



**INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT**  
**EDUCATION**  
**ACTION AND STUDIES**  
**MADURAI**



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2025-26**



**Ideas**  
Institute of Development,  
Education, Action and Studies



**Ideas**

Institute of Development,  
Education, Action and Studies

## 1. 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.

## 2. 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 rights-based perspectives in partnership with secular and democratic organizations.

## 3. Vision

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

## 4. Stakeholders

Dalits, with a special focus on Arunthathiyars, Indigenous peoples, Women, Minorities, Children, and other marginalized people.

## 5. Thrust Areas

- ❖ Capacity building on social analysis and social action
- ❖ Building grassroots people's organizations
- ❖ Promoting human rights education
- ❖ Engaging in grassroots advocacy
- ❖ Networking with Dalit, Adivasi, Women, Minorities and various people's movements, human rights, civil and democratic organizations, and government bodies
- ❖ Engaging in action-research
- ❖ Preparing resource materials – print, audio-video, and posters, and dissemination.
- ❖ Publication, documentation services, and library facilities



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Education, Action and Studies

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# Ideas

Institute of Development,  
Education, Action and Studies

## IDEAS PROFILE

**1978**

PALMERA – Grassroots movement work by the Jesuits & Scheduled Caste Welfare Movement of People, Devakottai

Research Unit

**2002**
**1984**

IDEAS-AICUF Centre, a resource and training centre, Madurai

Silver Jubilee year celebrations

**2009**
**1987**

Documentation and publishing of books and audio materials

Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Federation Unit

**2012**
**1994**

Training of Dalit movements & Multi-level Capacity Building

Abolition of Manual Scavenging and Violence Against Women Units

**2015**
**2000**

Trainings for Arunthathiyars

Arunthathiyar Unorganized Women Workers Unit

**2017**
**2001**

AICUF moved to Trichy, Field-based Training Programmes & Media Education

Accompanying Kal Oddar Unit

**2020**



## From the Director's DESK



IDEAS has completed 42 years of service to the most marginalised communities in Tamil Nadu. Founded in 1984, the institute has evolved through different phases, with its mission becoming increasingly focused on accompanying and empowering Dalit women, manual scavengers, unorganised women workers, Kal Oddars, and building the capacities of youth, students, teachers, members of civil society, and non-governmental organisations. The work of the institute is guided and inspired by its Trustees and Advisory Committee members.

The Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Federation (TNDWF) Unit has strengthened its animation and mobilisation efforts among Dalit women in the districts of Madurai, Virudhunagar, Dindigul, and Theni. Platforms have been created for more than 800 women to gather, share their experiences, plan collective action, and negotiate with local governance institutions to access their rightful entitlements. The evening study centres continue to serve as an important entry point for community engagement.

In the evening study centres, children are introduced to the concept of Children's Parliament, sowing the seeds of hope that they will grow into responsible, responsive, and active citizens.

The Abolition of Manual Scavenging Work Unit, functioning under the auspices of the Madurai

Legal Awareness Coordination Committee (MLACC), expanded its services in Dindigul district while continuing its work in Madurai and Virudhunagar. Organising manual scavenging workers, particularly at the panchayat level, remains an urgent priority across the state. On 27 July 2026, the Supreme Court of India expressed serious concern over the continuing deaths of manual scavenging workers and issued contempt notices to the Chief Secretaries of five states, including Tamil Nadu. In this context, many civil society organisations and NGOs have recognised IDEAS' contribution and look up to the institute to provide leadership in organising, mobilising, and accompanying manual scavenging workers, especially at the grassroots. Securing sustained cooperation from local government officials, however, remains a significant challenge.

The Multi-level Capacitation Unit, the flagship

programme of IDEAS, continues to connect the institute with more than 35 NGOs and 20 civil society organisations. We remain deeply grateful to all our partners. The enthusiastic participation of youth, NGO staff, and movement leaders demonstrates the trust they place in IDEAS and in its ability to develop capable leaders and trainers. It is particularly encouraging to see many former trainees emerge as trainers themselves. Many partner organisations have encouraged the institute to strengthen this unit further, with a particular emphasis on the holistic development of young people.

