



# Social Watch - Tamilnadu

## SOCIAL WATCH – TAMILNADU

April 2023 to March 2024

### MILESTONES OF CHANGE : THE SW-TN JOURNEY

*‘SOCIAL WATCH – TAMILNADU’ (SW-TN) is a State-level Public Policy Research-cum-Advocacy Centre in the south-Indian State of India*

**Social Equity** is the central concern of **SW-TN**. The centre undertakes various research and advocacy initiatives, by interfacing with policy makers, social researchers and Human Rights-cum-grassroots movements in the State and outside, in its efforts to ensure Social Equity by linking public policy with livelihood rights of the socially marginalized sections in the State, such as **Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women and children**.

**SW-TN** uses Budget Advocacy as a key instrument of monitoring Public Policy as well as of evolving Alternate Policy formulations. “**Social Equity Budgeting**” is the over-arching framework of **SW-TN**.

**Vision:** Social Equity is the central concern of SW-TN. And “Social Equity Budgeting” is the over-arching framework of SW-TN.

**Mission:** SW-TN uses Budget Advocacy as a key instrument of monitoring Public Policy as well as of evolving Alternate Policy formulations.

We are one of the 14 Social Action Centres of “**JESUIT CHENNAI PROVINCE**”. We align our goals with the universal goals of Society of Jesus, by engaging ourselves in Empowering the marginalized, preserving & protecting the environment, providing holistic & integral formation to youth promoting justice, peace, reconciliation & secular values, forming our men to be rooted in Ignatian tradition and legacy.



1) Editorial on Tamil Nadu's Gender Budgeting



- Based on continuous discussions and exchanges with Vanessa Peter from IRCUDUC, a detailed news article titled “TN’s Gender Budget breaks barriers, but still trips up” was published in the editorial section of The Times of India on April 4, 2023.
- The article highlighted the importance of intersectional and decentralized gender budgeting in Tamil Nadu while also pointing out existing challenges in its implementation.

2) Study Release Event on “Tamil Nadu State Disaster Relief Norms – A Critical Appraisal from Social Inclusion Perspective”



- On 17 April 2023, Fr. Kumar chaired a session during the Study Release Event on “Tamil Nadu State Disaster Relief Norms – A Critical Appraisal from Social Inclusion Perspective.” The programme was organized by National Dalit Watch – NCHDR, Delhi, in collaboration with COSCO – Madurai, Tamil Nadu, and held at Vestin Park, Chennai.
  - The discussion raised awareness on gaps in relief implementation, strengthened advocacy for inclusive disaster policies, and encouraged collaboration among civil society to improve equitable disaster response systems.
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### 3) Career Guidance and Government Scholarship Awareness Session



- On 19 April 2023, Rajeshwari delivered a session on Career Guidance and Government Scholarships for around 300 students. The programme was organized by Loyola Students Support Services, Chennai, with the aim of guiding students on educational opportunities, career pathways, and available government scholarship schemes.
  - The session increased awareness, helped students understand application processes, and motivated them to plan their academic and career goals with greater confidence. The interactive session allowed students to clarify their doubts regarding courses, scholarships, and career planning.
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### 4) “SPEAK OUT – Rise! Resist! Restore!” – Women Leaders’ Session

- On 21 April 2023, Kamatchi chaired a session titled “SPEAK OUT – Rise! Resist! Restore!” for about 150 grassroots women leaders. The programme was organized by Tamilnadu Dalit Women’s

Movement and held at CSI LITE Auditorium. The event aimed to strengthen the voices and leadership of grassroots women in addressing social injustice and gender-based discrimination.

- The session strengthened confidence among participants, encouraged collective action, and reinforced the role of grassroots women in advancing rights, equality, and community leadership.



### 5) Commemoration of the 86th Birthday of Fr. Stan Swamy



SW-TN organized the 86th birth anniversary commemoration of Fr. Stan Swamy, bringing together activists, students, and civil society members to honour his contributions to Adivasi rights and social justice.

## 6) Awareness Session on Post Matric Scholarships for SC/ST Students



- On 28 April 2023, Rajeshwari presented information on Post Matric Scholarships for about 110 SC/ST students attending a folk artist children's camp. The programme was organized by Alternate Media Centre and held at the Corporation School Office.
- The session increased awareness, equipped students with practical knowledge to access scholarships, and encouraged continued education among children from marginalized communities.

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## 7) Session on Gender Budgeting for Elected Women Representatives

On 11 May 2023, Kamatchi handled a session on Gender Budgeting for elected representatives during a Refresher Training Programme. The programme was organized by State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj at Maraimalainagar. More than 50 women Panchayat leaders from various districts of Tamil Nadu participated in the training.

### Objectives:

- To introduce the concept and importance of Gender Budgeting in local governance.
- To strengthen the capacity of women Panchayat leaders to incorporate gender perspectives in local development planning.
- To encourage elected representatives to ensure equitable allocation of resources for women and marginalized communities.

Participants were guided on how Panchayats can analyze budgets and allocate resources to address the needs of women and vulnerable groups.



**Impacts:**

1. Enhanced understanding on gender-responsive budgeting among women Panchayat leaders.
2. Strengthened the capacity of elected representatives to promote inclusive and equitable local governance.

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**8) Meeting with Chairperson of State Education Policy Committee**

On 15 May 2023, Fr. Kumar and Rajeshwari, along with R. C. Gandhi, met Justice Murugesan, Chairperson of the State Education Policy Committee, to present recommendations for the effective implementation of the State Education Policy. The meeting focused on strengthening education policies to ensure inclusive and equitable access to quality education in Tamil Nadu.



## 9) Meeting on Strengthening the Functioning of Post Matric Scholarship (PMS)

On 16 May 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SW-TN), along with Christodas Gandhi, organized a meeting of senior retired officers to discuss submitting a delegation to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu regarding the smooth functioning of the Post Matric Scholarship (PMS) scheme. The meeting was held at SAF Games IAS Officers' Mess.

### Objectives:

- To discuss issues affecting the implementation of the Post Matric Scholarship (PMS) scheme.
- To prepare a delegation of senior retired officers to submit recommendations to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.
- To advocate improved access and smooth functioning of the scholarship scheme for students from marginalized communities.



Discussions focused on identifying practical solutions and policy recommendations to improve the implementation of the scholarship programme.

- The meeting emphasized the importance of ensuring timely and efficient scholarship support for SC/ST and other marginalized students pursuing higher education.
- Senior retired officers agreed to form a delegation to present the recommendations to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

### Impacts:

1. Initiated the formation of a delegation of senior retired officers to engage with the state government.
2. Strengthened advocacy efforts for the effective implementation of the Post Matric Scholarship scheme.

## 10) Online Planning Meeting on Budget Training for Climate Change and Disaster Resilience

- An online discussion with NDW–NCDHR and COSCO focused on planning a training programme on Union and State Budgets related to climate change, disaster relief, and resilience. Participants discussed budget analysis, tracking, fund devolution to Panchayats, and finalized the structure, sessions, and resource persons, with Fr. Kumar invited as a resource person.
- The meeting finalized the training framework and strengthened collaboration among civil society networks, while initiating capacity-building efforts for community leaders to engage in budget analysis and advocacy on climate and disaster-related public spending.

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## 11) Online Discussion with District Selection Committee Members of CAI

On 7 June 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SW-TN) hosted a Zoom meeting for a discussion with the District Selection Committee members of Confederation of Affirmative Industries (CAI). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Christodas Gandhi.

### Objectives:

- To facilitate a discussion with District Selection Committee members of CAI on programme coordination and implementation.
- To strengthen collaboration between civil society organizations and industry networks working on affirmative action initiatives.
- To review the selection process and support mechanisms for beneficiaries under CAI initiatives.

The meeting brought together District Selection Committee members to discuss the functioning and objectives of CAI and its role in promoting affirmative opportunities for marginalized communities.

- Participants reviewed the selection process and discussed ways to strengthen transparency and effectiveness in programme implementation.
- The session provided a platform for committee members to share experiences and suggestions for improving outreach and support to beneficiaries.
- The discussion also emphasized the importance of collaboration between civil society organizations and industry bodies to promote inclusive economic opportunities.

### Impacts:

1. Strengthened coordination among District Selection Committee members of CAI.
2. Encouraged collaborative efforts to promote affirmative action and inclusive economic development.

## 12) Discussion on Budget Research and Advocacy



On 9 June 2023, the Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SW-TN) team held a discussion with Fr. Maurice and Fr. Maria Joe Mahalingam. The meeting focused on sharing and discussing the ongoing budget research and advocacy work undertaken by SW-TN.

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## 13) Official Communication to Access DEAR Study Reports

- SW-TN sent an official request to the Planning Department seeking access to DEAR study reports on Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare programmes to support research, policy analysis, and advocacy, emphasizing the need for accessible government research.
- The initiative strengthened engagement with the government, promoted evidence-based policy advocacy, and encouraged transparency and accessibility of research for public policy discussions.

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## 14) Online Meeting on Post Matric Scholarship

On 14 June 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SW-TN) hosted a Zoom meeting on “Post Matric Scholarship (PMS)” organized by Ambedkar Kalvi Centenary Movement (AKAM). The meeting brought together activists and stakeholders to discuss issues related to the implementation and accessibility of the scholarship scheme.

### Impacts:

- Increased awareness about the challenges in the implementation of the Post Matric Scholarship scheme.
- Enhanced awareness among activists and stakeholders on challenges in the implementation and accessibility of the Post Matric Scholarship scheme
- Strengthened collective advocacy efforts to improve transparency, access, and effectiveness of the scholarship for marginalized students.

### **15) Webinar on “Structural Violence on Rural Women Workers”**

On 16 June 2023, Kamatchi participated in a webinar on “Structural Violence on Rural Women Workers.” The programme was organized by Feminist Policy Collective (FPC) and Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch.

- The webinar examined structural violence faced by rural women workers, including economic exploitation, lack of recognition, and limited access to resources, while highlighting issues related to wages, social security, land rights, and the need for gender-sensitive policies.
- It enhanced understanding of challenges faced by rural women, strengthened engagement with national networks, and encouraged continued advocacy for gender justice and labour rights.

### **16) Solidarity Protest and Conference on the Rights of Tribals in Manipur**

On 18 June 2023, Fr. Kumar and Rajeshwari extended solidarity to a protest organized to protect the rights of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Manipur. The protest demanded that the Bharatiya Janata Party government take immediate steps to stop the violence against tribal communities in the state. The protest was organized by Humanity Democratic Party and held at Egmore. Followed by this Rally, Fr.Kumar rendered a Talk at the Conference organized by ‘Tamil Nadu People’s Platform for Unity’ at Royapettah, Chennai.



### **Objectives:**

- To express solidarity with the tribal communities affected by violence in Manipur.
- To demand immediate measures to stop violence and protect the rights of Scheduled Tribes.
- To raise public awareness on the human rights situation in Manipur.

The protest emphasized the importance of peace, protection of tribal rights, and accountability from the government.

- Following the rally, Fr. Kumar delivered a talk at a conference organized by Tamil Nadu People's Platform for Unity at Royapettah.
- In his address, he highlighted the importance of solidarity, democratic values, and collective action in addressing violence and injustice.

### **Impacts:**

1. Demonstrated solidarity with tribal communities affected by violence in Manipur.
2. Strengthened civil society engagement in advocating for peace and protection of human rights.
3. Raised public awareness on the need for justice, unity, and democratic accountability.

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### **17) Meeting with Commissioner of Tamil Nadu SC/ST Commission**

- On 26 June 2023, Fr. Kumar and Christudas Gandhi met the Commissioner of the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to discuss key issues related to the empowerment of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities in Tamil Nadu.
- The meeting initiated dialogue with the SC/ST Commission and strengthened collaboration between civil society and statutory institutions for advancing the empowerment of marginalized communities

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### **18) Two-Day Workshop on "TN State Budgets for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Resilience & SC/ST Rights"**

On 27–28 June 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN), as a Knowledge Partner, trained 28 participants from 8 districts during a two-day workshop on "TN State Budgets for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Resilience & SC/ST Rights." The programme was organized by National Dalit Watch – Swadhikar / National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), in collaboration with COSCO, Tamil Nadu.

### **Objectives:**

- To build the capacity of community leaders and activists in understanding the Tamil Nadu State Budget related to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience.
- To analyze budget allocations concerning SC/ST rights and welfare programmes.

The workshop provided an overview of the Tamil Nadu State Budget, focusing on allocations related to disaster management, climate resilience, and welfare programmes for marginalized communities.

- Participants were trained on analyzing budget provisions and linking them with community needs, especially those of SC/ST populations vulnerable to disasters and climate change impacts.



