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Intersectional Gender Project

Part of proposed Kanyakumari Green District Initiative

Primer I

2 September 2022

Initiated by Hon. Minister for Information Technology

Thiru. Mano Thangaraj

Supported by

District Administration of Kanyakumari

Facilitated by

Kaani Nilam

Background

In the on-going discourse in India around how development frameworks can ensure effective progress towards gender equality, Tamil Nadu strongly supports gender equality and the empowerment of women, trans and intersex persons as stand-alone goals which should be integrated through targeted social measures and interventions into all goals of the state's development framework. Tamil Nadu stands as one of India's pioneer states for not just initiating pro-poor policies and social protection programmes for women, but also implementing progressive policies for the protection of the rights of transpersons, intersex persons and sexuality minorities.

While it is widely recognised that securing gender equality is among basic principles in the respect for human rights and the key imperative for overall economic and political progress, Tamil Nadu is yet to achieve full equality for women, trans and intersex persons, and they are still underrepresented and marginalised in many spheres.

To reach the ambitious goal of total empowerment of women, trans and intersex persons, we have to tackle critical socio-cultural challenges and address the structural causes of gender inequality, such as persistent gender disparity in secondary and tertiary education, unequal employment opportunity and the gender wage gap, unpaid care work, limited control over assets and property, caste and religious dogma, social stigma, physical and mental violence, and unequal participation in private and public decision-making.

Unless all these dimensions of gender inequality are addressed in an intersectional manner, gender equality, the empowerment of women, trans and intersex persons and the realisation of human rights of these communities cannot be achieved.

Project Concept

Kaani Nilam, with the support of the Hon. Minister for IT, Mano Thangaraj and the District Administration of Kanyakumari will implement a holistic intersectional gender project to address the various social, cultural, economic and political exclusions girls, trans and intersex children and youth of Kanyakumari face. The project will be initiated as a pilot to build a working model for intersectional gender interventions in schools and communities across the state.

With a focus on empowering girls, trans and intersex children and youth, the project will aim to build field level interventions that rope in multiple stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, public health workers, law enforcement, community elders, students, etc.

The efforts will be to;

- a. Study gender inequality in the district
- b. Develop training modules for various stakeholders based on constitutional rights and legal frameworks
- c. Build capacity in stakeholders through trainings to reduce and mitigate gender inequality and violence
- d. Set up community safeguards such as peace committees, gender equality centres, peer-to-peer support groups, etc
- e. Spread awareness among general public through online and offline campaigns

Call for insights - Negotiating the scope and form of the Project

To officially announce and launch our efforts to draw up an intersectional gender project, we are keen on organising a roundtable discussion with members of the Tamil Nadu government, academics, activists, policy experts, and community leaders in September 2022. This roundtable will present an opportunity for Kaani Nilam and the District Administration of Kanyakumari to benefit from the insights of an interdisciplinary pool of expertise. We hope to curate panels of experts to address the specific challenges that we anticipate encountering when drawing up the structure and form of such an intersectional project.

To this end, we look forward to benefiting from your insights in drawing up the project and better preparing ourselves for the challenges it may encounter.

About Kaani Nilam

Kaani Nilam (Ek Potlee Ret Ki in Hindustani) is a grassroots artists-activists collective working to recognise aspects of cultures and their practices as constitutional rights. We endeavour to acknowledge and protect India's pluralism by collectivising, educating, organising and advocating for cultural and social justice.

With a vision to preserve and celebrate India's diversity we have mobilised over 50 severely marginalised communities across several states, documented their lives and practices, felicitated impactful interventions and are advocating for their rights.

Our unique caste-gender-poverty intersectional approach to our grassroots work, and our values of inclusion and solidarity ensure we are always a representative collective which forefronts community leadership, especially that of women and youth.

