

## Psycho Social Support Programmes conducted through Muppet Shows at Tsunami affected area



### PHASE - I

**Psycho Social Support Programmes through Muppet**

**Shows funded by UNICEF-PHASE- I**

*A Report on the programmes Conducted in the Tsunami Affected  
Shelters/Villages and Schools at Nagapattinam, Cuddalore,  
Kanyakumari and Kanjeeपुरam District*

**Time Frame - 5 months from June 2005 to Oct 2005**

**Introduction**

**The aftermath...**

The morning of 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 brought forth tides of distress to many people as the world was just winding up after the Christmas festivities. A massive earthquake measuring 9.3 on the Richter scale triggered off the worst ever tsunami that the world had ever witnessed. Tidal waves rushed onshore devastating the age old coastal settlements of South Asian countries. Within a matter of minutes, lives that had thrived for centuries in synergy with the seas were ravaged beyond recognition. Everything was taken away- their lives, their loved ones, their home, their belongings and their hope...



The unexpected strike of the Tsunami unleashed waves of distress. For the first time in human history, the fishing community developed an apprehension of the sea. These people suffered negative psychosocial effects generated by the shock of losing their loved ones and their possessions.

This crisis had a massive and severe impact on the children of these communities. Many were either orphaned or separated from their parents; many were seriously ill and dropped out of school. There was a persistent threat of large numbers of school dropouts, with ever increasing numbers of child laborers and the unsafe situation whereby the children were exposed to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. The children became the most vulnerable in the community.

This give rise to enormous challenges because children may be frightened by the disaster; they can also be affected by disruption that a disaster might cause in their daily routine or their relationships with parents, teachers, and friends. It is not unusual for children to show changes in behaviors, yet these behavioral changes are but signs and symptoms of distress or discomfort. In addition, poor health conditions add to their vulnerability and lead to many dangers. Lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation spread disease, aggravate malnutrition and weaken health. So, there is an urgent need to protect these children from such situations.

Young children are affected more than others during these times because of their lack of understanding and their difficulty in communicating how they feel. Older children may be affected as well and like their younger siblings they too find it difficult to express their feelings. The children should be brought out of their stress, depression, guilt and worries. Moreover they should be provided accurate and practical information concerning the tsunami so that they could plan for preparedness in any disastrous situation. This calls for the need of an effective medium to vent their suppressed feelings as well as to help them overcome the unforgettable fears...

### **The rising hope...**



The MYRTLE SOCIAL WELFARE NETWORK with the support of UNICEF had organized 100 Muppet shows for these children who have been affected by the tsunami. These shows are designed so as to help the children combat stress and depression. The show aims to restore normalcy in the lives of the children. To support the community PA system had been hired for 26 programmes in Nagapattinam

District from fishermen community of Karthik Sound Service owner Mr. N.Paramasivam affected by Tsunami and residing at Nambiar Nagar Temporary shelter. The Muppets were used as effective medium to enable the children to voice out their feelings and to restore their hopes that was washed away by the Tsunami.

Sl. No	Name Of The District	Number Of Villages/Temporary Shelters/ Covered	Number of Children Participated	Number of Adults Participated	Number of Students covered in Schools	Evaluation	
						V. G*	G*
1.	Nagapattinam District	51	16420	5118	9081 (14 Schools)	48	3
2.	Cuddalore District	25	4972	2961	1450 (1 School)	23	2
3.	Kanyakumari District	24	4245	2855		19	5
4.	Kancheepuram District	1 Temporary Shelter	300	200			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>101 Programme</b>	<b>25,637</b>	<b>10,934</b>	<b>10531</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>10</b>

\* V.G : Very Good

\* G : Good

**Total Number of Children Participation : 25,637**

**Total Number of Participation : 36,571**

These programmes were the result of the ceaseless effort on the part of the Myrtle team to restore hope to the children who had a lot to lose in life...

### **The main objectives of the programmes**

- To provide Psycho Social Support to the Fishing community and in schools for the Tsunami affected children thus enabling them to step out of their fear and depression through Muppet Show
- To help the children to ventilate their emotions and feelings
- To help the children to lead a normal healthy life

Psycho Social support through Muppet shows funded by UNICEF conducted by MYRTLE



- To teach children the safety measures during emergencies
- To provide guidance and counseling to cope with post disaster situations
- To give information on Health & hygiene and the importance of Iodized salt

To bring back the forgotten smiles in the face of the children...

