

# IN SEARCH OF CHILDHOOD

An Assessment of  
Eleven Years of Work (2001-12)  
Among Child Labourers by  
Southern Collective for  
New Initiatives on Childhood (SCNIC)

**By**

**Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph Jaikumar**  
(Author and Facilitator)

**Assisted by**

**Dr. T. J. Thressia**  
Director, CEDAR

**A. Syed Ali**  
Programme Coordinator  
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## PREFACE

When we insisted that we would submit a self-study report in the place of a summary evaluation by an external agency, to be honest, we wanted our voices to be heard in the first place. It is about more than eleven years of our work among children. A right evaluation of the impact of our work can happen only after we made a clear statement as to what we claim to be our achievements and failures. Such a statement, we decided, has to be necessarily public in nature. The report in sum, is that.

The first element of its publicness derives from its transparency. This would allow easy professional and public scrutiny of the report. The report in this sense, is an honest confession. The report might please, disappoint, annoy, and even frustrate. It depends on who reads and for what purpose. But our response to any provocation- pleasing or totally displeasing- would be, not to put up a defence with heavy armours. But we would extend a full invitation for anyone to launch a thorough interrogation of all that we claim to be valuable in our experience. That alone would further enlarge our understanding, not only in terms of what we did and what we did not, but also in terms of the general concerns relating to right to childhood.

Second, calling it a confession, we have not allowed the whimsicality and fantasies of the author, to lead. The rigours of sticking on to statistical data wherever necessary, objectively conducted interviews, well facilitated Focus Group Discussions, use of documentary evidence and use of conceptual guidelines for selecting and interpreting data etc. have considerably restrained the authorial subjectivity. In other words, the report has taken certain nuances and protocols of qualitative research seriously, to avoid the pitfalls of whimsicality.

Thirdly, though the voice of the text is primarily dominated by the interpreter, it tends to be ambiguous or multiple. This in fact was deliberate, as we wanted every staff irrespective of rank and position, to speak through. Very much so, it was about the beneficiaries.

Fourthly, going public also meant to us, to place our story in the context of larger texts of conceptual and theoretical meanings. This has led us to consciously and explicitly define key concepts. Partnership, Child labour, Childhood, Child Rights, Agency, Quality Education, Child-Centred Space etc. by way of being defined, get located in a larger system of meaning. This, we did in the first place, to avoid easy caricaturing and reduction of ideas presented. This is the fate of many in-house reports in NGOs. Incidentally, this has helped us to bring certain broader implications for academic and policy research. This further demands that our achievements and lack of it, must be evaluated in very professional terms.

Finally, we, with certain audacity have moved from 'Child Labour Abolition' to 'Ensuring Childhood' advocating Total Quality Education. This underlines the need of the hour. It also signifies the transition we have made through eleven years of hard work. Our models of action we think, are easy enough to replicate. But the reading of this report, would answer whether they are worthy enough to emulate.

Madurai  
January, 2013

**T. Chinnaraj Joseph Jaikumar**  
Author and Facilitator



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the very outset we recognise the fact that but for Action Aid India, SCNIC would not have been possible. There have been many at the helm of affairs at Action Aid India who stood firmly behind SCNIC. We fondly recollect and place on record, the pioneering work done by Late Dr. Sarojini, Regional Manager who made SCNIC a reality. Her unfortunate death in 2002, shifted the responsibilities to Mr. Saroj Doss. The baton was then passed on to Mr. Amar Jyoti Nayak. We also place on record the valuable work done by Program Officers Ms. Esther Mariaselvam, Mr. Ajay Kuruvilla, Mr. Jaideep, Mr. S. K. Ravi, Ms. Jyoti Awasthi, Ms. Anne Thomas, Ms. Vanessa Peter, Ms. Jeyanthi, Ms. Jacintha and Ms. Sunitha.

More importantly it is the hard labour of the Programme Staff of SCNIC drawn from CEDAR, NEWS and Victory who provided the substance to SCNIC. We have made special effort to print the name of any staff irrespective of cadre in the appendix of this report, who worked for SCNIC for more than three months. The management of CEDAR, NEWS and Victory deserve real praise. Our special thanks are due to Mr. Pandian, Director of NEWS and Mr. Bose, Managing Trustee of Victory Trust, but for whose cooperation SCNIC would not have crossed over rough terrains.

We also sincerely place on record the services rendered by Mr. Shyam Sundar, Director, CEDAR and Capt. Antony J. Ignatius, Director CEDAR who acted as Project Directors of SCNIC between 2001-2002 and 2002-2009 respectively and who largely shaped the operationalisation of the project for long, before Dr. Thressia took over as Director. We also recognise the long stint of Mr. Syed Ali, Programme Coordinator, SCNIC and his contribution in various capacities.

We, with so much gratitude thank the children of our collectives for making SCNIC a real child-centred programme. We thank the civic leaders, community elders, women's groups, youth groups and numerous other CBOs for their ungrudging cooperation and participation.

Coming to the present study, it is Ms. Esther Mariaselvam, presently Regional Manager, who made it possible. She was too willing to accept our suggestion that CEDAR would undertake the responsibility of doing the self-study. She also enthusiastically supported us with a liberal budget.

Of the present SCNIC staff, first our thanks goes to Mr. Aruldoss, Manager, Victory and Mr. Jacob, Manager, NEWS. These two, provided the right leadership for collecting field data involving SCNIC staff. Their hosting of FGDs at Meelaneelithanallur and Sivakasi respectively, was of immense help. Apart from participating in FGDs, the drudgery part of collecting and collating several information were borne specifically by Ms. Mariammal, Field Coordinator, CEDAR, Mr. Michael, Field Manager, CEDAR, Mr. Palpandi, Field Motivator, NEWS and Ms. Malliga, Field Motivator, Victory Trust. Nothing works without efficient management of money and maintenance of accounts. We thank Mr. P. Marimuthu, Accountant, SCNIC specially for making money available on time. I also place on record the services of Mr. R. Ajit Thangaraj, Volunteer, CEDAR for diligently typing the manuscript and providing secretarial assistance. I thank Dr. Paul Jayakar for meticulously correcting the proof.

I also thank G. Paul Timothy for typesetting and printing the report in a short time.

**T. Chinnaraj Joseph Jaikumar**



## GLOSSARY OF NON ENGLISH WORDS

<i>Adi dravidar</i>	<i>Dalits</i> or Scheduled Caste, officially used by Government of Tamil Nadu
<i>Adikkal</i>	Foundation stone
<i>Akka</i>	Elder sister
<i>Annan</i>	Elder brother
<i>Arundadiyar</i>	One of the <i>dalit</i> communities in Tamil Nadu, considered to be the lowest in the ritual hierarchy, even by the <i>dalits</i>
<i>Aya</i>	Women attendant
<i>Balwadi</i>	Crèche
<i>Dalit</i>	Oppressed Caste
<i>Dharna</i>	Sit in strike demanding complinace
<i>Gramsabha</i>	General body of the village
<i>Gurukula</i>	Traditional Indian School attached to the teacher's household or abode
<i>Kazhil</i>	A folk dance form played with sticks, derived from martial arts
<i>Kolattam</i>	A folk dance performed in group with rhythmic clicking of sticks held by the performers in both the hands alternately clicking self and with co-performers
<i>Mela</i>	Festival
<i>Oyil</i>	A form of folk dance performed in villages
<i>Panchayat</i>	Civic Council of the village
<i>Panchayat Raj</i>	System of Civic representation and governance
<i>Parai</i>	A simple drum
<i>Patta</i>	Document showing ownership details of land, issued by revenue authority
<i>Purambok</i>	Land not owned by anyone (But practically under the control of government)
<i>Sarvashiksha Abhayan</i>	Programme of Education for All
<i>Silambam</i>	A form of Tamil martial art, performed with long thin poles
<i>Sumangali</i>	A married woman with her husband still alive, a woman enjoying full womanhood
<i>Taluk</i>	Sub division of a district
<i>Thappu</i>	A simple drum
<i>Thiran</i>	Capacity
<i>Vahana</i>	Vehicle

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## **CHAPTER I**

# **CONTEXTUALISING SCNIC PARTNERSHIP**

## CONTEXTUALISING SCNIC PARTNERSHIP



" WE'RE HAPPY TO JOIN YOU..."

Southern Collective for New Initiatives on Children (SCNIC) has completed its 12 years of existence. It is a partnership between Action Aid India and a consortium of three NGOs, led by Centre for Education Development Action and Research (CEDAR), Madurai. The other two members are Navajeevan Education and Welfare Trust (NEWS), Sivakasi and VICTORY Trust, Melaneelithanallur. Beginning in April 2002, and supported by National Fund of Action Aid for the first twenty months, this 'partnership' became eligible for Development Area (DA) funding in January 2003. The complete phasing out of funding by Action Aid would happen in December 2012.

### POST-DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE IN STRATEGY

To place the self-study cum impact analysis in context, it is important to state in explicit terms the theoretical and strategic meaning of 'partnership'. Given the very asymmetry of power, size and resources of those partnering organizations, we ask the question what made these organizations stick together for more than a decade? The easily available answer is that it is the convergence of their vision, namely, 'establishing a child labour free society'. More than this, what made the difference is the change in perception of their own roles by organizations like Action Aid as they participated in the development work.

The post-developmental era that began with structural adjustment and liberalization, placed fresh challenges on the international aid-givers as well on the local NGOs involved in development work. This can be summed up as follows:

1. Liberalization resulted in the withdrawal or retreat of the mammoth developmental state leaving a big space for the market. This process started in early 1990's in India. From the point of view of development action needed for tackling poverty and marginalization, this called for re-organization and re-configuration of institutions that would, to some extent, substitute the developmental state as well counter-balance the market thereby preventing the exclusion of the poor and vulnerable. This concern was expressed in building a 'new model of civil society' which would act as the 'third sector' – the state and market being the first and second sectors respectively.
2. In contradistinction to the state sponsored model of top-down, externally directed and straight-jacketed (usually inefficient and corrupt) model of development, a new model was developed. This model emphasized 'situation-specific' and 'locally owned' process of development which ensured the effective participation of the people, particularly those who are poor and marginalized.

3. Participation of the people, on one hand and the building up of a 'new civil society' on the other hand, called for revisiting and recovering the notions of 'rule of law' and the 'citizen'. This became the basis for a 'right based approach' to development. The 'target populations' and 'beneficiaries' of development came to be reconceived as 'right-bearing citizens' with agency, to 'specify', 'own', 'control' and 'direct' the development process.
4. The idea 'civil society is a vehicle of development' came to be increasingly justified by the aid-agencies and INGOs for several reasons. Two major reasons are: i) in civil society, an ideal instrumentality was seen for launching 'situation specific' (local need based), 'locally owned' (participatory) and 'right-based' (agency-based) development and ii) the North also found good amount of political correctness in adopting this approach particularly in the liberalizing Southern democracies.
5. Civil society had to be strengthened for managing development resources on one hand and for 'engaging the state' on the other hand in a manner that it ensured the rights for the citizen, particularly the marginalized. 'Capacity building of the civil society' became the *mantra*.
6. By the year 2000 in countries like India, the 'third sector' or the civil society had come of age. Aid-givers and INGOs did not see much difficulty in directly becoming partners with local NGOs for implementing the new model of development.
7. SCNIC partnership (2001-2012) must necessarily be seen in this context only, and not in terms of 'donor-donee' relationship.

### Descriptive Table 1:

#### PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

##### Organisational

1. To interface without power imbalance.
2. To recognize complementary nature of roles and responsibilities.
3. To promote non-bureaucratic non-hierarchical methods of working.
4. To ensure transparency and mutual accountability.
5. To learn from one another but without appropriating others' intellectual/knowledge resources.
6. To be accountable to the community of supporters.
7. To be accountable to the constituency of the poor and the excluded with whom the work is carried out.

##### Programmatic

1. To rightly identify the constituencies of the poor and excluded.
2. To build alliances of the constituencies of the poor with that of CBSOs, NGOs and other institutions.
3. To use the alliances and networks to promote collective leadership and assert rights.
4. To facilitate and strengthen the agency of the constituencies that they come out on their own, of their marginalized conditions, in a sustainable manner.
5. To leverage local resources including social capital in favour of the poor and excluded.
6. To facilitate increased participation of non-poor sections of the society by promoting community volunteering. To promote responsible and ethically correct corporate partnership.
7. To engage in policy influencing, advocacy and knowledge creation.
8. To strengthen civil society platforms at local, national and global levels by building alliances and networks.

### Political

1. To believe in and uphold rule of law, democracy and good governance.
2. To believe in and work for the full realization of citizenship nationally and globally.
3. To believe in and uphold the view that development and poverty-free life are matters of right and entitlement to people.
4. To believe in and act in a manner that the poor and excluded do have 'agency' that they can efficiently participate and direct development.
5. To strategically strengthen people's movements those address the rights of the poor and excluded but to avoid political affiliation.
6. To believe in and appropriately emphasize that the state had the primary responsibility to ensure rights and deliver justice to the poor and excluded.
7. To critically engage the state that it protects the rights of the poor and excluded and deliver justice.

Partnership refers to the strategy of collaboration adopted by aid-givers and INGOs in the post-developmental era by joining hands with NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBSOs), their alliances and networks and social movements in order to recast their role from that of 'donors' to that of civil-society actors at the local, national and global levels. Partnership may or may not involve funding assistance. But it would certainly depend on a convergence of interests among partnering organizations in identifying core constituencies of the poor and the marginalized (eg. dalits, minorities, child labourers, etc) with whom they would like to work with. Equally important are their shared vision on the desired change in the situation, efficacy and compatibility of their organizations in terms of capabilities, values, strategies and optimal outcomes of actions. Partnering might involve activities ranging from joint-programme implementation, policy influencing and advocacy networking and alliance building to strengthening of civil society platforms at local, national and global levels. Partnership would inevitably demand strategies of organizational interfacing without imbalance of power, complementarity, transparency and mutual accountability, openness to learn from one another, horizontal working and ultimate accountability to both the constituency of the poor and excluded and the community of supporters.

## PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

### ACTIONAID'S SHIFT IN FAVOUR OF PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

Action Aid India (AAI) has been present in the development scene since 1972. As the post-development era slowly dawned, it responded to the emerging situation in a manner prescribed above, ultimately ending up in building partnerships with NGOs and promoting alliances and networks for the purpose of addressing poverty and marginalization in terms of rights perspectives. The Country Strategy Paper III (2005-2010) of the Action Aid India named 'Rights First: Working Together to End Poverty and Patriarchy' says, "Today, more than three decades since we started the journey, we have the privilege of emerging in rights and development action with more than 300 civil society organizations and nearly 5 million poor and excluded people – namely dalit and tribal people." The same document admits, "Our organizational growth and the rapidly changing external context during 1990s compelled us to engage in strategic programming." The Country Strategy Paper CSP-II (1995-2002) and Taking Sides (1999) are worth re-visiting in terms of Action Aid India's transformation into a 'partnering organization in development' using rights based approach.

The SCNIC partnership policy on the side of Action Aid India, was largely shaped by their Country Strategy Paper II (1998-2002). This needs to be summed up and explicitly stated in order to highlight how it fitted into the post-developmental scenario first and second, how it found compatibility and convergence of vision with CEDAR, the leader of the consortium and other partners, NEWS and Victory.

#### **ACTION AID's CSP – II: 1998-2002 on Partnership:**

1. Taking sides with the poor and marginalized
2. Strengthening their 'agency' for rights action
3. Addressing the distress needs of the poor and marginalized within the constitutional framework (critical engagement of the state)
4. Presenting pluralist identity of Action Aid
5. Donor agencies and 'activist organizations' to be treated as equal partners of social change.

#### **ACTION AID's CSP – II: 1998-2002 on Constituency:**

Though Action Aid had identified different constituencies to work with, it had the following to say:

“Rights of women, persons with disability and **child rights** permeate all our work and programme as cross cutting themes” (emphasis added).

#### **Centre for Education, Development Action and Research (CEDAR): Providing the Node**

CEDAR was conceived, founded and developed as a conscious response to the emerging post-developmental conditions in India. A group of well meaning citizens – academicians, public intellectuals, development educators and practitioners and a set of rights advocates and grassroots workers (who were already working among child labourers in Sivakasi match belt) – after debating the post-developmental issue for about three years, founded CEDAR as an NGO in 1994. The vision of establishing 'poverty free society' was developed on the basis of following beliefs and assumptions.

1. The emerging post-developmental scenario regardless of a number of market induced perils, will open up a wider global civil society space.
2. The developmental discourse will be recentred more and more in terms of private initiative and voluntary action.
3. Yester year volunteerism and confrontationist approach would be rendered ineffective and new forms of engagement of the state will be needed that in turn would demand new capabilities for NGOs.
4. Post-developmentalism and neo-liberal values demanded 'high-performance capabilities' from NGOs operating in the emerging but fluid civil society space. This meant, beyond commitment and passion for social cause, NGOs needed capacities for professionally articulating their vision and mission, putting appropriate systems and procedures that would long-sustain NGOs in organizational terms, efficient use of human and material resources, obtaining required results and developing and sustaining leadership capabilities for development work and civil society action.

5. Most of the small and emerging NGOs neither did have the money nor access to 'building capacity' in above terms.
6. 'Think on the feet practice' of activism was no more sufficient to tackle development in the context of an emerging information era and knowledge economy. Development called for production of alternate knowledge forms and empowerment of NGOs through such knowledge.
7. Alternate knowledge can neither be borrowed uncritically from the North through aid-givers and INGOs nor from the academia. The 'alternate development knowledge' should be based on a de-centered discourse of grassroots action and people's experience. It is imperative that any organization involved in either development education or capacity building activity, should unfailingly involve in grassroots action.

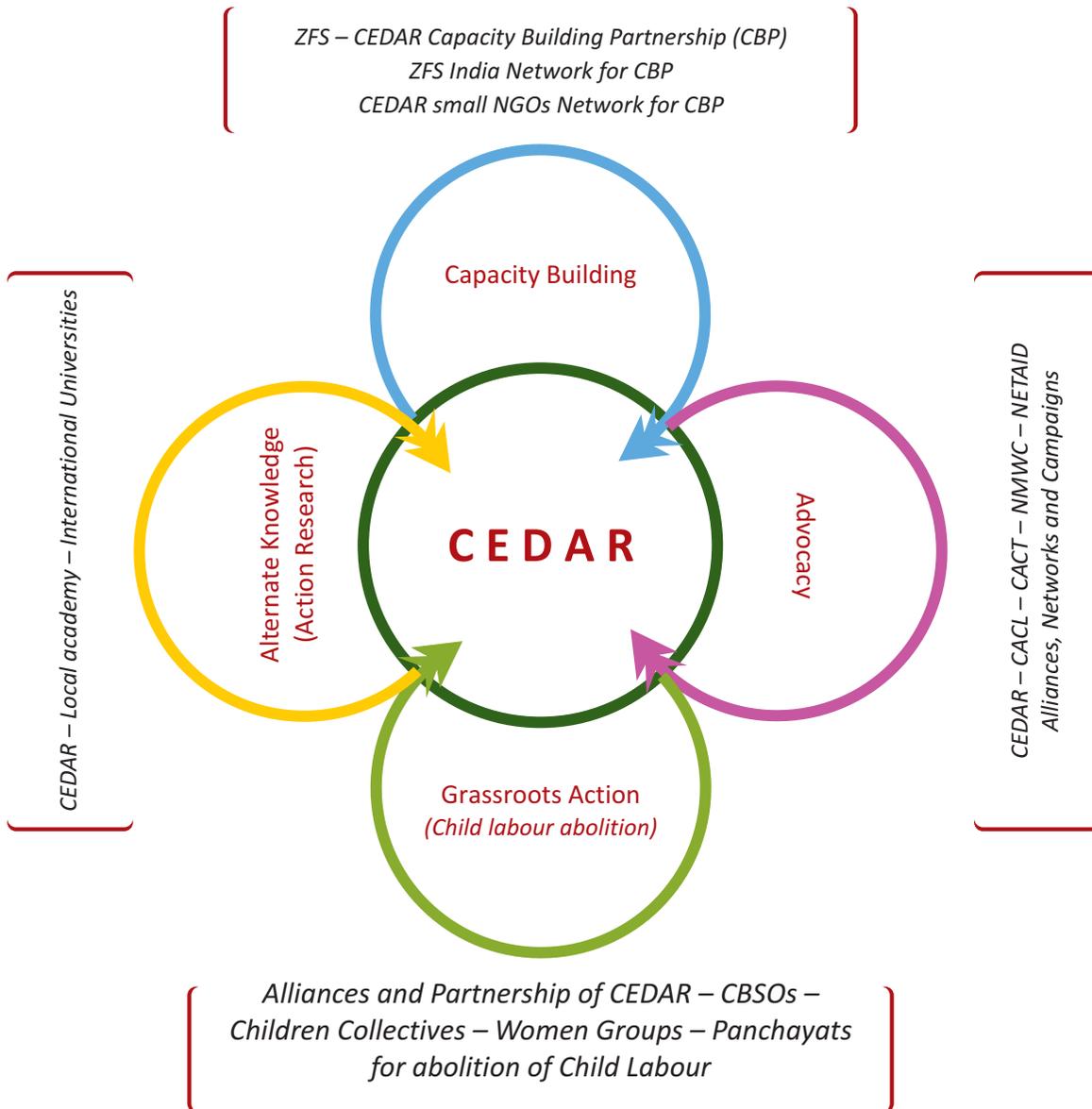
These ideas became a reality for CEDAR when Allied Dunbar Community Trust, UK (Later Zurich Financial Services Community Trust) agreed to support CEDAR through its India Partnership Programme.

The India Partnership Programme of Allied Dunbar (Zurich Financial Services) was a unique model of NGO-Corporate partnership which had the following mission:

1. To build CEDAR's own capacity as a capacity building organization for 'small and emerging Indian NGOs'.
2. To support and partner with CEDAR in its grassroots development work for abolition of child labour in Kovilpatti region.
3. To support CEDAR in developing a capacity building partnership with 30 NGOs in South Tamilnadu.
4. To support CEDAR for developing its own 'action research based development knowledge' and thereby promote an international development education program which would challenge the dominant development paradigms in vogue.

**Fig 1 :**

**CEDAR'S SYNERGY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND ALLIANCES BY 2000**



Over a period of six years (1994-2000), CEDAR had developed considerable experience in three distinct fields: 1. Capacity Building for civil society action through NGOs, 2. Grassroots intervention for abolition of child labour, 3. Dissemination of alternate development knowledge through 'action research' and promote development education at the local, national and international levels.

Early 1990's were also the times when India came under severe pressure for paying attention to the abolition of child labour. National Child Labour Project (1987) of the Government saw, CEDAR as its natural choice for collaboration in the Kovilpatti area.

CEDAR's role as the leader of the consortium of NGOs that entered into partnership with Action Aid India and its continued leadership for SCNIC project by running its Secretariat, are based on the above credentials and should not be lost sight of in making any assessment whether positively contributive or otherwise.

### Navajeevan Educational and Welfare Society (NEWS): Small and Emerging

Navajeevan Educational and Welfare Society (NEWS) was founded in the year 1989. By the year 2000, it was a small NGO involved in the promotion of education of the children of the marginalized communities living in urban slums and rural areas. Eminent educationists and young people committed to bringing a change were behind it. The greatest advantage of NEWS was its location on the very epicenter of child labour namely, Sivakasi. By the year 2000, NEWS has established its own credentials by providing educational support to the poor and working children in the child labour belt around Thiruthangal.

### VICTORY Trust: Small and Emerging

Victory Trust was founded in the year 1996. By the time it entered into the SCNIC partnership it had gained six years of experience with the poor and marginalized. Its constituency was centered around Melaneelithanallur block, an agricultural belt predominantly prone to severe drought. Victory was involved in supporting school going children of the poor families in 15 villages prone to child labour in agriculture. It was also involved in empowering rural women and supporting victims of drought and monsoon failure.

## PARITY ANALYSIS

At the very outset it is understood that SCNIC is a partnership of NGOs with extremely varying strengths in terms of finance, organizational standing, networking, social capital formation and praxis. In a partnership, many factors of strengths and weaknesses cannot be straight away put to easy comparison. Each factor is valuable in its own way. What makes the partners initially come together is of course the convergence of vision – here in SCNIC it is 'establishment of child labour free society' – but what keeps a partnership going depends on ensuring complementarity of roles played in order to achieve the common goal. The challenges posed by SCNIC partnership is highlighted below, through a Parity Analysis Matrix using 13 factors.

### Descriptive Table 2:

#### PARITY ANALYSIS MATRIX FOR PARTNERING (Position of each organization by year 2000)

##### Factor 1. Social cause served in terms of vision, mission and goals

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Relevant in terms of serving the poor and marginalized and strengthening of civil society. Very broad in scope. Striving for plural identity.	Relevant in terms of serving the poor and the marginalized and strengthening of civil society at intermediate level. Plural identity.	Relevant in terms of serving the poor and the marginalized directly. Highly localized. Singular in identity.	Relevant in terms of serving the poor and the marginalized directly. Highly localized. Singular in identity.

## 2. History, track record and standing

Factor

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Has a long history. Known primarily as a credible funding agency. Quite new to participating in grassroots development processes through partnering.	Started in 1994. Came to limelight through the partnership programme of a major corporate social responsibility project. Six years of credible grassroots action for abolition of child labour. Strong professionalism and development-knowledge based action.	Relatively new. Had earned credibility with local community through community services, especially among children.	Relatively new. Had earned credibility with local community through community services.

## 4. Ability to mobilize and command financial resources

Factor

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Very high financial resilience with support base in North. Basically a funding organization of international standing.	Financially viable with capabilities to mobilize programme based fundraising/fund mobilization.	New. No financial standing by 2000.	New. No financial standing by 2000.

## 5. Support networks, alliances and collaborations

Factor

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Strong fundraising network in the North. Strong and long standing community of supporters.	Reasonably good network of supporters with reasonable international access and diverse development interest, mostly of non-financial nature with high social capital content.	Small and emerging. Needing support.	Small and emerging. Needing support.

## 6. Proximity to community for action

Factor

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Distant from community. Had to work through intermediate partners.	High proximity to the community. Capacity for direct participation.	High proximity. Capacity for direct participation.	High proximity. Capacity for direct participation.

**Factor 7. Credibility and acceptance with community**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Credibility and acceptance built through partners in the constituency.	Enjoyed considerable acceptance and credibility with the constituency even before the launch of SCNIC partnership.	Enjoyed considerable acceptance and credibility with the community even before the launch of SCNIC partnership.	Enjoyed considerable acceptance and credibility with the community even before the launch of SCNIC partnership.

**Factor 8. Knowledge, familiarity and empathy for core issue**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Empathetic and eager to choose the constituency with distant knowledge.	Possessed not only experience based knowledge but also highly reflective knowledge based on action research studies. Highly familiar with child labour issue having worked in the field for six years. Possessed very high empathy.	Possession of praxis based knowledge and empathy.	Possession of praxis based knowledge and empathy.

**Factor 9. Influence with community groups / leaders**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Direct interfacing not possible. Wanted to engage the community only through partners.	Direct interfacing and day to day interaction were well established. Enormous goodwill with the community.	Direct interfacing and day to day interaction were well established. Enormous goodwill with the community.	Direct interfacing and day to day interaction were well established. Enormous goodwill with the community.

**Factor 10. Resources for raising and building the capacity of CBSO's, social groups and volunteers**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Could act only through the mediation of NGOs.	Possessed enormous resources for building CBSOs. Enjoyed a good standing as a capacity building NGO even before entering into partnership.	Could build CBSOs.	Could build CBSOs.

**11. Grassroot management and field level translation of goals****Factor**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
As it related to proximity to the community, disadvantaged.	High potential.	High potential.	High potential.

**12. Relevance of action for livelihood support****Factor**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Programatically relevant	Praxis based support. Direct.	Praxis based support. Direct.	Praxis based support. Direct.

**13. Ability to engage the state****Factor**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Possible through participation in public sphere. High potential for advocacy, policy influencing, knowledge creation and opinion making. Least potential for praxis oriented engagement.	High potential for praxis oriented engagement with direct support and participation of local communities. Considerable capability in advocacy, knowledge creation and opinion making.	High potential for praxis oriented engagement with direct support and participation of local communities.	High potential for praxis oriented engagement with direct support and participation of local communities.

**14. Political correctness****Factor**

Action Aid India	CEDAR	NEWS	VICTORY
Global status creates certain ambiguities.	No ambiguity.	No ambiguity.	No ambiguity.



## **CHAPTER II**

# **CHALLENGES FOR ACTION**

## CHALLENGES FOR ACTION



" I AM NOT ALONE HERE.."

Any action contemplated in terms of abolition of child labour proceeds as such from the meaning and nature of conception of child labour we hold. The practice of seeing child labour issue as part of the discourse of child rights and ensuring childhood, is quite recent. Several arguments have been placed to explain child labour, each drawing its meaning from the discursive logic prompted by the nature of political economy in which it is found, poverty conditions, law and state policy, change-ideology and cultural perceptions. At least there are four different major arguments that have governed our thinking and action. They are placed as follows in an order as they historically emerged:

- 1. Family Labour Argument :** Child labour as necessary labour as it contributed to the household economy. A necessary condition in peasant economy.
- 2. Poverty Argument:** Child labour as necessary provider for subsistence in extreme poverty conditions. A condition of dual economy, lopsided industrialization and failed development.
- 3. Ameliorative Argument:** Child labour needs only a few regulations before it is prohibited. Beginning of a change.
- 4. Child Labour as Child Rights Argument:** Child labour is a serious child rights violation that it must be totally prohibited. Derives basically from the twin notion that freedom from poverty is basic human right and each child is natural inheritor of rights in a civilized society.

Though each notion belongs to different socio-economic context and conditions of political economy, they float freely uprooting themselves from their own contexts seriously interfering with our understanding of child labour in the present context.

Before we proceed to contextualize child labour as child rights issue, it is important to briefly review the historical backdrop to the issue and the paradigm shifts.

### **1. Family Labour :**

The idea of family labour generally derives from peasant subsistence economy. The very logic of peasant production is maximum utilization of family labour that includes the labour of women and children. The economic activity under this condition might range from tenant cultivation and pastoralism to minor craft production and even extension of labour on bondage. Here, work is not only seen in non-monetary terms but also attributed positive value of socializing children into adult economic roles. A carpenter's son grows into becoming a carpenter, a cobbler's son a cobbler and a girl child, nurturer of the family.

As the work is unpaid and socially rationalized, no exploitation is easily made out as is the case with wage earning child labourer in a factory or mines. But the conditions are so oppressive that children are totally denied of childhood and its entitlements in the modern sense of the term. If a boy is denied of childhood for being a child, a girl is denied of childhood for being a child and a girl. The child is totally denied of its freedom and carries no distinct identity but as a transmitter of a family tradition particularly its economic rationale and work culture.

Though such economic conditions do not exist in toto, anywhere in India anymore, it however provides the economic and social rationale for exploitation in the subsequently monetized and wage earning economy. Though the peasant economy started disintegrating as industrialization and commercialization under a developmental state progressed after independence, its mutilated and mutated forms continued for long keeping the children vulnerable and ready to be deployed by families for 'wage earning' at the slightest economic distress.

Though the Indian state brought in constitutional protection as early as 1950 (Vide Art. 27, Art. 28 & Art. 32), this remained largely as rhetorical value late into 1980s. If the state was totally apathetic to children, what came from the civil society were a few impulses of charity.

We restate the early history for two reasons: first, this set the stage for the development of notorious forms of child labour in the subsequent period; and second, its cultural and social rationalizations continue to affect us even today by drawing a false dichotomy between 'unpaid child work' and 'child labour' and by placing the child under the patriarchal authority of the family denying thereby several facets of freedom.

## **2. Poverty Argument :**

Poverty argument emerged as a justification and rationalization of child labour during the typical phase of its development. By mid 1960s, the development economy of India reached a stagnant point. There emerged a dual economy – an industrial sector with tendencies of exploitation through informalisation of manufacturing and a stagnant agriculture with a reservoir of low and poorly skilled labour including that of women and children. This set the stage for predatory forms of extraction of surplus by deploying capital in the informal sector where more than the adult male, women and children could be profitably employed for wage on piece-rates. In Tamilnadu, children thus came to be employed in all notoriety in the manufacturing of safety matches, fireworks, printing, bidi rolling, handloom silk weaving, gem stone cutting, tanneries, hosiery, cotton rope manufacturing, etc.

More than the inhuman exploitation and cruelty caused on children, the cruel irony came from the system of beliefs and values shared by every quarter of the society that justified and rationalized child labour 'as a necessity' at the face of poverty. It was a total burial of the child and childhood. In this regard a few excerpts taken from the 'Report of Thiru. Harbansingh, I.A.S., Member, Board of Revenue on the Problem of Child Labour In Various Factories And Industries in Ramanathapuram District 1976' is worth revisiting.

### **Extent :**

*“An important feature of the industry is the preponderant influence of women and children. the two together constitute 80 percent of the labour force. The children outnumber women... Again among the children the girls outnumber the boys, the ratio being one to three.” (Para 3.3).*

*“The match factories, particularly the frame filling section give[s] a primary school look, except that instead of having books in their hands, children are found busy with frames and match sticks. The general impression created on one's mind is that the match factories are entirely run by child labour.” (Para 10.1).*

#### **Cruelty :**

*“Most of the workers transported for long distances are children. They are brought to the factories from their villages early in the morning.... Children have to get up at 4 a.m. to catch the bus and return to their houses by 7 p.m. and sometimes even later...” (Para 3.4).*

#### **Parental Attitude :**

*“In some cases it was stated, the children are the only earning members of the family. They [employers] contended that sometimes they [employers] are forced by parents in various ways to take their children for employment. For example, when the buses go to the villages to bring the children to the factories, the driver is surrounded by some of the parents and he [driver] is not allowed to leave until he takes the children of such parents also to the factory.” (Para 7.1).*

*“Child labour is available in plenty due to economic distress in the surrounding areas and sometimes due to the greed of parents who would prefer their children at least earn their own living instead of being a burden on the limited family income.” (Para 7.7).*

*“The employers' representatives stated that the parents of the working children forced them to work longer hours to maximize their earnings.” (Para 3.6).*

#### **Employer's Arrogance :**

*“I had discussions with the representatives of the employers on 10.6.1976 at Madurai and again on 17.8.1976 at Sivakasi... at Sattur on 17.8.1976...”*

*... [employers] stated that they were employing child labour more for the benefit of the employees and their families than for their own advantage.” Para (7.1 & 7.2).*

#### **Trade Unions :**

*“According to them [Trade Unions], the problem of child labour must not be viewed purely from the legal point of view... By and large it is because of the poverty and lack of earnings on the part of the parents that the children are forced to seek employment.” (Para 8.3).*

#### **Governmental Attitude :**

*“The employment of children below 14 is clearly a violation of the laws. [Under, Employment of Children Act, 1939 & Factories Act, 1947]. Yet such violations have taken place on a large scale continuously over the years. The enforcement machinery of the State Government has not taken any steps worth the name to put an end to it or even to curb this practice... the number of prosecutions launched on account of employment of children below 14 years is almost negligible. In the calendar year 1975, only 4 such prosecutions were launched against 4 factories. During 1976, of course, the number has been larger, namely 17. (Para 4.13).*

### **Attitude of a People's Representative, Member of Parliament :**

*"...she [Thirumathi Jeyalakshmi, M.P., from Sivakasi] felt child labour cannot and should not be abolished straight away. It is an economic problem, and should be tackled accordingly without causing hardship to the families of the child labourers and also without upsetting the industries which had created employment in the area on such a large scale." (Para 9.6).*

### **Recommendation of Harbansingh, Author of the Report :**

*"I have suggested to the employers that instead of using their buses and lorries for the transport of children, they can use them for the transport of frames and raw materials which can be given to people in the villages for filling." (Para 10.13).*

The above citations clearly demonstrate how the system of child labour dubiously developed into a perverted system of consensus whereby the child was asked to pay in terms of blood and sweat for thawing adult unemployment and poverty. It was not absence of human rights but humanity itself. The developmental state which was generally apathetic towards the children of the poor became conspiratorially indifferent to any kind of enforcement as to the prevention of child labour. Though the National Policy for Children was pronounced in 1974, no worthwhile action was taken for another decade to legislate on child labour. The most worrisome feature of this phase was the very perversion of the role of parents as providers, protectors and developers of the children.

This was to pose a single major challenge for those involved in child labor abolition work for another two decades. The child carried no identity except that it silently passed on as the sacrificial lamb before the altar of poverty. Every quarter of the society was not only willing to sacrifice the child but also superstitiously whisper the prayer 'child labour is a necessary condition under poverty'.

### **3. Ameliorative Argument :**

Starting with mid 1980's, there was considerable change in the child labour scenario in India. The next 15 years saw major changes not only in terms of policy but also in terms of improvement in the economic environment. The poverty of 1970's and early 1980's were slowly giving way. There was certain reduction in rural unemployment. This was partly because of improved national income and partly because of government's anti-poverty programmes. By early 1990's, the economy was on the threshold of liberalization.

The government passed the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, in 1986. This was followed by National Child Labour Project. The state governments also woke up to many embarrassing realities relating to child labour under international glare. Specific plans of action were proposed. For instance, the Government of Tamilnadu fixed 1995 as the deadline for total elimination of child labour in the fireworks industries and withdrawal of children under 12 years from match industries. It fixed 1997 as the deadline for total elimination of child labour in Tamilnadu. Even it proposed establishment of special courts for speedy trial.

While the concerned state governments suddenly became active formulating specific rules under the central child labour legislation for effective enforcement, National Child Labour project became active in rescue and rehabilitation work. A new form of consciousness with regard to addressing child labor issue dawned. More and more NGOs and civil society organizations were drawn into the work through National Child Labour Project.

There was also a facilitating environment provided by international organizations like ILO, UNESCO and other INGOs. There was more and more attention on policy discourse. Still there prevailed an oscillation between the desirability of total abolition, and tolerating working children; the desirability of 18 years as the criterion for defining a child, and 14 years as practical; the desirability of providing compulsory education up to 14 years, and providing rehabilitative and non-formal education for children who are employed. India acceding to UN Child Rights Convention in 1992, made a big difference. By the year 2000, there was considerable withdrawal of child labourers on one hand and effective prevention of children entering child labour on the other hand. This was certainly a period of positive transition and growing promise for the child. But the vulnerability of child as potential labourer was yet to be totally removed. This was mainly because of lack of will to commit to child rights discourse and action. Ameliorative attitude continued to dominate policy makers and administrators as they entered the new millennium.

#### 4. Child Labour and Child Rights Argument

The decade beginning with the new millennium in fact provided the most favourable policy climate for child support work in India. In terms of political economy, there were two reasons for that. First, liberalization of the economy that began around 1990, though brought new types of marginalization of the poor, however loosened up the borders of poverty. By 2000, there were more number of poor families who could climb over the poverty line. The booming economy supported by various poverty amelioration measures (later more focused National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme), reduced the chronic adult unemployment of the previous era. By 2000, the women Self Help Groups had found considerable roots in rural Tamilnadu and the promotion of thrift had thawed poverty conditions of households. This in the first place, had removed the extreme pressures experienced earlier by children of poor households to go for work. In other words, poverty driven child labour was thawing up.

Second, the seeping in of child rights ideas inspired by UN and other international agencies and the general pressure turning critical, made the Indian State to act more decisively than ever. Beginning 2000, India saw not only more number of child supportive legislations but a paradigm shift in terms of state's attitude towards children and child rights. Noteworthy are the state sponsored compulsory enrolment programme under the aegis of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (2001), Right to Education (Constitutional 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act, National Plan of Action for Children (2010) and finally Abolition of Child Labour in the 14-18 age group (2012). The State became the prime mover. There was growing conviction as to child right as *sine qua non*.

The previous decade had certainly helped NGOs and Civil Society Organizations gain some exposure to child rights work. There were already National level networks, advocacy groups and numerous grassroots organizations left in the field. It became suddenly fashionable to talk about 'child rights' and 'child rights monitoring'. Although the paradigm shift in national policy brought in fresh inspirations, the departure from the dominant themes of the past certainly left a big gap between the rhetoric and practice. But certainly India was not going to be the same again when it comes to children. Child labour abolition came to be decisively seen as a matter of child's inalienable right to enjoy protection without any qualification.

### Descriptive Table 3

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY, STATE POLICY AND CHILD LABOUR : PARADIGM SHIFTS

Stage I 1940 – 1970				
<i>Emergence of Developmental State and Disintegration of Peasant Subsistence</i>				
Condition of Household Economy	Status of Employment of Children	Policy Environment/ Primary Emphasis on Children	Civil society / NGO concern	Largely Shared Notion of Child in Rural Communities
Extreme poverty. Severe adult unemployment, Hunger and destitution, Migration, footloose labour.	Conversion of children from farm hands/craft labour/family labour to industrial wage earner.	Era of Constitutional Promise: Indifference to children 1. Rhetorical emphasis of the Constitutional Protection created in 1950 (Art. 27, Ar. 28 & Art. 31).	Unconcerned.	"Transmitter of Family Tradition and Provider of continuity (in social, economic and cultural terms)."

