



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER VOL. 7 July - September 2023

# ✓ VALAM

*Together We Rise*



Point  
of View



Happy  
Beneficiaries



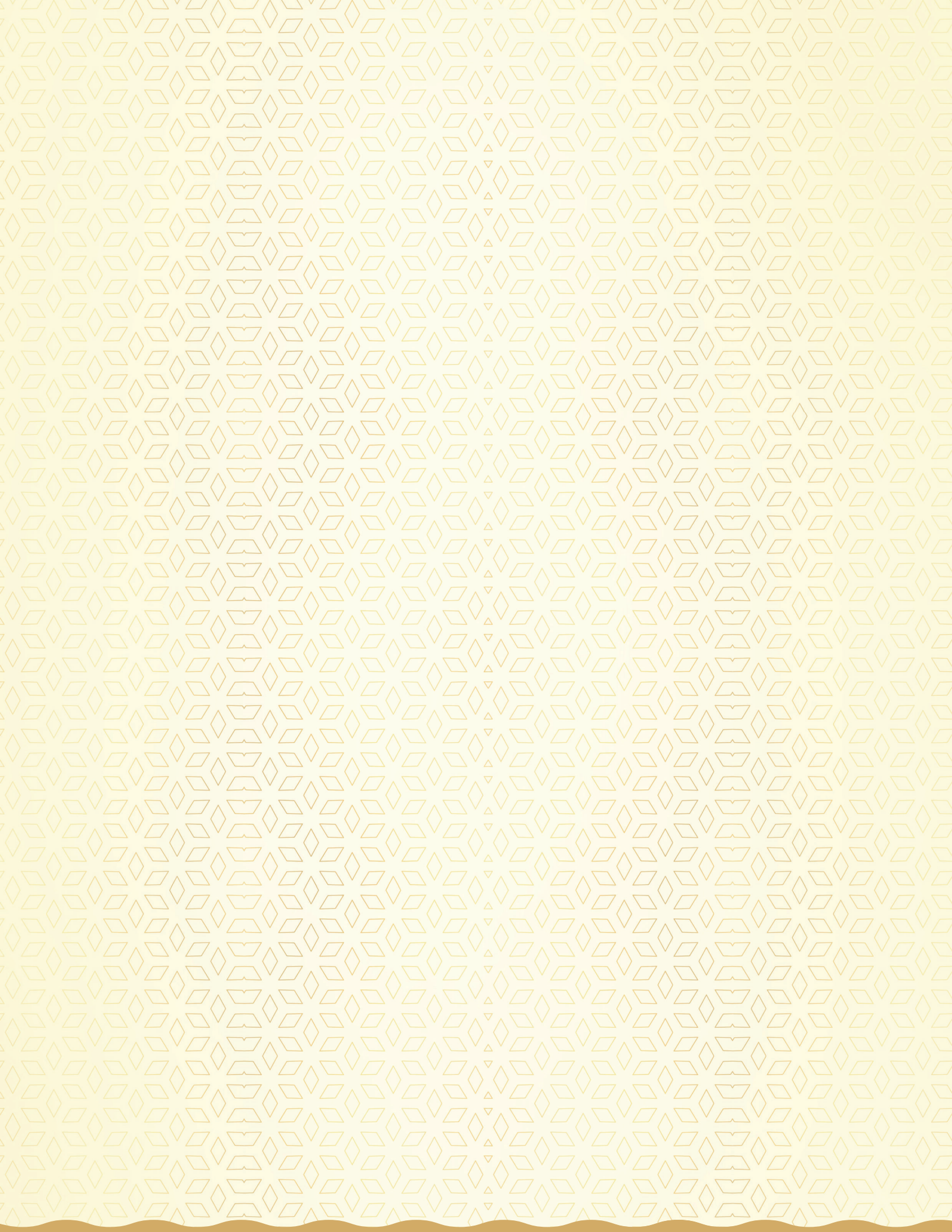
Events



Green  
Biz

**Tamil Nadu Rural Transformation Project**  
Vazhndhu Kattuvom Project







# Point of View



## Tmt. S. Divyadharshini, IAS

Chief Executive Officer  
Vazhndhu Kattuvom Project, Chennai

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to announce that the Project's matching grant program has completed one year in August, 2023. It gives me great pleasure to announce that this program has been an incredible success, benefitting 2,856 beneficiaries across various sectors. During the year 2022-23, an amount of Rs. 84.09 cr was sanctioned as MGP loan, with the grant amount valued at Rs. 28.03cr, while Rs. 54.66cr was the amount disbursed. The achievements have been across the sectors such as manufacturing, services, retail, agricultural allied activities and many more. A majority of the beneficiaries of the MGP loans have been women who have used the money to buy new machineries or equipments, and which have helped them tremendously to procure orders and scale up their business.

