

# SOCIAL AWARENESS SOCIETY FOR YOUTHS (SASY)



## ANNUAL REPORT



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## ***Foreword***

*It is my great pleasure to speak to you about the our journey of achieving the rights of equality of Dalits, Adivasis, Women and Children with human dignity by undertaking various efforts including Human Rights Monitoring, Adjudication, Campaign, Advocacy and Lobbying, engagements with the statutory commissions, Women Empowerment, Promoting women and Men federations for ensuring sustainable livelihood, small and medium size trade engagements, Entrepreneurship, Child Focus Community Development, capacity building training for elected representatives of local self-government, Advocates, Human Rights Defenders.*



*We are able to accomplish the positive outcomes with the great support of the staff team and solidarity groups who have collaborated with us and forming joint action initiatives in overall accomplishments of the tasks have designed.*

*I would deeply appreciate and extend my sincere gratitude to **Christian Aid - UK, Kindernothilfe - Germany, Indigo Foundation-Australia, Share- Australia, Fondation de France**, for their extensive and benevolent support and accompaniment in the past one year to accomplish the tasks and ensuring justice of the most marginalized communities.*

*I would greatly extend my sincere thanks to all the solidarity groups, networks, campaigns, collaborative initiatives and other likeminded groups for your continuous support and solidarity in all our efforts that motivated and very much supportive in our past one year journey towards achieving the right to equality, justice of Dalits, Adivasis, Women ,Children and other marginalized groups.*



# About SASY

Social Awareness Society for Youths is a Human Rights organization genesis in the year 1983 based in Tindivanam actively engaging in protection and promotion of the rights of Dalits, Adivasis, Women, Children and other marginalized communities in the state of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry through human rights monitoring, fact-finding mission, adjudications, lobbying and advocacy, networking by accompanying with human rights standards and other anti-discriminatory legislations. SASY effectively addressing the issue of poverty, marginalization and violence against Dalit and Adivasis women through promoting leadership, building Dalit women movements, economic empowerment by Social Impact Investments (SII) and entrepreneurships. SASY has been directly benefitted 634 children and 2057 families in 51 villages of Cuddalore district and indirectly benefitted around 6725706 members of Scheduled Castes in 4 districts namely Villupuram, Cuddalore, Tiruppur and Erode districts in the state of Tamil Nadu.

## **Dalits Situation – An Overview:**

The Dalit population is estimated around 3, 71, 89, 229 in the state of Tamil Nadu and 71.4% of the are lives under below poverty line (BPL). The Dalits who were considered as ‘outcastes’ being outside the Varna system, historically alienated from the main stream society, and considered as low, impure, and polluting on the basis of their birth and traditional occupations. Dalits are subjected to various forms of discriminations, deprivations, humiliations, harassments, atrocities and injustice. Traditionally they are forced to do menial and degrading labour and denied access to land and natural resources, denied wages or adequate wages and forced to work and live in degrading condition, outside the primary settlements of the so called upper caste Hindu communities. They are deprived of decent standard of living, denied education and excluded from participations in socio-economic-political-cultural spheres. They are kept under perpetual deprivations of basic human civil rights and customary rights, destroying their morale for generations. They are subjected to caste based discriminations, atrocities, social exclusions and violations of human rights.

**Article 17 of Indian Constitution**, “Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden The enforcement of any disability arising out of Untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law”

Article 7 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), “All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.” Despite these anti-discriminatory human rights standards the caste atrocities and discriminations against Dalits are rampant and widespread.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND ADVOCACY:**

**DALIT HUMAN RIGHTS – An initiative to ensure equality with human dignity of Dalit and Adivasis:**

### **FACT FINDING MISSIONS:**

The Dalit and Adivasis are subject to various forms of human rights violations, caste atrocities and social exclusions in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is obligatory to address these brutal forms of caste atrocities committed against Dalit and Adivasis in order to ensure their rights, justice with human dignity. The Criminal Justice System (CJS) is often insensitive and inadequate to respond to the incidents of caste atrocities and prevent the commission of atrocities. Awareness among Dalits and Adivasis concerning the legal mechanisms available to safeguard their rights and their ability to prevent commission of atrocities against them are inadequate. Totally 74 incidents of brutal forms of caste atrocities and social exclusions have been effectively addressed in the four districts of Tamil Nadu namely, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Erode and Tirupoor by undertaking fact finding missions, adjudication, media advocacy and engagements with the National and State statutory commissions to ensure the rights and justice of Dalit and Adivasis. The survivors of caste atrocities have been consoled and empowered through continuous support, handholding and accompaniment through the District Human

<b>Form of Atrocities</b>	<b>Villupuram</b>	<b>Cuddalore</b>	<b>Erode</b>	<b>Thirupur</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Murder</b>	3	3	2	1	7
<b>Attempt Murder</b>	1	1	-	-	2
<b>Rape</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Attempt Rape</b>	7	2	1	1	11
<b>Rape and Murder</b>	-	0	1	-	1
<b>Physical Assault</b>	4	1	4	2	11
<b>Mass Atrocity</b>	3	3	4	4	14
<b>Social Boycott</b>	-	-	2	-	2
<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	2	-	3	-	5
<b>Police Atrocity</b>	-	4	-	2	6
<b>Abet to Suicide</b>	3	2	-	-	5
<b>Corporal Punishment</b>	1	1	1	1	4
<b>Land Grabbing</b>	2	-	1	-	3
<b>Atrocity on Dalit Panchayat President</b>	2	-	-	-	2
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>74</b>

Rights Defenders (DHRD).

