

# Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY)



## ANNUAL REPORT

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Social Awareness  
Society for Youths  
**S A S Y**



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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, Indigo Foundation, Fondation de France, European Union, Fund for Global Human Rights and Open Society** 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.

**I.Pandiyan**  
Director - SASY

*Sincere Thanks to Our Donors*



## **About SASY:**

Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY) is a non-profit, non-governmental Human Rights Organization known for its accurate fact-finding mission, impartial reporting, effective advocacy through media, and targeted advocacy through trained human rights defenders, local human rights groups, professionals and experts. SASY is proactively engaging in protecting and promoting the Rights of Dalits and Adivasis through national and international human rights standards and mechanisms in the four districts namely Cuddalore, Villupuram, Erode and Tirupur in the state of Tamil Nadu. SASY works alongside with communities, Government, CBOs, NGOs, solidarity networks, coalition organizations, corporate and other partners in addressing issues encountered by Dalits, Adivasis and Children, such as denial of access to fundamental rights, violence against Dalit and Adivasis, caste atrocities, social exclusions, poverty, marginalization, lack of access to education and poor livelihood opportunities.

## **Summary**

More than one-sixth of India's population, some 160 million people lives in an insecure existence, shunned by much of society because they are considered as “untouchables” or “Dalits” or people who are out of the India's caste system. Dalits are discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions, and routinely abused at the hands of the police and of dominant caste groups that enjoy the state's protection. The “hidden apartheid,” prevails in many Indian states and is completely segregated by caste. The legislation as well as the constitutional protections serves only to mask the social realities of discrimination and violence faced by those living below the poverty/pollution line.

Untouchability was abolished under the India's constitution in 1950 but the practice of “untouchability remains very much a part of rural India. The “Untouchables” should not cross the line dividing their part of the village from that occupied by the dominant castes. They are not allowed to use the same wells, visit the same temples, drink from the same cups in tea stalls and the Dalit children are made to sit in the back of classrooms. Most Dalits continue to live in extreme poverty, without land or opportunities for better employment or education. Dalits are demoted to the most menial of tasks, as manual scavengers, removers of human waste and dead

animals, leather workers, street sweepers, and cobblers. Dalit men, women, and children work as agricultural labourers for a few kilograms of rice or Rs. 15 to Rs. 35 per day.

Recently among the southern states, Tamil Nadu has becoming an epic centre for caste-based violence and honour killings. The state reveals violent responses towards inter-caste marriages because of its changing political climate. Despite policy development and new legislation, the fundamental challenges subsist in all caste-affected parts of India. Also the lack of implementation of anti-discriminatory legislation, due to dysfunctional of criminal justice systems and caste-bias, had largely left Dalits without protection.

## **Access to Justice**

Law is the means and justice is the end. In order to reach justice the law and legal systems must be established and made available to all. Access to justice is a human right which imparts life and meaning to law. The state is the supreme guardian of the right to access justice and it is the legitimate expectation of the citizen to believe that whenever the sanctity of this right is threatened, the state would intervene and protect their right. In reality the State does not abide to the law and other legal systems rather lean to the political determination and caste interferences.

## **Dalit Human Rights Monitoring & Legal Interventions**



Dalit Human Rights Monitoring is the one of the thrust activities of SASY to bring out the facts of gruesome human rights violations committed against Dalits, Women, Children, Adivasis and other weaker sections of the society such as

caste atrocities, social exclusions, police torture, encounter death, custodial death, violence against women, corporal punishment and violence against minorities, disadvantaged groups. It has set the standard for professional Dalit human rights monitoring through scientific fact finding mission, information collection in the place of occurrence, legal intervention, and national and international human rights redressal mechanisms.



SASY has been engaged in vigorous monitoring of the incidents of caste atrocities that have been reported both in print and visual media such as daily newspapers, weekly magazines, online digital media. The intimidation of caste atrocities and human rights violations have been monitored through the news monitoring. These case incidents had been categorically tabled, professionally documented for further interventions, advocacy and lobbying with the various government machineries and statutory commissions. The human rights monitoring helped to prioritise the incidents of caste atrocities and human rights violations for undertaking fact finding mission.

