

LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION



THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

**PARTICIPATORY PILOT STUDY DONE WITH COMMUNITIES
TO DESIGN CFCD INTERVENTION**

Report by
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Resource Centre for Participatory Development Studies - RCPDS, an offshoot of its parent organisation called SPEECH (Society for Peoples Education and Economic Change), started its mission in 2000. Our initial intervention was in the area of building participatory capacity with communities and local NGOs to effectively respond to the emerging needs that retard development processes. There is an independent Management committee and Board of directors exclusive for RCPDS to manage the affairs of development intervention. The key concerns of RCPDS include child development, community mobilisation and capacity building of marginalised sections such as Dalits, Adivasies and their rights over natural resources from rights perspective. Use of participatory approaches in community mobilization and participation is one of the great strength of the organization.

Objectives of RCPDS :

- To undertake projects those are aimed at poverty reduction and protective to ensure child rights in nature with community participation.
- To expose field level functionaries from both formal and informal sector to participatory approaches with appropriate emphasis on attitude and behavior.
- To create linkage and dialogue forums for local perceptions and plans to find place into the mainstream Panchayats / Block / District Plans.
- To scale up the use of participatory approaches as a mode of interaction with communities and to create appropriate dialogue space for the vulnerable.
- To effectively respond to emergency situation and restore life normalcy of the victims by way of development intervention, capacitating and psychological intervention.
- To build capacity among field functionaries for transferring skills to community members for initiating projects articulating needs and developing self monitoring systems by federating grassroots organisations.
- To undertake action research activities on field based interventions and social concerns to feed into national and International agendas.
- To promote networks around key development issues to strengthen advocacy and solidarity processes thereby influence policy frame work.
- To organize workshops and learning exchange programs for middle level management staff, community representatives and panchayat leaders.

Non negotiables for RCPDS

As development organization RCPDS believe in keeping at pace with the following thrust areas as non negotiable in its mandate. There is a clearly spelt out policy guidelines for gender equity, disaster response, child rights, stag management and accounting procedures. Thrust areas include Child rights, Gender equity issues, Social Discrimination, Eco friendly environment and HIV/AIDS. Whatever development intervention we propose, the above mentioned non negotiable will be the guiding scale against which the projects are to be assessed.

The philosophy of the organisation is based on the basic Christian belief of Christ in action for the poor as perceived by the founding team. Also we believe that development process must be initiated from within the community, it cannot be provided from outside. The role of outside organisations should be one of a facilitator enabling people to realize and release their own potential to help themselves. RCPDS believes that unless the inter-related components that combine to inhibit development are tackled, both at the local and institutional level, sustainable solutions to poverty reduction and improved quality of life will not be achieved. It is only when sufficient acceptance for change is generated at the top that locally led initiatives can become self sustaining and replicable. To assist in this process and in order to avoid confrontation and alienation of those sections within the village who may feel threatened, the organisation ensures that sufficient attention is given to working with and fostering relationships and contacts with these groups.

RCPDS carried out numerous Participatory Rural Appraisal workshops throughout India for both the government and NGOs, and several PRA workshops in Africa and other Asian countries, the organisation has developed an internationally recognised expertise in PRA methodologies.

Partnership with KNH

In response to the ravage created by the killer waves of tsunami, RCPDS rushed to the worst affected district of Nagapattinam and involved in rescue operations. Later in partnership with KNH, RCPDS is involved not only in relief operations with humanitarian aid but also with rehabilitation processes. Participatory processes and involvement of the victim, especially dalit and marginalised is ensured right from the relief stages. With KNH support around 2500 families were recovered from the disaster shock with systematic intervention of counselling, stress release, child

survival, ensuring child rights, support to orphan and semi orphan children, assist single mothers and support with economic rebuilding processes. Along side strong community based organisations in the form of self help groups and federations were initiated and nurtured to ensure appropriate institutional arrangement to safeguard the interests of the vulnerable and to facilitate sustainability of recovery plus disaster preparedness.

Having responded to the disaster situation with humanitarian concern, RCPDS decided to return back its main stream activities with specific child focus and to work with its original development framework of child rights protection, especially children in difficult situation. The work that is carried out in tsunami affected partner communities is gradually handed over to SPEECH, the parent organisation of RCPDS, since SPEECH has long term development intervention plans to continue with Nagapattinam area in partnership with Christian Aid.

RCPDS made an initial survey using its earlier information and secondary data review of vulnerable pockets in Virudunagar districts which is gray marked by the development index of Government of Tamilnadu. The level of social discrimination, poverty level, food insecurity, MMR and IMR, educational status of children and above all children falling victim to working situation made us to make detailed inquiry into the socio cultural practices of the remote villages of Narikudi and Tiruchuli blocks which scores very high on all the above said inequalities and child/human rights violations. Our initial concept note was well accepted by KNH, who offered their wholehearted support to make a detailed participatory assessment of the situation that retard the child development processes from overall community perspective.

Participatory Rural Appraisal:

PRA is a family of approaches which constantly emphasis on revisiting the attitude and behaviour of the facilitator who strive to induce participation, which is a empowering process of the weaker and vulnerable to articulate their needs/situation, stumbling blocks and aspirations. Thus PRA approach is backed by a set of tools which serve as catalysts in facilitating the involvement process. This approach does not stop at one point or it is neither a one off activity but an ongoing process. This could be used at various levels of the project or development cycle. PRA is both a philosophy (that outsiders need to learn about the situation from the insiders – local communities,

and that insiders can analyse their own problems) and a series of tools for carrying out participatory and qualitative development process. The key and unique feature of PRA is its scope for triangulation. Data generated from the field is carefully and jointly analysed by locals along with the facilitator (often multi-disciplinary team) to iron out the gaps as well accept field realities from local perception.

Tools Used in PRA facilitation process:

Participatory Mapping:

Local adults from the target villages drew and colored on the ground with minimum interference and instruction by us - facilitators. In addition, great play is made of the issue of 'who holds the stick'. The person who holds the stick talks about what is most important to them. Villagers including children and women used local materials, such as sticks, stones, grasses, wood, small cards, cigarette packets, tree leaves, colored sands and soils, rangoli powder to express their experiential knowledge about their habitat and their surrounding. Pens and papers are media that outsiders are familiar with. Use of external material limits their real expression and allows distortion of information. As maps take shape, more people become involved, and they went on contributing and making changes to the initial diagram. While the mapping was in progress, since the respondent crowd was more in number one of our facilitator went with a bunch of community members to go round the village as part of the transect walk, which is a tool in PRA basket. This process allowed cross checking and validating of the info generated on the mapping. This inter linkage between the tools of PRA allows space for triangulation.

2. Seasonal Calendars

Seasonal diagramming is a visual analytical tool used in PRA method to better understand the seasonal variation over a period of months or seasonal cycle or operational turnover. This tool provides scope for the facilitator to jointly study and analyse the sociological factors associated with natural resources, access of the dalit families over the same, their livelihood strategies over a period to time and occupational pattern. This diagram/tool was focused more to understand the issues from local perspectives on types of occupational opportunities, investment pattern, food security, migratory pattern and coping mechanism during seasonal variation.