### **Content of the Programme – A synopsis**

The programme starts with small activities and games. The Navigator and the Rosy, Navigator Doll will interact with the public in a friendly manner with fun loving stories.

The Myrtle team will gather necessary information about the children in the community. This helps Rosy to involve in humorous interaction with the young and the old alike in the community. This friendly conversations help in facilitating participatory approach and also assist in the building of effective, long standing rapport with the children and the other members of the community.



The social issues that are addressed in the course of the Muppet shows are:

1. Scientific information on Tsunami so that knowing about the scientific facts will help the children reason out things and will give a secure feeling.
2. Child Rights
3. Importance of educating the girl child  
Basic education promotes the well-being of girls. More educated women enjoy better opportunities for employment, and seek out modern health care and also in decision making, higher self esteem and treated equally.
4. Health & Hygiene
  - Environmental Health
  - Personal Hygiene
  - Sanitation

- 5 The basic facts of Iodine, the importance and the need for it and lead the community to take commitment to take the iodised salt regularly.
- 6 The programme will end with the community people taking oath that they would provide an atmosphere which is safer and healthy for their children which would help them to become a potential citizen.

### **The strategies Adopted**

- The duration of the programme was for Two hours which includes Muppet Show, Songs, Activity, and Games.
- “Infotainment” (Information with entertainment) policy was adopted
- Programmes was organized in the community preferably in the evening hours (In community) and during the school hours (at schools).
- The Muppet show was organized in a participatory and entertaining manner.
- Psycho social Counseling was given by the professional counselors when children are in need of it.
- Prior permission and support was taken from the Collector’s Office, police station, school management and the social welfare officers of the tsunami orphanages.
- Propaganda was given through sound system and Thandora (A verbal propaganda employing mobile units like autos)

#### **Rosy’s Muppet Miracle...**



They make announcements regarding the venue.

The backbone of the Muppet shows is the Myrtle team, UNICEF’s District consultant and the Nehru Yuva Kendra Volunteers, the local panchayat leaders, Church Fathers, School management and the social welfare officers of the tsunami orphanages extended their support for every Muppet shows.

The Propoganda Unit is used to announce the commencement of the Muppet shows with the help of their mobile propaganda unit.

Rosy the Muppet navigator steals the show...She adds spice to the lives of the children who were affected by the Tsunami. Rosy is known for her laughter. The show usually starts with Rosy's remarks on UNICEF. She points out that this organization is established exclusively to "protect the children". These words of reassurance are a soothing balm for the children who faced the brunt of a natural disaster. The child replies to each of Rosy's queries with great enthusiasm. Their face light up with joy and laughter at the very sight of Rosy and her team.

Apart from the puppet performance, recreation programs are conducted. The children were divided into four to six groups. Each group was asked to name themselves. Each group had named them creatively. Some of the names are "little stars", "Tsunami", "Elephant", "Kadal Pura (Sea Bird)", "Kadal Meen (Sea Fish)" "11 Angels" etc. The groups also chose their leaders and in all the cases the children did this unanimously without any difference of opinion. This was followed by an ice breaking session.



This session was very useful because these children were able to show their leadership skills through group participation and proficient team work. Playing games with each other helped in building of their interpersonal relationship, giving up for one another and improved their self confidence and self esteem.

Along with education, the basic rights of the children were insisted in an attractive manner. **Rosy and her team enlightened the children about the basic rights and the children recited back with glee...**

- Be protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment.
- Life, survival and sustainable development including a safe environment
- Leisure, play, love, support and security of the family and a home.
- Information, freedom of expression, thought, association and assembly.



- Participation in all matters concerning children.
- Access the media and express their views.
- Nutritious food, clean water, shelter and adequate standard of living.
- Free, quality, compulsory education.
- Protection from all forms of sexual exploitation, protection from torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Last but not the least an awareness song was played for which the puppet dolls danced. This helped the community to understand the concept of social values, specially child labour, and education.

