75 houses were built as part of the rehabilitation effort during Tsunami



Thirukandalam Village Meeting

- Lady in the picture with Siddamma is a student from the block development office who has come to study the community as part of her internship



Tailor Training

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- ❑ Women learning tailoring at Agara Pudunagaram in Cuddalore



Tailor Training

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- ❑ Women group from chengelpettu have been trained by Siddamma and Gita
- ❑ They arranged for 5 tailoring machines for these young ladies
- ❑ They are making these cloth bags and selling to local stores for use



Millet Flour Training



Millet Flour Training

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- ❑ Siddamma has trained a group of Irula women to roast and grind different millets (raagi, chola and other millets)
- ❑ Millet flour is being sold locally and in government hospitals and the Thirutanni panchayat office

Herbal Garden Training

- Siddamma conducted herbal garden training in Cuddalore.
- She helped set up the garden



Herbal Garden Training

- Siddamma has set up a herbal garden at the farm and is training Irula women to set up the garden, maintain and harvest the herbs to make herbal powders and sell to hospitals and local stores.

- Herbs
- Lemongrass
- Insulin
- Thulsi
- Meesai poonai
- Vicks



Potential Rice Mill Set Up at Farm

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- ❑ One of the local rice mills in Pallipattu that Siddamma used for her paddy was shutting down.
- ❑ The owner has known Siddamma for years and decided to give her all the rice mill equipment for free
- ❑ Siddamma has all the equipment stored at Bharathi Trust. Her plans are to expand the godown at the farm to accommodate the rice mill equipment (husk remover, huller, and steamer)
- ❑ She got an estimate from a local technician to expand the frame of the godown entrance to be able to bring in the equipment, to connect them and bring in electricity.
- ❑ Her plan is to have the Irulas own and run the rice mill and reap the benefits from the sale of rice/wheat etc. Since the Irulas have worked at rice mills before, they have the technical know how to operate these machines.
- ❑ ***Siddamma stated it would cost Rs. 3.5 Lakhs to set this up at the farm and get it running***
- ❑ ***Yet to get a breakdown of costs from Siddamma***

Proposed Rice Mill Set Up at Farm

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Proposed Rice Mill Setup at Farm

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Site Visit Compliance

- ❑ Last site visit was conducted in person by Sowmya Suryanarayanan on Dec 28, 2022
 - ❑ Attendees : Sowmya Suryanarayanan and Siddamma
 - ❑ Site Visit Report: [Site visit report](#)

FCRA Compliance

- FCRA for BharathiTrust is valid till October 2028

Fellowship Disbursal

- ☐ For the time period of April 2023 through March 2024 we will disburse Rs. 4, 20,000
- ☐ Time to vote
 - ☐ Yes: 8
 - ☐ No: 0
 - ☐ [Meeting Minutes Notes](#)



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Thank You
Asha Austin