

# TAMIL NADU DOMESTIC WORKERS' WELFARE TRUST

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



**About TNDWWT:** Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust was registered in 2005 and has been working for the empowerment, rights, justice, dignity and welfare of Domestic Workers, Migrants and Children. Our organisation has been creating a platform in the society for less privileged Domestic Workers, Migrants and Children, by empowering them with opportunities to learn about their rights, Organising, mobilising and strengthening them, ensuring their safety, responding and intervening during crisis, petitioning for their rights and legislations by coordinating with the state, national and international organizations etc. Our work today has spread across 17 Districts of Tamil Nadu, viz., Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram, Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Salem, Trichy, Pudukkottai, Tanjore, Villupuram, Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram, Chengalpattu and Chennai.

### **OUR VISION:**

As an organization our vision is envisaged for the betterment of the rights, welfare, justice and empowerment of women domestic workers, overseas migrant workers and children.

### **OUR MISSION:**

TNDWWT works towards a mission:

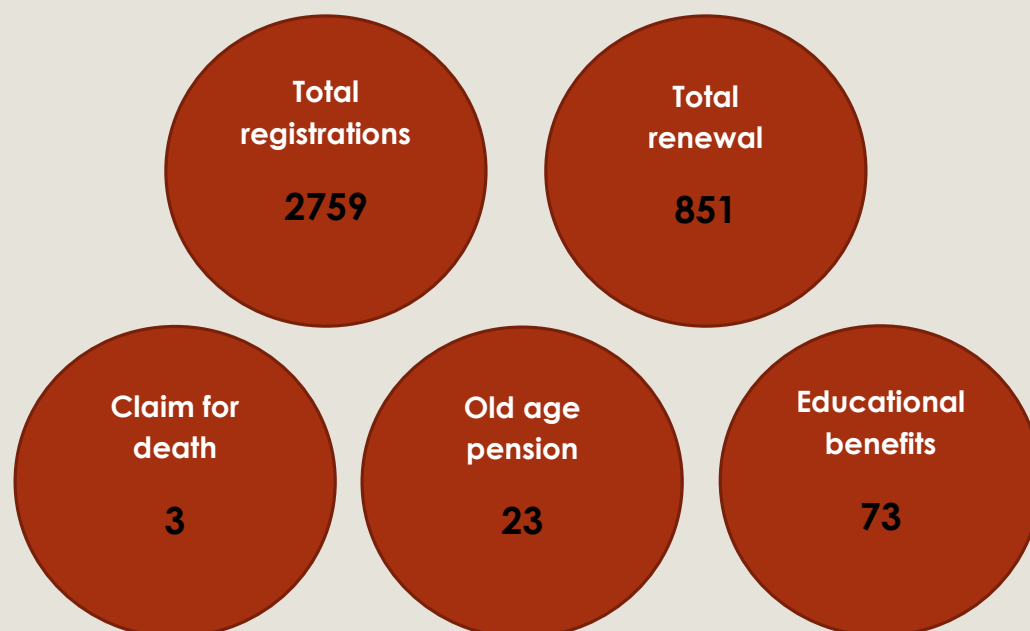
1. To create a platform for domestic workers to voice out for their rights, create a safer working condition with better wages, capacitate them with skill based training, empower them financially through alternate income generation techniques and ensure access to social security schemes,
2. To ensure access to safer means of migration among overseas migrant workers and intervene during crisis situations,
3. To manifest for less privileged children and provide them with opportunities to learn about their rights and education thereby empowering them to strengthen their capacities.

### **DOMESTIC WORKERS**

**Organizing, Strengthening, and Mobilizing the Domestic Workers:** TNDWWT creates a platform for its Domestic Worker members by organizing, mobilizing and strengthening them through various meetings organized in their communities. Through the meetings various discussions upon their rights, responsibilities, welfare schemes available to them etc., were discussed throughout the year. About 1,310 floor meetings were carried out during the year and the following were the key discussions:

- Awareness meetings during Domestic Workers' day/ Labours day / Human rights day/ Women's day to make them understand the purpose of commemorating those days.
- Awareness upon ILO convention C189, duties, response
- SEED money benefits and procedure to avail it.
- Domestic Workers Welfare Board registration and its benefits
- Asking for weekly off, awareness on importance of employer and employee agreement
- Awareness on the right to avail leave/ equal wages/ yearly bonus/ paid leave etc.
- Giving awareness on importance of celebrating domestic worker's day
- Importance of self-dignity and equal wage compared to Men
- Referring nearby jobs
- Awareness on Co-operative for DWs and its Benefits.

**Welfare Board Registration:** TNDWWT has been actively engaging in creating awareness among DWs upon the Domestic Workers Welfare Board of the government of Tamil Nadu and the benefits such as old age pension, widow benefits, educational benefits, and marriage benefits it has been giving to the domestic workers. The organization has also involved in registering the DWs in the Domestic Workers Welfare Board through its online portal and helping them avail their benefits and rights.

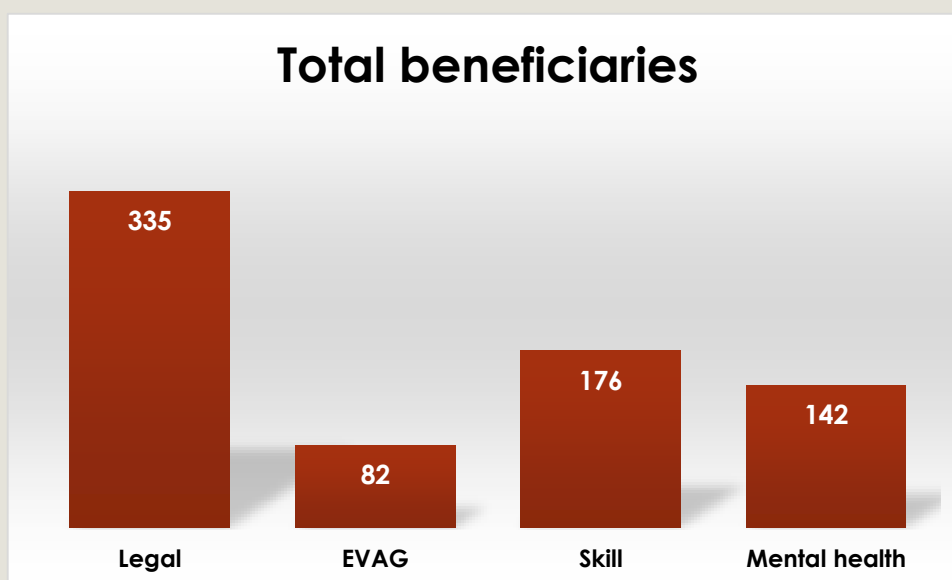


**Trainings for Domestic Workers:** With the motive of capacitating the domestic workers with various topics and skills, TNDWWT frequently organizes various training programs. During the year about 21 trainings have been given covering legal literacy, life skill, mental health and gender based training.

