

Saaral

Center for Sustainable Human Development



Annual News letter Issue No.1

Dear Friends,

The Child Rights Convention (CRC) and the Constitution of India assert that humankind owes the child *'the best it has to give'*. The four general principles of CRC are non-discrimination (Art 2), the best interest of the child (Art 3), right to life, survival and development (Art 6) and respect for the views of the child (Art 6). India is a signatory to the convention and hence bound by its constitutional obligations to secure minimum standard of living to its children. There are ten million children in India deprived of basic right to life and education. Physical and mental abuse against children, and trafficking of children is on the increase. At this juncture, CSHD has been attempting to make a difference in the lives of the abused children in Tamilnadu by ensuring their rights. Following is a report about the journey of CSHD together with these children from April 2002 to March 2004. Children have been inspiration and support in our small efforts. We are grateful to the supporters, donors, friends and well wishers in our mission.

Director, Staff & Board Members.



Promotion of Child Rights:

Ensuring Children's Right to Participation:

Adolescent Children Network

Of late, the slums in North Chennai witnessed high incidences of suicide deaths predominantly among the adolescent age group and the newly married couples. Subsequent awareness education by CSHD and participation of children in decision-making processes have enabled adolescent children to form "Suicide Prevention Movement" to prevent suicide deaths. Around 25 children in Elill Nagar slums of North Chennai have formally become members in the movement. The movement spreads awareness and makes adolescents to take oath against suicide by forming adolescent children networks.

Ensuring Children's Right to Protection: -

Rescue of Bonded Child Labourers:

Two child labourers namely Kumaran aged 12 years and Saravanan 14 years (names have been changed) who were in bondage for 4 years in one of the muruku (snacks) small scale industry were rescued and rehabilitated to their families in Tuiticorin. The owner of the industry took a vow not to employ children in the industry. The industry is under constant monitoring by CSHD.

Prevention of Child Trafficking: According to media reports, around 190 children were disrupted by various agencies in Tamilnadu between January 2000 and June 2001. It is only the tip of the iceberg. Failure of monsoons, caste factors, poverty, adult unemployment and high dropout ratio in Government schools were the major causes for child trafficking. CSHD has undertaken reserach works to map child trafficking in Tamilnadu and to evolve strategies through networking to prevent children from worst forms of child abuse.

Ensuring Children's Right to Education: - School Enrollment: CSHD campaigns in schools and among parents towards 100 percent enrollment of children in villages and slums. Enrollment rallies, campaigns and follow-up programs were organised in Kodungaiur slums and five villages in Gumidipundi to sensitise the community on the importance of early childhood education.

Non-formal and Supplementary Education:

CSHD organizes Non-formal and supplementary education in five villages in Gumidipundi in Thiruvallur district and in two slums in North Chennai to support Children who cannot compete in the present system of education in the formal schools. 35 to 40 children in each centre benefit from this program.

Strengthening Government Schools:

One of the main causes for child labour is the inefficiency of the schools to retain children in school system. CSHD supports these schools by identifying local community supporters and donors to support the schools.

Ensuring Children's Right to Development:-Summer Children Camps:

CSHD organised leadership awareness camps for child labourers and school enrolled children in five villages in Gumidipundi Block and in Kodungaiyur slums in Chennai to provide an opportunity for self-development and self-awareness.



District Level Convention for Girl Child Labourers

Two Annual summer camps were organised for children in NFE and Supplementary Education in Kodungaiyur and in Gumidipundi villages. 176 children participated in the camps.



State Level Workshop on Eradication of Child Labour

Four leadership awareness camps were organised for Children in Corporation Primary School at Kodungaiyur. Around 50 children regularly participated in these camps.



CSHD together with the PTA in Kodungaiyur Corporation Primary and Middle School organised a signature campaign to demand a new school building. The school was run in a dilapidated building under shift system. Demands were submitted to the Corporation Commissioner for immediate action. Due to constant representation the Corporation has sanctioned a new school building. The middle school has been shifted to a new area and construction of school building is to begin shortly.

Empowering Children Families: Self-help group activities enable parents to involve in economic and savings activities. The savings enable parents to support children's immediate and future needs in education and to come out of the clutches of taking loans with exorbitant interest rates. CSHD has initiated five women groups in Gumidipundi. In every women group meeting various topics on rights of children, gender equality and community participation in local administration were discussed.

Network and Collective Action:

CSHD strongly believes in networking and collective action to resolve problems at its root. CSHD is a member in Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL-TN), Campaign Against Child Trafficking (CACT-TN), Campaign Against Female Infanticide (CAFI-TN) and League for Child Rights TN. CSHD's new initiative is the Suicide Prevention Movement (SPM) for adolescent children.

