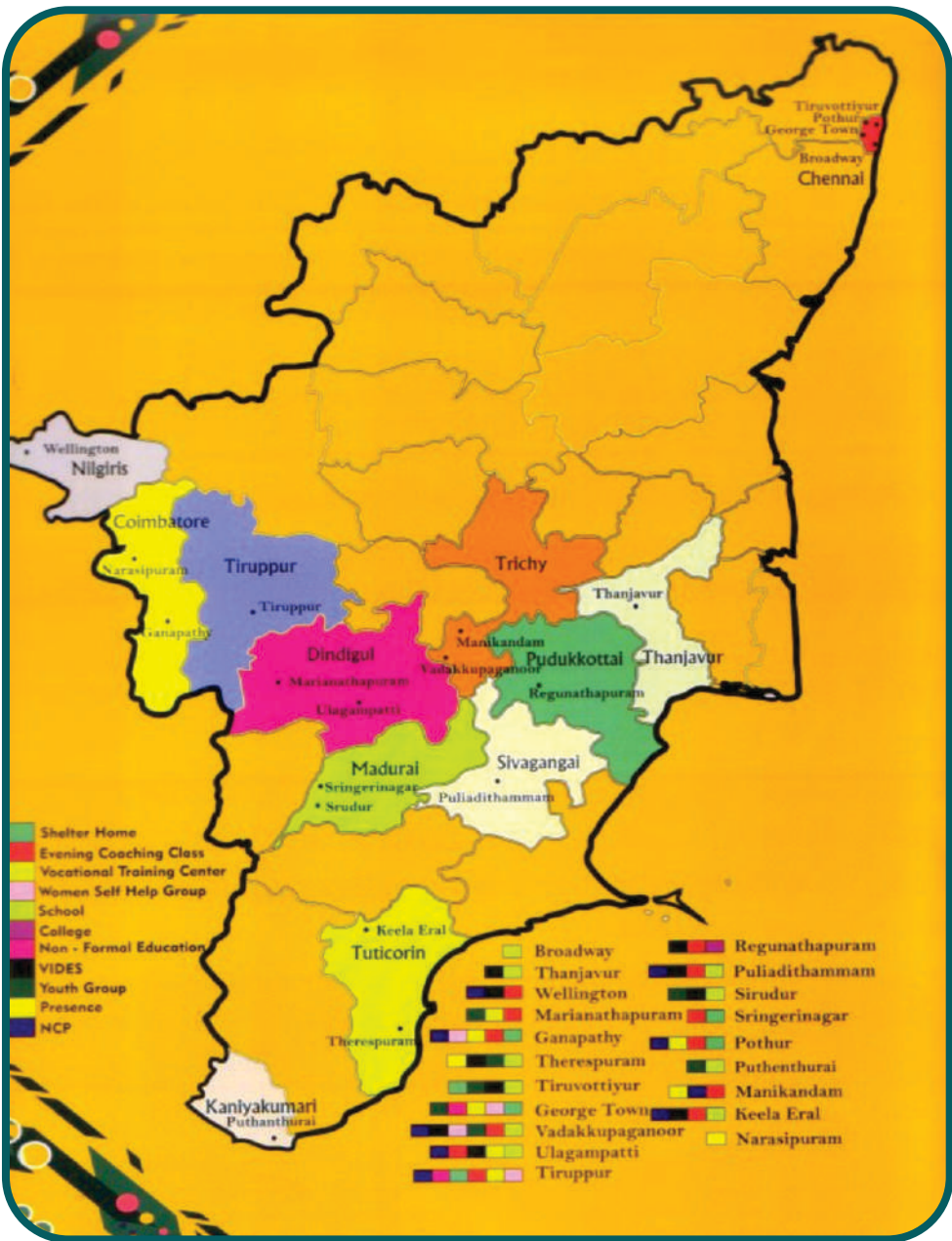


ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021





VISION

ASSIST envisions an inclusive, equitable and sustainable society.

MISSION

ASSIST as a synergy source facilitates the transformation in CHILDREN, YOUTH and WOMEN of the communities in our reach, by organizing people & resources as catalyst for socio-cultural & economic positive change and promoting a grid of likeminded organizations to meet challenges and opportunities through lobby and advocacy.

