



*Upholding the Sovereign Rights
of the Coastal Communities*

SNEHA'S *Memory Lane...*





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25
Years

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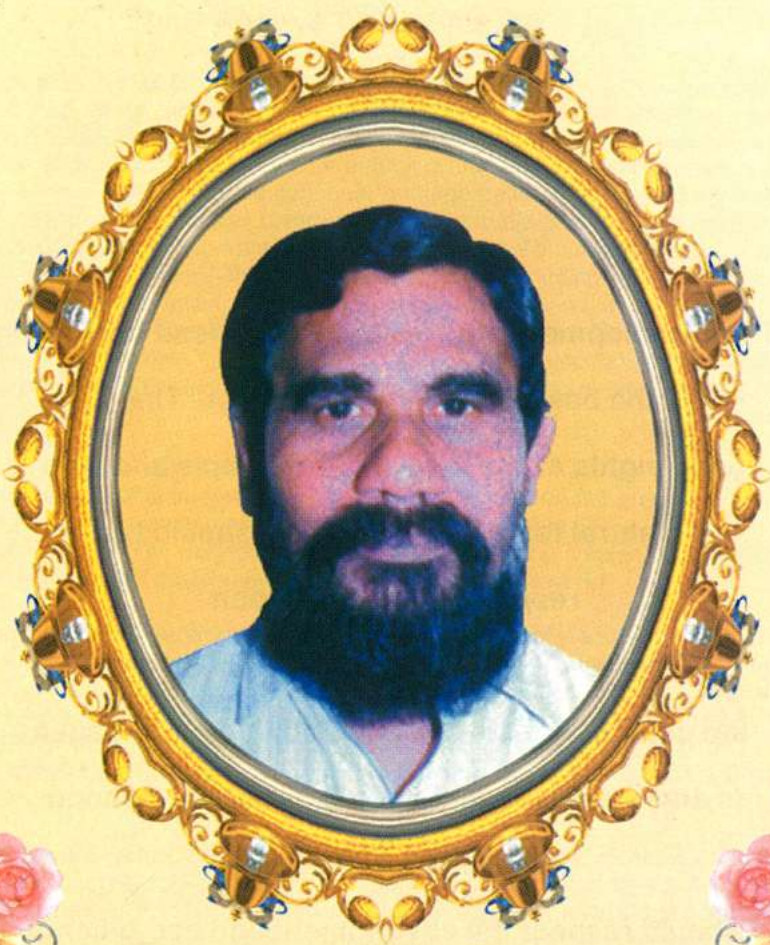
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Fax : (+91) 4365 - 248675
e-mail : snehangt@gmail.com
snehaorg2004@yahoo.com
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Mr. P. CHRISTY

Born : 24.10.1950

Demise : 18.07.2004

We dedicate this souvenir to our beloved Founder and
former Director of SNEHA

"True development or progress should lead to fulfilling the basic needs of the poorest. The basic rights of the local (fisher) people and their natural technical knowledge should be respected and built upon.

The development activity should involve the people who are already traditionally engaged in and are dependent upon it for their livelihood.

It should be sustainable.

It should respect the environment and eco-balance.

There should be no cultural invasion by the outsiders. (WFF)"

The Future from SNEHA's Past

The success seen over each of the past 25 years of SNEHA's experience compels us to think of its direction and of its future. Donors have recognized this success and supported key initiatives of SNEHA. But I believe that SNEHA's achievements are still undervalued by donors as many tried and new initiatives remain in search of financial support commensurate with their value. The work of SNEHA should continue to shape national policy making on many areas including future of India's coastal communities, democratic and sustainable management of oceanic resources, women workers and the management of our natural capital. SNEHA's work on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has shown us all including information specialists on disaster response teams improves access to information and contributes to better and faster recovery. SNEHA could develop a new area of work—the promotion of coastal forests—that our greening India's brown coasts need so badly. Carbon accounting systems that favour sustainable coastal communities are possibilities that have come up in many conversations with SNEHA's field teams.

I have seen SNEHA's work: as a friend; as a man interested in women's issues; as a Disaster Risk Reduction specialist interested in learning what works on the ground. SNEHA's work is very inspirational and I know many people who look forward to SNEHA deepening its work in Tamil Nadu, spreading its activities in coastal India, initiating links in South Asia and taking these lessons to support sustainable communities around the world.

Sneha is able to sustain its work as it takes the local reality of women as the starting point for any risk reduction work. This may be the reality for need for credit, on the issue of liquor on issue of women having no access to big boats. SNEHA's key leaders in the communities and the team members are both strong, vigilant and clear thoughts in their heads in all they plan. As a result SNEHA's work is constructive and allows buds to grow. SNEHA's future focuses on building women's capacity as a central aspect with, how poor women can be better equipped to do what they want to do? This is central to SNEHA's work and gives it power and meaning.

In the post tsunami years, SNEHA has prioritized prevention of disasters, whether through expansion of economic activity or through expansion of panchayat raj activities. With its large network with local NGOs, SNEHA has been able to recognize and bridge political, economic, and social protection issues in coastal India. SNEHA's work is well set in this recognition.

SNEHA not only leads communities away from discrimination but it builds inclusive alternatives for moving ahead. It unites poor women in moving ahead, across caste, class and other artificial divisions. SNEHA builds on its priorities by offering practical coordination between various local actors wherever possible. Most importantly SNEHA acts fast but stays engaged long enough to make activities sustainable. SNEHA works for results.

SNEHA protects local community capacity. Even when questioning authorities, SNEHA protects the political contract between the local government and its citizens. Over 25 years, SNEHA has grown as a partner to women and as a builder of new and stronger communities.

Mihir Bhat
Honorary Director,
All India Institute of Disaster Management

Foreword

India is stated as a model of persistent 'economic growth' in times of global economic recession, and this is equally true of Tamil Nadu whose State Domestic Product has been growing at 8% between 2002 and 2007. While 'officially' income poverty levels have decreased from 39.8% in 1993-94 to 22.2% as of 2004-5 in Tamil Nadu, 33.2% of children under-three years are underweight children and 53.3% of ever married women in 15-49 years are anemic as of 2005-6. The figures on malnutrition rates- which have barely come down during the decade- reveal the true picture with regard to poverty in the state. Rather than addressing the root causes of this persistent malnutrition- which stems from the model of economic growth adopted (commercialization, privatization, mechanization and usurping of natural resources) and caste and gender inequalities, the Indian/state government is promoting wage employment and micro-credit based employment schemes.

While most NGOs adopt the micro credit approach, SNEHA since its inception has been mobilizing women, men and children to challenge the model of economic growth adopted by the government in coastal Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal district of Pondicherry. Before the occurrence of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, its focus was on successfully challenging along with Coastal Action Network, the emergence of shrimp industries along the coast which destroyed coastal resources and led to loss of livelihood for fisherwomen and fishermen. The Supreme Court order on prohibition of shrimp industries along the coast has had widespread ramifications throughout the country.

Subsequent to the tsunami, SNEHA has played a crucial role in advocating in-situ shelter for those displaced by the tsunami, managed entirely by women. It has succeeded in this effort in two-thirds of instances in Nagapattinam district which is no small achievement, as a visit to coastal districts of Sri Lanka indicates major displacement of fisher-folks which has led to loss of livelihoods for fisherwomen in particular as they are not in a position to travel 2-5 km (one way) to the coast everyday. Further, in-situ housing has ensured that tourism does not spread along the coast, which not only erodes access to coastal resources but enhances vulnerability of women and adolescent girls and boys to sexual exploitation. Fisherwomen's federations and fish-workers' forum formed by SNEHA, post tsunami, have joined hands with Coastal Action Network to stand against the Sethu Samudram project, commercial ports and harbors, chemical industries and thermal power plants and call for implementation of CRZ notification.

Some of these struggles have met with success but others have not. SNEHA needs continued support in strengthening these struggles, and resisting new anti-people developments which emerge not only in the two coastal districts but coastal districts where presence of grass-roots women's and workers' forum is low. It also needs support to strengthen disaster risk reduction along the coast, as it is coastal lines in developing countries which are going to bear the brunt of climate change caused by unfettered consumption in the West. Last but not the least SNEHA has embarked on a strategy of combining struggle with development – of initiating a producer company of fisherwomen which will attempt to remove middlemen, traders and intermediary companies and directly link producers to consumers. I invite you to lend hand to SNEHA in whatever way you can in the coming 25 years.

Ranjani K. Murthy,
Independent Researcher, Chennai

Preface

SNEHA with its vision to empower fisher people has traveled with these people in ensuring a sustainable livelihood for more than two and half decades in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts in Tamil Nadu. The journey took momentum in the past several years through the generous support of Programme for Social Action, Manos Unidas (Spain), Terre des Hommes(G), AEI Luxembourg, Christian Aid (UK), Action Aid International, CWS-New Zealand, Oxfam-HK, Swiss Red Cross and Save the Children Fund (UK). SNEHA has empowered the fisher people to own the developmental processes.

In the first phase, Sneha facilitated and strengthened the grass root level people's organisations and organised people to take decisions within the existing organisational frame work. The first phase marked the journey of the fisher people from sangam level activities to formation of village level federations, taluk level federations and district level federation of sangams. Sneha has further enabled people during the second phase to enter into macro level activities such as Cooperatives, Workers' forum. Regional and National Networks. Sneha had been facilitating a processes of empowerment through trainings, information dissemination, participation in decision making, legal aid, literacy, researches, support through advocacy and lobby, support during people's struggles, creating linkages with Government, democratic organisations, forums, networks at national and international levels.

Sneha and the fisher people are entering the third phase in their struggle towards sustaining the achievements and to ensure rightful livelihood for the fisher people. The focus would be to sustain the activities of the previous phases and to empower people to take responsible roles as 'change elements' which will entitle people to take policy level decisions from the macro perspectives.

We the people at Sneha and together with coastal communities from Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts present our annual silver jubilee report and dedicate this report to our founder and former Director for nearly two decades Mr. P. Christy who left us with his vision for a just society.

We take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to our donors, board members, general body members especially our patron Most Rt. Rev. Dr. Peter Remigius, Bishop of Kottar, our former president Rev.Fr.M.J.Edwin, network campaign partners and other friends.

Our special thanks are due to Mr. Mihir Bhat and Ms. Ranjani K. Murthy for their forewords and to Ms. A. Gandimathi for designing and editing this report.

We share our sincere thanks to all the team members of Sneha and Mr. Antony for their support in printing this report.

Nagapattinam
18.7.09

Jesu Rethinam
Director, SNEHA

Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAN	Coastal Action Network
CASI	Campaign Against Shrimp Industries
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CRZ	Coastal Regulation Zone
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ETRP	Emergency Tsunami Recovery Project
IEC	Information Education and Communication
MNC	Multi National Company
NAMA	Non Agricultural product Market Access
NCRC	NGO Coordination and Resource Centre
NFF	National Fish workers' Forum
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NOC	No Objection Certificate
REGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PMC	Pre-school Monitoring Committee
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institutions
PWD	Public Work Department
RTI	Right to Information
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SNEHA	Social Need Education and Human Awareness
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Right
SSCP	Sethu Samudharm Shipping Canal Project
TNWFF	Tamil Nadu Women Fish workers' Forum
TNWPPF	Tamil Nadu Women Panchayat President Forum
TRHP	Tsunami Rehabilitation and Housing Project
UNCRC	United Nations Child Rights Convention
VHN	Village Health Nurse
WASH	Water and Sanitation Hygiene Promotion

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SNEHA AN UNIQUE INITIATIVE IN NAGAPATTINAM

SNEHA completes 25 years of development services. During this period the organization had several ups and downs, underwent changes and moved forward guided by its position, core values, action and reflection process and rearticulated its mission in the context of tsunami.

From a grass root identity, it has consolidated its learning and evolved as a resource agency for disaster mitigation and a model for engendering the Tsunami Recovery and Reconstruction Process in South India. Its grassroots initiatives and advocacy initiatives have facilitated CBOs to transcend their micro level issues to macro level polity. It has withstood the onslaughts of tsunami and its identity and sustainability of its development initiatives are secured.

Sneha is unique as it has been a trend-setter in advocating self autonomy for fishing community like the tribals and it is focusing on this single point agenda to bring a constitutional amendment where the coastal communities will have access and control over their resources and equal right in the governance at all levels. Rallying around this theme, the CBOS are now in the way of building their own **Singaravelar movement for the protection and promotion of livelihood rights of the coastal community and Coastal ecology** guided by the values and ideology taught by this national leader who hailed from this marginalized community "Coastal land and the coastal resources are our sovereign rights and we will fight against the intruders including the State in the name of destructive development projects." This is the unifying Agenda of the movement which

attracts fishing community into its fold. In the same way, the women federations have formed an economic institution called **SAMUDHRA** to strengthen their primary livelihood and involve in policy dialogues with the various interest groups which have a stake on their economic rights including the State.

As the fishing communities living on the coast of Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts look back, they divide their lives and histories with the event of the tsunami. A **"HISTORY"** of resilience and courage and a **PRESENT** marked with changes that have been so dynamic that it took their history of strong self governance and weathered nature of **BEING** to tide over each wave of change with courage and fortitude.

An even faster changing national and global economic perspective finds them looking at a future that they fully do not comprehend. As the tsunami interventions keep growing on the psyche of the coastal communities of Nagapattinam and Karaikal, there is one that stands linking these communities from the past into the future... **Sneha. Being... Facilitating... Opposing... Advocating... Rebuilding... Networking... Engendering.**

PROFILE OF NAGAPATTINAM

Nagapattinam is a coastal district; covering a total area of 2,71,583 hectares. Out of the total area, around 1,26,149 hectares is classified as wetland, 61,880 hectares as dry land, and the remaining 83,548 hectares as 'poramboke' or Government land. Though the area receives an average of 1337 mm of rainfall annually, nearly 76% occurs during the Northeast Monsoon followed by 17.3% during the Southwest Monsoon. The soil is predominantly sandy in texture, and clayey in certain pockets, with slight salinity/alkalinity. The soil in the region belongs to Valudalakudi series; dark brown to brown, deep, sandy and possessing characteristics, of mild to moderate alkalinity levels. The area lying between Nagapattinam and Vedaranyam, dominated by sand dunes, and cultivated soils mostly sandy in texture. Regarding the water table, fresh water is overlying saline ground water. The cultivation depends primarily on rainfall, supplemented by underground water. The area lying between north of Nagapattinam, to the border of Cuddalore District is covered under the Delta Irrigation System.

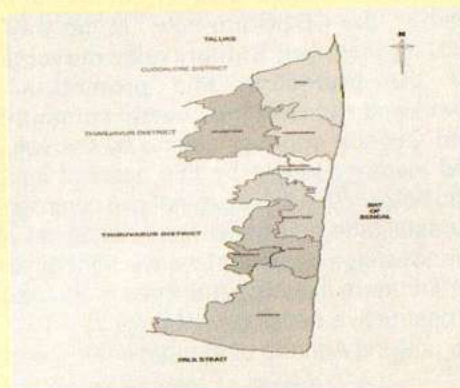
Located between 100 15' to 110 30'N and 790 30' to 790 55' E, it stretches from river Coleroon in the north to Kodikarai in the south. (Fig 1.1). The district forms part of the Cauvery river basin and delta. For administrative purposes, the district is divided into seven taluks namely Sirkali, Mayiladuthurai, Tharangambadi, Kilvelur, Nagapattinam, Thirukkuvalai and Vedaranyam. These are further divided into 11 blocks namely Mayiladuthurai, Kuttalam, Sembanarkoil, Sirkali, Kollidam, Vedaranyam, Thalainayar, Nagapattinam, Keeliyur, Kilvelur and Thirumarugal. The district has a coastline stretching to 190 km. Since the district is underlined by sedimentary

formations, the major land forms that occur are natural levees near Mayiladuthurai coastal- plain covering almost the entire district with beaches, beach ridges, mud flats, swamps, and back waters along the coastal stretch.

Between 1891 and 2000, nearly 26% of cyclones that formed in the Bay of Bengal struck the coast of Tamil Nadu; of which 55 severe cyclones crossed the region, mostly during the months of October and November. In addition to frequent cyclones, mid-season drought, floods, and water logging due to the flat topography, and improper/disturbed drainage systems, make the region more vulnerable. Thus the soil resources in this region show fluctuating characteristics of soluble salt concentration and soil pH.

Inception of SNEHA

At the tail end of the terrestrial eco system, the coast is the most vulnerable region to the various exploits of man and his quest towards profits and control. This fragile eco system has the fishing communities as its gatekeepers and they have over the centuries been weathering the storms of change and nature with broad shoulders and equally large hearts and spirit.



In the midst of a global fisheries' crisis caused mainly by large, high-tech, industrial fleets, "artisanal fishing" have often severely impoverished fishing communities that in many cases are centuries old whose immediate survival depends on their ability to continue benefiting from local fisheries and operate in some of the biologically richest and most sensitive waters on earth, often in tropical coastal zones where interactions with coral reefs and land-based ecosystems introduce complex interdependencies. These communities are highly significant in human, economic, and environmental terms. The artisanal fishing sector provides direct employment to tens of millions of people, and indirect employment to tens of millions more. Many of them are women involved in fish processing.

Artisanal fishing comprises 90% of all fishing jobs worldwide, approximately 45% of the world's fisheries, and nearly a quarter of the world's catch. They provide critical income and edible protein to hundreds of millions across the globe.

Sneha has been facilitating a growing resistance of this community to changes that have been threatening the communities' very existence and dependence on the coast.



During the last 25 years **Sneha** has been organizing and mobilising the fishing communities to protect their rights over their livelihoods and coastal existence. **Sneha's**



initiative started with a focus on the formation of women and men sangams to take up issues of civic and sectoral nature. For early child care and education of children in the fishing hamlets, five pre schools were initiated in five hamlets in the year 1989. Work soon expanded into seven other hamlets and then to 29 hamlets where **Sneha** facilitated the functioning of 32 pre schools.

Responding to strong gender related disparities in the fishing community, **Sneha** began working with the women in the fishing communities to address strong patriarchal



values and encouraged a greater appreciation of the value addition to the fishing economy by the labour of the women in the various pre and post harvest operations related to fishing.

The women of fishing communities were organized into collectives called the sangams. With this began **Sneha's** mobilization of coastal communities around rights that were crucial to their being. The main objective to create federations of

sangams was to facilitate the interaction vending trade and to take up need based sectoral issues and gender issues at the taluk and district level. It was in the year 1989 that three Taluk level federations were formed for men and women. Federation of sangams enables fisher women to avail support of community especially traditional Panchayat to voice their views at a larger level. **Sneha** has achieved remarkable success in federating sangams in Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts. Thus, federations have emerged as a force to fight for the rights of the fisher people, to demand the basic amenities in the fishing villages and to enforce gender justice among the fisher people among far flung sangams, to take up common issues like the multifaceted problems in the fish vending trade and to take up need based sectoral issues and gender issues at the taluk and district level. It was in the year 1989 that three Taluk level federations were formed for men and women. Federation of sangams enables fisher women to avail support of community especially traditional Panchayat to voice their views at a larger level.

In 1989, as part of its mission to support education and health care activities for children below 5 years of age and campaign for eradication of child labour and protection of child rights, Sneha started pre-schools or 'Baalar Palligal' in 5 villages. In twelve years, this grew to 32 pre-schools with 1310 children attending them every day. Each Baalar Palli had a young woman teacher from the fishing community, familiar with the childrens' background. As part of its annual intensive training programme for the Baalar Palli teachers, Sneha invited the Center for Montessori Training - Chennai (CMTTC) to train its teachers in the Montessori Method.