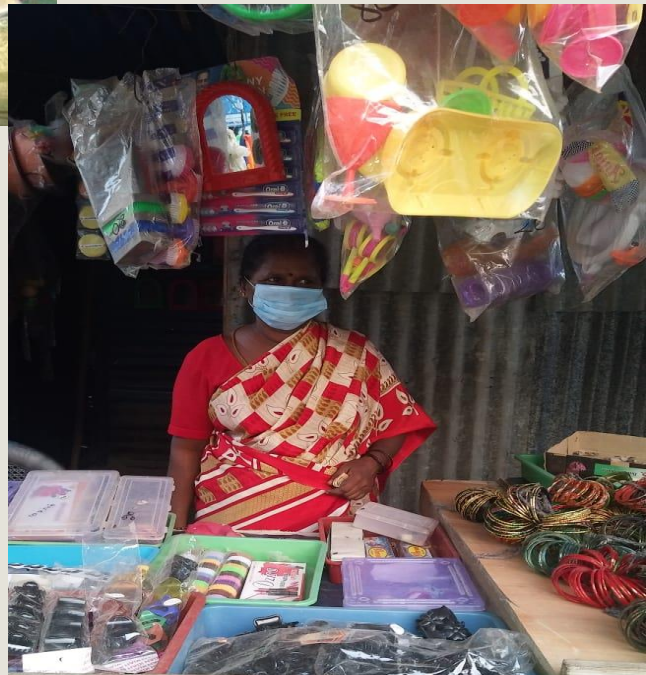
- **Legal Training:** In order to increase the knowledge of DWs upon the existing labour laws of India, ILO convention, welfare schemes and their legal rights, 8 trainings have been given through which 385 DWs have been benefited. These trainings have capacitated the workers to a greater extend and as a success the workers have been able to voice out for their rights at their workplace.
- **Skill Training:** About 6 skill trainings have been carried out by TNDWWT through which 237 have participated. The trainings focused on masala making, organic product making, cooking, and financial management. The training has created a positive impact as few of the participants who attended the masala making training have started. Many of the trained DWs have taken forward their learnings by starting up their own businesses.
- **Mental Health Training:** Domestic workers undergo various mental health issues that are left unaddressed especially after the pandemic their mental health have taken a very huge downturn. In order to address this issues, 4 mental health training for 142 DWs

was conducted. Through the training, Activities on self-care and Coping techniques, Exercise, setting boundaries, Practice mindfulness, Meditation, Breath work, Self-care etc. were given.

- **EVAWG:** As a new implementation, TNDWWT has started training the vulnerable domestic workers with 3 gender based training in the name of Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls. About 87 participants were benefited upon one stop centres, women police stations etc.



**Seed Money for Entrepreneurs:** Women in the informal economy face a number of structural constraints that prevent them from finding decent paid jobs. The situation is particularly difficult for domestic workers. Though the sector is growing rapidly, there are no work contracts, social security, wage raises, paid leave or medical facilities for the workers. Further, the law makers and public do not consider them to be labourers. The COVID-19 has made the situation even worse for these workers because many of them have lost their jobs, which are their only means of survival. To bridge these gaps, TNDWWT provided seed money to domestic workers. The idea behind providing seed money is to create women entrepreneurs so that economic stability can be achieved. About 22 domestic workers were benefited during the financial year by this initiative.



### Meeting with MLAs MPs and other Government officials:

Many MLAs MPs and government officials have been met time to time by the staffs of TNDWWT. MP Kanimozhi was met through an online meeting, RS Barathi MP alandur, CM, labour minister CV Ganesan, MLA Ezhilan, Dr. Thol Thirumavalavan MP, MLA Karunanidhi, MP Kalanidhi Veerasamy, SS Balaji MLA, MP Thamizhachi Thangapanidiyan, MLA Aravindan, Labour secretary Mr Anandan, Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare Board Aecretary Mrs. Velambigai were also met during the year 2021-2022. During the meetings various demands of the DWs were submitted through memorandums. The meetings have also increased the visibility of the organization's work and the problems faced by the



DWs. The memorandums consisted of the following demands:

1. Bring in a resolution in the State Assembly revoking the 4 new labour code of the Union government which deprives the unorganized worker's basic right.
2. Ensuring the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention C189 Recommendation 202, brought during the International Labour Organization's conference in 2010.
3. There should be no forced relocation/ eviction that has been affecting the livelihoods of domestic workers. Building alternative housing in the same place must be ensured where the workers live thereby safeguarding the livelihood of the workers
4. Bring in separate State and National legislations exclusively for the Domestic Workers to ensure their rights.
5. The government of Tamil Nadu need to revise and amend the minimum wages of the Domestic Workers to Rs 80 per hour considering the current economic situation of the country.
6. To ensure the effective functioning of the Domestic Workers Welfare Board, the state government has to allocate 1% of the revenue from the house tax collected.
7. Create a special grievance tribunal for domestic workers in each district labour welfare office and a panchayat, taluka and district level grievance committee should be set up to register cases of the affected workers under the Workplace Sexual Harassment Act 2013. With women being included in this committee.



8. Include Domestic Workers during the National Census and ensure that there is proper data of the unorganized labours especially of the domestic workers.
9. Increase the old age pension for the domestic workers to Rs 3000
10. Provide temporary housing for workers while demolishing until rebuilding homes in urban areas.

Apart from this various ward member like counsellors have been met to discuss upon the issues of the domestic workers.

### Important Observation Days:

The organization has been creating a platform for the DWs by celebrating various observation days by conducting various awareness campaigns and public meetings. Through these events various issues of the Domestic Workers are voiced out and an awareness is being created among the general public and the officials of the government.