3. Linkages with various institutions:

Venn or Chappathi diagram is a tool that is applied to study the level of access and control from local perspective over child rights areas by children, land and water related services, health system, social discrimination redresses, and other associated formal and informal institutions. The size of the circle denotes the level of importance, local's attribute to a given institution and the distance from the centre denote the level of access or usability of such an institution. Facilitator used this tool by drawing two Venn diagrams to compare their linkages before 10 years with various institutions associated with basic livelihoods and at present. As part of the process, participants analyzed the reasons and possible factors for such a change in the light of the diagram.

4. Cropping Pattern:

A diagram was drawn to understand their cropping pattern and reasons for the changes over a period of time in wet, dry and garden land in the near by areas as well their employment potential as wage earners or daily wage agri-coolis. The crops in each type of land and the quantum of cultivation were analyzed and explained. Some of the crops, which they cultivated ten years back, have disappeared completely from the scene linked to nutritional value and food security given the seasonal variations. Analysis of this information helped the facilitator to further probe into changes in food practices, land use pattern, possible reason for change, etc.

5. Semi-Structured Interviewing:

This is guided interviewing and listening in which only some of the questions and topics were predetermined, and questions arise during the interview. The interviews appeared informal and conversational, but were actually carefully controlled and structured. New avenues of questioning were pursued as the dialogue developed in the process. This tool is considered as a heart of PRA since is used in support all other visual tools to facilitate discussions.

6. Direct Matrix:

This versatile method confirms the value for learning from local people of their categories, criteria, choices and priorities. Ranking and scoring means placing something in order and reveal differences within a population. It helps to identify main problems or preferences of local

communities and the criteria used in making such a decision. There are different sorts of ranking – pair wise ranking, preference ranking, matrix scoring, direct matrix ranking, etc. In using pair wise ranking, items of interest are compared pair by pair, informants being asked which is preferred of the two, and why. What is good and bad about each? Matrix ranking and scoring takes criteria for the rows in a matrix and items for columns, and people fill in the boxes for each row. The items may be ordered for each of the criteria

7. Problems and Impacts:

Problems associated with health, basic rights of the child, social discrimination and livelihood in rows and impacts in columns were listed out and score was given to each column according to the perception of local community and ranked finally. The impacts were standardized and problems were identified as exist in the village across various sections. All related problems such as lack of schooling, drinking water, absence of health services, public distribution system, lack of skills, social acceptance, lack of employment opportunities, etc., were identified as exist in the village. These problems had become the cause for marginalization, existence or growing child labor scenario, chronic illness, increasing food insecurity, lack of participation in public life, communal problem, lack of self confidence, etc. They ranked the problems according to their preference.

Members of the PRA Team:

The field level PRA team was guided by Dr John Devavaram, Director of RCPDS with conceptual design and initial orientation to village level facilitators and field staff. Actual process of the exercises/use of tools with communities was led by Mr Nirmal Raaja and Mr Arunodayam Erskine. In each of the study villages around 60 to 75 local members (women, men and children) participated in preparing the out put diagram constantly facilitated with probing questions and semi structured interviews by the field facilitators. The facilitators made night halt in all the study villages to build close rapport and mutual learning process in a trust building manner. The team also attempted to develop locally acceptable indicators for future monitoring (which is not fully done but initiated) concerning the status of all children, including girl children, children belonging to marginalized groups, children with disabilities, children born out of wed lock, children who are out of school and working situation.

General overview of the Taluk/proposed working villages

Tiruchuli is located 22 km west of Virudunagar, which is the head quarter of the Virudunagar district. RCPDS working villages are at a radius of 15 km from Tiruchuli town, where our field office is located. The major communities of this area are Thevar, Nayakkars, Konars (all backward communities) and Dalits. Of this Thevars are dominant and generally hold decision-making power. The status of women is comparatively low but within family set up normally women are given opportunity to decide on internal affairs, but ultimately men are the decision makers. The major economy of the community revolves around rain-fed agriculture, which often fails due to acute drought and consecutive monsoon failure. In terms of religion only 5% of the families belong to Christian, 7% Muslim and the rest belong to Hindu. There is a Lutheran Church based at Tiruchuli town which has got extension ministry and rural prayer houses in few of our working villages.

Land holding among backward and very few of the dalit communities range from 0.5 to 3 acres, does not make big difference in their socio-economic status. Social atrocities on dalit communities are subtle and still exist in most of the target villages. These villages are remote and deprived of many basic facilities that seldom reach the inhabitants. Children walk through fields and kuttcha roads for two to five kilo meters to access either the bus/transport or basic education and health facilities. Social discrimination in schools on dalit children is a common scene.

Virudunagar District is known for fire and match works, textile and spinning mills, and printing press above all the prevalence of child labourers. There are number of factories, spinning mills and printers available in the District. It creates high labour demand. Working conditions in these industries are also appalling; with adolescent children frequently forced to work for more hours and cramped in dark sheds with little ventilation.

The child labour contributes a lot to these industries to gain profit. The children easily work from early hours of the day until it is dark with the chemicals and under the hazardous situation. In most cases adolescent girls are made to work on double shift which takes them as long as the mid night. Social security is a very big question for these girls.

There are 18 medium-sized textile, weaving and dyeing industries, which employ lot of adolescent children specially, girls. These mills depend on children from this area since they are experienced as well from the same caste group on contract basis by paying advance to their parents. Poverty and vulnerability of the families make them to fall victims of the available situation. This results in desperate denial of child rights as well sexual assault on children at their early age.

Basic facilities for protected water supply, health and sanitation situation are appalling. Invariably women walk 3 to 5 kms to fetch one pot of water. Working for long hours in the match and fire industries workers are susceptible to many respiratory, waterborne and skin problems. Most of the children, especially girl children, stop schooling once they attain the age of 10 and assist their parents in making matchbox drawers at their homesteads. Later they slowly enter the factories against the loans taken by their parents in their working spot.

Specific village reports/outputs from PRA
MELENDAL VILLAGE
Tiruchuli Block, Virudunagar District

Date PRA sessions conducted: February 2007

PRA sessions facilitated by : RCPDS field staff led by Mr. Nirmal Raaja
Report compiled – Dr John Devavaram

Sessions participated by – children, SHG members, traditional leaders, PRI members and general men groups

Melendal is located 10kms towards northeast of Tiruchuli town and 8 kms from RCPDS field office. The village is hundred percent habituated by dalits. The PRA team initially facilitated a village social mapping through which the following information has been generated. The participants had drawn their village mapping starting from the village temple and gradually progressed to cover all individual house holds. By the time they finished their map and started to super emboss the details they identified space constraints and started preparing individual cards for each of the households. Thus the following consolidated information is culled out from individual cards produced by the local community and processed by various age segments of the same.

Total No of Houses – 167 (Pucca houses – 45; tiled houses – 83; colony houses 30 and thatched roof with mud walls 9).

