


“What is most important in the world?  
It is people; it is people and it is people.”

**KAMARAJAR DISTRICT**

**ARIVOLI IYAKKAM —  
A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT FOR LITERACY**



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**NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION  
INDIA  
1993**



# KAMARAJAR DISTRICT ARIVOLI IYAKKAM IN TAMIL NADU

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A DOCUMENTATION

BY  
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## PREFACE

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*If people are most important in today's world, then their education should also be equally important. As people, we have to live together, work together, understand each other and also strive for human welfare and well being.*

*People's education is also the key to success in democratic functioning of any institution be it government or non-government; it also enables people to fight against poverty, illiteracy, exploitation, oppression and what not!*

*Literacy is the first step in people's education. Without the knowledge of literacy skills, no human being can feel self-reliant or self-confident, let alone fight against injustices, social and other evils in society.*

*The Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) in the country are aimed at educating people, make them functionally literate and fully aware of their rights and duties as citizens in the world's biggest democracy.*

*It is heartening that TLCs are now going on in 190 districts of the country involving seven crore learners and about seventy lakh literacy volunteers. Of these, many are on the threshold of achieving literate status soon and continue their education through post-literacy and follow-up programmes. In fact, the story of each TLC is interesting, illuminating and enlightening.*

*It is in this background that the National Literacy Mission thought of documenting the literacy efforts in some selected TLCs in the country so that the rich and varied experiences gained by them could prove useful in helping and guiding other districts which are yet to take up such ventures. Such documentation, it was considered, would also enable International donor agencies to get a clear idea of the type of literacy campaigns going on in India today with people's participation and voluntary effort.*

*One such mass endeavour took place in the Kamarajar district of Tamil Nadu during 1991-92. The TLC in this district was popularly known as '**Arivoli Iyakkam**' meaning '**A People's Movement for Literacy**'.*

*The documentation of this TLC was assigned to Shri G. Sivaswamy, formerly Deputy Director and Editor '**Literacy Mission**' and presently Consultant in the Directorate of Adult Education. The story of '**Arivoli Iyakkam**' presented by him has come out very well with interesting insights into the various changes that are taking place among people in that district.*

*I am thankful to Shri G. Sivaswamy for his invaluable effort. I am also thankful to **UNICEF** for agreeing to fund this documentation project. I hope this document will be of great use to all those concerned with literacy and development in India and abroad. Your views and suggestions to improve the document are most welcome.*

*I am also thankful to the State Resource Centre, Jamia Milia Islamia for agreeing to print and distribute this important publication and for their advice and assistance in this regard.*

New Delhi  
30th March, 1993

(A.K. BASU)  
Director



*Literacy march in Virudhunagar*

*Slogan shouting during march*





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## DOCUMENTATION EFFORT — A FEW WORDS



*Children's participation*

A successful Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) in any part of the country marks a Turning Point in the life and living of its people.

TLC draws its inspiration from the people; it is in fact a movement of the people, for the people and by the people.

Voluntarism, dedication to the cause, commitment to the ideals of cooperation, participatory endeavour, mobilisation of local resources, talents and goodwill are some of its distinguishing features.

It is a mass movement involving lakhs of people, both literates and illiterates, for brining about a sort of equality among the people through education and paving the way for social transformation in society.

In many cases, TLCs are meticulously planned and implemented with a lot of enthusiasm and emotional fervour, a lot of goodwill and social consciousness, a lot of preparation and programming. It is a process which begins with environment building for motivation of learners and volunteers, training an army of instructors and others, preparation, production and distribution of teaching-learning materials in lakhs, organising literacy learning classes in thousands of places, monitoring the whole operation, evaluating the outcome and so on.

To document such a mass effort in a district is not an easy task. It needs time, attention and above all, a lot of patient effort. TLCs being more action oriented, result seeking selfless endeavour, may not be able to provide you with all the documents relating to important events and happenings unless a conscious effort had been made from the very beginning towards that end.

In the Kamarajar District of Tamil Nadu which has been selected by the National Literacy Mission for special written documentation, several thousands of literacy workers were engaged in imparting literacy to about 1.75 lakh illiterates in the 15-35 age-group. They had gone through the whole process of planning and implementing the campaign with courage and conviction. Details of the implementation process in a chronological order were however not readily available at the district level. Therefore, a concerted effort had to be made in this regard for documentation purpose.

I am sincerely thankful to the District Collector Shri V. Gunalan and the Campaign Staff at the Central Office in Virudhunagar and Project Areas for their excellent cooperation, active assistance and help in this endeavour.

—G.SIVASWAMY

## TLCs IN TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu, one of the major States of the Indian Union, also enjoys second position in the matter of literacy. According to 1991 census, the literacy rate was 63.72 percent — 74.88 percent for males and 52.29 percent for females.

With a total population of 55.64 million, Tamil Nadu had taken a bold initiative in launching TLCs in 8 out of 22 districts in the State. These are :

S.No.	Project Area (District etc.)	Coverage (Lakhs of persons)	Target age-group	Time-span
1.	Kamarajar	2.40	15-35	2/91-3/92
2.	FTT Sivaganga	1.00	„	2/91-5/92
3.	Fudukkottai	2.30	„	6/91-5/92
4.	Kanyakumari	0.84	„	9/91-8/91
5.	Nadurai	4.20	„	11/91-11/92
6.	Cr. Ambedkar Arcot	4.80	„	11/91-10/92
7.	Tirunelveli Kattabomman	2.80	„	10/91-10/92
8.	Famanathapuram	2.00	9.45	7/92-7/93

The State enjoys several favourable factors for success on the literacy front :

- Tamil language is very ancient.
- Tamil culture is equally great and has produced great men and women in the field of art and literature.
- The State has low rate of growth of population

and a favourable sex ratio.

- It has a well-knit communication and transport arrangement.
- It has also a network of educational, cultural, scientific and technological institutions.
- Lot of voluntary agencies are actively involved in literacy promotion and development.
- There is tremendous political will and commitment on the part of the State Government to make the State the second fully literate State in the country, next only to Kerala.

In Tamil Nadu, they have coined a new slogan in Tamil highlighting the role of Literacy in Life :

**“VEETTUKKU VILAKKOLI,  
VAZHKAIKKU ARIVOLI”**

The English translation is something like this :

**“LAMP LIGHTS THE HOME  
LITERACY LIGHTS LIFE ITSELF”**

Arivoli has become very popular among the masses and they look at it as a people's movement. In fact, one of the stickers widely distributed in the district, says :

**“ARIVOLI IYAKKAM  
MAKKAL IYAKKAM  
KARPOM, KARPIPPOM”**

In English it means :

**“LITERACY MOVEMENT  
A PEOPLES MOVEMENT  
LET US LEARN, LET US TEACH”**



Arivoli women's procession



Street singing

## KAMARAJAR DISTRICT ARIVOLI IYAKKAM (OPERATION ENLIGHTENMENT)

'Arivoli' in Tamil means 'Light of Knowledge' and 'Iyakkam' means 'Movement'. Popularly 'Arivoli Iyakkam' is understood by people as 'Peoples movement for literacy'.

One such campaign for literacy has been going on in the Kamarajar District of Tamil Nadu. The story of 'Arivoli' is thrilling, vivid and enlightening. An attempt has been made in the following pages to narrate the story in a chronological order.

### Introduction

Named after the great freedom fighter and a former Chief Minister of the State of Tamil Nadu Thiru K. Kamaraj, this new district came into being only in March 1985. It was actually carved out of the erstwhile Ramanathapuram district with Virudhunagar as headquarters.

Deficient in rainfall, drought-prone and with nearly 70 percent of the population depending on agriculture and allied occupations for their livelihood, this southern district of Tamil Nadu over the years has given rise to a flourishing indigenous match and fireworks industry with large scale employment of child labour. Sivakasi fireworks are famous all over the world. But, this ancient land of Andal's 'Thiruppavai' has been in the forefront of a literacy movement in 1991-92 engulfing its 15.34 lakh population in the war for eradication of illiteracy marking a turning point in the life and living of its people.

According to 1981 census, the literacy percentage of the district was only 47. In 1991, the position was :

**Total Population** : 15.34 lakhs

**Literates** (age-group 7 and above): 8.52 lakhs

— Males : 3.40 lakhs

— Females : 5.12 lakhs

**Literacy** (age-group 7 and above) : 64%

— Males : 76.9%

— Females : 51.1%

**Illiterates** (age-group 7 and above) : 4.80 lakhs

— Males : 1.54 lakhs

— Females : 3.26 lakhs

**Illiterates** (age-group 15-35 as per survey) : 1.75 lakhs

— Males : 0.61 lakhs

— Females : 1.14 lakhs

Thus, there was a big gap in the literacy status of men and women. Unless large-scale improvement in female literacy was possible in the years to come, developmental activities were going to be affected.

It was in this context that the TLC was considered to be significant for the district's bright future.

### Success of Ernakulam Experiment and After :

The success of Ernakulam experiment followed by the great enthusiasm created by the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha of 1990 prompted the District

*Mass rally before launching*



*Cultural programme*



Administration to think in terms of a campaign for Total Literacy in the Kamarajar District as well.

### **Operation Arivoli :**

Accordingly, '**Operation Arivoli**' —a proposal for total eradication of illiteracy in the Kamarajar District was made in March, 1991, to the National Literacy Mission by the then District Collector Thiru T.S. Sridhar. The proposal was developed in consultation and involvement of officials of the district besides the Child Labour Project Society, the Tamil Nadu Science Forum and the District Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi.

The rationale behind the proposal was sound and mentioned, among other things :

- Prevalance of large scale child labour in the district;
- High incidence of illiteracy among women;
- Illiteracy remaining as a dominant retardant to social progress;
- Hope that a mass movement for eradication of illiteracy might help in ushering in the 21st century for further social advancement with people's participation.

## **RICKSHAW PULLER FEELS PRIDE**



*Kalimuthu*

**Kalimuthu**, aged 22, a rickshaw puller in Sattur Municipal area, is a new person today, thanks to **Arivoli**.

He had no schooling. It was difficult for him to get a job anywhere. His parents had arranged for him a cycle rickshaw but he could not even sign the papers and felt very much ashamed

about it at the bank.

On another occasion, he was standing in the bus stand. An old woman asked him which was the bus going to Sivakasi. He could not assist her as he could not read the letters. He felt his condition was no better than the old lady herself.

'**Arivoli**' came to his rescue. He can now read and write. He has

completed the second primer. He can also read the headlines in the newspapers.

**He feels pride that he is now a literate citizen. He has been encouraging his illiterate mother to learn. He also feels his wife should be literate so that he can consult her on everything in their life together .**

## PLAN OF ACTION

Plan of Action drawn-up envisaged :

- Registration of a society for conduct of the campaign;
- Constitution of a District-level Governing Body and a District Executive Committee;
- Formation of Literacy Committees in all Panchayat Unions and Municipalities;
- Appointment of Central Coordinators;
- Identification and appointment of Project Coordinators and Assistant Project Coordinators;
- Organisation of one day survey to identify illiterates;
- Identified illiterates in the age-group 15-35 to be taught by volunteer-instructors based on a syllabus specifically prepared for the campaign;
- Each volunteer to teach ten illiterates in 120 sessions (180 to 240 hours);
- Training of volunteer-instructors to be imparted by Master Trainers;
- Community involvement at all levels;
- Carefully planned publicity campaign for motivating clientele groups with stress on 'Jatha' activities;
- Establishment of network of Jana Shikshan Nilayams after the literacy phase is over;
- Entire programme to be time-bound i.e. from April, 1991 to March, 1992

According to the Calendar of Activities listed,

important events were to take place as follows :

Submission of Proposal	March 1991
Project Launch	April 14, 1991
Establishment of committees at different levels — village, panchayat union, municipal and district and training of Key persons and Resource Persons. Jathas, Material Production (primers), Training of Master Trainers and enrolment of volunteers	April, May & June 1991
Volunteers training	May, June, 1991
Literacy Festivals and Publicity campaign	June-July, 1991
Teaching to begin on	July 1-14, 1991
Teaching to end on	July 15, 1991
Consolidation, Monitoring and Evaluation	January 26, 1992
	Feb 11
	March 31, 1992

Although the Plan of Action had been drawn up systematically, mid-course modifications had to be made while implementing the programme to suit the changing needs of the campaign.

