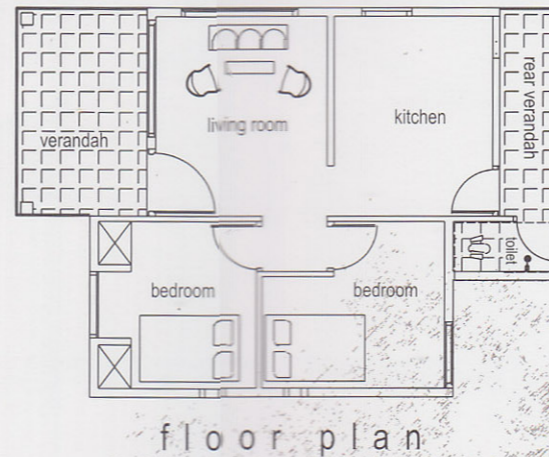


sangamagramam housing scheme

thandiyadi, thirukovil, ampara



Context

Sangamagramam housing scheme consisting of 80 houses is located in Thandiyadi, less than 1km away from the Potuvil-Ampara main road at a higher elevation close to the sea. The tsunami affected Tamil community from buffer zone areas of Umiri and Sangamam villages were resettled in this new village constructed on state land. Housing and socio-economic development of Sangamagramam was planned as an eco-sensitive project where people were to be self-sustained in the end. The new settlement consists of a community centre, a playground and other infrastructure facilities.

Implementation

Housing and socio-economic development of Sangamagramam was funded by Cooperazione Italiana (Italian Development Cooperation) through the Italian Embassy in Colombo. The project was implemented in partnership with Green Movement of Sri Lanka (GMSL), an organization working on environmental conservation and sustainable development. The construction component of the project was implemented in partnership with INGO Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI). Close cooperation was kept throughout the project with all stakeholders including Urban Development Authority and the local administration.

The architectural designs for the village layout and two types of plans for individual houses were prepared by Archt. Russell Dandeniya who worked hand in hand with COOPI and GMSL to fulfil their eco-sensitive approaches. UDA approval was obtained for the master plan and house plans. At the inception, a steering committee was formed with representatives from COOPI, GMSL and village community including women, to oversee the project activities. The construction was done through labour contracts and COOPI used their in-house technical team to coordinate and supervise the construction work.

Design and building technology

The houses are very spacious with a large front verandah, a living room, 2 bedrooms, kitchen with a firewood hearth and rear verandah. Two types of houses were used in this scheme. In the master plan, houses were located around a large central open space which was intended as a community gathering space. Places are allocated for shops, playground, village headman (Grama Niladhari), traditional doctor, a religious precinct and a post office which are to be constructed in future. Only a community centre with public activity and maintenance office has been completed. A new school constructed by another INGO is available in the vicinity.

Initially the houses were to be constructed using soil blocks; The beneficiaries refused it due to poor quality. In the end conventional technology of 8 inch x 4 inch burnt brick on rubble foundations was used for walls. Door and window frames were constructed using rubber wood but sashes and roof structure was made from good quality Mahogany and Kohomba wood. The roofs were covered with clay tiles.

Community participation

Project activities were carried out with community participation from the inception to the end. This was ensured by re-establishing social networks within the community such as village development society and tsunami affected women's forum. Skilled and unskilled labourers among the community were identified and employed in the construction work. The technical and social activities related to the project including decision making were done by a steering committee which included representatives of all stakeholders. Periodical meetings were held to ensure transparency and continuous information flow. The beneficiaries were asked to choose a house plan, environmentally friendly materials and colour scheme for their own house. Due to the participatory approaches used, a strong ownership feeling is evident among the beneficiaries. Not only 80 families from this new village but residents of Sangamam village and people from 3 surrounding villages make use of the newly constructed community centre and the playground. GMSL was involved in stimulating the beneficiaries' attention to social and environmental aspects, through various awareness programmes. Livelihood support was provided through training: batik making and sewing by Rotary Club, animal husbandry (goats, chicken, cattle) by Rcerca Cooperation (RC).

Environment and infrastructure

The housing scheme was planned as a model eco-village, by adopting environmentally friendly construction methods, rainwater harvesting systems, proper garbage sorting/recycling, and providing sustainable livelihoods for people.

On GMSL's initiative, live fences were planted in between plots with edible trees such as Katurumurunga and Murunga. The trees were shared by both the owners. A green belt was planted along roads. Herbal gardens were promoted. Goat and cow dung was used as fertilizer for home gardens.

A proper sewage and waste water management system is in place. The toilets were constructed with individual septic tanks and soakage pits. Sewage and grey water from kitchens and bathrooms are directed to these individual septic tanks. Sewage is left for sedimentation while liquid effluent from each septic tank is directed to a large soakage pit and filtered to the ground. CEB electricity is available for houses as well as public areas. Lack of ground water due to rocky strata was a major drawback at the inception of the project. To solve the drinking water problem, a water tank was constructed in a location close by. Rain water harvesting tanks were provided by COOPI for all the houses. People use rain water collected for home gardening. People were trained to do proper solid waste management through sorting and composting of garbage using containers and composting kits given by GMSL.

Plot size: 17-20 perches

Floor area: 600 sq.ft

Cost: Rs. 600,000 / house

Donor: Cooperazione Italiana (Italian Development Cooperation)

Implementing agencies: Housing and socio-economic component:
Green Movement of Sri Lanka (GMSL)

Construction component: Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)

Livelihood Support: Rcerca Cooperation (RC), Rotary Club

Architect: Russell Dandeniya