By the continuous interventions of SASY more than 145 perpetrators were arrested and convicted in 17 cases. 21 cases were filed charge sheets and transferred to District Sessions Court and Special Court hearings. Also it was evident that Special Courts were started and became effective in SC/ST PoA cases of Villupuram District. More than 52 SC/ST cases were delivered justice to the survivors of caste atrocities at the Special Courts. SASY intervened, appointed special prosecutor for the cases, the first offender were sentenced to life imprisonment and other 6 offenders were given 2-year sentence. This is the first time and the highest conviction rendered by the court. About 44 persons received monetary compensation relief of Rs. 1, 13, 98,900 under the SC/ST POA in 8 cases. Apart from filing cases at the police station, obtaining compensations and reliefs for the affected families SASY is completely engaged in appointing special prosecutor, monitoring cases at the Special Court, filing appeals at the High Courts for the dismissed cases and thereby getting complete justice by intervening with more attention and expertise.

## **Legal Interventions for Victims of Police Torture:**



The Kuravan community is one of the sub-sects of the Scheduled Castes in the state of Tamil Nadu and they have been labeled as “Denotified Tribals” under the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 in

India. They are engaged in pig rearing, bamboo basket weaving, sanitary works, construction labourers, agricultural coolies and other menial jobs. Later this act was repealed, but the Kuravan community has been criminalized with caste stigmatization for several decades and still it continues even after the Independence of India.



These people are always subjected to various forms of torture illegal arrest and detention. SASY has taken many legal interventions, appointing special public prosecutors, monitoring the special courts and thereby providing continuous legal support to the victims of police torture. Presently it is in the process of advocating and lobbying with the state and national statutory commissions to access justice for the Kuravan community.

## **Special Court Monitoring**

Special Court Monitoring is one of the special features under the SC/ST PoA Act 1989 and its main objective is to ensure speedy justice to the survivors of caste atrocities. SASY has been actively engaged in special court monitoring in the 4 districts of Tamil Nadu namely, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Erode and Tirupur. The Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) appointed by the state under the SC/ST PoA Act to conduct prosecution on behalf the survivors of caste



atrocities are often prejudiced and negligent to conduct the prosecution effectively which was resulted in least number of convictions and reasoned for rising incidents of caste atrocities.

SASY strongly felt that the judicial accountability will guarantee effective prosecution by the SPPs and special court monitoring in turn will ensure the judicial accountability. SASY has been effectively engaged in advocacy with the district magistrate seeking the appointment of SPPs as per the choice of survivors of caste atrocities in Villupuram, Cuddalore, Erode and Tirupur districts. About 9 SPPs and 2 Assistant SPPs have been appointed by the District Magistrate for the first time in Tamil Nadu and other applications are under process. This had effectively contributed to progressively access to justice by the survivors of caste atrocities.

## **Amendments in SC/ST POA Act**

SASY has been constantly engaged in lobbying and advocating with the statutory bodies with regard to the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act seeking justice for the survivors of caste atrocities to ensure immediate interventions by the concern officials to end or prevent a human rights violation. Effective campaign and advocacy are key tools towards bringing amendments in the SC/ST PoA Act in order to ensure and realize the objectives of the Act. SASY had campaigned in collaboration with the national coalition for strengthening the SC/ST PoA Act to bring amendments in the SC/ST PoA Act 1989.

The collaborated NGO's and other solidarity groups was demanded the Parliament to bring the amendments legislation and was achieved it in the form of amendment ordinance 2014. By the continuous joint action initiatives of SASY along with other solidarity groups the upper house of Parliament, Rajya Sabha on 21 December 2015 passed the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2015 which will widely impact among the Dalits in the state of Tamil Nadu as well as the country through several activities and interventions.

## **Joint Action Initiatives**

The prejudice, denial, untouchability practice, suppression of Dalits & other excluded communities inundated for centuries together and could not be put to an end with individual

strengths. Also the magnitude of the malevolence is profound and hence a consistent, and coordinated efforts were made by the Dalit headed organisations and solidarity groups.

Joint Action initiatives ensure protection, promotion of Rights of Dalits, Adivasis and Children and to make a significant impact in human rights monitoring and advocacy efforts. The Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation (HRF), National Dalit Movement for Justice NDMJ, Dalit Foundation, People's Action Movement (PAM), Consumer Confederation Tamil Nadu (CONFED), Human Resource Development Forum (HRDF), Gandhiji's Oriented organization for the development of weaker and institute for literacy and logic (GOOD WILL), Village Educational Service Association (VESA), Rural Education and Development Society (REDS), Village Development Society (VDS), Women Association for Sustainability Harmony (WASH) are some of the partners in its Joint Action Initiatives. With these collective efforts SASY has widened its scope of action and geographical outreach.