For example, though several committees had been formed at the district level, because of their not meeting regularly and inaction, their duties and responsibilities had to be taken over by the team of

### A COMMITTED WORKER

Working all day for a private courier service, Selvi M. Radha, aged 19, daughter of Thiru L. Murugesan of South Street in Arappukottai Municipality, found time to work as 'Arivoli' volunteer in her area. She had studied upto 12th Class. Her father had studied only upto 6th class and mother did not go to school at all but was full of common wisdom.

Radha took over ten learners all of whom had completed the second primer by July, 1992 and

also participated in evaluation tests conducted by the local team.

Radha feels happy she could be of some help and assistance to the people who are all handloom weavers depending entirely on this cottage industry for their livelihood.

**She says 'Arivoli' was of great help and of benefit to womenfolk especially as most of them were illiterate.**



Radha using board

Central Coordinators headed by the Chief District Coordinator and Campaign Leader, the District Collector.

As a result their duties and responsibilities grew enormously resulting in a sort of centralised functioning. This had its own advantages and disadvantages. In the Project and Sub-Project levels also more or less this sort of a situation prevailed all through the campaign.

Due to unforeseen developments, the TLC could not also stick to the Calendar of Activities drawn-up by them. While some of the contributory factors for delay were beyond the control of the TLC, some others were caused by uncertainty including frequent transfers of District Collector and Secretary in-charge of Arivoli activities. At appropriate places mention has been made to some of these causes which delayed the process of implementation.



*Youth meet*



*Kala jatha*

## LITERACY CLASS BY DISTRICT COLLECTOR

Thiru K. Gnanadesikan, IAS., former District Collector of Kamarajar District was taking a literacy class in the village Kooraikundu, one kilometre away from his official residence in Virudhunagar. The class run by him had 30 learners mostly belonging to the scheduled caste and backward communities and functioned from 7.30 and 9.00 p.m. for five days in a week.

The District Collector had thus set an example for all other district officials to follow.



*Collector taking class*

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## DISTRICT ARIVOLI IYAKKAM

One of the first things the District Administration did was registering a Society called the '**Kamarajar District Arivoli Iyakkam**' under the Societies Registration Act for the specific purpose of undertaking a Total Literacy Campaign in the district. The Society formally came into being on 11th March, 1992, with the District Collector as its President and the founding members included both officials and non-officials, representatives of voluntary organisations etc.

Formation of a separate registered society, it was thought, would confer a number of advantages in order to meet the project's needs, give it a lot of flexibility and also help in organising, arranging and utilising resources for the literacy campaign. A society is not required to follow rigid government rules and regulations. It was also felt that a society would be in a much better position to enlist effective cooperation and involvement of voluntary organisations and the community in general for the campaign.

The registered Society was to have a Governing Council consisting both officials of the State Government and non-officials. It was also to meet once in three months to take stock of the campaign situation. But upto July, 1992, only two meetings of the Council had taken place.

Besides Governing Council, for attending to the

*Slogans decorate well wall*



*Arivoli Radham*

day-to-day functioning of the campaign, an Executive Committee had been constituted from among the members of the Governing Council itself. The District Collector was Chairman of the Executive Committee as well. This Committee was required to do all the planning and take decisions for implementation of the campaign based on the guidelines given in the project proposal.

It was to meet regularly every month. But till July, 1992, only five meetings had taken place.

Therefore, on day-to-day affairs, the Collector, Secretary and the Treasurer took decisions in consultation with the Central Programme Coordinators.

### **Project Cost and Approval by NLM:**

The proposal for launching a Total Literacy Campaign in the Kamarajar District was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Literacy Mission Authority on 18.3.1991 at a total cost of Rs. 150 lakhs to be shared both by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 2 : 1.

Upto March, 1992, the TLC had received a sum of Rs. 100 lakhs — Rs.90 lakhs from the Central Government and Rs.10 lakhs from the State Government. The TLC had also spent a sum of Rs.60 lakhs on the project.

## GNANABAGHYAM LOOKS AFTER SIX VILLAGES



Gnanabaghyam

A young and committed social worker, Gnanabaghyam, M.A., B.Ed. of village Sittai Moondra-daippu in Kariapatti Panchayat Union was working for 'Arivoli' looking after six villages with a total learner population of about 600. How she was able to do this and several other jobs is a matter of her deep conviction and has brought her name and fame in her locality.

Working as a member of the Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme in her village, she has been attending to children and their need for nutritious food. She joined 'Arivoli' as a kala jatha artist and toured the villages. This widened her outlook and interest in literacy. After the jatha she was selected as master trainer-cum-resource person for her area. With training, she started

organising her own village people and people in the nearby villages. She was a volunteer in her own village but found time to move around in other villages, arrange learners meets, volunteers meet, sub-project committee meetings, motivate learners etc. Wherever dropouts were there she did not hesitate to talk to the learners and try to win over them for literacy. In order to sustain learner participation she has been arranging exhibitions and sports and games, competitions etc.

**When asked about her deep involvement in literacy work, she said 'social service is giving me a lot of enjoyment'.**

**It is educated and young women like her who have given 'Arivoli' its strength and vigour in the war for eradication of illiteracy.**

## TEAM SPIRIT IN MAHARAJA PURAM

Maharajapuram is a village nestling in the Western Ghats in Watrap Panchayat Union. Adi Dravidas and Muslims constitute a sizeable portion of the total population. Illiteracy was also widespread in this area covered with hills and forests. But a good team of Arivoli workers, most of whom are young and talented, have taken-up the task of making all the illiterates literate. They were in the process of spreading the message of literacy to every nook and corner of this difficult area and opening centres for imparting literacy. In some areas classes had been going on.





## FORGING ALLIANCES

A Project in order to be successful should take into consideration not only the project set-up but also the close alliances it can forge with different agencies. In a literacy project especially the linkages with both administrative machinery on the one hand and peoples organisations on the other are crucial for successful launching of the project and conduct of operations.

In the Kamarajar district, this aspect had perhaps been fully realised by the organisers and they had provided for a three-pronged set-up with the District Collector and Campaign Leader providing leadership for the whole movement.

The District Collector himself being the President of the Executive Committee of Arivoli Iyakkam, a registered society, he could mobilise support of both officials and non-officials in the campaign endeavour.

As could be seen from the Charts I & II in the following pages, there were both full-time and part-

time workers and adequate number of volunteers as well. Each member of the project had a specified role to perform and the set-up was more functional in nature rather than hierarchical. No one was superior or inferior in this common endeavour.

In Chart II an attempt has been made to place the District Arivoli Iyakkam in a larger perspective as one of the many TLCs in the country under the auspices of the National Literacy Mission and the State Government of Tamil Nadu and to show how the whole structure right from NLM to grass-root level functioned in unison for providing the much-needed literacy support to the learners.

### Urban and Rural Areas

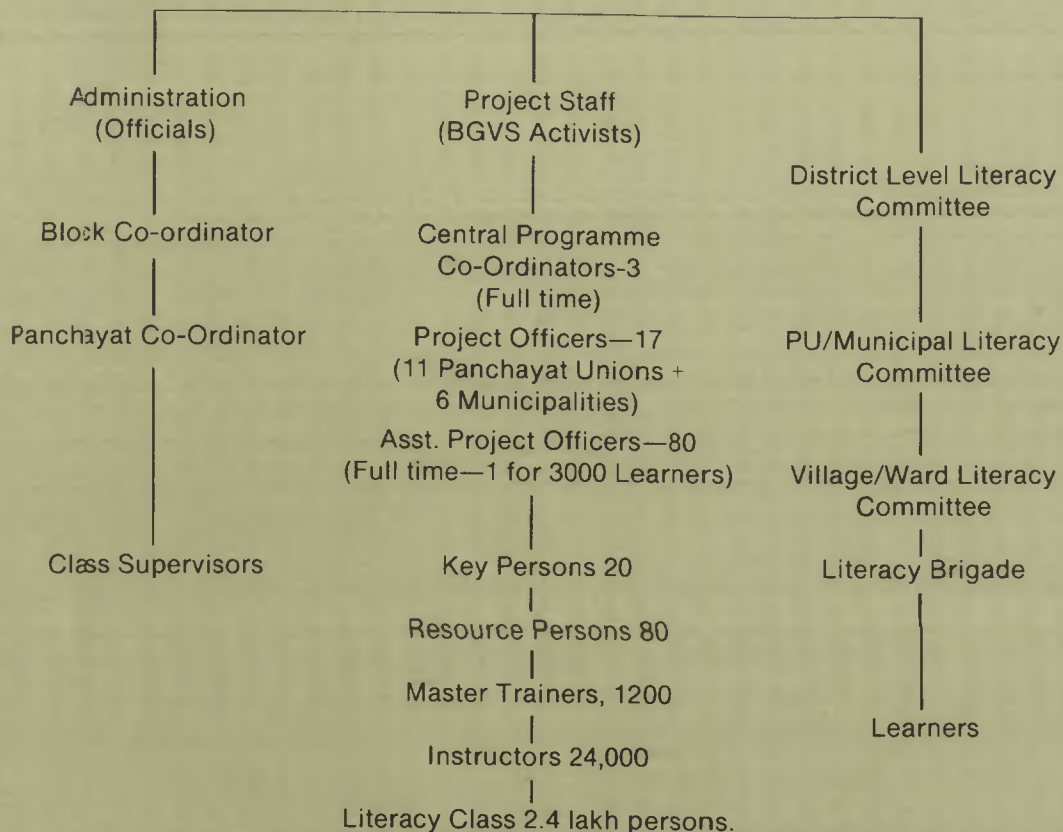
In Kamarajar District there are both urban and rural areas, in other words, municipalities and panchayat unions. It is through People's Committees that literacy promotion was undertaken eventhough there were Project Coordinators and Assistant Project Coordinators.

*Women's meet*



# PROJECT TEAM DISTRICT CO-ORDINATOR (COLLECTOR)

Chart-I



*Central Office Team*



# NLMA & STATE GOVT.

**ARIVOLI IYAKKAM (Regd. Body)**

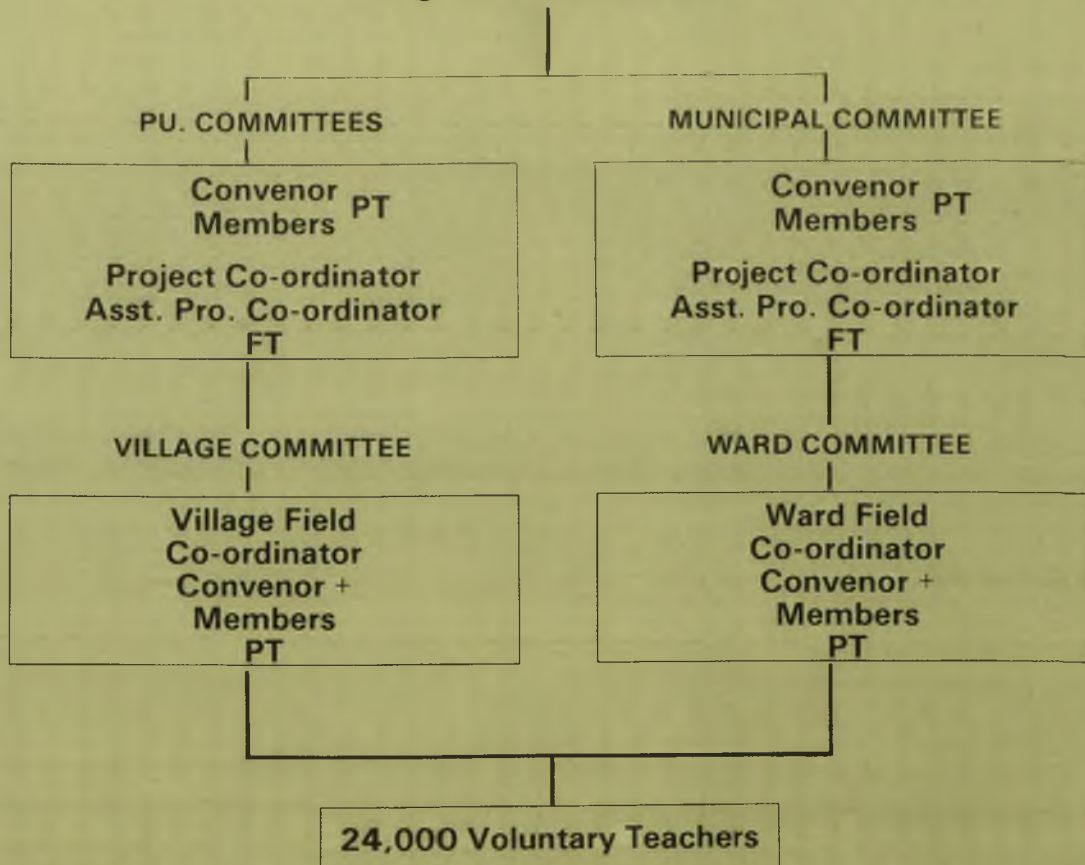
(Governing Body & Executive Body-PT)

## DISTRICT LITERACY COMMITTEE

(President, Secretary, Treasurer,  
3 Central Prog. Co-ordinators (FT)  
and few people from Governing Body (PT))

## DISTRICT LEVEL SUB COMMITTEE

(Convenor, Members (PT) & 3 Central  
Prog. Co-ordinators (FT))



PT—Part Time  
FT—Full Time  
PU—Panchayat Union

## Project Area

For the purpose of the campaign, the whole district had been divided into 17 project areas—six municipalities and eleven panchayat unions, with about 80 sub-project areas. Each sub-project was to have about 3,000 illiterates to be made literate.