The song was in a form of a dialogue between a child labour, his mother and that of his father. At the end, the song will end with a vow taken by the parents that they will educate the children at any cost.

The lyrics of the whole show were in the vernacular language and the people were able to relate to the Muppets. The Muppets captured the hearts of the young and the old.

Ms. Leela Krishnan, Consultant for Health and Nutrition, UNICEF, in two of the shows in Devenampatinam and St. David Higher Secondary School Cuddalore, interacted with the children. The children were happy to talk to her and pointed out what Rosy had taught them...When asked about the most nutritious foods the children answered in chorus “Fruits, vegetables and greens.... Fish of



course”. Ms. Leela was enthralled by the active participation of the children. Mr. Rabindran from UNICEF was also attracted by the gimmicks of Rosy who stole the hearts of the crowd.

One of the most remarkable features about the Muppet show is that a whole session is dedicated for fun and laughter. The Muppets start a hilarious laugh and the whole audience joins the infectious



laughter. There is true happiness when the people laugh. For many this was the first time they had laughed since the Tsunami.

The show ended with a laugh song where the puppets will laugh and dance this would end the show merrily and the people will carry a message in their heart. This will help the children to come out of their fear, depression by ventilating their emotions and feelings and help the children and community to lead a normal healthy life.

The puppet director ended the show by making the community to understand the values of life, being a role model for children and the responsibility of the parents to create a better and healthy



environment for their children to face the future. He asked the children to share to the crowd what they foresee in the future. Children shared their dreams to the community. Many of the parents were proud to hear their children talk of their future. This gave them the impetus to strive to fulfil the dreams of their children...The children took an oath that

“I shall never lie, I will take bath daily, I will brush twice daily, I will go to school regularly, I will respect the elders, I will obey my parents, I shall not be carried away by the influence of the movies and I will be responsible and I will strive to succeed”

## HALL OF FAME...

- The people in the Kannagi Nagar temporary shelter (Thoraipakkam, Chennai) for the Tsunami survivors were disheartened when the rain was pouring in torrents. Their houses were flooded with waters, the roof was leaking, the area was slushy... Everything looked gloom till Rosy stepped in. The people gathered in the community center bundled together to watch the performance of Rosy and her team. 300 Children and 200 adults gathered with curiosity when they heard the announcements. They were eager to observe the happenings for it was different from the other performance. Rosy the Muppet’s cheerful disposition was

infectious. She brought about sunshine in the lives of these people who lost their houses and their traditional lands after the Tsunami. They were living in ramshackle shelters yet the Muppet team generated warmth in these shelters that lifted their heavy laden hearts. UNICEF team witnessed the Muppets performance. This programme report was launched in [UNICEF's official web site](#). The Indian Express and Jaya TV provided Media coverage for this event.

- Annai Sathya Government Orphanage was a well known children home at Kadambadi in Nagapattinam District after Tsunami. This home housed 96 inmates of whom 45 were orphaned by the Tsunami. 6<sup>th</sup> of July was indeed a different day for these children. The Myrtle team introduced some games that helped the children to forget their sorrows. Some of the games helped the children to shed their inhibitions and helped them to ventilate their suppressed feelings. Rosy stole the show... the children liked Rosy because she helped them forget their problems. Rosy inspired them and gave them hope for a bright future. Mrs. Suryakala, the Social Welfare Officer, was impressed by the performance of the Myrtle team. She remarked "The children were happy... I have never seen them laughing like this before". When commenting on the laughing session she pointed "laughter is the best medicine Rosy offered these children... the healing has begun".
- The show in Nambiar Nagar – Kadambadi temporary shelter was a unique experience for



everyone who was present there. The children were happy beyond measure that they asked Rosy for performing again. They wanted to listen to Rosy's words... they promised Rosy that they would bring about a difference in the lives of their family and community by studying well.

Mr. Godson and Mrs. Sivakami District Consultant of UNICEF participated in this show. The media coverage was ensured by Thina Thanthi and Thina Malar the two infamous Tamil News paper in the region.

