

ASHWINI
The Gudalur Adivasi Hospital
Newsletter 2011



The ASHWINI team wishes you a very happy and prosperous New Year!

Highlights of the year

A grant for the completion of the buildings of the hospital and for equipping it was sanctioned by The Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust. This is indeed a dream come true! The first block was completed with support from innumerable people; it was a great achievement. The dream for a proper hospital for the adivasis was kept alive and there was much rejoicing when the Trust decided to support this venture. Preparation for starting the construction work is in progress and we hope to have everything complete before mid 2013.

Training program: 8 of the staff completed a one year certificate course recognized by the Central Government under BSS (Bharat Sevak Samaj). 13 others are preparing for the diploma course this year. This has been a big ego booster for all the staff as they are now legally qualified and will not be questioned by any authority. 17 new students have enrolled for diploma courses in nursing, pharmacy, lab technology and administration.

Karmaveer Chakra Ceremony 2011-12
Active Citizenship - Fulfilling Fundamental Duties



Awards: Kali, one of our first health workers was awarded a Karmaveer Chakra by Skillshare International and iCongo at a ceremony in Delhi.

Dr Shylaja was awarded The Karmaveer Puraskar, also by iCongo

Decentralization of the Community Health Program has resulted in the area teams taking on a lot more responsibility in planning and implementing the activities at the area level. All areas have a building now and better infrastructure. The health workers have been very active, volunteering to take on the responsibility of their village.

The Hospital is getting busier by the day. More tribal and non-tribal patients are seeking out patient care. The tribal staff is managing most day to day activities. **A Diabetic Clinic** is held each month by Vittala Institute of Ophthalmology in Bangalore. **Orthopaedic clinics** have been regular and busy with doctors visiting from St Johns in Bangalore. **Other clinics** in ENT, Paediatric Surgery, Gynecological surgery have been going on as usual. Visiting surgeons performed plastic surgeries in the hospital. In spite of increasing the number of beds to forty, the hospital is always full.

A Microbiology lab has been set up with the support of Dr Sabine Schweinburger from Switzerland. It has been a much needed addition to the facilities. We are also in the process of setting up a **Cytology lab** with the help of Dr Jan Olaf and Mr Celestino, also from Switzerland. This will help us to screen the community for cervical cancer; there has been an increase in the incidence of this cancer in the last couple of years.

The Medical Student Elective Program has been very popular especially with students from UK. It is helping us raise much needed funds. As of this year we are running the program directly and have launched a new website (<http://www.medicalstudentelectives.in>).

Funding Support this year. . .

The Government of Tamil Nadu under TNHSP continues to support the Inpatient care of tribals, Sickle Cell Disease programme, the Tribal Counselors, and the Mobile Outreach. **NRTT** has been supporting the decentralization of the Community Health Programme and up-gradation of

the hospital mentioned earlier. **Charities Advisory Trust**, UK, through its "Good Gifts" Programme has provided a fund for cardiac surgeries for children. **Many Individuals** have donated generously for various activities; especially for the "Land Fund" to acquire land to construct staff quarters. **Think India Foundation, USA** has also pledged support for this fund. **Association for India Development (AID)**, USA has extended support for our training programmes this year. **Skillshare International** continues to support the health volunteers training programme.

Funding needs...

We had to acquire 40 cents of land to put up the quarters. We bought this with an advance, confident that the well-wishers of the adivasi community would help. Please visit http://www.ashwini.org/wp/?page_id=139 for further details on how you can help.

Looking ahead.....

The Area Centres will become resource centres for training and service delivery. Good rapport will be established with the Government Public Health system and the area teams will monitor the health status of the people as well as their utilization of the services provided.

The hospital infrastructure will be well established and systems will be in place for its smooth functioning.

Training will be given primary focus. As more children finish school, ASHWINI will support them in pursuing paramedical/medical courses with good job opportunities both at the hospital and outside.

Progress in other sectors . . .

Adivasi Munnetra Sangam has consolidated its **Forest Rights Campaign** and the special Adivasi Gram Sabhas are becoming more active in highlighting the issues faced by the community and also the special rights and benefits that are due to the Primitive Tribal Groups. Advocacy with the Government and policy makers to implement participatory welfare programmes was a focus of the work this year.

Under our **Cultural Revival Program**, the traditional elders and activists are paying lot of attention in protecting the sacred groves and burial grounds from encroachment. A detailed survey of these important cultural symbols was done in all adivasi villages this year, generating discussions in the villages about ways to protect them.

The **Education program** took up a major challenge by starting a Rural Bridge Centre for drop-out children in partnership with the Government. The idea is to improve the academic levels of these children so that they are at par with the regular children in a period of two years. Two of the Paniya girls who completed the Teacher training course are in charge of teaching at the centre. It is heartwarming to see how well these young girls do their job!

We look forward to more youngsters from the community coming forward to take over the many aspects of the work.



We thank you one again for your continued support.

Have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!!

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. 11317309532) Tax deductible donations can be made in the US through our website http://www.ashwini.org/wp/?page_id=51

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