



SNEHA

Social Need Education and Human Awareness



Annual Report 2016

30, Kariyangudi Chetti Street
Velippalayam, Nagappattinam-600001

CONTENTS

- **A Word From Us**
- **Our Area**
 - Map & Key Highlights
 - Locations and People
- **Our Focus and Activities**
 - Women Empowerment and Gender Equality
 - Rights of Children and Adolescents
 - Coastal Rights and Livelihood of Fishing Community
 - Networking and Advocacy
 - Policy level interventions
- **Our Challenges and Dreams**
 - Challenges
 - Future



A WORD FROM US



SNEHA incepted with a broader mission to facilitate self-mobilization of marginalized workers in fisheries and allied fisheries of the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry to ascertain their traditional rights for coastal resource and livelihood, with a special focus on women and children from the marginalised fishing community. SNEHA (Social Need Education and Human Awareness) is a Non-Profit Organisations registered in India under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act of 1975. SNEHA strives to work towards “A just society that is free of caste, class, religion, gender, language and age based discrimination through social transformation with peoples’ participation and participatory, consultative, transparent and inclusive system of governance, which ensures the protection and promotion of environment and sustainable development”.



SNEHA reaches out to 51 villages and hamlets in Karaikal and Nagapattinam Districts. Fishing is a way of life and not just a source of income for the fishing communities. Traditionally, fishing communities were self-sustaining entities with an organic relationship with the ocean and market. The



ocean, had given them abundant catch which they sold to the local market and led a fulfilling life. However, the increased demand and resultant rush of unsustainable fishing practices from larger fishing companies and multinationals have not only left a dent to the livelihood of the traditional fishing community but also destroyed the fragile marine ecosystem. The destructive fishing practices such as mechanised fishing which caused depletion of marine resources continues unabated despite several national and international policies, conventions and protocols. The situation is further intensified by importing of subsidized fish from other areas that has sounded a death knell to the existing small-scale and cottage fish industries. With the fish workers losing their right to decide the price of their produce invariably results in chronic loss of their livelihood and it is estimated that over 10 million fish workers are on the verge of losing livelihoods.

With women playing an integral role in the pre-harvest activities like mending of nets, mechanization of the same has had a deep impact on women's economic empowerment. Likewise, women have also been involved in the various post-harvest activities that include marketing as well as processing of fish. With the trade becoming export-oriented, women are marginalized in the marketing as the trend of retail marketing is increasingly replacing the wholesale business. As fish processing has also become industrialized, women involved in the cottage industry of fish processing are forced to close down their units and work as "cheap labourers" in the various industries that violates the labour laws.

The women had been pushed to the margins because of the privatization of wetlands and inland waters whereby they have lost their access to the commons. Women are losing control over the means of production in the fisheries and their rights are reduced from that of an entrepreneur to that of a labourer. They are denied of "profits" but are offered "security nets" that makes life a constant battle. There is no safeguard against sexual harassment at work place and occupational hazards. Further the impact of rampant tourism and emergence of anti-poor development policies related to fisheries and the commons is posing a threat to the very survival of these communities.

In this scenario SNEHA strives to restore the rights of coastal communities, especially women over coastal commons, ensure sustainable and alternative livelihoods and raise their awareness on the threat and degradation of marine

ecosystem and actions to be taken to conserve the same. SNEHA has adopted a rights-based holistic approach to address the issues of coastal communities. Along with advocating for the traditional, economic and environmental rights, SNEHA is actively engaged with the coastal communities to work for their social and cultural transformation and political empowerment. With this objective SNEHA is engaged with the children, adolescent girls, women and traditional panchayaths in spreading awareness about education, health, and sanitation and gender equality. The year 2016 was an eventful year with many activities, campaigns, success and challenges. We are pleased to share our experience in fighting for one of the significant socio-developmental issues and our learning in the journey to empower one of the most marginalised communities in India.

