

State Level Consultation on ‘Policies and Budgets for Women’ with Tamilnadu State Commission for Women

(Jointly organized by Social Watch-Tamilnadu &
Good Shepherd Health Education Centre & Dispensary, Karamadai
In collaboration with Tamil Nadu Women’s Collective and EKTA Resource Centre for Women
In Solidarity with Tamilnadu Women’s Groups)

Date: 29.03.2022

Venue: ICSA, Chennai

Time: 9.30 am- 2.00 pm

No. of Participants: 100

Background of the program

The state level consultation on policies and budget for women with Tamilnadu State Commission for Women was convened as a collaborative effort of ‘Social Watch Tamilnadu’, Good Shepherd Health Education Centre & Dispensary, Karamadai, Tamil Nadu Women’s Collective and EKTA Resource Centre for Women; in solidarity with Tamil Nadu Women’s Groups. It was a great occasion which had been looking forward to for quite a long time. In fact the release of the Women Policy Draft and the budget has given the space for the leading women organizations to think and review the existing policy documents. The highlight of the program was the presence of Hon. Ms. A. S Kumari, Chairperson, Tamilnadu State Commission for Women throughout the meeting.



Profile of the participants

The meeting was rich in participation of 100 development professionals as stakeholders of the program from various organizations: Social Watch-Tamilnadu, Good Shepherd Health Education Centre & Dispensary, Karamadai, Empower Trust, Trichy, Native Medical Charitable Trust, Coimbatore, Uthagamandalam Social Service Society, Ooty, AECOM Network, Puducheri, Social Equity Alliance, Tamilnadu Women’s Collective and its sister concerns from Theni, Kancheepuram, Thoothukkudi, Chengalpattu and Thiruvallur districts, , EKTA Resource Centre for Women, Women’s Wing- December 3 Movement, MPWC, Mullaipakkam, National Domestic Workers Movement, Kalanjium Women Farmers Sangam, Thenkasi, Action Aid, Society for Rural Education & Development, Arakkonam, PADHAI, AGAL, Urutunai, CWDR, Chennai, HRF, Chennai, Dept. of Tamil Ethiraj College, Chennai, Voice of Tamil and Pennurimai Iyakkam, Chennai along with independent researchers and development consultants.

Inauguration

The meeting was started officially with the welcome address by Ms. Kamatchi, Senior Researcher, SW-TN. She emphasized the need for an intersectional and decentralized Gender Budgeting in TN. She also highlighted the importance of State Women Commission becoming the key member in the ‘High Level Women Empowerment Committee, promised in the draft Women Policy 2021’. She also proposed the future collaborative “Pre-Budget Gender Consultation” in the month August 2022.



And the inaugural address was given by Rev. Sr. Anila Mathew, Director General, GSHEC. The Hon. Chairperson Ms. A.S. Kumari was welcomed and honoured where it was emphasized that she is such a dynamic person,

Consultation on “POLICIES and BUDGETS for WOMEN” with Tamilnadu State Commission for Women (TNSCW)

Organized by Good Shepherd Health Education Centre & Dispensary (GSHEC) & Social Watch-Tamilnadu (SW-TN) In Collaboration with Tamilnadu Women’s Collective & EKTA Resource Centre for Women In Solidarity with Tamilnadu Women’s Groups
On 29th March 2022, at ICSA

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE		
9.30 am	Registration & Tea	
10.00 am	S. Kamatchi Senior Researcher, SW-TN	Welcome Address
10.15 am	Sr. Anila Mathew, Director General, GSHEC Sr. Daisy Maria, Director, GSHEC	Inaugural Address Honouring the Chairperson, TNSCW Commission for Women
10.30 am	Ms. Sheela Francis President, Tamilnadu Women’s Collective	Keynote Address
10.45 am	Ms. Binia Chandrasekar Director, EKTA Resource Centre for Women	Recommendations towards a process towards monitoring women’s policies & budget.
11.00 am	PANEL CHAIR: Ms. Ranjani K. Murthy, Consultant: Gender, Poverty and Development SPEAKERS (10 minutes for each speaker) Ms. Bernard Fatima, Society for Rural Education and Development Ms. Vanessa Peter, Information & Resource Centre for Deprived Urban Communities Sr. Valarmathi, National Domestic Workers Movement Ms. Geetha Narayanan, Consultant and Researcher (11.45 am Tea Break - 15 Minutes) Ms. Esther Mariasevam, Action Aid Association Ms. Aranga Mallika, Department of Tamil, Ethiraj College Ms. Reshika, Centre for Women’s Development And Research Ms. Sherin, Good Shepherd Health and Education Centre Ms. Uma Devi, Women’s Wing, December 3 Movement	
1.00 pm	Honourable Chairperson Ms. A.S. KUMARI, Aul Tamilnadu State Commission for Women	Scope for Collaborative Interventions - Discussion
1.30 pm	Fr. John Kumar Director, Social Watch - Tamilnadu	Vote of Thanks

Open Discussion from 2.30 to 4.00 pm



who always wishes to work for the well-being of women in all sectors. For that she had started to make field visits to understand the real condition of women in connection to various stakeholders who are in action to implement programs/schemes for women.