## Staff

Most of the full-time staff—the three Central Programme Coordinators, 17 Project Coordinators and 80-odd Assistant Project Officers—were working in the campaign on deputation basis receiving their salaries from their parent departments. They only got some travelling allowance per month from the campaign funds. APOs being mostly unemployed Graduates/Post Graduates drew a honorarium of Rs. 1,000/- plus a fixed travelling allowance of Rs. 300/- per month.

In the project set-up, Village Field Functionaries or

Coordinators also play an important role. They are mostly nominated and are charged with the task of building-up their own team, meet the learners, motivate them, arrange them into batches and also arrange for their learning by volunteers. VFCs are invariably local people with some experience in jatha and other mobilisation activities.

## Community Involvement

Wherever the set-up was functioning in full cooperation with the committees envisaged at different levels, the campaign had been progressing smoothly and on desired lines, but wherever the set-up could not muster enough support from the community or the people of the area, progress had been slow and in some cases even nil. At such places induction of new organisers and supervisors had become necessary and efforts were also made to reactive people's committees.

*A view of procession*



## THE PROCESS

### 1. Launching of the Campaign

Launching of a Total Literacy Campaign is an important event. It heralds a new wave of enthusiasm and calls for vigorous efforts on the part of literacy workers to secure as much peoples support as possible for the campaign. Once you formally launch a campaign, there is no going back; it is understood you have carefully considered the pro and cons and have finally taken the bold decision to go ahead with the campaign idea.

Launching also marks the stage at which the idea finally takes shape in the form of action. In fact a series of events follow the launching ceremony and the count down for declaration of Total Literacy begins.

In the Kamarajar District they chose the Tamil New Year Day — 14.4.1991 for formal launching of the campaign. Elaborate arrangements had been made for this momentous event which was organised at the District Headquarters, the town of Virudhunagar, also the birth-place of Kamarajar, after whom the district has been named.

The then District Collector Thiru T.S. Sridhar formally launched the campaign at an impressive and colourful function in which thousands of people from all walks of life participated. A 5000 strong student march through the streets of Virudhunagar preceded the inaugural function.

Several daily newspapers had brought out special supplements to mark the occasion.

Hon'ble State Governor Shri Bishma Narain Singh in his message wishing all success for the TLC expressed his hope that the campaign would succeed in making the entire population of the district literate by 1992.

The District Collector described the launching as the beginning of a new era in the history of the district. He said Government had been trying to uplift weaker sections of the community since Independence but could not make much progress as most of them were illiterate. In the campaign education would be used as an effective tool to change the standard of living of the large masses of people, he added.



Launch function



Student march



Literacy torch

## 2. Survey

In their proposals to the National Literacy Mission, the District Administration had estimated the number of illiterates in the age-group 15-35 as 2.40 lakhs. At that time the 1991 Census figures were not available. Therefore they had calculated the figure as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of Taluk	No. of Illiterates (age-group 15-35)
1.	Sattur	61,400
2.	Arappukottai	46,660
3.	Rajapalayam	44,210
4.	Srivilliputhur	35,600
5.	Virudhunagar	35,360
6.	Tiruchuli	18,065
	Total	2,41,295

Therefore, in order to identify the precise number of total illiterates in the district, they decided to hold a one-day survey. The idea was that the entire population in the district be accounted for with regard to their literacy status though it would have been sufficient if the survey had been restricted to the target age-group of 15-35. Since a door-to-door survey was being organised it was thought and rightly so to have all the figures for all the age-groups, so that, if necessary, later on the campaign could conveniently cover the other age-groups as well.

Elaborate arrangements went into the conduct of this mass operation which also received active support from the Media particularly the newspaper and the Radio.

A special poster had been developed, printed and distributed to all projects. It was also pasted at all important public places where people normally assembled. Survey forms were also printed and distributed. A one-day training was imparted to volunteers participating and they were told how to conduct the survey, how to fill-up the forms, how to pass on the information from level to level etc.

An important feature of the survey was that it was used as an environment building device. Through survey more information about the TLC and its



Poster announcing survey



Meeting people



Team in a house

objectives was passed on to the target group. The survey-event was actually named as '**Reaching Out and Meeting the Learners**'; in fact, not only the learners, but also the entire population itself, whose cooperation was essential for the campaign.

For the survey, survey squads with personnel such as Village Administrative Officers, Noon meal Organisers, Animators, Healthcare Workers, Makkal Nalapaniyalarkal and others were drafted. The squads went door to door and each squad had to cover fifty households.

The survey forms provided for collecting information for all age-groups, viz: 5-14; 15-35; 36-

45; 46-50; and 60 and above—also males, females, SC and ST etc.

In the Municipalities the information was to be collected and compiled wardwise and in rural areas villagewise.

The figures collected in the literacy survey was to be cross checked with the Census figures of 1991. Whether this was actually undertaken or not is not known.

**The Survey revealed that the actual number of Illiterates in the target age-group of 15-35 was only 1.75 lakhs less than the estimated figure of 2.40 lakhs.**

The survey figures are given below project-area wise i.e. in Municipalities and Panchayat Unions for better understanding of the task before each project-area:

#### NO. OF ILLITERATES AS PER SURVEY HELD ON 6.7.1991

Sl. No.	Name of Municipality/ Panchayat Union	No. of Illiterates (age-group 15-35)		
		Men	Women	Total
<b>I. MUNICIPALITIES :</b>				
1.	Rajapalayam	3,143	5,797	8,940
2.	Virudhunagar	440	1,210	1,650
3.	Sattur	518	1,249	1,767
4.	Sivakasi	964	2,206	3,170
5.	Srivilliputhur	1,291	3,138	4,429
6.	Arappukottai	874	2,326	3,200
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7,230</b>	<b>15,926</b>	<b>23,156</b>
<b>II. PANCHAYAT UNIONS :</b>				
1.	Rajapalayam	6,254	9,588	15,842
2.	Srivilliputhur	4,188	7,515	11,703
3.	Watrap	6,255	10,341	16,596
4.	Sattur	4,272	8,182	12,454
5.	Sivakasi	7,953	15,065	23,018
6.	Vembakottai	4,146	7,758	11,904
7.	Arappukottai	3,156	5,857	9,013
8.	Virudhunagar	4,874	9,514	14,388
9.	Kariapatti	5,022	9,648	14,670
10.	Narikkudi	3,300	8,162	11,462
11.	Tiruchuzhi	3,853	6,860	10,713
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53,273</b>	<b>98,490</b>	<b>1,51,763</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>60,503</b>	<b>1,14,416</b>	<b>1,74,919</b>

**Note :** Survey also revealed that there were a total of 69,388 illiterates in the age-group 5-14 and 76,615 in the age-group 36-45.

The survey findings were interesting and revealing. For example, Sivakasi Panchayat Union which accounts for maximum number of match factories and fire-works units, also topped in illiteracy, may be due to extensive use of child labour for several years. Among Municipalities, Rajapalayam topped the list with 8,940 and Virudhunagar has least, 1,650. In Sivakasi again the number of illiterates among women was double that of men in the Panchayat Union and three times that of men in the Municipal area. Wide variations in literacy among men and women could be noticed in several other places. Even of the total of 1.74 lakhs as many as 1.14 lakhs being women, the campaign had to be a women-oriented programme. As will be seen from enrolment figures and actual learning process, only

very few numbers of men out of a total of 60,503 participated and any amount of persuasion could not bring them to the classes. This is one of the important and disappointing features of the campaign in the Kamarajar district which we shall deal with at appropriate place.

Survey figures also helped in the actual planning process—the number of volunteers to be identified and trained in each area; the number of literacy learning materials to be distributed and so on.

It also forced the campaign organisers to go all out for women volunteers for imparting literacy to all the identified women illiterates. Fortunately for them, the women readily volunteered and gave a boost to the campaign.

*Publicity through mud pots*





### 3. Environment Building

Environment-building is an important part in any literacy campaign. It is aimed at several things simultaneously but it is difficult to spell out all the objectives. To mention only a few of them:

- Spread the message of literacy;
- Create awareness among illiterates and motivate them to join literacy classes;
- Create a favourable atmosphere for the learning process;
- Secure peoples participation and support for the Campaign;
- Enthuse the community and young people specially to join the literacy movement voluntarily;
- Make Arivoli a People's Movement.

In the Kamarajar district, Arivoli did not spare any means to build-up a rousing environment for literacy. Whatever popular methods that were

available and conceivable were all used to reach out to the people.

The formal inauguration itself was planned and organised as part of the environment building process. it was followed by the street meetings, rallies, symposia, student melas and the like to spread the message of literacy to every nook and corner of the district.

Even the survey to identify illiterates was part of this process by which for the first time direct contacts with potential learners were established. Arivoli and its objectives were made clear to the people, how it was a non-party forum for people to come together and work for, how it was a non-profitable but a fully peoples body aimed at eradicating illiteracy from among the people. It was also clearly explained to them how **Arivoli** was a **Second War of Independence** to wipe out the curse of illiteracy from this ancient land and the 'sin and shame' that went with it.

Literacy car being drawn



Arivoli Kolam



Women marchers



Human chain



Young volunteers singing



Literacy festoons



Elephant joins campaign



Activists



Children donning Arivoli caps

The non-jatha activities included:

- Block level Conventions;
- Women's Conventions;
- Posters;
- Wall Writings;
- Padayatras : (Literacy Walks)
- Cycle Rallies;
- Literacy Debates;
- Procession of Letters;
- Literacy Exhibitions;
- Letters hanging from Tree branches;
- Spreading Message through domestic animals;
- Letter Festoons;
- Arivoli Sports and Games;
- Arivoli Radham; (Literacy Car)
- Street Corner Meetings and Campaigns;
- Arivoli Deepavali;
- Arivoli Bhajans; (Literacy Singing)
- Village Literacy Festivals;

- Human Chain;
- Tinprinted Slogans;
- Student Marches and Competitions Among Them;
- Release of Audio Cassettes;
- Folk Songs and Dramas;
- Literacy Walls;
- Letter Garlands; Illiteracy Effigy Being Burnt;
- Debates (Pattimandram)

The impact of each of them could not be measured specifically. But people had a preference for folk items, songs and dramas like 'Kummi' and 'Therukoothu'.

People participated in large numbers in 'Human Chain' which in some places was several kilometers long. People of all age-groups and from all walks of life stood together for hours as a show of strength and support to the movement. Another popular event was burning of the big effigy of 'Illiteracy' in the presence of thousands of people.

