

## **Thagavalagam Telecenters:Creating a Knowledge Revolution in Tamilnadu**

*BalasundaramMuthukumarasamy  
DHAN Foundation, Madurai, Tamil nadu*

ICT is an effective tool for knowledge networking. Thagavalagam is the telecenter facilitated by DHAN Foundation(an NGO based in Madurai, Tamilnadu). There are 157 Thagavalagam Telecenters spread in 10 districts of Tamilnadu & reaching out to 500 villages. These telecenters offer a range of e-Services including Computer education, e-School(computer aided school education), Video conference on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, General Health, Women specific, Legal consultaion, Education, e-Commerce through SMS, e-Mailing, Browsing, Sectoral literacy through offline content, etc. These centers thus reaching out to more than 1,00,000 families in the rural, remote and coastal areas. The Thagavalagam telecenters were initiated in Melur Taluk of Madurai District in the year 2001. The CorDect Technology was used for connecting the telecenters to the hub for Internet/Intranet applications. After Tsunami, The Thagavalagam telecenters are expanded to Tsunami affected coastal areas. The Thagavalagam telecenters in Coastal areas are connected with WiFi/Pre Wi-Max technology. In the coastal areas, the telecenters was the felt as a need of the Tsunami affected communities for early warning system and disaster preparedness.

The Thagavalagam telecenters are clustered under the Thagavalagam community college(Hub) located at the block/district level. The Thagavalagam telecenter is a community owned and managed telecenter model. Each telecenter is run by the Thagavalagam Development Association which consists of users group like Women, Farmers, fisheries, agriculture labourers, youth, students, etc. The Thagavalagam development association also performs the role of the disaster management committee for the respective panchayat. The Thagavalagam Development association are federated at the district level called as "District Thagavalagam Federation".

This model is sustainable both socially & technically. Moreover, it is marching towards 100% financial sustainability.