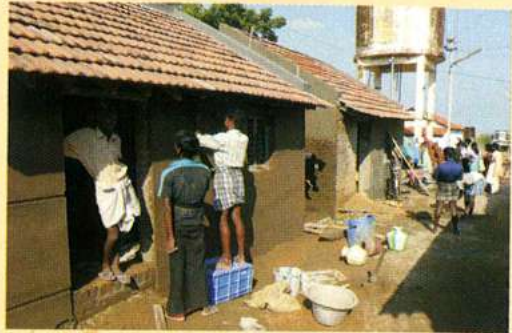
POST TSUNAMI SITUATION

Political Economy of the Tsunami Affected Areas

Five years after the tsunami, the following issues are confronting coastal communities in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry:

Housing The State is assisting the coastal communities through two schemes through TRHP (Tsunami rehabilitation and housing programme) and ETRP (Emergency Tsunami Reconstruction Programme) funded by ADB and World Bank and issued government orders to implement these schemes. The intention of these two government initiatives which are being implemented through private builders and NGOs is to evacuate the community from their coastal home land and allow their traditional habitats to be used for commercial interests. In Sneha's area of operation 30% of households who were living on the coast before the tsunami are already living away from the coastal areas.

Livelihood: The restoration of livelihoods of coastal dependent women was not given importance by the government. As a result there are still 30% dalit women who have not been able to go back to their original livelihood, and over 50% of Meenavar (fishing) women who are operating on a lower scale. Those women whose habitats have moved far away are facing problems in



recommencing their livelihoods. In the case of men, the fish catch has declined post tsunami, and some men have moved to other occupations. A study done by Sneha which has to be quantified has revealed that 30% of men in the fishing community are now working as auto drivers, petty shop owners or as wage labourers.

Impact of risks on livelihood: Some risks are occurring frequently with lesser impact and some are occurring occasionally with higher impact to the household. The reported risks are the risk such as natural death of the bread-winner and contributor to the household, accidents, Road accidental death / disability, falling down in the well without the side wall, snake bite, boat capsizing, falling down in sea while spreading the net, mud house collapse, theft of household articles, hut fire, loss of fishing nets in the sea, theft of boats, boat engine breakdown, floods, lightning, tsunami, sea intrusion & erosion, prolonged illness, hospitalization due to minor ailments, major operations and child birth.



Risk perception by the poor is highly location specific and consequently, the prioritization of risks differs widely according to the present household security (financial and physical) livelihood option, degree of exposure of their residences to risk and their awareness about



risk. The amount of expenses incurred by them also varied from Rs500 to Rs2000 or Rs3000 for small loss events like death of a goat or minor illness and from Rs10,000 to Rs40,000 or Rs60,000 for major loss events like hospitalization requiring surgery.

When they are affected by major events like surgery, they are depressed, as most of the times, they face the decapitalisation of their assets. The impact of catastrophe loss was devastating on the entire household and it ranged from Rs1,00,000 to Rs200000 per household. When the households had been affected by the catastrophe loss, even after the lapse of more than a year, they could not recover fully from the economic as well as the psychological shock suffered by them.

Climate Change This one is even more scary, for while deforestation contributes enormously to the carbon emissions that are tilting the fine balance in our atmosphere, the resulting changes in climatic patterns are further damaging the land resources and the coast which is a target for all kinds of destructive development projects and converting sea/ oceans as the dumping

ground of organic and inorganic effluents. The ocean's ability to absorb pollutants reduces as climate change affects the productivity of its biodiversity. It is an another vicious cycle. Cause and effect merge into one deadly combination that is self-perpetuating.

Floods: Nearly 75 percent of the total rainfall is concentrated over a short monsoon season of four months (June-September). As a result, the rivers witness a heavy discharge during these months, leading to widespread floods. The flood hazard is compounded by the problems of sediment deposition, drainage congestion and synchronisation of river floods with storm surges in the coastal plains. In South India the flood-prone areas are Deccan region with rivers like Mahanadi, Krishna and Cauveri. While the area liable to floods is 40 million hectares, the average area affected by floods annually is about 8 million hectares. The annual average cropped area affected is approximately 3.7 million hectares. Notwithstanding flood policy and flood control schemes, flood damage is increasing, with larger populations subjected to distress in increasing flood-prone areas.



Cyclone: The States most exposed to cyclone-related hazards, including strong winds, floods and storm surges, are West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu along the Bay of Bengal. On an average, about five to six tropical cyclones form in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea



every year, of which two to three may be severe. More cyclones form in the Bay of Bengal than in the Arabian Sea and the ratio is 4:1. Cyclones are most deadly when crossing the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal and Bangladesh, mainly because of the serious storm surge problem in this area. The impact of these cyclones is confined to the coastal districts, the maximum

destruction being within 100 km from the centre of the cyclones and on either side of the storm track.

The worst devastation takes place when and where the peak surge occurs at the time of the high tide. Stretches along the Bay of Bengal coastline have the world's shallowest waters but the relatively dense population and poor economic condition complicate the situation. The population density in some of the coastal districts is as high as 670 persons per square km. The cyclones have had a devastating effect on the economy and lives of the people in the affected districts. A very large population in these districts has lost its source of livelihood. Public infrastructure suffered extensive damage. The economy of the state has suffered a serious setback. This has had an adverse impact on the development of the State.

Issues:

- ★ Non diversified nature of livelihood.
- ★ Poor access to information and services, limited flow of goods in and out of a region.
- ★ Poor access to education and community institution such as SHG.
- ★ Existing pattern of vulnerability: gender-based, social position, economic base, education, political marginalisation.
- ★ Lack of role and authority in decision-making
- ★ Lack of secured access to water for domestic and other needs.
- ★ Nature of natural resource base and its degradation (e.g. constrained drainage, depleted groundwater level, high arsenic level, pollution).
- ★ Lack of critical local social auditing capacity.

Gender based violence: Women are experiencing new forms of violence within the household and work place. An example is the government initiative to support re-canalisation surgery for women who had undergone sterilization before tsunami, and had lost some or all of their children. This surgical procedure is of high risk if the women are over 35 years, and only 8% of the women were able to conceive after the surgery. When operations are not successful, the women are

facing the threat of domestic violence. Consumption of alcohol has increased post tsunami, and related physical and sexual violence against women has been on the rise. The presence of broken down (but undemolished) shelters has also led to increase in violence against women. Some dalit and single women of Meenavar community have been pushed into sex work because of crisis in livelihoods. Women are burdened with most of the burden of reconstruction and recovery.

Children: There was an increase in drop out rate of male adolescents due to increase in fishing-crafts or death of father. While this drop out rate has decreased due to Sneha's intervention, it has not totally stopped. The same is the case with adolescent girls whose mothers have died, and fathers have not remarried. They have to do household work. In instances where widowers have remarried, there are a few cases of children facing discrimination. Occasional cases of children sleeping on the coast due to domestic violence (linked to alcohol) are also noted. There is still a need to monitor the position of orphans in institutional homes run by government and NGOs.

Dalits: The already pauperized dalits in coastal areas are the worst affected communities by tsunami, facing discrimination by the State and dominant communities. They have had less access to recovery support from the government and some of the NGOs. More dalit members than in Meenavar community are still living in transit shelters. Their livelihoods have been worst affected, as they are dependent on both fishing (as labourers) and agriculture both of which have been affected. There were stray attempts to give away the land on which they lived (without title deeds) for construction of housing by dominant communities.

Case study

I am Madhavi, aged 28 yrs residing at Thirumullaivasal village. I was married to Ganesan of Thirumullaivasal village Sirkazhi taluk. My husband is a fisherman. We had three children after our marriage. All three children were delivered normally. Giving due consideration to my family situation and the income of my husband, I underwent family planning surgery at Lister Hospital, Chidambaram in the year 2004.

On 26.12.2004 I lost all three of my children in the tsunami disaster. I was not able to digest a life without children. Moreover my husband wanted to remarry soon after my children perished. He insisted to my parents that they should give my sister to him in marriage. I was grief stricken by the loss of three children, on the other hand I had to sustain my life with my husband. I had vague fears to undergo recanalisation surgery as I had undergone tubectomy only in the year 2004. In spite of the fear, I underwent recanalisation surgery in the year 2006 to sustain my family life and get rid of the loneliness. I was all alone when subjected to medical test before the surgery. My husband was not medically examined. So far, there have been no signs of pregnancy. Hence my husband talks of remarriage again. He beats me everyday accusing me that I was responsible for the death of our children. I feel that my life has been pushed into a very bad situation. There is excessive bleeding during the menstrual periods and there is pain in the hip and pelvic region.

Coastal Policy scenario in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

- ★ In the name of tsunami reconstruction the government of India has availed support from the World Bank and ADB and has taken two policy decisions: promoting harbour based fisheries and the promotion of industrialized shrimp culture.
- ★ The state is promoting many industrial and infrastructure projects along the coast in the power sector, fuel energy sector, infrastructure, transport sector etc
- ★ The state is now planning to permit fish import under the guise of foreign trade agreement with EU (being operationalised in the current year), inspite of the protests and oppositions against inclusion of fisheries under Non-agriculture product Market Access (NAMA).
- ★ The 2005 National Disaster Act is not sensitive to coastal, livelihood, dalit or women's rights, and this is shaping the disaster management plan at State and district levels. Districts have evolved contingency plans which are full of gaps.
- ★ While Coastal Action Network, in which SNEHA is an active member, is taking up the first three issues, the fourth issue is yet to be addressed by the rights based organisations.

NGO scenario in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

Many of the NGOs (came from outside and) played a role of service provider post tsunami and made the community relief dependent. Majority of those who came from outside have withdrawn from the area, leaving behind groups and structures (for example solar drying machines, information centers) without follow up and which are now not in use.



Rights based NGOs and hence community organizations are few in some eastern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry: Cuddalore, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai. Puducherry, and in some pockets within these districts there are no NGOs. Hence though CAN network is advocating on coastal issues, its grass roots support needs strengthening in these districts. In the same districts there is also a need for capacity building on rights based disaster preparedness and management. No rights based advocacy group is yet influencing disaster management plans of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry governments, or ADB/world Bank recovery programmes from a rights based perspective.

Our Assessment of the Current Needs for Intervention

Sneha needs to deepen its work in the present 51 villages of Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts, by weaving in risk reduction strategies, strengthening women producer's company (and through it primary livelihoods of dalits and Meenavars), strengthening trade union of coastal dependent workers, gender training of traditional panchayats for more rights based governance and consolidating



groups left behind by other NGOs and transferring assets left behind by these NGOs to CBOs and making them operational. (wherever possible)

Sneha needs to Strengthen NGO capacity in coastal areas of eastern Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on gender and child rights, organisation of fisher women, fishermen and dalits, coastal and allied livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and management. While their capacities on coastal issues and destructive development also need to be built this could be undertaken in coordination with other larger forums and organisation.

Where no NGOs exist along coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, Sneha can facilitate the mobilisation of fisherwomen and women from coastal dependent communities into sangams and federations so that they take up gender and livelihood issues strongly.

Our assessments on specific vulnerabilities and exclusion

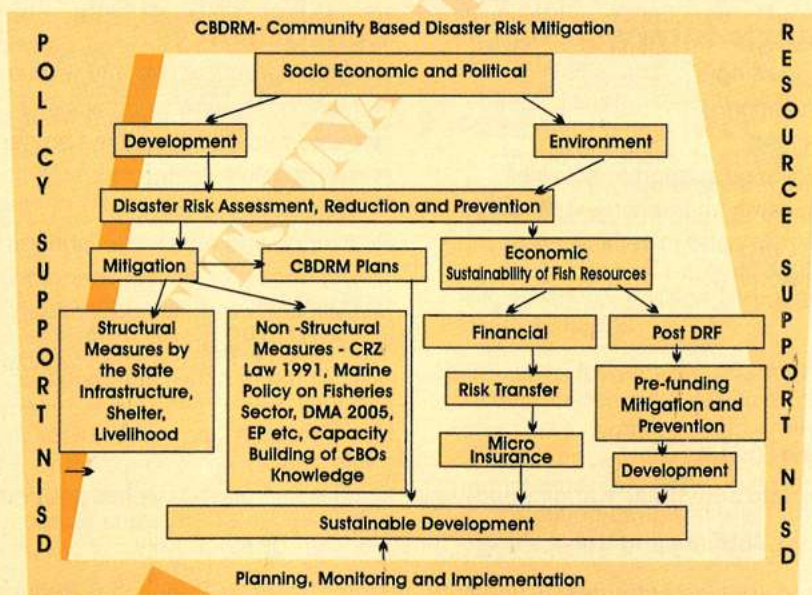
- ★ Reduction in traditional marine resources, and traditional livelihood resources.
- ★ Threat to coastal livelihood from destructive development projects discussed above.
- ★ Tsunami victims who are still to receive permanent shelters.
- ★ Tsunami victims whose permanent shelter is far away, with women struggling for their livelihood.
- ★ Vulnerability of fisherwomen and women from allied resources, who still have not recovered from their livelihood losses.
- ★ Vulnerability of women who have undergone for re-canalisation and not reconceived, or who are under pressure to undergo recanalisation.
- ★ Occupational life risks of men and women in coastal occupations, market fluctuation risk of coastal dependent livelihoods, risk to fishermen from straying into neighbouring countries/state, occupational health risks of men and women in coastal livelihoods, future natural disaster risk, risk due to inflation etc.,

- ★ Exclusion of women from traditional panchayats in Meenavar community.
- ★ Lesser access to recovery of dalits' livelihoods and shelter.
- ★ The psychosocial care of tsunami victims, especially adolescent children.
- ★ The women of the marine fishing communities need more attention as they are excluded within their own community.

External conditions necessary for our response to be successful

- ★ Support and solidarity from other rights based organisations at the district, state, national and international levels.
- ★ Provision of information by government and donors on their policies, and responsiveness to Sneha's advocacy campaigns of Sneha.
- ★ Financial support for a minimum of six years from rights based donors to meet the future deepening, multiplying and widening initiatives proposed by Sneha.

Disaster mitigation framework at a glance



DRF - Disaster Relief Fund

NCCF - National Calamity State Contingency Fund

EP ACT - Environmental Protection Act, 1986

HRD - Human Resources Development

NISD - National, International, State, District

DMA - Disaster Management Act, 2005

FUTURE INTERVENTIONS OF SNEHA (2010 - 2014)

Vision

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**

Mission

To facilitate the self mobilization of marginalized workers in fisheries and allied fisheries of coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry states (**Cuddalore, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Karaikal and Puducherry** especially, women, children, youth, dalit and minorities to protect and promote their **civil, political, economic and livelihood rights** from a socialist feministic ideology and a rights based approach through the strategic interventions of **education, training, organising, advocacy, campaign, networking, research and livelihood support activities**

Strategic interventions

- ★ Organising
- ★ Education
- ★ Training
- ★ Livelihood support to activities
- ★ Research and documentation
- ★ Lobbying and advocacy
- ★ Networking

Constituency

- ★ Kattumaram owners and workers
- ★ Fiber boat owners and workers
- ★ Labourers in mechanized boats
- ★ Women fish vendors
- ★ Women auctioneers
- ★ Women and men wage labourers dependent on fishing economy.
- ★ Dalit and minorities dependent on fishing economy
- ★ Children of above communities

Geographical area

- ★ **Intensive field activities:** Karaikal and Nagapattinam districts (54 villages and hamlets)
- ★ **Advocacy, Lobbying and Networking :** Tamil Nadu and Puducherry
- ★ **Field based support activities:** Cuddalore, Tanjore, Tiruvarur, Pudukottai, Puducherry
- ★ **Strengthening perspective of other NGOs:** Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and others

Objectives:

1. To ensure that the coastal fisherwomen, fishermen and coastal fisheries dependent communities in Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts retain their rights to coastal land and coastal resources.
2. To facilitate strong (marginalised) women's and men's organisations at village, taluk and district levels in Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts for coastal fisher folks and coastal fisheries dependent communities.
3. To protect the livelihood rights of coastal fisherwomen, fishermen and coastal fisheries dependent communities and promote models of risk-reduction strategies including micro insurance and women centered livelihood development models in Nagapattinam district of Tamilnadu and Karaikal district of Puducherry.
4. To protect, promote and gain new rights for children from coastal fishing and fishing dependent communities from a UNCRC perspective and to promote organisations of children in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts.
5. To reduce human rights violations against key constituencies with special reference to women children and dalits in Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts.
6. To advocate with government and aid agencies for disaster risk reduction and disaster management policies plans and structures that are pro-women and pro coastal communities in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.
7. To advocate for a systematic approach to reducing risks by shifting the focus from hazards to risk management, understand the nature of the risks - both the hazards and the vulnerabilities, put in place the tools and methods to assess, predict, ameliorate, and respond to risk, including community commitment and advocacy and ensure strong political support and administrative capacity for risk reduction.
8. To advocate for a participatory, inclusive and deliberative system of governance, and evolve models of demanded accountability in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts.
9. To facilitate strong (marginalised) people's organisation for women at district levels in Pudukottai, Cuddalore Thiruvavur and Tanjore districts of Eastern zone of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry states for coastal fisherfolks and coastal fisheries dependent communities to advocate on the implications of climate change on the coastal ecology and the coastal communities, gender and child rights, inclusive models of disaster risk-reduction and changes in policies and plans with regard to protection of coastal habitats and livelihood.
10. To work towards self autonomy of the fishing community in terms of their right over the coastal land resource and governance through Constitutional amendments (fifth schedule of the Constitution deal with such powers to the tribal adivasi communities)

The key changes or benefits to be achieved

- a) Organisations of unorganized and marginalised workers in fisheries and allied sectors especially women, dalit, and other marginalized communities will be strengthened in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal district of Puducherry.
- b) The livelihood rights and human rights of above constituencies and children will be protected and promoted in a sustainable manner in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal district of Puducherry.
- c) Returns of women in fisheries around the value chain in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts will be increased
- d) Rights of girl and boy children of coastal communities in these two districts will be protected and promoted through children's organisation at various levels.
- e) Participatory, deliberative and inclusive processes of governance will be advocated for, including on disaster policies and management plans in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.
- f) Management will be strengthened, as well as on gender, dalit rights and organization building.
- g) Women's federation leaders in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts would be contributing to build women's organizations and federations in the above five districts.

The key elements of our programme that ensure inclusion in Identification of beneficiaries and addressing issues

- ★ Covering all dalit families dependent on Coastal livelihood in two districts Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts
- ★ Affirmative (higher than proportionate) representation in all community organisations at all levels for dalits.
- ★ 50% men and 50% women in workers forums (as of now women are more than men)
- ★ Inclusion of dalits in manual labour welfare board, and getting membership card for women workers in welfare board for fisheries sector.
- ★ Enrolment of fisher women, in fisheries cooperative.
- ★ Building women's organisations in the five eastern districts of Cuddalore, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai and Puducherry, of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, with higher representation of dalits than in the population
- ★ Giving preference to women headed and dalit headed NGOs in the five eastern districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry for capacity building inputs.

Intended Outcomes

- ★ Coastal women's and men's organisation to be strengthened in Nagapattinam and Karaikal, and formed/strengthened in five eastern districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry
- ★ Increased awareness on coastal issues in the context of neo liberal policies in East Zone of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry
- ★ Need based campaigns commenced in the context of neo liberal policies, and locality specific coastal issues (East Zone), with 25% of them succeeding
- ★ People's capacities to respond to natural, man-made and household disaster risks will be increased largely in Nagapattinam and Karaikal district, and to some extent in Cuddalore, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai and Puducherry districts
- ★ Fisherwomen's livelihood strengthened in Karaikal and Nagapattinam, with good replication in at least two of the five other districts
- ★ Disaster mitigation plans including resource maps for the districts of eastern zone might have been evolved and community based resource pools might have been initiated
- ★ Child rights protection and promotion in Karaikal and Nagapattinam, with good replication in at least two of the five other districts Human rights violations against women and dalits reduced in Karaikal and Nagapattinam districts, with reduction in atleast two of the other five districts
- ★ Advocacy commenced with government aid agencies and NGOs for disaster risk reduction and disaster management in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, with 25% success in changing policies on issues advocated.
- ★ Inclusive, participative, transparent governance promoted in 7 districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, reflected in greater number of women standing in general seats in panchayat elections, fairer elections, lesser violence against women (dalit women elected leaders, greater political awareness, strengthened gram sabha, greater community monitoring of NREGA, CBO representation in all committees, gender budgeting and accounts etc.,

SNEHA TODAY

Ensuring Protection of Coastal Habitats, access to Primary Livelihoods



- ★ Implementing livelihood programmes to strengthen the primary livelihood of the fishing women
- ★ Extending Management Skill Trainings to fisher women
- ★ Introducing Social Security programmes to fishing women
- ★ Training on livelihood rights and development of business plans

- ★ Registration of producer company under section 25 of Companies Act and implementation of economic programmes
- ★ Campaigning for livelihood rights
- ★ Ensuring access and control over vending activity in domestic market
- ★ Fundraising initiatives for the independent functioning of SAMUDHRA the economic Institution of CBOs.