Total population – 633

0 -5 years	male 29 and female 23
5+ - 14 years	male 68 and female 55
14 + - 18 years	male 26 and female 27
18 + - 45 years	male 159 and female 155
Above 45 +	male 42 and female 49

No. of women headed households – 25 (widows 23 and separated 2)

School going strength - 161

Balwadi/creche level	– male 20 ; female 12
Primary school level	– male 30; female 40
Middle school level	- male 15; female 17
High school level	- male 22; female 9
Hr. secondary level	- male 6; female 6
Higher studies various courses	– male 16 and 9 female

The drop out rate of children from primary to higher secondary level is worked out at 39.7% or 82 individual children. Current level of child labourers in the village accounts for 13 (male 7 and female 6)

Children with special need/status -	Orphan/semi orphan	male 8; female 11
	Physically challenged	male 4; female 3
	Children below 8 with severe malnourishment	18
	Children with second degree malnourishment	12
	Children with third degree malnourishment	7
	Still born and children at birth	4
	Mothers died in pregnancy	7

Health scenario of the village:

The PRA team also applied Resource mapping to generate information related to basic health services and their accessibility to the vulnerable, livelihood pattern and options etc.

The government sub centre is located 5kms away from the village and the staff concerned attends the center only twice a week. Official Primary health centre for the village is located at M. Reddiyapatti village which is 18 kms away from the village. But for practical purposes local access the Narikudi PHC which is only 6kms from their village. The Government General Hospital is located at Tiruchuli which is 10 kms away from their village. The nearest bus station/stop and mobility tracks are two kms away and people, especially the sick need to be lifted by shoulders to reach the bus station/stop. There are only four trips of bus services available during the day, which irregular too.

In terms of nutrition supplement at the balwadi/crèche the organizer is from nearby village and from higher caste. Thus supply of nutrition supplement is also irregular which contribute to sustain the mal nourishment. Also there is no structure for balwadi and children use the church corridor to spend their day at the balwadi.

Basic drainage and waste disposal system do not exist in the village, for the village being dalit habitat and placed in one corner of the panchayat. Protected water supply is made through overhead tank and pumped from bore hole. But the supply system is irregular and the habitants greatly depend on local pond/tank for common water usage. Also there is a hand pump outside the village boundary with potable water.

Livelihood options and pattern:

There are about 68 acres of rain fed red soil land owned by 46 families and 80 acres of wet land owned by 78 families. Of these 37 families own piece of land in both wet and dry lands. Thus

21% of the population own both wet and dry lands and are dependent on agri allied activities. 9% of the population own exclusive dry land ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 acres and 24% of the population own exclusive wet land ranging from 0.5 to 2 acres. Thus the rest of 46% or 78 families are landless and are greatly dependent on land and agri allied activities including cattle rearing.

There are about 12 families (individuals) who work in electricity board as helpers and contract labourers. 2 members work as highways helpers, 2 members work as primary school teachers and 2 members work in textile industries. 10 families move as migrants in brick making industries in Manamadurai. (Nearby district) Apart from this there are about 18 girl adolescent children who work as contract labourers in the nearby textile mills and in sweet shops in Maharashtra.

Women earn Rs.40/- per day and male earn Rs.50/- per day in agri allied occupation which is seasonal (approx 6 months) and the rest of the period the women are engaged in charcoal making and wood cutting.

Internal and External Linkages to the village:

Venn diagramming tool from within PRA basket was used to better understand the linkages, both internal and external, to the village community. (diagram enclosed)

The villages are predominantly Christians and attribute greater importance to the church within their village. Also linkages with the primary school run by TELC church are given importance, with a note that the school being private not many of the government schemes such as SSA, school maintenance, etc. The women self help groups initiated by RCPDS are prioritized for the groups have strong linkage with banks, government department and address issues through their panchayat. The evening centre run by RCPDS is seen as important for it respond to the educational needs of children. PRI representatives and Panchayat in general is viewed with lower importance for there is not many ward members or leaders from dalit community and no schemes or importance to issues addressed by the panchayat.

They prioritize the health sub centre but under value the services for reasons of the health workers not attending to the needs of the local community. Road access and transport system attracted a lot of discussion for the community felt the bus timing do not match the school timing of children and due to limited operations the rush and safety level of children traveling by the bus is regretted. Public distribution system does not function well and ration supply do not reach them in time.

Issues and possible strengths and weaknesses as analyzed by the community themselves

The PRA team and local respondent later presented the outputs from various above mentioned tools to the community in a joint sitting and facilitated the group/local community (children, women and men) to process the data as well prioritize the most pressing needs using matrix and triangulation process:

Issues	Reasons as identified by the community	Strengths of the community as perceived by the locals	Weakness of the community as perceived by the local	Source from PRA data/tool
<p>Education</p> <p>1.1 Balwadi/crèche for children below five years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no permanent structure to run classes. - Safety, security and service level is very low - The organisor and care taker is from upper caste and do not care for the dalits. <p>Due to irregular services children do not stay in the balwadi but go only to receive mid-day meals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are about 52 children at the age of 0-5 - There is village common land where there could be new construction of balwadi - There are about 2 well functioning SHGs formed by RCPDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issues related to panchayat elections and weak link - dalit positioning within the overall panchayat profile - lack of initiative by village elders 	<p>Social Mapping; Resource mapping; Venn diagramming and semi structured interviewing.</p>

<p>Primary schooling</p> <p>2.1 Basic facilities</p> <p>2.2 recreation and play facilities</p> <p>2.3 toilet and sanitary facilities</p>	<p>School structure is very old and is leaking during rainy seasons</p> <p>The school structure is one hall which is divided into five classrooms</p> <p>There are only two teachers to handle five classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is no play area/ground for the school - no play equipments in the school - no special teacher or guide for play improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are about 70 children at the primary level - There are government subsidy schemes to support school education at the panchayat level - Parent – Teacher association is functional at the school. - There is private open space around the school which is currently used by children - Space available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government aid and other benefits do not reach because the local school is run by private management. (TELC) - Parent – Teachers association do not function properly and do not met regularly - no perspective or consideration of recreation and games as need among the stakeholders concerned - no responsibility or clarity on roles of PTA or community or teachers - Because it is private management, the school 	<p>Social mapping, Venn diagram and resource mapping</p> <p>Resource mapping and SSI</p> <p>Resource Map, SSI</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No toilet or urinal facilities - No provision for protected water supply 	<p>within the school premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are schemes within government to address this issue 	is not considered under government schemes	
<p>3. Middle and higher studies</p> <p>3.1 distance/accessibility</p>	<p>The nearest school is in 10 kms distance</p> <p>Only one bus service across the village and during peak hours child safety is a problem</p> <p>Nearest bus stop is 1.5 kms away from the village through rough roads.</p> <p>Safety of girl children return from school is an issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest of parents to send their children to higher education - SHGs within the village which deal with common issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strained relationship with PRI due to election dispute - Division within the village – whose responsibility is this? 	Venn diagram and SSI
<p>3.2 limitations with hostel facilities</p>	<p>SC hostel is located only in Tiruchuli which</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest of parents to send their children to higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government policy on change of religion. 	SSI and Venn diagram