- The show in the National Higher Secondary School in Nagoor, Nagapattinam District was a landmark success because 1204 people were eager to see and interact with Rosy in her performance on 21 July 2005.
- St. John Primary school at Tranquebar, Nagapattinam District was well known because this school recorded the highest death toll of 65 children. The principal of the school after the performance pointed out that “I have never seen the children laughing before... They were in constant fear of the sea. They were always insecure. Now they are laughing... they are laughing... I just can’t believe it thanks to Rosy she has touched the lives of these young children. When the children were asked about their future aspirations they always pointed out that they wanted to go fishing but now some of them want to achieve something great in order to bring about a positive transformation in their community”.

- On 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of July Muppet team organized a Muppet programme for the Head Masters of the schools in Nagapattinam District. On the first day 185 Head Masters and representatives of the school management attended this programme. On the second day 215 participated in this programme. The principals



- relished Rosy’s performance. This show in fact provided a foot hold for the Myrtle team to seek permission to perform in the schools. Rosy reaffirmed her belief in teachers and this did have an effect on the participants. She reminded these people of their school days and teachers. The teachers pointed out by the end of the show that Rosy taught them that they should be role models and practice all that they preach.
- In Koodimunai, Kanyakumari District, the show did have a strong impact on the people. The children were happy that Rosy had come to greet them. Rosy stole the heart of the young and the old alike. Ms. Prameela Manoharan, UNICEF, Chennai and Mr. Kuldeep Singh, UNICEF, Delhi was there to grace the event. Dr. Sam Prasad, UNICEF Consultant of KanyaKumari was there with the Myrtle team providing them with technical support.



- The show in Pillaithepe in Kanyakumari District had a lasting impact not only in the minds of the children but also in the minds of the performers. Mr. Venkatesh William, Director, Myrtle points out that “I will never forget this show...the children were all very happy...they also taught us a lot of things...they adored Rosy and wanted to listen to all that they said...They vowed that they would never let Rosy down and for Rosy the Muppet



they would do just anything”. Ms. Barbera Athrelly of UNICEF witnessed this programme. She spoke to the children and they reciprocated to her in the most cheerful and courteous manner. She adored

Rosy the Muppet and was enthralled by Myrtle team’s performance she pointed out that “The branches of Myrtle reaches to these unfortunate children who had lost their family, home and hope... Now Rosy has revived it...thanks to Myrtle”. After the programme a young child came on stage and shared her experience. The child’s words melted the hearts of all those who were there.

These were but few incidents...”Each show is unique in itself...I am happy that I was able to reach out to these children....” says Venkatesh of Myrtle.

#### They Said It...

- “Through jokes, songs and dance, Rosy and her friends taught the children of the shelter the value of hygiene and its importance for total well – being” - Indian Express (July 27, 2005).
- “Rosy has not only touched the lives of the children by her songs but also our hearts. We forgot our sufferings and like children we laughed a lot much more that we do anywhere anytime.” An elder in Chittirapettai, Cuddalore. (10.8.05)



- “My sons Bharat and Sarath went on stage and declared that one day they would become doctors. When I heard that my children my eyes were flooded with tears. I never knew what my sons wanted. I never imagined that my sons cherished such dreams. Thanks to this puppet show, I now know what my sons aspire to become...I will somehow provide my sons with good education. I will help them make their dreams a reality” Shaktivel, Periyakuppam (11.8.05)
- “After my son Gokul saw your programme, he brushes twice everyday pointing that Rosy wanted him to do so. I am surprised thanks to Rosy” Gokul’s mother, Rettyarpettai (12.8.05)
- “We used the fields as the toilets; we never knew what personal hygiene is all about till Rosy came over to our village. We shall never resort to such unhygienic practices.” Annapanpettai (13.8.05)
- In Kottilpadu, Siji(6 years old) and Sijin (8 Years old)’s mother Rani pointed out that “My children are brushing twice every day, my daughter asks me to buy soap to wash her hands”
- Sudha’s (9<sup>th</sup> Standard) mother Sagayarani died in Tsunami. Her father Sagayaraj points out “My daughter had forgotten to laugh. Rosy has brought back her smile...thanks to Rosy. Sudha now brushes her teeth twice a day, she is using footwear for toilet and even washing her hands with soap...It’s a miracle....Rosy’s miracle indeed” (PeriyaNagar Colony)

### **The future is ours...**

Myrtle believes in making a difference in the lives of the children who lost so much in the tsunami...