**Decent Work Day:** On November 25th 2021, the workers of The Tamilnadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust went to the venue Sir Pitty Thyagaraya Hall with the following dignitaries: Thiru.J.Karunanidhi, MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly-Tnagar), .Dr.Kalanidhi Veerasamy, MP (Member of Parliament Lok Sabha, North Chennai), Thiru.M.Shanmugam, MP (Member of Parliament Rajya Sabha), General Secretary of Labour Progressive Federation Thirumathi.Veelambigai, Additional commissioner for labour and Secretary of Tamilnadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board, Dr.Divianathan, Joint commissioner of labour, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary of Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Welfare Trust, Ms. Geetha, Advisor of Unorganised Workers Federation, Thirumathi.Virgil D Sami, Director of Arunodhaya centre for street and working children, Selvi.Clarammal, coordinator of National Domestic Workers Movement. During the event the DWs submitted a memorandum consisting various demands safeguarding their welfare.



Decent Work Day was also celebrated in Perumbakkam with Mr. Arvind Ramesh, MLA, Ms. Jayathi, AE, Mr. Darwin Moses, PCO- Slum Clearance Board chief guests. During the event the Domestic Workers requested the MLA with the following demands enjoy a decent working condition:

1. Increase the minimum wages to Rs.75/- for an hour.
2. To provide two days of paid holidays in a month.
3. To ensure bonus and festive holidays.
4. To add 1% of House Tax to the Welfare Board.
5. Demand for better and safe working conditions.
6. To ease the process of getting registered in the Domestic Workers Welfare Board
7. To recall their rights to be in the association and bargain collectively.
8. Ensure payment for overtime work.
9. Must ensure Work Agreement.
10. Should be provided with standard and appropriate equipment/materials to work such as gloves, standard detergent, and slippers.



## Domestic Workers Day:

On account of International Domestic Workers Day, the Domestic Workers of TNDWWT organised and participated in various events that included Awareness rallies, Auto Campaigns, Post Card Campaigns, Meetings with the MLA's/MP's to submit memorandums that contained the demands of Domestic Workers and a Google meeting with the Government officials and Domestic Workers. The campaigns, awareness rallies, and memorandums submitted to the MLA's and MP's mainly demanded the authorities to ratify of ILO Charter 189, enacting federal laws that would benefit domestic workers, Initiate Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board to the register all domestic workers and provide them corona relief, Provide relief of Rs 10,000 per month during the pandemic curfew, Prioritise Domestic Workers for vaccination, Ensure that the employers take responsibility for the domestic workers, and Ensuring to extend the government's Urban and Rural employment schemes to 200 days. TNDWWT-TN has successfully celebrated International Domestic Workers Day in Chennai, Thiruvallur, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Trichy, Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Tuticorin and Salem districts of Tamil Nadu with the following results:

- 2727 DW's have participated in awareness rallies,
- 2500 DW's involved in protest in front of the collectorate,
- 6600 DW's have addressed their issues through Post card campaign,
- 7920 DW's have participated in the Signature campaign,
- 85 DW's have voiced out through Auto Campaign,
- 11 meetings have been done with various MLA/ MP/ government officials and memorandums have been submitted.
- 394 DW's have participated in an online consultation with the Chief guest Dr. D. Ravi Kumar member of the Parliament- Lok Sabha, Villupuram Constituency, Mr. Divyanathan- Secretary, Manual Work Welfare Board, and Ms. Geetha- Advisor, Unorganized Workers Federation. Various issues regarding the domestic Workers were consulted with the Chief Guests to bring in changes that could empower the DW's.



## Human Rights Day:

The International Human Rights Day was commemorated by the Domestic Workerws of TNDWWT through and awareness program. Mr. Vetrivel, Advocate of Free Legal Aid Services, Semmenchery, Ms. Gajalakshmi, Juvenile Aid Police Unit (JAPU), Ms. Saraswati, CD Wing, TNUHDB, Ms. Devika, CD Wing, TNUHDB were the dignitaries of the program. The dignitaries emphasized upon the importance of human rights and its relevance to domestic workers. The need of the hour of **reworking on domestic workers' salary, paid holidays, festive bonus, and workplace safety which are basic human rights** etc were discussed. Apart from this the dignitaries also spoke upon the importance of Child Rights by recalling the **Right to Live, Right to Development, Right to Protection, and Right to Participation** that needs to be guaranteed to the children. More than 250 participants enthusiastically participated in the program showing solidarity.



## Women's Day:

Women's day was celebrated with **Honourable Chief guests Geetha Mam, (legal advisor of confederation of unorganised workers), Mrs.Jeyanthi AE, Sr. Valarmathi and Dr Any Rathna (Chief Doctor of Ponneri Taluk Government Hospital).** Dr Any Rathna spoke about the minimal wages of Domestic working women and the challenges they face due to suppression of basic rights. Ms Jayanthi wished the DWs to have a successful, meaningful women's day. The domestic workers performed various cultural events and showcased their talents. Ms Geetha gave a powerful speech to the gathering on how women have been suppressed by not being able to get proper pension and other schemes. She sung an awareness song of domestic workers and encouraged the gathering. Sr. Valarmathi asked the Domestic Workers to keep fighting back to get the schemes permanently and to work together to get more benefits. Finally, the prize distribution ceremony was held and winner of various events that was carried out prior to women's day were awarded prizes.



## Network Meeting:

**Networking and Petitioning:** TNDWWT has been constantly advocating for the rights of Domestic Workers and Children. The organization has been actively engaging with various like-minded organizations such as Unorganized Workers Federation, Action Aid, Unorganized Workers Committee etc.

