

Round Table

No. 2

Public Policy and the Child in Tamil Nadu

Sept. 02, 2017 | Kasturi Buildings, Chennai - 600002



THE HINDU CENTRE

for

Politics and Public Policy

unicef 
for every child

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In accordance with this mission, The Hindu Centre's publications are intended to explain and highlight issues and themes that are the subject of public debate, and aid the public in making informed judgments on issues of public importance.

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The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy - UNICEF

Round Table on

Public Policies and the Child in Tamil Nadu

Saturday, September 2, 2017

Board Room, Kasturi & Sons Ltd, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai 60002

Programme Schedule

9.55 am – 10.00 am	Welcome by V.S. Sambandan, Chief Administrative Officer, The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy
10.00 am – 10.05 am	Remarks on UNICEF-The Hindu Centre partnership by Job Zachariah, Chief, UNICEF Field Office for Tamil Nadu and Kerala
10.05 am – 10.10 am	Purpose of the Round Table by N. Ravi, Director, Kasturi & Sons Ltd
10.10 am – 10.15 am	Inaugural Remarks: Girija Vaidyanathan, Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu
Session I – Policy and Fiscal Space in Tamil Nadu	
10.15 am – 10.25 am	Budgetary Allocations and the Child in Tamil Nadu: Some Initial Findings: R. Srinivasan, Associate Professor, University of Madras
10.25 am – 10.35 am	Social Sector Budgets: K.R. Shanmugam, Director, Madras School of Economics
10.35 am – 10.45 am	Fiscal Space for the Child: S. Krishnan, Principal Secretary, Planning and Development, Government of Tamil Nadu
Session II – Health and Education	
10.45 am – 10.55 am	Survival, Nutrition and Health Status of Children in Tamil Nadu: V.R. Muraleedharan, Professor, IIT-Madras
10.55 am – 11.05 am	Employability of School Pass-outs: V. S. Sambandan and Saptarshi Bhattacharya, The Hindu Centre for politics and Public Policy
11.05 am – 11.30 am	Discussion and Tea
Session III – The Disadvantaged Child	
11.30 am – 11.40 am	Policy Challenges for the Total Elimination of Child Labour in Tamil Nadu: R. Vidyasagar, Independent Expert in Child Protection
11.40 am – 11.50 am	The Dalit and Adivasi Child: Fr. Kumar, Director, Social Watch
11.50 am – 12.00 pm	Slums, Migrant Pockets and Coastal Communities: Vanessa Peter, Policy Researcher, Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities
12.00 pm – 12.10 pm	The Disabled Child: P.V.S. Giridhar, Advocate, Madras High Court
Session IV – Social Spaces for the Child	
12.10 pm – 12.20 pm	Governance and Social Spaces for Children – Tamil Nadu as a Potential Leader: Akila Radhakrishnan, Programme Specialist, UNICEF
12.20 pm – 12.30 pm	Towards a Paradigm Shift in Child-sensitive Policy in the Social Space in Tamil Nadu: Erinda Shah, Independent Expert on the Child
Discussion and Soup and Starters	
1.00 pm – 1.15 pm	Summary Remarks by Girija Vaidyanathan, Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu
1.15 pm – 1.30 pm	Concluding Remarks by N. Ravi, Director, Kasturi & Sons Ltd
Lunch	

The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy and UNICEF (Tamil Nadu and Kerala)

Concept Note: Round Table on Public Policy and the Child in Tamil Nadu

Public policies define the life of a child. In Tamil Nadu, progressive investments in basic public goods, like health, education to name just two, have led to socio-economic indicators favourable for the child. However, even successful policies need to be revisited, both, to take stock of gaps, achievements and to recalibrate them to meet current and future needs.

The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy and UNICEF (Tamil Nadu and Kerala) propose to hold a Round Table discussion, **Public Policy and the Child in Tamil Nadu** on 02 September 2017, followed by lunch, at the corporate office of *The Hindu*, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002.

Aim: The Round Table will take stock of the extent to which State policies have contributed to and shaped childhood, including the social spaces available, to lead a fulfilled life. Covering the ages of 0 to 18 years, the aim is to explore the relationship between the state and the child in Tamil Nadu, which is critical for the quality of life for children. The Round Table will also look at possible innovations that could ensure that Tamil Nadu not only maintains its leading position, but also leverages its progress and sets itself against international benchmarks.

It will serve as a forum for focused deliberation on public policies that directly and indirectly affect the life of the child in Tamil Nadu. It aims to bring together informed policy makers, scholars, and practitioners to discuss thematic policy areas from quantity, quality and equity perspectives. The discussions will look to generate and share forward-looking perspectives relevant to policy and facilitate reviews.

The way ahead: The Round Table could point to the way ahead and to the future course of action relevant to Tamil Nadu. It is expected to contribute to updating policies relevant for the child in a rapidly changing environment, and periodic reviews of status and progress *vis-à-vis* global benchmarks. If required, introduction of new policies will be suggested to enable the State to better cater to the needs of every child, including the vulnerable.