Another significant achievement for this quarter has been the move to create a new co-creation centre in the likes of a Mathi Siragugal Women Start-up Mission. In this regard, the project has signed with WEHUB, government of Telangana.

This edition of the newsletter captures the stories of those women and men who have benefitted from the MGP loans such as Ms. Gnanpriya who restarted her apiary business; Mr. Venkaraman expanded his artificial flower business; Ms. Renuka a SPARK has given successful trainings on groundnut cultivation, while being a farmer herself; Mr. Kandamasmy who



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became a SPARK and demonstrated the benefits of integrated farming; and all were the recipients of the MGP. The edition also captures the story of Mr. Ramasubramani, who propagated good agricultural practices in the Nilgiris district.

The edition also highlights the various training and programmes that are conducted on a continuous basis to enhance the capacities of the beneficiaries and at the same time the trainers, such as the CSS trainers and SPARKs. The Project continues to support the beneficiaries with financial assistance, such as through the newly formed nano-enterprise finance fund (NEFF) that was inaugurated by the Chief Minister.





## BECOMING A TRAINER HELPED HIM TO EXPAND HIS BUSINESS AND EARN ADDITIONAL INCOME

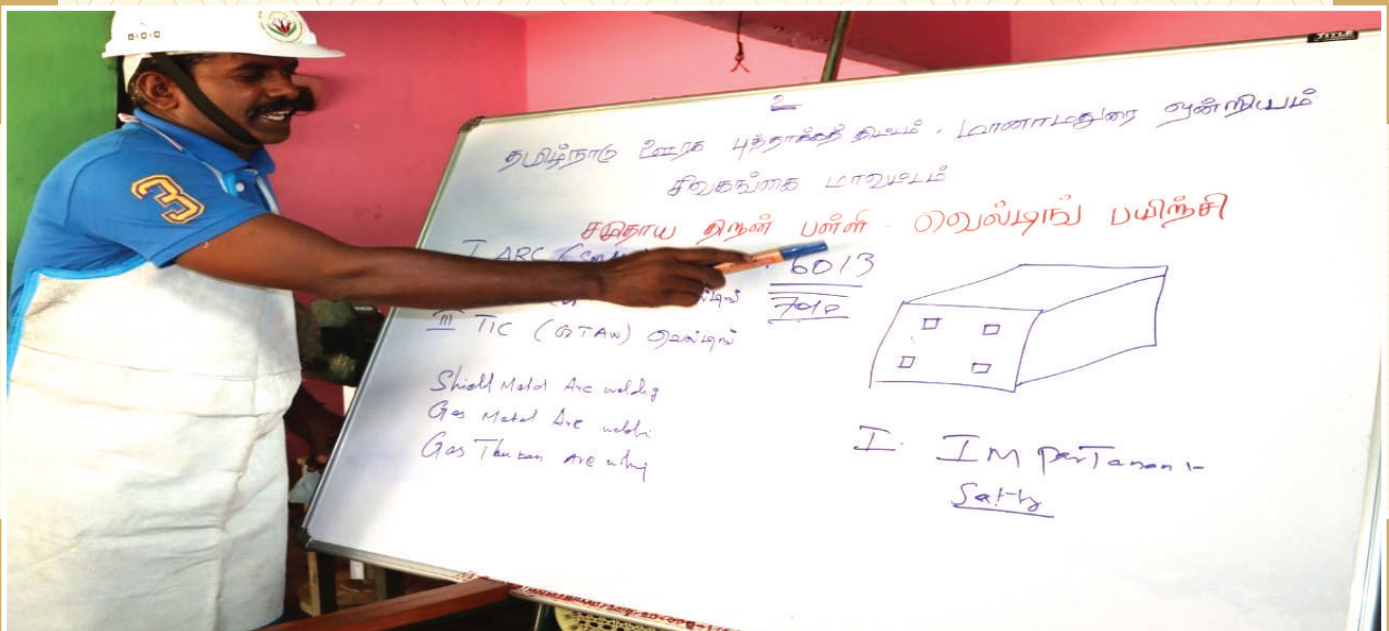
Name: **Karthikeya Raja**

Village: **Soorakulam Pillaruthan**

Block: **Manamadurai**

District: **Sivagangai**

Product: **Welding**



Karthikeya Raja used to own a small mechanic shop in Soorakulam Pillaruthan Panchayat for the past 10 years. His business was stagnant. At this time he was approached by VKP to be a trainer for CSS in soldering work. Twenty students joined his CSS. He has been a trainer for 2 years now, and in the latest batch he has trained 15 students.

All his students were wage workers with low incomes. After the training period, he employed 3 of the trainees in his own shop and facilitated the placement of 10 trainees in companies with a salary of Rs.550–600 per day. Two other trainees started their own shops with their own funds. Another trainee was able to get an MGP loan of Rs. 1,65,000 through VKP and set up his own shop. Many of his trainees take up temporary employment opportunities and carry out repair work for the neighbourhood households. Many also join

local welding companies as assistants and are able to earn around Rs. 2000 in a day by taking up local jobs. They hire machinery for Rs. 300–500 for daily jobs, but two trainees were able to purchase their own small machines.

Becoming a trainer enabled Karthikeya Raja to upgrade his knowledge. He was also able to secure an MGP loan of Rs. 5 lakhs through the Project. He also attended a workshop on fabrication at IIT Madras, along with 20 other trainers from other districts. There he learnt about new technologies and the power of automatic machines. With this added knowledge, he was able to earn additional income, and his monthly earnings are now in the range of Rs. 40,000–50,000. In his latest batch, he trained two women, who wanted to help their husbands in their business.





