

E. Siddamma



Fellowship Renewal

Background and Education

- 1979-80 Teacher Training Government Teacher Training Institute Chitradurga
- 1980-83 B.A. Sociology Bharath Education Society, Bangalore
- 1981-82 Search Training Centre - Training for personality development and for social work. Included practical experience with teaching street children in Bangalore.
- 1983 Oxfam fellowship for one yr – worked with Abacas, educational resource center in Chennai run by Ammukta Mahapatra.
- 1985 got into activism when working with poor conditions of women in Chennai slums.
- Early 1990 **CRY** - I was teaching the Irula children from 1990 onwards and motivating the tribes for their empowerment and teaching the children using non formal methods of education.

Background and Education cont...

- 1990 - Founded the Bharathi Trust and started working as Managing Trustee with the Irula tribes since then.

Q: Why the name, Bharathi Trust?

A: I really liked a few ideas that Bharathiyar had brought forward that of equality of everyone in the society and that women should be literate and empowered. I took the feminine name Bharathi in honor of these ideas.

- Later in 1990s started training teachers and opened a school for rice mill children.
- 1995 Was working through CRY fellowship.
- 1999 Been associated with Asha through the Bharathi Trust in establishing 8 motivational centers for the Irula tribes to help children ramp up and go to schools.

Bharathi Trust activities: 1) Thiruvallur

Formed Sarpam and the unorganized workers union.

Sarpam is registered under trade union act and also working on getting it registered as a cooperative society.

Different activities of the Sarpam include:

- Building local leadership in Irula tribes
- Educating people of their of basic rights, understanding and utilizing schemes available from the government.
- Over time Sarpam has come to represent the Irulas to the government and many of its members are now included in government committees.
- Over the last year the Sarpam has also been involved with the rescue and rehabilitation of bonded laborers.
- After the Tsunami struck the Sarpam organized communities to help and support each other in the Pulligat area.

Bharathi Trust activities: Thiruvallur

Started motivational centers. These centers use alternate education to get the children to a point where they can integrate into the government schools. The centers run for around 3 yrs and then do a year of follow up work with the government schools. The centers in this district were:

1. Thiruvallur city (95-97): Children of parents working in rice mills.
2. Asha schools: Pulligat 3 schools Rajaratna Nagar, Kullitemadu, Kallukadumedu (00-03). and one yr follow up work with the government school.
3. Mullainagar, Punneri Taluk (00-03) and 1 yr follow up
4. Illevanmedu, Punneri Taluk (00-03) and 1 yr follow up
5. Pundelimedu, Gumdipundi (01-04) and 1 yr follow up
6. Sanjiagaram, Uttakottai taluk (00-03) and 1 yr follow up
7. Kodankuram, Uttakottai taluk
8. Janganapallai, Uttakottai taluk

Bharathi Trust activities: 2) Vellore

- Sarpam related activities and Asha supported schools.
- Working on reactivating a government school in Panakatari. This is in the midst of a thick forest area. There is actually a government school, but there are no teachers.
- Working with brick kin bonded laborers

Bharathi Trust activities: 3) Cuddalore

- Started working with the Irula communities after the Tsunami. We started working in 6 affected areas and have also reached out to 20 other Irula villages. In the 6 villages set up schools for 600 children through Save The Children.
- Trying to address issues concerning education for the children:
 - Government school not very close and the girl children either take care of chores or younger siblings and not going to school.
 - Economic conditions are bad. There is no infrastructure and some parents are desperate and tie a rope to their children and ask them to dive into water and catch crab and prawn. It is easier for parents to pull the children out of water since they are lighter than adults. However, this is very hazardous work and we are trying to build infrastructure and work with parents to change this.

Bharathi Trust activities: 4) Virulupuram

- Interacting with people and made detailed survey of the villages their needs and issues.

Bharathi Trust activities:

Resource center

Would like to create it in the border of Thiruvallur and Vellore. The local community consists of:

- Artisans, weavers, potters , carpenters and small farmers and Irula tribes. Most of the local communities are dalit communities.
- There are also 800 people rescued from bonded labor from Red Hills rice mills and have been provided some land by the government close to this area (6 km-10km away). Government has provided a package for 200 people of around 5 acres of dwelling land)
- The resource center would present an opportunity to the community to attempt various techniques old and new that would be beneficial for income generation and a decent livelihood.

Resource center cont...

Socio-economic background : Economically disadvantaged locations in Thiruvallur district. They are however skilled in basic life skills like fishing, beekeeping, traditional farming. Many have also been working as agricultural laborers and coolie workers in rice mills.

Type of work at the center:

- Curriculum development and teaching methods
- Health & Nutrition
- Alternate Eco. Development

Proposed Fellowship

- The fellowship support is for \$225/month and an additional \$400/year (for travel, communications, etc – receipts will need to be provided)
- The fellowship needs to be provided in 6 monthly installments a month in advance starting July 2005 (for Aug 2005) onwards.
- The fellowship is provided for Siddamma to coordinate all her activities and not limited to a single task e.g. the resource center.
- She will be expected to keep aside some time every month for a conf call (8th of each month) to discuss the progress of her work and answer questions.