## **PROMOTING GROSS ROOT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS:**

Capacitating gross roots human rights defenders is one of the unique strategies to prevent caste atrocities against Dalit and Adivasis communities and sustain the human rights impacts in the gross roots. Totally 75 committed Dalit and Adivasis youths have been capacitated on human rights monitoring, fact finding missions, drafting complaints, legal intervention and strategical interventions. The trained gross roots human rights defenders are sensitive towards protection and promotion of human rights. This led to the sensitization of the media, other solidarity groups and people representatives towards the abject situation of the Dalits and mobilized the general public support for the Dalits and to redress their issues swiftly.

## **CAPACITATION INITIATIVES – Assertive Human Rights Defenders:**

Lack of knowledge about the various provisions of the Act and its importance is safe guarding the rights of Dalits and legal safeguards for the prevention of commission of atrocities were also some of the factors for the poor implementation of the Act. Totally 34 Vigilance and Monitoring Committee members; 123 Dalit Panchayat Presidents; and 126 Dalit advocates were capacitated and sensitized about the Act and its provisions. The Dalit Men and Women Self Help Groups and their Federations were given orientations on various central and state funded schemes, land rights, forest rights and other legal mechanisms, who in turn share their knowledge in their neighbourhood leading to greater empowerment of Dalits and Adivasis.

## **AWARD OF PUNISHMENTS AND COMPENSATION:**

Unlike in the past, the Criminal Administration System (CJS) is slowly restraining from the nexus and dis-associating themselves from the perpetrators fearing disciplinary & legal action and increased accountability, due to advocacy and legal intervention efforts. The effective advocacy efforts that lead to the arrest of 124 perpetrators in 34 incidents of caste atrocity. The exemplary legal intervention contributed speedy trial of 84 cases in Vilupuram Special Court and 19 cases awarded interim compensation as sum of Rs. 42, 23,750 to 102 survivors and dependents of caste atrocities and FIR has been registered in 55 cases of atrocities. The Survivors, witnesses and dependents of caste atrocities were given orientation on PoA Act and the new PoA Amendment Ordinance 2014, other state and national mechanisms that improved their confidence, sense of self respect, ability to protect and promote their rights as a unified force.

## **ENSURING RIGHTS OF THE CHILDREN:**

Violation of Children rights are on the rise. Corporal punishments, Sexual Abuse in Schools, caste based discrimination are frequently reported in the media. Child Rights are the special focus and engagement of child rights monitoring and legal intervention is always core activity. During the year 2013-14 nearly 21 brutal incidents of child rights violations have been effectively addressed and ensured the arrest of the accused.

The District Human Rights Defenders (DHRD) has constantly followed all the cases and provided care and support to the affected children. The children were given orientation on Child Rights, UN CRC, Complaint procedure and internal Child Protection Policy (CPP) implemented in the organisation.

## **ADVOCACY WITH THE STATUTORY COMMISSIONS: - Facilitating Access to Justice:**

Facilitating the efforts towards achieving justice is one of the key areas of adjudication. It is important to engage in advocacy with the statutory commissions to ensure fair investigation and prevent further sufferings of survivors, witnesses and dependents. 29 selective cases of caste atrocities and human rights violations have been represented to the commissions for seeking appropriate redressal. The persistent engagements with these commissions exert pressure on the state towards appropriate measures and protection and promotion of the human rights of Dalit and Adivasis.

## **REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL – POST 2015. [Marginalized & Discriminated Sections Dialogue].**

“Don’t Break Your Promises” – Wada Na Toda Abhiyan (WNTA) is a National Campaign to hold state accountability towards its promise to end poverty, Social Exclusions and Discriminations. A regional consultation was organised to consolidate the experiences and aspirations of Dalits, Adivasis, Women and other marginalized sections concerning MDG Post 2015 agenda. 30 participants from various sections like, Dalits, Women, Fishermen and Advasis participated and shared their understanding on MDG Goals, the schemes introduced by the Government to fulfil the goals, and their experiences on inclusion, exclusion in availing the benefits of those schemes. The participants expressed their views and concerns on policy changes and implementation to accommodate the interest of the marginalized sections.