The Child in Tamil Nadu

In many ways, Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in social welfare schemes catering to children's health, nutrition and education. A child born in Tamil Nadu, going by key socio-economic indicators in India, has better opportunities compared with one born in many other States. These include several outcomes with higher probabilities: birth at an institution, living up to the age of five years, being immunised, living longer, access to food, education, healthcare and other life-defining attributes.

However, there are signs that Tamil Nadu's impressive performance has started to either plateau, or in some instances, slow down. For instance, the Government of Tamil Nadu, in its *Economic Appraisal, 2011-12 to 2013-14*, points out that though the State's literacy rate had doubled in the past five decades (from 36.4 per cent in 1961 to 80.1 per cent in 2011), was better than the All-India rate of 73.0 per cent, and was placed third after Kerala and Maharashtra; there was "cause for concern" as decadal gains had slowed down in 2001-2011.¹ This indicator, from the State's

¹ Government of Tamil Nadu, (nd): [Tamil Nadu Economic Appraisal 2012-12 to 2012-13](#). Department of Evaluation and Applied Research, pp. 215-216.

literacy rate, is a timely reality check both for the laurels earned and the lags that persist in some sub-sectors: ‘wasting’ for instance, which remains a nutritional problem.

Themes and Experts to be invited for the Round Table:

The Round Table will address selected issues under the following categories.

- I. Policy and Fiscal Space in Tamil Nadu** (Tamil Nadu *vis-à-vis* national and international benchmarks)
 1. Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan
 2. Mr. S. Krishnan (Fiscal Space for the Child) (Subject to re-confirmation)
 3. Dr. R. Srinivasan (Overview of public policy for the child in Tamil Nadu)
- II. Education and Health:**
 1. Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan
 2. Dr. K.R. Shanmugam (Social Sector budgets)
 3. Dr. Muraleetharan (Survival, Health and Nutrition)
 4. V.S. Sambandan and Saptarshi Bhattacharya (Employability of School Leavers)
- III. The disadvantaged child:**
 1. Mr. Vidyasagar – (Children as workers – paid and unpaid)
 2. Fr. Kumar (Dalit and Adivasi children)
 3. Ms. Vanessa Peter (Children in slums, migrant pockets and coastal areas)
 4. Mr. P.V.S. Giridhar – The Disabled Child
- IV. Social spaces for the Child**
 1. Dr. Akila Radhakrishnan
 2. Ms. Erinda Shah

Methodology and Resource Papers

The Round Table will be held under Chatham House Rules.

Invited experts will be requested to contribute a short Working Note on their theme (about 800 to 1,600 words, excluding tables and figures), preferably 10 days before the Round Table, to facilitate informed discussion. Note contributors may consider the following guidelines:

- Reference period: From 1990 to the present for trends in outcomes, status, and key challenges
- Comparisons: National comparisons, and international benchmarks
- State intervention: Nature and extent of policies, programmes, schemes; regulatory, distributive, redistributive²; budget allocations
- Gaps, inequalities: Gender, geography and economic status
- Emerging issues
- Way forward

Interactive discussions will be held after all papers are presented

From The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy Mr. N. Ravi will chair the Round Table while Mr. N. Ram will participate. From UNICEF Mr. Job Zachariah will deliver the welcome address.

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² Steinberger, J. P., 1980. [Typologies of Public Policy: Meaning Construction and the Policy Process](#). *Social Sciences Quarterly*, 61(2), pp. 185-197.

Upholding Rights of the Tribal Child Tamil Nadu

Fr. K. J. Kumar

Abstract: *Behind Tamil Nadu's success as a progressive State in providing for its peoples lies the coming together of politics and public policies. Despite an underlying current of universalisation in its redistributive policies, there are pockets that tend to be left out. Fr. Kumar, Director, Social Watch–Tamil Nadu, calls for pointed interventions for the Tribal child, presenting findings from a case study of Kaadar children.*

A combination of socially transformative politics and public policies that were synchronised with the larger political direction, explains the progress made by Tamil Nadu from the mid-1950s, albeit at varying degrees and under different political leaderships.

The State's politics and redistributive policies have tended to broadly be along the lines set by its pioneering and visionary Chief Ministers, the late K. Kamaraj and C.N. Annadurai. A whose efforts were bolstered by a host of progressive-minded executives on the one side and revolutionary socio-politico-cultural leaders like E.V. Ramasamy (Periyar) and Annai Meenambal Sivaraj on the other. Collectively, their people-oriented and humanitarian mindset rendered yeoman service to Tamil Nadu. The policies adopted by the State, which influenced the trajectory of its economy and society have their roots in the social justice thrust embedded in their social and political struggles that began in the dawn of the 20th century and continues till date.

In both education and health sectors, Tamil Nadu has been one among the forward marching States right from the Seventies and with jumps and strides from the 80s and 90s. Keeping in tune with India's macroeconomic structural adjustment and the adoption of the New Economic Policy in the 1990s, the State entered into the fray of market economy, but the progress witnessed a slump back to stagnancy in certain respects from the beginning of the Second Millennium: a consequence of the economic setback that started in the mid-Nineties.