SASY potentially collaborated with several joint action efforts for the past one year and had addressed severe human rights violations across the state of Tamil Nadu and organized numerous consultations on various issues. Recently SASY had joint action initiatives in addressing gross human rights violations, discriminations and social exclusions of Dalits, Adivasis and other marginalized communities during the State's Relief Response in Tamil Nadu Floods 2015.

## **Dalit Collective for Justice**

Protection and Promotion of human rights is always a collective effort that needs joint actions and mass mobilization to influence the state to deliver justice. SASY has strong networks, partners and collaborations both at state and national level to take the advocacy efforts forward. SASY has formed DCJ – Dalit Collective for Justice a Dalit collective representation to ensure equality, equity, justice and social inclusion of the marginalized and other socially excluded communities. The Dalit Collective for Justice Forum has more than 40 likeminded Dalit headed organizations and solidarity groups working for the betterment of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. This forum had conducted more than 4 discussion meetings on various issues like enacting and implementing the Special Component plan (SCP) and the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP); also had one day discussion meeting on the recently passed ordinance of the SC/ST

Prevention of Atrocities Act. This forum has released an election manifesto on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and also submitted its memorandum to the District authorities with regard to Social, Political and Economical developments for the Dalit and Adivasi communities. Also the members of the Dalit Collective for Justice had released an election manifesto for Tamil Nadu Assembly Election 2016

## **Enacting Central and State SCP/TSP**

Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) for Scheduled Tribes (STs) were initiated by government as intervention strategies during seventies to cater exclusively to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) respectively. These plans are meant to ensure benefits to these special groups by guaranteeing funds from all related development sectors both at State and Centre in proportion to the size of their respective population but remained in a dormant state. Presently SASY has engaged in enacting and enhancing the process of effective implementation of Programmes under SCPTSP both at the Central and State levels. Along with SASY various civil society representatives of different Scheduled Castes communities, People's representatives from the districts & SC Panchayats and Research Scholars are involved in the effective implementation of the Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) towards accessing entitlements and economic rights.

SASY has been advocating and lobbying in a full-fledge for the effective implementation of the SCPTSP act in the State of Tamil Nadu. Implementation of this plan will make the nation as well as the state to hold its accountability and transparency and also these schemes and plans will fill the gaps to ensure social inclusion, inclusive economic policies for the development of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

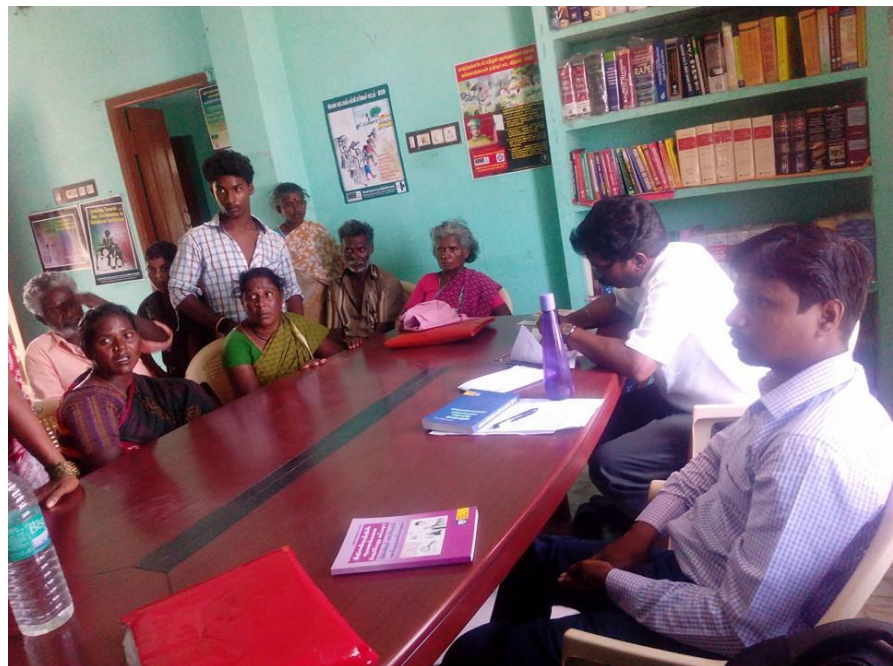
## Legal Resource Centre



SASY is the first non-governmental organization to inaugurate a Legal Resource Centre in the state of Tamil Nadu aiming at access to justice. The ominous increase in incidents of caste and

ethnicity based violence across India has reflected the prevalence of dominant caste hierarchies and atrocities against Dalit and Adivasi communities. 13,975 reported cases as atrocities against schedule castes and 1,390 reported cases against STs were registered under SC/ST Prevention of

