



Annual Report 2020-2021

Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY)

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From Director's Desk:

It gives me immense pleasure to write on the one journey of SASY and the struggle for steeping towards equality and dignity for the most oppressed communities. It is very essential to acknowledge the contribution of each and every one who was with us in this long run of accessing justice to the marginalized, Dalit and Adivasi communities.

At the outset I take this an opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the supporters, donors, stakeholders, link minded groups, solidarity networks and friends for the extensive financial and moral support to empower the most oppressed communities to access justice and their entitlements.

Even during the COVID Pandemic, Second Wave and Cyclone Burevi SASY were able to accomplish the positive outcomes with the great support of the community, women federation members & staff team who have collaborated with us.

Once again I thank you very much for your earnest support to take this forward in sustaining the impacts and bringing significant changes in the lives of most marginalized communities in our past one year journey.

Best Wishes



Dr. V.A. Ramesh Nathan
Director - SASY

At a Glance

Welcome to **Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY) Annual Report 2020 -2021**. This report provides an overview of our work in the areas of Human Rights Monitoring, Interventions, Livelihood Initiatives and Disaster & Pandemic Response with Social Inclusion. It also highlights our work on access to Rights, Capacity Building Workshops & Campaigns, Partnerships and other key initiatives. The latter part of the annual report focuses on each of the thematic areas of our work, along with best practices and success stories on accessing justice from the field.

Executive Summary:

Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY) has relentlessly engaged in protecting and promoting the rights of the marginalized, vulnerable communities to lead life of dignity and self-respect. It has consistently worked towards bringing a human rights-centered approach, as well as towards creating human rights awareness and sensitization amongst public authorities and civil society. Since its inception, SASY been actively engaged in the social, economic development of SC and ST communities. The present Annual Report for the year 2020-2021 of the Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY) describes at length, the important activities of SASY and its numerous initiatives undertaken to robust protection and promotion of human rights of the Dalit and Adivasi communities.

This Annual Report talks about various chapters dealt during the COVID pandemic and COVID Second Wave situation. The chapters includes one year journey of SASY of access the justice system by the marginalized communities, training and capacity building programs for Human Rights Defenders, Elected Representatives of local government, CSOs, CLOs. It also includes the Pandemic Relief and Cyclone Relief Response with Inclusive Perspectives and with Core Humanitarian Standards.

This report also focuses on the rights of women and children, the rights of vulnerable sections of society, particularly SC/ST, children along with the Children participation and social promotions for women through livelihood initiatives. In addition, the report deals with the efforts of SASY taken to ensure accessing justice by the survivors and their families.

One Year Journey of SASY!!!

1. Access to Justice:

SASY is engaged in protection and promotion of the rights of Dalit and Adivasi communities by responding to the incidents of caste atrocities and providing legal support to the survivors to access Justice.

SASY had undertaken about 74 fact finding missions in heinous crimes by effectively addressing in the districts of Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Cuddalore, Tirupur, Erode, Coimbatore, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai, Tiruvannamalai and Tanjore in the state of Tamil Nadu during April 2020 to March 2021 are as follows:

High Lights – Access to Justice:

1. 74 Fact finding missions were undertaken and among them 47 FIRs were lodged under the SC/ST PoA Act through the critical Intervention and various strategies adopted by SASY;
2. Uploaded 154 Cases in ATM Website and 1809 alert messages sent to the concerned authorities and accused persons were arrested.
3. Complaints were sent to concerned district authorities and statutory commissions in 61 cases and around 197 accused persons were arrested in 33 cases
4. INR 11,030,000/- received as interim compensation under the SC/ST PoA Amendment Act 2015 to 48 survivors of caste atrocities;

2. Best Practices:

Case No: 1

Ms. Rajeswari of Bhuvanagiri, Cuddalore District has won in the last panchayat election held in December 2019 and belonged to the Scheduled Castes (SC). She has won in the Therkkuthittai Panchayat and presently holding the position of panchayat president. The vice-president Mr. Mohanraj(non-Dalit) had influenced the other non-Dalits and was discriminating the two Dalit women Rajeswari and Sukanya. These non-Dalits did not allow the panchayat president to execute the powers and to perform her duties.