- ★ 77 Death claims have been submitted to LIC of India in which 67 claims have been settled. Rs.19,60,000 has been paid to the nominees account as compensation.
- ★ In the year 2006-2007 Rs.8,18,400 was provided to 682 children in 51 villages. In the year 2007-2008 Rs.26,63,100 was provided to 2366 children in 51 villages. In 2008-2009 1554 children benefited.
- ★ Total number of women insured in 51 villages were 11070.
- ★ The premium amount for the beneficiaries was paid for the past 3 years with external support. From the year 2009 onwards people are paying the premium.

Building and Capacitating Fishworkers' Forum



- ★ Strengthening the membership of male workers in the workers' forum by 50%.
- ★ Enrolling all of the members of the workers' forum in the welfare board .
- ★ Ensuring membership identity card.
- ★ Creating an understanding about the rights of the workers' forum among the members.
- ★ Creating an understanding about the rights over the coastal resource and the coastal lands.
- ★ Advocacy and Lobby to make changes in the Policy pertaining to the welfare board and the programmes of the Government and appointing fisheries based leaders as administrators of the welfare board.

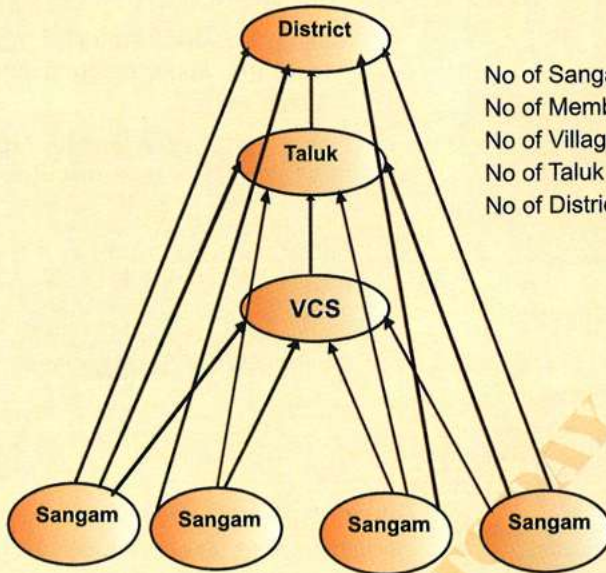
Strengthening Women's Federation



- ★ Creation of Rights outlook on the coastal resources and coastal lands and involving in the public actions and campaigns.
- ★ Spreading the Fisherwomen's network in the eastern zone with the active leadership of Karai and Nagai federation.
- ★ Identifying the welfare schemes of the government and making them available for the fishing and fishing dependent coastal communities.
- ★ Initiatives for effective functioning of the Fisher women Cooperatives societies.
- ★ Training the members of the federations and sangams to strengthen their socio political understanding.
- ★ Linking the federations with other regional, State and National Level Forums.

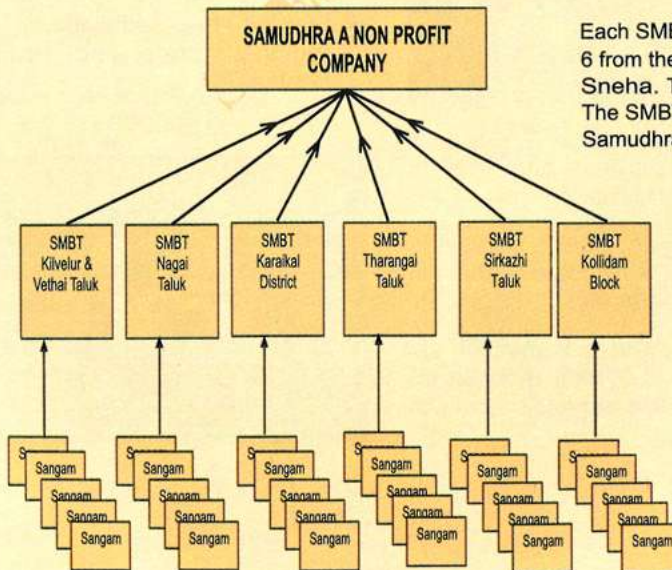


STRUCTURE OF THE FISHERWOMEN FEDERATION



No of Sangams: 617
 No of Members 11070
 No of Village Coordination Sangams (VCS): 51
 No of Taluk level Federations: 6
 No of District level Federations: 2

STRUCTURE OF SAMUDHRA



Each SMBT has 9 Board of Directors, 6 from the Sangams and 3 from Sneha. There are 6 such Trusts. The SMBTs are members of the Samudhra Company.

SMBT- Samudhra Mutual Benefit Trust

Creating awareness among the communities on Destructive Development Projects along the coast and policies that could potentially affect them.

- ★ Trainings on the National State Policies related to the coast
- ★ Documentation and dissemination of information on the policies and developments along the coast.
- ★ Perspective building training on the impact of Tourism, Globalisation, (SEZ) Special Economic Zones and Land rights, (SSCP) Sethu Samudhram Shipping Canal Project
- ★ Tirupur Dye effluents and Harbour based fisheries
- ★ Public hearing, Publications and Fact findings relating to these development disasters



- ★ Advocacy on Social Forestry and community ownership
- ★ Monitoring the process for not misusing, Mangroves.

Campaigning for the protection of coastal environment and rights of the coastal communities using rights based approaches



- ★ Campaign against Shrimp Industries, Levelling of land in existing shrimp industries and places where shrimp industries were there formerly through (NREGA) National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and Construction of wall, Dumping of stones should be opposed

- ★ Public Actions demanding protection of the marine and coastal resources
- ★ Workshops on Government policies that affect the coastal communities to consolidate their demands and evolve action plan for bringing necessary changes
- ★ Documenting the coastal violations and lobby for changes



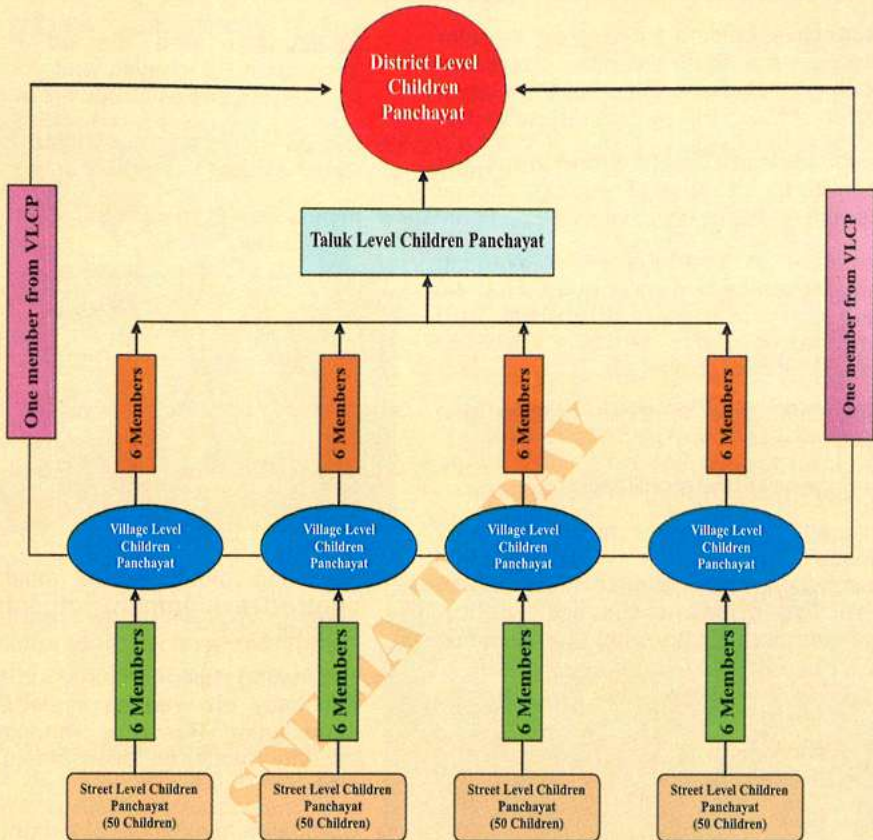
Protection and promotion of rights of children and adolescents have been possible due to long years of work, and base created at the community level

- ★ Strengthening children's Panchayats at various levels up to 14 yrs and facilitating separate forums for adolescent children at the village level for boys and girls separately.
- ★ Orientation camps to strengthen their perspectives on child rights ,coastal rights
- ★ Networking of children and adolescent groups at the village, taluk and district level
- ★ Monitoring of child rights violation through child protection committees



- ★ Lobby for changes in law and conditions of the children related institutions
- ★ Trainings for the members of child protection committees and other interest groups
- ★ Advocacy for allocation of funds for the education of dependant children. Priority for children of single women and orphan children
- ★ Advocacy and networking for Compulsory Free, Equal and quality education

STRUCTURE OF CHILDREN'S PANCHAYAT



Children's Panchayats

No of Street Level Children Panchayats	:	99
No of Boys	:	2148
No of Girls	:	2192
Total no of members	:	4410
Village level Children Panchayats (Vill)	:	51
Taluk level Children Panchayats	:	6
District level Children Panchayats	:	2

Adolescent Groups

Boys group	:	65
Girls group	:	44

Advocacy with Government and Aid Agencies for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Policies and plans

- ★ Perspective building training on disaster mitigation for Staff CBOs, Traditional Panchayat Leaders Elected Panchayat Leaders, NGO, PHC personnel and VHNS
- ★ Identification of Disaster prone areas and preparation of Risk Mapping, Social mapping and Mobility Chart
- ★ Formation of Task Force for Warning team, Resource and relief team, First aid team Information collection and communication team, Shelter team, Financial Committee
- ★ Mock Drill once in three months and Exposure visit
- ★ Contingency Fund mobilization
- ★ Advocacy initiatives such as Policy Critique on disaster. Planning and consultation meetings once in six months about government disaster policy, Disaster model plan with more women



Research and publications

- ★ Documentation of coastal violations and empirical studies and status reports on constituencies and market study to understand the role of women in fishing economy using value chain analysis and updating the Demographic profile of the population.
- ★ Bringing out Quarterly bulletin on the issues and concerns of coastal community - MEENAVAR KURAL and children's rights KIZHINGALKAL

participation and Elected Panchayat, Traditional Panchayat, and youth Priority for local governments' powers and funds

- ★ Set up monitoring committee for Elected Panchayat in Disaster Management.
- ★ Inclusion of Disaster education as part of primary education



- ★ Evolving multi hazard multi purpose centre/Development of information centres.
- ★ Facilitating task forces for taking up advocacy on warning system, Hospital capacitating Resource mapping, social security measures, alternate contingency plan.
- ★ Campaign against development disasters with different interest groups such as task force, women leaders, NGO leaders PRI leaders and leaders of CBOs



Reduce human rights violations against key constituencies with special reference to women, dalits, Children, and minorities in Eastern Zone



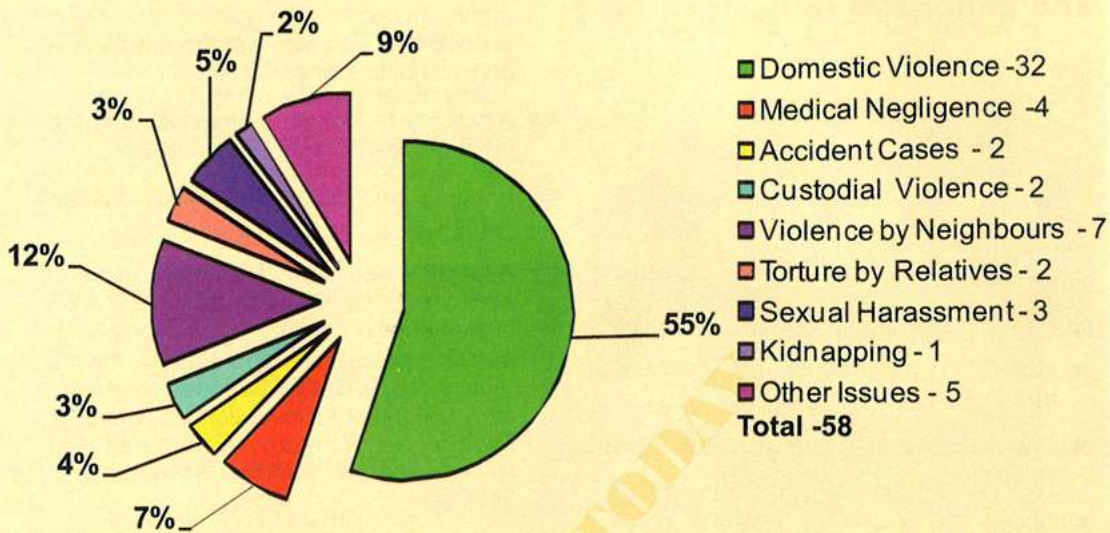
- ★ Identification of human rights violations and conducting public hearings.
- ★ Organizing conferences about the rights of Women, Dalits and Minorities.
- ★ Taking up issues of violence against women (protests, agitations) by CBOS
- ★ Giving awareness about the laws related to human rights to the School teachers, students and representatives of local governance.
- ★ In the areas where there are human rights violations a fact finding team would be formed to investigate the incidence and

expose the facts through the media and demand justice for the victims.

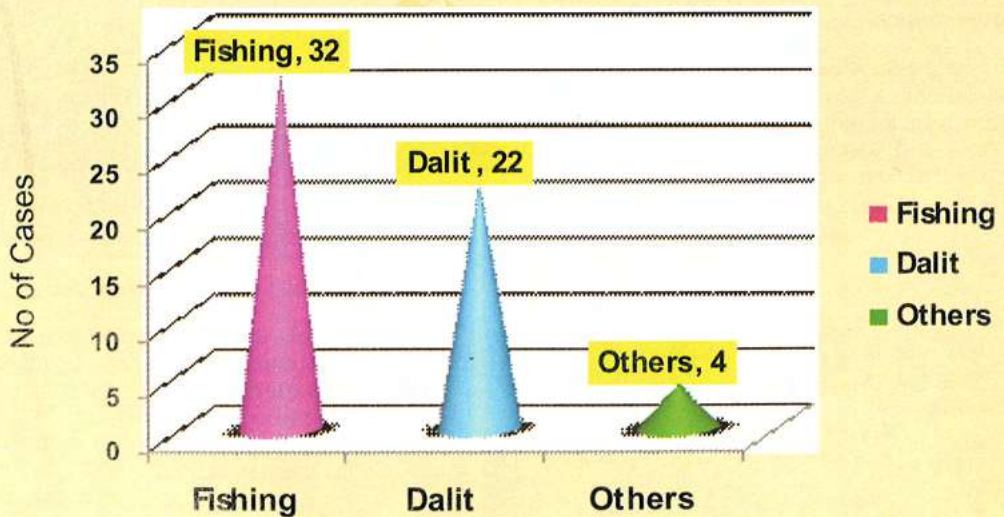
- ★ Advocacy to include human rights in the syllabus right from primary education.
- ★ Bringing publications regarding human rights
- ★ Advocacy and lobby for ratification of optional protocol on CEDAW, implementation of key Legislations such as Dowry prohibition act, Domestic Violence act, Child Marriage Prevention act, Child Labour Prevention act, Property Rights for Women, Enactment of Reservation for Women in Governance at all levels



Categories of Violence Against Women (Post Tsunami)



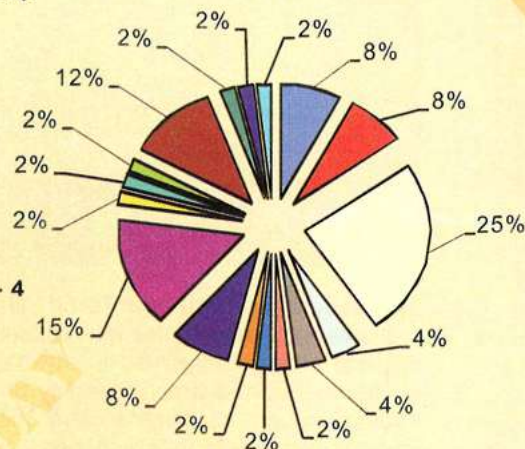
Violence Against Women in Different Communities (Post Tsunami)



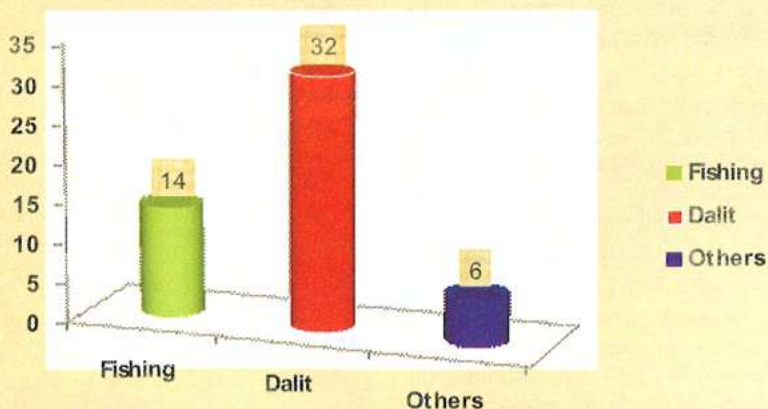
Types of Child Rights Violations (Post Tsunami)

- Death due to School Buildings Collapse - 4
- Death due to the Corporal Punishment in Schools - 4
- Injury due to Corporal Punishment in Schools - 13
- Sexual Abuses in Schools - 2
- Suicides in Hostels - 2
- Death due to Medical Negligence - 1
- Disability due to Medical Negligence - 1
- Starvation Death - 1
- Injury Due to the Collapse of the School Building - 4
- Sexual Abuse in Communities - 8
- Murder by Juveniles in Juvenile Home - 1
- Escape of Children from Juvenile Home - 1
- Sexual Harrasment and Murder - 1
- Rape - 6
- Custodial Torture - 1
- Violence against Minority Students in School by Fundamentalists Religious Groups - 1
- Injury due to the Accident by Private Mini Bus - 1

Total - 52



Child Rights Violations in Different Communities (Post Tsunami)



POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE COASTAL ZONES

Pre Tsunami



The coastal zone in Tamil Nadu is characterised by complex interactions of the marine, terrestrial and atmospheric environments and a rich diversity of natural habitats, such as coastal and mangrove forests, coral reefs flats / fringes / barriers, beaches, continental shelf areas, sand dunes, grasslands, marsh lands, rocky shores, flood plains, salt marshes, estuaries, mudflats, wetlands, sea grass beds and seaweed areas. A variety of natural resources, exist including corals, cowry shells, seaweeds and algae, fish shrimp and other aquatic life, plants and minerals. These are important for the existence of coastal communities. Coastal habitats and resources are also vital because of their role in stabilising the shorelines, and in protecting coastal areas and habitations from cyclones, tidal waves and other natural disasters.

Coastal zones support a majority of the world's populations' basic food needs. Important human activities, such as those relating to agriculture, fishing, fish drying and processing, salt extraction and production, shell collection etc., are integrated with this eco-system.

