

TRANQUEBAR



Tranquebar, historically known as Tarangambadi – “the land of the singing waves”, has seen many faces through the ages gone by. Under the rule of the Thanjavore king, it had been an active international trading port for centuries attracting Muslim traders, German missionaries, Moravian entrepreneurs and the Danish East India company.

The allure of Tranquebar is a wonderful yet seamless cultural concoction that has been brewing over hundreds of years - a beautiful mix of languages, cultures, races and religions!

Lost and forgotten since the English left India, today this demure town is in the spotlight again. Although deeply affected by the tsunami, Tranquebar and its people have great potential to survive, stand, and soar.

Four organisations (do we need to add “the local govt.” here?) along, have been inspired and they have come together for restoration, development and social upliftment. This is not a mere facelift but a step towards a culture of preserving a heritage we all love and cherish!

The reconstruction efforts in 2004 brought together Bestseller Fund from Denmark and INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) from Pondicherry. They shared a common interest in preserving the mixed and unique heritage of this coastal town. The collaboration inspired them to bring together other organizations to bring about holistic development. Upasana Design Studio from Auroville and SJDT (St. Joseph Development Trust), a local NGO in Tranquebar joined the project.

This joint project now covers architectural and environmental restoration along with social upliftment through training, employment and micro credit schemes. A number of traditional houses have been restored. The local population was trained in traditional masonry methods, especially the women. The area was also surveyed for handicrafts communities which revealed that there were more than 20 different crafts being practiced. Retraining and improving the skills of these artisans and providing livelihood opportunities has become an integral part of the project. The TCRC (Tranquebar Crafts Resource Centre), was envisaged subsequently as a space for artisans to showcase their designs and for visitors to see Tranquebar through a cultural, interactive experience in a visually engaging manner.

All these diverse aspects are coming together to make Tranquebar a vibrant destination, modern while maintaining its rich history. The enthusiasm of the local population and authorities has augmented this effort and the project has made great progress.





The architectural features of the old buildings in Tranquebar are a charming synthesis of both European and Tamil building cultures. The continued adaptation of old buildings for new purposes, has the effect of weaving memories into the town's everyday life. The TCRC has been set up on Goldsmith street and features many elegant traditional details. It is the perfect venue for interaction between the visitors and the local – the keepers of the heritage.

The TCRC has been designed as a space for exhibitions, workshops, or just taking a

moment's rest to soak in the place and it's people. It is also a platform that redefines the earthy, simple local crafts into 'gifts from Tranquebar'. Here TCRC takes on another role as it is mainly community based entity that works with the local crafts and craftspeople around Tranquebar to improve livelihood opportunities. It will function as a place for them to learn new ideas, endorse good practices, meet qualified people who otherwise are not accessible to them through government projects and such initiatives.

For the visitors, the TCRC offers an exciting place brimming with new ideas with a display area to browse through the beautiful hand work and meet the artisans personally. It is also an inviting place to relax, with a coffee shop featuring a simple, delicious menu and a tranquil ambience.



Funding Support: The Bestseller Fund, India

A charitable organization based out of Denmark, the Bestseller fund has wholeheartedly adopted Tranquebar in the aftermath of tsunami for its development work. The development model used in Tranquebar aims to bring about an integrated socio-cultural development by partnering with various organizations that have expertise in the fields of heritage conservation, poverty alleviation and craft revival. (www.bestsellerfund.com)



Craft Resource Center Project conception and execution: Upasana, Auroville, Tamilnadu.

Upasana is a design studio set up in Auroville in 1998 working with the notion of 'integral design'. Upasana seeks to constantly evolve its engagement with design through multi-dimensional activities in diverse areas of: clothing design & manufacture, social development, craft revival and incubation of creative ideas for the common good. (www.upasanadesign.com)



Restoration : INTACH, Pondicherry.

INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) is a non government, non-profit organization which makes strategic and timely interventions to conserve and promote India's natural, built and living heritage. INTACH Pondicherry chapter is actively engaged in heritage preservation and solid waste management in Tranquebar with assistance from Bestseller Fund and the government of Tamil Nadu. INTACH is striving to make Tranquebar into a heritage destination and to ensure integrated development of the historic town by improving sanitation, water supply and electricity. www.intachpondicherry.org

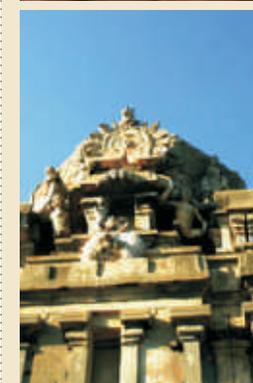
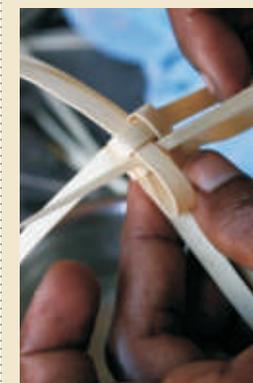


Field partner: SJDT, Tranquebar

St. Joseph Development Trust is an NGO working in Tranquebar since 2005. SJDT's operations in Tranquebar include successful inroads into microfinance sector through the formation of women SHGs, child care centers, education, livelihood training for women, plant nurseries and coastal plantation programmes that have benefited hundreds of needy villagers.



Knowledge Partner: Crafts Council of India, Chennai
CCI was established by Smt. Kamaladevi Chatopadhyay in 1964 to address the challenges faced by the craft communities across India. It is an apex body consisting of hundreds of volunteer members across the country, networked with ten regional councils and with the World Crafts Council. CCI works at various levels to preserve and sustain crafts.



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