

MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

(Established by the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department, Tamil Nadu)



NEWSLETTER

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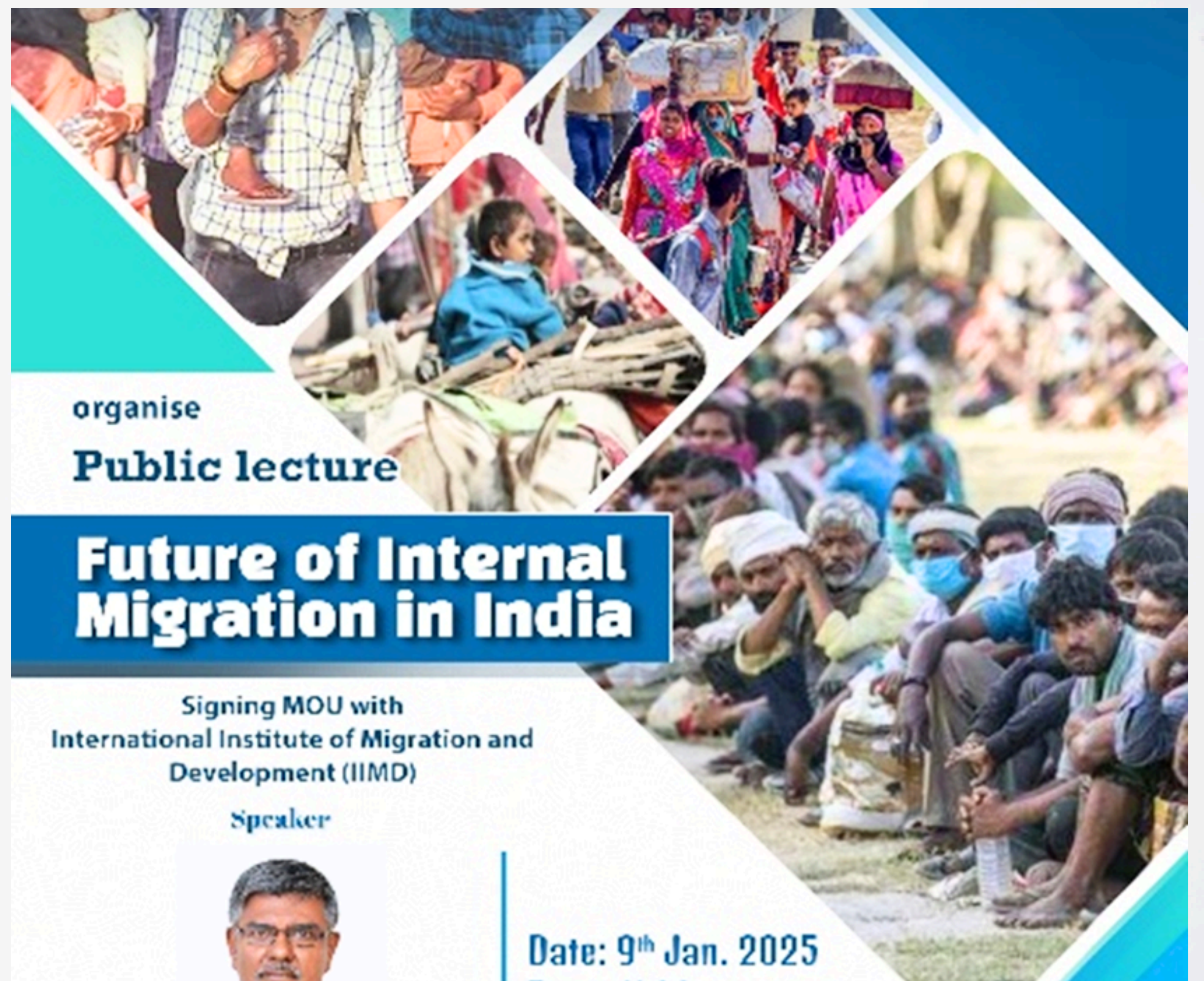
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 2025 marked an exceptionally active period for CSJE, with the Centre executing a diverse range of outreach, training, and research activities across Tamil Nadu. The month opened with preparations for the Movement Journalism Workshop and included the Centre's participation in the 49th Chennai Trade Fair, the One-Day Training on the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act in Tirunelveli, a Republic Day visit to the Adi Dravidar Boys Hostel, a Public Lecture at St. Xavier's College, a Reel Competition in collaboration with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, and a consultation on Post Matric Scholarship and Dalit Entrepreneurship.