Stage II 1971 – 1985				
<i>Failure of Developmentalism, Lopsided Industrialization, Exploitation Through Predatory Extraction</i>				
Condition of Household Economy	Status of Employment of Children	Policy Environment/ Primary Emphasis on Children	Civil society / NGO concern	Largely Shared Notion of Child in Rural Communities
Extreme Poverty. Need for cash income to meet subsistent needs. Deployment of children for ready cash income.	Self-perpetuating system of child labour.	Continued indifference and Apathy of the state 1. Integrated Child Development Services (1975) 2. Establishment of Women and Child Development Department under HRD (1983) and 3. National Health Policy No Child Labour Abolition Effort	Actively Supporting 'poverty argument'.	"Economic provider for the Family in crisis".

**Stage III 1986 – 2000*****Economy at the threshold of Liberalization***

Condition of Household Economy	Status of Employment of Children	Policy Environment/ Primary Emphasis on Children	Civil society / NGO concern	Largely Shared Notion of Child in Rural Communities
<p>Thaw in poverty. More scope for adult employment Empowerment of women, Improved economic status of women &amp; women emerging as nurturers of family.</p>	<p>Transition. Progressive withdrawal of child labour from industries and hazardous employment.</p>	<p><b>Child Labour Abolition as National Priority Begins</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986</li> <li>2. New Policy on Education (1986)</li> <li>3. National Child Labour Project 1987</li> <li>4. India Acceding to UN Child Rights Convention</li> <li>5. Reproductive Child Health Programme</li> <li>6. Juvenile Justice Act 2000</li> </ol>	<p>Involvement of NGOs in child labour release &amp; rehabilitation. Running of special schools, and providing non formal education. Mostly in collaboration with the Government. Child Labour: Seen only as helpless victims and not right bearers.</p>	<p>“Potential Labourer” (Ambiguity about school going still persists).</p>

**Stage IV 2000 Onwards**

**Liberalized Economy**

Condition of Household Economy	Status of Employment of Children	Policy Environment/ Primary Emphasis on Children	Civil society / NGO concern	Largely Shared Notion of Child in Rural Communities
<p>Reduction in the number of families under BPL improved adult employment. Well improved economic and social status.</p>	<p>Near total absence of child labour in 5-14 age group.</p>	<p><b>Child Rights Era</b>  <b>Aggressive Empowerment of Women especially through SHGs.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001)</li> <li>2. Right to Education (Constitutional 86th Amendment Act)</li> <li>3. Prenatal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Protection) Act (2003)</li> <li>4. Amendment of Juvenile Justice Act (2003),</li> <li>5. National Plan of Action for Children (2005)</li> <li>6. Right to Education Bill (2006)</li> <li>7. Ban on Children as Domestic Help (2006)</li> <li>8. Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2010)</li> <li>9. Abolition of Child Labour in the 14-18 Age group (2012).</li> </ol>	<p>NGO involvement continued and increased emphasis on advocacy, networking, providing movement dimension. Inculcation of child rights and enforcing of compulsory education. More number of NGOs/CSOs switching over to rights based action.</p>	<p>“Right-bearer school goer”.</p>

## SOUTHERN COLLECTIVE FOR NEW INITIATIVES ON CHILDHOOD (SCNIC)

### Challenges Ahead by 2000

By the time SCNIC was conceived as a rights based child labour abolition work, following were the major challenges that lay ahead.

#### 1. Problem of child labour and child rights

- i. A general thaw in poverty had reduced pressure on children to go for factory type of employment in vogue during the previous era, but child labour persisted very strongly in some form or other.
- ii. Closer monitoring by the State in the organized sector had pushed child labour into the households by way of put-out-system and piece rating.
- iii. More than an economic necessity, child labour manifested in terms of cultural attitudes as additional support to family and as a means for ready cash income.
- iv. There was absolutely no notion of child rights; child right abuses went unnoticed.
- v. There was no significant articulation of interest among children for attending school.
- vi. Enrolment programmes were on, but remained largely as an element of compulsion.

#### 2. Parents and Households

- i. Parents were still ambiguous about total abolition of child labour.
- ii. Child labour beyond school hours especially at homesteads, continued to be endemic.
- iii. Parents were largely apathetic to the education of children as they saw opportunity cost to be very high by remaining out of 'work'.
- iv. Notion of childhood as a necessary space was totally absent. Parents could, least understand their own roles of providing support to children in terms of survival rights, development rights, protection rights and participatory rights.
- v. Parents themselves indulged in child rights violations and were not still aware of it.

#### 3. Community

- i. Community was yet to accord a legitimate space for children as right bearing agents.
- ii. Traditional CSOs and CBOs of the village communities, were yet to articulate child centered space.
- iii. *Panchayats* and *Gram Sabhas* were yet to either recognize civic articulation of children, or their participation in meetings.

#### 4. School

- i. Schools continued to remain as external agencies and totally lacked structures that would permit meaningful participation of the community.

- ii. Top-down approach of the government in terms of policies and programmes had made schools to look upon compulsory enrolment as a necessary evil.
- iii. There was clear absence of policies in terms of 'child centered education' which would have demanded radical changes in primary school curriculum and pedagogical practices.

## **5. Praxis**

- i. There was so much of confusion and lack of understanding of child-centered activism. Activists and development workers though paid lip service to child-centered thinking and child-centered activism, they were largely paternalistic and lacked knowledge and skills in child-centered praxis. Child-centered praxis demanded personal transformation of programme personnel in terms of attitudes and commitments, which were not readily forthcoming.
- ii. Child-centred platforms which recognized the 'agency of the child' were largely absent. They were to be freshly constructed.
- iii. Organizational capabilities were lopsided among partners which demanded capacity building and meeting management challenges.
- iv. Partnership that tried to replace donor-donee relationship was yet a new concept that put a lot of demand on the capabilities of leadership of all partnership organizations that constituted SCNIC.



## **CHAPTER III**

# **VISION, MISSION STRATEGIES & PROGRAMMES 2001 - 2012**

# VISION, MISSION STRATEGIES & PROGRAMMES 2001 - 2012

## Vision

Southern Collective for New Initiatives on Childhood (SCNIC), a partnership platform that brought together CEDAR, NEWS, VICTORY and ActionAid, became possible as they shared a common vision. The shared vision was '**Establishing a Child Labour free Society**'.

## Mission

Once SCNIC became a reality as a partnership platform, a realistic mission was articulated through joint consultations and discussions. The mission that emerged was very much based on introspections and articulations of capabilities and commitments of partner organizations, financial and human resources available, time framework for optimally solving the problem, and finally, the assessment of the magnitude and veracity of the problem at hand. The consequence was the Appraisal Document (2001) of SCNIC which formally documented this articulation. SCNIC gave itself the mission of **Complete Eradication of Child Labour in Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Virudunagar districts by 2005 initially, which time limit after review in 2005, was extended to 2012.**

## General Strategy

It was agreed from the beginning that the general strategy for addressing the issue of child labour was the use of **Child Rights Approach** which would directly address the child labour issue on one hand and create an overall consequence for ensuring holistic childhood in general.

Apart from SCNIC giving itself the above value premises and direction, it did evolve a methodology for developing specific operational strategies that enabled planning for programmes and activities. After evolving the perspective plan through a process of joint consultation of the partners and major stakeholders initially, operational plans were continuously evolved annually within the framework of the perspective plan. This was done through the Annual Review and Reflection Process (ARRP) and Planning/Budgeting process. This made translation of general objectives into workable actions in the field possible. This means that within the perspective plan of long term objectives and goals, there was always an emerging rolling plan which made the course correction. The course correction was always done in response to the following factors:

1. Policy Perceptions of ActionAid: (International Strategy Paper (ISP) and Country Strategy Paper (CSP) of Action Aid)
2. Policy Perceptions of other partners
3. National Policies and Priorities
4. Feedback from Field Programmes
5. Contingent Situation in the Field
6. Availability of Resources.

### **Operational Strategies**

A review of plans and programmes of SCNIC would help us to identify nine important operational strategies which facilitated allocation of resources and direction of actions throughout the project cycle. They are as follows:

1. Strategy of Organizational Capacity Building and Training
2. Child Labour Abolition Strategy (Direct intervention)
3. Educational Intervention Strategy
4. General Development of Children Strategy
5. Livelihood Support Strategy
6. Child Activism Strategy
7. Creating Child-Centered Community Space Strategy
8. Child-Centered Knowledge and Discourse
9. Strategy of Advocacy and Alliance Building
10. Strategy of Child Protection and Child Rights Monitoring.

#### **1. Strategy of Organizational Capacity Building and Training**

It was already indicated that SCNIC programme demanded a paradigm shift in terms of child rights praxis. This demanded new types of organizational sensibilities, awareness about international, national, regional and local level policy changes relating to child rights, attitudinal changes prompted by child-centered thinking and praxis and new skills and capabilities for adapting to change by programme personnel.

The programme inputs to effect this, came in the form of organizational development, staff re-training programmes, orientation on child rights issues and child rights praxis and exposure visits for staff to other pioneering child rights organizations.

#### **2. Child Labour Abolition Strategy (Direct Intervention)**

This was otherwise a direct intervention strategy for abolition of child labour. The programme input involved direct release of child labour, rehabilitation and mainstreaming of rescued child labourers, intervention at the household levels, counseling of parents and creating general awareness among parents and the community members on the evils of child labour.

### 3. Educational Intervention Strategy

SCNIC continued with the conventional strategy of compulsory education as an effective method of preventing the occurrence of child labour. This strategy prompted activities like aggressive enrolment, school retention work, beyond school support by way of private coaching and tuition, volunteer support to children and schools, career guidance, provision of textbooks, notebooks and uniforms, special financial assistance for children at school and enumerating and enrolling children with special needs.

### 4. General Development of Children Strategy

This strategy was to further strengthen the educational intervention and enrolment programmes. The inputs came in the form of conducting of health camps, training children in creative arts, providing of special sports programmes, raising children cultural troupes, organizing exposure visits and providing of life skills training. This was to largely meet the deficiencies of existing school system and lack of support from parents, beyond school.

### 5. Livelihood Support Strategy

SCNIC continued with the argument that though poverty was not the only factor causing child labour, it was the most potent factor creating vulnerability in children, for child labour. This encouraged SCNIC to evolve programmes for livelihood support. It included creation of revolving funds to support parents who sent their children to school under very trying circumstances, one time grant for generation of income by very poor households, general promotion of SHGs and follow up of NREGS for effective sourcing of livelihood support extended by the government.

### 6. Child Activism Strategy

As a strategy, child activism found pride of place in the SCNIC programme. It was the most critical strategy for effecting a '*child centred discourse*' and creating '*agency*' in children. The programme inputs ranged from formation of child collectives in 154 villages and promotion of civic activism of children through child rights campaigns, child rights monitoring including that of monitoring the occurrence of child labour and school dropout, *gram sabha* participation, creating networks of children collectives particularly in partnership with National Movement for Working Children (NMWC), Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) and Federation of Children Movements for Right to Participation (FCMRP). The idea of networking and creating federations was to register the presence of the child in the larger public sphere, both at regional and national levels.

### 7. Creating Child-Centered Community Space Strategy

This strategy presumed that the existing social and cultural institutions of the village and conventional CBOs did not provide a space for childhood. The programme input in this regard, primarily aimed at building the capacities of youth groups, self help groups, and Panchayat Raj Institutions for right based child support activities in the village.

### 8. Child-Centered Knowledge and Discourse

This was a special effort towards sharing of experience and dissemination of knowledge emerging out of child centred praxis. The programmes took the shape of experience sharing sessions, workshops and joint consultations. At a more formal level it also involved a project of preparation of a Training Manual based on child-centred discourse to be used by NGOs and CSOs.

## 9. Strategy of Advocacy and Alliance Building

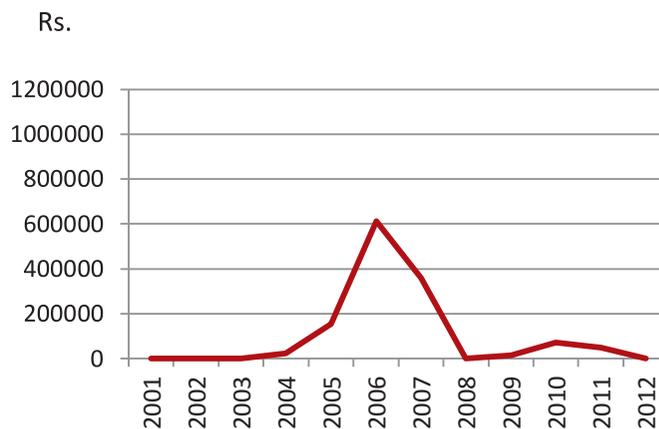
From the beginning SCNIC emphasized collective effort in the process of abolition of child labourers and promoting child rights. This understanding made SCNIC to consciously involve Trade Unions, Student Groups, other NGOs/CSOs in the project area, partners of ActionAid from different regions, national level civil society networks like Campaign Against Child Labour and community groups. Harnessing the energies of otherwise isolated civil society actions through networking and alliance building, it was thought, such actions would give child rights activism the augmented dimension of a social movement. That would make advocacy effective.

## 10. Strategy of Child Protection and Child Rights Monitoring

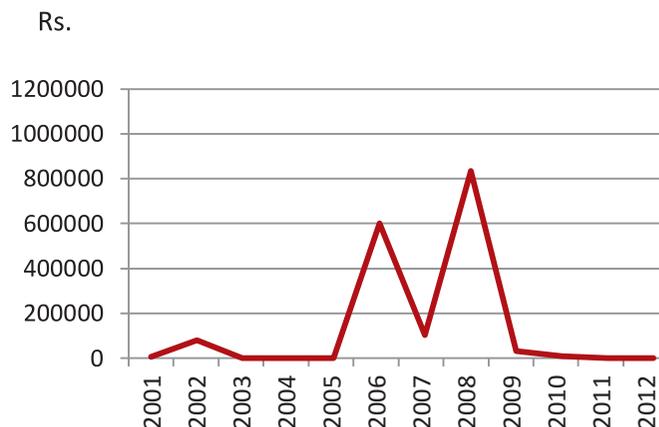
Though entered late in the agenda, this programme input took two forms. First it took the shape of establishing Anti-Sexual Harassment (ASH) Cells. The most significant programme input however came in the form of establishing Child Rights Monitoring Committees (CRMCs) in every village involving committed adult community members.

## BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS 2001 - 2012

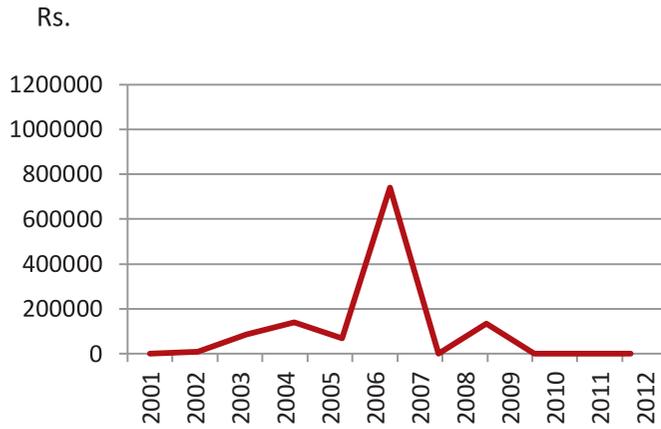
**Graph 1 : Child Labour Abolition (Direct Intervention)**



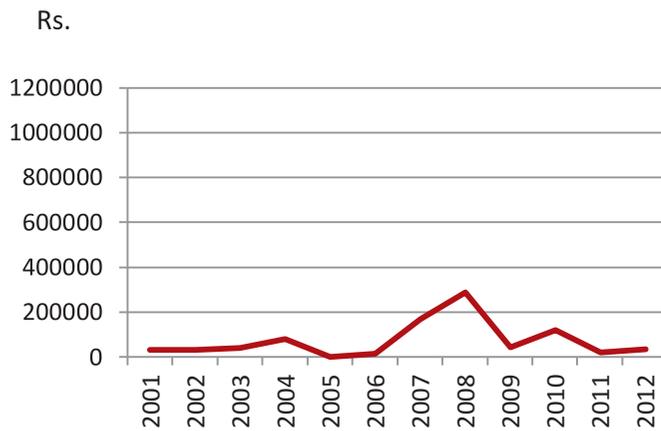
**Graph 2 : Educational Intervention**



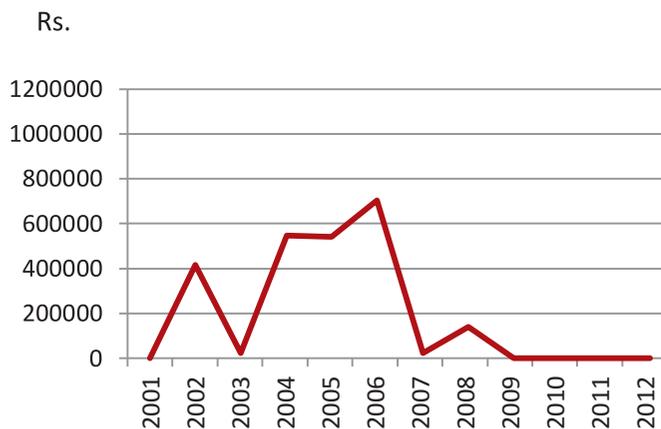
**Graph 3 : Livelihood Support**



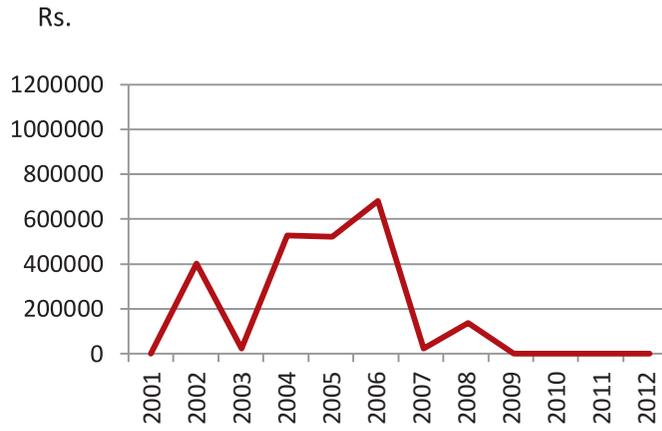
**Graph 4 : General Development of Children**



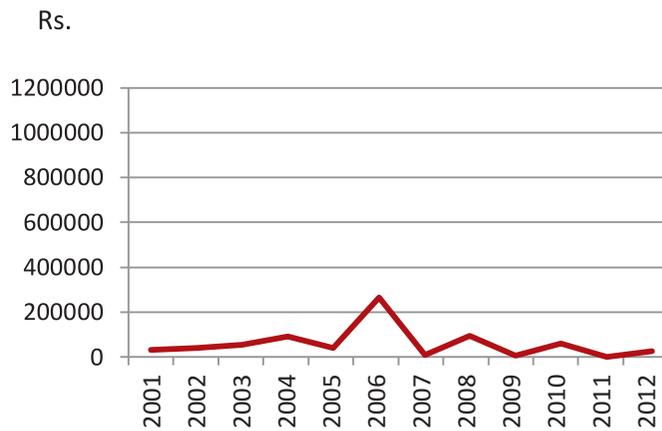
**Graph 5 : Child Activism**



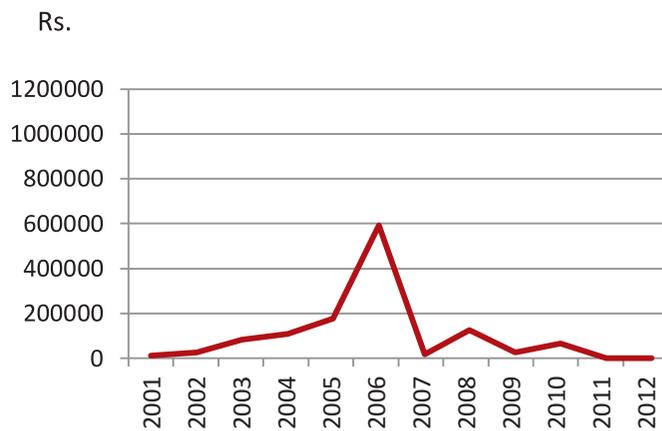
**Graph 6 : Creating Child-Centred Community Space**



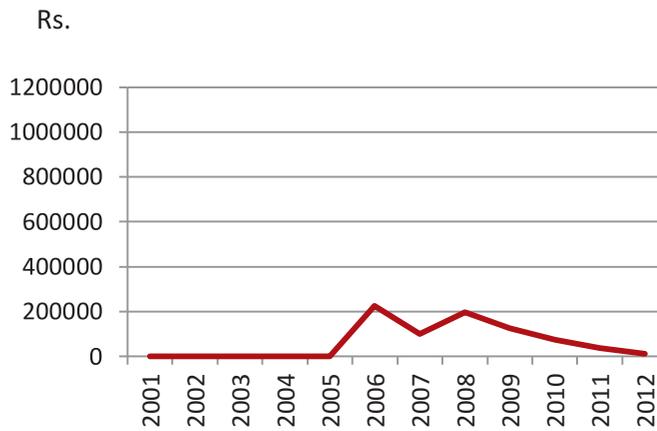
**Graph 7 : Child-Centred Knowledge and Discourse**



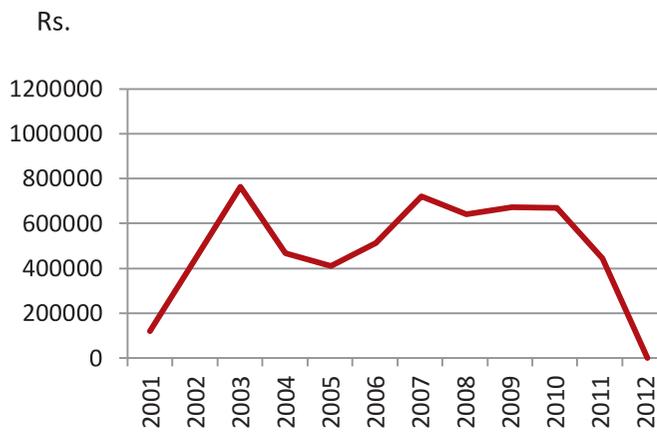
**Graph 8 : Advocacy and Alliance Building**



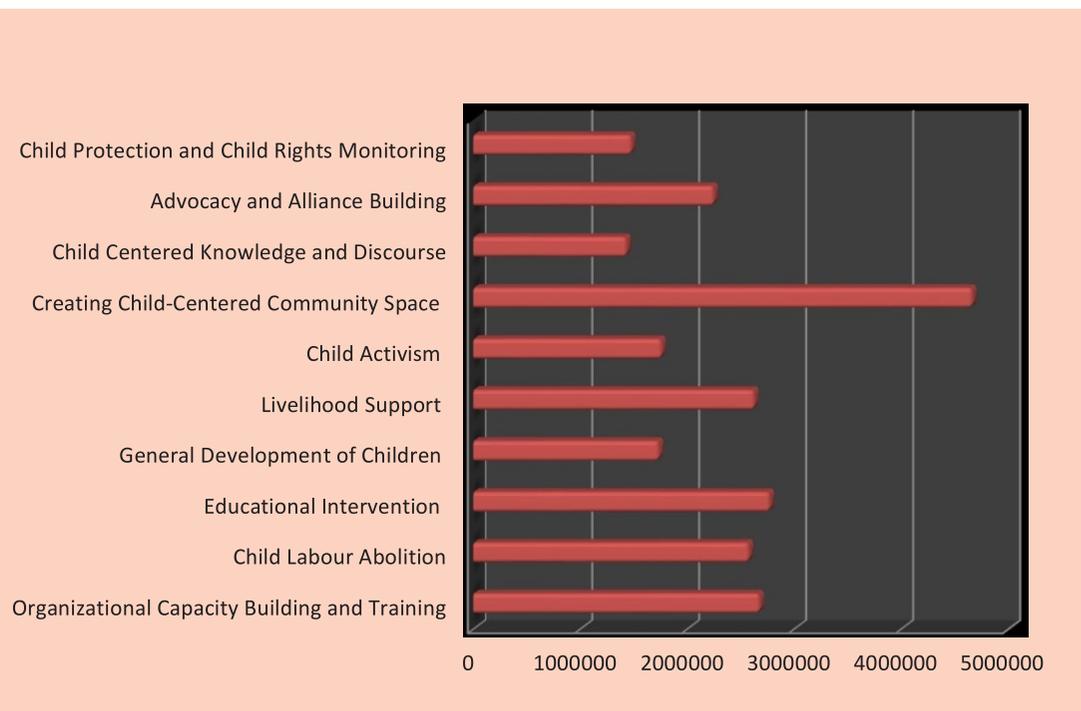
**Graph 9 : Child Protection and Child Rights Monitoring**



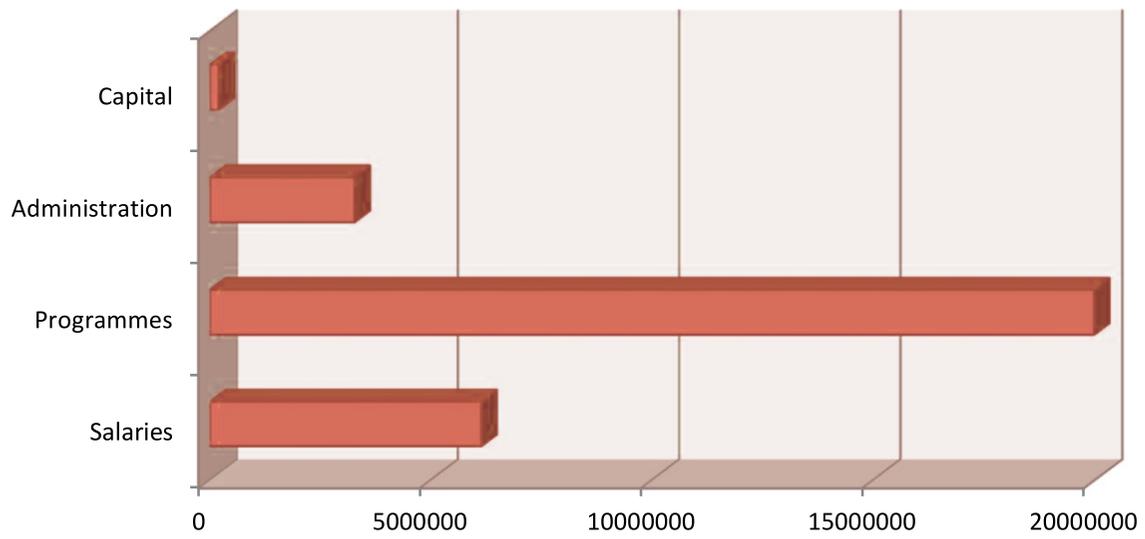
**Graph10 : Project Monitoring**



**Graph 11 : Comparison of Total Expenditure Against the Strategies**



**Graph 12 : Expenses (2001-2012)**



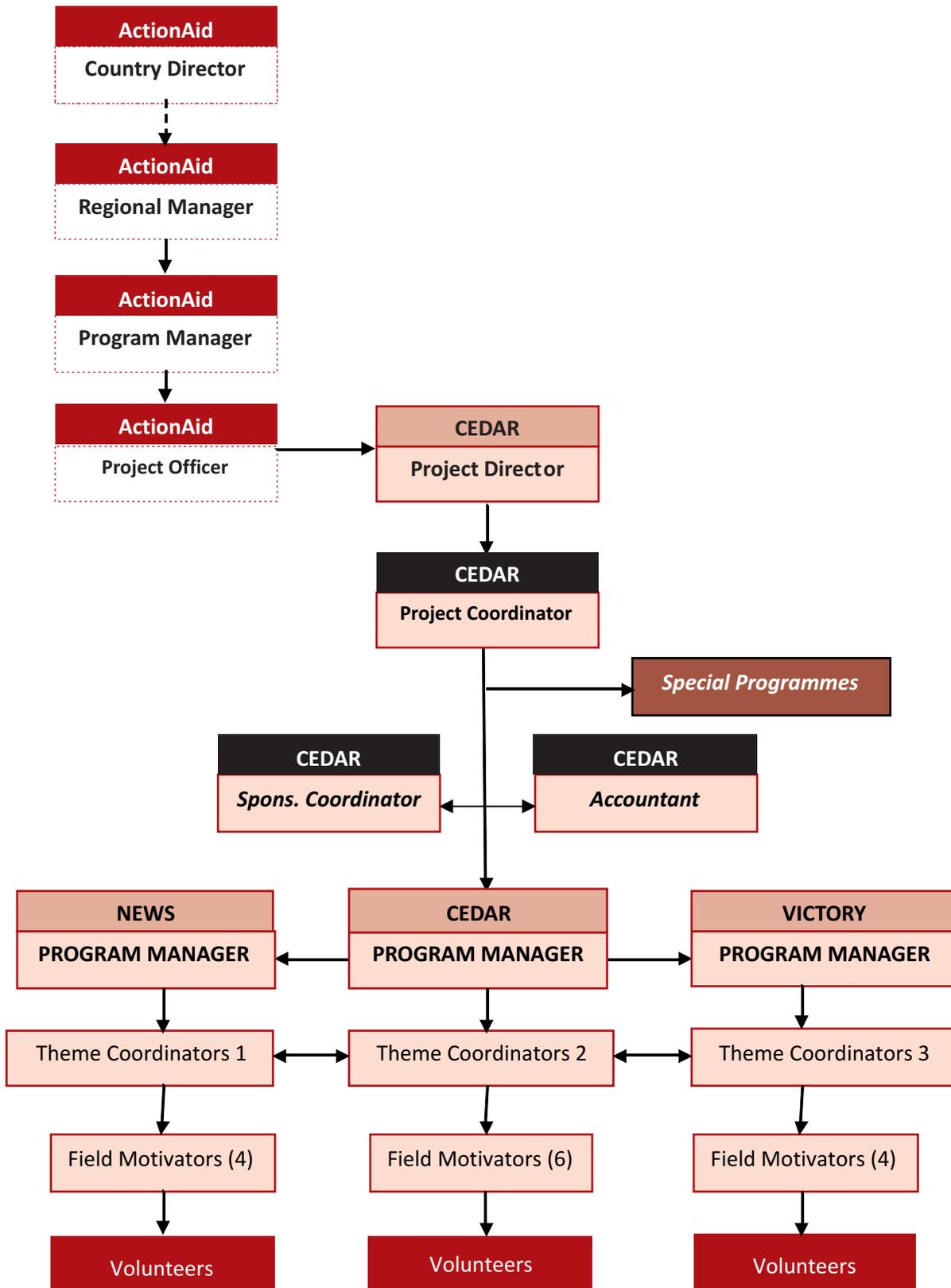
**Descriptive Table 4 :  
SCNIC VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIES**

<b>VISION</b>
<b>CHILD LABOUR FREE SOCIETY</b>
<b>MISSION</b>
<b>COMPLETE ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOUR IN TUTICORIN, TIRUNELVELI AND VIRUTHUNAGAR DISTRICTS DURING PROJECT PERIOD</b>
<b>GENERAL STRATEGY</b>
<b>USE CHILD RIGHTS APPROACH FOR ERADICATING CHILD LABOUR IN PARTICULAR AND ENSURING CHILDHOOD IN GENERAL</b>

**SPECIFIC STRATEGIES**

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING	NETWORKING, ALLIANCE BUILDING AND ADVOCACY	LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT	CREATING CHILD CENTRED COMMUNITY SPACE	CHILD LABOUR ABOLITION AND CHILD PROTECTION	EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION	GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN	CHILD-CENTRED KNOWLEDGE
Organisational Development Trainings by ActionAid, Staff Trainings on Child Rights issues and interventions and Exposure visits to staff.	NGO network in the three project districts, Membership with larger networks like Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) CBOs networks, SHG federations and Action Aid networks.	Revolving Funds, SHG promotion, Income Generation Schemes and NREGS Follow-up.	Mobilizing SHGs, youth, PRI for Child Rights. Village level sensitization programme on child rights. Formation of Child Rights Monitoring Committees.	Regular awareness programmes, House visits, Counselling, Direct release & rehabilitation work. Anti Sexual Harrassment (ASH) cells and Child Rights Monitoring Committees.	Provision for textbooks, notebooks and uniforms. Private coaching assistance and Tuition centres. Volunteer support programme. Career guidance, Higher education support, Inclusive Education and Volunteer support for schools.	Health camps, Creative arts camps, Sports programmes, Exposure visits, Children cultural troupe and Skill development trainings.	Development of intervention models. Developing training manual.

**Fig 2 :  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**





## **CHAPTER IV**

# **METHODOLOGY OF ASSESSMENT**

# METHODOLOGY OF ASSESSMENT

When a Project is wound up, it is customary to leave the assessment of the impact it made, to an external expert or a team of experts. Depending upon the policy of the sponsors, the expert evaluator(s) may make the process participatory in various degrees. Still the evaluation would remain external. Assessment by external evaluators would remain justified in terms of expertise on one hand and distance and impersonality and hence objectivity on the other hand.

As a partner in SCNIC, CEDAR very strongly argued in favour of self-assessment as the project concluded. It is not our idea however to question either the wisdom of sponsors/donors appointing experts or the objectivity ensured by the outsider-expert. But we thought that relying completely on the assessment of the outsider-expert would leave certain lacuna in the assessment. Assessment of outsider-expert at the best can be complementary and should necessarily be preceded by self-assessment or self-study. Following are reasons that substantiate our argument.

## **1. Partnership and Multiplicity of Voices**

In the context where the rigid and hierarchical donor-donee relationship has largely transformed into partnership, the success or failure of a project has to be necessarily and equally borne by all concerned. The conventional expert based assessment is tacitly prone to take the side of the 'donor' by focusing more on one side of the spectrum than trying to gain a holistic view of the issue. Wittingly or unwittingly, the uneven distribution of power between the donor and donee plays a major role in such an assessment. The expert tends to speak either on behalf of the donor or in terms of successes and failures as understood or as prescribed by the donor. His voice would naturally mimic the donor. A true partnership necessarily turns 360 degrees in making the assessment holistic. This makes it multi dimensional and the voice multiple. The self-assessment or self-study is the right beginning point. And it should not be construed as both the beginning and end as is the case with outsider-expert approach.

## **2. Insider Accountability**

A self-study is a narration by insiders. These insiders must necessarily be held most accountable as they are the ones who manage resources, claim to have commitments, set goals, execute actions and finally boast of results. The conventional method which brings them under the microscope, however treat them as passive objects. What is visible for the outsider is partial. The expert has the option of not seeing and the projector not showing. There could be certain opacity to the method by design. Self-assessment gives the self-assessor the freedom of telling the truth. By doing this, it compels the insider-narrator to trust his/her experience (voice), introspect and reflect on that experience. In the praxis oriented activities, there cannot be a better source than personal experience that informs knowledge. Still authenticity is a problem. More authentic the introspection and reflection more reliable the knowledge becomes. Thus self-assessment places a harsher demand on the professional integrity and honesty of actors. The question of authenticity and integrity is common to all methods and that need not single out self-sessment and discredit it. We will return to this problem shortly.

### **3. Processes and End- Results**

In a development action, to the extent end-results are important, the processes involved in creating the results, are also important. For insiders, processes turn out to be lived-in-experiences which they can revisit at will and recollect them with their natural inconsistencies and contradictions and deviations from the predicted course.

Such contradictions and deviations are important for developing more realistic praxis. External evaluators have a natural tendency to highlight end-results as the biographical or historical memory is not readily available to them. Even if they are sensitive to the history of evolution of the project they rely only on collateral information. True processes when stated first hand, explain results better.

### **4. Serendipity**

Practically, only a short span of time will be available to an external expert. This forces the outsider-expert enter the assessment context, textually guided either by the mandate of the sponsor or by the indices of success forecast originally at the time of conception of the project. This can mechanically result in conceptual strait-jacketing or empirical shallowness or both, that would remove the real nuances and subtleties that went into the making of a project. This reduces innovation based on novel and unexpected experiences that visit a project. The real educational value of the evaluation is thus reduced. The reason why evaluation reports are uninteresting to read, explains this phenomenon. On the other hand a more authentic self-reflection is deeply anchored in experience and therefore insight providing. A true evaluation should lead to further innovations and improvements in terms of praxis.

### **5. Counterpoising**

If self-reflective method is said to suffer from subjectivity and personal bias, objective methods are prone to suffer from certain distance from reality, and theoretical bias. An external expert who does not share the background and value premises of the actors in the field, might use concepts and theories that might work at cross purposes and draw conclusions distorting meanings. For instance, an evaluator who subscribes to radical theories of economic causation would attribute more value to 'livelihood support' as a major strategy for the abolition of child labour and might undervalue the work done in terms of 'beyond-school educational support'. This type of bias of even the well grounded external studies can be averted and counter-poised only through self-study and insider-narration as they explicitly state the value premises or the theoretical biases that guide the praxis.

### **6. Completing the Evaluation Cycle**

Now let us return to the problem of authenticity raised earlier. In a development project, an external evaluation can certainly follow an internal evaluation. This is not to counter-check but to complete the evaluation cycle. Self-study would provide the real substance for scrutiny and more anchored questions to be handled during external evaluation. Complementarily, they augment the value in terms of meaning, reliability, and validity.

### **7. Data Collection for Assessing Impact**

The data collected for the purpose of impact assessment was done over a period of more than three months beginning from August 2012. Following are the sources and methods adopted.

- a. Documentary Sources: Reports and Reviews
  - i. SCNIC Appraisal Document,
  - ii. AAI Country Strategy Papers,
  - iii. SCNIC Mid-term Review,
  - iv. Plans and Budgets 2001-2012,
  - v. Phase out Review 2010,
  - vi. Annual Review and Reflection Reports, and
  - vii. Annual Reports of CEDAR.

- b. Documentary Source II: Survey Data
  - i. SCNIC Door to Door Survey 2007
- c. Visits and observations
  - i. Village visits at random in the Project Area between August and November 2012.
- d. Interviews
  - i. Interviews on select issues by Programme staff and editorial team
  - ii. Case studies.
- e. Focus Group Discussion on following themes

**Descriptive Table 5 :****FGD Themes**

Sl. No.	FGD Themes	Participants
1	Issues Relating to Child Labour 14-18 age group	SCNIC Staff, Parents.
2	Child Labour in 14-18 age group	SCNIC Staff, Parents.
3	Role of <i>Balwadis</i> in preventing the occurrence of child labour	SCNIC Staff, Balwadi Teachers, members of SHGs and Parents.
4	Assessing Beyond School Support by SCNIC	Children, SCNIC staff, Parents, Youth, past members of children collectives.
5	Internalization of Child Rights by Parents, Teachers, Adults in community	Parents, CRMC members, adult community members.
6	Creating 'Agency' in child	SCNIC staff, Children collective members.
7	Children collectives and 'civic self'	SCNIC staff, children collective members, civic representatives.
8	'Agency' in child and parents	SCNIC staff, parents, children.
9	Impact of NMWC, FCMRP, CACL and children networks	Children leaders, SCNIC staff.
10	SCNIC activities and child centeredness in school	School teachers, CRMC members, VEC/PTA members, SCNIC staff.
11	Effectiveness of VEC and PTA	School teachers, CRMC members, VEC/PTA members, SCNIC staff.
12	Impact of Training of Children in Traditional and Performing arts	Children, SCNIC staff.
13	Challenges and Personal Transformation through SCNIC work	SCNIC staff.
14	SCNIC programme and civic leaders	<i>Panchayat</i> leaders.
15	SCNIC livelihood support and child labour	SCNIC staff, Beneficiaries.
16	Assessing SCNIC partnership	SCNIC staff.
17	Effectiveness of Exit Strategy	SCNIC staff.

## CHAPTER V

# IMPACT

## 1. ABOLISHING CHILD LABOUR

# 1. ABOLISHING CHILD LABOUR



ANTI CHILD LABOUR RALLY

The question that needs to be answered straight is, “Did SCNIC succeed in abolishing child labour in the project area that constituted 144 villages spread across four blocks - Kovilpatti, Sattur, Sivakasi, and Melaneelithanallur?” The answer is not a very exact “yes”. It satisfies statistically and legally, but not, in terms of broader implications child rights would bring. The latter inexactness deviates on either side – negatively and positively. Negatively, the problem of child labour has its persistent residue in the form of 'work at homesteads' and employment in the legally grey 15–18 age group. Positively, it is in terms of creation of vast child-support space and child-centred thinking, unanticipated in terms of project goals. In the opening section, we begin speaking about in certain quantitative terms how child labour in general declined and found a near exit by 2011. This will be followed by sections that would elaborate how a 'child labour abolition project' created a vast child-support space in the village communities and caused certain paradigm shifts in certain constituencies, if not in every constituency of consequence.