## **LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS An initiative towards legislation and Policy Changes with the president of Hon’ble Sonia Gandhi, President, Indian National Congress Party.**



Since 2009, National coalition for strengthening SC/ST PoA Act, a consortium of nearly 500 Dalit and Adivasis organization, Human Rights Federations and Social Activists, working for the empowerment of Dalits, actively engaged in proposing and deliberating

amendments to the existing SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989. Due to the consistent efforts of the Dalit leaders both at the national and state level with the people representatives lead to bring the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Amendment Ordinance, 2014 was passed after duly signed by the President of India. The Passage of PoA Ordinance was a significant success

on the part of Dalit movements during the time when the anti-Dalit sentiments and Rhetoric's to repeal the Act were at its peak in some parts of India.

### **IMPORTANT FEATURES OF SC/ST PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 2014:**

Inclusion of new forms of atrocities; New section on the rights of the victims; Comprehensive listing about the duty of the government servants; formation of exclusive special courts are some of the special features of this Ordinance.

- **Inclusion of new forms of atrocities:** Garlanding with foot wear; tonsuring of head; removing moustaches; painting the face; election related atrocities; objection or intimidation to mounting on horses were also brought under purview of the ordinance. For the First time Forest Rights of Adivasis were brought under the purview of the ordinance and its deprivation will attract criminal proceedings and punishment. Dalit Panchayat Presidents and their struggles to perform their duty due to caste discrimination and dominance were recognized and any intimidation and obstruction will attract punishment under this ordinance. Manual Scavenging and Devadasi system were also brought under the purview of this ordinance, as most of the people engaged in manual scavenging and inducted into the devadasi system belongs to Dalit community. Poll related atrocities; Pre and post poll atrocities like social boycott, deprivation, discrimination and denial will leads to criminal implication under this Ordinance.
- **Duties of the Public Servant:** To read out the complaint given orally by the victims; Registration of the FIR under the appropriate sections of the PoA Act. Filing of Charge Sheet within 60 days; Furnishing a copy of an FIR are also some of the duties of the public servant brought under the purview of the act.
- **Special Court Formations and its Functioning:** Special Courts shall have the power to take cognizance of offences under this Ordinance; disposal of the cases within two months; Every appeal need to be disposed within three months. Formation of Special and Exclusive Special Courts are vividly mentioned in the Ordinance.
- **Rights of victims and witnesses:** This is the first Ordinance (Act) speaks about the rights of the victims and witnesses. It is mandatory for the state to provide protection to the victims, dependents and witnesses; Victims and Witnesses are entitled to receive information about the court proceedings; entitled to be heard in respect to bail, discharge, release, conviction, etc; Court should provide travelling and maintenance expenses; social and economic rehabilitation and relocation; to provide information about the rights of atrocity victims at the time of FIR registration; to update about the investigation process and victims have the right to take the assistance from the NGOs, Social Workers and Advocates.

## STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION ON SC/ST POA AMENDMENT ORDINANCE 2014.



As the SC/ST Amendment bill was not passed in the last parliament session, it was promulgated as an ordinance due to the consistent advocacy and lobbying efforts of Dalit Organizations since 2009. If the ordinance was not got passed in the next parliamentary session, it will become void at the end of 6 months. Hence an Action plan was evolved in the State level consultation held in Chennai on 23/03/2014, to engage in lobbying with the various political parties to seek support to pass the Ordinance in to an Act in the Next Parliamentary session.

### MEDIA ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC SENSITIZATION STRATEGIES:

#### Attack fallout: Vadakku Mangudi Dalits wish to move to a safer place

Special Correspondent

**CUDDALORE:** The residents of the Vadakku Mangudi Dalit colony in Kumaraichchi block near Chidambaram, where caste Hindus unleashed violence recently, are living in panic.

For the sake of safety and also for getting sustained livelihood, they want to move away from their traditional habitation and settle down at Koothankoil on the Chidambaram bypass road.

The Dalits shared these thoughts with a fact-finding committee of human rights forums that visited the place recently, according to A. Marx, president of the People's Union for Human Rights and G. Sugumaran, secretary, Federation for People's Rights.

They told reporters here that the Dalits were shaken to the core by the brutal attack carried out by the caste Hindus on their colony on the night of the polling day (April 24).

• The aged and infirm become sitting ducks to the assailants

• "Ever since the attack Vanniyars deny jobs to Dalits in farmlands"

While the young and the able-bodied ran away from the colony, the aged and infirm became sitting ducks to the assailants. It was learnt that a few days ago A. Palani (80) and S. Pappa (65), who sustained injuries, died in the hospital.

Over 30 houses were ransacked and two-wheelers and four-wheelers were damaged. Mr. Marx said that the Dalit habitation was surrounded by the houses of the majority Vanniyar community.

Though no such physical attack was made earlier on the Dalits they were subjected to discrimination of various forms; separate tumbler were kept at tea-shops, those wearing trousers were admonished, girls were taunted and were denied seats in bus-

es when the Vanniyars happened to be fellow passengers.

Ever since the trouble broke out, the Vanniyars had denied jobs to the Dalits in their farmlands. The Dalits were also now barred from grazing their cattle heads in the village. The Dalits were apprehensive that even after peace resumes in the village it would be impossible for them to get re-employed by the Vanniyars, he said.