VALUES



TARGET GROUP FOCUS



INTEGRITY



PROBITY



PROFESSIONALISM



EXCELLENCE



COLLABORATION

Integrate Catalyze Transform



PROVINCIAL MESSAGE



The financial year 2020 – 2021 threw at the world a bedlam of novel COVID-19 virus, threatening all that was taken for granted mobility, safety, and a normal life itself. This, in turn, posed the most formidable economic challenge to India and to the world in a century. The policy dilemma of “lives versus livelihoods” in the process of containing the deadly virus has indeed created a space for the non-government and community organization to play their active role in holistically addressing the pandemic — develop, implement and ensure that measures reached the needy, last-mile people.

It has been a period of challenges and achievement as ASSIST was able to spearhead its initiatives with its extensive reach and volunteer-base embedded in the community. While this has been a time when world disrupted and transformed in ways we could never have anticipated, this was also the time when humaneness has blossomed beyond barriers. I appreciate the response of ASSIST, the Social Development Office in mobilizing resources to provide food, healthcare, and information and cash transfers to affected populations.

The efforts of ASSIST Team under the leadership of Sr. Azarias Arokia Mary Selvi to reach out to the vulnerable groups and most affected people like the beggars, visually challenged, gypsies by actively engaging in ongoing relief work, including last-mile delivery of relief materials such as dry ration and sanitation kits, community awareness and sensitization, setting up health camps and offering rehabilitation of distressed communities is laudable.

Pandemic has taught us to be hopeful by seeing the light despite all of the darkness since the human sensitivity was awakened towards each other. The new normal has enabled us to accept the new norms and engage in digital platforms with renewed vision for a better connected world. Let's ignite hope and be partners in building immunity against the impact of the monster virus.

Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret FMA

Provincial, Province of Our Lady of Snow,
Tiruchirappalli.



DIRECTRESS MESSAGE



It is an enduring tradition to take time to pause, turn around to look at the fruitful year gone by, achieving both the expected and the unexpected, while setting various milestones and then synergizing ourselves to move ahead to face the challenges in the coming year, with a positive attitude.

“Challenges are gifts, opportunities to learn” said Andy Andrews and pandemic has proved it right. From access to healthcare and green spaces, to work and education, corona virus has shown up real disparities. The ability for digital technology adoption in our operation and programmes made it easier for ASSIST team to cope with the challenges of the new normal. While we had to temporarily suspend on-ground programmes and pivot to relief work the adoption to digital technology enabled us to stay connected with our target groups. The programmes for children, women and youth had been carried out in most relevant manner as per the need of the hour. These milestone actions are recorded in this annual report.

I extend a note of appreciation and gratitude to my team for using their remarkable talents and skills to fuel our mutual efforts. Their ability to handle the programmes during the pandemic showed resilience, experience, knowledge, and critical thinking. Sustainable development goals have been the cynosure of every intervention of ASSIST as a synergy source motivated to attain integrated social transformation.

I am thankful to our Benefactors, Partners and volunteers for their support which has been remarkable during this time of uncertainty.

We are hopeful that every effort we make will enliven the dreams of the people we serve , that ASSIST will proffer exciting goodness through its service to the most vulnerable and unreached, enabling them to become protagonist of a more just and equitable society.

Sr. Azarias Arokia Mary Selvi

Directress, ASSIST,

Tiruchirappalli.

Protecting The Children During COVID-19 pandemic





Children – Thulir



ASSIST's passion and perseverance in establishing child friendly society which ensures basic rights, education and health care have moved a step forward this year by prioritizing the continuity of child-centered services, with a particular focus on equity of access. In the current context of lockdown and restrictions, children have constrained access to socialization, play and even social contact, critical for their psychological wellbeing and development. The ***“Catalyst for change program”*** which aims at creating child protagonists was concentrated in doing everything possible to minimize risks and enhance positive impacts through information, solidarity and action.

