



PARTNERS *International*

Update – July 25, 2006

Sunil Daniel, projects coordinator for Joshua Vision India, shares an update on the income-generation projects they've started for tsunami-affected women:

The women in Kanyakumari lost all their belongings in the tsunami of December 2004. On June 22, 2006, 480 women from 24 groups, organized by JVI, came neatly dressed to listen to us share about forming groups for sustainable economic development.

They gave their testimonies, and also performed a skit enacting what happened on the day the tsunami struck. This brought tears to all of their eyes as they recalled what happened that day.

As a result of the tsunami development work, 31 women's groups, with around 20 women in each group, have been formed and 24 groups have been given loans to start income-generating businesses. The women's husbands were fishermen before the tsunami, but since then, fishing has not been as profitable. With these small loans, the women also receive training in various technologies such as making soap powder, disinfectants, candles, and other products. The women have taken up the project enthusiastically and have shown a profit of 20 percent from the money that was loaned them. All the 24 groups have united to form a core committee through which they will re-loan the money they repaid and help new groups create a revolving loan fund in the near future. This is the first step to sustainable development.

Mary is from a relief camp in Kottipadu. She and her family are still living in a shed that is just 12 square feet. Her whole family manages to live in that room. She wept as she showed us the photos of her daughter, 10, and son, 5, whom she lost in the tsunami. She had laminated the pictures and hung them on the wall. "What should I do without my children?" she cried. It was hard to know how to console her. We prayed for her. Mary takes part in a group formed in the relief camp. She shared how God has used the program to empower the women through income-generating activities, but said the greatest benefit of the group was the encouragement and comfort she receives. As she is busy with the group activities, she is occupied and diverted from thinking about her children.

Though the tsunami is now long past, the memories are still fresh in people's minds. Families are still suffering economically and emotionally. Praise God we can have a part in bringing hope, healing, and physical care to these families in need.