We strive to achieve a bright future for the children. To equip the children of certain skills that will empower them to help themselves and also their fellow brethren in distress.



## **Our plans for the future**

- To increase our coverage to all the affected villages
- Train the children affected by Tsunami to perform puppetry
- To provide leadership and communications training for the children
- To empower the children to perform shows in front of audience
- To facilitate the children to reach out to other affected children by means of puppetry
- To inculcate in the children certain values that they lack
- To identify their various needs and help fulfilling them

## **Our Journey...**

..

Our first phase intervention is but a drop in the ocean. We have to walk a mile to bring about a smile... We have just started our journey and we shall not give up till we achieve our goals.

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep  
But I have promises to keep:  
Miles to go before I sleep  
And Miles to go before I sleep...”  
- Robert Frost

## PRESS RELEASE...



### தற்காலிக குடியிருப்பில் பொம்மலாட்ட கலை நிகழ்ச்சிகள்

நாகப்பட்டினம், ஜூலை 21—  
சென்னை சேர்ந்த மெர்டல்  
சமூக நல அமைப்பு, யுனிசெப்  
உதவியுடன் சிறுவர்களுக்கான  
விழிப்புணர்வு பொம்மலாட்ட  
நிகழ்ச்சியை கடந்த ஒரு மாதமாக  
நாகையில் கனாமியால்  
பாதிக்கப்பட்ட தற்காலிக குடி-  
யிருப்பு மற்றும் பள்ளிகளில் சிறு-  
வர்கள் மத்தியில் நடத்தி வருகிற  
நகர். இதன் மூலமாக கனாமி-  
யால் பாதிக்கப்பட்ட சிறுவர்-  
களுக்கு, மன ஆறுதல் தரும்படி,  
யாகவும், சுற்றுப்புற சுகா-  
தாரத்தை நாம் எப்படி பேணி-  
காப்பது என்றும் குழந்தைகள்  
கரிமைகள் பற்றியும் அவர்கள்

பெண் கல்வியின் முக்கியத்து-  
வத்தை உணர்த்தியும் தாய் பால்  
கொடுப்பதின் அவசியம்  
குறித்தும், ஐயோயின் உப்பு  
பயன்படுத்துவதால் ஏற்படும்  
நன்மைகள் குறித்தும் இதுவரை  
34 இடங்களில் பொம்ம லாட்-  
டத்தின் வாயிலாக மக்கள் மத்-  
தியில் விழிப்புணர்வு ஏற்-  
படுத்தப்பட்டு வருகிறது.  
நாகை காடம்பாடி நம்பியார்  
நகர் தற்காலிக குடியிருப்பில்  
நடைபெற்ற நிகழ்ச்சியில் யுனி-  
செப் அதிகாரிகள் காட்சன்,  
சிவகாமி ஆனியோர் கலந்து  
கொண்டனர். மேலும் செம்பு-  
னார் கோவில், கொள்ளிடம்,  
சீர்காழி ஆகிய ஒன்றியங்களிலும்,  
கடலூர் மற்றும் கன்னியாகுமரி  
மாவட்டங்களிலும் நடத்தப்பட-  
 உள்ளதாக மெர்டல் சமூக நல  
அமைப்பு குழு தலைவர் வெங்க-  
டத்தியது.

Thina Thanthi 21-07-05 Nagai district



### கோடிமுனையில் பொம்மலாட்ட கலைநிகழ்ச்சி

கோடிமுனை மீனவர் கிராமத்-  
தில் கனாமியால் பாதித்-  
துள்ளவர்களுக்கும் ஆறுதல்  
தரும் வகையில் மெர்டல்  
பொம்மலாட்ட நிகழ்ச்சியை  
சென்னை மெர்டல் சமூக நல  
அமைப்பு யுனிசெப்  
திறமையும் இணைந்து  
நடத்தியது.