Combating COVID-19's effect on children:

Most often, Organizational strategies have been adapted during the pandemic out of necessity, however many of these innovations proved to be successful and will remain in place permanently. Since the outbreak of corona virus, online classes have become the cornerstone of education. Posters, Android games, Magazines and Puzzles were designed and shared for children to learn about the impact of the deadly disease corona.

Thus information, solidarity and action have been the strategies to combat the impact of pandemic on children.

Topics dealt through virtual sessions and direct interactions:

- Basics information about COVID-19.

- Protective measures to ensure safety of children against online vulnerabilities during the pandemic.
- Role of teachers and parents in engaging children during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Stigma and discrimination of COVID-19
- Maintaining Healthy Life Style and Diet for children to enhance immunity during COVID-19 infection and lockdown.
- Role of Civil society in safeguarding the livelihood of persons with disabilities during the pandemic.
- Extending Psycho-Social Support to Children during COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown.
- Problems faced by unorganized workers and its impact on their children during and post pandemic.
- Understanding Pandemic in the voices of Children – Call for action.

2. Networking to ensure Child rights

Staff, child protection committee members, children and parents were organized to participate in the various initiatives, virtual campaigns, competitions, debates, talks and sessions organized by the civil society organizations to mitigate the possibility of COVID-19 exacerbating the risks of children experiencing maltreatment, violence at home, and poor nutrition among the children in target areas.

Workshops were organized on the following topics

- Ensuring Child Rights amidst COVID-19 Lockdown
- Addressing Child Protection amidst COVID-19 Lockdown
- Getting ready to address the emerging child protection issues as an impact of COVID-19 infection and lockdown
- Problems of children from disadvantaged communities and the role of civil society in protecting their rights
- Issues of children in urban slums – understanding the reality and policy lapses
- Tobacco Free World is a right of every child – Leveraging the Lockdown opportunities
- Awareness on Human trafficking
- Awareness program on child rights, child abuse & child marriage
- Campaign against new education Policy
- Awareness on new education policy.
- Advocacy drive to protest against the new education policy

Sanjay, a farmer kid used his leisure time for growing vegetables and proved that agricultural experiments can give better results. He is doing ninth grade

and studies in an evening study center run by ASSIST. Inspired by the orientation given on how to set up a Kitchen garden planted a kitchen garden using the seeds and saplings distributed in the study center. In two and a half months the plants grew and started to yield. “I got greens, tomatoes and eggplant which I needed for my house” says Sanjay. He was very happy that he could supply vegetables needed for his family from his garden. He added that apart from financial benefits, growing plants also offers happiness and relaxation



**AN
INSPIRING
FARMER
KID**



3. "Let's go Green to get our Globe clean"

ASSIST took responsibility to teach children to create, care for and respect our world by teaching young children about ecology and the environment. Children were encouraged to respect and care for the world they live in from the young age which would help them to preserve and pass on to the next generation.

ASSIST organized several awareness building workshops on the following topics for the children and the mothers.

- The dangers of privatizing water
- Awareness on Conserving nature
- Celebrating Stewardship of creation
- Promoting Kitchen Garden



1. Celebrations and Special day:

- Observations of world literacy day
- Children's day
- Human Rights day
- World soil day
- Celebrating Savithri Bhai Phula birthday

I am Santhosh from Achampatti Village. I am the Minister of Health in the Children's parliament, Auxilium evening study center. When COVID-19 set its

foot in our place, there were several challenges to surmount. Further, dissemination of awareness about the Pandemic and its Do's and Don'ts within a shortest possible time was the other formidable task. As the Minister of Health for along with the other members Children parliament. I asked for the other members and leaders in NCP, as a team raised awareness among the public by pasting COVID-19 awareness posters (importance of Social distancing, hand wash and wearing mask). In the posters we have included Government hospital and health inspector telephone numbers for emergency assistance. We have successfully completed the work all around our village area.

The activities were carried out with the assistance of Village panchayat leader. I felt happy and proud as I could carry out my responsibility effectively.





