

PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION FOR PEOPLE'S EDUCATION (POPE)

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



FOREWORD



It is my immense pleasure to speak about the work completed in 2019-2020 helped us to effectively respond and assisted the survivors of caste atrocities for increasingly access to justice and economic entitlements.

We have proactively engaged and work towards promoting leadership among children of socially excluded communities by facilitating creative learning through Children

Resource Centre (CRC) reached 150 children directly. CRC is one of the core activities of our intervention for ensuring social inclusion of Dalit and Adivasi children in the educational institutions by breaking prejudices and stigma based on their birth identity.

The key learning that will help us to intensify our interventions by evolving escalative strategies to achieve the results and multiply the impacts in it interventions for the advancement lives of Dalit and Adivasi communities.

We sincerely express our gratitude to you all and very importantly we acknowledge your incredible support that you have extended to us in the past and your very meaningful support, handholding, accompaniment have helped us lot to accomplish many significant interventions to accelerate justice for the people who needed and we sincerely thank all the donors, stakeholders and community, volunteers and staff team for provided immense support and let us continue the journey with escalative strategies to increasingly access to justice with dignity.

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About POPE

People's Organisation for People Education (POPE) is a registered, voluntary, secular, non-profit organization established in the year 1992, is aiming at to Create a Just Society with Equality and Dignity of Every Person. POPE strives to achieve this objective by Educating, Enabling Opportunities, Strengthening Access to Justice System and bringing socio & economic sustainable changes in the lives of Dalit, Adivasi and other marginalized communities in the state of Tamil Nadu.

POPE is committed to strengthen the Access to Justice System for increasingly access to justice for the Dalits, Adivasis and other most Margilasied communities in the state of Tamil Nadu through engaging in Dalit Human Rights Monitoring, Adjudication, Engagement with the State and National Human Rights Redressal Institutions, Campaign and Publication.

VISION:

Create a just society with Equality and Dignity of Every Person

MISSION:

Protect and promote the fundamental rights of Dalits, Adivasis and other most Marginalized community through quality education, accessing economic entitlements and justice

PROMOTING FRONTLINE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS:

Capacity Building Training is one of the strategically approaches that we strongly believe in transformation and change through the efficient engagement and participation of the local communities. We have capacitated 120 Human Rights Defenders from the community on Human Rights Mechanisms to effectively address the incidents of alleged forms of Human Rights Violations. Especially the new amendments and the special features in the Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 2018 were widely disseminated through capacity building programs. The trained Human Rights Defenders were effectively addressed the incidents of caste atrocity and Human Rights violations and abuses.

Dalit Human Rights Monitoring is one of the core activity of WITNESS for Justice and the trained Human Rights Defenders were undertaken 5 Fact finding mission on the incidents of caste atrocities and brutal forms of Human rights violation committed against Dalits. The cases have been meticulously followed up by the defenders and accompanied the survivors to gain intern compensation and justice.



SYSTEMATIC HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ENSLAVING COMMUNITY THROUGH PREJUDICE:

KURAVAR is one of the sub castes of scheduled castes known as Dalits in TamilNadu and historically they were notified as "Born Criminals" with prejudice since the British colony in India through legitimate oppression by enacting tyrannical law called "Criminal Tribes Act". The act was repealed in independent India but still this community has been criminalizing by the police with stigmatization and prejudice. WITNESS for Justice closely works with this community and monitor the Incidents of police torture and addressed them by using legal measures in the appropriate redressal institutions. Totally 2 incidents were addressed and accompanied them to gain justice.



INTERVENTION OF POPE IN IMPORTANT CASES

22 year old pregnant women died in Primary Health Centre due to Medical Negligence

Sakthikali (22 yrs), W/O Manimuthu (29 yrs), residing at EMG Nagar in Pudur, Madurai. Her husband is working as a carpenter. Sakthikali got married to Manimuthu last year. Sakthikali got admitted in K Pudur Urban Primary Health Centre for her first delivery on 14.9.2019, Saturday afternoon at around 2.00 pm. She was accompanied by her mother Panchavarnam and mother-in-law Subbulakshmi. She did her regular check-ups in the same hospital during the course of her pregnancy. On 14.9.2019, Saturday, Sakthikali was examined by the duty doctor at 5.30 pm and the doctor provides assurance to Sakthikali's family of getting normal delivery. The doctor leaves the Urban Primary Health Centre at around 6.00 pm after her duty time over.

On 14.9.2019 at around 7.00 pm, she began experiencing labour pains and was taken inside to the labour ward by the nurse, who was on duty at the hospital. At around 2.00 p.m, Sakthikali, in severe pain, came out of labour ward, asked her family members to take her to Government Rajaji Hospital to perform surgery instead of normal delivery. On that time, Sakthikali's husband requested the nurse to refer his wife Sakthikali to Governement Rajaji Hospital, but she refused to allow his wife to send Government Rajaji Hospital.

Without presence of Doctor, the nurse had performed a delivery for Sakthikali, in Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC), K.Pudur, Madurai. During Delivery time, Sakthikali had severe breathing trouble at around 3.00 am and has been rushed to the emergency unit of Government Rajaji Hospital where she declared as brought dead. Sakthikali and her unborn child could be saved, if the duty nurse transferred her to Government Rajaji Hospital, Madurai in a right time.

POPE has conducted a fact finding in Madurai. On behalf of the victim, we have prepared and sent a complaint to the District Collector, National Human Rights

Commission and other respective authorities. With the effort of POPE, SHRC had taken this case as suo moto. NHRC come forward and asked the Commissioner of Police to enquire the case in detail and report the same. Writ Petition filed before Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, seeking direction to investigate and relief to the deceased family.

Madurai Schoolboy Attacks Dalit Classmate with Blade After Making Casteist Remark



Saravanakumar, a 14-year-old boy, residing with his parents in Maravapatti Colony Street, Vadipatti Taluk, Madurai District. He is the only son for his parents. He is studying 9th standard in Palamedu Government Higher Secondary School. He belongs to Hindu Arundhathiyar community. His father is a hearing-impaired person and not able to speak properly, working as a painter in local village. His mother is doing the work of rearing goats.

Saravanakumar went to school as usual on Friday, 11.10.2019. After school, Saravanakumar and his friend Mohanraj who are in the same class, waiting for the bus to go home from school at around 4.30 pm. The duo had left their school bags on the floor of the bus stop to buy ice cream. At that time, Mahaeswaran (age 14), belonging to the Hindu Agamudaiyar community of Maravarapatti village, studying with Saravanakumar in the same class, was hiding school bag of Mohanraj. After learning that the bag was

hidden by Maheswaran, the both are went asking for the same. Saravanakumar has been verbally abused by referring caste with slur. Mahaeswaran, who was hiding a blade in his shirt pocket, torn from upper to lower part of the back of Saravanakumar, causing a blood wound. Saravanakumar had treatment at Madurai Government Hospital from 11.10.2019 to 14.10.2019.

FIR has been filed against Mahaeswaran with Cr No. 156/2019, under Sec 294(b) and 324 of IPC and Sec 3(1)(r), 3(1)(s), 3(2)(va) of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. On behalf of the victim, we have sent complaint to all the concerned authorities. Mahaeswaran has been produced before the Juvenile Justice Board of Madurai District. The victim has received Rs. 50000 as compensation from the state authorities. The victim's mother expressed their gratitude for the support throughout the entire process of intervention.



PUBLICATION:

VISUAL NARRATIVE OF THE LIVES OF KURAVARS:

KURAVAR community is one of the ancient trader by occupation and extensive traveler by nature having very interesting human character with huge social capital. They are the good storyteller, very traditional healers and well established salt traders. Their entire lives were collapsed during their establishment of Railway Transportation and the enactment of salt Act. The main livelihood of their salt trade was completely destroyed by the British and their economy became very fragile which pushed them into huge vulnerability. The Community became nomad and later the British branded them as "Criminals". This has been continuing even in Free India. The community has been targeted for brutal forms of police atrocities and false charges and they are stigmatized with Criminal Identity. WITNESS for justice is trying to bring counter narratives of their ancient life with historical evidences to create public opinion to free from the social stigma and prejudice.



RESEARCH:

The law itself will not serve or implement in the mute spectator system and therefore it needs adequate monitoring and engagements to implement and activate the system.

Article 17 of the **constitution** abolishes the practice of untouchability.

The practice of Untouchability is an offence and anyone doing so is punishable by law. Despite the untouchability is prevails everywhere in India. WITNESS for Justice undertook a study on Untouchability and through RTI and found 502 villages where practiced untouchability from the data obtained from the Law Enforcement Department and another RTI had filed to obtain the data of Non-Untouchability villages where the state

சாதி வன்கொடுமை மாவட்டங்கள் – தமிழ்நாடு

Witness For Justice, Madurai.



~ சமூக நீதி அமைச்சகம் அறிக்கை 2008

government has been giving award to those villages. The purpose of the study is to bring the state accountability to abolish Untouchability and effective implementation of the SC/ST PoA Act 2018 and ensure the prevention of atrocities. The report is yet to release and the material will be used as an advocacy material and filing a PIL.

CHILDREN RESOURCE CENTER (CRC):

A CHILDREN CENTER FOR CHANGE:

Children are the potential change makers especially it is very important to work among the children of socially excluded groups. WITNESS for Justice has forming a CRC in the villages to enable space for the children to discover their potentiality and self worthy beyond their regular educational Excellency. CRC has encouraging children to make their own spaces by discovering their inherent talents and enhance their capacity and skills. WITNESS for Justice in collaboration with CEDAR provides training on Art and crafts and photography skills to the children to enhance their creative capacities and motivates innovations to realize their full potentials and self worthy. This hugely impacted among the children and increased their self-confidence beyond their academic standards.



WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION

International Children's Day has been celebrated in the working villages of POPE in Dindigul District on the theme of **"Investing in our future means investing in our children"**. The CRC children actively participated in the drawing competition organized by POPE. During the competition, the children were involved very enthusiastically. The members of the women group invited to the children's day celebration.

OBSERVING ENVIRONMENTAL DAY

POPE has organized a drawing competition on observing the environmental day. The theme of the competition is focusing on climate change and Biodiversity. The CRC children actively took part in the competition. A Colorful picture was drawn by all the children to express their view regarding climate change and Biodiversity. All the children were provided with a small prize for their effort.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON PERSONAL HYGIENE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Personal Hygiene and Environmental Sanitation campaign organized for the Adolescent Children in the working villages of POPE. The adolescent children were imparted about self-hygiene and to follow the habit of using toilets and maintain cleanliness. During the campaign, IEC materials and handbills distributed to the community people. It will help them to improve their knowledge of Personal hygiene.