Read more at: www.ekpotleeretki.org

CO-CREATING AN INTERSECTIONAL GENDER PROJECT For Kanyakumari



BRAINSTORMING with



- Revathi Chandrasekaran - DRO, Kanyakumari
- Grace Banu - Transgender Rights Activist
- Estelle Keerthana - Transgender & Gender Diversity Activist, Researcher
- Raisa Philip - Policy Research & Advocacy Consultant for Gender & Child Rights
- Mathangi Krishnamoorthy - Prof of Anthropology of Gender & Body, IIT Madras
- Samuel Gnanadurai - Policy Researcher & Monitoring and Evaluation Expert
- Shalin Maria Lawrence - Dalit Feminist Writer & Activist
- Swapna Sundar - Gender Justice Lawyer
- Archanaa Seker - LGBTQIA+ & Reproductive Health and Rights Activist
- Alagu Jegan - LGBTQIA+ Activist (YPP Champion 2022)
- Pechiammal - Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department

Facilitated by Radhika Ganesh
Cultural-political Activist & Feminist

Lets think; intersectional,
intergenerational & inclusive

 ON ZOOM

2.09.2022
FRIDAY
10AM

Revathi Chandrasekaran is the District Revenue Officer at Kanyakumari. She graduated in 2005 from Tamilnadu Agriculture University with a gold medal and did her MA Sociology and now she is doing a PhD in women's studies.

She is greatly interested in the issues of women and children and is constantly working for the enhancement of their health and education. She has stopped around 400 child marriages in the years 2011–2014. She has rescued many child labourers and ensured their education. Revathi Chandrasekaran worked in various capacities in the five parliamentary and assembly elections. She handled natural disasters such as floods, drought, and the COVID-19 pandemic well in Perambalur and Kanyakumari. She was trained by the National Institute of Disaster Management in New Delhi in 2019 regarding disaster management. Revathi Chandrasekaran worked for four years on various World Bank funded and ADB funded land acquisition projects. She was sent to Hohai University, Nanjing, China as part of a collaborative certificate course on land acquisition.

Revathi Chandrasekaran was awarded the 'Munnodi Penmani' by Bharathidasan University in 2015, honouring the fieldwork she did for the betterment of women and children. She was awarded with a certificate of excellence by the honourable President of India for the work she did for the Census 2011.

Grace Banu is a Dalit and trans activist. India's first trans engineer, she is also a central member of the mobilisation and advocacy around the amendment of the Transgender Protection of Rights Bill. Her daughter, Tharika Banu, has been the first transgender person to have completed her secondary education in Tamil Nadu. Grace Banu vehemently argues for trans rights such as the right to paid leave during transition surgery just like paid maternity leave and speaks on various safeguards that must be initiated at workplaces and educational institutions to make them safe and welcoming to trans people. Grace Banu stresses on the importance of reservations as part of affirmative action for transgender people. She is the founder and director of Trans Rights Now Collective, she has been at the forefront of India's LGBTQIA+ rights movement.

Mx. Estelle Keerthana (née Hari Hara Sudhan) Ramaswamy is a trans* and gender non-binary early career researcher and an emerging author. They are currently a Deakin University Postgraduate Research Scholarship (DUPRS) awardee pursuing a PhD @Deakin University, Australia. They are the first trans person to have reached Australia for a DUPRS awarded PhD place in Australia. They are also the Founder & Chief Executive @Ardham Collective & Social Trust which is a collective of trans and gender diverse individuals that works for the empowerment of underprivileged and underserved communities especially the trans and gender diverse (TGD) communities. In addition, they are also in the Editorial board of @The Ecopreneur India, which works towards nurturing an ecology of eco-friendly entrepreneurship.

They are an alumna (we need to find a gender-neutral equivalent) of the prestigious RGNIYD (Government of India) where they pursued an MA in Development Policy and Practice after a BSc in Psychology from the illustrious University of Madras. They were a 'RUSA 2.0 Social Sciences Project Fellow' at the esteemed @Bharathidasan University within the Department of Women's Studies. Prior to these, they were an edupreneur between 2010-2016 @Scholarclips International Education, promoting international education. They are proficient in six languages including German and French.

Raisa Philip is a practitioner, researcher, and activist who has been working on child rights, gender rights, and health for more than a decade. Her current areas of interest include understanding and collectivising efforts to counter gender backlash and violence, re-shaping understanding around women's work, and building safe spaces for children and young people to participate in the politics around them. She is a firm believer in building experimental, collaborative, and innovative spaces that promote discussion and critical thinking. She has post-graduate degrees in Social Work, and Gender and Development.

