



Reg. No. I-750/98

V O S A R D

**(Voluntary Organization for Social Action and Rural Development)
Administrative Office, Kumily P.O., Idukki District, Kerala – 685 509**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

INTRODUCTION

Upon approaching the significant milestone of VOSARD's 26th anniversary, we pause to proudly consider the outstanding achievements we have accomplished in the last 25 years and beyond. For nearly twenty-six years, VOSARD has persisted in its dedication to bringing about constructive changes in the lives of underprivileged people in our service region. VOSARD has been actively involved this year, working with financing partners, non-governmental groups, and government bodies. Together, we have worked to create communities that are resilient and to lessen the social and economic hardships that people encounter in all spheres of life. 2023-24 was an year of encouragement, perseverance, and connection building. With deep gratitude and immense satisfaction in fulfilling our entrusted mission to the best of our abilities, I am honored to present the Annual Report of VOSARD for the year 2023-24.

MAJOR PROGRAMMES/ ACTIVITIES

1. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Empowering and equipping families and communities has always been at the heart of VOSARD's programs to lead them to inclusive and sustainable development. To date, we have successfully established 800 self-help groups, 33 clusters and four apex associations covering more than 12,000 beneficiary families. These apex federations and clusters play a crucial role in coordinating the functions of SHGs. Further strengthening of these Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is an ongoing process which includes: Awareness raising, leadership training, skill development, sustainable livelihoods, facilitation of microfinance opportunities and advocacy for community issues at various levels. The CBOs are made up of a diverse range of members: Men, women, people with disabilities, small and marginal farmers, day laborers, elderly, children and youth. These CBOs serve as a platform for collective action and collaboration, ensuring that the voices of all community members are heard and represented. The main activities carried out during the year to strengthen the people's organizations are:

- The efficient operation of the thrift and credit system was observed in all Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- Monitoring of bank linkage and follow-up was conducted for 59 Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) established in Vathikudy Panchayat, with 31 JLGs receiving Rs. 62 lakh in subsidy loans from UBI Thoprankudy.

- With assistance from NABARD, 50 new SHGs have been established, initiating a savings and credit system within all groups and opening bank accounts. Two of these SHGs secured bank loans of Rs. 5 lakh each.
- Three training sessions were held for 60 SHG leaders, supported by NABARD, to enhance the effective functioning and management of the Self-Help Groups.
- Leadership and motivation trainings organized for 62 SHG leaders and members, with NABARD's support, in Kochera, Vandanmedu Panchayat.

2. COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION (CBR) PROGRAMME

a) **District-Level Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Program:** Initiated in 2002 in six panchayats of Idukki district, the CBR program has expanded to encompass 18 panchayats. In addition to general body, executive body, and federation meetings, various activities have been implemented, including financial aid for corrective surgeries, educational assistance, awareness campaigns for diverse groups, the provision of disability-friendly aids, and support services aimed at enhancing livelihood opportunities.

b) **State-Level CBR Program:** Launched in 2012, VOSARD began enhancing the capacity of Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) across eight districts, forming a broad network known informally as the Kerala Confederation of Differently Aabled (KCDA). KCDA is registered under the Society's Registration Act and its registration has been renewed in the reporting year.

c) **Local Level Committee (LLC):** In line with the National Trust Act, VOSARD led efforts to establish a Local Level Committee (LLC) in Idukki district. This committee facilitates access to the Niramaya Insurance Scheme and serves as a centre for processing issue of Guardianship Certificates.

d) **Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities:** Since 2006, VOSARD has provided support for children with disabilities (CwDs) through home-based rehabilitation, addressing their educational, surgical, medical, assistive device, and livelihood requirements. To date, 550 CwDs have benefited from early identification and intervention services, facilitated by CHAI-LF and other partner organizations.

Major interventions during the reporting year are:

- Medical assessment camp -2
- Correction surgery -5
- Aids & appliances-12
- Niramaya insurance - 520
- Livelihood support -10
- Home based physiotherapy – 24 CwDs
- Care takers training -3
- Observance of 'International Disability Day' and World Disability Day

3. COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

This initiative, supported by The Live Love Laugh Foundation, focuses on individuals with diverse mental health problems residing in nine panchayats and one municipality in Idukki district. The project's objectives include raising awareness and providing a variety of services related to

mental health. Baseline surveys conducted to identify Persons with Mental Illness (PWMI) in the targeted areas, with prompt medical assistance provided upon identification. Home visits facilitate a deeper ethnographic understanding of each individual and their unique circumstances, while relapse prevention services help monitor and sustain the progress made. Additionally, the project offers essential services such as counseling and advocacy, community awareness programs, caregiver support groups, training for stakeholders, and assistance for the livelihoods of participants.

