



ASHWINI & The Gudalur Adivasi Hospital

Newsletter 2009

The ASHWINI team wishes you a very happy and prosperous New Year. We thank you once again for your encouragement and support.

ASHWINI's vision of a Health programme for the tribals of the Gudalur valley that is accessible, acceptable and owned by the community is becoming a reality as each day goes by....

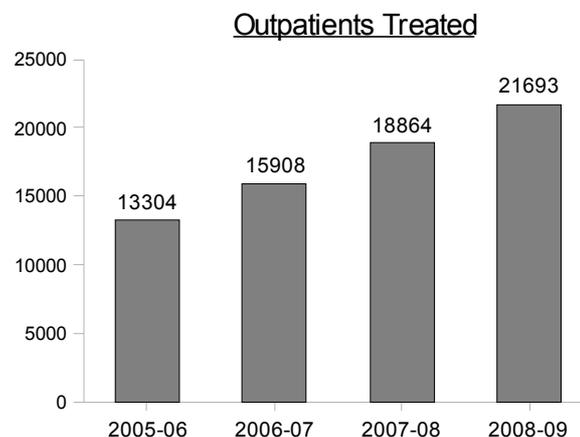
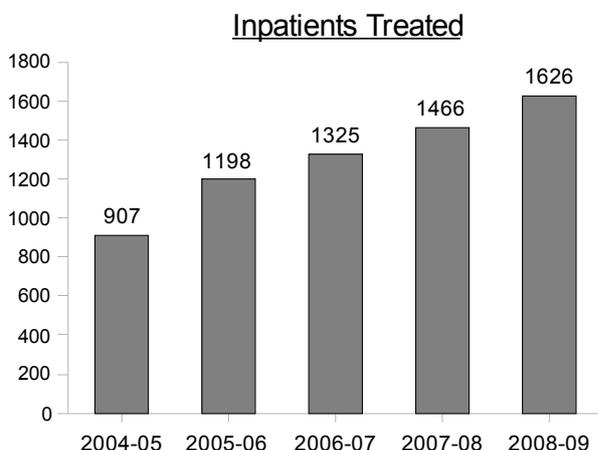
Highlights of the year

The new Hospital building was inaugurated on May 3rd. Hundreds of tribals participated. There was singing and dancing. Shri Rajkumar, IAS and Ms Supriya Sahu, IAS, both former Collectors of The Nilgiris, were special invitees. Although there was still work left to be done, the tribals of Gudalur had the structure that was "their" hospital. It was indeed a day for celebration.



We had boldly started the construction without any assured funding source. But like magic, money flowed in, almost Rs 60 lakhs, from friends, relatives and well wishers that we never met. Another 30 lakhs came from the fees paid by the medical students for their elective program. The sense of participation was tremendous. Together we had managed to complete this wonderful task. For details please visit www.ashwini.org/building.php We thank you all for your continued support!

The Hospital has been getting busier each year as more tribals seek outpatient and inpatient care