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"It is not easy for girls to have dreams. I was one of the few girls in our community who went to college studies. I knew my father's income wasn't enough to feed the six members of our family. Neighbors' and relatives started blaming my family for pinning their hopes on a daughter. My father had suffered the same taunts when he had decided to send me to college, when the family was struggling. When I got my first job in FSS on completing my Skills to succeed course at ASSIST, Trichy, my father was the happiest man. He always says – If you have a heartbeat, there's still time for your dreams." says Shahin bhanu.



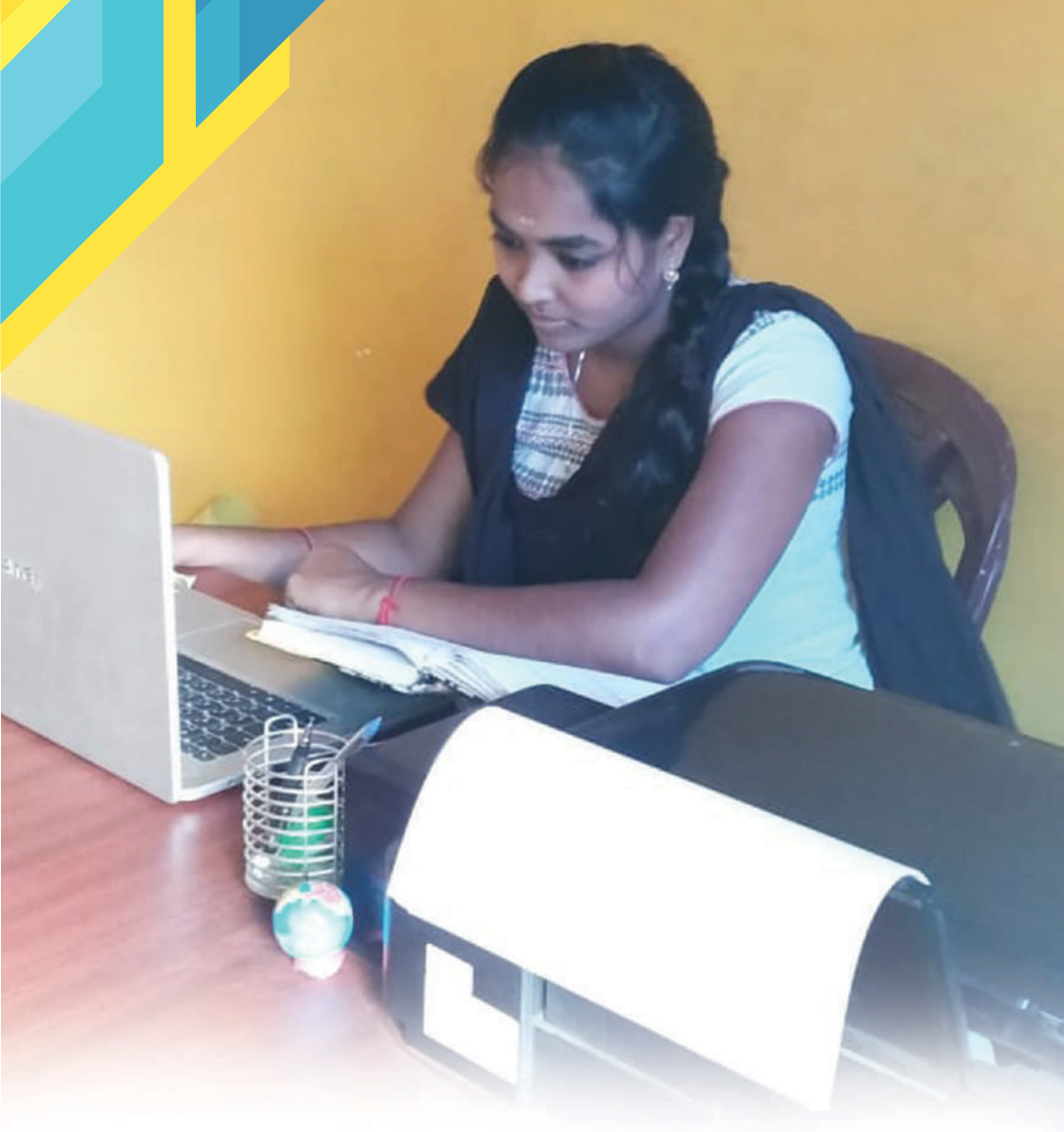
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Preethi Kanchala one of the students from ASSIST Trichy says, "I realized the importance of Money Management after completing the new life skill toolkit. This knowledge helped me to prepare monthly budget for my family and save. The toolkit has been effective in inculcating planning mentality among the students. My parents are happy with my performance since they see the application of my learnings in daily life".