### **Impacts:**

1. 28 participants from 8 districts gained practical knowledge on budget analysis and monitoring.
2. Strengthened the capacity of activists and community leaders to advocate for inclusive budgeting related to disaster resilience and SC/ST welfare.
3. Encouraged district-level engagement in budget tracking and policy advocacy.

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### **19) Internship at Social Watch Tamil Nadu**

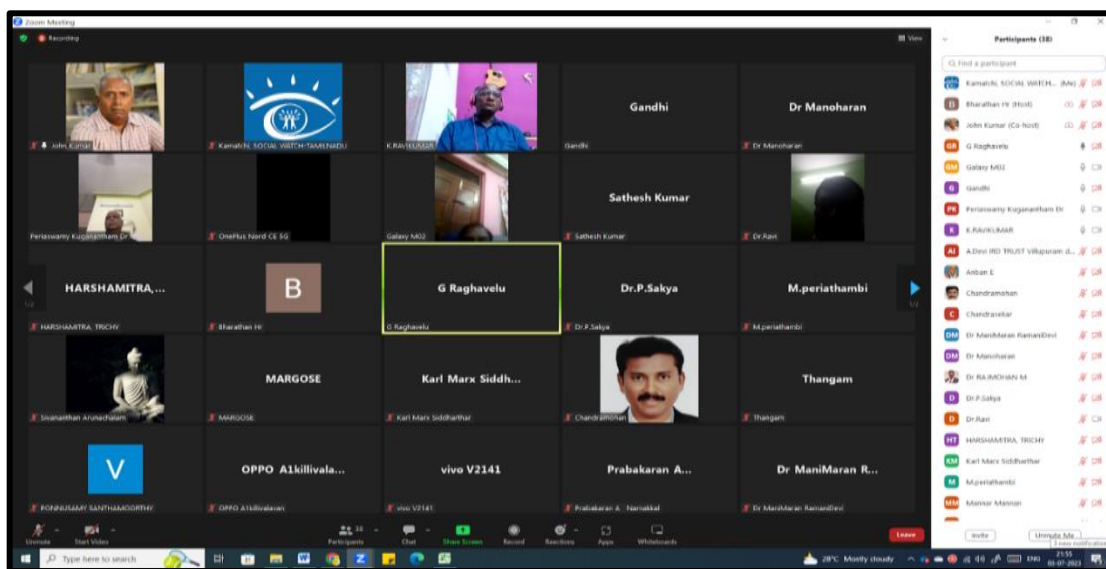
During June 2023, Anuvarshini, a law student from Christ University (Christ College), Bangalore, completed a one-month internship at Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN). The internship provided practical learning in policy and social justice work, enhanced understanding of civil society engagement, and contributed to SWTN's research and documentation efforts.

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## 20) Talk on “Intersectional and Interdisciplinary Approaches in Women’s and Gender Studies”

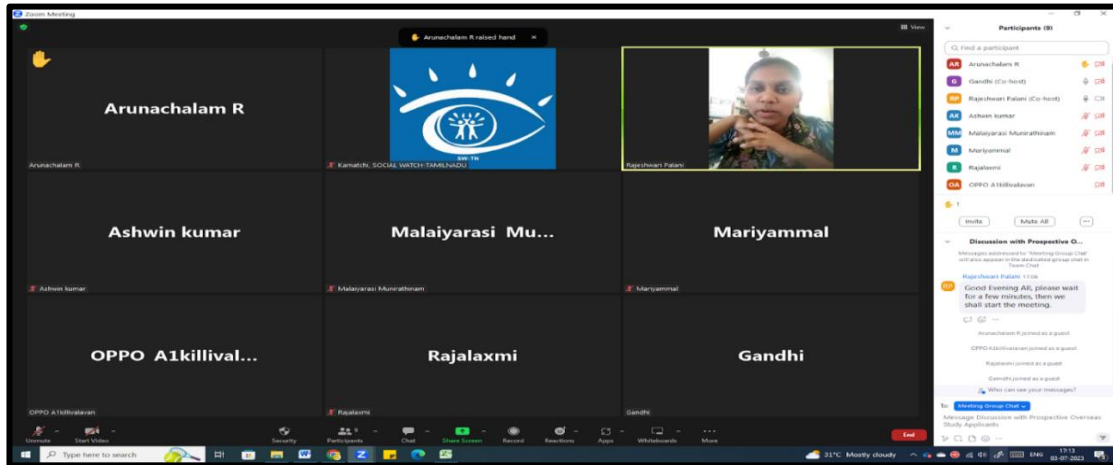
- On 1 July 2023, Kamatchi participated in a talk on “Intersectional and Interdisciplinary Approaches in Women’s and Gender Studies” delivered by Sujatha Modi, Professor and Chair, Department of Women’s & Gender Studies, California State University. The programme was organized by Research and Interdisciplinary Networking (RAIN), Department of English & Sociology, Loyola College Chennai.
- The session focused on intersectional and interdisciplinary approaches in gender studies, highlighting how gender intersects with caste, class, and culture, and emphasizing the importance of integrating perspectives from sociology, literature, policy, and social movements.
- The talk strengthened understanding of intersectionality, encouraged collaboration between academic research and grassroots activism, and promoted dialogue on gender equality and social justice.

## 21) Online Meeting on MBBS Admission for SC/ST Students



On 3 July 2023, through an online platform, SWTN along with AKAM organized a session to guide SC/ST students and parents on MBBS admission procedures, covering eligibility, reservation policies, application steps, counseling processes, and required documentation, while addressing challenges faced by marginalized students. The meeting increased awareness on medical admissions, provided practical guidance to navigate the process, and strengthened support for promoting educational opportunities among SC/ST students.

## 22) Focus Group Discussion on Overseas Education through SC/ST Scholarship



On 3 July 2023, SWTN and AKAM organized an online focus group discussion for SC/ST students aspiring for overseas education, providing guidance on scholarship opportunities, eligibility, application procedures, and preparation requirements, while enabling participants to share their aspirations and challenges. The discussion provided clarity on overseas education opportunities and identified key challenges faced by students in accessing and applying for international scholarship programmes.

## 23) Commemoration of “Fr. Stan Swamy Day”



On 5 July 2023, SWTN extended solidarity in the commemoration of “Fr. Stan Swamy Day” held at Tiruchirappalli, where speakers and participants reflected on his contributions to Adivasi rights and social justice, emphasizing the importance of continued advocacy and democratic values. The event honoured his legacy, strengthened solidarity among civil society organizations, and encouraged sustained efforts toward protecting the rights and dignity of marginalized communities.

**24) Submission of Demands on Post Matric Scholarship (PMS)**

- On 7 July 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN) and Ambedkar Kalvi Centenary Movement (AKAM) presented a memorandum of demands regarding the Post Matric Scholarship (PMS) scheme to Lakshmi Priya, the newly posted Secretary of the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department.
- The initiative strengthened advocacy on effective scholarship implementation, reinforced dialogue with the government, and supported efforts to ensure timely and accessible educational benefits for SC/ST students.

**25) Submission of Demands on “Rejuvenating Post Matric Scholarship in Tamil Nadu”**

- On 8 July 2023, John Kumar and R. C. Gandhi presented their demands on “Rejuvenating Post Matric Scholarship in Tamil Nadu” to Sibi Adhithya Senthil Kumar, Secretary to Government (Expenditure), Finance Department Tamil Nadu. They also submitted the same demands to N. Muruganandam, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister and Development Commissioner, at the Secretariat, Chennai.
- The initiative strengthened advocacy for improving the PMS scheme, promoted dialogue with key government authorities, and emphasized the need for timely and effective educational support for SC/ST students.

**26) Publication of Article on Special Component Plan**

On 18 July 2023, an article titled “Will Marginalized get Justice through Special Component Plan?” written by John Kumar was published in the The Hindu Tamil.

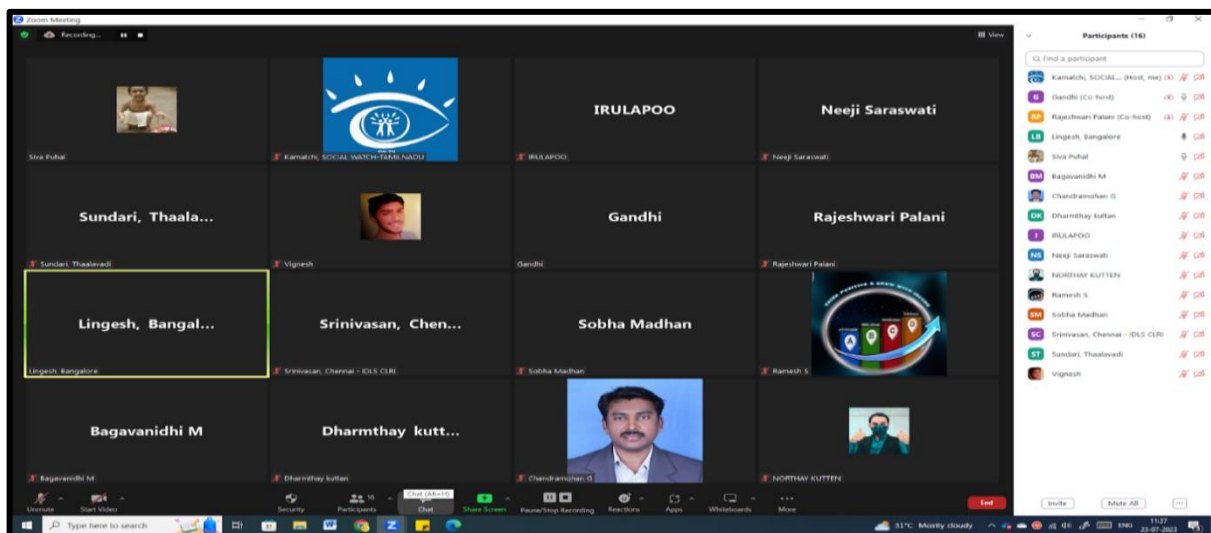


## 27) Online Planning Meeting with Tribal Leaders on Manipur Violence



- On 23 July 2023, SWTN, in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Tribal Council, organized an online meeting with tribal leaders to discuss the impact and repercussions of the violence in Manipur on tribal communities.
- Participants shared concerns, emphasized the need for solidarity, and discussed the importance of collective advocacy, awareness initiatives, and peaceful protest actions for justice and security.
- The meeting strengthened solidarity among tribal leaders, initiated plans for collective advocacy and protests, and raised awareness on safeguarding the rights and security of tribal communities.

## 28) Online Meeting on Scope for Higher Education for Ooty Thodar & Koththar BEs and Graduates



- On 23 July 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN), along with Ambedkar Kalvi Centenary Movement (AKAM), organized an online meeting on the scope for higher education for Ooty Thodar and Koththar BE graduates. The meeting aimed to guide young graduates on opportunities for higher education and career advancement.
  - Participants were informed about scholarships, fellowships, and financial assistance schemes, along with the importance of career planning and academic preparation for advanced studies in India and abroad.
  - The meeting increased awareness on higher education opportunities, encouraged graduates to pursue further studies, and strengthened support networks for educational advancement among marginalized communities.
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### 29) State Level Public Hearing on Abolition of Manual Scavenging

- On 28 July 2023, Rajeshwari participated and extended solidarity at a State Level Public Hearing held in Coimbatore, focusing on the continued existence of manual scavenging and related human rights violations.
  - The hearing brought together activists and affected communities, where survivors shared testimonies highlighting the need for stronger rehabilitation measures, alternative livelihoods, and enforcement of laws ensuring dignity and safety.
  - The event strengthened advocacy for abolishing manual scavenging, amplified the voices of affected individuals, and encouraged collective action for effective legal implementation and rehabilitation support.
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### 30) Consultation with Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

On 30 July 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SW-TN), along with PAALAM and Ambedkar Kalvi Centenary Movement, organized a consultation meeting for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) from Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Erode, and Tirupur. The meeting was held at Jeeva Jyothi Ashram.

#### Objectives:

- To understand the issues and challenges faced by PVTG communities in the region.
- To facilitate dialogue between tribal leaders and civil society organizations.
- To identify strategies for strengthening welfare measures and policy advocacy for tribal communities.

The consultation brought together representatives from PVTG communities across four districts to share their experiences and concerns.

