



CHILD AID UK NEWSLETTER

No 5

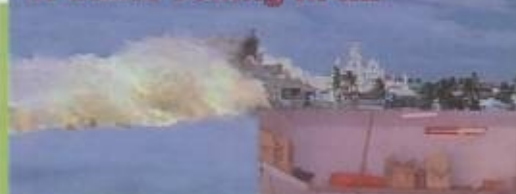
WHAT'S NEW FROM TAMIL NADU ?

A Difficult Time, for which we can only apologise ...

... we usually try and get out a full colour Newsletter, at least Annually. Last year we didn't manage to do so - so mid year we will try and bring you fully up-to-date on everything which has been going on in our, and indeed your, world since our last Newsletter. So what have we been doing ... these pictures will give you a few hints :

26th December 2004

It came rolling in



January 2005
all washed
out, but now
back in
business



It really
looked like
a war zone !



Only the stronger houses
were left standing



David Pryke of
Child Aid UK presenting
the cheque to build
the boats, with
B Nagarajan of Child
Aid India Trust.

... November 2005
four boats
were fully
equipped ...



... at last we can get
back to work

At last,
the village
shop
reopens



... with Engines

November
2005
the deal
is sealed



... and nets

On December 26th 2004, one of the worst calamities even to befall so many people at one time, happened across the Indian Ocean ; a great undersea earthquake created one of the largest Tsunami's ever seen. It engulfed islands, land disappeared - never to be seen again and the entire world could not believe what had happened. It was as though it was a fictional story, impossible to believe, but believe the world had to, and massive aid relief was undertaken.

At the end of January 2005 - only a few weeks after the event, Child Aid UK flew out to the tip of India to see if they could help. What was seen was as if one had entered a War Zone. Stories of devastation were everywhere...

It was a matter of how on earth can our small Charity do anything sufficiently substantial to be meaningful ! We decided that the best way to help, would be to get some of the villagers back into gainful employment - they told us they wanted boats ; they wanted to help themselves. We returned to the UK, spoke with some of our charitable supporters and also with many of you, our sponsors. We raised sufficient enough money to make a real difference.

We got over a dozen families back into helping themselves and in the process opened up an educational programme in the area since many of the children had lost parents and were no longer able to continue with their school studies.

How did they help themselves ? Well most were fishermen, so we purchased some boats - but since boats were large we insisted that three families operated each boat and that the boats remained the property of Child Aid India Trust. In this way we managed to retain an interest in the families and were secure in the knowledge that the boats did not get 'lost' ! We also helped a local baker back into business, as well as a grocer.

over >

..... Small projects, but a big, very big, help.

Our final task has been to help some of the children who have lost mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, to survive in the new, more alone, world in which they now find themselves. Their new guardians simply would not have the financial resources to continue such a child's education, so this is where Child Aid India Trust's Tsunami funds are trying to help.

Many of these children are senior school children who would like to continue their education, but, quite simply, now find it impossible to do so. Child Aid India Trust has opened a small computer training college away from the disaster areas. The children will come to this college to study for a government recognised computer certificated course. The children will have an intensive computer course all paid for by Child Aid India Trust's Tsunami fund. This will include accommodation, food, travel and the course tutoring.

Eight children will start on the programme, thereafter we intend a further eight and so on ... all those selected will return with a qualification which will see standing a better chance to obtain a job, and gaining a worthwhile career, contributing in their own right, **but most important, having hope for a better future.**

A Computer Expert to help students gain ...



Tsunami Relief working together

Child Aid UK's activities didn't end with the Tsunami.

We started a very adventurous project in one of the small villages around Vandavasi.



A new discovery for one village

Radha is happy with her family's toilet So is

Radha After Sponsorship standing in front of the newly built toilet

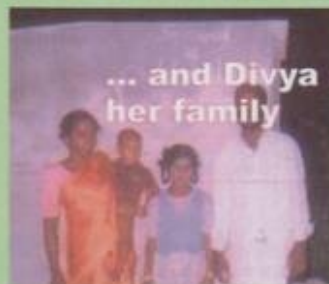
To us it probably doesn't sound much at all, but ask yourselves one question, where do Indian village families undertake their toilet? We don't really think about things like this, do we? Well, the answer is simple, in the field next door to their village! One hundred people in the village! You can see it starts to become a problem and it is something we really don't like to talk about. So one delightful Sister decided to do something about it ... lets build toilets for our villagers was her battle cry ...



..... Sr Lima Josephine



Joseph and his family ...



... and Divya and her family



.. and so is ... Little Sofana

... it will be more hygienic and cut down on many of the problems villagers have because of bad hygiene. But Sister Lima needed financial help, this came from Child Aid and Child Aid UK's friends. A communal one? No, who would clean it? So the project was that each house, village hut, would have its own toilet - OK, not a flush toilet system - water is far too scarce for that; a village with their own toilets was a way of eradicating bad health ... and within a few months of the first sixty being constructed, outbreaks of diarrhea and tummy problems virtually disappeared. Now everyone wants their own toilet ...! To date we have built over sixty toilets ...but with the Fellowship of St John helping, the tally of toilets is now into the 100s.

to us it is nothing, but to them, it is ... almost ... everything



India



The land of extremes

Where in the world would you see cows roaming busy city streets ?



Where in the world would you see traffic so dense (maybe the M25) travelling at life defying high speeds (certainly not the M25) going, maybe somewhere, but the visitor would be understandably unsure ? Where in the world, if the road is not wide enough to over-take, the driver uses the pavement ? Yes, this is India ; it seems chaos ? Well it is, but this is city life in India's major cities.

Our latest visit was with a Child Aid sponsor. It was the first time this sponsor had visited India and although it was explained that India was a world 'all its own', the reality took some while to sink in !