However industrial activities like rare earth mining, mining of corals, limestone and beach sand, groundwater extraction, land reclamation, plantation and afforestation, oil exploration and extraction, aquaculture,

transport highways, tourism and recreation, farm houses, real estate development, highway road projects, chemical and power industries, hotels, defence and nuclear establishments, ship breaking yards, wind mill farms, discharge of urban sewage and other effluents, construction and dredging of ports and harbours, and military and naval bases, are the major cause for the destruction of the coast its ecology and livelihood systems in Tamil Nadu.

These activities deplete and destroy natural resources and habitats and interfere with processes occurring naturally in the coastal zone. Activities, of a commercial, profit oriented nature, which require substantial



acquisition and privatisation of common resources, also lead to deprivation and poverty and loss of control over coastal peoples traditional livelihood, since local communities are either displaced, or their access to hitherto common resources is limited or alienated from them.



Coastal Zones and the Fishing Community



For the fishing communities, fishing is a way of life, not just a source of income. Traditionally, small scale or artisan fishers have provided fish for local consumption, but as fish becomes scarce, its value increases; it enters the global market and become unaffordable to common human being. Fish is a vital part of our diet, providing essential protein, vitamins and minerals.



In the Globalisation process, the fishing communities are displaced and the MNCs have depleted all the oceans in the world displacing the fishing communities all over the world depending on these life resources. In addition to this resource depletion, importing subsidised fish means the destruction of the

livelihood of millions of Indians involved in the smallscale, cottage fish industry and its marketing, resulting in the displacement of people, who are engaged in marketing particularly women. Lakhs more people are involved in processing the fish, transporting it to other locales and markets, its wholesale and retail trade.

The fish workers are losing their right to decide the price of their produce. This will invariably result in the displacement of the 10 million fish workers in this country. Now by allowing import we are selling out our fish industry to the Transnational Corporations.

Women's Role

With industrialisation in fisheries in India, women's role in pre-harvest activities is largely eliminated as net making is mechanised, though some mending work remains. With increase in industrial fishing and long distance fishing, the women become 'housewives' or work in other jobs. With trade becoming long distance and export oriented, women are marginalised in the marketing. Few are retailers of wholesalers.





As processing becomes industrialised, women are employed in cutting, cleaning and packing, but processing and marketing get separated. The condition in such processing plants and in activities like prawns peeling are often violating the labour laws, the employment is not regularised, sexual harassment occurs and occupational health is no safeguarded. This employment appears separate from fishing as an activity within a specified eco-system Similar problems arise where women are engaged in collecting of fingerlings for aquaculture), in pond culture.

With fisheries becoming more export oriented and industrialised, women lose more and more control over resources as innovations are aimed at men. Privatisation of wetland and inland waters occurs, women lose access to the commons. Salt for processing and firewood for smoking are hard to come by and women are pushed out of the marketing. Tourism displaces artisan fisheries, in general, and women on the shore in



particular. Traditional processing gets displaced by icing, canning and shelving. Trading companies and processing factories take over and employ women on contract under exploitative conditions. Women lose control over means of production in fisheries.

The underlying assumption is that women are anyway housewives and supplementary earners and that the future of the sector can be safeguarded by 'development' in the form of technology and profit orientation aimed at the male 'bread winners' and 'heads of the household' with some 'supplementary' income generation for women. This destroys the option of seeing women as central



guardians of social cohesion, food security and ecological balance, role that they have traditionally played. Women are offered some sops and safety nets, but their political role in creating alternatives is denied.

Specific Issues

Fish vending is a difficult occupation. Women fish vendors identify the following as their main problems scarcity of fish, escalating prices lack of capital and high rates of interest charged by money lenders entry of big (male) merchants with ready capital and own vehicles iced fish from other States and stiff competition. In the process, small vendors are marginalised or ousted, especially from



harbours. Since life in the fishing villages is very precarious and basic amenities are few, the time spent at home is not one of relaxation or rest for the women. They have to fetch water, do all the household chores and attend to the needs of their children and husbands. Even these resources like water and fuel are becoming scarce as they are either polluted or destroyed because of the destructive industries like shrimp and petro-chemical industries along the coast. The destruction of mangroves and associated fish breeding and nursery areas has affected fish catches, and organic pollution and use of pesticides has brought diseases.



All these have created insurmountable hardships to the women's lives. The fisheries sector itself is losing out and becoming marginalised in the context for use rights of aquatic resources. The other resource users are gaining priority over fisheries. Wherever the right to life & livelihood issue, which is a human need issue as a negative consequence of aquaculture, is raised, Fishworkers are portrayed as destroyers for over fishing using over efficiency technologies. Often the deeper causes of too



much technology and too many commercial interests destroying too many marine ecosystems are not taken into account or analysed. Industrial Aquaculture and other development projects along the coast are promoted as export industries and the myth is that they will mitigate rural poverty. In reality they have created new levels of impoverishment and feminization of suffering.

SNEHA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PRE TSUNAMI CONTEXT

Campaign against Sri Lankan Navy's Atrocities



The Sri Lankan Navy's atrocities on Indian fisher men venturing beyond the territorial water limits (kutch island) for their catch have been an issue of great concern. Numerous petitions and campaigns to draw the attention of the state and urging both the governments at the central and state level to take appropriate action had drawn a lukewarm response so far. Moreover, this was not a problem confined to the fishermen of Tamil Nadu alone but also four other states wherein the fishermen from those states were also subjected to harassment and torture by the foreign navy. Hence it was felt that only a joint action would force the Government to act immediately and decided to pressurize the union governments of the two countries to render justice.

As a response to the growing atrocities and to transcend this issue into macro level polity, like-minded NGOs, Trade Unions and People's Organisations evolved a forum called **Alliance for the Relief of Innocent Fishermen (ARIF)** to take up the fishermen cause at the highest appropriate level. ARIF works in alliance with the **South Asian Labour Forum**. Their main objective was to release the captured fishermen not only by the Sri Lankan Navy but also the Indian navy. It was also considered relevant to negotiate the release of the fishermen and avail compensation for the fishermen with the help of like-minded NGOs in Sri Lanka also.



During 1998 three fishermen from Kasakudimedu, were shot dead by the Sri Lankan Navy and two were seriously injured and their boat were capsized in the waters. In Sirkali around 1000 villagers assembled in front of the taluk office and raised slogans against the human rights violations against the fishermen. Over 2000 people from all the villages of the target area in Nagapattinam, Srikali, Tharangambadi and Karaikal gathered in front of the Karaikal Administrative Office and also at the Nagapattinam District Collector's Office and protested against the inhuman act of Sri Lankan Navy. Their demand was that the Indian state should condemn the Sri Lankan Navy's act and secure adequate compensation for the lives lost and demanded protection for the fishermen.

Campaign for the Protection and Promotion of Water Bodies

Tamil Nadu is endowed with the largest and richest fishery wealth in India. The Exclusive Economic Zone constitutes 1.9 lakh sq.km covering the Coromandal Coast, Palk Bay, Gulf of Mannar and part of West Coast of India, besides 21 coral islands in the Gulf of Mannar, with the rich habitats of live corals, coastal lagoons, mangroves and estuaries. Regarding inland fisheries, there are five major rivers, 51 reservoirs and innumerable tanks.



This rich biodiversity and resources are under threat due to the globalisation process and the related policies of the State and Central Government. Disposal of untreated domestic waste, industrial waste, developmental activities like shrimp industries construction

of ports, harbours, breakwaters, tourist resorts, dredging for navigation, ocean traffic, exploration of mineral and oil are major threats which upset the ecological balance of the coast. They not only affect the resource availability but also have repercussion on the life and livelihood resources of the coastal communities. The coastal stretches of Chennai, Nagapattinam, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari have been identified as zones with major CRZ violations as per Coastal Regulation Zone notification 1991 which prohibits the developmental activities in the ecologically sensitive areas.

In this backdrop, with a view to identify the existing status of coastal water bodies and their present status, SNEHA, in collaboration with Coastal Action Network (CAN) constituted a study team and this team travelled along the stretch from Muthukadu to Muthupettai in the month of June 2000. The factual information from the people and secondary sources were documented. One of the key focus was to investigate and document the status of mangrove vegetation all along these water bodies

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the conditions of water bodies along the coast from Muthupettai in Thiruvavarur district to Muttukadu in Kancheepuram district.
2. To document the violations along the coastal water bodies.
3. To facilitate a state level campaign for the protection of water bodies.
4. To investigate and document the status of mangrove vegetation all along the water bodies

The condition of water bodies in Tamil Nadu is rapidly deteriorating causing destruction to livelihood systems, ecology and environment, animal life, agriculture and vegetation, aquatic life etc. It is also the

cause for droughts and floods, disease and desertification. Various efforts were being taken over the last decade in various districts to protect these water bodies and to advocate with government, state and union for urgent steps to halt this destruction.

Keeping this mission in mind a state level campaign for the protection and promotion of water resources was evolved in which sneha is one of the founder members. Sneha took a lead role in convening a state level consultation on the theme of the campaign and during this consultation the campaign was officially launched. Sneha is part of the core team of the campaign.



Protection and Regeneration Mangroves (2001-2002)



Seminars and training programmes were conducted in 49 villages to train the people to be responsible for protection and regeneration of common resources. Realizing the need to protect the mangroves, sangam women had formed themselves into a group. A total of 114 trainings participated by 1475 women and four seminars participated by 160 women and 5 debates participated by 174 women were organised to sensitize the people on their role in protecting the mangroves along the coast of Nagapattinam. Efforts were taken to regenerate mangroves in Pazhaiyar, Madavamedu, Chinnakottaimedu region and the growth of mangroves was promising.

Special attention was extended to protect these mangroves which is a source of protection of fish resources and protection of the coast from natural calamities like cyclone.

Mangrove's Protection Committees took efforts to monitor and protect the mangrove vegetation in the area. Seedlings were also planted at Vellaiyar region, near Velankanni. Efforts were made to obtain that land from the revenue department for regenerating more mangroves in that region. In the pre-monsoon season mangrove protection committee completed the planting of seedlings. Since mangroves form part of very sensitive ecosystem in the coast.

Sneha educated even the pre-school children on the importance and children were taken out for a nature walk and explained about the environment and importance of protecting the mangroves. The children's sangams also discussed the same in their regular meetings. The N.S.S volunteers of ADM college and Natarajan Dhamayanthi Higher Secondary School also volunteered in collection of mangrove seeds and regeneration of mangroves.

Campaign Against PPN Power Plant 2001-2002



The Tamil Nadu Government permitted the private sector to build a power plant at **Pillaiperumalnallur** in Tharangampadi Taluk. The technology being used by this private power plant is outdated and the plant uses Naphtha and liquefied petroleum gas to generate power. These two chemicals are the enemies to environment and pose a serious threat to life and livelihood of coastal people and coastal ecology. The hot water emitted from the industry is directly pumped into sea, the breeding place for several species of marine life. The very life of fishing communities who solely depend on coastal resources are thus deprived of rights to life and livelihood.

In this context Sneha organized many awareness generation programmes in the form of yatras, seminars, public meetings, distributed IEC materials on the impact of PPN on the coastal ecology and the rights of the coastal community. In order to present a scientific view on the issue, a six member Independent Expert Committee headed by Justice H.Suresh, former Judge, Bombay High court completed a two day public enquiry in the affected villages and a public hearing at Anbu Thirumana Mahal, Akkur from 30th may to 31st may 2001 on the functioning and impact of the Pillaiperumalnallur Power Generation Co.Ltd. The other members of the committee were Ms Norma Alwares, Advocate from Goa, Mr. V. Natarajan, former

Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India, Mr. Mohan, Advocate from Chennai and Mr. Ramamurthy, Honorary Wild Life Warden, Thiruvarur District.

On 30th May they had received 22 affidavits from both agricultural and fishing villages. Nearly 300 affected families, men and women came to express their views about the irrelevance of this power company to their lives. Several affidavits submitted to the committee by villages spoke of denial of information and misinformation both by Pillaiperumalnallur Power Generation Company (PPGC) and the State government officials. They shared that their right to be heard and right to information had been denied. Another major impact of the power company they said was the rapid erosion of the sea coast as much as 50 to 100 meters in the last one year. This had resulted in declining common coastal lands, so essential for boats and gear of the fishing community.



People were aware that the power company was using naphtha and naphtha spill could destroy several kms of marine life and destroy the fishing community. Further due to the laying of the huge intake and outlet pipes into the sea and required dredging which uprooted of the entire smooth sea bed surface in the area and it had become rocky



resulting in hundreds of nets being damaged during fishing. Case after case gave evidence of coastal lands being lost (50 to 60 meters) into the sea due to erosion in the last two years due to the Pillaiperumalnallur Power Generating Company. Erosion they said was worsening after filling up and leveling work for the Thirukadaiyur minor port has begun for the purpose of Pillaiperumalnallur Power Generating Company Ltd.

Very stirring accounts of rapid salinity of drinking water was recorded by the women. Many wells in the villages were dry and other hand pumps were only flowing with salty yellow water. They also spoke of the depletion of fish resources after construction and trial run of the power company and there was severe sound pollution. Other affidavits accounted for no employment at all to the people of surrounding villages and the encroachment of coastal lands by the power

company. The entire livelihood system of backwater had been destroyed because of blockading by the construction of various roads and buildings by the company. Earlier on 29th May the expert committee visited the affected villages of Vanagiri, Chinnamedu, Chinnangudi, Thalampettai and Pudhupettai and visited the site of erosion, listened to the voice of fishing leaders and women, checked the salinity of drinking water, travelled in a boat for 8 kms to understand the hardships now faced by fishing people due to the intake and outlet pipes for naphtha transfer at the single mooring.

Coastal Action Network also placed evidence before the committee about the very toxic substances used by PPN Power Generation Company Limited and the impact on the lives of the fishing people and marine life in case of oil spills or naphtha spills. They gave evidence to show that the power plant was in violation of Coastal Regulation Zone Law. It produced the copies of clearance got by the company and that there were no documents regarding comprehensive Environment Impact Assessment, Power Purchase Agreement etc and they were not made public. On 30th the Expert Committee also took evidence from district officials of the fisheries department, PWD and Electricity department. On 31st the Expert Committee met officials of the state government at Chennai. In spite of the strenuous efforts, the traditional Panchayat allowed the establishment of PPN plant.

Campaign Against Shrimp Industry



It was first the Shrimp farms that started dotting the coast, and there was a great need for mobilization of the coastal communities. This new industry changed the very manner in which the coastal communities perceived the coast – from a sustainer of life to an exploitable commodity. The consequences were grave and ended in the total destruction of coastal agriculture due to heightened salinity, reduced food security, bio-diversity, increased fragility of the coastal environment and reduced shrimp yield of artisan fisheries as shrimp seedlings were being consumed by the shrimp industry.

In this context SNEHA mounted an offensive with the formation of the Campaign Against Shrimp Industries (CASI) in which sneha was one of the founder members.

Coastal communities across Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and other southern states,

whose coasts were vulnerable to this invading trend were mobilized and coastal communities started getting on to the streets in the form of rail and Road Roko, Dharna, hunger strikes etc., filing writ petitions, conducting fact finding missions into atrocities that have since been committed on coastal communities, and conducted public hearings that have challenged the status of the Shrimp industry along the coast of Tamil Nadu. This had put a lot of pressure on the district administration and state government and to this day the Nagapattinam coast has the lowest number of shrimp farms that are functioning in violation of the 1991 SC notification. CASI supported the writ petition filed to ban shrimp Industries by Veteran leader Jeggannathan with an alternate report headed by Justice H. Suresh. Supreme Court delivered a verdict in favor of coastal communities with due acknowledgement to the findings of the alternate report filed by CASI



Public Action Against Destructive Projects



The Karaikal Women's Federation emerged as one of the strongest and the most active in struggles waged against sectoral issues like shrimp industries, joint ventures and tourist industries/Encouraged with the success of getting roads, street lights, and transport facilities, this federation drafted a charter of nineteen demands including action against sectoral and policy level issues and sent it to the SNEHA as part of Coastal action network,

a state level forum to protect the rights of the coastal communities and coastal ecology made strenuous efforts to educate the community on the implications of destructive infrastructure and industrial projects in the light of CRZ 1991 notification with the dissemination of IEC materials .

This has resulted in the public protests against PPN power project, Sedhu samudhram shipping canal project, commercial harbours and other industrial and infrastructure projects. The most important contribution was the resistance made against the Coastal Zone management notification (CZM) 2008 through protests, public actions and filing petitions with Ministry of Environment, Chief Minister and other



relevant state functionaries for suitable action. The then Pondicherry Government had proposed to set up a tourism industry in Karaikal and to attract the tourists even planned to develop the beaches and make them resorts. There was also a plan to establish a film city. The suggested tourism harbor was traditionally used for landing the motor boats of the fishermen. Since the move of the Government would naturally work against the interest of the fishing community, a sustained campaign was taken up in 10 villages for more than a year. With the help of Sneha the federation joined hands with the National Fish workers Federation (NFF) on the 'Protect Water.. Protect Life' campaign. They took up the issue of their men languishing in the Sri Lankan prisons on account of excesses relating to the use of international / cross territorial waters and strengthened the hands of NFF in stopping the legalization of the same.

Protests were made against the Sethu Samuthram Shipping Canal Project (SSCP) at Madurai, Chennai, Rameswaram, and at Nagapattinam. Some of the members of the Karaikal federation were arrested in the protest. The members of the Karaikal federation played a key role in these protests.

Action Against Eviction of Fishing Villages in Chennai

The State Government promulgated an order to evict fishermen and their fishing crafts and gears, in order to permit a Multinational Five Star Hotels on Chennai sea coast. A joint action was planned by Sneha, Neythal and Human Rights Foundation. It was planned to mobilize fisher people from Ennore and its

surrounding area to protest against marginalization of fishing community in Chennai and its suburban sea coast. On 10th and 11th Nov 2003 a two day campaign was organised to mobilise fisher people to fight against the foreign invasion and to protect human rights.

Campaign Against Privatization of Water

Sneha was a active member of Campaign against privatization of water. This campaign was an outcome of the state level consultation held on 4.09.03 at Madurai. In this consultation leading eminent speakers from

NGOs and political fronts participated and deliberated on the privatization of water and consumerism, entry of MNCs and globalization's adverse effects on the common man.

Highlights

- ★ Water and air are common resources and not to be privatized.
- ★ Women fall a prey to this unjust act of the Government.
- ★ Right to protect these National resources should be handled by the Panchayats.
- ★ Organise struggles to prevent the massive destruction of water resources.

It was decided that in order to protest against privatization of water resources, it is necessary that water should be considered as a livelihood resource and right to safe water is a fundamental right and campaign should promote this as the focal point

Fisher Women Cooperatives (2003)

It was a milestone when the government announced the savings cum relief schemes for the fisher women's cooperatives, but a set back when it withdrew the subsidies within a short time. It was an achievement when government recognized labour of the fisher women equal to fisher men, again it is a continuation of the struggle to fight back to secure their rights. Now even fisher men have joined the struggle to fight for women's rights.

No of Societies Registered	Societies under registration	Total membership	Government schemes availed (Savings cum relief scheme & Accidental Insurance Schemes)	
			No of Societies	No of Beneficiaries
46	8	11,135	33	5,037

Objectives of Cooperatives:

- ★ Securing government schemes through cooperatives for the members.
- ★ Procurement and selling of fish through cooperatives.
- ★ Selling fishing accessories through cooperatives.
- ★ Increasing the savings habits among the fisher women.
- ★ Reducing the work load for women by demanding common vehicle to transport fish from sea.

Achievements of Cooperatives:

- ★ Savings cum relief schemes for women.
- ★ Accidental Insurance.

Subsidy Schemes:

- ★ Vessels for fish vending.
- ★ Tricycle worth Rs. 125,000.
- ★ Ice box.

Fisherwomen's Cooperatives Network – Nagapattinam

Representation of all the Fisherwomen's Cooperative Societies met at Tharangambadi on 31st January 2004 to have consultation on their activities. Out of the 33 registered societies that have received the schemes, 23 of them were represented by 83 members.

