



Annual Report 2018-19





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VIZHUTHUGAL

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1. Introduction

Vizhuthugal was established in 1992 and registered under Indian Trust Act (Regst. No. 146/BK4/2003) on 23rd April 2003 in Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu with the goals of empowering the poor and the Dalits and emancipating them from the caste-slavery. It is registered under FCRA (number. 075850336). Vizhuthugal is a Tamil word meaning the roots hanging from the branches of banyan trees.

Working in the Western part of Tamilnadu, Vizhuthugal motivates mainly the poor, the women, the working masses and the Dalit- Arunthathiyars who are the most backward among Dalits of Coimbatore, Erode, Nilgiris, Namakkal and Salem districts.

Vizhuthugal closely works with the government, CSO partners, donor organization as well as with the affected community to bring system change that encourages educational, social and economic development of vulnerable community and contributes for the empowerment of women and children

Our Vision

The marginalized have sustainable livelihood and their children are par with others on all development like Education, Health, Rights and Participation

Our Mission

Empowering marginalized people to achieve socio-economic development and participation in local governance and the mainstream and eradicate poverty, untouchability, caste discrimination and atrocity through awareness creation, empowerment initiatives, education and training, monitoring and networks



2. Highlights of 2018-19

15

Workers
Groups
formed in
mills

5428

Total lives
impacted in
2018-19

95

Liberated from
Slavery

5

Schools
supported
for improved
Sanitation

186

Survivors were
given
educational
support

5

Internal
Compliance
Committee
s formed in
the mills

39

Survivors
received
loans for
micro
enterprises

15

Schools educated
on hand washing
with soap

39

Survivors
Promoted to
Entrepreneurs

285

Survivors
linked to Social
Protection Schemes

104

out of 119

survivors completed skill
training got placement and
better salary



3. Projects...

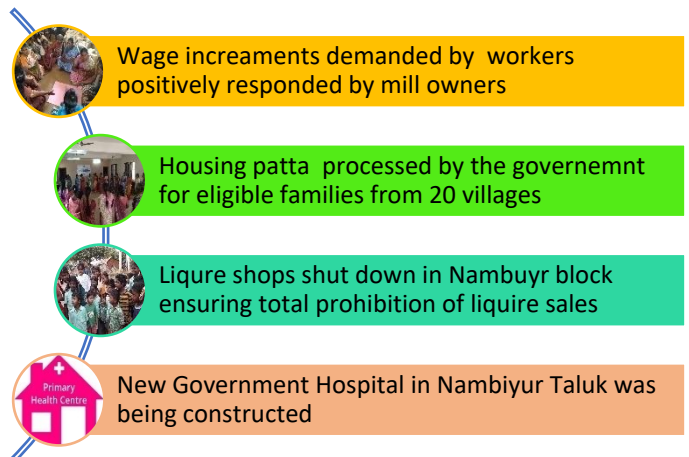
3.1 Addressing the issues of young workers and strengthening existing community Support: Supported by The Freedom Fund, UK

The project is addressing the issues of young workers especially adolescents who are working in a high risk employment and slavery situation. Our focused interventions in 20 villages 2 blocks of Erode District, the hub of spinning mills and textile have impacted 5428 lives and liberated 95 survivors from high risk employment in spinning mills, garments and textiles industries in 2018. It was possible through the community movements lead by the Community Support Groups (CSG), children collectives and our continuous advocacy efforts with the government, mill owners and other stakeholders at State and National level.

a. Advocacy for system change:

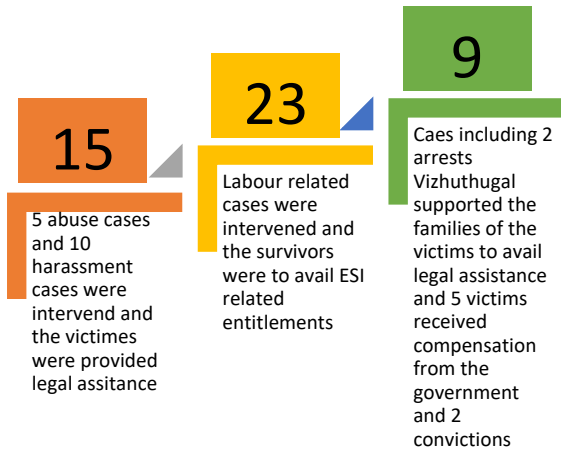
A memorandum has been submitted to the Dy. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for the rehabilitation of rescued Bonded Labours. A rescued bonded labour family was supported to meet him in person for the compensation as per the provisions of existing laws. Mobilizing the community to advocate for their issues at the micro level to State level has contributed to solve various developmental and infrastructural issues that holding back the communities for years. Road, Drinking water, drainage, transport, proper sanitation were some of the facilities which communities received through their advocacy

