

**SIEMENPUU PROGRESS REPORT FORM**

**Name of the organisation** : Rural Women's Development Society

**Name of the contact person of the organisation** : J.RAJAMMAL , Executive Secretary

**Address** : No-1, New Muslim Street, Polur road, Tiruvannamalai

**E-mail** : rwdstvm@gmail.com

**Fax** : \_ **NIL**

**Telephone** : 04175-254464

**Project code** : 13012AAS

**Project title** : Protection Of the Ecology and Environment In Tiruvannamalai

**Amount granted for the total project in euro's** : 10000 EURO

**Project duration** : **Start** Month/Year April 2013 **Estimated End**<sup>1</sup> Month /Year: March 2016

**Time period covered by this narrative report** : **From** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 **To** 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

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<sup>1</sup> If this has changed from the approved work plan please consult with the Siemenpuu Foundation

**1. Please give us a description of the project activities you have implemented this far. Is the project progressing as planned? Write a short general summary and fill out the table below.**

**Summary:**

**Overall goal of the project is:** Assertion of Local Communities over the local livelihood resources by way of control and management

**Through the project it was anticipated to achieve the following outcome:**

Sensitization of the local communities and mobilizing them around the key environmental protection legislations, the challenges and need, mobilizing them to join voice against the depletion of resources and facilitate them to safeguard the local livelihood resources towards prevention of further depletion of the forest and the environment in Tiruvannamalai district by exerting pressure on the government for implementation of key environmental protective legislations and policies, are the major outcome expected through this project.

The activities were envisaged at two levels, one the programs for combating the challenges and for protecting the hills and forests in Tiruvannamalai district and the second strengthening the Kauthimalai and Vediappanmalai protection committee on both protection and conservation of Kavuthimalai – vedyappanmalai Eco system for ensuring the traditional and customary rights of local communities. The following results achieved from this project so far.

- Continuously building community momentum to safeguard the hills from mining company through people mobilization process. The solidarity groups also to support local community in legal battle. Hence the attempt made by the Mining group through political presser and legal battle is beaten by community so far. Since the project is not withdrawn by the company, the community needs to be careful to monitor continues. It needs both technical and moral support from project.

Siemenpuu Progress Report Form

- When comparing to initial stage to now, the public cooperation is achieved from various sections of the society if the threat were perceived.
- As part of building new way of struggle towards to stop the mining giants, the collective farming type of livelihood programme should be a people alternative model for uniting people to develop solidarity economy among community. It needs to be networked as solidarity group from local community.
- The new generation of young kits part of children parilimenet and youth groups planting more than 12000 saplings and protected them through local bodies.

The above said achievement done based on the following planned activities.

Activities	Progress	Participants	Reasons for possible differences
<p><b>1. Baseline study</b></p>	<p>The baseline study is planned in two different locations namely</p> <p>1. The villages located in and around Kavuthi Vedyappan hills of Tiruvannamalai taluk</p> <p>2. The villages displaced under Kuppenatham minor irrigation project of Chengam taluk.</p> <p><b>Baseline line study for the villages surrounded Kavuthi – Vedyappan Hills:</b> This village level study primarily focused on community dependence on traditional and customary resources. The excerpt of the study is as follows.</p> <p>Total No. of villages covered – 20</p>	<p>The people of Thurinjikuppam, Kilayoor and Kallathur villages.</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan but the follow up work of Kuppenatham study is evolved to submit the report to district administration is planned with the community. It will be done during the next quarter.</p>

Total Village Panchyat comes under	- 13		
Toal block covered	- 4		
Taluk covered	- 2		
District	- 1		
Total Families Living	- 6558		
Population	- 25978		
(Male -13315 + Female 12663)			
Total no families depending agriculture	- 4485		
No of Women farmer	- 638		
<b>Seasonal Migrant families:</b>			
Male headed families	- 527		
Female headed families	- 449		
<b>(please see the study details as annexure 1)</b>			
<b>Baseline study for Kuppanatham reserviour project:</b>			
This displacement study aimed to understand the socio economic conditions of the displaced people and their livelihood patterns. The excerpt of the study is as follows.			
<b>Name of the village affected:</b>			
1. Thurunchikuppam 2. Thottimadu 3. Mottur 4. Vai.ko nagar of Kalluthurpanchyat and Jamnamuthur union of Chengam Taluk, Tiruvannamalai district			

