

Vaan Muhil Annual Report 2017 -2018

Vaan Muhil, as the Nodal Agency for Campaign Against Camp Coolie System, has carried out a number of activities in at least nine districts in Tamilnadu in creating awareness about modern forms of bonded labour and human trafficking in 2017-2018. The organization has consolidated its base in Srivilliputhur and Vembakottai blocks, strengthening its groups in 35 working villages, provided support to the young women survivors through direct assistance, vocational training, life skill training, Film based curriculum training and career guidance courses and exposure visits for school children in the financial year.

1. Campaign Against Camp Coolie System

With an aim of building a supportive environment for protecting the rights of adolescent workers in the textile and garment industries in Tamil Nadu, the Campaign Against Camp Coolie System (CACCS) has undertaken the following activities in 2017-2018. CACCS has initiated its work, particularly building coalitions and developing strategic plan for nine districts in Tamil Nadu, building rapport with district level officials and organizing state level workshops, trainings and conferences on the issues related to bonded labour, trafficking, child labour, child rights, labour rights and child marriage. The Campaign partners were involved in building constituencies at district level.

1.1. Building Constituencies at district level

Realizing the need to build constituencies at district level, the partners in nine districts have identified participant NGOs, trade unions and child rights activists within the districts to



initiate collective efforts on this issue. District level consultations paved way for NGO level coordination to address the issues and explored the possibility of NGO-Governmental coordination at the district level. Training materials were prepared and the same was distributed to all the participants. The training materials carried legal provisions and application of RTE, RTI, POCSO Act and ICPS besides, articles on

child labour, bonded labour, migrant workers.

1.2. Developing strategic plan for districts

In each district level consultation, the partners analyzed the local context and finalized the area of collaboration. The district level action plans were developed for nine districts above mentioned, based on the local need. Three key issues namely child labour, child marriage and child trafficking in all the districts, were focused and on an average two or three blocks have been identified in each district for awareness building and follow –up interventions in those blocks.



1.3. Sensitization to CSOs and other stakeholders in the districts



Efforts were taken by the campaign partners at the district level to sensitize the Civil Society organizations, Trade Unions, Women groups and community leaders, explaining to them about the key provisions of the TOP Bill and how trafficking issue would be meaningfully addressed and crimes of Trafficking could be reduced considerably, if a comprehensive bill of this sort becomes a legislation in today's context.

1.4. Participation of district level Govt officials and DLSA

Campaign Against Camp Coolie System, through its partners, has been in constant touch with district level govt officials, particularly with the mechanisms established for the protection of children. These officials have been invited for all district level consultations, and their participation in the programs was very fruitful. The participation of District Child Protection units, Child line, District Social welfare departments and Labour officers has been considerable in each of the district level programs.

The contribution of District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in the organizing of the District level Programs was substantial.



In many consultations, the Secretaries of District Legal Service Authority were chief guests

who either inaugurated the district level programs or given key note addresses in the consultations.

1.5. Documentation Unit

The Secretariate of CACCS has developed the documentation unit and continues to collect information relating to child labour, modern forms of bonded labour and trafficking and disseminate relevant information to all partners and other child rights activists who are working with us. The Documentation Unit has been useful for preparation of Training Materials for our Training programs at the District levels. Five dailies and ten magazines have been subscribed to and the relevant news items are scanned on weekly basis and made use for programs.

1.6. Publication of posters

Three sets of posters were prepared and published during the reporting period, the first one on SDGs, the second one on the need for a comprehensive legislation on trafficking and the third one on stop child labour. The first set of poster was widely distributed to all civil society groups, colleges and various movements throughout Tamil Nadu, and the second and third posters were distributed to our partners.



The posters were well received by the civil society groups, particularly the poster on SDGs and on the Trafficking. The NGO partners were able to understand each of the Sustainable Department Goals (SDGs) and able to correlate the specific SDGs that are relevant to our interventions and working areas. CACCS was able to reach out many and the posters were well received by the partners. Besides NGOs, who have been associated with the Campaign, other stakeholders, particularly colleges also received the posters and made use of it.

