CHAPTER - III
PASUMPON MUTHURAMALINGA THEVAR DISTRICT
- A PROFILE

3.0 Introduction

The main objective of the study is to investigate the Post-literacy achievement of neo-literates of Total Literacy Campaign in Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District in Tamil Nadu.

This chapter deals with the profile of the district.

3.1 Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District - a Profile

An attempt is made here to give the geographical description of Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District (PMT). The Post Literacy Campaign in the district is analysed at the backdrop of the geographical conditions of the district.

3.2 Overview

Pasumpon Muthuramlinga Thevar (PMT) District was formed on 15th March 1985 in memory of late Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar by trifurcating the erstwhile Ramanathapuram district into three districts, namely Ramanathapuram, Kamarajar and PMT Districts, with its Headquarters at Sivaganga. This district is historically important as this region was ruled by Maruthu Brothers. The area ruled by the Sivagangai Zamindars and the region popularly knows as "Chettinadu" now constitute the present PMT District.
3.2.2 Population and Occupational Pattern

According to 1991 census, the district has a population of 10,74,989 out of which 8.20 lakh people are living in rural areas. The total number of literates and educated is 4,334 lakhs. The population of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is 1,07,063 and 1721 respectively. The sex ratio, i.e. number of females per 1000 males is 1046. The density of population per sq.km is 235 persons.

According to 1991 census, the percentage of workers to total population was 39%. More than two thirds of the workers derive employment from agriculture. Half of the geographical area of the district is being utilised for cultivation. Over 60% of the farmers are small and marginal farmers.

3.2.3 Administrative set up

The district has been divided into two revenue divisions and six taluks. Further, it is divided into two development divisions with 12 blocks, 437 village panchayats, 497 revenue villages with 2366 small villages, 12 town panchayats and 3 municipalities.

3.2.4 Working Group

The total working population of this district is 3.41 lakhs out of which 1.80 lakh people are cultivators and 0.17 lakh people are
agricultural labourers. 3/4th of the working population depends upon agricultural activities.

The main occupation of the district is agriculture. The district is served by a network of 102 bank branches. There are six technical institutions in this area.

3.2.5 Developmental Programme

The district is eligible for all concessions and incentives as far as developmental programmes are concerned. The Department of Agriculture is taking concerted efforts to develop agriculture activity so as to boost the income of the farmers in the district. As far as dairy is concerned, the Co-operative Milk Societies plays a significant role. Handloom weaving is one of the occupations of the people in the district.

To augment the economic prosperity in the region, many developmental programmes are being implemented in the district. The Training for Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), credit linked programmes of Tamil Nadu Adi Dravida Housing and Development Corporation (TAHDCO), Urban Self-employment Schemes for Hindu Adi Dravida Youth are some of the schemes being implemented in the district. Different schemes of loan are introduced to boost the economy of the district.
3.2.6 Need for Total Literacy Campaign

The above descriptions clearly reveal that the district is a backward one. Although agriculture is the backbone of the people, they suffer due to insufficient rainfall as the climate remains hot during many months. Some parts of the district are not fertile and hence are not suitable for cultivation. River Vaigai and Periyar are the water sources available, but their flow is limited to a few parts of the district. Most of the people remain illiterate. In this context, Total Literacy Campaign and Post Literacy Campaign were necessary to achieve economic, social, political and cultural development in the district.

3.3 Total Literacy Campaign in Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District

Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar (PMT) District, one of the smallest and most backward districts in Tamil Nadu has a population of 10.74 lakh people with 4.35 lakh illiterates. When the Total Literacy Campaign was launched one lakh eight thousand people were illiterate in the age group 15-35 and 70% of them were females. The illiterates were distributed in 12 blocks and 3 municipalities. The Bharath Gyan Vijayan Jatha created a climate for literacy during 1990 all over the district. Arivoli Iyakkam, a people's movement for Total Literacy was launched in the district on 17th August 1991 on the pattern adopted by various districts and accepted by NLM.
It was the first and foremost district to launch the literacy movement in Tamil Nadu. The TLC had the following main features:

- Time bound
- Massive total approach
- Greater mobilisation and motivation
- Well planned training
- Voluntary in nature
- Involvement of the community
- Co-operation of Government structure and Voluntary Organisations.

To carry out the TLC, a society, ARIVOLI IYAKKAM was registered with the District Collector as its President. It also had a Secretary, Vice-President, Treasurer and members which included representatives from Government Departments and Voluntary Organisations. The NLM approved the proposal and contributed 2/3 of the expenditure and the State 1/3. The Arivoli Iyakkam had three implementing organisational components.

- The Government and Administrative component with voluntary organisations.
- The full time staff component.
The village, block and district level committees.