supported by Vizhuthugal. Participating in the pan India movement for advocating with the central government to pass the Trafficking of Person Bill 2018 in the Rajya Sabha, more the 2000 post cards endorsed by the people sent to the Member of Parliament and to Prime Minister's office. Few major results of the advocacy initiatives of community with the technical assistance from Vizhuthugal are



b. Rescue and legal support to survivors

Vizhuthugal was the frontline warrior fighting for the freedom of vulnerable workers and families who were exploited physically, sexually and economically and enslaved into modern slavery. The number below indicates the cases filed and intervened by Vizhuthugal in 2018-19.



The employees who were denied their entitlements as per the labour acts i.e. EPF, ESI, salary, compensations were assisted through our legal experts to avail them. The inter-state migrant labours living in an exploitative situation were supported to break the vicious cycle of slavery and Vizhuthugal served as their contact point for any legal assistance. For improving the working conditions inside mills and help workers to voice their concerns and report abuses **5 Internal Compliance Committees (ICC) were formed in 5 mills.**

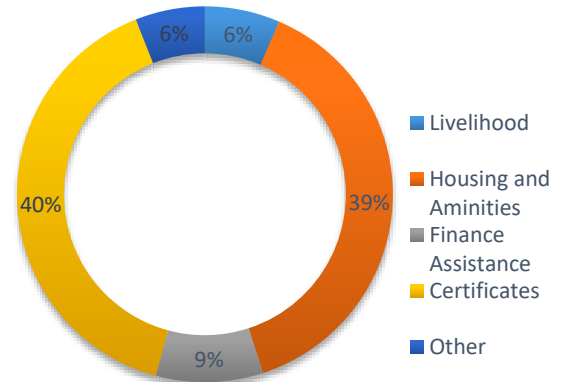
These ICCs were trained on their functions and oriented the workers about the existence of such forum in the mills to report any incidence of sexual harassment at work place. **15 workers groups formed in 15 mills** having representatives from the workers play a vital role in addressing the issues of workers in the mills.

Life skills trainings and health camps to the workers improved the physical and mental health and capacitated them to face day today real life challenges confidently.

c. Livelihood support and Social Protection schemes:

To sustain the freedom of the survivors they were provided livelihood support. The vulnerable families were linked to social security schemes under various departments of central and State governments. These supports ranged from getting an income certificate to availing bank loans to construction of house. Having a Community certificate makes a person eligible for availing reservation (sub-caste 3% reservation as well as SC Quota reservation of 15%) in educational institutions and government employment.

Survivors linked to Social Protection schemes and livelihood support



These assistance helped them to have a sustained livelihood, reduced the risk of taking loans from money lenders and made them eligible for availing other benefits under various government schemes.



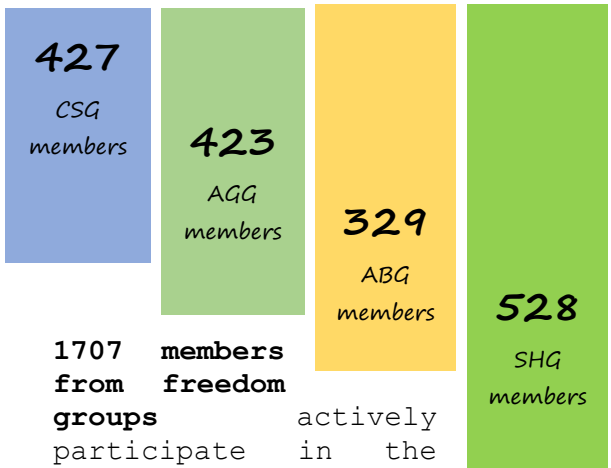
The survivors of slavery turned into entrepreneurs who established their own micro and small enterprise and lead a peaceful life with dignity.

d. Strengthening Community Freedom Groups



In Ranganathapuram village, based on CSG interventions and advocacy actions, officials removed the garbage and organized an alternate place to shift the dump yard. Now children and old age people and communities of 200 families enjoying the clean space and children.

Effective functioning of the community freedom groups-Community support groups, Adolescent boys and girls groups, self Help Groups, has resulted in mobilizing a community movement and improved the resilience of the affected communities to fight against slavery and other caste based discrimination.



1707 members from freedom groups actively participate in the process of identifying those issues that hold back the community and together they plan to resolve them through collective actions. They escalate the issues in the Grama Sabha meetings, Village level Child Protection Committees, interface meetings with the allied departments and to the District Collector.

