



Solar Solutions

Most visitors to Goa would not have heard about the place called Pernem. Probably those who have travelled in the Konkan Railway might have noticed the railway station Pernem Road which is about 4 kms from the town. The region belongs to the Goan sub-region, the *Novas Conquistas* meaning the New Conquest. The name has a distinct Portuguese spelling and the local Konkani name is *Pedne*. After few skirmishes with the erstwhile rulers, the place was regained from the Raja of Sawantwadi.

Pernem is located in the Northern part of Goa and is sandwiched between the Chapora and Arondem rivers. It is predominantly a Hindu town, has a beautiful coastline with long sandy beaches, lagoons and coconut plantations. Being not as popular as other destinations in Goa, Pernem has few settlements equipped to cope with the tourists. However, for the more adventurous souls, there are destinations like the Terekol fort, located on the Maharashtra border, that provide ample enticement.

The villagers were merrily chopping off trees in the area and using it as firewood for heating water. That was till the Rotarians of Rotary Club of Mapuca, RI District 3170 came to know of it and decided that environmental degradation should stop. The solution was soon found and the club decided to provide 60 solar powered water heating systems to the community. The trek to the forests nearby to collect wood would be reduced if not eliminated completely and people would have time to engage in more productive work.

The project cost was estimated as US \$36,082 and The Rotary Foundation gave US \$16,162 amounting to



Dignitaries at the Solar Plant.

over rupees seven lakhs. The matching grant partner was soon located and it was the Rotary Club of Napoli Sud Ovest, RI District 2100, Italy. The District Governor of the partnering district Michael Angelo Ambrosia was not only too willing to support such a wonderful cause but also took the efforts to locate a manufacturer of solar water heaters and negotiated a good price. RRFC Dilip Salgaocar, DG Mahesh Raikar, RI District 3170, PDG Manoj Desai, Rtn. Suraj Mantrawadi, President RC Mapuca and a host of dignitaries were present when the system was inaugurated on June 5, 2011.

Much to the delight of the Rotarians in District 3170, the scheme soon found willing partners from RC Napoli, Naples, RC Napoli-Nord, RC Napoli-Nord Est, RC Napoli Ovest, RC Napoli Castel dell Ovo, RC Napoli Flegreo, RC Napoli Posillipo and RC Napoli Castel Sant'Elmo. Generous DDF flowed in the partnering districts.

Pernem represents how Goa was many years ago. Farming and fishing keep the inhabitants occupied. The beauty of the place is still untouched as even the passenger travelling by

bus seem reluctant to alight here and explore the land. But all that beauty would have disappeared soon with the forests being cut down for wood. If you turn the pages of a tourist guide you can read that in Pernem you can bargain to your heart's content with the natives while shopping here for bamboo work and other local artifacts! The locals may yield. But with the advent of solar water heaters the villagers could not have bargained for a better deal to lead a life that is in harmony with the woods around them.

Such projects, which are supported by TRF, go to prove that you have to constantly contribute to The Rotary Foundation. It is your foundation that helps you to bring about the desired changes in the society and that can happen only when every Rotarian gives every year.



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