Cycle rally



Cycle jatha



Preparation of posters



Street campaign

## Kala Jatha



*Kala jatha artistes entering a village*

The Kala Jatha was indeed the most popular item with the people. Accordingly, the main Kala Jatha took place in two sessions; September, 91 and January February '92.

In the first Kala Jatha which was inaugurated at Aruppukottai on International Literacy Day—8th September, 1991, fourteen troupes participated. Giving performances four per day, they covered 1,044 villages out of a total of 2,000 villages in the district. The concluding function for this jatha was held at Sivakasi on 27.9.1991 with Bharathiraja, renowned film Director participating with a concern for education.

The second wave of Kala Jatha which took place from January 27, 1992 for a period of 20 days covered all the left out villages. Fourteen troupes participated in this jatha also.

As one writer put it, "through the medium of

entertainment and active participation, the importance of literacy will be put across" in the Kala Jathas. And who were the people behind this 'Literacy Through Plays' movement? College professors, transport corporation employees, school teachers, unemployed graduates and even those who passed their Plus-two examinations had all thrown themselves into the work with zeal, after being trained in staging street plays; folk dances, etc.

Through the medium of entertainment and active (not passive as on television) participation these people drove their points home in an understandable way, about the importance of literacy.

What were they equipped with?

A missionary spirit, self-confidence and above all, an urge to reach out to the people. They did not wear gorgeous costumes and make-up but they got the attention of the illiterate villagers through oral

contact and personal interaction.

Their effort was not limited to motivating the unlettered but also to motivating the educated into sparing time for the uneducated.

**Kala Jathas did create a favourable atmosphere for the start of the learning process though several things happened in between which ultimately delayed the start of teaching.**

The role of mass media in a campaign like this cannot be underestimated. The All India Radio, Madurai, had lent able support to the campaign through broadcasts and announcements during Survey. Interviews with the survey volunteers also were broadcast. With the launching of instruction,

the AIR Madurai, allotted a slot for 'Arivoli Deepam' Radio programme between 9.16 and 9.30 p.m. every Second Saturday meant for the learners and Volunteers. Among other things, they elucidated problems and difficulties.

The newspapers have carried numerous messages and advertisements. Reporting of Arivoli functions has been fairly strong. In some places, like Rajapalayam, the visits of journalists to learning centres helped good motivation.

Video documentation of all significant events and functions had been undertaken. All this was yet to be completed and edited in July 1992.



Performance by kala jatha



## MEETING WITH KALA JATHA ARTISTES

The cultural troupes that went round the whole district had done a fine job of motivating learners and helped in building-up the environment for literacy learning. Even though for the time being their job was over, meeting some of them on 26th July, 1992 was a fine experience. Most of them were still involved in the campaign in different capacities. Each one of them had a story to tell, a story of their own reformation and progress and simultaneously the story of literacy movement as it took shape through different incidents, events and participation of people.

For Madathi Ammal of Sattur who had studied upto 12th Class, at twenty, 'Arivoli' proved to be a 'world of experience'. The training given to her was useful, her fear-complex and looking at all men with that feeling, became a thing of the past. She was no more afraid to move out of her house or village Nenmeni. She is now working as a volunteer and trainer in her area. **Her social status has gone up considerably. She herself has become a very sober, considerate, patient and accommodative person who cannot be easily upset at trifles.**

Such things were also experienced by Vedavalli, a brahmin girl of 17, who had studied upto tenth class. Daughter of a temple priest, for her to join the kala jatha and tour the district with menfolk, give performances to rural audien-



Madathi Ammal



Vedavalli

ces etc, were things which could not even be thought of normally. But she braved the storm and came out of it all successfully. Despite opposition and problems, she gave 'Arivoli' her artistic abilities and the audiences were very happy about her performance at all places.

This good looking singer artist then worked as a volunteer in the TLC in her area 'Anaikootam'.

'Arivoli' made her a new social being and she is a happy person today.

To N.K. Viswanathan of Vembakottai, a fine artist, who participated in the first kala jatha, 'Arivoli' was an experience worth remembering. **It made him an all rounder and gave a new dimension to his life.**

For M. Thangam, a very powerful speaker and singer, 'Arivoli' came as a new era in his life and activities. He found a revival of folk-arts and culture with 'Arivoli' and this vital medium was also helpful in communicating with the people.

For teachers R. Muthuraj and V. Venkatasamy, it was a new experience, different from their school atmosphere. They feel that more teachers should have joined and helped 'Arivoli'. Both of them are well-versed and can help in production, script-writing and broadcast through AIR. It has also been suggested that they should help in the revival of folk media by training some of their students in these skills. **They also feel that, the 'Arivoli' method of teaching learners has great relevance and the schools should make modifications in their methods of teaching by making it participatory and entertaining to the student community.**

For R. Balakrishnan of Pandyan Roadways Corporation, it was big struggle to make the Roadways agree to his participation in 'Arivoli'. **He is now a full-fledged artist and can undertake training and direct plays.**

For Marimuthu of Virudhunagar, who had studied only upto Plus-2, kala jatha provided opportunity for knowing more about common people and their world.

Rajkumar, M.A. found kala jatha one of the most lively experiences in his life. **He realised that people could progress in life only through education and service.**

## ARIVOLI EXHIBITION



*Trying to read*

In the Kamarajar District, Arivoli Exhibitions have become a very common and effective medium to attract learners and others in the rural areas.

The exhibition is a sort of literacy games and tests. Each one of them has educative as well as entertainment effect. No doubt people are attracted to play the games and test their own learning and skills.

For example, the 'Fishing' literacy game, the fish tank is a very interesting pastime and mode of instruction. There is a fish tank made of cardboard. Fishes are put in the tank made of paper. Each fish has a name. Each fish is pinned to a safety pin. A fishing rod with a magnet is put in the tank and a fish comes out. The fish thus caught by the learner is

brought out and the learner is asked to read the letters or word on the body of the fish caught by him. Most of the words were chosen from the Primers. He or she reads them to the delight of the audience. This game has become very popular and people throng to play the game in rural areas.

*Fishing game*



Similarly, games using numbers, games using words (flash card type), picture-building etc. also form part of this new type of low cost exhibition.

Apart from these, there are charts, hung around the hall. The charts have topical sentence or sentences drawn from the primers written boldly and there are often illustrations. The learner can read them. There are charts with stories and in the course of narration, instead of words, pictures are given in some places. Thus a hut may be represented by the picture of the hut, and a cat by the illustration of a cat. Also, a few articles are exposed to the view of the learner for a few seconds and they can recount the items they were shown.

*Learner with 'fish'*



## 4. Training and Capacity Building

Inauguration function



A literacy campaign is something like a Crash Programme. You have to achieve things in a short time. You cannot also expect ideal conditions to prevail all the time and all throughout the campaign area. You have to fully depend on voluntary force for teaching illiterates. Fully trained teachers may not be available, and even if available, may not be prepared to teach without payment. The volunteers being new to the literacy movement, whether they are Resource Persons, Master Trainers, Volunteer-Instructors or others, you will have to equip them

for the task. How will you do that? Herein lines the need for training which is also key to the success of the programme itself.

For example, a volunteer would need training to :

- help him understand the programme;
- orient him to correctly approach adult learners;
- familiarize him with primer and the way of teaching it;
- motivate and enthuse him;
- develop communication skills and techniques to the extent possible.

In case of Master Trainers, since they are also expected to train volunteers something more, some basic things are needed in their programme.

Field visit



Women's training

### TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS IN PATAKKULAM

Pattakkulam is an interior village in the Srivilliputhur Panchayat Union. Several volunteers from nearby areas had assembled there on 27th July, 1992, for training as they were on the eve of taking-up the third primer.

Some of them mentioned about the problem of lighting as street lights were not burning and how they had difficulties in making

alternate arrangements.

It was also stated that large-scale dropout after the first primer occurred because there was delay in supply of the second primer by about two months.

They were thinking of restarting the closed centres, First they would revise the first book itself as most of the learners would have forgotten the lessons learnt by them. Then they would take up the second primer and then only the third primer. But they hoped to complete the whole operation in about two to three months time.



When you come to Resource Persons, the field gets still wider and wider and needs of training increase considerably because they are supposed to train the Master Trainers.

In a campaign one has not only to maintain a high level in quality of training but also train large numbers in each category in a short time.

In the Kamarajar District it was as follows :

Category	No. to be trained Total	No. actually trained		
		Men	Women	Total
Resource Persons	80	80	20	100
Master Trainers	1,200	600	500	1,100
Volunteers	18,000	4,000	8,000	12,000

### Resource Persons :

Their training was through a structured pattern. They were imparted training with the help of experts drawn from the teaching community. Initially they had four days intensive training on different aspects



Volunteers Training camp



Thiru Shenbagam

## BEST RESOURCE PERSON

Resource Persons have to be very resourceful, knowledgeable, active, socially fully aware of the problems of the people, kind and above all, possess a disposition to work with a large number of people for a common cause.

If you can find such qualities of head and heart in a person, he or she can be inducted into the

literacy movement without any reservations.

It is perhaps in this background that the Kamarajar **Arivoli** also happened to meet Thiru N. Shenbagam, Headmaster of the Government Higher Secondary School, Chatrapatti in Rajapalayam. He has besides resourcefulness, a very amiable disposition towards literacy and an urge to do something for the poorer sections of the community. Therefore, without any sort of hesitation, the Arivoli made him a resource person. That he proved to be best among the 80-odd resource persons in the whole of the district, entirely goes to his credit, his devotion, commitment and capabilities.

It was therefore a thrilling experience for us to meet him and

talk to him about his involvement in literacy and training master trainers and others.

Thiru Shenbagam is unassuming person but very emphatic when he says that visible changes have been brought about by '**Arivoli**'. "Today people are more cooperative, more considerate, more helping and more aware of the importance of education, significance of '**Arivoli**' and its aims and objectives," he says and adds "the dropout rate in schools has gone down and enrolment in primary classes has gone up, thanks to "**Arivoli**". He feels that students involvement can be maximised if all the students of all the schools studying in Classes IX and XI can be motivated to participate in **Arivoli**.

of the campaign. They were supposed to work part-time for the campaign. They were drawn from among headmasters, post-graduate school teachers, professors, doctors, writers and the like. Their main job was to train the Masters Trainers numbering 1,200. But some of them were also helpful in different activities such as monitoring the learning process, for clarifying doubts of volunteers in teaching endeavour, for conducting evaluation etc.

The training camps for Resource Persons were organised to fully acquaint them with:

- Arivoli and its objectives;
- How to organise a People's Movement;
- Master Trainers and their duties;
- Finalise guide for use by Masters Trainers;
- Primers and about teaching numeracy;
- Finalise training schedule of Master Trainers.

Even after the first training, the Resource Persons were often called for further orientation at periodic intervals to meet the arising needs. All the meetings

were quite useful in equipping them for the task assigned to them.

### **Master Trainers :**

They had been drawn mostly from among the teacher community. The Resource Persons had been assigned the task of imparting training to them. A curriculum had also been prepared. Each Resource Person was to train 20 Master Trainers at a time and in a place. They had to motivate them and tell them :

- All about Arivoli — Why a peoples movement?
- Principles of approaching and teaching adults;
- All about the three primers— contents of literacy, numeracy and functionality;
- About monitoring and evaluation;
- To finalise details of training camps for volunteers.

According to reports collected from different areas by 'Arivoli' all the Master Trainers had undergone training for eight days (4+2+2). Their

## **VOLUNTEERS TRAINING PROGRAMME AT K. METTUPATTI**

K. Mettupatti is a very attractive village with peaceful people in the Sattur Panchayat Union. Literacy volunteers from six panchayats had assembled there to review their progress and also to know more about the third primer, which was about to be taken up in their areas. Nearly 50 volunteers, most of whom were women, participated in this training programme held on 25th July, 1992.

Use of words in the third primer, how some of them were not in use in the area, how some other words were popular among people, how could they supplement such words in the classes etc. were discussed in detail and

everyone participated in the deliberations.

