

PUDUCHERRY, January 11, 2015

## Earning their livelihood through Tsunamika

- [Annie Philip](#)



Children and a visitor (right) make clay dolls as part of the 10th anniversary of Tsunamika held in Auroville on Saturday. photos: s.s. kumar

*Events held through Saturday to mark the 10th anniversary of the doll.*

Prema Shankar, 65, watches the proceedings on stage with keen interest at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Tsunamika doll at Bharat Nivas, Auroville on Saturday.

“I could never imagine that the Tsunamika could become such a big movement,” she says about the doll, which was conceived as a measure for post-trauma rehabilitation among fisherwomen along the Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast in the wake of the 2004 tsunami. Ms. Shankar from the Chinnamudaliarchavady village was among the first lot of fisherwomen who started making Tsunamika dolls in 2004.

“When the tsunami hit our shore, we had no idea what it was. I lost vessels of the food stall I was running and my house was badly damaged. The Tsunamika project helped us. Today, I give training in making these dolls, conduct final checks on the batches, besides working with the Upasana Design Studio,” she says.

The Upasana Design Studio and Uma Prajapati, its founder, had conceived the idea of the doll. Today, more than 6 million Tsunamika dolls have been made and distributed across 80 nations earning a livelihood through donations for the women who are making it.

The anniversary was marked with daylong festivities which included Tsunamika-making classes, art work, live music and performances and 50 stalls with products from Auroville, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Women from the Nadukuppam village who have worked on the project performed a puppet show with the dolls as central characters.

The celebratory events had people turning up in large numbers, including a group of 1100 school students from Puducherry, said Ms. Prajapati. The highlight of the day was the play, ‘Tsunamika-Daughter of the Ocean’, performed by Finnish theatre group ISIS and directed by Liisa Isotalo. Ms. Isotalo had volunteered with the Tsunamika team during the 5th anniversary, and the play is inspired by ‘Tsunamika meets friends,’ a story by Manoj Pavitrnan.

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