

# TAMIL NADU DOMESTIC WORKERS WELFARE TRUST

607, Vasu block, Chitra Avenue, Choolaimedu, Chennai- 600 094

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



## **About TNDWWT**

Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust is an organisation which was registered in the year 2005. As an organisation, it engages working for the empowerment, rights, justice, dignity and welfare of Domestic Workers, Migrants and Children. Our organisation has been creating opportunities for the less privileged Domestic Workers, Migrants and Children by educating them and empowering them. The organisation through its activities is been organising, mobilising and strengthening them, educating them about their rights, ensuring their safety, responding and intervening during crisis, advocating and lobbying 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.

## **VISION**

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

## **MISSION**

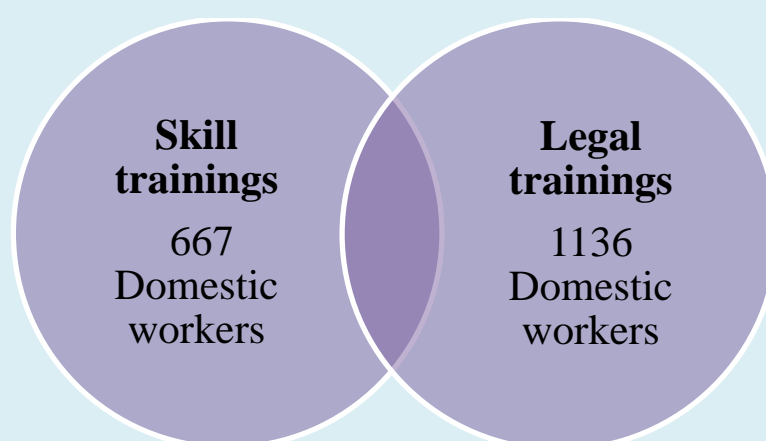
1. To create a platform for domestic workers to voice out for their rights, create a safer working condition with better wages, capacitate them with skill based training, empower them financially through alternate income generation techniques and ensure access to social security schemes,
2. To ensure 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**

**Organising and mobilising the domestic workers:** Domestic workers from around Tamil nadu were identified at the ground level. They are provided awareness on their rights and benefits and organised together as collectives. These collectives formed at the neighbourhood level gather for floor-meetings and discuss their rights and violations and grow together in groups. A total of 871 floor meetings were conducted for 11767 domestic workers in neighbourhood level. 2350 Domestic workers were newly identified during the year

**Welfare board registration:** TNDWWT has been creating awareness among the domestic workers to make them aware of the benefits provided through Tamil Nadu Domestic workers welfare Board of the Tamil Nadu Government. Benefits provided by the board include- benefits such as old age pension, widow benefits, educational benefits, and marriage benefits. The organization also has involved in registering the domestic workers in the Welfare board through the online portal. Through the floor meeting and formal channels information and necessities for making use of these benefits are taught to the domestic workers. Apart from this, they are helped to attain their rights and entitlements like aadhar, ration card, birth certificate, etc. 2250 domestic workers have newly registered with the help of the assistance. 280 Domestic workers received education assistance through welfare board schemes, 23 elderly domestic workers received pensions this year.

**Trainings for Domestic Workers:** With an aim for 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 trainings:** Domestic workers identified in different areas are organised together and provided with various trainings. Legal trainings are one major type among them. Through the legal trainings provided, the domestic workers are given awareness and educated on labour rights, gender rights. 1136 Domestic workers were trained through the legal trainings organised in the year 2022. The legal trainings have thus provided ample space for the domestic workers to learn about their rights such as decent work, fair wages, health and safety, fair working hours, freedom from abuse and intimidation, etc. they learned about ILO convention C189, importance of having work agreements, weekly paid leaves, work hours and many more through this. Domestic workers are also constantly been educated on various benefits that are made available through the welfare board and helped to attain those benefits.





**Skill trainings:** TNDWWT provides domestic workers with skill trainings that help them to earn additional incomes. The skill trainings provided included housekeeping trainings, cooking trainings, masala making, paper bag making, mat making, wire basket, pickles, etc. The training has created a positive impact as a few of the participants who attended the masala making training have started. A total of 667 domestic workers were provided skill trainings during the year.



**Training on prevention of violence against women:** TNDWWT is on a mission working against elimination of violence towards women and children. We try to reach the domestic workers through training and capacity building programmes. This has tried to include the women as well as adolescent children in the training process. In the year 2022, a total of 300 women and children are trained under this. A committee comprising of 8 members-including women and children are formed after being trained on the topic.



**Seed money beneficiaries:** Women from poor unorganized sector face several constraints that keep them away from enjoying their rights. Though the sector is growing rapidly, there are no



work contracts, social security, wage raises, paid leave or medical facilities for the workers. One major constraint is the financial crisis that follows every immediate job loss. Covid-19 and related crisis made these situation worse. It is a fact that domestic workers are still in the process of coming back, not yet fully recovered from it.

Their incomes have come down drastically within these 2 years, while the living expense in India has faced a serious hike. To aid this situation, TNDWWT provided seed money assistance to the domestic workers who were willing to help them earn additional income and thus improve their living standard. 22 domestic workers availed seed money assistance to start their small business.



**Elderly domestic workers:** Elderly domestic workers comprise a commendable part of the entire domestic workers' population in Tamil Nadu. Elderly domestic workers were kept aside and never given jobs after the pandemic outbreak. They are still unemployed, left with no income. Some of the elderly domestic workers took seed money assistance and started small business which could earn them income for living. TNDWWT ensures their participation in all its training and events. Elderly domestic workers engage in doing small scale business like roadside tea shops, textile shops, snacks shops, vegetable and selling Idli -dosa batter door to door.

