



**Jamsetji TATA**  
**National Virtual Academy for**  
**Rural Prosperity (NVA)**

**Fellows inducted in August 2006**



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Fellows inducted in  
August 2006



M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

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**Research Foundation**

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## FOREWORD

The Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity (NVA) established in 2003 with generous support from Tata Trusts has become an important national institution for according recognition to outstanding rural women and men who have mastered the techniques of ICT and are now applying them in villages for the knowledge and skill empowerment of rural families. The first two Convocations of the Academy held in July 2005 and January 2006 were addressed by H E the President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam who pointed out that the recognition of such talent in our villages marks the celebration of the core competence of rural India. The present publication gives information on the achievements of 43 women and 34 men drawn from eleven states who have been elected as Fellows of the Academy after January 2006 on the basis of a Peer Review process. These Academicians will serve as the torch bearers of the rural knowledge revolution. They will be the pillars of the *Gram Swaraj* Movement. The Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy is proud to have such gifted and innovative women and men as its Fellows.

In addition to the enrolment of the Fellows, the NVA is also striving to build the capacity of our rural population in mobilizing the power of modern ICT for improving the quality of their life in all areas of importance to both their lives and livelihoods. We seek the cooperation of all interested in bridging the urban – rural digital divide in identifying and proposing competent women and men from villages who could be considered for election as Fellows.



**M S Swaminathan**

President

National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity

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**Mr S K Lal Ahamed**

Velaipalem,  
Railway Colony Road,  
Nellore District,  
Andhra Pradesh  
Phone: 0861-2524004

52 year Old S.K.Lal Ahamed, a graduate in Arts, has been volunteering for the social causes since 1982 and rendered much humanitarian services to people in the coastal area of Nellore. He started a society namely Nehru Bharathi Educational Institution for education of children in the coastal belt.

Nellore District being prone to natural disasters like tsunami and cyclone, Lal Ahmed was a saviour of the affected people and the work he has done for their rehabilitation and livelihood is remarkable. He is appreciated by Government Departments as well as by the local people. During the 2004 tsunami, he organised relief for the affected people of Venketachalam Mandal and with the help of Government and Voluntary Agencies he helped the fisher folk to get boats, nets and other prerequisites to start a new life. He is also devoting much of his time for spreading computer literacy and Village Knowledge Centre concepts among the poor and marginalised sections. In all aspects, he is a true, committed social worker and good role model working for the betterment of the poor and down trodden people.



### **Ms Latha Gauri**

Marpally (Mandal),  
Ranga Reddy District,  
Andhra Pradesh  
Phone: 0841-623 8508

A 26 year old graduate, Latha Gauri is a trained video producer and is a print and video reporter in her village. A community reporter with a difference, she works towards developing her village and bringing in attitudinal change, with the tool of a news magazine and video in her hand.

Having been married at a very young age and leading her life alone with her 5 year old son, she has been instrumental in stopping many child marriages in her village and helping young girls pursue further education. She informs her community about the health impacts to women because of child marriage, and also conveys to the mainstream information about the problems in her village. Development issues that have been captured by her camera are screened regularly for the benefit of the community and to influence public opinion through the “Namma TV” channel which features local news, farming information, health alerts and discussions with experts. (A monthly community magazine brought out by the SHGs gets her coordination also she highlights local issues to address the social needs and information that could be used by the community).

Latha Gauri had studied up to 10<sup>th</sup> Standard when she had got married. Now with her determination she has been able to complete her graduation through distance education. She is associated with SOCIETY FOR ELIMINATION OF RURAL POVERTY, Hyderabad, provides her with regular support and capacity building to carry out various programmes in her village. In recognition of her work and competency OWSA gave her an opportunity to express her concerns at the UN plenary at WSIS II in Tunisia. Her key motto is education and empowerment, to which she has sincerely dedicated herself.

### **Mr Mohammed Riyaz**

20-2-1750, Raveendra Nagar,  
Near Kondayapalem Gate,  
Nellore, Andhra Pradesh

Mohammed Riaz is 25 and holds an MBA degree. With his knowledge of the application of ICT he has started motivating grass-root level people to learn modern technologies such as computer, internet etc. so that they can get empowered to solve many problems of their day to day lives. He has involved himself in social work out of compassion and sympathy for the suffering poor people. He used to spend much of his spare time by creating awareness among the rural people and slum dwellers and helping them in getting government help for housing, livelihood and other such assistance.

Mohammed Riaz has contributed much for the computer education of girls students and is seen as a good Samaritan for the poor. He travels in rural areas to prepare projects and estimates to help women Self Help Groups start small businesses and eke out their livelihood. In every aspect this sincere and honest young man is a worthy social worker, playing an excellent role for community development.

**Mr N N Narasimha Reddy**

Nandimandalam Village  
Pendimarri, Mondel  
Kadapa Dist, - 516 218  
Andhra Pradesh

40 year old N.N. Narasimha Reddy is a graduate and experienced agriculturist who has been practicing SRI method of rice cultivation for the past 3 years. He is the first person to successfully adopt the SRI practice in the district. An innovative and dedicated farmer, Narasimha Reddy has been using biofertilizers for a long time. He has designed new implements and helps the N.G. Ranga university to spread these technologies to neighbouring farmers for the betterment of the farming community.

In addition, he assists with conducting training programmes for farmers on various crops and is convener of Nandishwara Rythu Club. His social work includes organising medical camps and eye operations.

### **Mr S K Riyazuddin**

Naryana Reddypet,  
Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.  
Phone: 098493 53898

26 year old S.K.Riyazuddin has been involved in social welfare activity from a very young age. Being an Electronic and Communication Diploma holder he is taking special interest in spreading knowledge through internet and radio. He has motivated women in Nellore District and Naryana Reddypet to form Self Help Groups and arranged a number of welfare programs for them. He was assisting Polymer Education Society in the maintenance of an old age home, women's hostel etc.

Riyazuddin has participated in many training programs and is trying to help the poor people in rural areas to develop skills. He is also providing computer training to poor children. He facilitates by identifying good market for farmers' products to save them from distress sales and suicides. In addition, he is taking active part in environment programmes, ground water recharging and health initiatives with special stress on TB.

His selfless service for the betterment of marginalised and neglected sections deserves admiration and he stands as a role model for the present day youth.

**Mr S K Sadiq**

Naryan Reddypet, Nellore,  
Andhra Pradesh  
Phone: 98868 92921

26 year old Sadiq has special aptitude for working in rural areas and has been helping the coastal people since his school days thereby earning the good will of all people in Naryan Reddypet Mandal. Since coastal Andhra is prone to frequent cyclones he takes personal interest in helping disaster affected people and farmers when cyclones occur. At the time of the tsunami in 2004, he took up serious work for helping the affected people, procuring nets and boats for fishermen.

After his Computer Science education he started training women and poor people in computer skills with the support of Polymer Educational Society whereby more than 200 students were given training. Though he has subsequently taken up professional work, he plans to spend all his leisure time and holidays to work for the poor women, children and neglected people. His energetic enthusiasm has helped many poor families to improve their living standard and educate their children.

Sadiq has organised youth activities and he has given the leadership for youth to work during times of disasters and other difficulties. His voluntary service and application of his ICT skills for the benefit of poor people makes him a good role model for younger generations.

### **Mr S K Sajeeth**

Indukurpet,  
Nellore,  
Andhra Pradesh  
Phone: 0861-2341837

After graduating in computer science, 23 year old Sajeeth , belonging to Nellore in coastal Andhra Pradesh, learned the importance of Information and Computer Technologies and the revolution it can make in rural areas for improving the opportunities for small and marginalised farmers, fishermen and women. He took up a mission to create awareness and sensitise NGO's to start training programmes and offered free services to many institutions. This benefited hundreds of boys and girls who were able to learn computer applications.

Sajeeth also helped rural women to form Self Help Groups and start micro credit activities and assisted youth in skill development. He helps the women's groups and social organisations in many ways with an aim to empower and bring change in the lives of poor people . His interest in community development and disaster management work and the sincerity and integrity of his actions make him a model for other social activists.

**Ms T Shobha Rani**

Dorathopu,  
Navalac gardens,  
Nellore - 524314  
Andhra Pradesh  
Phone: 0861-5531244

T.Shobha Rani aged 48 with Intermediate education, has actively participated in community Development Works in various rural mandals of Nellore District and is an ardent worker for the cause of women and children's welfare. She began to serve the community through Polymer Educational Society and motivated women to form nearly 100 Self Help Groups including DWACRA. She imparted skill trainings to women with the support of DRDA and other agencies and helped a number of women to start self employment and earn a livelihood. She also took an interest in helping elderly women, destitutes and widows, and organised assistance for them.

Shibha Rani has played an effective role in HIV/AIDS campaign and in environment campaigns, for which she received appreciation from Government officials and local people. She is an excellent volunteer in the field of service to the poor and is worthy to be a guide for others.