February 2025 was defined by two landmark events: the successful conduct of the inaugural six-day Movement Journalism Workshop (11-16 February), and the Public Awareness Campaign at the Tirunelveli Porunai Book Fair. The Gig Workers Project field assistant training furthered the Centre's research commitments, and Dr. Suseendhira's publication in Arumbu monthly magazine continued CSJE's tradition of public intellectual engagement. The Movement Journalism Workshop, which resulted in internship placements at News 7 Channel for three participants, was widely acknowledged as the Centre's most significant programme initiative of the period.

Public Lecture - Future of Internal Migration in India

On 9 January 2025, the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) in collaboration with the Centre for Social Justice and Equity (CSJE), Madras School of Social Work, organised a Public Lecture on the 'Future of Internal Migration in India' at the TAG Auditorium, MSSW, at 11:30 am. The lecture was delivered by Dr. S. Irudaya Rajan, Chairperson of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMD) and Honorary Professor at MSSW. The event also included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between MSSW and IIMD, marking a significant institutional collaboration for migration research.



Participation in Toda Primer and Curriculum Development Workshop

On 21 July 2024, Dr. Pavananthi, Director, Centre for Social Justice and Equity (CSJE), visited an Irular community settlement in Minjur to gain firsthand insights into the community's livelihood strategies. The visit provided an opportunity to understand the socio-economic conditions, daily challenges, and existing support systems within the settlement. The observations gathered will contribute to CSJE's ongoing research and advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting the welfare and development of tribal communities.



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One-Day Training on the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 & Rules, 1995

on 24/01/2026, The Government of Tamil Nadu, Department of Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, in collaboration with the Centre for Social Justice and Equity (CSJE), Madras School of Social Work, organised one-day training programmes on the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995 in Tirunelveli and Madurai.

The training programmes aimed to strengthen awareness and understanding of the legal provisions of the SC/ST (PoA) Act and its implementation among stakeholders.



Public Lecture: Civil Rights Struggles in Colonial Tamil Nadu

On 27 January 2025, CSJE organised a Public Lecture in collaboration with St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, at Fr. Lebeau Hall. The lecture focused on 'Civil Rights Struggles in Colonial Tamil Nadu,' examining historical movements for equality and social justice. Dr. J. Balasubramaniam, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Science Communication, Madurai Kamaraj University, delivered the lecture as Chief Guest and Speaker. Felicitations were offered by Rev. Dr. S. Ignacimuthu S.J., Rector, St. Xavier's Institutions, Rev. Fr. Dr. G. Pushparaj S.J., Secretary, and Dr. R. Pavananthi Vembulu, Director, CSJE. The programme was coordinated by Rev. Fr. Dr. S. Arul Ravi S.J., Director, MAX Forum.