The training was not restricted to the teaching of third primer but also to several other aspects of the whole learning process. One of the Resource Persons, Smt. Jamine Daisy, explained to them how they could play literacy games in groups. She demonstrated this in the group. Each member felt that it was a new and innovative idea and could take up same in their groups as well. Games included story building where everyone in the group could participate by speaking. It was something like this :

One learner is made to start the story:

"I saw an elephant today"

Another says : "It was moving towards the temple." Yet another says : "It was perhaps feeling hungry." The next one adds : "It

was happy when it spotted some coconuts in the street being sold." The story goes on building with participation of each individual learner. They add to it whatever they feel. "The elephant was given a coconut by the seller; it accepted it thankfully and acknowledged its gratefulness and so on..."

'Arivoli' and 'Rights of women' was another interesting topic that engaged attention of all. They also sang 'Arivoli' songs and discussed their programme, reviewed learner activities, their plans for future etc.

People had started talking in terms of 'Before Arivoli' and 'After Arivoli' which indicated the importance of literacy movement to them. The village coordinator Satguru felt Arivoli marked a 'Turning Point'.

training programmes were organised in Block Headquarters and Project areas.

#### **Volunteers :**

Training of volunteers was most difficult and most troublesome. It was a decentralised affair. In some places more of them turned-up than was planned while in some other places there was lack of response.

Originally it was planned to have 24,000 volunteers, but actually only 12,000 of them could be identified and trained. The 1,200 Master Trainers were to train these 12,000 volunteers in ratio of 1:10. Even the trained volunteers all could not participate in the learning process. There was heavy dropout on the part of the students necessitating remedial measures to overcome shortage. By end of July, 1992 there were only about 10,000 volunteers in the field.

Volunteers were given special training in teaching the primers, how to go about it, how to make it a participatory endeavour etc. Special guide books based on primer lessons had been prepared for the benefit of the Master Trainers and volunteers.

#### **Others Trained :**

Apart from Resource Persons, Master Trainers and Volunteers, training was also imparted to :

- Jatha Artists
- Project Officers and Assistant Project Officers
- Village Organisers
- Music Teachers of Schools
- Selected Women in Leadership

It was felt that training would have been more useful and effective if it had been imparted by people who had field experience. Resource Persons and Master Trainers being new to the field of literacy could not cope up with all the areas and needs of training and clearly clarify points of doubt. Efforts were made by 'Arivoli' to supplement the training efforts by organising meetings and get-togethers when people from the field, BGVJ activists and others were brought to speak to them about field situations and realities. Even then the training of volunteers remained weak. They had to arrange for volunteer meets every now and then to clarify their doubts, to enthuse and sustain their motivation, to give them more information and materials for their learning and teaching. Such participatory orientation programmes helped in getting the campaign moving to desired direction.

*Mass training*



## WARD CONVENORS AND VOLUNTEERS' MEET

Virudhunagar Municipality had identified nearabout 7,567 illiterates belonging to 9-45 age-group. The Municipality is divided into 34 wards and for campaign purposes each ward had a convenor and a five-member committee to organise things. The volunteers worked in close cooperation and coordination with these functionaries.

A meeting of all these people had been arranged on Sunday, the 26th July 1992, to assess the situation and also plan ahead.

Changes in the health and hygiene habits of learners, their willingness to attend family planning camps, improvement in enrolment of children in schools etc, were narrated by different volunteers and others.

In some areas they had to struggle hard in the initial stages but were happy to see the results and how centres were running smoothly. In some other areas, dropouts were reportedly returning to the classes.

The Project Coordinator, Mrs Tilagam said they were able to enrol nearly 90 percent of the identified learners, a large number of whom however were children. A visit to the Municipal Colony in Virudhunagar town will reveal how each family had a large number of children and how none

of them were attending schools. The children had been forced to help their parents in scavenging work and therefore denied the opportunity of schooling. All of them, however, received attention in 'Arivoli'.

In the municipal area, they had started 647 centres but only 461 of them were properly functioning. They made all-out efforts to reactivate other centres as well.

According to Mrs. Thilagam as many as 5,900 learners had completed the first primer and they were in the process of taking-up the second primer in July 1992. Acute water problem was one of the reasons for women being not able to attend classes regularly.

*Smt. Thilagam with her team*



## STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN RAJAPALAYAM

Students of several schools in Rajapalayam Municipality and rural areas have been actively participating in 'Arivoli' since its inception.

For example, the PACR Ammini Ammal Girls Higher Secondary School at Rajapalayam had motivated as many as 175 students to act as literacy volunteers. They were all studying in the 9th and 11th classes during 1991 but had entered the 10th and 12th classes, terminal years with public examinations in 1992. Even then all of them were continuing teaching their learners. Their teachers, were encouraging them to meet this community need of the hour and serve the cause of literacy promotion.

It was very enlightening to meet the students and hear their experiences and problems faced by them in their new mission of teaching learners, for which they were also not fully equipped.

One of their teachers, Mrs. Draupadi Ammal, had set an example before them by teaching 15 learners in her area. She was on the verge of retirement from service. Even then she was active, her heart and mind was with the illiterates and she wanted to do something for them. She is of the firm view that through love and consideration, one can do anything and eradication of illiteracy was one such endeavour. She said she was happy to notice



*A student volunteer*

visible changes among her learners. They were becoming more and more conscious of the need for neatness and cleanliness, and savings.

C. Pankajam, a tenth class

student, explained how her mission was successful because of her perseverance and continued personal contact with learners and their family members.

V. Subhashini, another tenth class student, took it up as a challenge and found fulfilment in her task.

K. Kannamma narrated how the learners used to avoid her in the initial stages but later on realised the benefits of literacy and fully cooperated.

Two girls by the same name — D. Suba, found motivation a difficult process but paying in the long run. Others who talked about their experiences included K. Rajaguruvammal, G. Madhi and P. Gandalakshmi.

*A section of students*



## BEST VOLUNTEERS' MEET

*Few best volunteers*



In any activity some people show keenness and willingness par excellence to do the job successfully. They equip themselves not only through training given to them but also through other ways and means. The very action-oriented effort assigned to them also becomes a field for self-learning.

**In literacy there are several activist volunteers who excel and set an example for others to follow. They are called the best volunteers and consulting them and learning from their experiences becomes a regular process. Therefore, the Kamarajar Arivoli has been bringing them together as often as possible.**

It was a very lively, interesting and educative experience to meet them and know from them the innovative ideas and ways employed by them in order to solve the field problems pertaining to sustaining learner motivation, securing peoples cooperation, new ways of teaching etc. This 'Get-Together', one of the many, was held in Virudhunagar on 26th July 1992.

The discussion centred round class room problems of an academic nature. The volunteers also contributed stories, legends, vocabulary (common words in use) of people, proverbs, traditional beliefs, tips on use of locally available medicinal plants and herbs, etc.

One volunteer said that after reading the lesson on Trees, learners have, for the first time, started looking at trees around them with a changed outlook and thinking. Earlier, they had no special feelings for the trees as trees were not part of their felt-world.

Another volunteer narrated how the learners were applying the reading and writing skills acquired by them for performing their household duties in their daily chores. Earlier, they could not plan things properly, write out their proposals or list of things needed, now, they were fully prepared and confident.

## 5. Preparation of Teaching/ Learning Materials

Preparation of learning materials for the learners and teaching guides and other aids for the volunteers involves lot of academic work. The National Literacy Mission has also laid down some parameters and guidelines for the preparation of such materials. It is known as the Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) pattern with the three primers marking different progressive stages in literacy learning.

In the Kamarajar District also this pattern was fully adopted in the preparation of the three-part primer 'Arivoli Deepam'. Its main aim was to enable adults 'to understand the world through the word', take part in the developmental efforts around them and be partners in progress.

The TLC took-up this work in collaboration with experts in the field of linguistics, education, adult psychology, activists from BGVJ and others including the State Resource Centre for Tamil Nadu.

'Arivoli Deepam' was finally approved by the IPCL Committee of NLM in September, 1991.

Some of the salient features of it are :

- the crux of the three-part primer teaching is that literacy is taught in a manner where it is closely linked with the learner's life and experiences, and in such a way that it evokes a desire in him to know more and learn further.
- The syllabus consists of minimum of 120 sessions, each of which gives him/her some basic and essential knowledge about nature, society, and science, and about his/her own experiences, singing, the alphabet, numerals, simple arithmetic and so on.
- The first part of the primer introduces familiar words, easily representable, and in constant use in his/her community. Numeracy is also taught.
- The second part covers functionality aspects and is also aimed at reinforcing the words and alphabets learnt.
- The third part covers areas pertaining to learners social needs.

Three-part Primer — Arivoli Deepam



- Besides the three primers, the TLC also prepared exhaustive guides and notes for volunteers to help them in imparting literacy effectively. Guides were also based on lessons in the primers.
- A book of popular songs titled 'Arivoli Songs' was also printed and distributed to all volunteers.

While the State Resource Centre handled the production of 2.4 lakh primer sets, its distribution was taken-up by Arivoli in close cooperation with the District Administration.

### Learning Materials :

Materials supplied to the learners included :

- \* Arivoli Deepam Primers Parts I, II & III
- \* A Slate with Pencil
- \* A Note Book with Lead Pencil

### Teaching Materials :

Materials supplied to volunteers included :

- \* A Set of Primers
- \* Volunteers Guides I & II
- \* Attendance Register

### \* Identity Card

### \* Rolling Board and chalk pieces

### \* First Information Report form

### \* The Monthly News Bulletin 'Arivoli Azhaikkirathu'

### Training :

However good the materials be and relevant to the needs of clientele groups, unless the lessons were taught with imagination and spirit, the purpose of materials will not be fully served. Keeping this in view, the Kamarajar TLC took the following measures :

- While imparting training to Master Trainers, volunteers and others, special efforts were made to tell them important points in regard to literacy teaching.
- Organisation of regular Volunteer Meets was another way of reorienting them in primer teaching.
- Volunteers were encouraged to supplement by reading from newspapers and science magazines.





## 6. Some Constraints

Several things happened which forced the campaign authorities — the district's 'Arivoli lyakkam' to postpone the time schedule.

First came the general elections in which the whole District Administration was involved. This was followed by the tragedy of Rajiv's assassination which postponed the election process further. It took three to four months for the people to come out of the shock of the gruesome incident and for the Administration to restore normalcy for undertaking any sort of literacy work.

They could not capitalise on the favourable environment created through several activities.

The whole summer vacation months in 1991, when both student volunteers and teachers were free for working full-time for the campaign, were just lost. The Kala Jathas too got postponed but local production camp and training for master artists were carried out.

Transfer of the then District Collector Shri T.S. Sridhar followed by the start of the agricultural operations forced the TLC to further postpone the activities.

The new Collector Thiru K., Gnanadesikan proved to be highly dynamic and infused new vigour and vitality among Arivoli workers. He actually set in motion the Kala Jathas and various conventions including Block level conventions and started the teaching phase in October, 1991. By the time learning process was picking up he too was transferred and Thiru K. Gunalan took over charge of

the campaign towards the fag end of February, 1992.

In between the Secretaries in-charge of Arivoli were also transferred resulting in loss of time and attention, non-meeting of essential councils and committees, uncertainty in several matters etc. spoiled the atmosphere.

Large scale drop-out among student volunteers due to late start of learning process also resulted in rescue operations, recruitment of new people to run centres etc.

Since village-wise and ward-wise lists of illiterates had been prepared after the survey, it was possible for the project staff to plan their operation in consultation with the identified and listed learners in each area. Whether this process of consultation with the clientele groups was gone through in all the areas is not known. Efforts were however made to bring all of them together during the process of environment building like Kala Jatha and the like.

But even after one year of the Survey, figures for S.C. and S.T. were not available separately in order to assess how many of them would have actually benefited from the campaign. This will indicate how the survey figures and forms were still lying in the different areas to be fully compiled and assessed.

**In this background, unless the survey figures were finalised, it will not be possible to clearly indicate even after the learning process, the numbers made literate community-wise or weaker section wise.**

But for some of these omissions and drawbacks, the survey helped the campaign organisers and functionaries to know the real challenge before them.