The District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) collaborates with the project to organize regular camps at community health centers in the region. A notable achievement of the project was obtaining approval from the District Medical Officer (DMO) to create a separate queue for the mental health patients at Community Health Centres, resulting in an increase in consultations. Below are some statistics related to the project:

- Persons with mental health problems identified: 517
- Stakeholders training: 08
- Community awareness programme: 30
- Caregivers group formation: 25

4. CARE AND PROTECTION FOR SENIOR CITIZEN

Elderly individuals require care and support to lead healthy and worry-free lives, as old age can be a vulnerable period. Many seniors face economic, emotional, and physical challenges. In response to this, VOSARD initiated a program in 2013, with support from Misereor, Germany, to provide community-based care and protection for senior citizens. The project's aim is to actively involve families and other stakeholders to enhance the quality of life for older adults and to promote community-based care and support services. Additionally, the project protects the rights of senior citizens, encourages active and semi-dependent seniors to maintain their standard of living, assists them in accessing welfare and health services, and motivates them to engage actively in family and community life.

Currently, over 1,688 senior citizens are members of 121 Elder Self Help Groups (ESHGs) and seven Panchayat-level Federations operating in seven panchayats in Idukki district. Since January 2023, a replicable model of this project has been implemented in five panchayats in the Thogamalai Block of Karur District, Tamil Nadu. Major interventions carried out during the year include:

- New ESHGs formed – 26
- New members – 302
- Counselling services for elders and family members
- Conducted leadership and caregivers trainings
- Organized medical camps for 205 participants
- Community health check-up for monitoring blood sugar and blood pressure
- 117 elders with health problems were linked with PHCs for medical treatment
- 7 health awareness programs - 216 participants
- 24 medical volunteers were trained for conducting community health check-up
- Livelihood support - 67 beneficiaries

5. WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN KANCHIYAR

The "Holistic Improvement of Livelihood of Marginalized Families" project, funded by the German Karl Kubel Stiftung foundation, is a project for holistic development of marginalized women and children in Kanchiyar Panchayat. This project started in 2019 and completed in July 2023. As a result of the project's various interventions, the living conditions of the target families have significantly improved. Key interventions include:

- **Agricultural Renovations:** Enhancements to agricultural practices and resources to increase productivity and sustainability.
- **Livestock Rearing Assistance:** Support for families in managing livestock, which contributes to their food security and income generation.
- **Income Generation Programs (IGP):** Establishment of initiatives such as tailoring units that empower women, providing them with skills and financial independence.
- **Education promotion:** The children belong to socially and economically backward families were facilitated and supported to improve their learning capacities, talents, extra-curricular activities and social involvement.

6. FAMILY COUNSELING CENTRE

The Family Counselling Centre under the support and guidance of Central Social Welfare Board and Kerala State Social Welfare Board has been functioning since 2004. The centre supports people to overcome their problems encountered within family or social situations and help strengthen their willpower with the required values and capacities. Apart from settling family feuds, the counselling centre is also instrumental in handling adolescent problems, parent-child maladjustment, behavioural problems in school children, cases of substance abuse and suicide tendency etc. The activities carried out during 2023-24 are:

- Awareness Programs - 27
- Sub-committee Meeting - 6
- No. of cases registered – 538

7. SERVICE PROVIDING CENTRE

The Service Providing Centre (SPC) was established in 20+08 with the support of Kerala State Social Welfare Board. Its primary objective is to offer free legal aid to women who have fallen victim to domestic violence, ensuring they receive the justice and relief they deserve under the provisions of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (PWDV) Act-2005. Services of the centre include: awareness raising on women rights, free legal support to women in distress, providing shelter and medical assistance. The SPC rendered following services during the reporting year:

- Cases registered - 28
- Shelter provided - 5
- Medical Assistance - 2
- Referral Services - 3
- Awareness programs - 4

8. CHILDREN AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

a) KAVAL is a project focused on the rehabilitation of Children in Conflict with Law (CCL), supported by the Government of Kerala. The project aims to implement psycho-social interventions to provide comprehensive care and support for these vulnerable individuals. During the reporting year, KAVAL successfully provided rehabilitation support as under:

- No. of active cases – 90
- Cases transferred to project – 16
- Case terminations – 18
- Rehabilitation programmes – 23
- Educational support – 23
- Facilitation of job opportunities – 16
- Arrangement of children's accommodations – 7
- Vocational training support – 8
- Intersectoral collaborations – 52

b) Kaval Plus is an innovative program launched by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Kerala, designed to provide psycho-social care and support to children and their families who fall under the categories of Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) and survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). Since its inception in 2021, the project has made significant strides in addressing the needs of these vulnerable groups. Major interventions made for 80 CNCP children and 74 CSA children during the year are:

- Counselling sessions - individual and family
- House visits and follow up support
- Financial support - 15
- Education support - 32
- Medical support – 26
- Aswasanithi financial assistance - 4
- Kinship care - 7

c) Chavara Jyothi Education Promotion (CJEP) Programme: Launched in 2008 with the generous backing of CMI St. Joseph Province and various local contributors, this program provides financial support to financially disadvantaged children at the beginning of each academic year to cover their educational expenses. In addition to financial support, the program offers life skills training, leadership development, cultural activities, career guidance workshops to equip the children with life skills and knowledge. During the year, 321 children were supported with Rs. 28.55 lakh.