### *Unorganized Workers Federation*

- Unorganized Workers Federation organized a consultation meeting where in a joint action was taken against various issues of the working class people which includes the cancellation of new labour code, conducting a press meet and a demonstration for the issue were decided.
- TNDWWT participated in a demonstration that was organized by the Unorganized Workers Federation at Chepauk- Chennai by addressing various issues faced by the Domestic workers and other such unorganized workers due to COVID-19 thereby emphasising to the government authorities to provide COVID-19 relief to the workers and their family and the hardships that the workers undergo due to the digitalization of welfare board registration.
- Two Zoom meeting with the Unorganized Workers Federation was organized and various issues of Domestic Workers and other such unorganized workers like the negative impacts of the new labour code, the need of monetary relief for the workers due to COVID-19.
- TNDWWT participated in 4 demonstrations that was organized by UWF to voice out about the digitalization of Welfare Board and new labour code.
- TNDWWT participated in a rally program organized by UWF. About 50 Domestic Workers from TNDWWT took part in the rally and expressed their solidarity against the new labour code.
- TNDWWT was a part of a meeting organized by UWF with like-minded organizations from Maharashtra and discussed about the issues of the unorganized workers.
- TNDWWT with the UWF has given various petitions regarding the issue of digitalizing the welfare board and new labour code was given to officials like Mr. R.S. Barathi- Member of the Parliament, Labour Minister Mr Ganesan.
- UWF organized a zoom meeting with Ms Kanimozhi- Member of Parliament to discuss regarding the issues that workers face due to the new labour code.
- TNDWWT participated in the hunger strike that was strike that was conducted by the UWF at Valluvar Kottam to show its opposition against the new labour code. Following this a petition was given to the labour commissioner Mr Annadurai regarding the same.



### ***Unorganized Workers Committee***

- Unorganized Workers Committee at DMS organized a meeting regarding Occupational Health Hazard with a panel of doctors. During the meeting TNDWWT presented about the health issues that Domestic Workers face due to their work environment.

### ***Action Aid India***

- Action Aid India organized a zoom meeting with the staff members of TNDWWT. The gathering was addressed by Ms. Kannagi Bagiyaraj, IAS and Mr Srinivasan from Human Rights Movement about the COVID-19 situation and the issues that the domestic workers and their family are undergoing during the situation. Mrs Geetha joined the session and addressed about the eviction problems that the workers undergo in spite of the land that is already available in Chennai that is close to their workplace. The speakers suggested to give a complaint regarding the discussed problems to the Women's Commission.

### **Case Studies:**

#### **1. NAME: MRS.DHANALAKSHMI**

**Address: 44/77**

Mrs. Dhanalakshmi is a married woman and was working as a Domestic Worker. She has two children who are school going. Dhanalakshmi lost her jobless during the lockdown. She had been confined in her home and had felt so stressful about the economic status of the family. During this time TNDWWT organized mental health training. After attending it she was able to get clarity upon how to deal with problems.

Through ice-breaker session she had got an opportunity to know about- different kind of people and their perceptions which were very interesting and refreshing. The training gave her an opportunity to feel good about herself and get an exposure about mental health. She gave a feedback that she enjoyed the ice breaker session. The meditation during the session was very relaxing and helpful for her to stay calm and develop peace of mind. She has thanked the organization for providing such training that has helped her a lot.

#### **2. Name: Ms.Gomathi**

**Address: T/152**

Ms.Gomathy is a 39 year old hardworking domestic worker; she has been working since a very young age. Mrs. Gomathy lives along her husband, mother-in-law and two children. Her two

children are currently in studying in government school, and her husband worked as a security guard and due to COVID-19 he is jobless currently. Her mother-in-law is widowed who was also a domestic worker and is currently taking care of her grandchildren when Mrs Gomathi is not around.

During lockdown imposed due to covid-19, her family struggled a lot to afford basic needs. Ms.Gomathi became the member of the Domestic Workers movement since 2019 and has been attending the monthly meetings regularly. By that means she was informed about the monetary benefits that she could receive if she registers in the portal. With submitting all necessary documents, she registered herself in Welfare Board in the year 2019 and was waiting to receive her benefits. She was able to claim the benefit of Rs.2000/- provided by the government as a relief fund during the COVID-19 lockdown. This has been a great help to her and her family during the tough times.

**3. NAME: S. DEEPA (34)**

**ADDRESS: 2520**

Ms.Deepa is a domestic worker and a member of the movement. She was working in 2 houses for Rs 3000/- Her husband is irresponsible and an occasional daily wager who doesn't give money to his family. Her mother of age 72, 2 sons, her husband and she are the members of the family. Her first son is also irresponsible who resists going for a job. Her second son is sewage cleaner at construction work sights. Deepa and her second son had to take care of the family. She was always worried about the behaviour of her son and husband. During the outbreak of the pandemic they lost their jobs. The family lost all their hopes and were very much worried about their economic status. They had no means even to buy their food items. They were left to stay in their homes for months which made them mentally depressed. At this very time she was informed about the seed money provided to domestic workers by the trust. She submitted all necessary information and documents to the field coordinator and she was given with Rs. 5000/-. Ms. Deepa has started batter business along with her petty shop using the seed money. Amid the chaos in her family, seed money had been of great help to her. She has been able to earn up to Rs 500/- per day with the help of the business. Along with the business, she was also able to get back a domestic worker job as she is vaccinated completely now. Both the earnings are very helpful to run the family. She thanked organization for extending an immense help.

## CHILDREN:

**Strengthening CRM and Formation of new CRM groups:** TNDWWT has been involving with the children of the most vulnerable community by making them engage with the Child Rights Movement. The CRM has been a key factor in motivating the children to address various issues of their community by creating awareness. The CRM members through their monthly meetings have discussed about various issues that has been prevailing in their society.



| S.No | Issues addressed   | Action taken   | Impact created   |
|------|--|--|--|
| 1    | Toilet usage, government schemes available to build toilets were discussed | Children were able to understand the importance if using toilets. About 330 CRM children have given petitions to the government to provide their families with the subsidy amount to build toilets at their homes. | 28 members have received their subsidy from the government. 2 of the members could not receive the subsidy because of lack of documentation. |
| 2    | Rain water harvesting<br>Dengue and Malaria prevention                     | Awareness about the importance of saving rain water and the issues of dengue and malaria that occurs due to improperly saving rain water was discussed. A petition   | As an impact of this, the septic tank of the area was cleaned. Apart from this the CRM children have also taken initiatives by               |