Mr. Sugumaran said that the Vanniyars alleged that the provocation came from certain Dalits who made a tongue-in-cheek observation to the effect that "will the Vanniyars who seek Dalit votes for the Pattali Makkal Katchi candidate enter into marriage alliance with the

Dalits?"

But the Dalits denied having made any such unreasonable demand. In the aftermath of the row the police filed cases against 78 persons but arrested only 30, and even those arrested were let out on bail.

It was the contention of the Vanniyars that the police had rounded up at least four college students and certain outsiders who were nowhere connected with the incident.

The rights activists called upon the police to take a re-look on the arrests and free those who were not involved in the episode. They called upon the authorities to take appropriate measures to instill confidence among the Dalits, provide livelihood to them through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and assign them cultivable land. They also stressed the need for holding peace meeting to bring about amity between the two communities in the village.

The plights of Dalits are largely ignored by the main stream media and even the news of atrocity incidents is twisted and presented as if the Dalits are mischievous and as law breakers. In order to sensitize the public and ensuring the publication of the true incident, engaged in rigorous media advocacy during the period 2013-14 to counter and nullify the anti-Dalit sentiments fanned by some of anti-Dalit caste based political parties. On various occasions it invited the media personnel to sensitize the media and the general

public about the plight of the Dalits and their hardships in accessing justice.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CBOs AND PANCHAYAT PRESIDENT'S FEDERATIONS:

The interventional geographical presence extends to 3109 villages of 2402 Gram Panchayats at 62 blocks of 4 districts. Totally 1079 numbers of Men and Women CBOs have been promoted in 142 villages. These members have been actively engaging in the Dalit empowerment initiatives. The continuous support and accompaniment to the gross root organizations have initiated advocacy and legal assistance to the survivors of caste atrocities on their own in their respective villages. The CBOs have been significantly contributed and actively campaigned for amendments to the PoA Act; housing entitlements, title for agricultural land and basic amenities to their respective villages. The Dalit Panchayat Presidents, who were facing discriminations and hostilities due to their raising social and political status at the panchayat level, were brought under one umbrella. The Dalit and Adivasi elected representatives of the local self-government were provided capacitation on Panchayat Raj Act, redressal mechanisms, government schemes and programmes and effective function strategies of Gram Sabha the SC Special Component Plan for SCs and Tribal Sub Plan bill. They made an impact by passing resolutions in their Gram Sabha meetings seeking amendments to the Tamil Nadu PRI Act, providing greater delegation of powers to the Panchayat Presidents enabling them to function effectively, amendments in the existing SC/ST PoA Act, SC Special Component Plan for SCs and Tribal Sub Plan bill pass in the parliament.

### **ATROCITY TRACKING AND MONITORING WEBSITE –An initiative to hold state accountability, inaugurated by Hon’ble former Chief Justice of Supreme Court and Chairperson of NHRC**

As the atrocities on Dalits are on the rise and as it is assuming new forms, it has become an



imperative to evolve a technology driven initiative to redress those commission of atrocities. To exert pressure on the duty bearers and the statutory commissions; to sensitize the Dalit community at large; to fast track the grievance redressal efforts; and to garner the support for adequate legislation to protect and promote the rights of Dalits, this new website was launched by the

National Coalition for Strengthening SC/ST Act 1989 and Social Awareness Society for Youths. Any aggrieved person can send SMS to the Cell phone number 9898915455 or log in to the website [www.annihilatecaste.in](http://www.annihilatecaste.in) to seek help for incidents of caste atrocities across the country. The ATM will send alert messages to the District Collector, District Police Officials and other duty bearers to take action under the PoA Amendment Ordinance, 2014 within

stipulated time. Such alert messages will also be sent to the appropriate commissions seeking its direction to the concerned government officials to Act promptly and without delay.

## **PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION:**

- ***JUSTICE DENIED AND PEOPLE BETRAYED: (A Study on the Status of Implementation of SC/ST PoA Act)***



In the recent past, Anti-Dalit political parties raised voices seeking repeal of the SC/ST PoA Act alleging that the Act was largely misused by the Dalit community by filing false complaints against non Dalits. Their allegations were based on more number of acquittals by the judicial system. In reality these acquittals was attributed to the lack of sensitivity of the Indian Judicial System, Bias and calculated indifference of the government appointed SPPs, and due to the haphazard and negligent investigation process. In order to counter such baseless allegations, A critical evaluation was conducted on the status of Implementation of SC/ST PoA Act, 1989 based on the 531 incidents of caste atrocities addressed in 7 districts of Tamil Nadu, namely Villupuram, Cuddalore, Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Erode, Thirunelveli and Thoothukudi. The status of implementation of Prevention of Atrocities Act is critically evaluated with the actions taken by the duty bearers in the protection and promotion of Dalit rights is well documented in this Study Report; the commission of atrocities on Dalits since 1921 is well documented in 344 page critical study named – *JUSTICE DENIED and PEOPLE BETRAYED*. The Book was released on 23/03/2014, at Chennai during a State Level Consultation on SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Ordinance, 2014.