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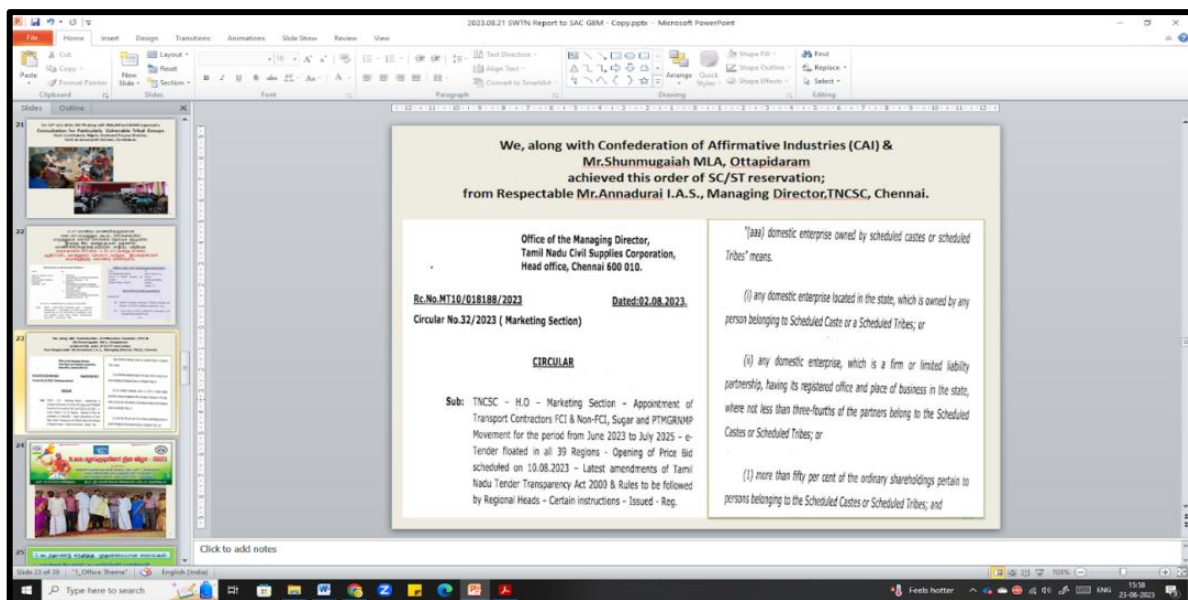
- Discussions focused on issues such as access to education, livelihood opportunities, land rights, and welfare schemes.
- Participants explored ways to strengthen community participation and collective advocacy for addressing these challenges.



### Impacts:

1. Provided a platform for PVTG community representatives to express their concerns and priorities.
2. Strengthened collaboration between tribal leaders and civil society organizations.
3. Initiated discussions for policy advocacy and community-based support for tribal development.

## 31) *Advocacy for 5% Reservation for SC/ST in Government Tenders*



- Through collaborative advocacy by SWTN and partners, efforts led to a significant step toward securing 5% reservation for SC/ST entrepreneurs in government tenders, with the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation issuing and circulating a supporting circular across its units.
  - The event marked a key policy-level breakthrough, strengthened affirmative action in public procurement, and created greater opportunities for SC/ST entrepreneurs, advancing economic empowerment and inclusive development.
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### **32) Online Discussion on Higher Education for Adhiyar Graduates**

- On 6 August 2023 (forenoon), SWTN and AKAM organized an online discussion for Adhiyar graduates, focusing on higher education opportunities, postgraduate studies, professional courses, and available scholarships and financial support.
  - The session increased awareness on educational opportunities, encouraged graduates to pursue advanced studies, and strengthened efforts to promote academic and career advancement within the Adhiyar community.
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### **33) Online Discussion on Development Opportunities for Adhiyar Leaders**

- On 6 August 2023 (evening), SWTN and AKAM, along with Kaliamoorthy, organized an online discussion with Adhiyar leaders to address community challenges and explore opportunities in education, employment, and welfare schemes, while emphasizing collective leadership and advocacy.
  - The discussion strengthened dialogue among community leaders, encouraged collective initiatives for development, and increased awareness on available opportunities and support systems for the Adhiyar community.
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### **34) Advocacy on MBBS/BDS Admission Process for SC/ST Students**

- On 7 August 2023, SWTN, through Christudas Gandhi along with AKAM, raised concerns with ADTW and ADW officials regarding financial barriers in the MBBS/BDS admission process for SC/ST students, particularly the issue of initial tuition fee payment.
  - The intervention led to the exemption of initial tuition fees for SC/ST/SCC candidates, with directives issued and communicated to relevant departments, significantly reducing financial barriers for students pursuing medical education.
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Directorate of Adi Dravidar Welfare		MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT	
From	To	From	To
Thiru.T.Anand, I.A.S., Director, Adi Dravidar Welfare, Chepauk, Chennai – 05	1. Director, Directorate of Medical Education, Kilpauk, Chennai – 10 2. Director, Directorate of Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy, Arumbakkam, Chennai – 106 3. The Secretary, Selection Committee, Directorate of Medical Education, Kilpauk, Chennai – 10	Dr.R.Shanthimalar..MD.DA. Director of Medical Education and Research Kilpauk, Chennai – 600 010.	Thiru.T.Anand, I.A.S., Director, Adi Dravidar Welfare, Chepauk, Chennai – 05.
R.C.No. L1/6969/2023-3, Dated: 07.08.2023		<u>Ref.No.3423/SCS1(1)/2023, Dated.09.08.2023</u>	
Sub: ADW – 2023-2024 academic year – medical admissions – exemption of initial payment of Tuition fee for all SC/ST/SCC candidates who are eligible under Post Matric Scholarship schemes – requested - Reg		Respected Sir,  Sub. Selection Committee, Directorate of Medical Education and Research - SC/ST/SCA candidates exemption fee - Reg.,  Ref. 1. Your Letter ref no.R.C.L1/6969/2023-2 Directorate of Adi Dravidar Welfare Dated.07.8.2023.	
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### 35) Orientation on Gender Budgeting in Tamil Nadu

- On 7 August 2023, Kamatchi delivered an online orientation session for the IIHS team on Gender Budgeting, introducing its concepts, practices, and relevance in ensuring equitable public resource allocation.
- The session covered Tamil Nadu's experience in gender budgeting, policy frameworks, and the importance of integrating gender perspectives in planning, budgeting, and programme implementation.
- The session strengthened understanding of gender-responsive budgeting, promoted knowledge sharing, and encouraged the integration of gender perspectives in research and policy analysis.

### 36) Online Meeting to Disseminate Government Order on MBBS Admission Fee Exemption

On 13 August 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN), along with Ambedkar Kalvi Centenary Movement (AKAM), organized an online meeting to disseminate the new Government Order issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu regarding MBBS admissions for SC/ST candidates without paying the initial tuition fee.

**Objectives:**

- To inform students and community members about the new government order exempting SC/ST candidates from paying the first-time tuition fee during MBBS admission.
- To create awareness on educational rights and support measures available for marginalized students.

The meeting explained the key provisions of the government order and its implications on SC/ST students seeking admission to medical courses.

- Participants were guided with how the exemption of the initial tuition fee would reduce financial barriers during the admission process.
- The discussion also clarified procedural aspects and encouraged students to make use of the opportunity to pursue medical education.

**Impacts:**

1. Increased awareness among SC/ST students and community members about the new admission fee exemption policy.
2. Encouraged eligible students to pursue MBBS education without immediate financial burden.

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**37) Presentation on Organizational Work to National AICUF Students**

- On 14 August 2023, SWTN presented an overview of its work to AICUF student representatives from across India, highlighting its initiatives in budget advocacy, social inclusion, education rights, and policy research, while emphasizing the role of civil society in social justice.
- The session increased awareness among students, encouraged youth engagement in social development, and strengthened connections between civil society organizations and student networks.

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**38) Appeal to the Chief Secretary on Key Issues Concerning ST and SC Students**

- On 16 August 2023, SWTN submitted an appeal to the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu highlighting concerns related to SC/ST student welfare, including delays in Post Matric Scholarship disbursement, the need for an exclusive ST Secretary, and the appointment of ST teachers in tribal schools.
- The appeal emphasized challenges faced by students due to delayed scholarships, the importance of dedicated administrative focus on tribal welfare, and the need for culturally appropriate education through ST teacher recruitment.

- The initiative brought critical issues to the attention of top government authorities, strengthened civil society engagement in policy advocacy, and supported efforts to improve educational and administrative support for SC/ST communities

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### 39) Participation in Independence Day Book Exhibition

- On 18 August 2023, John Kumar and Kamatchi participated in the Independence Day Book Exhibition at MIDS, Adyar, engaging with academic publications on development studies, public policy, and social justice, and interacting with scholars.
- The participation enhanced exposure to research resources, strengthened engagement with academic networks, and contributed to knowledge building for advocacy and research initiatives.

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### 40) Commemoration of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples – 2023

On 19 August 2023, the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples – 2023 was commemorated by Adivasi Social Service Education Trust (ASSET), Social Watch Tamil Nadu, and Helping Hands at Nellikuppam.

#### Objectives:

- To recognize and celebrate the rights, culture, and contributions of indigenous peoples.
- To create awareness about the social, economic, and cultural issues faced by tribal communities.
- To strengthen solidarity and advocacy for the protection of indigenous peoples' rights and livelihoods.



The programme brought together members of tribal communities, social activists, and civil society representatives to mark the occasion.

- Discussions highlighted the importance of protecting tribal identity, traditional knowledge, and natural resources.
- The event emphasized the need for stronger policy measures and community participation to address the challenges faced by indigenous peoples.

**Impacts:**

1. Promoted awareness on the rights and issues of indigenous communities.
2. Strengthened solidarity among tribal organizations and civil society groups.
3. Encouraged continued advocacy for inclusive development and protection of indigenous peoples' rights.

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**41) Consultation on Social Justice and Equity among Marginalized Communities**



- On 25 August 2023, John Kumar and Rajeshwari participated in a consultation at Madras School of Social Work, Egmore, focusing on social justice and equity for marginalized communities, with discussions on policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and shared experiences for inclusive development.
- The consultation strengthened dialogue among academia, government, and civil society, generated key insights for promoting equity, and encouraged collaborative efforts for inclusive policy advocacy and social development.

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**42) Voter Awareness Trainer Workshop**

On 27 August 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN), along with the Social Action Movement, co-organized the “Voter Awareness Trainer Workshop” at A.V. Arangam, St. Joseph's College in Tiruchirappalli.

### Objectives:

- To promote voter awareness and democratic participation among citizens.
- To train participants as resource persons to conduct voter awareness programmes in their respective communities.
- To strengthen understanding of electoral rights, responsibilities, and the importance of informed voting.

Participants were trained on methods to conduct voter awareness campaigns and engage citizens at the grassroots level.



- The sessions emphasized the significance of ethical voting and the role of civil society in strengthening democratic processes.

### Impacts:

1. Built a group of trained facilitators for voter awareness initiatives.
2. Strengthened efforts to promote informed and responsible participation in elections.

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### **43) Participation in General Body Meeting of Social Action Commission**

- On 30 & 31 August 2023, the SWTN team participated in the General Body Meeting at Dhyana Ashram, where members reviewed ongoing social action initiatives, shared field experiences, and discussed strategies to address social justice, human rights, and community empowerment issues.
  - The meeting strengthened coordination among organizations, facilitated collective planning for future initiatives, and reinforced commitment to social justice and community development.
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#### 44) Participation in Webinar on Civic Engagement with G20, G7 and BRICS

- On 1 September 2023, Kamatchi participated in a webinar on civic engagement with G20, G7, and BRICS, focusing on the role of civil society in global governance, sustainable development, and inclusive policy-making.
  - The session enhanced understanding of global engagement platforms, strengthened connections with international civil society networks, and contributed to discussions on participatory and inclusive global policy processes.
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#### 45) Discussion on Social Discrimination and Violations of Reservation Norms

- On 3 September 2023, John Kumar extended solidarity at a discussion held at Anna Centenary Library on issues of social discrimination and violations of reservation norms in higher education institutions, with participants emphasizing institutional accountability and equal access.
  - The discussion strengthened dialogue on reservation rights, encouraged collective advocacy against discrimination, and reinforced solidarity with marginalized students and communities.
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#### 46) Panel Participation in Tamil Book Release of The Gorakhpur Hospital Tragedy

- On 3 September 2023, John Kumar participated as a panelist at the Tamil book release of *The Gorakhpur Hospital Tragedy* at Devaneyya Pavanar Library Hall, discussing public health accountability, governance, and human rights issues highlighted in the book.
  - The event promoted awareness on healthcare justice and accountability, encouraged dialogue on citizens' rights, and strengthened public engagement on social issues through literary discussions.
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#### 47) One-Day National Seminar on “The Anti-Caste Pedagogy of Dalit Politics”

On 4 September 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SW-TN), in collaboration with the Loyola College Chennai – Department of Sociology, organized a One-Day National Seminar on “The Anti-Caste Pedagogy of Dalit Politics” at Loyola College LS Hall. The seminar was inaugurated by **Thol. Thirumavalavan**, who delivered the inaugural address. The programme also featured academic sessions by Soumyabrata Choudhury from the Jawaharlal Nehru University and V. Geetha, independent scholar and activist.