மோடி, சாம்பிவழம், சிவனா-  
ரமேனாவலி, பெரியாழி  
காலனி, கைமன்காலனி, வானி-  
யக்குடி, உள்பட 7 இடங்களில்  
நடத்தப்பட்டது.  
நேரிலும் நண்பர்கள் விழிப்-  
புணர்வு பாடல் பாடியும், நடன  
மாடிக்கும் அனைவரையும் வர  
வேற்றனர்.  
கோடிமுனை ஆலயம் முன்  
நடத்த நிகழ்ச்சிக்கு மெர்டல்  
சமூக நல அமைப்பு மெர்டல்  
ஜி.வி. வெங்கடேசன் தலைமை  
தாங்கினார்.

இந்த நிகழ்ச்சியின் போது  
கனாமியால் பாதிக்கப்பட்ட  
சிறுவர்களுக்கு மன ஆறுதல்  
அளிக்கும் தன்மையும் சிறு-  
புறத்தின் பேணி காப்பது  
குழந்தைகளின் கரிமைகள்  
குறித்தும் அறிமுகப்பட்டு  
பயன்படுத்தவது குறித்தும்  
அதனால் ஏற்படும் நன்மைகள்  
குறித்தும் பொம்மலாட்டம்  
மூலம் யுனிசெப் உதவியுடன்  
விழிப்புணர்வு ஏற்படுத்தப்-  
பட்டது.

Thina Thanthi 17-09-05 Kanyakumari dt



சிறுவர்களை குறுகல்கள் செய்த பொம்மலாட்ட நிகழ்ச்சி.

### கடலூரில் கனாமி பாதித்த குழந்தைகளை மகிழ்வித்த பொம்மலாட்டம் சோகங்களை மறந்து ரசித்தனர்

கடலூர், பெப்-  
ரவரி 21—கனாமி  
பாதித்த குழந்தைகளை  
மகிழ்விக்க யுனிசெப்  
அமைப்பின் உதவியோடு  
பொம்மலாட்ட நிகழ்ச்சி  
நடத்தப்படுகிறது.  
கடந்த டிசம்பர் மாதம்  
30-நாட்கள் ஏற்பட்ட கனாமி  
தாக்குதலால் கடலூர் மாவட்டம்  
இலையாக பாதிக்கப்பட்டது.  
இங்குள்ள 50க்கும் மேற்பட்ட  
உதவியோடு கிராமங்களை  
சேர்ந்த 900க்கும் மேற்பட்டோர்  
பலியானார்கள். இவ்விடங்களில்  
மேலான குழந்தைகளும் மற்றும்  
பெரியவர்களும் உரிமையுடன்  
பெயர் சொல்லி அனுப்புவது  
தான்.

இதைப் பார்க்கும் குழந்தை-  
கள் ஆனந்தமடைந்து  
குறுகல்களை மறந்தனர்.  
பாடல்-நடனம்  
போன்ற பொம்மை  
தனது கிச்சு குரலில்  
நகைச்சுவையுடன் கதைகளை  
கூறுவது சிறுவர்-சிறுமிகளை  
வெறுமையாக்கிவிட்டது.  
வெறும் பொழுது போக்கு  
நிகழ்ச்சியாக மட்டுமல்லாமல்  
பொம்மைகளை கொண்டு  
விழிப்புணர்வு ஏற்படுத்தும்  
பாடல்கள் மற்றும் நடனமும்  
நடத்தப்படுகிறது.

கடலூர் மாவட்டத்தில்  
கனாமி பாதித்த குழந்தைகள்  
தாக்குதல், சோகங்களுக்கும்  
பெரிய குழந்தைகள், சின்னார்,  
சாம்பியாப்பேட்டை, முருகுத்த-  
துறை உள்பட 20க்கும்  
மேற்பட்ட கிராமங்களில்  
பொம்மலாட்டம் நடத்தப்-  
படுகிறது.