- ***JUSTICE UNDER TRIAL (A Critical Study on the Function of Indian Judicial System Concerning PoA Act)***



In collaboration with National Dalit Movement for Justice, other Dalit Human Rights Organizations and Lawyers Community of the 5 states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, brought out a critical study on the status of

Implementation of SC/ST PoA Act by the Indian Judicial System. This book also made important recommendations for the reforms in the Criminal Administrative Systems, particularly Judiciary. The Justice Dispensation process, the actions of various court actors, the prevalent caste discrimination in the Judicial System, is comprehensively analysed in the book. This publication is also an effective tool for the Civil Society organizations to arrive at an action plan to withstand the weaknesses exist in the Judiciary and to enable justice for the victims of atrocities and their dependents.

### **JOINT ACTION INITIATIVES:**

As the Discrimination, deprivation, untouchability practice, subjugation of Dalits, which plagued the Indian Society for centuries together, cannot be put to an end with isolated individual actions. As the gravity of the evil is so deep, it needs consistent and coordinated efforts by many pro-Dalit solidarity groups. Joint Action efforts are one of the unique strategies from its inception to ensure the Protection and Promotion of Rights of Dalits, Adivasis and Children and to make a significant impact on its human rights monitoring and advocacy efforts. The Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation (HRF), National Dalit Movement for Justice NDMJ, Adivasis Solidarity Council (ADC), International Justice Mission (IJM), Campaign against Sex Selective Abortion (CASA), Centre for Child Rights & Development (CCRD – Chennai), Consumer Confederation Tamil Nadu (CONFED); Human Resource Development Forum (HRDF); Social Watch, PALAM, WNTA, BLESS, RCPDS, SafaiKaramchariAndoloan, National Coalition for strengthening SC/ST PoA Act and Thurambar Liberation Movement are some of the partners in its Joint Action Initiatives. With these collective efforts SASY has enlarged its scope of action and geographical outreach.

### **LEADERSHIP IN PROTECTION OF DALIT, ADVASI AND CHILDREN RIGHTS:**

#### **CONVENOR - NATIONAL COALITION FOR STRENGTHENING SC/ST PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES ACT, 1989:**

NCSPA is formed in June 2009 during a consultation organized by NCDHR-NDMJ held in New Delhi. It is a forum of nearly 500 Dalit and Advasis human rights organizations, movements, activists, experts from all over India. The objective of the coalition is to ensure effective implementation of the Act and to recommend amendments to the existing act and to ensure the effectiveness in prevention of commission of atrocities. Due to the NCSPA consistent effort, the PoA Amendment Ordinance 2014 has become a reality. The state and national level advocacy efforts has resulted in mass mobilisation of Dalit, Adivasis communities, Dalit Rights Organisations, Human Rights groups, Activists, media professionals, opinion makers and etc towards the need of amendments in the existing SC/ST PoA Act 1989.

**LEGAL INTERVENTIONS EFFORTS AND NEW INITIATIVES:  
LEGAL CLINIC AND SPECIAL COURT MONITORING – to end the injustice:**

The Conviction rate under the SC/ST PoA Act is begged at mere 30% whereas the conviction rate under the IPC sections is at 42%. The pendency of cases is as high as 85.37%. In reality, the Criminal Administrative system and the judicial system under tight scrutiny revealed that the conviction rate is at 5%. Thus the Indian Judicial system at the lower level is alleged to be negligent, biased, and insensitive towards effective implementation of PoA Act. Lack of integrity among the government appointed Special Public Prosecutors, non- formation of exclusive special courts by the state governments are some of the impediments for the effective implementation of the PoA Act. The SPPs often found to be biased and having illegal nexus with the perpetrators derailing the delivery of justice to the victims of atrocities. In order to overcome such impediments SASY evolved a new strategy and organized Legal Clinic and Special Court Monitoring Initiatives.



SASY, NDMJ and HRF organized Legal Clinics and Special Court Monitoring Programmes in Villupuram and Coimbatore district on 14th June 2013 and on 25th - 26th October 2013 respectively. These legal clinics and special court monitoring efforts aims to abridge the potential and pro-Dalit lawyers and the survivors of caste atrocities and Witnesses. This platform enabled the Victims and Witnesses to share their experiences about the court proceedings and impediments in accessing justice. Totally 52 Dalit advocates participated in this programme and 87 survivors of caste atrocities were benefitted by this legal clinic programme.

**CAPACITATION OF THE DALIT LAWYERS: - Access to Justice...**

The Dalit advocates were given comprehensive training on various aspects of the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocity Act 1989, and Rules 1995; Drafting petitions under IPC and Cr.P.C and on appointment of Special Public Prosecutors (SPP) in Special courts. The trained advocates



formed into a state-level forum to assist the survivor's caste atrocities in the respective areas. The consistent capacitation and mentorship efforts for the young Dalit Lawyers and for the victims and witnesses have significantly empowered to seek appointment of Special Public Prosecutors with the choice of survivors of caste atrocities. For the first time in Tamil Nadu the survivors have filed applications seeking SPP with their choice in 14 cases.