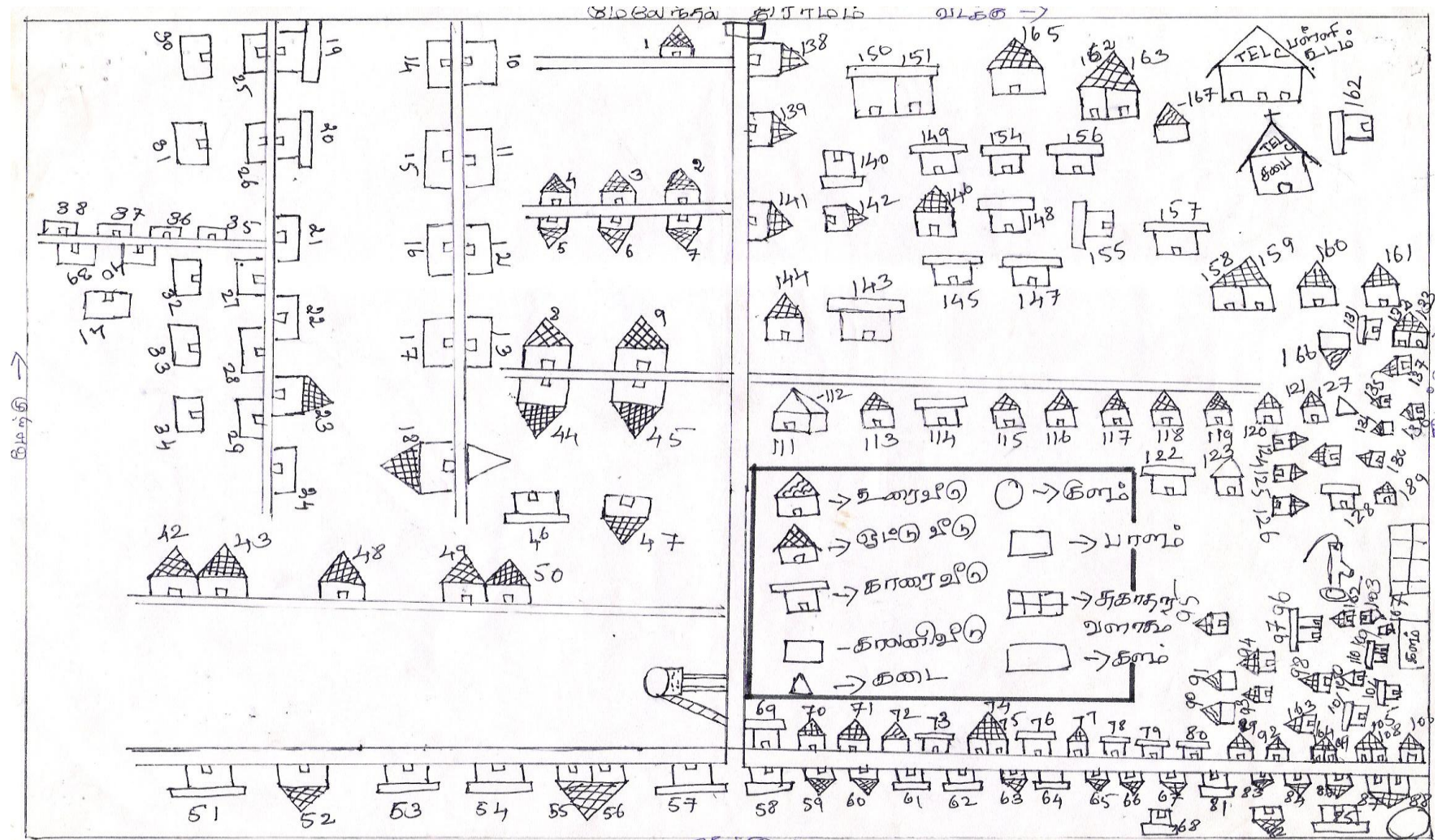
<p>3.3 drop out scenario</p>	<p>is 10 kms Religious conversion and change in social status inhibit admission to this hostel Government scholarship inaccessibility due to religious changed status 39.7 % drop at the level of middle school to high school. Especially girl children do not cross middle school level at all</p>	<p>- SHGs within the village which deal with common issues</p> <p>Willingness with parents to send their children</p>	<p>Level of affordability and accessibility Government schemes do not reach them Attraction towards contract labour with assurance of lump sum amount</p>	<p>Social mapping and mobility analysis</p>
<p>4. Health 4.1 Nutritional deficiency</p>	<p>Nutrition supplement from TNIP programme do not reach the village</p>	<p>There is a approved balwadi within the village on government records</p> <p>Existence of 2 SHGs</p>	<p>Caste discrimination, since the organisor appointed by government belong to BC community No structure for balwadi</p>	<p>Resource mapping, Venn and SSI</p>

<p>4.2 ANC/PNC care</p>	<p>The existing sub-centre is not functioning Village health nurse do not visit the village on a regular basis Nearest hospital is located 10 kms away from village</p>	<p>Existence of 2 SHGs and their involvement in addressing common issues Scope to form health specific interest group Possibility of promotion of high school passed local girls as dais or health workers</p>	<p>Distance, accessibility to services and transport facilities</p>	<p>Venn diagram, resource map and social map</p>
<p>4.3 Environmental sanitation</p>	<p>No drainage facilities Open defecation practiced</p>	<p>Common space available Efforts to mobilize government scheme is in process</p>	<p>Lack of awareness among villagers Lack of cordial link with PRI Village is sidelined due to caste discrimination</p>	<p>Resource Map and SSI</p>
<p>5 . 1Livelihood situation</p>	<p>Basic and prime occupation is land based(agri) Water bodies not maintained for long years</p>	<p>50% of families own cultivable land of various size Water body (kanmoi) exist in the village</p>	<p>Absence of year round employment opportunity Lower price for agriculture produce which does not match with production</p>	<p>Transect walk, resource map, social mapping, SSI</p>