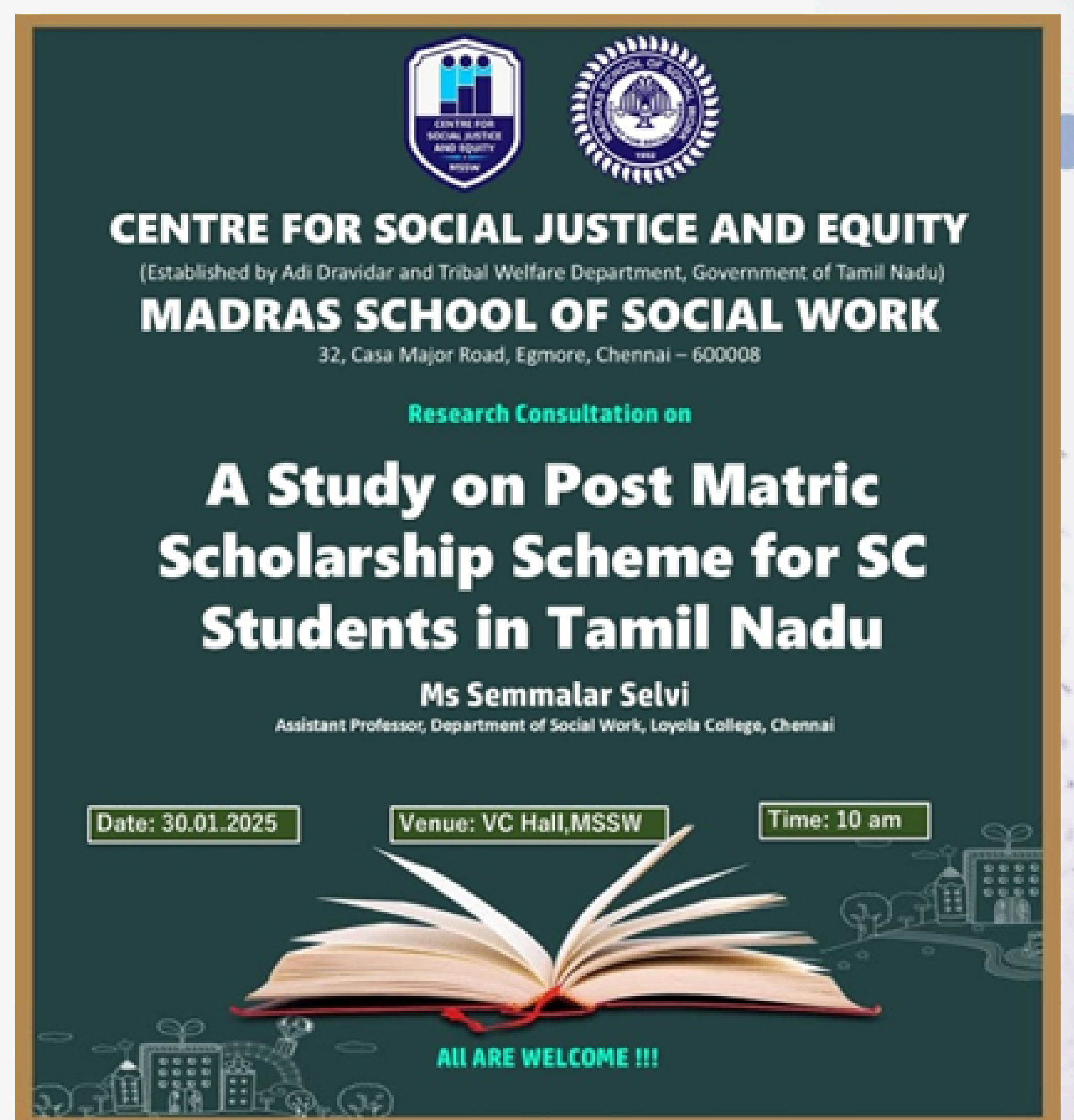
Consultation on Dalit Entrepreneurship with Reference to ACTIV

On 30 January 2025, CSJE organised a Consultation on Dalit Entrepreneurship at Madras School of Social Work, Chennai, focusing on the role of the Adi Dravidar Confederation of Trade and Industrial Vision (ACTIV) in promoting entrepreneurship among Dalit communities. Dr. S. Lalitha, Assistant Professor, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, presented the research study. The discussion highlighted key challenges including caste-based discrimination and limited access to credit and resources, while acknowledging that government schemes have contributed to improved financial stability and social mobility. Recommendations included sensitisation programmes for bank officials, simplified loan procedures, and extended repayment periods. Around 30 participants from ACTIV, PRAXIS, and MSSW attended.



Consultation on Post Matric Scholarship Schemes for SC Students

On 30 January 2025, CSJE organised a Consultation on Post Matric Scholarship Schemes for Scheduled Caste Students at Madras School of Social Work, Chennai. Ms. Semmalar Selvi, Assistant Professor, Loyola College, Chennai, presented the research findings, examining challenges faced by SC students in accessing technical and engineering higher education. Key issues discussed included delays in scholarship disbursement, financial burdens on families, and language barriers affecting academic performance. Recommendations included mentorship programmes, improved scholarship implementation, and establishment of grievance redressal mechanisms. The consultation was attended by 15 participants, including researchers, faculty members, and civil society representatives.