The Kal Oddar Unit has, through legal intervention, helped secure the release of many members of this nomadic community who had been falsely accused and imprisoned. The unit continues to focus on community mobilisation and the education of children. Significant progress has been made in educational attainment, and we are especially proud that several young women from the community have entered undergraduate studies. Organising evening study centres remains challenging because many families migrate in search of livelihood. We are responding to this challenge by developing new and innovative strategies.

The Tamil Nadu Labourers' Rights Federation (TLRF) continues to accompany unorganised women workers in their struggle for dignity and justice. The unit has focused on

improving basic village infrastructure, promoting livelihoods through self-employment and entrepreneurship, and enabling access to government welfare schemes. Participation in Gram Sabhas and the effective use of the e-GramSwaraj have empowered women to claim their rights and assert their place in society. The Systematisation of Experiences study enabled women to critically reflect on their experiences and identify important lessons for the future.

I would also like to acknowledge the services of the Library and Documentation Service Unit, and dedicated administration, finance, and support staff. Their commitment enables the institute to continue dreaming, innovating, and making a meaningful difference in the lives of ordinary people. During the year, the training centre and administrative blocks underwent renovation, providing a more welcoming, comfortable, and secure environment for the trainees. I would like to thank our donor partners Misereor, Alboan, Swiss Mission and the Australian Jesuit Mission for their continued support and collaboration.

We still have miles to go. Looking back on the journey that began in 1984, we recognise that, despite many challenges, the institute has remained relevant and steadfast in its mission. My heartfelt gratitude goes to our staff, friends, partners, donors, well-wishers, and all those who have walked this journey with us. Together, we move forward with hope, courage, and unwavering commitment.

**Dr. Joseph Xavier SJ**  
Director





## Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Federation Unit



The Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Federation (TNDWF) is a community-based collective working for the empowerment of Dalit women in Madurai, Dindigul, Virudhunagar, and Theni districts. The Federation strengthens women's leadership, confidence, and awareness while facilitating access to government welfare schemes, livelihood opportunities, legal support, and social justice. It also provides a platform for women to unite, discuss common issues, and work collectively for community development.

During the year, nearly 900 women enrolled as Federation members, with 568 receiving membership identity cards, strengthening their sense of belonging and participation. Through regular meetings, awareness programmes, counselling, and leadership training, around 240 women gained greater confidence to address family and social issues and independently access government services. The

Federation also supported women and youth with employment guidance, enabling several members and their family members to secure government and private sector jobs. Additionally, eight Evening Study Centres continued to provide academic support and a safe learning environment for children from marginalized communities, resulting in noticeable improvements in their education and overall development. Through its integrated approach to leadership development, legal guidance, livelihood promotion, counselling, and educational support, the Federation continues to create lasting positive change in the lives of women, children, and their families. As a result, more women from neighbouring villages are joining the Federation and actively participating in its initiatives.

| S.No | Nature of the Intervention                     | No. of Programmes | Participants |
|------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1.   | One-day Motivational Training at Village Level | 62                | 2,437        |
| 2.   | One-day District Level Review and Planning     | 8                 | 272          |
| 3.   | One-day District Level Thematic Training       | 12                | 415          |
| 4.   | Two-days Federation Level Review and Planning  | 3                 | 56           |
| 5.   | Two-days Federation Level Skill Training       | 3                 | 60           |
| 6.   | Federation Level Consultation                  | 4                 | 369          |
| 7.   | District Level Convention                      | 3                 | 400          |
| 8.   | Exposure Visit for Women                       | 1                 | 25           |
| 9.   | Evening Study Centres                          | 8                 | 113          |
| 10.  | Annual Day for Each Study Centre               | 6                 | 225          |
| 11.  | Exposure Visit for Children                    | 1                 | 52           |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                   |                   | <b>4,424</b> |

| S.No | Nature of the Benefit                               | No. of Persons | Remarks                                                           |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | Loan for a Petty Shop                               | 1              | Received Rs 1,00,000                                              |
| 2.   | Loan from Grama Bank                                | 64             | 64 received - each Rs 10,000                                      |
| 3.   | Ayushman Bharat Health Card                         | 60             | 2 benefited – each Rs 80,000                                      |
| 4.   | e-Shram card                                        | 70             |                                                                   |
| 5.   | Purchasing of Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) | 1              | Rs 14,000, out of which Rs 7,000 was subsidized by the government |

| S.No | Nature of the Benefit                                     | No of Persons | Remarks                         |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 6.   | Renovation of a House under Kalaingar Kanavu Illam Scheme | 1             | Government grant of Rs 3,00,000 |
| 7.   | Welfare Board Card                                        | 9             |                                 |
| 8.   | Educational Assistance                                    | 15            | Received Rs 1,000 – Rs 3,500    |