The vice-president had also threatened the president and the 2 Dalit women were forced to sit on the floor during the two gram sabha and two panchayat meeting. They were subjected to derogatory forms of verbal abuse and discriminatory practices. Also during the Independence Day the

panchayat president Rajeswari was denied to hoist the national flag and the vice-president Mohanraj's father hoisted the flag.

SASY had immediately undertaken fact finding into the brutal atrocity and the case was registered at BhuvanagiriPS. The secretary Sindhujah and 6th ward member Mr. Sugumarwere arrested by the Bhuvanagiri police. SASY complaints have sent to the District Collector, Superintendent of Police, National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC, Chennai) and Chief Minister Cell. SASY filed petition at the SC/ST Court – Cuddalore in cancelling the bail petition of the accused persons under section 15 A of SC/ST PoA Act and the bail was denied to the accused persons.

Case No: 2

Loganathan, S/o Mr. Murugan, resident of Devampalayam, Avinashi Taluk of Tirupur District was residing with his sister. One of the goats of Loganathan had crossed the fencing (KallikaduThottam). Immediately the owner of the place Mr. Moorthy (Other Dominant Caste) and his son Praveen (21) had pulled the goat and threw it and this was noticed by Loganathan's sister and she informed her brother. Loganathan rushed to the place in bringing his goat, but they refused to give and brutally attacked and verbally abused Loganathan and his sister. The next day, the dominant caste people had asked Loganathan to fall on their legs in public view and he refused it. And hence the dominant caste people filed false case against him.

SASY had undertaken fact finding into the brutal incident and had generated complaints, alert messages to the concerned departments. By the continuous engagements of SASY and DHRDs's the bail petition of the accused persons was denied for more than 3 times under the rights of victims and witness of SC/ST PoA Act

Case No: 3

Clash between Chellaperumpulimedu dominant caste youths and Dalit youths in Puliyarabakkam led to the mass attack, murder of Dalit youth named Venkatesan, property destruction and social boycott against Dalits. SASY's DHRD had made continuous engagements with the concerned departments and followed the case with the AdiDravidar and Tribal Welfare Department in these lock down days.

Finally the deceased Venkatesan's brother Adhikesavan was provided government job as Junior Assistant in Panchayat Union Office, Anakavur of Tiruvannamalai District, Tamil Nadu under the provisions of Contingency Plan 2017 of SC/ST PoA Act focusing on the Relief and Rehabilitative Measures for the Survivors of Caste Atrocities.

SASY had immediately intervened in the case and had sent complaints to the concerned authorities. The police had arrested the two accused persons namely Selvaiah and Raja Durai. The survivor was provided the FIR stage compensation of Rs. 75,000/- and the charge sheet was framed within 60 days (SC No: 54/2020). SASY was able to implement the provisions of the SC/ST PoA Act even in the lockdown days and assisting the survivors to access the criminal justice system.

Case No: 4

Somasundaram resident of Chekarakudi North Street, near Tuticorin District and 4 persons namely Isakiraja (17), Balakrishnan (20), Pandi (28) and Dinesh (20) from Tirunelveli District went to Somasundaram house for cleaning the septic tanks. After completely draining the water, Isakiraja and Dinesh got into the septic tank for cleaning the drainage substance which was sediment down the tank. Within few minutes, they both got fainted after inhaling the in-toxic gases emitted from the septic tank.



Balakrishnan who was watching this immediately got into the tank to rescue them. But he also was intoxicated by the obnoxious gases. Finally Pandi went into the tank and he also fainted by inhaling the gases. This was informed to the Fire Service Department, they rushed to the spot and they took all the four persons from the tank. They found that the 4 persons were dead by inhaling the intoxicated gases emitted from the septic tank. The Thattaparai Police came to the spot and took the 4 deceased persons for post mortem to Tuticorin Government Hospital.