**Mr Amal Sarma**

Community Information Centre  
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Udalguri, Dist-Udalguri Assam  
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Phone: 94351-84531

28 year old Amal Sarma is JE (Comp. Sc.) with experience in the field of computers for three years. He works at the Community Information Centre in his area where rural people come to collect information regarding agriculture market price, government plans etc. Since training in computer literacy is one of services of the CIC, he provides computer education for villagers and is also involved in socio-economic activities like ASFC.

Amal assists with other activities such as agricultural marketing through [www.assamagribusiness.nic](http://www.assamagribusiness.nic), micro finance (specially for self- help groups) and tele-health programme through the CIC.



## **Ms Anjana Neog**

Letekuphukhuri  
Narayanpur,  
North Lakhimpur  
Assam

Anjana Neog has an Education Degree with PG Diploma in Computer Science. At the age of 26, she has been involvement with community activities since 3 years.

Since joining CIC Telahi as CIC Operator Anjana Neog has been working for the larger benefit of the rural people through various means. She has been actively working in the ASHA project to empower rural cultivators through technology, such as organizing mushroom training and organic culture in CIC Telahi during 2003 which was attended by a number of women SHGs. Anjana also works with rural students, helping them to learn computer and internet skills and has organized Environment Day activities with the high school faculty.

She is a talented poet and writer, contributing frequently to newspapers and magazines.

**Mr Bijoy Kr Nath**

Community Information Centre Sipajhar  
Development Block Sipajhar,  
Darrang - Dist.  
Assam  
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Phone: 98641-90044

A graduate with PGDCA qualification, Bijoy Kr. Nath 32, is appointed as CICO at the Community Information Centre at Sipajhar which is near the district headquarter Mangaldoi of Darrang district, Assam.

For the past three years he has been involved in facilitating computer education and services for villagers in his area. Rural people come to the centre to collect information regarding agriculture market price and agricultural marketing through [www.assamagribusiness.nic.in](http://www.assamagribusiness.nic.in) as well as on government plans and policies. Through the CIC he conducts tele-health programmes and provides training in computer literacy and micro finance for self-help groups.

## **Ms Bijoya Bharali**

Bogamol Bharali  
Ghahi Gaon, Ghilamara  
Lakhimpur,  
Assam - 787053

A 25 year old graduate, Bijoya Bharali comes from an economically backward low lying rural area. Being an energetic person with commitment towards society, she was instrumental in setting up a knowledge centre in the Ghahi Gaon village and pioneered the setting up of a computer centre and screen printing centre in the village for the larger interest of village children and women. She took the leading part in forming around 20 women SHGs in the Ghilamara block and trained them in organic farming, vermicompost, as well as mushroom and orchid cultivation.

Bijoya's qualification in a 3 months computer certificate course has enabled her to be actively associated with all computer literacy programs undertaken by CIC Ghilamara such as organizing seminars or workshops and in the farmers' training through ICT tools in the ASHA project done by ASFAC.

## **Mr Debendra Hazarika**

Bapakhat,  
Panaigaon,  
North Lakhimpur - 787001

Debendra Hazarika ,26, who has JE ( Electronics & Telecommunication) education, has been working for the larger benefit for the rural people by empowering them through technology for the past 3 years. Since joining CIC Telahi as a CIC Operator, he has been teaching internet browsing for students and running special courses for women SHGs.

In addition, he organized training on mushroom cultivation and organic culture. A actively helps rural cultivators through the ASHA portal, and conducts functions like Ernvironment day in schools.

A young and talented potential leader, Debendra is gifted with oratory skill. He writes poetry and is a frequent contributor to the newspapers and magazines.

## **Mr Dipen Kanwor**

Socio-Economic Development Organization (Sedo),  
Dhemaji  
H.O.: Kuwafala  
P.O.: Do Khubolia  
Dhemaji - 787057 (Asom)

A 30 year old graduate, Dipen Konwar is a dedicated social worker, serving as Chief Co-ordinator of Socia-Economic Development Organization (SEDO), Dhemaji. He designs and plans and executes the programmes of the organization. As a volunteer he was committed towards forming SHGs and training them. Since the inception of SEDO, so many income generation programmes have been conducted that Dipen Konwar stands out a role model for youths.

Apart from these he works to provide sanitation and safe drinking water for the rural poor. Mr. Konwar is responsible for forming various village level and panchayat level disaster management and flood control committees and is well-trained in this respect.

**Ms Geeta Magar**

C/o: Mr. Kanka Bahadur Magar  
Ulubari,  
P.O: Orang  
P.S: Mazbat  
Udalguri (BTAD)  
Assam

Though only 20 years old with HS education, Geeta Magar is already a veteran member of the NGO Society For Action & Rural Development (SARD). For the past five years she has been working for agriculture, rural area development and microfinance in her village where most people belong to ST, general category, SC and the minority.

## **Ms Indrani Dowerah**

Community Information Centre,  
Morongi D. Block,  
Purabanagla. Doigrong  
Golaghat. Assam.  
e-mail: indranidowerah@rediffmail.com  
Mobile: 94350 53898

Indrani Dowerah, 31, has been working at CIC in Doigrong, a tea garden area in Assam for the last three and a half years. She holds a B.A degree from Dibrugarh University & Advanced Diploma in Software and System Management from NIIT.

Active and dedicated to her job, she has made immense contributions towards providing IT- related services locally. A regular inflow of clientele comprising of students, research fellows, members of self help groups (SHG) and groups of farmers avail of information available on the Internet on agriculture or veterinary problems as well as examination results, online registration and distance education. Her aim is to develop the community by using resources which are available locally, and also through information technology and computer literacy.

Indrani maintains good relations with local NGOs involved in social activities and feels that working in CIC gives her a great chance to work for rural and technically undeveloped people and society.

## **Ms Kamala Borah**

Sonitpur

Assam - 784176

Phone: 03715-247132 (R)

e-mail: asm-bagamara@cic.nic.in

38 year old Kamala Borah is metric educated and has been involved with micro-finance, women & child care and other community activities since 1995. She has experience in promoting economic development in rural areas and wishes to mobilized the people for sustainable development of her area. Since 2002 Kamala has been associated with the Community Information Centre at Kamalpur, providing relevant information to the community.



## **Ms Mafida Begum Saikia**

Community Information Centre,  
Bechimari

Development Block Bechimari,  
Darrang, Assam

e-mail: [asm-bachimari@cic.nic.in](mailto:asm-bachimari@cic.nic.in)

Phone: 94350-83726

Mafida Begum Saikia is 31 years old, holding a B.Sc in Agriculture and Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Application. She is working as CIC operator under the ongoing Central Govt. project Community Information Centre at Bechimari Development Block comprising 10 gaon panchayat with 75 villages. People from the rural areas come to the centre to collect information regarding agriculture as well as on agricultural marketing along with different cultivation practices and pest or disease control measures.

Mafida Begum gives computer education for rural youth, housewives as well as employed or unemployed persons, including internet browsing, printing with laser printer or DMP, CD writing, health consultancy through internet etc. She also provides information on different Government schemes & policies, micro finance specially for Self Help Groups, as well as on job opportunities for the unemployed.

## **Ms Malabika Sut**

Gogan Sut  
Ghahi Gaon, Ghilamara  
Lakhimpur, Assam - 787053

25 year old Malabika Sut is a graduate from an economically backward rural area. After further qualifying with a 3 months computer certificate from the Community Information Centre, Ghilamara and undergoing training in other fields such as organic farming, screen printing, tailoring, etc, she has been involved with community activities since three years.

An energetic person with commitment towards society, Malabika is an executive member of Diana SHG for young women in the technology sector. She has been actively associated with all computer literacy programmes taken by CIC Ghilamara and has also been involved in the farmers' training in the ASHA project implemented by Assam Small Farmers' Agri Business Consortium. She took a lead role in setting up of a knowledge centre in the Ghahigaon village and has pioneered the formation of around 20 women's SHGs through which training is imparted in the field of organic farming, vermi compost, mushroom & orchid cultivation.

**Mr Nila Gogoi**

Picholaguri, Dhalpur  
Assam - 784165  
Phone: 94350 06177

30 year old Nila Gogoi is a graduate with talent and vision. Having attended training on small scale industry and khadi village industries training at Mumbai and Guwhati, as well as agro - based industry training at Jorhat, he is the chief coordinator of Lakhimpur Farmers' Club, Dhalpur affiliated to Assam Gramin Vikash Bank Dhalpur Tiliali.

Involved with community activities since 3 years Nila organized training in organic farming, mushroom production, sugar cane and potato cultivation and alertness programm for farmers on various schemes including new agro based technology. He has also taken part as a resource person in ASHA awareness programme at Narayanpur CIC on the usefulness of ICT in agriculture.

**Mr Nirmal Singh**

Dewnbasti, Near Nepali Mandir  
Diphu, Karbi Anglong,  
Assam  
Phone: 03671-271230  
Mobile: 094351-66143

Since 2002 Nirmal Singh 31 has been working as Supervising Officer facilitating the implementation of a community resource management project in Karbi Anglong district and as a community worker. He is a B.Sc (Agri) degree holder with competence in agriculture, water management, health issues, etc, and has appeared for M.Sc in Eco. & Env. In collaboration with the CIC at Chinthong Block Hamren sub-division he is involved in promoting agri-Business services and is also a member of the district malaria control society.