## PROJECT SUPPORT HELPED HER ACQUIRE LATEST MACHINERY AND PROCURE MORE ORDERS

Name: **Kalaivani**  
Village: **Allapalayam**  
Block: **Annur**  
District: **Coimbatore**  
Product: **Aari embroidery**

There is a saying "you only live once" and VKP has fulfilled Kalaivani's thoughts and made them real. Kalaivani has been a resident of Allapalayam panchayat of Mathireddipalayam village for the past 20 years. She was interested in tailoring 12 years ago, and attended a 6-month tailoring cum beautician course at Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore. She started her tailoring business with a small sewing machine. After 6–7 years in the trade, her customers insisted on her doing Aari embroidery work. But she was unable to find the required machinery in her town or the nearby ones. Finally, she found the machinery at Tiruppur, and she got the embroidery work done for her customers. But it was not cost effective, as she spent 75% of her income on travel and as embroidery fees. So, she looked for an alternative in a fully automatic embroidery machine, but the price was very high and she did not have the money. She came to know about the VKP and immediately applied for an MGP loan. The project staff encouraged her and facilitated a loan of Rs. 4,50,000 from Indian Overseas Bank. She contributed Rs. 50,000 as margin money, and the project subsidy was Rs. 1,50,000. She spent Rs. 5 lakhs and purchased a fully automatic Aari embroidery machine and expanded her business. Now she is able to fulfil the customers' needs in her shop itself. She is earning between Rs. 18,000 and 30,000 in a month. The Project staff also guided her to approach other tailoring shops, garment stores, beauticians and others in order to increase her customer base. She has now employed four members of self-help groups with a monthly salary of Rs 5,000 each.







## PROJECT FUNDING HELPED HER TO RESTART HER FAMILY'S APIARY BUSINESS

Name: **Gnanpriya**  
Village: **Solaicery**  
Block: **Rajapalayam**  
District: **Virudhunagar**  
Product: **Honey**



Gnanpriya's husband's family has been in the apiary business for three generations now. She was a school teacher having completed her B.Ed. degree, but had to quit during the pandemic. At this time, she took up bee-keeping. Her father-in-law had already been running an apiary, and she decided to join the family business, while her husband went to work. During the pandemic they faced many hurdles, but they wanted to restart the business. They came to hear about the MGP of the VKP from her SHG as she was working as a book-keeper there. She got a loan of Rs. 3 lakhs through VKP, and the MGP amount is Rs. 271, 466.