Atrocities Act. In order to counter atrocities and strengthen the constitutional mechanism of SCs and STs PoA Act, 1989 SASY initiated Dr. Ambedkar Legal Resource Centre in Villupuram District on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to fight present day injustices. The experienced lawyers are providing legal



guidance and support to the survivors and witnesses of caste violence who are in greater need and assistance.

## **National Public Hearing on Identity Based Discrimination /Violence against Children School Education**

A National Public Hearing on Identity Based Discrimination/Violence against Children School Education held in the month of May 19, 2015 at New Delhi organized by Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion-CSEI, Children Movement for Climate Justice – CM CJ (SASY), National Dalit Movement for Justice – NDMJ (NCDHR) and Right to Education Forum - RTE. The core objectives of the public hearing were to highlight the nature and forms of discrimination and violence in educational institutions, to sensitize the enforcement machineries and promote equitable quality education with social inclusion.

Children Movement for Climate Justice – CM CJ (SASY) was a part of the organizing committee and it presented 2 cases before the jury members out of 40 total cases that was deposed. The charges included suspicious death of students, denial of access to schools and hostels, non-availability of basic facilities in schools, irregularities followed in private schools and its hostels, sexual abuse and unleashing corporal punishment. This is one of the highest prides of SASY where Ms. Gayathri – CM CJ, Ms. Muthu Selvi – CM CJ were the part of the jury members and extended their solidarity with the children who deposed cases.

## National & Regional People's Tribunal on caste based discrimination



National and Regional People's Tribunal on caste based discrimination was held at New Delhi on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 which was jointly organized by Swadhikar- National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (India), Samata Foundation (Nepal), Nagorik Udyog (Bangladesh) and Asia

and Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF). SASY had presented 4 cases from Cuddalore, Tirupur, Villupuram and Nagapattinam. The survivors of the caste atrocities and human rights violations deposed their cases before the jury panel. The jury members gave directions and recommendations to the deposed cases. SASY deposed 4 cases of which one is with regard to the untouchability practices prevailed in the Tirunalkondacheri village of Kuttalam Taluk near Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam District. The jury panel gave specific recommendations and directions to the survivors of gruesome violation of human rights even at the time of death and burial.

## Global Harmony Day

The United Nations declared the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bharatha Ratna Dr B. R. Ambedkar as **Global Harmony Day** and Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY) had celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The legend Dr. Ambedkar was recognized every year of April 14. He had earnestly dedicated his entire life to the emancipation of Dalits, Adivasis, women, minorities, other marginalised groups and he was the first Jurist and

the father of the Indian Constitution in the independence India. He was a revolutionary social reformer combated and articulated for Social Justice and Democracy.

It was also followed with a training programme on SC/ST PoA Amendments Act 2015. Vibrant persons from varied professions namely Mr. Ragupathi - Professor, Mr. Prabhakaran - Writer, Mr. Pandiyan – Director SASY, Captain. Durai and Mr. Chella Selvakumar – Member SCPCR, Tamilnadu shared their expertise and made presentations with SC/ST PoA Amendments Act 2015. More than 110 participants from like-minded groups and civil society organisations participated in the training.

## **Access to Entitlements through Women Federations**

Dalit women are placed at the very bottom with regard to caste, class and gender hierarchies. They suffer multiple forms of discrimination as Dalits, as poor, and as women. Caste-affected women in rural settings face a number of serious challenges, including lack of access to resources, land, basic amenities and social justice. SASY had federated two federations namely Inanitha Kaigal (Joint Hands) and Puthumai Pengal (Novel Women) to alleviate the poverty and to empower the women, the micro-finance as a powerful instrument in the new economy. These two federations are comprised of 120 Self Help Groups with 3120 members.