## **Mr Pannalal Bhattacharjee**

Community Information Centre,  
Tapang Shrikona High School,  
Shrikona Silchar,  
Cachar, Assam

35 year old Pannalal Bhattacharjee holds a diploma in electronics & telecommunication engineering and is working as an operator in a community information centre at Tapang, a heavy rainfall area surrounded with ranges of hills. He is also qualified in information & system management.

Besides providing the normal services offered by the Community Information Centre some of the other services organized by Pannalal are training camps and awareness programmes on AIDS, cancer, family planning etc, as well as community based programmes related to agriculture. In co-operation with Apollo Telemedicine Centre, Silchar he organized telemedicine service (e-Sanjivani) at the Community Information Centre. Another initiative was to arrange for training in e-Parichay, an electronic address of village people opening e-mail accounts.

**Ms Reema Bardoloi**

Surath Ch Bordoloi  
PO: Chapai (Mangaldoi)  
W No-7, Dist Darrang, Assam  
Phone: 03713-223720

35 year old Reema Bardoloi has an MA degree and is a veteran member of the NGO “SANJEEBANEE”. In her village most of the people belong to general category, SC and ST, the economy activity being cultivation mainly of paddy, vegetables, ginger, fruits or pepper. For the past five years, she has been involved with various community activities in the fields of agriculture, rural area development, microfinance and child and women development.

## **Ms Rehana Shaji**

Bilasiparagaon (Baragua),

P.O.: Bilasipara Bazar,

Barpeta Dist., ASSAM - 781 315

Phone: 03666-262784 (CN ) 94351-25021 (M-CN)

e-mail: [assamhortsocietybarpeta@yahoo.co.in](mailto:assamhortsocietybarpeta@yahoo.co.in)

20 year old Rehana Shaji has H S (Arts) education and has been involved in community activities since 2003-04, working in the fields of health, fruit preservation, and thrift among rural women. She has a natural drive for the cause of rural upliftment with potentialities of a leader and has served as Secretary of the Women & Child Welfare Society in her area and as Associate Member, Assam Riot Victims Unit Trust Society (ARVUTS).

Rehana has successfully organized eco-friendly horticultural plantations through rural women groups in Katajhargaon in Barpeta district, as well as free medical treatment camps with homeopathic medicines for rural people especially women in 35 nearby villages.

She has a special interest in helping women to create awareness on health & hygiene. She hopes to start an information kiosk for spreading need-based development messages among women, and to work as a master trainer for the different women's groups.

## **Ms Rupjyoti Borah**

D/O , Late Profulla Kr. Borah Junaki  
Nagar Tini Ali  
(Near Warehouse) H.C.G. Path.  
Golaghat - 785621, Assam  
Phone: 03774-281146 (R) 9435053662 (M)  
e-mail: jyoti\_rup05@yahoo.co.in

31 year old Rupjyoti Borah has a B.Com., degree and Diploma in Computer (DCO) under IGNOU. Coming from a village where most families are small farmers cultivating a variety of crops, she is caretaker of a small poultry and animal farm. Occasionally she also does weaving and embroidery at her home through her connection with some Self Help Groups in her area.

Rupjyoti has been involved with the Community Information Centre (CIC), Golaghat North Dev. Block, Dergaon since 2002 and has completed a training programme with the National Informatics Centre, Guwahati. Working as a CIC-Operator she has had the opportunity to establish contact with farmers and others community members. She trained over 350 people including a number of students who she assisted with preparing projects, conducting distance-learning education, making online registration or getting examination results. An active and hard-working person, she has gained the goodwill of the community of Dergaon.



## **Ms Sabita Devi**

Community Information Centre  
Kalaigaon, Old Nabodaya Vidyalaya building Campus  
Kalaigaon, Udalguri, Assam  
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Phone: 98641-92520

Holding a post-graduate degree, 31 year old Sabita Devi is appointed as CICO under the ongoing Central Govt. project Community Information Centre at Kaligaon village where most people belong to the Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe, Nepali communities along with the minorities, mainly depending on cultivation and animal husbandry.

She provides computer education for rural youth, housewives as well as for employed or unemployed persons, and makes available a number of services and information such as Govt. Schemes & policies or information on agricultural marketing along with different cultivation practices, pest & disease control. Micro-finance specially for Self Help Groups, internet browsing, printing, health consultancy through internet, weather report etc. are some of the services she provides through the CIC for the rural community.

## **Ms Tilottama Hazarika**

2 Gosaipathar,  
Bihpuria  
Assam  
Mobile: 94350 86745

A talented young woman, Tilottama Hazarika is a 25 years old Botany graduate with a Diploma in Computer Science. She has been involved with many community activities for the past 3 years such as organizing workshops in CIC Bihpuria involving rural women SHGs in various economic developmental activities like mushroom cultivation, nursery and vermi-compost as well as ASHA workshops involving educated farmers, entrepreneurs, NGOs or SHGs. Through the ASHA portal, Tilottama has actively helped rural cultivators and has developed a database on rural SHG and entrepreneurs.

Using her IT skills, she has organized special training for rural students on internet, web browsing, email and other applications.

**Mr Medani Sahu**

Gram Bhanesar  
Dhaneli,  
Janjgir Champa  
Chhattisgarh  
Mobile: 94252 30722

32 year old Medani Sahu has a post graduate degree in sociology and has been working for community development since 1995. He has organized many awareness campaigns for health and for watershed management. He has also participated in social activities such as youth summit and sports.

Presently, Medani is a project officer at DPAP watershed programme and also is part of the programme for assisting rural poor through self-help groups. He is involved in community micro-planning and in activating BPL and landless people towards self-employment. Through honest and hard work, he wishes to ensure that education, health and development technologies reach his village.

### **Mr Aadil Rashid Vaid**

S/o Abdul Rashid Vaid  
C/O Late Haji MMohammad Abdul Kanue  
Sadiqabad, KP. Road,  
Anantnag  
J & K - 192101  
Phone: 01932-227378  
Mobile: 09419542338

19 year old Adil is currently studying in first year of college in Anantnag town in South Kashmir. He hails from a small remote village called Wullrhama, 32 kilometers from district Anantnag in Pahalgam Tehsil of Kashmir valley which has forested hilly terrain and experiences harsh winters with heavy snowfall. The village women are skilled weavers but their literacy levels are very low. A part of the village population comprise Gujjars who are very backward and are without education, living in poor conditions. Militancy is still active in some hilly regions and is the main reason for backwardness. The village has a health centre which is non functional.

For the past three years Adil has been working as a volunteer community worker at a “Samanbal” (Kashmiri word for a meeting place) opened by Athwaas in District Anantnag. As a part of the initiative which involves formation of women’s self help groups for emotional, psychological and economic empowerment., he motivated young girls from nearby villages to visit the Samanbal and form a group. It was a challenge to sustain the group but Adil was instrumental in developing and sustaining the group. Now while he continues to study in college, he devotes the rest of his time for engaging with the group.

Besides, Adil is actively engaged with Pulse polio programme in the villages. After the Kashmir earthquake in October 2005, Adil visited villages of the affected region. He participated in the initial relief work and is now engaged with rehabilitation work with a group called Yakjah Reconciliation and Development

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## JAMMU & KASHMIR

Network. The group is engaged in integrated learning for children in a village in Uri, District Baramulla, North Kashmir. Adil has participated in workshops for learning skills for personality development, social mapping of villages, and the art of making and using puppets for social mobilisation. He also has competency in environmental protection and networking at the grassroots level and is looking at the possibility of linking eco-friendly sustainable livelihood for women and their empowerment at the village level.

**Ms Saleema Ahad**

W/O Abdul Ahad Sofi

R/O Zoothama

Post Office Hanjoora (Chadoora) - 191113

Budgam, J & K

Saleema hails from Zoothama, a remote village of the hilly Budgam district where the bulk of the population is living below the poverty line and women are mostly illiterate. Though she has only primary education, 38 year - old Saleema is regarded as a role model in her village, being a dedicated social activist and a hard working woman possessing good leadership qualities Saleema has set up many income generation units in and around the adjoining villages which help many unemployed girls sustain themselves by doing various traditional crafts of Kashmir so that they are able to support themselves during hard times and have an assured source of income. She is also providing effective support to these young girls by helping them with the marketing of their products, on a no-profit no-commission basis.

She has been associated with Voluntary Health Association of India from 1994 and played an important and vital role in initiating VHAI activities in the rural areas. During times of turmoil and insurgency when health services were poor in the rural areas since doctors left the Valley for security reasons, she worked without fear and helped in building the confidence of the people in the area.

Saleema has undergone the health workers' crash training programme and was assigned the work of Village Health Worker. She has now been promoted as the Health Supervisor, on account of her dedicated service. She played an important role in the no-smoking campaign, effectively counselling many women and young boys regarding the ill effects of smoking. She has promoted community health, personal hygiene, sanitation and use of latrines in the villages by making house to house visits and canvassing for the environmental cleanliness and also assists the VHAI health teams to register pre natal and

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## JAMMU & KASHMIR

ante natal cases for further treatment and guidance. As a trained “Barefoot Counsellor” she has helped many people in the villages to deal with stress, tension and trauma. With her rich knowledge of the culture and heritage of Kashmir, and her commitment to upliftment, Saleema has won the trust of the women in her village.