Raisa is currently working as Manager- Programs and Innovations at Crea, a feminist human rights international organisation based in the Global South, where her work supports feminist organising against gender-based violence, and challenging punitive approaches to justice. Raisa is also a core member, and gender and child rights advisor for Young People for Politics.

Mathangi Krishnamurthy is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Madras. She holds a PhD in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin and was an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her areas of interest include the anthropology of work and gender, and medical anthropology. Her book "1-800-Worlds: The Making of the Indian Call Centre Economy," published by OUP in 2018, chronicles the labour practices, life-worlds, and media atmospheres of Indian call centre workers.

Samuel Gnanadurai has a master's in development studies from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and has many years of work experience in the development sector, handling multiple projects including education and health care projects for various states of the government of India. He has also worked extensively in the area of monitoring and evaluation and is currently heading M&E for the Asia-Pacific region for an international organisation.

Shalin Maria Lawrence is an activist, intersectional feminist, writer, and orator from an oppressed community. She has been working towards the empowerment of Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasis since 2012. She has been working with the Dalit communities of north Madras, particularly in and around Vyasarpadi, since 2015 and has assisted them in the establishment of libraries, as well as conducted campaigns and awareness programmes promoting education and child rights. She has also been working with Dalit women and children in the Dharavi Region of Mumbai since 2016. She has set up a library and has been conducting awareness workshops on women's rights, leadership and the annihilation of caste. For the last five years, she has been conducting regular workshops and trainings on violence on women, women's rights, and leadership among the rural Dalit women in and around Madurai and Chennai, along with the Madurai-based NGO group Evidence as a freelancer.

Shalin is a writer in English and Tamil. She has published three books in her native language, Tamil, namely "Vadachennaikari" (feminist take on sub-altern history and culture), "Jency en Kuraivaaga paadinaar" (feminist take on cinema) in the year 2018 and "Sandaikaarigal" in 2022 on intersectional feminism. She is a regular writer in Tamil and English media and has bylines in The New Indian Express, Vikatan, Kumudham, First Post, Quint, News Minute, Behanbox, The Wire, etc on politics, gender, arts, caste and other social issues. She is currently writing a column in Kumudham, a popular Tamil magazine, on fourth wave feminism named "Manadhai punpaduthum pakkangal". She is an orator and regularly speaks at academic institutions, on television, and on podcasts on topics like gender issues, annihilation of caste, the arts, and women in politics. She has recently received the Laadli award for the year 2021 in the southern region for gender sensitivity in media and advertising.

Swapna Sundar is a Lawyer, specialising in IPR and technology law, teaches law and technology in a number of institutions including leading law and other colleges like NALSAR, Hidayatullah National Law University, Asian College of Journalism and NIFT, Chairperson of Apollo Biomedical Research Ethics Committee, and member of Ethics Committee in ICMR - NIE, a few corporate hospitals in Chennai; Swapna Sundar is a member of Internal Complaints Committees (under sexual harassment Act) in some companies and NGOs; draft Standard Operating Procedures and policies for equal opportunity in companies and ensure legal and regulatory compliance in companies and NGOs. She writes books and articles on law and enjoys reading, painting, dancing and fitness training.

Archanaa Seker is a feminist, rights-activist, researcher and writer based in Chennai. She works with different organisations and collectives on issues including homelessness and mental health, corporate accountability and environmental pollution, gender and queer rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and media, arts and culture. Archanaa has previously worked as Project Coordinator at The Banyan, Research Assistant at IIT-Madras, and Campaigner at The Other Media, Project Associate at IFMR LEAD. Archanaa is a columnist with The New Indian Express, and works independently

as a curator, communications consultant, campaign strategist, and feeds into the policy for the many issues she works on.