### Should one feel shy to share problems related to periods?

My name is Kavitha. I got married to Sankar Ganesh 13 years ago. We have two children and live at Chatrapatti village, Viruthunagar district. I am also the leader of the Dalit Women Federation (DWF) village unit. For the past 6 months, my periods have not been regular. I was suffering from leukorrhea. I felt ashamed to share my problem with others.

DWF used to organise various training sessions for village units once every 3 months. In March 2025, there was a training at Mettamalai. The theme was psychosocial and health care. Mrs. Renga Jothi, the health worker from the Primary Health Centre, was the resource person. She spoke on increasing problems of women, especially related to the uterus, and breast cancer. She also spoke on how psychosocial issues affect the health system. At the end, she gave time for questions and answers. I did not feel like sharing my problems. Jothi told us that if someone has concerns, the person could approach her in private. I met her and explained my problems. She gave me a letter and asked me to meet with the doctor working at Chatrapatti Primary Health Centre. I preferred to suffer rather than meet another doctor and share my problems.

During this time, Mrs. Packiyam, the field staff of DWF, came to our village. I told her that I was hesitant to go and meet the doctor. She consoled me and guided me. The following day, I went to the Primary Health Centre along with my friend. The doctors examined me thoroughly and said that I have a hormone deficiency. The doctor gave me medicines for 3 months. I am normal now and my periods are regular. I thank Packiyam and DWF for giving me the courage and guidance to address my health issues.

**S. Kavitha. Chatrapatti**







## Abolition of Manual Scavenging Unit



Sanitation workers provide an essential public service, yet they continue to face caste-based discrimination, poor working conditions, and denial of their legal rights. Although many have served for over a decade, they are still not recognised as regular government employees, leaving them without job security, fair wages, or social protection. In response, we work across Madurai, Dindigul, and Virudhunagar to organise sanitation workers, strengthen their collective voice, and promote education as a pathway to breaking the cycle of marginalisation. We support workers in forming associations, pursuing their rights through legal and collective action, and holding authorities accountable for implementing government policies.

The programme also offers legal aid, awareness programmes, vocational training, job fairs, and personality development initiatives to improve workers' social and economic well-being while

supporting their transition to dignified alternative livelihoods.

In addition, children of sanitation workers receive educational support, career guidance, and leadership opportunities through Children's Parliaments, helping them build a future with greater dignity, confidence, and opportunity.



| S.No | Nature of the Intervention                     | No. of Programmes | Male         | Female       |
|------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.   | One-day legal awareness for workers            | 58                | 1,407        | 3,453        |
| 2.   | One-day legal awareness for officials          | 11                | 187          | 158          |
| 3.   | One-day capacity building of frontline leaders | 8                 | 134          | 158          |
| 4.   | One-day training for teachers                  | 6                 | 18           | 126          |
| 5.   | One-day state-level consultation               | 1                 | 48           | 54           |
| 6.   | One-day convention                             | 1                 | 248          | 432          |
| 7.   | Four-day children's camp                       | 1                 | 28           | 34           |
| 8.   | Evening Study Centres                          | 15                | 228          | 275          |
| 9.   | Sangam Meeting for Frontline Leaders           | 13                | 174          | 460          |
| 10.  | Career Guidance Programme                      | 3                 | 207          | 407          |
| 11.  | Children's Day Festival Programme              | 1                 | 74           | 108          |
| 12.  | Staff Review Meeting                           | 24                | 168          | 24           |
| 13.  | Children's Exposure Visit                      | 15                | 144          | 208          |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                   |                   | <b>3,065</b> | <b>5,897</b> |

| S.No | Nature of the Benefit                 | No. of Persons | Remarks                        |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.   | Registration in Welfare Board         | 258            | 93 received welfare cards      |
| 2.   | Registered in TAHDCO for loans        | 52             | 44 received - each Rs 1,00,000 |
| 3.   | Insurance for workers died during job | 9              | Each received Rs 5,00,000      |