#### Objectives:

- To examine the role of Dalit politics in shaping anti-caste pedagogy and social transformation.
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- To promote academic dialogue on caste, social justice, and democratic values.
- To encourage students and researchers to critically engage with Dalit perspectives in politics and education.



The seminar brought together scholars, activists, and students to discuss the intersections of caste, politics, and education.

- Speakers reflected on the contributions of Dalit movements in challenging caste hierarchies and promoting equality.
- The sessions highlighted the importance of incorporating anti-caste perspectives into academic discourse and public policy discussions.

### **Impacts:**

1. Strengthened academic engagement on Dalit politics and anti-caste pedagogy.
2. Facilitated dialogue between scholars, activists, and students on caste and social justice issues.
3. Encouraged critical reflection on inclusive and transformative approaches in education and politics.

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### **48) Release of the Status of Nomadic Tribes Report**

- On 6 September 2023, Christudas Gandhi attended as Guest of Honour at the release of the *Status of Nomadic Tribes Report*, organized by Vanavil Trust and Madras School of Social Work, where the study highlighted the living conditions, education, livelihoods, and social inclusion of nomadic communities across Tamil Nadu.
  - The event brought visibility to the socio-economic challenges of nomadic tribes and encouraged dialogue among government, researchers, and civil society for inclusive policy interventions.
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#### **49) Online Discussion on High Court Order on Professor Selection**

On 10 September 2023, PAALAM and Social Watch Tamil Nadu (SWTN) organized an online discussion with Saandror Associate Professors of Annamalai University to deliberate on the recent High Court order related to the selection process for Professor posts.

##### **Objectives:**

- To understand the implications of the recent High Court order concerning the selection of Professors.
- To provide a platform for Saandror Associate Professors to discuss concerns and perspectives.
- To explore possible steps for ensuring fairness and transparency in academic recruitment processes.

The discussion focused on the legal and institutional implications of the High Court's decision on faculty recruitment.

- Participants shared their perspectives on how the order could affect the career progression of Associate Professors and the academic environment within the university.
- The meeting also highlighted the importance of ensuring equity, transparency, and adherence to reservation norms in higher education recruitment.

##### **Impacts:**

1. Facilitated dialogue among Associate Professors and civil society organizations on the High Court order.
2. Helped clarify concerns related to academic recruitment and promotion processes.
3. Strengthened collective engagement on issues of fairness and equity in higher education institutions.

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#### **50) Release Event of Report on World Bank Financed Housing Projects**

- On 15 September 2023, Kamatchi participated in a report release event at the ICSSR Complex, Chennai, focusing on the implementation of World Bank financed housing projects and their impact on deprived urban communities, highlighting issues of housing access, rehabilitation, and livelihood security.
  - The event increased awareness on urban housing challenges, strengthened dialogue among researchers and civil society, and supported advocacy for accountable and inclusive housing policies in Tamil Nadu.
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**51) Online Lecture on Peace and Gender**

- On 19 September 2023, Kamatchi participated in an online lecture on “Peace and Gender,” focusing on the integration of gender perspectives in peace-building, conflict resolution, and the role of gender equality in achieving sustainable social harmony.
  - The session strengthened understanding of gender-sensitive approaches, encouraged dialogue on gender equality and peace, and contributed to knowledge sharing on inclusive social development.
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**52) Webinar on Gender Responsive Public Transport**

- On 21 September 2023, Kamatchi participated in a webinar on gender-responsive public transport, focusing on integrating gender perspectives in urban transport planning, and addressing issues of safety, accessibility, and mobility challenges faced by women, especially in the post-COVID context.
  - The session enhanced understanding of gender-sensitive transport policies, promoted dialogue on inclusive and safe mobility for women, and strengthened awareness of global and policy approaches to gender equality in urban transport.
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**53) Civil Society Dialogue on Draft Act for Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes (DAPSC)**

On 24 September 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu, PAALAM, and International Ambedkar Mission jointly organized a Civil Society Dialogue on Recommendations for the proposed Act on “Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes (DAPSC)” (formerly known as Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan) at IAS Officer’s Mess, SAF Games.

The draft proposals deliberated during the dialogue were finalized and approved for submission to the Government of Tamil Nadu.

**Objectives:**

- To review and provide recommendations for the proposed DAPSC Act, ensuring it promotes growth and equity rather than mere allocation of welfare shares.
  - To deliberate on fund allocation mechanisms, governance, and accountability for Scheduled Castes development.
  - To strengthen civil society inputs into policymaking for inclusive and focused development schemes.
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### **Key Features of the Draft Act:**

- The Act should not bear the name of SC or ST, with the Tamil term “ஓங்குயர் சட்டம்” proposed; the same terminology can be used in English.
- The objective emphasizes growth orientation, beyond mere pacifying share in welfare schemes.
- Two-way allocation recommended to encourage innovation:
- Allocation based on existing formula proportional to population (census-based) across welfare schemes.
- A 3% allocation from the total budget size for new schemes with Saandror (SC) focus.
- Funds under the 3% allocation to be used exclusively for new SC-focused schemes.
- All funds to be routed through Saandror and Aandror Panchayats only.
- District-level disaggregated allocation and utilization to be shown in the annual audit.

### **Impacts:**

1. Strengthened civil society recommendations for a progressive and accountable SC-focused development framework.
2. Ensured mechanisms for targeted allocation and innovation in schemes for marginalized communities.

#### 54) Resource Session on TN State Women Policy and Gender Budgeting

- On 25 September 2023, Kamatchi served as a Resource Person at Pillar Centre, Madurai, delivering a session on TN State Women Policy and Gender Budgeting in the SDG context, focusing on policy alignment, gender-responsive budgeting, and feminist perspectives in planning.
- The session enhanced participants' understanding of gender integration in policy and budgets, built capacity for gender-responsive planning and advocacy, and strengthened feminist approaches linking women's empowerment with sustainable development.

#### 55) Release of Book on Unique Education Policy for Tamil Nadu

During September 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu and PAALAM released the book: “கற்பி - தமிழ்நாட்டிற்கான சமூக ஒப்புரவை வளர்க்கும் தனித்த கல்விக் கொள்கை” [EDUCATE – A Unique Education Policy for Tamil Nadu to Promote Social Equity].



#### 56) Micro-Level Aandror (ST) Consultation

On 1 October 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu and PAALAM jointly organized the Second Micro-Level Aandror (ST) Consultation at IDEAS Centre, Madurai.

#### Objectives:

- To provide a platform for Aandror communities to voice their priorities and challenges.
- To develop community-driven strategies and policy proposals for social inclusion and sustainable development.

- To strengthen networking and collaboration among ST communities and civil society stakeholders.

**ஆன்றோர் (ST) அணுக்கத் திட்டமிடல்  
(MICRO LEVEL PLANNING) கூட்டம் - II**

பங்கேற்கும் ஆன்றோர்:

- காணிக்காரர்
- கணியார்
- பளியர்
- காட்டுநாயக்கர்
- நரிக்குறவர்

இடம்: IDEAS மையம், சிந்தாமணி ரோடு மதுரை,  
தேதி: 01.10.2023, காலை 10 மணி.

ஆன்றோர் நலத் திட்டங்கள், பட்ஜெட் குறித்த முக்கிய பகிர்வு

**Impacts:**

1. Facilitated the creation of new strategies and policy proposals tailored to ST community needs.
2. Encouraged women's participation in leadership and decision-making at the community level.
3. Strengthened civil society and community partnerships for advancing tribal rights and welfare.

**57) Participation in 13th World Human Rights Cities Forum – Gwangju, South Korea**

- During 4–7 October 2023, SWTN engaged with the 13th World Human Rights Cities Forum (hybrid) in Gwangju, South Korea, gaining insights on global approaches to poverty, inequality, and human rights-based urban development.
- On 10 October 2023, the SWTN team held a planning discussion with Amal Xavier Raj to review priorities, refine advocacy strategies, and develop a roadmap for future initiatives.
- The engagements enhanced understanding of global best practices, strengthened knowledge exchange, and improved clarity on organizational priorities and strategic direction.

**58) Consultation on Government Services for Victim-Survivors of Violence**

- On 12 October 2023, Kamatchi participated in a consultation at Residency Hotel, Chennai, focusing on integration, coordination, and partnerships in government services for victim-survivors of violence, including identifying gaps and improving service delivery mechanisms.
- The consultation strengthened understanding of inter-agency coordination, contributed insights on policy and partnership frameworks, and supported capacity building for integrated, survivor-centric support systems.

**59) Webinar on Ecological Justice**

- On 18 October 2023, Kamatchi participated in a webinar on ecological justice, focusing on the intersection of human rights and environmental sustainability in the Asian context, and discussing regional challenges and policy approaches.
  - The session enhanced awareness of ecological justice issues and strengthened understanding of policy frameworks and advocacy strategies linking human rights with environmental protection.
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**60) Online Consultation on ALBOAN's Gender Equity Plan**

- On 19 October 2023, Kamatchi participated in an online consultation on ALBOAN's Gender Equity Plan, focusing on gender mainstreaming strategies, organizational policies, and mechanisms for monitoring and accountability.
  - The consultation contributed to strengthening gender equity approaches, enhanced understanding of evaluation frameworks, and promoted best practices for integrating gender equity in organizational planning.
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**61) Cross-Learning Visit – EN OORU Tribal Heritage Village**

- On 23 October 2023, the SWTN team visited EN OORU – Tribal Heritage Village, Pookode, Wayanad, gaining first-hand exposure to indigenous culture, architecture, and heritage preservation initiatives supported by the Kerala Government.
  - The visit enhanced understanding of tribal empowerment and cultural sustainability, facilitated cross-learning on community-led development models, and strengthened knowledge of heritage preservation practices.
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**62) Consultation on “KARPI – New Education Policy for TN's Social Equity”**

On 28 October 2023, Social Watch Tamil Nadu and Ambedkar Kalvi Centenary Movement organized a consultation on KARPI – New Education Policy for Social Equity at St. Xavier's College of Education.

**Objectives:**

- To discuss the implementation of KARPI – Tamil Nadu's New Education Policy for Social Equity.
  - To develop actionable strategies for inclusive and equitable education.
  - To strengthen policy recommendations and practical interventions for marginalized students.
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**Impacts:**

1. Promoted strategies for equitable education policies and inclusive schooling in Tamil Nadu.
2. Enabled development of practical action plans for supporting marginalized students and communities.

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**63) World Social Forum – Tamil Nadu**

- On 28 October 2023, Ms. Rajeshwari and Ms. Kamatchi extended solidarity at the World Social Forum – Tamil Nadu held at Patrician College of Arts and Science, engaging with civil society actors and promoting dialogue on inclusive development and equity.
- The participation reinforced SW-TN’s commitment to social justice and enhanced its visibility and engagement within the state-level civil society network.

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**64) Two Days South India Workshop of Feminist Activists to Promote Climate Justice for Gender Equality**

- On 2–3 November 2023, a two-day meet was held at Kings Hotel, Egmore, Chennai, bringing together women activists and environmental leaders to discuss climate change, its gendered impacts, and feminist approaches to environmental justice, including experiences like CRPCs and policy discussions.
- The programme strengthened understanding of gender and climate linkages, enhanced collaboration among South Indian activists, and initiated efforts to build a collective platform for climate and gender advocacy.



**65) Visit of the Province Revisor Team to Social Watch – Tamil Nadu**

On **4th November 2023**, the **Province Revisor Team** visited **Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)** for the verification of accounts and financial records.

**66) Visit of Fr. Antony Robinson SJ to Social Watch – Tamil Nadu**

On Tuesday, November 7, 2023, **Fr. Antony Robinson SJ**, Rector of the **Chennai Province**, visited the **Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)** team for an in-depth discussion on the **past, present, and future directions of the organization.**



**67) 66th Birth Anniversary of Mr. S. Thomas Jayaraj and 25 Years of the Centre for Child Rights and Development (CCRD)**

On Tuesday, November 7, 2023, *Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)* extended its solidarity in commemorating the **66th Birth Anniversary of Mr. S. Thomas Jayaraj and 25 years of the Centre for Child Rights and Development (CCRD)**. The event celebrated the life and legacy of Mr. S. Thomas Jayaraj, whose pioneering work has been instrumental in advancing the cause of child rights and community welfare.



**Objectives:**

- To honor the contributions and vision of Mr. S. Thomas Jayaraj in the field of child rights and development.
- To mark 25 years of CCRD’s impactful work for the protection and empowerment of children.
- To reaffirm the commitment to building a healthy and inclusive society for every child.