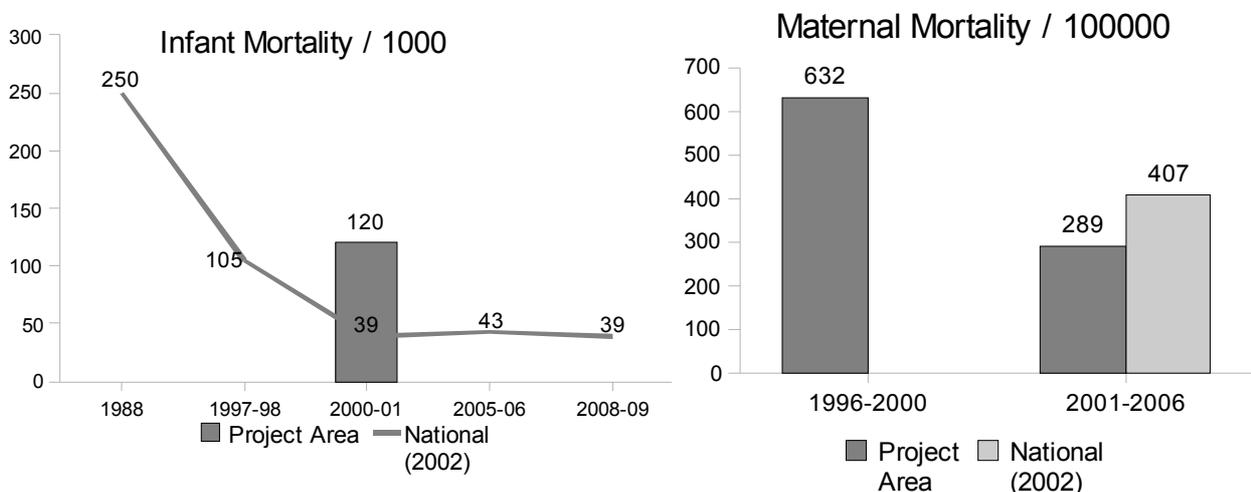


Speciality clinics continue with the support of doctors from St Johns Medical College, Bangalore

Tribal staff and Trainees: This team continues to work with commitment and enthusiasm taking on more and more responsibilities each year. There are ten trainees at present, five having joined this year.

The Community Health Programme has entered a new phase with the support of The Sir Ratan Tata Trust. As part of the strategy to make health care more accessible and to improve participation of the community, a process of decentralization has been set in motion. The eight area teams are being built up to plan and implement village specific interventions. There is a stress on the training of health volunteers, encouraging them to take responsibility for the health of their villages. Health indicators are being monitored at the village level. The health animators' team has taken on this initiative with great enthusiasm.

The Infant (IMR) and Maternal mortality rates (MMR) have shown a steady downward trend. We are proud of the fact that despite all odds, these indicators in the tribal population in Gudalur are way below the national rate. Consistent work has helped us to achieve this.



We have made tremendous strides in reducing the Maternal Mortality as well. Sadly, there was one maternal death this year- Shantha, a Kattunaicken mother with twins was referred to Coimbatore Medical College hospital and died there of bleeding — a totally preventable death!

The grandmother seen in this picture, takes care of the little one now.

The Medical Student Elective Programme has been as popular as ever- 28 students from different countries participated.

Funding Support this year. . .

The Government of Tamil Nadu under its Health System Development programme, continues its grants for inpatient care and for Sickle cell screening and treatment, while TANSACS supports the HIV and TB control programmes.

Sir Ratan Tata Trust (S.R.T.T) will be supporting the decentralisation of the Community Health Programme.

Charities Advisory Trust, UK, through its “Good Gifts” Programme has supported much needed activities like maternal care, out patient care and cardiac surgeries for children.

Many other donors like American Tamil Medical Association, Tribal India Health Foundation, The Toshniwal Trust, Give India Foundation and very many individual donors continue to support us.

Corpus Fund: Thanks to our staunch supporters this has reached **Rs. 12 lakhs**. We still have a long way to go to reach our target of **Rs 100 lakhs** to ensure stability of our health care system.

Looking ahead.....

The focus of the work in the next few years will be on decentralizing the Community Health Programme and in improving the management skills of the tribal team. Systems will be set up to improve the efficiency of the hospital and the area centres . Work on this has already been started and the team is all enthusiastic about taking on these added responsibilities.

We hope to complete the second hospital block housing the operation theatres, labour room and neonatal ward, as well as the meeting hall and staff quarters in the next three years. We will also work towards better equipping the hospital.

Progress in other sectors . . .

This year saw a flurry of activities by Adivasi Munnetra Sangam(AMS) around the implementation of the **Forest Rights Act**. 29 Special Adivasi Gram Sabhas have been formed and through the elected adivasi representatives, the claims over forest resources are being ascertained.

AMS has started a few **Livelihood Initiatives** during this year. The handmade soap making unit is successful and expanding. In collaboration with the Forest department, a group in Chembakolli is making furniture out of waste Lantana weeds. The Honey Marketing Unit has become more professional in terms of honey processing and packaging.

The Education Team has had great success in increasing school enrollment. The focus is now on improving the quality of education. An ambitious 2-year **Teacher Training Programme**. has been launched to increase the pool of qualified teachers within the community. You can read about all these in AMS's quarterly newsletters at www.ashwini.org/donations.php

Donations in India are exempt from income tax under section 80G of the income tax act. Money can be transferred directly to our account in State Bank of India, Gudalur (A/c No. 11317309429 for foreign donors and A/c No. 11317309532 for Indian donors). The IFSC code is SBIN0001016. Tax deductible donations can be made in the US through our website at the page www.ashwini.org/donations.php.

In the UK, donations can be “gift aided” through Give India. www.giveindia.org

Have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!!

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