Dalit Women Federations assisted by SASY gained momentum due to their vibrant economic and livelihood initiatives. They had 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. 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. 40 families were benefitted by actively engaging in candle making business. Due to the members' prompt repayment behaviour, the Women Federations total savings rose to Rs. 11, 00,000.

Due to the advocacy efforts of the Women Federation 254 Dalit families from 10 villages were provided concrete houses under the Thane Housing Rehabilitation 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.

During the Tamil Nadu Floods 2015 the federation members' intensively extended their support and assistance in rescue, relief operations. Also they mobilized local volunteers, community leaders towards providing relief and timely measures to the worst flood affected families.

## **Promoting Social Entrepreneurship**

SASY had created a self reliant model among the rural poor women for helping each other both resolving domestic violence faced by women and enabling their livelihood opportunity through small and medium size ventures. The rural Dalit women were capacitated on savings, access to credit facilities from the national banks, marketing, and skill based trainings and leadership. It has enormously contributed to achieve their social equality, dignity and improving their standard of living.

SASY provided social entrepreneurship, vocational trainings to women and youth in accessing education, skill trainings, micro enterprises and job oriented career development. The Dalit men and women were given an orientation and education on sustainable living, career opportunities and vocational capacity trainings. They were provided various skilled capacities and were employed in several income generating activities and earn their regular incomes. These business activities have procured saving skill towards sustainable income generation which in turn increased their self-dignity, socio-economic status, right to decision making and right to speak/voice out for a common cause.

About 295 Dalit and Adivasi families are successfully engaged in various entrepreneurship trainings. These livelihood interventions exercised their right to participate and development and increased the income of the family, and strengthen the rural skills and made them economically self-sufficient.



## **Children Resource Centre**

The Dalit and Adivasi community children are the potential victims of abuses, rights violations, denial of opportunity, participation and social exclusions. They are often subjected to caste based discrimination and untouchability practices in the schools by the non-Dalit Teachers and students. SASY had provided educational assistance and has formed children resource center in disaster affected villages of the Cuddalore District and helping children to acquire education, talents, interests and extra-curricular skills. About 20 children resource centers are running successfully in 20 disaster affected villages to enhance the educational skills and desires of the poor children. The centre has 1 or 2 facilitators/mentors rather than teachers.

The CRC is enabling space for the children to quietly study and provided opportunity to expose

their inherent abilities. About 677 children are directly benefitted from 20 villages. The children were taught regular education, cultural including singing, dance, musical instruments, and social education particularly on



non- discriminatory values, Indian constitution, child rights, child protection policy, leadership and sports. Children have gained self-confidence, self-assertiveness, high levels of self-esteem, sense of self-respect& dignity, positive social behaviours empowered through continuous education of rights and their participation at the Children Resource Centre.

The children who wrote their 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> public exams have passed all their subjects, secured good marks with maximum percentages and came out with flying colours. Also more than 190

children participated in the cultural, sports and other talent competitions at their schools and won medals, shields and prizes.

## **Children Movement for Climate Justice**



The children of Dalits and other marginalized communities were imparted knowledge on the effects of global warming, sustainable climate, duties of the citizen and other explanatory strategies. It is one

of the potent, dynamic children's instruments that played a vital in addressing on climate justice and rights. The right to climate justice is element of right to life of children along with the other four fundamental rights including right to life, right to protection, rights to participation and right to development. The right to climate justice is very important rights to realise the other four primary rights of children in their life.

The CMCJ children were conducted and organised more than 80 cultural awareness programmes on climate justice in the villages and about 42, 000 adults, children, were sensitized on climate justice, global warming and it effects. Totally 18, 900 members were benefitted through these events. About 750 children are the members of the CMCJ movement and 56 children were newly enrolled through the effective membership campaign conducted by the CMCJ children in the villages. The CRC children planted 165 medicinal saplings and had organized 22 mass rallies sensitizing the local communities on negative impacts of global warming and to grow trees to mitigate the effects.

The Children were given orientation on organic farming, cultivation and natural manures. They were started cultivating minor millet in a small garden offered by the community in 4 villages. It is very significant that the children engaged in the agricultural activity at a miniscule level and after coming from school they visited the garden daily and shared their responsibilities on a shift basis. Finally they harvested 17 kg of minor millet from 32 cents seeds and celebrated the seed festival. The parents and the community were very much supportive to the children and they extended their support by giving feedbacks at every stages of agriculture and it was a value based education to the children to gain self-confidence and self-reliance to elevate their future.