### **Ms Shahzada Geelani**

R/O Dadompora  
Hanjoora (Chadoora) - 191113  
Budgam, J & K

Shahzada, 45, has matriculation education and hails from Dadompora, a remote village in a hilly area 22 kms from Srinagar city. She has two grown up daughters and a son, but the whole family has a hand to mouth living since her husband earns a meagre income.

Shahzada is well known in her locality for her craft skills. She is good at knitting and embroidery and has been contributing to the family's income through her traditional Kashmiri crafts. She has formed various Self Help Groups (SHGs) in her locality, where young adolescent girls take up income generation activities. She has taught these young girls various arts and crafts so that they are able to support themselves in hard times. Her hard work and dedication has made her famous in her area, such that many vulnerable women-headed households with no source of income have also taken up these crafts under her guidance and thus have an assured source of income.

When the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) first started its intervention in health and development activities in the villages of Budgam in 1994, Shahzada joined the association and was the first woman member recommended by the villagers, overwhelmingly by ladies to be on the Village Development Committee (VDC). Due to insurgency in the area the health scenario had received a serious set-back and people in the rural areas were suffering because the doctors and paramedics had left the Valley due to security reasons. Shahzada played an important and vital role in initiating VHAI activities in these rural areas. During those turmoil years, when VHAI initiated Community Health Programmes in villages, they were looked with suspicion, so she helped to gain the confidence of the people in the area. She helped the women and the girl child to get equal treatment in the family.



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## JAMMU & KASHMIR

After undergoing a health-workers crash training programme as well as course on mental health counselling as a Barefoot Counsellor, she was assigned the work of the Village Health Worker Programme so that she could attend to the problems of women in backward villages. Shahzada promoted the schedule of immunization, care of Child & Mother at Birth programme in her village and has trained Traditional Birth Attendants (Dais) for conducting safe home childbirth. She has created awareness in her area regarding the effects of stress, tension and trauma and how to cope with it. She has also been instrumental in promoting community health, personal hygiene and sanitation in the village by making house to house visits and canvassing for the environmental cleanliness.

Shahzada possess good skills of singing Kashmiri folk songs and is highly respected in her area, popularly known as “*Dedee*” (elder sister).

**Ms Sunita Kumari**

Hariraydih, Sonaraitadi,  
Block - Sarwan, Deoghar,  
Jharkhand - 814150

22 year old Sunita Kumari hails from a village located in the hill area of Deogarh district in Jharkhand State. She has higher secondary (12<sup>th</sup> Std.) education and competency in the field of agriculture. For the past one year she has been involved with community activities through NEEDS.

Sunita Kumari is a committed social worker and leading self help group member. In addition she is an active member of a local youth club.

**Mr A V Kumarswamy**

Arehalli Coffee Growers Association,  
Arehalli Village,  
Belur Taluk,  
Hassan, Karnataka.

45 year old A.V. Kumarswamy is a graduate from a small village by name Arehalli in Hassan district Karnataka where the major crop cultivated is coffee. As the founder member & president of the Arehalli Coffee Grower's association consisting of small and medium planters, which was formed when the coffee industry was going through a crisis, and coffee growers were in distress due to low prices. With his leadership the group has assisted planters by offering specialist advice on pest control and has organized seminars, demonstrations and field trials in conjunction with the Coffee Board of India and the agricultural department to make planters aware of recent technological developments in plantation technology. An information centre has been started in the Arehalli village, where the community can get information about current schemes (plantation, financial, health etc) offered by the government, and scholarships are being given to deserving candidates of the local primary & secondary schools.

Besides being the frontrunner in taking up welfare activities in his village Kumarswami has been involved with ITC IBD & e-choupal since 2003. Through the e-choupal kiosk, he has been disseminating prices to growers to help them make an informed selling decision and has made a significant contribution to agriculture as well as community development.

**Mr A N Praveen**

Shivani,  
Masgod,  
Somwarpet,  
North Coorg - 571236

An Engineering graduate of Mysore University, 37 year-old A.N.Praveen is a cultivator of coffee specifically of Arabica variety. He provides advice and inputs on cultivation and processing to other small planters in the local villages of the hilly coffee growing region to which he belongs. Processing being his area of expertise, the produce of small planters is processed under his supervision to improve standards and to achieve better prices.

Praveen has been involved with ITC IBD since 1999 and with e-choupal since 2001. Through the computer installed at his kiosk he is able to communicate the latest coffee prices to the planters. This enables them to take informed decisions on selling their produce. He is also involved in local social activity such as helping to conduct marriages of poor couples and running a play home for poor children.

## **Ms K Zarina**

Madikeri Bagamandala Road,  
Karugunda village (PO),  
Madikeri Taluk,  
Kodagu. Karnataka

Hailing from A small village by name of Karugunda in a hilly area where the predominant crop grown is coffee, 45 year old K. Zarina is a graduate who has made significant contributions in the spheres of agriculture and community development.

She is the founder member and president of the Rajarajeshwari Womens Self Help Group. The group provides market and price information to coffee planters through the ITC e-choupal kiosk with which she has been involved since 2003. This helps coffee planters to make an informed decision when selling their produce. A grant has been received by the group from the Coffee board for the establishment of a mini coffee roasting & grinding unit. With funds from the grant, a small retail outlet has been established on the way to Talacauvery a location of tourist significance in Kodagu. The outlet helps the group promote homemade products by the women's group among tourists and generates employment for a few local girls. Part of the income generated from the sale of home made products is used to educate needy children at the local primary school and to give scholarships.

Led by it's pioneer Zarina an number of women SHGs take the lead in social causes in the local and surrounding villages for women's empowerment & community development.

**Mr Bapusaheb Kadam**

Kinhola, Taluka Manvath,

Parbhani, Maharashtra

Phone: 0-9371584909

e-mail: bapusahebk1v1c@gmail.com

Bapusaheb Kadam is an SSC educated young man of 29 with very good understanding of almost all developmental issues in and around his village, and with leadership qualities oriented towards problem solving. He has been involved in social movements since year 2000, leading the youth and peasants in Kinhola village and surrounding areas.

Bapusaheb adopted computers and information technology as a tool for his work in year 2004 and looks for more IT tools for targeting issues with peoples' movement perspectives. He was the leader of an information drive for making a village web site, working on developing content for rural areas. With his expertise in operating computer he has trained youth, has worked to set up e-Chaupal's centre in his village and has been volunteering for better information dissemination on market rates of the crops.

Proficient in organic farming and a known leader of the organic farming movement, he has promoted organic farming in his own village and surrounding villages effectively arranging CD shows on laptop to communicate all aspects of organic farming. He has worked on water distribution issues from canal as well as rainwater harvesting by participating in the government initiative "Jal Swarajya" as well as tried to implement water auditing and management software for drinking water.

His other initiatives include a cleanliness and sanitation campaign in Kinhola, building toilet and sewage facilities and networking on this issue with villages that have successfully carried out similar schemes and participating in implementing the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme for a number of years.

**Mr Krishna Dake**

Mukkam Post Nitrud,  
Mazalgaon,  
Bid, Maharashtra  
e-mail: krishnad1v1c@gmail.com

22 year old HSC educated Krishna Dake belongs to Nitrud village located in Bid district, the most backward area of Marathwada where irrigation is completely absent, and people live on non-irrigated farming. When the village suffered from lack of drinking water, the activism started by Krishna's group lead to successful rainwater harvesting.

Krishna has been actively pursuing the issue of rainwater harvesting from an early age since he joined a training camp arranged in 2004 under the Year of Scientific Awareness on water conservation. Then he took the agenda actively to his village and was the prime leader of community development issues there.

A reputed local speaker, he gives inspiring speeches that help him to communicate across the spectrum of village society. He understands the importance of networking and has created youth networks around his village. In addition he keeps on meeting local administration with delegations addressing issues concerning people. With his good understanding of the use of IT and excellent content development capabilities he comes up with new ideas that help to solve crises at the local level. He took charge as an IT trainer conducting mass IT training camps for the youth to get involved in constructive work and carries out campaigns on water issues using presentations and software. He has also worked on issues affecting students, mostly the lack of educational facilities and for policy change within colleges and universities.

Now Krishna is working in his own village on Employment Guarantee and hopes to stop the people in his village from becoming migrant labourers. His team of youth is also conducting information drives on NREGS

## **Ms Chinnalu Kandagiri**

Badahansa,  
Jimidipeta,  
Rayagada  
Rayagada

Belonging to a small tribal village 42 year old, 3rd Std educated Chinnalu Kandagiri is a tribal lady with a difference and is a very good community mobilizer. Since her family is landless, she and her husband cultivate paddy in leased farms in the neighbouring villages. The annual share of the yield is not sufficient for their consumption throughout the year, so to meet their basic needs, both husband and wife work on daily wages.