They not only collect honey from their farm but also buy locally from others. The price per 250 g can vary from Rs. 200 to Rs. 600

and they can produce between 50 and 100 kg in one season. The honey is harvested once in 15 days during the season. They purchase hill honey from the local tribes in their villages and sell it too. They sell their honey under the brand 'Solai Honey' locally and in exhibitions such as the Trade Fair in Nandampakkam, Chennai. They have two members from the group to help with packaging and processing the honey. They are paid Rs. 200 per day, which can increase if the workload is higher. Gnanpriya and her family can earn Rs. 50,000–80,000 in a month after deducting expenses. She has applied for a GST certificate and wants to branch out into the online business space.





## FARMER CUM SPARK TRANSFORMS VILLAGE INTO GROUNDNUT HUB AFTER TRAINING

Name: **Renuka**  
Village: **Sokkanur**  
Block: **Tiruppur**  
District: **Tiruppur**  
Activity: **SPARK in groundnut cultivation**



Renuka is a SPARK from Sokkanur village Panchayat in Tiruppur block of Tiruppur district. She belongs to a family of farmers and has been cultivating groundnuts sweet potatoes for over 10 years in her field, along with a bit of small onion and sweet potatoes. She is constantly experimenting with new technologies in her own field and has proven record in using these practices for groundnut cultivation. For this reason she was selected as a SPARK for groundnut cultivation.

After attending the training on the latest technologies for groundnut herself in KVK Pongalur, she became a SPARK and has taught 2 batches so far. In these batches, members of the producer group Vyavasaya Urpathi Kuzhu were the trainees with the majority being women. Out of 60 women who participated in 2 batches of 30 each, 15 were men.

Mrs. Renuka taught the trainees good agricultural practices to improve the yield, right from preparing the soil, soil and water

testing to sowing and harvesting. Through the adoption of low cost technologies she helped the farmers reduce their cost of cultivation and increase yield. In this way she transformed the village into a groundnut hub.

After the training, the trainees learnt to use bundlers to harvest groundnut crops. The bundler efficiently rolls the groundnut haulms, which was earlier wasted, leaving the stem behind. The straw, after it is rolled and compacted will serve as a good source of fodder for cattle and other livestock. With this technique, yield has increased and no part of the crop is wasted.

After becoming a SPARK, she was able to get recognition and could also avail an MGP loan of Rs. 3,14,000 from VKP to purchase a bundler. She now rents the bundler to other producer group members at a reasonable price. After the purchase of this machine, farmers have been able to cut the cost of fodder. She is now seeking training on cultivating small onions for herself.





## TRAINER EXPANDS ARTIFICIAL FLOWER BUSINESS WITH PROJECT SUPPORT

Name of the trainer: **Venkatraman**  
Panchayat: **Sokkadi**  
Block: **Krishnagiri**  
District: **Krishnagiri**  
No. of trainees in CSS: **20 trainees**  
No. of days: **15**



Venkataraman was working as a daily wage labourer in an artificial flower garland shop in Bangalore. However, during the covid pandemic he lost his job and returned to his native village. He then started a small business in artificial flowers, but faced low incomes due to lower potential of marketing.

"After losing my job during COVID, I returned home feeling clueless. The CSS training recognized my talent, gave me an honorarium"

Venkataraman is an experienced trainer, having been in the industry for over 10 years. He trained a batch of 20 trainees, all of whom were women, in the business of artificial flower making over a period of 15 days. After the training, the women with VKP's

support of a start-up grant of Rs. 75,000 formed a group, however, now they work on order basis.

He was facilitated by VKP to get an MGP loan of Rs. 3,60,000 and expanded his production capacities. Now he has found a potential in Bangalore and a majority of his sales are directed there. He makes garlands for marriages receptions and for temple decorations.