The Adolescent children were the change agents in the community and lead the social change. Capacity building trainings conducted to these adolescents and exposure visits organized to provide them an opportunity to interact with the government service providers face to face have increased their confidence as well as paved the platform for the children to directly contact these service providers when needed.

Children Resource Centers (CRC) in 20 villages have been accessed by 552 children every day. CRCs served as a place for these children to study, learn life skills and develop their individual talents and exhibit them by participating in the events organized by CRC and at school and community level.

e. Community led social change communications

The community support groups in association with the children collectives and other stakeholders at the village/panchayat level organized awareness campaigns in their respective villages. The campaigns focused on women empowerment, prevention of child sexual abuse, child labour, child marriage, education of girl children, promoting clean and green environment and also educated the community on the right of workers through sensitization on labour laws. More than 20000 population reached out with these messages of through social change communication methods on important days.

3.1.2 Story of Success

Liberation from bonded labour

Balasubramanian, aged 39, living in the Dalit colony of Ponmedu village Sathiyamangalam Block, Erode District, Tamil Nadu, India was a victim of bonded labour. Through a broker he was paid INR. 30000/- as advance and along with his wife and children was employed in a power loom cum garments factory. They worked as bonded labours for more than 4 years. He and his wife had to work 15 hours daily. They were not allowed to go home. To prevent them from escaping, the owner installed electric fence. On 30th August 2014 his 6 years old child, Nanthini, was electrocuted while she was playing near the fence and died. Vizhuthugal, on receiving the information visited the spot immediately and rescued family.

"I filed a complaint in the Karumathampatti Police station on the same day, my child died but FIR was not filed. I protested 3 days, refused to receive my child's body after post-mortem, demanding the police to take appropriate action" said Balasubramaniyan, His prayer was never heard by the police. No action was taken by the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police when it was escalated to them.

Vizhuthugal, appealed to the National Human Rights Commission of India. The National Human Rights Commission took immediate action and on 11th January 2018 ordered the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu State to provide compensation of INR. 3 lakhs and also issued an order to the District Collector, Coimbatore to file the case under Bonded Labour Abolition Act 1976 and to issue the release certificate to the family under the provisions of the Act. **"We received the release certificate on 5th March 2018. The Tamil Nadu government has given us INR. 3 Lakhs compensation on 17th June 2019. It was a tough fight by Vizhuthugal for almost 5 years from the day they liberated my family from Bonded labour and standing by and supporting us to get justice and compensation",** says Balasubramaniyan with gratitude.

Balasubramanian who suffered a lot as bonded labour, now lives a free life with his relatives in his native village. He and his wife, Thulasi (35) are working in the same village. Their elder daughter Nathiya studying 11th standard and younger daughter is in 8th standard in a government school. Vizhuthugal continues to support this family for their economic development and both the children to continue their education, preventing the possibility of these survivors trapped again into slavery situation. **"Living as a bonded labour is like living in the hell. This practice of bonded labour should not be allowed any more. My appeal is that all who are enslaved under any pretext should be liberated. I wish my child Nanthini would have been with us today to witness our freedom",** say Balasubramani with tearing eyes.

Vizhuthugal works along with the Government and other CSOs for the liberation and rehabilitation of bonded labours, taking collective, concrete actions to help the victims of Bonded labours like Balasubramanian.



3.2 Awareness Creation and improvement of WASH-Infrastructure at Schools-Supported by Karl Kubel foundation for child and Family

The project aimed at Ensuring safe & secure water and over all hygienic sanitation (Toilets) for healthy envionment, nutrition and neighbourhood in Schools and Communities of Avinashi Block, Tiruppur District, Tamil Nadu in order to ensure child health and development.

- Change in people's behavior regarding sanitation and hygiene
- Improve awareness on importance of overall sanitation
- Promote programmes to improve sustainability of sanitation programmes

a. Global Handwashing day: The day was celebrated in 15 schools in Avinashi Block. Children were taught how to wash their hands with soap and why it was important also explained to them. The demo on techniques of hand washing with soap helped them to understand the issue and practice it every day.

“We are imparting whatever learned from this health and hygiene training to our parents and they are following it regularly”. Students from Panjalingam Palayam

Improved sanitation and practice of personal hygiene has improved the attendance of children in the school substantially. They were also aware about their health.