1.7. Participating in one day state level consultation on labour codes in Trichy

CACCS organized a one day state level consultation on the proposed Labour Codes and Social Security measures for the workers. NGOs, trade unions, workers' group, academics and advocates shared their experiences on the topic, followed by the three key presentations on wage bill, Social Security bill and Industrial Relations that the Centre is pushing through. The speakers, in the first session, highlighted the proposed changes in the Bills and the gaps in the bills.

2. Interventions in Srivilliputhur and Vembakittai blocks in Virudhunagar district

2.1. Empowerment of Adolescent Girls

2.1.1. Educational Support to children and survivors

Totally 65 girls from the working villages in both blocks were supported with educational assistance. Out of them, 20 have joined degree courses in various colleges in Sivakasi, Rajapalayam, Chatrapatty and seven of them in Kalalsalingam University, Krishnankovil. Among them, six have taken Science subjects in their graduation, 9 have opted for arts subjects and five are doing Nursing Course. One girl is doing B.Com course in Kalasalingam University and one more in B.A. in Tamil Nadu University.

43 girls, supported with our assistance, are doing their high or higher secondary schooling in nearby schools in Srivilliputhur, Edayankulam, Keelarajakularaman, Puduchennelkulam, Alangulam, Melanmarainadu, Sevalpatty, Chatrapatty, Thiruvenkadapuram and Vanniyampatty. One girl from A.Lakshmiyapuram has joined a tutorial and prepared herself for 10th public exam and another girl from A.Lakshiyapuram and Thulukankulam joined TTC in Srivilliputhur.

2.1.2. Career guidance course for students

A three one day career guidance courses were organized for school students in the working villages during the reporting period and totally 267 boys and girls benefitted out of these three day courses.



47 students attended the one day course in Melathotiapatty, while 96 benefitted out of the one day program in Mamsapuram Hr. Sec. School and another 113 in Keelarakulaaraman Hr. Sec. School. The students received inputs on possible courses available in various educational institutions in nearby towns. The courses motivated the rural students to pursue their studies further.

2.1.3. Orientation to Adolescent group members

Orientation to Adolescent Group Members in all working villages were given in 2017-18 and 509 girls took part in meetings held. The members were explained on basic things about child rights, workers rights and women rights. Many girls taking part in the orientation shared their work related problems in the mills and receive proper inputs / guidance from the CRC facilitators and colleagues in the AGs. Some of them raised important questions related to health issues and adolescent period that are more relevant to them in their immediate context. Thus AG meetings provide enough space to learn from others and share things that they had.



Vaan Muhil Project staff organized 16 orientation meetings for Adolescent Boys Groups and 209 Adolescent Boys attended these meetings and were able to understand the goal and purpose of our project and their role as partners, along with AG members, CSG members in their respective villages.



2.1.4. Medical Camps in villages and follow up

Two medical camps were organized in Noorsahipuram of Srivilliputhur block of Keelamarainadu of Vembakottai block and a total 111 people benefitted out of these two camps conducted. Adolescent girls from these two villages took active part in organizing the camps. Edayapottalpatty and Noorsahipuram AG groups conducted

special medical checkup for AG girls to check their HB count. This has been followed up at regular intervals so as to ensure their HB count is increased gradually. CRC facilitators in the villages do focus on the increase of HB Count for adolescent girls. There has been increase in awareness level on health related issues among adolescent girls in all the villages

2.1.5. Exposure Visits of Children

CRC facilitators organized five exposure visits for the children to different places during the reporting period. 35 children from Puduchennelkulam were taken to Courtallam, 30 from P.Thiruvenkadapuram to Madha Temple, 12 from Padikasuvaithanpatty to Thiruvannamalai, 14 from Subramaniapuram to Vaigai dam and 7 from Edayapottalpatty to American College, Madurai. The exposure visits were real learning for children and gave them rich experiences. Most of the expenses was met by the students participating in the exposure visits.