|   |                          |  |   |
|---|--------------------------|--|---|
|   |                          | <p>to the Area leader emphasizing to clean the septic tank to avoid dengue and malaria and building a closed tank in the area to save rain water was given.</p> <p>The children of Chennai wrote to the corporation of Chennai about the mosquito problem.</p> | <p>themselves and cleaned their places.</p> <p>The Corporation of Chennai took up immediate action by spraying mosquito sprays in the localities.</p> |
| 3 | Online classes           | Issues that the children face due to unavailability of smart phones were discussed with the children.  |   |
| 4 | Good touch and Bad touch | The children were taught about good touch and bad touch through interactions and audio visual mediums.   | The children who were a part of this awareness sessions have taken the learnings to their friends, families and neighbors.                            |
| 5 | Road Facility            | The issue of road facilities in the Villupuram district were discussed during the meetings. A petition was given to the concerned authority by the CRM children.   | As an impact the authorities have started laying roads in the village. The work is still in progress.   |
| 6 | CCTV camera              | The importance of CCTV cameras was discussed.  | The children have collected money from their parents and 5 CCTV cameras have been set up at Pazhangunam and S. Malaiyanoor.                           |
| 7 | Covid-19                 | Awareness about COVID-19 was given to the children. The importance of vaccination was also addressed.  | With the awareness given, the children have taken it to their parents and made 85 people to get vaccinated.   |
| 8 | Child Marriage           | The evils of child marriage were discussed during the meeting. 23 child marriage cases have been identified by the children in their communities.  | A petition regarding the issue has been given to the secretary. The process of meeting the area MLA has been initiated.                               |

|    |                 |   |  |
|----|-----------------|---|--|
| 9  | Tree plantation | The CRM children interacted about the need and importance to plant trees.   | The children initiated to plant trees in 17 villages. About saplings have been planted by the children and have been taken care. |
| 10 | Library         | The children of Chennai took up initiative and wrote a petition   | The petition has been submitted to Dr. Ezhilan, MLA  |
| 11 | Child Rights    | The children of Perumbakkam discussed about the various aspects of Child rights.  |  |
| 12 | Hand wash       | Due to the COVID-19 problem, the children of CRM were taught to properly wash their hands to prevent the spread of deadly diseases. This topic was covered by using | The children were found to show interest upon washing their hands and followed the practice to protect themselves.               |



## Trainings for Children

In order to enrich the skills of the children of CRM, 2 Leadership and Personality Development trainings were given to 133 children from various CRM groups of Chemmanchery, Perumbakkam and Villupuram district. Through the session the children were able to understand the importance of becoming a leader, leadership traits and various aspects of a successful leader. The children felt that it was a great opportunity for them to learn about it through creative means that was combined with games and knowledgeable session.



### Tuition centres for CRM children:

TNDWWT's evening tuition centre has been always welcomed by the children and the parents of the community. There are about **15 tuition** centres with actively engaging children for their education. The centres have played a major role during the pandemic by helping the children continue their studies despite of the schools being shut. The children have also been able to act as a support for each other's education. The tuition teachers assess the children on a periodically to ensure their progress in their studies. With the assessment made it has been found that **30% of the children are very good with their studies, 42% of the children are average students and 28% are below average**. The average and below average children are being given extra attention. Apart from this frequent meeting for the parents are conducted to involve the parents their children's studies.



## Observation Days:

Anti- Child Labour Day was celebrated by the Children of CRM groups in Chennai, Perumbakkam, Kannagi Nagar, Semmancheri, Padappai and Viluppuram on 12 & 13 June 2021. Due to the pandemic, the children were unable to gather in huge groups. In spite of this the children of CRM expressed their solidarity towards the importance of Education through various artistic forms like drawing, poems, speech, skit etc by adhering to the pandemic protocols. The activities were shared in social media platforms thereby making the public know about the evils of child labour.



- Child Rights awareness was given to **139** CRM children through meetings.
- An interactive online session with the children was conducted through Google meeting. About **142** CRM children participated in the session. The chief guest of the session Professor Andrew Sesuraj of Loyola College gave various insights about the harmful impacts of Child Labour and the benefits of Education. The children cheerfully participated in the session and also gave real life scenarios of child labour that they have witnessed in their communities.
- About **112** CRM children participated in Drawing/ Speech that expressed the issues of child labour.
- **190** CRM children participated in awareness rallies that were held inside their communities.
- Street play about child rights was done in **7 villages by 25 children**.



## International Children's day:

On November 20th 2021, the CRM children of Tamilnadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust commemorated the World Children's Day at Loyola College Chennai. Mr S.S. Balaji- MLA of Thiruporur, Ms Gajalakshmi- Inspector of Juvenile Justice Unit were the chief guests of the session. During the session the children gave out various cultural performances and participated enthusiastically. The children also submitted a memorandum to Mr S.S. Balaji- MLA addressing various issues such as:

1. Building up of schools near their localities as they have been evicted and sent to the outskirts of Chennai.
2. Provide safer house where there is no stagnation of water during rainy season.
3. Take action immediately upon perpetrators who involve in harming the children at educational institutions.
4. Increase in the educational benefits given through the Domestic Workers' Welfare Board.
5. Speedy action and justice to complaints received through Child Line 1098.
6. Implementation of the education at the doorstep scheme to benefit more number of children during the COVID crisis.



## Day of Hope

Day of Hope was commemorated by the children and Domestic Workers of TNDWWT in various parts of Chennai, Perumbakkam, Chemmancheri and Kannagi Nagar. The Children of Perumbakkam, Chemmancheri and Kannagi Nagar took up a particular theme “Bodhayai Edhirikum Pudhu Vazhvu” and carried out awareness rallies, skits upon the harmfulness of drug abuse in various public areas. While the children of Chennai focused to address the topic of “Eviction” by carrying out signature campaigns with 5000 signatures, meeting the ward members and post card campaign with 500 participants. Apart from this a press meeting was also conducted where in the problems that the children and Domestic Workers face due to eviction were address.



## CRM- Election:

The CRM launched a new initiative called the "Children's Election committee" and made the children elect their Chairman, Co-Chairman, and Secretary in their respective areas. The children participated in this election with great enthusiasm as it was their first time experience in voting. The elected representatives were provided with certificates.



## Case Studies:

### Bhuvaneshwari:

Bhuvaneshwari is in CRM from class 9. Her father is a painter, and mother is a domestic worker both have completed 10<sup>th</sup> std. Mother is jobless currently. From the day one, she is the leader of her group who is chosen by everyone in her group. Bhuvaneshwari was unaware of her rights earlier. Now that she is in CRM, she knows her rights, she along with her group members have written petition on water problem in her block and submitted them to Slum Board. “In CRM meetings, various activities are carried out which brings out her creativity. She also shares that she got an opportunity to showcase her talent of speech in front of Mrs.Thamizhachi Thangapandian, MP during a program. She also shared various problems such as, need of compound for school, need of hospital; ladies bus and ladies police station. This was shared in Hindu newspaper well.