A network was formed in order to execute the activities in an effective manner. A 17 member working committee was formed from which five district level office bearers were elected. Various issues related to economic development and subsidies from the Government were discussed.

Resolutions passed

1. Resolved to include women to benefit through savings cum relief scheme as women's work is also directly related to fishing activities.
2. Resolved to condemn the act of the Government for withdrawing schemes for fisher women.
3. The network resolved to submit a petition to the Government to double the amount of grant on savings cum relief schemes provided during the off seasons.
4. It was resolved that if the above demands were not met by the Government the network would boycott the coming elections.

Panchayat Governance

Although local government in India is a subject of the State governments, the seventy-third and the seventy-fourth amendments to the Constitution of India now make it obligatory for the State governments to organize local bodies, to hold regular elections to them and to give them appropriate finances. These bodies are elected on a universal suffrage basis, with all citizens above the age of eighteen years of age having a right to vote. The rural local bodies are organized in three tiers, the village panchayat at the village level, the block panchayat samiti for about 100 villages and a district council for a district comprising about 1000 villages. The rural local bodies do not have many resources of their own. They actually spend the state government funds as implementing agencies.

Women's role in decision making is one of the most important questions for consideration in

the movement for their empowerment. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1992) to the Indian Constitution have served as a major breakthrough towards ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in political power structures. This Amendment provided for reservation of one third of seats for women at level of local governance in urban areas. There is also a one-third reservation for women for posts of chairpersons of these local bodies. This amendment has initiated a powerful strategy of affirmative action for providing the structural framework for women's participation in political decision-making and provided an opportunity to bring women to be in the fore-front and centre of any development and develop new grass-root level leadership. There are about one million elected women representatives in Panchayats and Municipal Bodies in India.

Role of Sneha

Sneha is an active member of TN alliance for empowering women panchayat presidents. It involved itself in the active campaign of monitoring elections in 1996, 2001 and 2006 and organizing trainings for the potential candidates. It facilitated the participation of its sangam members to contest in the elections. It organized awareness campaigns about the need for women's participation.

In the post election period, it organized capacity building programmes to educate the

elected women presidents about the importance of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the obstacles faced by women in their day to day work in the panchayats, the methods to be adopted to break these obstacles, the rights and duties of the panchayat leaders. A state level federation of Women Panchayat Presidents has been formed and so far this federation with the support of NGO alliance has convened four state level conferences

The following are the major resolutions passed during the conference

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment stipulates that twenty nine subjects be brought under the purview of the panchayats. But so far only a few departments have been brought under their control. The women demanded the total inclusion of all specified departments in the panchayats. Initially, primary health, nutrition, education, public distribution system be brought under the control of the panchayats. The powers and funds for these departments should also be vested with the panchayats. The power of issuing community/caste certificates should be vested with the panchayats. The panchayats should also have the powers to manage common village resources and maintain a registry of births and deaths. The Government Orders, circulars should be sent directly to the panchayats instead of routing it through the Block Development Office. The government should repeal section 205 under chapter 10 of

Panchayatraj act as it violates the constitution. The transfer of powers to issue NOC to building or reconversion of land and



permitting industries from the Panchayat government to MMDA/town and country planning need to be reverted 50% of the state revenue must be shared with the local government and the panchayats.

Action Plan of TNWPPF

On issue-based topics, lobbying and advocacy are being currently taken up. In order to ensure the strengthening of the local governing bodies, mapping of resources

would be taken up as a first step. All the resources like land, water, water bodies and forests in the target area would be mapped to provide an update of the available resources.

Learnings

As reservation policies are not the only gender-sensitive governance mechanism, alternative gender-sensitive governance mechanisms (e.g., gender quorums in community meetings, women-friendly institutions, gender budgeting) need to be facilitated Political, social, and institutional

factors unrelated to reservation (e.g., HH location, political membership, attendance of Gram Sabha meetings, the actions taken and stakeholders involved to improve service provision, household size of GPs) influence local governance and rural service provision. This has to be analysed

Credit and Savings

In the project areas upto 26 December 2004 there were 278 self-help groups (SHG) in 49 fishing villages of Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and Karaikal district in Pondicherry. There were 225 SHGs in Nagapattinam and 53

SHGs in Karaikal districts. Of these there were 12 men groups. The total number of men is 240 and the total number of women 5279 and together the total number of members in self help groups is 5519.

Upto Dec 2004

★ Savings	:	Rs 64, 84, 420
★ Total Loan	:	Rs 1,24,18,500
★ Total Repayment	:	Rs 82,85,990
★ Total R/F Amount	:	Rs 6,65,000 (62 Sangam)
★ Subsidy 57 Sangam	:	Rs 33,25,000

Upto March 2009

★ No.of Sangams	:	617
★ No.of Members	:	11070
★ Savings	:	Rs.2,73,87,320/-
★ Total Loan	:	Rs.3,76,74,250/-

Protest against gender violence Rape and murder of girl children Case 1

The non fishing community in the coastal belt undertook extensive cultivation of casuarina tree, a cash crop which was mainly used for constructing tents, as building materials for contractors, had replaced bamboo and were



also used as fuel wood in industries. The land in which this cultivation was undertaken was more often government revenue land but in local parlance as poramboke. These poramboke lands which were previously enjoyed by the common poor including the

Case 2

Priya's (name changed) father was a catamaran owner and labourer and her mother was engaged in fish vending. It was the female children in the household who usually took care of other household activities like collecting fuel/Firewood, fetch water, clean the house etc. Similarly Priya used to go to the nearby casuarinas plantation to collect fallen twigs and wooden pieces.

When the matter was first brought to light, there were concerted efforts by the local administration and the police top brass to keep the whole thing under wraps. But the women's as well as the men's federations quickly swung into action mobilizing public opinion and support and very soon it was the

fishing folk and were then being illegally occupied by the non fishing community. The fisher women had no other alternative but to travel through those lands to collect firewood. It was to deter them and also to teach them a lesson that the gruesome act of rape and murder was resorted to by illegal land owners.

Several years back, it was the little girl latha hailing from village Vellapallam was raped and murdered followed by Priya.. It was the rape and murder of seven year old latha (name changed)(1989) that got SNEHA neck deep into this agenda. She was assaulted by a member of the Gounder community and her body was found hanging from a tree. In the case of Priya she was raped and murdered by a health inspector, a Caste Hindu with high political connections locally. Federation Women were organized around the mandate of protection of girl children and a position against the violence meted out to their gender.

talking point in the corridors of power in the state capital too.

In the meanwhile, the federations stepped up the publicity campaign, distributed pamphlets, petitioned the government and the local police authorities, organised rallies, mobilized support from the likeminded organisations and even undertook hunger strikes. This massive campaign forced the authorities who had the audacity to even close the file on the case to reopen and reinvestigate the whole issue. SNEHA's persistence and continuous protest by the federation members paid up when the sessions court gave a conviction to the guilty.

Case 3

Seven year old Sandhya was raped by Govindharaj, a 60 year old economically powerful man of the village. The matter was brought to the notice of the panchayat and the mother of the girl lodged a complaint with the local police. The police in turn asked the panchayat to settle the issue as the accused was a fairly rich man of the village.

After much dilly-dallying over the issue, the panchayat convened a meeting in which nothing of significance was decided. The village was divided on the issue of punishment to be meted out to the accused. One group wanted a fine to be imposed while the other group wanted him to be humiliated in the public by the panchayat. The women's sangam approached the men's sangam for support. Consequently a meeting of the eight village panchayats was called for and the matter discussed. Finally it was agreed to impose a fine of Rs. 30000 on the accused but

the girl's mother refused to have none of it and walked away from the panchayat. The women quickly drummed up public opinion and this time the panchayat had no option but to execute the mandatory punishment of humiliation. The man had since left the village for good.

Various cases of similar magnitude were later addressed through the life and work of federations facilitated by sneha.



SNEHA'S ACTION

SNEHA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF TSUNAMI

Women and coastal community led tsunami recovery

The main achievement of Sneha's recovery program is that it is one of the most important women and coastal community led tsunami recovery in South India; and with rights based perspective. This recovery is made by the organization that itself is a tsunami victim. It has suffered loss of members and workers and income and development gains made over years. Thus Sneha's recovery is an example of recovery made by a local and a victim/surviving organization reaching out to a large number of its members through relief and recovery projects as well as advocacy activities to access relief, rehabilitation, and recovery resources from the state and other donors in favor of women, dalit and excluded groups in coastal areas.

Pre- Tsunami period

Responding to strong patriarchal values and the need to recognize the role of women in the fishing economy, Sneha initiated the mobilization of women into sangams starting with Serudhur, Kameshwaram and Vellapallam. Women were actively involved in pre and post harvest related activities that started from sending the men into the sea (cooking the needed food for the men that needs to be taken, helping the launch of the boats), mending the nets, getting the nets ready, preparing the ice box, etc. and that went on into auctioning, processing, vending and transporting. There was the need to assert this space for the women in the fishing community. Initial work was greeted with a lot of opposition even when they came together. The sangams began taking up need based issues.

Sneha facilitated these sangams into federations with an initial focus to get benefits collectively from the Government Schemes through fisherwomen cooperatives and to protest collectively against insurgent evils that affected the coast. Over a period of time Sneha trained the federation members to protect and fight for rights that were crucial to their being – the rights of the Women, Children and marginal communities among the coast dwellers. Independently and collectively women were able to make decisions from the family to the Panchayat level. Panchayat leaders have accepted decisions and suggestions of women in Panchayat meetings. These federations over time were a part or leading the way when it came to the issues of coastal resources, its protection, food security, addressing issues relating to mechanization of fishing fleets and the adverse affects of destructive fishing gear.

The Post Tsunami activities of the Federations



Sneha's bottoms-up approach to the relief distribution through its federations had underscored Women's capacities in the context of Disaster, breaking the popular images of their helplessness and vulnerabilities. In the wake of the tragedy of December 2004 that left the fishing community totally devastated, the federation members immediately got together to take

stock of their situation and ensured that they would be the prime drivers of the relief efforts that were to reach the affected population. With the help of Sneha, it was the federation members who purchased the relief materials for distribution. They went to two to four shops, checked the quality of the materials

and purchased materials of good quality. The federation members packed the purchased materials for individual families. Since the federation members themselves were from the affected villages, it was easier for them to identify the affected people and distribute the relief materials.

The efficient logistics, handled by women themselves also went beyond the extension



of women's domestic role to the community services such as cleaning the surroundings or distributing relief to women alone expectedly attracted the greatest attention from both the Government and Civil Society

Shelter recovery programs

SNEHA's tsunami recovery program is one of the largest shelter recovery programs in tsunami affected coastal South India, which has protected the livelihood of coastal communities by promoting in situ housing. The shelter program is driven by the survivors almost all of them women, as suited to their needs (in situ and spatial needs) and pace of recovery and not as suited to the government, donor or international organization's budget deadlines.

Recapturing the Coast and a Coastal Identity

Post Tsunami, the Coast became the hunting ground for multiple interests; interests that sought to capitalize on the vulnerable context that fishing communities found themselves in. The state declared that no reconstruction was to take up to 500 meters of the high tide line. Pressure began to mount on the fishing communities to vacate the coast and the state played the Private Interests harp as local communities hearts burnt... with the loss of dear ones, all that they held near and now it



was the direction from the state that they had to vacate the coast. That which was theirs by birth and life was now being plucked away from them; and there were many incentives that were offered if they surrendered this birth right of theirs. It was in this context, while yet dealing with the losses that the extended Sneha family itself had gone through, that these challenges were taken.



Advocacy against government and demanding permanent houses within the 200 mtrs by the State

After the tsunami disaster the state government has been indirectly and directly forcing people to move outside the 200 mtrs off the high tide line. It had been announced that no financial assistance would be provided by the government for the repair or rebuilding



of damaged houses within the 200 mtrs off the sea. Further no NGOs were allowed to sign on the MoU to construct permanent houses within this 200 mtrs. The GO indeed could be seen as an effort to relocate the coastal community by making use of a major disaster and its added vulnerability. Sneha advocated for insitu houses and helping the coastal community to repair their houses and their original habitations.. In this context the District Administration started surveying and getting signature from the beneficiaries expressing their willingness to surrender their existing shelter and land to the State and shift to the new houses. Through this GO 708, the state was yet again trying to relocate the coastal communities in the name of vulnerability of houses to natural calamities.

Sneha again took up a massive campaign educating the coastal dwellers about the

various aspects of vulnerability both relating to shelter and livelihoods and this has helped the communities make decisions based on meaningful information that the communities were facilitated to access.

In the 50 working villages of Sneha in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts, federations availed support from Sneha in repairing their damaged houses within 200 metres from the sea for those who did not receive any assistance from the Government or other NGOs., Sneha was requested to assist in repairing of the damaged houses. A monitoring committee was formed. The Panchayat members, women of the federation, the monitoring committee and the coordinator of the respective area assessed



the damaged houses and estimated the extent of damage to the houses. The monitoring committee and the federation members ensured that the money given for the repairing of the house was used only for that purpose. The federation members immediately reported about the defaulters to the organisation

Livelihood recovery initiatives

Sneha's recovery program is one of the remarkable livelihood recovery initiatives in South India with a focus on fishery as well as allied sectors in coastal areas in South India. The unique aspect is that Sneha focused on livelihood recovery of coastal and dalit women, neglected by the government. Its provision of vending accessories to women as relief, its provision of seed money to groups to restart their traditional livelihoods, its provision of carrier auto for fish marketing to women's federations, reconstruction of drying yards in landing sites, ongoing construction through federations of flour mills and float production units, registering of women's producer's company and formation of fish vendors forum stand out.

Planning and implementation of livelihood activities



The federation members decided their village needs. The major focus of the federation was to strengthen the sangams in the context of tsunami. The federation further was involved in the identification of gaps in the relief work and rehabilitation

They identified a list of economical activities to strengthen the economic status of the members of the federation. They came to a consensus on utilizing the seed money towards the formation of a producer company called SAMUDHRA and registered it under



sec 25 of Companies Act. They evolved a common consensus on the following possible fishing related livelihood options to the member villages of the federation



- ★ Running carrier Auto
- ★ Running Share Auto
- ★ Availing vessels and electrical appliances for renting.
- ★ Running a Flour Mill
- ★ Using Ice Boxes for storage
- ★ Availing Fish Boxes, Vending Baskets and Lunch Boxes
- ★ Facilitating access to credit
- ★ Providing seed money to Women's Sangams
- ★ Dry Fish platform to the villages
- ★ Women's Activity Centres

Gender mainstreaming in tsunami response

Sneha challenged the gender blind livelihood rehabilitation practices of post-tsunami period. The tsunami relief and rehabilitation policies of government were blind to women's livelihood and asset losses, and often replaced livelihood assets only of women.



Given high levels of pre-Tsunami debt, women benefited from Sneha's initial seed capital in the form of a grant. Sneha's seed money Rs.3,000 (approximate US\$75) for fisherwomen provided them with an initial impetus when they needed it most. Many had nothing else with which to restart their business and to replace assets and tools of trade, which they lost in the Tsunami. The women now get immediate loans from the Sangams at a lower interest rate. Because of this they have escaped from the moneylenders who collect exorbitant interest rates. The women are now able to think for themselves, decide and take initiatives to strengthen their economic activities.

Strengthening the asset base

Three taluk federations were given auto carriers to facilitate the mobility of women vendor access to market. Auto carrier especially had brought a significant change in the lives of fish vending women and other community members when it has space. Not only the head loading burden has been

though they eventually get off at different places.



It also strengthens the institutional capacities of federation. The federation is ready now to buy another auto in view of the increased demand for it as well as the sustainability of income it ensures to the federation. The organization also have given a stock of vessels for their rental value to all the taluk level fisherwomen federations which fetches good income to it. The venture is sustainable as already the inventory of vessels has seen an increase as federation has reinvested the profit in buying more vessels as per the demand of the clients.

reduced, it saves time for women who used to walk 10 Km per day or would face harassment in the bus and have frequent arguments with the conductor. The auto carrier has restored their dignity and increased the sense of security for them. Going collectively is an enhancing experience for all the women,



This manner of Redefining fishing occupation from women's perspective has imparted a focused direction for Sneha's lobbying and advocacy efforts. Sneha is in the process of organizing women engaged in fish vending,

processing of fish and for allied sectors such as floats making, dry fish processing in a cooperative mode for value added products to strengthen their negotiating position in the market.

Impact of tsunami on single women

The major impacts of Tsunami were on the occupation of the fish vendors. As said earlier, they lost their vessels, vending accessories and other sheds put up to dry the fish and also the catch of fish, they had purchased for retail selling amounting to Rs.5,000 and Rs.10,000. Women also shared that their houses were washed away. They have lost their livelihood sources and trapped into severe indebtedness. They could not educate their children. The other issues were inconvenient temporary shelters, denial of permanent shelters, loss of male members, physical and social insecurity, unhealthy physical status due to injuries sustained during Tsunami.



Sneha in coordination with NCRC filed petitions with the concerned officials and availed compensation, inclusion of their names for the allotment of permanent shelters and health care services.

Strengthening women's collective agency

In tandem with their effort to restore and strengthen existing means of livelihoods for fisherwomen, Sneha facilitated group activities that strengthened women's primary livelihood options. In an effort to increase their negotiating power and to make their presence felt in the domestic market, they federated women under the Tamil Nadu Women Fish

Workers Forum (TNWFF) to raise awareness on their rights. For Sneha, fish workers were not just fisherwomen engaged in fish vending and fish processing, but also others including Dalit women engaged in allied activities such as net making and mending and women working in fish processing companies.

Investing into the Future - Working with Children

Sneha's tsunami recovery program is also prominent in terms of its focus on the children and their right to education after tsunami.

Pre- tsunami initiatives



Sneha's pre-schools have today grown to a network of 31 pre schools in 29 villages of Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts. These schools were being run on the Montessori model of elementary education. Priorities of the children were earlier never discussed in the panchayat meetings. With the facilitation of Sneha, the women sangams began taking these issues up seriously. Parent Teachers meetings were convened. Parents were encouraged to participate in the development and education of the children. With these inputs the parents started seeing marked changes in the lives of their children. This facilitated the continued patronage of the fishing community of the services of Sneha. The Pre schools over time were integrated along with the services of the ICDS.

The children were further organized into **Children Panchayat** as this was felt to be a more pro active manner of mobilizing children around their participatory rights and facilitate meaningful decision making. Each of the Children Panchayats have the Education Committee, the Finance Committee, the Environment Concern Committee, the Health Committee, the Child Rights Committee, and the Protection of the Rights of Girl Children Committee. There initially was resistance from the traditional panchayat about the children grouping into street specific panchayats. The children however demanded that this was a need and their right. The **Children Panchayats** functioned to its capacities as they were convened regularly at least once in a fortnight and the situations and child rights related contexts were constantly monitored by the children themselves.



Post tsunami initiatives



During the immediate relief phase there were serious gaps that were observed such as the non availability of dresses for the different age groups of children, nutritious infant food and the lack of specialised health services for the children. Adolescent girls could not access sanitary napkins and their privacy during morning hours towards fulfilling their sanitation requirements were not guaranteed. These gaps were communicated to district administrators through the NCRC and action was facilitated. One of Sneha's first response after Tsunami towards the children was to start the children camp with various activities.

Children were provided with playing material, toys, clothes, etc. Sneha has started rebuilding preschools in 32 of the worst affected villages. Montessori education was of great relief to the children. There were puppet shows, cultural programmes, and various activities on the beach that were organized for the children of each fishing hamlet. with the inputs from various organizations such as Psycho Trust, NIMHANS, and CSED, and Montessori trainers from Chennai. Children were given supplementary education. The Sneha team further involved itself in providing door to door counselling to women and children to recover from the traumatic memories of December 2004.