| S.No | Nature of the Benefit                                         | No of Persons | Remarks                                                |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.   | Helped to get arrears for workers                             | 36            | 13 members each Rs 37,000<br>23 members each Rs 42,000 |
| 5.   | Retirement benefit @ Rs 50,000 and monthly pension @ Rs 2,000 | 8             |                                                        |
| 6.   | Helped the workers to get salaries                            | 6             | Each received Rs 9,000                                 |
| 7.   | Welfare Board Cash Benefit                                    |               | 3 beneficiaries each Rs 12,000                         |
| 8.   | Cases filed in the High Court and PIL                         | 12            |                                                        |
| 9.   | RTI petitions filed on working conditions of the workers      | 150           |                                                        |
| 10   | Enrolment of children in schools                              | 48            |                                                        |
| 11.  | Petition Filed for Basic Amenities                            | 88            |                                                        |

### Evening Study Centre is a sign of hope

I am Vasanth, and I reside at Kannapatti village, Dindigul district, along with my parents. I am studying Class 10 at the Government Higher Secondary School at Sekkapatti, near my village. I was not good at my studies, and I was not interested either. I could not even read Tamil. I scored poor marks and failed in some subjects.

My class teacher advised me to join the evening study centre run by Madurai Legal Awareness Coordination Committee (MLACC). I was motivated by my teachers' concern, and I decided to join the evening study centre. I met the evening study centre teacher and told her that I am forgetful and also do not know how to study. There were two teachers in the study centre. They listened to me and guided me with compassion. Both took special interest in me. They taught me the lessons and made me write. They also allocated separate time for me and paid special attention. They made sure that I understood the lessons well. Slowly, I gained confidence and took an interest in my studies. I started scoring well on the tests. This boosted my self-confidence. In the recently held test, I scored high marks and passed in all the subjects. My parents are happy with my progress.

Now, I am confident that I will score high marks in the final Class 10 examination. I feel that participation in the evening study centre has helped me to discipline my life. I also participate in various activities of the study centre. I am learning various soft skills. Thanks to MLACC for providing handholding support to weak students like me.

**Vasanth, Class 10  
Kannapatti Village, Dindigul**





## Multi-level Capacity Building Unit



The IDEAS Centre strengthens civil society organisations through intensive training programmes that build leadership, critical thinking, and social action skills. During the year, 14 five-day training programmes were conducted for representatives from 25 grassroots people's movements and 60 non-governmental organisations across 21 districts of Tamil Nadu. A total of 486 participants, 243 men and 243 women, benefited from these programmes.

The trainings produced significant outcomes: 150 participants emerged as community leaders, 30 became trainers, 25 developed as effective public speakers, 9 gained social media skills, and 10 completed all five major training modules. The daily recitation of the Preamble to the Constitution of India became a regular practice, reinforcing constitutional values, while over 150 college students were oriented on constitutional principles.

The IDEAS Centre also provided specialised training to three Dalit movements, benefiting 74 leaders and frontline workers. In addition, around 40 students from leading colleges and universities completed internships with the Centre, gaining valuable field experience and practical exposure to community development.



| S.No | Workshops/Training                                                         | Male       | Female     |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1.   | Social Analysis - 5 days                                                   | 7          | 19         |
| 2.   | Dialogue and Communication - 5 days                                        | 12         | 11         |
| 3.   | Public Speaking Skills - 4 days                                            | 21         | 14         |
| 4.   | Media Education - 5 days                                                   | 16         | 9          |
| 5.   | Social Media Knowledge and Skills - 3 days                                 | 8          | 13         |
| 6.   | Dialogue with Teachers, Students and Youth on Indian Constitution - 3 days | 20         | 17         |
| 7.   | Dialogue with unorganised youth - 1 day                                    | 50         | 20         |
| 8.   | Dialogue with movement leaders - 1 day                                     | 48         | 67         |
| 9.   | Consultation with Dalit and Women leaders – 2 days                         | 47         | 27         |
| 10.  | ToT on Violence Against Women - 3 days                                     | 9          | 27         |
| 11.  | Children's Parliament - 2 days                                             | 5          | 19         |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                                               | <b>243</b> | <b>243</b> |



## No more fear of delivering a talk

I am Suriya, working as a field staff member of Adi Tamizhar Democratic Welfare Workers' Association. I have been organising training sessions, consultations, and public meetings for the association. I prepare my talks well. However, whenever I had to speak, I was trembling. My legs and hands used to shiver. I forgot what I had prepared. I felt so bad that I could not deliver a good talk despite spending time preparing.