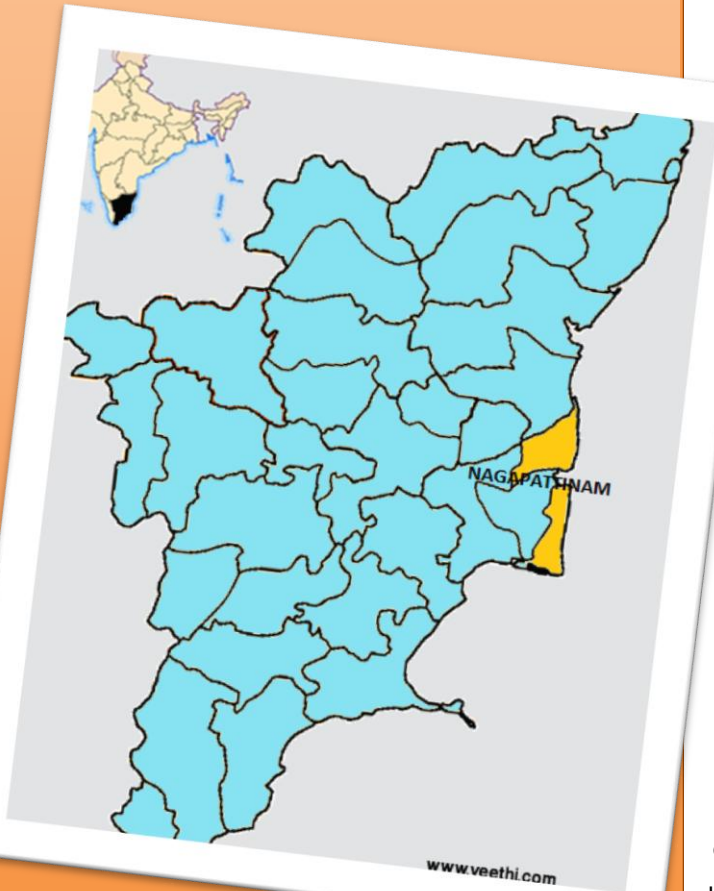


OUR AREAS

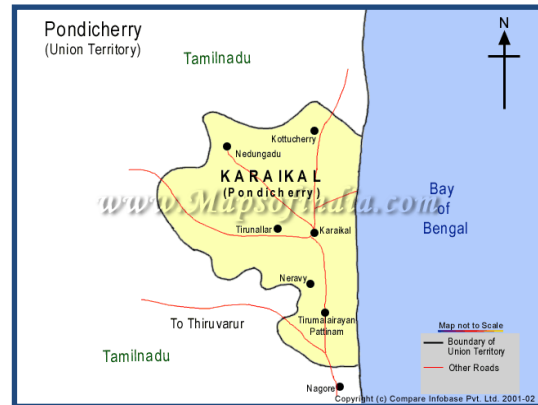
Nagapattinam:

Nagapattinam is a coastal district of Tamil Nadu with a population 1,616,450 with a sex-ratio of 1,025 females for every 1,000 males, much above the national average of 929. Nagapattinam was one of the worst affected districts during tsunami in 2004, accounting for 6,064 off the 8,009 casualties in the state. The victims were predominantly from the fishing community who reside close to the seashore. The damage impacted the fishing industry, as most of the boats were damaged by the inundation. The district has two Lok Sabha constituencies, namely Nagapattinam, and Mayiladuthurai.

Area	2,715.83 km2
Data as per census 2011	
Total Population)	1,616,450
Under the age of Six	84335 – Males, 80,910 – Females
Sex Ratio (Number of Females per 1000 Males)	1025
Literacy Rate	75.04%
Scheduled Caste	31.54% of population
Scheduled Tribe	.23% of the population
Total Households	413,837
Total elementary schools	891
Total Middle School	185
Total High Schools	83



Karaikal is a small coastal enclave of territory with a population of 2,00,314. The district belongs to Pondicherry Union territory. The district has a population density of 1,252 inhabitants per square kilometre. Karaikal has a sex ratio of 1048 females for every 1000 males and a literacy rate of 87.83%.



In the above two major headquarters the work of SNEHA has been divided among the following clusters; Kizhvelure vedai cluster

- Nagapattinam Cluster
- Karaikal Cluster
- Tharangambadi Cluster
- Sirkali Cluster
- Kollidam Cluster



OUR FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES



STRATEGIES

The work of SNEHA is deeply democratic and we believe in mobilising and strengthening the community based organisations to ensure sustainability of the programmes implemented at the grassroots. The programs of SNEHA are implemented through the following strategies;

- Self Help Groups
- Village Co-ordination Sangam
- Cluster & District level Federations
- Children Panchayats at Cluster and District levels
- Adolescent Girls' Groups
- Youth forum
- SMBT, ME & Home shop members



OUR FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

'Gender' as an ideology cuts across all the developmental interventions of SNEHA and we work for women workers in the fishing community in upholding their socio-economic, cultural and political. In addition SNEHA exclusively works on the issue of violence against women and girls and encourage women to participate in democratic decision making at the grassroots level by pushing for their participation in local governance.



