

Virtual Site Visit Report (September 2025)

The site visit was conducted on **15 September 2025** with Siddamma in the village of Gummudipoondi. She was accompanied by the Sarpam Sangam for a meeting. The Asha Austin Team had the opportunity to discuss with Siddamma the recent progress, her vision for 2026, and the current challenges faced by the community.

Attendees from Asha Austin: Rangakrishnan Srinivasan, Sowmya Suryanarayanan, V K Gupta, Ankita and Kaavya Venkat

Recent Updates and Progress

1. Housing for Irula Families

- 63 Irula families who previously did not own land successfully obtained patta.
- The patta was registered in the name of the women in each family, marking a significant step in women's empowerment.
- The government sanctioned INR 4,37,000 for each household.
- Homes were constructed by Irula women themselves, showcasing their resilience and self-reliance.
- The Sarpam Sangam takes immense pride in this achievement.

2. Grazing Land Reallocation (Goal for 2026)

- Ongoing work to evaluate illegally occupied grazing lands currently held by landlords.
- Applications will be made to reallocate these lands to Irula families for housing.
- The Sarpam Sangam is leading the effort, completing surveys and preparing documentation for applications.

3. Tailoring Training and Livelihood Opportunities

- The Tribal Department is setting up a Production and Tailoring Training Center for Irula women.
- The government has allocated over INR 1 crore for construction and

equipment, including tailoring machines.

- The Sarpam Sangam is close to finalizing a contract with local schools to supply tailored uniforms.
- This initiative will create sustainable employment opportunities and strengthen women's economic independence.

4. Community Empowerment and Women's Leadership

- These milestones reflect the active leadership of Irula women in driving housing and livelihood initiatives.
- Recognition of women as landowners and skilled producers reinforces their role as key decision-makers in the community.

4. Issues Faced

The Sarpam Sangam members shared that their daily occupations include working as coolies, laborers, and farmers. Due to their limited income, they are unable to afford travel expenses for attending meetings and are seeking support from Asha Austin to cover these costs.

Additionally, Valli, a women leader from the Irula community, highlighted that their village is located in a remote area with no nearby schools. While the Sarpam Sangam is actively working to establish a school closer to the community, they are requesting funds to set up a *balavadi* (early childhood care center) in the interim.

Siddamma also emphasized that the frequent travel required to reach these interior villages for meetings incurs significant expenses for her, and she would greatly appreciate any support from Asha to help cover these costs.

Conclusion

The site visit highlights significant progress in housing, land rights, and livelihood creation for the Irula community, led primarily by women. With government support and the active involvement of the Sarpam Sangam, these initiatives are laying the foundation for long-term empowerment and self-sufficiency.



Homes built by the Irula Women – Proud Achievement for the Irula Community



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