With all its social welfare schemes and populist measures—doling out free gifts—both in terms of food provisions, and other items like television sets and kitchen gadgets (mixie, grinder, fan etc.), the State and its administrators could not guarantee progressively the even pattern of growth prospects, to reach all the sectors and the regions, especially the remote tribal (Kaadar) habitats and those whose total population is less than 1,500, located in remote jungles. This is the predicament of these miniscule minorities despite well ingrained institutional systems that have been in place delivering goods and services.

(Kindly find the Human Development Index (HDI) of TN 2003 report (attached) with an interpretation of the HDI ranking and its possible correspondence with the life/living conditions of SC/ST in TN.)

In meeting and addressing the child welfare needs, India is worse off compared with the other South Asian countries, viz. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and even Nepal, the reason being the vast stretch of its landscape with all the geo-physical regional differences. Of course, Tamil Nadu is far ahead of many other States in the Indian Union. But, childcare protection and the needed attention to the growth and development of the children of the marginalised groups need to be toned up in a few aspects.

Though Tamil Nadu still can claim that a child born here has better opportunities compared with one born in many other States, this broadly justifiable claim is put to the test when children living in the margins are not able to keep pace with the rest of the population, because of want of focus through specific provisions of budgets and institutional approaches. Currently these are not inclusive enough with respect to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

The entry of market-driven policy orientation, stress and priority towards infrastructure growth, and development wooing FDIs have progressively reduced budgetary allocations in the social sector and their realisations through social welfare policies. Much less is the maximum utilisation (budgets) of the fund allocated as budgetary provisions; on the whole, the social sector budgets have been shrinking radically from the Nineties, which have resulted in the slowing down benefits through decadal gains.

The shrinking social sector budgeting affect the prospects and welfare of the poor in general and SCs and STs in particular. The following Table shows the fact in a cursory glance:

(Kindly find attached the Excel sheets of Social Sector Budgeting with particular reference to Tribal population, budgeting for them and their expenditure over the last two decades.)

The needs (issues and concerns) of tribal children and their struggles and challenges emerging out of one per cent of the ST population in Tamil Nadu is a cause for concern. Their absolute number (tribal children in the age group of 0 to 18) could be three to four hundred thousand in Tamil Nadu (roughly one-third of the eight lakh tribal population in the State). They are a miniscule minority, thinly spread out all over the State, and their plights have not been studied in depth so far.

Coverage of this group appears within reach. However, the effort becomes arduous considering the scattered population living in small clusters far removed from the mainstream. Political sensitivity to policy frameworks for Tribals has always been indifferent, given the low political bargaining power of the latter. Consequently, the much needed administrative and social attention also becomes nominal.

Among Indian States, Tamil Nadu is quite advanced in taking education to all and does not lag in providing health coverage either. However, beyond this broad-brush picture, there lie the at the micro-level ‘not so positives’ facts such as the concerns of Tribals, both on the hills and on the plains, especially their children who suffer gross neglect. State policies. These cannot simply be overlooked or brushed under the carpet just because their numbers are insignificant. Social Watch – Tamil Nadu, a civil society organisation, has been focusing on specific needs of tribal children.

Kaadar Tribals – A Case Study

A microscopic study of the Kaadar Tribal population was carried out by Social Watch-Tamil Nadu for the State Planning Commission between 2015 and 2016. As a group, Kaadars are barely 600 and odd people. All of them are live and eke out their livelihood in the deep jungles of Valparai in Pollachi Taluk of Coimbatore District. Children, far fewer in number, fight odds to come out of their remote habitats to become graduates. They are, however, yet to explore employment prospects. The following two tables depict the plight of this particular Tribal population:

Income and Family Sizes of Kaadars

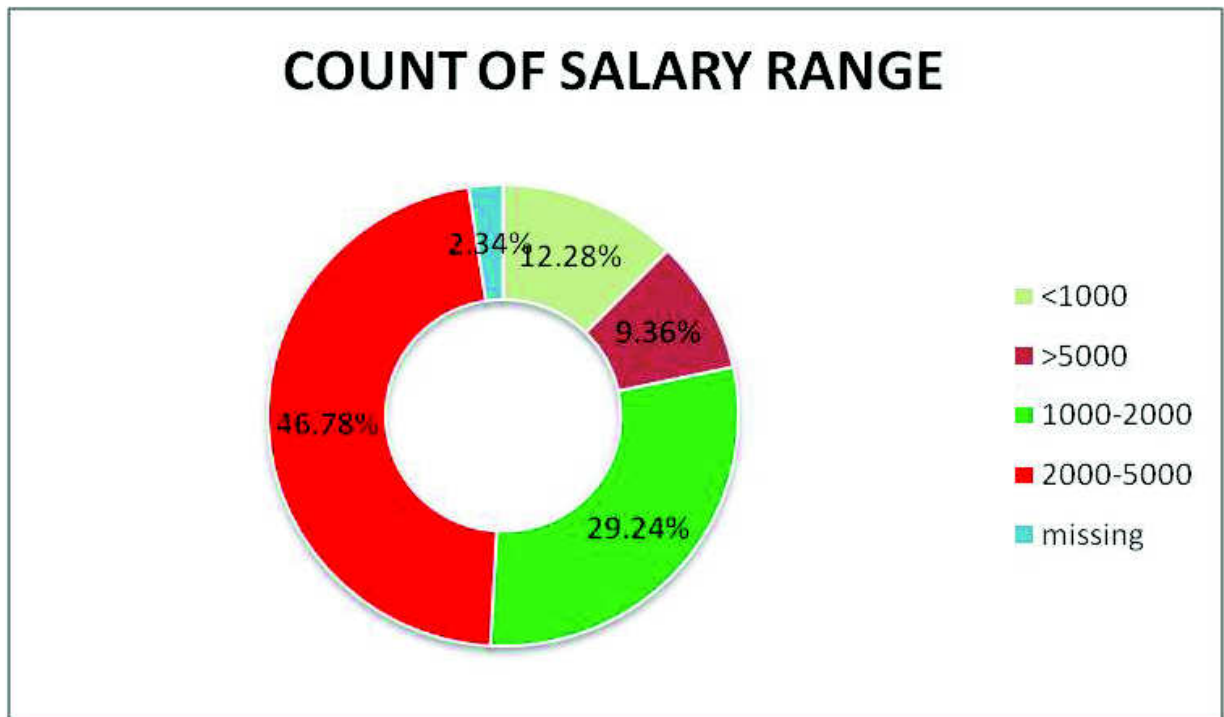


Table 1. Per capita income (p/m) Kaadar Tribals

- Most of the Kaadar are marginal farmers earning between Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000 per month. A total of 77 per cent (47 per cent + 30 per cent) of families fall in the BPL (Below Poverty Line) category of the population
- Half of the Kaadar population earn an income of more than Rs. 2,000 and less than Rs. 5,000 p/m.
- About 12 per cent of them are very poor and their monthly income is less than Rs. 1,000.
- Less than 10 per cent of the Kaadar families have their monthly income more than Rs. 5,000.

The above described poverty condition, coupled with the Union and the State governments' skewed policies on conservation of forests, ban on hunting, or felling of trees, have had a heavy bearing on the lives, livelihood and sustenance of the Tribals. This has critically affected the fertility rate, if the figures are to be believed:

Child birth rate and fertility among Kaadars:

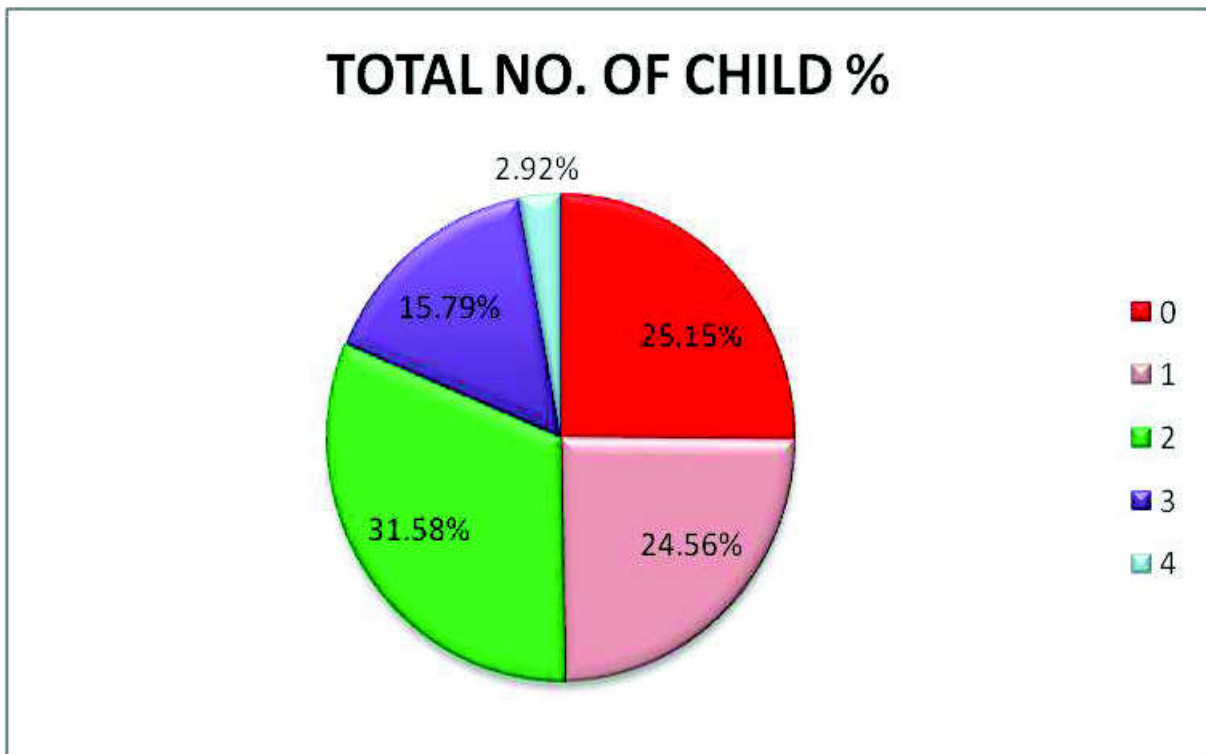


Table.2. Child population among Kaadar Tribals

- 25 per cent of Kaadar Tribal households don't have children (alarming).
- Only about three per cent households have four children.
- Almost 72 per cent households have 1 to 3 children.