2.1.6. Functioning of Community Resource Centres

With the involvement of CRC facilitators, the CRCs do function very well in all working villages, and a total of 1358 children have attended the centres in the villages. The children are motivated by the CRC facilitators to study well and they show good results in their exams. The parents are willing to send their children to the centres, as many of them score good marks and these centres provide good ambience for study and better handwriting. Apart from these, the children are provided platform to improve their skills and to learn their dormant potentials, space to interact with other students in a friendly way. Village level competitions are being organized for children and most of them take part in the competitions and exhibit their talents and CSGs support in giving them prizes.



Community based interventions

2.1.7. Strengthening of Community Support Groups



A total of 281 CSG members attended orientation programs held in villages, organized by Vaan Muhil project staff. There were inputs on modern forms of slavery vis-à-vis the textile industry and basic information on workers' rights, minimum wages, working hours and other legal benefits entitled to the mill workers as per available legislations. The project staff explain to the CSG members about the purpose and various components of the project. Awareness creation among CSG members about the workers' issue has increased to some extent, as the members start discussing these issues in their CSG meetings. In some villages the CSG members do regularly interact with mill workers and enquired with them about the working conditions with concern and care and this type of meaningful interaction helps the adolescent girls / mill workers.

2.1.8. . Meaningful observance of important days

Vaan Muhil took efforts to organize a series of programs in villages during the reporting period, creating awareness among the people on issues related to our work, by way of meaningfully observe the important days such as Anti Child Labour Day, Asthma Awareness Day, International Day in support of Torture Victims, National Youth Day, World Girl Child Day, International Women's Day, Anti - Cancer Day and World TB Day. Handbills about the importance of the day in simple language are prepared and distributed to the people on that day.

2.1.9. Participation of CSG members in Grama Sabha meetings

The participation of CSG and AG members in the two Grama Sabha meetings held was on the increase. A total of 1824 members took active part in the Grama Sabha meetings and particularly more adolescent girls showed keen interest in attending the Grama Sabha meetings. Key issues were raised and discussed by the AG and CSG members in the Grama Sabha meetings and resolutions were adopted on girl child education, improvement in infrastructure facilities, closure of TASMACH near villages, and working conditions of manual scavengers. Working conditions of the young women mill workers were also discussed in Grama Sabha meetings in

many villages. Besides, issues related to lack of basic amenities were also raised in the Grama Sabha meetings.

2.1.10. Signature Campaign and Seminar on abolition of Child Labour in Srivilliputtur

Signature campaign was launched by Vaan Muhil on 21st June 2017 at Srivilliputtur, by way of creating public awareness on abolition of child labour. Nearly 300 people witnessed and participated in the signature campaign, which was inaugurated by Ms.Christal Babitha, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Virudhunagar District, Labour officer and District Child Protection officer were the special invitees for the campaign.



More than 140 AG and CSG members actively participated in the one day program. They learnt various dimensions of Child Labour in the country and the provisions of the recently amended Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 2016 and Rules 2017. All the speakers insisted on the collective need for abolishing child labour.

Legal Interventions

2.1.11. Fact Finding on the gruesome murder of a female worker in Spinning Mill, Sattur

Vaan Muhil undertook a Fact Finding Mission into the gruesome murder of a female worker in a Spinning Mill, on 29th May 2017 near Sattur in Virudhunager district. Vaan Muhil formed a four member FF team and collected details about the incident and obtained statements from the millowner, workers and the relatives of the deceased, apart from getting a version from the local police, which investigated the crime. After meeting the relatives of the victims, police officials, workers and owner on 31st May and 1st June, the team bought out a detailed report. The team, after the press meet, approached the District Collector, the District Child Protection officer, the District Labour officer, the DSW and the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority for immediate action on the incident.

3.1. Livelihood Support

3.1.1. Skill development courses / vocational training

As part of providing livelihood support to the adolescent girls working in the mills, Vaan Muhil project team made arrangements for Vocational Training for 30 girls in 2017-2018. Out of these 30 mill workers, who joined the skill development courses, six have completed beautician courses, 12 took tailoring and 12 computer courses. Efforts are being taken to avail loans for

them from the Banks and Govt. departments under various schemes. A total of 216 beneficiaries from the working villages have been linked with Govt departments under various schemes. Out of this total, 32 households received gas cylinders, and others benefitted out of govt schemes for, unorganized workers welfare cards, New Ration cards and loans for goat rearing.