After the training, he has employed 7 of the trainees in his shop, all are women, and they are paid Rs. 6,000–7,000 per month. After the expansion of his shop, he is able to earn a profit of Rs. 35,000 – 40,000 in a month.





## SPARK PRACTICES AND TEACHES INTEGRATED FARMING METHODS TO MAXIMISE RETURNS

Name of the SPARK: **S. Kandasamy**  
Name of PG: **Thumbalpatti Farmer  
Producer Group**  
Village Panchayat: **Thumbalpatti**  
Block: **Panamarathupatti**  
District: **Salem**



Kandasamy is a tribal farmer from Thumbalpatti and cultivates on 3 acres of land. He has a Diploma in Agriculture. He grows pearl millets along with chrysanthemum as border crop that in turn controls pest and diseases. He took training at KVK on crop management practices. He was selected as SPARK by VKP, as he practices good agricultural practices such as integrated agriculture and promotes the use of natural inputs.

During training, he promotes integrated farming that involves flower cultivation (Aralli), minor millets, goat rearing, milch

animals and cultivation of green fodder. He also teaches about the preparation and sale of bio- inputs that reduced the cost of cultivation by Rs. 2500 per acre, planting of crop at the right time with 17 days old seedlings, and maintained 46 hills per sq.metre. He also teaches about bee-keeping during the training and installing bee traps in the field. By following the above practices, he was able to see a profit of Rs. 3 lakhs in his second year of cultivation. He was also able to avail an MGP loan of Rs. 5 lakhs facilitated by VKP, which he used to set up a goat farm.





## PICKLE BUSINESS A BIG HIT WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS

Name of the enterprise: **Sudar Pickle Appalam and Powder Making Enterprise Group**  
Panchayat: **Nambudalai**  
Block: **Thiruvadani**  
District: **Ramnad**

Nambu Poongodi is from Nambudalaipanchayat in Thiruvadana block of Ramnathapuram district. In 2021, she took training in RSETI as suggested by the Project and learnt to make 18 types of pickles along with six others. Initially, after undergoing training, only two persons started the production of pickles and they started with eight varieties. Their Vathakuzhumbu pickle became a big hit and therefore Project suggested that six other members from the village could join them and form a group; thus, the Sudar Pickle Appalam and Powder Making Enterprise Group began in 2022.

The group has received Rs. 750,000 as start-up fund, which was used to procure small machinery. Two other members are PLF members, but the rest are housewives and so they all meet by 2 p.m. on most days to start the enterprise activities. Six members are in charge of making the pickles such as lemon, lime (narthanga), garlic, vathakuzhambu mix etc. The other members help with bottling and packaging.

Pickles are made to order and also sold at stalls in the block and district offices, local shops and stalls at Chennai. A bottle of 200g of pickle sells for Rs. 50, and in a month around 200 to 250 bottles are sold. The Project is in the process of helping them to get an MGP loan of Rs. 4 lakhs from the Tamil Nadu Grama Bank.







## FARMER AND SPARK WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE GUIDES PG MEMBERS

Name of the SPARK: **Ramasubramani**  
Name of PG: **Inore Amore Producer Group**  
Block: **Kotagiri**  
District: **The Nilgiris**



Ramasubramani of Kotagiri in the Nilgiris district has been farming for the past 35 years. He belongs to the Inore Amore Producer Group that has 30 members (23 are women and 7 are men). Owing to his rich experience in the cultivation of hill vegetables such as cabbage, potato, carrots and garlic, he was chosen as a SPARK by VKP. He learnt the best agricultural techniques from agricultural experts from Doddabetta, Trichy etc. He now helps the other farmers to adopt better practices by providing them valuable practical tips to improve yield as well as to select seasonal crops for sowing. He also gives the members tips on how to switch over from chemical fertilizers to organic ones. Although the yield is lower by 10% now, he assures them that it is a good practice and the output

will stabilize in 3 years. In his experience, he feels that leaving the land fallow for a year after harvesting is the best practice, but it is not practical, so during the rainy season (about 3-4 months) they do not cultivate any crops. The group has sought marketing support to market their products outside their localities, and VKP has set a Marketing Board for this purpose. In future, if they can find an agent, they can also sell their produce in bigger cities like Chennai. Although the farmers have taken crop insurance, it does not protect them from market fluctuations; for example, in the previous season some farmers suffered losses on their cabbage crop due to lower prices. However, the returns on carrot and garlic were good. They are working with VKP for a storage facility within their village.