**Networking:** Effective Networking with various likeminded organizations through the project has enabled the network groups to contribute and share their skills, expertise, time or other



resources in a sustainable manner. One network meeting has been conducted with like-minded CSOs and Trade Unions. During the meeting, a discussion upon the draft of the new minimum wages was done.

Ensured participation in 47 network meetings, demonstrations and advocacy related meetings



with like-minded organizations such as Unorganized Workers' Federation which comprises of 170+ trade unions and CSOs. Tamil Nadu Habitat Development Board, Action Aid etc. The network programs mainly involved various consultations, trainings, demonstrations, workshops, policy discussions, capacity building programs, campaigns etc.

**Meeting Members of legislative assemblies and Members of parliament:** TNDWWT in its way of advocacy approached and submitted the memorandum of demands to the elected representatives of the state. 45 members of legislative assembly and 5 members of parliaments were met during the year. Apart from this, TNDWWT has represented the domestic workers while meeting the representatives of Labour department.



- **Important Events observed:**

**The International Domestic Workers' Day**

The International Domestic Workers' Day has been commemorated at Perumbakkam and about 928 Domestic Workers participated in the awareness meeting. Various dignitaries such as Thiru S. Aravind Ramesh Member of Legislative Assembly, Sholinganallur constituency, Thiru. J.A. Nirmal Raj Chief Community Development Officer, Tamil Nadu Habitat Development Board, Thiru. Siva Sankar Executive Engineer, Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board, Tmt. Geetha, Advisor, Unorganized Workers Federation participated and discussed upon the issues of Domestic Workers and the measure the government has taken to address the issues of the vulnerable.



In order to commemorate the International Domestic Workers' Day, Hall meetings were conducted in the Chennai, and Padappai. Demonstrations were Dindigul, Salem and Tuticorin. About 1180 participated in the hall meetings conducted in Chennai and Padappai. Various dignitaries from the government of Tamil Nadu present at hall meetings are as follows:

Chennai: Ms. Geetha Jeevan P Minister for Social Welfare and Women Empowerment, Government of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Kalanidhi Veeraswamy, Member of the Parliament, Lok Sabha, North Chennai, Dr. Ezhilan Naganathan Member of Legislative Assembly Thousand Lights, Chennai, Dr. A. DiviaNathan Joint Commissioner of Labour/ Chief Executive Officer/ Secretary, Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Welfare Board, Mrs. Geetha, Advisor- Unorganized Workers' Federation, Ms Clarammal, Coordinator-NDWM and Sr. Josephine Amala Valarmathi Chief Functionary, TNDWWT.



### **Decent work day**

Perumbakkam: Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare trust conducted Decent work day awareness programme at Perumbakkam. Dignitaries like Dr. Thamizhachi Thangapandian- Member of Parliament, Thiru. Aravind Ramesh –Member of legislative assembly, Mrs. Sherin Bosco, project head of 181 women helpline. The whole programme was organized by domestic workers. Petition comprising the local issues were submitted to the higher authorities. Consolidated demands of Domestic workers were submitted the same day. The authorities there took time to discuss the issues faced by domestic workers there. Around 657 domestic workers participated in the event.





Kannagi nagar: 505 DWs have participated in decent work day awareness campaign that was held at Kannagi Nagar. Dr. Thiru Thol. Thirumavalavan- Member of Parliament, Ms. Geetha Ramakrishnan – Advisor from Unorganized Workers Federation, Mr. Arul: Media head from Unorganized Workers Federation took part in the event and spoke about the importance and the need of decent working conditions for domestic workers.



**Women's Day celebrations 2023:** On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023, HRF organized first convention for the single women. TNDWWT as network partner participated and chaired a panel where the single women domestic workers shared their issues and demands. Recommendations drawn from the consultation was submitted to honourable Minister Geetha Jeevan, minister for women and children. 40 organizations representative participated in the event.



Apart from the above program, TNDWWT organized a rally at Perumbakkam. About 300 Domestic Workers took part in the event and showed solidarity towards the International Women's Day. D

Mr. Darwin Moses from Slum Clearance Board inaugurated the event. He spoke out the rights of women and their contribution to the society. During the rally the participants chanted slogans on the need stop child marriage and any other form of violence against women



**16 days campaign against gender based violence:** TNDWWT joined hands with the global 16 days of campaigning against gender based violence. Domestic workers and children of domestic workers together took part in the 16 days of activities which included-human chain, movie evening, auto rickshaw campaign, signature campaign, Kolam art expo, poster making, mental health advice, street play and awareness walk were conducted.





### **International Human Rights Day**

Tamil Nadu domestic workers' welfare trust organized the International Human rights day with the domestic workers of Perumbakkam, and Kannagi nagar on 15th of December. Thiru. Justice S. Baskaran, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission, Tmt. A.S Kumari Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women, Thiru. S. Aravind Ramesh, Member of Legislative Assembly, Thiru. A. Divianathan, Joint commissioners of labour/ chief executive officer/Secretary, Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Welfare Board etc. were the guests for the day. 1007 domestic workers gathered for the event. on the same occasion, a research report on the domestic workers' current status of Minimum Wages and Occupational Health and Safety was released along with the posters on human rights violations faced by domestic workers.





### Other events:

**International day for the elderly:** Tamil Nadu domestic workers welfare trust observed International day for the older persons with the elderly domestic workers of Perumbakkam. Around 65 elderly domestic workers gathered for the vent, the event was entirely about the elderly. They organised cultural programmes and discussion sessions. The elderly women gathered were given opportunities to recollect and share with the gatherings their happiest moments in life. They were also engaged in discussions about their problems in day to day life. The programme started by 3:00 pm in the afternoon and ended by 6:00 pm. the programme received great feedbacks from the elderly.