Breaking Gender Barrier



“ACHIEVING
AN EQUAL
FUTURE IN A
COVID-19 WORLD”



**SUCCESSFULLY MEASURED
THE DISTANCE BETWEEN
DREAM & SUCCESS**

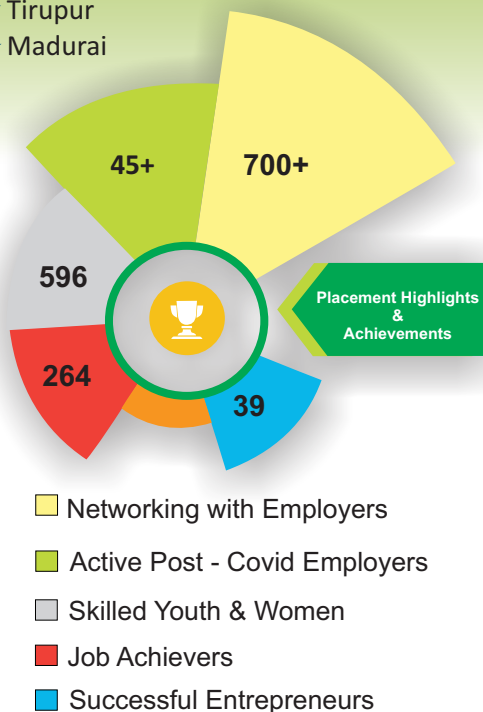


Youth – Vergal

ASSIST's goal is to uplift and empower the next generation by giving them the tools they need to not only survive, but to thrive through skill training. The ambit covers Career development programs, Career connect events and interpersonal skills like communication skills, teamwork capability, conflict management, cultural awareness and negotiation skills including placement opportunities. These programs give youth access to the resources and training needed to transit into work life especially through the virtual classes conducted during lockdown.

key Locations :

- ★ Trichy
- ★ Chennai
- ★ Tirupur
- ★ Madurai



ASSIST in partnership with Quest alliance has been providing platform for skilling and enhancing career building competency for rural and urban underprivileged youth.

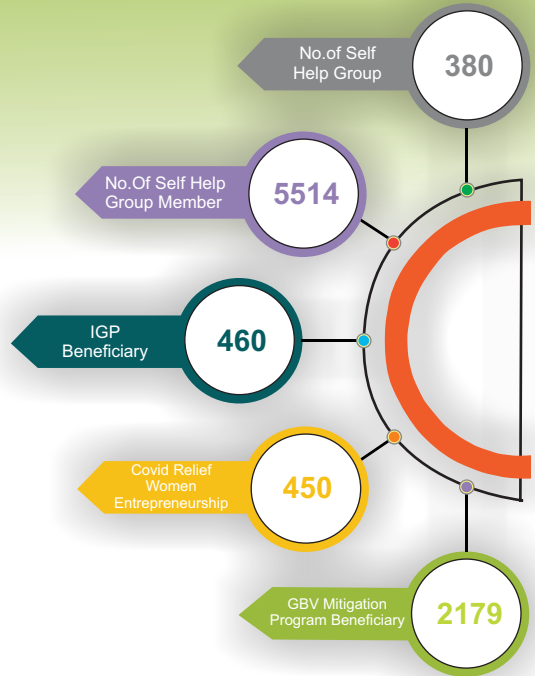


Since the COVID -19 has disrupted the normal lifestyle of people across the globe, the virtual world has come to the rescue. Consequently, catering to the needs of the students', virtual classes has emerged as the new normal with the support of well trained facilitators. Students were able to get the positive outcomes through the program.



