

ASHWINI Newsletter 2015

Season's Greetings and All Good Wishes for a Wonderful Year ahead!



Hurray! Its silver jubilee celebration time!!

The Gudalur Adivasi Hospital completed 25 glorious years this October.

A hospital **FOR** the tribals; **BY** the tribals.

What seemed an impossible dream in 1990 has now become a reality! Apart from the fairly good infrastructure, the tribal team that has grown and matured and can now handle the complicated operations of a 50 bed hospital. These are achievements that all of you and the people here, who have been a part of this memorable journey, can be justifiably proud of.....



From then to now...

We began with a small rented building in town, Outpatient department under the staircase, an Operation theatre that was so small, the anesthetist had to go under the table to get to the other side, open ether anesthesia that left half the staff partly anaesthetized, Adivasi nurses in training who came running diffidently to the doctors when non Adivasi came to the hospital, visits to villages in jeeps part of the way, and by foot over the rest, carrying common medications, patients who, if they did not hide behind trees at the sight of us, still needed to be coaxed and cajoled to come to the hospital. Those are our poignant memories of the beginnings.



Today there are more than 60 tribal staff in all positions, handling the various aspects of the work with competence. The hospital has well-equipped wards with a maternity unit, operating rooms with modern anaesthesia machines and laproscopic instruments! Functional X ray and Ultrasound machines, a blood bank...; all that is needed for secondary care.

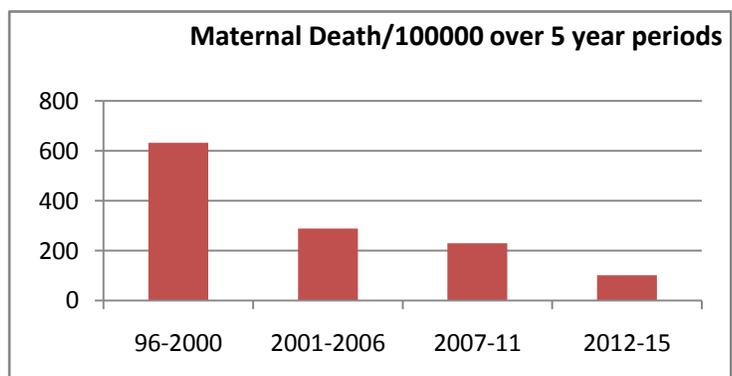
Again, our health indicators have reached levels better than the Indian average. For

a community that is impoverished, uneducated and has very poor access to health needs, due to the terrain, this has been a significant achievement.



There has been a steady increase in the number of patients seeking health care. The number of institutional deliveries have gone up to more than 80 % now; all leading to a decrease in maternal deaths. Overall, the level of health achieved has been commendable.

Year	Institutional deliveries %	Inpatient at GAH	IMR
1990		869	250
1995	25	689	105
2000	39	877	38.6
2005	47	1051	42.6
2010	74	1408	20
2015	92	1536	28



One by one the Eight Area Centers have been set up; all of them now have basic infrastructure. The Centres are well accessed by the people; these centers have progressed to screening for Non communicable diseases including cervical and breast cancer. The planning for implementing the health program has been decentralized; the area team now interacts actively with the community in the planning.



Another achievement has been the establishment of the BSS center for training help to provide the mandatory certification for the staff who had been trained at the hospital, on the job. The bona fide status has increased manifold, the confidence levels of the nursing team. The training centre is well established and it is heartwarming to see the young generation's self confidence and enthusiasm. Each year about 15 students have enrolled for various courses.



Highlights of the Year.....

- ❖ Extensive screening for Cancer of Cervix and Breast was completed. Early cases were detected and treated
- ❖ A study of the prevalence of Diabetes and Hypertension in the community was done with the help of Dr. Anand Zacharia from CMC Vellore and R. Srivatsan from Anveshi research center for women's Studies, Hyderabad. The study also brought to light the fact that 46% of the Adivasi Adults are severely underweight.
- ❖ A lot of Stress was avoided because of the well functioning Blood bank. The components bank has also being completed; thanks to the unstinting support of Cognizant foundation. The license is awaited.
- ❖ The access road to the hospital is in top shape thanks to the support of the department of tribal welfare.
- ❖ The hospital is getting ready for NABH accreditation; there is a buzz of activity with all the systems being put in place.
- ❖ We were awarded the Mother Theresa Award for Social Justice by the Harmony Foundation.
- ❖ The Tata Trusts Have once again comes forward to support the community programs. There is a major stress on malnutrition and mental health in the programs this year.

The dark side of things.....

Severe malnutrition in children is on the rise; it is up to 8 percent this year. We think that the massive epidemic of alcoholism is the reason for this. The government is encouraging the sale of alcohol with a vengeance and there seems to be very little that we can do about this. Alcohol is readily available even in remote teashops!! The government had been reimbursing us regularly for in-patient care of tribals for the past 5 years. However, the payments are pending since March 2015 when the project was handed over to NRHM. The outstanding amount of over 40 lakhs Rupees has put a heavy burden on our financial resources. Thanks to the timely support from friends; we are staying afloat.

Looking forward

The tribal team is ready to take on much of the management of the hospital. Fine tuning this process is a big agenda for the coming years. Further improving the training programs with support for various vocational programs is also the need of the day.

The situation with the Government funding has led to the resurfacing of the big question about the financial security net. The Tata Trust has put a corpus fund that will meet some deficit expenses. We are also talking to the community to contribute more towards costs.

Looking at the goodwill that we have had over the past years; we are considering a network of supporters who contribute a small amount every month to ensure that there is some financial stability when the program is handed over to the community.

Donations in India are exempt from Tax under 80G and money can be transferred to our SBI account in Gudalur payable to ASHWINI, Ac no 11317309532, IFSC Code: SBIN 0001016.

In the USA, Tax deductible online donations can be made through Tribal India Health Foundation, <http://www.ashwini.org/donations.php> This site uses a "Paypal" account. Please send us an email if you do use this route.

Checks in the US can be sent to Ms. Asmita Shendye, Vidyalay.Org Foundation Inc., 35 Mayer Drive, Clifton, NJ 07012.

In the UK, we can get the benefit of "Gift Aid" if donations are made through the charity "From Here to There" Sort Code: 30-65-92, Account no: 16621468. Please send an email to friendsofgudalur@gmail.com