State Level Workshop on Eradication of Child Labour for SKN and IGSSS partners in Tamilnadu: IGSSS in collaboration with CSHD organised two day State Level Skill Enhancement Workshop towards removal of children from child labour. A base line survey was organised as a preparation for the workshop. Around 45 chief functionaries from 13 districts in Tamilnadu participated and benefited from the workshop. Districtwise mapping of child labour enabled participants to design a strategic action plan for specific target groups.

Workshop on Sensitisation of District Level Enforcement Officials on Child Labour: CSHD was officially appointed by the Department of Labour, Tamilnadu to document the District Level Workshops in Tamilnadu. Labour department and the Inspector of Factories under the leadership of Labour Commissioner and the District Collector organised the workshop in each district. 29 workshops covering 27 districts were organised in the State. District action plans were drafted during the workshop to remove children from hazardous occupations. The State Action Plan's target towards total removal of children from hazardous occupation by 2005 and in all other occupations by 2007.

Fact-finding study into the prevalence of child labour in Silk Weaving Industry: CSHD was part of the research team constituted by Social Action Movement (SAM) and CACL - TN in compiling the study on child labour in silk weaving in Kancheepuram district in Tamilnadu. The study estimated around 30,000 children being employed in silk weaving. Subsequently a public hearing was organised on 21st and 22nd January 2003 to create awareness and to sensitise the people on this issue.

Fact-finding in Vasan Match Industry at Gudiyattam:

As part of the four member fact-finding team constituted by CACL-TN CSHD researched into the death of girl children in the match industry on 25th February 2003. When the fire broke out in the match industry three girl child labourers locked themselves in toilets to escape the fire and subsequently died of suffocation and seven others admitted to ICU with severe burns. Around 20 other children and women suffered severe fire burns. At the time of the accident 400 to 500 children were working in the premises. The report was presented before the jury panel during the State Level Girl Child Labourers Convention and Public Hearing organised in Chennai.



State Level training for Women Facilitators

The Successful Collaboration:

CSHD as part of the resource team in CCRD (Centre for Child Rights and Development) provided consultancy in documenting successful collaboration of Kochi Corporation and Sneha Bhavan an NGO in restoring the rights of children on the streets. The study analysed the commitment and ownership of the program by Corporation, Police and the Public in rehabilitation processes.



Girl children who work in Vasan Match Industry at Gudiyattam

Spare a Thought:

The students of II M.A Communication, Madras Christian College, organised an awareness program on the plight of street children and about the various voluntary organizations working for this cause. George Heston on behalf of CSHD presented a paper on the status of street children and the NGO interventions to address the same.



NFE classes in Gumidipundi villages

Fact-finding Study on the Mysterious death of Child Anand :

Anand an orphan was found hanging on 23rd July 2003 in the Seva Samajam Boys Home. He was under the State custody and taken care by the boys home. CSHD joined the fact-finding mission organised by CCRD and CDaWS. The study was presented before the media and before the State for further investigation and action on the issue.

Girl Child Labourer's Convention:

To protect the rights of millions of girl child labourers in India CACL proposed a Girl Child Labourer's Convention and Public Hearing. State and District level events preceded the national event. CSHD participated in State Level event as well as in the district level events organised in Chennai and Tiruvallur districts in Tamilnadu. The convention was a show of strength and solidarity to every girl child in the country.

Workshops, Seminars and Training programs were organised through out the State as a preparation for the State Level Girl Child Labourer's Convention. To facilitate the district level and state level processes CCRD organised a **State Level training for Women Facilitators** for NGO representatives from each district. CSHD provided resource and documentation support towards the training.

Anti-Child Labour Day:

CSHD participated in the State Level Anti Child Labour Day commemoration organised by CACL-TN at Kancheepuram. Rally and public meeting were organised to create awareness on the issue of child labour in Silk Weaving industries in Kancheepuram.

Common School System:

In support of the launching of state level campaign on Common School System organised by TAFRE, CSHD showed its solidarity and support in the two day state level consultation and launching of the campaign held on 9th and 10th of September 2003. The objective of the campaign was to secure equity in education to all children without discrimination.

State-Level Consultation on Issues and Concerns of Victimized Women and Children in Cases of Female Infanticide:

Women were victimised and convicted in cases of female infanticide. A state level consultation was organised by Campaign Against Female Infanticide (CAFI-TN) to condemn the victimisation of women in the cases of female infanticide. CSHD actively participated and provided documentation assistance for the consultation.