I asked my friends how I could get rid of fear and trembling. Some suggested that I attend the workshop on Public Speaking conducted by IDEAS every year. I was looking for this opportunity for several months. I attended the workshop from August 13-17, 2025. I took all the sessions seriously. Simply and creatively, with practical sessions, we were taught the art of public speaking. I found every session was interesting. We were also introduced to the library and motivated to read books. The session on how to read fast and take notes was enlightening. I never thought of reading books. But during the workshop, I read and took notes.

On the last day of the workshop, 44 of us were divided into groups and asked to speak on a particular theme. My group members wanted to have a demonstration against Honour Killing and speak on this issue. They asked me to speak on why we need a law to stop honour killing. I agreed and spoke well. Everyone appreciated my boldness, clarity of thought and delivery. After this training, I have gained confidence. Now, I feel that I can speak among women with whom I am working without fear and anxiety. Thank you, IDEAS, for training me to be a good orator.

**Mrs. Suriya.**  
Field Trainer







The Kal Oddar community, recognised as a De-notified Tribe (DNT) since 1952, continues to face police harassment and systemic discrimination despite the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. To address these challenges, Itinerant Peoples' Rights Organisation (IPRO) works across seven districts of Tamil Nadu—Madurai, Theni, Virudhunagar, Sivagangai, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, and Tenkasi—promoting justice, dignity, and equal rights.

Using a rights-based and participatory approach, IPRO empowers the community through education, legal support, and socio-economic development. Fifteen village Sangams provide democratic platforms for addressing issues such as housing, land rights, basic services, identity documents, welfare schemes, and legal assistance for those facing false cases.

Thirteen Evening Study Centres support children's education, encourage sports and cultural activities, improve school attendance, enrol out-of-school children, and help prevent child labour and child marriage.

To strengthen women's economic independence, Self-Help Groups promote regular savings, facilitate bank account access, and link women with the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihoods Mission (TNSRLM), creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.



| S.No | Nature of the Intervention              | No. of Programmes | Male         | Female       |
|------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.   | Community-level programme               | 50                | 694          | 982          |
| 2.   | Legal Training                          | 15                | 148          | 208          |
| 3.   | Women's Day programme                   | 01                | 97           | 149          |
| 4.   | IPRO State level Meeting                | 01                | 95           | 135          |
| 5.   | Summer Camp                             | 01                | 57           | 60           |
| 6.   | Evening study centre teacher's training | 12                | 0            | 66           |
| 7.   | Evening study centre                    | 13                | 93           | 114          |
| 8.   | Constitutional Rights Educational Forum | 10                | 40           | 68           |
| 9.   | IPRO                                    | 12                | 242          | 180          |
| 10.  | Legal Interventions                     | 41                | 40           | 1            |
|      | <b>Total</b>                            |                   | <b>1,506</b> | <b>1,963</b> |

| S.No | Nature of the Benefit                   | No. of Persons |
|------|-----------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1.   | Loan for Auto Rs 3,50,000 each          | 2              |
| 2.   | Aadhaar Card                            | 7              |
| 3.   | Voter ID                                | 5              |
| 4.   | Family Card                             | 6              |
| 5.   | Disability Identity Card                | 2              |
| 6.   | Women's Entitlement Amount              | 11             |
| 7.   | Chief Minister's Medical Insurance Card | 2              |
| 8.   | Opening of Bank Savings Account         | 5              |







### A Safe Place to Teach our Children

The Kal Oddar Unit of IDEAS runs an Evening Study Centre at Kannagi Colony, Sivakasi, Virudhunagar District. About 40 children attend. The centre was run under a tree. The parents of the children work in menial jobs such as buying old clothes, collecting scrap materials, and repairing gas stoves.