	Total number families – 246 Families Displaced - 105 Migration - 164 Male headed migrant family – 115 Female headed migrant family - 49																													
<b>2. Sensitization on conservation and management plans</b>	<p>Sensitization on local community for conservation and management of natural resource done through village level meetings, IEC campaigns.</p> <p>1. There are 16 village level meetings conducted with the participation of 365 leader's people from PRI and SHG. The details of the meetings are as follows are as follows</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Meeting</th> <th>Place</th> <th>Participants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>08.04.2014</td> <td>Devanathal</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23.04.2014</td> <td>Vaividathangal</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>09.05.2014</td> <td>Gangampattu</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>03.06.2014</td> <td>Vadamathur</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22.09.2014</td> <td>Paliyapattu</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.10.2014</td> <td>Melpadur, Keelpadur, Periyakulam</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14.10.2014</td> <td>Devananthal, Punalkadu, Vediyappanur</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.11.2014</td> <td>Kanji centre</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Meeting	Place	Participants	08.04.2014	Devanathal	28	23.04.2014	Vaividathangal	24	09.05.2014	Gangampattu	27	03.06.2014	Vadamathur	29	22.09.2014	Paliyapattu	21	7.10.2014	Melpadur, Keelpadur, Periyakulam	24	14.10.2014	Devananthal, Punalkadu, Vediyappanur	22	3.11.2014	Kanji centre	20	365 community people from the villages	There is no change from the original plan
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18.11.2014	Palipattu, Selvapuram	26
1.12.2014	Vaividathangal , Gandhi nagar	18
12.1.2015	Kulalpadi, Sakthi nagar	21
21.1.2015	Chinnakollapadi, Periyakolapadi	27
16.2.2015	Vadamathur, kottavur	18
23.02.2015	Gandhinagar, Vaividathangalnagar	16
5.3.2015	Paliyapattu	21
23.03.2015	Idamkariyenthal, Venkaiyavelur	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>

## 2. IEC campaign:

A Pham let highlight the importance of protecting Kavuthi Vedyappan hills and its eco system printed in Tamil. More than 5000 copies of the Pham let distributed to general public assembled for receive holly water at Vedyappan temple and Theerathamalai during full moon day of each month

This was an occasion for sensitizing the community on the issues and mobilizing them to get involved in the conservation and management of their local livelihood resources that are currently being threatened by the external threats.

(Please see the Pham let in Tamil as Annexure 2)

<p><b>3. Sensitizing the community and involving them on promotion of ecology:</b></p>	<p>The CBOs formed by RWDS namely Nava Yuga (New Age) Youth Federation, Children Parliament, Dalit Women Movement came forwarded and involved in tree planting activity.</p> <p>During this period, 12000 saplings planted in 15 panchyats by them in common places like Temple, Road side, Common lands in the village. RWDS supported them to received saplings from Forest department under mass tree plantation programme. The local Panchyat came forward to safeguard the by involving local people under NREGA scheme to provide protection covers and watering work.</p> <p>In the same manner, during the drought session, the youths were organized under NREGA scheme to fill the watering pits constructed by forest department for forest animals. The regular monitoring of saplings done by children's club and youth groups.</p> <p>They are also involved in campaign against plastic, cleaning drinking water tank, drainage at village level. So far, Kulalpadi and Vadamathur panchyat announced and maintained as Plastic free panchyats.</p>	<p>12000 saplings planted in common places within 15 local Panchyate</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>
<p><b>4. Capacity building</b></p>	<p>Nava Yuga (New Age) Youth Federation, promoted by RWDS for youth concern for a decade before. It was very active in</p>	<p>40 cadres who were regularly</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

<p><b>workshops for cadre:</b></p>	<p>protecting Kavuthi Vedyappan hills from Iron ore mining groups. During this period, the members of youth group attended two capacity building trainings on various environmental protection acts and its provisions related hill ecosystem on 05.05.2014 and on 11.06.2014 at Kanchi centre. The trainings were facilitated by Ms. Rajammal, the chief functionary RWDS, Mr. Rajendran and Mr. Angelis, a lawyer from Chennai. The cadres were equipped with the protective legal provisions and the mechanisms that they needed to approach to use the instruments.</p>	<p>oriented.</p>	
<p><b>5. Promoting sustainable agriculture</b></p>	<p>RWDS working among Dalit women from 1980s onwards through right based issues. It is because of the necessity from the community and changing of strategies intervention among Dalit women, we took this initiative.</p> <p>The village very close to Kavithi Vedyappan hills – Ananthal, Nanthimangalam, Nammiyenthal, Gengampattu, Oranthavadi were very active in farming activity and involved in vegetable cultivation. Hence, the general awareness programme about low input agriculture was done in the month of November and December 2014. With the support of KVK – Virinjipuram of Vellore district, 5 village level organic farming trainings conducted for preparation of earth worm, pest repellent and growth promoters like Panchakaviya. The selected farmers from</p>	<p>There are 25 women from 5 collective farming groups benefited</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan. But the programme got value addition from other donors and was supported financially. Now it taking new shape and height. <b>The possibilities of joint intervention to upscale the programme are expected from Siemenpuu.</b></p>