1.1 The figures used in the present narration and interpretation are data collected on the basis of door-to-door survey and from enrolment records. Though the project commenced in the year 2001, the year 2007 is taken as the base year because only in that year, a complete enumeration was done first.

**Table 1 : Children Population In Different Age Categories (2007)**

	0 TO 5			6 TO 14			15 TO 18			TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	
<b>Kovilpatti</b>	982	943	1925	1982	1979	3961	806	843	1649	3770	3765	7535
<b>Sattur</b>	272	244	516	502	505	1007	209	184	393	983	933	1916
<b>Sivakasi</b>	1617	1564	3181	2853	2770	5623	948	872	1820	5418	5206	10624
<b>M.N. Nallur</b>	919	852	1771	1994	1806	3800	739	799	1538	3652	3457	7109
<b>Total</b>	3790	3603	7393	7331	7060	14391	2702	2698	5400	13823	13361	27184

**Table 2 : Children Population In Different Age Categories (2011)**

	0 TO 5			6 TO 14			15 TO 18			TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	
<b>KOVLIPATTI</b>	1059	1017	2076	2137	2133	4270	869	909	1778	4064	4059	8123
<b>SATTUR</b>	293	263	556	541	544	1085	225	198	423	1060	1006	2065
<b>SIVAKASI</b>	1743	1686	3429	3076	2986	6062	1022	940	1962	5841	5612	11453
<b>M.N. Nallur</b>	991	918	1909	2150	1947	4097	797	861	1658	3937	3727	7664
<b>Total</b>	4086	3884	7970	7904	7610	15514	2913	2908	5821	14901	14403	29304

1.1.1 The project area constituted a child population which roughly ranged from 25,000 to 30,000 children, if we choose to define children as 'below 18'. In 2011, a year before exit, to be exact, it was 29,304 children living in the 144 project villages, distributed across four blocks. Of them, 7970 (27.19%) belonged to 0-5 age group, 15514 (52.94%) belonged to 6 to 14 age group and the remaining 5821 (19.86%) belonged to 15-18 age group. In the total population of children (0-18), there are 998 female children, per 1000 male children. This means that there is no demographically adverse gender implication.

1.1.2 Though the project treated children of all age groups, 0-5, 6-14 and 15-18 as equally important deserving equal attention, the dominant policy discourse placed primary emphasis on the age group 6-14. This stage of childhood was seen as the most vulnerable to be exploited and hence critical for intervention. The policies drew their strength from the legal definition that child is one who is below 14 years of age.

## 1.2 Out of school children and child labour in 6-14 Age Group

The overt and visible engagement of children (6-14) in factories and manufacturing units, almost disappeared by 2005. If at all it was there, it became covert. Therefore, to keep the head count of children (6-14) engaged as full-time child labourers, became practically difficult. The most reliable statistics to arrive at on presence or absence of child labour, is the enrolment/retention rates at school.

**Table 3 : Decline In The Rate Of Out Of School Children (6-14) Between 2007- 2011**

	Out of School age children 6-14						Out of School children 15- 18					
	2007			2011			2007			2011		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total %	M	F	Total	M	F	Total %
<b>Kovilpatti</b>	106	81	187	44	22	66(64.7%)	317	429	746	115	159	274 (63.2%)
<b>Sattur</b>	28	21	493	5	2	7(85.2%)	67	56	123	21	12	33 (73.1%)
<b>Sivakasi</b>	195	195	90	23	22	45(88.4%)	386	367	753	220	285	505 (32.9%)
<b>M.N. Nallur</b>	80	98	178	46	61	107(39.8%)	187	269	456	109	117	226 (50.4%)
<b>Total</b>	409	395	804	118	107	225(72%)	957	1121	2078	465	573	1038 (50.4%)

- 1.2.1 The data available with SCNIC shows that by the year 2007, on the whole, in 144 villages, 804 children were permanently out of school in the age group 6-14. This amounted to 5.58% children in the age relevant group. In the next four years, that is by 2011, this ratio came down to 1.45%. In other words, this implies that there was marked improvement in the status of these children as there was 72% decrease in out of school children. By 2011, of the total 1554 children in the 6-14 age group, only 225 were permanently out of school.
- 1.2.2 We hasten to say that 'out of school children' does not simply mean child labourers. However, children who are not sent to school in this age group are not children who will be kept at home and tutored and educated privately. Given the general context of poverty and the particular background text of culture of child labour in the match belt, 'out of school children' form theoretically, the 'potential child labour' and practically, the 'actual pool of child labour'. Maybe, a small percentage of children might account for permanent dropping out due to health reason or migration. These factors do not vitiate the argument that 'out of school children' can be equated with 'child labour' for the purpose of interpretation.
- 1.2.3 Another way to look at the issue is to examine the distribution of 'never enrolled' and 'permanently dropped out' children across villages. Table 4, shows that by 2011, 30 out of 40 villages (62.5%) in Kovilpatti block, did not have a single child left out of school. For Sattur block, it is 14 out of 16 villages (87.5%), for Sivakasi 30 out of 40 villages (75%). The lowest however, was for Melaneelithanallur, 21 out of 40 (52.5%). On the whole, the project could boast that of 144 villages in which SCNIC worked, 95 villages (65.9%), had all their children in the age group 6-14, in school by 2011. This gave SCNIC and respective *panchayats* the confidence to declare these villages as 'child labour free villages'.

**Table 4 : Villagewise Distribution of Out of School Children**

Block	Total No of Villages	No of Villages Categorized Against Rate of Permanent Dropouts in the Age Group (6-14)					
		Nil %	1-2%	3-4%	5-6%	7-8%	9 and above%
Kovilpatti	48	30 (62.5%)	8 (16.6%)	6 (12.5%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Sattur	16	14 (87.5%)	1 (6.2%)	1 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)
Sivakasi	40	30 (75%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	5 (12.5%)	1(2.1%)	0 (0%)
M.N. Nallur	40	21 (52.5%)	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	6 (15%)	6(15%)	1 (2.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>95 (65.9%)</b>	<b>12 (8.3%)</b>	<b>14 (9.7%)</b>	<b>12 (8.3%)</b>	<b>8(5.5%)</b>	<b>3 (2%)</b>

- 1.2.4 Again, out of the total 144 villages, only 23 villages had 5 or more children out of school. Just 3 villages had 9 or more children out of school. Although a single child 'out of school' robs a village of its status as 'totally child labour free', anything up to 5 or 6 children out of school, is still negligible if we compare them with total number of children in each village in the 6-14 age group. For instance, in Pallapatti village of Sivakasi block, there are 8 children out of school. But, the total number of children in the age group is as high as 1127. When this is so, anything up to 5 children dropping out, does not suggest any proneness to child labour. This is what we meant metaphorically as 'inexact yes'. Notwithstanding the metaphor, we conclude with confidence that occurrence of out-of-school, full-time child labour in the 6-14 age group, has vanished in the project area.

- 1.2.5 There is a little irony in the data. Going by the popular notion, it is the blocks of typical 'match belt' in order of rate of occurrence namely, Sivakasi, Kovilpatti and Sattur that are expected to show more proneness for 'out of school children'. But, it is Melaneelithannallur block which has the lowest percentage (52.5%), lower than the project average of 65.9% of villages, declared as 'totally child labour free'. On closer examination, the number of villages where occurrence of 3 to 6 children dropping out, are more. This need not cause any alarm. There are two villages, Sundankurichi and Devarkulam where the 'out of school children' ratio is higher. In Sundankurichi, of the total 101, children (6-14), 8 are permanently out of school. In Devarkulam, it is 10 out of 172. These two villages, on enquiry, we found out had more footloose labourers seasonally migrating to Kerala. Parents when they migrated, either took the children with them or left them behind under the care of kin and other relatives. The dropping out of children in these cases, are explained in terms of poor parental care than anything.
- 1.2.6 Melaneelithanallur, compared to the other blocks, is less industrialised and dependent more on dry land agriculture of precarious fortune. Frequent monsoon failures and drought conditions, put this zone on a different socio-economic dynamics. There is near absence of safety match manufacturing units or industries.
- 1.2.7 In Kovilpatti block, there are two villages where there is a higher number of children out of school – 16 out of 90 children (17.7%) in Athikinaru village and 7 out of 59 children (11.8%) in Kumarikulam village. These two villages, are not only very backward but by their physical location are isolated. There is absolutely no transport facility. Children have to walk up to 8 kms., to attend school.

### 1.3 Part-time Child Labour

Although almost all the children are enrolled, children attending to part-time work beyond school hours, lingers on. SCNIC staff concurs that there is a considerable decrease of this, over years. However by 2012, 35 out of 40 villages in Kovilpatti block, 13 out of 16 in Sattur, 24 out of 40 in Sivakasi and 20 out of 40 in Melaneelithanallur block, continue to have the phenomenon of part-time child labour. The general pattern of employment is that children, after school hours, get employed in homestead production of safety matches. Outdoor employment includes minor agricultural operations. Melaneelithanallur villages are known for flower-picking in fields, by children.

**Table 5 : Total Number Of Children Engaged In Part-Time Child Labour (6-14) In 2011**

Block	Total Children in 6-14			Total Children Engaged in Part time Child Labour in 6 -14			% of Part-time Child Labour		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Kovilpatti	2137	2133	4270	34	98	132	1.6 %	4.6 %	3.1 %
Sattur	541	544	1085	11	35	46	2 %	6.4 %	4.2 %
Sivakasi	3076	2986	6062	54	161	215	1.8 %	5.4 %	3.5 %
M.N. Nallur	2150	1947	4097	157	150	307	7.3 %	7.7 %	7.5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>7904</b>	<b>7610</b>	<b>15514</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>3.2 %</b>	<b>5.8 %</b>	<b>4.5 %</b>

**Table 6 : Comparison Of Out Of School Children/Full-Time Child Labour, With Part-Time Child Labourers In 6-14 Age Group In 2011**

BLOCKS	Total No. of Children (6-14)			Out of School Children / Full-time Child Labour (6-14)				Part-time Child Labour (6-14)			
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	% of Total Children	M	F	Total	% of Total Children
<b>Kovilpatti</b>	2137	2133	4270	44	22	66	1.5 %	34	98	132	3.1 %
<b>Sattur</b>	541	544	1085	5	2	7	0.6 %	11	35	46	4.2 %
<b>Sivasakasi</b>	3076	2986	6062	23	22	45	0.7 %	54	161	215	3.5 %
<b>M.N. Nallur</b>	2150	1947	4097	46	61	107	2.6 %	157	150	307	7.5 %
<b>Total</b>	7904	7610	15514	118	107	225	1.5 %	256	444	700	4.5 %

- 1.3.1 Contrary to expectation, Melaneelithanallur block ranks the highest with 7.5% of children to the total children in the 6-14 age group, participating in part-time work. In the match belt (Kovilpatti, Sattur and Sivakasi) it registers about 3% of the age relevant group (Sattur is anomalous). Part-time work in Agriculture as it occurs in Melaneelithanallur, vastly differs in terms of labour practices. The higher percentage of occurrence is explained in terms of seasonality, intensity and sudden peaking of demand, in terms of labour. The higher percentage of occurrence is explained in terms of seasonality of flower-picking which peaks during a particular period. Part-time child labour in agriculture is not a hindrance throughout the year. Compared to their counterparts in homestead match work, the part-time child labourers enjoy more freedom, less fatigue and less demand in terms of person-days.
- 1.3.2 In homestead manufacturing, the level of exaction of labour is very high. Children depending upon circumstances, even work up to 4 to 5 hours beyond attending school. The work is available for all the 365 days. The stakes are also high as the child can potentially earn up to Rs. 300 a week as ready cash income.
- 1.3.3 If part-time child labour in agriculture can be explained in terms of peaking of seasonal demand for labour and general poverty, the part-time child labour in match belt has a different dynamics. It is observed that the income earned by children is not simple supplementary income that would go to support the subsistent needs of households. Such compulsions are becoming less and less. There are of course instances of children working part-time to support their own education or meet vital household needs, but these are mere exceptions than rules.
- 1.3.4 The practice of parents taking cash advances (up to Rs.50,000/-)from manufacturing units which encourage put-out strategy of manufacturing, provide the real background to part-time work. Children willingly and unwillingly get into part-time labour. The tendency of poorer households to use these cash advances for buying such gadgets as TVs, DVDs, wet grinders and even refrigerators, is reported. Children especially boys, reserving earnings to allow indulgences for themselves like buying cell phones, electronic goods or spending on a visit to nearby town for entertainment is increasingly noticed. It is more of an attitudinal issue than sheer compulsion under poverty that force children into part-time work.

1.3.5 The data would show that the girl children are more affected by the practice of part-time child labour than boys. The compulsion that girl children must stay home further supported by the belief that girls must be more responsible than boys, pushes more girls into part-time work. The rate of occurrence of part-time child-labour, is roughly three times that of boys. It is also reported that compared to boys, girls have less control over what they earn, as they are more often forced to contribute to household emergencies and needs. The proximity of girls to the nurturing roles of mothers is a problem. In this sense, part-time child labour is a double disadvantage for girls, first as a child and then as a girl.



WORK AT HOMESTEAD : FIRE CRACKER ROLLS

1.3.6 'Beyond school child-labour' brings, several hazards to children. First, it is an opportunity cost paid in terms of time lost for study and play after school hours. Many children who get employed use work as an escape from study. They stand to lose in terms of developing self-discipline and meaningful sense of work and leisure. Children who are otherwise motivated to study, have to fight extreme fatigue and emotional stress.

**Table 7 : Out Of School Children In 6- 14 Age Group**

Year	Total Children			Out of School Children			% to the Total Children		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
2007	7341	7060	14401	409	395	804	5.57 %	5.59 %	5.58 %
2011	7904	7610	15514	118	107	225	1.49 %	1.40 %	1.45 %

**Table 8 : Out Of School Children In 15- 18 Age Group**

Year	Total Children			Out of School Children			% to the Total Children		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
2007	2702	2698	5400	957	1121	2078	35.40 %	41.50 %	38.40 %
2011	2913	2908	5821	465	575	1040	15.90 %	19.70 %	17.80 %

## 1.4 Child Labour in 15 - 18 Age Group

The presence of child labour in the 15-18 age group continues to be a major challenge. The very magnitude of the problem itself is a matter to reckon with. Even as late as 2007, a massive 38.4% in the age relevant group numbering about 2078 children, were identified as being out of school. In four years, there was a little more than two fold reduction in this ratio. When compared to the occurrence of out of school children in 6-14 age group where the respective figures are 5.58 (2007) and 1.45 (2011), this is alarmingly very high. The more than twofold decrease, does not fail to imply the effectiveness of the programme.

Though, we do not have to clearly distinguish between out of school children in 15-18 age group and child labourers in the same age group, we treat every child who drops out of school at 15 as a potential child labourer for interpretation purpose. Majority of the children who drop out in 15-18 age group take to wage employment, more often outside home. In the case of female children in this age group, they either become unpaid family workers assisting the family or get remunerative employment. The latter can happen at the homestead or outside home, in a manufacturing or commercial establishment. In the case of boys, there are wider variety of wage earning opportunities.

**Table 9 : Out Of School Children In 15 - 18 Age Group In 2007**

Year	Total Children			Out of School Children			% to the Total Children		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Kovilpatti	806	843	1649	317	429	746	39.20 %	50.88 %	45.23 %
Sattur	209	184	393	67	56	123	36.41 %	30.43 %	31.29 %
Sivakasi	948	872	1820	386	367	753	40.71 %	42.08 %	41.37 %
M.N. Nallur	739	799	1538	187	269	456	25.30 %	33.66 %	29.64 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2702</b>	<b>2698</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>2078</b>	<b>35.41 %</b>	<b>41.54 %</b>	<b>38.48 %</b>

**Table 10 : Out Of School Children In 15- 18 Age Group In 2011**

Year	Total Children			Out of School Children			% to the Total Children		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Kovilpatti	869	909	1778	115	159	274	13.23 %	17.49 %	15.41 %
Sattur	225	198	423	21	12	33	9.33 %	6.06 %	7.80 %
Sivakasi	1022	940	1962	220	285	505	21.52 %	30.31 %	25.73 %
M.N. Nallur	797	861	1658	109	117	226	13.67 %	13.46 %	13.63 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2913</b>	<b>2908</b>	<b>5821</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>1038</b>	<b>16.10 %</b>	<b>19.70 %</b>	<b>17.83 %</b>

1.4.2 The occurrence is more among girls than boys. Except in the case of Sattur block, in all other blocks this is uniformly on the higher side. For the entire project area, the higher dropping out of girls over boys, was as high as 4% in 2007. This halved to 2%, by 2011. This means that more and more girls try to retain themselves in schools than to go for work. However, the general rate at which children drop out in the 15-18 age group is not encouraging at all.

1.4.3 Unlike in the case of 6-14, the occurrence of 'out of school' children in 15-18, get equally distributed in all project villages. According to SCNIC staff, only 15 villages could be identified out of 64 in Kovilpatti-Sattur blocks combined, as 'child labour free' as far as the 15-18 age group is concerned. The figure for Sivakasi is 5 out of 40 villages. And for Melaneelithanallur, the figure is as high as Sivakasi with 35 villages throwing up child labour.

- 1.4.4 There are several reasons why there is a higher rate of occurrence of child labour in this category. The first and the most critical reason is the absence of legislative support for abolition of Child labour in this age group. Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 1986 talked about child labour with several qualifications. It wanted to prevent child labour only in 'hazardous employment' and that too among children up to 14. We had to wait till 2012 before the age limit was raised to 18. Neither the constitution nor the Right to Education Act 2010 extended the definition of the child beyond 14. All that followed as policies and programmes including *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education for All Programme) saw children only below 14 years of age as children. This largely vitiated any effort to address the issue of child labour or school dropouts in the 14-18 age group. However SCNIC saw children up to the age of 18 as needing help.
- 1.4.5 Though conditions of poverty provided a general text for motivating children to enter early employment, it operates under several caveats.
- 1.4.6 Male children being pushed to taking up breadwinning roles or salvaging family from dire poverty conditions, is not there anymore as a general axiom. This might happen in cases where there is an early death of the father or family desertion. In certain other cases, disorganized family conditions caused by several reasons including alcoholism of the head of the family, can put pressure on children to take up early responsibilities.
- 1.4.7 Presently, there is a positive incentive ironically coming from growing employment opportunities and higher wages. A boy of 16 coming from a village need not be too very lucky to earn anything between Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 a day on a semi skilled job. Construction work easily offers Rs. 300 /- to boys in small towns close to their villages. SCNIC staff reported that every village has middlemen and touts who organize such work. It is no more poverty, but easily available jobs and higher wages.
- 1.4.8 There was also a consensus of opinion during the FGD that there is a fast emerging youth subculture in rural areas that encourages seeking out employment early, as a means to earn and indulge. Today, extending family support or supplementing family income comes only next.
- 1.4.9 Finally, it is the failure of primary education. The first eight years of schooling neither provides the necessary scholastic and numerical skills for children to progress further on education nor the meaning that would sustain promises of education. Most of the children by the time they reach VIII Standard, are too fatigued to be in the system. Employment provides an easy invitation. (The failure of primary education is discussed in detail in Section 9).
- 1.4.10 As far as girls are concerned, there are still lingering tendencies among a few communities to stop girl children from attending school in the post-pubescent stage. But this is largely diminishing. The factor is of course aggravated by non-availability of schools, close to home.
- 1.4.11 More than traditional notion of patriarchy controlling mobility of post-pubescent children, it is the newly emerging employment market coupled with certain rationalisation of patriarchal values that has introduced a new form of child labour among girls in the age group 15-18. This can be called as a new form of indenturedness or 'captive employment'. In this system, the parents of a girl take a cash advance of Rs. 50,000/- or more from a manufacturing industry located far away from the village. Normally, such payments are made through touts who contract these children.

These children assembled in hundreds, are normally provided dormitory form of shelter. They are provided with food as it is provided in a hostel. The girls then are ferried in buses to factories where they are made to work for 8 to 10 hours. The girls are not permitted to go out either of the factory premises or of the dormitory. They go through endless cycles of work, food and sleep. The salary accumulates in their accounts, over which, the parents have more control than the girls. At the end of the contract, which may extend from three to five years, a lump sum amount is handed over to the parents. Parents justify this practice saying that they are able to marry off their girls with a decent dowry and thereby after all help them 'coming up in life'. It is not very difficult for girls to buy these dreams as they would otherwise dropout and get into the drudgery of either unpaid family labour or, suffer a poorly paid local job under everybody's supervision and control. This new type of contract first promises them anonymity and hence some freedom and novelty.

The much fussed over 'dormitory culture' of the factory, is taken as a rationalisation for surrogate sexual segregation and safety. This newly emerging form of child labour among girls as a consequence of liberalised market, is dubiously called '*Sumangali* Scheme' (Scheme for Marriage). An estimate by SCNIC staff about the number of children working under this type of schemes are estimated to be 181 cases. The practice is prevalent in almost all the villages in the project area. Kovilpatti - Sattur region recorded 73 cases, Sivakasi 30 cases and Melaneelithanallur 78 cases. The industrial town associated with *Sumangali* scheme are Coimbatore, Tirupur and Sivakasi.

## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **2. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION & CHILD LABOUR ABOLITION**

## 2. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION & CHILD LABOUR ABOLITION



CHILD RIGHTS AWARENESS RALLY

Educational intervention here in this context means, taking special effort to get children of the vulnerable households enrolled in schools. This could be done through door-to-door canvassing, counselling, enrolling and monitoring. The target group of children fell into three categories. First, it was the children of pre-school age, the second 6-14, the traditionally and legally well recognised as being the most vulnerable, and finally, the children who were in the 15-18 age group who were still vulnerable as children but whom the law has been treating with ambiguities. SCNIC concentrated on all the three categories of children as far as educational intervention was concerned.

### 2.1 Promotion of *Balwadis* - Catch them Young

SCNIC, especially drawing on the experiences of CEDAR working in child labour villages since 1994, was very particular to 'catch them young'. In child labour villages, it is quite common that children cling around working mothers as they do their work. This is very debilitating to the child when the work happens at home as is the case with frame-fixing, packing match-sticks, box-making and pasting banderoles in home-based manufacturing of safety matches. (Even potentially very dangerous dipping and drying were very common during earlier times). Apart from getting exposed to dangers of health hazards, the children very easily got inducted into simple pieces of the job the mothers did at home. Then slipped into becoming regular child labourers by the age of five or six and would not attend school. So it becomes imperative that the children get weaned away from working mothers for both health reasons and for the social reason that the children may get easily inducted into child labour. *Balwadi*, (crèche) was the only answer. Children taken into *balwadis*, further had the advantage of pre-school inculcation of interest in education very early in life. With the above objectives, SCNIC from the beginning, was keen to strengthen the *balwadis* in each village.

2.1.1 When SCNIC work was started in the project area, there were many villages that did not have *balwadis*. In other villages where they had *balwadis*, they were lacking in many respects. This included non-availability of permanent buildings, housing of *balwadi* in unsafe places, non availability of water resulting in poor sanitary conditions, non availability of *balwadi* teachers or *ayahs* and non availability of teaching aids, play objects and the like.

2.1.2 Most of the effort by the programme staff as it is claimed was towards either bringing *balwadis* to villages wherever they did not have one or, to improve the infrastructure of *balwadis* which were already present. They also had to work for appointment of *balwadi* teachers and *ayahs*.

- 2.1.3 The type of activities involved mobilization of village people, representation to authorities and holding of rallies and campaigns.
- 2.1.4 It is claimed that only through SCNIC initiatives, *balwadis* in the following places could be established: Meenatchipuram, Moovirundali, Salaipudur, Madathupatti, Chokkalingapuram, Narkalaikottai, Kattalaipatti, kumarikulam, Ceylon Colony, Kannagi Colony, North Thottilovanpatti, North Achampatti, keelaneelithanallur, Vannanpottal, Sanarpatti, Pethulupatti, Thirumalapuram. Presently there is no village in the project area without a *balwadi*. The total number of children benefitted in *balwadis* by 2011 is estimated to be 3427 out of which 1850 (54%) were girl children. In all the three project areas, girl children exceeded male children indicating a very welcome development.

### Box 1

#### ***Three years to make a Balwadi***

*Meenakshipuram is in Sattur block. It is a single caste dalit village. The women in general and CRMC members in particular, were very active here. During a SCNIC training session in 2010, the women of Meenakshipuram complained about the absence of balwadi in their village. They were told that any village that had 20 children or more, were entitled to a balwadi. Meenakshipuram had more than 20 children at that point. A petition was drawn in the very training session itself. The government responded by sanctioning a balwadi for the village. It started functioning from a small room of a dingy old house given free by someone in the village. It was neither safe nor sufficient for the children to come and stay. After a while, the balwadi moved into the Self Help Group building. The ayah was there from the beginning, but not the teacher. It took more than a year before a teacher was appointed. Now, it is the end of 2012. SCNIC staff says that it might take one more year to get a building. That is in 2013.*

- 2.1.5 As far as the realization of the need for *balwadi* is concerned, there is a unanimity of opinion among parents, VEC members, *Panchayat* leaders and CRMC members that, *balwadis* are preparatory ground for children for enrolment in schools. Even with poor households, the idea of the need for *balwadi* has been positively inculcated.
- 2.1.6 As far as the working of the *balwadi* is concerned, there are a number of issues. They range from that of the inadequacy of the infrastructure to that of social issues like caste.
- 2.1.7 The group observed that though there is a *balwadi* in every village, they lack in some respect with infrastructure. The most emphasized factors are lack of sanitation and poor upkeep in terms of cleanliness. The physical location of the *balwadi* is also stated to be a matter of concern in many villages. Non availability of water has made maintenance of toilets practically not possible.

**Table 11 : Working of *Balwadis* In Each Village As Preparatory Ground For Healthy Childhood**

Balwadis Graded	Number of Each Category	% to the Total Children		
		M	F	Total
Above optimum	35 (22.8%)	356	458	814
Optimum	37 (34.37%)	385	438	823
Below optimum	81 (37.5%)	836	954	1790
TOTAL	153 (100%)	1577	1850	3427

[Note: The classification was done using a four-point criteria with weighted points : Quality of building and location-10, Usable toilet with water-10, Availability of drinking water and nutrition service-10 and Proper upkeep and functioning-20. Balwadis that were given above 30 points were declared 'Above optimum', balwadis between 20 and 30 were declared 'Optimum' and those less than 20 were declared 'Below Optimum'.]

2.1.8 Another important reason is the commitment of *balwadi* teachers. The group observed that wherever they had a committed teacher, the *balwadis* worked well. They normally went beyond the call as employees. On the other hand, some of the *balwadi* teachers complained that they were forced to do very many unrelated work by the district authorities. This involved collecting health statistics, attending meetings at the *taluk* and district headquarters on short notice and getting deployed to other activities which do not basically relate to managing *balwadis*. They complained of overwork and lack of clarity of their role as *balwadi* teachers.

2.1.9 The group also felt that mothers being the most important stakeholders, their attitude and involvement in various ways affected the effective working of *balwadis*. The group complained about the apathy of mothers who according to them see *balwadis* only as a part-time depository for children. They don't seem to even make routine enquiries or casual conversations with a teacher or *ayah*. They try to maintain a kind of mechanical relationship which lowers the interest and commitment of the *balwadi* teachers and *ayahs*.

**IN SAFE HANDS : BALWADI**

2.1.10 Each village is supposed to have a 'committee of mothers' that would meet periodically and discuss the working of *balwadis* and give feedback. Such committees seem to be not in operation.

2.1.11 Caste seems to play a role in the working of *balwadis*, at least in a few villages. The problem becomes acute whenever the *ayah* cum cook comes from a lower caste. There were reported instances of parents boycotting *balwadis* and refusing to send their children whenever a *dalit* woman was appointed. SCNIC staff have involved themselves in resolving such crisis with reasonable degree of success. But the problem according to them persists. The group also reported the practice of using separate tumblers for children belonging to *dalit* community.

2.1.12 Though it must be conceded that so much effort has gone into establishing and strengthening of *balwadis* by SCNIC, the monitoring of the working of *balwadis* needs to be further enhanced.

2.1.13 The group was of unanimous opinion that *balwadis* have helped in a big way in the '100% enrolment' of children in schools. They also expressed the view that *balwadis* must be given equal importance as that of primary schools.

## Box 2

### *She Joined CEDAR*

*The Children Street Theatre Troupe was deeply immersed in its performance trying to spark a discussion on the importance of children attending school. The village was Kadalayur. Nageshwari 14, was keenly watching the play. She had just dropped out the VIII standard. Her parents wanted her to go for work in the nearby match factory. When the performance was over, she ran to the SCNIC staff to tell that she wanted to rejoin the school. SCNIC staff contacted the parents and persuaded them to put her back in school. When she finished X standard, once again the family mounted pressure on her to go for work. She approached CEDAR for a job. But CEDAR staff once again managed to put her back in school telling her parents that she had a bright future if she completed XII standard and then went to college. In the mean time, there were two attempts to get her married before she was 18. CEDAR intervened and thwarted the attempts. She finished her XII standard in 2011. She was insistent to join CEDAR.*

*She was given the job of Field Motivator in CEDAR. She worked hard to hone her computer skills. Nageshwari got married towards the end of 2012 when she was 19. She then moved to Chennai with her husband. She is decently employed there, as a supervisor in a computer education centre.*

## 2.2 Enrolment and Re-enrolment (5-14)

The most successful impact of SCNIC project is ensuring near 100% enrolment of children in the age group 5-14. This not only did successfully fulfil the long cherished ideal of compulsory schooling but also prevent the occurrence of full-time child labour in the 5 - 14 age group. (Explained in detail in section I, before).

**Table 12 : Retention Of Children In School (Cedar, News, Victory) 2010 - 2011**

PARTNER	No. of School age children (6-14)			Children attending school (6-14)		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
<b>CEDAR</b>	2678	2677	5355	2629(98.1%)	2653(99.1%)	5282(98.6%)
<b>NEWS</b>	3076	2986	6062	3053(99.2%)	2964(99.2%)	6017(99.2%)
<b>VICTORY</b>	2150	1947	4097	2104(97.8%)	1886(96.8%)	3990(97.3%)
<b>Total</b>	7904	7610	15514	7786(98.5%)	7503(98.5%)	15289(98.5%)

- 2.2.1 The enumeration for 2010-2011 shows that the retention of children in the age group 5-14 for Kovilpatti, Sattur blocks (CEDAR), was 98.5% for the entire project area. The same figure for Melaneelithanallur block (Victory) was 97.3%. The biggest success has been achieved by NEWS in the very heart of match land with 99.2% retention. CEDAR recorded 98.6% with heavy presence of match work. The lower figure for Melaneelithanallur (97.3%) is explained in terms of dependence of draught prone agriculture explained previously (Refer Section 1).
- 2.2.2 A few out-of-school children present in a few villages need not be taken as to mean presence of child labour. Verification by field staff and monitoring committees testify that these children form part of out-of-school statistics because of other reasons. A few, according to the field-staff were out of school due to health reasons. A few others migrated out of the area during a school year (Refer Section 1 for elaboration).

**Table 13 : Re-Enrolment In SCNIC Area (2003 To 2010)**

Year	VICTORY	NEWS	CEDAR	TOTAL
2004	NA	NA	109	109
2005	49	169	74	292
2006	98	132	34	264
2007	47	10	121	178
2008	43	40	2	85
2009	43	10	29	82
2010	65	13	13	91
TOTAL	345	382	374	1106

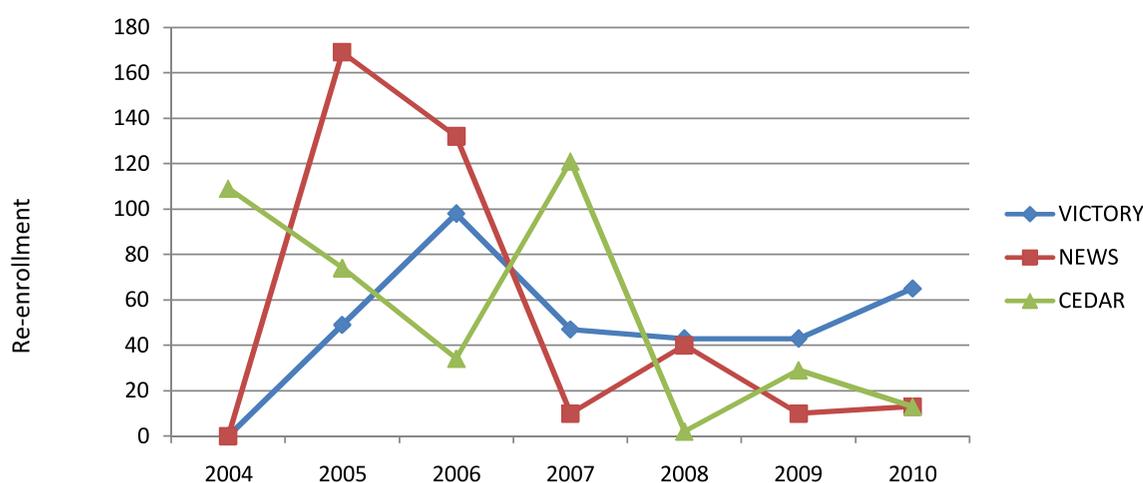
- 2.2.3 A higher level retention was not automatic. As we already mentioned, door-to-door canvassing, counselling of parents and children, rescue and rehabilitation of child labourers and of necessary financial assistance for the most needy really helped. Mass awareness campaigns, rallies and highly focussed village level propaganda since 2005 brought enormous social pressure for enrolment and retention. The involvement of schools especially since the introduction of *Sarvasiksha Abhaiyan*, helped in no small measure. SCNIC had developed its own strategy of working with village youth groups, CBOs especially women SHGs, children collectives and Child Monitoring committees for enrolment and monitoring. This is also the phase which brought SCNIC very close to village schools.

### Box 3

#### Continuously Dropped Out Continuously Fished Out

Sudalaimuthu lived in Kovilpatti town. His father had a cycle repair shop. The shop itself was hired from someone else. The father was not a very enterprising man. Many accused him of being slothful. He was totally indifferent to Sudalai. Sudalai did not belong properly to the area where Vannamathi Collective belonged. But Sudalai's enthusiasm compelled Vannamathi Collective to make the exception of accepting an 'outsider'. In spite of his enthusiasm, Sudalai dropped out at VII Standard. SCNIC staff intervened. He went back to school. The father saw to that Sudalai dropped out again at IX Standard. The collective children took up the issue. With the help of SCNIC staff, he was again sent back to school for the second time. Again he dropped out at X Standard. The children and SCNIC staff did not lose patience. He was made to go back. He completed X Standard successfully. Now, Sudalai was afraid of going back to the cycle shop. He on his own, applied for joining Ramakrishna ITI, in Chennai. He got his admission on merit. The highly charitable institution wanted only a sum of Rs. 6,000/- to be paid as fee for the entire year. SCNIC staff were too happy to raise the money for him. He completed the programme in 2011. But, even before he completed the course, he got a campus placement and became an apprentice with Leyland Motors. Now, he is placed in its Latur factory in Maharashtra as a probationer mechanic.

Graph 13 : Stabilisation of Retention



2.2.4 It needs mentioning here, the successful monitoring and re-enrolment work of SCNIC only could lead to higher level retention. Re-enrolment does need in the first place efficient monitoring of each village. Then it is a case by case work involving the child and parents. The statistics would show how intense the work became since 2004 when a very focussed strategy was worked out. Re-enrolments have progressively decreased in all the three areas before they stabilised around 2009. There is a bit of an irony that the tendency for dropping out seems to have considerably reduced in more acute child labour prone areas with match industries like Sivakasi and Kovilpatti than in Melaneelithanallur. This is partially explained in terms of frequent agricultural failures in the block which is more dependent on agriculture than the other two blocks. At least here with some caution we can say that dropping out could be attributed to direct economic causes rather than the direct pull-factor provided by the presence of market for child-labour which could tilt the opportunity cost against education.

**Box 4****Not Easy Always**

*Enrolment campaign was in peak during the year 2007. Field staff returning from Peeklipatti in Kovilpatti block had something to report to Programme Coordinator Syed Ali. It was about a belligerent man of Peeklipatti whose daughter dropped out of VII standard whom the father wanted to go for work in a textile factory, far away from the village. The father would not take anybody's counsel. His belligerence had frightened the field staff and they wanted Syed to intervene.*

*Syed took Kannan, another Field Motivator and a local man, along with him. They went to Peeklipati and enquired about the man. No one wanted to join Syed and Kannan but warned them about the angry man. They said that he would not listen to anyone. The Panchayat President was no exception.*

*Syed and Kannan met the man in his house the very afternoon. After an initial nod acknowledging their arrival, the man casually went around attending to the sundry routine in front of the house. Syed at one point stepped in and tried to speak about the importance of the girl going back to school. The angry retort came "I am the master of my house... I know the right decision for my daughter... off from this place, you both". Syed kept his cool and calmly declared that he and Kannan would not leave until he gave a favourable reply. Both went and sat on a small platform in front of the house. The man then fired his first warning by sending the loudest possible shout at his daughter in displaced anger on the girl, who just popped out to see what was happening. The girl ran in. Syed and Kannan again remained calm. As his shout did not bring any effect on Syed and Kannan, the angry man suddenly strode in to the house in a fit and came out with a big chopper in the hand. He went near Syed and started angrily chopping a wooden log lying by his side. Now, he had stepped up the threat by several volts of his anger. After a while, Syed and Kannan wanted to leave. Syed wanted to have a final word with him quiet calmly. But the hell broke loose. The man belligerently took a step toward Syed, raising the chopper. That was the final warning. Both left without precipitating the issue further. After a few days, the news reached CEDAR office that the girl had already been packed off from Peeklipatti.*

## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

### **3. BEYOND SCHOOL SUPPORT AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN**

### 3. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION & CHILD LABOUR ABOLITION



**KARAGAM : ARTISTS OF CHILDREN COLLECTIVES**

Certain of the individual child-centred development inputs are brought under the umbrella term 'beyond school support'. The need for organizing 'beyond school support' arose because of two factors. The village schools children attended, in the first place, did not provide scope for reasonable extra-curricular or co-curricular activities that would take care of their development needs beyond skills in literacy and numeracy. This might include promotion of good physical health through games and sports, health education and creating opportunities that would ensure a balanced development of personality and creative self-expression in each child. Secondly, in the event schools did not provide for such scope in a middleclass urban situation the families would organize a supportive space. This supportive space apart from creating opportunities to develop talents, would always include supervision of studies at home and meeting deficiencies through tuitions and coaching. But in the village situation where overwhelmingly poor households (below or just above BPL households) are involved, these households cannot organize such family based support for children. This problem of organizing 'co-curricular' support also had other challenges.

With enrolment campaigns forcing more children into schools, the schools were caught unawares on many fronts. Less said the better about co-curricular activities and individual attention paid to children. Again, those who prodded the parents to send their children to schools, had to necessarily show results not only in terms of the child being retained in the school but also in terms of something very tangible that would speak of each child's 'growth' that each parent could readily see and appreciate. Any success in this regard would earn the project the necessary goodwill. Further it will create a progressively expanding opportunity to demonstrate to the parents and community, the need for creating child-supportive space that can guarantee holistic development of each child. Only in this context, 'beyond school support' was organized. For this, the children collectives became useful launching pads.

**Descriptive Table 6 :**

**COMPONENTS OF BEYOND SCHOOL PROGRAMME**

Health	Supporting the weak students	Career skills	Creative Education	Social congregation and fellowship
Health camps 1. Nutritional Health Training. 2. Health training for adolescent girls.	Tuition 1. Special coaching. 2. Child Resource Centres. 3. Volunteer support for schools.	1. Vocational skill training. 2. Higher education follow-up.	1. Creative arts camp. 2. Children's magazine. 3. Raising of children's cultural troupes. 4. Exposure visits.	1. Annual day celebrations. 2. Children's Mela. 3. Annual sport event. 4. Exposure visits.

### 3.1 Health Education

Though the health programme was not a regular feature of SCNIC, the programme was organized on the basis of need. The most popular health education programme was Nutritional Health Programme conducted in mixed groups of children and parents. The programme staff are of the opinion that it impacted considerably in the health seeking behaviour of women. To some extent, the improvement in *balwadi* attendance is attributed to this health education programme.

3.1.1 Health and Hygiene for Adolescent Girls Programme and Gender Training for Adolescent Girls Programme were most successful creating very positive impact. 2279 adolescent girls were reached through the former and 2135 through latter programme. The awareness created was in terms of reproductive health, breaking cultural stereotypes and superstitions. The impact is rated as to be very positive by programme staff that some of the children could even resist successfully child marriage proposals forced on them by parents.