The Government and Administrative component with voluntary organisations had 38 Governing Body members and 28 Executive Committee members along with the following Sub-committees:

The Administrative Committee

The Finance Committee

Training and Workshop Committee

Publicity Committee (including cultural)

Women's Committee

Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.

The full time staff component had 4 District level programme Co-ordinators, 12 Panchayat Union Programme Co-ordinators and 3 Municipal Programme Co-ordinators for every 3,000 illiterates identified and 44 Assistant Programme Co-ordinators were working at Sub-block level. The District Office had 2 Typists, 4 Clerks and 2 Assistants and one Secretarial Assistant for each block. The Popular Committee consisted of the district literacy committees, Panchayat Union Committees, Sub-block core committee, a core committee and a village committee. Preparatory meetings were aimed at Government Officials, Educational Officials, Trade Unions, Mass Organisations, Service Organisations, N.S.S. and N.C.C. Offic-
ers. The main objective of this mobilisation work was to request these people to supply the man power as full time co-ordinators, training personnel for volunteers like Resource Persons and Master Trainers and Jatha artistes.

The training was organised to build up organisational set up upto village level on one side and to teach the learner through volunteers on the other side. Training was imparted to the full time programme co-ordinators and the part time panchayat, village and women conveners. The training was organised as residential and non-residential camps. 10,500 volunteers were mobilised and given training to teach the primers to one lakh illiterates in the ratio of one volunteer per 10 illiterates. At first, training was given to 70 Resource Persons at the district level. They gave training to 650 Master Trainers at the Block level. The Master Trainers in turn trained 10,500 volunteers at the sub-block level. No travelling expenses were paid to volunteers and Master Trainers to attend the camp. Volunteers training camp was conducted 4 times at 106 places.

For mobilisation and motivation non-Jatha publicity activities were made use of which included Posters, Stickers & Door slips, Hand bills, Brochures, Slides, Banners, Song books, Booklets, Newsletters, Audio Cassettes, Flags and Placards. To mobilise the people Arivoli conducted district level, taluk level, block level and
village level conventions. These conventions were marked by huge rallies and public meetings. To give special attention to women’s literacy, District level and Taluk level women’s conventions were organised at Karaikudi. To mobilise the teachers, Arivoli organised two teachers’ conventions, one at Devakottai and the other at Sivagangai.

Special campaign strategies included a ‘One day Survey’ to generate a campaign mood organised on 6.7.91. To create the feeling that the Lamp of literacy removes the darkness of ignorance a call was given to the people of the District to light lamps on the Independence day. During the period of Saraswathि Pooja festival a general call was given to the learners to write “SARASWATHI” in a post card and send it to the District Collector. To mobilise the volunteers and learners and to keep up the learning environment alive “ARIVOLI HUMAN CHAIN” was formed. Arivoli Folk cultural festival gave the message of preserving the rural folk arts. Pongal Festival was linked with literacy campaign. International Women’s Day celebration, Exhibitions, Jatha Artistes rehearsal camp, Jatha programme, Booster Jatha, Women kala jatha, Minor jathas and Children jatha were also organised and celebrated.

The enrolment in a centre varied from 6 to 25. Though a volunteer was meant to teach only 10 learners, due to lack of volunteers a volunteer had to teach more than 25 people in a few
areas. Since most of the classes had to be run under the street lamps, there were problems in the beginning. Remedial actions had been taken to maintain the street lamps. The external evaluation shows that the literacy centres were active for six days a week and in some centres seven days. Many of the centres started with the singing of literacy songs.

The volunteers in certain centres taught basket-making, bead-chain making, etc. The volunteers who were teachers by profession developed their own teaching models and taught the learners. For evaluation special forms were designed and information were collected periodically through volunteers, Panchayat and village conveners etc. These data were collected at volunteers’ training camps, panchayat conveners’ and village conveners’ camps. One special volunteers’ camp was organised to gauge the learning level of the learners. An independent mid-term external evaluation was conducted by a team of external evaluators headed by Dr. Jeyakumar of Bharathiar University. This team visited three blocks and evaluated the learners.

The TLC was constantly evaluated by the external evaluators such as literacy consultants of NLM, officials of NLMA, Journalists, officials of the Directorate of Adult Education from State and Central Governments. Arivoli Iyakkam succeeded in its people’s movement and the district is totally literate in the age group of 15-
35 as per National Literacy Mission norms. Of the one lakh and odd illiterates, this movement had enrolled 90,000 and 69,000 people have acquired the skill of basic literacy. The literacy percentage in this age group has gone upto 90%.