Following are some of the major highlights of our intervention among women in the year 2016;

- **We have formed 41 monitoring committees with 205 members at the grassroots that monitors violence against women in their respective areas and meet once in every month. .**
- **114 Members (56%) have been trained and capacitated last year. In the training they have evolved the Roles and responsibilities of the committees.**
- **Death with 11 different cases of right violations of women and all are under legal proceedings.**
- **2016 was also a year where some active monitoring committees suggested sensitizing men on women's rights and involving them in the interventions related to women's rights.**
- **Organised International Women's Day and 16 Days of activism campaign focusing on eliminating 'Nalungu' system (dowry and other such culturally discriminating practices against women)**

Other interventions with respect to Violence against Women and Girls:

SNEHA has a dedicated counselling and legal aid cell that provides emotional and legal assistance and support to women who are in crisis. Most of the cases are settled at the counselling stage ensuring to settle the dispute with fair judgement without compromising the rights of women in any circumstances. If any cases are of extreme nature which demands legal intervention SNEHA assists women to follow the legal path with essential legal assistance.

Total Interventions	Months	Clusters	Number of Cases
Number of Counselling – 29	January	Karaikal	3
	February	Nagapattinam	2
	March	Nagapattinam	4
	April	Karaikal	4
	May	Karaikal	4
	June	Karaikal	2
	July	Karaikal	3
	August	Karaikal	1
	September	Nagapattinam and Karaikal	3
	October	Nagapattinam	1
	November	Karaikal	1
	December	Karaikal	1

Rights of Children and Adolescents

From the inception 'children and adolescent girls' are at the core of SNEHA's focus. However dedicated intervention among adolescents started from past 3 years.

When India aiming to reap the benefit of demographic dividend it is essential to equip the children and adolescent with proper education and required skills and SNEHA is playing its part to make some of the marginalized sections access the mainstream benefits by equipping with required education and skills. In addition it is also essential to provide an intellectual awakening to the young generation around issues such as gender and environmental justice to develop a matured and responsible younger generation.

We have conducted 11 village level monthly meetings for girls and 5 for boys & 1 Cluster level (North) training on Gender & VAW. Nearly 45 adolescent groups attended from 3 clusters in the cluster level training program. The programmes mainly focused on skill building, gender training for adolescent boys, girls and also children. An exposure visit also organized exclusively to girl children. for many it was first time experience to be away from their village.





Dedicated 24/7 Childline service by SNEHA

SNEHA is implementing the CHILDLINE 1098 Karaikal Project as a collaborative organization. The CHILDLINE project is operational in Karaikal district since April 2012 at Karaikal Municipality. This project aims towards creating awareness about CHILDLINE service to the children and the public. Linkages are established with allied government department to protect the rights of the children.



Highlights:

- Circulating pamphlets to the public generated awareness about CHILDLINE, 1098 service. SNEHA reached out to 3197 people by conducting 19 programmes.
- SNEHA reached out to 3536 children of 56 schools. Awareness about CHILDLINE service was spread by issuing pamphlets and by screening films. The awareness on child sexual abuse, child marriage and child labor enabled the team to identify children requiring intervention.
- Eleven open house programmes were conducted. Awareness on CHILDLINE was generated through songs, drama and street play. 1050 children gained awareness because of this programme. Along with children Panchayat leaders from traditional governance structure, SHG members, and youth, adolescent also participated.





The following table shows the consolidated participation from women, girls and children and the total programs conducted in the year 2016 focusing on all these target groups.

S.No.	Programmes	Kollidam	Sirkali	Tharangai	Karaikal	Nagai	K & V	Total
1	Beach Profiling				34			34
2	Adolescent Girls (SRHR and Gender Rights)	17	22	64	13	12	12	140
3	Exposure Visit			48			50	98
4	Adolescent Boys (SRHR and Gender Rights)	60						60
5	Arts & crafts Training	10	28	33	13			84
6	Gender Training for Adolescent Girls			45				45
7	Cluster Level Forum discussions	18	33	37			35	123
8	16 days of Activism	18	192	195				405
9	Women's day			295				295
10	Village Committee Discussions	20						20
11	Village Level VAW Committee		11	8	Nil	17	Nil	36
12	Cluster Level VAW discussion	11	14	22	34	30	Nil	111
13	Responsibility Homage	232	239	323	177	398	265	1649
14	POCSO	85	88	64	34	97	54	422
15	Procession on Responsibility	65	200	123	116	104	Nil	608
16	Gender Training – Village Level	60		63		43		166
17	Gender Training Cluster Level						65	65
	Total	617	873	899	454	678	366	4361