### 3.2 Village Volunteers and Special Coaching

SCNIC organized special educational support programme for children who were deficient in their studies. This support was organized in 40 villages which were late-entrants to SCNIC. Most of these villages fell in Sattur block. The programme included special coaching for students who were weak and found de-motivated and special tuition for X and XII standards. SCNIC also organised a village cum school volunteer programme. The volunteers apart from meeting shortages of teachers in schools, also worked with children beyond school hours, giving tuition or coaching.

3.2.1 Beyond school programme that specially attended to weak students, bore direct results. This is seen easily in terms of high retention rates in schools where these programmes were conducted. The highest retention rate (99.12%) put up by Kovilpatti – Sattur, testifies to this.

### 3.3 Vocational Training

Vocational skill training was necessitated by situations in which a child became a permanent dropout for a long period in the first place and secondly for children who dropped out after standard VIII. The idea was to enhance the scope of employability for the child but postpone employment. Providing computer literacy and tailoring skills were the two options.

3.3.1 Though there was a big need for skill upgradation of children who dropped out in the age group 14-18, the resources did not permit a full scale skill upgradation programme. About 448 children in this age group were provided with reasonable higher level computer skills in the form of Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe PageMaker and other Desktop Publishing Software. Many of them could equip themselves for getting reasonable employment.

3.3.2 Similarly, 88 girl children were trained in tailoring skills to enhance their self-employment potentials. In a number of cases after being trained, the girls were given assistance to set up their own shops. The assistance would be either in the form of free supply of a sewing machine or an interest free loan to buy a machine depending upon the financial hardship of the dropout.

### 3.4 Art and Self-expression

Of all the beyond school programmes, the most popular and educative one was the programme for creative self-expression. SCNIC created three different avenues. The first and the most popular avenue was the scope created for performing arts. The second one was for fine arts in the form of drawing, painting and clay modelling. The third opportunity created was in the form of creative writing and children journalism.

3.4.1 Through a highly participatory programme, children were helped to identify their own inclinations for self-expression. In the case of performing arts, the medium chosen were mostly



OYIL : CREATIVE ARTS CAMP

traditional art forms rooted in the traditional rural culture. *Oyil, Kazhil, Thappu or Parai, Kolattam and Silambam* were some of the forms chosen for training. Children could not only identify their talents so easily but took to performing as fish taking to water. Compared to classical forms, folk forms were very much part of the consciousness of the rural people and did not place any barrier in the name of canons, standards and rigours of training. They provided easy connect between individual child's creative urge to express himself or herself and community's well scripted meanings and consciousness.

3.4.2 Performing art capabilities of children brought an easy but highly visible creative presence of the children in the community. Children cultural troupes raised by SCNIC found wider acceptance in community and it was not very uncommon that these new cultural mavericks were invited to participate in public functions and annual religious fairs. Schools were also very quick to recognize their importance.

3.4.3 Drawing and painting were other areas of self-expression that had been hitherto hidden. Regular competitions and training workshops provided platforms for articulation.

3.4.4 Another grand success was launching of '*Thiran*' a children's magazine run by children themselves. The magazine opened a big scope for creative writing in the forms of short stories and poems, received articles of interests written by children for children and printed drawings and paintings of children. Children exhibited a great organizing skill in editing and publishing the magazine, of course helped and encouraged by SCNIC staff.

#### Box 5

##### 'Thiran'

*'Thiran' in Tamil means 'capacity'. It is a children's magazine run by SCNIC children, on their own. Children contributed in the form of free verses, short stories, articles, tit-bits, interviews, drawings and paintings. The idea of children running their own magazine, first crystallized in a children federation meeting in 2006. SCNIC staff too saw a big purpose in the proposal as it would help channelizing the creative energy of the children. The first edition, with contributions entirely coming from children, was published in December 2006.*



3.4.6 Equally important were the change in perception of parents, of their children. And it is only here – in the ability of their children to speak in public, perform a dance on the stage, move a crowd to tears through a street theatre performance, paint in colour their imagination and emboss their ideas in print – parents saw how their children grew before their own eyes. What campaigns took months and years to teach parents the importance of education, a cultural programme took just a week or two. Schools too opened their eyes to accept the new reality and started recognizing the work of SCNIC.

### 3.5 Exposure, Congregation and Experience

In spite of the fact that there are revolutionary changes in terms of transport, communication and the reach of the visual media, the underprivileged children largely get confined to their villages only. Their consciousness and worldview therefore easily get structured by notions of caste, class and gender and their horizon limited by the immediate or extended boundaries of the village. There were and are, many children who never even went to see a big town. Many would not have even travelled by train. Sea ports and airports are what they may grab as glimpses in a television. A forest and a waterfall are mere words that occur in text books. Exposure visits and annual congregations for *melas*, sports and anniversaries were planned in order to enlarge both the physical and social horizons of children.

3.5.1 Exposure visits brought great novelty of experience in children and added to their understanding of geography, culture and environment. In a normal year, at least 2 exposure visits were planned benefitting on the whole, 150 to 200 children.

#### Box 7

##### Priceless Gift



*Thank you to those who donated to the Gift Fund. This time, 52 children from across Kovilpatti were selected by the Children's Collectives to go on a day trip to Tuticorin harbour and beach. Tuticorin is one of the major commercial seaports in India.*

*The children were fascinated to see all the activities that take place in such a busy seaport and the huge cargo ships that bring goods from far away countries. The children also had the opportunity to board a ship which had come from Hong Kong. After visiting the port, the children then went to the beach where they played in the sea and watched the fishermen bringing in their catch.*

*One of the children Rajalakshmi (14) told us about her day, "This was the first time I went on a big ship and it was really interesting. I also loved playing on the beach, gathering shells and splashing water on each other!"*

3.5.2 Annual congregations of children which normally involved the participation of 550 to 600 children, was one of the important factors responsible for breaking caste, gender and territorial barriers. Children could place themselves in larger collectives and could arrive at better evaluation of their self-knowledge. These annual gatherings also registered a conspicuous public presence of the children which in turn could give each child a much enlarged vision of 'self', transcending social and physical boundaries.

3.5.3 On the whole, beyond school support programme, first time, created certain publicness of attending to individual child's needs as a school goer. From the point of view of the child, it could evoke very positive emotions of getting involved as a learner. Though it is difficult to establish clear statistical relationship between 'beyond school support' and school enrolment/retention and school performance, the programme certainly created a psycho-social climate that certainly placed parents and children in a new context of motivational dynamics at least.

## Box 8

### *I Write Poems*



MANJULA DEVI (RIGHT)

*“My name is Manjula Devi. I am fourteen and I study in class ten. I am part of the children's collective in Thirumalapuram village where I live.*

*SCNIC has helped me a lot. I have learnt about discrimination faced by girls and women and I have been inspired to write poems about this. My poems have been published in Thiran – our children's magazine. There is no other magazine like it for children. I felt very happy when my teacher read my poems from Thiran to the whole class. She appreciated my efforts in front of all. It was wonderful.*

*I believe that women can achieve many things in life. I want to become a doctor and serve in my village. I would like to share with you a few verses from one of my poems.”*

*“Being a woman – there is so much to feel  
Proud about  
It is not good keeping the flames inside you  
Run towards a greener future  
Make your presence felt at every turn.”*



## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **4. LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT, ENROLMENT & CHILD LABOUR ABOLITION**

## 4. LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT ENROLMENT AND CHILD LABOUR ABOLITION

Though SCNIC does not subscribe to the theory that poverty directly causes child labour, it however does not fail to recognise the fact that in certain BPL families, poverty created vulnerabilities that made children dropout of school. In a limited way, SCNIC launched a livelihood support programme. It was by creating a 'revolving fund' from which, a maximum of Rs. 5000/- was given as interest free loans to families, identified as vulnerable. In certain other cases, one time grant of Rs. 5000/- were also given. In other occasions, financial assistance for paying school fees, buying school uniforms, books and notebooks and simple equipment like geometry boxes etc. were also given.

### 4.1 Revolving Fund

The revolving fund had a small corpus of Rs.7 lakh, kept jointly in the account of SCNIC and a 'committee of community representatives who jointly administered it.

- 4.1.1 Any request for assistance was primarily processed through children collectives. Children not only did involve themselves in scrutiny but also made recommendations for sanction to the committee.
- 4.1.2 It is estimated that children collectives processed 475 applications on the whole and made as many recommendations.

### 4.2 Livelihood Support

Livelihood Support Programme was so successful that the money went into either reviving the business of a vendor or a hawker or a goat-rearer that it brought a small but sustainable income. The borrowers always gave a written undertaking that they would support his/her child's or children's education. 475 loans, according to SCNIC estimate, roughly helped about 900 children by preventing situations in which children would have permanently dropped out. Discontinuing studies at abysmal conditions of family poverty, no doubt, would have driven these children to become child labourers.

### 4.3 Children Managing Livelihood Support

The children collectives gained enormously through this programme. As they became virtual 'sanctioning authorities', they gained so much in prestige and self-worth. It was indeed, a novel experiment in creating a child-centred discourse in the village.

## Box 9

### **Mariselvi**

Jeyakumar aged 44, was a migrant labourer from Thoothukudi, who had taken up a menial job in a wine shop in Kovilpatti. He was married to Mariselvi (44). The couple had four children, Esakinathan 17 (Son), Uma 13 (daughter), Gopi 10 (son) and Sivasankari 6 (daughter). Mariselvi did not go for work and managed the family with the paltry Rs. 3000/- which the husband brought home every month. As fate would have it, Jeyakumar fell ill suddenly and was diagnosed of renal failure. Mariselvi borrowed about Rs. 30,000/- from money lenders in a bid to save her husband. But Jeyakumar died on June 8, 2007. Mariselvi literally came to the street. Some women, who belonged to Karangal Self Help Group attached to CEDAR, put her across to the field staff. Only option open to CEDAR under SCNIC programme was, to provide her with one time grant of Rs. 5,000/-. She was encouraged to start a flower vending business. Mariselvi who never went to work when her husband was alive, diligently went around the streets in Kovilpatti selling flowers. She made Rs. 50/- a day. She could feed herself and the children. But she had one vision, which she shared with her late husband. That was to educate all her children. What SCNIC provided was a small glimmer of light. But Mariselvi could see the educational future of her children clearly. Her hope was Esakimuthu, the eldest son who was in the XII Standard. She always consoled herself saying that it was only three more years before he finished his graduation and took up a job. The local children's collective gave Mariselvi and her children immense moral support.

## Box 10

### **Anandha Jyothi**

Anandha Jyothi aged about 13, lived in Peeklipatti village. Her father suddenly passed away. Jyothi's mother was only a daily wage earner. Economic compulsions made Anandha Jyothi's mother to force her to go for work in the nearby match unit. She dropped out of her VII standard. She had three other younger sisters to feed. The children managed to get Rs. 5000/- for Anandha Jyothi's mother from the revolving fund. She had an intelligent investment plan. In addition to the Rs. 5000/- she borrowed, she managed to mobilise a few thousands more and managed to put up a hut. From then on, she saved the rent which could go into the subsistence of the household and compensate for loss of income as Anandha Jyothi went back to school.

## Box 11

### **Kaleeswari**

Ayyampatti village had a vibrant children collective. Kaleeswari was a leading member of the collective. She was a very good student. She was only 15. It was her effort that led to the participation of children in the gramsabha meeting. Children called her 'heroine'. Kaleeswari's father was an alcoholic. He completely stopped going for work at one point. The mother struggled for a while. Then she thought that the solution lay in Kaleeswari taking up some work in the match unit. The children of the collective as they came to know about it, protested. They went to Kaleeswari's mother to work out some alternate. Kaleeswari's mother agreed to take up goat rearing. The children of the collective drew the attention of SCNIC staff to the issue and managed to get an advance of Rs. 5000/- to help Kaleeswari's mother. Kaleeswari the heroine, was thus saved from dropping out of the school. Kaleeswari's mother worked hard and paid back the interest-free loan.



## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **5. INTERNALIZATION OF CHILD RIGHTS BY PARENTS**



## 5. INTERNALIZATION OF CHILD RIGHTS BY PARENTS

"I TOLD HER ABOUT CHILD RIGHTS..."

One of the major programme components is to create awareness among parents, community, school, CBOs, civil society and civic and state agencies – all major stakeholders of child rights. This was done at two levels. Mass awareness campaigns were conducted through village and block level rallies, holding of children *melas*, celebration of child rights day, organizing of cycle rallies, poster campaigns and street theaters. At the individual level, house visits, counseling, training workshops and consultations on child rights were held. The child rights propagated through these awareness campaigns, trainings and education were drawn from United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In this section, we try to comprehend how various components of Child Rights internalized by parents in particular, measure up to the standards of UNCRC.

### Descriptive Table 7 :

#### KEY UNCRC ARTICLES ON CHILD RIGHTS 1989

1	<b>UPBRINGING</b>	Parents/Legal Guardians to bear the primary responsibility of upbringing and the development of the child. (Article 18.1)
2	<b>STANDARD OF LIVING</b>	Right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. (Article 27)
3	<b>HEALTH</b>	Right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. (Article 24.1)
4	<b>EDUCATION</b>	Right of the child to education. (Article 28)
5	<b>WHOLESOME DEVELOPMENT</b>	Entitlement to the development of child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. (Article 29.1 (a))
6	<b>REST AND LEISURE</b>	Right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and arts. (Article 31.1)
7	<b>FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION</b>	Right of the child to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (Article 12.1)
8	<b>RIGHT VALUES</b>	Preparation of the child in a free society in the spirit of understanding peace, tolerance, equality of success and friendship among all people, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. (Article 29.1. (d))

9	<b>EXPOLITATION</b>	Right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (Article 32.1)
10	<b>VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY</b>	Right of the child to be protected against all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. (Article 19)
11	<b>SEXUAL ABUSE</b>	Right of the child to be protected against all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. (Article 34)
12	<b>DRUG ABUSE</b>	Right of the child to be protected against illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. (Article 33)

For the purpose of the evaluation and interpretation, the process of internalization is conceived as follows. No awareness campaign can assume that all the information and knowledge with attendant values disseminated through different strategies are positively received. It can be either resisted or received with varying reactions.

In the event an information or piece of knowledge is not acceptable, the individual or collective can totally refuse to receive that. This might result in complete ignoring of relevant information. In certain situations the refusal to accept, can be resisted with counterproductive reactions that might further strengthen existing prejudices or values which we profess to change.

In the event an information or piece of knowledge with its attendant values are acceptable, the individual or the collective receives it with varying degrees of internalization that can be shown as follows:

**Descriptive Table 8 :**

**CONCEPTUALIZING INTERNALISATION OF RIGHTS**

	Level 5: Crystallization of value in a group or community with certain consensus and permanence.
	Level 4: Articulation of the meaning in terms of value and sharing the same with others.
Level 3: Resisted, Reacted upon, Counter strategy.	Level 3: Accepted, practiced, value realized at the individual level.
Level 2: Accepted as rhetorical value but resisted.	Level 2: Accepted and attitudinal and behavioral changes shown but without much meaning.
Level 1: Totally Ignored.	Level 1: Accepted as rhetorical value and as good but not acted upon.

← Not Accepted

Accepted →

## 5.1 Parents, Childrearing and Living Condition

FGD with programme staff, interaction with parents in the villages and other random observations made in the field, clearly indicate that there is a discernible change in terms of parental outlook towards child rearing responsibilities in general. This applies to even parents who belong to BPL families. The old fatalism 'God who gave the children would take care of the children' type of thinking is clearly gone. This type of 'wishing away of responsibilities towards children has been clearly replaced by real and existential anxieties of concerns of well being of one's own children. This can be rated as Level-3 internalization. This however does not mean that every aspect of child rights is clear to them. There are certain ambiguities and contradictions that go not very infrequently against the interest of the child.



"EAGER TO KNOW..."

5.1.2 During the FGD, the programme staff arrived at the consensus that today, the parents are able to clearly articulate 'certain needs' and 'make demands' in terms of what they want as child support facilities or services. It may range from setting up of a *balwadi* in a village, to seeking an educational loan. Protests and collective actions in this regard signify Level-4 internalization.

5.1.3 The argument that there is considerable improvement over child rearing practices is indirectly supported by the observation that today, without much exception, children look comparatively more healthier than they were in previous decades, that they have learnt to care more for personal hygiene, that they have given to the habit of dressing up well, that they demonstrate positively better self-confidence compared to what they did in the past, that they avoid loitering around, and finally that they do not suffer general abandonment.

5.1.4 One of the basic reasons attributed to this improvement is the general thaw in the poverty conditions and improvement in cash income of the poor households as we indicated earlier.

5.1.5 The improvement in household income also correlates with the increasing empowerment of women. Larger participation of women in wage earning activities, promotion of thrift, access to micro-credit facilities, better awareness and participation in public sphere by women through SHGs and other women empowerment programmes, have greatly helped in this regard. Social and economic empowerment of women has led to women assuming larger child rearing responsibilities than men. It is not unsafe to conclude that women are better internalizers of child rights at least in the broader sense of child rearing. Patriarchal indifference to child rearing however continues in various degrees with men shifting responsibilities to women.

5.1.6 Poverty or sudden fall in household income are not anymore allowed to directly deprive children of their living conditions, as was in the previous era of child labour, where children were mercilessly deployed to salvage family from poverty. Using of thrift, borrowing from SHGs and other agencies become avenues through which mothers try to meet nurturing needs of their children.

## 5.2 Parents and Right to Health

It is also observed that there is considerable amount of positive change in the health seeking behaviour of women which has a direct bearing on the well being of children. Apart from paying attention to

prenatal and postnatal care, women pay better attention to the health of the children. The government health programmes have been largely responsible for this change in outlook. Access to private clinics which have mushroomed in the rural areas is another important factor. Though SCNIC programme confined itself largely to health education of adolescent girl children, the general change in outlook relating to the health of women and children seems to have served as a motivational text for organising health awareness among girl children.

5.2.1 The issue of child nutrition continues to remain as a concern. Though poorer household incomes provided general background for the prevalence of problems relating to malnutrition, a number of cultural prejudices and traditional habits continue to mar food habits. Though the deficiency diseases are not readily seen, underweight and stunted growth of both boys and girls are ready indicators of the wide prevalence of malnutrition. Ideas on nutrition and balanced diet remain as rhetorical value. (Level.1).

### **5.3 Parents and Right to Education of Children**

Internalization of right to education of children by parents has a complex dynamics and call for a well nuanced understanding.

5.3.1 In the first place the most significant change that has happened in terms of outlook of parents is in relation to right to education of children. Today, parents irrespective of their social and economic status in the villages have come to agree that compulsory education of children up to the age of 14 is a must. There is a clear crystallization of this value and sending children to school especially in the age group 5-14 has become a stable practice. At no cost, this is going to reverse. (Level-5).

5.3.2 However, education here simply means compulsory schooling. This has a serious bearing on the understanding of the beyond-school-support-role of parents in ensuring 'proper education' that includes aspects like supervision and support of study at home for children, proper rest and recreation and creating and providing conditions for proper personality development. Poor parents neither have the material nor the intellectual resources to adequately play this role.

5.3.3 There are three distinct reactions to this demand on the newfound role. First, many take it as a rhetoric value but do not know how to act on it. Second, there are parents who do not mind a trade-off by either encouraging or allowing children to get engaged in part-time work at homesteads. Children not only forgo their right to leisure and quality time for home-study and play, but pay in terms of physical and mental well being. The third reaction is by way of parents encouraging children to participate in child collective activities and other programmes of SCNIC meant for general development. This is however indicative of growing appreciation of the need for general educational development of the children, beyond mere schooling.

5.3.4 SCNIC programme has made considerable impact on the very issue of freedom of expression among children whether it relates to family or community in general. Unlike in other areas of internalization of child rights, where the internalization depends on factors other than programme induced factors, any achievement in the 'freedom of expression front', can be attributed only to SCNIC programme. This aspect is elaborated in the subsequent sections (Sec. 6 & 7), where the issue of development of 'agency' in the child is discussed.

## 5.4 Parents and Right against Economic Exploitation of Children

On the most fundamental issue of Right of the Child to be protected against economic exploitation, the following needs to be said. The question of exploiting child labour as a necessity to meet the subsistent needs in poverty conditions belongs to a bygone era. Children working beyond school hours at home are seen as supplementing family income which in a way is avoidable as it is invariably not related to meeting vital household needs. More than compulsion, it is the compliant attitude of the parents which is responsible for this phenomenon. This also signifies the failure of many parents to appreciate the concept of childhood in a holistic fashion. This certainly qualifies as subtle exploitation of children by parents. This would continue as long as parents do not play effectively their beyond-school-support-role for the holistic development of children or an alternate platform is found to address the issue as is done with Children's Resource Centres (CRC) or Children Collectives (CCs).

- 5.4.1 Though there are rare incidences of domestic violence resulting in cruelty caused to children, the general tendency is to avoid inflicting corporal punishment by parents. Programme staff during FGD was of the consensus that degrading punishments in public and even verbal abuse that would question the dignity of children which characterized yesteryears has considerably come down.

## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **6. CHILDREN COLLECTIVES AND 'AGENCY' IN CHILD : PARENTAL AUTHORITY, CASTE AND GENDER**



MAHASAKTHI CHILDREN FEDERATION LEADER

## 6. CHILDREN COLLECTIVES AND 'AGENCY' IN CHILD : PARENTAL AUTHORITY, CASTE AND GENDER

Successful internalization of Child Rights among various constituencies of a community as we mentioned in the previous section, might manifest in the value consensus and definitions by community as to what is 'right childhood'. Looked at from the point of view of the child, the 'right childhood' or the 'rights based childhood' is seen in the nature of 'agency' the child develops. Agency would mean psychological and social-psychological makeup and capacity of a child for a self-willed action. (Improved over the meaning given by Oxford Dictionary of Sociology: 2004). The first dimension of agency in a child develops in the context of parent-child relationship. For this, the child must acquire the ability to interrogate parental authority and control and ensure for itself the necessary psycho-social space for healthy self-expression and reasonable independent action. In practical form, this means the ability of a child to articulate its physical, psycho-social, educational and recreational needs without much restraint and thereby positively influence the decisions of the parent.

The second dimension of the agency of a child is the ability to interrogate the socio-cultural authority imposed by the community at large, as they step out of the family. This might include very many do's and don'ts relating to caste, gender, age and other social markers mediated through the authority of teachers, elders and others present in the child's world. The child needs to interrogate the cultural meaning and the social implications of such exercise of authority in a manner that they ensure for themselves certain autonomy and world view. This would help the child to adopt a proto-model of society whose logic and content the child may carry forward to the future shaping of his or her adult life. More enlarged the mental-scape of the child and one that transcends the limitations imposed by the traditional authority structures like caste, age, gender, religion and school, more it ensures autonomy for the child, as it grows.

The agency in a child can be developed only through a process that ensures high level of child-centred organization and facilitation of self-expression. This was made possible by SCNIC through its 'children collectives' strategy. Children collectives are voluntary association of children facilitated by SCNIC for children to discover and articulate their agencies.

### 6.1 Organising Children Collectives

At least three of the group members namely Mariammal, Malliga and Palpandi have been involved in the organizing work of children collectives from the beginning. By the time they went about organizing children collectives in the villages, there was no recognized psycho-social and physical space beyond the family and school where children could come together transcending age, gender, caste and religion. We can also safely say that the contours of child as a social category in the modern sense of the term, was yet to become clear. This could be seen from the statements of the parents and others who felt that there could be no useful purpose in children meeting themselves beyond school hours.

6.1.1 In the initial days the programme staff saw serious apathy and resistance from parents. They could not easily see any useful purpose in children collectives

6.1.2 The early strategies and entry for children collective work could be devised on the basis of the following: 1. Persuading and seeking the cooperation of parents, 2. Using the physical space of the school as legitimate and useful space for children to come together after school hours, 3. Kindling in children, child-centred experiences through games, play activities and storytelling



COLLECTIVE MEETING

thereby encouraging children to discover in them joyful childhood experiences irrespective of age and gender. 4. Introducing the larger purposes and instrumental logic of organizing children collectives and providing them with structures and leadership. The strategies were executed in such a manner by encouraging children processually to discover their interest, abilities and leadership capabilities.

## Box 12

### **Organising Children Collectives**

*Today, everyone in the village knows what we mean by children collectives. Young or old, educated or otherwise, they all like the idea. Majority of the villagers support us in the 'children work'. Children also have proved their ability and have shown how useful they could be for the village. But this was not the case when I first went to organise collectives in the villages. Everyone used to suspect me. I used to just play with one or two children who came to me day after day. I used to visit every street in every village to collect children for play and storytelling. Play interested them first. Then I got them interested in more serious things- about their study, school, home, talents etc. The word spread slowly. Children brought more children. But only when we started proving to the village that children could do things useful for themselves and for others, parents and others started supporting. When I look back, it is incredible to believe. The path I have treaded was long, difficult and tedious.*

*- Mallika, VICTORY Trust*

## 6.2 'Agency' in Child and Parents

The successful creation of agency in a child is practically understood to be the ability of a child to critically interrogate the traditional authority of parent, teacher, gender and caste and take decisions, centred around childhood experiences, and interests and preferences.

6.2.1 What the children collectives could earn in the first place was parental approval of the activities and positive support. What emerged through FGD is that it was not a mechanical happening. Parents however poor or uneducated, first time could come to the conclusion that the novel way of organizing children – beyond family, school and other traditional spaces, as useful and worthwhile. This judgement of parents, in all probability, could happen because of the way in which children represented to their parents their experiences gathered in children collectives.

The content of such experiences were nothing but the experiences of listening to programme staff, free expression and sharing of children's feelings and thought in the collectives and the joy of playing and doing things, the terms of which were very child centred and purposeful. These, the family, the school and the community, could not give children. All the participants unanimously made the observation that the new type of compassion and empathy for children, the freedom to express freely in a secure atmosphere of the collective and the experiences shared with other children and programme staff, were catalytic factors for producing the agency in children.

- 6.2.2 The agency of a child in relation to their parents as it developed, could be understood in terms of different manifestations and stages of development. Considering the entire project cycle, according to the group, the parental attitude went through the following metamorphoses: from an attitude of resistance to grudging acceptance, to becoming willing partners and finally to that of according positive respectability to children collectives. This can be illustrated by the following sequence. Parents who initially refused to send children freely to the collectives, then started sending them on persuasion. Once the collectives established credibility in terms of what it can do to children, parents used to come and share their difficulties of their home and children with the members of the collectives and at times even seeking help. Later when the collectives took upon themselves civic/public responsibilities like the responsibility of processing and recommending applications for livelihood support for needy families in the village, the collectives acquired certainly respectability in the eyes of the parents and the members of the community. Equally noteworthy, is the fact that they also acquired necessary agency for handling issues of public nature.

### 6.3 Children Collectives, 'Agency' and Caste

To what extent the creation of agency in a child can dilute caste rigidities can be seen at the outset, from the way the collectives could be organized and their internal dynamics.

- 6.3.1 Of the total 144 villages, 83 villages (57.6%) could raise children collectives with mixed membership of *dalit* and non *dalit* children. However 45 villages could raise children collectives which are of exclusively *dalit* membership. And 16 villages could raise children collectives exclusively with non *dalit* children.

The predominant participation in collectives is from *dalit* children which amounts to 46.9% of the total children in the collectives. This is more than twice the presence of *dalits* in general population in Tamilnadu. The programme no doubt, helped *dalit* children more, than any other caste category.

**Table 14 : Children Collectives And Caste Boundaries**

No.	Nature of Collectives	Number	%
1	Mixed Collectives	83	57.6%
2	Exclusively <i>dalit</i>	45	31.2%
3	Exclusively non- <i>dalit</i>	16	11.1%
	TOTAL	144	100%

6.3.2 Apart from the agency of the child, other factors like numerical dominance of a particular caste, caste discrimination practices prevalent and perpetrated by a given community and the nature of housing settlements, were factors which interfered with either exclusiveness or inclusiveness.

**Table 15 : Higher Rate Of Participation Of Dalit and MBC Children In Collectives**

Block	BC	MBC	SC	ST	TOTAL
Kovilpatti	268 (18.0%)	358 (24.0%)	838 (56.2%)	26 (1.7%)	1490
Sattur	151(35.7%)	45 (10.6%)	226 (53.4%)	1 (0.2%)	423
Sivakasi	27 (2.7%)	430 (43.6%)	530 (53.7%)	0 (0.0%)	987
M.N. Nallur	104 (5.8%)	1076 (60.3%)	605 (33.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1785
<b>TOTAL</b>	550 (11.7%)	1909 (40.7%)	2199 (46.9%)	27 (0.6%)	4685

6.3.3 Group members commenting on the dynamics of the collectives however felt that children irrespective of their caste identity and affiliation could easily transcend caste limits and easily avoid openly exhibiting discrimination. This could be seen in group interactions, team activities, play and games. More anonymous the situation, more spontaneous the children became interacting with one another. For instance when the children were taken out of their villages for larger collective activities like Sports, Annual Day Celebrations, Excursions, Rallies, Training Camps and Exposure Visits, the programme staff maintained that the interacting situation was absolutely free from any kind of caste consciousness or manifestations. Even in the villages the children tended to be more spontaneous as they received more and more exposures.

6.3.4 But the problem was always the gaze of the parents and the community elders, who wittingly or unwittingly tried to impose in an implicit manner certain codes of conduct prescribed by caste observances. When asked about the apparent contradictions involved in the parental attitude which on one hand permitted children to go for camps and rallies where they could freely mix with other caste children, they on the other hand tried to behave with certain restraint within the village boundary, the members explained it thus. The parental attitude according to them, suffered a paradox. Parents could no more easily say 'no' to the preferences of their children and the choice of their outdoor activities which might include and involve mingling with other children. This, in the first place, indicates the strong presence of the agency of children in relation to parents. It also indicates parents' ambiguous acceptance of the same. Camps and rallies and the like that always happened 'far away there outside the vicinity of the village' resolved the conflict. The physical distance also provided the emotional distance. But within the village, the parents 'loudly acted out' on caste lines whenever they became conscious of community gaze and when they deliberately wanted to meet out, certain social expectations.

6.3.5 The point that needs to be noted is that the creation of agency in the child, constantly effects a tension in the micro-system of equilibrium of power involving the child and community. Barring a few exceptions, the equilibrium is always found to be in favour of the child. But for this advantage, children collectives and their sustenance would not have become a reality. Many of the larger collective programmes involving children, would not have been possible at all.

## 6.4 Children Collectives, 'Agency' and Breaking the Barriers of Gender

The major success of children collectives is rather seen in breaking the gender barriers.

**Table 16 : Gender-wise Participation In Children Collectives**

No.	Block	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Kovilpatti	709 (47.5%)	781 (52.4%)	1490
2	Sattur	205 (48.4%)	218 (51.5%)	423
3	Sivakasi	476 (48.2%)	511 (51.7%)	987
4	M.N. Nallur	919 (51.4%)	866 (48.5%)	1785
	<b>TOTAL</b>	2309 (49.2%)	2376 (50.7 %)	4685

- 6.4.1 Even in numerical terms, girls participated better than boys.
- 6.4.2 In terms of age, no serious restraint was placed by parents or community on pre-pubescent and early - adolescent children. The participation of the girl children up to the age of sixteen, is considered as normal.
- 6.4.3 The group also felt that girls attended collective meetings much more regularly than boys. This they say mainly because of the fact that girls do not have distractions arising out of mobility factor. Boys are more mobile and get distracted on other activities. In terms of focus and purpose, girls find children collective more useful and easily relate it to their personal and social development.
- 6.4.4 Children collectives have very successfully broken the social distance prescribed by traditional codes of conduct. This is seen from free and spontaneous interactions among boys and girls during group activities. Members felt confident saying that there is good amount of gender parity, mutual respect and appreciation of one another's role. Problems like teasing, ridiculing, demeaning and using of gender insensitive language are not generally seen during group activities. More importantly, the climate in the collectives is such that girl children are freely able to take lead roles without restraint. And also, it is generally felt that the girls readily showed more energy and enthusiasm than boys as they participated in collective activities.
- 6.4.5 The group members highlighted how most of the programmes facilitated by the programme staff were gender neutral in character permitting parity of participation of girls and boys. Though caste criss-crosses gender, within the permitted level of facility, boys and girls mingled more freely than ever before. The gaze of the community and patriarchal control have become much less in most of the programme villages. Remarkable achievements have been noticed in parents permitting girl children travelling to places outside the village. This might also involve stay in common places extending to a week or so. This clearly indicates the extent to which the newly promoted agency of the child has diluted the traditional rigidities of gender based identity. This is also indicative of positive change in the parental attitude.

## 6.5 Acknowledgment of the 'Agency'

Following statements by members of the SCNIC staff during the FGD deserves recording as they are clearly indicative of the working of agency in children and how they are perceived by others.

*"The parents of children from outside the project area want the project staff to start children collectives in new areas."*

*"The children of the collectives are seen by the villages as more knowledgeable."*

*"The children of the collectives speak and perform on the stage with extreme self-confidence."*

*"They have better knowledge about their rights."*

*"They know how to write petitions to the authorities."*

*"They make their own decisions."*

*"They are able to question even their own teachers for right reasons in the school."*

*"The teachers of these children say that even if they absent themselves from the schools for a while they can manage on their own."*



"WE SING OUR RIGHTS.."



## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **7. CHILDREN COLLECTIVES AND 'AGENCY' IN CHILDREN : CIVIC SELF**



ON THE TOP : RIGHTS MELA

## 7. CHILDREN COLLECTIVES AND 'AGENCY' IN CHILDREN: CIVIC SELF

First the agency of the child was established in the parent-child relationship; second in relation to community at large. SCNIC however thought it necessary to add yet another dimension to the agency of the child. This has been done by way of creating a 'civic self' which would make childhood wholesome. Civic self is created through civic engagements. Here, the children are not only made to understand and internalize their own right to childhood, but also made to realize their commitment to the common interests of the community in which they live. If the first dimension of 'agency in child' is psycho-social, the second dimension is more socio-cultural. But the third dimension however is socio-political which makes the agency balanced. SCNIC facilitated a process through which the children addressed some common issues, particularly those directly affected their interests as children. On one hand this involved planning and executing civic activities invoking individual and collective volunteerism, and on the other hand, it involved engaging civic and state authorities.

The study of the situations reveals that civic self in children developed in various stages and through different processes. They can be summed up as follows:

1. Collectivisation of children and creating instrumentality in group
2. Giving knowledge inputs in terms of rights and social issues
3. Training in democratic skills
4. Networking and mobilization
5. Finding a civic space and
6. Demonstrating leadership and civic courage.

### 7.1 Children Collectives, Instrumentality, and Publicness

Collectivisation of children in the age group 5 to 18 by organizing of Children Collectives, was done in all the 144 villages. Reference has already been made about this. One of the major gains achieved through Children Collectives is, its instrumentality. Apart from children enjoying their participation in Children Collectives, they over a period of time, realize how the group can be made an instrument for achieving larger goals. On examination, it is found that only at certain level of maturity, the groups seem to gain potential for instrumentality. The indicator of this level of group maturity is seen in terms of children's ability to distinguish the 'personal' from that of the 'public' in their group deliberations. Meeting of various Children Collectives, makes us to say that SCNIC Children Collectives, carry a good amount of instrumentality which is not even seen in adult groups.

7.1.1 At this level of maturity, the group show greater ability for organizing itself on goal based activities. Members' self-confidence and self-worth seem to be high. Their ability for team work is significant. SCNIC training of Children Collectives, in methods of formal deliberation and holding of meetings, of raising leadership, of developing capacity for team work and of developing collective vision, have greatly helped the process.

## 7.2 Children Collectives, Child Rights, and Developing Civic Capabilities

Civic capabilities certainly meaning basic knowledge about rights and duties. In the case of children, this involves knowing a good deal of rights relating to childhood protection and citizenship. SCNIC organized various training inputs based on UN Child Rights Convention (Right to Life, Right to Development, Right to Protection and Right to Participation). Additional inputs were also given in terms of knowledge relating to active child labour laws and Right to Education. The knowledge of the children about the rights and its internalization, are found highly satisfactory.

7.2.1 Rights are not taught in abstract. Children are helped to find the connection between what they see as their own individual rights and what they see as their collective needs and problems. These needs and immediate problems are usually identified by children in terms of the following: Lack of educational materials like books and notebooks, non availability of play things in the *balwadi* and schools, need to establish *balwadis* and improvement of school infrastructure, request for appointment of teachers in schools and *balwadis*, beyond school support such as tuition, maintenance of access roads to schools, drinking water, street lights, transportation to schools, creating play area in the village, cleanliness and environmental concerns of the village, removal of liquor shop in the village, raising support for special events for children, preventing the occurrence of child labour, monitoring of children for preventing dropouts, monitoring of child marriages, and other forms of child abuse, etc.

### Box 13

#### **Friendly Panchayat**

*Kanchampatti is a village near Sattur. Thendral is the name of the collective functioning in the village. The collective was very conscious of its civic responsibilities. The first success came to the collective when the children petitioned the Panchayat to repair a damaged drain that caused overflowing of sewage that ran across the village road. The second issue the collective identified was, the need for getting a water tap connection to one of the main streets, wherefrom some of the children came. The Panchayat was very children friendly. The water tap came without much difficulty. The children did not stop there. Now they found a new need. This need was very much around their own interest. They wanted a play ground cum children's park established for them in a plot that belonged to the Panchayat. The Panchayat very gladly accepted the proposal. They got a park with a nice play area.*

7.2.2 In the collectives children are helped to prepare their own agenda based on their felt needs. Then the issues are taken up in their monthly or weekly meetings. Children reflect on these issues based on their own personal experiences, observations and needs. There is a good amount of sharing of experiences in such meetings. It is a process of self education and developing social concern through self discovery using the group process.

The process is encouraged to be praxis oriented that children themselves arrive at solutions and action plans. This further leads to higher level of ownership of the social issues and commitment for action. This is certainly a unique achievement.

- 7.2.3 Mere development of instrumentality in group and knowledge about rights are not enough for civic action in a democratic society. Children must cultivate democratic values of equality, tolerance, inclusiveness and respect for consensus. There must therefore prevail in a group an 'ideal speech' situation whereby every child gets an opportunity to articulate his or her views, be open to others' views, demonstrate tolerance, be inclusive in terms of the outlook pertaining to caste, gender, etc. It is not mere oratorical skills, but skills for free and fearless expression of views, sharing of experience and opinion and collective problem solving. Children's Collectives have made a real mark in this regard.
- 7.2.4 In Children's Collectives, leaders emerge spontaneously. This means that, a child over a period of time, on the basis of its own initiative, knowledge, organizing ability, appreciations of programme initiatives, acceptance from others and consensus arrived, comes to the fore as leader.

#### Box 14

##### ***They Did Not Mind Stopping The Collector***

*Sukiravarpati village belongs to Sivakasi block. NEWS Jeevapookal Collective was active in the village. The village drain caused a big problem. It very often got clogged near the dalit colony and overflowed. The Panchayat was not keen to regularly clean the ditch or build a diversion. People from the colony petitioned the Panchayat several times. They also met the Panchayat President several times. That was of no use. Then the children collective under Koodalingam, the collective leader, took up the issue. They further petitioned. But nothing happened. The indifference of the Panchayat was too much to bear. It was the year 2008. One day, they got the information that the Virudunagar District Collector was to visit Sukiravarpati to attend Gramsabha meeting. A strategy was worked out by the children collective. The Collector was to go past the road that ran close to the dalit colony, before he entered the main village. The children led by Koodalingam went in time and stood in the middle of the road to block the collector and petition him straight. The collector stopped seeing the children. The matter was heard. The collector promptly directed the Panchayat President to attend to the work. In no time, it was done. But Koodalingam's family had to pay the price. His mother was refused a house patta for long, by the Panchayat. Koodalingam never gave up his work in the children collective.*

### **7.3 Mobilisation and Public Good**

Another important facet of gaining democratic capability involves learning of skills for democratic mobilisation. A review of the activities of children collectives, would reveal that children have gained considerable knowledge and skills in various forms of mobilization and protest, for civic problem solving and civic engagement. The most frequently used method, is direct representation to civic authorities or, drawing formal petitions requesting civic action from them. As an extension, children do participate in *gramsabha* meetings, where they represent their collective grievances and needs. Such representations before the authorities and collective bodies, give children self confidence in public and ability to represent, negotiate and convince others on important issues of public nature. Children are also given sufficient exposure in organizing campaigns and rallies.

Choosing the right slogans, producing publicity materials like placards, campaign songs and staging street theatre on thematic issues, are capabilities which are very much within their purview. Children in the collectives seem quite capable of staging formal democratic protests in public. Very effective signature campaigns, organizing of processions and rallies, and holding of even *dharna* when necessary, are not uncommon among Children Collectives.