- A majority of the households have on an average two children each. (Demographically, this tribal group is, almost successfully, keeping in line with State’s population & birth control policy!)

The total population of 600+ persons live in six different settlements in Tamil Nadu. Perhaps another 600-odd Kaadars live in the neighbouring State of Kerala. In-breeding within the community could be one of the reasons for the low fertility rate among the Kaadar tribals.

Literacy levels among the Kaadar Tribals of Valparai

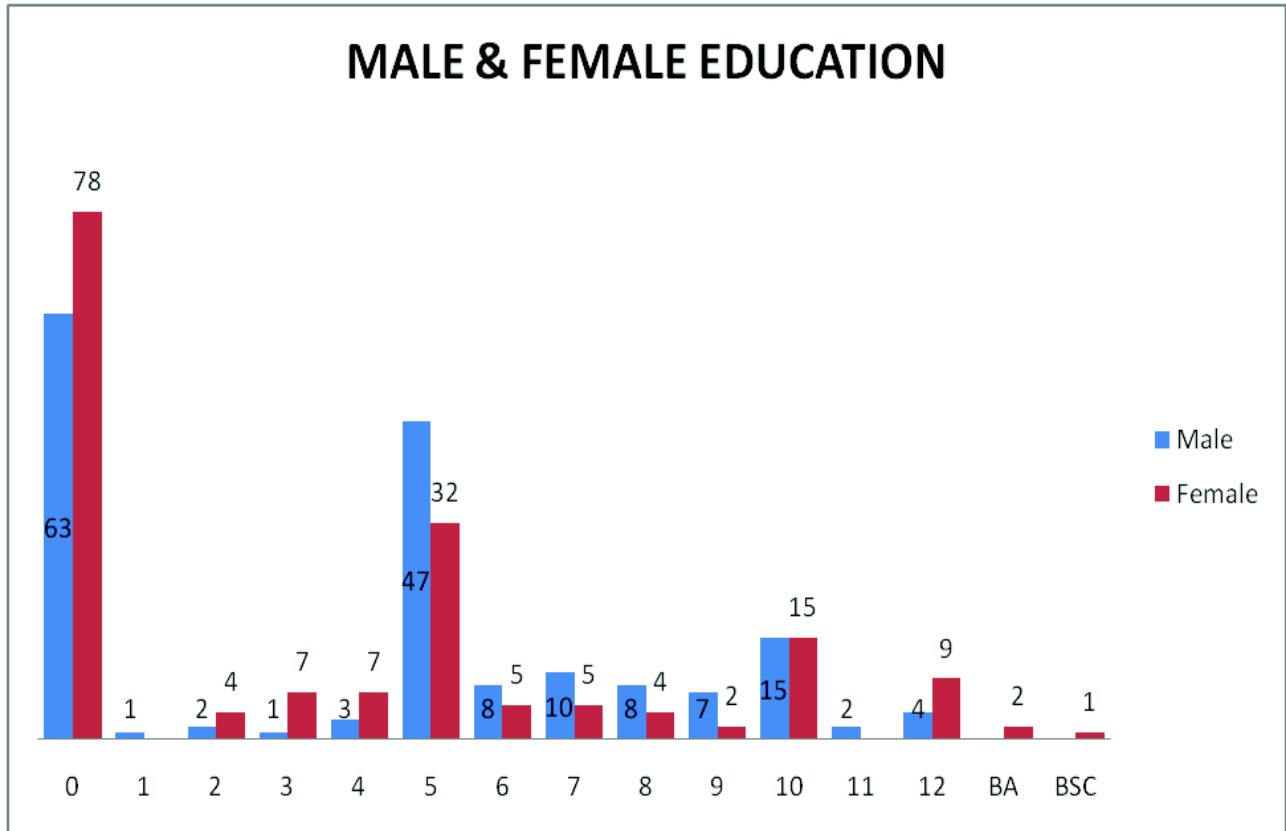


Table.3 Literacy rate among Kaadar Tribals

- Most of the Kaadars, especially women, do not even have primary education.
- The number of uneducated females is 15 percentage points higher than that of males.
- A huge majority of the Kaadars (47 per cent men and 32 per cent women) stop their education at 5th standard.
- Only one male member and three females have managed to get a graduation degree (one woman doing her PG at Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli, and the three others completed BA or BSc).

The protection of these communities, whose numbers are dwindling, is deemed to be as important as the conservation of forests, nature, flora and fauna of this country and State. We suggest the following programmes:

I. Pre-Natal Care:

Attention to the Tribal children is called for from the stage of their conception in the womb of their mothers. The ongoing schemes for pregnant mothers and those for delivery do not have enabling components to reach out to the remote Tribal settlements. A micro-level perambulation of Tribal habitats in Valparai reveals the plight of the would-be mothers.

Almost all the six Tribal settlements are located in deep forests declared as sanctuaries and, therefore, deprived of normal roadways for travel and transport. Routine scheme delivery would neither reach them nor does the system have any special arrangement to ensure that the services reach them. A cursory look at two of the six Kaadar Tribal settlements:

1. **Nedumkundram:** Five kilometres away from the main town or neighbourhood villages; one has to walk through the forests for four kilometres through tea-estate pathways before reaching a bus road. Another six kilometres to Valparai where primary health care is available. They need to set on another long road journey to Pollachi if they need any critical health care to be attended to.