A Child Secretariat has been formed with Sneha as an integral part to monitor the situation of child rights in Nagapattinam. This

Committee that have members from seven other organisations have been given the authority to conduct Home Visits and document child rights violations that are prevalent in these children's homes and report these to the government. It was also involved in advocacy efforts along with the Child Rights Protection Network and the Child rights Core team in Nagapattinam.

Building State Level Alliance

SNEHA together with 22 other NGOs from various districts working for the promotion of Participation and Protection of Child Rights decided to build a forum (an



Alliance) of children's organisations (children sangams, panchayats, clubs, parliaments, etc.) for the purpose of promoting children's participation and through this to strengthen the right to protection of children.

On 3rd & 4th November 2007 nearly 250 delegates in the age group 12 to 16 from different children's organisations (about 10 from each organisation) assembled at Madurai for a State Level Convention of Children's Associations for Participation and Protection. This alliance is active in raising pertinent issues related to child participation and protection.

Case Study

In Kumarakudi, 300 children did not get any relief support during the relief phase and this matter was taken up seriously and the Children panchayats along with the Child Protection Committee petitioned the collector and Gram Sabha to get the needed interim support. Various efforts were further taken on the lines of the government GO 33. Samuthra Valli is an orphan who was studying in the 9th grade and being looked after by her elder brother. Her ability to go to school was compromised as the Thiruvengaadu Girls High School dismissed her as she had petitioned the collector along with the CPC with regard to her candidature being suspended due to her inability to pay the school fee. Sneha did a fact finding study into the incident and the report facilitated the children's re-entry into the school.

Enrolment Campaign

Enrolment Campaign was taken to ensure that basic education is accessed by all the children and that children are enabled to continue their studies. Surveys were conducted to identify the dropouts. Enrolment yathras were organized along with the CPS's and due to these efforts about 98% of the children who have completed 5 years are today accessing elementary education. 587 Child labourers have been identified and efforts getting them back were made to get back them to the schools



Special initiative to include physically challenged children

Sneha has a preferred focus on the status of Differently Able Children. It was reported that many children were also made disabled due to the tsunami disaster hence a survey has been conducted to know the extent and nature of

disability among children in the target villages where Sneha are working. This information is being used to mainstream children with disabilities into the mainstream schools and preferentially working with them.

A focus on Adolescent Girls

Sneha focused attention on the needs of adolescent girls. Following the Tsunami, Sneha collected and analyzed field data,



which indicated high levels of depression, suicidal tendencies, feelings of loneliness, a need for sharing and being guided, and low awareness levels regarding reproductive health issues among adolescent girls. In response, Sneha formed groups of adolescent girls to help orient them and raise awareness on issues related to alcoholism, children's rights, and hazards of early marriages as well as reproductive health concerns. Prior to the formation of these groups, it was considered taboo to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues

Children's panchayat are village based organizations where all the members of children's sangams come to gether for mutual learning, sharing and collective action to ensure the rights

Regular Activities

They used to meet every fortnight. They invite the members, the sangam leaders to facilitate the meetings, used to sing awareness songs about child rights and other social issues, read the last meeting minutes, fix the present meeting agenda, discuss the ongoing children's problem, review the activities of each committee and finally make the resolutions and plan of actions.

The committees formed and functioning are

1. Education Committee To ensure 100 per cent enrollment of children and identify the dropouts and facilitate the remission of drop outs
 2. Finance Committee. To mobilize support for those children who cant afford to buy note books and text books
 3. Girl Child Rights Committee : To monitor the discriminatory practices against the girl children and to encourage them to continue their studies
 4. Environment Committee, To keep the school and village surroundings clean
 5. Child Rights Committee to monitor and halt the violations against children in home, schools and in public places
 6. Health Committee to monitor the incidence of communicable disease among children
- The children's panchayats have taken up many issues with the support of women sangams and sneha's team ranging from abuse of girl children abuse of children's mother by their alcoholic fathers, representing their views in gramsabha to address civic issues like adequate buses, maintenance of roads watertanks, halting corporal punishments, enrolment of children, organizing tuition for the needy children and creating awareness about the safe environmental practices and health care measures.

The children's panchayat at the village level is a place for common gathering of children in a constructive way as they can discuss their issues, can learn about child rights etc. They have their own identity as the children and the adults have listened to their needs and views.

They are aware about the child right issues and violations. They had gone to many places and meetings for exposure visits. They had visited the places such as Gujarat, Perambalur, Nagappattinam, Trichy, and Seerkali for meetings and camps. They went to Kodaikanal for Tour. All these visits, meetings have improved their awareness on child rights issues, developed their



communications skill, their knowledge and practice. It has also helped them to have safer and better childhood practices, behaviours and thus improved their personality positively. It has helped them to have better self confident and self esteem.

Case Studies

Thamarai Chelvan aged 9 is from **Vizhundamavadi** village. While he was studying in the 4th standard, he had an attack of Chicken pox. He was a bright student at SNEHA pre-school and was outstanding in all extra curricular activities. After he joined the primary school in 2002, he became very irregular due to the parent's carelessness. In this context after the attack of chickenpox, the boy left his studies and started going for fishing along with his father. The pre-school teacher at Vizhundamavadi had discussions with the boy and his parents. Since it was not fruitful, she approached the teacher and the headmaster of the school and convinced them to have discussions with the parents. The headmaster sent a group of school children to Thamarai Chelvan's house to convince the boy to come back to the school. Thamarai Chelvan convinced by the interaction he had with other children has joined the school again and is doing his Fifth Standard.

Selvanayagi aged 14 comes from a village, **Madathukuppam**. She has two sisters in her family. Both girls were stopped from schooling after 5th standard. Selvanayagi was stopped from school due to poverty, after she completed her 8th standard. While having discussions with her parents, it was found that they were not able to send the girl to school due to poverty. The headmaster of the school was convinced and she was admitted again in 9th standard with a special concessional fee.

Rama (age 14), D/o. Panneer Selvam, is coming from village in **Vedaranyam** Taluk, Nagapattinam District. She was a student of 7th standard in a Middle School receiving Government Aid. On 21.12.2001 she came to the school with 2 of her friends to clean the classroom (Usually the students clean the

class room, fetch water in the pots in rotation). Rajan (age 45) is a Middle class teacher employed in that school. Noticing her cleaning the 8th standard classroom, Rajan entered suddenly and forcefully raped her.

In shock she was not able to shout. After that, Rajan threatened her of murder if she informs that to anyone. Hence she remained silence and did not complain to even her parents. After this incidence Rajan threatened her the next day also and keeping her in fear, he raped again. Later she became pregnant and when she was enquired about her pregnancy she explained all that happen to her.

Her parents approached Rajan and enquired about the abuse of their daughter. He suggested to amicably settle the matter without going in for any further action. As they did not agree to his suggestion, he threatened us with goondas. After this, her parents preferred a complaint to the Superintendent of Police, Nagapattinam. Based on the complaint a case was filed under IPC section 376, 506(i) against Rajan and he was arrested. Now he is on bail.

Siranjeevi, aged 1 ½ year in **Madavamedu** village was brutally murdered two years ago by Murugan in the same village in order to snatch the jewels she was wearing. (It was reported in our previous report). The police did not take action to arrest the culprit. SNEHA did a fact-finding and persuaded Police to initiate legal action against the culprit. It extended legal assistance to the sangam member who was mother of the deceased child. The culprit was awarded life imprisonment this year SNEHA is also giving pressures through the local women sangams to the Government to provide compensation for the family.

On 22nd March, 2009, **Thilak**, hailing from Keezhamoovarkarai was studying in 6th standard. He was injured as his class teacher battered him with wooden rod. The boy was afraid to go to school. During enquiry it was found that the teacher in Konaiyanpatti Government Higher Secondary School was inflicting many forms of torture on their students. All the sangam members approached the school headmaster and requested him to take immediate action against teachers and stop atrocities against children. Failing which the parents and sangam members opted to place the children in other schools. The headmaster assured the members that the atrocities would be stopped. Thus the sangam members have halted the practice of Corporal punishment in the schools.

CBDRM Initiatives

As Sneha believes in action and reflection approach, it envisaged interventions both at the ideological and material level for Disaster Risk Reduction, recovery and resilience of the communities. It facilitated the CBOs to develop Systems, procedures and norms to set in place as fallback mechanisms to respond recover and mitigate the impacts of disasters and creation of local leadership in the form of task force and contingency fund to reduce the dependency on external agency. The taskforce was facilitated to critically examine the role of development approach in the incidence of disaster and helped them to build lobby and advocacy with the state in coordination with the various actors to give up such models and strengthen the community participation especially women, dalits and other vulnerable groups in the planning and implementation plans of DRR.

Children in **Nayakkarkuppam** had to travel 6 kms to reach the school. There were no transport facilities from their villages; Sangam gave a petition to the Collector. No action was taken. The children organised a road roko and this agitation was supported by the sangam members. Immediately after the demonstrations buses started plying to the villages.

In **Thoduvali** the preschool initiatives of SNEHA have created an awareness and all the eligible children joined the formal school. But there were no adequate teachers. The PMC (**Pre-school Monitoring Committee**) approached the Chief Education Officer and submitted a petition to appoint more teachers. Two teachers were appointed with immediate effect. PMC also appointed 2 more teachers in the school and support their salary.



The task force with the support of sneha has collected information on the contingency plans made in all coastal districts through Right to Information Act. So far four such plans have been received from the concerned people and the process is continuing. SNEHA participates in the planning meeting of task force to strengthen their perspectives

SNEHA is experimenting implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction Programme in four selected villages such as Kumarakudi, Chinnamedu, Chinnangudi and Thalampettai of Traquebar Taluk in Nagapattinam District. SNEHA has formed Disaster Mitigation Task Force in these four villages. Five persons were chosen from each village and introductory training on DRR was provided to them. These selected persons from these four villages selected 20 persons from their respective village and provided them training in DRR. After this they have formed five task force committees exclusively for warning, search and rescue, first aid, relief and shelter committees and they were trained for the execution of specific tasks. The task force

committee members participated in mock drills and they meet once in a month. In all four of the selected villages sneha has availed from CASA, rescue equipments like gloves, saw, first aid kit, ropes, stretchers, torches, screw drivers, cutting players, shovels, drums, lifebuoys, life jackets, trunk boxes etc. Each of the selected villages has been provided with these materials. In addition to this a set of cooking vessels have been provided in common to these four selected villages. For every taskforce in a village 20 bags of rice each bag containing 50 Kg of rice was also given. In addition to this a sum of Rs.20000/- was provided for every village task force. They have the option to sell the rice and the amount to be deposited in the bank

Task Force team intervention in cyclonic storm Nisha

As a result of the depression that formed in the Bay of Bengal rains lashed the delta districts of Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Perambalur and Trichy from 23.11.2008 onwards. In this situation the low pressure depression developed into a cyclonic storm named "Nisha" hit Nagapattinam on 26.11.2008. . Though the



reported rainfall was less in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts when compared to Thanjavur District, water logging and flooding was more because of the flooding in all the drain systems (12 rivers). The Nagapattinam District was inundated with rain water. The District Administration reported that 1.38 Lakh people were lodged in protection camps at the District. Four fishermen belonging to the Sirkazhi and Puthupattinam villages and five fishermen of the Jegathapattinam village have lost their lives in the rough sea. So far 69 persons have lost their lives due to the Nisha cyclone.

The team leader of task force alerted SNEHA, Panchayat members and the Collector and mobilized the people to move to elevated places. The task force discussed with the panchayat and arranged to provide

rice for all of the victims of the cyclone on the agreement that the people would have to pay for it later as the DRR task force had only

limited funds. The task force engaged people in relief work. The flood water was all around the village. Trees were uprooted, electricity lines were cut. They arranged a school for the people to stay safely. They used the DRR equipments to remove trees, debris and the

stagnant water was diverted to a nearby canal to drain. Before Nisha cyclone the task force members used to meet once in a month. But they were not in the best of their spirits and enthusiasm. After the cyclone Nisha (facing the response from the people) they have become very active and were taking active steps to multiply the fund through many means.

Challenges

- ★ Training the youth team as a task force is tough task as they have to lose their income during the days of training
- ★ The traditional panchayat wants to possess all the articles of the DRR and wants to implement the relief measures on their own
- ★ There is expectation among the people and the panchayat for provision of relief without any cost.

The formation of Child Secretariat

The Tsunami that hit the south-eastern coast of India devastated the coastal habitations of Nagapattinam resulting in the highest Tsunami related mortality in the Indian Coast. The South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) and SNEHA, were the only NGO's working with fishing communities before the Tsunami hit the Nagapattinam Coast. Seeing the need for an immediate intervention in coordinating the rescue and relief efforts that came flooding into the coast, they together strategically set up the NGO Coordination Centre (NCRC) in Nagapattinam District Collectoraté since January 1st 2005. This enabled a more coordinated action and interaction between



the District Administration, NGOs and communities affected by the Tsunami in the district

Bay of Bengal Fish Workers Forum



Though still at a nascent stage, Sneha has formed a workers forum (men and women) of workers dependent on fishing economy, which has successfully campaigned for a separate fisheries welfare board along and recognition of women as fisher-workers along with Tamil Nadu fisherwomen federation facilitated by Law Trust a state level resource organisation working with coastal communities. It also shaped tsunami relief and rehabilitation policies and practices of government and other NGOs in Nagapattinam district through being on the core committee of the NGO Coordination and Resource Center, Nagapattinam.

This forum is federated at the taluk and state level with forums at the village level. The membership dues are Rs.60 annually for each member. Presently there are about 9,000 members who are registered with the union. The union has boat and kattumaram owners, boatless workers, vendors and auctioneers as its members. The union has been taking up various issues that concern the fish workers and the community such as the opposition of the Sethu Samudhram Shipping Canal Project, the invasion of the shrimp farms that violate the CRZ norms, deep sea fishing, sand mining, and issues that relate to the SEZ and the fishing community.



Post Tsunami issues

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights concerns include urinary tract infections, miscarriages, high-risk deliveries, breast enlargement (when infants have died), uterine prolapse, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS, early marriages and unsafe abortions. Some of these apply to adolescents as well. Women have required (re)fertility and removal of contraception services. Adolescent boys have also been vulnerable to sexual violence and HIV/AIDS, with the latter being a discriminated group through the disaster management cycle. At the same time women, adolescents and transgendered people, and marginalised groups amongst them are not passive recipients of relief and rehabilitation. They have often acted before outside relief reached to rescue people and to meet some of their immediate SRHR concerns.

Post tsunami

Right to Information Campaign

Sneha is a core / active member of the Tamilnadu Right to Information Campaign which aims to assert community and individual efforts to access information and demand accountability and transparency from public authorities. It is also meant to demonstrate the positive outcomes resulting from a situation where informed people are able to influence decisions.

It plans to do this by:

1. Educating people about their constitutional rights to information and informed decision making by highlighting the relevance of the Right to Information Act, 2005 and how to actually use this law for day-to-day issues faced by them as individuals and members of communities or organizations
2. Enabling people to use the Act to access information crucial to controlling the decisions that affect their rights and daily lives

Tamilnadu Right to Information Campaign conducted a campaign from 13.10.2008 to 22.10.2008 on Right to Information Act. This campaign was a coordinated effort of SNEHA, Law Trust, BEDROC and SIRD, EGS Pillai College, DMI and CREATE, FEDCOT and IIPA, in Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Cuddalore and Thanjavur districts with SHG members, students professors, NGO leaders, adolescent groups and general public.

In the planning meeting the NGO representatives became aware of the Right to Information Act and its utilization. Sharing of experience helped them to write more petitions. The representatives from different NGOs assured to conduct camps and awareness training programmes in their



working area. The mobile clinic enabled the public to gain awareness about the RTI Act. Many among the public became aware of how to write petitions under the Right to Information Act. The members of the Self help groups learnt from the campaign how to write petitions under the RTI Act. They became aware of the public authorities and their functions and powers.

The students got awareness about the Right to Information Act through the conferences held for them. They expressed that the usage of this Act would gradually bring about transparency in the Government procedures. The students were eager to question the Government officials using the Right to Information Act.

Re-canalization

Re-canalization surgery that were sanctioned as free service by the District Administration were not facilitated well as the communities came with little information and there was little choice offered to them. Strong advocacy efforts with the support of sangam women to

give up such ventures were initiated as it had serious health impacts on women. Sneha is yet to publish its empirical study on the experiences of women who underwent recanalisation procedure

Alcoholic Violence

Sharp increase in alcoholism had various affects on the lives of women and children in the temporary shelters. Health camps were not equipped to handle the various needs of women as most doctors who came in during

the relief phase were men and even fewer had gynecological specialization. Sneha organized special camps to address these issues

Tsunami Marriage

The district administration offered an attractive package to those bereaved to get married and start afresh. These almost universally only had male takers. Girls who had just attained puberty were being married off to men who were even older than their fathers. This was creating a sharp communal break down and families were being thrown

into quandary. Fathers as Groom: In Akkaraipettai a 23 year old girl committed suicide after her father married a girl her age and started forcing her to marry a man of his age. Federation took up these matters and advocated against child marriage and reduced the incidence which had a community sanction

Focus on Girl Children

Post Tsunami SNEHA has formed the groups of adolescent girls after having collecting and analyzing field data which showed the high level of depression, suicidal feelings, feelings of loneliness, a need for sharing and being guided, and a low awareness on the reproductive health issues. The group is oriented on issues like alcoholism, Children's rights, and early marriages as well as reproductive health concerns. Before this group came about, speaking on the

reproductive health issues was a taboo but no more now. The adolescent group of SNEHA in Seruthur, Nagai, has successfully exerted pressure on parents and stopped early marriage of a group member. The group meetings and an opportunity to share their concerns with the staff of SNEHA and the other group members have reduced the impulsiveness and anger in them, a main reason for the cases of suicide among girls

Health interventions

Arogya Agam is a grass root level NGO working on health issues has its head quarters at Theni of Madurai District. In the years 2006 to 2008 Arogya Agam collaborated with SNEHA in creating awareness on HIV Aids and is functioning in

21 working villages of SNEHA at Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts. In the sangam meetings and adolescent group meetings Arogya Agam's team participated and created awareness among the participants on HIV Aids.

Trainings

The organizers and Coordinators of SNEHA in the 21 villages have been trained by the Arogya Agam trainers. 14 staff members of SNEHA have been trained in HIV Aids so far. The number of sangam members trained is 150. Volunteers were identified from these sangam women to monitor and educate the

other HIV positive women. In the 21 villages 135 adolescent girls have been trained in HIV Aids. Training for Village traditional and elected panchayat members was conducted for the persons from Kilvelur and Nagapattinam villages.

Action taken

The positive women were advised and linked with the Primary health centers and the Government Hospitals. The identified women were linked with the positive women network and welfare activities for these women have been initiated. The positive women have sent an RTI petition requesting information on various welfare schemes of the government exclusively for the HIV positive population. These positive women who are sporadically

distributed were informed on how to organise themselves as one self help group. This self help group was linked to AVVAI NGO as they are already engaged in this area of work.

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Case study

Akkampettai Thamayanthi owns a petty shop; To refurbish this shop assistance - was extended through VBETS. At Kilinjalmedu Ponnaswari of Arivuchudar sangam lost her

elder daughter and her husband due to HIV infection. Their son also is HIV positive and he has been admitted at a home in Puducherry through Arogya Agam.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion Programme (WASH)

Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion



It is well known that sanitation and hygiene related practices have a strong bearing on

disease profile of a region. To reduce the disease burden that afflicts a community sanitation and hygiene promotion are crucial as the prevalence and burden of diseases eats into the income and savings of the households. Hence, this component has a direct bearing on the economic profile of individual households in particular and the community in general. For this component the key activity would be awareness generation and sensitization campaigns targeted at users

Solid waste management

- Waste Segregation – The intervention would involve waste segregation at source into biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes.
- Primary collection of wastes – Self help group women will collect the green waste and transfer in pick up vans to the compost yard and recyclable waste will be transported to the transit depots.
- Waste Transit Depots – At the depots there will be further segregation of the waste, redirecting waste directly to the recycling



industries and the organic waste being sent to the compost yard.