SASY had made specific recommendations in providing compensation under the SC/ST PoA Amendment Act, providing other rehabilitative measures to the deceased family members, as they have lost their sole bread winner of the family. FIR was registered under Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their rehabilitation act and SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. By the intervention of SASY and other organisation the Tamil Nadu Government had provided Rs. 10 lakhs to each deceased family from the Chief Minister Relief Fund.

3. Training and other Programs:

a. State Level Conference for Dalit and Adivasi Panchayat Presidents:

India is a country which has largest democratic republic in the world. The local self – government, an important system in which people participate, had existed since before independence. After independence the constitution was amended and panchayats were formed; the execution of powers and responsibilities were given to them. The ultimate objective and purpose of the Panchayat Raj Act is to devolve powers. The local self-government is governed by the people and is very strong and powerful. This gives the elected representatives the right to govern themselves. It was everyone hopes that the new law will create greatest social change but the first general election held in 1996 completely shattered it.

The caste patriarchy and caste social structure led to the denial of political powers to the Dalits, Adivasis & Women ensured by the Constitution. SASY is continuously working to empower Dalit and Tribal Panchayat leaders. Presently, the panchayat elections, which have not been held for the last three years, were held in the 28 districts and not held in 9 districts. As the panchayat election for the remaining districts was about to be held and the Quarantine curfew announced due the sudden outbreak of COVID 19 Pandemic halted the activity. In this context, SASY had jointly organized “State Level Conference for Dalit and Adivasi Panchayat Presidents” through virtual meeting on August 12, 2020. 110 Dalit and Adivasi panchayat presidents were capacitated on strengthening the local self- government; special powers for the panchayats (local self-governments), separate projects, social audits, empowering Dalit and Adivasi women panchayat leaders and empowering the local self – government into a powerful separate body. At the end of the conference around 13 decisions were taken and it was decided to form a federation for Dalit and Adivasi Panchayat Presidents.

b. Rejuvenation of Tamil Nadu Chapter on Coalition on SCP TSP Legislation:

The Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan was formulated in the year 1970 mainly to uplift the Dalit and Adivasi Communities who are continuously subjected to various forms of social exclusions and caste discrimination. It was decided to bring a national legislation on the Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan and the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) as a leading organization and it was decided to form a national level coalition on bringing a legislation on the Special component plan and Tribal Sub Plan (SCP TSP) and this coalition is functioning at the national level. Meantime, a state legislation on SCSP TSP was introduced in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana respectively. SASY jointly organized State Level Consultations, Meetings for bringing a state legislation on SCP TSP in Tamil Nadu and in 2014; we have organized a demonstration for bringing a state legislation on SCP TSP. SASY along with other organizations work collectively on rebuilding the campaign for advocacy in bringing a state legislation on SCSP TSP.





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c. Capacity Building Training for Dalit and Adivasi Panchayat Presidents on Executing their Powers and Redressal Mechanisms:

SASY had organized a capacity building training for Dalit and Adivasi panchayat presidents on February 2021 at Coimbatore District. More than 50 Dalit and Adivasi Panchayat Presidents from Erode, Tirupur and Coimbatore participated in the conference. The local self-governance system is another dimension of the democracy and it is an evolutionary development of the democracy. The caste discrimination is showed in directly and indirectly in 3 tire administration system of our country. Therefore, elected panchayat leaders of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe are not able to execute their fullest powers and duties in the panchayat administration.



Though the Panchayat Raj Institutions have been in existence for a long time, it has been observed that these institutions have not been able to acquire the status and dignity of viable and responsive peoples bodies due to a number of reasons including absence of regular elections, prolonged supersession, insufficient representation of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes,

scheduled Tribes and women, inadequate devolution of powers and lack of financial resources. This training program had capacitated the Dalit and Adivasi Panchayat Presidents to execute their powers and perform the duties as elected representatives.

d. Advocates Training on Accessing Justice to Dalit & Adivasis in TN:

SASY had organized one day training for Dalit and Adivasi Advocates in two regions by combining 6 districts in the state of Tamil Nadu in the month of January and February 2021. SASY had capacitated the advocates on SCs and STs (PoA) Act, Crpc and Evidence Act. Around 85 advocates participated in the training. The objective of the training was to build their prosecution skills and gaining more number of advocates as SPPs and built a stronger platform for Advocates. Dr.V. A Ramesh Nathan, Director – SASY capacitated the lawyers strengthened their skills in order to accessing justice to the Dalits Adivasis against all kind of injustice & atrocities.