Table : 2 Literacy Status of Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>: 10.74 Lakhs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Status</td>
<td>: 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-35 Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Population</td>
<td>: 3,84,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Literates</td>
<td>: 2,77,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Illiterates</td>
<td>: 1,07,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>: 32,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>: 74,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Literacy added through</td>
<td>: 69,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arivoli :(Basic literacy as per NLM)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Total Literates after TLC</td>
<td>: 3,46,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Literacy percentage</td>
<td>: 90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1 Limitation of Total Literacy Campaign

Literacy is not only the 3 R's - reading, writing and arithmatic, but also awareness. It is also knowledge about the conditions of their life, about nature and society. It includes concepts of science,
law, women's rights, environment development, health, art and culture. This is a continuing process. Attention needs to be given to awareness of the various existing government programmes and other development activities like co-operatives, credit sources, employment schemes and agricultural productivity schemes. This functionality component therefore assumes a much larger meaning as an 'information window' on rights and development. The functionality component of 'Arivoli Campaign', though higher than in many schemes, was not adequate due to the shortness of time available and the lack of training to the volunteers and above all the fact that the volunteers themselves had extremely low functionality and awareness levels - often less than that of the persons they were to teach.

There was a persistent demand for vocational training especially from young women which could not be satisfied by the Arivoli Campaign, though to some extent was covered in the follow up phase.

3.4 Post Literacy Campaign in PMT District.

Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District has the pride of being the first district to be declared totally literate. 69,319 people in the age-group of 15-35 benefitted from the Total Literacy Campaign and 65,445 of them participated in the Post Literacy Campaign.

PLC was launched on September 12, 1992 to

a) Prevent the recurrence or relapse of illiteracy.
b) Provide a better and deeper teaching of functionality and awareness component.

c) Develop greater involvement of public in all education programme.

d) Maintain a spirit of voluntarism for any social cause.

e) Sustain and develop the literacy and numeracy skills of all the neo-literates.

f) Develop organisational structure at the grass-root levels to implement government programme.

3.4.1 Organisation

The Governing Body and Executive Committee of the Arivoli Iyakkam were retained as such.

Under the executive committee were the Sub-committees at District level, and Popular committees at Municipal/Block level, Panchayat level and village level. These Committees were broad based and comprised local and elected representatives. These committees were in charge of the work in their respective areas.

Functioning in these village level and Panchayat level committees were approximately 100 school teachers, scientists, professionals and officials who acted as resource persons. The resource persons constituted under their leadership local academic committees involv-
ing school teachers and professionals and officials in guiding and organising Post-literacy activities.

The project had thirty two project/sub-project co-ordinators, 5 at District level, 3 at Municipal level, and 24 at Block level. They were taken from the existing Programme Co-ordinators of TLC.

There were 500 organisers. Each of these organisers had 5 villages in his/her charge. They were chosen from amongst the best volunteers. There was a total of 1,750 Literacy circles of Arivoli Vattams, 500 PL Centres or Arivoli Thodarkalvi Maiyams, and 25 PL Nilayams or Arivoli Thodarkalvi Nilayams,

PL Circles: Each PL Circle was formed by grouping the neo-literates of 4 literacy Centres of TLC. Of the four volunteers the best was given training to teach the neo-literates.

PL Centre: Each PL Centre conformed to a panchayat. Each PL Centre covered 5 villages/habitations and nurtured 5 PL Circles. The PL Centres were run by the Project Organiser and a committee of five circle guides and others.

PL Nilayams: PL Nilayams were the meeting places of project organisers with the co-ordinators where the weekly meetings for MIS were held. Each PL Nilayam catered to the needs of 20 PL Centres. The activities and training were conducted with the help of voluntary organisations and Government bodies. PL Nilayams were engaged in
science popularisation activities and developmental activities.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) of the District constructed buildings for PL Nilayams.

PL Centres: The PL Centre was for over 200 neo-literates. Each centre was provided with books, magazines, recreational equipments and stationery. Each centre was run by the project organiser and the committee. The committee had a core of 5 volunteers mostly youth who were unpaid but provided with suitable training to run the centres effectively.

Functions of PL Centres:

a) To run and monitor the PL Circles.

b) To run IPCL based short term classes for illiterates left out in the age group of 9-45.

c) To conduct refresher classes once a week to neo-literates.

d) To conduct refresher classes for guides.

e) To supply newspapers, posters, magazines, books, etc. to each PL Circle in a planned way.

f) To conduct the meeting of PL Centre committee regularly, thus ensuring community involvement.

g) To set up and run Non-formal Education centres for working children and school drop-outs.
h) To help to readmit in schools the children who were covered by Non-formal Education programme.

i) To ensure 100% school enrolment and to maintain a separate register for unenrolled or drop out children.

j) To carry out literacy campaigns regularly to keep the environment alive.