The commemorative program featured a **special address on “Towards a Healthy Society for a Healthy Childhood”** by **Dr. Amalorpavanathan Joseph**, Member of the **Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission**.

- Dr. Amalorpavanathan highlighted the importance of holistic approaches to child well-being, emphasizing the role of families, communities, and institutions in nurturing a safe and supportive environment for children.
- Members of SW-TN and CCRD shared their experiences of collaboration and expressed their continued commitment to strengthening child-centered development initiatives across Tamil Nadu.

**Impacts:**

1. Reinforced collective commitment toward child rights and social well-being.
2. Enhanced understanding of the link between healthy societies and healthy childhoods.
3. Strengthened partnership between SW-TN and CCRD for future initiatives.

## 68) Capacity Building Programme on Tribal Leadership and Tribal Welfare

In commemoration of *Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2023*, on 15th and 16th November 2023, the *Centre for Dalit and Subaltern Studies (CDSS) – Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD)*, in association with *Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)*, *PAALAM*, and *AMBU*, organized a two-day “**Capacity Building Programme on Tribal Leadership and Tribal Welfare Programmes**” at **RGNIYD, Sriperumbudur**.

### Objectives:

- To enhance leadership capacities among tribal youth and community representatives.
- To create awareness about government welfare schemes and opportunities for tribal development.
- To promote collaboration between institutions, civil society, and tribal organizations for inclusive growth.

Thiru. Abraham IAS inaugurated the first-day session, emphasizing the importance of empowering tribal youth through education and leadership. On the second day, Tmt. Dr. Aruna Basu IFS (Retd.) highlighted the need for sustainable tribal development and environmental conservation.



- Sessions on Tribal Leadership were facilitated by Thiru. Irulappoo Selvakumar and Tmt. Sornalatha, focusing on indigenous leadership and collective mobilization. The session on Educational Opportunities, including Post-Matric, Ph.D., and Overseas Scholarships, was presented by Mr. Chandramohan and Ms. Rajeshwari.
- The panel featured experts including Mr. Navaneetha Sivakumar, Mr. Vignesh, and Ms. Venkateshwari, who discussed entrepreneurship opportunities and government schemes such as Start-Up TN and the Dr. Annal Ambedkar Business Championship Scheme, focusing on economic empowerment.

**Impacts:**

1. Enhanced knowledge among participants on tribal leadership and welfare opportunities.
  2. Strengthened awareness of education, entrepreneurship, and livelihood schemes.
  3. Promoted networking among tribal representatives, institutions, and government bodies for collective action.
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**69) Commemoration Gathering in Memory of Fr. Manu Alphonse SJ**



On Friday, **November 17, 2023**, **Friends of Fr. Manu Alphonse SJ** organized a **commemoration gathering** at the **Institute of Development and Communication Research (IDCR)** to honor and remember his life, values, and contributions to society.

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**70) Training on Forest Rights Act – Commemorating Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2023**

On **17th and 18th November 2023**, in commemoration of **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2023**, **Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)**, in collaboration with **PAALAM** and **Kaanikaarargal Magaa Sabhai**, organized a “**Training on the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**” at the **Forest Department Training Centre, Pechipaarai**.

**Objectives:**

- To enhance awareness and understanding of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 among tribal and forest-dependent communities.
  - To equip participants with practical knowledge to claim Individual and Community Forest Rights (IFR & CFR).
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A two-day training at Pechipaarai on 17.11.2023, led by Thiru. S. Rajan, educated tribal and community leaders on the Forest Rights Act, 2006, focusing on claims processes, practical challenges, and strengthening community-based forest governance.

**Impacts:**

1. Increased understanding of the Forest Rights Act and its implementation process.
2. Strengthened leadership and readiness among tribal participants to pursue FRA claims.

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**71) Capacity Building on Tribal Leadership Programmes**

On 21st and 22nd November 2023, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN), in collaboration with PAALAM and AKAM, organized a “Capacity Building on Tribal Leadership Programmes” at Moonjikkal, Kodaikanal. The two-day programme focused on strengthening leadership among tribal communities and enhancing their participation in governance and development initiatives.



**Objectives:**

- To build leadership skills among tribal youth and community representatives.
- To promote awareness of tribal rights, welfare schemes, and participatory governance.
- To facilitate collaboration between tribal organizations and civil society networks for inclusive development.

The **special address** was delivered by **Thiru. R. Christudas Gandhi, IAS (Retd.)**, who emphasized the importance of ethical leadership, education, and community participation in achieving tribal empowerment.

- Input sessions were conducted by representatives from **Palani Paliyar Federation, ARUDECS, Arokiyagam, and Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)**. These sessions focused on practical strategies for strengthening community-based organizations, accessing government welfare programmes, and asserting forest and land rights.

**Impacts:**

1. Improved understanding of leadership roles and responsibilities among tribal participants.
2. Strengthened networking between tribal federations and development organizations.
3. Enhanced awareness of government schemes and rights-based approaches for community advancement.

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72) **Celebration of Constitution Day 2023**

On **27th November 2023**, **Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN)** in collaboration with the **Loyola Institutions** organized the **Celebration of Constitution Day** at **LS Hall, Loyola College, Chennai**. The event aimed to reaffirm the values and spirit of the Indian Constitution and to promote civic awareness among students and civil society representatives.

**Objectives:**

- To commemorate Constitution Day and honor the vision of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- To create awareness on the significance of constitutional values in promoting democracy and social justice.
- To engage youth and stakeholders in reflecting on their roles in upholding constitutional principles.

The programme was **presided over by Thiru. Peter Alphonse, Chairperson, Minority Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu**, who emphasized the continued relevance of constitutional ideals in ensuring equality and social harmony.

- The **keynote address** was delivered by **Thiru. Raja MP, Former Union Minister, Government of India**, who highlighted the historical journey of the Constitution, its transformative role in Indian democracy, and the need for citizens to remain vigilant in protecting democratic institutions.

- The event witnessed participation from faculty, students, and representatives of civil society organizations, engaging in meaningful discussions on constitutional responsibilities and citizens' rights.



**Impacts:**

1. Strengthened understanding of constitutional values among youth and participants.
2. Encouraged civic responsibility and active citizenship.
3. Reinforced collaboration between educational institutions and civil society for constitutional awareness.

*Listen to the speech in the below links:*

<https://youtu.be/REifqHviVw4?feature=shared> ;

[https://youtu.be/V8A\\_bRRKJ3g?si=7esKnCUDL6bmV66G](https://youtu.be/V8A_bRRKJ3g?si=7esKnCUDL6bmV66G)

**73) National Consultation on Crime Against Women Migrant Workers**

- On 29th November 2023 in Chennai, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu participated in a national consultation on crimes against women migrant workers, focusing on vulnerabilities, legal gaps, and the need for stronger policies, institutional support, and gender-sensitive migration frameworks through multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- The consultation strengthened partnerships and reaffirmed commitment to ensuring safety, dignity, social protection, and access to justice for women migrant workers while enhancing understanding of their socio-legal challenges.

#### 74) Micro-Level Planning for the Development of Kaatu Naayakkars (ST)

On 3rd December 2023, PAALAM and Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN) jointly organized an exclusive **Micro-Level Planning Meeting for the Development of Kaatu Naayakkars (Scheduled Tribes)** at **TAISHA Hall, Chennai**. The initiative aimed to promote socio-economic development, livelihood opportunities, and housing advocacy for the Kaatu Naayakkar community.

##### Objectives:

- To develop a micro-level action plan for the holistic development of the Kaatu Naayakkar community.
- To orient youth and graduates towards employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- To strengthen advocacy for housing and welfare schemes benefiting Scheduled Tribe families.

The meeting brought together community representatives, young graduates, and social development facilitators working toward tribal empowerment and inclusive growth.

- More than **20 graduates** from the Kaatu Naayakkar community were oriented on organizing **Job Fairs** and **Entrepreneurship Programmes** in collaboration with the **Confederation of Affirmative Industries (CAI-ST)**.
- The session also highlighted ongoing **advocacy efforts for securing 5,000 houses** for Kaatu Naayakkar families, drawing reference from the successful **Kayarambedu housing allotments for Irulars** as a model intervention.

##### Impacts:

1. Enhanced awareness among Kaatu Naayakkar youth on employment and entrepreneurship pathways.
2. Strengthened planning for housing advocacy and community development.
3. Fostered leadership and collaboration for sustainable tribal welfare initiatives.

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#### 75) Meeting with Fr. Provincial and Fr. Socius: Sharing SWTN's Work and Future Plans

On 7th December 2023, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu presented its recent work, achievements, and future action plans in a review meeting with Fr. Provincial and Fr. Socius, receiving guidance to strengthen strategic priorities, organizational sustainability, and long-term impact through discussions on community interventions, advocacy, and partnerships.



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76) *Media Coverage on Budget Advocacy, Gender Budgeting, and Post Matric Scholarship by Digital Daily Thanthi*

- On 8th December 2023, a journalist team from **Daily Thanthi (Digital Edition)** visited the Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN) office to document and publish a feature story on SW-TN’s Budget Advocacy work, Gender Budgeting initiatives, and engagement on the Post Matric Scholarship scheme.
- The interaction highlighted SW-TN’s advocacy on transparent public budgeting, Gender Budgeting, and issues in the Post Matric Scholarship scheme. The team shared insights on budget analysis, public expenditure tracking, participatory governance, and challenges faced by students, while emphasizing the need for equitable resource allocation and responsive policies.

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77) *Relief Distribution for Michaung-Affected Irulars in Pazhaverkadu with Action Aid India*

- During the second week of December 2023, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu, in coordination with ActionAid India, provided essential relief materials to Cyclone Michaung-affected Irular families in Pazhaverkadu, ensuring immediate support for those facing displacement and livelihood loss.
- The initiative strengthened collaborative humanitarian response efforts while reinforcing commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of vulnerable indigenous communities during crisis situations.

**78) Delegate Participation in International Conference on Emerging Trends in Crime Against Women, Taj Coromandel**

- On 11th December 2023 in Chennai, Ms. Kamatchi participated as a delegate in an international conference on emerging trends in crimes against women, contributing to discussions on trafficking, cybercrime, legal frameworks, and strengthening victim protection and justice systems.
  - The participation enhanced understanding of evolving gender-based violence, strengthened networks with institutions and civil society, and reaffirmed commitment to advancing women's safety, dignity, and access to justice.
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**79) Online Session on SC/ST Sub Plan: Bridging Gaps for Inclusive Development, Ambedkar King Study Circle, California**

- On 14th December 2023, Mr. Christodas Gandhi, IAS (Retd), conducted an online session on the SC/ST Sub Plan, highlighting its framework, constitutional basis, and key implementation gaps such as fund diversion, underutilization, and lack of transparency.
  - The session enhanced awareness on inclusive budgeting, strengthened engagement among diaspora, researchers, and civil society, and emphasized accountability, community participation, and advocacy for equitable development.
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**80) SOCIO-FEST 2023: Youth Roles in Sustainable Development, Loyola College, Chennai**

- On 15th December 2023, Fr. John Kumar and Ms. Kamatchi participated in SOCIO-FEST 2023 at Loyola College, highlighting the vital role of youth in sustainable development, social responsibility, and inclusive growth through academic and interactive engagements.
  - The event strengthened students' awareness on social justice and sustainability while encouraging youth leadership, informed citizenship, and active civic participation.
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**81) Co-Organizing State Level Seminar for Youth and Students: HUMAN RIGHTS 75 – TN**

- On 18th December 2023, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu co-organized a state-level seminar marking 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, engaging youth and stakeholders on key issues like custodial violence, freedom of expression, gender justice, and rights of marginalized communities.
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- The seminar enhanced awareness on human rights, strengthened collaboration among civil society networks, and encouraged youth participation in advocacy, reinforcing commitment to constitutional values and human dignity.

## 82) Coordination of GBM: Dalit Commission at Dhyana Ashram

On 21st December 2023, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN) coordinated the General Body Meeting (GBM) of the Dalit Commission held at **Dhyana Ashram**.

- The meeting reviewed the progress of the Dalit Commission, discussed key issues affecting Dalit communities, and explored strategic actions. Members shared field experiences, highlighted grassroots challenges, and emphasized the need for stronger awareness, legal support, and institutional accountability, with SWTN facilitating coordination and documentation.
- The meeting strengthened internal coordination and provided clarity on future action plans. It reinforced the collective commitment toward advancing equity, dignity, and constitutional rights, while enhancing collaboration among members for sustained advocacy and community outreach.

## 83) Solidarity with Felicitation of Mr. Balaji, Member of ST Advisory Council, Government of Tamil Nadu

On 23rd December 2023, Fr. John Kumar extended solidarity at the felicitation of Mr. Balaji, ASSET, on his selection as a Member of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) Advisory Council, **Government of Tamil Nadu**, held at **Sembakkam**, Thiruporur, Chengalpattu District.