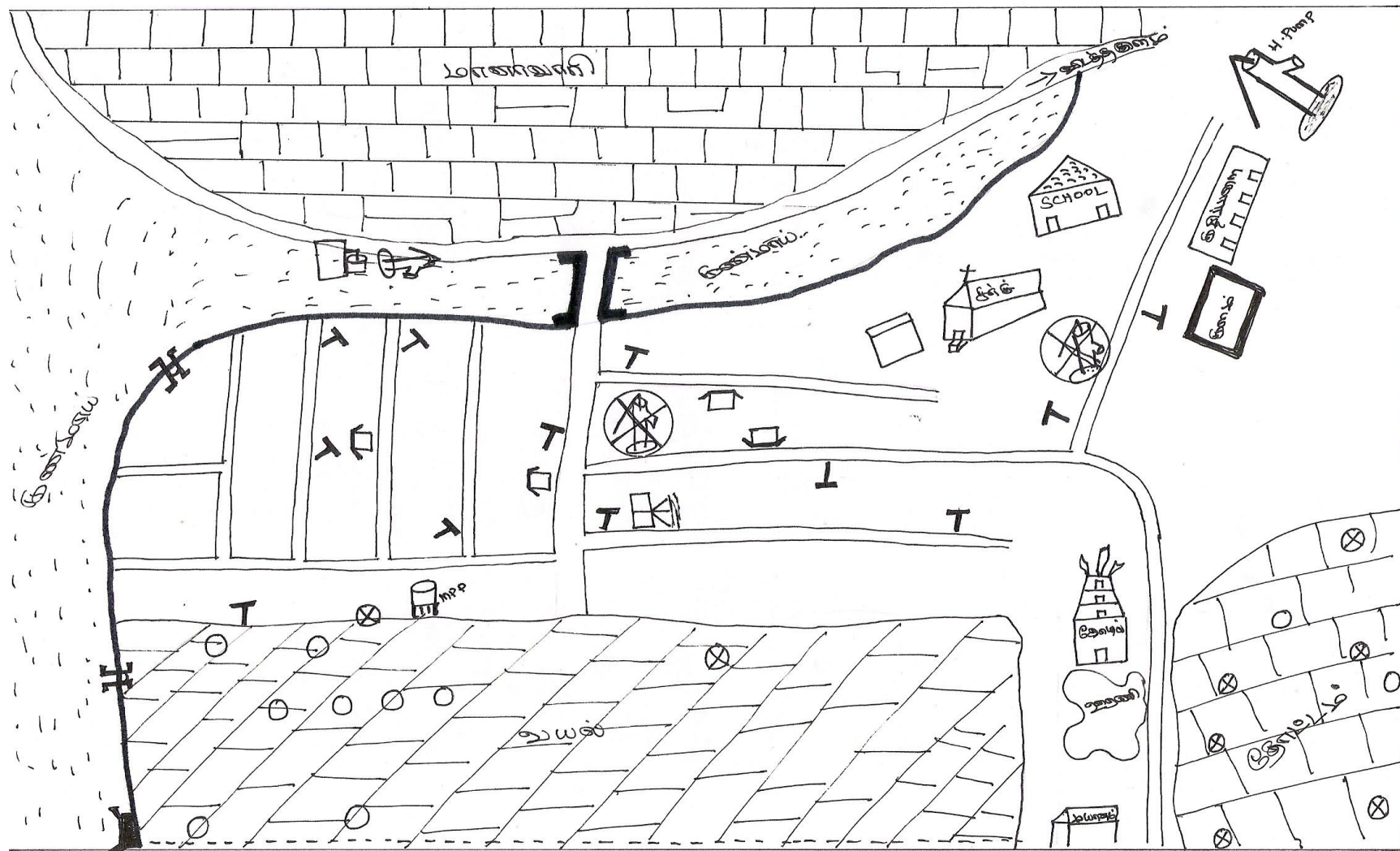
	Labour opportunities is only for six months of the year Vast stretch of land left fallow and are prone with prosopis Juli flora	Ground water potential is high	cost Mono cropping and inappropriate cultivable practices Set mind around traditional agriculture and crop selection	
5.2 Migration	Permanent and temporary (short stay) migration is seen as coping mechanism Promoting adolescent children employment as contract labours and textile and match industries	Strengthening of agriculture and allied activities practiced by few farmers	-loss of trust in agriculture returns -one time payment by contractor/middle men is attract most of the parents with girl children	Social mapping and resource mapping, venn diagram and SSI
6. Social being 6.1 caste situation	Domination of upper caste neighborhoods within the same panchayat	The panchayat is reserved for dalit candidate	Basic needs are met either by government or local bodies Since they are marginal within the panchayat, this village is dependent on	SSI Venn diagram

<p>6.2 women status</p>	<p>External contact and linkages are limited</p> <p>Women participation at the village level is missing</p> <p>Women are involved in decision making processes</p>	<p>Existence of 2 SHGs</p>	<p>other BC villages</p> <p>Women sidelining is not seen as an issue at all.</p> <p>Lack of awareness</p>	<p>SSI</p> <p>Venn diagram</p>
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PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL MAPPING - MELENDAL



PARTICIPATORY RESOURCE MAPPING



**VIDATHAKULAM PUDUR
Tiruchuli Block, Virudunagar District**

Date PRA sessions conducted: February 2007

*PRA sessions facilitated by : RCPDS field staff led by Mr. Nirmal Raaja
Report compiled – Dr John Devavaram*

Sessions participated by – children, SHG members, traditional leaders, PRI members and general men groups

Vidathakulam Pudur is located 12 kms north of Tiruchuli. The same could be reached in 10 kms from RCPDS field office. The village is habituated by exclusive dalit families. The PRA team facilitated the local community to reflect on their village history and started with drawing the village map on the ground. Before drawing the social mapping the team along with local villagers- specially women – walked through the streets to get first hand impression about the village as well make an observation from outsider perception. There were about 45 women and 20 men involved in drawing the social mapping of the village. They started with the common assembly hall for the women self help group and then progressed towards the last house hold of the village. Also basic information about common infra structure with in the village was marked. Having done the skeleton sketch of the village the respondents then super embossed specific data related to age break up, school going, sickness, pregnancy, etc. The following data is an extract of the elaborated data generated through various exercises.

Total No of Houses – 92 (Pucca houses – 11; tiled houses – 43; colony houses 20 and thatched roof with mud walls 18.

Total population – 272	0 -5 years	male 14 and female 14
	5+ - 14 years	male 36 and female 26
	14 + - 18 years	male 25 and female 19
	18 + - 45 years	male 60 and female 48
	Above 45 +	male 28 and female 20

No. of women headed households – 13 (widows 8 and separated 5)

School going strength - 81	Balwadi/creche level	– male 7 ; female 5
	Primary school level	– male 10; female 16
	Middle school level	- male 10; female 9
	High school level	- male 10; female 6
	Hr. secondary level	- male 2; female 7
	Higher studies various courses	– male 1 and 1 female

The drop out rate of children from primary to higher secondary level is worked out at 22.6% or 24 individual children. Current level of child labourers in the village accounts for 9 (male 2 and female 7)

Children with special need/status -	Orphan/semi orphan	male 7; female 5
	Physically challenged	male 0; female 0
	Children below 8 with severe malnourishment	21
	Children with second degree malnourishment	9
	Children with third degree malnourishment	8
	Still born and children at birth	2
	Mothers died in pregnancy	3

Health scenario of the village:

PRA team used resource mapping tool to facilitate information related to existence of basic health services and accessibility levels. The primary health sub centre is located 7kms from the village. Unfortunately this centre is not functioning since there is no staff attached to this. Primary Health Centre assigned for this village is 20kms away from the village (located at M Reddiapatti). For convenience the local population use the services of PHC located at Narikudi which is only 5 kms. Government General Hospital is located at Tiruchuli which is 12 kms away from the village.

Public Transport facilities are available thrice daily. Unfortunately due to very bad road conditions the public transport does not come on a regular basis, may be two to three days a week. There are about 12 children of crèche going children who walk 2.5 kms since the crèche is located at Vidathakulam (habitat of higher caste communities). Due to safety reasons, inability children do not access this crèche centre. In addition, if at all the children go to the centre social discrimination is very high and the children are treated in inhuman way. The care taker at the crèche belongs to the upper caste.

Drinking water is supplied through over head tank. Bt the size of the tank is very small and inadequate to cater to the needs of the families. There is only one hand pump which cater to the need of the families in addition to the over head tank.