கடந்த 3-நாட்கள் முதல்  
இதுவரை 33 நிகழ்ச்சிகள்  
இந்த அமைப்பு நடத்தி

Malai Malar  
02-09-05  
Cuddalore dt

### நாகையில் கனாமியால் பாதித்தவர்கள் மன ஆறுதல்பெற பொம்மலாட்ட நிகழ்ச்சி

நாகை, ஜூலை 21—  
நாகையில் கனாமியால்  
பாதித்தவர்களுக்கு மன  
ஆறுதல் தரும் பொம்மலாட்ட  
நிகழ்ச்சி மக்களிடையே நல்ல  
வரவேற்பை பெற்றுள்ளது.  
கனாமியால் பாதித்த சிறு-  
வர்கள், பொதுமக்களுக்கு மன  
ஆறுதல் தரும்படியாகவும்,  
சுற்றுப்புற சுகாதாரத்தை காப்-  
பது, குழந்தைகளின் மன  
பெண்களில் முக்கியத்துவம்,  
நாய்ப்பாலின் அவசியம்,  
அயோயின் உபயோகம்  
ஆகியவற்றை வலியுறுத்தியும்  
இந்த கலை நிகழ்ச்சிகள்  
நாகையில் நடந்து வருகிறது.

Thina Malar  
21-07-05  
Nagai district





Maalai Murasu 29-09-05 KK dt.



Tamil Murasu 29-09-05 KK dt



Maalai Malar 15-09-05 KK dt



Indian Express Date: 25-07-05 Chennai



Thinamurasu 16-09-05 Nagercoil



## UNICEF supported MYRTLE programmes in UNICEF Television and UNICEF official website



### Puppets help heal children



UNICEF v

A puppet show helps alleviate the boredom and difficulty of life in a temporary camp for people left homeless when the tsunami hit Tamil Nadu, India, in December 2004.

**By Rob McBride**

TAMIL NADU, India, 7 September 2005 - In the drabness of a temporary camp for tsunami survivors, the brightly coloured puppet show is an instant hit with the children – and a welcome relief from the misery of the monsoon season.

The puppeteers had hoped to stage the event in the open, but the unrelenting rains have forced them into the open-sided hut that acts as the meeting place for the residents of Thuraippakam camp on the outskirts of Chennai. The children crowd in, watching in awe, little ones at the front, the bigger children behind. Standing among them is 11-year-old Geeta Venkatesh.

She and her family have been living here since the tsunami waves took their home, on the Tamil Nadu coast of southern India. We follow her back through the waterlogged alleyways that separate the corrugated tin huts to the one room her family now call home. Here she lives with her mother, father and two sisters.

Elsewhere in India, the monsoon is a cause for celebration, signalling an end to almost unbearable heat. But not here.

"When it rains, life is miserable," says Geeta's sister, 17-year-old Kavitha. "We can't go anywhere, there's no school and our parents can't work." Along with the other family members we squat together on the floor of the hut, which we are told can flood when the rain is particularly heavy. "Most of all, we have a problem with snakes," she complains. "When it rains, the snakes get into the camp."

More than half a year on from the devastating tsunami, life is still tough for many of its survivors. In this one camp alone, 1,400 people are still waiting to be permanently re-housed; the number of people in India displaced by the tragedy has topped 95,000.



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Puppets organised by UNICEF help alleviate the hardship of life for children in a temporary camp.

Now, helping the recovery process, an initiative supported by UNICEF has brought together a variety of different agencies and NGO's to work with the government on developing a long-term plan.

UNICEF Child Protection Officer Saji Thomas explains the problems they face. "There are fears about children getting into child labour because of the disturbed social condition," he warns. "There are fears of children dropping out of school. There are serious concerns about early marriages." But what also concerns UNICEF and other agencies is the increased vulnerability of young to physical or sexual abuse.

The hope is that together they can develop a comprehensive child protection programme to create a protective environment for the 'tsunami generation'.

"The government for its part has done whatever is possible," says Ashok Ranjan Mohanty, the government's Commissioner of Social Defence.

"But," he added, "it's a very widespread area. So obviously the NGO's have to do their job. All put together, the NGO's, the Government and other organisations have done our best... against the disaster."

Back at Thuraippakam camp the glove puppets of the Myrtle Social Welfare Network – a group funded by UNICEF – make their own contribution by entertaining and educating the children in the camps.

"We've found it is a very effective medium, especially among the tsunami-affected children," says puppeteer, Venkatesan Williams. "They are coming out of the stress. You can see that from our show."

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