### **PANCHAYAT PRESIDENTS EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES:**

The Dalit Panchayat presidents have been facing multiple forms of discriminations, exclusions and denial of powers due to caste bias system. The Tamil Nadu Panchayat Raj Act 1994 gives more power to the government authorities, hence the elected Dalit and Adivasi representatives found difficulty to execute their powers and they are often removed from the power by the District Panchayat Raj Inspector without any appropriate reasons. A Panchayat President Convention has been organized and capacitated them through various training programs to fights against discrimination in unified force.



The general public along with the Panchayat presidents and members were given orientation on Gram Shaba and its special feature. They were oriented about to pass some important resolutions regarding to pass the Prevention of Atrocity amendments Act, The Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub-Plan; and for the provision of land title as per the Forest Rights Act and constitutional amendments to strengthen the Panchayat Raj.

### **RENAISSANCE OF COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES:**

#### **WOMEN FEDERATIONS – Fund seekers to Fund Providers.**



During the Post Tsunami Rehabilitation efforts, Dalits in Cuddalore district were grossly discriminated and deprived of state sponsored and international institutional benefits. On noticing this caste driven gross discrimination, SASY intervened and enabled them to access the

rehabilitation benefits. It strived to empower the Dalit community by grouping them into federations and guides them to attain development unitedly in socio, economic, cultural and political spheres. The Dalits who were seeking funds for their development now rose to prominence and started providing funds for other deprived people of the community. The Dalit women have assumed leadership and engage in addressing caste atrocities and livelihood & economic aspects of their lives.

### **ECONOMIC AND LIVELIHOOD EFFORTS:**

Dalit Women Federations assisted by SASY are gaining momentum due to their vibrant economic and livelihood initiatives. They have transformed from being a passive fund seekers for their sustenance to fund providers to some of the community members who were facing hardships due to natural disasters. They have mobilized funds to the Thane Cyclone affected victims to the tune of Rs. 18,00,000. They actively engaged in advocacy and ensured the provision of KNH Housing Grant to the victims of Thane Cyclone to the tune of Rs. 25,72,500. Women Federation has received livelihood development loan to the tune of Rs. 11,50,000. The Women Federations were given extensive training on Candle Making process. Capitalizing the training, the women members participated and promoted Candle Making livelihood development process. Till date 40 families were benefitted by actively engaging in candle making business. Due to the members prompt repayment behavior, the Women Federations total savings rose to Rs. 11,00,000.

Due to the advocacy efforts of the Women Federation 253 dalit families from 10 villages were provided concrete houses under the Tamil Nadu Government Green House Scheme and 338 members of Women Federation from 40 villages were provided loans by the banks for livelihood development activities. Due to the encouragement and assistance of SASY and the women federation, 40 dalit families submitted petitions with the District Collector seeking provision of Housing Patta. Infrastructure facilities like Cement road, Electricity Facility, and Drinking Water were also provided for the Ambedkar Nagar residents with the intervention of Women Federation. Women Federation members actively campaigned on the importance of Social Security and ensured Social Security Coverage to 145 Dalit families under the National Pension Scheme.

### **Rights Based Interventions:**

Women Federation actively campaigned against Sex Selective Abortions and organized awareness programmes in Parangipettai, Puduchattiram, Chidambaram, Buvanagiri, Kururinchipadi, Neyveli, Kullanchavady, Vadalore, and Settiathoppu and distributed 2000 pamphlets. Dalit Women Federation engaged in advocacy and lobbying efforts leading to the provision of Police Security for a couple whose life was under threat since they had an Inter Caste Marriage. Legal assistance was provided to Velmurugan, a dalit victim of caste atrocity and rehabilitation was sought under the SC/ST PoA Act. 6 cows belonging to Dalit families in AlameluMangapuramvillage, were poisoned to death. Hence legal intervention has been made on behalf of the victims for justice under SC/ST PoA Act. Asmi, a differently abled girl from KarunanithiSalai, was provided with Identity Card with the intervention of Women Federation. Now she is pursuing her education in a High School located in Parangipettai. Kishore, a resident

of Srinivasapuram, was provided with Differently Able People Identity card with the active intervention of the Women Federation.

### **MEN FEDERATIONS:**

SASY developed and tutored Men Federations, who have experienced the brunt of caste discrimination, deprivation and atrocities, now undergone resurgent development and attracted the attention of the district administration with its social, economic, cultural and political vibrancy. They have been in the fore front addressing various rights based issues and also economic development impediments faced by the Dalit community. They actively campaigned for provision of permanent housing facilities for 500 Dalit families and now the district administration sanctioned 244 houses and the construction is in progress. To improve the livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunity with the carpentry profession, the Federation obtained Rs. 307499 under the livelihood promotion loan scheme and Rs. 350000 under the TATA ACE scheme. Nearly 415 voluntarily joined the THAIMAN Men Federation, after witnessing their efforts concerning development of Dalit communities. The federation has obtained Rs. 20000 from the Government for the provision of Pipe line facilities for irrigation. Men Federation actively campaigned on the benefits of social security coverage and extended it to 89 Dalit members under the National Pension Scheme.

