

## Legal cell to aid the Madduvalasa Dam oustees

The livelihoods of people living on the banks of the Suvarnamukhi River in Andhra Pradesh are threatened by the construction of a dam. Construction of the dam across the Suvarnamukhi River in Vangara Mandal of Srikakulam District, AP started in 1976, at a projected cost of Rs. 7 crores, funded by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The dam was to irrigate 24,700 acres of dry land, while displacing 5,000 families, and submerging 13,500 acres (including 8,500 acres of wetlands - officially, 1 acre of wetland counts as 2 acres, and the usual norm for dam-related submergence is a command area at least ten times the submergence zone). As of November 2001, the dam has been completed, albeit at a cost of Rs. 112 crore, and 3,000 acres of land has been submerged. In June 2002, the gates will be closed, drowning the remaining land, which is currently occupied by ten villages.

As activists from the Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU, AP Agricultural Laborers' Union) found out, the Government has given cash compensation (far below the market value) for only 3,000 acres of the wetlands. Further, earlier repeated protests by the affected villagers produced Government assisted housing for only 750 families. The rest of the displaced people appear to have been left to fend for themselves; tenants, landless laborers and artisans are not even counted by the Government as being among the project affected. The APVVU, assisted by Ravi and Aravinda of AID-India, has tried to better organize the people in their struggle for justice. Their activities include forming study groups of five youths from each village to quantify the affected population and land resources. Their demand for rehabilitation is that it should not be on cash based, but on land for land, housing and other assets.



*People of Kuttisa village, which will be submerged by the dam, raise their concerns in a public meeting organized by APVVU.*

Since the dam is already completed they feel it is meaningless at this stage to say no dam. They want the authorities to stop closing the gates until the total rehabilitation is completed. AID recently approved \$1,600 to help set up a legal cell that will aid the oustees in preparing for and seeking court interventions to get an enhancement of their compensation. It will also assist the villagers in fighting legally for a proper rehabilitation package and preparing writ petitions where their rights are not being recognized at all. Data collection from land acquisition offices as well as the compensation status of each family is another important task that the legal cell will perform.

*-- Subramanian (AID-Pittsburgh)*

### Projects Corner

Development of Village Education (DOVE) has embarked on a project to create awareness on rural sanitation and to promote kitchen gardens through training, community participation and campaign activities in 15 villages around Nochikulam in the southern part of Thoothukudi district in Tamil Nadu state. The population in this region consists mostly of Palmyra tappers, landless laborers, coolies and helpers in construction sites, brick kilns and lime industries, and Dalits who do whatever work opportunities they get under trying conditions. The specific objectives of the project are to educate the people about the importance of keeping their houses and surroundings clean, remove the factors contributing to poor sanitary conditions of the villages, cultivate a sense of hygiene in the minds of the children, create a general awareness in the villages regarding health, hygiene and sanitation and to maintain kitchen gardens so that people can get nutritious food in the form of vegetables and greens. For further information on this project, please visit <http://ucsu.colorado.edu/~aid/dovevisit.html>

*-- Sumita Mani (AID-Dallas) & Kiran Sonnad (AID-Colorado)*

### **Mark Your Calendar :**

1) AID Minneapolis, along with Indian Music Society of Minnesota and School of Music - University of Minnesota - Twin Cities presents "Masters of Percussion" featuring Zakir Hussain (Tabla), Fazal Qureshi (Tabla), Selva Ganesh (Kanjira), Taufiq Qureshi (Percussion), Bhavani Shankar (Pakhawaj), Vijay Chauhan (Dholki, Folk Drums), A. Sarvanan (Thavil) and special guest Sultan Khan (Sarangi) on Thursday, May 2, 2002, 7:00 PM at the Ted Mann Concert Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis - West Bank campus. For more details of the concert, visit [www.imsom.org](http://www.imsom.org). Tickets are available online at: [www.sulekha.com/minneapolis](http://www.sulekha.com/minneapolis)

2) AID - Los Angeles presents Master Shasank on the flute on April 28th, at 5:30 P.M in Tom Bradley International Hall, UCLA. For more information, please contact Latha at 310-643-4366 or e-mail [aidla@yahoo.com](mailto:aidla@yahoo.com)

### **Obituary.**

We deeply regret the passing away in early March of Mrs. Tara Shastree, founder and co-ordinator of Muktabai Mahila Swayam Vikas Pratishtan (MMSVP), a group in Pune, working for social and economic empowerment of women. AID has worked with MMSVP for over five years. The San Francisco Bay Area and Maryland chapters of AID have supported their vocational training programs, and many have no doubt used the fine greeting cards made by them. Mrs. Shastree dedicated her entire life to social work. She was an inspiration for those who knew her, and will be remembered for her vibrant ideas, tireless perseverance and amazing energy and enthusiasm. We hope and believe that her work and vision will continue to grow. --- AID volunteers.

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### **Thank you!**

We would like to thank all our donors who contributed to the success of our first ever web-based Fund raising Drive 'One for AID' which ran from Dec.'01 through Jan.' 02. We received approximately \$10,000 as donations during the drive. We look forward to your continued support in our future efforts. --- AID volunteers.

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