## TN CM Presides Over Fishermen Welfare Conference



The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu presided over the Fishermen Welfare Conference and the Fishermen Government Welfare Schemes Distribution, jointly organized by the Tamil Nadu State Fisheries Cooperative Head Web Portal and Fishermen Associations. The CM visited the exhibition organized by TNCDW in Mandapam, Ramanathapuram, and highly commended the stalls featuring products from the Fishing Self-Help Groups (SHGs). On behalf of VKP, he was presented with palm-leaf handicrafts made by the VKP beneficiaries.





## Thiru. Udhayanidhi Stalin Visits VKP FPO Stall

The Hon'ble Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, Thiru. Udhayanidhi Stalin, visited the VKP FPO stall in Cuddalore and learnt about cashewnut processing. He was also gifted its products.



## World Bank Reviews Project Activities in Six Districts during 10<sup>th</sup> ISM

A World Bank team reviewed six districts under VKP-TNRTTP, namely Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Thirunelveli, Sivagangai, Pudukottai and Virudhunagar. This was followed by a district team workshop for the DEOs and YPs from 31 districts by VKP-TNRTTP. The World Bank team shared their field visit observations and insights regarding VKP's PGs, PCs, EGs, MGP funding, CFS, CSS and OSF business facilitation centre. Under VKP, women SHGs are given vocational skill training, production training and business support with various other initiatives to help them start enterprises. The Hon'ble Minister of Youth Welfare and Sports Development, Udhayanidhi Stalin, The World Bank team and VKP officers discussed the progress made on 8 August 2023 at the Camp Office.



## VKP Signs Agreement with WEHUB-Telangana

The Vazhndhu Kattuvom Project signed an agreement with WEHUB, Government of Telangana, to support the establishment of Co-creation Centres based on the 'Mathi Siragugal Women Start-up Mission'. This was done in the presence of Mr. Jayesh Ranjan IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Industries and Commerce and IT-Electronic and Communication Technology, Government of Telangana, and Mr. P. Senthil Kumar IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Tamil Nadu. Ms. S. Divyadharshini IAS, CEO-VKP and Ms. Deepthi Ravula, CEO-WEHUB signed and exchanged the agreement.



## Promoting VKP FPCs through the Agri Business Expo 2023

At the Agri-Business EXPO held in Nandambakkam, Chennai, on 8 and 9 July, Tmt. Divyadharshini IAS, CEO-VKP, visited all the stalls, interacted with VKP-promoted FPCs and highlighted VKP's initiatives for and immense support to farmers.





## MoU signing with ICICI bank

VKP-TNRTP signed an MoU with ICICI Bank to further extend MGP funds for enterprises across TN.

## TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING



## Capacity Building on Managing FPOs Held

A 3-day capacity building Management Development Programme (MDP) on managing FPOs was conducted by the Institute of Rural Management (IRMA), Anand, Gujarat, for VKP officers from 7 August 2023. The Executive Officers-Enterprise Development (EO-ED) officers were enlightened with participatory sessions including learning tools and exercises by Prof. C. Shambu Prasad, Skillgreen Global, IRMA's Living Farm Project; Prof. Aashish Argade, IRMA alumnus; and other eminent mentors.



## RPL Assessment and Certification Conducted

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment and certification was conducted for 55 CSS Trainers along with Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) and Apparel Sector Skill Council (AMHSSC) on 18 August 2023 at Cuddalore.