Women – Vizhuthugal

ASSIST created an enabling environment through adopting various programmes for development of women, besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potential. ASSIST provided training in employment and income generation activities with both forward and backward linkages with the ultimate objective of making all women economically independent and self reliant.



Focusing on Prevention: Ending Violence against Women

Increased awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence and its impact on children is pre-condition for changes in attitudes and behaviour. The capacitated Staff utilized the Resource kit developed by ASSIST team consisting of the Posters, Videos and booklets, effectively to promote GBV sensitivity and gender equity among the target groups to break traditional old beliefs from the mindset of people and the socio cultural impact of male chauvinism in order to mitigate gender based violence in 10 Districts.

Networking and Collaboration:

ASSIST engages in information sharing and collaboration with donors and non-governmental organizations in promoting the rights of women. Staff reached out to victims on providing psychological care and legal support when faced with domestic violence and violation of women's rights.

Women in Power and Decision Making:

ASSIST worked with nearly 440 SHG's covering 440 families. In the long term, we expect these groups to provide an enabling and supportive environment in which women from marginalized communities come together, express themselves freely, dream and plan to change their situation. During lockdown these meetings were conducted in accordance to the COVID-19 protocols.



Glimpses of activities which were implemented in target areas:

- Staff orientation program on Gender Based Violence
- Realization of Centralized training courses workshops for District local operators to provide psychological skills for victims
- Psychological skills for Women and families to address issues related Gender Based Violence
- Webinar on Stress Management
- Animation on Gender Based Violence
- Employable Skills Training
- Distribution of sewing machines to promote self-employment for sustainability



A JOURNEY TOWARDS SELF RELIANCE

Active cooperation between family and school is necessary when considering development of a child's personality. ASSIST initiated to organize the mothers of Evening Study center students in KeelaEral for the formation of Self Help Group. Access to adequate and timely credit at affordable rates is critical for the rural poor to alleviate high cost debt and invest in livelihood opportunities. Kurinji Women Self help Group, KeelaEral, consisting of 15 members had Rs.18, 750 as their savings since their formation in January 2021 when they decided to venture into livelihood initiative to meet the family expenses as their income were affected due to the impact of lockdown. The saving has been utilized by the group members as loan to initiate the livelihood activities like livestock rearing and agriculture. They have now become pillars for growth and sustainability for the family. This SHG has become a source of inspiration for many other rural women.

38 interested women were enrolled in the tailoring and dress making class run by ASSIST in Chittampatti Village located in Madurai. The students have successfully completed their training in sewing. After the assessment of the pathetic status, we have prioritized to give sewing machine at a discount rate to 15 women. This effort has brought about a change in their standard of living by enabling them to save some amount for future use. Now all the 15 women are gradually gaining self-sufficiency by stitching clothes for neighbors and for their own family members. One of the Student Sumathi says excitedly, “I am happy to earn and contribute to meet the family expense. The sewing machine is helping me to achieve proving to be a boon for me as it is economic independence”.



TOWARDS

INDEPENDENCE

ECONOMIC

OF

A RAY

“Women need pandemic because of the have and they often carry the domestic burden and domestic violence during Panchayat leader, Athivetti awareness program on coping



HOPE

request of the Panchayat leader to empower women to meet the challenges during lockdown. Jeyalakshmi aged 45 who attended the program was a mother of two children. She was in severe depression after her husband lost his job. The inspiring talk given by the resource person Mrs. Sheba, Advocate enabled her to value her life and discover her potentialities which prevented her from committing suicide. Later women were oriented towards income generating ideas to support their financial needs. Now the whole family is involved in Kitchen gardening and they are able to make both ends meet. Jeyalakshmi says “For people who feel safe at home, the isolation period is the best time to plan for the future. We can survive all this. We have the strength”. This awareness reached many people in the Athivetti village and changed the lives of many.

specific support during the type of employment they a greater proportion of are at increased risk of lockdown and crisis” says Village. ASSIST organized an skills and gender sensitivity at the

Relief Work During COVID - 19



As the COVID-19 crisis continued to loom over us, the Government of India had taken a strict combat measure by directing a lockdown of the entire nation. Healthcare services have been challenged and livelihoods have been destroyed. ASSIST required playing an even greater role in addressing the various effects arising out of the COVID-19 crisis. ASSIST partnered with several NGOs & GOs to help with COVID-19 relief efforts. We focused on reaching out to the vulnerable communities with dry ration and hygiene kits, raising awareness among the communities and supporting frontline workers, medical and paramedical staff with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Our goal was to provide gender-sensitive public health support and humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable families so that the impact of the crisis on children, youth and women is mitigated.