Global hand washing day was celebrated in the community too to make the aware of the importance of personal hygiene.

b. Construction of Toilets in School: Lack of proper sanitation provisions in the schools and poor maintenance of toilets also contributed to the dropout of girls from school. Children not using toilets for a long time exposed to various health hazards and may end up in hospitalization and discontinue the education. To improve the sanitation toilets were constructed in 2 schools with the support of education department. Permission sought from the district education



department after continuous follow up. Toilets were repaired and made functional in 4 schools.

c. Drinking water facility:

Potable and safe drinking water has become costly due to costs involved in RO purification system and traditional water purification system has been extinct. Everyone to have access to potable drinking water and to quench the parching throats of hundreds of rural and marginalized people drinking water facility was installed in 1 village and planned to expend the support to 5 schools.

d. Awareness generation on WASH:

The programmes used the interactive Game Based Training using Wash Action Tool kit The **"Musical Toilets"** have created a lot of interest among children and have learned how to use toilet and hygiene practices while using toilets. **"Germ Killing"** game has reminded cartoon-based characters among children and they have participated with abundant interest in killing germ using ball which has been portrayed as a soap to kill germs. This has created deep interest among children to know about the dirt and germs around us and how to fight it out and kill them with hygiene practices. **"Relay Race against Evil Practices"** game has enthused children as they play and learn through this play-way pedagogy. After the event all children spontaneously washed their hands with soap before taking their lunch thus they have internalized knowledge-based information, changed their attitude and transformed the practices.

Similar programmes were conducted in the community to promote improved sanitation practices in the community and

increases the usage of IHHLs at home. This enabled the parents to support the children as they try to practice handwashing and usage of toilets at home.

Women and adolescents in the community also sensitized on the MHM as part of programmes.



"This game-based methodology is innovative with insights on hygiene and sanitation-"musical toilet" is motivating me to play with caution", Gowthami, 9th standard is one among the 1500 students directly participated in the participatory learning activities on WASH. The programme was conducted in 15 schools. Motivated students have also educated their parents and friends about personal hygiene and improved sanitation practices.

Pappathi, 45 years old women from Pachampalaym Village who was a silent observer of the Musical Toilet activity, spontaneously, turned out to be a player in the game. She was one among the 500 community members who directly participated in the game based activities became aware of sanitation, hand washing practices.

It has considerably reduced the practice of open defecation and improved hand washing behavior among adult and children. These activities also motivated the community members to monitor the construction of IHHLs in their villages to ensure quality of construction as per the norms of the government and user friendly.

4. Sustaining the Freedom of Migrant Labours

Vizhuthugal has been working for the migrant labours especially migrants from other backward states of India. There are more than 4.5 lakh inter-state migrant workers in lakhs of spinning, garments and textiles units. They have been deprived of basic rights. Collective bargaining, dignified labour and improved working and living conditions have been denied to these labours as they are unskilled, vulnerable, not knowing the local language and cultural diversity. Vizhuthugal has started helping these migrant labours to address the issues they face during their stay and work in Tirupur advocating for their rights recognized and peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Lashman age-25 was a migrant worker working in the Fabrication Unit as a machine operator in Sidco, Tirupur for the last one year. He was a migrant worker from Tentla village, Mayunbha District of Odisha. He has two children. He used work excessive hours besides his 12 hours work in the unit. When he went to buy some provisions in the local market, a dispute erupted with a local guy and due to local language problem, Lashman was not able to communicate properly and responded in sign language. Due to some misunderstanding, he was attacked by 3 youth from the area he was beaten up mercilessly and was hospitalized. While the company has taken care of the medical expenses Vizhuthugal

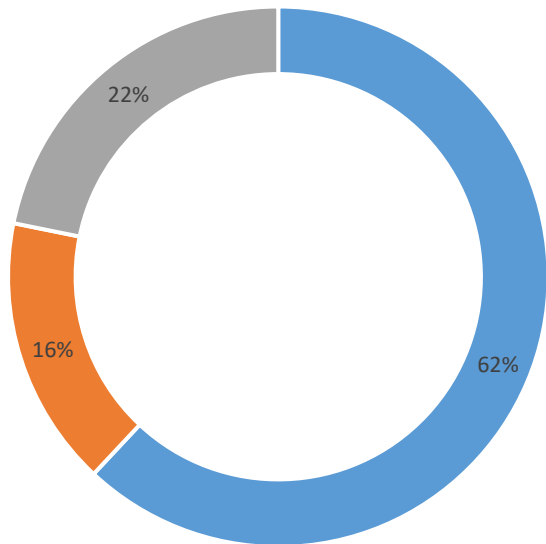
has provided other necessary assistance to the migrant victim such as food expenses and moral support. The protest by local migrant workers from North India and other States and Vizhuthugal's intervention in escalating the issue to the local police and District Authorities forced police to file the First Information Report and arrested one accused. Legal proceedings initiated against another 2 accused involved in the incident.

