

# Program Brief

## CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY ECOSYSTEM IN TAMIL NADU

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### Background

The Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department of Tamil Nadu in collaboration with the Madras School of Social Work (MSSW), Chennai, took a significant step towards promoting social justice and equity by establishing the Centre for Social Justice and Equity (CSJE) at MSSW. To discuss CSJE's annual plan, a Consultation on Social Justice and Equity Ecosystem in Tamil Nadu was held on the 25th of August 2023. Outlined the key areas of focus, including research projects, community engagement initiatives, capacity-building workshops, and policy advocacy efforts. The plan's emphasis was on generating actionable insights that would contribute to the upliftment of marginalized communities and promote social inclusivity.

### Objective

- To discuss the tentative annual plan and activities
- To outline different activities of the Centre

### People Participated Profile

Dr. S. Raja Samuel – Principal, MSSW.

Dr. Pavananthi Vembulu – Professor, CSJE

Mr. Antony Stephen - Assistant professor and Programme Co- Ordinators CSJE

Dr. Natarajah – Advisory Committee, Loyola College of Social Sciences

Mr. Sankara Pandi, Assistant Professor and Documentation Assistant CSJE

Mr. Ramkumar, Assistant Professor and Documentation Officer CSJE

### Experts Participated Profile

Dr. Ramajayam – Professor, Bharathidasan University

Dr. Gajendran, - Assistant Professor, MSSW

Dr. C. Jerome Samraj – Assistant Professor, Pondicherry University

Dr. K. Ragupathi – Member, Tamil Nadu Commission for SC and ST

Fr. John Kumar – Social Watch

Dr. Ponnusamy – Researcher

Ms. Prema Revathi – Founder, Vanavil Foundation

Ms. Semmalar Selvi, - Assistant Professor, Loyola College, Chennai.

Ms. Shalin Maria Lawrence – Activist

Mr. Deepak Nathan Disability Rights Activists,

Dr. S. Illavarasi – Researcher

Mr. Nirmal Khatri – Researcher, Eco- Social Development

Ms.P, Malliha

Ms. R. Sivasakthi – Students, Pondicherry University

Ms. Rajeshwari Palani – Researcher, Social Watch TN

## **Dignitaries expressed their views and activities of the Centre.**

- Dr. Semmalar:
  - The plan is not focused on Gender aspects. Plan should include the gender aspects as part of the activities
  - Need to create module for FDP to both school teachers and college professors
  - Videos on social justice in more simplified videos such as reels
  - Centre should start its own journal
  - Vision and Mission document need to be prepared
  - Training and sensitising programmes for different officials
  - Centre can collaborate with experts
  - Can help in setting up social justice clubs in college
- Mr. Deepak Nathan
  - Activities of the Centre covered social disability and it should also include physical disability and its intersections such as caste gender, class.
  - No data on Dalit disability. Centre should take initiative to collate the data,
  - Study should be conducted based on the accessibility of welfare measures.
  - Centre should be a platform where it is accessible to the differently abled people as well Centre should reach such people.
- Dr. Pavananthi Vembulu
  - Data are there in different departments. We need to focus and collect from government departments.
  - With the limitation of the Centre in terms of manpower, time and mandate, we need be focused on particular area in particular time.
  - Every year focus of the Centre should be prioritized
  - During the discussion on partnership, network and Advocacy Dr. Pavananthi Vembulu expressed that as an institution, Centre can only be limited to policy level intervention. Science policy should be discussed and researchable area. Centre need to make network with different government agencies as the data are with the agency.
- Dr. Ramajayam
  - The area of Dalit disability should be focused. There are many Dalit disability people did not register or got certificate to receive any welfare measures especially, differently people in villages.
  - Centre can priorities the communities who struggles to get the community certificates.
  - Selective issues should be focused.
- Dr. Jerome Samraj
  - Centre should bring out a compulsory course for the entire college, where every student enrolled in this college should have oriented on social justice aspects.
- Dr. Gajendran
  - The Centre should come up its own definition or conceptualisation on Social Justice and Equity. It should come up with document on social justice
  - Training programmes and modules for government official, school and college teaching professionals
  - Centre should come up bi-lingual journals comprise of both Tamil and English.
  - FDP programmes for teaching fraternities on social justice and Equity.
  - Centre can focus on caste in urban spaces as part of the research activity.
  - It would be good if the Centre can prepare a status report of marginalised communities.



- Dr. Ragupathi
  - Centre can focus on Social Justice in historical perspectives in the context of India.
  - Curriculum can be formed on social justice and equity
- Ms. Shalin Maria Larence
  - Social Justice in the context of Tamil Nadu remains only in the welfare and reservation aspects. Whereas the Centre can focus on development justice comprise of poverty, segregated livelihood and violence, restrictive justice, Economic, criminal justice and mental health aspects.
- Ms. Revathi
  - Centre should map different communities such as Paampaatti, Koodai Kurvan, Boom Boom Maattukarar etc. as there has not many research on those communities.
  - Stigma and prejudice are there in the educational institutions. Centre can do research on such areas
  - During annual conference, exhibition of these communities art work should be there.
  - Centre through its activities can stress on state welfare board for NT DNT communities.
  - Centre can also focus different communities involved in begging, customary begging, rag pickers, scrap pickers as part of manual scavengers.
  - Centre should priorities the cyber caste crimes.
  - The Centre should also focus on the most marginalised communities such as NT DNT Communities.
  - Most of the NT DNT community people does not have any basic facilities. There are issues of getting the ST certificates.
  - Centre can take up the research on these Communities.
- Fr. John Peter –
  - Stressed on Centre should do social equity audit
- Fr. John Kumar
  - Centre should adopt tools such as Gender and intersectionality and social equity audit.
  - Centre should create dialogue process for opinion makers such as Government staffs, policy makers, teachers, political member etc.
- Dr. John Bosco
  - Centre should come up with generating data by using social equity tool. This data can empower the people who are already working with marginalised communities.
  - Research should be the base of the

## **Outcome**

The core segment of the event was the discussion on the proposed annual plan. The session, inviting inputs from various stakeholders present, including activists, academicians, and fieldworkers. This diverse range of participants brought forth valuable perspectives, suggesting potential enhancements to the plan and recommending new avenues of exploration. highlighted the key takeaways, including the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, the importance of involving community voices in research, and the potential for the CSJE to act as a bridge between academia and grassroots activism.

## **Follow up**

The center focuses on the most backward communities like SC/ST communities. The Center conducts research independently and in collaboration with some organisations.



**CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY**  
 (Established by Adi Dravidar & Tribal Welfare Department,  
 Govt. of TN)  
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