Coastal Rights and Livelihood of Fishing Community

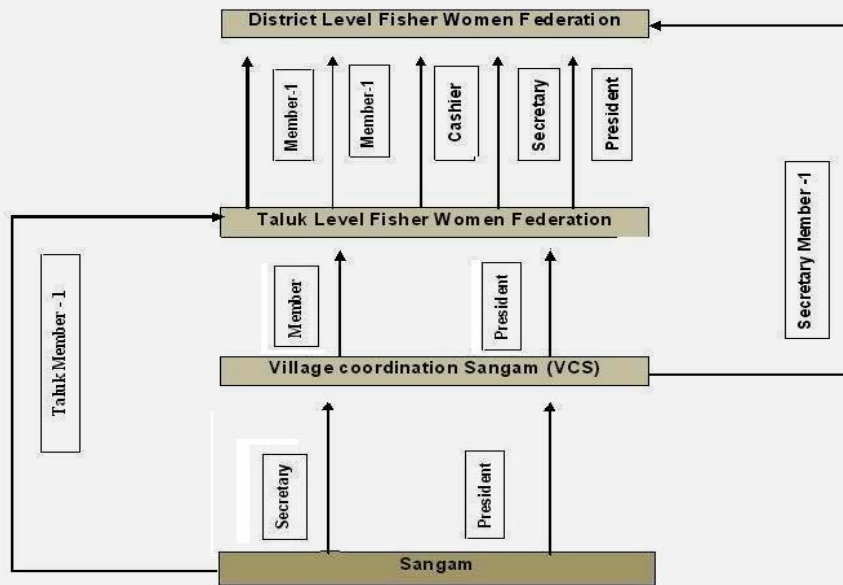
Creating Alternative and Sustainable Livelihood for Women in Coastal Community

SNEHA has formed federations among fisher women who are involved in various fishing allied activities. These women are organized at the grassroots level in the forum and a collective federation is formed at the district level. The federation members are trained on several skill building activities that held them to add value to their work thereby increasing their income levels.

One of the unique interventions of SNEHA is the initiation of the Samuthra India Producer Company Ltd., which was set up towards ensuring economic empowerment of women in fisheries and allied fisheries. This community-owned initiative is launched with an objective to strengthen the primary livelihood options for the women. This initiative also seeks to strengthen the food security at the local level and to ensure access and control for the women fish workers in the local market. The recent activities of Samuthra include that of float production, transportation facilities, vending vessels, flourmills, soap production, dry fish marketing, tea marketing, packaging and marketing chilli powder.



Structure of the Federation





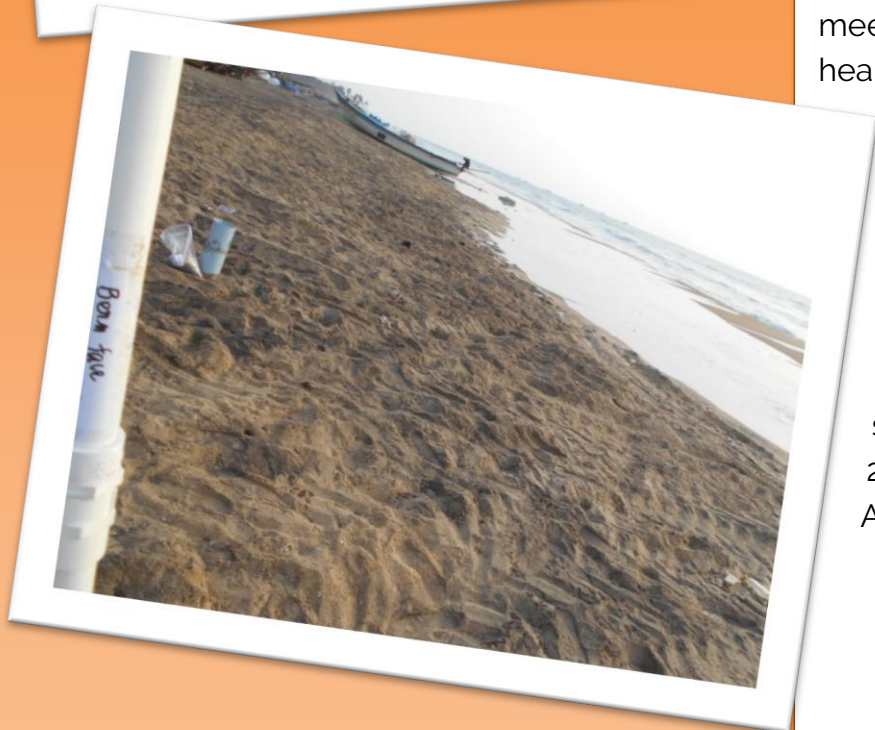
Ensuring Protection of Coastal Habitats and Environment by creating awareness among the communities