4. Pandemic Response:

4.1 (COVID Impact & Relief Work)

The COVID – 19 Pandemic has resulted in unobserved pandemic in the form of the corona virus, which has spread to a large extent in India by leading to devastating situation. Nevertheless the disease had created chaos and fear globally; yet the consequences for those in India especially the most marginalized groups based on caste, gender and class it poses a greater challenge due to corresponding effects in terms of accessibility of essentials. As the cases increased, our governments at the Centre and the states took emergency measures to contain the spread of the COVID 19 virus.



The lockdown has resulted and created serious impact in the lives of the Dalits and Adivasis, migrants, daily wagers, transgenders, women, children and elderly people. They are naturally vulnerable, marginalized and socially excluded; it is manifested during any disaster and it is visible during this COVID 19 Pandemic too. They are worst affected due to this lockdown as they are not able to manage even their daily survival for food and other basic needs. There is a huge loss of livelihood and the people are struggling for their daily survival. They face existing structural discrimination, social and economic exclusion which result in most devastating impacts in the short and longer term. The spread of the corona virus and the disease it causes, COVID-19 had also driven massive disruption in

One of the thrust areas of SASY is Disaster Response and providing humanitarian assistance. SASY is also proactively engaged in Humanitarian aid to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity of the marginalized communities in disaster with relief and rehabilitative measures for the Survivors of Disasters. SASY has been effectively engaged in Disaster Response to ensure Social Inclusion of Dalit and Adivasi communities in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management since, Tsunami 2004 and continued interventions in Thane cyclone 2011, Tamil Nadu Floods 2015, Vardah Cyclone 2016, Ockhi Cyclone 2017, Cuddalore Floods 2018, Gaja Cyclone 2018 and had involved in Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstructive activities at different level to ensure the social inclusion. Likewise, SASY has been engaged in emergency relief response during COVID 19 Pandemic situation.

This is one of the major epidemic occurred and Tamil Nadu ranks high in the country with more number of positive cases. Also due to the self-isolation and social distancing people were not able to get adequate food and suffering without basic amenities. The Dalits and Adivasi communities are naturally vulnerable, social excluded; it is severely manifested during the disaster times and also exists during this COVID 19 Pandemic too. This affected the loss of livelihood of the people and their daily survival. The humanitarian assistance is very much needed and the affected people need to be provided immediate relief assistance including dry ration and WASH kits to tackle this worst situation.

SASY has provided more than 4500 relief packages to the needy, vulnerable, marginalized and socially excluded communities including Dalits, Adivasis, Single Women, Elderly, Migrant Workers, Transgenders across 7-8 districts of Tamil Nadu. The relief kits included rice, dhal, sugar, salt, cooking oil and biscuits to the vulnerable families to cope with their daily survival.

4.2 Emergency Relief Response – Cyclone Burevi 2020:

After 26th December 2004-Tidal wave (Tsunami), the usual monsoon situation happened every year in Coastal district of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam District. The same situation has been occurred under the influence of Cyclone Burevi, several parts of the central region of the State, particularly Cuddalore and Nagapattinam heavy rainfall due to the north-east monsoon. This is the continuation to the Cyclone NIVAR which occurred in the last week of November (24-28, 2020) 2020 and following this, the Cyclone Burevi caused heavy rainfall and massive floods across the Cuddalore District. The majority of the Dalit and Adivasis communities are living in the flood affected areas including the river and coastal sides are very poor. They have been frequently experiencing the heavy rain in their hamlets parts. They often became homeless due to the frequent flood and cyclone hit and their huts always washed away by the cyclone and flood. In these backgrounds the humanitarian assistance is very much needed and the affected families need to be provided immediate relief assistance including Food, Shelter, Warm Clothes, WASH and essential Medicines to prevent communicable diseases in this Cyclone Burevi as well as in the COVID 19 Pandemic Situation.