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Movement Journalism Workshop



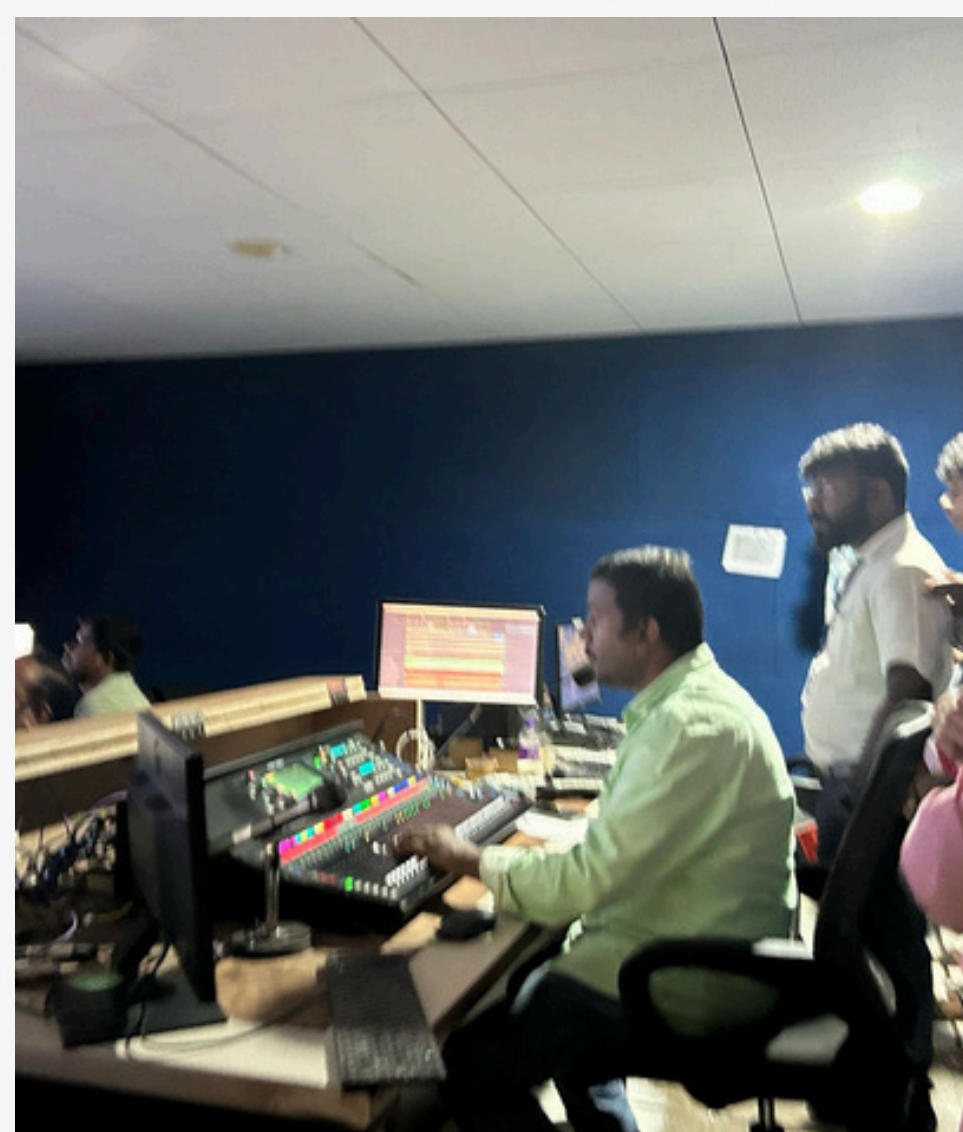
The Centre for Social Justice and Equity (CSJE), Madras School of Social Work, in collaboration with the Digital Sapiens Foundation, organised a one-week residential workshop on Movement Journalism from 10 to 17 February 2025. The workshop was designed to equip youth from marginalised communities with the skills, ethics, and critical perspective required to practise journalism that authentically amplifies marginalised voices. Around 20 participants from districts including Kallakuruchi, Villupuram, Sivagangai, and Ponneri were selected from over 40 applications received through a systematic registration and social media mobilisation process coordinated by Programme Coordinator Dr. P. Suseendhira.

The six-day programme combined expert lectures, field visits, and hands-on practical sessions. Day 1 covered Alternative Writings and Journals, led by Thiru Vanniarasu (Tamilman) and Thiru Prince Ennares Periyar (Viduthalai). Day 2 addressed Press Laws and Ethics, delivered by Adv. A.B. Rajasekaran, alongside a community field visit. Day 3 was held at Maadha TV for broadcast media practical sessions. Day 4 included a visit to News 7 Tamil Channel, which subsequently agreed to offer internships to three participants – a direct professional placement reflecting the workshop's real-world impact. Day 5 featured a session on 'Contemporary Print Media for Marginalised People' by Ms. Krithika Srinivasan, Senior Field Reporter, Indian Express. Participants also visited The Hindu, News 18, Nakkheeran, Murasoli, and Theekathir, gaining exposure to diverse editorial cultures across mainstream and progressive Tamil media.