Livelihood pattern

The economy and occupational pattern is greatly dependent on agriculture and land based activities. There are about 119 acres of rainfed land owned by 68 families on which they cultivate during season. They also own 74 acres of irrigated land on which they cultivate food crops. 24 families are landless coolies who work on the lands of other families. (18% own both wet and dry land; 32% own only dry land and 21% own exclusive wet land. 28.5% are agri labourers; 0.05% are employed in unorganized sectors). The wage pattern in the area for agriculture labour is Rs.40/- for women and Rs.50/- for men. Normally the families get employment only for about 150 days a year in all sectors included. Average income of a land owning family is worked out at 24000/- and the income level of agri cooli families are calculated at Rs.14000/- a year. Apart from agriculture few families keep live stock (34 families) as support forum and charcoal burning from thorny trees seems to be the life line for most of the families.

Linkages with resource centres and service institutions

Venn and linkage tool of PRA was used to study the dynamics around the perceptions of local institutions and service centres. Institutions related to accessibility by the self help groups were listed first and they include the local bank, block development office and magalir thittam. Later they have enlisted RCPDS and the evening resource centre run by the same. However public health sub centre and transport services are under valued for their inadequate services. The revenue office was completely kept away from the village but with a bigger circle, when questioned they mentioned that they had been approaching for supply of ration card to the taluk office and nothing seem to be happening. Also the high school which is located at Tiruchuli was given priority but kept at long distance. Similarly the crèche was also given bigger circle but kept away from the centre. When asked it is explained that the level of social discrimination involved in these two institution make them to keep them away in spite they wanted them to be closer.

Issues and possible strengths and weaknesses as analyzed by the community themselves

The PRA team and local respondents later presented the outputs from various above mentioned tools to the community in a joint sitting and facilitated the group/local community (children, women and men) to process the data as well prioritize the most pressing needs using matrix and triangulation process:

Issues	Reasons as identified by the community	Strengths of the community as perceived by the locals	Weakness of the community as perceived by the local	Source from PRA data/tool
Education 1.1 Balwadi/crèche for children below five years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balwadi is located at 2.5 kms distance - children below the age of 5 find it difficult to pass through rugged roads and fields - social discrimination is high since the crèche is located at the main village (upper caste) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are about 24 children of crèche going age group in the village - There are two self help groups form by RCPDS - There is lot of interest among local villagers to start a crèche in their hamlet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The community is unable to act on its own without the consent of the upper caste - There are disputes as a result of panchayat elections - Weak linkages with government system 	Social Mapping; Resource mapping; Venn diagramming and semi structured interviewing.
Primary Education 2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - primary school is also located at the main village at 2.5 kms distance - improper structures for the school and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents show interest in sending their children to school - SSA scheme is included on to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No representation for dalits in the parents teachers association - The neighbouring villages are upper 	Social mapping, resource mapping and venn diagramming

	<p>buildings are damaged and very old</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teachers are not regular to school and have some private business <p>Social discrimination is high</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - due to lack of road access during rainy seasons children cannot reach school 	<p>school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school is recommended for upgradation - There are about 5 teachers on role – though irregular. 	<p>caste, hence dependency to a great extent.</p>	
2.2 Recreation and play facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no play ground facility - the school does not have any provision for play materials or not utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is village common land available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents do not consider play as part of child right - Lack of initiative and representation 	Resource mapping children matrix
2.3 Toilet and sanitary facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open defecation is practiced - no organized waste disposal system and toilet facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is place available within the village - Sanitation facilities construction is part of SSA scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of conscience about basic health practices - Parent teachers association does not act - Marginalization due to social discrimination 	Venn diagram, semi structured interviewing and resource mapping

<p>Middle and Higher Education</p> <p>3.1 distance and accessibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school is located 12 kms away from the village - only one trip of public transport during school hour - The nearest bus stop is also at a distance of 2 kms - not safe for girl children to get back to their village in the evening hours - school fees is very high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a proposal upgrade the school at Vidathakulam (2.5 kms) in the next academic year - The self help group is making efforts around this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of proper relationship with government departments - Local disputes as a result of recent elections 	<p>Venn diagram, matrix ranking and SSI</p>
<p>3.2 Limitations with hostel facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SC hostel is located only at Tiruchuli which is 12 kms - very limited seats - scholarship does not reach in time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parents are interested in sending their children to school - there are about 25 children who require hostel facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of relationship with concerned offices and lack of initiative - limitations of government policy 	<p>Social mapping, semi structured interviewing and venn diagram</p>
<p>3.3 dropout scenario</p>	<p>There is wide gap in enrollment between the middle school level and high school level (M12 – F19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - girl children drop out rate is high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - initiative taken by the SHG to control contract labour - trained counselors to intervene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adolescent children are seen as wage earners and family income supplementary - The contractors pay one time amount lumpsum 	<p>Social mapping, venn and ssi.</p>