## **Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Management**

Inclusive Disaster Risk Management is about equality of rights and opportunities, dignity of the individual, acknowledging diversity, and contributing to flexibility for everyone, not leaving aside members of a community based on age, gender, disability or other. The inclusive approach aims to address is one related active participation in decision making related to all aspects of assessments, planning, action and monitoring of risk management interventions. SASY is proactively engaged in delivering humanitarian aid to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity at the onset of natural disasters and man-made disaster in the state of Tamil Nadu. SASY has significant number of volunteers to engage in disaster preparedness, rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations.

Since 2004 after Tsunami SASY has been effectively addressing the social exclusion of Dalits in relief and rehabilitation measures. It had immediately engaged in relief response as soon as after the Tsunami, Thane Cyclone and Tamil Nadu Floods. It had effectively responded in delivering the relief and rehabilitation for more than 8372 Dalit, Adivasi families and also socially excluded communities.



Soon after the torrential rainfall and flash floods in low-lying districts of Tamilnadu, SASY quickly and immediately responded to the disaster situation and provided emergency exists to the worst flood affected families of Cuddalore District which was thrice worst affected than Chennai. SASY aided humanitarian aid and provided relief measures like food kits, hygiene kits, garments and other apparels to more than 5000 families who were worst affected and excluded from the State's Relief Response. Also it had conducted medical camps and provided free medical checkups and free medicines to the flood affected people.

SASY had engaged in monitoring the relief response provided by the State Government and conducted a base line survey "Rapid Assessment Study on Social Exclusion" across the most affected 20 Dalit villages in Parangipettai and Bhuvangiri blocks of Cuddalore District. SASY having federated women and men groups in Parangipettai, Cuddalore District and with the help of women federation members and the local community volunteers SASY organized several community level meetings in capacitating and training them with an inclusive model of framework to conduct damage assessment survey in the worst affected villages. A "Social Exclusion Damage Assessment Report" was prepared and was released during the Press Meet which held at the Cuddalore Press Club on 25.11.2015.



Following this, SASY in collaboration with 8 NGO's from 6 districts conducted a full-fledged "Comprehensive Inclusion Field Assessment" study across 6 Districts namely Cuddalore, Villupuram, Kancheepuram, Chennai, Tiruvallur and Nagaipattinam and the study report was released on January 9, 2016 at Chennai Press Club. Both the studies revealed that the Dalit, Adivasis and other marginalized communities were totally excluded with regard relief and rehabilitation. There were willful negligence due to caste prejudice and the affected Dalits, Adivasi families experienced discrimination in relief and rescue operations compared to members of the dominant castes. Also the Government authorities willfully ignored bringing rescue and relief efforts to Dalit locations. The assessment team found discrimination in access to shelter, food aid, health, water and sanitation and in the whole rescue process.



Finally SASY has formed a coalition at State and National level had been formed to ensure the Disaster Risk Reduce Management under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005 and also take appropriate measures to address and prevent caste based exclusion in Tamil Nadu floods 2015 management in future.

## **Journey to Success**

SASY has long recognized the importance of working to eliminate discrimination and to promote economic, social and cultural rights. Defending the rights of the many traditionally marginalized communities must be among the highest priorities, with the poorest and most excluded groups taking pre-eminence. This year SASY have been working in monitoring human rights, monitoring special courts, providing legal assistances and support to the survivors of caste atrocities, and inclusive disaster risk reduction management during the Tamilnadu Floods 2015. SASY's thrust is to promote, protect the human rights mechanisms, to strengthen the capacity of marginalised groups in accessing justice and other entitlements.

## **Case: 1**

In the year 2012, a man named Kumar (35 years) Erode District belonged to the Arunthatiyar community (sub-sects of the Scheduled Castes) was riding along with his friend Murugan (38) went to the bus stand. As they were riding a man named Natrajan (47) belonged to Hindu Pandaram and asked Murugan for his money which Natrajan had given Murugan as debt amount. Within few minutes Natrajan and Murugan had serious arguments and immediately Natrajan abused Kumar in filthy and derogatory languages referring with his caste name and brutally attacked Kumar with his sharp knife. He was taken to the Sathyamangalam Government Hospital and had 7 sutures. SASY immediately conducted Fact Findings and intervened in the case asking the Deputy Superintendent of Police to conduct spot inspection. He conducted a spot investigation; the perpetrator was arrested and produced in the Court. Due to the pressure of the dominant caste people the Puliampatti policemen refused to give summons to the witnesses in the case. By the continuous intervention of SASY the victim and the witnesses were given summons and the case came for hearing and final judgment. On 28.09.2015 the perpetrator was convicted under IPC Act 5 years and 2000 as penalty and under SC/ST 3 years and 1000 as penalty totally 8 years, at District Session Court, Erode District.

