

10 Percent Adivasis Showcase Developmental Revolution

Gudalur is a small taluk located in Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu. The area has 10 percent adivasi population, which accounts to a maximum of 25,0000 people. 20 years back ACCORD (Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development) foundation was established, to help the adivasi community of Gudalur take control of their lives. ACCORD had created a membership-based community called Adivasi Munnetra Sangam(AMS) for the benefit of the tribal community. At present the community is self-sufficient and has its own hospital, schools and 8 centers, which are all digitally enabled. All the information is collected and stored digitally.

There is an area centre, which also works as a community centre for Gudalur and other nearby villages. The area centre team consists of animators (Active members are called animators), health coordinators, education coordinators and saving/financial coordinators who contribute in the growth of their respective communities. The tribal people themselves run the area centres. The animators collect first hand data from the villages and send to ACCORD office every month for further data analysis, which helps in utilization of community information.

Last year ACCORD nominated their project ATLM (Adivasi Tea Leaf Marketing) under Vodafone Mobile for Good programme 2013. The project is run by Digital Empowerment Foundation under mBillionth Award South Asia. The project was selected as one of the four best mobile practices of the year and was offered INR 1 million funds and mentorship support for next two years. The Digital Empowerment Foundation team visited the area to monitor the progress of Adivasi Tea Leaf Marketing project. ATLM is a tea leaf marketing agency owned and run by

adivasi people in the Nilgiris district. ATLM purchases fresh tea leaves from the adivasi tea farmers and sells it to the tea processing units. In past the functioning and monitoring of the process was done on papers, which led to lots of human made errors. ACCORD helped ATLM to learn advanced mobile-based technology and develop a system, which eased up the functions at all levels in the ATLM process. The use of mobile technology reduced unnecessary paper work and human errors during the data collection from field to office by ATLM workers. People use mobile tablets to enter data in the system, which records the kilos of tea, member name, member code etc. at the time of tea bags collection from ATLM members at village. The data saved to the app is sent to the system through Wifi connectivity to keep a record of the process. The entire mechanism is now being managed through mobile application.

Apart from this, the area has a hospital called ASHWINI. Association for Health Welfare in the Nilgiris, is a tribal hospital, which is run by the tribal staff for the tribal community. The core idea of the charitable society is to build this unit as accessible, acceptable and owned by the tribal community of Gudalur Valley. Patients can get their medical check ups and basic treatment done in INR 20. In need of surgery or any major treatment the hospital is insured with a government hospital for support.

The area has its own tribal school in Gudalur town known as Vidyodaya Vishwabharti (VBVT). The school for tribes works on an education system different from the traditional schooling standards. The teachers use advanced technology like computers, Internet and mobile tablets for teaching. The school has an open system of education, where all the kids are free show their interest, to choose to learn and to play. All students speak in fluent English and are still

attached to their roots. The area also has a tribal marketing unit of 'Adivasi Munnetra Sangam', known as 'Just Change', which aims to work as an intermediate agency for the consumers and the producers in the region.

In a time span of 20 years the entire scenario of the area has changed. The community is prospering with constant efforts by the people from the community. Most of the adivasis are living a satisfactory life with no worries about their daily needs. The people are constantly drawing inspiration from their own cultural values and setting up a positive example for their coming generation as well as the entire world.