Chinnalu motivated three active Women's SHGs formed in her village to work in the Forest Department's nursery and earned a profit of about Rs 69,000/- in a year. Under her dynamic leadership, the three WSHGs are formed into a federation. The members of the federation are working in the nursery and are expected to earn more profit this year. As the spokesperson of the team, she represents the problems of the federation and village in all fora and demands justice and action. She plays a significant role in the empowerment of village women to achieve a better standard of living. A true village level leader, Chinnalu is accepted by all as a committed worker.



## **Ms Laxmi Mandangi**

Jhara,  
Penkam,  
PS - Ramnaguda  
Rayagada

35 year old Laxmi Mandangi who has studied up to 7<sup>th</sup> Std. belongs to Jhara, a small tribal village in Rayagada District with just 61 households consisting of harijan and kandha tribes.

Though her family owns about two acres of landed property, both she and her husband have to work on daily wages to supplement their income, since the annual yield from the family owned land is not sufficient for their consumption throughout the year.

Laxmi is a dynamic lady with good communication skills and an excellent team leader. Despite the pressing work to fulfil the needs for sustenance of her family, she devotes considerable time for strengthening of women's groups. She mobilizes and motivates village women to form groups of active WSHGs in order to take up enterprising income-generating activities. An advocate for the upliftment of village women, she raises her voice against injustice and as the spokesperson for the group and for the village, she presents their problems at all fora, demanding justice and action. She plays a significant role in the empowerment of village women and literacy for the children.

## **Mr A Baskaran**

29, Desamarriamman Koil Street,  
Embalam  
Pondicherry

Baskaran, aged 40, is post graduate social worker with humanitarian attitude to help others. He established his own social service project named 'Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Rehabilitation Centre for physically challenged people' in his village, Embalam, through which he could help handicapped people to get tricycles, motor cycles and assistance to those belonging to BPL category . Through Women Development Corporation, he got old age pension for many women and financial assistance for widows and lactating women. Nearly 200 women belonging to his village were benefited.

Baskaran motivated the government to release housing loan facilities to the poor and needy people under Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Housing scheme. His organization bagged the State Welfare Award from the Dept of Social welfare, Pondicherry and also a Certificate for successful recognition as 'Resource Centre for Non-Formal Education Programme' in Pondicherry.

## **Ms K Bharathy**

13. Pillaiyar koil street,  
Karasur, Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413 2678247

Since 2004 Bharathy, 33, has been involved with community activities. She is educated till 10<sup>th</sup> Std and is a Bio-village council member. She runs a crèche at village level for the benefit of working women and is a member of a school team in her village that assists school drop-outs to return to school and contributes towards maintenance of the school premises.

Bharathy's work with the Bio-village council includes organized SHGs, credit linked with State Bank and providing information about council meetings. She also participates in medical camps and cattle health camps as well as does service for water management as a member of the tank rehabilitation group in her village.

## **Mr R Chandirasekaran**

58 Kavalkaran Koil Street,  
Kunichampet,  
Pondicherry

A dynamic youth aged 25, R Chandrasekaran is a graduate in Chemistry, having the zeal and determination to uplift his dalit community in Koonichempet village, located 24 kms from Pondicherry Town. He is heading the youth movement called 'Ilamburakkal Youth Association' where he motivated a good number of youth from his community to work with unity to promote livelihood opportunities, through various services especially identifying the entitlement from the Government for the benefit of his fellow caste members. Being a teacher in a government school he also educates his students on promoting livelihood opportunities through voluntary services.

Chandrasekaran applied his services to his community on the area of health through various awareness programs like HIV Aids, polio vaccination, eye camps, BP camps and dental camps at schools. He encouraged people in his locality to get the benefit from the Dept of Agriculture by bringing social forestry schemes to his village. He also addressed the problems of women in his village by advising them on methods of scientific rearing of cattle through knowledge guidelines from M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary Sciences and animal Husbandry Department.

For the last one decade he has rendered his services for the benefit of his village community with his humanitarian work such as helping the aged, widows and handicapped children by way of getting assistance from the Rotary Club.

**Mr V Innarasu**

Marriamman Koil Street,  
Thirukanchipet  
Pondicherry

Innarasu,42, educated up to school level (SSLC) belongs to the village Thirukanchipet, a dalit area located 20 kms from Pondicherry town, and has an interest in promoting sports among the youth. In 1989 he established a youth club for sports and encouraged the students to get free sports related materials. He helped people in his community to get free land from the government and also moved the government to develop his village by bringing more sanitation facilities like construction of toilets and cremation ground.

In 2005 he prevented sand theft by the businessmen, in riverbanks around his village with the cooperation of men and women from his village. This good deed awakened the government to stop sand smuggling business in his area.

## **Mr N Janardhanan**

47 Main Road,  
Emabalam,  
Pondicherry  
Tel: 0413 2645492

Janardhanan aged 45 who has studied upto school level (plus 2) hails from Embalam village located in 20 kms from Pondicherry town. He is a farmer and an active social worker. A good communicator, he could help his fellow farmers to learn about the usage of various agriculture machinery and to get their seeds and agriculture machineries in a subsidized manner from the Government. He motivated the Banks to extend their financial help to the farmers to build their houses under Kamarajar Housing Scheme of the government.

When he was the President of the European Commission's Tank Rehabilitation Programme, Janardhanan effectively controlled people who encroached on riverbeds for their personal purposes. Through this effort, his village Tank Rehabilitation program stood the best among other villages. He received good appreciation for his actions to promote an environmental protection movement in his village and thereby became an Executive Member of the Farmer's Green Corp. run through farmers' Ulzhavar Uthaviyagam (farmers' market). He also planted several thousand saplings around his village.

## **Mr P Jayaraman**

8, Main Road,  
Thirukanchipet  
Pondicherry

Educated upto school level (SSLC) Jayaraman ,30 is a social worker from Thirukanchipet village in Pondicehrry . He was working as Volunteer in the Knowledge Centre for about 3 years, guiding all the fellow members of the society to get the maximum benefits from the government on various schemes meant for the dalit community. He directed a good number of students and youth to proper educational, training and employment opportunities.

Jayaraman joined the ‘Sudeshimitran Youth Club’ in his village and started his mission by helping people to get their updated land records from Revenue department and getting bank finance to the SHGs of his area. By becoming a member of the Biocentre Council, he helped the farmers in his area to get technical know how on different agricultural practices. He is now working as a compounder in a private doctor’s clinic and in his spare time he helps students to get computer training in the Knowledge Centre.

**Ms Kathanayagi**

39, Mariamman Koil Street,  
Keezhur Post, Sivarandagam,  
Nettapakkam - via,  
Pondicherry

10<sup>th</sup> Std educated 40 year old Kathanayagi has been actively engaged in a variety of community activities in her coastal village for the past 13 years. She is a Bio-Village Council member and has been identified as a role model for mushroom production by the District Industries of Commerce, Pondicherry. Her work has included forming 23 SHGs, credit linking with nationalized banks, training on accounts maintenance and book-keeping, as well as assisting NABARD to organise enterprise training.

Kathanayagi always insisted that the village SHG men and women should repay the due amount to the banks and facilitated the SHGs to avail government subsidies for animal husbandry. She helped with organizing medical camps and cattle health camps and also enabled deserving women and handicapped persons to get government assistance.



## **Ms V Krishnaveni**

6. Main Road, Melsathamangalam,  
Korkadu (PO), Villiyanur (via),  
Pondicherry, 605 110  
Phone: 0143 2644533

From 1996 onwards 36 year old Krishnaveni who has studied up to 12<sup>th</sup> Std has been working for various social and community activities. She has been actively engaged in training activities as well as in social welfare in her village. She assisted NABARD to organize enterprise training, organized women SHG members to do composite fish culture in community ponds and facilitated the SHGs to avail of Animal Husbandry Department subsidy for dairy development, goat and poultry rearing. She helps pregnant women to get government assistance and also arranges for old age pension, pension for widows and for physical disability assistance.

Krishnaveni protested against an arrack shop in the village and as a member of the education for all movement she assisted in sending school drop-outs back to school and in arranging for renovation of the school premises. She rendered service to the tsunami-affected people of the coastal Karaikal region as well as for relief in Gujarat .

She assisting the Government department to organize medical camps and cattle health camps and was also involved in forming SHGs and providing training on accounts maintenance and book-keeping.

**Ms Lakshmi**

17. Kamarajar Nagar, Keezhur,  
Keezhur (PO), Nettapakkam (via), Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413 2698590

Lakshmi aged 37 is an active Bio-village council member who has been identified as a role model for coir production by the district Industries of commerce, Pondicherry. At the time of the tsunami in 2004 she offered her services for the tsunami affected people of Chidambaram region and also gave coir production training to them for income generation.

As Bio-village council member she is responsible for giving information about council meetings, organizing SHGs and credit linked with banks, and as a member of the tank rehabilitation team, she is involved in water management in her coastal village.

From 1994 onwards Lakshmi has been doing social work including assisting the government department to organize camps for AIDS awareness, polio immunization and filaria control. She has taken initiatives to streamline transportation in her village and is a member of a cultural group that spreads awareness on various issues in the area.