	<p>this village were taken to Aurovil for exposure visit to learn integrated farming techniques through Aurovil Action group.</p> <p>In the meantime, one of the well-wisher and local support of RWDS, IWID came forward to support this initiative at different manner. They insisted RWDS to promote collective farming activities. Hence RWDS decided to form collective farming groups in these 5 villages.</p> <p><b>Promotion of Collective Farming Groups:</b></p> <p>Under the concept of collective farming, 4 landless agricultural cooli women and one small woman farmers having agriculture land with water source selected for this intervention. This 4+1 jointed together and formed as collective farming group.</p> <p>The selected women underwent two visited women collective farms in Tiruvallur and Nagapattinam districts.</p> <p>After the exposure visit, They took lease land from their group member and started doing farming activity organically. Each Collective farming group received Rs. 10000 as seed money for initiating farming activities. End of the cultivation period, the benefit was shared equally after paid the lease. Each member got</p>		
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	<p>Rs.3000 as cash and also received vegetables for their own consumption.</p> <p>Now another local donor – ECOMWEL came forwarded to support 2 of our collective farm groups Gengampattu and Oranthavadi to purchase Rs.30000 worth of 9 milk cows and this programme started in the month of March 4<sup>th</sup> week.</p> <p>Now RWDS thinking to get Panchami land from district administration to expand this activity in future if supported by the existing donors including Siemenpuu. It will ultimately reduce the migration rate and dalit women will get property rights over agriculture which is not realized for many centuries.</p>		
<p><b>6. Formation of Environment Protection Forum – (Formation, Training and meetings):</b></p>	<p>In all the twenty villages initiatives have been taken for promotion of Farmer’s club, Women’s club, Children’s Club and youth club. Potential members are identified and enrolled in sangams (groups).</p> <p>Meetings were held for the members on 28.08.2014 at Gandhi Nagar, on 06.09.2014 at Japthi kariyanthal,, and on 07.04.2014at Kanchi training centre.</p> <p>Trainings were held on 11.06.2014, on 05.09.2014 and on</p>	<p>Farmers, women group members, children and youth from the 20 villages.</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

	<p>11.06.2014. These trainings were held at Tiruvannamalai. These meetings helped to consolidate the farmer's groups. The training held on 11.06.2014 was also used as space for electing the leaders of the farmer's federation.</p> <p>The leaders were taken for a learning exposure to Auraville, where they had an opportunity to interact with the farmer Thomas who has been involved in organic farming for the past twenty five years. At the end of the program the farmers expressed that they could learn from the exposure and it instilled confidence among them to involve without any apprehension.</p>		
<p><b>7. Strengthening the existing platforms:</b></p>	<p>From 2012 onwards, the Kavuthi – Vedyappan hill protection forum was started and very active in raising voices to safe guard the hills from Iron ore mining groups. There are 10 members from 20 village giving leadership to this forum and each of them responsible for two villages.</p> <p>The forum meets 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month and discussed about their activity. Two member from each village participated this meeting. Before coming to this meeting, each member should conduct a village meeting to discuss their local issues pertaining to hills to be presented during the meetings. It is kind of vigilant body to monitoring the move of mining groups and their</p>	<p>38 members from the of Kauthimalai and Vediappanmalai people's protection movement, participated in these meetings.</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

	<p>informal activities regularly.</p> <p>During this reporting period, the forum met 10 times discussed the following matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning to meet one committee appointed by Supreme Court against the case filed by mining group.</li> <li>• Inviting media people to highlight the issues</li> <li>• Thanthi TV interview</li> <li>• One day fasting in front of district collectorate</li> <li>• Tree plantation activities</li> <li>• Meeting of local panchyat presidents to get grama sabha resolution to stop mining project</li> <li>• Preparation of bio diversity register work</li> </ul> <p>The meeting was a space for evolving strategy for further follow up actions.</p>		
<p><b>8. Strengthening the community on advocacy for policy decisions:</b></p>	<p>Consultations were organized on 30.06.2014, 28.05.2014, 06.07.2014, 25.07.2014 and on 12.08.2014 for the community traditional panchyat leaders for strengthening the advocacy and lobbying. Resource persons shared their experiences in legislative and judicial advocacy. Provisions of law to effectively combat Violence against women, assertion of the rights of children and combating sexual violence on women. The</p>	<p>73 community leaders from the operational villages benefitted</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