Here's a summary of action undertaken to fight the situation:

- Food aid:** Supported 850 vulnerable families in Ambedkarnagar, Gandhinagar and Nagamangalam with food baskets by ensuring food and nutrition security for 30 days.
- Mass awareness campaign:** ASSIST with the collaboration of TNCRW (Tamil Nadu Child Rights Watch) organized several awareness programs on COVID-19 especially for the protection of women and children who are the most vulnerable people during this pandemic time. 292 evening study center students attended the meeting through online. Posters, Android games, Magazines and Puzzles were designed and shared for children to learn about the impact of the deadly disease corona.
- Protection for COVID Warriors:** Distributed 1500 liters of Hypo and soap oil to the Block development Officer, Manikandam for the doctors, nurses, frontline health workers, sanitation and other workers who work in the CovidCare Centers to enable them to continue delivering services to COVID patients. On request of the Revenue inspector, Manikandam, 750 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was distributed to the people in Gandhi Nagar and Manikandam.
- Creating Livelihood opportunities:** ASSIST along with the collaboration with ARISE (Donor agency) joined hands holding support by giving livelihood opportunities. This approach lifted 200 Gandhinagar people from extreme poverty through holistic, time-bound and carefully sequenced interventions that include skill training like Tailoring and Kitchen gardening.



The tailoring class has promoted 10 small entrepreneurs in their community. It was observed in the targeted area, social benefits that have emerged from kitchen gardening practices are; better health and nutrition, increased income, employment, food security within the household, and community social life.

300 families in Gandhi nagar, Ambedkarnagar and Manikandam were supported with 600 chickens to promote chicken farming. Women in Pothur, Tirupur, Keelaeral and Manikandam were given opportunity for stitching mask. As an output 18,000 masks were stitched by the women.

These livelihood opportunities strengthened resilience and tackled the multifaceted constraints faced by the poorest and most vulnerable households to recover from unanticipated shocks and vulnerabilities.

- Medical Camp:** ASSIST initiated Monthly health check up for the people in Gandhi nagar. Outreach programs like health camp are important tools for bringing health education and screening services directly to community members and serve to contribute to reducing health disparities. Each and every month, health camp will be organized. The people who had health issues were distributed with medicines to revive their health. The health conditions of these people were monitored and followed up to assure their recovery. 240 people in Gandhinagar were monitored and followed up to assure their recovery during this pandemic time.
- Cooking Class:** In cooking classes we have been teaching 20 women from Gandhi nagar each month to cook nutritious foods. The cooking classes have helped women to learn and equip themselves with knowledge on nutritious ways of cooking and consumption of nutritious food.



Environment care

Disaster Management Activities



ASSIST took initiative to address the problems of people who were affected by the Cyclone Gaja. 6 Students from Auxilium College, Regunathapuram and 6 from Holy cross college were given training for data collection. Pilot visit has been done to Athivetti village to understand the problems and needs of the people after the Cyclone Gaja. In response to the survey taken, water shed management program has been planned for the village to protect and improve the quality of the water and other natural resources within a watershed by managing the use of their land and water resources in a comprehensive manner. Several meetings with Village panchayath leaders and lead farmers were held to promote organic farming. Nearly 200 farmers and 100 self help group women were given training on organic farming for the sustainable livelihood of the people.



During the academic year June 2020 - May 2021, Social work students from Holy Cross College attended the Internship program. We are grateful to the 6 students, who worked with us on our project activities and initiated two Community organization programs for the people in Gandhi nagar on the topics Kitchen gardening and financial literacy. 150 people from Gandhinagar participated in the program and benefitted. As a part of their curriculum, they were engaged in the field work activities with the ASSIST staff in data collection, conducting medical camp and children activities. Students have developed their professional skills, people skills and got exposure to field work activities through the internship program.