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d) KELI Scholarship: Collaborating with the Rajagiri Outreach Service Society (ROSS) in Kochi, this scholarship is granted to underprivileged students aspiring to pursue professional courses. During the reporting year, 18 economically disadvantaged students were supported with Rs. 3 lakh.

e) CHRYSALIS Project: VOSARD has collaborated with IBS Software Private Limited (IBS) to tackle the educational, health, and livelihood challenges faced by underprivileged children. Initiated in 2020, the project aims to provide financial assistance to children and youth under the age of 21 who encounter difficulties in accessing education or healthcare services. During the

year, 53 children and youth received support, including 36 for education, 7 for health, and 10 for livelihood-related needs.

9. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME

Supported by the Karl Kubel Stiftung Germany, this program was implemented in Vandamedu Panchayat from 2006 to 2010. Even after the project's completion, the interventions continue through a mobilized community fund managed by a community federation known as the Vandanmedu Farmer's Groups (V-Farm). VOSARD provides support and guidance to V-Farm. The key activities undertaken by V-Farm during the year include:

- Rainwater tanks – 4
- Dairy units – 2
- Cattle shed – 2
- Toilet – 4
- Kitchen garden – 15

10. WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

A watershed development project, supported by the Karl Kubel Stiftung in Germany, was carried out in Vathikudy Panchayat from 2014 to 2019, aimed at enhancing the capacities of small and marginal farmers through the promotion of soil and water conservation, sustainable farming practices, and livelihood activities. The targeted families were organized into self-help groups (SHGs), clusters, and a federation. The federation, known as the Vathikudy Farmers Association (VFA), is a registered society that oversees the functions of the SHGs and clusters. After completion of the project, VFA continues project activities by mobilizing a community fund with support and guidance from VOSARD. The major activities undertaken by VFA during the year include:

- Dairy unit – 17
- Goat unit - 4
- Agriculture renovation activities- 93
- Construction of rainwater storage tank – 5

11. EXPOSURE FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS & NGOs

VOSARD organizes block placements, internships, and fieldwork opportunities for students from various disciplines (such as BSW, MSW, BBA, LLB, MPH, B.Sc Agri, etc.) at various colleges/universities across the country. This initiative helps the students to observe successful models in professional and practical social work. During 2023-24, 165 students from different colleges and universities visited the organization for their fieldwork and internships as part of their curriculum.

12. VOSARD AS A MOTHER NGO

VOSARD envisions a society that recognizes and empowers the underprivileged, including the poor, children, women, persons with disabilities, and others, enabling them to create positive changes in their lives. To accomplish this, VOSARD shares its extensive experience and successful community development models with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Currently, VOSARD is collaborating with seven NGOs across Kerala, offering them professional support and guidance. These partnerships aim to replicate effective social work models in their respective regions. Key initiatives include community-based rehabilitation, the establishment of a three-tier system of People's Organizations, and the implementation of resource mobilization strategies. By fostering these collaborations, VOSARD seeks to build a more equitable and inclusive society where marginalized individuals and communities can flourish. Through the sharing of best practices and the provision of continuous support, VOSARD and its partner NGOs are working together to drive sustainable change and uplift those in need.

CONCLUSION

In the fiscal year 2023-24, VOSARD focused on broadening its support to a significant number of individuals in urgent need. The achievements of the year were made possible through the generous contributions of national and international donor agencies, government departments, NGOs, and local benefactors. Their unwavering support has been crucial in addressing the pressing needs of those facing difficult circumstances. Their commitment to our mission inspires us and strengthens our resolve to tackle the urgent needs of vulnerable individuals and communities.

Looking ahead to the upcoming fiscal year, VOSARD is optimistic about its potential to expand its reach and impact. With the continued backing of our esteemed partners, we are confident in our ability to create a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need assistance the most. As we embark on this journey, we remain committed to transparency, accountability, and efficiency. We recognize the responsibility that comes with the resources entrusted to us, and we vow to use them wisely to maximize their impact.

Kumily
12.10.2024



Dr. Jose Antony CMI
Secretary