District Level Workshop on Eradication of Child Labour:

Under the Indo-USDOL project, Thiruvallur district was identified as one of the 5 districts with high incidence of child labour in Tamilnadu. A two-day consultation was organised for the launch of the project in the district. As an active member in the district, CSHD participated in the consultation and provided support to the initiatives.

State Level Consultation on Child Abuse:

Children are exposed to physical, mental, psychological and sexual abuses. Abuses take place in family environment, in the school and in work places. There are not many initiatives to address child abuse in the State. A State level consultation was organised by League for Child Rights Tamilnadu to discuss the issues related to child abuse and to

Support for Organisations:

Professional consultancy was provided by CSHD for the following studies;

- Study on offering of girl children to village diety 'Mathamma' – leading to sexual exploitation in Thiruvallur and Vellore Districts in Tamil Nadu, organised by CCRD.
- Study of Child Labour in Beedi Industries in Tamilnadu – by CCRD.
- Study on Child Labour in Match industries in Tamilnadu – supported by CACL – TN.
- Study of Child Labour in fishing community in Tamil Nadu conducted by Sneha Nagapattinam.
- Study on status of Government schools in Pulazal Panchayat in Thiruvallur Districts.
- Documentation on incidences of Child Trafficking and child bonded labour situations.
- Study on effects of Globalisation on Coastal fisher women and girl children conducted by Sneha Nagapattinam.
- Various fact-finding studies into child right violations in Tamil Nadu.

THE HINDU

Saturday, Nov 08, 2003

Children living on the streets today are as common as the busy wayfarers. Maybe their numbers give them a commonality that makes it easy to ignore. But street children or children in difficult circumstances is a problem that needs addressing. This was the idea behind the "Spare a thought" workshop on street children held in Madras Christian College, Tambaram, recently. The idea was not to get every child off the road but to understand better their conditions, NGO efforts towards their rehabilitation and how the general public could help.

The speakers included George Heston of Centre for Sustainable Human Development and Deva Chiruchuravaraj, coordinator, Jeeva Jyothi.

CSHD in the Media:

"Nobody's Children" - by Paromita Pain, Young World, Nov 08, 2003.

"Chennai Online" - Nov 08, 2003.

"Child Abuse" - Dhinamalar, Dhinamani, Nov 20, 2003,



evolve strategies to prevent child abuse in the state. CSHD participated and provided resource support on child abuse in family environment.

Study on Basic Education and Public Hearing on Dropout in Chennai Corporation Schools:

CSHD compiled the sample study conducted by TanPic (Tamil Nadu Primary School Improvement Campaign) on status of education in Chennai Corporation Schools. Based on the research and case studies a public hearing was organised.

State Level Consultation on the Code of Rules for Education:

Tamilnadu Government constituted a committee to frame new code of rules for the Education Act in the State. State Level consultation was organised by networks to critically evaluate the present set of rules and to provide suggestions and recommendations to formulate child friendly rules. The responsibility of drafting suggestions and recommendations was given to TanPic, TN Forces, CSHD and TN Peoples. Teachers, Union representatives, students, Lawyers, representatives from Science Forum, and from the management field participated in the consultation.

State Level Consultation on the Interventions of Salesian Sisters:

The Consultation was focused towards taking a rights perspectives in the activities of the Salesian sisters in Tamilnadu. It was facilitated by Mr.Suresh Dharma, Black Theatre and Mr.George Heston, CSHD.

Human Rights Training for the Youth:

CSHD facilitated the training on Human Rights for VIDES Don Bosco youth group in Vyasarpadi, Chennai, organised by Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco. Around 30 youth both girls and boys participated and benefited from the training.

Capacity Building for NGOs:

CSHD as a resource center provided training in social development, scientific project planning, sustainable research and documentation, personality development, Rights awareness training and workshops for various NGOs in Tamilnadu.

CSHD represented in the following consultations:

- State level consultation on the Draft Bill 2003 on Free and Compulsory Education for Children was held on 18th December 2003 in Chennai. It was organised by CACL -TN. Subsequently to the consultation, recommendations were faxed to political parties, members of the Parliament and members of Legislative Assembly.
- Workshop on Government Policies and Budget Analysis - three day Workshop was organised by Tamilnadu State Non Governmental Organisations and Volunteers Resource Centre (TNVRC).
- Guest invitation was given to CSHD to attend three day workshop for partners of TDH - Germany in Chennai.
- Participated in activities of Campaign for Custodial Justice and Abolition of Torture.

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