Thiru Gunalan

## ARIVOLI HAS BROUGHT AWARENESS

Thiru V. Gunalan, District Collector and Campaign Leader of Kamarajar District Arivoli lyakkam feels that 'Arivoli' has brought awareness among people with the result they are now sending their children to schools

and also trying to learn themselves. The opportunity provided for learning by 'Arivoli' was being utilized by the people though they have to face several difficulties to attend classes regularly. He hopes to complete the first phase of the Campaign by September-October and start Post Literacy activities thereafter. Leftout people may also be covered in the second phase.

## 7. Learning Phase



*Inauguration of Learning Phase*

The most crucial phase in any literacy campaign is the learning phase. All other phases are in a way preparatory to this phase. Efforts at environment-building, training, material preparation, creation of a monitoring network are all directed towards making the illiterate learner attend the literacy class regularly with interest to learn.

The main bottleneck in this phase is attendance in the literacy class by the learners. Several of them find it difficult to spare some time for literacy. There can be hundreds and thousands of reasons for their lack of interest in learning. All other things remaining normal and peaceful, it becomes easier to persuade them to join the classes. But if even one problem remains, say water or light or for that matter some



*Learner reading*

tension in the area, then it becomes really difficult to run the centres. Here it is for the village committees, the community in general, to come forward and ensure learner participation.

The Kamarajar Arivoli was fully aware of these disquieting factors and spent lot of time in setting-up village level committees and nominated village organisers.

The actual teaching phase was launched on 7th October, 1991, by Shri R.M. Veerappan, the then Education Minister of the State at a well-organised and well-attended function in Virudhunagar.



*Can write on board.*

Immediately after the function there was a spurt in the enrolment figures, but this was shortlived. In some areas people had still the feeling that by attending literacy classes they would incur monetary loss. The more they work, the more their daily wages.

Therefore in order to sustain the interest of learners, Kudumba Vizhas, Volunteer Meets, Learners Meets, etc. were organised.

According to reports received from the District Arivoli Iyakkam, out of 1.75 lakh identified learners, as many as 1.53 lakh had been made literate by end of September, 1992 and there was a backlog of 22,000 in various stages of learning process.

## ACHIVEMENT AS PER FINAL EVALUATION (15-35 Age Group)

S. No.	Name of the Project	No. of learners identified			No. of learners made literate		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1.	Auppukottai Union	4,872	7,408	12,280	3,046	7,544	10,590
2.	Kariapatti Union	3,824	8,416	12,240	3,013	7,793	10,806
3.	Narikudi Union	3,704	8,286	11,990	2,587	7,821	10,774
4.	Sattur Union	3,295	6,753	10,048	2,587	6,470	9,057
5.	Sivakasi Union	5,287	10,493	15,780	4,296	9,298	13,594
6.	Srivilliputhur Union	4,795	8,905	13,700	3,761	7,987	11,748
7.	Thiruchuli Union	3,250	7,490	10,740	2,531	6,838	9,369
8.	Virudhunagar Union	4,421	9,479	13,900	3,493	8,891	12,384
9.	Vembakottai Union	4,083	8,997	13,080	3,226	8,437	11,663
10.	Watrap Union	5,672	8,608	14,280	4,648	7,848	12,496
11.	Rajapalayam Union	6,168	9,962	16,130	4,924	8,974	13,898
12.	Arupukottai Municipality	1,241	2,020	3,261	911	2,143	3,054
13.	Rajapalayam Municipality	3,394	5,496	8,890	2,785	5,099	7,884
14.	Sattur Municipality	873	1,377	2,250	660	1,537	2,197
15.	Sivakasi Municipality	1,221	1,949	3,170	914	1,810	2,924
16.	Srivilliputhur Municipality	2,057	3,373	5,430	1,495	3,312	4,807
17.	Virudhunagar Municipality	2,441	5,319	7,760	1,867	4,357	6,724
Total		60,598	1,14,331	1,74,929	47,110	1,04,859	1,53,969

**Note :** Percentage of learners made literate in relation to identified learners was 88.02%. Of this nearly 31.13% belonged to SC and ST communities.

### Declaration

The Kamarajar district was declared as fully literate on October 9, 1992, by Dr. Bhishma Narain Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu at a glittering function held at Virudhunagar. Thiru S. Kannappan, the PWD Minister presided over the function.

### Post-Literacy

The Post Literacy Programme aims at :

- remediation of learning deficiencies observed in the TLC phase;
- coverage of persons who were left out or had dropped out in the TLC phase besides ensuring retention and consolidation of literacy skills of the neo-literates;
- enabling the learners to move on from guided learning to self-learning;

- establishing linkages between literacy, skill development and income generating opportunities;
- linking UEE and NFE with PL programme;
- amelioration of the socio-economic plight of the masses through imparting of skills and organisation.

The programme would cover 1.75 lakh neo-literates and semi-literates. There will be two Arivoli Thodar Kalvi Vattams per hamlet and one Arivoli Thodar Kalvi Maiyam per panchayat/ward. There are in all 1,453 hamlets and 198 municipal wards in the district.

The Executive Committee of NLMA has approved the proposal at a cost of Rs. 85.76 lakhs in the first year and Rs. 47.10 lakhs in the second year at a per learner cost of Rs. 38.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Kamarajar TLC was too late in working out the details of the monitoring mechanism they would like to have and putting the same into operation. This did cause widespread information gap and it was really difficult to know what was happening at a particular stage of the campaign operation. They had to rely on what the functionaries told them. There was no mechanism to cross-check and to attend to remedial measures immediately.

Finally when the mechanism was devised it became for all practical purposes a one-way traffic—reporting by Village Coordinators to APOs, from APOs to POs and from POs to the Collector at the district level. Forms for such reporting were provided with all details.

The TLC had also devised a form for use by the volunteers but it was also to be routed through the Village Coordinators and not directly to the Central

Office in Virudhunagar.

So long the Collector used to take a weekly review meeting of the POs things seemed to move on well. At the project and sub-project levels also such meetings were to take place regularly. Since there was some slackness in holding such meetings, it became difficult to know including for Collector as to the exact number enrolled or number attending classes at any given time. Only nine out of 17 project-areas were sending their reports regularly.

### Evaluation :

Though the monitoring system was weak, the evaluation arrangements for learner attainments at the close of each primer was being undertaken quite regularly. Teams were constituted, test papers distributed and learners were assembled and given the tests. These were thereafter evaluated and passed on to the project officers.

Arrangements for external evaluation were also being made.

## SUB-PROJECT GROUP ACTIVE IN SATTUR & VIRUDHUNAGAR

**What is a sub-project group?**

**How does it function?**

**What are its advantages?**

**How to involve them fully in learning?**

The sub-project group is a sort of team working in close co-ordination with the Assistant Project Officer. This team consists of Master Trainers, Village

Organisers or Ward Convenors, unemployed educated youth, jatha artists, social workers and others. The APO could fully depend on this team to motivate and carry out the task assigned. Instead of doing all the work, he/she distributes duties and responsibilities to the team members according to their likes and abilities. One is good in contacting people, other in motivating, yet another in arranging programmes and so on.

**Team work, team spirit, team initiative, team consciousness are some of the results of having**

**a sub-project active group. One also learns how to work in a team without inhibitions.**

The Sattur Arivoli Iyakkam sub-project group was said to be an example in this sort of functioning. They discussed problems and worked as a team to solve the same. Their involvement in learning process has helped in sustaining the motivation of learners and volunteers alike.

A meeting of sub-project groups in the Virudhunagar Panchayat Union was also held on 26th July to assess the progress and plan ahead.

## SUCCESS STORY

### HANDLOOM WORKERS TAKE TO LEARNING EN MASSE

Devanga Chettiars of Arappukottai, in the Kamarajar District of Tamil Nadu, one of the oldest communities engaged in handloom industry and Chalias also engaged in weaving, had all started learning utilising the opportunity provided by 'Arivoli'. Each family owns a loom and work in their own dwellings.

There were several such people in Chokkalingapuram and other areas of Arappukottai. Whole streets — Ratnaswamy Koil street; Thirumenichetty street; Jawahar Sangham street are all inhabited by handloom weavers. Most of them still speak Kannada in their households.

When did they migrate from Karnataka and how they had established their homes and hearths in far-off Arappukottai etc. are not clearly known. But the fact remains that these people have fully adopted the Tamil language and culture though some vestiges of Kannidiga language and tradition still remains with them. The illiterates among them can fluently speak Tamil but not read or write.

So it was easy for a Literacy Team from Shimoga TLC to interact with them. The team headed by Shri Bharatlal Meena, the District Collector and Campaign leader, were happy to meet these people and know more about their effort to learn Tamil, the state language.



Centre in Arappukottai

Among weavers, women were not allowed to attend schools till recent times because of which several young women remained illiterate and 'Arivoli' came to them as a last chance to learn. They have fully utilised this golden opportunity provided to them.

**Several young girls from the community who were either students or had completed their studies readily volunteered to teach the illiterates.**

M. Menaka, who had studied upto 11th class has been running a literacy centre in her own house. Vijayalakshmi, who had studied also upto 11th class, was helping women in that area to learn.

In Pottilpatti area on 21st July, 1992 evaluation of learner attainments was going on a festive air prevailed at the evaluation centre.

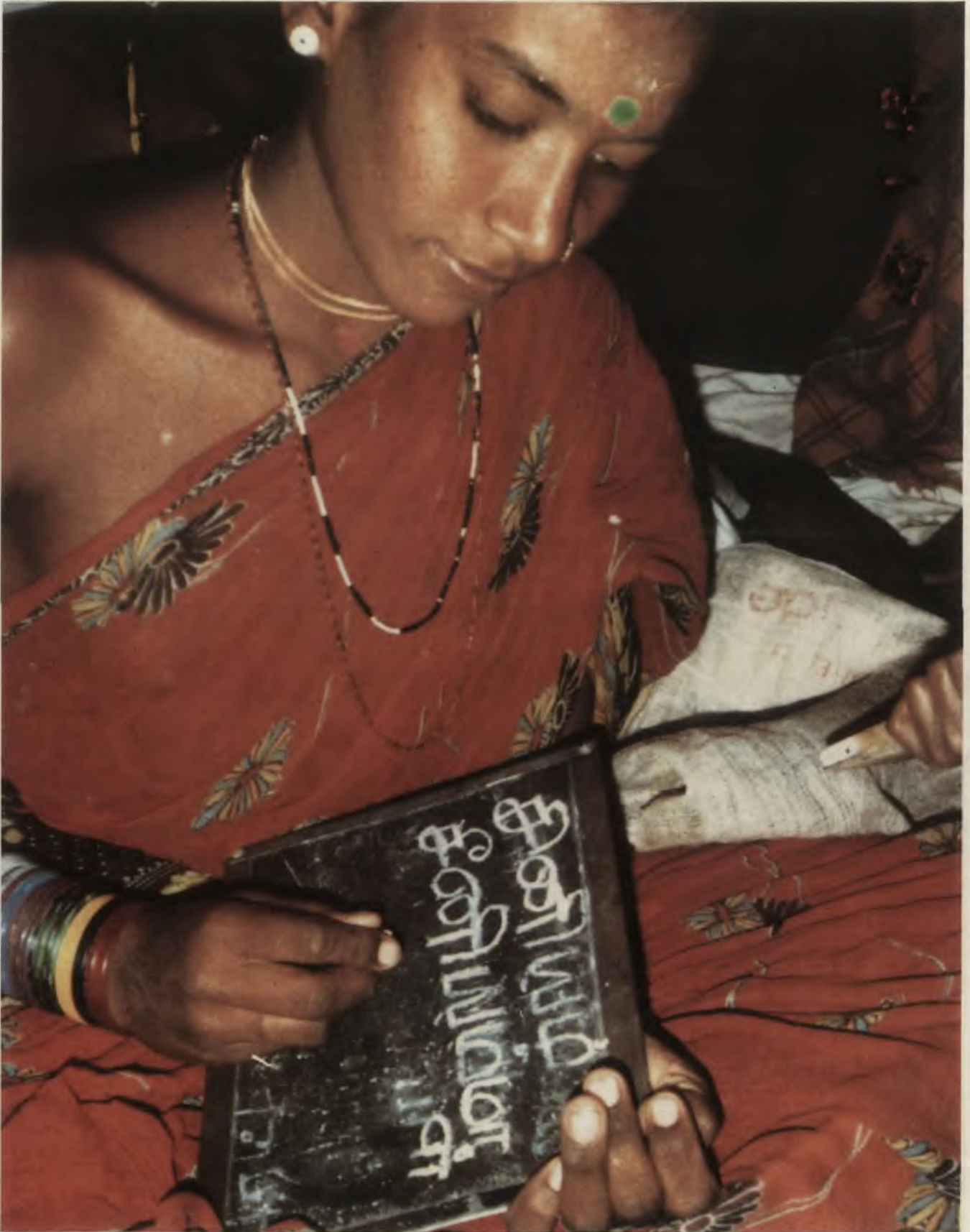
M. Lakshmi was very proud of

her six learners who had done well and two more were preparing for the tests. Lakshmi after completing her 12th Class was encouraged to work as 'Arivoli' Volunteer in Ward 15 of Arappukottai Municipality.