#### **84) Consultation with ST Advisory Council Members on ST Development, Triplicane**

On 27th December 2023, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN), along with PAALAM, organized a discussion with Members of the ST Advisory Council, **Government of Tamil Nadu**, to deliberate on Scheduled Tribe (ST) development at **Anjappar Arangam, Triplicane**.

#### **Objectives:**

- To discuss priority concerns and development needs of Scheduled Tribe communities in Tamil Nadu.
- To facilitate dialogue between civil society representatives and ST Advisory Council members.



The meeting brought together community leaders, activists, and members of the ST Advisory Council to reflect on challenges and opportunities in tribal development.

- Key issues such as education, land rights, livelihood opportunities, housing, and access to welfare schemes were discussed.
- Emphasis was placed on transparency, accountability, and participatory planning in development initiatives.

#### **Impacts:**

1. Strengthened engagement between policymakers and grassroots organizations on ST development.
2. Identified actionable priorities for policy advocacy and follow-up interventions.

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#### **85) Online Advocacy and RTI Filing for Finalization of Tamil Nadu State Women Policy Draft 2021**

On 2nd January 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu organized an online meeting with women leaders to advocate for finalizing the State Women Policy Draft 2021. SWTN filed an RTI, mobilized 92 endorsements, and escalated the issue to key government officials and MLAs, while also engaging with the State Commission for Women. The advocacy gained media coverage in The Indian Express and DT Next on 7th January 2024.

**Objectives:**

- To accelerate the finalization and public release of the State Women Policy Draft 2021.
- To ensure stakeholder consultation and participatory governance in policy-making.
- To amplify advocacy efforts through political and media engagement for gender-responsive policymaking.

The initiative engaged women leaders, civil society organizations, and policymakers to push for timely action on the policy.

- SWTN coordinated online discussions to consolidate inputs and strategic advocacy measures.
- The RTI request sought transparency on the revised policy and timeline for public circulation.
- Stakeholder endorsements were systematically escalated to political representatives and departmental authorities.
- Media coverage helped raise public awareness and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

**Impacts:**

1. Strengthened pressure on Go,TN for finalization and public release of the State Women Policy.
  2. Increased collaboration among women leaders, civil society, and government authorities.
  3. Enhanced visibility of policy advocacy efforts through media and political engagement.
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**86) 10th Micro Level Plan Meeting for Chengalpattu Irulars, Madras Christian College, Tambaram**

On 8th January 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN), in collaboration with the Department of Social Work (Aided), **Madras Christian College**, organized the 10th Micro Level Plan Meeting for Chengalpattu Irular communities at MCC, Tambaram.

**Objectives:**

- To review and discuss the ongoing development initiatives for Irular communities in Chengalpattu.
- To engage community members in participatory planning for micro-level interventions.
- To identify gaps and prioritize action areas for sustainable community development.

The meeting brought together Irular community representatives, social workers, and civil society actors to collectively plan and assess local development strategies.

- Discussions focused on livelihood opportunities, education, health, and social welfare programs for Irular families.
- Participants shared feedback on past interventions and suggested improvements for future planning.
- SWTN facilitated participatory decision-making and documentation of the community's priorities.



**Impacts:**

1. Enhanced community participation in planning and decision-making processes.
  2. Identified actionable priorities to address socio-economic gaps in Irular communities.
  3. Strengthened partnerships between SWTN, academic institutions, and local communities for sustainable development.
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**87) Solidarity with Training for Nilgiris PVTG Interpreters, ICSA Paripurna Training Hall**

- On 9th January 2024, Ms. Rajeshwari extended solidarity to a training for Solidarity Interpreters of the Nilgiris PVTG Federation in Chennai, focusing on building skills in interpretation, cross-cultural communication, and ethical community advocacy.
  - The training strengthened collaboration among interpreters and civil society groups while reinforcing commitment to protecting the rights, dignity, and inclusion of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
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**88) Appreciation for CAFOWA Sanitary Workers and Security Personnel**

- On 10th January 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu honored sanitary workers and security staff of CAFOWA by distributing gifts as a gesture of appreciation, recognizing their essential contributions and promoting dignity of labor.
  - The initiative boosted morale among staff and strengthened relationships between SW-TN and support personnel of partner organizations.
-

**89) Online Discussion on Kaatunayakar Tribes Higher Education and Business Opportunities**

- On 10th January 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu, along with partners, organized an online discussion on higher education and business opportunities for Kaatunayakar tribes, addressing challenges, sharing best practices, and promoting mentorship, skill-building, and policy support.
  - The discussion enhanced awareness on education and entrepreneurship, strengthened collaboration among stakeholders, and reinforced commitment to inclusive development and economic empowerment of tribal communities.
- 

**90) Sharing Information on Formation of Gender Budget Cells and Submission of Alternate Basket of Schemes**

- On 12th January 2024, Ms. Kamatchi informed women leaders about the Government of Tamil Nadu’s initiative on Gender Budget Cells, guiding them to submit alternate scheme proposals and promoting civil society participation in gender-responsive budgeting.
  - She also filed an RTI to ensure transparency and accountability in GBC functioning, strengthening advocacy for equitable resource allocation, performance-based auditing, and gender-sensitive governance.
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**91) Facilitating Thoduvaanam Series: Capacity-Building for Women in Social Sector on Gender Budgeting**

- On 19th and 22nd January 2024, Ms. Kamatchi facilitated online workshops on “Understanding Gender Budgeting” under the Thoduvaanam series by Prajnya, building the capacity of women social sector workers in gender-responsive budgeting and advocacy.
  - The sessions enhanced participants’ understanding of budget analysis, encouraged collaboration and peer learning, and strengthened engagement in promoting gender equity in public spending.
- 

**92) Session Chair on Social Investment of MLA/MP Funds in Alliance with Local NGOs, South Investment Conclave 2024**

- On 24th January 2024, Fr. John Kumar chaired a session at the South Investment Conclave 2024 on utilizing MLA and MP funds in collaboration with local NGOs, emphasizing alignment with community needs, transparency, and accountability.
-

- The session enhanced understanding of effective social investment practices, strengthened collaboration between elected representatives and grassroots organizations, and reinforced commitment to inclusive and impactful development.
- 

**93) Guest Speaker on Women Policy and Gender Budgeting: International Online Training Programme, Pondicherry University**

- On 27th January 2024, Ms. Kamatchi delivered a lecture on women’s policy and gender budgeting in relation to SDG 5 during an international training programme, highlighting strategies for integrating gender-responsive approaches into policy planning.
  - The session enhanced understanding of gender equality frameworks, promoted global knowledge exchange, and reinforced the importance of aligning policies and budgets with sustainable development goals.
- 

**94) Session on “Decentralized and Intersectional Gender Budgeting” at the VII Annual Convention on Women and Sustainable Development Goals (31 January 2024)**

- On 31st January 2024, Ms. Kamatchi presented a session on decentralized and intersectional gender budgeting at the SDG-Watch Tamil Nadu convention in Chennai, highlighting participatory governance and inclusive policy approaches.
  - The session enhanced understanding of intersectional budgeting, encouraged dialogue on equitable resource allocation, and strengthened commitment to aligning local governance with sustainable development goals.
- 

**95) Workshop on Gender Responsive Budgeting for TN Government Officials, AJNIFM & Anna University**

- On 2nd February 2024, Ms. Kamatchi delivered a session for Tamil Nadu government officials on Gender Responsive Budgeting at a workshop organized by AJNIFM in collaboration with Anna University, focusing on integrating gender perspectives into planning, policy, and budget processes.
  - The session strengthened officials’ capacity in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating gender-sensitive budgets while promoting collaboration for accountable and effective gender-responsive governance.
-



### Workshop On

### Gender Responsive Budgeting Organised by

**Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM)**  
(Nodal Centre at Central Level for Women Development & Gender Studies,  
Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India)

In Collaboration with

**Anna University, Chennai**

On

(February 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024) at

**Venue: Sivalingam Hall, Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Anna University, Guindy Chennai-25**

**Inaugural Session**

**Minute to Minute Programme: Day 2**

Day 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024
	<b>Technical Session- III</b>
09:45 AM – 10:30 AM	<b>Topic:</b> Role of State Officials in the GRB Space (Online session). <b>Speaker:</b> Dr. Sanghamitra Dhar, Programme Lead – Gender Responsive Budgeting, UN Women.
10:35 AM – 12:15 PM	<b>Topic:</b> Gender Budgeting in Tamil Nadu; Achievements and wayforward <b>Speaker:</b> Ms. Kamatchi Sundaramurthy, Assistant Director, SocialWatch, Tamil Nadu

### 96) Orientation for SC/ST Girls on Post Matric Scholarship, SHEROES

On 5th February 2024, Ms. Rajeshwari conducted an orientation for SC/ST students at Queen Mary's College and the University of Madras on the Post Matric Scholarship, providing guidance on eligibility, application procedures, and documentation, thereby enhancing awareness, supporting access to higher education, and promoting educational empowerment among marginalized communities.



**97) Gender-Sensitive Performance and Outcomes Workshop, Department of Social Welfare & Women Empowerment, GoTN**

From 5 to 7 Feb, 2024, Ms. Kamatchi represented People’s Response in a Gender Budgeting Workshop, delivering a session on gender-sensitive performance and outcomes, focusing on integrating gender perspectives into planning, budgeting, and evaluation processes. The workshop strengthened stakeholders’ capacity for gender-responsive governance, enhanced inter-departmental collaboration, and promoted accountability and evidence-based approaches to achieving gender equality.



**98) Online Discussion on Business Expansion for Participants of TAHDCO TN BEAT Expo**

On 6th February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN), Confederation of Affirmative Industry, and PAALAM organized an online discussion on **Business Expansion** for participants of TAHDCO’s TN **BEAT Expo**, which featured over 350 stalls showcasing nearly 5,000 products by SC/ST entrepreneurs.

From,  
Tmt.V Amuthavalli IAS,  
Commissioner of Social Welfare,  
Commissionerate of Social Welfare,  
Kamarajar Salai,  
Chennai – 600 005  
Roc.no.05633/SRCW/2022

To,  
Ms.S.Kamatchi,  
Social Watch

Date 29.01.2024

Sub : Social Welfare & Women Empowerment - State Hub for Empowerment of Women- To organize 3 days training/workshop programme on Gender Budgeting for the year 2023-24 – regarding.

Ref : 40. Ministry of Women and Child Development, New Delhi Ref. No.GB- 21/1/2022-O/o DD(E-98782) Gol, dated 21.03.2023  
41. Social Welfare & Women Empowerment, Director of Social Welfare, Roc.No.10639/SRCW/2023, dated 20/04/2023  
42. Ministry of Women and Child Development, New Delhi Ref.GB-12/1/2023 – Gender Budgeting [Comp.No.108422] dated 18/12/2023

The undersigned is directed to state that the Ministry of Women and Child Development being the nodal Ministry for Gender Budgeting has been providing financial assistance to organize training programmes and workshops to facilitate capacity building of Government officials on Gender Budgeting at State level. The purpose of the Gender Budgeting Schemes is to provide grand-in-aid- for training of various stakeholders including officials of Central and State Government, PSUs, Corporate sector, PRIs and NGOs

### **Objectives:**

- To support SC/ST entrepreneurs in scaling up their businesses and expanding market reach.
- To provide guidance on strategic planning, marketing, and leveraging business networks.
- To foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among entrepreneurs, industry experts, and support organizations.

The discussion brought together entrepreneurs, business mentors, and representatives from civil society organizations to explore growth opportunities.

- Participants received insights on business expansion strategies, market access, and product diversification.
- Practical guidance was shared on networking, branding, and leveraging government and private sector support.
- SWTN and partner organizations facilitated interactive sessions to address challenges and identify actionable solutions.

### **Impacts**

1. Strengthened capacity of SC/ST entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and access new markets.
2. Promoted networking and collaboration among participants, mentors, and support organizations.
3. Enhanced visibility and support for SC/ST enterprises participating in the TN BEAT Expo.

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### **99) Lecture-Discussion on ASER 2023 Beyond Basics, SWTN & Arunodhaya, Egmore**

On 7th February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SW-TN) and **Arunodhaya** organized a lecture-discussion on “**Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023: Beyond Basics**”, presented by **G. Kumaresan**, ASER TN Team member, held at Egmore, Chennai.

### **Objectives:**

- To review and discuss the findings of ASER 2023 with a focus on learning outcomes beyond basic literacy and numeracy.
- To engage educators, civil society members, and stakeholders in analyzing educational challenges and strategies for improvement.
- To promote evidence-based advocacy and informed interventions in the education sector.