## Capacity Building Programme For Second-Level Lead Farmers (SPARKs) under VKP

The Directorate of Extension Education, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, and the Vazhdhu Kattuvom Project (VKP-TNRTP, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Chennai) jointly organized a 3-day Second-Level Training to Lead Farmers (SPARKs) on "Seed to Value Chain in Groundnut and Sesame" during 14-16 June 2023 at DoEE, TNAU, Coimbatore. The training programme included class room sessions, demonstrations and exposure visits to an FPO on groundnut and gingelly oil extraction unit. Scientists and experts from TNAU handled classes on the scenario and scope of cultivation of groundnut and gingelly in Tamil Nadu, new high yielding varieties, newly evolved technologies for cultivation including weed, water and fertilizer management practices, IPDM practices, physiological disorders, nutrient deficiencies and rectification methods, TNAU groundnut-rich tonic, machinery in groundnut cultivation, post-harvest and value addition, marketing intelligence and role of KVKs in promoting the cultivation of ground nut and gingelly in Tamil Nadu through various means. A book in Tamil "Seed to Value Chain in Ground Nut and Gingelly" was distributed to the farmers. Thirty lead farmers, six each from five districts, were benefitted through the training programme.





## Capacity Building on High Technologies for Horticulture Crops Undertaken

A capacity building training on “Hi-Tech Technologies in Horticultural Crops” was organized for the Project staff at the Horticultural College and Research Institute, Periyakulam, between 12 and 14 June 2023 to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to support and monitor Community Farm Schools (CFSs) effectively. The training covered various topics related to horticultural practices, management, nurseries and value addition.



## Capacity Building Training Given to SPARKs

A 3-day Capacity Building Training Programme to 30 Dairy SPARKs from different districts was organized at the Aavin Skill Development Centre, Madhavaram, Chennai, between 5 July and 7 July 2023. In the training, topics such as deworming, vaccination, fodder cultivation, livestock waste utilization, fermented dairy products and animal insurance were taught.



## Capacity Building Training on Micro-Enterprise Loans Held

A 3-day skill-enhancement training for VKP district and block staff on formulating high-quality micro-enterprise loan proposals was held in Madurai, supported by IFC, The World Bank.



## MGP Refresher Orientation Conducted

A district-level MGP refresher orientation was held to deliver revised MGP guidelines to bankers and Task Force Committee members across the project districts.



## Training on Dairy Farming Done in Tiruvannamalai District

Under VKP's CFS, a comprehensive training in dairy farming including animal husbandry, deworming and cattle vaccination camps was organized for VKP beneficiaries in nine blocks of Tiruvannamalai district, including Kalikulam, Nadalarganandal, Arasur, Salukkai and Mattavettu and nine Panchayats in Rajamapuram and Kolathur.





## Training Conducted for Staff on Developing High Quality MGP Proposals

A 3-day training program in Chennai from 10 to 12 July was conducted to empower district and block-level staff in developing high-quality MGP proposals for micro-enterprises. Trainers were particularly trained to guide, navigate and support peers in the process.



## EDP Training Conducted for Nano Entrepreneurs

An Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) training for 30 nano-entrepreneurs of Chengalpattu District commenced on 6 July at VKP, SPMU, chaired by Tmt. Padmaja IAS (the Chief Operating Officer (PM) with Thiru. Arul Jothi Arasan (Chief Operating Officer (PI), Thiru. Sakrapani (ACOO-SandJ), Thiru. Muthuraman (Additional Director), Tmt. Petchiammal (Deputy Director, EDII) and Thiru. Ram Subramanian (World Bank Consultant) in attendance. Certificates for loan eligibility will be provided after the training. Similarly, nano entrepreneurs in Thirupparankundram and Melur Blocks of Madurai were up skilled and given a 3-day training in Entrepreneurship Development.

## PROJECT ASSISTANCE



## Thiruvannamalai FPC Inaugurated and Financial Assistance Given

The 'Thiruvannamalai FPC' was formed in Sirunathur with 812 women stakeholders and producers in Kilipennathur and Thuringiapuram under VKP. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Deputy Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, Thiru. K. Pichandi, who opened its sales.

They received a total grant of Rs 15 lakhs from VKP towards setting up office and material procurement (Rs 5 lakhs) and equipment purchase (Rs 10 lakhs Business Expansion Grant). VKP's District Officers and Government Officials participated in the FPC inauguration ceremony.