### **CANDLE MAKING UNIT – A LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVE:**



SASY being in the forefront regarding economic empowerment of dalit women with the special focus on livelihood enhancement activities and entrepreneurship, is continuing with its involvement and guidance in Candle Making Operation in Parangipettai, Cuddalore District. Candle Making Unit, operating from

Parangipettai, covering six villages namely, Villiyanalore, Vadakkuthurai, B.Mutlore, Madhakovil, Vadugathirumedu, and Kavarapattu, benefitting 160 members is in progress and continues its effort to enlarge its beneficiary coverage. Each Beneficiary is realizing sum of Rs. 90-120 per day as an extra income with this part time work effort.



## **PORTO-NOVA WOMEN CASHEW PRODUCER UNIT – Landless Labourers to Entrepreneurship.**



Thwarting the social stigma and historical attributes to the Dalit Women as an work force incapable for enterprising works and fit only for menial and laborious jobs, Dalit Women started administering a commercial enterprise named Porto-Nova Cashew producer unit and transformed themselves into profit makers from being landless daily wage labourers. This big leap forward became a reality due to continuous mentoring of SASY.

These women entrepreneurs have started emulating some of the best administrative and organizational ethics and fast becoming the mascot for the Dalit Women Entrepreneurship. The Cashew Company is expected to gain momentum and to make a re-entry in to the business world after some re-strengthening and revitalizing process.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE FOR DALITS – NPS-LITE: Towards Distress Free Old Age.**

The Dalits who were mostly belongs to casual work force without adequate resources to support during their old age, are forced to be dependent and their sustainability is always a worrisome factor. National Pension System (NPS) is an initiative of Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), established by the Government of India. The NPS scheme was extended to weaker and economically disadvantaged sections of the society, promoting small savings during their productive years. It aims to build a corpus, sufficient enough to buy an annuity for their old age. SASY in coordination with Institute for Financial Management and Research and with Care India, organized a capacity building programme for the staffs to extend the benefits of the National Pension Scheme to the poor and marginalized Dalit Community. Till date 145 members of dalits and other economically disadvantaged sections have got enrolled and gaining benefits from the National Pension Scheme.

## **CHILD FOCUSED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

The historically institutionalized caste discrimination and deprivation; commission of atrocities and untouchability practices which destroyed the morale and the healthy & comprehensive development of Dalits, have not spared their children, who happened to be the most vulnerable section among the Dalit community. Any empowerment and development strategies ignoring the developmental aspects of children will not bore fruit. Hence strategically engages with children by ensuring their good quality education, safe environment, equality and dignity.

SASY organizes Children Resource Centre to enable the healthy development of impoverished Dalit children.

### **CULTURING THE CHILDREN'S CAREER PROSPECTUS:**

The Dalits impoverished family condition mostly deprives them of decent reading and school going culture. Hence it is an imperative to give the Dalit Children a platform where their interest to continue the education, nurturing their talents and to increase their morale and interest towards education is taken care of. To ensure their healthy education, SASY organizes 20 Children Resource Centres in 4 blocks of Childambaram Taluk, Cuddalore district benefiting 634 children. Through these centres, the Dalit children are provided with a stress-free studying environment, where there is space for holistic personality development.

### **CHILDREN SABHA – ENSURING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:**

To enable the Dalit Children in the future to actively participate in the political discourse and to develop their leadership quality, SASY organizes Children Gram Sabha, where the children engage in discussing their infrastructural requirements of their village to ensure their progressive growth. They make resolutions on various aspects of the needs of their village and submit such resolutions to the Grama Panchayat and see to the fulfilment of their petitions.



Thus their future political participation is nurtured and to grow as responsible citizens is ensured.

### **CHILDREN - BALANCING THE HEAT BUDGET:**

SASY engagements with Children led to enhanced participation of nearly 1248 children in the Climate Justice initiatives. Through the Children Resource Centre, children of Dalit's and other marginalized community are imparted knowledge on global warming, sustainable climate, duties of the citizen and other mitigating strategies. CRC students not only get sensitized on the climate justice, they



share their knowledge with other students, villagers and their family members, leading to greater awareness among the community members. They led various campaigns on Climate Justice, like campaigns against burning of plastics, growing nutritional gardens in the backyard of the houses, growing trees in the school and to distributing samples to other school children.

SASY's continuous engagements with these children will ensure that they assume leadership in various climate justice programmes in the future. Due to their increased awareness on Global Warming, the CRC children planted 65 medicinal saplings near the CRC Centres in 4 villages. Through this they mobilized community support for their activity concerning Global Warming Mitigating initiatives. They organized 2 mass rallies in Parangipettai and Chidambaram, sensitizing the local community on negative impacts of global warming and to grow trees to mitigate the effects. Most of the CRC children grow vegetables, flowering plants and medicinal plants and waters them regularly and ensures their share of effort in mitigating the global warming.