Preceded to that Ms. Sheelu Francis, President, Tamilnadu Women's Collective conferred keynote address in which she mentioned about the insights on the draft women policy and the points are mentioned below;

- Preparation of budget and drafting of policies should be inclusive of women centric approaches- involve women from different sectors and CSOs to have a holistic view and also to ensure adequate time in planning, reviewing, drafting and revision
- Women farmers who do 80% of farming activities and are not even recognised as farmers but just as farm labourers
- It is better to split and represent data with respect to gender in the fields of caste, religion, rural & urban, livelihood, etc
- Influence of media in the upsurge of cybercrimes need to be taken care
- The clarity on allocation of budget with respect to genders is highly required
- Allocation for education should be common
- Why is family planning considered as 100% women centric in budgets?



Ms. Bimla Chandrasekar, Director, EKTA Resource Centre for Women presented the recommendations for establishing processes/systems in terms of monitoring policies and budgets for women. The points highlighted were;

- It was emphasized that the role of Tamilnadu State Commission for Women and National Commission for Women should be effective to handhold the disadvantaged women to access social dignity in all realms
- Insisting a system of framing policies with a women inclusive approach and effective functioning of an internal committee that can review the consolidation of reports
- Decentralize gender budgeting to local governance, town, district, state and national divisions
- Propose an intersectional gender budgeting
- A. 100% health and maternity benefits
- B. Health and nutrition services for both men and women
- C. New Schemes and policies for marginalized women



Thereafter the panel discussions were held and speakers from various organizations expressed their policy recommendations and suggestions. Ms. Ranjani K Murthy, Consultant; Gender, Poverty and Development chaired the sitting. Each speaker was given 5 minutes to deliberate their recommendations in a brief and comprehensive manner.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Ms. Vanessa Peter, Information & Resource Centre for Deprived Urban Communities, Chennai

Information & Resource Centre for Deprived Urban Communities; Chennai is working for the deprived urban communities.

- Establishing Gender Labs in all cities to ensure participatory gender budgeting and mainstream gender responsive programs
- Monitoring on the utilization of Nirbhaya Funds and its effectiveness
- Identification of unsafe zones and increase police patrolling



- Evolving rescue protocols for homeless women in unsafe situation
- Victim protection and access to justice
- Specialized forensic team for investigating sexual offences
- Protection from arbitrary evictions

II. Rev. Sr. S. Valarmathi, National Domestic Workers Movement

National Domestic Movement provides a space for the domestic workers all over India represent their demands.

- Exclusive budgeting and state legislation for domestic workers



III. Ms. Renuka, Domestic Workers Movement

- Single/abandoned/separated women needs to have special consideration to avail welfare schemes
- Reservation of 33% should also be in practice for availing land patta in the name of women

IV. Ms. Geetha Narayanan, Consultant and Researcher

- Developing gender responsive strategies for family planning methods
- Capacity building on treating transgender people along with the issues faced by them
- Promoting ethical committees to provide quality services and ensure ethical services of health workers
- Ensure accessibility of AYUSH at in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels
- Ownership of women on farm lands should be guaranteed
- Period research has to be organized on food and water security, climate change, preservation of rain water preservation, etc
- Effective functioning of safety mechanisms for women needs to be ensured
- Endorsing social education for adolescents



V. Ms. Esther Mariaselvam, Associate Director, Action Aid Association, Chennai

Action Aid Organization is working for social and ecological justice.

- Sanitation facilities under Gender Responsive Public Services in al salt pans
- Occupational safety and health code for salt pan workers
- Initiating special transportation facilities for salt pan workers
- Evolving systems to safeguard women and children from exploitation
- Implementing first aid centres and Creches for the children of salt pan workers
- Women fish workers should be recognized as labourers and bring under the entitlements of factory base employers



VI. Dr. Aranga Mallika, Department of Tamil, Ethiraj College, Chennai

- Sensitization on gender gap through education institutions
- There should be allocation of funds for research grant
- Half yearly meet up with Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to discuss on the progress women centric development actions and implementation



VII. Ms. Renuka, Centre for Women's Development and Research, Chennai

CWDR is an organization working for the upliftment of vulnerable women through ensuring their rights for empowerment.

- Sexual harassment survivors should be enquired in private court rooms



VIII. Ms. Shanthi, Society for Rural Health & Education

SRED is involved in advocacy and lobbying work in state, national and international level to redress the issues faced by women.