She also shared that, “Being a leader in CRM has given a great exposure to her. Earlier she was not so outspoken. But now, she is able to speak up confidently. She finds joy in helping out her group by sharing knowledge and information and finds this experience treasurable.”

### Mahalakshmi:



Mahalakshmi has been a student in TNDWWT's evening tuition centre for the past 6 years. She has an elder brother Rajesh who is 15 years old and is a part of the CRM and the tuition centre. Her father Mr Ravikumar. (42) passed away due to illness and her mother Amudha (40) is a Domestic Worker works hard to provide the family with basic needs. Mahalakshmi's family lives in the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board as they were evicted by the government from the city. Mahalakshmi is a very quiet girl. Her favourite subjects are Tamil and English. She aims to become an IPS officer and serve the people through it. Due to the pandemic, Mahalakshmi's family has been facing tough times. Her mother was unable to continue working as the employer requested her to stay at home until the

government lifts the lockdown.

Mahalakshmi and her brother were unable to continue to study as schools were shut down. Her school was not able to provide her with online classes for all the subjects and she was really

worried about her studies and ambition. TNDWWT's initiative gave hands to her at this very time through its tuition centre. By following proper protocols during the pandemic, she was able to continue studying at the tuition centre with the help of the tuition teacher. Maha feels very thankful to the organization for helping her study without any interruptions.

**Janani:** Janani lives at East Namachivayapuram, Choolaimedu along with her father Balan who is a painter, mother Sheela who is a Domestic Worker and two siblings. She was unable to cope up with her studies and was lethargic about her studies. She also lacked in discipline and kindness towards elders. During the pandemic, Janani skipped all her online classes. TNDWWT had approached her parents to join the CRM and the tuition center. Her parents without hesitation handed over Janani's studies to the tuition center. Slowly there was an improvement in Janani's discipline. She started attending all her online classes. She was weak Math, Tamil and English before joining the tuition. The tuition teacher has given her a good reading training for Tamil, English and a lot of teaching and practice in Math. The tuition teachers through the monthly assessment have been able to find a gradual increase in the assessment. Janani's academic marks have also increased very well. Not only in academics she has also proven herself through her assertiveness in various situations. The tuition center has been a pillar of support to students thereby creating a responsible future generation.



## MIGRANT WORKERS:

### Raising awareness, pre-departure training:

- About **3360** individuals were benefited out of various services provided to them.
- There are **35 groups** and total of **525 members** are part of the group.
- With **116 awareness meetings** were conducted and about **2320 people** were sensitized upon the issues faced by migrants and safe migration practices that needs to be followed by the migrant worker. They were given awareness raising on the Qatar labour law, minimum wage, exist visa system, no objection certificate etc.
- **5 Pre-departure trainings** where conducted during the project period in which **515 people** have been trained and sensitized.
- These sessions have given the people an understanding upon safe migration, issues faced by migrants abroad, issues caused by fake agents etc. The people who participated in these program have expressed that the session were informative and will help them identify and prevent any such scenarios.



### Legal assistance to the migrant workers:

During this year TNDWWT intervened in cases and find solution to the problems of the migrant worker. TNDWWT filed all these cases in MADAD portal and helped the migrants to get rescued/ solve their problem. In the year 2021, the organization has **20 filed cases** in the MADAD regarding various issues faced by the migrant workers. From these **16 cases have been resolved** through necessary steps taken by the Indian embassy. **4 cases are in the process of investigation.** The category of the difficulties faced by the migrant are repatriations issues, mortal remains in the country, sexual abuse, worker abuse, physical abuse, health issues, passport issues, agent scam, wage theft etc. were filed.

### **Data Collection and survey of the returnee migrants:**

TNDWWT conducted a survey to identify the problems of the migrant workers from various countries like Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Singapore etc. These surveys were carried out through means such as door to door visits and telephonic calls. About **424 migrants** were identified and surveyed. The surveys mainly focused on identifying the status of the returnee migrants who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and current state of the families.

### **Observation Day:**

**Multi- Stake Holders Exchange:** On account of International Migrants Day, the TNDWWT organized a Multi-Stakeholders Exchange through google meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The main aim of the happening was to have a discussion regarding various issues pertaining to the migrant worker, the law mechanism that prevail for them and its effectiveness etc. The speakers and the topics for the discussions:

1. Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Migration in Oman: Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Chairman- Tamil Labour Welfare Forum- Oman
2. Reality of migrant workers' rights amidst Qatar 2022 FIFA world cup: Mr.P.N. Baburajan, the President of Indian Culture Centre, Doha- Qatar
3. Problems faced by Malaysian Migrants: Mr Kamalnathan from Malaysia Human Rights Organization
4. Involvement and schemes of NRT in protecting migrants during the pandemic: Mr. Ramesh, Deputy Director- Non-Resident Tamil
5. Problems faced by Women Migrant Workers in Kuwait: Mr Alwin Jose- a Social Worker, Kuwait.
6. Role of ILO and Union Government in protecting migrant workers: Ms. Neha. Wadhawan the National Project Coordinator- Work in Freedom Program, International Labour Organization (ILO)

**Suggestions and Discussions:** The sessions came to a conclusion with few suggestions and discussions put forth by the participants and the speakers. They are as follows:

1. The TN government must set Kerala government as a model and arrange for pensions for the workers after they return to India.
2. Unauthorised agents and agencies should be penalised heavily and authorized agents should be made public and easily available to the people.
3. Insurance schemes for any worker should be mandated.
4. Pre-departure trainings and awareness needs to be made effectively.
5. New immigration bills need to be passed to safeguard the migrant workers.
6. When the act gets passed there is a high chance of the authorised agencies backing off due to stringent measures.
7. ECR and ECNR eligibility needs to be increased.

8. There needs to be more dialogue like this among likeminded organizations and networks to know more about the issues prevailing and act upon immediately.
9. Skill and employment opportunities needs to be increased to avoid the risk of migration and enable citizens work in their countries thereby helping the nation grow.