7.3.1 Every children collective has created some public good or other. There cannot be a single exception. A cursory survey would reveal that these public goods created by the Children Collectives are normally in the form of enrolment of children in schools, monitoring of and preventing the occurrence of child labour, monitoring and reporting of other forms of child abuse, helping a child victim in the school, cleaning up the village garbage, getting the authorities to clean up the village sewer, removing of a wine shop from a dwelling area, bringing a library to the village, pressurizing the authorities for laying a village road, laying access road to the school, getting street lights, building or adding infrastructure facilities in schools, etc.

## 7.4 Children Collectives and Larger Public Sphere

Another remarkable achievement is seen in networking of Children Collectives and mobilisation of children for participation in the larger public sphere. This is facilitated by creating at the first level, clusters of Children's Collectives and then federating them at the block level.

7.4.1 This type of networking in the first place, effectively breaks the geographical and social isolation of children. By way of providing children with novel situations for interaction and making them share their lived-in experiences, SCNIC has succeeded in creating a new form of self consciousness in children where they see themselves as a social category. This provides for new forms of self confidence, ability for higher level organizing and providing of leadership. The successful way in which *melas*, enrolment drives, rights oriented rallies have been conducted, stands proofs. This is where the movement aspiration of the SCNIC project is tested. By all measures, the activities and outcomes of larger mobilization of children at the block level are found satisfactory.

7.4.2 Creation of children's federation and organizing of activities and creation of new forms of experiences had in a larger measure, created new patterns of communication among children. In other words, there has emerged a new collective consciousness among children of SCNIC collectives.

7.4.3 All the federation activities are clear demonstration of participation in public sphere by children and are well received not only by the general public, but also by the local, print and visual media. Here again, the movement aspiration of SCNIC is largely met.

7.4.4 Another indicator for success of networking ability of SCNIC is seen in their effective participation in National Movement for Working Children (NMWC) and Federation of Children Movements for Right to Participation (FCMRP), movements completely mobilized and organized by children. SCNIC children seem to have emerged as natural leaders of these state level and national level children activism. (Discussed in more detail in the next section).

## 7.5 Politicised Adults and Civic Children

Another important finding that needs to be recorded is that there is not much difficulty for children of the collectives to take civic responsibilities in the villages. Ironically it is a negative condition created by adults who in the present context of political populism, identity politics, vote bank mobilization and party membership, are too very politicized to take up civic responsibilities. Adults are too very partisan and defensive in addressing civic issues. Children on the other hand, do not suffer from such constraints and partisan considerations. Collectives must be credited for easily appropriating and engaging the civic space in each village.

## 7.6 'Civic self' and Personal courage of Children

There is a remarkable range of civic courage demonstrated by the children of the collectives as they engage in civic activism. By civic courage here, we mean the ability of children to individually and collectively engage people in power or authority in such a manner as to influence their decisions in obtaining favourable civic benefits. This might involve meeting of personal consequences that might range from indifferent treatment by authorities, to abuse, chastization and even personal victimization. It is reported that the children have gone through all these experiences. Even those who experienced direct and personal victimization by authorities, do not seem to feel unhappy over such experiences.

### Box 15

#### *Jansirani of Sivakasi*

*Jansirani is now aged about 18 years and is doing her I BSc Chemistry in the local college. She came to Sivakasi to attend the FGD. She recalled some of her experiences as a member of Ceylon Colony Children Collective. She said that the government school in which she was studying did not have a compound wall around. This gave the village urchins and others the opportunity to peep in through the windows and tease girls. She was in her*



#### **JANSI RANI (centre)**

*Jansirani's house was also in danger. She ran to the Panchayat President and pleaded with her that her house must be spared as there was some dispute as to the boundary. But the woman was sarcastic and said, "Did you not argue with me that day when you came to the Gramsabha asking for the compound wall. Were you not rude to me? Now it is my turn". Part of her house was pulled down in no time. Jansirani said, "I wept inconsolably. For a few days we could not do anything. My mother went around literally begging for food. My father was only a daily wage earner. But he went to the court. But the tragedy was that no one came to my house to console me."*

*VII Standard then. One day, she took a few of her classmates to the Gramsabha meeting of the village and handed over a petition to the President requesting her to attend to the issue. The woman President of the Panchayat was thoroughly annoyed. She scolded them and said it was for their teachers and Head Master to approach her, and not the small ones like them. But Jansirani argued that it was only girl children who were affected and not teachers. The president was further annoyed. But somehow the compound wall was built, not very late.*

*Sometime later, there was an eviction drive by the Panchayat in Ceylon Colony. They were indiscreetly pulling down several houses and small huts in the name of clearing unauthorized structures. The angry Panchayat President was very much there supervising the work.*

*“Now I am grown up. Though I have a lot of hurt feelings, now I am matured enough to understand all that around me. I continue to take the lead role even now, for doing public good. My ambition now is, to get my PhD in chemistry and become a teacher. I will start an NGO. I will teach children how to become mentally tough and work for society.”*

- 7.6.1 When asked about the sources of inspiration for their courage they reported the following to be significant. They are namely, motivation and support from programme staff, role models provided by senior children and leaders of the collectives, overall support from other children, support from parents and personal commitment for a cause.

## 7.7 'Civic Self' and aspiration for Change

Another conspicuous feature of the development of 'civic self' is seen in terms of children's aspirations to be 'change agents' of their own community. In the focus group discussion with children, the career aspirations expressed by children would manifestly display this. A sample of statements are given below which make the contention self evident.

*“I am doing B.E. now.... After that I would do M.E..... And then I would become a Collector and would do a lot of good to the village community.”*

*“I want to become an MBBS. I want to open a clinic and give free medical service to women and children.”*

*“I want to become a policeman and I would correct the society.”*

*“I am interested in drawing. I will become a drawing master and teach drawing to children who cannot study well.”*

*“I want to become a businessman. And I will support a trust that will do social service.”*

*“I want to do MBA. I will give a portion of my earnings to an organization that would support children's education.”*

*“I want to do my PhD in Chemistry. I want to become a Professor. And I will not punish my students.”*

*“I want to become a teacher. I will not give too much homework.... I will not torture students who will not do their homework.”*

*“I will study for IAS. I would definitely pass.... I will correct government officials who do wrong.”*

These are typical answers that come from the children of the collectives. Their career aspirations however naive, certainly reflect potently their 'yearning for change' of their immediate circumstances. This is a major achievement of SCNIC.

## **7.8 Children Collective- New Social Capital in Children**

As on today, SCNIC by way of raising 144 Children Collectives across four development blocks, has effectively reached out to nearly 4500 children. In terms of social capital generated by bringing children together who are otherwise left in isolated villages, is a good promise for launching of any development work centred around the interest of children.

## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **8. NETWORKING & CHILDREN IN LARGER PUBLIC SPHERE**

## 8. NETWORKING AND CHILDREN IN LARGER PUBLIC SPHERE



NMWC NATIONAL CONFERENCE, MADURAI (2008)

SCNIC certainly used Networking Strategies to enlarge its presence in the larger public sphere. Networking strategies can manifest in different forms as is seen in Funding Partnerships, Alliances, Coalitions and Coordinations. SCNIC itself was built on a networking strategy that tried to bring funders and NGOs with different capabilities on a level playing ground for optimization of resources and realizing other development action ideals. However in this section we shall briefly look into the issue of how SCNIC itself used networking strategies to advance some of its programme objectives.

### Descriptive Table 9 :

#### NETWORK PURPOSES AND CONSEQUENCES

NETWORK PURPOSE / STRATEGY / ACTION	ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCE(S) FOR MEMBER NGO	CIVIL SOCIETY CONSEQUENCE(S)	ISSUE(S) FOR NODAL LEADERSHIP
Information sharing among NGOs for wider awareness and promotion of meaningful action	Acquisition of new knowledge, new models for action and mutual learning.	Empowerment of NGOs and appropriation of civil society space for development action.	Higher trade-off for more resourceful NGOs and nodal leaders in terms of time, HR, Knowledge resources and money.
Creation of awareness and public opinion	Providing the communication link, expression of solidarity and gaining new legitimacies.	Larger and more effective presence in the public sphere.	Strong nodal leadership and organizing ability required.
Advocacy	Expression of solidarity and mainstreaming of constituency specific issues and knowledge of these issues.	Civil society bringing concerted pressure for policy changes and government action for changing institutional practices or for addressing major development issue.	Strong nodal leadership, organizing ability, lead research and ability to engage state structures.

NETWORK PURPOSE / STRATEGY / ACTION	ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCE(S) FOR MEMBER NGO	CIVIL SOCIETY CONSEQUENCE(S)	ISSUE(S) FOR NODAL LEADERSHIP
Synchronization of effort	Shedding duplication, better focus and saving of resources.	Better synergy.	Better planning and coordination.
Profiling and legitimacy	Better presence and recognition. Positive trade-off for weak NGOs. Negative trade-off for resourceful NGOs.	Effective presence in public sphere.	Need for well recognized and resourceful NGOs to provide leadership.
Democratic distribution of resources and aid	Smaller NGOs gain financial support and donor access.	Democratization of CS space, breaking of NGO monopoly.	Strong nodal leadership and democratic commitment.
Evolving democratic and decentralized consensus among larger NGO constituencies and stakeholder.	Recognition and empowerment of smaller NGOs and alliance with people.	Creating scope for people's movements.	Strong nodal leadership and strong commitment for social change.
Regulatory coordination	Accepting standard practices/code of conduct.	Better standards of NGO governance.	Ability to educate and promote consensus.

## 8.1 SCNIC and National Networks

The longest involvement ever in a network for SCNIC came, through its association with Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL). CACL was started in the year 1992. The aim of this national level network is to forge a relationship between the actions of the grassroots level NGOs and advocacy efforts, taken at the state and national levels by a nodal leadership for abolition of child labour. The strategy of this national level campaign is to support rights based activism and effect policy changes that would lead to long lasting structural changes. SCNIC could gain a significant place in this network as CEDAR in its own capacity, had already demonstrated its ability for providing nodal leadership in this network since 1998. CEDAR was the convener at the district level.

8.1.1 In the first place, CACL was greatly facilitative of giving SCNIC, a State and National level identity. Though SCNIC was very well known in the southern districts of Tami Nadu, CACL brought SCNIC into contact with other NGOs – big and small with similar persuasions and development agencies like UNICEF. On one hand this gave SCNIC a new form of self-confidence and on the other hand, a profile that was needed to operate in a wider public sphere.

8.1.2 Countrywide, hundreds of NGOs worked among child labourers. Child labour occurred in different settings in different ways, subject to different levels of exploitation and cruelty. CACL provided the platform for NGOs to share their experiences and arrive at an integrated understanding of the issue. This had two consequences. First it helped individual NGOs working in isolation find the connect to enlarge the meaning and scope of their work. Second, the connect in return, promoted a national conscience capable of addressing child labour issue.

- 8.1.3 CACL also disseminated information relating to regional and national perspectives of the issue, policy discourses, government attitude and impending campaigns. SCNIC also greatly benefitted from the free trainings organized by CACL, particularly for its grassroots workers.
- 8.1.4 CACL provided the much needed legitimacy and solidarity of action at the time of crisis. Several of the investigations and enquiries conducted on the accidents involving children in firework industries/match industries would not have been possible without network support. The same is true about rescue of bonded-children located in other states.

## **8.2 Children's Federations and Heightening of Children's Self-Consciousness and Child-Centred Publicness**

Another important network strategy that helped the SCNIC programme was the alliance of NGOs working among children, with the constituencies of children they worked with. The NGO network is called Forum for Promotion of Child Participation (FPCP). The federation of children is called Federation of Children's Movement for the Right to Participation (FCMRP). FPCP has about 100 NGOs today, coming from Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. FCMRP federates about 25,000 children from the same area. SCNIC provided the nodal leadership during the difficult years of its formation before it was handed over to others.

- 8.2.1 The aim of the coalition is to create a child-centred space in the public sphere. This was to be done by promoting children's participatory capabilities through self-articulation and self-organizing of children. The coalition has very strict protocol of conduct for adult facilitators and child participants. The coalition provided not only training in child rights and child-participation methods but also provided first-hand experience of self-organizing of children. Started in 2008, the coalition is going strong.
- 8.2.2 From the point of view of adult facilitators, this coalition programme gave them an opportunity to address the issue of gap between what was theoretically proposed as a child-centred space and what was practically possible. For many, the self-articulation and self-management abilities of child leaders were real eye-opener. Syed Ali, Programme Coordinator of SCNIC is of the opinion that FPCP/FCMRP programmes helped adult facilitators to deconstruct effectively their 'patronizing roles' since. The quality of facilitation by adult staff suddenly improved effecting a quantum jump in the quality of children collectives.
- 8.2.3 The off-shoot of this impact could be seen, Mr. Ali maintains, in the manner it improved the quality of the training manual SCNIC prepared in the name '*Adikkal*' (Foundation Stone). *Adikkal* is a 76 page training manual that could be used by NGO workers, teachers and others for teaching child rights, for both children and adult learners. FPCP/FCMRP experience gave the team of authors of the manual which included SCNIC staff and 14 children, several advantages. It helped them thus: 1. heavily drawing on the participatory experience of the adults and children it could problematize the entire issue of child rights in a realistic perspective; 2. could design practical riddles and exercises based on the real experience of the children; 3. could avoid adult pedagogical tone and prescriptions; 4. could add value by way of children providing authorship; 5. could build lot of self-esteem and pride in child-authors. Once published, the manual became the most tangible asset of the network.

## Box 16

### **Adikkal**

*Yet another novel experiment of involving children in higher level participatory learning was the way Adikkal was prepared. Adikkal in Tamil means 'foundation stone'. It is a seventy six page highly user-friendly training manual in Tamil, on Child Rights. It is a flexible manual that it can be used not only in variety of contexts but also by anyone, from a professional trainer to a field level motivator. The Child Rights themes that form the content, are drawn from United Nations Child Rights Convention (UNCRC). The manual contains seven sections, each section providing guidelines and materials for conducting 5 to 7 training sessions.*

*It was the year 2008. There was a heightened conscience about Child Rights in every NGO and Civil Society circles. There was a heavy demand for training. SCNIC became major resource centre for training. There were several manuals and guide books available freely and SCNIC in fact, was using some. But soon difficulties arose. Most of the manuals were in English. Some of them were too general and missed the context. Others were too prosaic or abstract, they rendered themselves uninteresting. At this point there arose within SCNIC the idea that SCNIC using its own experience and training expertise, could develop its own manual.*

*The interesting twist came when SCNIC decided to involve children. It was no fad. The inspiration came from child leaders themselves. By 2008, the Children Collective programme had sufficiently matured and had pushed to the front, many talented children –boys and girls, taking up several responsibilities. They were children who were sure of themselves. Fourteen children who were articulate were invited to participate in the manual preparation. Equal number of SCNIC staff too participated in a week long workshop.*

*What made the manual special in the first place was the enormous amount of lived-in experience the children could pour in to provide content for highlighting different contexts and even for designing exercises. This single factor pegged the manual to the context and made it highly relatable with the experience of local trainees. The second important aspect of the preparation was, the way the children provided the 'child's eye view' of the whole process. Adults could see through these children's eyes. It was personally very exciting for many of us. The manual in that process found its right perspective. The third important aspect was the marvellous way the children could demonstrate their talents and abilities especially in an exercise where application of mind on abstract issues were involved. For many of us adults, it became a joint exploration. Many programme staff during the sessions confessed that they would 'change their attitude towards children thereafter'. The popularity of the training manual became the very proof of the success, of the project.*

*Syed Ali, Programme Coordinator*

- 8.2.4 SCNIC could also make its presence felt in the network (FPCP/FCMRP) through the successful participation of their children. Ponselvi of Samathuvapuram village representing 'Thendral Children's Collective' rose up to become the head of the State Executive, the President of FCMRP. She diligently climbed up the ladder by demonstrating her organizing and leadership skills.

## Box 17

**Syed's Interview With Ponselvi**

**PONSELVI (Extreme Right)**

(Ponselvi hails from Samathuvapuram near Kovilpatti. She is presently doing her XI Standard and is 17. Her father is a daily wage worker who has health problems. Mother works in a match unit. She has a brother who is about 14 years old, suffers from debilities from spastic condition. Her background doesn't deter Ponselvi from being her own self. She is a natural leader. No wonder she got elected as the President of FCMRP which means that she is on the top of a movement as a leader which commands a federated membership of about 25,000 children in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. Syed Ali interviewed her recently.)

**How did you join the Children Collective?**

It was in 2006. I used to like participating in debates. Siriya Puspam akka, Field motivator from CEDAR, one day, was conducting an oratory competition in our village, Samathuvapuram. It was Kamarajar's birthday celebration. I was too glad to participate. Everyone appreciated my speech. I

was then in class VI and 12 years old. That was my first ever participation in a collective. Since then, I had been part of Thendral Children Collective.

**What did you do in the collective? What interested you in the children collective?**

I was just a member of the collective initially. But I became a leader in 2009. I continued to be the leader of the children collective till 2011. The very first thing I like about the collective is the space it gives you to talk about things like education, environment, and child rights. This interested me initially. It didn't stop there. We also got involved in corresponding actions. I remember when I joined first, going with other children to meet Karthiga akka's mother and persuade her to send Karthiga akka back to school. And we were then very happy that Karthiga akka went back to school from the next day. Many in the village praised us. And I think that's my first motivation. We have helped many children in our village to go back to school after that. Now, as a leader, I have been meeting the panchayat president to get a teacher for our village balwadi. I hope we will succeed soon.

**What is the most memorable experience you had in children's collective?**

It was when there was voting by rising of hands for the post of Secretary of Mahasakthi Children Collective Federation. There were two other friends who also contested. When they announced my name, almost all the children raised their hands in support of me. I was overwhelmed and felt so happy. The same happened, when I was declared as the President of FCMRP (Forum of Children Movements for Right to Participation) at Coimbatore in

**What have you learnt in general, from Children Collective involvement?**

I have learned to be a good leader. I think I have developed the ability to prepare and conduct a meeting. I have also learnt so many things from CEDAR and FCMRP. I always share this experience with my collective friends. I have learned about different places I happened to go.

**Where all you have been?**

I have been to almost all the cities in Tamil Nadu...Chennai, Pondicherry, Madurai, Coimbatore, Dindigul... and many other places as well. My first visit for children collective is, to CEDAR in Kovilpatti, when I was just in VII standard with Amutha akka who was a Children Collective leader.

**What you think are qualities of a good leader?**

A leader must first have organizing ability. She must know how to conduct a meeting... prepare agenda, discuss... take decision... I think I have all these abilities...

**When you leave the children collective what are your plans?**

I cannot completely leave the children collective even after I go past 18. I will continue to facilitate and help them. When I grow up, I want to start my own organization and help children to participate. I want to become a teacher.

- 8.2.5 FCMRP has a system of retaining able and motivated children on completion of 18 years of age, as young facilitators. They serve as trainers and motivators of younger children. They are taken as role models. Amutha of Samathuvapuram village has been retained by FCMRP as Young Facilitator.
- 8.2.6 SCNIC children from CEDAR area organized a model *Gramsabha* at Thurayur demonstrating how children could effectively participate in *Gramsabha* meetings. This seems to have considerable impact inspiring children of non SCNIC constituencies. This provides an insight how children could exercise their agency in influencing opinions and attitudes in larger public sphere.
- 8.2.7 Another evidence for bringing wider influence in the public sphere could be seen from the choice Aazmey, funding partner of FPCP, made by selecting 'CEDAR-*Mahasakthi* Children Collective', as one among the ten best models of children participation in Tamil Nadu-Pondicherry area. This has been show-cased as 'best practice'.

### **8.3 Nodal Leadership of SCNIC and Missed Opportunities**

As we record some of the successes using networking strategies, it is also equally important how the nodal leadership capabilities of SCNIC were underutilized.

- 8.3.1 There was a long felt demand from NGOs from southern districts of Tamil Nadu, to form a network to address child rights issue in a concerted manner. This in fact converged with the vision of SCNIC/Action Aid, in enlarging the 'Southern Collective'. In the year 2005, acknowledging this spirit, Action Aid initiated a move that wanted SCNIC partnership to further include 12 more NGOs. After a short orientation for the formation, Action Aid for reasons best known to it, became disinterested. This frustrated many NGOs in the Southern Districts.
- 8.3.2. After a gap of about 2 years, another attempt was made. About 30 NGOs came together (distributed across 12 districts of southern Tamil Nadu – Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Virudunagar, Madurai, Karur, Theni, Dindigul, Thanjavur, Puthukottai, Ramanathapuram and Sivanganga) to form a network. The process went on for about two years with CEDAR taking up the nodal leadership. The expenses were met from SCNIC budget. By 2008, SCNIC had sufficiently ground-tested many of its action models with success. The expectations were very high and the time was ripe for replication of SCNIC experience in all the remaining nine districts. The expected funding support was not forthcoming. The effort had to be once again given up in frustration. SCNIC thus, could not really live up to its dream of a 'true southern collective'. The inconsistencies of stand taken by Action Aid in this regard, remains unexplained.



## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **9. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION & SUSTAINING CHILD-CENTRED SPACE**

## 9. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND SUSTAINING CHILD-CENTRED SPACE



"WE ORGANISED OUR REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS..."

Child-centred space, in our understanding, is the institutionally facilitated physical, psychological, socio-cultural, and intellectual space in the family, community and school that ensures a child its 'agency', the capacity of the child for self-willed action. Such an 'agency' we presume would help the child to learn and grow in a fulfilling and joyful manner and enter succeeding phases of development and into adulthood realizing maximum his/her human potential without any handicap and in the larger interest of the society.

Child-centred space in other words means, the institutional space that positively recognizes and nurtures the personhood of the child. From the point of view of internalization of child rights, it corresponds to Level- 5 of internalization where the community arrives at certain value consensus as to the redefinition of child and childhood in terms of rights.

### 9.1 Civic Leadership and Acknowledgement of Child-Centred Space and Child Participation

The nature of child-centred space emerging in the village communities in general and as a consequence of SCNIC programme in particular needs to be understood in terms of certain new configurations that characterize the community. First comes the leadership in the community. No more, we can easily dichotomize the traditional 'caste leadership of the village' and 'civic leadership'. There is virtually a collapse of the space between the two and there is a symbiosis of the highly 'differentiated caste interest' and 'universalizing civic' interest. What emerges is a complex matrix of power relationship, caste cutting across civic structures and representation throwing, 'leaders of paradox'. Only with this background in mind, we proceed to speak about 'civic leaders' of the village. He or she could be an elected member of a ward or president of a *panchayat*.

**Descriptive Table 10 :**

**COMMUNITY AND CHILD-CENTERED SPACE**

	KEY MARKERS OF CHILD-CENTRED SPACE	Traditional Community without child-centred space	Community that guarantees child-centred space
1	Identity and Dignity	Mediated through a hierarchy of Paternity, Gender, Caste and Class.	Child as person with naturally inherent rights.
2	Survival of Child	Conceived largely in terms of superstitious, religious and fatalistic notions of fertility and mortality.	Explicit articulation of concern for child health (pre-natal /post-natal), prevention of child mortality, care for child nutrition and maternal health.
3	Child Protection	Primarily a Family Responsibility. Vulnerability, abuse and exploitation are rationalized in terms of gender, caste and age.	Vigilance and protection against all forms of vulnerability, exploitation and abuse of children (foeticide, infanticide, gender discrimination, child labour, child marriage, sexual abuse, child trafficking, delinquency etc.).
4	Child Development	Responsibility of the family and kin to prepare the child for highly gendered caste differentiated occupational and educational preferences and roles.	Community commits to concern and action for quality education without gender/caste discriminations.
5	'Agency'	Knowledge and wisdom are endowed in terms of age, authority and position. A child cannot think or judge for itself.	Guarantees freedom of expression and right to participation. Recognizes the fact that child can think for himself/herself and for others if guided properly. Creates space for creative self-expression and participation.

**Box 18****Children's Cause And Political Space**

*Saravanan is a dalit youth who hails from Chockalingapuram in Sivakasi block. Chockalingapuram is a dalit village attached to M. Pudupatti Panchayat. M. Pudupatti is predominantly a caste-Hindu village. Saravanan became a youth volunteer with SCNIC around 2008. He became a vibrant youth worker who went about organizing children, for special coaching and tutoring beyond school hours. He was so committed and sincere that he became very popular among parents not only in his own village but also with the parents of M. Puthupatti, the caste-Hindu village. When 2011 Panchayat Elections were held, Chockalingapuram returned Saravanan as a ward member. This was followed by a triangular contest for Vice-Presidency of the panchayat in which, Saravanan engaged two other non-dalits from M. Pudupatti. Saravanan won. Today, the proud Saravanan says that it was his total commitment to Children's cause which earned popularity and acceptance from every community. With the present position as Vice-President, Saravanan says, he will spare no effort in promoting children's cause.*

- 9.1.2 As change agents, these civic leaders stand to particular advantage. As leaders and members of the *panchayat*, they have certain mandated responsibilities that relate to child rights as is the case with *panchayat's* role in abolition of child labour, supervision of *balwadis*, health care of mother and child, participation in Village Education Committees (VEC) etc. These roles and responsibilities thrust upon by government on *panchayats* to a great extent, legitimize the child rights discourse. SCNIC, when it took up with *panchayats*, the issue of child rights through its training workshops and organizing of various child-centred activities, the ideas were not alien to civic leaders warranting any resistance.

**Box 19****"He Led And SCNIC Followed"**

*Thurayur is a village located about 15 Kms away from Kovilpatti. It has about 700 to 800 households representing several caste groups. (Thevars, Nadars, Konars and Arundhathiyars). Arulraj is now about 38 years. He belongs to a dominant caste-Hindu group mentioned above. He first came into contact with SCNIC some seven years ago when SCNIC organized Panchayat Raj Training for youth and adults. He is remembered even today, as a keen participant of SCNIC trainings and workshops. Arulraj became the Panchayat President of Thurayur in 2005. He is one of those presidents who went that extra mile in child-labour abolition and monitoring. He personally monitored dropouts in the villages and reported it to SCNIC. Not a single day passed without Arulraj visiting the balwadi. Thurayur could have one of the vibrant children collectives represented by children of all castes. Arulraj also ensured children's participation in gramsabha meetings. He put in his personal money to organize annual sports meets and children's melas. He also instituted special prizes to recognize talent. A staff of SCNIC remarked "He led, and SCNIC followed."*

- 9.1.3 As the Programme Staff of SCNIC would testify, there was absolutely no resistance whatsoever from any civic leader of any village against any of the SCNIC programme or activities throughout the programme period. It needs to be recorded that on two important issues namely, child labour abolition and enrolment of children in schools, the civic leadership had been overwhelmingly unanimous. The staff are of the opinion that the civic leadership irrespective of cast affiliations, never placed any caveat in the name of caste or gender on children finding access to education or availing health/nutritional facilities. Barring a few, even civic activism of children either caught them by surprise or simply fascinated them.

9.1.4 SCNIC by encouraging civic activism of the children, has impacted very positively upon civic leaders. These leaders would go a long way trying to secure a larger and inclusive space for children, in the community. Factors like caste, gender, and patriarchy would yet provide the contours of the space. But they are no more belts and braces. Despite tension, they stretch out breathe and provide a larger space.

## Box 20

### Not Too Late For Conversion

*Pappa Naiker who is in his mid sixties now, was the Panchayat President of Meenthulli Village (2006-2011)*



### PAPPA NAIKER RECEIVING PETITION

*Naiker with the request for attention. For Naiker, it was a revelation that children could articulate a civic issue in a manner which he could least imagine. He saw to that everything the children asked for, were conceded. There began his own child-centred activism. Meenthulli Panchayat became the panchayat that promoted the finest child-participation in Gramsabha. Though the children collectives had certain exclusiveness in terms of dalit and non-dalit identities, Naiker and his panchayat, valiantly created an inclusive space for children in gramsabha.*

*near Melaneelithanallur. He comes from a caste-Hindu background. The village comes under Victory Trust. Meenthulli is a mixed caste village with a considerable dalit population. Two separate collectives function, one in the dalit area and the other in the non-dalit area. On one occasion, the children from the dalit collective, conducted a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and drew a village map locating several of the civic amenities wanting attention from the Panchayat. It ranged from broken water taps to non-working street lamps and from pathways needing repair to trees that needed to be planted. The children submitted the 'map' obtained through PRA to Pappa*

9.1.5 The experience of SCNIC, on hindsight reveals that the project did not anticipate clearly the potential available in the agency of civic leaders in the community for creating a child-centered space. It is largely left underutilized. This was perhaps because of the stereotype, people in power change least.

## Box 21

### Beyond Borders

*The newly elected Panchayat Presidents of Melaneelithanallur block, about 20 in number, wanted to form a consortium of Presidents in early 2012 to address certain of their common interests. They were looking for a place to hold their first meeting. Moovirundhali Panchayat President who was known to Victory Trust, suggested the office premises of Victory Trust at Ayalpatti. Becoming the host, Mr. Aruldoss, Manager, Victory Trust, got an opportunity to speak about Victory's Child Rights work. Impressed by this, he was invited to speak more specifically on child rights issues on three subsequent meetings. Many presidents got impressed and applauded Victory Trust. The presidents of Naduvakurichi and Thadiyampatti went further. They invited Aruldoss to replicate SCNIC work in their villages. Child rights awareness programs are very much in progress right now in Naduvakurichi and Thadiyampatti villages beyond SCNIC and with Victory's own resources.*

## 9.2 Women and Child-Centred Space in the Community

Already we have dealt in detail how women in their parental role create a child-centred space in the family. Today, several of the empowerment programmes meant for women have made the presence of women in public sphere, significant. Especially, the organisation of women in terms of SHGs in villages has given women certain economic leverage. It also provides a social platform for mobilisation for common causes. CEDAR which is actively involved in SHG programme, has a pertinent observation to make. Going by their records, there is an increasing rate of borrowings from SHGs by women, to meet the educational needs of the children. Access to credit and control over cash by women, certainly bring a thaw on the patriarchal hold over the child in the family. Children enjoy increasing allowance of receiving maternal protection and nurturing.

9.2.1 Even as mobilising platforms, SHGs have served well, campaigns and rallies organised by SCNIC. Women are the first to respond whenever there is a serious child rights violation. They are always on the forefront of such protests. SHGs also serve as information sharing and public opinion making platforms. Although SCNIC focussed more on women, there remains a vast potential yet to be tapped.

## 9.3 Youth and Child-Centred Space in the Community

Youth groups are thought to be another platform to create and sustain child-centred space. SCNIC throughout the project period has relied on youth groups for organising rallies, campaigns and protests. A number of volunteers for the regular programmes had also been drawn from youth groups. Though there is a good amount of positive interest in the child among youth, the group is so transient these days that it is difficult to organise youth in a sustainable fashion around the interest of the child. Employment opportunities and urbanward migration, have resulted in the absence of stable youth groups which characterised villages of yester years. This social trend indirectly brings added relevance for forming children collectives because children as they become youth, are increasingly not going to be available for social exposure.

## 9.4 School and Denial of Child-Centred Space and Child-Participation

Of all places, the school turns out to be the most opaque of places for promotion of child rights and development of a child-centred space.

### Descriptive Table 11 :

#### CHILD CENTRED SPACE IN SCHOOL

Key Markers of Child-centred space in school	Schools in the past	Schools in the present	Ideal school which is child-centred
Main purpose of Education	Providing literacy and numeracy, removing ignorance, modernize the country.	Compulsory schooling, access to every child irrespective of caste and poverty. To tackle poverty and promote equality.	Total development of every child through quality education irrespective of caste, class and gender. To positively contribute to holistic prosperity.

Key Markers of Child-centred space in school	Schools in the past	Schools in the present	Ideal school which is child-centred
Identity of the Teacher	Moulder of children, change agent, person committed to public good.	Tutor, coach, skill provider, Employee of means, statusquoist, Establishment person.	Facilitator, joint explorer, child rights crusader, promoter of community good.
Teacher's Authority over Student	Morally absolute, not accountable to anybody.	Oppressive, indifferent to child rights.	Facilitative and accountable in terms of child rights.
Identity of the Student	'Blank slate', no 'agency'.	'Blank slate', no 'agency'	Person with 'agency' who can think, act and create on his/her own.
Pedagogy and Curriculum	Rote learning, knowledge divorced from personal experience and immediate surroundings of the child.	Rote continues with rhetorical commitment to Activity Based Learning (ABL) and Active Learning Methodology (ALM).	Pedagogy and curriculum that places maximum premium on child's experience, ability to observe and create. Highly participative and explorative.
What is evaluated	Ability to memorize.	Ability to memorize.	Ability to observe, articulate, problematize and creatively solve problems.
Reward	For competitive achievements.	For competitive achievements.	For originality and sincerity of effort.
Punishment	Corporal punishments, public humiliation and degrading verbal abuse often approved in terms of paternalism.	Clandestine corporal punishment, degrading verbal abuse and public humiliation are continued and rationalised to be in practice in defiance of child rights mandate.	Punishments to be replaced by corrective measures through mentoring, coaching and guiding. In extreme cases, punishment will be corrective and will not question the self-worth of the child.
Accountability	Bureaucratic and routine, school/teachers not accountable to parents and community.	Continues to be bureaucratic. Mere lip service paid to accountability to parents and community (PTAs and VECs).	Thoroughly accountable to parents and community.

Key Markers of Child-centred space in school	Schools in the past	Schools in the present	Ideal school which is child-centred
Physical infrastructure and ambience.	Largely a shelter against sun and shower.	Vast improvement in terms of buildings and furniture, yet inadequate in terms of the actual needs of the children. Teaching and play equipment and computers continue to remain as fetish in many schools and beyond the reach of the children. The spatial organization of school is such that it is made to communicate that every inch of the classroom and the school premises belongs to teachers and authorities. Highly alienating for children.	Child-centered spatial reorganization of school and classrooms with adequate infrastructure and equipment.

- 9.4.1 By no stretch of imagination SCNIC thought it did have a mandate to re-organize school as a child-centred space. Enrolment and schooling were its primary work and was seen as strategies for preventing the occurrence of child labour. SCNIC programme as it was conceived, tacitly believed that schooling meant 'education and development' of the child. The question how far school itself provided child-centred space was never problematised. This was perhaps because of the fact that as long as we believed that school provided 'education' for children, it was a child-centred space *per se*. SCNIC experience shows that the schools, given the present state of affairs, cannot be considered as providing child-centred space even by very average standards.
- 9.4.2 By coming to the above conclusion, we enter a paradox where what we have gained in terms of creating child-centred space in family and community, we are in the danger of losing through schooling of children. In other words compulsory schooling can ironically result in the oppression of the child and its impaired development.
- 9.4.3 The recently published ASER survey for 2012 indicates the quality of education in rural Tamil Nadu in the following manner. 56.6% of students in Std I cannot even read letters. Only 3% can read Std I text. In Std V, 3.3% cannot even read letters and 30.3% can read Std I text and not beyond. In Std VIII, 22.5% can read Std I text and not anything higher. When it comes to arithmetic, in Std I, 46.1% of children cannot even recognize numbers 1-9. When it comes to Std V, only 39.6 can do the simple subtraction and 13% simple division. The same figure for Std VIII is 40% and 37.4% respectively. This description typical of Tamil Nadu, certainly would fit in the average situation in schools in SCNIC area today. It is no exaggeration that compulsory schooling certainly leads to large scale 'trained incapacity in literacy and numeracy'. These skills or lack of them, are often measured and made visible to attract criticism. There are several other skills and capacities that a child needs to acquire before it fulfills the requirement of 'total development'.

They include maintenance of good physical and mental health, skills for emotional management, social and leadership skills, ability for problem solving and creative self-expression and finally acquisition of personal worth and right values. In a situation where we have not got the basics right yet, other things are distant dreams.

- 9.4.4 In the above conditions, schooling leads to certain redundancy, meaninglessness and demotivation in children. Children may dropout and take-up dead-end jobs and relapse to child labour. Experience shows that meaninglessness in education create more vulnerability in 14-18 age group for child labour.
- 9.4.5 In the meanwhile, both the central and state governments over the past ten years, have propelled very many reforms. Apart from compulsory access, the governments have been attempting to radically restructure the existing pedagogy and curriculum. Again it is an interesting irony that these pedagogical and curricular reforms promoted in the name of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), compulsory promotion of children up to VIII Standard, Activity Based Learning (ABL) and Active Learning Methodology (ALM) which are highly child-centred in theory, as they pin hope on the 'agency' of the child as the single most important factor for meaningful education, in practice, are highly counterproductive. ASER findings after all show further deterioration of basic standards after the introduction of the new pedagogy and curriculum.
- 9.4.6 What adds to this dismay is that along with this reform, the government in Tamil Nadu as is the case with other states, over the past decade, has considerably improved the spending on school infrastructure, on the training of teachers and finally by way of recruiting more teachers. (However this does not mean that the infrastructure are complete and the student-teacher ratio are favourable to cross the threshold).
- 9.4.7 Again it is a classical case of a reform failing because of the top-down thrust by the government. No doubt, the changes required in pedagogy and curriculum are overdue and the goals of reform still more laudable. What was not realized of course was that the teachers who were to be the very agents of educational reform themselves needed reform as individuals and collectives in terms of their beliefs, values and outlook relating to the child, its personhood and rights. It is a sheer misfortune that the government given to its habit of mind, once again reduced what ought to have been a socio-cultural revolution from below, to 'engineering change through educational technology' using experts and trainers. School, especially in the underprivileged rural society, is a system of vested interest and power, well entrenched in the discriminatory matrices of caste, gender, age and class, managed largely by a body of self-serving teachers and their managers whose outlook and notions of the child are purportedly rooted in the socio-cultural values of a bygone era that they consciously and unconsciously articulate to rationalize and justify *status quo ante*.
- 9.4.8 The change vision of the government on education in the first place, is not shared by majority of school managements. In the case of government schools, over bureaucratization and over politicization have resulted in the complete lack of autonomy and independence of action for school leadership. Consequently, there is nothing to own as a vision or goal but only targets to meet in terms of statistics and reports. There could not be any change ideology that could further seep down the ranks of teachers. Everything is reduced to 'official requirement' and to a rhetoric and ritual commitment. Aided schools may have autonomy and at times even resources but, left in a system of general apathy, there are not enough incentives for schools to come out of their comfort zones. Change requires 'ready-to-learn school organisations' and school leadership robust enough to push things beyond threshold levels. Not many schools as on date can cross the threshold of change.

- 9.4.9 As long as the schools do not consciously draw their vision, mission and goals from the child-centred and child rights based ideology, the education they offer, would continue to be oppressive and alienating. This would render the potentials of the children, hampered for life. It is a personal loss for each child. And a drain of immeasurable wealth, for the country and society.
- 9.4.10 To the extent the government fails to see schools as organizations of worth, (every time thrusting down policies from above), the teachers who are employed by schools apart from teaching, fails to see the importance of having an organizational vision or goals to which they can commit to. The traditional notion that a teacher is a 'moral absolute' continues to form the core identity of a teacher resulting in certain egoism and indifference. The government's delusory notion of grand reform, the school management's disconnect with the government and teachers' indifference to change, provide a lethal combination against any reform towards child-centred schooling and education.
- 9.4.11 Very often poor physical infrastructure and lack of equipment are cited as reasons for poor quality education. More than buildings and equipment, it is the spatial organisation of the school and classrooms that have bearing for child-centred teaching-learning process. Unfortunately, schools continue to be organised as socially charged spaces. They get organised on some totemic principle where every space and every object or equipment symbolically go to represent in various degrees, the authority of the school and several of the greater and lesser deities in the persons of teachers. The school space and the consequent ambience it creates, produce in children, only negative emotions like awe, fear, and cold distance. The idea of Victorian classroom with its rigid notions of discipline, and order, coupled with the sacntimoniousness of the Indian *gurukula*, continue to characterise in various ways the rural school classrooms, even today. The teacher's space, his or her table and chair, the black board, his or her personal belongings, almost assume totemic significance. In its total configuration, the classroom imposed certain profanity on the students, in contrast to the sacredness of the presiding deity, the teacher.

It is not a simple hierarchy of student-teacher relation in a classroom as it is often reduced in interpretations. In ABLM pedagogy or in any other child-centred pedagogy, the spatial organisation of the classroom has to be reversed to become child-centred. The children will sit as they please, have their individual furniture or a location of choice, an individual blackboard to write. Instead of every single student going to the teacher as in a traditional classroom (it is only in theory, the students went to the teacher only if summoned, not on their own), the teacher will now go to each student attending to his/her work and instructing. This simple reversal has not happened yet. Because it is a direct challenge to the teacher's established notion of authority over the student. The caste and gender might further complicate the issue. During the FGD, the programme staff reported an incident. In Semaputhur village, there is a government school. There the classrooms are so small that they are not basically adequate for holding ABLM type instructions. But, no teacher worried about it and made any demand for bigger classrooms. But there was a queer teacher it is told, who owned a new Yamaha motor cycle. Every day, this teacher lifted, pushed and rolled his motor cycle into his small class room. It was for safe-parking. He did not stop there. He banished the children going near it or touching it. He also appointed a monitor from among the students to watch the machine during recesses and during his absence from the class.