Considering the safety and welfare of the children, we searched for a place in that area. We found a vacant Amma Clinic government building. As guided by the unit staff, two Evening Study Centre teachers went to the office of the Sivakasi MLA and submitted a petition to allow the study centre to be run at the vacant Amma Clinic. A staff member from the MLA's office informed the Ward Member of Sivakasi Municipal Corporation, Kannagi Colony.

The Ward Member handed over the keys of the Amma Mini Clinic building to the Evening Study Centre teachers. The building needed a thorough cleaning. The parents of the children, leaders of Itinerant People's Rights Organisation and teachers came together and cleaned the place and did some renovation work.

On February 13, 2026, the centre was inaugurated by the District Juvenile Justice Board Member and Tamil Nadu Disability Rights Programme Sivakasi District Facilitator in the presence of the Sivakasi Municipal Ward Member. The centre is now functioning excellently.

**Prabu. Kal Oddar Unit**



## Arunthathiyar Unorganised Women Workers' Unit



For the past nine years, IDEAS has been working with Arunthathiyar unorganised women workers in Dindigul, Madurai, and Virudhunagar districts. These workers have organised themselves into labour sangams and have formed the Tamil Nadu Labourers' Rights Federation (TLRF).

◆ During 2025–26, TLRF focused on increasing participation in Gram Sabha meetings, addressing workplace violence, gender and caste discrimination, securing livelihood entitlements, and promoting sustainable development for workers.

◆ To achieve these goals, TLRF strengthened women leaders through capacity-building, enhanced legal awareness and access to free legal aid, improved union sustainability, and promoted alternative livelihoods and small businesses.

◆ Key activities included leadership and financial management training, legal awareness programmes on workplace rights and the PoSH Act, audio-based legal awareness through Namma Kural IVR, and training women workers to use digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Namma Kural, and a monthly Tamil e-newsletter for awareness and collective action.



| S.No | Nature of the Intervention                        | No. of Programmes | Male       | Female       |
|------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1.   | Half a day village level legal awareness          | 86                | 155        | 1,118        |
| 2.   | One-day Leadership and Management skills          | 21                |            | 572          |
| 3.   | One-day training on Gram Sabha                    | 54                |            | 1,408        |
| 4.   | One-day Gender awareness for couples              | 16                | 134        | 134          |
| 5.   | One-day Entrepreneurship training                 | 10                |            | 299          |
| 6.   | Creation and broadcast of Audio programmes in IVR | 106               | 76         | 525          |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                      |                   | <b>365</b> | <b>4,056</b> |

| S.No | Nature of the Benefit                                  | No. of Persons | Remarks      |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1.   | Financial assistance for marriage                      | 6              | Rs 1,20,000  |
| 2.   | Financial assistance for Education                     | 37             | Rs 1,30,500  |
| 3.   | Old age pension per month                              | 19             | Rs 22,800    |
| 4.   | Financial assistance for death                         | 1              | Rs 50,000    |
| 5.   | Financial assistance for cremation                     | 8              | Rs 1,60,000  |
| 6.   | Financial assistance for small business through Sangam | 53             | Rs 4,90,000  |
| 7.   | Financial assistance through banks                     | 13             | Rs 15,70,000 |
| 8.   | Common benefits through Gram Sabha                     | 54             |              |
| 9.   | New entitlement documents obtained and corrected       | 109            |              |



### Pension support will help me in my old age

I am Murugaayi, a widow from Kondaiyampatti village in Madurai district. I registered with the Construction Workers Welfare Board and received my welfare identity card. Although I had repeatedly applied for a widow pension through legal aid camps, my application was rejected because I had two sons. As I had already been enrolled with the Welfare Board, TLRP helped me apply for the Board's old-age pension after I turned sixty. My application was registered on 1 July 2025, and within two weeks I received the pension sanction order, entitling me to Rs 1,200 per month. I feel relieved. Additional pension, along with ration card assistance, would help meet my basic needs.