Alagu Jegan

என் பெயர் அழகு ஜெகன், என்னுடைய சொந்த ஊர் மதுரை, முதுநிலை பொறியியல்

படித்து கடந்தது 10 வருடங்களாக தகவல் தொழில்நுட்ப துறையில் பொறியாளராக பணிபுரிந்து வருகிறேன், பல தீண்டாமைகளையும் ஒடுக்கு முறைகளையும் குழந்தை பருவத்தில் இருந்து சந்தித்த நான் கடந்த 2019 ஆம் ஆண்டு என்னுடைய பாலீர்ப்பை அதாவது நான் ஒரு தன்பால் ஈர்ப்பு நபர் என்பதை வெளிப்படையாக உலகத்திற்கு சொன்னேன், அதிலிருந்து என்னுடைய LGBTQIA+ மக்களுக்கான சமூக பணி தொடங்கியது, அதன் தொடர்ச்சியாக அணியம் அறக்கட்டளை என்ற தொண்டு நிறுவனம் ஆரமிக்கப்பட்டது, அதன் நிறுவனராக இருந்து வருகிறேன், LGBTQIA+ மக்களுக்கான முதல் மாத மின்னிதழ் பால் மனம் என்ற பெயரில் 2020 ஆம் ஆண்டு ஆரமித்தேன், அதன் தலைமை இதழ் ஆசிரியராகவும் உள்ளேன், செவிகள் குயர் தொலைபேசி சேவை மையத்தை LGBTQIA+ மக்களின் மனஅழுத்தம் தற்கொலைக்கான எண்ணத்திற்கு தீர்வு போன்ற உதவிகளுக்கு அணியம் அறக்கட்டளை மூலம் உருவாக்கி 800 மேலே தீர்வுகள் கண்டுள்ளோம், இலக்கியத்தில் ஆர்வமுள்ள நான் தொடர்ந்து LGBTQIA+ மக்களின் வலிகள் கவிதைகளாக எழுதியுள்ளேன், என்னயுடைய கவிதைகளை தொகுத்து ஏலே பதிப்பகம் புத்தகமாக வெளியிட்டுள்ளது, எண்ணரிய கவிதை தொகுப்பின் பெயர் "செருப்பை தின்கிறேன்", என்னுடைய இலக்கிய பணியை பாராட்டி டெல்லியில் இந்திய அரசு மற்றும் சாகித்ய அகாடமி நடத்திய சர்வ தேச இலக்கிய விழாவில் என்னுடைய கவிதை வாசிக்க எனக்கு 2020, மற்றும் 2022 என இரண்டு ஆண்டுகள் வாய்ப்பு கொடுக்க பட்டது, 50க்கும் மேற்பட்ட கல்லூரிகளில் LGBTQIA+ மக்கள் பற்றி உரையாற்றியுள்ளேன். இவ்வாறு தொடர்ந்து எனது சமூக பணி தொடர்ந்துகொண்டிருக்கிறது.

Radhika Ganesh is a cultural-political activist with over a decade of experience working with human rights movements and feminist campaigns across various states in India. As one of the founders of India's pioneering cultural rights movements, Kaani Nilam (Ek Potlee Ret Ki in Hindustani) she focuses on building grassroots interventions that work at the intersection of caste, gender and poverty. She works extensively on youth engagement, leadership building, policy advice and advocacy, and digital campaigning. She is a national co-convener of Young People for Politics, a non-partisan political forum to educate and engage youth in democratic thought and processes. Her feminist practice leads her to consistently strive towards creating safe and equal spaces, especially in public and political life for women, gender & sexuality minorities and youth from structurally excluded communities. She was part of the 2019-2020 cohort of the International Arts Leaders Programme run by the Australian Government.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and acknowledgement by Radhika Ganesh - 5 mins
2. Brief self-introductions - 15 mins
3. Initiative context by Revathi Chandrasekaran, DRO - 10 mins
4. Concept & need for collaboration - Radhika Ganesh, Kaani Nilam - 10 mins
5. Open floor for discussion - 60 mins
6. Next steps - 10 mins
7. Roundup by Cindia. G, Wright Intended - 10 mins

Total time - 2hours

10am to 12noon

Kindly join the zoom room 2 mins ahead of scheduled time.

Zoom Link

Ek Potlee Ret Ki (Kaani Nilam) is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Co-creating an Intersectional gender project

Time: Sep 2, 2022 10:00 AM Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86472141995?pwd=cHU0ODIUUkY0Z05tVFdaa0FOMm1pdz09>

Meeting ID: 864 7214 1995

Passcode: 124846

Contact

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