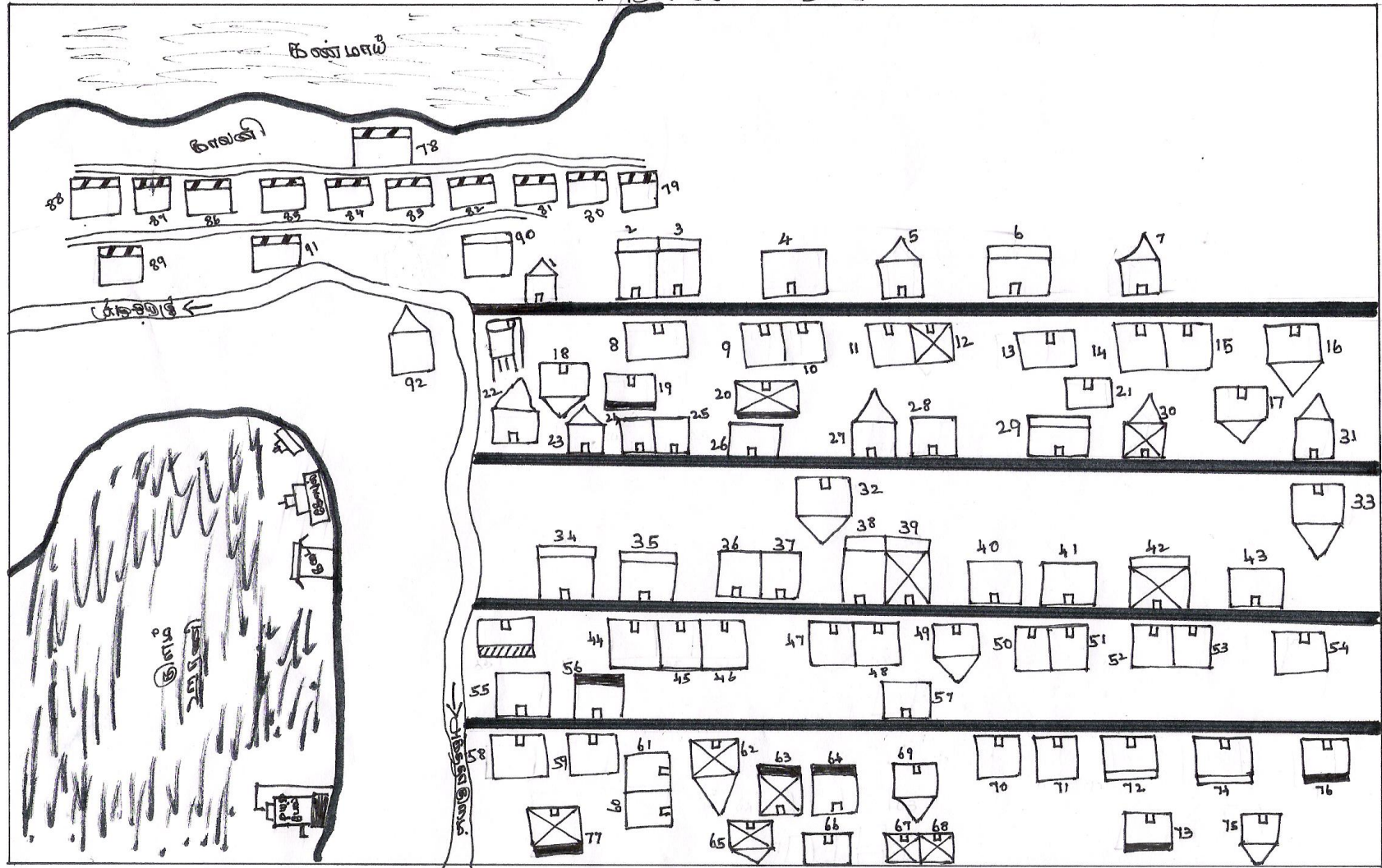
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many adolescent children are sent to contract labour in textile and match industries 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no permanent and assured income source - Presence of middle persons and brokers 	
<p>4. Health</p> <p>4.1 Nutritional Status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supply of nutritional supplement for children below five is not accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are sufficient number of children to run a full time centre in the village itself - The efforts by the self help groups - Local practice of using fresh vegetables - Traditional practices of using porridge with pulses and breast feeding exist in the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caste discrimination - Accessibility of the centre since it is located 2.5 kms - Lack of water access for cultivation - Menace of goats - Increasing trend of commercial crop cultivation practice 	Matrix, seasonal diagram and resource mapping
<p>4.2 ANC/PNC care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary health centre is not effective - periodical checkups and hygienic practices are not followed Timely access to health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional birth attendants are available - Nutritional traditional food intake is part of the regular diet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transportation is an issue - Village health nurse do not visit regularly - Lack of information about recent and 	Venn diagram and semi structure interview

	<p>services are a remote possibility</p> <p>Lack of information on communicable disease and family planning practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard working women during pregnancy months - There are few high school passed girls willing to undergo health worker training 	<p>periodical injections and tests</p>	
4.3 Environmental sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of protected water supply - water logging during rainy season - open defecation and prosopis plants constrain ground water source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole village has good drinkable ground water - Village is included in local government scheme - Common area within the panchayat limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inefficient leadership - Lack of awareness on environmental protection - Culturally negative perception about use of toilet 	<p>Resource mapping/semi structured interviews/seasonal diagram</p>
5.1 Livelihood situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -exclusive dependence on monsoonal showers - tanks and other water bodies not maintained - Government schemes does not reach this village - rainfed agriculture also fail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 65% own varied size of agri lands - 24 families depend on agri cooli - Ground water is good for cultivation - Though not maintained there is a tank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of investment and fear to take risk on agriculture - Intrusion of brokers - Less returns due to price fixation by market economy - Availability of cheap labour 	<p>Seasonal diagram/matrix and SSI</p>

<p>5.2 Migration</p>	<p>-during 6 months families move to alternate employment in brick making to Chennai and madurai</p> <p>- adolescent children are sent on contract to textile industries</p>	<p>- There is scope to introduce alternate employment since the soil and brick making technical know-how is available within the village</p>	<p>- Lump sum payment from contract labour</p> <p>- No permanent employment potential in the near by areas</p> <p>- Natural disasters such as concurrent drought</p>	<p>Social mapping, resource mapping and SSI</p>
<p>6 social being 6.1 caste situation</p>	<p>No importance because it is a dalit hamlet</p> <p>Heavy dependence on other caste land owners surround villages</p> <p>Lack of access to THADCO schemes</p>	<p>- There are schemes exclusively for dalits</p> <p>- The panchayat is reserved for dalits</p>	<p>- Vulnerable to divisive actions of the neighborhood villages</p> <p>- Lack of government extention system presence</p>	<p>Venn/ resource mapping/matrix and SSI</p>
<p>6.2 women and girl children</p>	<p>- girl children are not sent to school</p> <p>-lack of customary rights for women to enter public life</p> <p>Lack of external linkages for women</p> <p>Lack of recognition inspite of heavy family work load</p>	<p>- 2 women self help groups emerged</p>	<p>- Blind and indifference to view this as an issue from women themselves</p>	<p>Venn and SSI</p>