## Consultations:

### *State Consultation on the State Legislation for the Domestic Workers*

A State level convention was organised by Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust in collaboration with, Chennai on 17th September 2022 at Loyola College of education, Chennai. About 300 Domestic Workers participated in the event. The event was inaugurated by the Honourable Justice, the Chairperson of State Human Rights Commission Tamil Nadu and the Chairperson of State Women's Commission. According to Justice S. Bhaskaran, Tamil Nadu state human rights commission, the special legislation needs to address several issues that are being faced by domestic workers.



He mentioned that the State Women's commission would stand along with TNDWWT, provide the fullest support and would recommend to the government upon the need for separate state legislation for domestic Workers. AS Kumari, chairperson of the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women said that though 97 percent of domestic workers are women, they are unaware of their rights and the laws to protect women. She further noted that TN State Commission for Women will also support and recommend the government to bring a law for the welfare and protection of domestic workers. A Domestic worker representative



was given space to share their issues among the gathering. Following the inauguration, a panel discussion upon five different topics with an amazing set of speakers;

***Constitution day and Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Constitutional Protection for Domestic Workers:***

Following the State consultation, TNDWWT felt the utmost need to have a Multi-stake holders meeting that involved MLAs, MPs, government officials, Press, CSO partners, Trade Unions, Academic Professionals, and Domestic Workers. The meeting acted as a platform to intensify the need for a separate legislation. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the State Human Rights Commission Tamil Nadu in which about 180 individuals participated in the program that began with an inaugural session presided over by Thiru. M. Appavu, Honorable Speaker, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, Thiru. A.K.S. Vijayan, Hon'ble Spl. Representative to the Government. of Tamil Nadu at New Delhi, Thiru. R. Shanmugasundaram, Advocate General, Government of Tamil Nadu, *Mr. Justice S. Baskaran*, Chair Person, Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission *Ms. A.S Kumari*, and Chair Person, Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women. Following this a panel discussion was conducted upon various topics such as:

- The Role of the Domestic Workers in Economic growth of Tamil Nadu
- Constitutional Rights and making Social Protection a reality for Domestic Workers
- The Role of the Legislators in ensuring the Decent Living and Decent working condition for the Domestic Workers
- Issues of the domestic workers at work place and the need for protection
- International Perspective for evolving State Legislation for Domestic Workers



***State level consultation on Right to Decent Living Income, Decent work and Social protection for domestic workers***



One State level consultation on the topic Right to Decent Living Income, Decent work and Social protection for domestic workers was conducted. About 419 domestic workers participated in the consultation. The consultation began with an inauguration which was presided by Dr. Prof. M. H. Jawahirullah, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Papanasam, Thiru. M. Shanmugam, Member of

Parliament, Rajya Sabha, General Secretary of Labour Progressive Federation. Unorganized sector welfare board, Ms. A.S Kumari, Chair Person, Tamil Nadu State Commission for



Women and Dr. A. Divyanathan, Joint Commissioner of Labour/ Chief Executive Officer/ Secretary, Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Welfare Board. Following the inauguration, a panel discussion was conducted which was moderated by Adv. David Sunder Singh, Advocate - Tamil Nadu commission for child rights, Chennai. The Panellists included: Ms. Geetha Ramakrishnan, Adviser, Unorganized Workers Federation who spoke upon Decent Working conditions, Ms. Esther Mariselvam, Director, ActionAid Association who spoke upon Social protection for domestic Workers, Sr. Clarammal, Coordinator, National Domestic Workers' Movement who spoke upon Decent Living Wage for domestic Workers An experience sharing session was done by 3 Domestic Worker leaders, Mrs. Babi, Domestic Worker & Leader, Mrs. Sumathi, Domestic Worker & Leader, and Mrs. Kalai, Domestic Worker & Leader. Recommendations were drafted based on the inputs from the consultation.



**State Level Consultation- Drafting State Legislation for Domestic Workers:** A state level consultation was organised by Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare trust on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The programme started with the welcome address by Ms. Clarammal P. She briefed the purpose of the consultation. Various dignitaries like Dr. Virgil D' Sami, Sr. Escaline Miranda, Mrs. Geetha Ramakrishnan, Mrs. A.S Kumari, spoke on the issues and needs for separate legislation for Domestic Workers. Following the remarks from the dignitaries Mrs. Esther Mariaselvam moderated the second session. Dr. Sophy Joseph presented on the Essence of the Delhi Bill, Adv. David Sunder Singh presented on the Essence of the Kerala Bill and Dr. Neha Wadhawan presented about the International Perspective for Domestic Workers bill. As an outcome of this consultation the members were clear about- what are the elements that should be covered in the new Tamil Nadu bill. As a next step a drafting committee was to be formed. Comprising of 6 members.



#### **Major studies carried out:**

A study report was prepared on the current status of Minimum Wages and Occupational Health and Safety of Domestic Workers in Chennai, Kannagi Nagar, Perumbakkam, Chemmenchery and Padappai covers a wide range of issues faced by domestic workers in their workplace. This study was done among the domestic workers belonging to Chennai, Kanchipuram, and Chengalpattu districts of Tamil Nadu. They were interviewed and their responses were collected through surveys. A total of 582 domestic workers were surveyed and 25 domestic workers were interviewed for the study. The responses show that- A commendable number of respondents are widows, single women or women who are living on their own which implies that they themselves are the major source of income in their families. Every question amplified the voices of domestic workers as well as their families. The study concludes with the following recommendations:

- The study suggests the utmost need is to ensure provisions for weekly leave, annual leave, and maternity leave for the domestic workers. Ensuring these rights helps in achieving social justice.
- The study amplifies the need for social protection among domestic workers by incorporating them in various government schemes such as ESI etc.
- Discrimination and treating female domestic workers as inferior ones is an act of oppression that has to be dealt legally. Strengthening of legal framework to prevent

such instances is future. A Local complaint committee should give priority to the women in informal workforce considering their vulnerability and lack of protection.