## **Ms S Malarkodi**

15. Saniyasappan koil street,  
Sorapattu Po, Pondicherry

Malarkodi , 45 is 11<sup>th</sup> Std educated and is a Bio Village Council and NABARD VVV club member. She is a role model for successful use of organic biopesticide and she is engaged in facilitating women to adopt organic farming.

From 1996 onwards she has been involved with numerous community activities such as forming SHGs , arranging training in various enterprises, facilitating subsidies for dairy, goat or poultry, assisting with medical camps, facilitating pensions and aid for deserving persons and helping school children.

Malarkodi took the initiative to resolve a communal caste conflict in her village, served the tsunami affected people of neighbouring Karaikal and did relief work for Gujarat.

**Ms A Malarvizhi**

9. Main Road, Kilinji kuppam Po,  
Thirukanchipet, Villianur, Pondicherry  
Phone : 98652 64823

From 1996 onwards 32 year old 9<sup>th</sup> std educated Malarvizhi has been involved with many different community activities in her coastal village. As a Bio Village Council member her work included forming SHGs, credit linking with nationalized banks, training on accounts maintenance and book keeping as well as facilitating the SHGs to avail of government or Animal Husbandry department subsidy for dairy, goat or poultry.

Malarvizhi assisted the Government department to organize medical camps on polio, AIDS awareness and filaria, and as a member in the education for all programme she sent school drop-outs back to school. She also helped pregnant women to get government assistance as well as assisted the government department to give old age pension, widows' pension and physically disabled assistance. She rendered service to the tsunami affected people of Karaikal region and for Gujarat relief.

## **Ms R Murugapathy**

106, Murugan Koil Street,  
Keezh sathamangalam,  
Korkadu (PO), Villianur (Via),  
Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413-3292730

32 year old Murugapathy belongs to a coastal village in Pondichery and has passed 8<sup>th</sup> Std. She has been actively engaged in training activities as well as in social welfare in her village. She assisted NABARD to organize enterprise training, organized women SHG members to do composite fish culture in community ponds and facilitated the SHGs to avail of Animal Husbandry Department subsidy for dairy development, goat and poultry rearing. She helps pregnant women to get government assistance and also arranges for old age pension, pension for widows and for physical disability assistance.

Murugapathy took the initiative to protest against an arrack shop which she succeeded in having shifted outside the village. As a member of the education for all movement she assists in sending school drop-outs back to school and in arranging for renovation of the school premises.

She rendered service to the tsunami-affected people of the coastal Karaikal region as well as for earthquake relief in Gujarat.

**Ms O Rajalakshmi**

14, Mariamman Koil street  
Pillaiyarkuppam village,  
Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413: 2903174

From 1991 onwards 37 year old Rajalakshmi who is 12th Std educated, has been involved with community activities. As a Bio-village council president she organized SHGs and credit linked with banks and has become a role model for accounts management and book-keeping. Her responsibilities include conducting regular Bio-village council meetings and coir production training. Rajalakshmi works with Government departments to organize medical camps for polio immunization, AIDS awareness, filaria control and also cattle health camps. As a member of the tank rehabilitation committee she attends to water management in her village, and also takes an interest in making school drop outs continue their education. She has also been involved in assisting the tsunami- affected people of Chidambaram region when a tsunami struck the coastal area in 2004.

## **Ms B Saraladevi**

54, Pillaiyar koil street, Sandaipudukuppam,  
Suthikeni (PO), Sandaipudukuppam,  
Vazhudavur- (Via),  
Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413-2674349, 2674175

Saraladevi 49 is a 10<sup>th</sup> std educated Bio-village Council member who has been involved with community activities from 2004 onwards. As a member in the tank rehabilitation group, she motivates the women members to do composite fish culture in community ponds and as a member in the education for all programme she helps school children, especially drop-outs.

Saraladevi assisted NABARD to organize enterprise training, formed SHGs, arranged credit linking with nationalized banks, training on accounts maintenance and book-keeping. She facilitates the SHGs to avail of government subsidies for animal husbandry or poultry rearing and assists the Government department to organize cattle health camps.

She also works with the government department to provide old age pension, assistance for pregnant women, widows and the physically disabled , and organizes medical camps on polio eradication, AIDS awareness and filaria control.

**Ms D Saroja**

9, Pudunagar, Mangalam,  
Villiyannur, Pondicherry

From 1993 onwards 53 year old Saroja has been working in different ways for the community. She has taken initiatives like solving community conflicts within the village instead of going to the police station, and protested against the dowry problem in her coastal village.

As a Bio Village Council member, she provided information about council meeting, formed SHGs, arranged credit linking with nationalized banks, arranged training on accounts maintenance and book-keeping and also made sure that the village men and women repaid all overdue amounts to the bank. Saroja has also worked with government departments for medical camps and cattle health camps and for providing assistance to the poor and disabled. She assisted NABARD to organize enterprise training in the village.

As a member of the education for all programme she helped school children. She has also worked for the tsunami affected people of Karaikal region and for Gujarat earthquake relief.



**Ms P Sengani**

36, Mangalam Road,  
Uruvaiyaru  
Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413-2668444

40 year old Sengani is a Biovillage Council member living in Uruvaiyaru a coastal village in Pondicherry. From 1997 onwards she has been involved with different kinds of community activities such as working with the social work department to provide assistance to pregnant women and assisting the Government department to organize medical camps and cattle health camps. An important part of the Bio-village council activities was to organize SHGs and credit linked with the Indian Bank and to ensure that the village men and women repay their dues to the bank. She has also made efforts to streamline the transportation in her village and to renovate the school premises. Through the cultural group to which she belongs she expresses the experiences of the Bio-village.

**Ms G Syamalavathy**

15, Kizhaku Pudunagar,  
Sellipattu (PO), Vambupet,  
Pondicherry  
Phone: 94429 91787

Syamalavathy 37 is a Biovillage Council member living in a coastal village in Pondicherry. From 1999 onwards she has been involved with different kinds of community activities such as working with the social work department to provide assistance to pregnant women and assisting the Government department to organize medical camps and cattle health camps.

She organized SHGs and credit linked with the Indian Bank and ensured that the village men and women repaid their dues to the bank. She has also made efforts to streamline the transportation in her village and to renovate the school premises. She is a member of a cultural group spreading awareness in the villages.

**Ms Thamizhmani**

Nadutheru,  
Pillaiyarkuppam,  
Pondicherry

10 Std educated 52 year old Thamizhmani is an experienced Bio- village council member who has been involved with community activities for the past 15 years. She is a role model for floriculture and vegetable cultivation. In addition, she is a member of the tank rehabilitation group doing service for water management in her coastal village and also assists the Government department to organize medical camps on polio, AIDS and filaria.

At the time of the tsunami in 2004, Thamizhmani gave her service to the tsunami affected people of Chidambaram and Karaikal region.

**Ms K Vijaya**

Kizhaku street,  
Keezhur (PO), Keezhur,  
Pondicherry  
Phone: 0413-2698590

Vijaya, 37 has completed 10<sup>th</sup> Std and has been involved with community activities from 1994 onwards. As a Bio-village council member she organized SHGs in her coastal village and arranged credit linked with banks . She assists the Government department to organize medical camps for polio, AIDS awareness, and filaria prevention as well as cattle health camps. As a member of the tank rehabilitation group in the village she is doing service on water management, and as a member of the school committee, she assists school drop outs to rejoin the school.

After the tsunami in 2004, Vijaya directly rendered service to the tsunami affected people of Chidambaram region, including giving training in coir production for income generation. She is also a member of a local cultural group that spreads awareness to the villagers.

## **Ms Vimala Periandy**

5, Bavani Nagar,  
Veerampattinam,  
pondicherry

Vimala Periandy is a very dynamic lady belonging to a fishing community in Veerampattinam coastal village which is located 21 kms from Pondicherry town. She is aged 45 and has studied upto school level (10th class).

She brought good awareness among fisher women in Pondicherry by emphasizing women's empowerment and gender equity for equal rights on par with men. By nature, fisher women tend to stand behind the men for any action and depend on the menfolk to lead the situation. However Vimala encourages women to act independently without seeking assistance from men. This attitude helped her to form a Federation for fisher women in Pondicherry, which consists of more than 1000 women members from 15 coastal villages. Through the federation she could enlighten the Government and the public through various means like representation through petitions, meeting the higher authorities at the Ministers level, and even through dharna, rail roko and road roko.

Vimala is focusing in many issues such as reservations for women and for fisherfolk community, allocation of a fishing community legislator to be the member of the Ministry in the recent election, growing saline-resistance vegetation in the tsunami hit coastal belt to prevent sea erosion and to withstand future natural disasters in collaboration with the Dept of Forestry , and also to get employment opportunities for women. She conducted fisher women welfare meetings to bring to the notice of the government their problems and needs after disasters like tsunami, such as compensation for losses incurred and rice provisions for each family at the time of ban of fishing by the government.

Vimala is associated with the Knowledge Centre and the SHGs in Veerampatinam through which she brings awareness among women on various micro enterprises and women health.