The session brought together teachers, social workers, and education advocates to reflect on the ASER findings.

- G. Kumaresan presented key insights on learning gaps, trends, and policy implications from ASER 2023.
- Participants discussed strategies to enhance quality education, remedial teaching, and monitoring mechanisms.
- Interactive dialogue encouraged sharing of field experiences and community-level interventions to address educational challenges.



**Impacts:**

1. Increased understanding of educational outcomes and learning gaps beyond basic literacy and numeracy.
2. Strengthened capacity of educators and civil society actors to plan evidence-based interventions.
3. Promoted collaborative dialogue and advocacy for quality education in Tamil Nadu.

**100) Recommendations for Sustainable Empowerment of TN Aandrors (STs) to ST-MLAs**

- On 7th February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu and PAALAM submitted recommendations to ST-MLAs for the sustainable empowerment of Aandror (ST) communities, focusing on education, livelihoods, health, and cultural preservation.
- The initiative strengthened advocacy, encouraged engagement of elected representatives, and promoted collaborative, inclusive approaches for tribal welfare and development.

### **101) Online Discussion with SC/ST Healers Forum on Health Business Expansion**

On 7th February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN) and PAALAM facilitated an online discussion exclusively for the **SC/ST Healers Forum** to explore business expansion opportunities for establishing health facilities, including nursing homes, diagnostic centres, and individual specialty clinics such as dentistry and ENT.

#### **Objectives:**

- To support SC/ST healers in expanding their healthcare services and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- To provide guidance on setting up professional health facilities and navigating regulatory and operational requirements.
- To foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building within the SC/ST healthcare community.

The discussion brought together healers, medical professionals, and business advisors to strategize on health sector entrepreneurship.

- Participants explored practical steps for establishing clinics, managing operations, and scaling healthcare services.
- Emphasis was placed on leveraging community networks and government schemes to support health enterprise development.

#### **Impacts:**

1. Strengthened capacity of SC/ST healers to establish and manage health facilities successfully.
2. Promoted entrepreneurship, innovation, and professional growth within marginalized healthcare communities.
3. Encouraged peer learning, networking, and collaborative planning for healthcare interventions.

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### **102) Core Group Meeting on Intersectional and Outcome-Based Gender Budgeting in TN**

On 8th February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN) organized a core group online meeting with women’s organizations to strategize demands on “**Intersectional, Decentralized, Participatory, and Outcome-Based Gender Budgeting in Tamil Nadu**”. The joint statement received nearly 115 endorsements and was featured in **The Indian Express** on 12th February 2024. The statement was submitted as the **Voice of Women in Tamil Nadu** to all MLAs, the **Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women**, and concerned line departments.

### Objectives:

- To consolidate demands for gender-responsive, participatory, and outcome-oriented budgeting in Tamil Nadu.
- To build consensus among women’s organizations and civil society on priority interventions and policy recommendations.
- To advocate for institutional mechanisms that ensure accountability, equity, and inclusivity in budget planning.

The online meeting brought together representatives from women’s organizations, civil society actors, and activists to plan coordinated advocacy.

- Participants reviewed strategies for submitting department-wise recommendations and ensuring stakeholder participation.
- The joint statement articulated key demands for intersectional and decentralized gender budgeting.
- SWTN coordinated the endorsement process and dissemination of the statement to policymakers and government bodies.

**Tamil Nadu**

## Women groups demand outcome-based gender budget from TN govt

*The statement also called for the release of a 'status report of marginalised women in Tamil Nadu 2024' by the gender budget cell, in collaboration with the state planning commission.*



Image of a calculator used for representational purposes onlyPexels

**Express News Service**  
Updated on: 12 Feb 2024, 10:50 am  
1 min read  
Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2024/Feb/12/women-groups-demand-outcome-based-gender-budget-from-tn-govt>

CHENNAI: Women’s groups and organisations, in a joint statement, have urged the Tamil Nadu government to prioritise an intersectional, participatory, decentralized, and outcome-based approach to gender budgeting in the state.

### Impacts:

1. Strengthened collective advocacy for gender-responsive and outcome-oriented budgeting in Tamil Nadu.
2. Increased visibility of women’s voices and demands in media and policymaking spaces.
3. Facilitated direct engagement with MLAs, the TN Women’s Commission, and line departments to influence budget planning.

### **103) Session on Utilizing Administrative Charges under Post Matric Scholarship, CRY & TN Open University**

On 9th February 2024, Ms. Rajeshwari presented a session on “Utilizing Administrative Charges in Meaningful Ways as Contained in PMS Guidelines Para 19 through Establishing Helplines” during the consultation meeting on ‘Enhancing Gross Enrolment Ratio Through Maximizing the Implementation of Post Matric Scholarship (PMS for SCs & STs) in Tamil Nadu’, organized by Child Rights and You (CRY) in association with the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice Administration, Tamil Nadu Open University, held at Saidapet, Chennai.

#### **Objectives:**

- To provide guidance on effectively utilizing administrative charges under PMS guidelines to support SC/ST students.
- To explore the establishment of helplines as a mechanism to enhance accessibility and implementation of scholarships.
- To strengthen stakeholder engagement in improving gross enrolment ratios through better implementation of PMS schemes.



The consultation brought together educators, government officials, civil society representatives, and student welfare advocates to discuss strategies for optimizing PMS outcomes.

- Ms. Rajeshwari shared insights on using administrative charges to create supportive infrastructure, such as helplines for students.
- Participants discussed challenges in PMS implementation and identified actionable solutions for increasing enrollment and retention.
- The session emphasized collaboration between government departments, educational institutions, and civil society for effective scholarship management.

### **Impacts:**

1. Enhanced understanding among stakeholders of strategic use of administrative charges under PMS guidelines.
2. Contributed to efforts aimed at increasing gross enrolment ratios and promoting educational equity for SC/ST students in Tamil Nadu.

### **104) Solidarity with WORLD SOCIAL FORUM – Nepal: Declaration on Rights of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD)**



On 16 & 17 Feb, 2024, Fr. John Kumar participated at the World Social Forum – Nepal, contributing to discussions on the rights of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD), including Dalits, and sharing grassroots perspectives from India.

### **105) Strategic Discussion with Ms. Sandra (ALBOAN) and Ms. Maria Jones (UN Women Policy Specialist)**

On 16th February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu hosted a discussion with Ms. Sandra and Ms. Maria Jones, focusing on gender policy, development initiatives, and strategies for advancing women’s empowerment through collaboration. The interaction strengthened partnerships, enhanced understanding of gender-responsive frameworks, and reinforced commitment to joint action and knowledge-sharing for promoting gender equity.



**106) Resource Session on Post Matric Scholarship, Social Action Centre, Vallam**



On 20th February 2024, Ms. Rajeshwari served as the resource person on **Post Matric Scholarship** during a programme organized by **Social Action Centre** at Pathai Centre, Vallam.

**107) Media Feature: Part-C of Gender Budget Statement Inflated Amount Spent on Women's Welfare, Indian Express**

On 21st February 2024, Ms. Kamatchi's views on the Tamil Nadu Gender Budget Statement 2024–25 were featured in **The Indian Express** under the headline: **“Part-C of Gender Budget Statement Inflated Amount Spent on Women's Welfare.”**

**THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS** | **TAMIL NADU** | WEDNESDAY 21.02.2024 | CHENNAI | newindianexpress.com

**‘Part-C of gender budget statement inflates amount spent on women’s welfare’**

**SUBASHINI VIJAYAKUMAR**  
@Chennai

THE gender budget statement released on Monday stated that ₹1.22 lakh crore was allocated for welfare of women under various schemes in which the women beneficiaries ranged from 30-100 %.

This includes ₹27,915 crore under Part A - schemes that are targeted only for women, ₹31,976 crore in Part B - schemes where the women beneficiaries range from 40-88% and ₹55,739 crore in Part C - schemes in which at least 30% beneficiaries are women. However, no list or details about the schemes under Part C were mentioned.

“The gender budget statement of the central government as well as several other state governments has only parts A and B. The Part C introduced by the Tamil Nadu government only inflates the amount spent on the welfare of women in the state without reflecting the reality, as it is much higher than the first two parts,” said S Kamatchi from Social Watch, Tamil Nadu.

Endorsing the view, Binla Chandrasekaran, director of Ekta Resource Centre for Women, said gender budgeting serves no purpose if one of the major sections does not have any specifics and is used just to inflate numbers.

Activists have also demanded the government to release an exclusive document for the gender budget statement which is now part of the appendices to the budget memorandum.

Across the country, at least 11 states have been releasing it as a separate document.

They also want the state government to make a performance-oriented statement with details on the number of women beneficiaries to ensure schemes are not added to categories without any basis. Earlier this month, more than 87 activists signed a joint statement pressing for these demands.

According to the standard operating procedure released by the central government for gender budgeting, the government has to conduct situational analysis of women in the state, following which the departments have to conduct pre-budget consultations with the stakeholders to bring out a performance-based gender budget statement.

Recently, the Comptroller and Auditor General had advised the Kerala government to bring out performance-based gender budgeting statements, failing which the objective of gender budgeting would be defeated.

However in Tamil Nadu, the government is yet to form gender budgeting cells in many departments which are responsible for analysing the schemes. Despite a government order released in July, 2022, only five including the social welfare department out of more than 40 departments have gender budgeting cells, as of December, 2023, according to an RTI reply.

However, the women’s groups have welcomed the move to include the accounts, budget estimates and revised estimates of 2023-24 in the statement as the previous six statements had only the budget estimates of that single financial year.

**108) Consultation on SCSP & TSP Development Fund, TAISHA, Virugambakkam**

On 21st February 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN) and PAALAM organized a consultation on “Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Fund (SCSP & TSP)” at TAISHA.

**Objectives:**

- To review and discuss the planning, allocation, and utilization of SCSP & TSP funds for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- To engage stakeholders, including community representatives and civil society organizations, in strengthening accountability and transparency in fund utilization.
- To identify strategies for effective implementation of development programs under SCSP & TSP.

Participants discussed gaps in fund allocation, monitoring mechanisms, and challenges in reaching marginalized communities.

- SWTN and PAALAM facilitated dialogue to generate actionable recommendations for improving the impact of SCSP & TSP initiatives.
- Emphasis was placed on participatory planning, outcome-based monitoring, and ensuring equitable access to development resources.

**Impacts:**

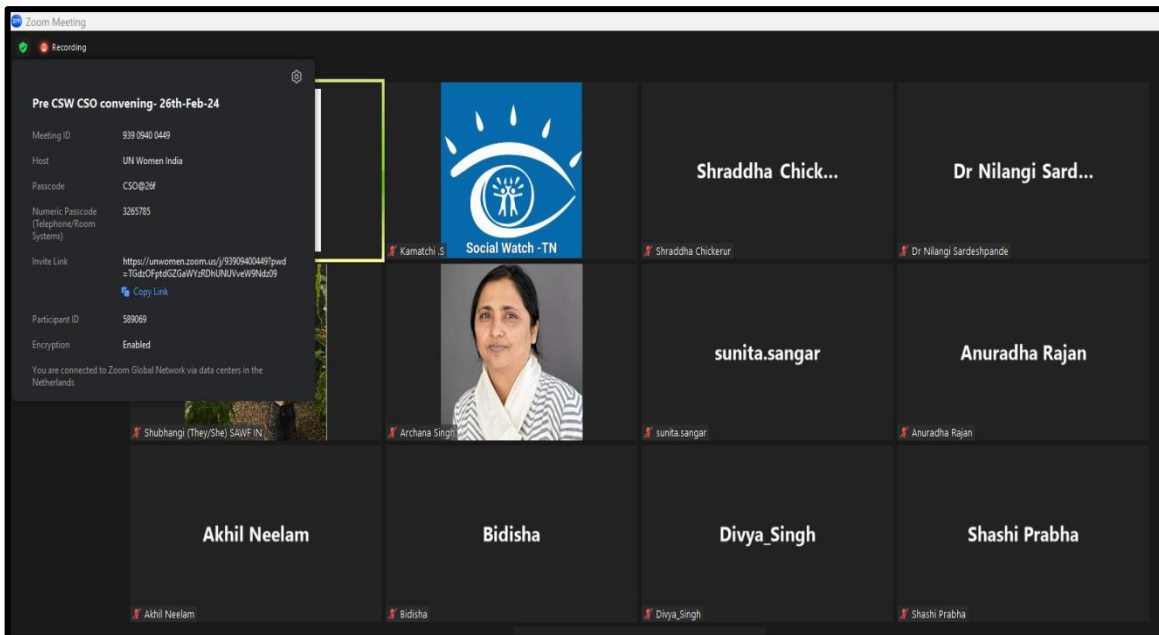
1. Strengthened understanding among stakeholders of SCSP & TSP fund management and accountability mechanisms.
2. Promoted collaborative dialogue for enhancing the effectiveness of development programs for SC/ST communities.