- Government should ensure that domestic workers have enough access to job and take necessary measures to address sudden job loss.
- The study recommends the government to consider the models of countries which pioneer in protecting the domestic workers through specific policies and laws.
- Government should ensure that the benefits provided for domestic workers are reaching them. For instance, Rs.2000 which was provided for them during the times of COVID -19 has not reached more than 40% of domestic workers.
- The registration and welfare schemes provided for the domestic workers should be simplified as most of the domestic workers are illiterate. Additionally, the eviction and related migration has left them with complex documents that requires a lot of time and efforts to be worked on-which would be impossible for elderly and illiterate category of domestic workers. This complex system existing hinders the domestic workers to register themselves in the unorganised sector welfare board and avail the deserved benefits.
- Government should ensure a good healthy environment for domestic workers, by implementing and mandating Occupational Health and Safety equipment and measures.
- There is an utmost need to ensure the social security of domestic workers by mandating the Employees' State Insurance.
- The study emphasizes the need for Increasing the Minimum Wages of domestic workers from Rs. 37.50 to Rs. 100 or above.
- Elderly domestic workers are the most struggling community; they still have to work due to the insufficient income. In this context, increasing their pension amount from 1000 to 3000 can be beneficial.
- The study emphasises a strong need for a separate legislation for the domestic workers and the utmost need to ratify the ILO Convention 189 which would solve most of the issues faced by the domestic workers.

- **Case studies:**

[From a trainee to a Trainer- Pushpa's journey of empowerment](#)

Pushpa is a senior domestic worker who lives in Perumbakkam. She is also a victim of forced eviction and related poverty. She was evicted from Chetpet and relocated to Perumbakkam. Now she is living in Perumbakkam. Being an active member of TNDWWT and its activities, she never fails to be there in the meetings and trainings. Pushpa is also known for her cooking skills, for which she is proud for herself.



*“I always wanted to start a hotel of my own. With the little earnings I had, I used to buy vessels and plates that would look good in my hotel. But, I couldn’t make into it as I was restricted by my husband. Later after his time, I had the responsibility to look after my family. When all these problems got sorted my children did not want me to start a hotel. I kept working the same way I used to till now. After going around as a teacher, I started pulling out my plates-now I take it with me for my trainings”*

Pushpa who was an active participant of masala making trainings is now a Masala making skill-trainer. She initially trained the people of her area- Perumbakkam and later started being a trainer for several other places in Chennai. Initially she was accompanied by someone to go places but now she moves to places on her own. She has grown more confident to talk out her mind than ever before. *“I enjoy trying more masalas at home, selling it getting feedbacks on it and then teach it to my fellow mates.”*

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### **Floor meetings to National Leadership**

Baby is a single mother who found herself in a difficult situation of tending to the needs of the family, raising her two children. Her husband Som Samuel passed away a few years ago. She has 2 children one boy and one girl .The girl is married and she stays with her husband. Baby and her family were forcefully evicted from her home place and were made to relocate to Slum clearance board colony located in the very end of Chennai. She now lives in Perumbakkam Slum clearance board colony.

She has her son along with her. Both of them are the only ones in their home. Moving to Perumbakkam was a really hard task for her and her family. But being the only provider and guardian, she had to work extra hard. She travelled all around Chennai to work and get a decent pay. She became a prodigy in saving money and investing them. Later, being a part of the domestic workers collectives, she excelled in numerous fields. She grew as a person. Got trainings, developed skills, became a very effective leader and resourceful person baby never failed to take part in the capacity buildings and trainings provided. From the neighbourhood leadership baby dealt with step by step progress in the field of domestic work and leaderships.

She dances her heart out and never fails to talk as clear as water. Baby was appreciated in all levels. Recently she was elected as the national level leader for the National domestic workers movement. Baby still excels in her own way.

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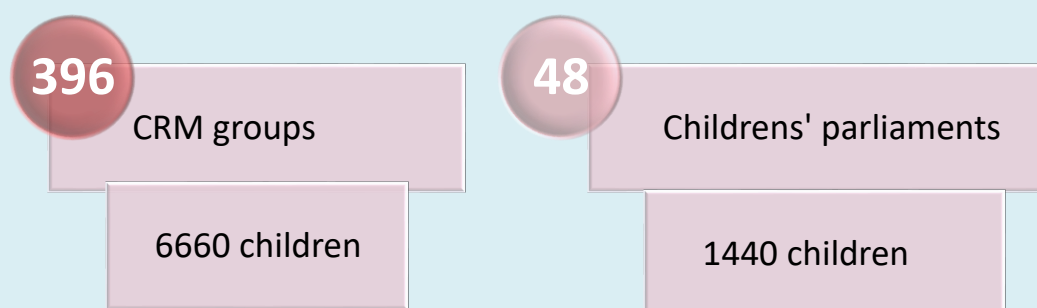
## CHILDREN

TNDWWT has been working with the children of domestic workers for some years. It is engaging with these children by providing them Right-based education, organising them and enabling them to take up active roles for their familial and societal welfares. They are formed as collectives in their neighbourhoods.

**Child rights movement:** Child rights movement (CRM) is a significant part of TNDWWT as it engages with the education and empowerment of the younger generations. The organisations through its activities help the children of domestic workers to grow up in a right and just society by knowing their rights. They are also motivated to get in touch with their community and take up the right violations and issues from their community. CRM members represent themselves in platforms like Gram Sabha to amplify the issues in the community. Today, TNDWWT has 396 CRM groups with 6660 children.