However, the idea is that the infrastructure like compost yard and recyclable waste will eventually be managed by the self help groups in the long run and would constitute a source of profit for SHGs / Federation.

Water supply and management. The intervention aims at ensuring safe drinking water to each household for this purpose the following activities would be required

VOICES OF THE COMMUNITIES



Jayanthi "I have been very active with the sangam right from the beginning. It was my only space where I can go away from all the pressures of home. Also when I go and see other's problems and deal with issues it made me realize that there are greater troubles than mine and it made me come to terms with my own condition. Sangam has always been my source of energy. It has strengthened me ideologically and politically and supported me with credit facilities at times of need with nominal rate of interest. We have waged many a struggle. Against shrimp industries we held an indefinite hungerfast and got that removed. Today there is a medical college in that place. When I go through that road I look at it proudly as our struggle only cleared shrimp farms from that place and got our village a medical college.

Today also I spend a lot of time for the sangam, federation and co-operative activities. Somehow it's become a very gratifying inseparable part of my life. I feel great when people see me on road and come with problems. It's almost like I've got a new lease of life when I think of it sometimes."



Kalvi "My husband Samimalai wants me to get him a second wife. "I never thought such a situation will come to me. I'm myself so sad thinking about my lost children. I went and told Indiarani akka about this. She came and spoke to my husband saying that the sangam woman will not sit and look at his second marriage and that it is illegal." After the women's federation intervened Samimalai has not been vocal about his desire to remarry but now is trying to coax Kalvi's relatives to advise her. Kalvi's suggestion that they can adopt a child have been turned down by samimalai. The federation is backing Kalvi in this complicated fight for her space. "I've already lost my children. Its not my fault however. Now I don't want to lose my husband and live as lone woman. He is not worried about the children. He only wants another wife. I won't let him get away with this. Initially I thought I'll kill myself. Now the sangam is behind me. I'll fight this injustice."



Valarmathi "After the tsunami my entire house was washed out. It was the people to whom I use to sell fish that came to my immediate rescue. All my customers from MMG nagar came in search of me gave me clothes, money and moral support. I was very moved by the affection they showed on me at the time of my worst crisis. To restart my business I needed money. With the money I got from sangam I started my work again as soon as fishing resumed. I buy fish for 500 to thousand rupees and sell it in streets. I carry the basket on my head and walk almost five to six kilometers to sell the fish. The biggest problem in this business is access to credit. If you have money to rotate you can earn a decent life. With the self help group that has come into our lives. Initially when we started the group in 1997, many women were doubtful of the use of the group. But now almost everyone is a

member of an SHG. Not only for fish selling, I have taken loans from the SHG for the wedding of my daughters. After Tsunami I got my second daughter married. Took a loan for 40 thousand rupees from my group.

Socially also it has empowered us. I have gone to Madurai, Rameswaram, Chennai and many other places for public actions and meetings. It makes me aware of so many things and I feel good to know all these things."



Valli "In my morning trip even if some fish remains I'm not worried. I can add it to my sale in the evening but now I have to finish all this fish, then only I can make a profit. Valli has been selling fish for twenty years now. She is an active member of the women's sangam. She has availed loans from the sangam more than three times. She is regular in repaying her loans so that she could always use this facility. I wish to be more active but hand to mouth existence keeps me on tender hooks and the run is always on. Even if I'm

sick I think thrice before taking an off."



Muthammal' "I lost twenty thousand worth stock I had. No compensation for that. We had no boat or net or anything. So the only compensation we got is the money SNEHA gave us to repair the house."Muthammal has been in the self help group right from its inception. She has taken loans from the SHG for her business and towards marriage expenses of her daughters. But she has also taken loan from money lenders for 10% interest. She says the dry fish business needs atleast

twenty thousand rupees investment. "If government gives us a low interest loan we will be relieved of these money lenders."



Rasamma (aged 58 from Kilinjalmadu) "The sangam is almost a inseperable part of my life. It has given me one kind of freedom and strength to deal with life. As a single woman fish vendor its also the most reliable kitty bank that I depnd solidly on."



S.Rathinavalli, (aged 55yrs, Pushpavanam)

"I am from the seashell self help group. I'm the breadwinner of my family My sangam has been my best friend at many a crucial time. From medical expenses to capital needed for my business I have depended on this group. The interest is also very low so it has really helped me."

Saraswathi, I'm 55 years old. For the last ten years I'm into fish trade. After my husband Palaniappan stopped going to the sea I've taken the basket on my head. I have taken most of the loans from moneylenders for exorbitant interest. All our labour goes down the drain we know but what else is the way out for people like us. This sangam is there so at least our small needs gets addressed. Otherwise earlier for every single need we had to rely on these moneylenders only." After tsunami when we had lost everything, our sangam came to our rescue. Of course so many people came with so much of help. But sneha through our sangams gave us all that we require to restart our livelihood. They gave us an ice box, Tiffin carrier and even a rain coat. And when we needed capital to run our businesses they gave us seed money. It was the link of our fish selling trade between before and after tsunami."



Chellammal, aged 52 yrs, Pushpavanam I'm in the Sneha Sangam for many years now. I used the seed money to restart my business. I have taken many loans from my sangam also to meet medical expenses and emergencies. Also the sangam meeting is my only respite in my otherwise ever busy life.



Parvathi aged 30 yrs , Pushpavanam I have been in the Sneha Sangam for seven years now. It has strengthened me in so many ways. Initially we joined because of the savings only thinking that it will be of some use in times of need. Which it has been but more than that it has given me awareness about so many problems and the realization that there are so many problems in this world that are bigger than mine.

Alcoholism is a huge issue in our village. In this whole village there will not even be 10 men who do not drink. Most men spend 200 to 300 rupees on drinking on an average day. It affects the woman badly as the money meant for family gets reduced drastically and also it results in unexplainable violence on the women. We have organized so many meeting to discuss this and also we have protested against many anti- fisher people moves of the government. For me the monetary help has been good. But more that that the confidence to face life which sneha has given me is more valuable."

The best and most effective way of taking the existing achievements forward is through *deepening, spreading, and multiplying* the outputs and outcomes. In this process inclusive disaster risk reduction must be central and integral part, including risk identification, pooling, protection, and transfer. (An external evaluation of all the interventions of Sneha in 51 villages by Mr. Mihir Bhatt and Ms. Ranjani K Moorthy)

Issues and Concerns

The profiles of women have revealed many forms of violence experienced by them ranging from right to livelihood, denial of dignity, denial of access and control over

labour; the women also experience domestic violence and in some of the cases, they were victims of sexual violence.

Violence Against Women

The primary consequence of violence against women, even the threat of violence, is that it maintains women in a state of constant fear and vulnerability. Violence of all kinds deprives women of their autonomy and undermines their physical, psychological, and intellectual integrity. It prevents them from working, from being politically active, from having fun - in short, from living. This must be heard and understood in their life context. Violence against women is legitimized and

generated by all forms of inequality, fanaticism, sexist discrimination, and the condition of inferiority and marginality in which society attempts to maintain women. Violence is the ultimate guarantee of women's oppression; at the same time, their unequal societies are the breeding grounds of sexist violence. The struggle against inequality is also a struggle against the legitimization of violence.

The Consequences of Violence Against Women

They feel invaded in their private life spheres by the discussions on domestic violence especially physical abuse and marital rape. Issues of bigamy, low status of being a second wife, extra marital relationship of the spouses are prevalent in certain groups. The experiences of domestic violence on the lives of women victims remaining same wherever the physical violence is correlated to alcoholic violence. A few women broke down when this issue was discussed. The entire being is profoundly shaken, with everything that was previously taken for granted now thrown into question. Paradoxically, whatever the circumstances or forms of violence women have suffered, they feel ashamed and guilty. Women feel ashamed for the invasion of their intimate beings, for being robbed of control and of their physical and psychological integrity. They feel guilty for their supposed

failure to offer resistance (the reality is always more complex than it appears)

Major Consequences

- Feel ashamed and guilty: Invasion of their intimate beings, robbed of control, failure of resistance and the like.
- Loss of physical and psychological integrity
- Feeling of low status

Democratization of family

By and large, there is still the expectation that women are solely responsible for domestic labour and for maintaining the rhythm of family life. Which means that the price they have to pay for some improved well-being, and increased self-respect and influence in household matters, is that of increasing their hours of work? Nevertheless, the price women have to pay for their successes is that of working longer hours. This is no doubt a critical weakness of the change in gender relations that poor women are going through, a weakness that will continue until the conjunction of domestic with other, productive labour is challenged. But at another level, the

compelling situations to take care of family needs for the men do arise during their hour long absence during sangam meetings /training programmes / participation in the struggles etc., and thus the federation members are in the process of democratising the family.

Yet another negative factor in the current changes in gender relations is the growth of dowry. This was mentioned by women in most of the group discussions. How the development of women as income-earners has led to a growth in dowry demands needs to be further analyzed.

Reflections

What the Federation has meant to Women?

The analysis of the case - studies reveal that activities of the federation have an impact on women's say in household decision-making and their own well-being. Other areas of changes in women's agency and their position looked into are their interaction with officials, mobility, and dignity and self-esteem. The role of women's federation in promoting solidarity in supporting changes in household behaviour, particularly men's behaviour, is reported. Changes in men's attitudes are beginning to emerge, as also the effect of credit-related activities on women's livelihood needs. When we sum up the changes are in terms of changes in gender relations, in particular the articulation of new gender norms. are their interaction with officials, mobility, and dignity and self-esteem. The role of women's

federation in promoting solidarity in supporting changes in household behaviour, particularly men's behaviour, is reported. Changes in men's attitudes are beginning to emerge, as also the effect of credit-related activities on women's livelihood needs. When we sum up the changes are in terms of changes in gender relations, in particular the articulation of new gender norms.

Based on coastal women's voices, we can view that, while there is no straightforward translation of micro-credit schemes or social action into changes in gender relations, there is, however, a continuous creation of new norms and social contexts, which amount to a change in their traditional status as dependents.

What Constitutes a Change in Gender Relations?

We have discussed many changes in the condition of women – changes in well-being, ownership of fish vending assets, and so on. The gap between women and men in various

spheres of social action and existence is beginning to decrease, towards weakening of the pre-existing form of patriarchy.

Is there a Change in Gender Relations?

The rise of loan from SHGs has made women's income a permanent component of household income and weakened the women's dependency on the men as providers. The micro-credit financed activities of women are not just temporary or irregular. They have become an integral part of the household budget. The household's living standard, whatever it might be, depends in part at least, on this stream of income continuing. Thus, there is a change in the picture of men being the breadwinners; which is one part of the gender relation, and women being dependents. There is a clear change in relation; the gender gap in the area of dependence has certainly been reduced.

The weakening of isolation as single women itself has been noticed in a number of ways women's greater presence in the market as

sellers, though only very restricted as sellers; women's participation in various types of public activities; women's unescorted movement, though often in a group and not alone, to the markets, to schools, to attend training, and so on that is likely to have a greater impact on seclusion norms. As pointed out, "When women engage in activities outside their households and/or villages, the increased interaction they have with the outside world goes a long way in empowering them." Nevertheless, we can see that there have been many changes in isolation and in their status.


New Norms

Women's income-earning activities are now seen as a necessary part of household income, one that will continue to be so to meet household needs. After a decade of micro-credit based activity, there is no longer an idea that women's income-earning activities are temporary and reversible. In the context of changing norms, women's honour now lies in education, being mobile, and being able to work outside the house, take leadership in public struggles and collective participation for asserting their rights.

In the context of tsunami, the public efforts by the federation to provide social protection and rehabilitation package have changed the nature of vulnerability especially for single women. The actions that households take in relation to risk and uncertainty thus provide important insights into their capabilities and priorities. The extent to which they are able to take precautionary or reactive measures against crisis can be seen as one indicator of capability.


OUR PUBLICATIONS

**Impacts of Globalisation
On Fisher Women's Livelihood**
In Nagapattinam & Karaikal Districts of Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry




Study Conducted by Sneha, Nagapattinam

**Child Labour in
Fishing Sector**



Study Report for
SNEHA (Social Need Education and Human Awareness)
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam, Nagapattinam
Pincode: 605012, Tamil Nadu, India
Phone: 04362-248270
Fax: 04362-248270
Email: sneha_sneha@gmail.com
snehainfo@sneha.org.in


**Study on Girl Children
In Fishing Villages
In Nagapattinam and Karaikal Districts**



Study Conducted by
Sneha

Sneha (Social Need Education and Human Awareness)
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam
Nagapattinam - 605 012, Tamil Nadu, India
Phone: 04362 - 248270, Fax: 04362 - 248270, Email: sneha_sneha@gmail.com
For: 04362-248270, 248270


**Social Need Education and Human
Awareness (SNEHA)**




Report of the survey
Conducted in
**49 coastal villages of Nagapattinam District &
Karaikal Region
in May 2001**

Sneha (Social Need Education and Human Awareness)
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam
Nagapattinam - 605 012, Tamil Nadu, India
Phone: 04362 - 248270, Fax: 04362 - 248270, Email: sneha_sneha@gmail.com
For: 04362-248270, 248270

**குழந்தை உரிமைகள்
ஒரு பார்வை**



**Study on the Status of Coastal
Water Bodies in Tamil Nadu**
(From Shimoga to Vellore)



Sneha
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam, Nagapattinam - 605 012
Ph: 04362 - 248270, Fax: 04362 - 248270, Email: sneha_sneha@gmail.com

**Report of Water Quality Analysis in Shrimp
Farm Areas in Thanjavur, Pudukkottai and
Nagapattinam Districts of Tamil Nadu**

2000 - 2001

Concessory Environmental Management and Research Centre
27, Pongal Street, 605 002, Thanjavur, Chennai - 605 002

Law Trust - Madurai
100, Rajapalayam Street, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India
Nagapattinam - 605 012, Tamil Nadu, India

Sneha
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam, Nagapattinam - 605 012, Tamil Nadu, India


A Report of the Social Audit
Bodies of Representatives, Institutions of
Government of Tamil Nadu & Nagapattinam District
2000-2001




சமூக ஆய்வு அறிக்கை
தமிழ்நாடு அரசு மற்றும்
நாகபட்டினம் மாவட்ட அரசு
2000-2001

SNEHA (Social Need Education and Human Awareness)
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam, Nagapattinam - 605 012, Tamil Nadu, India

**Social Need Education and Human
Awareness (SNEHA)**



Report
of
**Expert Committee Investigation into the
Impact of
PPN Power Generating Co., Ltd.,
Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu**
28th, 29th and 31st May 2001

Sneha (Social Need Education and Human Awareness)
31, Kanyakumari Chitra Street, Velupattanam
Nagapattinam - 605 012, Tamil Nadu, India
Phone: 04362 - 248270, Fax: 04362 - 248270, Email: sneha_sneha@gmail.com
For: 04362-248270, 248270

OUR PUBLICATIONS

"சங்கமினி"

கிளிஞ்சல்கள்

வினாக்கள், இலக்கன்கள், உரைகள்...
பக்க 3 குடி 4 ரூப 1000

வினாக்கள்

ச. இளமணி
K. அழகர்சாமி
R. சுவாமி

வினாக்கள்

1. ஒருவர் வாங்கிய ஒரு பையன் தந்தைக்கு உதவி செய்வது பற்றி
2. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
3. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
4. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
5. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
6. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
7. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
8. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
9. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி

விடைகள்

10. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
11. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
12. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
13. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
14. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
15. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி
16. மாற்றியமைக்கப்பட்ட உட்படிவைப் பற்றி

**குடும்ப வளக்குறையிலி
பாதுகாக்கும்**

குடும்ப வளக்குறையிலி

சீநேகா

**குடும்ப வளக்குறையிலி
பாதுகாக்கும்**

குடும்ப வளக்குறையிலி

சீநேகா

**குடும்ப வளக்குறையிலிருந்து வெண்கலை
பாதுகாக்கும்**

பார் இதனவம்?

சீநேகா

69

Sneha's Memory Lane
25
Years

OUR PUBLICATIONS



OUR PUBLICATIONS

மீனவர் குரல்



மீனவர்கள் திரும்பிவரும் மீனவர்கள் குரல்கள் வந்தழகவே...



யதிரியோகம்
மீனவரின்
வாழ்வரிமை
கந்திரியலார், சங்கராஜசேகரம்



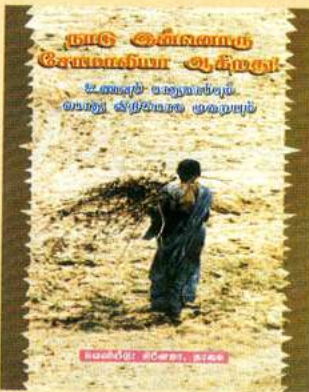
சாதியும்
சாதிய ஒழிப்பும்

யதிரியலார் கவிமொழி

மீனவர் குரல்



மீனவர்கள் குரல் - கவிமொழி
மீனவர்கள் குரல் வந்தழகவே...



நாடு இரினாநம்
சேவலாநியா - வ.கீரமணி
மீனவர் குரல்களும்
வாழ்வு இரினாநம் முறையும்

மீனவர் குரல் - கவிமொழி



நாடக அனல் மின் நிலையத்திட்டத்திற்கு
எதிராக அணிதிரளவோம்

மீனவர் குரல் - கவிமொழி

குடியிருப்பு பற்றிய பல்வேறு
நவீன உதவிகள் துடி அணுகுமுறைகள்
முற்றும்
கட்டுமான, பழுது பார்க்கும் பணியின்
கவனத்தின் காரணம் வேண்டியவை

மீனவர் குரல் - கவிமொழி

Voices of the Marginalised

A success story of Karikal Federation

Joining hands and fighting for rights

மீனவர் வாழ்வரிமை இயக்கம்

மீனவர்கள் ச.குடிமீனம் சேரிசேவை வித்தகமும்

OUR PUBLICATIONS



**SNEHA is an active member in
various State and National Level
Networks and Campaigns**

The Convening Organisation of Campaign Against Shrimp Industries (CASI)

Special Representative of Eastern Zone in Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL)-TN

Core Team Member of Campaign Against Sex Selective Abortion (CASSA)

State Committee Member of Coastal Action Network (CAN)

One of the founding members of Campaign for the Protection of Water Resources

State Committee Member of Campaign for the Protection of the Rights of Unorganised Workers

A supporter to National Fishworkers Forum

Member Organisation of Tamilnadu Women's Network

The Convening Organisation of the State Level Children's Alliance for the Right to Participation and Protection

District Level Convener of Tamilnadu Child Rights Protection Network

Steering Committee and Founder Member of NGO Co-ordination and Resource Centre (NCRC)

District Level Convener of Campaign Against Child Trafficking (CACT)

Core Team Member of Child Secretariat at Nagapattinam

A member of the Tamilnadu NGO Alliance for Empowering Panchayat Government State

A State Committee Member of Social Action Movement

A Member of the Tamil Nadu Environment Council

MILESTONES OF SNEHA

Sneha in coordination with Tamil Nadu Environment Council met the Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission and lobbied to support the people's struggles against industrial shrimp culture.

Sneha played an active role in forming the Social Action Movement in Tamil Nadu, a forum of NGOs at state level.

Sneha introduced the concept of self help through credit and saving programmes.

Following the evaluation, Sneha started addressing the sectoral issues of fishing communities and rearticulated its primary constituencies.

Sneha started its work among the fishing communities in five villages in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry States.

Sneha took the pivotal role in initiating a major campaign against shrimp industries and public action against the industrial shrimp culture which had a devastating impact on coastal ecology and livelihood rights of coastal communities.

The Nagapattinam and Karaikal District Fisherwomen Federation initiated public actions on rape and murder of Madhavi and Pavalakodi, children from fishing communities and initiated advocacy for gender equality and gender justice.