### **CRCs – BREAKING THE HISTORICAL BARRIERS:**

Dalit and Adivasi community children who were subject to caste driven discrimination and untouchability practice, are treated equally and are given adequate attention for their healthy growth in the SASY run Children Resource Centre. Hence whenever they find any disrespectful treatments, they



immediately voice their objection and strive to find remedy. This new found assertion among Dalit and Adivasi children became a reality due to SASY engagement with them. They are



given individual attention on their educational prospectus and self-interest to continue their education is well cultivated. 19CRC facilitators were involved in tutoring nearly 584 students (boys – 281 and girls – 303). The children were given orientation in all the 19 SASY organized CRCs on Right to Education, Climate Justice, Juvenile

Justice Act, Personal & household hygiene, growing of nutritional garden. These children in turn share their knowledge on the above subjects with other children in their villages and in their school. Thus SASY programme outreach is not less than 1248 children who were future leaders of the nation and that too mostly from the oppressed community. 286 Children were enrolled in Integrated Child Development Scheme and were provided nutritional food at regular basis. Due to these exemplary knowledge impartations, the children can easily identify child rights violations and abuse even in its obscure form and unitedly tries to redress those menace. Sense of Self Respect and dignity, positive social behaviours is very high among the CRC children, thus their respectable and responsible living is ensured by the CRC facilitators.

### **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS:**



The contemporary civilization fuelled with materialistic competition is having its sway on the future generations. The children are found to be in constant pressure and stress to excel in studies to survive in the competitive world and in this midst their active participation in extracurricular activities is largely ignored, leading to

deprivation of children's' holistic growth. But SASY with its value oriented child centric approach provides enough space for children to fine tune their talents and to have healthy mental strength to withstand the complexity of the future materialistic competitions. Children's talents are nurtured and their unique skills are well noticed and are given guidance to enhance and fine tune their



talent. During the year 2013-14, 18 children from the 19 CRC actively participated in various District level competitions and won prizes and awards in sports like Running, long Jump and in extra -curricular activities like Drawing, painting, speech competition and quiz programmes. In the CRC centres, the Cultural coordinator gives them training on playing musical instruments like Harmonium, Flute and Drums. The students are encouraged to perform music during cultural programmes organized in their respective schools.

### **STRENGTHENING PARENTHOOD AND THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP:**

For children's comprehensive growth, parents play a vital role. Their positive or negative development will largely impacts the children and their progress. Hence SASY constantly educates and enlightens the parents of the CRC children, who shoulders greater responsibility for healthy future of the children. SASY mobilized 2157 Dalit



women and 1192 Dalit men into 2 federations, who effectively strive to uphold the economic and social rights of the Dalits and Adivasis. Men and Women Federations were given training on various government schemes, legal mechanisms to protect and promote their rights. 64 Parents of CRC Children are engaged in Cashew Processing Unit activity strengthening Dalits participation in business and entrepreneurship. 35 single women were given permanent shelter to extend security and safety and to live with dignity. Nearly 172 families were given monetary assistance to improve their livelihood opportunity. 171 families affected by Thane Cyclone are given monetary assistance to renovate their damaged houses. The SASY assisted Federations ensured provision of 242 houses under the Thane Cyclone Rehabilitation Programme. Due to Federation initiatives 338 women availed livelihood Assistance Fund to improve their standard of living.

### **SASY – RE-STRENGTHENED CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:**

SASY being a catalyst of new social order and prospective development of Dalit Children where the children rights are protected and promoted has revitalized the existing Child Protection Policy. The CPP enables the safety and security of the children from any possible abuse of child rights and equally ensures availability of redressal mechanisms in case of violation of rights. SASY in coordination with KNH conducted consultations with its staff,

Parents Committee members, women and men federation members, communities at various levels and brought out a comprehensive Child Protection Policy. With this New CPP, Placing of Complaint boxes in all the CRC centres, faster redressal of the incidents of child right violations, transparent and participative system in place were ensured. CRC children, CMCJ members, Sponsor children were given orientation on the SASY –CPP and available mechanisms to redress their grievances.

**MAHALIR SAKTHI:An initiative of empowerment of urban poor women and children of marginalised communities**



MahalirSakthi is an exclusive project focusing women and child empowerment by fostering various capacity building training programs including life skills, leadership, exposure visits, special coaching centres, spoken English and etc. The domestic violence is the greatest challenges of attaining equality

of women has been effectively handled with the trained women rights defenders, psychotherapists and mediation has been effective tool applied to reunion the family by finding positive solutions. The girl children have been provided special coaching's on various subjects including mathematics, science and English which enhanced them to gain good academic results. The children are nurtured their talents through summer camp and their inherit talents were exposed by enabling various opportunities. The summer camp was significantly contributed in their overall development including enhancement of self –confidence and leadership.