**Children's parliament:** Children's parliament is the very new initiative of TNDWWT. The idea of organising the CRM members of each areas into children's parliaments comprising of 30 members each, started from November 2022. It follows sociocratic mode of election and functioning. According to this, each child in the Children's parliament would be assigned as ministers in a parliament which creates a sense of equality and great responsibility. TNDWWT is still in the formation stage of these parliaments. As of now, 48 children's parliaments have been formed comprising of 1440 children.





**Study centres:** In order to help the vulnerable children, get access to quality education and help them improve in their academics, 25 tuition evening tuition centres is been successfully running in Chennai and Villupuram district in the following places:

- ✓ Choolaimedu-1
- ✓ Kannagi Nagar-2
- ✓ Perumbakkam-3
- ✓ Valasaravakkam-1
- ✓ Mylapore-2
- ✓ Vyasarpadi-1
- ✓ R K Puram-1
- ✓ Pushpa Nagar-1
- ✓ Semmenjeri-1
- ✓ Thomas Road-2
- ✓ Padappai-4
- ✓ Villupuram-6



About 728 children have been actively engaging in these centres. The average and below average children are being given extra attention. And their progress has been recorded through an evaluation sheet. Apart from this frequent meeting for the parents are conducted to involve the parents their children's studies.



Sl.No	Issues addressed	Action taken	Impact created
1.	Dengue awareness and petitioning	During the CRM meeting, awareness cum discussion was held where the problem caused by sewage water stagnated in	With the initiative taken by the children the government officials have cleaned the roads that were affected by stagnated

		roads and unclosed septic tanks. Following which a petition signed by 44 children was submitted to the Panchayat President.	sewage water and septic tanks as well.
2.	Child Marriage awareness	Awareness upon child marriage was created among the children of Villupuram. A petition was submitted to MLA Manikandan regarding the issue of Child Marriage.	With no proper response from the government, the CRM children have initiated to have a close watch upon the child marriage atrocities in their respective villages. 6 cases have been reported to the Child line officials and police officials.
3.	Awareness on Trafficking and Child Labour	Awareness upon trafficking for child labour was created among the children of CRM in Villupuram and Chennai. The children were informed about the harmful effects of child labour. A street play was put down by the children of Villupuram depicting the same.	As a result of the awareness and street play, 8 parents have started sending their children to school, thereby disrupting child labour.
4.	Awareness on Plastic waste	The CRM children were given awareness upon the harmful effects of plastic waste during the meeting.	As a result of the awareness created the children themselves initiated and created awareness among the villagers upon plastic waste and the proper ways to segregate waste.
5.	Road facility	The children of CRM submitted a petition requesting the need for a land bridge in their village to the Panchayat leaders.	As a result of this, the panchayat leaders have approached the respective MLA. The action to construct the bridge is still in progress.



6.	Eviction	The CRM children of Chennai have been facing the issue of forced eviction done by the government. The children have discussed upon it during the meeting.	As a result of this discussion, the children have given petitions requesting the government to stop the eviction process to the respective councillor and MLAs.
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- **Important events observed**

### Children's day

Children's day 2022 was observed in various fields like Chennai, Perumbakkam, Kannagi Nagar. Around 250 children participated from Perumbakkam and 102 children participated



from Padappai. Following a brief formal session, the stage was open for the children to perform the cultural activities in all the areas. Apart from this, the whole program was planned, organized and implemented by the Child Rights Movement (CRM) members. CRM members of Chennai and Kannagi nagar conducted a rallies on the occasion by saying aloud their rights. Face paintings were done on their faces in order to get attention. They marched along the streets of their locality chanting the slogans and rights. Around 250 children of Perumbakkam- Semmancheri gathered for the event. A panel of MCC alumni including Mr. Timothy- Child development Worker and an NGO consultant, Narendran- Dean/ secretary SRM college, Jacob- Assistant Headmaster, Njanodaya Hr. Sec. School, etc. were the other guests with us on the special day. Children made performances like Gymnastics, Silambam, parai, mime, theme dances, drama, awareness songs, speeches and several such cultural programs. The program started at 3:00 PM and ended by 7:15 PM. Several problems faced by children of the urban poor was discussed on the same day. Chief guests offered scholarship



support for children who are dropouts from Perumbakkam Semmancheri area and gave the CRM members the responsibility to identify the school dropouts in the area. As per this, one child was identified and reported- parents of the child were given advice on and prepared to admit the child in the school.

**Day of hope- 2023:** The Day of Hope program was observed in Loyola College, Chennai on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023. CRM Children from Chennai, Perumbakkam, Kannagi nagar, Padappai gathered for the big event. Around 424 children were actively participated in the event. Children from different district have displayed their chart work related to child rights and other charts related child labour, child marriage, etc. The program was presided over by Mr. Vishnu Dayal, Dr. Shilpa from Rotary Club, Mr. Gnana Sekar from Children's Parliament, Sr. Escaline and Sr. Clara the trustees of TNDWWT. Following this the children performed various cultural events such as Dance, Villu paattu, Silambattam, Skit and Mime. The Day of Hope has shown a positive impact by promoting child rights, child parliament and paved a way for the children to display or showcase their talents and skills.