k) To promote cultural and library movement.

l) Wherever possible to arrange vocational training especially for young women.

m) Acting as centre of information window on development and rights.

i) Employment opportunities and IRDP schemes.

ii) Knowledge of credit/loan facilities.

iii) Knowledge of government social welfare schemes.

iv) Knowledge of Self-employment schemes.

v) Knowledge of housing schemes.

vi) Knowledge of fuel management for their households.

vii) Knowledge of environmental hazards and ways of safeguarding against them.
viii) Knowledge of health measures.

ix) Knowledge of legal rights of women.

x) Knowledge of legal rights of working sections.

xi) Knowledge of basic democratic rights and institutions.

xii) Local grievance redressal mechanisms.

xiii) Local area level facilities.

xiv) Increasing agricultural productivity.

Efforts were made to give special attention to the unenrolled illiterates and the dropouts. PLC in the district included, establishing a library at each panchayat for retention and upgradation of literacy skills by supplying reading materials like posters, newspapers and specially designed books. 1000 libraries were established of which 400 were run by the local village people. Every library received "Thina Thanthi", a popular Tamil Daily. Every Tuesday "Arivoli Poonga", a neo-literate broadsheet was attached to the Thina Thanthi issue. The content was contributed by a panel of writers and included science articles, short stories, weekly news round-up and literacy movement news and readers' contribution. Many contests were held with the help of the broadsheet. More than 200 reader responses were received every week. Two copies of Thulir, Tamil Nadu's largest circulating popular science monthly with special
features for neo-literates, were supplied to every PL Circle.

A few other information and entertaining periodicals were also brought for the libraries. "ARIVOLI KADIR", a wall journal was brought out for the benefit of the neo-literates every month. Moreover, titles brought out by external agencies also were made available to the libraries. A number of book collection campaigns were conducted and 1000 books were collected from the public and supplied to Arivoli libraries. Any village that bought for its library, books worth Rs 200/- was supplied with more books worth Rs 300/-. About 400 villages availed the benefit of this scheme.

3.4.2 Training

Training was given to organise PLC to build up organisational set up upto the village level on one side and to teach the neo-literates through guides on the other. It included training for Resource Persons, Panchayat Coordinators, Guides, Youth, Women, Health, Kala Jatha training programme, writers workshop for preparing learning materials and village coordinators' workshop.

Pedagogy and primers for adult learners in conformity with IPCL were already available. But maximum attention was given to developing a primer for a one month refresher course.

Guides were trained in:

a) General organizational skills
b) General communication skills

c) Adult literacy pedagogy for left out literates and neo-literates

d) NFE pedagogy for 9-14

e) Understanding and communicating science and development activities.

Residential training was organised for 500 Project organisers for 3 days followed by another 2 day residential training after two months and then a 5 day non-residential course. The first 3 day training focused on communication skills, adult literacy and NFE pedagogy, and the remaining training programmes concentrated on functionality.

80 Key Resource Persons and resource persons were given 5 day residential and 5 day non-residential trainings. Training programmes were conducted on Panchayat Raj. More than 450 guides from all over the district participated in the training programme.

Mr. Chidambaram, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Executive Trustee, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, inaugurated 10 Rajiv Gandhi rural libraries on the occasion of World Literacy Day on Friday, September 9, 1995 in the PMT district. The village library programme of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, developed in collaboration with Machwe Foundation, was designed to support and strengthen Post-literacy. Each library had around 400-450 books, selected by the villagers themselves. Young boys and girls were
being trained as librarians. An important aspect of the programme was collection of literature emanating from the rural areas. The aim was to enable the villagers to manage their need for information, skills and knowledge in course of time.

Other important PLC activities in the district were Human Chain for National Integration on the birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Kapadi matches for the youth, Seminar on International Women's Day, Camps for the prevention of Malaria, procession for enrolling children of school going age and environmental cleanliness, Prohibition Campaign, Consumers' procession and Small Savings procession. Tangible changes were stabilization of Arivoli Library committees, Women's Forums, Youth Forums and Village committees, a permanent capacity to publish books needed by neo-literates and the villages adopting libraries and making them people's libraries.

Funds were collected by S. Pudur Arivoli Women's Organisation and a labour ward was constructed. Flood relief work was undertaken. Materials and funds were collected and sent for the relief work. Propaganda was done to create awareness on AIDS. Arrack sales was prohibited and campaign was conducted against alcoholism. Tanks were cleaned, litter was removed and water pipes were repaired. At the Alagappa University Library, a workshop was conducted on the production of neo-literates' books where all district
level writers participated. Public Grievance Day meeting was held once in a month. The applications written by the public were collected on that day and decisions were taken based on them.