### International Migrants Day celebration:

The International Migrants Day 2021 was commemorated on **20<sup>th</sup> December 2021** at **Noor mahal, Villupuram district** from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. It was jointly organized by Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare Trust (TNDWWT) and Jesuit Migrants Ministry External (JMMEEx). The Chief guest of the program was **Mr. Gingee K.S. Masthan, the Minister for Minorities welfare and Non Resident Family Welfare**. The Guests of honour were **Mr. R. Lakshmanan- the Member of Legislative Assembly, Villupuram** and **Mr. Ramesh the Deputy Director, Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non-Resident Tamil, Government of Tamil Nadu**. The Special guest of the program was Mr. Meeran- The Coordinator for Tamil Sangam, UAE. Apart from them, various other dignitaries such as Mr. Alvin Jose (Coordinator for Kuwait society for Human Rights), Sr. Valarmathi ICM (State Coordinator for TNDWWT and Trustee TNDWWT), Fr. Velz SJ (Director of JMMEEx), Fr. Prabu Francis SJ (Co-Director for JMMEEx) participated in the program. About **450 migrant workers** and their families participated in the program by showing their solidarity. During the program various discussions and experience sharing upon the issues faced by migrant workers were done. The chief guest minister K.S. Masthan listed out various activities that the state government has planned for the welfare of the migrants. He also made sure to take up all the issues of the migrants to the Chief Minister and make a positive impact in their lives. The meeting was also presided by various cultural performances to entertain the migrants and their families.

Petitions were submitted to the minister by migrants. The event has been highlighted in the press.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2021/dec/21/migrant-workers-abroad-must-get-insurance-ngo-2397945.html#:~:text=An%20insurance%20to%20an%20migrant,Day%20is%20marked%20on%20Monday.>



**Initiatives to disrupt smuggling of migrant workers:** TNDWWT during the current financial year has taken a new step to disrupt smuggling of labour migrants. As an initial phase, the organization has started a data collection among 1500 migrant workers of Sivagangai and Ramanathapuram district. Through the survey a general understanding upon the patterns of smuggling, and identification of unauthorized agents/ agencies will be identified.



**Testimonies of Migrant Workers:** TNDWWT has recorded testimonies from 50 migrant workers who were affected due to various reasons and returned back from the destination country to India during the year 2021. Common problem faced by the migrant workers is unemployment due to Covid -19 lockdown, health issues, gender based violence, after math economic problems and psychological problems have been recorded in the testimonies.

#### **Mrs. Jayanthi:**

Mrs. Jayanthi is a 50-year-old female who lives at MGR Nagar-Kodungaiyur, Chennai along with her husband and children. She has an elder son who is unemployed, an elder daughter who is married and youngest daughter who has completed B.E and has been looking for employment opportunities. She takes care of her sick husband who is unable to work. She borrowed money to educate the children and get her daughter married.

Jayanthi in order to support her family financially and to overcome all the debts got a job as a Domestic Worker at Qatar. Initially there was no trouble in her job but as days passed her employer began to physically abuse her. She was being hit and tortured continuously for 15 months. She was mentally disrobed by the torture of the employer and she wasn't able to take the abuse anymore. She bravely made a complaint to TNDWWT and her petition was sent to Indian Embassy. With advice of the organization she escaped from her work place in order to reach the Indian embassy, but in the middle of her way she was stopped by police officials of Qatar who started enquiring to her. After explaining to the officials about her state she was taken to



the police station and she had to spend the night over there. She was then taken by the social workers to the shelter to stay. Her daughter made a complaint to the Indian Embassy about Mrs. Jayanthi's situation. Her passport and other belongings were in the hands of the employer who refused to give it back. The employer filed an absconding case upon her. Meanwhile the Indian embassy took efforts to resolve her issues and obtained an emergency passport to exit from Qatar.

Mrs Jayanthi somehow reached back India after a huge struggle and sickness. Her diabetes level was fluctuating a lot throughout the process. Her experience as a migrant worker in Qatar was really traumatic, that she could hardly forget about until her death. After the trauma and agony that she underwent she could not feel relaxed as her next thought was about the situation of her family. Without her earnings her family is currently facing a huge financial crisis. The pandemic situation on the other hand has made it hard for her to get a new job. Her family members have no job yet to support the others. And the money lenders have been giving the family a hard time.

**Mr. Kalyanasundaram:** Kalyanasundaram aged 50 years lived in Melakidathalaimeedu village of Nagerkovil district along with his wife Sujatha and 3 kids. He worked as an electrician in Chennai. Due to the family situation, he took up the advice of his relatives and decided to take up a job in Dubai. He had been working there for the past 15 years as an electrician in a private firm. During this tenure he was shifted to several companies from time to time. His last employer's name was Mr. Sanni Agarwal. While at work, Mr Kalyanasundaram happened to meet Sanni Agarwal's kid and was playing along with the kid. The employer Mr Sanni Agarwal who saw this falsely assumed that Mr Kalyanasundaram was misbehaving with their child and called up the police.



Kalyanasundaram was arrested by the Police on 11.07.2021 at Dubai, on charges of Child Abuse, without any valid evidences. After several arguments and spending countless number of days in jail, Kalyanasundaram with the help of his friends and relatives approached TNDWWT. After filing a complaint at MADAD portal the embassy took up initiatives by starting up enquiries. The enquiry statement brought in conclusions that, "Kalyanasundaram was found to be playing with the three years old child of Mr. Sanni Agarwal, by picking her up with his both hands holding the armpit. He has not touched the child inappropriately or made any injury to the child. Also, he has informed that he is not getting sufficient food at the jail and only one kuboos alone is provided for him. The accused Indian Worker is innocent and he is the only bread winner of the family." After this incident Mr Sanni Agarwal also came forward to withdraw his complaint.

After several months of struggle Kalyanasundaram underwent, he returned back to India. His family was very much relieved that his problems have come to an end. Currently, Mr Kalyanasundaram is unemployed and with the cattle that the family owns his wife is able to earn a small portion of money that is hardly enough for their basic survival. Mrs Sujatha has witnessed various psychological and behavioural changes in Kalyanasundaram due to the

traumatic experience that he underwent. He becomes very anxious for no reason. Mrs Sujatha is worried about the situation of the family and the future of their kids a lot. She feels helpless.

### **Mrs. Suguna Saravanakarthikeyan**

Mrs. Suguna is a 35-year-old woman from Thovala village of Kanyakumari district who lived with her husband and two children. Suguna in order to support her family financially manage to get a job as a domestic worker through an agent. Initially she was told that her salary was Rs. 35000 and her place of stay and food was completely free that would be provided by her employer. She was informed that the employee's house will be having only three to four members. But after beginning the work she realised that the entire work burden was given to her. There was nobody else to helper as she was the only worker that they had.