**Anti-child Labour Day:** A human chain was organized in Besant nagar, Chennai on the occasion of World day against Child labour. about 500 children participated in the awareness program and showed their solidarity. Hon'ble Minister of School Education Mr. Anbil Mahesh Poiyamozhi inaugurated the event and addressed the gathering. Following this, the founder of Viduthalai Siruthai Party and Member of the Parliament Chidambaram constituency Dr. Thol Thirumavalavan; Mr. Asan Maulana, Member of the Legislative Assembly- Velachery constituency, Ms. Geetha Advisor- Federation of Unorganized Workers Federation. and Mrs. Virgil Di Sami- Director of Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working Children took part in the event and delivered their speech.

The following were the demands raised by members of the Child Rights Movement:



- Educational Institution is a place where children under the age of 18 should be. The government should declare as its policy that it is the duty of the government to bring children outside the educational institutions into the educational environment.
- Action must be taken to prevent the formation of child labour and to be a child labour free state.
- The government should take action only after ensuring the education and safety of children, before relocating urban slum dwellers.
- Steps should be taken to provide quality education to children in all schools of Tamil Nadu.
- Increase in scholarships for the children of domestic workers in welfare boards.
- Allocate more funds for child education and child protection.
- The government should soon impose severe punishment on those who engage in acts such as child sexual abuse children and especially for girl children.
- The minimum wage set by the previous government for the domestic worker parents of these children should be reconsidered and fixed at Rs.80 per hour based on today's economy.
- Establish Child Protection Commission and State Child Organization to ensure continuous monitoring of children who were relocated.



#### • Other events:

**International Girl Child Day:** The International Girl Child Day was celebrated on 11th October 2022 with the CRM members. A cultural program was conducted by the children where the children gracefully danced and expressed their enthusiasm. Following this the children had a discussion on “Stain the stigma: creating safe spaces to talk PERIODS” the

importance of girl child in the society, and the need for their education were discussed. About 55 children participated in this area level initiative. An oath was taken on the occasion to say aloud that they themselves will be the safe places for each other's, that they will share with their family and friends about their concerns and learnings on their body and to be proud for whatever they are.



**Sports Day:** Sports day was conducted on 9th of August prior to the Independence day for the CRM children of Perumbakkam and Chemmanchery. Various sports events were conducted such as: Running race , Musical chair, Murukku-game, Skipping competition, Sack race, Slow cycle race, Kho-Kho, Filling the bottle, Tug of War







**Independence Day:** TNDWWT along with Child Rights Movement (CRM) members celebrated the 75th Independence Day of India. The programme was fully planned and



organized by CRM member, where TNDWWT and staff provided all the background support. Mr. Pushpa (Assistant Manager of Union Bank of India, Tambaram branch) addressed the audience about the educational support provided by banks and the freedom educational brings. Sr. Josephine Amala Valarmathi from Tamil Nadu domestic Workers' Welfare Trust spoke about the

freedom from addictions and a safer Perumbakkam people want. Mr. Darwin Mosses, project coordinator of Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat development board greeted the guest and audience gathered. Dr. Ram Kumar, managing director of A4 Hospital, hosted the flag and made the key note address of the day. Various cultural performances were made by the children of CRM. All the guests gathered were honoured with a momentum. Prize distribution was conducted where the results of sports and such competitions were declared and honoured. Certificate and medal were distributed to the winners and participants of the competitions. Following the official function, a rally was conducted to spread the message of anti- narcotics and drug abuse



### Case studies:

March 2022 when Chennai was in its hottest weather, Tamil Selvi and her friends who were the 10<sup>th</sup> standard students of an established government girls high school in Chennai took a step for

the whole school. The school had a fully developed toilet, but there were no facilities to wash. They did not have any proper arrangements or water supply. This created a situation where the toilet stank all time. Children never wanted to go to the school toilet. They controlled their urge to go to toilet. Many of them struggled during the menstrual cycle and many of them developed urinary infections. To put an end to this, Tamil Selvi and her friends took an effort to convey this inconvenience to their class teacher. She did not find this issue as a serious issue and just ignored. They shared this issue with other teachers as well, which did not create any specific change. Nobody actually heard their issue or found it serious.

During this situation, the CRM members including Tamil Selvi took a stand against this. They decided to take leave prior information. A disciplinary action was taken by presenting their absence to the principal. The school principal contacted the students' parents- while all the three students said about their problems, their efforts presenting it to teachers, and the ignorance from the part of teachers while presenting the issues. They talked to the principal and got the assurance to repair the mechanism and make available water supply to the toilets. Within a week, water supply was restored in the school toilets. They received a lot of appreciation from their friends who were benefited from the action. "we were sure that if we take leave, it reaches the principal faster than when we ask our needs."-says Tamil Selvi. They shared the incident with the field staff with immense pride.

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Jeevan is an eighth standard student, resident of T. Nagar Sarankapani Street. His father Mr Elumalai is a daily wage labourer and mother Mrs. Mahalakshmi is a domestic worker. He has 1 sister who is in class 3. His family is financially weak as the salary earned by the parents is hardly sufficient to run the family. Jeevan is a below average student. He could not read basic sentences in school and he had no guidance to deal with this problem as his parents were illiterate.

Later Jeevan joined the CRM movement a year back and started coming to tuition centres regularly. Gradually Jeevan started to improve in his studies. With the coaching that his tuition teacher has been giving he has been able to read fluently. His mother says she could see a big difference in her son's studies after joining the tuition centre. Jeevan's class teacher often complains to his parents about his studies during the PTA meetings, but the teacher has also started giving positive feedbacks. He never skips any of his classes and is very punctual in submitting all his assignments. Not only his studies, but unlike before he is now very disciplined and shows respect towards others. The intervention done by the organization through the grant has transformed Jeevan into a student with an undeniable passion and thirst for learning.

