

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. In the center, there is a clearing with a bright green field, possibly a rice paddy. A small structure with a blue roof is visible in the middle ground, surrounded by tall palm trees. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2023 – 2024**

## Secretary's Note

I am pleased to present the annual report for the fiscal year 2023-2024, showcasing the significant advancements of our welfare programs. This year, our efforts were concentrated on improving the lives and livelihoods of residents in the Thally and Kelamanagalm blocks of Krishnagiri district.

A major focus of our initiatives has been to educate tribal communities about the commercial value of forest produce.

We have provided comprehensive training in value addition, packaging, and marketing, and facilitated connections to government schemes to promote sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, we implemented numerous child-centered activities designed to ensure the holistic development of children, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Our initiatives have yielded substantial impacts. We have notably enhanced access to healthcare services for children and women, and supported over 1200 young women in achieving safe deliveries, among other significant accomplishments.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our donors, government collaborators, medical professionals, grassroots NGOs, and well-wishers. Your unwavering support and guidance are vital to our growth and our ability to positively impact more lives each year. Finally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to our board members, staff, and field volunteers for their relentless dedication and commitment to advancing our organization and reaching more deserving individuals annually.



Yours sincerely,

K. Gowri

Secretary



## About Us

The Rural Development Council is a registered non-profit organization committed to the upliftment and enhancement of tribal communities, specifically focusing on the Dalit community and mentally ill patients in wallajabad, Kanchipuram district and Irular Adivasi communities in Denkanikottai, Krishnagiri district. These marginalized communities have historically lacked access to basic amenities. Our primary objective is to empower women and children within these communities, recognizing their heightened vulnerability to exploitation and the denial of basic human rights. Despite the existence of government schemes designed for their welfare, a lack of awareness often hinders their access to these initiatives. Through our initiatives, we actively work to inform and encourage them to avail themselves of the social schemes implemented for their benefit by the government.

In addition to raising awareness about government schemes, our organization conducts programs aimed at fostering sustainable development in areas such as livelihood, health, and literacy. We are dedicated to equipping these communities with the knowledge and skills needed to exercise their rights, ensuring they have equal opportunities in society. Our long-term vision extends beyond immediate improvements, aiming to bring about a transformative change in the communities we inhabit. Through our efforts, we aspire to empower them to lead fulfilling lives with the confidence to navigate and contribute effectively to society.

### **Vision:**

RDC envisions an egalitarian society where indigenous Adivasi communities and Dalits live with dignity, self-identity, and secure livelihoods. We advocate for their access to customary rights over forests and lands and the realization of human rights, particularly for children and women in socio-economic, cultural, and political spheres.

### **Mission:**

Our mission is to empower the most vulnerable social groups, facilitating self-governance, ownership, and sustainable management of natural resources. We emphasize people-centered sustainable development, micro-action research for evidence-based advocacy, the revival of traditional knowledge, and collective actions to protect forests and natural resources.



# Child - centered programs



**RDC actively promotes education and skill development among children through a range of child-centered activities. Our study centers in Denkanikottai Taluk cater to the educational needs of children, encouraging them to pursue continuous education despite various challenges. To keep children motivated and aware of their rights, we organize diverse cultural and sports competitions. These initiatives not only foster a love for learning but also empower children by building their confidence and social skills.**



Program	Description
Study Centers	Support educational needs and encourage continuous education
Cultural Competitions	Motivate children and promote awareness of their rights
Sports Competitions	Foster physical development and teamwork





## Healthcare Support Programs

Providing healthcare access for tribal communities across 125 villages has been a crucial objective for RDC. The organization runs a mobile medical unit (2 doctors, medical staff, lab technicians) with the support of the National Health Mission since 2002 in Thally and Kelamangalam blocks, attending to the medical needs of people living in remote areas. RDC has also collaborated with Primary Health Care centers to conduct free antenatal care (ANC) and postnatal care (PNC) health check-ups for pregnant and lactating mothers from hilly villages, screening for hypertension, blood pressure, glucose, and hemoglobin levels for adolescent girls. Through the Nutrition Mela program, RDC provides healthy, nutritious supplements for pregnant women and adolescent girls, and shares information on government health schemes. The organization also conducts special medical camps and Non – communicable disease camps periodically, including breast and uterus screening camps for women.