2. **Udumanpaarai:** One hour of steep climb through rubble pathways and another two kilometres of walk through estate pathways before reaching Valparai and Pollachi. There is an instance of a full-term Tribal lady walking for over eight hours to reach the nearest hospital where she was delivered of her baby an arrival. Even 108 ambulance services are of no use since they cannot access the habitat. Moreover, no mode of transport is safe for a mother in labour when it is going to be a long and bumpy ride. Therefore, schemes appropriate to Tribals needs to be conceived.

II. Pre-school child care:

The existing schemes of early childhood (0-3 years) and childhood (3-5 years) care, the manpower pattern and institutional care yet again cannot be extended to the Tribal children since tribal habitats would normally have barely 5-10 children of these age groups living in the neighbourhood settlements. Therefore, appropriate micro-level child care centres need to be designed.

III. Special Primary school system for Tribal children:

Tamil Nadu can proudly claim to have complied with the Right to Education Act requirements in having provided enough primary schools within one kilometre perimeter. What is sufficient for mainstream people will not always deliver the goods or services to the Tribals. Even if it is one or two kilometres to a primary school, for a tribal child to traverse that distance becomes a perilous journey through the jungles.

Prescribing a minimum population for location of a primary school will not provide a practical solution to all situations in the demographic and geo-physical settings of our country or state. Engaging non-tribal teachers from outside would end up in absenteeism. The concept of residential primary schools militates against the very right of the child to live under the tender loving care of parents.

Therefore, an innovative module of primary schooling addressing these specific requirements needs to be put in place through the existing development programs (Integrated Tribal Development Schemes).

Social Watch-Tamil Nadu, rather than making critical appraisals of ongoing schemes, believes in urging new functional options for Tribal children. Keeping in mind the critical gaps listed above, we recommend the following innovative schemes for establishing the rights of tribal children:

I. PREGNANCY AND DELIVERY CARE:

A monthly allowance of Rs. 5,000 should be provided to Tribal pregnant women from the date of conception for a period of twelve months. (Under the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Scheme, the maternity benefit for pregnant women has been increased from Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 18,000 by the Tamil Nadu government in the current fiscal year. This benefit was being disbursed over three instalments over a period of a year.) This should be provided for two normal institutional deliveries. While the pregnant mother should take care of her nourishment at home for six months, she should be shifted to *Thaayagam*, a residential care home in the proximity of an upgraded primary health centre equipped with a modern labour ward for a term lasting till delivery. These *Thaayagams* should be large enough to accommodate 5-10 pregnant women and an attendant each. These should be run as an NGO by Tribals themselves.

Accommodation, food, medical care, lessons for pregnant women and their husbands should be the responsibilities of the *Thaayagam*. Moving the pregnant women in time for delivery to the PHC should be the utmost responsibility of the *Thaayagam*. Generous funding at the following scales should be provided by the government:

1. Rent = Rs. 30,000 per month (p/m)
2. Water & power charges = Rs. 5,000 p/m
3. Food for pregnant mothers = Rs.5,000 p/m (individual)
4. Food allowance for attendant = Rs. 3,000 p/m (per individual)
5. Honorarium for the NGO = Rs. 20,000 p/m

Food can be outsourced from a nearby mess. Medicines will be provided by the PHC. An amount of Rs. 8 lakh per annum, per *Thaayagam* can be allocated initially for five such centres.

- 1) One *Thaayagam* can be set up in Pollachi to cater to the Valparai Tribals.
- 2) One in Sathyamangalam catering to the Tribals in Sathyamangalam ranges.
- 3) One in Thuraiyur catering to Pachachamalai Tribals.
- 4) One in Gudalur catering to the most vulnerable tribes.
- 5) One in Coonoor for the most vulnerable tribes (Thodars, Kurumbar and similar tribes).

II. 0-5 Yr. CHILD CARE CENTERS:

One sophisticated care centre consisting of cradles, play materials, indoor play area, kitchen, bath, and toilets should be designed and set up in separate habitations, irrespective of the numbers they cater to. The best of nutrition should be provided at the centre for the child and the mother. Each centre should have the freedom of designing their menu. This should be a place for community activity in rearing the child. Elders will learn lullabies, singing, dancing, and attending to the needs of babies, viz. feeding, playing with them, cleaning them, dressing them up, lulling them to sleep, narrating stories, as well as taking care of breast-feeding mothers.

Besides two care-takers, mothers coming to the centres would also actively take part in looking after their babies for the duration of stay at the centre. They, in turn, will assist in cooking, cleaning of the premises,

and washing of utensils. The two care-takers would be from the same habitations and would have to live there. Preference should be given to women degree-holders. Their remuneration should be fixed as Rs. 20,000 per month, besides food. A building at a cost of Rs. One crore should be built in tune with the local ecosystem. No uniform design should be imposed. The local forest rights committee under the 2006 Forest Rights Act should be left to manage this centre. Rs. 200 crore can be set apart for a period of ten years, so that 200 such centres could up during that period.

III. PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Since the number of elementary school children in Tribal hamlets will be abysmally low, sometimes less than 20, primary schooling can be made an extension of the pre-school community centre. The building to be designed for the pre-school centre can have just one more class room (since, the strength will not be more than 20) and other common facilities, like kitchen, rest-rooms, play area, can be shared. One lady teacher from the same hamlet shall be in-charge of teaching all the children (1–5 standards). Candidates with teacher training qualifications can be given preference. Even otherwise, available degree holders can be appointed. Being a local, is most vital compared to other acquired qualifications. Untrained candidates can be subsequently provided special in-service training. The teacher will be paid a scale of salary applicable to other teachers.

The existing tribal residential primary schools can be merged with this pattern. About 200 such schools coterminous with 200 pre-school centres can be introduced over a decade.

IV. OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Till the time local institutions are established within the same hamlets, wherever children of any age are forced to travel to school, special transport arrangements suitable for road conditions, like two-wheelers, three-wheelers or four-wheel travellers, should be provided free of cost. Social Watch – Tamil Nadu makes these recommendations that will uphold and nurture tribal children's rights

- a. In the mother's womb,
- b. With the parental love and care,
- c. While early schooling, and
- d. With the sensitivity towards nativity and culture.

TAMIL NADU HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT A1.2—HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

S.no.	Districts	LEB index	Education index	Income index	HDI Value	HDI Rank	Real GDP per capita rank(minus)HDI rank	SC/ST Pop (Percentage) (20.01% / 1.10%)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Chennai	0.820 (1)	0.870 (2)	0.580 (2)	0.757	1	1 (1)	
2.	Kancheepuram	0.738 (3)	0.768 (15)	0.631 (1)	0.712	2	-1 (2)	
3.	Thiruvallur	0.706 (13)	0.773 (14)	0.484 (18)	0.654	12	6 (12)	
4.	Cuddalore	0.731 (7)	0.749 (19)	0.451 (24)	0.644	16	8 (17)	29.32 / 0.60
5.	Villupuram	0.668 (23)	0.678 (28)	0.417 (29)	0.587	28	1 (29)	29.37 / 2.16
6.	Vellore	0.676 (19)	0.781 (12)	0.518 (8)	0.658	11	-3 (9)	
7.	Tiruvannamalai	0.693 (14)	0.721 (24)	0.422 (28)	0.612	26	2 (25)	22.94 / 3.69
8.	Salem	0.671 (20)	0.698 (27)	0.508 (12)	0.626	24	-13 (24)	16.67 / 3.43
9.	Namakkal	0.687 (16)	0.728 (23)	0.491 (16)	0.636	20	-5 (21)	20.00 / 3.30
10.	Dharmapuri	0.614 (29)	0.628 (29)	0.512 (9)	0.584	29	-20 (27)	16.29 / 4.18
11.	Erode	0.736 (6)	0.716 (26)	0.523 (6)	0.658	10	-4 (8)	
12.	Coimbatore	0.738 (4)	0.792 (9)	0.565 (3)	0.699	5	-2 (5)	
13.	Nilgiris	0.737 (5)	0.809 (5)	0.510 (10)	0.685	6	4 (6)	
14.	Trichy	0.709 (11)	0.807 (6)	0.497 (13)	0.671	7	6 (7)	
15.	Karur	0.718 (9)	0.732 (21)	0.492 (14)	0.647	15	-1 (14)	20.80 / 0.05
16.	Perambalur	0.618 (28)	0.703 (25)	0.465 (20)	0.596	27	-7 (28)	31.01 / 0.46
17.	Thanjavur	0.656 (25)	0.787 (10)	0.447 (25)	0.630	21	4 (23)	18.91 / 0.15
18.	Nagapattinam	0.689 (15)	0.784 (11)	0.489 (17)	0.654	13	4 (13)	
19.	Tiruvavur	0.683 (17)	0.793 (8)	0.435 (27)	0.637	19	8 (20)	34.08 / 0.24
20.	Pudukkottai	0.676 (21)	0.729 (22)	0.451 (23)	0.618	25	-2 (26)	17.60 / 0.08

21.	Madurai	0.619 (27)	0.832 (4)	0.533 (4)	0.661	8	-4 (10)	
22.	Theni	0.628 (26)	0.775 (13)	0.480 (19)	0.628	23	-4 (22)	20.72 / 0.15
23.	Dindigul	0.661 (24)	0.741 (20)	0.521 (7)	0.641	17	-10 (15)	20.95 / 0.37
24.	Ramnad	0.670 (22)	0.762 (17)	0.454 (21)	0.629	22	-1 (19)	18.40 / 0.08
25.	Virudhunagar	0.693 (12)	0.753 (18)	0.508 (11)	0.651	14	-2 (16)	
26.	Sivagangai	0.711 (10)	0.768 (16)	0.441 (26)	0.640	18	8 (18)	17.01 / 0.06
27.	Tirunelveli	0.680 (18)	0.806 (7)	0.489 (15)	0.658	9	7 (11)	
28.	Thoothukudi	0.721 (8)	0.857 (3)	0.530 (5)	0.703	4	1 (3)	
29.	Kanniyakumari	0.794 (2)	0.885 (1)	0.453 (22)	0.711	3	19 (4)	
	STATE	0.696	0.767	0.508	0.657			

Source: State Planning Commission, Chennai, 2001. & Statistical Hand Book of Tamilnadu 2016.