The unconscious text is that as every God of our myth parked the *Vahana* by his or her side, this teacher too perhaps thought he should emulate them. In the surreal scene, the motorcycle became a surrogate of either Lord *Muruga's* Peacock or Devi *Durga's* Lion. Such is the extreme of an ABLM classroom.

- 9.4.12. The child-centred pedagogy pins its hope on the agency of the child. The child can experience, reflect and understand and articulate what is experienced or learned in a number of creative ways. The teacher's inability to believe in the agency of the child not only comes from the folk belief but also more specifically from what the teachers understood as knowledge. Without many exceptions, the teachers believe that the ultimate source of knowledge lies outside the individual. Hence the authenticity of knowledge and its truthfulness call for validation by certain authority. The authority may range from simple text to established scholarship. The teacher is one who has already acquired special powers and has higher gnosis to correctly interpret the text. Therefore the authority of the printed text and the word of the teacher take precedence over everything else in learning. The will and volition of the child and its experience and the numerous expressions of it, are either totally discredited or seen as childish aberrations of little value. A good child is a 'blank slate' on which, the teacher can easily draw those standard diagrams of knowledge, which a good child would re-draw on demand without much distortion. It is rote. Rote is not a mere capacity of the child to memorise and reproduce. It also means economy of effort and sloth from teachers, their exercise of authority swearing by the text and their vengeful discrediting of creativity as deviance. ABLM and ALM due to lack of commitment and effort from teachers, relapse to cramming and rote learning. As long as teachers do not honestly commit themselves to believing in the agency of the child, they will never make the journey from that of being authoritarian instructors, to that of facilitators and joint-explorers in the educational enterprise. Presently, they are ill equipped to do this.
- 9.4.13 This logically takes us to the point that what is tested of the child. ABLM and ALM emphasise the need for evaluating the child's ability to observe, understand, problematise and seek original solutions and express and articulate them creatively. The teacher is either too ill-equipped in spite of training, or has no conviction to do that. Everything reduces down to testing memory or arbitrary awarding of marks. Discouragement through competition and lack of support for originality and sincerity of effort in learning, completely dilute the participatory ideal and child-centeredness of ABLM and ALM.
- 9.4.14 While the dominant ethos of the classrooms continues to be one that discourages participation of children in general, this is further complicated by caste and gender discriminations in recognizing achievements of children. It is reported by programme staff that more than the gender discrimination where boys in general are encouraged more than girls, it is caste discrimination cutting across gender that totally vulgarizes the classroom. During the FGD, the staff agreed that non-*dalit* teachers continue to be predominant in terms of numbers. In a typical classroom, a bright *dalit* child is the worst hit. There again there is a gender difference. If a bright *dalit* boy is 'discouraged by total indifference of the teacher' a bright *dalit* girl is 'positively put down' through verbal banishments. On the contrary, even the poor-performing non-*dalit* children enjoy considerable patronage and care from teachers. The most conspicuous strategy is partiality in the award of marks. This is followed by discouraging *dalit* children from participating in cultural performances, taking up class/school leadership or representing the schools outside. However subtle it be, rural classrooms do not fail to reproduce in microcosm, the discriminatory structure of caste, prevalent in the wider community. Caste is an anathema to participatory learning.

- 9.4.15 Another major challenge for child-centred learning and enforcement of child rights is the type of punishment met out to students. Government has banished all forms of corporal punishment. Teachers and schools have responded to that in two different ways. There are a sizable number of teachers who would not quit the habit easily. They continue to inflict corporal punishment when the 'situation gets out of control' for them. If corporal punishment continues in a clandestine manner, the fear of corporal punishment continues to stalk the children without much thaw. The second response to the ban is more defensive and equally damaging. This group of teachers feel quite offended by the ban and say that the ban has reduced their authority over the students and so why they are helpless. They would no more, correct or discipline a student. It is a withdrawal with vengeance. This defensiveness and irresponsibility are fast spreading among teachers creating an atmosphere of laxity, especially in students in the 14-18 age groups. Student indiscipline is said to be on the increase. Degrading verbal chastisements, open abuse and humiliation before other children continue unabated as modes of punishment. In the days of authoritarian schooling, the well legitimised corporal punishment was always leavened by very patronising care and generosity of the 'morally absolute' teacher. Unacceptable though, it brought some uncomfortable balance at least. Child-centred schooling by no means implies permissiveness and indiscipline. Children need to be corrected and guided at every point, delinquent or otherwise. But this calls for compassionate understanding of the child in its own context. We need to believe in methods of persuasion, counselling and mentoring. Children need consistency and firmness of handling. Most of the teachers are too very ill equipped to do these things.
- 9.4.16 Another manner by which the self-worth of children is questioned, is by way of involving children in very demeaning and degrading activities. Ranging from running personal errands and attending to the domestic chores of the teachers' households, it might often extend to providing body care to teachers. It is reported that even today, there are a few village schools in SCNIC project area where children may extend manicure service to a teacher during a sleepy afternoon class hour, by trimming his or her toe nails. Women teachers, it is reported, are quite fond of asking the girls to preen and pick lice from their hair and scalps. For this, a teacher may rest her forehead down on the table in front and throw a black cascade of unbraided or loosened up hair. It is so regular that it does not even bring amusement to children who sit in front of her and watch. Field staff also report that there is a gender and caste dimension to assigning demeaning work. Girl children are normally assigned the work of sweeping classrooms and fetching water. Girls invariably accompany women teachers to the toilet carrying water. There is a little more respectable job that involves cleaning up of lunch boxes and plates when a teacher finishes his or her lunch. The system is so rationalized and well oiled that there is a competition to attend to teachers. No teacher seems to understand this, as something no better than abuse.

## **9.5 Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Accountability of School**

Now we turn our attention to accountability of school to the community. This is understood through the working of Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Village Education Committee (VEC). SCNIC had the mandate of motivating, training and creating awareness among parents in the villages as to the importance of parents participating in school activities through Parent Teacher Associations (PTA). SCNIC has conducted several trainings for parents in this regard. Programme staff by way of interacting with the schools and parents, try to see the regular holdings of PTAs. Invariably, they try to be present in PTA meetings whenever held.

- 9.5.1 In spite of SCNIC efforts, PTA's programme of improving primary and secondary education, remains largely as a mandated programme of the government. The success of the PTA meetings very much depend on the initiative, commitment and leadership capability of the head-teacher or the headmaster, who is the president of the association. Majority of the head masters does not qualify in this regard.
- 9.5.2 As far as teachers are concerned, there is a calculated disinterest and resistance for holding PTA meetings. Lack of interest to stay beyond school hours and refusal to spend time during weekends by teachers, normally hamper holding of PTA meetings.
- 9.5.3 The parental disinterest is cited as an equally strong factor why PTA meetings could not be easily facilitated even by a committed agency like SCNIC.
- 9.5.4 The staff are of the opinion that parents who send their children to the government and government aided schools, unlike the parents of the children of the matriculation schools, normally come from the poorest sections of the village community. Most of them, only now, have reached a state where they realize the importance of sending their children to school. For them, to see a mechanism like PTA, either as a platform for caring for the education of their children or for bringing the school and teachers to accountability on education, is simply beyond their imagination.
- 9.5.5 Though the parents rhetorically agree on the importance of PTA during training sessions and counselling, there is certainly a big gap between what we emphasize as required action on PTA and what parents would practically do. PTA is yet to become a felt need of the poor parents.
- 9.5.6 It was also reported that for the school, the holding of PTA meetings and PTA activities, largely remain only on record. The minutes are so systematically prepared with signatures obtained from parents and sent to the Directorate of School Education, in required periodicity. No wonder there are several reported incidents of mismanagement and misappropriation of PTA funds, by school authorities. Given the nature of the power and status of the teachers, the existence of caste hierarchy, the working of teachers' unions, the cold logic of educational bureaucracy and the poor social and economic status of the parents, PTA has to go a long way before anything is achieved. It is fair to say that SCNIC programme has not made a big dent in making PTA, an instrument in creating a child-centred space in the school.

## 9.6 Village Education Committee (VEC) and Accountability of School

Government through *Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA)* actively promoted the idea of Village Education Committee (VEC) and its role in bottom-up planning of school educational programmes, community ownership of schools, monitoring of the working of schools and the improvement of the quality of school education. It is a grand vision that the government identified following eight areas or responsibilities discharged through community mobilization.

1. Improving school management
2. Monitoring of the attendance of teachers and students
3. Managing construction works in school
4. Improving enrolment of girls
5. Re-admission of 'out of school' children
6. Appointment and payment of salary of teachers through PTA

7. Conducting awareness campaigns and *melas*
8. Celebrating days of national importance and promotion of cultural trainings.

- 9.6.1 The problems with VEC is that, this grand vision and laudable goals are yet to be shared either by the schools or by the community. The second important aspect is that the activities envisaged under VEC needed certain minimum capabilities for participation and decision making in community affairs. Given the nature of challenges and the enormity of work involved in building such capacity, SCNIC could not do much. Whatever be the awareness that was created about VEC and the capacity that was built in the community members for participating in VEC, they fell short of providing a cutting edge. Ironically, SCNIC programme staff invariably found themselves appointed as members of VECs in number of villages. This to some extent, helped SCNIC gain insight into the issues, rather than effect any course correction.
- 9.6.2 As stated above, VECs basically suffer from lack of sharing of vision, envisaged under the government policy.
- 9.6.3 The members appointed to VEC represent wide range of constituencies and are so formalistic that it has failed to elicit commitment.

## Box 22

### Roles and Responsibilities of VEC

- Identifying the needs of schools
- Conducting periodical meetings to ensure co-operation of the community
- Assisting the Headmaster in transparent utilisation of grants released to schools and effective utilisation of funds
- To manage the Joint Account of Village Education Committee
- Undertaking civil construction and maintenance works wherever assigned or needed
- Enrolment of all school-age children and ensuring cent percent completion of elementary education of all children
- Conducting campaigns and *meals* for Universalisation of Elementary Education
- Monitoring the Academic performance of children, Attendance, and Quality of education
- Organising functions and celebrations of the schools and public events which show the skills of children
- Effective co-ordination with implementing agencies
- Displaying school data and receipts and expenditure of grants in the school public display board
- Involvement in Teacher Training
- Involvement in appointment of Education Volunteers (EVs) for EGS and Alternative and Innovative Education centres as per guidelines and directions of District Education Committee.
- *VEC meetings are also conducted in school on special occasions such as Independence day, Children day, Republic day, Sport day, and Annual day.*

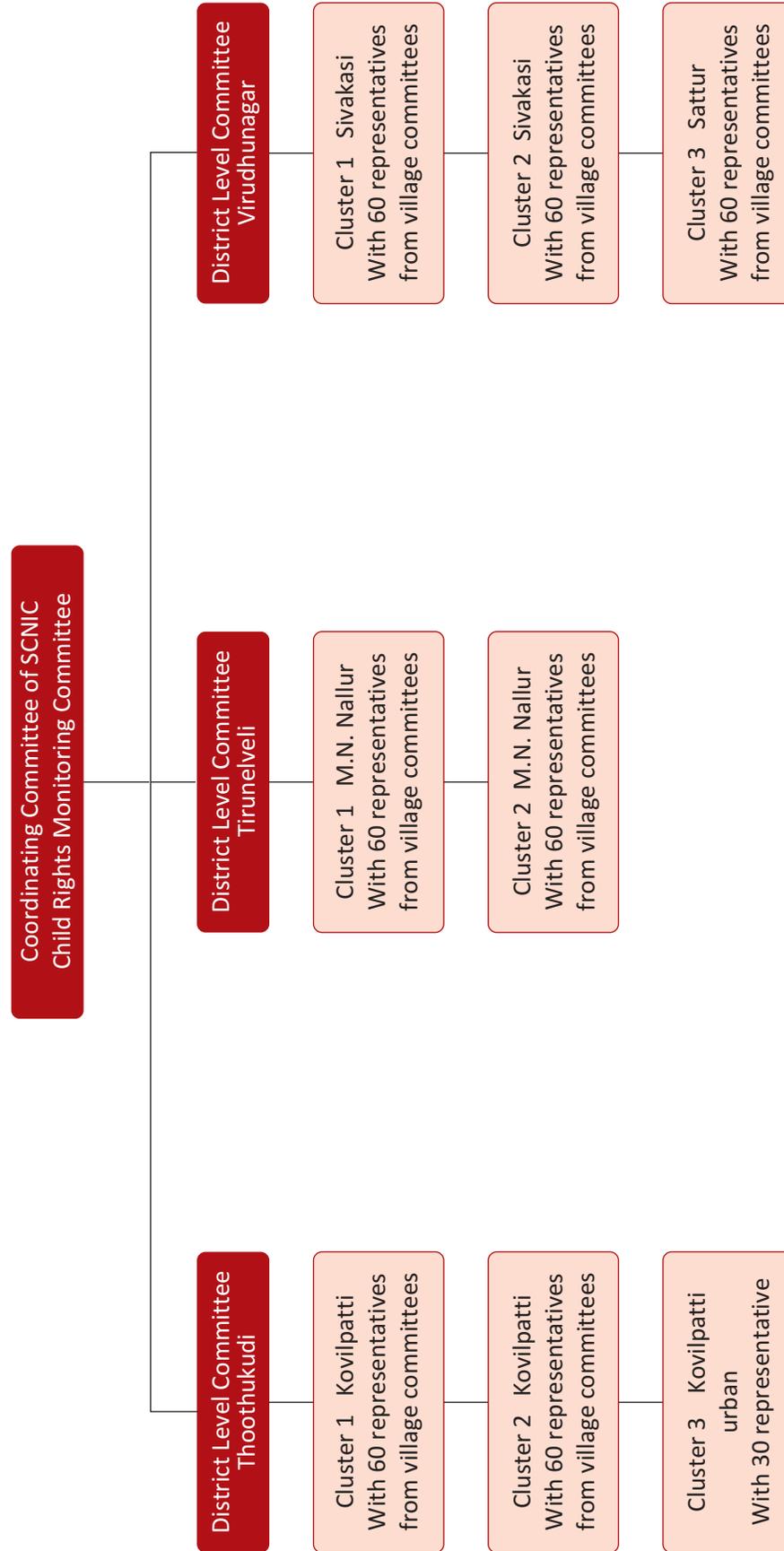
- 9.6.4 The experience of programme staff reveals that given the nature of power structure and dynamics in the village, it is difficult to bring the Head Master, Teacher representatives and the *Panchayat* leaders, on a level playing ground. Constant rivalries and mistrust between Head Masters/Mistresses and *Panchayat* leaders, have severely marred the process.
- 9.6.5 Wherever there is a committed Head Master or a *Panchayat* President, VECs have assumed certain positive functional significance. In most number of cases, perhaps ranging up to 80 percent, VECs remain only as a paper work. The participation of SCNIC staff in VECs however restricted, reveals that there is considerable resistance against change. Whenever SCNIC staff or other NGOs raised important issues in VECs, they were promptly dropped for the next meeting. Only those NGOs who toe the line of either the Head Master or the powerful cliché within VEC, are permitted to continue.
- 9.6.6 Programme staff and Teachers who participated in the FGD reported that parental indifference is, as bad as it is found with PTA.
- 9.6.7 Teachers who were present in the FGD agreed to the suggestion that VEC as a structure can do much. However, they identified several reasons for VEC not working properly. They are namely, but for the erosion of values surrounding the sanctity of education, over defensiveness of Head Masters and their reluctance to involve in community affairs, rivalry between school authorities and civic leaders of the village and tokenistic presence of other constituencies like health workers, ICDS organizers and others.
- 9.6.8 From SCNIC's own experience of participating in VECs, as it stands today, has not made any progress towards promoting community participation in the management of government schools. Less said the better, about the accountability of school to community effected through VECs.
- 9.6.9 Given the nature of policy emphasis on PTA and VEC and legitimacy accorded by the state, there is a good amount of scope for community action.

## 9.7 Child Rights Monitoring Committee (CRMC) As Exit Strategy

Around 2009, it was strongly felt that there should be a mechanism through which all facets of SCNIC action towards creating a child-centred space are integrated and sustained. Formation of such a self-sustaining and integrating mechanism, was also seen as a means to exit from the project by 2012. The plan and budget incorporated this idea, in 2010.

- 9.7.1 The mechanism would be called as Child Rights Monitoring Committee (CRMC). The committee would be formed at each village with at least i) two members representing youth, ii) two representing SHGs in the village, iii) one socially committed volunteer and iv) one civic leader representing a ward in the *panchayat*. The villages will then be classified into two or three clusters representing the district. Each cluster will have 60 representatives, a minimum of two elected from each village. At the apex, there will be district level committees under the umbrella of a Coordinating Committee.

**Fig 3 :**  
**PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF CHILD RIGHTS MONITORING COMMITTEE**



- 9.7.2 The idea is to gradually take over from SCNIC, the functions and responsibilities that are aimed at consolidating, further expanding and sustaining a child-centred space in each village.
- 9.7.3 Though the strategy in its conception was extremely good, it meant a massive mobilisation and reaching out to more than 900 members in the project area. The assumption that those who had been helpful to SCNIC work all along in the villages would automatically qualify to become members, proved wrong. CRMC was a new rationality and responsibility. Further, the new configuration of committees also meant very specific jobs and new types of working relationship and leadership at every level. Though many volunteered to join CRMC, for SCNIC, it did not become that easy a task to organise it efficiently, and anchor it as an institutional mechanism in each village.
- 9.7.4 The major flaw was improper timing. It was too massive a work which was understated and to come too late in the day, as an exit strategy. The erroneous assumption was that all those who responded to the call would fall into a rational matrix of instrumental worth in the name of CRMC and did not need any training or preparation. As a matter of hindsight, it is now realised that a well spread out training of members and gradual induction of them into CRMC would have made CRMC very functional and take easy roots in the community. By any conservative estimate, it would have cost four to six lakh rupees a year and an incubation period of at least three years. Very unfortunately, SCNIC budget tapered too unrealistically in the last three years. It decreased 46% for 2008-09, over the previous year. 2009-10, did not see further cut over 2008-09. But 2010-11 saw 33% and 2011-12, 34% over the previous years. On the closing year, SCNIC was getting one-fourth of what it was getting in 2008-09. The over ambitious exit strategy, did not work too very well. In spite of this, there are a few success stories.
- 9.7.5 It is therefore, not inappropriate to conclude that even if the Action Aid funding exits, the individual organisations will not be in a position to exit from the work. The biggest challenge for them now, is to mobilize resources for further strengthening of CRMC and make CRMC institutionally self-reliant.



## CHAPTER V

# IMPACT

## 10. PARADIGM SHIFT, PRAXIS & PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION



*"PRETTY SERIOUS..."* SCNIC FIELD STAFF

## 10. PARADIGM SHIFT, PRAXIS, AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Any impact analysis tries to assess the nature of changes effected in certain societal practices, cultural attitudes, beliefs and values in a given constituency. Furthermore, this change is purported to have been effected through deliberate and rationally planned actions that constitute the project.

Conventional assessments make the basic assumption that there is a change-causing-agent and a change-needing-object. The former is called the 'project' the latter the 'beneficiary'. Although the project constitutes a conglomerate of actions of free thinking people, it is caricatured and understood as an abstract and faceless entity with a flawless motive power that can effect change in any context. On the other hand the change-needing-object namely, the beneficiary, is construed to be causeless, passive, chaotic and powerless, needing external agents to act upon.

The above model of assessment unfailingly upholds top-down approach of action. In the first place, it underplays the agency of the people who is supposed to undergo change in a required direction. Within the project, it does not recognize the power differentials of actors of different levels and their qualitatively different contributions. More specifically, it fails to recognize the nature and quality of contributions made by project personnel who provide the real interface with the community or people. Mostly, they turn out to be professionally less qualified grassroots workers.

Moreover, sandwiched between the higher management of the project and the people, they only experience the heat. This is the point where the objectives of the project and the aspirations of the people are synthesized and translated into the greatest public good. In doing this, the people providing the interface have to necessarily think and act on their feet. The most useful of actions, come from those who are more committed in terms of the cause or value and are open to learn from numerous situations, moving from one to the other on a day to day basis. For a true field worker, there has to be necessarily a collapse of what is professionally taught and what is existentially experienced doing the job. Therefore in theory, the workers at the interface of the project are expected to come under maximum pressure for learning through praxis. Those who are truly committed, undergo the maximum personal transformation. The quality of the personal transformation of these individuals, then becomes yet another indicator of the success or failure of the project.

## 10.1 Background of SCNIC Staff

As is the case with any NGO involved in grassroots activism, there had been a reasonably high employee turnover in all the three partner organisations – CEDAR, NEWS, and Victory. (See Appendix -V). The staff left behind at the point of exit of the programme were: 1. Mr. Syed Ali (CEDAR), Programme Coordinator (2006), 2. Mr. Aruldoss (Victory), Programme Manager (2006), 3. Ms. Mariammal (CEDAR), Field Motivator (2003)/Theme Coordinator (2007)/Programme Manager (2010), 4. Mr. Jacob (NEWS), Programme Manager (2010), 5. Ms. Malliga (Victory), Field Motivator (2004)/Theme Coordinator (2007), 6. Mr. Palpandi (2003)/Theme Coordinator (2007), 7. Mr. Ramesh (Victory), Field Motivator (2008) and 8. Mr. Michael Raj (CEDAR), Field Motivator (2010).

10.1.1 The turnover was high. On an average, the staff at exit, had put in a service of about 6 years in the SCNIC project. At least two persons have put in a maximum of 9 years of service. And two persons have the minimum of 2 years of service. The average of 6 years provides an optimum period of exposure in the field. The experiences of these, are worth the analysis as change agents.

10.1.2 The personal backgrounds of these individuals were very heterogeneous. Of the three at the managerial/supervisory cadre, two of them were professionally qualified in Social Work (with MSW degrees) and the other, in Education (B.A. B.Ed.). One of the field motivators too had a professional degree in education (B. Ed.). Of the remaining, one had higher secondary education and others just secondary education. In terms of socio-economic background, the field team was a mix of extremes – a few coming from urban middle class homes providing one end of the spectrum and the rest coming from poor rural homes (some from BPL homes) providing the other end of the spectrum.

10.1.3 The most conspicuous observation that needs to be first placed on record as it constantly emerged throughout the FGD is that, through the work practices, the group had developed a very high level of coherence. This was made possible through a shared vision and common commitment. The group was highly integrated without differences in terms of job and educational hierarchies and socio-economic status. There was a very high morale even at the close of the project and consciousness of purpose. The lateral communication was manifest with high level of empathy. Each member was found sure of his or her identity, that gave a reasonably high sense of authenticity and meaning to what they expressed as their views. There was high level of inclusiveness.

## 10.2 Personal Transformation and Factors Responsible

All those who attended FGD agreed that each one underwent a profound personal transformation,



*"OUT IN THE FIELD..."* SCNIC FIELD STAFF

working for SCNIC. Almost all of them before joining SCNIC project, had some experience of working with children. Most of them concurred that on the previous jobs, they saw themselves merely as dutiful workers doing what was asked to be done on the job by a superior or manager. But they were do-gooders to children, either teaching or coaching them. They invariably carried the conventional adult notion that children simply needed help and sympathy. The idea that children have the capacity to think, feel, and make their own choices – and all that they wanted as support

from parents, family, adult members of the community and schools are matter of right – came to them, only gradually and only through SCNIC experience.

- 10.2.1 Members of the team identified various factors responsible for this transformation. Of the seven factors they identified as being responsible, two were considered as most important. SCNIC brought in first, a new orientation in terms of knowledge relating to child rights. This happened through formal training and capacity building programmes and also through exposure to literature that promoted child centred knowledge and thinking. Secondly, the praxis involved, ensuring of freedom and dignity to each child, creating a non-competitive and participatory context, organizing of children around the self-articulated needs of their own, striving to create 'ideal speech situations' for children (both in formal and informal situations), inculcating knowledge of rights and finally promoting child activism. These provided field-level workers with entirely new vectors of interacting contexts and hence, a new form of consciousness. Many felt that the way they learnt to approach the children, provided them with a new experience that helped them to deconstruct many of their own established 'adult-centred' notions of children. The change they experienced they said, however, was grudgingly slow and demanded a great deal of mental and psychological effort.
- 10.2.2 The other facilitative factors for successful transformation of their attitudes and change in commitment, were identified by the group as follows: 1. Core values and focus of the organization (The partner organizations had established traditions of child focused work. CEDAR had pioneered child rights approach by forming children collectives as early as 1996), 2. Democratic Work Culture (Members felt that the freedom to express views, reflect and criticize decisions and innovate on their own, were important), 3. Less gap between rhetoric and practice (Less the gap, more the pressure to learn and be authentic), 4. Inter-organizational learning and learning from others (Members felt that in spite of certain deficiencies and misgivings, SCNIC provided an optimum opportunity to learn from one another organizationally as well individually).

### 10.3 Transformation, Personal Life and Conflict

The measure of personal transformation of an individual can be seen in terms of the value and power conflicts experienced by him or her in various spheres of his or her life. The members articulated their views in terms of two referents, operating at personal, familial, community, and public spheres. These two referents were :

1. Conception of child
2. Individual's commitment towards changing a given societal practice or society in general.

- 10.3.1 For no one, child rights and child centred thinking is mere rhetoric. All of them sincerely felt that SCNIC experience had made them better human beings, particularly in terms of relating to children in general. This state of mind, for them, was never achieved easily. It was wrought through resolving numerous personal and interpersonal conflicts as they went about living their own lives. The episodes typically cited during the FGD were, correcting the attitude of a spouse or other family members in terms of child rearing practices, correcting neighbourhood children, counselling or correcting a friend's family, entering into a quarrel or conflict with a teacher or school authority and coming into conflict with a public agency or public authority whose actions were detrimental to the welfare of the children. The project team had numerous episodes to cite and all these episodes, happened mostly outside the project sphere. They all felt that to stand by the cause of child rights, came to them automatically as they carried on day to day life and as they were prepared to pay any emotional or social price for that. They also felt proud of changing the attitude of a spouse permanently, or positively influencing a neighbourhood family, or correcting a public authority.

10.3.2 On most occasions their call of duty as SCNIC staff and their personal commitment as change agents, collapsed into one. In such circumstances they had to necessarily demonstrate their personal courage and grittiness and pay personal prices. The cold logic of project management cannot easily estimate the value of this. They are path breaking efforts. In the micro sphere, only these path breaking efforts cumulatively help to cross the threshold of change. Following episode needs citation.

### Box 23

#### ***Last Straw On The Camel's Back***

*Ms. Mariammal was a Theme Coordinator in SCNIC in 2010. She was a resident of Ilupayoorani village, close to Kovilpatti. Having migrated from elsewhere, she had found an abode in the locality long time ago. It was a place predominantly of her own caste-men and women. In the initial years when she was battling for her survival, this close-knit caste-based community extended significant support to her in several ways. Twenty years later, as part of SCNIC/CEDAR activities, Ms. Mariammal had to raise several children collectives and self-help groups in that area.*

*One of the children collectives by name 'Vannamathi Collective', on one evening, was holding a meeting in the street. This was seriously interrupted by an abusive adult of the community, who was drunk and was in an inebriated condition. The children of the collective without a second thought, called the Deputy Superintendent of Police over phone, whom they had met once previously. The trouble making adult was immediately apprehended by the police and an FIR registered.*

*This very badly upset the community. A caste panchayat was called immediately. The panchayat came to the conclusion that in the first place, children ought not to have taken up the matter to the police that too, without consulting the elders. Second, of all persons, Ms. Mariammal, a woman of the community, should not have been behind organizing children. Interestingly, the incident happened in the absence of Mr. Mariammal who had gone to her husband's village to attend the funeral of her mother-in-law. Even without bothering to wait for Mariammal to return from the village, the panchayat pronounced its decision to ostracize Mariammal's family from the community.*

*The next four month period was a gruelling ordeal for Mariammal's family. Mariammal was personally put to a terrible state of mental agony. She was completely drained. The police too refused to close the case. At times she even loathed, she said, her decision to become an activist. In spite of the dilemma, she did not want to give up. Then came slowly the help from women's self-help groups she had raised. They started gradually undermining the caste-panchayat's diktat to ostracize the family. Finally, it culminated in an open and vocal protest against the caste-panchayat by a section of women. It was quite unexpected. In the end, there was a total thaw. Still there was a section that carried the grudge. Practically however, the diktat of the patriarchal caste panchayat failed. Mariammal says that only going through the ordeal was horrible. Now she does not regret. She says that the women who supported her, seem to say that they helped her because they knew very well how children benefitted out of her initiatives, through the children collectives. Since 2010, the caste panchayat has not shown its face yet. Mariammal says that the caste panchayat has lost its mandate once for all. And there will not be another panchayat meeting even on other issues.*

## 10.4 Factors that Kept Them Going on the Job

Another important way by which we could comprehend the personal transformation of the members of the team is, by addressing the question, “What kept them going on the jobs facing paradoxically numerous challenges as well getting low pay?” The pay averaged anything between Rs. 3000 to Rs. 3500 at the field workers level and from Rs. 6000 to Rs. 6500 at the supervisory/managerial level. Given the state of employment in Tamil Nadu, this is not the pay that could have kept these people easily on these jobs which by all standards, were highly demanding and stressful. The members without a single exception, proudly declared that the pay they received, did not matter much. The groups identified a number of factors as being responsible for positively clinging on to the job. These factors in terms of order of priority, can be stated as follows: 1. Certain emotional appeal arising out of personal experiences in life, 2. The opportunity to re-live their own childhood, 3. Relative openness of children and their readiness to learn bringing quick results, 4. The way children rewarded them emotionally expressing gratitude very different from adults, and 5. The acknowledgement extended by the community. Then, what they were doing perhaps, were much more than mere jobs.

10.4.1 When it came to personal experiences providing the context for deep emotional appeal for doing child-help work, at least the experiences of three persons need to be cited. Palpandi (NEWS) who has worked as a field motivator for 9 continuous years, was himself a child labourer, in a match factory in Sivakasi. He poignantly said, 'I never worked for money....I sincerely wanted to prevent one more child becoming a child labourer.' Malliga (Victory), Theme Coordinator who has continuously worked for 8 years for SCNIC, says that she too was a child labourer if not in a factory, in a service organisation. “I went to work at the age of 15 and was teased as NGO Child Labourer.” Mariammal (CEDAR) though a matriculate, had the fate of helplessly watching her eldest son dropping out of school and becoming a child labourer before he was salvaged again. (He is now in final year Engineering). She has continuously worked for 9 years in SCNIC. For them and a few others in the project, the experience of family poverty and deprivation either of their own childhood or that of their children, remain as deep seated emotional trauma. Given the opportunity to meaningfully work for children, they seem to have gone that extra mile with the real fire and passion, drawing extraordinary personal meanings which we often fail to comprehend and value. Meaningfully working for children in other words, means reliving one's own childhood.

As they really lived their childhood, they had experienced many inadequacies and sufferings. They carried in their memory many unfulfilled dreams. As they cannot retrospectively rectify anything, they want to create circumstances for children they come across, that would help them realise a near ideal childhood of their imagination. Their position as grassroots workers which falls in the lowest rung of the project hierarchy, often make them invisible.

### Box 24

#### **Baptism In Fire**

*Palpandi is a wiry thin man who instead of using crutches, uses a single long pole which he sticks to the ground firmly with his two hands, then hops, jumps and strides. A polio attack in childhood has completely paralyzed his lower left limbs. He is now 34 years old and is married with two children. He has put in about 8 years of service in SCNIC. He is a Theme Coordinator, representing NEWS in Sivakasi area. A frail body with physical deformity, does not prevent him from making a striking presence in any crowd whether it is in a roadside gathering in the village or in a formal training session. He speaks with certain incisively clear tone and focus, effusing real confidence.*

When he was hardly 13 years old he had to drop out of school. He had just completed his VIII standard. He, like many other unfortunate children of 1990's, had to find employment in a Fireworks factory at Sivakasi. The next two years, he burnt himself to supplement his family income. Then he went back to school and completed his X standard only to return to the Fire Works factory. But this time, as a petty accountant, at 16. Palpandi knew now, what it meant to be a child labourer. He slowly developed the conviction that no child should go to work at an early age as he did. He made a secret mission. Whoever he came across as a child labourer in the factory, he started persuading them to go back to school, like what he did. But it was not too long, before his covert operations were discovered by his boss. He was thrown out of the job. Though he ran from pillar to post doing odd jobs for survival, the victimization only strengthened his conviction that children should not go to work. Without anyone's support, he on his own strength, helped a child here to come out of a factory employment, and there another child, to get enrolled in school.

Meeting of Mr. Pandyan, the chief of NEWS, was quite accidental. Hearing his story, he encouraged him to join his organization as a volunteer. Much later, he was given the Rs. 3000 job as Motivator in SCNIC. This helped him to channelize better, his passion. Trainings he says, helped him further. But the activist streak acted too strong in him that he often found himself at loggerheads with others in the organization. But he hastens to qualify his statement saying that it was just his style and he never wanted to leave SCNIC.

In 2008, Palpandi was involved in SCNIC enrolment work at M. Muthupatti. There he was forced to take up an issue of public interest that affected women and children. Close to the village squire, there was a purambok land. This was encroached upon by some shady characters of the village who put up a liquor shop. Following this, other petty shops and eateries cropped up. This encouraged gathering of crowd around the shops. Lumphens found easy excuse to hang around. Children had to pass through the crowd before they reached the school which was very close by. Women had difficulty frequenting the common water tap. Apart from the proximity to the school, the women and girl children suffered constant gaze of men, teasing and occasional ogling.

Already there were complaints filed with the authorities. When Palpandi was approached by the children collective and women of M. Muthupatti, he along with another public minded individual of the village, took up the matter once again, with the revenue officials and the police. This time the authorities acted very promptly and the encroachments were removed. The liquor shop was shifted and the other shops were closed. Before Palpandi could realise the stroke of his victory, within a few days, he was waylaid by four motorcycle borne men on a deserted road and abducted. He was severely beaten up by the gang. As the irony will have it, he was taken to the very police station where he had lodged his complaint against the encroachers. A false complaint had been lodged against him for having caused intimidation. Somehow the station officer was not convinced of the complaint and contacted Sanarpatti Panchayat President from which village, Palpandi hailed. The matter was closed but the perpetrators of violence too, went scot free.

Narrating this, Palpandi makes no fuss. He has no regrets for not having taken action against the offenders. He says that it is normal in public life and he should not complain. On the question what would he do on the conclusion of SCNIC Project, Palpandi self-effacingly says, "It does not make much difference to me. I will continue to work with children as I was doing independently, before entering any organization". It is not very surprising that he has formed an association of public minded persons of his area, for voluntary work. There is no quid pro quo involved.

## 10.5 Grassroots and Professionals- Mutual Engagement

The presence of grassroots workers with considerable existential experience, catalytically does considerable good, for building up the work ethos necessary for effective grassroots work. Their presence in the first place energises the group. Secondly, they bring certain authenticity to the issue addressed. And thirdly, their world view and propensity for action provides the much needed alter ego that challenges professional knowledge and professionally trained workers, supervisors and managers. However the usefulness of these grassroots people, depends much on the leadership of the team which is responsible for locating, tapping and valorising their talents. In SCNIC, there is a very positive sign of this having been achieved.

10.5.1 Personal transformation of professionally educated and better paid workers, supervisors and managers, though takes a different trajectory, is equally a good indicator of success. In an ongoing project, everybody makes a journey. If the grassroots workers with existential experience of deprivation and trauma, articulate and reorganise their experience in order to locate them in the broader context of concepts, meanings and knowledge that direct praxis of development action, every professionally educated worker/supervisor, necessarily has to deconstruct so much in terms of professional, and social identities, before they learn to authentically and realistically address the grassroots issues. Even on this count, SCNIC has scored positively.

### Box 25

#### **A Second Career**

*Syed Ali joined CEDAR in 2003 as Project Officer in the 'NGO Capacity Building Project'. The job involved on-site and off-site training of NGOs. He was placed in Madurai City. Syed had had a first rate educational experience first qualifying for a B. A., Degree in English, followed by his Master's in Social Work from the city's best college. He came from a professional middle-class family with long urban roots. For several years, Syed took his placement in NGO as a job and had little knowledge of children related work. Equally did he show little inclination to go and work in rural areas.*

*He was placed in SCNIC project as Programme Coordinator in 2006. He says it was not his choice. He was suddenly transferred. He calls it contemptuously as a 'bureaucratic transfer and punishment'.*

*Otherwise a sensitive man by nature, Syed was very curious to learn. He did not want to leave the job in spite of the fact that he was not readily accepted by anyone at Kovilpatti. But his persistence was hard enough and journey long enough to become fruitful. In 2009, he became the team leader of SCNIC project and demonstrated praiseworthy leadership. He has been largely responsible for the present cohesion of the team.*

*He was asked to comment how he made the journey. Syed says that what puts him down always is the 'high pitch NGO rhetoric' which offered nothing to learn and commit to. But it overwhelmed and bamboozled anyone who wanted to sincerely learn. He says that there are two types. The first one according to him, is the rhetoric of the most powerful within the NGO field – the urban centred, professionally educated, well-connected, established, fund-giving and fund-holding. In them, there is so much of posturing and expression of intent, to either 'shake the country's parliament' or make the 'Leviathan state break'. The first phase of his career was dominated and hence marred by this discourse. He says that these NGO elites neither intend to learn from grassroots nor seriously encourage anyone to value it.*

*The second type of rhetoric which dominates the actual field work he says, is the rhetoric of the 'rural radical'. He or she is an established personality in the field with a strong rural identity, often effusing ideological imputations and sense of extreme ownership, of anything and everything that happened around. Humorously Syed calls them as people who had 'already arrived'. He says that these people in particular,*

*distrusted urban-educated and professionally inclined who showed interest in grassroots work. They readily discredited the achievement of others. Syed says without naming anyone that he had to take the biggest beating from this type, when he moved to Kovilpatti.*

*But the refreshing break for Syed came only when he started relating with the field level workers, who had the experience of real personal suffering. He says that only those battered and barefooted workers of SCNIC, inspired him with meaningful insights of grassroots work. They only seem to have helped him to launch his second career.*

*Syed says that in their struggle to transform themselves from being victims of social and economic injustice, to people espousing serious convictions to 'provide a better world for others', lay everything that can inspire others. They are not like those 'arrived ones' who always celebrate the victimhood with ostentation, exclusion and arrogance. He says that in the first place he developed a natural respect for them. Secondly, unlike the 'arrived', these simple souls had a natural talent for realistic appraisal of a given social situation. Ironically their genuine anxieties, apprehensions and fears over sincerely solving problems were to teach many things in terms of praxis, than the brazen courage and highly opinionated and formulaic solutions of the ideologues, the armchairs and the 'arrived'.*

*Thirdly, according to Syed, there was a great sense of search in them. This he says, helped him to jointly experiment and innovate on many ideas and actions. Their openness, reflexivity and humility to learn from others, he did not see in the elite squad. Today, Syed says that he is very comfortable with grassroots work and grassroots workers. He is humble enough to say that these barefoot workers have a number of capabilities, when he can never easily acquire or emulate. It is particularly so about their spontaneity of action and unpretentious courage. In fact, he has gone through a serious process of deconstruction, which is necessary for developing an inclusive style of leadership. That involves extraordinary empathy, touch of reality, recognising and acknowledging the space and talents of everyone and above all, serving to lead.*

## 10.6 Children Can Change Adults

Numerous examples have already been cited how children learnt very quickly when it came to a new skill or attitude. This in itself is valuable. It is an important motivating factor for the field level workers to carry on their work. Unlike adults, the children value such learning or help received from programme staff. They openly express their gratitude. Interactive experience with children can provide the spur for adult transformation.