Travelling to the villages, along more substantial roads, one passed homes of plastic, tin and cardboard and if you have travelled in third world countries, this was not unique, the contrast did not however end there, along these major roads, often motorways, you saw women road sweepers, tidying up dirt and grime from kerb to kerb with brooms, yes, I said brooms ! Novel, but their own homes had no water, no sanitation, no facilities whatsoever, these road sweepers were living in deplorable conditions, yet swept motorways with brooms ! We arrived in the villages where most live in 'thatched' cottages - well that is what some people call them, in reality they are mud huts with banana leaf roofs.

Yes they are weatherproof, well that's assuming a monsoon doesn't hit the village ; recently one area had a few days of heavy rain, the first thing that



happened was that the walls of some of the villagers' homes were washed away - and roofs do not stay up without walls ! Get the point ? So, better call in the builder - "**the what**", the casualty asks ? What they actually do is spend the next three to four months rebuilding their home. Dramatic monsoons, like those some countries experience, don't actually happen in Tamil Nadu, at least not so for the last ten years ; lucky, you may say, well not exactly, rain brings water to drench the farmers' crops and with the staple diet in these villages being rice, rice needs water.



In most rice growing countries, a good Paddy Field could turn around three crops a year. In Tamil Nadu you are very lucky to get one. Fish ? Well fish need water to survive and although there are a number of rivers in Tamil Nadu, without rain all that is left of the rivers are the river beds. You will actually see trees growing in many of the river beds, not to mention many homesteads - why worry about the river, its never there and is fairly safe to live there ; if the rains do come, they rarely come in such force to wash the houses away. Then there are the farmers' cows, all they need is some grass, but from where ? All this does make life difficult in Tamil Nadu.

We thought we should tell you what life is like in these village areas ; when we visit we really don't see the immensity of the problems, simply

because we are there for such a short time, live there and you will get to appreciate the difficulties. Then there are the social problems, what is the point of having an all girl family, we Dads might say great, pretty girl on Dad's arm when they are old enough to be that treasured possession - although, of course, you wouldn't have anyone to play football with - but in Indian rural life, and elsewhere in India, girls are not treasured possessions ; in India girls are of little value, you have to pay to get them off your hands, married and they are not as strong as boys in the fields, so value ? They are only of value to produce boys ! Now I have painted a real picture of Indian life, so how does your sponsorship help ? Simply, the only way to solve most of these problems is via education. The children of tomorrow must be in a position to obtain a worthwhile job, they can only do this with education. But families can only allow their children to obtain that education if they have some incentive to do so, your sponsorship helps ; a modest part of your sponsorship fee is provided as a family 'bribe', which the family loses if the child does not attend school for any other reason than illness. It works and you help by giving your child a massive gift of 'his or her' future.

Nandri
Is their word for
'Thank you'.

But 'Thank You', is not only something directed to you, our sponsor, it is also to many of our helpers on the ground, without their help, everything we do would come to nothing. The Grace & Compassion priory in Tiruvannamalai is, and we hope will continue to be, one of our focal points. Sr Inigo has an immensely tough task, but when you look at what she and her Sisters have done to date - a creche, a handicrafts school, a full scale hospital, an old peoples' home and fully operational farm, you begin to realise that their requests are all about helping others. On this last visit we were told that they were trying to buy a respirator, why ? Well, quite simply, they can do much, but sometimes not enough and have to move their patient to a bigger hospital, in transit a respirator is an essential part of travel equipment.

So, our next project is to see how far we can help them to acquire this life saving piece of equipment.

* * *

Here are some of your sponsored children

can you find your child ?

All are from Tiruvannamalai and surrounding villages



... And here are a few more from Madrapatu



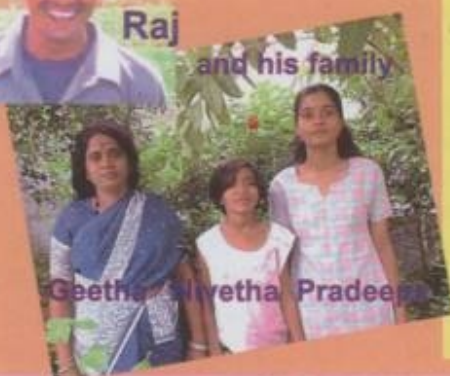
What is Child Aid India Trust ?

Child Aid UK now has a sister charity in India, Child Aid India Trust, CAIT, Why ? Well it is all a little complicated ; to work in India you need to be approved by the Indian Government, but to date we have been working through accredited organisations, however, Child Aid UK wants to manage its own affairs in India, it wants to ensure that you, our sponsors, get as much information about your sponsored child as possible. We also want to ensure that your funds are dispensed according to your wishes, to do all this we need representation in India ... It has taken a long while, but hopefully within weeks we should be totally and officially accredited. We should probably introduce you to Raj. Raj is married, a Hindu from Tamil Nadu and has two delightful daughters who speak good English. Raj has been working for us for many years. We have appointed him a Trustee of CAIT and he has agreed to devote his time to making CAIT a success. Raj is 'our man on the ground', he works closely with the Sisters in Grace & Compassion and ensures that your sponsorship funds are spent wisely. To get Government accreditation we worked closely with Chennai lawyers, **Surana & Surana**, an excellent law firm who not only are excellent lawyers, but who also undertake charitable work of their own. CAIT will shortly have its own small office in Tiruvannamalai ; for Raj this is a new and exciting venture, at last we shall be able to provide you with much much more information about your sponsored child - and what he or she hopes for their future.



Raj

and his family



Geetha Nivetha Pradeep



Child Aid UK, 1 Virginia Place, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 1AE

Telephone : 01932 588880 e-mail : childaid@btinternet.com

web site : www.childaid.org.uk