Another volunteer-instructor of that area was Deivaratnam, who had studied upto 9th class and could not continue her studies. But she hoped to continue as 'Arivoli' had given her a new hope and pride. All her ten learners had participated in the evaluation tests conducted by the local team.

Yet another volunteer, Gomathi B.Sc. was also acting as Ward Convener.

**Devanga Chettiars and other handloom weaving communities are today very progressive in their outlook and with literacy spreading among their people, a bright future awaits them.**



*A Nayakar woman learner*

## SUCCESS STORY

### NAYAKARS OF METTUPATTI TAKE TO LITERACY

The Nayakar Community of Mettupatti village, about ten kms from Sivakasi town, who were till recent times leading an isolated way of life has today taken to literacy, thanks to the effort of 'Arivoli' volunteers.

Decendants of the famous freedom fighter Veera Pandya Kattabomman, they fled from their native soil of Panchalakurichi in Tirunelveli District and settled down here after the British beheaded their leader and king. Since then they were living in seclusion hunting in the nearby forests and tending their cattle and goats. As time passed they took to agriculture which is today their main stay for living. But they are economically poor as agriculture mainly depends upon monsoon. The area is rather dry and drought-prone.

They still follow age-old customs and practices. Joint family system is still in vogue. The whole village with a total population of nearabout 150 people is divided into four families only. The household of Pusari Nayakar has 56 members. Cooking food for all of them is itself a big problem. He has to feed all the family members twice-a-day. The women are mostly busy in cooking, collecting firewood from jungles, helping in agricultural operations etc. Till some years back they were not even allowed to go out of the village and remained 'topless'. But things have changed. They are now



*Class in Mettupatti*

using pump water and tractor for the field work. TV has also come in his household. But still women are segregated and kept in a specially prepared house during their monthly menstruation periods. Their Goddess is Jakkamma. They speak Telugu in their household but are learning Tamil fast.

There is no elementary school or a primary health centre in their village. They have to walk down to the nearby Idayakulam for these. In view of this they are now demanding a school and dispensary in their own village.

It was a very heartening sight to see the whole village — all the four families busy in learning literacy skills till late in the night 9.00 p.m. to about 10.30 p.m. Men, women and children were all sitting together and learning from their own educated family members. V. Sakkamuthu has studied upto 10th class but S.



*Sakkamuthu & Veerappan*

Veerappa is a graduate, the first one from his village. People like them, the first generation literates were engaged in teaching their own kith and kin, sharing their knowledge and education.

If a Community which did not allow its women to attend schools or even go out of their village could on their own open their doors to literacy and were bent upon achieving full literacy status in a year's time, it is unparalleled in the history of literacy and deserves all appreciation and encouragement. With female literacy and children attending schools instead of tending cattle, their economic position is sure to improve in the years to come and they will prosper like other people in the rest of the country.

**Their period of isolation and seclusion was over and literacy is going to immensely help them in their liberation from all sorts of bondages.**

## SUCCESS STORY

### PERIAGOLLAPATTI SHOWS THE WAY

A sprawling village with about 100 match factories, Peria-gollapatti has been in the throes of change. Its 400-odd illiterate population have found 'Arivoli' a god-sent opportunity to learn.

In July 1992, 24 centres had already been started and were functioning regularly. The enthusiasm and commitment of volunteers was very high. Roshni Selvamani, Ramiza Begum, Kamala Veni — all volunteer-instructors were busy attending to more than ten learners each. The Thangam Match Works had opened their doors for literacy workers. Classes were held after working hours in the factory premises itself.

**In this village one could see real national integration in action. The three village coordinators — Mohd. Siddiqui, a Muslim, Somasundaram, a Christian and Chelladurai, a Hindu were all working together in complete peace and harmony for the common cause.**

They enthused the people of the village to eradicate illiteracy. They together moved about in the village after sunset and supervised the classes and the learning process. They persuaded almost all the match factory owners to allow literacy classes to be held in factory premises itself after working hours. This ensured lighting facilities and also space for the classes.

Siddiqui himself had been teaching his factory workers thus



*Somasundaram, Siddiqui & Chelladurai*



setting an example for others to follow.

Somasundaram being a teacher by profession was able to train the volunteers and involve the village young men and women.

Chelladurai was the village Administrative Officer and commanded lot of respect and influence but in the evenings he became a volunteer-instructor and a good motivator.

The literacy classes were also an amalgam of people — Christian Instructor teaching Hindu and Muslim women, Muslim woman

Instructor teaching Hindu women and so on. There were no inhibitions or communal feelings whatsoever in this village. All were workers and labourers and wanted to see their village free from the curse of illiteracy.

**Peria-gollapatti has shown the way of integration for progress of the individual and of the nation. The Arivoli has created a new awakening and purpose among people and has thrown-up new leaders like Siddiqui, Soma sundaram and Chelladurai. Viva literacy and literacy workers!**



## SUCCESS STORY

### RAMANAICKEN PATTI MOVING FAST TOWARDS FULL LITERACY

Nearly ten kilometers from Arappukottai Municipality, Ramanaickenpatti is a prosperous village with a population of about 300 people. It was moving fast towards attainment of Total literacy towards the end of July, 1992, when the spirited 'Arivoli' workers had started the third primer. They were happy the long journey would soon conclude and they would be able to declare the village fully literate by 8th September, the International Literacy Day.

They had identified 34 illiterates — most of them being women. Efforts were made by village organisers, master trainers and volunteers to bring all of them to the classes.

The young team of volunteers spared no efforts in this regard. B. Amudavalli, S. Valarmathi, P. Devaki, and M. Selvamani all in the age-group 16-20, have won the hearts of the entire villagefolk by dint of hard work and patience. The whole village today assembles for them, to hear them and to appreciate their achievement. Literacy has come out as a powerful tool to bring them together, to unite them, to give them a positive outlook and to urge upon them to move forward and go ahead in life with hope.

For Amudavalli it was a new experience. She had completed 12th Class; her parents being agriculturists could not study



*Amudavalli in her class*

more than 5th class. She took over nine illiterate men and women and also provided leadership to 'Arivoli' movement in that village. 'I learnt how to be patient in this movement', she says and adds; 'earlier I was very impatient and could not control myself.' She gained as well as gave to the movement.

For Valarmathi, a tenth-class student, the 'Arivoli' training was very useful. She established a very cordial and sustaining relationship with her learners all of whom did well at the evaluation tests. She had collected riddles, folk songs and stories from learners. She was also aiming at academic excellence.

For Devaki, aged 16, a good looking girl, the literacy movement was a rich experience. She found the learners were initially afraid of three-letter words but could soon pick-up with constant practise. She also found learners wanted to read story book and provided them with such books.

M. Selvamani, who works in a

factory, the teaching experience was something new, but she coped with the same with help from parents and others. She had studied only upto 10th class. Among her learners, three women were within the 20 age-group but two others were older women of 45-50. She said while the young people could learn bit faster, the older ones were equally keen but had some difficulties of sight, hearing etc. She says 'Arivoli' training was very useful in imparting literacy to the learners.

**The story of Ramanaickenpatti and the good work done by the young volunteers of that village should be an eye-opener for other villages in the area. They have demonstrated that success in literacy endeavour was possible if all of them could work together, could pull the weight in the community together. The lesson of active community participation can also help them in solving other problems equally important for the progress and prosperity of that village.**

## GAINS OF ARIVOLI

A movement of the people such as the Kamarajar Arivoli Iyakkam cannot be judged just by the number of people made literate in the year-long literacy campaign. It will not be a correct assessment of the mass effort though numbers are important as it was a major objective in the planned endeavour. But the offshoots of the campaign, the new forces unleashed in it, the goodwill and fervour created during the process etc. are also equally important as these mark a new change and Turning Point in the history of the district and will have to be reckoned with in future. These gains and achievements are both visible and invisible improvements in the social, educational and cultural set-up in the district.

For example, it has been noticed at all places in the district because of rapid awareness among the people about the need and value of education, dropout from schools have gone down. Not only that, there is marked improvement in enrolment of children in elementary schools. Villagers were taking keen interest in the schools, presence of teachers, regular attendance by children in their classes etc.

Coming to womenfolk, one can see a sea change in their outlook and life. They are now fully aware of their rights, status and position in family and society. They are now able to participate in all activities shoulder-to-shoulder with their men. They are more inclined to sending their children to schools, to undergo family planning, follow saving habits, more hygienic and healthcare conscious, more amenable to learn new things, happy to be in a group and be part of an organisation. Several women's organisations have come up in almost all the project areas under 'Arivoli' banner.

*A woman learner*



'Arivoli' has given young men and women a new forum to work for, a new forum to fulfil their dreams of building-up a new society, a new forum for their own growth and a self-learning. The movement has brought-up several hundreds of them in each project area full of zeal and commitment, a new generation of selfless and social workers, a new group of leaders of people who are fully aware of the social needs and especially the needs of the poorer and downtrodden sections of the community. What they can do in the coming years is something one can imagine.

Above all, there is a vast change in the attitude of government officials at the district, block and grassroot levels. They are now working out their plans and developmental activities with people's participation and not in isolation. In fact, the Administration and the people have come together to solve their problems. This was possible through mass contact in 'Arivoli'. Even among the villagers there is a new awareness to solve their problems through peaceful means, through negotiations and the like. The upper class educated volunteers have been taking classes in Harijan colonies which is a new development in these areas.

The kala jathas and other cultural programmes of folk songs and dramas, participation of people in these activities, use of audio cassettes for songs, etc. have resulted in a cultural revival in the district which will go a long way in revitalising the folk arts and crafts which are languishing. The vital communication media with its new found importance and significance can also help in popularising other activities in the district.

A new bond cutting across differences of religion

*Class in front of a house*



or caste could be found in most places — as illustrated by the Periagollappatti village in Sattur Panchayat Union where Chellathurai, Siddiqui and Somasundaram formed a Hindu-Muslim-Christian trio organising literacy centres and teaching. Any centre there is composed of learners and volunteers from different faiths. There have been cases of young women postponing their marriage to finish primer teaching.

All these have in a way strengthened the process of democracy in the villages, blocks and the district as a whole. With literacy people are also now in a position

to directly contact the district head and inform him of their needs and problems.

**In short, 'Arivoli' has set an example, a new way of thinking and acting, for solving people's problems and to find fulfilment for their urges and aspirations instead of looking towards government and its machinery for everything. It has also taught the lesson of marketing social ideas through mobilisation and management. Investment in 'Arivoli' has proved to be an investment in future for the betterment of the people as a whole.**

## POWER OF LITERACY FELT BY PALLIMADAM VILLAGERS

Pallimadam is a small interior village in Trichuzhi Panchayat Union. With about 180 households and a population of 500, this village has been in the throes of change as 'Arivoli' activities started here a few months back. The village youngsters found a new opportunity to bring the villagers together for a common cause.

For example, Chandanamari, who had studied upto Plus-Two and completed her teachers training, was happy to participate in literacy activities. So was Vijayalakshmi, also a Plus-Two; G. Lakshmi, a tenth-class student, Pandiamma working for Nutrition Scheme and Kalavathi.