3.1.2. Micro-enterprises

A total of 30 young women received support from Vaan Muhil under this project to start micro-enterprises. After attending the EDP training programs organized by Vaan Muhil project staff, the beneficiaries were very eager to start small trades and the identification of the individuals was done with the help of AG and CSG members in the villages. The beneficiaries are from Senkulam, Puduchenkulam, Natichiyarpatty, Edayapottalpatty, Achamthvirthan, Kothankulam, R.Rettiyarpatty, Korukkampatty, Nainapuram, P. Thiruvengidapuram, Kongankulam, Chellampatty, Kurichiarpatty, Rasapatty, Sankaramoorthipatty, Keelarajakularaman and Keezhanmarinadu. The activities mentioned above are preventing vulnerable adolescent girls / young women from entering high risk situations and pave way for sustainable freedom and well being of survivors in our working villages.

4.1. Other Programs

4.1.1. One Day Interaction on Livelihood Support Programs

The one day program on livelihood promotion / support to all partners on 27.10.2017 at Namakkal for all partners was useful and we were able to reflect on possible livelihood support programs to be carried out in our villages in future. The first joint meeting of partner organizations with ALC India and IED, Dharmapuri provided a space for the partners to understand the current models and approaches towards creating livelihoods opportunities, skill development and enterprise development. They provided inputs and reason for the success of models and compared that of current models and approaches of the partners. The partners could take stock of their capabilities and resources in this regard.

4.1.2. Mental Health Program for partners on 21.12.2017

The one day program organized by CSR Trust on 21.12.2017 at Madurai for our partners was useful to the partners as to understand the prevalence of mental health among the adolescent mill workers in working villages. This was very helpful to the partners to initiate specific programs in our villages in future in this direction. The CSR staff team enabled us to understand better the mental health issues and various dimensions to the same.

4.1.3. Participation in TN-IWG meet at Chennai

Vaan Muhil actively involved in the state level IWG meet at Chennai on 29.7.2017. The purpose of the meeting was to update NGOs, CSOs, opinion makers on the status of the proposed ToP bill and to propose certain state level activities that are to be carried out to prevent protect and rehabilitate the victims of Trafficking (both labour and sexual exploitation). Detailed action plan for Tamil Nadu was discussed as to how to take the initiatives that were planned in IWG meets in Kolkata earlier and all the participants positively contributed to the process. As the next day was International Anti-trafficking day, a press release was issued on behalf of TN-IWG collectively.

4.1.4. Round Table Conference on Human Trafficking in Delhi

Vaan Muhil has the opportunity to take part in the Round Table Conference on Human Trafficking for M.P.s, organized by Swaniti Initiative on 3rd August 2017 in New Delhi. More than 10 MPs from different political parties took part in the Round Table, wherein Dr.P.M.Nair provided an expert overview on the state of human trafficking, with respect to sex trafficking, bonded labours, labour migration and discussed about the existing tools such as ITPA, Bonded Labour system, and he also proposed possible solutions to combat the issue of human trafficking and the need for a comprehensive law that is pending before the cabinet. Followed by his presentation, there were questions / clarifications from the MPs on the content and this round table gave the MPs present an idea about the gravity of the issue and the dire need for a comprehensive law.

4.1.5. Participating in Alliance 8.7 NGO Forum

The Director had the opportunity to take part in the Alliance 8.7 NGO Forum, organized by Freedom Fund in London on 12th 13th September 2017. It was a wonderful opportunity to be with different leaders from other continents and to discuss labour rights issues vis-à-vis SGD 8.7. The challenges faced by the Trade Union Movements all over the world and the difficulties of the workers were shared in the Forum. It was a meaningful exercise, which provided platform for collective thinking on labour issues.



VAAN MUHIL

15, Kavitha Nagar, MaharajaNagar Post, Tirunelveli – 627 011, Tamil Nadu, S.India

Phone: +91 – 462 – 2521771 Email: vaanmuhil@gmail.com

Project Office: Vaan Muhil, 5A, South Car Street, Madavarvalagam, Srivilliputhur – 626 125