

OUR STORY

In 1978, the Jesuits of Madurai Province began a mission in the East Ramnathapuram area among the Dalits, having its headquarters in Devakottai. The primary strategy was to educate and organise the Dalits to live a dignified life. The Jesuits and collaborators called themselves as PALMERA (People's Action and Liberation Movement in East Ramnad) team. As the grassroots works intensified, the Jesuits felt the need to initiate a training centre in Madurai, to empower the Dalits and other marginalized communities and work for their holistic development, and thus IDEAS was born in 1984. On the same premises, the Tamil Nadu unit of the All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) was also established, which moved to Trichy in 1999.

IDEAS has been playing a significant role as a Regional Resource Centre for various kinds of marginalized groups in society. Right from its inception, the focus of the institute has been the empowerment of marginalized groups to become people's movements for accessing and enjoying their constitutional rights and entitlements and to live a dignified life.



In the late 90s, the institute turned its lens in a new direction: socio-political, legal, & economic capacitation and empowerment of Dalit Women, Women facing Violence, Widows and Manual Scavenging Workers.

From 2000, top on the list of engagements is the Capacity building programmes for members and leaders of people's movements/organizations conducted in and outside the Institute on a wide range of themes covering socio-cultural analysis, leadership skills, legal literacy, patriarchy and gender rights, the status of Dalit Catholics, etc. Besides, issue-based involvement, guidance and judicial interventions, Research and Publications were other important activities. Seminars and Workshops enable the participants to develop their communication skills, acquire media education and learn social video production skills. The institute staff also provide consultancy services to secular organisations and religious and Church related organisations.

What can IDEAS offer you?

IDEAS

Students, staff and youth orientation and motivation

Workshops on soft skills and personality development

Training sessions on social analysis and Constitutional Rights

Organizational development and Strategic planning workshops

Assessment of organizations and Reimagining

Project writing workshops



Ideas

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INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION ACTION & STUDIES

MADURAI

IDENTITY



Institute of Development, Education, Action and Studies (IDEAS) is a 'Capacity Building and Resource Centre', enabled by action-research, facilitating advocacy engagements and campaigns.

MISSION



IDEAS enables the empowerment of Dalits, indigenous peoples, women, minorities, and other marginalized groups, animates, and supports people's organizations and movements, and intervenes in their dignity, rights, and livelihood issues and in state policies and programmes, promoting right-based perspectives in partnership with secular and democratic organizations.

VISION



Building a Just and Humane Society characterized by respect for human rights, inclusiveness, secularism, gender equality and ecological integrity.

THRUST AREAS

Capacity building on social analysis and social action

Building grassroots people's organizations

Promoting human rights and Constitutional education

Networking with people's movements, human rights, civil and democratic organizations, and government bodies

Preparing resource materials and engaging in action-research

Thematic Areas of Engagement



Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Federation :

Organizing, motivating, animating, leadership development, and forming Dalit women into associations and a federation to live a dignified life is the core theme of this unit. Currently, Dalit women empowerment programs are organized in four districts of Tamil Nadu, namely, Madurai, Ramnad, Theni, and Virudhunagar.

The objectives are:

Accompanying and animating Dalit women leaders and guiding them in the process of movement building, equipping them with relevant knowledge on current social issues, facilitating coordination and networking among them and with like-minded Dalit movements and providing directional guidance to them when they take up issues and legal support.

Eradication of Manual Scavenging :

The objective is to work towards the eradication of Manual Scavenging as per the law in force in India, namely, "The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenging and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013". While covering three districts in Tamil Nadu, Madurai, Virudhunagar and Dindigul, the Madurai Legal Awareness Coordination Committee, is making efforts for the implementation of this Act through field-based activities by providing awareness of the law to the workers and the government officials in the local panchayat bodies.

Besides, the team is engaged in imparting special training to selected workers who are very active in each district, to empower them to take up the issues of the workers in their respective areas. The team has set up 15 evening study centres to help the children of the workers to pursue their studies and to motivate them to go for alternative jobs. Periodically, job placement programmes are being conducted.

Multi-level Capacitation :

The objective of the unit is to accompany the leaders and youth of the movements of the marginalized communities and empower them with intellectual, and analytical capacities so that they take forward their respective movements with a rights-based perspective. Secondly, the unit provides opportunities for marginalized groups to network and develop solidarity support with one another. Thirdly, the unrecognized sub-caste groups among the Dalits, such as Arunthathiyars, Puthirai Vannar, and Kuravan, are provided space to nurture their identity, and dignity, and realize their dreams.

The capacity-building programmes for civil society actors are attended by the Dalit and marginalized women and youth groups. Apart from the training sessions, the unit focuses on building networks across different movements and helping them develop collective responses to common issues.

Accompanying Kal Oddars :

Kal Oddar is a nomadic community, and the members move from one place to another every year in search of livelihood. This community is underdeveloped socially, economically, and educationally. This unit engages with this community by providing legal awareness, and education to children, organising workshops to improve their access to government schemes, getting identity cards and certificates, and women's development.

Currently, in 15 centres in 7 districts of Tamil Nadu, evening supplementary education is organised to reduce the dropouts and improve their education. Programmes are conducted to develop their learning capacities and increase their interest in extra-curricular activities such as arts and crafts. The community members have formed an organisation 'Alaikudi People's Rights Movement' to counter the erstwhile criminal identity and false cases filed by the police.



Tamilnadu Labourers' Rights Federation :

TLFR is an effort to organise predominantly Arunthathiyar and Tribal unorganized workers. At present, there are four organisations in Dindigul, Madurai and Virudhunagar districts, with members from Kodaikanal, Sattur, Sivakasi, Oddanchathiram, Vaadippatti and Thirumangalam taluks.

The objective is to improve the working conditions and standard of life of the workers. It monitors the legal activities of the organisations and lends administrative skills and organizational support to obtain benefits from government welfare programmes. By linking the Arunthathiyar workers in all the districts of the state, through these four labour organisations, TLRF works as a platform to place Arunthathiyars' and unorganized workers' issues on the public agenda. It also advocates gender sensitization and inclusion of women for a dignified life.

Library and Documentation Service :

Around 7000 books in Tamil and English are classified under various themes, and are made available for students, researchers, social movement leaders and youth for training and research purposes. One can access the Documentation section for news items and articles collected from various Tamil and English newspapers. E-books and e-documents on social themes are stored digitally. E-documents titled Ideas Avanam and Media Education are emailed to interested readers. The collection of audio-video materials serves as resource support for the institute's training programmes and group meetings.