## **Ms E Arunmoli**

Somesvarapuram, Papanasam taluk  
Thanjavur Dt., Tamilnadu

Born in a traditional agricultural family E.Arunmoli who has completed S.S.L.C was a housewife till she attended a DANIDA- aided training programme conducted by the State Department of Agriculture. By virtue of the interest she evinced in learning new skills and disseminating them among farm women, she was selected as the farmers' discussion group convener of the Farmers Training Centre at Sakkotai.

Arunmoli has been involved with community activities for the past ten years, maintaining a good rapport with Government Departments to help the people in her area to get government concessions. FAO experts who visited the village said the all-women farmers field school which she organized was first of its kind in Asia. She also formed a women's group with members from various communities to cultivate the habit of saving among farm women, while at the same time indirectly encouraging communal harmony among them. Such groups were formed by her even before the SHG concept was popularized. She is associated with the Village Resource Centre of MSSRF at Thirvaiyaru and conveys the benefits it provides to her village. Currently she is learning computer skills and is trying to establish a VKC in her village Somesvarapuram which is located on the banks of river Coleroon.

**Ms K Baladevi**

W/o P. Kannan,  
Kurundi (PO), Kariyapatty (Via),  
Virudunagar (Dist).  
Phone: 04566-250130

K. Baladevi, 32, is an educationist with B.Ed degree. A good leader, she has been involved with community activities for five years and is the president of an SHG group in her village.

She has taken many initiatives in the fields of health and hygiene, as well as in agriculture and economic activity. The members of her SHG group conduct awareness programs on using public toilets, keeping the village streets clean and using clean drinking water, which has brought their village many awards. They also convey fundamental knowledge on AIDS/HIV and on polio eradication.

Baladevi helps the women in her village to open bank accounts, maintain small savings and utilize the savings to create new small enterprises to uplift their economical and social status, and trains farmers in natural agricultural methods.

## **Mr G S Dhanapathy**

1377, Kamban Nagar,  
Rajagopalapuram (po),  
Pudukkottai - 622 003  
Mobile: 94435 93339

Mr. G.S. Dhanapathy, (55), an Organic Farmer with an open university master's degree, has been working for the development of the farming community for the past fifteen years. Through awareness campaigns and training programmes, he shares his expertise on a wide variety of topics related to agriculture, livestock, water harvesting and environmental protection.

Dhanapathy promotes low cost farming methods like vermicompost, pest control with organic pesticides. Using C.Ds or power point presentation he explains crop production technology for several crops including major & minor millets, vegetables and fruit crops.

He practices ancient methods of healing for livestock ailments and disseminates information to farmers on how to prevent infectious diseases of cattle. He also advocates prevention of cruelty to animals. Working with the PWD he has adopted water harvesting technologies, and encourages youth, college students and school students to grow trees and protect the natural environment.

EID Parry arranged for Dhanapathy to undertake organic farming training in Thailand and Singapore. He conducts a number of training programmes for farmers in Pudukkottai district with the help of several institutions such as Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Veterinary University Regional Resource Center (VURRC), Department of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture, Forestry Extension Centre, Department of Animal Husbandry, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, District Rural Development Agency, Department of Health, Rotary Club and NGOs. These services have won him many awards like "Best Organic Farmer", "Best Social Worker" etc., as well as a number of positions of responsibility in Pudukkottai District. Now he is working along with MSSRF for establishing a VKC and acts as a Resource Person for farmers' awareness and training programmes.



## **Mr P Irudhayaraj Duraisingam**

Jayabhavan,  
Sithumoonradaippu (PO),  
Kariapatti (T.K).  
Tamil Nadu - 626 106

32 year old P.Duraisingam hails from a backward village called Sithumoonradaippu in Tamil Nadu. After completing his B.A and B.Ed, he started a youth group to help the poor and ill people in and around his village with the assistance of Madurai Meenakshi Mission Hospital. They have conducted many medical camps including eye camps through Madurai Aravind Eye Hospital. By collecting local funds, his group has helped rural poor children through free distribution of notebooks and study materials.

Duraisingam rendered free service to teach rural illiterates and is now training poor school children through evening coaching classes. He also makes regular visits to sick people in the government hospital. He and his group participate in community activities and celebrations, and with the help of local donors conduct various sports competitions. Local NGOs are also assisted in their awareness rallies and meetings.

**Mr S Karuppasamy**

Arasakulam,  
Kurandi (PO)  
Kariyapatty (TK),  
Virdunagar (Dist)  
Tamil Nadu

Educated up to Higher Secondary, S. Karuppasamy residing at Arasakulam village is a 33 year old competent social worker. An excellent organizer, he has been involved in community activities since 1993, dedicating himself to social reforms in his village.

For the past 9 years, Karuppasamy has worked to remove illiteracy among his people and has also helped them to participate in medical camps conducted by various hospitals. At present he is serving as a village knowledge centre worker.

**Mr S Lenin**

Samiyar Pettai (PO)  
Chidambaram (TK)  
Cuddalore (Dist.)  
Tamil Nadu

After completing 10<sup>th</sup> Std, 19 year old S.Lenin underwent a computer training programme in Cuddalore. Since then he has involved himself in giving computer training to school students in his village which is located along the sea coast of Tamil Nadu, through the local village knowledge centre. He has also worked to spread awareness on health and hygiene among the villagers, including information on Siddha medicine. Environment and water management are his interests, for which he has participated in water awareness campaigns and helped with cleaning the water tank in his village once in two weeks. He also took part in relief work after the tsunami hit the coastal areas in 2004.

Lenin is a committed knowledge worker with a flair for the new technologies that he wishes to promote among his peers. By acquiring newer skills he has enhanced his capacity to help his fellow villagers by collecting and disseminating information and by communicating their developmental concerns.

**Ms S Mahamayee**

W/o. Solaimalai,  
Kurandi (PO),  
Kariyapatty (Via),  
Virudunagar (Dist).  
Tamil Nadu

28 year old S.Mahamayee is good communicator and enthusiastic field worker who is at present a village knowledge worker in her area. She has passed S.S.L.C and is the president of an SHG women's group for the past 4 years. As active social worker, she has been involved with the pulse-polio programme and other health campaigns. Her village has received many awards state-wide as a clean and healthy village.

Mahamayee also served as a volunteer in the "ARIVOZHI IYAKKAM" to help illiterate people to be educated, and with the help of the Panchayat President her group aspires to better development economically and socially.

**Mr C Manikandan**

Main Road  
Konayampattinam  
Thennampattinam (PO)  
Sirkazhi (TK)  
Nagapattinam (Dist.)  
Tamil Nadu - 609 106

C.Manikandan, a 24 year old student pursuing his M.Sc studies in computer sciences through distance education, has been involved with forming youth groups to improve general knowledge and information dissemination in his coastal village. The son of a poor fisherman, he learnt to use the computer at a local computer centre. He then began to engage himself in voluntarily helping fellow villagers to learn computer applications.

Manikandan has been an asset to his village in promoting computer training. His other media skills and commitment to promote new technologies in the villages motivate him to procure appropriate ICT infrastructure in his village. He hopes to manage a village knowledge centre in the future.

**Ms R Muthumari**

Arasakulam,  
Kurandi (PO),  
Kariapatti, Virudunagar (DT)  
Tamil Nadu

R. Muthumari aged 38 years has finished IX Std and is at present working as a village knowledge centre worker with MSSRF. With her good communication skills and field work ability, she served as a catalyst in the polio eradication programme during the past few years she has participated in the NSS camp conducted by SIT college of Kariapatti.

Her other social work in the village includes serving the illiterate people in her community through the literacy campaign “Arivoli Iyakkam” for 2 years as an evening schoolteacher, and helping people to participate in eye camps at Aravind Eye Hospital and Meenakshi Mission Hospital.

**Ms V Seethalakshmi**

Arasakulam,  
Kurandi(PO),  
Kariyapatty(TK)  
Tamil Nadu

V. Seethalakshmi has studied upto XII Std and is serving her most backward village Arasakulam through the literacy programme of Arivoli Iyakkam for the past 10 years. She also served in the Aravind Eye Hospital's Vitamin 'A' plan by distributing vitamin 'A' liquid to children within 24 hours of birth, and also distributed iron tablets to adolescent girls, pregnant and breast-feeding women to help them in family health maintenance.

A good field worker and organizer, she also served for 3 years in the Family Educational Programme for 8 villages. The programme consisted of educating pregnant women and breast feeding women and providing medicines and vaccination. As a result infant birth weight was improved, and there was reduction in infant mortality.

Seethalakshmi teaches in the evening school of 'Valarkalvi Iyakkam' and maintains a village library. At present she is an agricultural project coordinator of Tamil Nadu Govt.

## **Mr V Sethuramalingam**

Arasakulam,  
Kurandi (PO),  
Kariyapatty (TK),  
Virudunagar (Dist)  
Tamil Nadu

V. Sethuramalingam, a hard working and committed 30 year old who has Higher Secondary School education, helps his family as an agriculture worker and serves society as a social worker in Arasakulam his native village.

For the past five years, he has participated in the pulse-polio program for children below five years for the eradication of polio and also helped in the eye and medical camps conducted by the Aravind Eye Hospital and Meenatchi Mission Hospital. Through these camps he has brought better health care to the local people.