3. Generated recommendations and strategies to ensure equitable and impactful utilization of development funds.



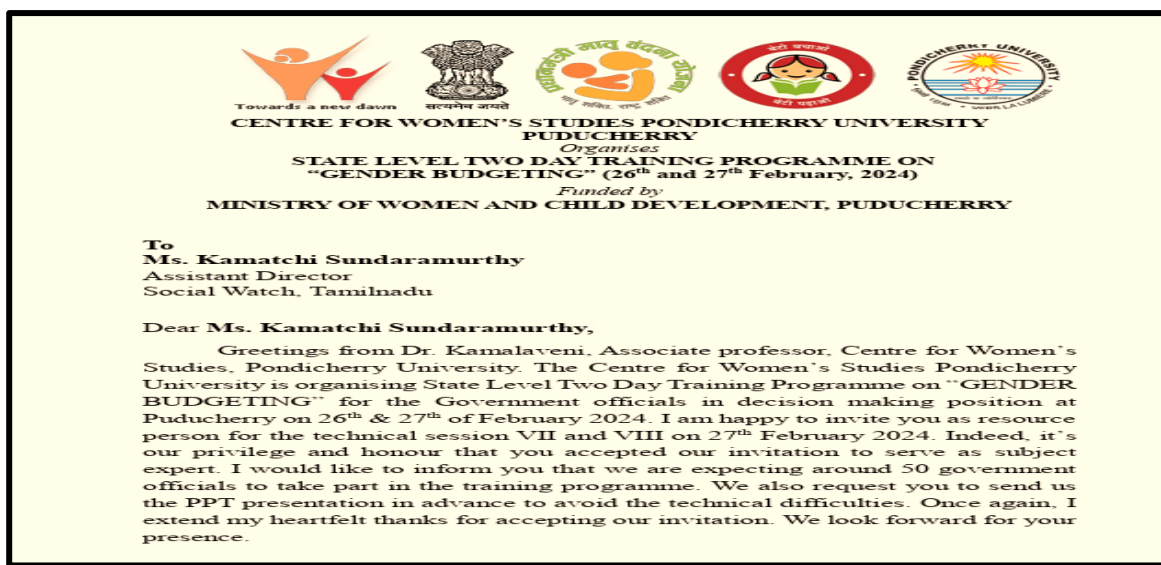
***109) Virtual Participation in Pre-CSW Consultation for 68th Commission on the Status of Women, UN House, New Delhi***

On 26th February 2024, Ms. Kamatchi virtually participated in the hybrid programme on “Pre-CSW Consultation with Civil Society Partners in India towards the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)”, held at UN House.



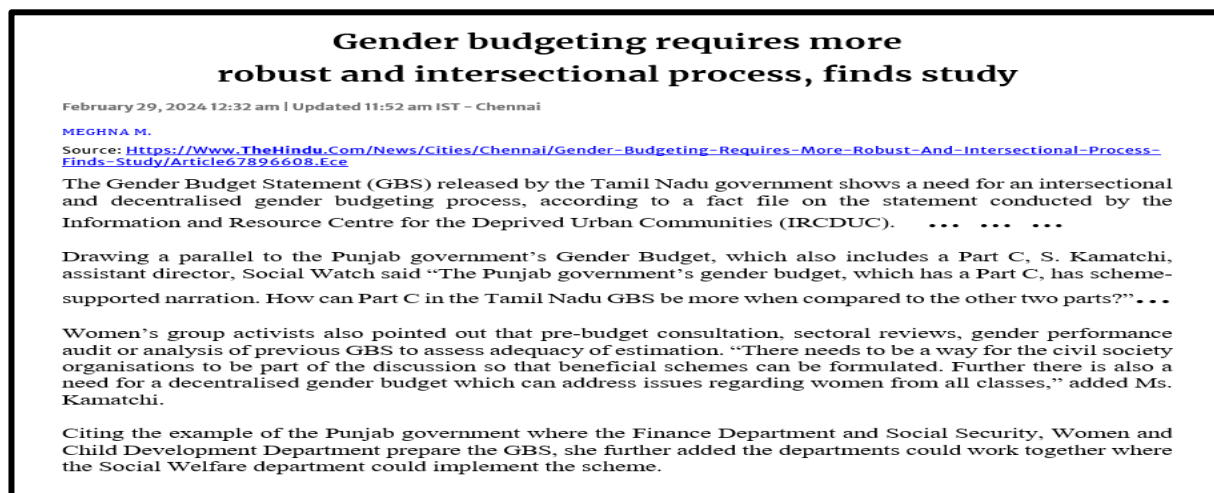
### 110) Technical Sessions on Gender Budget Techniques and Gender Budget Statement, State-Level Training, Puducherry

On 27th February 2024, Ms. Kamatchi was invited to handle two technical sessions on “Application of Gender Budget Techniques” and “Gender Budget Statement” during the State-Level Two-Day Training Programme on Gender Budgeting, organized by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Puducherry in collaboration with the Centre for Women’s Studies, Pondicherry University, funded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, held at Puducherry.



### 111) Recommendations Featured in The Hindu on Robust and Intersectional Gender Budgeting

On 29th February 2024, Ms. Kamatchi’s recommendations were incorporated in **The Hindu** article titled “Gender Budgeting Requires More Robust and Intersectional Process.”



**112) Training on Women's Political Participation Rights and Gender Budget Workshop, SRED, Ranipet District**

On 6th March 2024, Ms. Kamatchi conducted a training on “**Women's Political Participation Rights and Gender Budget Workshop**” for Scheduled Caste women leaders around Arakonam. The programme was organized by **Society for Rural Education and Development (SRED)** and held at **Kallaru, Ranipet District**, with about 36 participants (32 women and 4 men).

**Objectives:**

- To build awareness among SC women leaders about their political participation rights.
- To provide practical understanding of gender budgeting and its relevance for community development.
- To empower women leaders to engage in governance, decision-making, and advocacy at local and regional levels.



Ms. Kamatchi explained key concepts of political participation, rights of women, and mechanisms for effective engagement.

- Participants learned about gender budgeting, including planning, monitoring, and leveraging budget allocations for community development.
- Interactive sessions encouraged sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and strategizing for local governance involvement.

**Impacts:**

1. Increased knowledge and capacity of SC women leaders regarding political rights and gender-responsive budgeting.
  2. Strengthened confidence and skills of participants to participate actively in governance and advocacy.
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**113) Training on Social Advocacy and Lobbying, IDEAS, Madurai**

From 7 to 12, March, 2024, Ms. Rajeshwari participated in the “**Training on Social Advocacy and Lobbying**” organized by **IDEAS (Institute of Development Education, Action, and Studies)**, held at Madurai. The programme brought together around 25 youth participants from various organizations, including 5 women and 20 men.



**114) Session on Gender Budgeting and SDGs for 500 Girl Students, International Conference, Ethiraj College for Women**

On 8th March 2024, Ms. Kamatchi presented a session on “**Gender Budgeting and Sustainable Development Goals**” to about 500 girl students during the **International Conference on ‘Women as Catalyst for Sustainable Development’**, jointly organized by the **Centre for Women’s Studies, University of Madras, International Centre for University of Madras, and Regional Association for Women’s Studies**, held at **Ethiraj College for Women**.

**Objectives:**

- To educate young women on the role of gender budgeting in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
-

- To raise awareness on women’s empowerment, financial planning, and policy engagement.
- To inspire students to actively participate in promoting gender equality and sustainable development initiatives.

Ms. Kamatchi explained how gender budgeting contributes to achieving SDGs, particularly those related to gender equality, education, and social welfare.

- Participants engaged in discussions on practical strategies for advocating gender-responsive policies in their communities and future workplaces.
- Emphasis was placed on linking financial planning and policy decisions to measurable outcomes for women’s empowerment.



**Impacts:**

1. Enhanced understanding of gender budgeting and its relevance to sustainable development among 500 girl students.
2. Encouraged youth participation in gender-responsive policy advocacy and social initiatives.
3. Strengthened awareness of the connections between financial planning, governance, and women’s empowerment.

**115) Solidarity to Gender-Responsive Climate Action Discussion, International Women’s Day, British Deputy High Commission, Chennai**

On 8th March 2024, Ms. Kamatchi participated in the “**Discussion Towards Gender-Responsive Climate Action: Integrating Perspectives in Tamil Nadu’s Policies**” during the **International Women’s Day Celebration**, jointly organized by **UN Women, UNDP, British Council, and TN SDGs**, held at **British Deputy High Commission**.



- A discussion on gender-responsive climate action in Tamil Nadu brought together stakeholders to promote integration of gender perspectives into climate policies, with Ms. Kamatchi expressing solidarity and emphasizing inclusive, participatory, and SDG-aligned approaches.
- The initiative strengthened dialogue, amplified women’s voices in climate policy, and encouraged multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable development and gender-equitable environmental planning.

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### ***116) Online Discussions for Eklavya School Teachers and TN Scheduled Tribe Commission Members***

On 17th March 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN) and PAALAM organized **two online discussions** for **Eklavya School teachers** and **members of the Tamil Nadu Scheduled Tribe Commission**.

#### **Objectives:**

- To facilitate dialogue between educators and tribal commission members on education, development, and rights of Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu.
- To share knowledge, best practices, and strategies for improving educational outcomes and tribal welfare.
- To strengthen collaboration and communication between government bodies, teachers, and civil society organizations.

Participants explored challenges faced by tribal students and strategies to enhance learning and retention.

- SWTN and PAALAM facilitated exchange of ideas on implementing inclusive and culturally relevant educational practices.
- Emphasis was placed on participatory approaches, capacity-building, and monitoring mechanisms for tribal development initiatives.

### Impacts:

1. Strengthened understanding and coordination between Eklavya School educators and the TN Scheduled Tribe Commission.
  2. Promoted awareness of educational challenges and solutions for Scheduled Tribe communities.
  3. Encouraged collaborative planning and knowledge-sharing for improving educational outcomes and tribal welfare in Tamil Nadu.
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### ***117) Solidarity with Experience Sharing Meet of WSF – Nepal Participants and Plan of Action, Reporters Guild, Chepauk***

On 18th March 2024, Fr. John Kumar extended solidarity to the “**Experience Sharing Meet of the Participants of the World Social Forum – Nepal**” and contributed to devising a **Plan of Action** based on the Forum’s experiences, held at **Reporters Guild**.



### ***118) Panel Discussion on Community Engagement & Awareness Programmes during State-Level Seminar on Confronting Honour Killing, Madras School of Social Work***

- On 21st March 2024, Fr. John Kumar represented as a **Panel Discussant** on “**Administrative and Policy Dialogues: Community Engagement & Awareness Programmes – International Perspective and Best Practices**” during the **State-Level Seminar on ‘Confronting Honour Killing’**, organized by **Social Work Forum** in collaboration with the **Centre for Social Justice and Equity**, held at **Madras School of Social Work**.

- The discussion enhanced understanding, strengthened multi-stakeholder dialogue, and contributed to **actionable** strategies for preventing honour killings through collaborative and evidence-based initiatives.

### ***119) South Indian Budget Conclave: Review of Budget-Policy-Advocacy Work, Bodhigram, Kerala***

During 25th–26th March 2024, Social Watch – Tamil Nadu (SWTN), in collaboration with **National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)**, **Institute for Sustainable Development and Governance (ISDG)**, and **Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS)**, jointly organized the **South Indian Budget Conclave** with representatives from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Pondicherry. The event was held at **Bodhigram**.

#### **Objectives:**

- To review and assess progress in budget-policy-advocacy work across South Indian states over the years.
- To evaluate the significance and relevance of past initiatives for future strategies in budget analysis, advocacy, and policy engagement.
- To strengthen regional collaboration and knowledge-sharing among civil society organizations working on budgetary transparency, accountability, and social justice.

The conclave brought together budget analysts, civil society representatives, policy experts, and activists to deliberate on state-level and regional experiences.



- Participants reviewed achievements, challenges, and lessons learned in budget-policy-advocacy work.
- Discussions focused on improving strategies, leveraging resources, and ensuring inclusive, participatory, and outcome-oriented budgeting practices.

- Emphasis was placed on networking, capacity-building, and collaborative approaches to strengthen budget advocacy for marginalized communities.

**Impacts:**

1. Enhanced regional understanding of budget-policy-advocacy efforts and their outcomes across South India.
2. Strengthened partnerships and collaboration among civil society organizations in budget analysis and advocacy.
3. Generated actionable insights and strategies to advance evidence-based, participatory, and inclusive budget initiatives in the coming years.

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