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## **Initiatives to stop child marriage**

Child Marriage has been a critical problem in the villages of Villupuram district. Due to the lower literacy rate, poverty and lack of awareness among the people, girl children are being forced to marry at a very young age. Covid-19 having a bigger impact on societal life, violations of child-marriages was very prevalent. The children of CRM have been actively engaging in monitoring the child marriage atrocities happening in and around their community in Villupuram district.

On 7th September 2022, the CRM children of Pugaipatti identified a child marriage that was happening in the village. The groom Mr Satish who is 22 years old was getting married to a child who is 17 years old. In order to prevent this marriage, the children called up the Child line number 1098, the children also informed the Village Officer, the Thasildhar and the police of the respective areas. Despite this initiative the



children nor the officials were unable to stop the marriage. But both the bride and groom's parents were taken to the Thasildhar's office and were warned about the issue. They agreed to do what the officials advised. The girl child has been taken into custody and has been sent to Villupuram Child Care Centre and will be sent back to her family only after she becomes 18 years old. The groom Mr. Satish has been arrested and sent to Cuddalore Jail.

**Networking:** TNDWWT was able to collaborate and connect with Tamil Nadu Child rights Watch (TNCRW), Arunodhaya centre for street and working children, Thozhamai, Action Aid, Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat development board, police department, Directorate of Vigilance and anti-corruption, Information and resource centre for urban communities (IRCDUC) etc. and such like-minded organisations working in the field.

## **MIGRANTS**

**Awareness raising and Pre-Migration Training:** TNDWWT through its activities Covered about 4,066 with various services provided during the course of the project. About 19 groups with 343 members have been actively involved in discussing the issues of migration in their villages. 156 Awareness meetings have been conducted through which 2,238 individuals have been sensitized upon the issues faced by migrants in the different levels of migration. TNDWWT provided 12 Pre- Migration trainings to 322 prospective migrants. During the training the workers were trained upon safe migration process issues faced by migrants abroad, issues caused by fake agents, what should be done during crisis situation etc. The people who

participated in these programs have expressed that the session were informative and will help them identify and prevent any such scenarios.



**Legal assistance:** TNDWWT in the year 2022 has 19 filed cases as individual and group cases in the MADAD regarding various issues faced by the migrant workers. With a total number of 33 migrant workers TNDWWT has helped 21 of the workers/their families. The cases majorly involved repatriation and bringing back mortal remains of the worker.

The issue of being cheated by unauthorized agents has been one of the prime reasons why migrants face issues at the destination country. TNDWWT has helped migrants by filing cases on unauthorized agents. About 13 migrant workers who were cheated by unauthorized agents/agencies were identified and have been assisted to file police cases. Apart from this TNDWWT has also assisted prospective migrants in identifying if their job agreement is original. Through these 120 prospective migrants were assisted in this directly and indirectly.

**Networking:** TNDWWT during the year could collaborate and extend its network with various government departments like Commission for rehabilitation and welfare of Non-resident Tamil, Public department, Networks like Migrant rights coalition and various organisation like Migrant Forum Asia, Jesuit migrant services, Jesuit migrant ministry external (JMMEX)





- **Important events:**

**May Day campaign:** 180 migrant workers have participated in an awareness campaign that has been conducted to commemorate May Day. Thiru Navaskani, Member of Parliament of Ramnad, Thiru Ramesh, Assistant Director of Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non-Resident Tamils and various other government officials were the dignitaries. During the program various issues concerning international migrants were discussed. About 86 petitions from the participants were given to the dignitaries.



### **International Migrants Day Programme**

**Thondi:** About 387 migrant workers took part in the International Migrants Day program that was held at Thondi, Ramanathapuram Thiru. Gingee K.S Masthan Hon'ble minister, Minorities welfare, Non-Resident Tamils and Refugees, Thiru. K. Ramesh, Deputy director-Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and welfare of Non-resident Tamils, Fr. S. Britto, SMSSS, Sr. Clarammal, Coordinator- National Domestic Workers Movement and Sr. Josephine Amala Valarmathi, Chief Functionary- Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust presided over the program.



The IMD program focused on the main theme of Wage Theft among migrant workers and the after math of the issue. A memorandum was submitted to the dignitaries upon the



same requesting to bring in stringent measures to retrieve the stolen wages of migrant workers.



Villupuram: Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust and Jesuit Migrants Ministry External (JMMEx) commemorated the International Migrant Workers Day on 22nd December 2022 at Anantha Mahal- Villupuram district. The event began with welcoming of the Thamizh Thai Vaazhthu. Fr. Velankanni, JMMEX, Fr. Jebamalai Raja SJ, Provincial Jesuit Chennai Province, and Sr. Josephine Amala Valarmathi, Chief functionary, TNDWWT talked about the migrants issues they have gone through while working with them. Special emphasis was given to the scam by the agents.



Thiru. Gingee K.S Masthan- Hon'ble minister, Minorities welfare, Non-Resident Tamils and Refugees was the chief guest for the event. The minister spoke upon the various initiatives of the government for the people like free bus facilities provided for women etc. He further mentioned about the economic condition of the state comparing it with the overall economic condition of the country and asked the people

to be informed about the situation of the country as the economic situation of the country affects every individual and as a result they are forced to migrate. He mentioned about the Welfare Board of the Migrants that has been newly launched and asked the migrants and the families present to make use of it. He promised to look up to the issues of the migrants and resolve it. Ms. Kalaiselvi from JMMEx addressed the gathering with the list of demands for the welfare of the workers. The session was followed by cultural events on the migrants.