Sethuramalingam takes the initiative to co-ordinate with the government Agriculture Department by bringing rural farmers to their agriculture meets and other programs and also participates in the NSS camps conducted by various colleges.



**Mr L Settu**

578, Vaitheshwaran Koil Street,  
Periyar Nagar,  
Karyapatty - Virudanagar

An active and responsible field worker, 33 year old L.Settu has been an enthusiastic social worker since 1993. A native of Orathanad, Thanjavur district, he has an MA degree in Sociology from Annamalai University and Diploma in Agriculture from Gandhigram Rural University.

For nearly three years Settu rendered his service to the Damien leprosy control centre at Nilakkottai that covers an area with 288 villages in Dindigul District. During this period he worked to provide healthcare services to poor rural patients suffering from leprosy, T.B, polio, mental or physical handicaps. Subsequently he was as a field supervisor in the Vitamin A research project conducted by Madurai Aravind Children's Hospital. He has also functioned as a social reformer covering rehabilitation work and conducting awareness and health education programmes for the youth.

In addition, Settu engaged himself in helping rural farmers with training in organic farming methods such as vermicompost and panchakaviya in and around his hometown, while also directing *mahila mandrams* of his area to develop socially and economically by distributing interest free loans among themselves. At present he works as a field supervisor in a family health and development research service foundation in Virudunagar District.

**Mr J Sundar**

Kovalam,  
Kancheepuram District,  
Tamil Nadu

At the age of 23, J.SUNDAR is already a well-known social worker in Kanchipuram district. Hailing from the coastal village of Kovalam, the DME educated young man has been involved with community activities since 2004 in association with a number of organizations such as Dhan Foundation, Rotary Club, Tata Relief Committee, Loyola Outreach etc.

With the help of all these organizations the youth group to which he belongs has distributed boats, outboard engines, nets, catamarans and other requirements to the local fisher community. Along with his group he has also assisted schools with furniture or study materials, and arranged for water and toilet facilities. The poorest children from all communities in his area are provided with school uniforms, footwear and often even school and college fees are paid for especially in the case of orphaned or physically challenged students.

Sundar's other social welfare activities include conducting health camps and awareness programmes and arranging loans for women's SHGs or for micro enterprises development. By organizing the youth groups in his area, he motivates them to work for public interest.

## **Mr P Thangasamy**

Senthankudi,  
Nagaram Post,  
Alangudi Taluk,  
Pudukkottai District,  
Tamil Nadu  
Mobile: 94430 65446

An innovative farmer, 68 year-old P.Thangasamy who has SSLC education, is an organic farmer, practicing ecological agriculture on a long term basis. When he found that conditions were not favourable for viable agriculture, he switched over to tree farming in his land. He has tried the agro-forestry models in his dry land for the past two decades, planting species like jack, mango, neem, subabul etc in the beginning and then successfully introduced important timber species like teak, rosewood and red sandal as well as bamboo. By converting a part of his land as a good wood lot with about 200 trees of economically important species in 25 acres, he has developed his own farm as a model environmental farm.

Every year a large number of scientific workers, NGOs, officers of Agriculture and Forestry Departments as well as many people from the village and visit his farm and learn about the economics and the usefulness of agro-forestry. Due to his continuous effort he has now proved that tree crop is also a cash crop, and has enlightened some co-farmers around his village, making them plant trees along with their agriculture crops to improve their living status and economic conditions.

Thangasamy takes school children in and around his village to his farm on field visits to make them aware of the importance of planting trees to protect the environment. He has a large nursery where he raising seedlings that he distributes generously. This eco-development and tree cultivation work has won him many awards from Rotary, SPIC and other organisations including the Netherlands University. Now he is actively involved in NVA activities serving as a Resource Person for training programmes and for the establishment of a village knowledge centre in his area Keeramanagalam in Pudukkottai District.

## **Ms R Thenmoli**

Ganabayhy agraharam (VIA)  
Papanasam taluk  
Thanjavur Dt  
Tamilnadu

R.Thenmoli is a role model for women in Poonchery, a remote village situated on the banks of River Cauvery, where most of the people are below the poverty line. For the past five years ever since a Farmers' Club was formed supported by NABARD, she has been involved in a variety of activities for the benefit of her community.

Married to an alcoholic who was suspended from government service, SSLC educated Thenmoli had lost hope in the future. However, after undergoing training in goat rearing which is the main occupation for all the farmers of the village, she developed confidence and prompted the women in her village to adopt scientific rearing, which resulted in enhanced income for all. As president of The NABARD aided farmers club she brought the village under the preview of the DOT and made arrangements for phone connections and also a metal road and minibus service for her remote village. Until this initiative was taken by Thenmoli, the village was not connected to the outside world. She also formed a women's group among the farm women to cultivate the habit of saving. Taking the lead for creation of SHGs in her area, and is now associated with the VRC of MSSRF at Thiruvaiyaru.

## **Mr Gabbar Shing Rawat**

Gware Malla

Gairsain (P.O), Chamoli (Dist.)

Uttranchal - 246 428

Gabbar Shing Rawat, 24, was brought up in a small agricultural village surrounded by dense forests in Garhwal hills at 5000ft in the Himalayas. His parents are farmers.

While studying in school Gabbar Shing used to attend Bal Panchayat - a children's organisation promoting child rights in the village, and would lead the group to mobilise people to talk about various issues affecting children. He is now studying in undergraduate course in Arts and using his excellent communication skills acquired while working as volunteer community communicator, he participates in various campaigns to address child rights in his villages.

Using a variety of interactive media like street plays and songs he led his group to campaign on health and environmental issues in many villages. Since the year 2003, he has been continuously involved in various communication programmes for addressing development issues.

After joining as a community reporter in 2005, he has turned into a young journalist writing about his village problems. His articles contribute to the open Knowledge Network powered by open enrich software. Lately he has been exposed to radio and internet, and is now undergoing training to use these mass media for the benefit of the people.

## **Ms Padma Rawat**

Paturi

Gairsain (P.O)

Chamoli (Dist.)

Uttaranchal - 246 428

20 year old Padma Rawat belongs to an agricultural family in a rural community of Garhwal Hills in the Himalayas. Born and brought up in a small village surrounded by dense forest at the height of 5000 ft. above sea level, she is now studying an undergraduate course in Arts.

Padma possesses excellent communication skills that she has acquired while working as a volunteer community communicator. She participated in various campaigns to address child rights in her villages and more particularly on immunization and sanitation. Through a variety of interactive media like street plays and songs she campaigned for universal birth registration in 43 villages to ensure not a single child goes unregistered and unnoticed. Similarly she lead a campaign on health and environmental issues in 33 village. Using her good community leadership qualities, she formed BAL PANCHAYAT - a children organisation promoting child rights in the village, which she now heads.

After undergoing training and being exposed to radio and Internet to hone her communication skills, she has turned into a young journalist writing about her village's problems and addressing development issues. Her articles contribute to the open Knowledge Network powered by open enrich software.

## **Ms Uma Dhaundiyal**

Rikholi

Gairsain (P.O)

Chamoli (Dist.)

Uttranchal - 246 428

Uma Dhaundiyal ,24 , is the daughter of farmers hailing from a rural community living in the hilly and forested Garhwal area of Uttaranchal. A second year B.A. student , she possesses good community leadership skills in organising people to talk about health, environment, social concerns and on various issues affecting children. Her special areas of competency are functional literacy and health.

Since 2000, Uma has been active in these fields. When she was in school, she used to attend Bal Panchayat - a children's organisation promoting child rights in the village. She is still associated with this organization, through which she conducts campaigns in numerous villages on universal birth registration, immunization and various health problems like diarrhoea, using the interactive medium of street plays and songs. She has also participated in campaigns to address child rights in her village.

Uma joined as a community reporter with SBMA-Plan Gairsain, Uttaranchal. Her articles contribute to the open Knowledge Network and she writes about problems and issues in her village. Lately she has been exposed to radio and Internet, and is now acquiring new skills to use these mass media for the benefit of the people.

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## **Organisations that Nominated Candidates for Selection**

Acharya NG Ranga, KADAPA, Andhra Pradesh

Assam Riot Victims Unit Trust Society (ARVUTS), Barpeta, Assam

Athwaas, Delhi

Family Health and Development Research Service Foundation, Kariyapatti

ITC IBD, Karnataka

Jammu and Kashmir Voluntary Health Association of India, Srinagar, Kashmir

M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai

Maharashtra Foundation U.S. Initiative, Mumbai

National Informatics Centre, Diphu, Assam

National Informatics Centre, Goleghat, Assam

National Informatics Centre, Guwahati, Assam

National Informatics Centre, Janjgir Champa, Chhattisgarh

National Informatics Centre, Lakhimpur, Assam

National Informatics Centre, Mangaldoi, Assam

National Informatics Centre, Silchar, Assam

NEEDS, Deoghar, Jharkhand

OneWorld South Asia, New Delhi

Polymer Educational Society, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh

SFAC, Assam

Socio-Economic Development Organization (SEDO), Dhemaji, Assam

World Food Programme, Orissa





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