Since the situation is worsening SASY is immediately focusing on providing relief assistance to the worst affected families. And later will engage in advocacy, lobbying with the government departments for permanent housing to the affected families and restoration in long term.



The total scheduled caste population of 5780 families are living in 43 villages of 5 Blocks in Cuddalore District and is residing in thatched and hut with mud houses inundated due to heavy rains causes and influence of Cyclone Burevi. The affected families are living in watery floors and are not able to sleep and have lost their belongings such as household utensils, Clothes, books, dry rations and groceries items. These families are suffering without food, clothes and almost all their belongings were washed out.

SASY had immediately through distributing relief packages to more than 1600 worst cyclone affected Dalit and Adivasi families from the villages of Cuddalore District. The relief packages included 25 kgs of rice, two kg dhal, two kg Sugar, one kg salt, two litres of cooking oil, Masala items for cooking, Bed Sheets, Plastic Mats, Milk Powder, Dettol, KabasuraKudineer, Biscuits, Phenol, Sanitary Napkins and Tarpaulin Sheet.

5. Children Resource Centers and Promoting Children Participation:

Dalit and Adivasi children are subjected to various kinds of caste-based discriminatory practices, boycott and oppression in schools. Affected as they are by these cruelties at a very young age, they bear the pain of these practices well into adulthood. Many students discontinue their studies on account of the violence they are forced to endure.





SASY's Children Resource Centres (CRC) is functioning in 25 villages and due to the sudden outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic the centres were shut down. On 29th and 30th of September 2020 the CRC centres in 25 villages were inaugurated and the children were capacitated on the safety and preventive measures of COVID 19. SASY's CRC centres are functioning on daily basis for two hours in the morning even in the lock down days with the specified safety measures of the government. 90% of the children are studying in government schools where they do not have online classes and hence SASY's CRC facilitators are assisting the children to acquire knowledge on languages, math, science and social studies since 2007 to combat caste-based discriminations and oppressions in schools and promoting the right to survival, development, participation and protection. The CRC centres are functioning with the assistance of CRC facilitators. Around 30 CRC facilitators were capacitated through virtual meeting on the perspectives of human rights, child rights for effective functioning at the CRC Centres.

6. Cultural Training for CRC Children:

The Children groups from the child resource centers have explored their inclination towards art and culture. Many children have earned accolades in cultural performances in different forums on the issues of child rights.



The ultimate aim of the cultural training is the cultural team will perform on thematic issues of Dalit and Adivasi children to generate awareness in the community. The cultural team will perform on themes of discrimination, disaster preparedness, and children rights under UNCRC. In Cuddalore District, the Dalit communities in SASY's working villages have access their rights and entitlements through SASY initiatives and its solidarity organization initiatives in terms of Access to Justice and entitlements as well as Education and Disaster Response and rehabilitation.

In continuation of this journey, SASY has provided cultural training in November 2020 by the expert cultural Team where 20 CRC Children, 5 Facilitators, 5 Volunteers participated and adept in local Dalit and Adivasi music and instruments. This cultural group will promote Dalit culture and also generate awareness on Rights of Dalit and Adivasi children through cultural expression by addressing caste discrimination, exclusion in schools, disaster response, right to adequate housing etc.

7. Program on Education and Awareness Building, Mathuranthagam:

There is a very less space and opportunities provided for the Dalits and Adivasi children in their schools. They need additional support if they have to perform well in the school. They are also conscious of the fact that their children are being provided inferior quality of education. Their children attend the school where the teachers' motivation level is low and therefore the children are not taught properly. These children are not provided equal space in learning on par with the non-Dalit children. They are discriminated by their teachers, peer group, friends and neighbors.

Child Centric learning was promoted and effectively functioning for the poor marginalized children in Mathuranthagam. And they have acquired academic knowledge, skills, sports and extra-curricular knowledge. During the COVID situation, various capacity building programs and engagement with students were organized through virtual medium. The children had also discussion on gender and patriarchy and during the International Women's Day the mothers' of these children were provided legal awareness on domestic violence act.