## **Case 2:**

Another incident which occurred in the year 2011, a man named Muthu, Chennai was taken from his home on 30.09.2011 around 11 pm in connection with an enquiry in a theft case. Mr. Muthu was brutally beaten by the police and forcibly taken into illegal detention for an enquiry by the Vadapalani police. On 01.10.2011 Mr. Muthu was taken in a police van up to Viluppuram where he was brutally tortured by the Vadapalani policemen. Then he was taken to Virugambakkam Police Station and he was brutally tortured and was dead in police custody at around 4.30pm.

SASY conducted fact-finding into the case; but the NHRC, SHRC and other state authorities did not take appropriate actions against these perpetrators even after the continuous complaint and interventions made by SASY. Also the Police did not file FIR on the police men who tortured and brutally killed Muthu which eventually witnessed the caste bias and willful negligence of the police department. But then SASY continuously intervened in the case, pressured, made

demonstrations and advocacy with the state authorities and statutory bodies to speed up the investigation in this case. As a result of SASY's advocacy efforts the case was transferred to the CBCID investigation. Finally on 07.04.2016 the session's court has sentenced life imprisonment to the accused three policemen.

### **Case- 3:**

In the year 2015, a Dalit girl named Anitha, D/o Mr. Kumarasamy, belonged to Hindu Arunthaiyar Community (SC) resided with her parents and was studying 7<sup>th</sup> standard in a Government School in Chenimalai, Perunthurai Taluk of Erode District. On 22.08.2015 by 8 pm while Anitha was alone at home Mr. Kulanthaisamy Gounder, a dominant caste man of the same village entered and took her away in attempt of raping her. He forcefully covered her mouth and took her on the roadside. Suddenly Anitha bitted his hand and screamed for help. Immediately he dropped the girl on the road and escaped from the place. Finally the villagers rescued the girl and went to the police station. On 26.08.2015 a case was registered in the Chenimalai Police Station under the POSCO Act 2012 and SC/ ST PoA New Amendment Ordinance Act – 2014.

SASY DHRD team immediately conducted fact-finding and sent complaints to the concerned state and national authorities. SASY also provided protection to the victim family who were threatened consecutively to withdraw the complaint. SASY continuously intervened with the state authorities and statutory bodies to provide proper justice to the victim girl. As a result on 27.04.2016 the Women Fast Track Court sentenced 14 years imprisonment and Rs. 20,000/- penalty to the accused Mr. Kulanthaisamy Gounder (2 years for abduction, 7 years under POSCO Act and 5 under SC/ST PoA Act).



## Media Advocacy:

The recent anti Dalit Campaigns by the castiest and political outfits fanned the hatred feelings against Dalit community and their political polarization increased incidents of caste atrocities against Dalit communities in the state. Most of the media is owned by the political parties and the so called dominant caste groups, thus it never addressed or highlighted the issue of caste discrimination, atrocities and social exclusions. Despite SASY was engaged in continuous media advocacy with the secular media to address the issue of caste discrimination and seek the state attention to take appropriate steps to provide justice to the survivors of caste atrocities and reduce the incidents of caste atrocities against Dalits. Around 106 incidents were effectively addressed through media in the last one year and it was created larger impact among the community towards achieving the equality of Dalits.

# Kausalya seeks severe punishment for husband's killers

R. VIMAL KUMAR

**TIRUPUR:** S. Kausalya (19), wife of Dalit youth Shankar, who was murdered by a gang at Udumalpet on March 13, wants to see all the accused involved in the brutal killing of her spouse get 'maximum punishment'. "It includes my parents, other relatives and the gang members deployed for the execution of the crime," she said.

Ms. Kausalya, though discharged from Coimbatore Medical College and Hospital after the treatment for injuries sustained in the attack, is yet to recover fully from the shock.

Shankar's family received a message that the National Commission for Scheduled Caste had made a recommendation to the government to give Ms. Kausalya a job. She had asked for a job that would match her current qualifications.