	<p>participants agreed to meet the legislative members and parliamentarian from their jurisdiction and take forward the concern to them and to pressurize them to present before the Indian legislative.</p> <p>A separate consultation meetings organized to forum members on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 for preparation people bio diversity register conducted. Mr.Marirajan from Madurai explained the process of preparaing people biodiversity register and role of local panchyat. It was decided that, each village panchyat should approach district administration to initiate biodiversity register work and to seek assistance from state biodiversity board.</p> <p>So far Local Panchyat level meetings conducted in Paliyapattu, Vadamathur, Chinna Kollapadi, Sakthi nagar in the month of March 2015</p>	<p>56 members from 15 villages participated</p>	
<p><b>9. Lobbying:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A seminar was organized for the Panchayat Raj (local self governance) leaders on 22.09.2014 at Tiruvannamalai Various modes of conservation and managing the existing the resources were discussed with the leaders. At the end of the session they volunteered to involve in their respective jurisdictions in conserving the resources. They assured that they would stand with the people and support</li> </ul>	<p>54 Panchayat Raj (local self governance) leaders from the operational villages are surrounding</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

	<p>their demands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A signature campaign to protect the Kavuthi – Vedyappan hills in the month April to seek attention of Pollution control, district collector, Chief minister and Forest Minister at centre.</li> <li>• When the election campaign was on the leaders met the candidates who contested for the parliament election and the political leaders and requested their support for politicising the issue. The political party leaders openly gave assurance and gave media releases expressing their protest against iron ore mining in Tiruvannamalai. The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu also gave her assurance of support for the people.</li> </ul>	<p>panchayats from the Tiruvannamalai district participated.</p>	
<p><b>10. Issue based campaigns (Need based):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before General election, the forum took several steps to seek the attention of the politician who are contested the election should give priority to their election mandate to protect the hills.</li> <li>• The leaders participated in a series of demonstrations and protest meetings held before the RDO office, Tiruvannamalai, and displayed placards and raised slogans demanding protection of the two hills that were earmarked for iron ore mining. They demanded that the</li> </ul>	<p>Around 1500 people from the villages and Tiruvannamalai district</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

	<p>natural resources should not be alienated from the people. The campaign against the depletion of natural resources of the people has mobilized more number of supporters from various sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate media campaign was organized and several of our forum leaders spoke about the issue in the mainstream TV channel – Thanthi TV.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>11. Review Meetings:</b></p>	<p>The review meetings of the project activity conducted first week of each month, There are 12 meetings were conducted during this period at Kanchi centre. The effects of the implementation were assessed and new plans were evolved.</p>	<p>41 participants, including youth and cadres from the 20 villages participated in these review meetings.</p>	<p>There is no change from the original plan</p>

**2. Which steps of your original work plan are you going to take next? Are there any changes to the original work plan?**

There is no change in the original plan. We are implementing the activities as per the original plan. In the coming months the study on Thurinjikuppam will be completed and the other activities will be carried out as per plan.

As per the plan, the ensuring traditional and customary rights of local communities who dependent on the hills will facilitated through their local panchyat to form bio diversity management committee as per Tamilnadu Biodiversity conservation 2008 and to claim their traditional rights over the

hills. It is going to next step highlighted through the project to safeguard from mining group. In addition to that, the focus will be given to arrest the migration rate in target villages by introducing alternative livelihood options based on locally available resources and models – Collective Organic farming groups, Tamerind producers cooperative, Milch animal project with the support of local banks and supports of RWDS initiatives.

**3. What have been the biggest impacts of the project this far?**

The political party leaders openly gave assurance and gave media releases expressing their protest against iron ore mining in Tiruvannamalai. The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu also gave her assurance of support for the people. The Panchayat Raj (local self governance) leaders are made to internalize the people's strength and protest of the people. The villagers are mobilized around the issue and are very seriously taking up the issues as one unit. The panchayat leaders assured that they would pass resolutions in the Grama sabha as a priority issue and then forward the same to the higher officials.

**4. Anything else you would like to add? (Stories, news, information...?)**

The leaders very committed and motivated that their livelihood resource should not be taken away and their future generation should benefit. The understanding of the community is better and they are able to identify the impact on rural communities. They are organized around the issues and are extending support to challenge the government. This strength is being sustained.

**5. Please list here any written or printed materials generated by the project:**

Pamphlets, handbills and the copies attached.



**Please attach copies of the above listed materials to this report. We will also be happy to receive any additional materials, for example research and survey results, newspaper clips, reports concerning project issues and photos of the activities.**

**Do you hereby request for the next payment if this report is approved by the Siemenpuu Foundation?**

YES

**Signature of the authorised person(s) of the implementing organisation**

I hereby confirm that the information given in this project report is correct and valid.

Name: J. Rajammal

Name

Position: Director

Position:

Date: 29/4/2015

Date:

Place: Tiruvannamalai

Place:

Signature:

Signature: