



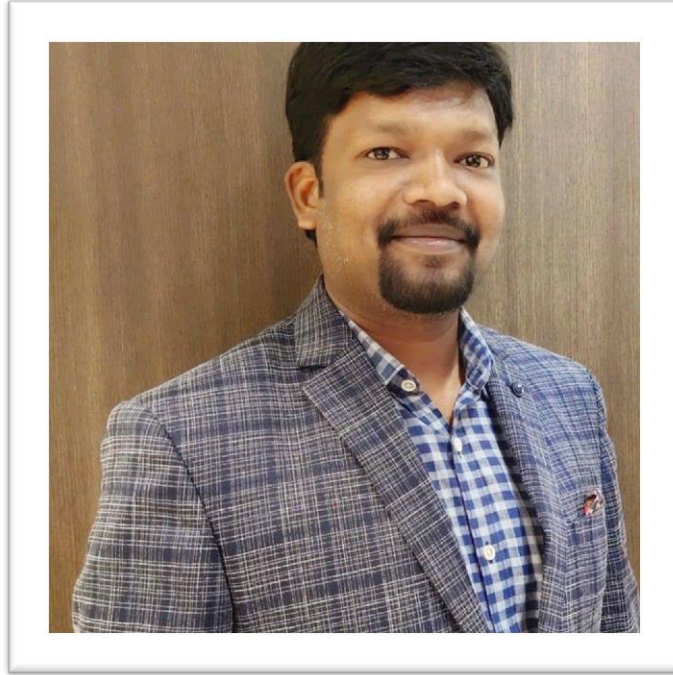
ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

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

Project Office: 109- Karpaga Nagar 7th Street, K.Pudur,

Madurai 625007.



In the memory of Adv. Pandian MSW., LLB

Founder of Witness for Justice and Executive Director of POPE

This year is a very challenging year for the POPE Team since sudden demise of Our Executive Director Adv. Pandian on 12th July 2021. He was the one who dynamically involved in implementing and coordinating the project activities with the staff in and around Tamilnadu. He had worked intensively for the upliftment of marginalised community.

Adv. Pandian had 20 years of experience in the field of human rights both at the national and international forums. The executive director was an alumnus of “International Visiting Leadership Program” (IVLP 2019) a prestigious program of the United States of America (USA) having recognized by his work on protection and promoting human rights and justice among the most marginalized communities in India.

He proactively involved in advocacy, lobbying with State and Central Government for ensuring social inclusion of Dalit and Adivasi by breaking prejudices and stigma. He wanted to research on the systematic violations committed on Kuravar community as he addressed their complaints of illegal detention, torture and sexual harassment. With the intention of creating critical advocacy material to engage in proactive action with the human rights redressal institutions and judiciary, he initiated this research.

Adv Pandian was immensely contributed and played a critical role with the capacity of state convener of national coalition for strengthening the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 which is a national coalition consisting of around 500 human rights organization in India that advocated to bring amendments in existing the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Preventions of Atrocities) Act 1989.

He had many dreams and strategies for the upliftment of marginalised community but his departure has been great loss to many for whom he cared, going out of his way. However, we will continue our work for the rights of mariginalised community as a team on his path.

Message from the Executive Director

As we look back at the past year it is with humility that I place before you, our reflection of the financial year 2021-2022. Despite several challenges we made significant progress in the journey we have taken to get where we are today. Every day we endeavor to take small steps towards to access the justice and strive towards as equitable future.



I appreciate and acknowledge the POPE team for the bravery and determination that they have shown in mobilizing the community and Children to access their rights through trainings and alterative pedagogy. Additionally I would like to congratulate the team for the effort they have put towards initiating the Children Resource Center in 5 villages of Tanjavur and 2 villages of Madurai District.

As part of our commitment to end Police atrocities, caste based discrimination, inequality, injustice POPE has developed an exclusive approach to prevent commission of caste atrocities and ensure effective implementation of The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes {Prevention of Atrocities} Amendment Act 2015 by systematic interventions and meticulous follow up of cases by accompanying the national and international human rights mechanisms. 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 Kuravar communities.

POPE has proactively responded to the pandemic COVID-19 and recent flood happened in 2021. POPE has provided relief kit after conducting rapid assessment to know the current situation of the community. POPE has provided relief kit to 800 marginalized families during the Second wave of COVID-19 and 300 families during floods. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our supporters, donors without whom we would not be where we are, thank you for believing in our work that POPE does.

I appreciate the great work done by the team and congratulate them on the breadth of fresh air, energy, knowledge and expertise they have brought to the organization. I have such confidence that the work will surge ahead with the continued commitment and energy.

But our inspiration continues to come from the ground where our community is fighting small and big battles for a sustainable future. I specially would like to acknowledge the Kuravar Women who are doubly burdened but who continue to fight with enormous power to access justice. We salute their resilience and strength. We draw on this strength as we enter yet another year.

ABOUT POPE

People's Organisation for People Education (POPE) is a registered, voluntary, secular, non-profit organization established in the year 1992, to create a Just Society with Equality and Dignity of Every Person. POPE strives to achieve this objective through quality Education to the Children of Dalits, Adivasis, and Promoting Entrepreneurship, Strengthening Access to Justice System, Social Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction, Management and bringing Socio & Economic sustainable changes in the lives of Dalits, Adivasis and other marginalized communities 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 Margilased 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.

WHERE WE WORK

POPE is primarily working in 7 districts namely Madurai, Dindigul, Theni, Sivagangai, Virudhunagar, Tanjore, Nagapattinam in the state of Tamil Nadu and networking with the State, National and International Campaigns and Coalitions.

Our Objectives:

- To Ensure Quality Education through Art and Media and Inclusive Development of the Children of Socially Excluded Communities
- Capacitate and Promoting the Dalit Women Leadership to increasingly Access Economic Entitlements
- Capacitate the Local Communities and CSO, CLOs for Strengthening Access to Justice System for increasingly access to Justice by the Socially Excluded Communities
- Capacitate the Socially Excluded Communities in Social Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and ensure Resilient Lives
- Promote Social Entrepreneurship among the Socially Excluded Communities and Enhance Business Leadership to engage in Mainstream Market and Economic Growth.
- Research and Publication

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2020-2021



COVID-19 -Relief Kit
provided to 800 families



Alternative Pedagogy



Colours of Smile-
Children's Festival



Flood Relief Kit provided
to 300 families



Capacity Building
Program

IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN 2021-2022

Dalit Human Rights monitoring and Legal Intervention:

POPE has effectively involved in monitoring human rights violation issues committed against the marginalised communities, especially Kuravar Community. POPE aims to hold the State accountability by responding to the incidents of caste atrocities by taking adequate measures by the state to render justice to the survivors of police atrocities.

This year, POPE has undertaken 10 fact finding missions on various forms of police torture and caste atrocities occurred against Kuravars and Dalits and effectively addressed in the districts of Tanjavur, Kallakuruchi, Madurai, Theni and Virudhunagar in the state of Tamil Nadu during April 2021 to March 2022.







Legal Intervention:

Legal Intervention is the major part in this project. When Police Atrocity/ illegal detention occurred, immediately a person seeks legal assistance to safeguard the arrested person. During this reporting project, we have effectively addressed 17 cases of caste atrocity, illegal detention, police atrocity cases and follow up of cases. The highlight of the Legal intervention during the reporting period follows

- *About 17 survivors of caste atrocity and police torture had received legal assistance from POPE.*
- *Five Writ petition filed before the High Court of Madras, Chennai for not to harass the family of Police Torture to render justice that results in court directed the police that not to harass the family in 5 cases.*
- *16 bail petitions filed in the cases of police torture and 13 bail petitions granted by the district court.*
- *Two Protection Petition filed before the High court of Madurai Bench and order received in favour of the victim.*
- *Two Direction Petitions filed for getting direction to file a FIR under the appropriate section of SC/ST PoA before the Special Court of SC/ST matter and order received in favour of the victim and now FIR registered by the Inspector in the concerned Police Station.*

Case 1: Arokkanam Double Murder Issue:

Two youths belongs to Dalit Community were murdered by a mob of dominant community. A clash had between the youth of Vanniyar community and Dalit Community in Soganur village of Arokonam Taluk of Ranipettai District. The Dalit youths are rounded up and attacked with sharp weapons. POPE had conducted fact finding on 9.4.2021 and brings out the fact of the issue to the light. POPE Intervene this matter follows

-  *POPE done Media advocacy to bring the real fact of the incident to the public on 16.4.2021*
-  *The report of Fact Finding circulated to the Civil society Organisations, Public and TN MP Kanimozhi and Thol Thirumavalavan to intervene in this matter.*
-  *Continuous follow up of this incident resulted in 7 accused being booked under Goondas Act.*
-  *Rs. 4, 12,500 has been given to each family member of the deceased by the state government.*
-  *Rs. 1 lakh given to Soundararajan and Madbankumar who was brutally attacked with weapons*
-  *The deceased family members will get a pension of RS 5000 monthly still one of the family members will get a government job, assured by the state government.*

CASE 2: Mr. Muthuvadivel S/O Rasu

Mr. Muthuvadivel S/O Rasu is living with his family in Theni District. He belongs to the Hindu Kuruvan Community of Scheduled Caste. He has been working as a sanitary worker for about 13 years. A dominant caste man Ashok throwing his Slippers on his face and verbally abused him in filthy and derogatory language by referring to his caste name in Public asking the public to provide garbage by segregating biodegradable and non-degradable trash based on the instruction given by this superior. He had given complaint against Ashok but the police did not file a FIR under SC/ST PoA Act.

POPE has done Fact Finding on the incident after that we have sent a complaint to lodge FIR under SC/ST PoA Act. The police provide CSR copy instead of FIR, then again WITNESS for Justice intervened and challenged the negligence of police by sending legal notice to initiate criminal proceedings against police under Sec 4 of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 2015. But the police did not filed FIR since the accused having political support. POPE filed **Direction petition at**

the SPL Court for SC/ST at Theni seeking direction to file the FIR sec 3(1) (r) 3(1) (s) of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and 294 (b), 324, 506(1) of the Indian Penal Code in the FIR. The court directed the Inspector of Police filed FIR for more than 90 days after the incident with Cr No 471/2021 with sec 3(1) (r) 3(1) (s) of Sc/ST PoA Act and 294 (b), 324, 506(1) of IPC. Still now the accused has not been arrested but he suspended from his position (Military Police) Witness for Justice is accompanying with the survivors and in the process of filing a petition in the Court. We are meticulously working for getting justice for the victim.

Case 3: RATHNA DEVI – W/O LATE RAJA FROM THENI

Rathna Devi's husband Raja was died while serving as a sanitary worker in the Palanichattypatti Municipality. She applied for compassionate appointment on the basis of educational qualification (SSLC). The Assistant Director of Town Panchayats allotted post for Sanitary Worker and not considering her qualification and insulted her for not taking steps to allot the post and also no action taken for giving false information to the higher authorities stating that no vacancy other than Sanitary Worker. On behalf of the victim, POPE prepared complaint and sent to Inspector of Police, SP, DSP and CM special Cell, the Director of Town Panchayat, The district Collector.

With the continuous intervention of POPE, the victim has got placed in Government Department after considering the qualification and also filed a FIR against the Asst. Director of Town Panchayat under the provisions of SC/ST PoA Act.

CASE 4: FIVE DALIT MEN ARRESTED IN ILLEGAL DETENTION IN KALLAKURICHI DISTRICT

On 14th November 2021, at around 11.45 pm, a special team consists of 10 policemen came in a white Tempo to Bhuvaneshwari house in mufti. At that time, her husband Prakash (25 yrs), relative Dharmaraj (35 yrs) S/O Periyasamy, Selvam (55 yrs) S/O Kannan and children were sleeping. They asked her husband and two of her relatives to come to the police station for an enquiry. They verbally abused her husband derogatorily referred caste name with slur for asking the reason behind the investigation. They have taken three persons without any warrant. They refused to provide the details of arrest. On the next day, the same police arrested two persons from the same family without informing the family. They were kept in illegal custody for five days and brutally tortured by the police to get confession

from the arrested person. Police asked them to identify at least one pawn shop so they can claim that they stole jewelry at the house. On refusing this, the three were booked for 13 different cases of theft, including one from 2020. They were remanded in Kallakurichi Sub Jail.

INTERVENTION

- ✚ Bail applied for three times in Kallakurichi Judicial Magistrate Court and the Hon'ble Judge has directed the petitioners to produce two sureties for the bond worth Rs.15,000/-Out of that, one surety to be Government Servant. That is, each Petitioner/Accused has to produce two sureties for each case which makes 24 Sureties for 12 cases.
- ✚ POPE has filed revised modification petition against the order of JM Kallakurichi before the High Court of Madras and received the order that the petitioner to produce 1 surety to be a Government Servant and 1 relative surety.
- ✚ We have released the three innocent people from jail after 5 months of Judicial Custody.

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON COMMUNITY VIDEO FOR YOUTHS

POPE has organized a two days capacity building training on community video for youths on 17th & 18th September at Centre for Experiencing Socio Cultural Interaction (CESCI), MADURAI as part of the project activity funded by the



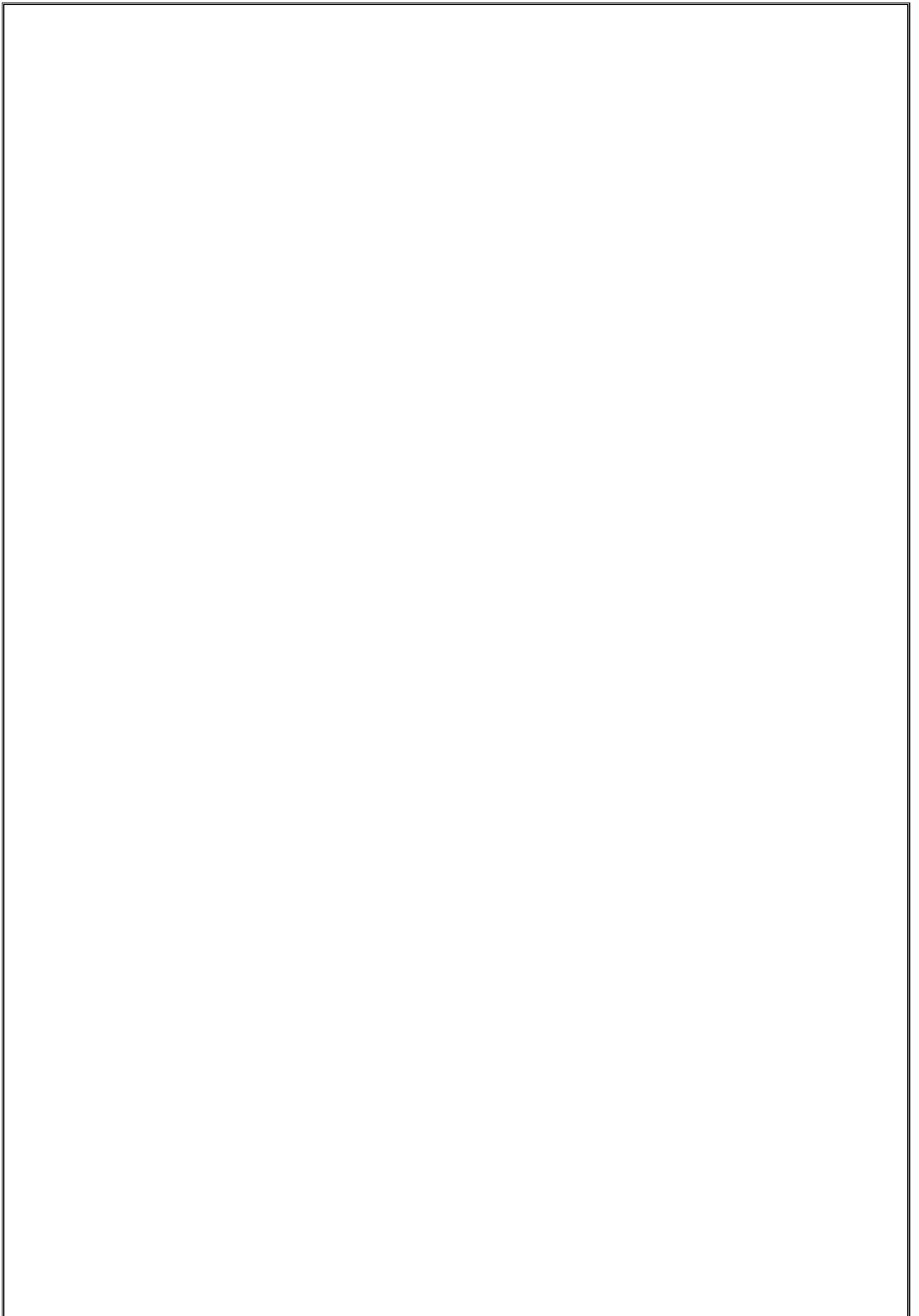
Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR). About 35 participants from different districts of Tamilnadu such as Madurai, Dindigul, Theni, Virudhunagar, Namakkal, Tanjavur and Chennai actively participated in the two days program.

The main purpose of the training is to capacitate the participants on the mobile video documentary skills through intensive training technical skills, knowledge practical experiences in field and legal standards since the continuous systematic form of police torture and atrocities had never been recorded or documented. So police brutality needs to be documented in the form of evidence for adjudicative purposes. This two days training program has been planned by compiling different topics since the participants are youths and they have to familiarize themselves with the concept of Understanding of Human Rights, Basic Rights and Rights of People during arrest by the police and how to digitally document the video and its importance.

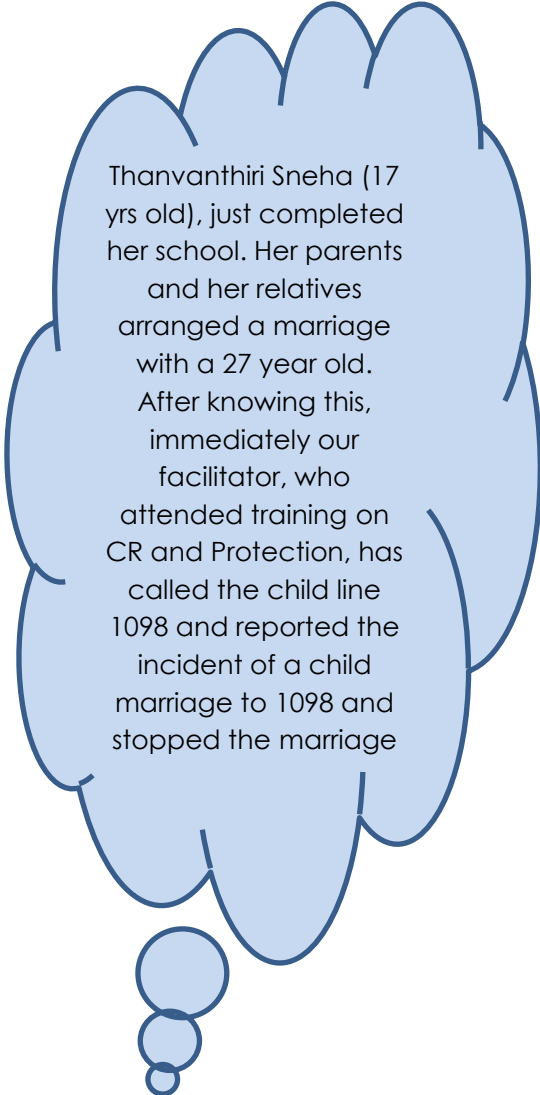


RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Witness for Justice, has been progressively applying Right to Information (RTI) as an important tactic to collect information from Government Sources. So far, we have sent 20 RTI's on different topics such as untouchability practicing village, violence-prone area, list of cases filed under POCSO Act to analyse the violation against children, list of criminals, collection of crime number details from concerned police station etc., after obtaining the data from the respective authority, the data will be compiled and made into a consolidated report.



TRAINING ON CHILD RIGHTS AND CHILD PROTECTION



Thanvanthiri Sneha (17 yrs old), just completed her school. Her parents and her relatives arranged a marriage with a 27 year old. After knowing this, immediately our facilitator, who attended training on CR and Protection, has called the child line 1098 and reported the incident of a child marriage to 1098 and stopped the marriage

The CRC facilitators were capacitated on Child Rights and Child Protection. It is very much important to understand the concept of Child rights and child protection. People who are working with children must familiarize themselves with the concept of child related issues and how to address those issues with the statutory authorities. On the basis of that, the CRC facilitators were trained on the topic includes UNCRC, Fundamental rights of Children, and types of torture faced by children, children who needs protection and state level protection and complaint mechanism. They also capacitated in handling the issues like child marriage, sexual abuse of children with the support of parents collective and local authorities. The importance of District Child Protection Unit and Child Line 1098 also explained to the facilitators so that they are able to apply the concept in their respective villages.

HUMANITARIAN AID DURING PANDEMIC SITUATION:

Apart from addressing the immediate vulnerabilities of the affected communities, POPE's humanitarian interventions are predominantly in the areas of Shelter, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and livelihood restoration during COVID -19 Pandemic and Flood 2021. POPE implemented these interventions directly as well as through local NGO partners.

Experience has shown that one of the key determinants of POPE's effective and efficient humanitarian operations is the capacity of POPE and its local implementing partners in terms of systems and procedures, staff skills and expertise.

COVID-19 CHILD CENTRIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE

POPE responded to protect the Children of Socially Excluded Communities from hunger and ensure their lives with Dignity, mental well-being through adequate food grains, psychosocial support and positive outlook during COVID19 Pandemic Lockdown. It is to develop a child-centric emergency relief to make fullest realization of Child Rights during post-corona period thereby developing a paradigm of support that upholds psychological, social, creative, cultural and also nutritional well-being.



A sudden lockdown was enforced in Tamil Nadu on 10th of May 2021 and Government has imposed COVID restrictions. It worsen the lives of most marginalized communities, daily labourer, migrant workers, people who have been engaged in menial jobs. COVID19 lockdown has immensely affected all walks of human life. But it has been severely affected the socially excluded, economically backward communities through loss of livelihood, unemployment and increased financial burden. POPE provided emergency COVID19 food, hygiene, creative learning Art material to 800 children and families of Dalit community in Madurai and Thanjavur for ensuring socio and mental wellbeing of 800 CRC children of Dalit community by providing creative learning art material which helps in reducing hunger and poverty.

FLOOD RELIEF 2021

POPE has identified most flood affected villages in Thanjavur and Villupuram District where most of the Kuravar Communities were highly lives. There are three blocks covering five villages in Thanjavur District and 3 blocks covering 6 villages in Villupuram District.

We have distributed the relief kits to 563 families of marginalized communities in Thanjavur and Villupuram districts to safeguard the life of children and community from hunger.



Children Resource Centre:

CRC established for mainstreaming the voices of Children. CRC is functioning in the evening hours after the school where the children are enjoying their rights through play and learning. We have established 7 Children Resource Centres (CRC Centres) in 2 districts namely Thanjavur and Madurai to enable the children to exhibit the inherent talents. This Centre formed especially for the children between the age group of 8 years to 18 years. This is the greatest platform for the children to improve their talents, develops knowledge, self-esteem and leadership qualities.

About 250 children have been benefitted and they have improved their knowledge of education through art and media. Due to COVID-19, POPE team find difficult in organizing program with Children due to Government Restrictions. But after COVID relaxation, POPE gradually increased in organizing program for children.

POPE has conducted 232 training including art, Photography, Traditional folk art ad Parai. As a result of it, CRC children got improved their knowledge and improved their self-confidence.



CHILDREN REPRESENTATIVE IN GRAM SABHA:



After knowing their rights, the CRC children are applying their Participatory Right in Grama Sabha Meeting held on 15.8.2021 at Sengipatti, Tanjavur District.

The representatives of CRC children and Parents Collective attended a Grama Sabha meeting and submitted an appeal for seeking new building to CRC centre. Since, the centre is functioning in the open ground in the village. The children suffer during rainy days. So they demanded building from the Panchayat Board for the effective functioning of the centre. This is all in the purview of sustainability.

COLOURS OF SMILE-CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

As part of the Children activity, POPE collected the art, models, and photographs of CRC children and conducted an exhibition on the theme of "The COLORS OF SMILE" - Children Festival program at Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer Community Hall, K.K. Nagar, Madurai on 26th of February 2022.



POPE organized a one day Children Festival on the theme of "The COLORS OF SMILE" - Children Festival program at Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer Community Hall, K.K. Nagar, Madurai on 26th of February 2022. About 250 children includes their parents participated in the program. These children are the Kuravar Children are potential victims of police torture, criminalization and social exclusion based

on their birth identity and stigma. They have been experienced multiple forms of oppression and ignorance due to brutal police atrocity. The innocent children and young people are targeted by the police as future criminals by their constructed antecedents. The Children had undergone traumatized experiences by forceful visits to the police station which severely wounded their inner psyche. Many of the children got dropped out from school by frequent visit of police in schools, overextended imprisonment of their parent, disability of their parent by police torture and etc.

The main purpose of this program is

- To bring out the inner talents of the children of marginalized community to direct them to be self-motivated and self-reliant.
- To showcase the talents, creativity and skills of children by displaying their arts, photos and model to others

The Children Resource Centre of Children exhibited their Drawings, Paintings, clay pot designs and art from waste materials photographs during the festival. **Kulasekarankottai CRC, Madurai** received the **"BEST CHILDREN RESOURCE CENTRE"** Award for the year 2021-2022.

Dr. Captain Durai, Chairperson, National Kurinjiyar Samuga Neethi Peravai (NKSNP), Rev. Santhana Sagayam, Secretary, SC/ST Commission, Madurai Arch Diocese, Mr. Guru Prasad, Legal Department of DCPU, Mr. Arulkumar, Social Worker of DCPU, Mr. Thirugnanam, Chief Coordinating Editor, Tamilnadu School Textbooks, Chennai and Mr. Pandiyarajan, Member of Child Welfare Committee was being there on the function

CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION:



Children's Day Program was celebrated in Thirumanur and Sengipatti village of Tanjavur Village with the active participation of Parents Collective. The members of the Parents Collective

contributed to celebrate the children's day by preparing Sweet Pongal. On this day, Mrs.Kala, The Inspector of Police of Sengipatti was invited for the program. She actively participated and spoke about the importance of education. She advised the parents of the children to send all their children to school and ensure regular attendance. Children enjoy their day by showing their talents and performing dance. A Physically challenged boy named Selvam performed a dance during the children's day celebration. There are no words to say his happiness during the program how much he enjoyed without any discrimination.

Illam Thedi Kalvi:

POPE has been selected for the ILLAM THEDI KALVI- education at door step, is a program launched by the Department of Education, Government of Tamilnadu which was drawn up to bridge learning gaps among students. With

குலசேகரன் கோட்டையில் விழிப்புணர்வு கலைநிகழ்ச்சி பிரச்சாரம்

வாடிப்பட்டி மார்ச் 24:-
மதுரை மாவட்டம்
வாடிப்பட்டி பேரூராட்சி
குலசேகரன் கோட்டையில்
தமிழ்நாடு அரசு மாவட்ட
பள்ளிக்கல்வித்துறை, கல்வி
கலாச்சார குழு மற்றும்
மதுரை போப் குழந்தை
வளமையம் இணைந்து
பள்ளி மேலாண்மை குழு
அமைத்தல் பற்றிய விழிப்பு
ணர்வு கலை நிகழ்ச்சி நடந்தது.
இந்நிகழ்ச்சியில் பெற்றோர்களும்
குழந்தைகளும் பங்கேற்றனர்.
இந்த கலைக் குழுவினர்களுக்கு
பயிற்றுவிப்பாளர் பிரியா
நினைவு பரிசு வழங்கி
பாராட்டு தெரிவித்தார்.



students having faced a long gap away from school owing to the pandemic, the volunteers empathize with their mindset, and motivate them with regard to learning.

Mr. Jeyakumar, Art trainer involved in creating awareness among children under this program. On behalf of POPE, We have identified 30 volunteers from Madurai for the Illam Thedi

Kalvi program. Ms. Priya from Kulasekarankottai and Ms. Murugeswari from Munnaiyampatti were selected as evening tutor by the Department of Education.

Awareness campaign on COVID-19:

COVID-19 Awareness Campaign organized in the POPE working villages in Tanjavur District with the active participation of CRC children. This activity helps in creating social responsibility in the minds of children. During the campaign, children raise slogans and ask their parents to put a vaccine to end CoronaVirus in the village. About 25 children and the public participated in the awareness campaign.

No Child Labour:

Internal Assessment has been done to ensure the 100% school attendance and to drop child labour in the village. Due to Covid-19 many families faced economic crisis, as a result many children who are not attaining the age of 18 yrs, are going to petty shops, markets and hotels as child labourers. After school opening, POPE team has conducted an assessment to find out any drop out/child labour in the working villages. As a result of it, we have identified 4 children who are working in petty shops. We have organised parent's collective meeting to send all the children to school and end child labour. As a result, the members of parents collective are monitoring the attendance of school going children in order to prevent/stop child labour in the village.

Net Working with Government Departments, CSOS:

POPE has able to build and maintain the cordial relationship with the departments of Education, District Child Protection Unit and Police department in order to link the target group with for building and ensuring sustainability. This networking with government departments and local panchayats helps in organising program and link them with existing government possible schemes. As a result of it, the school teachers and officials from DCPO agreed to organize program for the children at a specific time interval. Local Panchayat also voluntarily comes and provides building for the CRC centre.

APPEAL TO CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMILNADU

On behalf of POPE, submitted an appeal to the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu in order to prevent the incidences of caste atrocities and to direct appropriate authorities to effectively implement **recommendations** as mandated by SC/ST PoA Amendment Act 2015 in the interest of protecting rights of SC and ST persons in the state of Tamil Nadu.

We are requesting the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Shall

1. Immediately reform the State Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (SVMC) under Rule 16 of the SC/ST [Prevention of Atrocities] Amendment Act 2015 and convene a mandated meeting within stipulated time of July 2021.
2. Take appropriate steps to prevent widespread incidents of caste atrocities perpetuated against the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes in the State of Tamil Nadu by ensuring effective implementation of the SC/ST PoA Amendment Act 2015.

THE HINDU

Implement SC/ST Act in toto, activists urge CM

UDHAV NAIG
CHENNAI

Dalit rights activists and human rights organisations have urged Chief Minister M. K. Stalin to ensure that the State Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meetings, under Rule 16 of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act 2015, are held within the stipulated time in Tamil Nadu.

In a letter to Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, advocate I. Pandiyan, executive director, Witness for Justice, a civil rights outfit, said though there were various provisions to prevent atrocities against the members of the SC and ST community, the State government, in the past, did not make adequate administrative arrangements to ensure effective implementation of the Act. This resulted in a growing number of caste atrocities against the community.

Panel sought

Mr. Pandiyan said that an exclusive commission for the Scheduled Castes should be set up in the State to ensure that the Monitoring and Vigilance Committee meetings are held before the end of July.

VCK general secretary and Villupuram MP D. Ravikumar said that last year he had sought details on the implementation of the SC/ST Act in States and the status of State and district-level vigilance committees across India in Parliament from Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar-chand Gehlot.

3. Take appropriate action and necessary steps to form a State Level Commission for the Scheduled Castes (SCSC) under Article 338 of Indian Constitution.

4. Take necessary steps to enact State Legislation to ensure Non-lapsable & Non-divertible financial resources under Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan (SCP & TSP) and allocation of a budget in proportion to the population of the members of SC/T and formulate development schemes.

5. Direct the Director General of Police (DGP) to strengthen the robust functions of the SC/ST Protection Cell and submit his monthly report on or before 20th day of every month to the Hon'ble Chief Minister under Rule 8.

FIR of Dalit murder case not filed under relevant clauses: team

STAFF REPORTER
MADURAI

In the recent murder case of two Dalit youth near Arakonnam due to a clash between Vanniyars and Dalits, the police have not filed the First Information Report under relevant clauses of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities), Amendment Act, 2015, said I. Pandian, Executive Director of Witness for Justice.

Addressing mediapersons here on Friday, Mr. Pandian explained the findings of the fact-finding team that undertook a field visit near Arakonnam.

Mr. Pandian said that on April 7, a clash had broken

between the youth of Dalit and Vanniyar communities. "The Dalit youths were rounded up and attacked with sharp weapons. Two Dalits Arjunan and Suriya were killed and three of their friends grievously injured," he said.

Mr. Pandian said that two major attackers from the Vanniyar community were sons of leaders from Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). "The Vanniyar community youth have remarked that the Dalit youth must have voted for 'pot' symbol during the clash," he said.

The PMK was instigating hatred against people from

Dalit community, alleged Mr. Pandian.

As a result, the attacks on Dalits were prominent in many parts of the State.

He said that the full statement given by Sundararajan, one of the Dalit youth who was injured, to the policemen had not been recorded in the FIR.

"Especially, the conversation about the 'pot' symbol has not been mentioned in the FIR," said Mr. Pandian. The government must provide a financial assistance of ₹ 1 crore, government job for one family member, and two acres of agricultural land to each of the families of the deceased, added Mr. Pandian.

Children showcase their talent at festival

STAFF REPORTER
MADURAI

Drawings and paintings with messages, wood carvings, paper crafts, clay pot designs and artwork made out of everyday objects by children in the 6 to 15 years age group captivated the visitors at the arts and crafts exhibition organised by People's Organisation for People Education (POPE) at the SOCO Trust here on Saturday.

Apart from the arts and crafts exhibition, the children also displayed cultural and traditional art forms at



Children at an exhibition in Madurai on Saturday. •G. MOORTHY

the the children's festival organised by Madurai-based NGO POPE under the theme 'Colours of Smile'. The children from humble backgrounds were members of

POPE that runs its children resource centres in Madurai and Thanjavur districts.

Executive Director of POPE K. Jeyasudha said that the main objective of the event was to showcase the creative talent of the children. After school hours, the children were trained in various activities. The children's festival was organised for the first time with the support of the children and their parents, she said.

The children were felicitated with certificates for their performances.