**Murugaayi, Madurai**

### Gram Sabha Participation Transformed a Community

Aadhilakshmi, Branch Leader of the Chemmalar Sangam from Gangersevel, actively participated in the Gram Sabha meeting held on 26 January 2026. Earlier, she was often the only representative from her branch to attend. She learned to use the e-Gram Swaraj App to access information on Panchayat funds and development works. She shared this knowledge with other members, motivating 15 branch members to participate in the meeting. Using information from the app, Aadhilakshmi questioned the Panchayat Secretary about pending development works in her locality. Impressed by her preparedness, the Secretary later visited the area, inspected damaged roads, and assured residents that improvements would be completed within two months. Inspired by the experience, many branch members pledged to attend future Gram Sabha meetings and demand their rightful entitlements.

**Priya, Trainer**





## Library and Documentation Services

The library section has books, e-documents, and documentaries. Students and researchers interested in social issues visit our library to gather relevant materials for their publications. Those who come for various training sessions and workshops, such as trainers, trainees, field staff, members and



leaders of various movements, social work students, and IDEAS staff, make use of the library facility. In 2025-26, about 250 people visited and benefited.

The unit sends out e-documents on various social issues, media-related matters, critical essays, relevant data, and current issues to those who have requested our service. 135 essays on social issues and 135 posts on media-related matters were disseminated.

The tri-annual e-newsletter, Muhil Muzzakkam, is sent to 840 people, showcasing the impact of our work. The website has been upgraded. The primary purpose of the website is to share the most significant changes in the lives of the people and video testimonies. This newsletter and website give a voice to the marginalized people. 31 change narratives and 29 videos were uploaded.

We are on Instagram. Through Instagram and Facebook, we share information about our training sessions and photographs from the field and the centre. About 150 people are following us on Instagram.



1. Sharing and delegating responsibilities effectively creates clear pathways for greater community participation and stakeholder engagement.
2. Disseminating knowledge from the district-level Panchayat to the local-level Panchayat has significantly increased grassroots interest and engagement.
3. Fostering a habit of regular savings among women serves as a vital tool to help them systematically break free from debt cycles.
4. Thorough planning and preparation for ground-level programmes consistently result in significantly higher community mobilization and major participation.
5. Building active networks with like-minded individuals and organisations is essential for achieving our collective long-term goals.
6. The Children's Parliament provides a vital, dedicated space for children to express themselves and cultivate essential leadership qualities.
7. Awareness programmes tailored for government officials have successfully inspired them to recognize and execute their institutional responsibilities.
8. To create a meaningful impact on children, we must approach them with deep empathy, viewing the world from a child's perspective during our interventions.
9. Familiarity and utilization of the e-GramSwaraj Portal have boosted our confidence when interacting and negotiating with higher officials.
10. Project planning can be executed seamlessly and effectively when local community members are actively included and integrated into the planning process.



## **Publications, Consultancy Services & General**

### **Books Published (Print/E-Version)**

#### **Research Books**

- ◆ Dr. Joseph Xavier, Dr. Kamatchi, Mr. Arul Durai (2025), A Journey of Unorganised Women Workers: Systematization of Experiences, IDEAS, Madurai.
- ◆ Dr. Joseph Xavier (March 2026), From Death to Life: Systematisation of Experiences of PLHIV, Vishwas, Indore.

#### **Research Reports**

- ◆ Richard, Gram Vaani (June 2025), Free House Sites for Arunthathiyar unorganised workers in Dindigul, Virudhunagar and Madurai districts: A survey study report by TLRf.
- ◆ TLRf team (November 2025), A Comparative Study on Welfare Benefit Disparities Between Construction Workers and Unorganised Workers in Tamil Nadu.
- ◆ TLRf team (December 2025), A Study Report on the Impact of Usurious Money Lending (Kanthu vatti) on Unorganised women workers.
- ◆ Aloysius Albert (December 2025), Wage Discrimination Among Unorganised Arunthathiyar Workers.
- ◆ TLRf team (Feb 2026), Occupational Safety and the Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) among Unorganised Workers in Tamil Nadu: Evidence from a Field Survey.

## Articles Published

- ◆ Joseph Xavier (14 April 2025), A Caged Bird can Still Sing – Clearing Fr. Stan's name, The Tablet.
- ◆ Sahaya Satya (2025), Kulanthaiparuvam, Kattalukkanathu, Sampathipatharkkanathalla, Namathu Manvasam, June 2025.