### Box 26

#### **A Road To Discovery**

*Before joining Victory Trust as Manager, I had worked for several other service organisations. To be frank, it was not any ideology or social commitment that made me work for these organisations. The NGO for which I worked previous to joining Victory Trust, did not pay me regularly. My obsession was to get a 'good job'. Only this search landed me in SCNIC through Victory Trust, in 2006.*

*At that point, I did not know anything about childhood or child rights. Even I thought about the issue of dropping out of school say by VIII standard or so, as causing no serious problem to anybody. The training and capacity building programmes of SCNIC opened a new chapter in my life. First time, I opened my eyes to child rights. Since then I started looking at children differently. What often passed before me as innocuous details of children, now looked very much as moral and social questions.*

*One experience that changed me radically from my previous state of mind, needs mentioning. Laxmanan of Vadakupanavadavi village came from a poor family. He suddenly lost his mother. His step mother moved in. She stopped Laxmanan from studies as he had already reached VIII standard. As I have known Laxmanan well, it upset me badly. Laxmanan was asked to take care of the goats, the family possessed. I spoke to the step-mother. But she did not take me seriously. I persisted. She did not relent. Then I went to the elders in the community requesting them to persuade her. She did not budge. She maintained, "I can't feed this brat as long as he does not bring some income". It angered me. I went straight to her now and yelled, "This time I am taking you to the police station for forcing the boy to become a child labourer". I was not sure whether I was right in saying it. But it worried. The boy resumed studies. I never looked back. Every boy or girl whom I came across either as a drop-out from school or as a child labourer, I sent them back to school. Slowly, I realised that there lay in me, a great capacity to cajole, counsel and change children and if necessary, even effect changes in their circumstances to ensure for them, a better life.*

*The hiccup of being on a low paid job was slowly gone. The real soothing, healing and encouragement came from the emotional rewards I received from children. They openly expressed their gratitude and acknowledged even a small help. I want to tell you this story. Some time back I was invited to the Anniversary Celebrations of the school at Melaneelithanallur. I was late. The children and teachers had already assembled in a vast array. The moment the children saw me walking in, to my utter surprise, they rose in a single surge shouting and greeting. This was to earn me much envy of their teachers. Children, I understood, are more sincere in reciprocating. They remember you for long. A child who likes you and regards you, normally invites you for a family function. I never fail to respond to such invitations. This gesture of children breaks the barriers of age, caste, religion and physical distance. It is a new space children try to create, in terms of inclusiveness. For me, it is a new discovery of another self in me, through SCNIC.*

*Aruldoss  
Manager, Victory Trust*

## 10.7 Community Work, a Life in Paradox

Finally, the crowning success to the field workers or manager came only when he or she learnt to handle the paradox of community reactions. Like the children, the community does not carry innocence as part of its consciousness. It wants both 'change' and 'no change' paradoxically at the same time. Every time it encounters an opportunity to change itself, its predicament is to mediate through several alleys of the power matrix in which it is enmeshed. This relates to both its internal and external relationships. Any attempted change disturbs the equilibrium and bring angst to the community. A new equilibrium can be established only when the community crosses over the threshold of this resistance producing angst. Often it fails. This frustrates any harbinger of change. A successful community worker is one who is capable of understanding this paradox. He experiences this often in terms of, both extreme praise and deep contempt expressed by the community. Getting the acknowledgement of the community also ironically means, learning to accept its paradoxes and to persist all the time. The following case well illustrates this.

## Box 27

### **Let Down By Family And Community, I Keep Going**

*Even before coming to SCNIC, I had some understanding of Child Rights. My MSW dissertation was on child rights issue. My first job is as Manager, NEWS. My experience on the whole is less than three years. I have met children where other service organisations work. Children here in SCNIC collectives, are different. They are more committed and more organised. From the beginning, this made me very seriously get involved in the children collectives and stand by them.*

*An incident that happened in Sundaranachiapuram in 2010, remains un-answered in my mind, even now. The ten- day annual village festival was just on. It was the first day or second day.... I do not remember exactly. There began a minor quarrel between the thirteen year old Suresh and sixteen year old Ramesh (Names changed). Ramesh belonged to one of the children's collectives. The younger Suresh was a new comer to the village. Suresh wasted no time to go to his father. The father walked straight to Ramesh and beat him up black and blue before anyone could stop. Being a new comer to the village, no one could identify him either. A crowd gathered and there followed a commotion. The man became too violent and threatened to beat them up all. To their relief, a police jeep arrived at the spot. Before anyone said anything, the violent and drunk father of Suresh was put on the jeep, to be taken to the police station. The villagers were asked to come to the police station for further proceedings. Many went. But a big surprise awaited them. The culprit who was taken away in the jeep, was there sitting in the police station across a table, in a constable's uniform. Seeing him, the crowd was infuriated. But the police officer in-charge of the station, was not in a mood to listen or receive a complaint. But he managed to temporarily pacify the crowd, saying that the delinquent policeman would be transferred to another station as a matter of punishment.*

*Nothing happened for the next two days. Then people came to me for help. I took the boy to the hospital and obtained a medical memo. Then I went to the Superintendent of Police and filed a proper police complaint. I also sent a complaint to the State Human Rights Commission. The Superintendent did not act. But the SHRC acted promptly, resulting in the transfer of the delinquent policeman. But the complaint remained, pending enquiry.*

*In the mean time, the local police who supported the delinquent colleague, felt snubbed. They started a general harassment campaign against the people attending the festival. Whenever the villagers sought the help of the police for the proper conduct of the festival, they refused cooperation. Everybody felt suffocated. Then there arose real tension in the village. The festivities were being given up under pressure. There remained events yet for another four or five days.*

*Slowly, everything started swinging against me. I started hearing key people telling, "Jacob is responsible for everything". I was called indiscreet and blamed for pushing the matter too far. Then they came to my parents and pressurized them to persuade me to withdraw from the issue. To my great disappointment, my parents succumbed. With difficulty, I resisted the pressure my parents brought on me to withdraw. Then the villagers went to Ramesh's parents. They too succumbed. The case was withdrawn. I was totally let down by everybody. I felt awful. The defeat haunted me for quite a while.*

*But I got back to supporting children in need, with revenge. In spite of the community exercising poor will, the incident had left one clear mark in the minds of many. "If there is an unmanageable crisis either in the family or community there is Jacob to help". Again, they have started coming to me. And I go about helping them, not bothering to think what awaits me.*

Jacob  
Manager, NEWS



## **CHAPTER V**

# **IMPACT**

## **11. PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT**



## 11. PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

### DRAWING CLOSE UNDER ONE ROOF : A NETWORK MEETING

The opening chapter of this report articulates in detail the meaning of partnership in the post-developmental context. Contrary to popular perception, the civil society terrain is always uneven. This leaves NGO's working on this terrain with serious power imbalances. The new articulation of partnership, is a serious attempt to democratise this space. It attempts to bring development actors of different strengths and resources, on a level playing ground. It is good governance in NGO sector.

When it comes to managing partnership relations, the following four principles gain primary importance:

1. To interface without power imbalance
2. To recognise complementary nature of roles and responsibilities
3. To effectively promote non-bureaucratic non-hierarchical methods of working
4. To learn from one another but without appropriating others' intellectual/ knowledge resources.

Though there is a big rhetoric going around, given the established notions of NGO management and cultural values, there is a substantial gap between the rhetoric and performance. Action Aid of course was earnest in committing to the idea of 'partnership'. The following critique however would help us identify certain gaps.

### 11.1 Partnership, a Capability in Democratic Governance

Partnership Management as a notion of democratic governance will not automatically happen. It calls for acquiring new forms of organisational capabilities. Equally, it calls for giving up old practices, organisational legacies and cultural attitudes that governed NGO sector in yester years. The style of partnership management practiced, has a serious bearing on the kind of praxis we develop as we implement the programmes.

- 11.1.1 Wittingly or unwittingly, there was not much scope for such capacity building within SCNIC. Having committed to partnership notion, Action Aid as a funding partner, could have committed more financial resources for the formal preparation and capacity building of the organisations involved, as a pre-requisite for promoting 'high value partnership'.

11.1.2 As a matter of practice of good governance, SCNIC programme should also have ensured space for continuous dialogue, experience sharing and showcasing of good practices. This could have also increased the scope for self-reflection, course-correction and drawing close, the partners.

## 11.2 Policy Priorities of AAI and Partnership

MOUs, Strategy Papers and Plan and Budget documents are much needed instruments for partnership management. But consistent and coherent articulation of policies and their effective applications are more important.

11.2.1 It is the opinion of CEDAR, NEWS, and VICTORY Trust as partners in SCNIC that Action Aid India did not give Child Related Work, the same seriousness and importance as it gave *Dalit* Rights, Fisher folk Rights, Women Rights, Rights of the Urban Poor and the Rights of the Disabled. This was particularly so till 2005. To the extent 'civic activism' of children was welcome, other equally important aspects like creating 'sustainable child-centred space' in the community was not well received. The reason for this bias is not readily understood. The members, during the FGD felt "Child related work was not seen as masculine enough as rights issue by AAI". The forums developed for managing partnership relations like Regional Partners Meeting and Plan and Budget Meeting, did not cogently develop a child-centric discourse. This often created a disjointed understanding of policies and priorities among AAI (funding partner) and other partners.

11.2.2 Apart from the absence of well-anchored child-centred discourse within AAI, the SCNIC programme also experienced certain policy adhocism which brought some bearing on partnership. While subscribing to a top-down approach that undermined the autonomy of partners, this adhocism diluted the focus of the programme. At times, this also involved re-distribution of resources that rendered implementation, weak. The SCNIC team identified this adhocism as being prompted by at least, three factors: 1. AAI's compulsion to maintain its presence in national/global public sphere, 2. Certain knee-jerk reactions to unexpected developments or issues that AAI thought, deserved attention and 3. AAI's own organisational contingencies.

11.2.3 The problem of being seen as one who measures up to the national policy priority, can be illustrated with the following example. SCNIC in addressing child-labour issue, had developed the strategy of directly addressing livelihood issues of selected BPL households that showed certain vulnerability of stopping children from going to school. This was done on a case-by-case basis, identified through children collectives. The families identified as vulnerable, were either given cash advances for meeting children's educational expenditure or given interest-free loans through a revolving-fund. The livelihood-support was thus highly focussed and directly fed into actions that prevented the occurrence of school dropouts. As this was happening, the government in 2007 implemented NREGP in the Melaneelithanallur Block. Action-Aid under certain compulsions, perhaps to be seen supporting a mainstream policy of the government, made Victory Trust, one of the partners of SCNIC, to take up the monitoring of NREGP work. This was justified by AAI, that tried to maintain that it supported SCNIC's own livelihood strategy. In fact, this was far from truth. Victory did not have much say over the sudden thrust from AAI and carried out the work for a year. This completely made Victory lose its focus on the issue on one hand and overdraw on its own staff, on the other hand. There are other examples too. Measuring up to national expectations by AAI and consequent measuring up of partners to AAI's expectations, diluted true partnership principles.

- 11.2.4 An incident involving beating up of a *dalit* (Arundadiyar) in T. Shanmugapuram village, resulted in the launching of Right to Dignity Work (Manbukana Ezhichi Peravai Work) among *Arundadiyar*, as an auxiliary to Child Right Work. Initially, the incident of violence came to the notice of CEDAR as it worked in T. Shanmugapuram. CEDAR supported the victim to filing a case against the perpetrators of violence. This earned the wrath of the upper castes. Beyond supporting the victim on a humanitarian ground, CEDAR did not have any serious design to get involved. But AAI saw in this, an opportunity to organise a 'movement based work' involving *Arundadiyars*, in all the three blocks. Though the intention to help *Arundadiyar* cannot be questioned, it was quite beyond the comprehension and capabilities of SCNIC partners to launch a movement based work, addressing *Dalit* Rights. Consequently the expected leadership from among the *Arundadiyars*, could not be raised. The victim himself withdrew the police complaint without the knowledge of either AAI or CEDAR. The work was wound up within three years without bringing any result. All the partners should take the blame. When AAI was keen to thrust its *Dalit* Right mandate top-down, SCNIC partners without application of mind, consented. For SCNIC, it was diversion of attention and loss of focus on the original mandate. It was attempting to do, what it was not equipped to do. For AAI, it was loss of face and waste of resources. It also suggests lack of reflective space in partnership relations and consequent donor-drivenness.
- 11.2.5 Another example of adhocism can be cited in terms of sudden launching of the enumeration of disabled children, for a year, in the project area. SCNIC staff had to be diverted for this work. Addressing the rights of disabled children certainly relates to Child Rights Work. However, the *ad hoc* manner in which it was launched and withdrawn after a year without assigning any reason, again highlights the arbitrariness of AAI, in managing partnership relations.

### 11.3 Program Officer as Interface in Partnership

The key functionary who provided the interface between SCNIC partners and AAI was the Program Officer. The Program officer was expected to provide the real dynamism into partnership. In principle, the Program Officer represented AAI in SCNIC and SCNIC, in AAI. This would call for certain brinkmanship that would ensure each one's autonomy and complementarity of roles. In actual practice, AAI did not seem to have attributed any seriousness to the above principle of autonomy in managing partnership. This naturally tilted partnership management towards a top-down discourse and bureaucratisation.

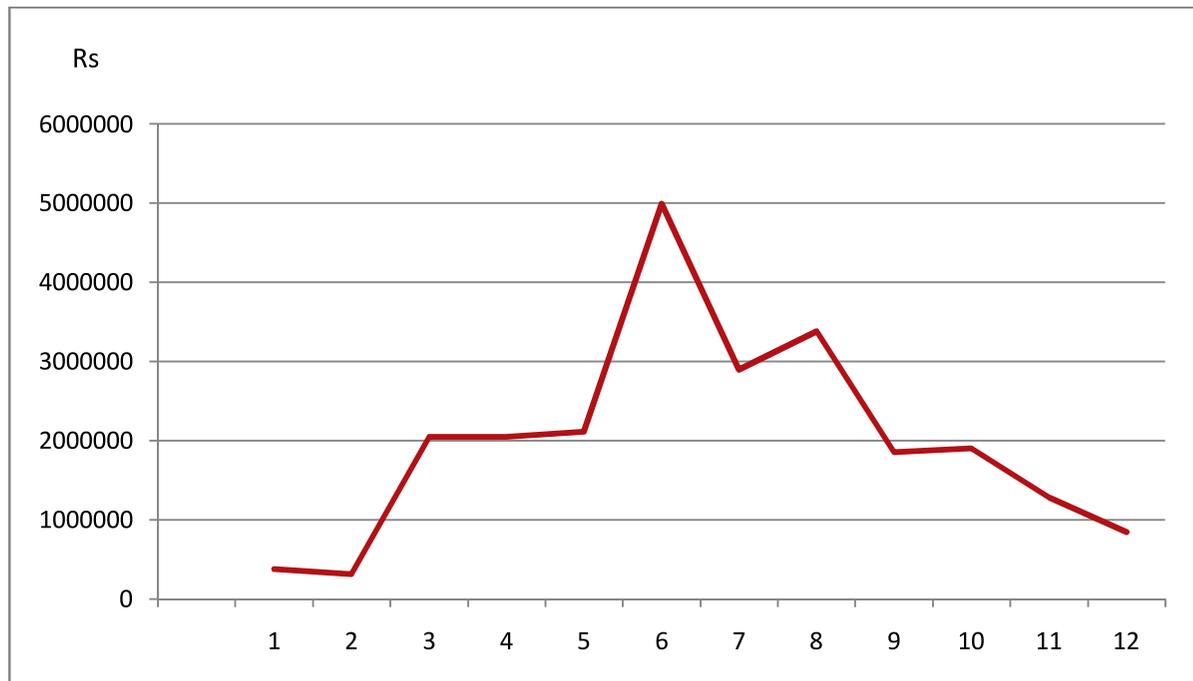
- 11.3.1 The lack of interest of AAI in providing and managing a proper interface is seen from the very adhoc nature of the appointments of Program Officers and their tenure. Between 2001 and 2012, in eleven years, ten Program Officers were appointed. Their tenure extended anything between a minimum of 8 months to a maximum of 18 months. These short and uncertain tenures of the Program Officers, made SCNIC suffer from a high level of arbitrariness of handling by AAI. Even when willing, the Program officers did not have much time to learn from what was going on, and then carve out a meaningful role.
- 11.3.2 The situation was further aggravated by appointment of persons without much working knowledge in the Child Related Work. Their experience of managing NGOs was also much in wanting, as the Program Officers were very often either fresh from college or had little managerial experience. Contrastingly, the NGO partners had managers and functionaries, who had reasonable experience in NGO management. Their knowledge of grassroots work was always well tested. This overwhelmed a novice.

11.3.3 This brought three types of responses. The first response was that the Program Officer overwhelmed by the situation, passively approved everything what the partners did. They could not open up much to learn anything from the partners. The second response was that the Program Officer became too very defensive, trying to manage the situation by reading the rule-book of Action Aid India to the partners, prescribing pre-digested solutions. [Very often the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) was given such scriptural value and was read out in planning meetings as if it was sacrosanct. What should have been a framework for realistic decision-making, was often used to silence partners. The CSP in itself was not wrong, but its unreflective and authoritarian use was]. The third response, we would call as the fallacy of following 'success models'. Fallacy of Success Models can otherwise be called 'Fallacy of the Market.' This means uncritical following of what successfully worked for 'someone mighty' in the field, or 'for many' in the field. When prescribed uncritically, in our experience, this created two types of problems. First, the solution proposed became totally irrelevant. For instance, seeing the success of running Bridge Schools by MV Foundation, SCNIC was almost forced to start Bridge Schools. In reality, there was not an optimum need for that. After about a year of zigzag movements and waste of time and resources, the proposal had to be given up with much difficulty. Second, the solution from a 'model of success', can also be appropriate. Again, if this is thrust top-down, it can lead to other serious problems resulting in the rejection of the transplant.

Such rejection can come from lack of ownership of the recipient, lack of preparation in terms of training and capacity to handle a new situation and lack of understanding of the magnitude of the problem that would very often overshoot requirements in terms of money and time. A tell-tale example of this positive misapplication is the introduction of CRMCs, all of a sudden, that too at the tail-end of the project. Proper dialogue and discussions would have certainly helped SCNIC partners to evolve a realistic time frame, assess the required financial resources and effect suitable modification before application. This could have worked as a wonderful exit-strategy. Mechanically thrust from above, today, CRMC remains only as a hope and not a reality yet. In all the three responses, only Action Aid India was represented before SCNIC and not the genuine concerns of SCNIC, taken upward before Action Aid. The scope for creative problem solving and learning from one another was thus limited.

11.3.4 To the extent Program Officers could not learn from partners on issues of project management, they could neither learn much from the grassroots realities. This is mainly because, they spent very little time with the partners and in the field. AAI administration could have encouraged them to get themselves anchored in partner organizations as yet another partner, spending more time to learn from grassroots realities. This did not happen. This was further complicated by the unfamiliarity of Child Rights work, for many.

11.3.5 Further, most of them did not undertake to develop an inclusive identity of a development professional. This was a daunting task for them as it involved giving up exclusive and conventional urban middle-class and professional identities. They tended to be officious and aloof. This placed a serious limitation on their potential to manage partnership relationship in a more creative and democratically representative manner. They involuntarily believed that AAI possessed all the answers for SCNIC. This prevented them from developing a sense of ownership of SCNIC. They wanted to be outsiders as they identified themselves very strongly with AAI, their employer, and very little or not at all, with SCNIC. The relationship ultimately crystallized into one that of donor-donee relationship.

**Graph 14 : STEEP RISE AND FALL OF BUDGETARY SUPPORT (2001-2012)**

#### 11.4 Partnership and Budget Adhocism

Though there is much celebration of Plan and Budget process as a democratic consultative process, where the SCNIC constituents and AAI involved in annual discussions, it was more a stance rather than anything meaningful in terms of resource management. The annual allocation was always done unilaterally by AAI in terms of its own priorities and availability of funds. The annual allocations seldom matched the real needs of the project. The above graph would show how there was a steep rise and fall. This was not very much supported by policy rationale. The sudden fall, rather than gradual tapering of funds towards the end, adversely affected the exit plan. Plan and budget consultations, apart from making allocation for expenditure for a year, it did not in a big way, bear on the sustainability and growth trajectory of the project. This should not be seen as a complaint in terms of inadequate funding by AAI. What we try to underline is that the surprise decisions on the quantum of funding at the beginning of every year based on the fortunes of AAI, badly upset the rhythm of activities and their meaningful expansion year after year. Early forecast and bringing an element of compulsion on partners to fend for resources on their own in the event AAI failed, could have helped. Resources must be mobilised in response to the demands made by project goals and not the goals altered according to the availability of funds. The cart cannot go before the horse. We do not mean to single out AAI in this. All should take the blame as it stemmed from donor-dependant thinking on everybody's part.

## CHAPTER VI

# TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION : LOOKING INTO FUTURE



## TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION : LOOKING INTO FUTURE

"THESE ARE NOT BLOCKS FOR ME..."

We do not finally want to end up writing a chapter of conclusions. No action project concludes. The mission may come to an end. Funding might stop. Assessments will be made. Some staff may leave. But they mark just an end of a cycle. Notwithstanding the fact whether the mission is fully realised or not, every cycle of action leaves us wiser with fresh insights and more knowledge of the issue at hand; then, with a fresh set of challenges. These challenges might be in the form of addressing a few issues that were left incomplete or, those problems that eluded solutions with the original design or, to go one step further, standing at the vantage point of success, plan a new mission with fresh targets issued by more worthwhile new goals.

A more than a decade of SCNIC action, in the first place, has given all of us, a great sense of victory and hence a vantage point. From this vantage point, we are able to certainly see farther but of course without our memory failing, either on our false steps or on a few frustrating failures against rock faces of resistance which we could never overcome.

The victory as evidenced, is in terms of singularly abolishing child labour in the 6-14 age group. By 2012, all the children belonging to this age group were at school. There still lingers the problem of part-time work in the 6-14 age group. Children in the 15-18 age group still continue to be vulnerable. This vulnerability surprisingly gets linked to two factors hitherto not spoken about loudly: poor quality education on one hand and easy availability of better paid jobs throwing up an indulgent youth subculture in rural areas, on the other hand.

Latent and mission-wise largely unspecified and unintended but certainly praise worthy, are the achievements relating to the internalisation of child rights by various constituencies. This has resulted in the emergence of child-centred space in the village communities and significant agency in the child and children. The spin-off. These communities of project villages in sum, today, are at the threshold of unprecedented change. If consolidated, this would result in a self-perpetuating institutional space for child-centeredness and child support, in every village. But sadly, the experience of SCNIC, forces us to come to the unassailable conclusion that while everything keeps moving in the right direction, village schools put up the biggest road block. In the event schools are not made child-centred soon, what all SCNIC achieved would become ephemeral.

Abolition is only a negative condition of success and as long as the seeds of abolition are not received in the wombs of child-centred communities, there can be several *avatars* of bondedness of children. The schools would play the proverbial well that returns bondage. As we saw, the authoritarian structures of

the school, the all pervading culture of oppression and the regression of any innovation on pedagogy and curriculum would only sponge out any agency created in the child outside of school. In its place, it will culturally substitute bondage. The answer therefore is that unless every child irrespective of its caste, gender, class and geographical location is given a 'child-centred total quality education', the bondage of the child would eternally continue. SCNIC on the hindsight of its decadal experience, therefore would conclude that its own slogans on 'Right to Childhood' and 'Right to Education' should change. SCNIC as it began in 2001, had to necessarily promote and then live with the reality 'Right to Childhood is Right to Schooling'. Time has now come for the paradigm shift in thought and action. "Right to Childhood is NOT Right to Schooling, BUT Right to TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION" This calls for facing fresh challenges.

## **COMMUNITY ACTION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

Right to quality education is not possible without organising a concerted community action for further consolidation of child-centred space in every community and bring schools to accountability. In this context, it is important to recapitulate for ourselves, at least three key concepts SCNIC has been using for articulating its vision for action, They are namely, Childhood, Child-Centred Space and Total Quality Education.

- 1. Childhood** : "SCNIC believes childhood to be that growth phase in the life of an individual who is an active and choosing agent (learning, questioning, and expressing 'self') wherein she or he is facilitated to grow physically, psychologically, socio-culturally and intellectually in a fulfilling and joyful manner so that as he or she enters the succeeding phases of development and into adulthood, is in a position to effectively participate in society and realize maximum, his or her human potentials without any handicap and in the larger interest of the society."
- 2. Child- Centred Space** : "SCNIC believes it to be that institutional space that would guarantee such care and development referred to above for every child in the family, in the community and in the school irrespective of gender, caste, class, ethnicity, and region. Such a space is articulated and sustained normatively through child rights by all concerned ,including civil society and the state."
- 3. Total Quality Education** : "By Total Quality Education SCNIC refers to a system of primary education that ensures wholesome development of the child appropriate for the age. This otherwise means facilitating physical and psycho-motor development appropriate for the age; scholastic and mental abilities that would ensure listening, reading, and writing comprehension prescribed for different standards; independent study habits, problem solving abilities and creative self-expression; development of moral conscience and ability for value judgements appropriate for the age."

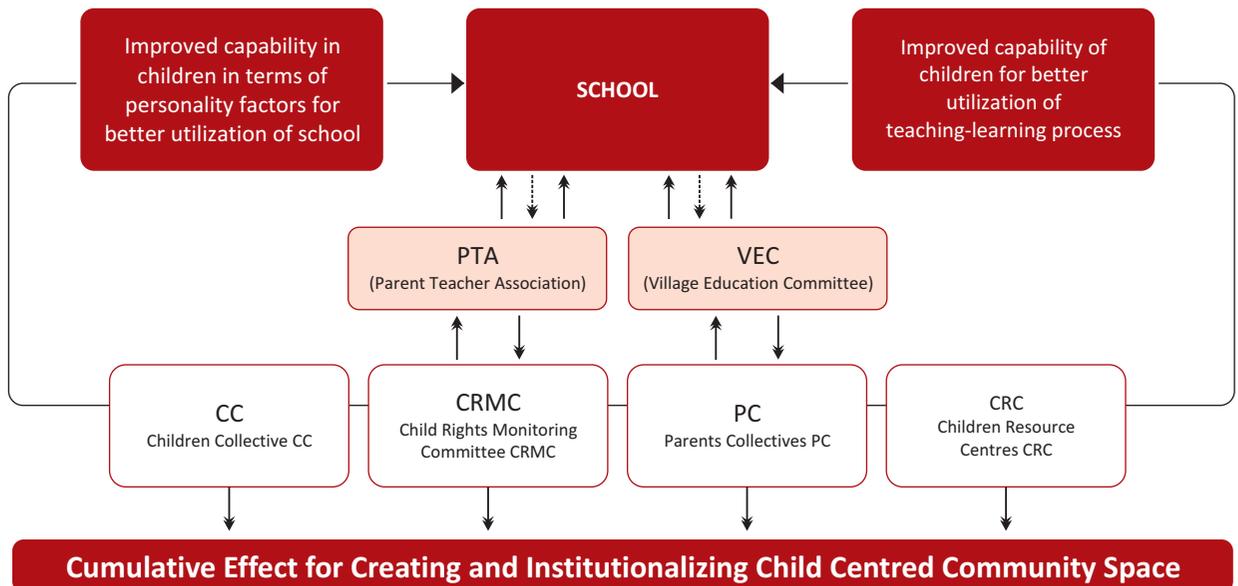
### **Major Premises that Call for Community Action for Total Quality Education:**

1. Child Labour abolition work and Child Rights activism well supported by legislative and policy measures, over a period of about 10 years, have sufficiently mobilised village communities for the creation of child centred space, especially in the project area.
2. The internalisation of child rights by major stakeholders – parents, community elders, and civic leaders– particularly in terms of Right to Education, is note worthy. This needs to be taken maximum advantage of, for ensuring right to childhood.

3. Mobilisation of the community itself is not enough. Sufficient capacity has to be built in parents, community leaders and others in bringing schools to accountability. For instance, the mandatory structures like Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Village Education Committee (VEC) need to be positively utilised as interfaces between School and Community. These potentials as we have demonstrated, as on date are severely underutilized.
4. For any educational programme to be successful, children need 'beyond school support'. In the middle class context, this support is organised at the family platform. Poor homes neither are equipped with intellectual/cultural resources nor could afford them financially. SCNIC 'beyond school support' programme has sufficiently demonstrated that in the village context, such support can be organised as a 'common community platform of support' for all poor children. SCNIC experience is only a tip of the iceberg. This community platform can be organised on a cost effective basis as is the case with Child Resource Centre (CRC). Each community can be encouraged to raise its own CRCs to provide 'beyond school support for each poor child' which otherwise cannot afford a family platform.
5. The very nucleus of child-centred space is the Children Collective in each village. This needs to be sustained and its activities augmented. Children however well organised, in general, are powerless in a world dominated by adults. They need very empathetic adults to support their cause. This calls for creation of structures that would encourage adults who would monitor Child Rights violation, provide support to Children Collectives (CCs) and Children Resource Centres (CRCs) and sustain the child-centred space in moral, material and political terms. It is not too long before the community comes forward to totally own Child Rights and Child-support responsibilities. This needs further consolidation and building the capacity of Child Rights Monitoring Committees (CRMCs) and creation of structures like Parent's Collectives (PCs). This demands the presence of NGOs experienced in Child Rights work in the village, at least for some more time.

**Fig 4 :**

**COMMUNITY ACTION MODEL FOR TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION**



**Community Action for Total Quality Education would rely on two major strategies:**

- I. Beyond School Support Strategy
- II. Community Accountability Strategy

## **I. Beyond School Support Strategy for Quality Education**

By this, we mean that each village community would create its own 'community child support space' for education. This support space would improvise upon, complement and valorise the learning experience of individual child. This in turn would improve capabilities of each child to make better use of the classroom and the school on one hand and bring forth fresh demands on pedagogical and curricular practices. Beyond school support programme gains tremendous significance in poverty conditions. It is very cost effective. The poor homes with illiterate or semi-literate parents who cannot in material terms and psycho-social and cultural terms, offer 'child support beyond school', would not be at loss now. In sum, quality in teaching-learning, to a greater extent, depends upon how a child is attended to and supported, beyond school.

### **Programme Under Beyond School Support Strategy**

#### **1. Children Resource Centre (CRC)**

Children Resource Centre (CRC) refers to a gathering of poor children in the village in the age group of 6 to 14 in the evenings after school hours, on a day to day basis in a common place around a village volunteer, who would provide a platform for

- i. Monitoring each child's regular attendance and performance in school
- ii. Supervising homework
- iii. Identifying special deficiencies on an individual basis and extend help
- iv. Providing coaching and tuition if needed
- v. Promoting aesthetic and creative self-expression
- vi. Training in art and culture.

The village volunteer will be a resident of the village who will have a minimum educational qualification of Higher Secondary Education and will be paid an honorarium. The project will train them in basic curricular-pedagogical practices.

#### **2. Children Collectives (CC)**

Children Collective refers to the voluntary assembly of children in the age group of 11 to 18 in each village on a membership basis and for the purpose of self-articulation and self-organization around the general interest of children in the community. The major objective of promoting Children Collectives (CCs) is to develop 'agency' in each child to promote civic consciousness and enlarge the space for children in the community. Child collectives are organized usually under the guidance of project staff and village volunteers. Child collectives would provide children a platform for

- i. Organizing themselves around their needs and interests
- ii. Promoting leadership qualities in general
- iii. Organizing periodical meetings on an established protocol that would deliberate on child rights issues and other child centred interests
- iv. Organize programmes of civic concerns, environmental issues and participation in civic bodies like '*Gram Sabha*'
- v. Organize rallies, visits and annual festivals that would enrich childhood experience.

## II. Community Accountability Strategy for Quality Education

In spite of several efforts to decentralize democracy in India, schools continue to remain as 'external agencies' to the village community. This is further complicated by lack of infrastructure, non-availability of teachers, lack of professionalism among teachers, over-unionization, bureaucratization of supervision by government agencies and lack of school governance. In recent years however, the government has proposed certain statutory measures to democratize the governing structures of the schools and make them more participatory and accountable to the community. Noteworthy are the statutory Village Education Committees (VECs) and Parent Teacher associations (PTAs). But these structures are in inception and are mostly rendered ineffective due to the lack of capacity of the poor and illiterate parents and other stakeholders.

It is therefore necessary that there has to be a civil society / NGO initiative to build the capacity of parents, community elders and other community stakeholders in participatory practices that would ensure better governance of village schools leading to child centred education and quality upgradation.

### Programmes Under Community Accountability

#### 1. Parents Teachers Association (PTA)

PTA as a mandatory committee constituted by the school is meant to promote:

- i. A feedback mechanism of parents on different concerns relating to children education
- ii. Direct accountability of teachers on classroom performance of each child
- iii. Monitoring of child rights violation including corporal punishment at school
- iv. Participation in school management.

#### 2. Village Education Committee (VEC)

VEC is a statutory committee meant for promoting participatory management of the school in terms of both general administration and infrastructure development. It is meant to promote

- i. Greater ownership of school by community
- ii. Community contribution for infrastructure development of the school
- iii. Improvement in governance.

### 3. Child Rights Monitoring Committee (CRMC):

#### PROGRAMME PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY INTERVENTION

CRMC is a broad based and heterogeneous group of adult stakeholders drawn from parents, SHGs, youth groups, village elders and civic body members whose number may extend from 7 to 12. SCNIC has already raised CRMC's in each village. The purpose of raising this group is:

- i. To spearhead and institutionalize child centred community space and monitor child rights
- ii. To provide a recruiting platform for VECs
- iii. Build capacity of adults for monitoring child rights and children education
- iv. Create synergy between PTA, VEC and Children Collectives.

### 4. Parent's Collective (PC)

#### CEDAR's PROGRAMME PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY INTERVENTION

It is an association of poor parents whose children participate both in Children Resource Centres (CRCs) and Children Collectives (CCs). At present SCNIC has raised only a few experimental parent collectives (PCs). The purpose of the collective is:

- i. To support the activities of Children's Resource Centre (CRC) and Children Collectives (CC)
- ii. To prepare parents to create a child centred space in the family
- iii. To prepare poor parents to become increasingly accountable for the education of their own children
- iv. To help parents to effectively participate in the PTAs and VECs.

Community Action for Total Quality Education cannot be postponed any further.



"WE WANT OUR FUTURE..."



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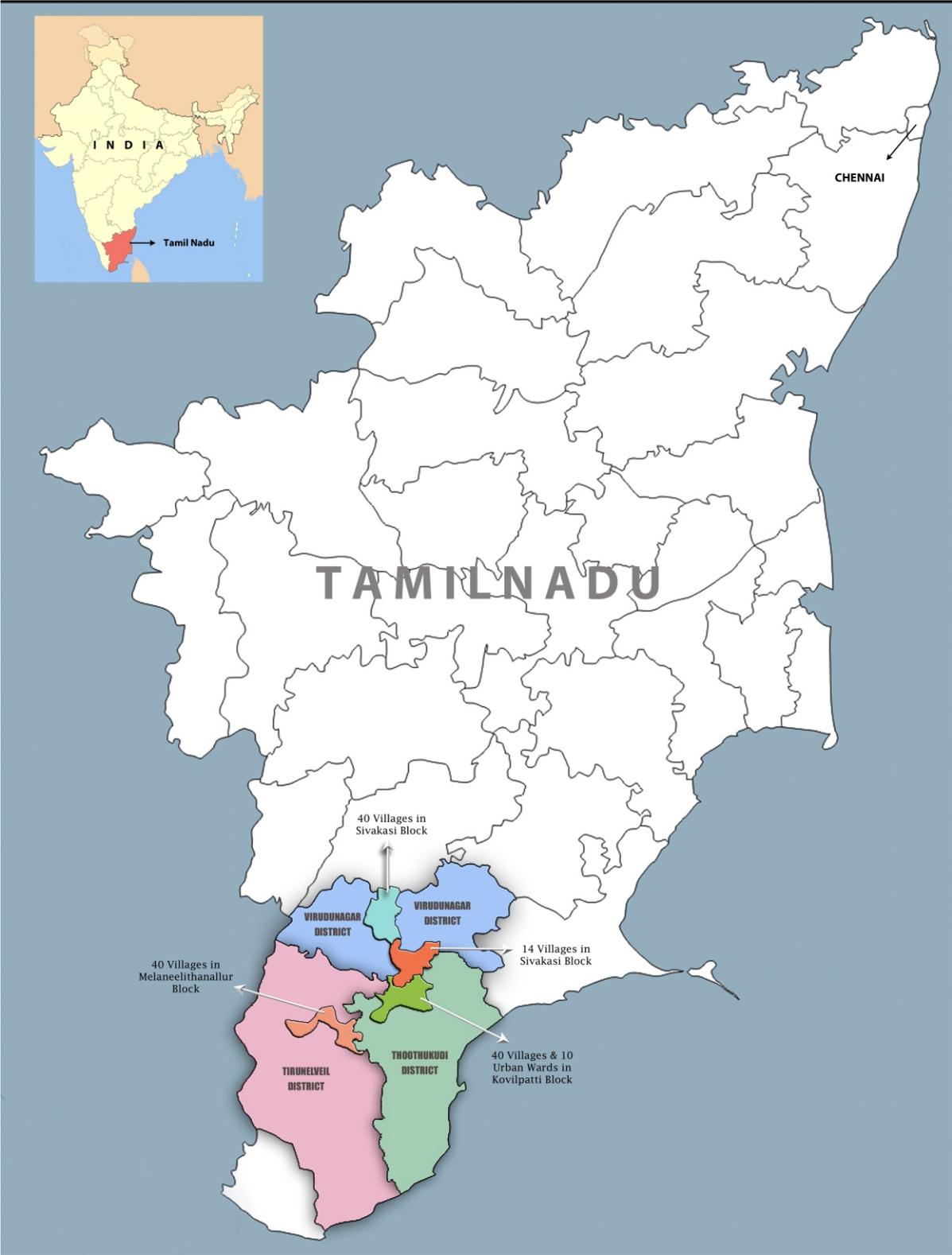
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2. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act 2010.
3. United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child 1989.