N.B: The districts where the average percentage of SC/ST is of more or about the State average of SC/ST or more than national average & their ranking which is at the fag end of the scale; this gives way to interpret that the Social welfare needs are either not met / mechanisms wanting to the SC/ST population pockets are living in remote areas; only special focus can bridge the gaps

About the author

Fr. Kumar John Krishnasamy, Director, Social Watch–Tamil Nadu, is a development researcher and has held the position at the policy research and budget advocacy organisation since 2010. He is a member of the Jesuit Madurai Province.

While his research and professional work has primarily focussed on the Dalits and subaltern communities of Tamil Nadu, he has been a member of the Working Committee of the State Planning Commission in the State Ministry of Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare for the 11th and 12 Five Year Plan periods. He is the co-editor of Tamil Nadu Social Development Report 2000, a research compilation of TN People's Forum for Social Development. He also co-authored a paper *The Social Development of Dalits and Tamil Nadu Budget* following a State-level seminar on Dalit socio-economic issues and concerns in 1998. He was the editor of '*Aanaalum Tamilnaattai Paaraattlam*', a critique of the Budget 2010-11 from the Dalit perspective.

He is also a member of the Management Committee of Loyola College, Chennai. After doing his B.A. in English Literature at Madras University, Fr. Kumar went on to do B.Ph from Gnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. He did his Masters in Sociology from Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu. His interest in Folk art and street theatre saw him take up a course on Folkloristics at Xavier's College in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. He also did a Diploma on Research Methods (Social Study) at the University of Manitoda, Canada.

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About The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy

The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy is a division of Kasturi & Sons Ltd., publishers of *The Hindu* and group newspapers. It was inaugurated by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee on January 31, 2013. The aim of The Hindu Centre is to promote research, dialogue, and discussion to enable the creation of informed public opinion on key issues facing India in order to safeguard, strengthen, and nourish parliamentary democracy and pluralism, and to contribute to the nation's economic, social, and political betterment.

The Hindu Centre has so far supported 24 short term public policy scholars, who have submitted Policy Reports on areas such as parliamentary democracy, freedom of expression, content of school textbooks, financial inclusion and rural broadband connectivity, which are published online. The Centre has also organised 21 public events, consultations and public discussions on key issues of national importance, including the creation of the Telangana State, violence against women, pre-election opinion polls, gender-based violence, Right to Education Act, the Sri Lankan Tamils refugees in India, sedition and free speech in India, the politics of welfare in Tamil Nadu, the Union Budget, and, most recently, a discussion on demonetisation and black money in India.

Today's Round Table, 'Public Policy and the Child in Tamil Nadu' is the 22st event, the second Round Table to be organised by The Hindu Centre, and the first in collaboration with UNICEF. The Hindu Centre has also organised a series of three lectures on Climate Change delivered by Jairam Ramesh, former Union Minister and Senior Visiting Fellow of The Hindu Centre, and Alan Rusbridger, former Editor-in-Chief, The Guardian, UK. The Hindu Centre also publishes frequent commentaries and analytical articles on current affairs. Its publications and resources can be accessed at www.thehinducentre.com

The Hindu Centre's first Annual Lecture, *Will India Script an Uninterrupted Growth Story?* was delivered on March 13, 2017, by P. Chidambaram, former Union Minister, a distinguished Parliamentarian who has been elected to the Lok Sabha for seven terms since 1984, and is now a member of the Rajya Sabha.

About UNICEF

UNICEF, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, has been working in Tamil Nadu for more than four decades now in partnership with Government, Civil Society Organizations and Academic Institutions

- With overarching priority to facilitate progressive realisation of SDGs and Child Rights, which includes right to survival, development, participation, and protection, UNICEF currently supports programmes for children and women in Health, Nutrition, Education, HIV/AIDS, Water and Sanitation and Child Protection sectors
- At State level, UNICEF supports progressive realisation of rights of children through evidence based advocacy and interventions for Policy, Planning, Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Capacity Building for better child governance
- At District level, UNICEF supports convergent and sectoral programmes in Krishnagiri, Salem, and Dharmapuri districts besides High priority Districts (HPD) under Call to Action initiatives of MoHFW, Govt. of India

Strategies of UNICEF supported Programming

1. **Develop capacities:** identify gaps, improve data analysis & monitoring, develop skills of government functionaries
2. **Promote decentralisation:** improve governance for children's rights: pilot models, leverage resources to up-scale, develop capacities of local self-governments
3. **Leverage partnerships:** with government, NGOs, civil society, academia and the media
4. **Promote social inclusion to achieve equity:** advocate for transparent, accountable and non-discriminatory service delivery, prioritise public policies and resources, use social protection instruments to ensure a minimum standard of living for all
5. **Improve knowledge management systems:** share lessons learnt, support concurrent monitoring and facilitate exchange of knowledge across states, countries

Programming focus: Life cycle approach, Equity - Reaching the unreached, Quality