They volunteered themselves and started classes for learners numbering about 90. But as there were only five volunteers, the progress was slow. They however hoped that all the illiterates in the village would be made literate in



the coming months.

The Collector happened to visit this village sometime in June, 1992. Awareness among the learners was so much they could speak to the Head of the District Administration about their problems. One acute problem was pertaining to drinking water. The District Collector immediately ordered new arrangements for the same and in July they were

happy water was available in plenty.

**The villagers have now realised the power of literacy, how they could boldly put forward their legitimate grievances and find solutions for the same. They are taking steps for enrolling all the children in the school, plant trees around the villages and such other activities**

## VILLAGE COMMITTEE ACTIVE IN ARASAKULAM

Arasakulam is an interior village in the Karimapatti Panchayat Union. The village has several problems. Despite all that, the villagers became active on the literacy front. They have formed a committee with Amma Thevar as their Chairman.

**It was the job of this committee to organise literacy centres in the village, motivate learners, see to lighting arrangements, supervise running of centres etc.**

They met formally once in a month when the volunteers and village organisers also took stock of the progress made. But each member of the committee daily moved around his allotted area to see that learning process, attendance at centres etc.

Out of a total of 440 illiterates identified by them, only 240 had been enrolled in 24 centres. The number of illiterate men in this village was appalling, 240 as compared to only 200 women. Nearly 150 of the men attended classes. Their main difficulty has been to get enough number of educated volunteers. The women population in this village being less than men, their number also is less.

In order to cover the remaining learners, efforts are being made. It is stated that several of them are living in isolated hamlets far from the village proper and they may need people to go to those hamlets or depute students for

the job. They however hope that in the coming months they would be able to make arrangements for the left-out learners as well.

## WOMEN'S MEET AT PHULWAIKKARAI

Phulwaikkarai is a small village in Narikkudi Panchayat Union. This area is very backward in several respects — no assured rainfall and agricultural operations, no good road, no industries, no other employment opportunities. Even the match and fireworks factories are absent in these parts. If it rains it provides living for only six months of the year. The other six months people migrate to far-off areas in Tamil Nadu to earn a living.

**But 'Arivoli' drew great response from the people. They wanted to learn despite their problems. Several young women also came forward to teach them.**

Centres were started but they could not continue learning as people had to migrate in large numbers because of failure of monsoon. In July several centres had been closed. But the volunteers were hopeful of their learners returning to restart the learning process.

All the women had assembled at Phulwaikkarai to discuss their problems. It was a very good experience to talk to them and know from them their deep interest in literacy and how each one of them was prepared to teach as many learners as

possible to make 'Arivoli' a success.

## LEARNERS' MEET AT ARAPPUKOTTAI

**Why do learners meet?**

**What purpose does it serve?**

If you want to know the answers to these questions, you must meet the learners yourself and ask them about it.

They will tell you how it brings them together, how it helps them to know about each other and also in sustaining their motivation for learning as a group.

Learners' meets are arranged regularly in the Arappukottai municipal areas. This has been one way of encouraging group activities.

On 21st July, 1992, learners from four literacy centres in South Street, all women, had assembled at one place along with their volunteer-instructors. Besides exchanging greetings, they used the occasion to assess their individual progress in learning. The volunteers also felt joy and happiness in presenting their learners and talk to other volunteers.

**Such meets do help in organising women in the area. In fact, an Arivoli Women's organisation has sprung up here as in Rajapalyam, Virudhunagar and several other parts of the district. To the women who had till now been confined to their homes and interests of home alone, Arivoli has brought a new perception and an opportunity to sit together, think, assess and suggest remedies.**

## DISTRICT PROFILE



District map

The Kamarajar District which forms the western extremity of the erstwhile Ramanathapuram District with its headquarters at Virudhunagar, the birth place of Bharat Ratna Sri K. Kamaraj started functioning from 15.3.1985. The area of the district is 4,222 sq. kms. Its population as per the 1991 census is 15,54,350.

Sri Periyalwar, Nachiar and Andal were born and lived in Srivilliputhur, a temple town of this district. Andal composed several divine poems including "Thiruppavai". In the Tamil month Aadi (July-August), the car festival of Srivilliputhur, attracts many devotees. The temple tower of the Andal Thirukoil, Srivilliputhur is one among the tallest towers in Tamil Nadu. The height of this tower is 197 feet. This tower forms the emblem of the Tamil Nadu Government.

Andal Thirukoil at Srivilliputhur, Arulmigu Srinivasa Perumal Thirukoil at Tiruchuli which is called South Thirupathi, Arulmigu Mariamman Koil at Virudhunagar and Mariamman Koil at Irukkankudi are very famous temples in this district. Bomminathan temple at Thiruchuli and Ayyakarkoil at Rajapalayam at Rajapalayam are some other important temples in this district. Tiruchuli is one among the fourteen temples in Pandia Nadu which were eulogised by Saint Thirugnana Sambandar. It is also the birth place of Ramana Maharishi. The siva temple here is one of antiquity and is noted for its architectural excellence.

The predominant rural character of Kamarajar



Temple at Srivilliputhur

District is quite pronounced. The major chunk of its total population lives in 600 villages while its comparative urban agglomeration is restricted to 14 towns. This rural slant is more pronounced in the eastern part of the district comprising Tiruchuli and Aruppukottai taluks than in the western portion comprising Rajapalayam, Srivilliputhur and Sattur taluks.

Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the people in the district and 70% of the people depend on this profession for their livelihood. The district has no perennial source of irrigation or major irrigation system and therefore agriculture is a gamble on the monsoon. This is a drought prone district. There are 952 tanks in the district which get water during the North East Monsoon. The average normal rainfall is 817.2 mm. The main crops raised are paddy, maize, ragi, cotton, chillies and pluses.

The following are the minor irrigation projects in this district.

- Pilavakkal Dam
- Kullursandai Dam
- Vembakottai Dam
- Anaikuttam Dam
- Golwarpatti Dam

In the field of industry, there are no major

industries barring a few. There are 3,931 cottage Match and Fireworks factories which cater employment to about three lakhs of people in and around Sattur and Sivakasi Towns. About 120 Litho Printing works with multi-colour printing are available in Sivakasi Town. There are two cement plants one in the Public Sector at Alangulam in Sattur Taluk and another in the private sector at Thulukkappatti in Virudhunagar Taluk. There is one Asbestos plant also at Alangulam. There are spinning/weaving mills at Rajapalayam, Srivilliputhur and Aruppukottai areas. Handloom weaving

is predominant in Aruppukottai, Srivilliputhur and Dhalavaipuram areas. There are oil mills in Virudhunagar Town producing edible oils. One tin manufacturing factory and one textile paper tube manufacturing factory are also functioning in Virudhunagar Town.

All the towns in the district are well connected by train and road links. There are places of historical importance like Srivilliputhur which is the birth place of Andal and Tiruchuli the birth place of Ramana Maharishi.

The salient features of the district :

### Population — 1991

a. Total	:	15,54,350
b. Male	:	7,79,086
c. Female	:	7,75,264
d. Literate	:	8,52,680
e. Scheduled Caste	:	2,34,900
f. Density of population per sq. km.	:	368
<b>2. Geographical Area sq. km.</b>	:	<b>4,222</b>
<b>3. Normal Rainfall (1991) mm</b>	:	<b>817.2</b>
<b>4. Area of cultivable lands : (acres)</b>		
a. Wet acres	:	90,180
b. Dry acres	:	7,11,835
<b>5. Live-stock population</b>		<b>2,30,841</b>
<b>6. Education</b>		
a. Primary Schools	:	1,009
b. Middle Schhols	:	17
c. High Schools	:	69
d. Higher Secondary Schools	:	71
e. Teacher Training Institutes	:	4
f. Colleges	:	11
g. Polytechnics	:	8
h. Industrial Training Institute	:	1
<b>7. Administrative Areas</b>		
a. No. of Revenue Division	:	2
b. No. of Taluks	:	6
c. No. of Municipalities	:	11
d. No. of Blocks	:	10
e. No. of Town Panchayats	:	453
g. No of Revenue Villages	:	608
<b>8. No of Consitencies</b>		
a. Lok Sabha	:	1
b. Legislative Assembly	:	6



## LITERACY PROFILE

According to 1981 census, the literacy percentage of the district was only 47.

### In 1991, the position was :

Total population	:	15.34 lakhs
<b>Literates</b> : (age-group 7 and above)	:	8.52 lakhs
Males	:	3.40 lakhs
Females	:	5.12 lakhs
Literacy Rate	:	64%
<b>No. of illiterates</b>		
in age group 7 and above	:	4.80 Lakhs
Males	:	1.54 Lakhs
Females	:	326 Lakhs
in age group 15-35 (as per survey)	:	1.75

### Before Arivoli :

Adult Education Centres were being run in this area since 1978-79. But as this district was newly formed only in 1985, figures are available only from that period. It is stated that nearly 1.82 lakh people benefited as per statistics given by the District Adult Education Office :

Year	No. benefited	Men	Women
1985-86	23,871	3,737	20,034
1986-87	32,900	10,474	22,426
1987-88	37,510	15,865	21,645
1988-89	36,756	10,479	26,277
1989-90	33,244	10,572	22,672
1990-91	9,000	2,850	6,150
1991-92	9,000	2,850	6,150
	1,82,281	56,927	1,25,354

It seems this claim may not be correct and also many of the neo-literates would have relapsed into illiteracy as adequate post-literacy arrangements did not exist in earlier years. Population growth, dropout from schools were other factors that would have contributed to the existence of large number of illiterates, say 1.74 lakhs at the time of Arivoli survey in 1991.

### After Arivoli :

Arivoli had been able to make 1.53 lakh people literate in age-group 15-35 out of 1.75 lakh learners indentified. Thus it has been possible to increase considerably, the number of literates in the 15-35 age-group in year's time which would not have been possible without a campaign.



## CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

APRIL 1991 — AUGUST 1992

Approval of Proposal	<b>18th March 1991</b>	Concluding Function of Kala Jatha	<b>28th Sept. 1991</b>
Project launch/ District Convention	<b>14th April 1991</b>	Launching of	<b>7th Oct. 1991</b>
Identification of Resource Persons	<b>28th April 1991</b>	Kudumbavizha, Volunteer Instructors' Meetings, VC's Meetings.	<b>to Nov. 91</b>
Identification of Resource Persons	<b>12th May 1991</b>	Village Co-ordinator's — Training and Convention.	<b>Dec. 91</b>
Identification of APOs	<b>19th May 1991</b>	Resource Person/ Master Trainer- Training and Convention.	<b>January 92</b>
Identification of APOs	<b>9th June 1991</b>	Kala Jatha Second Training, Jatha performance, Arivoli Singing Competitions	<b>Jan - Feb 92</b>
Key Resource Persons	<b>17th June 1991</b>	International Women's Day	
Special meeting with Shri L. Mishra, DG, NLM	<b>23rd June 1991</b>	Arivoli Women's Rights Day, Booster Jatha Valedictory, Arivoli Singing Competition Prize Distribution	<b>14th March 92</b>
POs meeting	<b>27th June 1991</b>	Arivoli Exhibition for Learners	<b>May, August 92</b>
Training for One day Survey	<b>29th June 1991</b>	Arivoli Youth Day Arivoli Cassette Release	<b>21st June 92</b>
Meeting with Principals of Colleges	<b>31st June 1991</b>	Arivoli Activists' Meet in 13 Centres in the Distirct	<b>5th July 1992</b>
Meeting with Political Parties	<b>6th July 1991</b>	Volunteer Training	<b>July 1992</b>
One day Survey	<b>15th July 1991</b>	Intensive Centre Visits by Arivoli Personnel and Government Officials	<b>15-31 July '92</b>
District level Women's Conventions	<b>21st July 1991</b>	Teaching Ends	<b>15th August '92</b>
Meeting with Central Government Officials	<b>June, July, August, Sept'91</b>	Evaluation	<b>August '92</b>
Jatha Production, Jatha Master Artiste's Training, Master Trainers Training	<b>8th Sept. 1991</b>		
Inauguration of Kala Jatha			



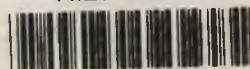




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