Sr.Arockia Mary Selvi, Directress, ASSIST has organized one week workshop for the Social work students of Holy cross college on the topic " Project Management cycle". Totally 60 GOT students participated in the workshop and understood the key concepts of Project management cycle.



ASSIST focused on improving ecological and environmental quality as it was a crucial year to win the critical battle against pollution and to achieve the decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. All the 50 evening study center's students and teachers were given several awareness programs to address the Environmental issues and thereby to promote ecology. We have reached out to 1010 students through the awareness program.

Celebrating stewardship of creation:

On 3rd October 2020, the students and teachers of evening study centers celebrated the “Stewardship of creation” focusing on the fundamental rights and entitlement of every person to enjoy the benefits of nature and to conserve the nature with at most care. The highlight of the celebration was the experience and commitment of the participants who pledged themselves to stewardship of creation – an anticipatory ethic that seeks to protect, sustain and to restore creation. Students sowed the seed balls on the banks of the lake of Manikandam, dedicating each seed ball for an environmental cause. Since it was a rainy season, these seed balls will sprout and grow into trees by preventing the soil erosion and provide shades and fruits for birds and people who pass by the lake.



Impact on Privatization of water:

Water privatization has historically had mixed impacts on child mortality and the overall health of the people affected by it. The students and teachers of evening study centers were given awareness on the dangers of privatizing water. A virtual meeting was arranged to address the impact and video clippings were displayed for the better understanding. ASSIST's aim is to raise awareness on water issues in a way to build a common understanding of water issues and to create shared values on how water should be used and managed. Awareness program on water conservation for the evening study center students were organized and thereby engaging them to use hygiene water and to preserve our ecosystems.





Uplifting GYPSY “Narikuravar Community”



Gypsy people are particularly vulnerable as they lack social protection and access to quality health care and have lost access to productive assets. Their major means of survival is by selling beaded ornaments. Without the means to earn an income during lock downs, many were unable to feed themselves and their families. Several awareness programs have been organized for the youth and children on the topic Health and Hygiene. Followed by the awareness programs, two sanitary workers were appointed in the village for the cleaning activities. Clean up activities have been done and the essential cleaning materials have been provided.



The health inspector of Devarayaneri Village Mr. ShanmugaSundaram inaugurated the program and gave awareness to the gypsy people on self hygiene and environment hygiene. Tailoring training has been given for 28 gypsy women. This encouraged them to involve themselves in self employment. 10 tailoring machines were distributed to the tailoring students based on their efficiency and sincerity. 6 tailoring students from their own interest and effort got free tailoring machines from the Government. Through this training, 16 gypsy women got self employed.

CELEBRATION





Infrastructure Development



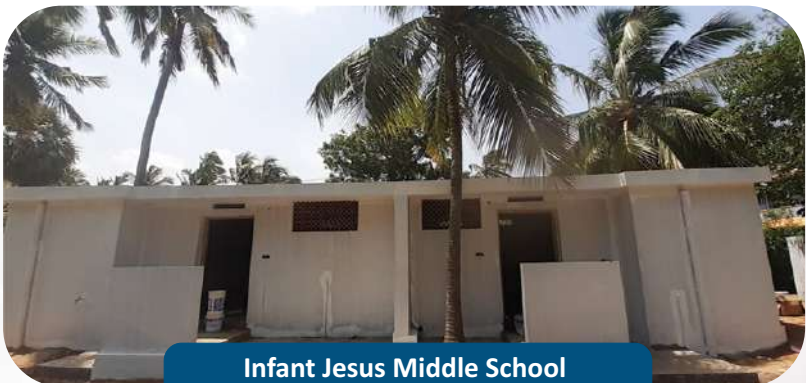
Our Lady's Matriculation School, Arch Bishop Louis Mathias Primary School and Our Lady's Higher Secondary School Thiruvottiur



Auxilium Matriculation School Puthenthurai



Auxilium VTC Chittampatti



Infant Jesus Middle School Puthenthurai.

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