### ***State consultation on pre-departure and fair recruitment process for Indian labour migrants to Middle East***

The state level consultation for Indian labour migrants was held on 23rd Sept 2022 in Ramanathapuram. The programme was flagged off with an Inaugural anthem by JMMEX team; it gave voice to the hardships of every migrant labourer. Following this, Sr. Josephine Amala Valarmathi, Chief Functionary of TNDWWT described the perspective of the consultation. She detailed the problems and issues faced by the migrants in recent years. Mr. Johnny Tom Varghese, I.A.S, district collector Ramanathapuram was the special guest



for the event. He addressed the audience and ensured support for the future recommendations that arise from the consultation. He assured the audience that any violations of the rights can be brought to his notice, and those would be acknowledged. A guarantee from the collector was received with regards to the

lobbying with the government regarding migrant issues. Key note address delivered by Ms. Jacintha Lazarus I.A.S, Commissioner, Commission for rehabilitation and welfare of non-resident Tamils was a great influence to the people, press and like-minded people gathered. She added the following points that Agencies working in the field of immigration should be brought under a board and should be registered. One-day training should be arranged for the migrant labourers before departure. Every migrant should undergo a pre-departure training in their own districts. All migrants should be aware of the support government provides before and after migration.



### ***Multi-stakeholders meeting on the issues of Tamil Nadu Migrants***

Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare Trust in collaboration with the Commissionerate of the Welfare of the Non- Resident Tamil- Government of Tamil Nadu organized a Stakeholders



meeting on the issues of Tamil Nadu Migrants on 9th November 2022 at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai. About dignitaries from the state and union government,

PA's & GA's from various district collectorate offices, Authorized Recruitment Agencies, and Civil Society Organizations participated in the meeting. The meeting began with an inaugural session which was presided over by Thiru. Gingee K.S. Masthan- The Hon'ble Minister, Minorities Welfare, Non-Resident Tamils Welfare & Refugees, Tmt. Jacintha Lazarus I.A.S. Commissioner, Welfare of Non- Resident Tamils, Dr. M. Venkatachalam I.F.S.- Head of Branch Secretariat & POE, Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, Dr. D. Jagannathan I.A.S. - Secretary to Government, Public & Rehabilitation Dept and Sr. Valarmathi I.C.M- Chief Functionary, Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare Trust. Following this three panel discussion were carried out upon the following topics.

- Safe Migration and Fair & Ethical Recruitment
- Problems faced by Migrants & Legal Solutions available.
- Welfare Measures & Interventions by the Government

### ***Stake holders' consultation on Migrant workers' rights and protection:***

A Multi- Stake holders meeting was organized by Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 in the State Human Rights Commission Auditorium,





Chennai. Ms Clarammal delivered the welcome address welcoming Hon'ble Thiru. Justice S. Baskaran, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission, Hon'ble Ms. A.S Kumari, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women, Sr. Escaline ICM, Trustee, Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust. Sr Valarmathi delivered the perspective of the meeting. The first panel discussion with the topic on Migrant Workers Rights and Protection, with the moderator Hon'ble Thiru. Justice Raja Elango, Member, State Human Rights Commission, Tamil Nadu with three key speakers: Ambassador K P Fabian, Professor Symbiosis University and Indian Society of International Law, Venkatachalam, IFS, Head of Branch Secretariat & Protector of Emigrants, Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, Ms. Sumitha Shaanthini Kishna, Director Our Journey, - Malaysia. The second panel was moderated by Hon'ble Thiru. V. Kannadasan, Member, State Human Rights Commission, Tamil Nadu with the following panellists. Dr. Irudayarajan, Chair, International Institute of Migration and Development, Trivandrum, Kerala, Dr. Bernard D' Sami, LISSTAR, Loyola College, Chennai, Dr. Neha Wadhawan, National Project Coordinator, Work in Freedom Programme, International Labour Organization, Mr. Rejimon Kuttappan, Independent Journalist & Author of Undocumented.

**Major studies carried out:** TNDWWT conducted a Survey among 1506 persons from 46 villages who have been migrating to various countries. The number of identified migrant labourers who have migrated from 46 villages to the following countries:

Saudi Arabia – 363	Oman – 45
Dubai – 326	Kuwait – 21
Bahrain – 139	China – 4
Singapore – 98	Iran – 3
Malaysia – 91	Other countries – 362
Qatar – 54	

The survey data was analysed and interpreted with the following results. It was found that 85.39% of the surveyed labourers have not migrated through legally registered manpower agents. They mostly migrated with the help of their relatives, friends and

unregistered agents. 30.34% of the surveyed labourers have paid penalties to the authorities in the destination countries for their prolonged stay than the stipulated period. Out of all the fishermen surveyed, 92.31% migrated to the Gulf countries for fishing only with travel visas. After the expiry of their visa the workers had to hide to safeguard themselves from the authorities. All fishermen who have migrated to the Gulf countries did not have proper shelter and food. Besides, they did not have fixed salaries.



### **Case studies:**

Jayanthi is a 49 years old female who lives at MGR Nagar-Kodungaiyur, Chennai along with her husband and children. She has an elder son who is unemployed, middle 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 no-more able 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 wasn't able to take it anymore. She was mentally disrobed by the torture of the employer.

She made a complaint through NDWM and her petition was sent to Indian Embassy. With advice of us she wanted to escape from the work place and reach embassy. She somehow escaped and tried reach the Indian Embassy to ask for help but in the middle of the way she was stopped by police officials who questioned about what she was doing. 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 and it was hard to get it back from them. The employer filed an absconding case. The Indian embassy took effort 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 increased and her health became worse. 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. She is badly in need of a support for her and her family's survival. She needs to be supported for a sustainable livelihood. The financial aid to her will help to earn and feed her family. Mrs. Jayanthi is now on her way to start a new business for her living, she has shown keen interest towards starting up her own business. She expressed her opinion about setting up a mobile fruit shop. She has requested the organization to help her buy a tricycle.

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