**APPENDIX I : PROJECT AREA**



## APPENDIX II : CHILDREN ORGANIZED UNDER CHILDREN COLLECTIVES

### KOVILPATTI BLOCK, THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
1	Alampatti	Diamond	17	14	<b>31</b>	0	0	31	0	<b>31</b>
2	Anjuranpatti	Thendral	11	9	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
3	Athikinaru	Titanic	26	13	<b>39</b>	0	0	39	0	<b>39</b>
4	Avalnatham	Everest	9	17	<b>26</b>	0	26	0	0	<b>26</b>
5	Bharthi Nagar	Annai Thersha	7	13	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
6	Chinthalakarai	Nehru	30	22	<b>52</b>	27	25	0	0	<b>52</b>
7	Duraisampuram	White rose	22	24	<b>46</b>	46	0	0	0	<b>46</b>
8	Duraiyur	Puratchi Malargal	24	17	<b>41</b>	0	41	0	0	<b>41</b>
9	Elambuvanam	Malligai	14	22	<b>36</b>	0	36	0	0	<b>36</b>
10	Eratchi	Dhamarai	17	14	<b>31</b>	14	12	5	0	<b>31</b>
11	Idaiseval	Dhamarai	18	20	<b>38</b>	0	0	38	0	<b>38</b>
12	Illupaiyurani (Valluvar	Nagar) Vannamathi	10	17	<b>27</b>	0	27	0	0	<b>27</b>
13	Kadalaiyur	Little Friends	16	17	<b>33</b>	23	5	4	1	<b>33</b>
14	Karisalkulam	Jawaharlal Nehru	14	23	<b>37</b>	27	0	10	0	<b>37</b>
15	Kattunayackar Street	Vetri Vengai	8	17	<b>25</b>	0	0	0	25	<b>25</b>
16	Katturamanpatti	Sivasakthi	8	27	<b>35</b>	0	0	35	0	<b>35</b>
17	Kodukkamparai	Malarum mottugal	12	10	<b>22</b>	0	0	22	0	<b>22</b>
18	Kulathulvaipatti	Nethaji	5	9	<b>14</b>	0	0	14	0	<b>14</b>
19	Kumarapuram	Star	16	11	<b>27</b>	0	0	27	0	<b>27</b>
20	Kumarikulam	Iampuyal	12	15	<b>27</b>	0	0	27	0	<b>27</b>
21	Kuriji Nagar	Three Roses	12	14	<b>26</b>	0	26	0	0	<b>26</b>
22	Lenian Nagar	Sangamam	11	4	<b>15</b>	15	0	0	0	<b>15</b>
23	Manthithoppu	Thendral	10	12	<b>22</b>	0	0	22	0	<b>22</b>
24	Meenakshipuram	Kuriji Malar	13	16	<b>29</b>	0	0	29	0	<b>29</b>
25	Melaeral	Nehru	16	13	<b>29</b>	0	0	29	0	<b>29</b>
26	Murugapatti	Alli	7	15	<b>22</b>	0	22	0	0	<b>22</b>
27	Naranapuram	Pasumai Thendral	17	15	<b>32</b>	10	0	2	20	<b>32</b>
28	Narkalaikottai	Thendral	13	12	<b>25</b>	25	0	0	0	<b>25</b>
29	Natchiyarpuram	Rojamoddugal	12	14	<b>26</b>	0	0	26	0	<b>26</b>
30	Peekilipatti	Thendral	20	21	<b>41</b>	0	0	41	0	<b>41</b>
31	Pithapuram	Thendral	8	18	<b>26</b>	10	5	1	10	<b>26</b>
32	Ranasurnaikanpatti	B.M. Thendral	11	12	<b>23</b>	0	0	23	0	<b>23</b>
33	Rasapatti	Malargal	12	14	<b>26</b>	0	0	26	0	<b>26</b>
34	RC Street	Roja	14	15	<b>29</b>	0	0	29	0	<b>29</b>
35	Samathuvapuram	Thendral	16	16	<b>32</b>	8	16	8	0	<b>32</b>
36	Semaputhur (North)	Arugapul	16	14	<b>30</b>	15	14	1	0	<b>30</b>
37	Semaputhur (South)	Thendral	11	9	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
38	Sivanthipatti	Sikaram	14	10	<b>24</b>	1	18	5	0	<b>24</b>
39	Stalin Colony	Vanavil	9	6	<b>15</b>	0	0	15	0	<b>15</b>

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
40	Subramaniyapuram	Win Star	14	16	<b>30</b>	0	0	30	0	<b>30</b>
41	Sundralingapuram	Tamil Thendral	27	41	<b>68</b>	0	0	68	0	<b>68</b>
42	Surakaipatti	Thendral	24	18	<b>42</b>	25	17	0	0	<b>42</b>
43	T.Padarthapuli	Vetri	10	18	<b>28</b>	0	0	28	0	<b>28</b>
44	T.Shanmugapuram	Thendral	10	8	<b>18</b>	0	0	18	0	<b>18</b>
45	Urulaikudi	Roja	15	17	<b>32</b>	12	0	20	0	<b>32</b>
46	Uthupatti	Thendral	11	19	<b>30</b>	0	0	30	0	<b>30</b>
47	Valampatti	Sangamam	10	13	<b>23</b>	0	0	23	0	<b>23</b>
48	Veeravanchi Nagar	Elam thendral	9	13	<b>22</b>	0	22	0	0	<b>22</b>
49	Vijayapuri	APJ Abdulkalam	31	25	<b>56</b>	0	56	0	0	<b>56</b>

### MELANEELITHANALLUR BLOCK, TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
50	Villiseri	Ambedhar	10	12	<b>22</b>	0	0	22	0	<b>22</b>
51	Ayalpatti	Viduthalai pookkal	20	26	<b>46</b>	3	28	15	0	<b>46</b>
52	Thirumalapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	47	49	<b>96</b>	77	21	7	0	<b>96</b>
53	Vannampottal	Viduthalai pookkal	15	21	<b>36</b>	0	36	0	0	<b>36</b>
54	Thonugal	Viduthalai pookkal	11	16	<b>27</b>	0	7	20	0	<b>27</b>
55	Narayanapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	31	25	<b>56</b>	0	20	36	0	<b>56</b>
56	Saminathapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	35	18	<b>53</b>	0	0	53	0	<b>53</b>
57	Keelaneelithanallur	Viduthalai pookkal	28	19	<b>47</b>	0	26	21	0	<b>47</b>
58	Melaneelithanallur	Viduthalai pookkal	41	30	<b>71</b>	0	46	25	0	<b>71</b>
59	Karuthanur	Viduthalai pookkal	25	18	<b>43</b>	0	0	43	0	<b>43</b>
60	K.Maruthappapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	11	13	<b>24</b>	0	0	24	0	<b>24</b>
61	Jamin Illanthakulam	Viduthalai pookkal	35	33	<b>68</b>	0	45	23	0	<b>68</b>
62	N.K. Puram	Viduthalai pookkal	24	12	<b>36</b>	36	0	0	0	<b>36</b>
63	K.Reddiyapatti	Viduthalai pookkal	16	26	<b>42</b>	0	42	0	0	<b>42</b>
64	Periakovilankulam	Viduthalai pookkal	30	24	<b>54</b>	0	40	14	0	<b>54</b>
65	Kurukkalpatti	Viduthalai pookkal	20	25	<b>45</b>	0	2	43	0	<b>45</b>
66	Chokkalingapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	26	22	<b>48</b>	0	43	5	0	<b>48</b>
67	North Panavadali	Viduthalai pookkal	30	25	<b>55</b>	0	55	0	0	<b>55</b>
68	Panavadalichathiram	Viduthalai pookkal	32	26	<b>58</b>	0	5	53	0	<b>58</b>
69	Permalpatti	Viduthalai pookkal	18	24	<b>42</b>	0	42	0	0	<b>42</b>
70	Venkatachalapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	22	26	<b>48</b>	0	48	0	0	<b>48</b>
71	Madathupatti	Viduthalai pookkal	15	18	<b>33</b>	0	33	0	0	<b>33</b>
72	North Achampatti	Viduthalai pookkal	20	28	<b>48</b>	0	48	0	0	<b>48</b>
73	Karuppanuthu	Viduthalai pookkal	10	14	<b>24</b>	2	22	0	0	<b>24</b>
74	Thadiapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	33	15	<b>48</b>	0	48	0	0	<b>48</b>
75	South Achampatti	Viduthalai pookkal	18	24	<b>42</b>	0	42	0	0	<b>42</b>
76	South Puliampatti	Viduthalai pookkal	22	19	<b>41</b>	0	41	0	0	<b>41</b>
77	North Puliampatti	Viduthalai pookkal	16	20	<b>36</b>	0	36	0	0	<b>36</b>

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
78	Vannikonendal	Viduthalai pookkal	17	20	<b>37</b>	0	37	0	0	<b>37</b>
79	Koovatchipatti	Viduthalai pookkal	20	22	<b>42</b>	0	42	0	0	<b>42</b>
80	Moovirunthali	Viduthalai pookkal	25	15	<b>40</b>	12	28	0	0	<b>40</b>
81	Salaiputhur	Viduthalai pookkal	20	10	<b>30</b>	0	30	0		<b>30</b>
82	Sundankurichi	Viduthalai pookkal	15	17	<b>32</b>	0	25	7	0	<b>32</b>
83	Panneeruthu	Viduthalai pookkal	25	12	<b>37</b>	0	37	0	0	<b>37</b>
84	Devarkulam	Viduthalai pookkal	18	20	<b>38</b>	0	38	0	0	<b>38</b>
85	Melanarikudi	Viduthalai pookkal	22	10	<b>32</b>	0	32	0	0	<b>32</b>
86	Mesiapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	15	16	<b>31</b>	0	25	6	0	<b>31</b>
87	Vadaku Thalaivanpatti	Viduthalai pookkal	20	22	<b>42</b>	0	10	32	0	<b>42</b>
88	Mela Illanthakulam	Viduthalai pookkal	31	56	<b>87</b>	9	18	60	0	<b>87</b>
89	Chokkanatchiapuram	Viduthalai pookkal	20	18	<b>38</b>	35	3	0	0	<b>38</b>
90	Thadiampatti	Viduthalai pookkal	20	12	<b>32</b>	0	0	32	0	<b>32</b>

### SATTUR BLOCK, VIRUDUNAGAR DISTRICT

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
91	Chinnathamiyapuram	Valar Thalir	16	8	<b>24</b>	0	24	0	0	<b>24</b>
92	Kalingapatti	Dhamarai	10	14	<b>24</b>	24	0	0	0	<b>24</b>
93	Kajampatti	Pudhumai	20	15	<b>35</b>	14	7	13	1	<b>35</b>
94	Meenakshipuram	Thendral	8	16	<b>24</b>	0	0	24	0	<b>24</b>
95	Mulliseval	Eyargai	23	21	<b>44</b>	3	20	12	0	<b>44</b>
96	N.Venkateswarapuram	Star	10	13	<b>23</b>	0	0	23	0	<b>23</b>
97	Natarajapuram	Roja	13	9	<b>22</b>	22	0	0	0	<b>22</b>
98	Pedhureddipatti	Bharathiyar	12	13	<b>25</b>	0	0	25	0	<b>25</b>
99	Periyaodaipatti	Muthamil	16	13	<b>29</b>	26	0	3	0	<b>29</b>
100	Perumalpatti	Malligai	13	4	<b>17</b>	0	0	17	0	<b>17</b>

### SIVAKASI BLOCK, VIRUDUNAGAR DISTRICT

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
101	Pulvaipatti	Malarum Moddugal	11	16	<b>27</b>	22	0	5	0	<b>27</b>
102	Sivananaithapuram	Tamil Thendral	27	41	<b>68</b>	0	0	68	0	<b>68</b>
103	Thotilovanpatti (North)	Elampuyal	16	16	<b>32</b>	0	0	32	0	<b>32</b>
104	Thotilovanpatti (South)	Puratchi	10	19	<b>29</b>	11	14	4	0	<b>29</b>
105	Anna Colony	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	13	13	<b>26</b>	0	26	0	0	<b>26</b>
106	Vadamalapuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	16	12	<b>28</b>	0	28	0		<b>28</b>
107	Puthupatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	11	9	<b>20</b>	0	20	0	0	<b>20</b>
108	Mangalam	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	15	9	<b>24</b>	0	24	0	0	<b>24</b>
109	M Mettupatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	18	7	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
110	Sanarpatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	18	10	<b>28</b>	0	28	0	0	<b>28</b>

No.	Village Name	Name of the CC	Boys	Girls	Total	BC	MBC	SC	ST	Total
111	Chokkalingapuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	11	9	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
112	Kalayarkurichi	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	18	10	<b>28</b>	0	28	0	0	<b>28</b>
113	Ceylon Colony A	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	8	17	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
114	Sukiravarpatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	16	12	<b>28</b>	0	0	28	0	<b>28</b>
115	Periyar Colony	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	15	8	<b>23</b>	0	0	23	0	<b>23</b>
116	Kannagi Colony	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	9	16	<b>25</b>	9	16	0	0	<b>25</b>
117	Ceylon Colony D	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	12	8	<b>20</b>	0	20	0	0	<b>20</b>
118	Gandhi Nagar	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	11	14	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
119	Samathuvapuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	14	6	<b>20</b>	6	8	6	0	<b>20</b>
120	A Lakshmiapuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	8	17	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
121	Ayyampatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	4	16	<b>20</b>	0	20	0	0	<b>20</b>
122	Anaiyur	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	13	12	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
123	Pudur	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	12	7	<b>19</b>	0	0	19	0	<b>19</b>
124	Goundampatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	11	14	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
125	Anaikuttam	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	10	12	<b>22</b>	0	22	0	0	<b>22</b>
126	Indiranagar	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	14	6	<b>20</b>	5	8	7	0	<b>20</b>
127	A Minatchipuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	6	12	<b>18</b>	3	6	9	0	<b>18</b>
128	M Minatchipuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	9	10	<b>19</b>	4	5	10	0	<b>19</b>
129	Uppodai	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	5	14	<b>19</b>	0	0	19	0	<b>19</b>
130	Servaikaranpatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	12	10	<b>22</b>	0	0	22	0	<b>22</b>
131	Mathiasenai	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	14	30	<b>44</b>	0	0	44	0	<b>44</b>
132	Kariseri	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	10	10	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
133	Vellur	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	21	45	<b>66</b>	0	0	66	0	<b>66</b>
134	Amman Kovilpatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	15	15	<b>30</b>	0	0	30	0	<b>30</b>
135	Pallapatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	14	13	<b>27</b>	0	0	27	0	<b>27</b>
136	Sivagamipuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	12	12	<b>24</b>	0	0	24	0	<b>24</b>
137	Meenampatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	9	13	<b>22</b>	0	0	22	0	<b>22</b>
138	Naranapuram	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	7	9	<b>16</b>	0	0	16	0	<b>16</b>
139	Poochakapatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	16	8	<b>24</b>	0	24	0	0	<b>24</b>
140	Zameen Salwarpatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	9	17	<b>26</b>	0	0	26	0	<b>26</b>
141	Pethulupatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	10	15	<b>25</b>	0	25	0	0	<b>25</b>
142	Kattalaipatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	15	5	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
143	Thaencolony	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	7	17	<b>24</b>	0	0	24	0	<b>24</b>
144	Sannasipatti	NEWS Jeeva Pookal CC	8	12	<b>20</b>	0	0	20	0	<b>20</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2309</b>	<b>2376</b>	<b>4685</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>2199</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4685</b>

## APPENDIX III : EARLY DISCUSSION ON SELF STUDY Impact Analysis - Enlarging the scope (2 messages)

thressia joseph <thressiatj@gmail.com>  
To: esther.mariaselvam@actionaid.org

Mon, Jun 11, 2012 at 4:42 PM

To,

Ms. Esther Mariaselvam,  
Regional Manager,  
Action Aid Inda (Chennai Region),  
Shenoy Nagar, Chennai.

### **Sub: Enlarging the scope of Impact Analysis – Bringing theoretical relevance to childhood rather than making an impact analysis using only empirical indices – Reg.**

You are aware that CEDAR would exit from SCNIC project by December 2012. It is understood that a very comprehensive impact assessment will have to be made covering the period between 2001 and 2012. It is customary that the impact studies are always left in the hands of external experts, appointed by ActionAid. This we understand is mainly on the justification that external assessment will bring better objectivity. Though we admit such objectivity is necessary, such impact assessments do suffer from serious limitations. They are as follows:

The assessors very often rigidly confine themselves to the empirical indices developed in terms of project objectives alone. The outcome suffer from theoretical insensitivity that the data thus collected cannot be used for other purposes including developing replicable models.

Most of the external experts are either insensitive to the issue under question or bring in their own theoretical bias, failing to capture positive consequences otherwise not contemplated in terms of project goals.

External assessment methods often fail to take into account the experiences underwent by the project personnel and processes involved in both successes and failures in achieving operational objectives.

The developing trend in social sciences too tries to place more and more emphasis in documenting experiences based on personal reflexivity of the individual projecteers and organisations. These methods of project assessment come to be called as 'personal experience method' and use anchored theories for maintaining objectivity.

Though we in CEDAR do not discredit the customary methodology of assessment, however want to propose something innovative and more useful to both CEDAR and ActionAid. We think that the Impact Assessment proposed can be done in such a manner that it becomes a study in itself in a larger perspective. Such perspective would naturally address the following issues apart from the conventional assessment in terms of input and output:

How the praxis initiated through SCNIC, processually enlarged itself from abolition of child labour to ensuring childhood as a right?

How creating awareness against child labour and exploitation, evolved into a 'sustainable capacity in community' for ensuring childhood?

How programmatic activities aimed at preventing child labour and ensuring child rights, resulted in discovering, articulating and strengthening of the 'agency in child'? This means how the articulation of agency of child manifest itself in leadership qualities, readiness to accept civic responsibilities transcending gender and caste constraints in maintaining social relations, ability for teamwork and talents for aesthetic self expression.

How sustainable method of abolition of child labour is related not only to schooling but also giving quality education? In other words, how right to childhood transforms itself into right to quality education?

How the interactive learning of the projectors and NGO partners resulted in organisational learning and internal capacity building for addressing child rights issues. In other words, what is the intellectual capital gained for partner organisations in SCNIC including ActionAid?

You are aware of the fact that CEDAR is an action research organisation which stakes its credibility in terms of knowledge for action through its research and capacity building programmes. In the past two decades, it has demonstrated very innovative approaches and models for action.

Therefore we in CEDAR, after much reflection and thought would like to propose a novel approach for making the Impact Assessment which will be larger in scope and relevant for future research and actions.

However this does not mean [that] we will work outside the assessment framework provided by ActionAid. Only the methodology and quality of data collected will differ. We request that CEDAR may be permitted to take a lead role of course inducting sufficient number of external member.

Regards,  
Dr. Thressia TJ

**Esther Mariaselvam**

<Esther.Mariaselvam@actionaid.org>

Fri, Jun 22, 2012 at 5:10 PM

To: thressia joseph <thressiatj@gmail.com>

Cc: Amar Nayak <Amar.Nayak@actionaid.org>, Gomathi <gomathi@actionaidindia.org.in>, Syed Ali <syed.ali@hotmail.com>

Dear Dr. Thressia

Greetings!

Sub: Enlarging the scope of Impact Analysis – Bringing theoretical relevance to childhood rather than making an impact analysis using only empirical indices reg.

We acknowledge the receipt of your mail dt. 11th June 2012 and our apologies for the delay in sending our response.

We are very well aware that 2012 is the phase out year of CRO – DI SCNIC supported by Actionaid Chennai Regional Office.

I would like to register my concern regarding the statement you have made in your mail that “It is customary that the impact studies are always left in the hands of external experts appointed by ActionAid’ for the varied justification you may bring in your mail. We believe in consultatively carrying out this process for the benefit of ActionAid, SCNIC and community.

While appreciating SCNIC's novel approach to carry out the impact assessment within framework provided by ActionAid, we request you to have ActionAid on board for the future processes related to the impact assessment. We request you to share your plan with ActionAid.

As per our mandate we request you to organise in such a manner that the impact assessment report will be made available by the 1st week of August, 2012.

Looking forward to hear from you.

Warmly  
Esther

## APPENDIX IV (a) : SCNIC IMPACT ASSESMENT (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)

Place: CEDAR office, Madurai

Date: 20.07.2011

**FGD 1 :** Identification of part time child labour below 14 in homesteads.

**FGD 2 :** Identification of part time child labour in 14 to 18 age group.

**FGD 6 :** To assess special coaching, AIE centres, inclusive education, special coaching of dropout children from the point of view of increasing motivation, preventing dropouts and mainstreaming weak students .

**FGD 7 :** To assess the present status of released child bonded labourers, victims of child marriage, accident victims and victims of sex abuse .

**FGD 8 :** To assess how processes introduced by SCNIC was helpful in creating agency in children (eg. Child planning, children's initiative, sharing responsibility, spontaneous leadership etc) .

No.	Name	Experience in SCNIC	Present Position
	<b>Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph</b>	<b>2001 to present</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
1.	Dr. Thressia	2009 to present	Project Director
2.	Syed Ali	2006 to present	Project Coordinator
3.	Aruldoss	2006 to present	Program Manager MNLR
4.	Mariammal	2003 to present	Program Manager KVP
5.	Jockim Jacob	2009 to present	Program Manager SVK
6.	Marimuthu	2008 to present	Accountant
7.	Malliga	2001 to present	Theme Coordinator (Girls Edu)
8.	Palpandi	2005 to present	Theme Coordinator (Child Rights)
9.	Michael Raj	2009 to present	Sponsorship Coordinator
10.	Chandrabala	2009 to 2011	Resigned
11.	Ramesh	2009 to 2011	Resigned
12.	Prakash	2009 to 2010	Resigned
13.	Sahaya Mary	2012 onwards	Field Motivator
14.	Mari Kala	2012 onwards	Field Motivator
15.	Kalavathi	2012 onwards	SHG Motivator
16.	Sudha	2012 Onwards	SHG Motivator
17.	Sunitha	2012	Program Officer: AAI - CRO

## APPENDIX IV (b): SCNIC IMPACT ASSESMENT (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)\*

Venue: VICTORY TRUST, MNLR

Date: 28.07.2012

**FGD 3 :** To assess the role of Balwadis in weaning children away from child labour and school enrolment.

**FGD 4 :** To assess the role of CRMC from three different angles:

i) How the community has internalized the need for child rights ?

ii) How active they are in monitoring Child Rights ?

iii) How sustainable the Structure on the exit of Project Staff ?

**FGD 5 :** To assess the effectiveness of VEC and PTA.

No.	Participant Name	Male / Female	Age	Representation	Village Name
	<b>Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>CEDAR, Madurai</b>
1.	P. Muthulakshmi	Female	50	Anganwadi Worker	Narayanapuram
2.	D. Jothimuthu	Male	55	Community Leader, CRMC	North Panavadali
3.	A. Kasthuri	Female	65	Community Leader, CRMC	Pidhapuram
4.	T. Vellathuraichi	Female	46	Community Member	S. Achampatti
5.	V. Ranjitham	Female	32	Community Member	Thirumalapuram
6.	S. Chellathai	Female	48	Community Member, Beneficiary (Individual Support Fund)	N. Puliampatti
7.	A. Murugathal	Female	45	Community Member, beneficiary (Revolving Fund)	N. Puliampatti
8.	V. Ramesh Kumar	Male	32	CRMC	Meenthulli
9.	V. Koyilthurai	Male	34	CRMC	N. Achampatti
10.	M. Sundari	Female	40	CRMC	Mooviruthali
11.	K. Jeyaprakash	Male	33	CRMC	Meenthulli
12.	A. Meena	Female	40	CRMC	Kannagi Colony
13.	J. Selvam	Male	39	CRMC	Kannagi Colony
14.	C. Sundari	Female	36	CRMC	Ceylon Colony
15.	A. Peter Selvi	Female	39	CRMC	A.Meenakshipuram
16.	R. Muthu Raman	Male	41	CRMC	Servakaranpatti
17.	M. Selvaraj	Male	42	CRMC	Sukkiravarpatti
18.	M. Samuthiram	Male	42	CRMC	Sokkalingapuram
19.	M. Krishnammal	Female	65	CRMC	Karisalkulam
20.	Y. Selvi	Female	30	CRMC	Meenakshipuram

No.	Participant Name	Male / Female	Age	Representation	Village Name
21.	S. Shanthi	Female	32	CRMC	Meenakshipuram
22.	Dr. Thressia TJ	Female	58	Director,	CEDARMadurai
23.	S. Joseph	Male	32	Ex- Staff	Salaiputhur
24.	P. Eashwaran	Male	35	Ex- Staff	Salaiputhur
25.	T. Sivakumar	Male	33	Ex- Staff, CRMC	Thirumalapuram
26.	S. Mariselvi	Female	22	Field Motivator	CEDAR Kovilpatti
27.	M. Gurulakshmi	Female	26	Field Motivator	CEDAR Kovilpatti
28.	S. Katthammal	Female	29	Field Motivator	CEDAR Kovilpatti
29.	A. Michael Raj	Male	28	Field Supervisor	CEDAR Kovilpatti
30.	K. Kanaga	Female	40	Headmistress	Ettayapuram
31.	L. Senthil Kumar	Male	26	NGO Staff	Thirumalapuram
32.	A. Arul Doss	Male	52	Program Manager	VICTORY TRUST
33.	J. Jockim Jacob	Male	24	Program Manager	Thiruthangal
34.	M. Mariammal	Female	41	Program Manager, CEDAR	CEDAR Kovilpatti
35.	G. Palpandian	Male	41	Program Motivator	Sanarpatti
36.	Syed Ali A	Male	35	Programme Coordinator,	CEDARMadurai
37.	V. Vethanayagam	Male	65	Retired Police	Aayalpatti
38.	P. Maheshwari	Female	28	Self Help Group Leader	Narayanapuram
39.	R. Isakiyammal	Female	38	SHG	Aayalpatti
40.	K. Avudayammal	Female	34	SHG	Thirumalapuram
41.	S. Thangam	Male	45	SHG Leader	Aayalpatti
42.	I. Gnanasekar	Male	50	Teacher, Middle School	Mela Ilanthaikulam
43.	T. Lathadevi	Female	45	Teacher, Middle School	Mela Ilanthaikulam
44.	T. Malliga	Female	35	Team Coordinator	Aayalpatti
45.	V. Saravanan	Male	39	Vice President	Sokkalingapuram
46.	P. Dhanalakshmi	Female	45	Volunteer, SCNIC	Narkalaikottai
47.	M. Rajalakshmi	Female	44	Volunteer, SCNIC	Erachi
48.	P. Ulaganathan	Male	27	Volunteer, SCNIC	Ethilappa Naickerpatti
49.	P. S. Muthusamy	Male	38	Volunteer, SCNIC	Kovilpatti
50.	C. Muniandi	Male	28	Ward member	Sanarpatti
51.	S. Jai	Male	22	Youth Member	Mooviruthali
52.	S. Tamil Kumar	Male	28	Youth Member	Aayalpatti
53.	S. Sathish Kannan	Male	28	Youth Member	Aayalpatti

\* Depending upon the theme the enlisted members were put into small groups for facilitation and focussed discussion.

## APPENDIX IV (c): SCNIC IMPACT ASSESMENT (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)\*

Place: NEWS office, Thiruthangal

Date: 29.07.2012

**FGD 9 : How far children have a say in the family now when it comes to decision on i) basic needs (food, nutrition and health), ii) Educational preferences and education related needs, iii) recreation, leisure & participation in outdoor games, iv) other outdoor activities enriching childhood ?**

**FGD 11 : How children have developed “civic self” through engaging in child activism in addressing child related issues and by engaging local bodies and other agencies of the state ?**

**FGD 12 : How NMWC, FCMRP, CACL and other child network/federation activities have enlarged the horizon and leadership qualities of the children ?**

**FGD 13 : To assess the impact of trainings in traditional performing arts.**

No.	Participant Name	Male / Female	Age	Representation	Village Name
	<b>Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>CEDAR, Madurai</b>
1.	Mahendran	Male	19	Member, Children's Collective	Indra Nagar
2.	Saraswathi	Female	18	Member, Children's Collective	A.Meenakshipuram
3.	Maheshwari	Female	16	Member, Children's Collective	Kannagi Colony
4.	Backiya	Female	18	Member, Children's Collective	Kannagi Colony
5.	Balamurugan	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Chokkalingapuram
6.	Sakthi Ganesh	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Chokkalingapuram
7.	Muniyandi	Male	13	Member, Children's Collective	Vellore
8.	Kanagalakshmi	Female	14	Member, Children's Collective	Vellore
9.	Mahendran	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Poochakapatti
10.	Maharaja	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Poochakkapatti
11.	Selvapandi	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Sanarpatti
12.	Velmurugan	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Sanarpatti
13.	Mareeshwari	Female	15	Member, Children's Collective	Ceylon Colony
14.	M. Karuppasamy	Male	21	Previous Children Collective Leader	Valluvar Nagar
15.	Mareeswaran	Male	21	Previous Children Collective Leader	South Thotilovanpatti
16.	Kirubasingh	Male	16	Leader, Children Collective	Kanjampatti
17.	Anusiya	Female	21	Previous Children Collective Leader	Eratchi
18.	Marikannan	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Valluvar Nagar
19.	Bharathi	Female	21	Previous Children Collective Leader	Samathuvapuram
20.	Bhavani	Female	17	Previous Children Collective Leader	Kalingapatti
21.	Sudalaimani	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Mandhithoppu
22.	Vijayakumar	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Kanjampatti
23.	Ponselvi	Female	15	Member, Children's Collective	
				President, FPCP, Tamilnadu	Samathuvapuram
24.	Mariselvam	Male	16	Member, Children's Collective	South Thotilovanpatti

No.	Participant Name	Male / Female	Age	Representation	Village Name
25.	J. Jegadeesh	Male	17	Leader, Children's Collective	Karuthanur
26.	M. Magarajan	Male	18	Member, Children's Collective	Vadaku Puliampatti
27.	Tamilselvi	Female	16	Member, Children's Collective	Vadaku Puliampatti
28.	Seenu	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Moovirundaali
29.	Kiruba	Male	17	Member, Children's Collective	Moovirundaali

\* Depending upon the theme the enlisted members were put into small groups for facilitation and focussed discussion.

#### **APPENDIX IV (d) : SCNIC IMPACT ASSESMENT (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)\***

Place: Municipality High School, Gandhi Nagar, Kovilpatti.

Date: 04.08.2012

**FGD 10 : How far SCNIC activities have succeeded in bringing changes in favour of child centeredness in the functioning of schools ?**

**FGD 14 : To assess the level of awareness and internalization of child rights by different stake holders particularly in relation to i. child labour, ii. Right to education, child marriage, corporal punishment, gender sensitivity and other forms of child abuse.**

No.	Participant Name	Male / Female	Age	Representation	Village Name
	<b>Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>CEDAR, Madurai</b>
1.	D. Senthil Kumar	Male	21	CRMC	Vadamalapuram
2.	J. Selvam	Male	40	CRMC	Kannagi Colony
3.	A. Meena	Female	35	CRMC	Kannagi Colony
4.	P. Mariselvam	Male	20	CRMC	Sanarpatti
5.	U. Kalirajan	Male	19	CRMC	Sanarpatti
6.	G. Murugesan	Male	39	CRMC	Thirutangal
7.	A. Saradhdevi	Female	52	CRMC	Ilambuvanam
8.	Dr. Thressia TJ	Female	58	Director, CEDAR	Madurai
9.	P. Marikala	Female	34	Field Motivator	CEDAR, Kovilpatti
10.	S. Kathammal	Female	29	Field Motivator	CEDAR, Kovilpatti
11.	M. Gurulakshmi	Female	26	Field Motivator	CEDAR, Kovilpatti
12.	C. Sahayaselvi	Female	33	Field Motivator	CEDAR, Kovilpatti
13.	K. Kanaga	Female	40	Headmistress	Ettayapuram
14.	V. Sridevi	Female	50	Headmistress, Gandhi Nagar Primary School	Kovilpatti
15.	G. Maharaja	Male	15	Leader, Children's Collective	Poochakkapatti
16.	J. Jegadeesh	Male	17	Leader, Children's Collective	Karuthanur
17.	P. Soulraj	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Anikootam

No.	Participant Name	Male / Female	Age	Representation	Village Name
18.	G. Chandramohan	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Poochakkapatti
19.	S. Sakthi Ganesh	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Sokkalingapuram
20.	M. Senthorapandi	Male	16	Member, Children's Collective	Sokkalingapuram
21.	K. Arun Kumar	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	M. G. R. Nagar
22.	S. Solai Murugan	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Kannagi Colony
23.	A. Velmurugan	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Sanarpatti
24.	V. Ravichandran	Male	17	Member, Children's Collective	N.V. Puram
25.	G. Singamuthu	Male	16	Member, Children's Collective	N.V. Puram
26.	S. Anuja	Female	14	Member, Children's Collective	Valluvar Nagar
27.	M. Manikandan	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Valluvar Nagar
28.	D. Karuppasamy	Male	17	Member, Children's Collective	Subramaniapuram
29.	M. Maheshwari	Female	15	Member, Children's Collective	Subramaniapuram
30.	M. Pechiammal	Female	17	Member, Children's Collective	Subramaniapuram
31.	M. Archana	Female	15	Member, Children's Collective	Subramaniapuram
32.	P. Dhanalakshmi	Female	45	Member, Children's Collective	Narkalaikottai
33.	S. Sridhar	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Kadalaipur
34.	V. Madhan Kumar	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Kadalaipur
35.	K. Mareeshwaran	Male	17	Member, Children's Collective	Periyaodaipatti
36.	N. Sathish Kumar	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Kadalaipur
37.	K. Saravanan	Male	14	Member, Children's Collective	Periyaodaipatti
38.	R. Karuppasamy	Male	16	Member, Children's Collective	Periyaodaipatti
39.	A. Kanagavel	Male	15	Member, Children's Collective	Periyaodaipatti
40.	M. Magarajan	Male	18	Member, Children's Collective	V. Pulampatti
41.	A. Nirmal Raj	Male	17	Member, Children's Collective	Kurukkalpatti
42.	S. Chitradevi	Female	23	Office Assistant, CEDAR	CEDAR, Kovilpatti
43.	J. Jockim Jacob	Male	24	Program Manager, SCNIC	NEWS
44.	M. Mariammal	Female	41	Program Manager, SCNIC	CEDAR, Kovilpatti
45.	A. Aruldoss	Male	52	Program Manager, SCNIC	VICTORY Trust
46.	Syed Ali A	Male	35	Programme Coordinator,	CEDARMadurai
47.	J. Mariammal	Female	60	Self Help Group Leader	Bungalatheru
48.	P. Maheshwari	Female	28	Self Help Group Leader	Narayanapuram
49.	T. Malliga	Female	35	Team Coordinator	Aayalpatti
50.	G. Palpandian	Male	41	Theme Coordinator, SCNIC	Thirutangal
51.	K. Alagu Murugan	Male	22	Volunteer	Sokkalingapuram
52.	P. Ulaganathan	Male	28	Volunteer	Ethilappa Naickerpatti
53.	G. Dharmalingam	Male	46	Ward member	Vadamalapuram
54.	M. Anusuya	Female	22	Youth Member	Erachi

\* Depending upon the theme the enlisted members were put into small groups for facilitation and focussed discussion.

## APPENDIX IV (d): SCNIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)

Place: RCPDS, Madurai

Date:

No.	Participant Name	Experience in SCNIC	Representation
1.	<b>Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph</b> Dr. Thressia	2009 to present	<b>Facilitator</b> Project Director
2.	Syed Ali	2006 to present	Project Coordinator
3.	Aruldoss	2006 to present	Program Manager MNL
4.	Mariammal	2003 to present	Program Manager KVP
5.	Jockim Jacob	2009 to present	Program Manager SVK
6.	Malliga	2001 to present	Theme Coordinator (Girls Edu)
7.	Palpandi	2005 to present	Theme Coordinator (Child Rights)
8.	Michael Raj	2009 to present	Sponsorship Coordinator
9.	Ramesh	2009 to 2011	Resigned

## APPENDIX V: SCNIC Staff List (2001-2012)

### CEDAR, SATTUR & KOVILPATTI

No.	Name of the Staff	Designation	Period
1.	R. Selvam	Programme Motivator	2000-2009
2.	Hepsiba Jawahar	Admin. Secretary	2001-2002
3.	T.R.Syam Sundhar	Director	2001-2002
4.	V. Venkatachalapathy	Manager	2001-2002
5.	M. Louis	Manager	2001-2005
6.	R. Seenivasan	Accountant	2001-2006
7.	N. Ravichandran	Admin. Secretary	2001-2007
8.	Antony J. Ignatius	Director	2001-2009
9.	A. Devaraj	Programme Motivator	2002-2005
10.	M. Mariammal	Sponsorship Coordinator	2003 to present
11.	M. Marimuthu	Programme Motivator	2003-2005
12.	Emilraj Jonathan	Sponsorship Coordinator	2003-2006
13.	P. Veluchamy	Project Coordinator	2003-2007, 2009-2011
14.	K. Malaiyalagu	Programme Motivator	2003-2008
15.	K. Shiriya pushbam	Programme Motivator	2003-2011
16.	Petchimuthu @ Kannan	Programme Motivator	2005-2010
17.	A. Syed Ali	Project Coordinator	2006 to present

No.	Name of the Staff	Designation	Period
18.	V. Gothanda Ramasamy	Accountant	2006-2008
19.	V. Muthaian	Arunththiyar Organizer	2006-2009
20.	M. Ramya	Programme Motivator	2006-2009
21.	V. Karpagajothi	Programme Motivator	2006-2009
22.	P. Marimuthu	Accountant	2007 to present
23.	Manoj Samson	Sponsorship Coordinator	2007-2008
24.	S. Muthukutti	Fellowship to Emerging Community(Arunththiyar)	2007-2009
25.	R. Pacikayalakashmi	Programme Motivator	2007-2009
26.	R. Ganesh Prabu	Sponsorship Coordinator	2007-2009
27.	S. Balaji	Fellowship to Disability	2008 (12 months)
28.	Dr. T.J. Thressia	Director	2009 to present
29.	M. Usha	Programme Motivator	2009-2010
30.	Paramasivam	Programme Motivator	2009-2010
31.	Ganesa Moorthy	Programme Motivator	2009-2011
32.	A. Vincent	Programme Motivator	2009-2011
33.	A. Michael raj	Programme Motivator	2010 to present
34.	K. Krishnaveni	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
35.	S. Tamilselvi	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
36.	S. Balamurugan	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
37.	R. Ramaligam	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
38.	P. Suresh Kumar	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
39.	M. Kohila Rani	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
40.	S. Jeyapandiammal	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
41.	A.Selvi	Programme Motivator	2010-2011
42.	P. Muthukaliammal	Programme Motivator	2011 ( 8months)
43.	S. Nagasewari	Programme Motivator	2011 (10 months)
44.	R. Ranjith Kumari	Programme Motivator	2011 (10 months)
45.	R Vijyalakshmi	Programme Motivator	2011 (2 months)
46.	K. Gurulakshmi	Programme Motivator	2011 (5 months)

#### VICTORY, MELANEELITHANALLUR

No.	Name of the Staff	Designation	Period
1.	Perumalsamy	Programme Manager	2001-2003
2.	Joseph	Programme Motivator	2002-2004
3.	Arul Jothi	Programme Motivator	2002-2004
4.	Muthamil Selvi	Programme Motivator	2002-2004

No.	Name of the Staff	Designation	Period
5.	Singathurai	Programme Motivator	2002-2004
6.	Selvakumar	Programme Motivator	2003 (8 months)
7.	Sasikala	Programme Motivator	2003-2005
8.	Rathinavelu	Programme Manager	2003-2006
9.	Eswaran	Programme Motivator	2003-2007
10.	P. Geetha	Programme Motivator	2003-2008
11.	C.Rani	Programme Motivator	2003-2009
12.	T. Malliga	Coordinator W & Girls Rights	2004
13.	Thirunavukkarasu	Programme Motivator	2004-2006
14.	A. Aruldoss	Programme Manager	2006 to present
15.	Mariraj	Fellowship to Emerging Community (Arunththiyar)	2007-2009
16.	E .Muthu Kumar	Programme Motivator	2007-2009
17.	K. Jeya Prakash	Programme Motivator	2008
18.	T. Sivakumar	Programme Motivator	2009-2010
19.	A. Mahalakashmi	Programme Motivator	2009-2011
20.	V. Ramesh	Programme Motivator	2011

#### NEWS, SIVAKASI

No.	Name of the Staff	Designation	Period
1.	Punitha	Program Manager	2001-2003
2.	Araamuthan	Programme Motivator	2001-2006
3.	M. Arul raj	Coordinator Child Rights	2002-2008
4.	G. Paulpandian	Coordinator Child Rights	2004 to present
5.	Sathiya	Programme Motivator	2004-2007
6.	Pannierselvi	Programme Motivator	2005-2008
7.	Thangaraj	Program Manager	2006 (8 months)
8.	Jeyachandhran	Programme Motivator	2006-2008
9.	A. Peter Selvi	Programme Motivator	2006-2009
10.	M.Guruvuthai	Programme Motivator	2007 (6 months)
11.	Chandrasekhar	Program Manager	2007-2008
12.	A. Kathiresan	Fellowship to Emerging Community (Arunththiyar)	2007-2008
13.	M. Muthumariammal	Programme Motivator	2007-2009
14.	S. Rajesh Kumar	Program Manager	2008-2009
15.	T.Sumathi	Programme Motivator	2008-2009
16.	Karupasamy	Programme Motivator	2008-2009 (3 months)
17.	S.Chandra Bala	Programme Motivator	2008-2011
18.	P. Ramar	Program Manager	2009-2010
19.	J. Jockim Jacob	Programme Manager	2010 to present



Centre for Education, Development Action and Research (CEDAR) was the lead partner in SCNIC. CEDAR was founded in the year 2004 by a group of committed activists, academics and development professionals, as a civil society response to the post-developmental phase in India. Its three pronged strategy is, to simultaneously get involved in grassroots development action, action (policy) research and building the capacity of small and emerging NGOs. Apart from its commitment to abolition of child labour, and promotion of primary education, since 1994, CEDAR in three successive phases, ran capacity building programmes for small NGOs in partnership with Zurich Financial Services Community Trust, UK, British High Commission (India) and Joe Homan Charities, UK, between 1994 and 2008. Zurich Finances partnership was an innovative experiment in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India. CEDAR's vision is Childhood for All.



**Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph Jaikumar** has been with CEDAR ever since its inception in 1994, as a trustee. He became the Managing Trustee in 1998. His long teaching career involved developing very innovative curricula in both Development Sociology and Development Management at the postgraduate level. He was formerly the Principal of the American College (Autonomous), Madurai. During his tenure as a senior academician, he was seriously involved in academic policy making serving several committees of the University Grants Commission of India (UGC). Mention must be made about his contribution as a member of the Expert Committee that framed policies for the Government of India sponsored programme of starting colleges in 370 educationally backward districts in India. He also served the Governing Council of the National Assessment and Accreditation Commission (NAAC) for three years (2007-2010) as the nominee of UGC. Now he is committed to CEDAR on a full-time basis.



**Dr. Thressia T.J** started her career as a Lecturer in Sociology in Lady Doak College, Madurai. Later, she taught at Gandhiji University, Kottayam, Kerala. Subsequently she gave up teaching and became an entrepreneur. She is interested in developing leadership qualities in women, particularly entrepreneurial capabilities. She has been keen to develop SHGs among poor women, both as a platform for strengthening livelihood strategies and for assuming collective social responsibilities. She became the Director of CEDAR in 2009.



**Syed Ali A** is a postgraduate in Social Work from the American College, Madurai. He joined CEDAR in 2003 as Project Officer in its NGO Capacity Building Programme. In 2006, he assumed responsibilities in SCNIC and rose up to become the Programme Coordinator. His leadership contributed to the success of SCNIC in various ways. His innate child friendliness coupled with artistic sensitivity, has left his signature on the children collectives.

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