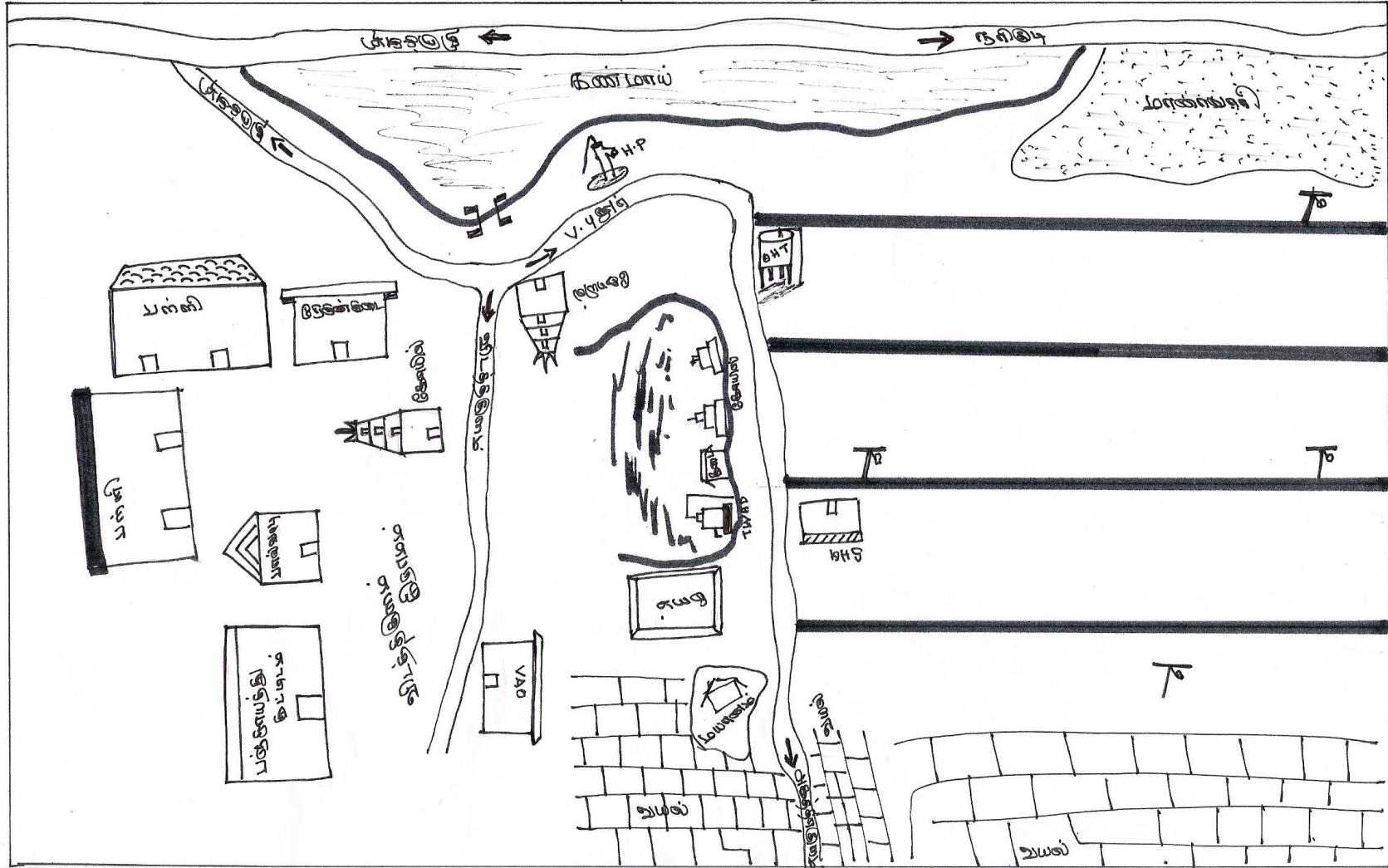
SOCIAL MAP OF VIDATHAKULAM PUDUR

V.42979 சூழல் அமைப்பை



RESOURCE MAP - VIDATHAKULAM PUDUR

V.யுஜிவ் சுதிரஷ்கரையடம்



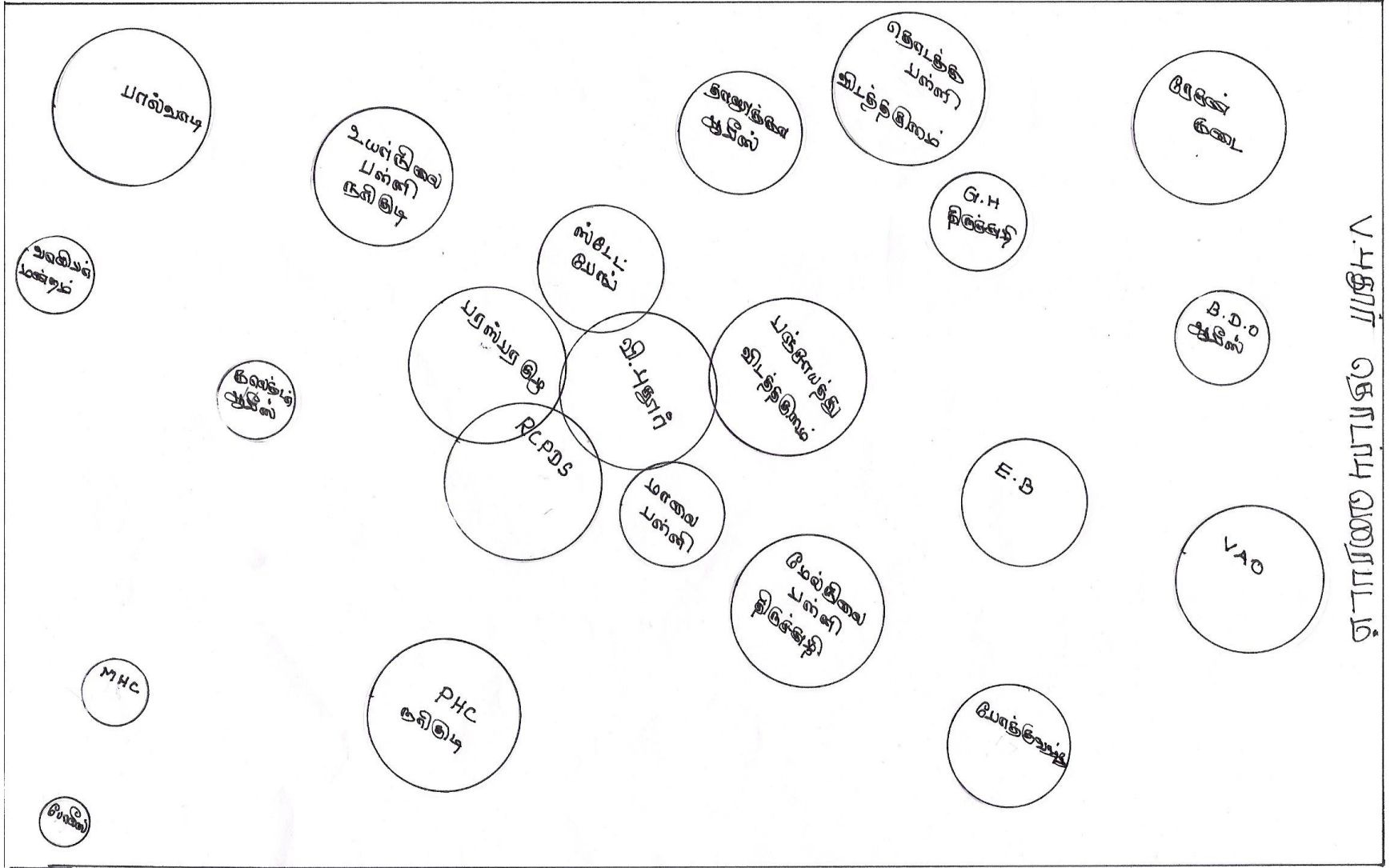
SEASONAL DIAGRAM - VIDATHAKULAM PUDUR

V. 4 சூன் - பருவகால அரையாடல் .

நிடுக்கிதூள்												
செவ்வய												
நடன												
சூண்கள் சுவலை												
விதைப்பு												
மரையு												
	சிற்ப	வை	சூனி	சூடி	சூண்கள்	புரட்ட	ஐயா	கார்ப்	மரந்த	தூ	மரதி	பங்கு
பயிற்சுவலை												
பெண்கள் சுவலை												
வரையு												
கூல்நடைபோடல்												
மனிதர்களுக்காய்	xxx xxx	xxx xx				உ	உ	உ				
கூல்நடைபோடல்						~	~	~				
கூல்நடைபோடல்	*	*	*									*

- நடவை
- பயிற்சுவலை
- செவ்வய
- உரையு
- செவ்வயசுவலை
- நடவை விதைப்பு
- சுவலை
- சுவலை
- நடன
- செவ்வய
- பண்புணர்
- வரையு
- கால்நடைபோடல்
- பச்சைநீர்
- மரந்த
- கனி/காய்க்கல்
- வெள்ளை
- சூண்கள்
- பயிற்சுவலை

VENN DIAGRAM – VIDATHAKULAM PUDUR



வி.புதூர் தொண்டர் குழு