From cooking washing cars cleaning the house washing clothes and gardening she had to take care of everything single headedly. She was only given rupees 18000 as a salary for 2 months only. The employer would provide only raw rice to her and nothing else in order to cook for her. She used to boil the rice and somehow by some curd from the nearby store along with pickle and have her meal. Due to this her health was deteriorating very much. The employer has sexually abused Mrs Suguna several times when is wife his not around. She was unable to go through and face the situation she complained to the TNDWWT. TNDWWT lodged a complaint to the embassy in Oman.

The employers came to know about the complaint and she was locked up in a room for 10 days and tortured mentally and tortured her to pay back Rs 4 lacs in order to send her back to India. Due to the continues effort of TNDWWT, the Indian embassy the employers left her in the agent office. With the support of the social workers in Oman she was sent back to India.

### **Mrs Valli**



Mrs Valli a resident of Chennai; lived along with her two sons. One of her son was a differently abled person and he passed away some time ago. Her son was has completed 12<sup>th</sup>, but he has not been going to college as he has no interest in studies. He did not take caring his mother, and was lethargic about everything. Vali is not educated well; she was doing a daily wages work before she going to Bahrain. On February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021, Vali went to Bahrain through an agent from Kallakuruchi. She was informed that her job was to take care of children for a salary of Rs. 30,000 per month. She thought that it was a great opportunity for her, which in turn would help her for all her financial problems. Valli was accompanied with her sisters Vadivukarasi and Velankanni to the job. All the three of them were confused by the agent's behaviour as they were first locked up in a room and later were sent to another agent, who left the three of them in different houses that were close by. At the employers she was given a small place to stay that looked like a dungeon. Valli's phone and sim card was taken by the employer and she had no other means to contact the outside world. She was given a monthly salary of 15,000 only that was not close to what was mentioned to her. She was given with poor quality food that mostly included flat bread.

She wasn't sent out anywhere and while working the employer used to scold her with words that Valli couldn't understand. When she once asked for her mobile to talk to her son, the employer bet her up with her shoes. The torture she experienced was not only physical but also mental. She was depressed very much about her state. She somehow made up her mind and secretly contacted her sister who were working nearby and told them about her situation and she had to leave back to India.

Valli sooner got a chance to meet the agent responsible and asked her she wanted to go back to India. But the agent demanded Rs. 2 lakhs in order to do so. Valli realized that she is being trapped by the people and joined hands with her sisters to take a video explaining their problem. The video was circulated to her family. They were taken to a nearby police and were left alone after 3 days without food or proper clothes. Two Tamil people named ATM Senthil and Sunil helped them comeback to India. On July 15<sup>th</sup>2021, Valli and her sisters reached Chennai. Valli has no idea about how she was going to serve her kids with food with no proper job.

#### **COVID-19 Interventions and Relief Assistance:**

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected people across the globe. India has been witnessing countless number of cases that has been increasing day to day. The most affected people during COVID-19 are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the society, such as domestic workers, migrant workers, unorganized workers etc. The pandemic has not only affected them physically, but also psychologically, and financially. Due to the lockdown restrictions, these vulnerable workers that are employed in various blue coloured jobs suffer a temporary or permanent loss of employment. As a result of the grim situation and regular feedback received from the field staff, TNDWWT decided to initiate interim and long-term relief measures for the Domestic Workers, Migrant Workers and their families residing in various districts of Tamil Nadu. The relief measures and the number of beneficiaries reached out are

| <b>S.No</b> | <b>Type of Relief</b>       | <b>Type of beneficiaries</b> | <b>No of Beneficiaries and packages distributed</b> | <b>Locations</b>  |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>1.</b>   | Groceries                   | Domestic Workers             | 9,401   | Chennai,<br>Perumbakkam,<br>Semmancheri,<br>Kannagi<br>Nagar, |
| <b>2.</b>   | Seed Money                  | Domestic Workers             | 303   |   |
| <b>3.</b>   | Smart phones for E-Learning | Children                     | 175   |   |
| <b>4.</b>   | Notebooks                   | Children                     | 2300  |   |
| <b>5.</b>   | Sanitation                  | Domestic Workers             | 5000  |   |

|    |                                  |  |      |  |
|----|----------------------------------|--|------|--|
| 6. | Nutrition Kit                    | Children                                   | 4899 | Padappai,<br>Madurai,<br>Theni,<br>Dindigul,<br>Kanyakumari,<br>Tuticorin,<br>Villupuram |
| 7. | Montessori educational materials | Children                                   | 500  |  |
| 8. | Mobile vegetable garden kit      | Domestic Workers,<br>Children and families | 6544 |  |



**Financial Assistance for Migrant Workers:** Migrant workers who travel to foreign land experience various kinds of medical issues due to the changes in food habits, excessive work pressure etc. Some of the workers lose their lives and some return back home in a critical condition. Out of the several migrant workers who face these issues, TNDWWT took initiatives to identify 36 most vulnerable migrant workers' families provided with livelihood assistance. Through this initiative, 23 migrants started up their businesses such as Clothing, Tailoring, Fish selling, Cattle breeding, Petty shop, Batter business. 11 children of the migrant who lost their life/ livelihood were assisted with school and college term fee. 2 migrant families were assisted with monthly groceries and medical expenses.



| S.No | Type of Business  | Number of beneficiaries |
|------|---|-------------------------|
| 1    | Clothing business, Tailoring business, Fish selling, Cattle breeding, Petty shop, Batter business | 23                      |
| 2    | Educational support (Schools/college fee)   | 11                      |
| 3    | Monthly groceries   | 2                       |



**COVID-19 medical kits:** TNDWWT along with Loyola college provided COVID-19 kits that consisted of pulse oximeter, sanitizers, masks, shield, Zinc tablets to selected Domestic Worker leader of TNDWWT. With the help of these leaders, we were able to reach out the people of their localities who are affected by COVID-19. This has enabled the people of the locality to monitor their oxygen level, this in turn makes it easy. Through this initiative 190 kits were distributed and a total of 12,000+ individuals were tested by the Domestic Worker leaders. During the second wave of the pandemic, the pulse oximeter has helped the people monitor their oxygen and pulse level.



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