The workshop concluded with video journalism exercises and project presentations. Prof. Pavananthi, Director CSJE, described it as a landmark event for the Centre. The programme established a replicable model combining residential learning, media exposure, and mentorship – reaffirming CSJE's commitment to building the communicative capacity of marginalised communities through socially conscious journalism.



Movement Journalism Workshop



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Guest Lecture: Artificial Intelligence and Social Science Research – Tools & Techniques

On 20 February 2025, the Documentation Unit of CSJE, in collaboration with the MSSW Library Department, organised a Guest Lecture on 'Artificial Intelligence and Social Science Research – Tools and Techniques' at the VC Hall, Madras School of Social Work. The session was delivered by Dr. A.R.D. Prasad, former Professor and Head, Documentation and Training Centre, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore. The lecture introduced participants to AI tools for data analysis, predictive modelling, and research automation, with focused discussions on the application of AI in both qualitative and quantitative social science research. Ethical considerations and limitations of AI in academic research were also addressed. Around 40 participants, including faculty members, PhD scholars, and students, attended the lecture.



One-Day Training on the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 & Rules 1995 Non-Official Members of DVMC and SLVMC

CSJE, in collaboration with the Government of Tamil Nadu, Department of Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, organised two One-Day Training programmes on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules 1995, for the Non-Official Members of the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (DVMC) and the State-Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (SLVMC).

The first training was held on 24 January 2025 at Tirunelveli. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. K.P. Karthikeyan, District Collector, Tirunelveli, lending the event significant official endorsement and administrative support. The inaugural session was followed by the first technical session conducted by Mr. Britto, Director of Vaanmuhil – a civil society organisation engaged in Dalit rights and legal awareness – who provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the Act's provisions and its practical application in addressing atrocities against SC/ST communities.

The second training was conducted on 28 January 2025 at Madurai, extending the programme's reach to another key district. Both trainings aimed to equip DVMC and SLVMC members – who hold critical oversight responsibilities in monitoring and responding to caste-based violence – with the legal knowledge and institutional awareness necessary to fulfil their roles effectively and protect the rights of marginalised communities across Tamil Nadu.



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Publications & Activities

Book Chapter Publication

Dr. R. Pavananthi Vembulu, Director, CSJE, contributed a chapter titled 'Ecological Democracy and Environmental Justice: Political Ecology of Disasters in India' to the edited volume Youth, Community, and Democracy in India, Myanmar, and Thailand, edited by Chosein Yamahata and Makiko Takeda. This publication reflects Dr. Pavananthi's engagement with critical environmental justice discourse and positions CSJE's scholarship within an international comparative academic framework.

Reel Competition – 'Samaththuvam Kaanbom'

CSJE, MSSW, in collaboration with the Centre for Social Inclusion Research, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, organised a Reel Competition titled 'Samaththuvam Kaanbom' (Let Us See Equality) for college students across Tirunelveli. The competition ran from 24 to 31 January 2025, encouraging students to express their vision of social equality and justice through short video reels – a format that engages contemporary youth communication creatively and meaningfully.

Republic Day Visit – Adi Dravidar Boys Hostel, Tirunelveli

On 26 January 2025, CSJE team members visited the Adi Dravidar Boys Hostel at Tirunelveli, participating in the Hostel Day and Republic Day celebrations. The students demonstrated remarkable initiative and awareness – notably delivering speeches on Gender Equality using independently prepared reference materials, reflecting their enthusiasm and intellectual engagement. The visit also identified infrastructure and equipment gaps warranting follow-up interventions by the Centre.



The Madras School of Social Work (MSSW), founded by Mary Clubwala Jadhav in 1952, is one of India's premier institutions for social work education and research. It stands as the first social work institution in South India. Located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, MSSW is a NAAC-accredited autonomous institution committed to fostering social justice, community development, and inclusive welfare through quality education and collaborative research.



The Centre for Social Justice and Equity (CSJE) at Madras School of Social Work was established under the financial grant-in-aid of the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, vide G.O. (MS) No. 87 dated 12 July 2023. The Centre was formally inaugurated by the Honourable Minister N. Kayalvizhi, Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, on 16 August 2023, marking a significant step towards advancing research, advocacy, and policy support for tribal and marginalised communities in Tamil Nadu.

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