# Livelihood Initiatives



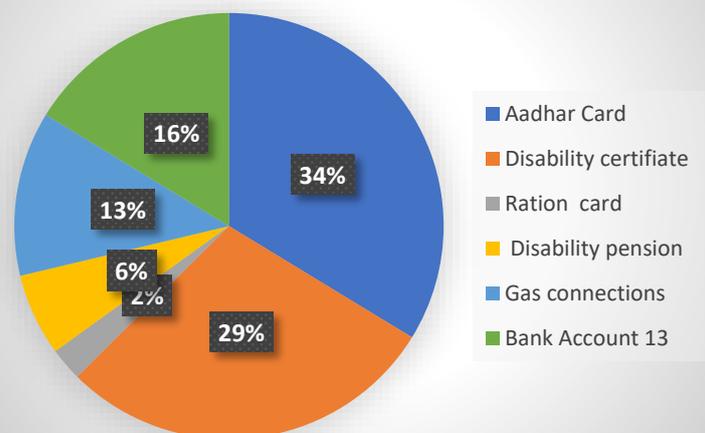
RDC has organized a series of training programs on value addition of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). The organization has constructed a multipurpose building to specifically train women on packing and marketing these products, which has ensured the economic enhancement of women. Many women are now actively engaged in this initiative to sustain their livelihoods. RDC has also conducted numerous exposure visits and exhibitions across various locations. The Thenkani Federation, formed and functioning by RDC, is benefiting the livelihoods of hundreds of tribal women and men.



## Housing with Supportive services for people with Psychosocial Disabilities

INDICATORS	SUPPORTED LIVING
Total Number of Clients	40
Total Number of Homes	08
Number of New Enrolment	04
Number of re-unifications	03
No. of clients sent to ECRC	04
No. of personal Assistants	16

### Entitlements received





## CARE PROJECT

- 76 students from low-income households were supported academically with 60% school fees to receive education in a coveted English medium school.
- 6 students who scored good percentage (between 76% to 92%) in the final exams were gifted a branded school bag.
- A session on 'Parental Responsibility' was conducted for the 76 families to equip them on child development, positive reinforcement, discipline and father-mother responsibilities.
- During the December 2023 floods, the project provided dry rations worth Rs. 1200 to 75 families. This was a great relief, as parents on daily wage work were without work for weeks.
- Visited 40 houses for counseling and guidance to the families and the students, and also for documenting testimonials.

## Our other programs



**Sensitization of Adivasi (Tribal) community of the remote hilly villages of Denkanikottai Taluk in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu, India, on STDs / HIV / AIDS prevention**



**Sensitization of the Tribal adolescent girls and women on their rights and promotion of the importance of higher education.**

# ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS 2023 - 2024

852

- Supported to get social entitlement from the Government

282

- Tribal Women Leaders developed
- Entrepreneurs Developed

1136

- Screening done for ANC, PNC mothers

22

- Tribal youth work in TATA Electronics

457

- Members involved in the Value addition of the NTFP Products

14400

- OP services provided to the Tribal people with the support of NHM

43

- Students continuing higher education

40

- People recovered from mental illness are provided housing and supporting services

520

- Children benefitted through evening study centers

# CONCLUSION

The support from donor agencies, including HCL, MEM Foundation, National Health Mission, ACT, RIST, and other donors, has enabled RDC to make tangible changes in the operational villages and in the lives of the communities. Despite the remote and hilly nature of the villages, with limited access, RDC has been able to bring the issues of the tribal community to the attention of officials. This is a positive change, and the efforts put in require continued support to make the progress more sustainable. The support from donor agencies, including HCL, MEM Foundation, National Health Mission, ACT, RIST, and other donors, has enabled RDC to make tangible changes in the operational villages and in the lives of the communities. Despite the remote and hilly nature of the villages, with limited access, RDC has been able to bring the issues of the tribal community to the attention of officials. This is a positive change, and the efforts put in require continued support to make the progress more sustainable.

The process is slow, as the population is largely illiterate and have been cut off from mainstream development processes. Additionally, the communities are struggling with livelihood issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its traumatic effects. However, the support from the people and officials has helped RDC achieve the anticipated outcomes.

RDC remains committed to its vision and mission, and will continue to work towards the empowerment and well-being of the Adivasi and Dalit communities in its operational areas.

## **Contact Information**

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# Our Valued Partners



**HCL Foundation**



**MEMFoundation-Chennai**

**Greijdanus Fund – Netherlands**