- Alcohol shops shall be curtailed/abolished
- Sanitation issues has to be addressed

IX. Ms. Sherin P Thomas, Liaisoning Officer, Good Shepherd Health Education Centre & Dispensary, Karamadai

Good Shepherd is an organization working for community development and women empowerment.

- Grass root level education on women rights, associated legislations and legal support systems
- Convene periodical Panchayat/Block Level meetings to generate informations on the actual status of women and to plan redressal mechanisms
- Ensuring accountability of govt. departments/officials
- Form and strengthen district level monitoring committee
- Appoint professional counselors/trauma sensitive specialists in the PHCs and schools
- Establish short stay homes in Valparai for women and children
- Regulate the work time of women tea pluckers in Valparai from 8.00 am to 5.00
- Ensure the availability of sanitation facilities in Valparai
- Increase the number of women supervisors in the tea estates



X. Ms. Umadevi, Women's Wing, December 3 Movement

- Out of 33% reservation in the local election, 1% has to be allocated for physically challenged women
- Representation of physically challenged women in Tamil Nadu State Commission for women
- Confirming physically challenged employees who are working more than two years in the Govt. departments as per GO 151
- Strict legal actions to address domestic violence against physically challenged women
- Ensuring disability friendly public infrastructures and transportation
- Shelter services like institutional home stays for physically challenged women who are in crisis
- Accessibility of free legal aid and toll free services

Followed to the panel discussions, the floor made opened to the participants to share their recommendations on any of the serious issues faced by women and the following points have been shared;

- Fr. John Kumar, Director, Social Watch- TN recommended separate inclusive budget for women for their rights and needs with 10% new schemes
- Ms. Sumathi from NMCT, Coimbatore : asked for provisions for tribal community to access communal awareness on women policies and budget
- Ms. Jomy, GSHEC, Karamadai recommended to change the term, 'RAPE' and remove the victim card through language sensitization of the public
- Adv. Uma Devi suggested to set up short stay homes for disabled and proper sanitation facilities along with pension funds appropriate to bear their expenses
- Ms. Geetha insisted on developing de-addiction and rehabilitation centers for younger population. She also shared that introducing ethical consent with reference to contraception is essential. Another point was to regulate contents of media exposures/publications

- Mr. Antony Peter, GSHEC recommended for increasing sensitization on political participation of elected women PRI leaders
- Ms. Daisy Mary, GSHEC recommended for setting up coaching centers in Valparai for students to appear for Govt. exams like TNPSC, UPSC, etc. Membership of Govt. officials in the Sexual Harassment Committee to ensure fault-free execution
- Ms. Ranjani asked to check the inclusion of various illnesses and treatment modalities
- Ms. Selvi recommended to extend the measurement of land provided by the Govt. from 2.5 to 5 cents
- To reduce lack of awareness on PRI, NGOs has to be allocated with funds for organizing sensitization for women PRI leaders
- Ms. Rajeswari from Social Watch-TN, suggested to see the hardships of women at a multi-vulnerability perspective and the percentage margin of reservation has to be increased

Ms. Ranjani K Murthy, moderator summed up the recommendations and highlighted that the accountability of institutions has to be ensured along with substantiating the data analysis with adequate inferences.

Response of Ms. A. S Kumari, Hon. Chairperson, Tamilnadu State Commission for Women in view of the demands from cross sectional areas of women empowerment

Foremost, she gave a positive gesture to all the concerns/recommendations that were deliberated on



the floor. She informed that TNSCW is planning to develop an exclusive software application to reach out the needy women with timely assistance. She cited a few of her experiences during the field visits. Health care institutions Teenage pregnancy and its terminations shall be strictly punished along with an effective monitoring system. Employment opportunities and vocational skill development of the physically challenged, especially autistic and dyslexic individuals will be considered. Functioning and administration of women legal helpline 181 and associated services will bring to

the notice of the Chief Minister. With reference to the Transgender community, shelter homes are to be introduced to safeguard them during their transition period. The concept of Internal Compliance Committee has to be overlooked to ensure its deliverables. She asked for sector-wise segregated recommendations, so that she would be able to follow up and share with the concerned ministries. Chairperson informed that, she has a plan to visit all the districts, so the contact points of NGOs can share with her, if available. Ms. Kamatchi from Social Watch called to meet the chairperson at her chamber on 01.04.2022 along with the recommendations and the contact details of NGOs.

Conclusion

State Level Consultation on developing a plan of action for a participatory monitoring mechanism to overlook the policies and budgets for women by the Tamilnadu State Commission for Women, NGOs and all the stakeholders was highly beneficial in terms of conveying the impressions on the draft women policy and budget. Unanimously an opinion shared that, organizations and CSOs working for women to be involved in drafting and renewing policies, so that the genuine concerns of women would be brought into light. The consultation meet was concluded with the expression of gratitude by Rev. Fr. John Kumar, Director, Social Watch-Tamilnadu.