8. Social Promotions and Empowering Women:

SASY's livelihood sector had identified and works with women from marginalized communities who are engaged in small business ventures. We have reached out to more than 350 women directly and more than 525 indirectly through different livelihood initiatives across the 52 villages of Cuddalore district

During the COVID Pandemic & COVID Second Wave the women federation members have contributed and volunteered themselves to study the COVID situation in their respective villages by identifying COVID positive cases and accompanying them to the medical treatment and other services of the state government. The women federation members have also engaged in undertaking a research study on the impact of Dalit and Adivasi communities in COVID situation.



Parallel to this, the women federation members had also received capacitation on SC/ST PoA Act, disaster preparedness and promoting community task force (CTF) in responding to the emergency situation ensuring with equality and dignity for the marginalized and vulnerable communities. They had discussion on the right to housing for the Dalit families in the working villages. Following this, the federation leaders had submitted collective petition to the District Collector, Cuddalore seeking 367 permanent housing under the government schemes in 9 villages of Cuddalore District



9. Empowerment of Women & Children (Mahalir Sakthi, Madurai) in the Slums of Madurai:

Mahalir Sakthi is committed to serve the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, in the City of Madurai Slums. Health, Education and Employment are the focus of Mahalir Sakthi and stepping towards forming an egalitarian society.

It has monitored education of 72 students in their daily coaching, learning typing, improving computer skills, English coaching, General Knowledge, Book reading, public speaking and grooming in leadership; helped 41 students to get admission in schools and colleges, assisted 32 students to apply Minority scholarships.



Provided career guidance to 16 students to apply for TNPSC and competitive exams; Organized 10 meetings to the young persons, on motivational and personality development. 5 Health lectures have been organized. Promoted livelihood opportunities to 35 young women by learning tailoring; 24 students learnt basic typing skill; 10 students are learning computer which is a new initiative and through our career guidance 58 women and youth have got job in various places. Helped 38 women to access scheme of NalaVariam. 78 families accessed the Government benefits of Ration Card, Aadhar Card, PAN card, old age pension, birth and death certificates, community certificates, OBC certificate Income certificate, legal heir certificates and deserted women benefits.



During **COVID 19 Pandemic**, raised donation of Rs. 70,000/- and distributed food items of Rice, Dhal, Biscuits, Cooking oil, grocery items and Hand wash soaps, Masks to 450 families, including deserted women, widows and old people .

10. Project on Initiative to Ensure Socio-Economic Rights of Excluded Community in Minority Institutions:

The aim of the project is to combat against the casteism in the Churches and to undertake the mission of engaging with Church leadership mainly through Dialogue- Monitoring, Advocacy and Lobbying- to ensure equality, dignity, space and justice for Dalit Christians. Despite Corona and its off shoot, the Core Team – GB of NDCW- met Seven times until March 2021- all through Virtual calls decided certain important aspect like Constitution building. With the main objectives of further intensifying the mission of NDCW of engaging with Churches to end discrimination of Dalit Christians at various levels within the Church and at the State levels; and to build up Dalit Christian youth leadership in Churches, NDCW Chapters have been attempted to be promoted through initial meetings in various States such as Kerala, Jammu, Gujrat, Punjab and Tamilnadu.

Two fact finding missions were undertaken during the reporting period. The cries of anguish of Dalit Christians, struggle for justice, narratives of affirmation and accomplishment both within the Church and in society are not adequately highlighted in the local, national, or international Christian news portals. These digital platforms that are in existence focus mainly on giving coverage to Christian dogmatic discourses and Church happenings and not specifically on the issues of DCs. Therefore, NDCW felt, there was a dire need for a News portal for Dalit Christians to share their realities, pain, pathos, passion, and accomplishment; to voice their demands for equality, dignity and justice; and to claim their rightful spaces in the various ministries and missions of the Church. As a result, NDCW launched an ONLINE news portal- 'Dalit Christian Digest' on the eve of Human Rights Day, December 09, 2020. It started carrying news of DCs.