## NEFF Given to Beneficiaries Across VKP Districts

The Hon'ble Minister for Public Works (Buildings, Highways and Minor Ports), Thiru. E. V. Velu, distributed cheques from the Nano-Enterprise Financing Fund (NEFF) scheme to 51 VKP beneficiaries. On 5 July, NEFF worth Rs. 52.83 lakhs was distributed by the Mayiladuthurai District Collector, Thiru. A. P. Mahabharathi, IAS, to 369 beneficiaries from 39 Panchayats under VKP on behalf of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, at his office. The event was attended by VKP officers, top government officials and other industry experts. The NEFF scheme is being implemented in various districts of Tamil Nadu through the VKP-TNRTF.

Women SHGs are receiving nano business loans for higher growth and success. One-hundred and eighteen women SHGs in 32 panchayats of Mohanur, Puduchatram, Pallipalayam and Thiruchengode in Namakkal District were given Rs 78,10,000 NEFF business loans by Thiru P. Ramalingam, Namakkal Assembly Member, with VKP officers in attendance. Fifteen beneficiaries in Namakkal were given Rs 10,50,000 NEFF business loans by Dr. S Uma, IAS, District Collector. Two-hundred and eighty-four women beneficiaries in Nagapattinam were given Rs 38,83,000 NEFF business loan, which was presented by the District Collector, Thiru Johnny Tom Varghese IAS, with VKP officers in attendance.





## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Integrated Fishpond-Agriculture Harvesting Abundance in Agriculture through Fish Farming

#### Introduction

Using fish pond water for agriculture, commonly known as aquaponics, is an innovative and sustainable method that combines fish farming with soil-less plant cultivation. This integrated system allows the efficient use of water, nutrients and energy while promoting organic and environmentally friendly food production.

VKP has been instrumental in organizing various knowledge-sharing initiatives through Community Farm School (CFS), Community Skill School (CSS) and skill development centres to improve farmers' livelihoods. A training program organized by VKP on Inland Fish Farming in collaboration with the Fisheries Department triggered the interests of a farmer to integrate fish farming and agriculture. VKP collected like-minded farmers into a farmer group and formed the Pacheri Producer Group in Pacheri village.

#### About the Individual

Mr. Dhanushkodi is a member-farmer of the Pacheri Producer Group in Pacheri Panchayat of Manamadurai Block, Sivagangai District. Sugarcane and paddy are the major crops grown in the village, and flooding irrigation is in practice. He pioneers at inland fish rearing and uses the pond water for irrigation at his village. He cultivates sugarcane and paddy along with fish farming at his farm. He is always interested to experiment innovative things in his farm.

#### Environmentally Green Activity

After the training, he set up a pond in his farm to grow fish. Earlier, he used to pump water from the well/borewell directly to his crops. Now he is stocking the water in the fishpond and later uses it for irrigating the crops.

Water stored in the fishponds has fish waste, which serves as a valuable nutrient source for plants. The fish excreta is rich in ammonia, which is then converted into nitrates by beneficial bacteria in the water.

These nitrates act as a natural fertilizer for crops. Due to storage of water in fishponds, water is available for the crops throughout the year. Also, the use of electric pumps has reduced considerably, as the fishpond is located slightly above the farm. There is commendable improvement in the growth of sugarcane and paddy crops after using the nutrient-rich water from fishpond, which has also reduced the use of fertilizers.



#### Environmental benefits

- Storage of water in fishponds improves the ground water table.
- Pumping of water has become less and water is available even during dry season.
- It has reduced the use of synthetic fertilizers
- It helps rejuvenation of soil health and local biodiversity.

#### Economic Benefits

Thiru. Dhanushkodi used to spend Rs. 25,000 on fertilizers for cultivation of sugarcane in his 4-acre farm. After using fishpond water for irrigation, it has reduced to Rs. 20000, thereby saving 20% in input costs in paddy crop. The yield of paddy has also increased from 35 sacks (50 kg per sack) to 50 sacks.

#### Way Forward

Thiru. Dhanushkodi is focusing on setting the highest yield record in paddy and sugarcane crops through his integrated fish farming and agriculture. He shares information on inland fish farming and integrated farming with other interested farmers in the nearby villages.





## **Tamil Nadu Rural Transformation Project Vazhndhu Kattuvom Project**

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department

5th Floor, Tamil Nadu Small Industries Development Corporation Limited,  
Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Chennai 600 032

☎ (044) 434 43200 ✉ tnrtpstae@gmail.com 🌐 www.vkp-tnrtp.org

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