Ms. Kausalya wants to continue her engineering course, which she had discontinued after her marriage. "I hope to get a job first, and then will continue with my studies through a part-time course. I even need to take care of his two brothers," she said.

The Udumalpet police on Tuesday arrested K. Dhanraj

(25) from Dindigul for his alleged involvement in the murder of Shankar.

He was produced before Judicial Magistrate Srividhya in Udumalpet and remanded to judicial custody.

Meanwhile, a judicial magistrate court at Udumalpet granted three-day police custody to four other accused - M. Manikandan, P. Selvakumar, M. Madan and P. Jegadeesan, who were arrested on March 15.

The police had recovered weapons reportedly used for the attack and two motor-bikes from them.

### Mother surrenders

Meanwhile the mother-in-law of Dalit youth Shankar, C. Anna Lakshmi, a native of Palani, surrendered before the judicial magistrate court in Theni on Tuesday, in connection with his murder. Her husband had already surrendered in court.

Judicial Magistrate A. Sundari remanded her to judicial custody till March 31 and directed the police to produce her before the Udumalpet Court. Later, she was lodged in Madurai central prison.

Shankar was murdered brutally by an armed gang in broad daylight and his wife Kausalya was injured in Udumalpet recently.

# NCSC Comes to Narikuravas' Aid

Commission summons State DGP for enquiry after report by fact-finding team which alleges rights violation

by Karal Marx L

**Villupuram:** The National Commission for Scheduled Caste (NCSC) has summoned the State DGP K Ramaniyam to be present before the Commission on Wednesday to enquire into the allegations of human rights violation against the Narikurava community.

The order was issued following a report by a fact-finding team comprising the National Dalit Movements for Justice (NDMJ), Social Awareness Society for Youth (SASY) and Capt. Durai, general secretary of the Tamil Nadu Kuravar Makkal Sangam (TNKMS), to the NCSC, which alleged that police use Narikuravas as scapegoats in unsolved cases.

According to the report, since 1993, as many as 30 people from the community, 29 from the State and one from the neighbouring State of Kerala, were foisted with false charges and subjected to various human rights violation, including illegal arrest



Members of a human rights organisation giving counselling to the Narikuravas in Chennai | EXPRESS

and detention.

Among them, seven reportedly died while in police custody, two died in suspicious circumstances in prison and the remaining 21 were victims of sexual assault and rape by the police officials.

There are about 1 lakh Narikuravas dwelling in Tamil Nadu. The Kuravas,

who used to survive by hunting birds and other wild animals, have now taken to making bamboos and palm products, and other handicrafts to earn their livelihood. Most of them do not have a permanent place to settle and keep migrating from one place to another in search of livelihood, said Lighter (51), district secretary of Villu-

puram Narikurava Welfare Association.

As they are a minority community, police often target them and accuse them in cases, in which they are not able to find the real culprits. "Since they are illiterate, police are certain that they won't go to the court or take any other sort of legal help. This is the main reason these

type of atrocities continue even now," says Senthil, of SASY.

Most of them are subjected to physical abuse and torture in the custody of the police.

Murugappan, of SASY said, "In 2005, Palaniyammal, a minor girl of Kurava community, who was pregnant, was repeatedly raped by 10 Salem policemen in a Suramangalam lodge. In another incident, Anusiya, another minor girl from Allinagaram in Theni district, was taken into police custody and allegedly raped by the Theni Town police in 2008."

"Most of these cases had gone unreported and had come to light only after several years of case study," he added.

On Monday, about 15 Narikuravas, who were victims in the hands of the police, and their kin rushed to New Delhi to attend the hearing in the National Commission probe. They requested the NCSC to give them justice and compensation for the atrocities that they faced in the hands of the police.

Media advocacy is nothing but community advocacy and has as its goal the promotion of healthy public policies. SASY had adopted the media advocacy as a strategic tool to promote public debate, and generate community support for changes in community norms and policies. SASY

has been engaged in continuous advocacy with the media to address the incidents of caste based atrocities, police torture and to seek the state consideration, to make them to take appropriate steps in providing justice to the survivors of caste atrocities and reduce the incidents of caste atrocities against Dalits and marginalised communities. More than 115 incidents were effectively addressed through media in the last one year and it had created a larger impact among the community towards accessing justice to the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.