The members of the CBOs participated in the National campaign on 'Protect Water and Protect Life'.

Started educational programmes in 5 fishing villages for children between 3 to 5 years (Pre-schools).

Started organising women into sangams.

After Tsunami Sneha became lead NGO in facilitating CBOs in planning and implementation of the tsunami relief and rehabilitation programmes in Tamil Nadu.

Anti Child Labour Programmes were initiated and strengthened through district level and state level campaigns and Sneha became prominent for its advocacy role on child rights.

Sneha undertook a study the status of the water bodies along the coastal stretches from Muthupettai to Muttukadu.

The members of the CBOs participated in the first conference of World Fisher People's Forum at New Delhi and thus Sneha facilitated the CBOs to transcend their micro level issues into macro level polity.

Sneha was one of the founding members of Coastal Action Network, a state level forum to protect the rights of coastal ecology and coastal communities

SNEHA was part of the committee, which critiqued the Tamilnadu Coastal Zone Management Plan 1996.

It supported collecting evidences on violations by Shrimp Industries, to submit to the Supreme Court by organising a public hearing.

Campaigned for the active participation of women and fishing community in Panchayat governance.

The members of the federations and other forums actively participated in the National Level Campaign against Joint Ventures in Deep Sea Fishing.

2004

Sneha became prominent for its Montessori teaching methodology and child friendly school programmes for preschool children.

2003

The federation in coordination with Coastal Action Network conducted a public hearing on the impacts of Pillai Perumal Nallur Power Plant and campaigned for the withdrawal of this destructive project.

1998

1998 - 2003

1997

1996

1995

Sneha has planned to upscale its role from a grass root identity to advocate for CBDRM in Eastern Zone of Tamilnadu and Karaikal of Pondicherry

2009

Sneha rearticulated its mission and included allied sectors dependent on fishing economy as one of its key constituencies.

Sneha was instrumental in bringing a shelter policy which protected the communities to retain their right to coastal habitats as guaranteed in CRZ 1991 Notification.

Sneha advocated against the institutionalization of orphan children and demanded the community care and responsibility along with the support from state.

Sneha opposed the insensitive move of the State to sponsor the recanalisation surgeries by women which violated the reproductive rights of the women.

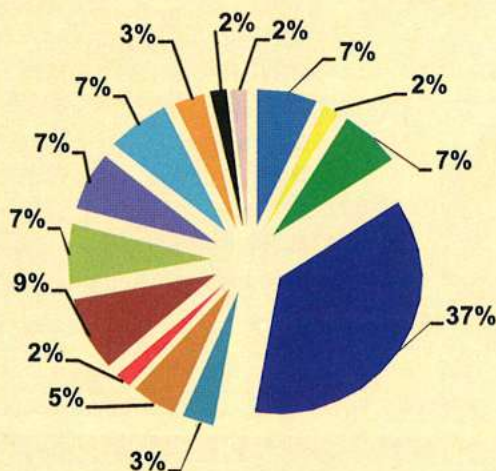
2005 to 2008

Sneha in coordination with National Fishworkers Forum and World Fisher People Forum campaigned against the government's policy to promote culture based fisheries and harbour based fisheries and critiqued the Joint Action Mission report.

Sneha has facilitated the women sangams to institutionalize their economic activities. Samudhra is in the process of completing the market study on women's role in fishing economy using value chain analysis and building their capacities to develop business plans.

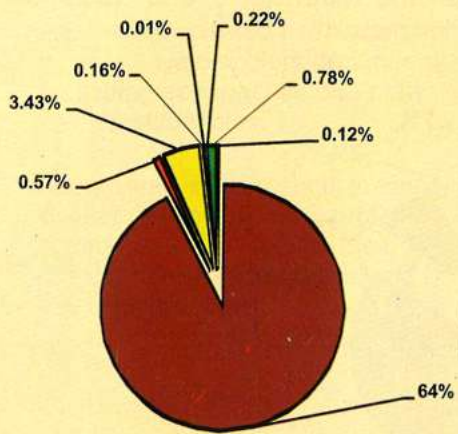
PERIOD OF SUPPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FROM 1984 to March 2009

Our various interventions are made possible through the support of individuals and organizations. We gratefully acknowledge the financial, and technical support of the following partners.



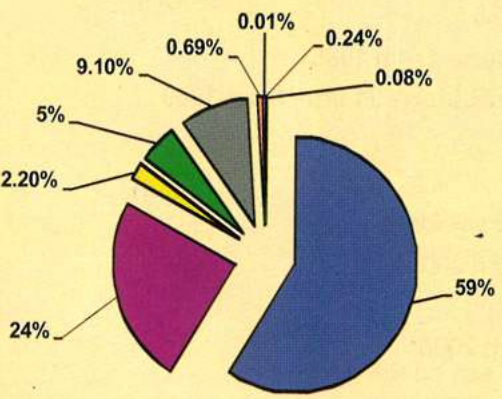
- Programme for Social Action, Kerala - 4yrs - from 1984
- Tamilnadu Social Welfare Board - 1yr - 1986
- Partners in Justice Concerns, Bangalore - 4yrs - from 1986
- Terre des Hommes, Germany & AEI, Luxembourg - 21 yrs - from 1989
- Netherlands Embassy - 2 yrs - from 1991
- Manos Unidas, Spain - 3 yrs - from 2000
- Centre for World Solidarity, Hyderabad - 1 yr - 2005
- Action Aid, International India - 5 yrs - from 2005
- Christian Aid, UK - 4 yrs - from 2005
- Swiss Red Cross, Switzerland - 4 yrs - from 2005
- Oxfam, Hong Kong - 4 yrs - from 2005
- Save the Children Fund, UK - 2 yrs - from 2005
- Christian World Service, New Zealand - 1 yr - 2008
- Vin Vis, Netherlands - 1yr - 2009

DETAILS OF CORE ACTIVITIES IN TSUNAMI INTERVENTIONS UPTO MARCH 2009



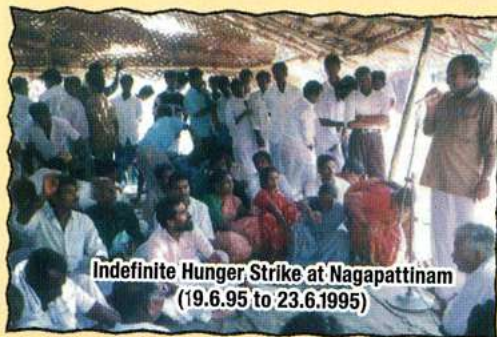
- Relief to House Repair - Rs.23,05,56,246
- Relief - Rs.1,39,22,841
- Livelihood Interventions - Rs.8,35,43,686
- Disaster Risk Reduction -Rs.2,58,584
- Policy Interventions - Rs.41,30,777
- Strengthening the CBOs - Rs.55,28,844
- Children's Programmes - Rs.1,91,70,114
- Water and Sanitation - Rs.29,62,643

SUPPORT FROM DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FOR TSUNAMI INTERVENTIONS UPTO MARCH 2009



- Christian Aid, UK - Rs. 23,93,34,991
- Action Aid, International - India - Rs. 9,57,30,391
- Swiss Red Cross, Switzerland - Rs.89,51,453
- Oxfam, Hong Kong - Rs.2,00,35,287
- Terre des Hommes, Germany & AEI, Luxembourg - Rs.3,71,50,328
- Save the Children Fund, UK - Rs.28,37,862
- Individual Contributions - Rs. 31,570
- Christian World Service, Newzealand - Rs.10,00,000
- Vin Vis, Netherlands - Rs.3,44,350
- Total - Rs. 40,54,16,232

Moments of Struggles...



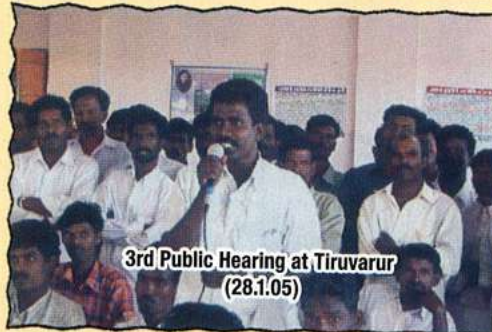
**Indefinite Hunger, Strike at Nagapattinam
 (19.6.95 to 23.6.1995)**



**Rally and Satyagraha -
 (15.8.97)**



**Public hearing at Thanjavur
 (26.11.2004)**



**3rd Public Hearing at Tiruvarur
 (28.1.05)**



Dharna at Chennai (19.7.07)



Protest Against CZM (9.6.2007)



**Conference on Save the Coast -
 Save the Fishers (27.06.2008)**

Moments of Struggles...



Consultation on PPN Power Plant (11.09.99)



Convention on CRZ-1991



Rally and Agitation to stop the SSCP Projects at Ramnad (2.12.05)



Conference on Fisherman Livelihood (25.12.2007)



Protest against SSCP Project



May Day Agitation (1.5.07)



Protest Against Harbour Based Fisheries



Fisher People Agitation at New Delhi(NFF) (5.11.08)

ORGANOGRAM

Establishment

Sneha (Social Need Education and Human Awareness) is a Non-profit organization registered in India under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act of 1975 (Registration Sl. No.35/84).



Sneha has been granted registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976 (Act No.49 of 1976) vide Registration No.075960006 dated 25th March 1986 by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India for receiving foreign grants.

Sneha has been granted registration u/s.12A(a) of the Income tax Act exemption, vide letter No.7162E(26) (Exemption)/CIT-II/TRY/2005-2006 dated 28/02/2006.

Project Management

All the coordinators of field activities and sectoral team form the core group. The core group involves in planning the general policies of Sneha, periodic assessment of programme implementation, finance review making, strategic decisions regarding involvement in other related issues, preparing budgets and project proposals, preparation of reports, recruiting staff, designing staff development programmes, redressing grievances of staff etc.

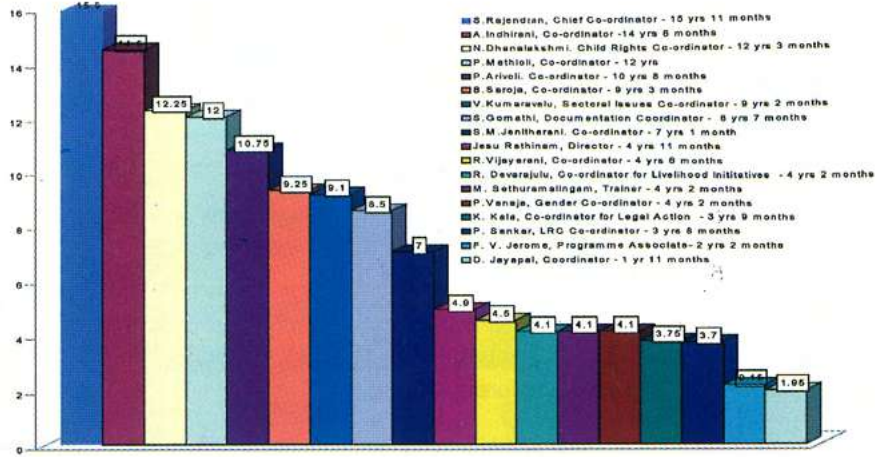


Core Team

The CASH (Committee Against Sexual Harassment) committee is a 6 members team. Members to this committee is nominated by the staff. It is a representative body of all section of the organization.

The field organisers are incharge of the implementation of the planned programmes. The administrative team consists of the accounts, computer section and other support staff.

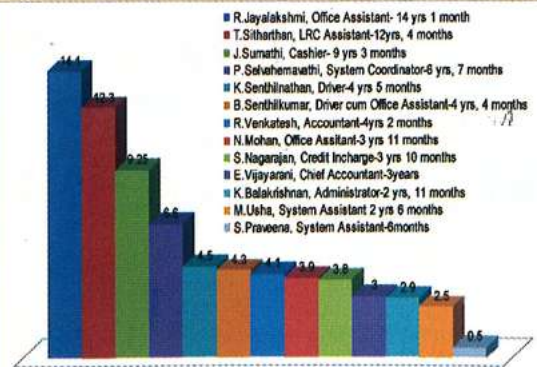
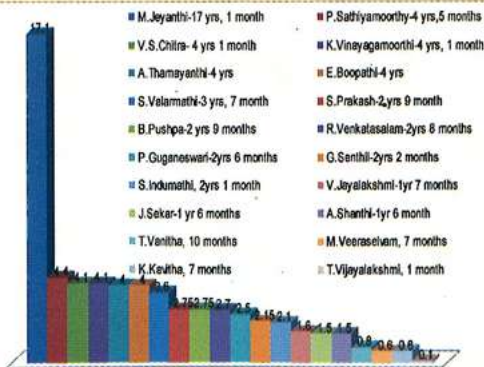
Core Team



Field Organisers Team



Administrative and Programme Support Team



Accounting System

The Accounting period followed is from 1st April to 31st March. The software Tally Version ERP 9 is used for the accounting system. The Accounting system is maintained on the Accrual basis in accordance with generally expected accounting principles. General Ledger adjusting entries are made at the end of each month and at the year end.



Sneha is engaged in project funded by various non-government agencies. Cost centre are maintained for different projects under the accounting system. Our banker is Indian Bank and account is operated through their Nagapattinam branch. Our auditors are KNR Associates, Chidambaram.

Organisational Development Programme

OD process rooted in promoting gender awareness and directed towards evolving gender sensitive policies both to strengthen gender infrastructure and bring about changes in organizational culture empowers the organization. SNEHA periodically goes through gender sensitive OD process, facilitated by two gender experts (Ms. Ranjani K. Moorhty & Ms. Gandimathi) of high credibility. These participatory sessions help in reflecting on the gains and gaps in mainstreaming gender in various institutions: family, community, market and lobbying and advocacy with policy makers.



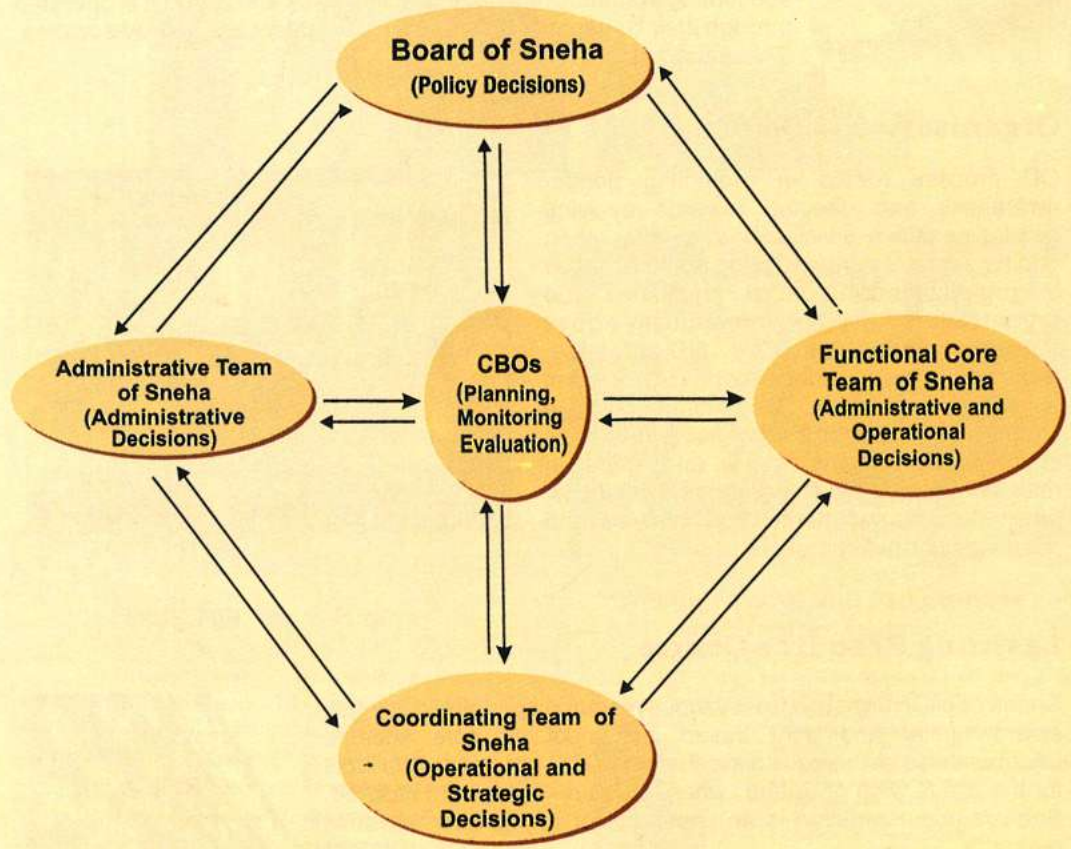
Learning Resource Centre

Sneha pools information from various resources pertaining to legal, environmental and right based issues of its core sectors. Information so gathered is classified with DDC and made available for the use in wing of Sneha where these resources are stocked. Sneha's documentation is an important for any gender sensitive research.

Learning Resource Centre has about 4000 documents such as books, development reports, encyclopedias, handbooks, manuals, training materials, dictionaries and interactive non book materials available for its users. More than 15 popular informative journals have been subscribed. 40 back volumes journals are available from 2005. The Learning Resource Centre has been automated with NIRMALSPRO 3.2.0 a client server based software.



FUNCTIONAL CHART OF SNEHA



SNEHA'S GOVERNING BODY

Sneha's General Body consists of 15 members including 9 Governing Board members.



Ms. Ramani Mathew
President



Mr. M.Ganesan
Vice President



Ms. Jesu Rethinam
Secretary



Ms. R.Valli Gopal
Treasurer

Board Members



Mr. Gilbert Rodrigo
Board Member



Ms. A.Gandimathi
Board Member



Mr Y.Fernandes
Board Member



Fr. V.Arulraj
Board Member



Mr D. Chinnasamy
Board Member



Fr. M.J. Edwin
GB Member



Mr. R. Vincent
GB Member



Mr. M.Jeeva
GB Member

General Body Members



Mr. Ossie Fernandes
GB Member



Mr. Thomas Jayaraj
GB Member



Mr.L.Antony Samy
GB Member

Acknowledgements

Sneha in its silver jubilee year wishes to acknowledge the contributions towards its growth, of all its former presidents, secretaries, joint secretaries, treasurers and the board members. In these 25 years there are many occasions to be remembered and appreciated where we have worked together with our board members. While we thank them for their contributions, we request them to continue their support.

- Mr. Cletus Babu** The first president of Sneha. He is now the chairman of SCAD group of institutions and always continues to be the well wisher of Sneha.
- Mr. R. Vincent** The second secretary and third president of Sneha. He still continues to contribute as a general body member.
- Rev. M.J. Edwin** The second and fourth president of Sneha. His contributions and efforts to build Sneha are remarkable.
- Mr. U. Mathivanan** The first joint secretary of Sneha. He is now the Minister for Dairy Development in Tamil Nadu Assembly and still continues to be our well wisher.
- Ms. F. Jesu Thangam** The first treasurer of Sneha. Being an active member of the youth movement, she has continued to support Sneha.
- Ms. Mamaji Ghaney** The second treasurer of Sneha. As a practicing advocate in Nagapattinam, she has rendered her services and supported the communities through her legal advice and trainings.
- Ms.S. Jothi Vani** The third treasurer of Sneha. An advocate practicing in Chennai High Court, has extended her full support as an active member and treasurer.
- Sr. Fathima** The fourth treasurer of Sneha. She has always inspired us through her hard work and contribution.
- Mr. Suresh Dharma** Our former member who expired on 4th January 2009. We acknowledge his contribution and support in building Sneha.

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

Social **N**eed **E**ducation and **H**uman **A**wareness

No. 30, Kariangudi Chetty Street, Velippalayam,
Nagapattinam - 611 001. Tamilnadu, India.

Phone : (+91) 4365 - 248622, Fax : (+91) 4365 - 248675

e-mail : snehangt@gmail.com, snehaorg@yahoo.com

URL : www.sneha-nagai.org