Awakening coastal community on their traditional coastal rights and collective rights to coastal commons is at the core of SNEHA's intervention and we have been implementing this with effective public actions and campaigns. The activities includes organizing training at various levels on the anti-poor policies; facilitate grassroots actions to challenge these policies and suggest alternatives; organizing workshops and conventions with various civil society formations to strengthen the struggles of the people and finally to involve in large-scale campaigns to bring the issues and concerns of people to the notice of policy makers. The key strength of SNEHA is to make use of the various democratic spaces like the gram sabha meetings as well as the public hearings to register the dissent of the communities.



Facilitating People's Action Demanding Protection of Coastal Commons:

SNEHA has been launching several campaigns in the year 2014 in coordination with Coastal Action Network (CAN), Karaikal





District Fisher Women Federation, Dalit and Farmer Movements, Consumer Federation and the National Fish Workers Forum towards safeguarding the coastal environment and habitats. The campaigns were against the Coal Based Thermal Power Plants, atrocities of Sri Lankan Navy on the Indian Tamil Fisher people and strengthening of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification. These campaigns have been instrumental in building perspectives among communities synergizing actions among various stakeholders to oppose these destructive development plans. SNEHA has motivated the CBOs to meet the leaders of the different political parties and present their memorandum with demands to withdraw the CRZ notification 2011 and stalling of the coal based thermal power plants.



Networking, Advocacy and Policy Interventions

SNEHA is part of state and national level coalitions working for the rights of coastal communities and women. During Legislative Assembly elections memos were distributed to the political parties. At state level, SNEHA facilitated the participation of community in the various advocacy initiatives like meetings, seminars, trainings, struggles of Coastal Action Network and National Fish workers Forum.





Major Challenges:

Bringing sustainable transformation in the lives and thoughts of people and in the perception of policy makers and in the mainstream is not an easy task. It demands challenging the conventional belief systems of the community and corruptive practices that are deep rooted in Indian democratic governance. Therefore, challenges are inherent in the activities we implement and these have indeed helped us in evolving new strategies and equip ourselves with more knowledge and expertise required in tackling these challenges. Here we share some of our major challenges and learning in our journey to fight for justice, equality and transformation;



- The political thinking and choices of people are greatly influenced by the corruptive practices and ideologies of the political parties and we are strengthening our engagement with coastal communities and generating awareness on the significance of their political rights and utilizing the democratic spaces efficiently in changing their lives on sustainable basis.



- Promoting a progressive relationship between the traditional panchayat and elected panchayat

has been a major challenge, which is also an essential aspect from social, cultural and political collaboration. We are constantly trying this through inviting both representatives in the common platforms and promoting collaboration.

- International financial institutions are involved in the tsunami housing projects and use these schemes in pretext for relocating the communities. We are providing adequate awareness programmes to the communities on their traditional rights to coastal commons.
- Constantly changing policies especially with respect to coastal zone notifications and the maritime dispute between India and Srilanka has posed a major challenge to the peaceful existence and livelihood of coastal community. SNEHA is actively involved in policy level intervention to mitigate the negative impacts of such moves and ensuring a peaceful coexistence between two major countries.

Future Plans:

- Strengthen the current implementation ideologically, spatially and programmatically. Increase the volunteer base and membership to the federations.
- Expand the current livelihood initiatives and invest in novel, unique and sustainable livelihood activities for women and youth. The livelihoods initiative Samuthra is a logical progression of the SNEHA intervention. Housing it separately enables the smooth interaction of the human rights and the economic initiatives. Samuthra needs to be taken to scale, with at least one member of a family being involved in micro-enterprise (ME).
- SNEHA has begun to tap into the potential of technology (in beach profiling and village mapping) but has a long way to go in the use of big data and visualisation. Another area is transitioning skills from being 'doers' (activists) to 'managers' (facilitators).
- The issues facing the fisher community are international (both economic and military), and require at least national presence (either directly or as part of a network). The organisational base of, and capacity for, such national and international engagement and footprint could be carefully nurtured and enhanced. It would involve enhancing skill-sets, broader perspectives, additional competencies, new networks and innovative ways of engagement with the external world—from the local traditional fishing community to the international community with the global market and the state included.



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