## Consultancy Services

- ◆ Joseph Xavier facilitated pastoral planning of Asansol, Karwar, Simla-Chandigarh and Goa dioceses. He also animated the clergy of the Bihar Region and Palayamkottai. He continues to animate the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India in planning and implementing Synodality.
- ◆ Sahaya Philominraj animated various groups of students, teachers and religious congregations on Constitutional values.
- ◆ Joe conducted Systematization workshops – one at IDEAS for Unorganised Women Workers and the second for Vishwas, an NGO working among HIV affected persons in Indore. He also conducted a week-long course on social analysis and project writing at Shanti Sadan, Goa.
- ◆ Philominraj continued to animate various institutions of the Jesuit province on Safeguarding.
- ◆ Joe conducted an evaluation study of a project of Udayani Social Action Forum, Kolkata. He also facilitated a discernment process for Medical Mission Sisters and animated the Chapters of CIC sisters.

## General

- ◆ The finance, admin and support service units have regular meetings to evaluate the progress and improve their performance. The finance unit in particular has improved its compliance practices.
- ◆ The institute staff went to Hyderabad on an annual tour from June 26-29, 2025.
- ◆ On December 22, the staff members shared their Christmas joy with 17 abused women residing at St. Patrick's Home, Madurai, run by the Salesian Sisters.
- ◆ The institute staff celebrated Teacher's Day, Deepavali, and Pongal.
- ◆ The interns: One-month block placement, one each from Gandhigram University and Bharathiyar University. On concurrent placement, 3 from Madurai Institute of Social Sciences and 2 from Fatima College.



# Institute of Development, Education, Action and Studies

## Accompanying the Marginalized since 1984



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, opposing feudal landlordism and caste discrimination. While the movement of the people was called the Scheduled Caste Welfare Movement, the Jesuits and collaborators called themselves PALMERA (People's Action and Liberation Movement in East Ramnad) team. Several Jesuits, religious and lay persons contributed and benefited through this grassroots engagement. In 1985, the People's Organization was rechristened as the Workers' People's Rights Movement. As the grassroots work 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.

Institute of Development, Education, Action, and Studies (IDEAS) was founded in 1984 at 26A, Valaithoppu, Chinthamani Road, Madurai 625001. 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: Dalits, Women, Children, Unorganized Labourers, Sri Lankan Tamil

Repatriates working as bonded labourers in the commercial forests of Kodaikanal Hills, Tamil Refugees from Sri Lanka, Dalit Catholics, Arunthathiyars, Puthirai Vannars, Paliyar and Pulayar Tribes on Kodaikanal Hills, and the Nomadic Tribes in the plains. Various civil society groups working with these groups have also benefitted from the institute's services. 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, responding to the nexus among crony market forces, religio-cultural nationalist politics and the hegemonic state and the increasing rate of discrimination and atrocities against Dalits, women and children, the institute has turned its lens in a new direction: socio-political, legal, and economic capacitation and empowerment of Dalit Women, Women facing Violence, Widows and Manual Scavenging Workers. Challenges posed to democracy and secularism today are another important area of concern.

From 2000, at the top of 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 through legal information, guidance and judicial interventions, Research and Publications for advocacy purposes were other important activities. Seminars and Workshops enable teachers, NGOs, youth, and leaders of people's movements to develop their communication skills, acquire media education and learn social video production skills. The institute's Knowledge Services include library facilities and e-documentation dispatch on current social issues.

In 2009, the institute celebrated its silver jubilee, and it was the beginning of a new era. In 2012, the Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Federation Unit was initiated, and in 2015, the Abolition of Manual Scavenging and Violence Against Women Units were opened. In 2017, the Arunthathiyar Unorganized Women Workers Unit was initiated, and in 2020, the Accompanying Kal Oddar Unit was commenced. From 2023, the institute effectively utilised social media platforms to reach out to its stakeholders. Collaboration with CSOs, national Jesuit social centres and Church agencies helped in expanding the institute's contribution.

In 2025-26, the training and administrative blocks were renovated, providing clean drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, rooms with toilets, and mosquito protection. The renovated office set-up improved work effectiveness and accountability.

Given that the achievements since 1984 are indeed a powerful testimony to what the institute had envisioned, done, and impacted, the coming decades offer newer challenges to serve the marginalised with deeper commitment and greater vigour.



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# Ideas

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