Addressing such issues demand an integrated approach to protect the migrant labours and to sustain their freedom. Vizhuthugal started working on the issue of migrant labours focusing on

1. Working with the policy makers and law enforcement authorities and the mill owner to implement the minimum standards in align with the existing Laws in India,
2. Promote legal literacy among workers, free legal services for accelerating the process of justice, rehabilitation and reintegration
3. Initiating employable skill development programme for migrants and psycho Social support through one stop crises centre
4. Working with the CSO partners at the source areas to prevent migration and conduct pre departure orientations to prevent them lured in to modern slavery

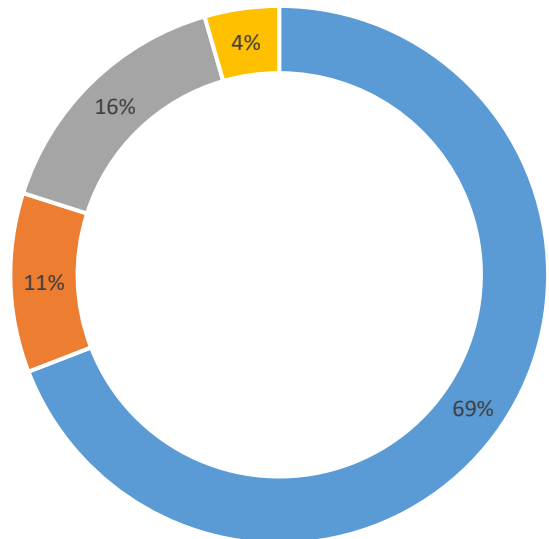
5. Finance:

Sources of income



■ The freedom fund ■ KKF C&F ■ Local contribution

Expenses



■ Programme ■ construction* ■ Administration ■ Others

* construction of toilets in schools under WASH programme

INR. **6223150**/- total annual income of Vizhuthugal in 2018-19



6. The road ahead.....

1. Prevent vulnerable individuals from entering high-risk work situations and ensure sustainable freedom and well-being of slavery survivors in highly affected communities in Erode, Thirupur and Coimbatore districts
2. Strengthen the practical resistance against violation of rights and freedom by workers in sites of high exploitation and improve workers' protections and freedom by engaging a range of spinning mill owners.
3. Strengthen and improve the quality of services provided to the children, adolescent and women by collective action by the community along with support of government
4. Identification of victims of trafficking amongst migrants working the textiles and Garment units in Thirupur district, Tamilnadu and to work with them to sustain their freedom through focused interventions at destination and source areas.
5. Establishing a One Stop Crises Centre to provide psycho social support, legal assistance to labours working, especially migrant labours, in the textile industry, construction and other unorganized sectors.
6. Promoting improved sanitation and hygiene/HWWS (WASH) practices among the community and school students and supporting for the effective implementation of Swachh Barth mission (SBM) in the target villages.



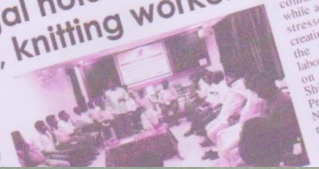
7. News Gallery.....

Awareness programme for adolescent women held

STAFF REPORTER ERODE
An awareness programme that educate women children to rights

Vizhuthugal holds awareness meet for textile, knitting workers in Tirupur

Tirupur, March 18: It is imperative about create awareness about the labour laws and the welfare measures by



Couple employed as bonded labourers rescued

STAFF REPORTER ERODE
A couple employed as bonded labour as a vehicle water serv

NGO helps dropouts to return to school

Colimathore: Thanks to the efforts of Vizhuthugal Organization, an NGO, over 200 school dropouts from the rural parts of the western districts are continuing education.



இந்தியாவில் குழந்தை கடத்தல் அதிகரிப்பு

விழாவில், துணை கமிஷனர்கள் தகவல்

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மீட்கப்பட்ட கொத்தடிமை தொழிலாளர் குடும்பத்திற்கு ரூ. 3 லட்சம் இலங்கை விழுதுகள் அமைப்பு சார்பில் விநியோகம் செய்து

திருப்பூர், மார்ச் 13: கொத்தடிமைகளை மீட்டி கொடுத்த விழுதுகள் அமைப்பின் சார்பில், ரூ. 3 லட்சம் இலங்கை விழுதுகள் அமைப்பு சார்பில் விநியோகம் செய்து

4 migrant manual scavengers asphyxiated

Through probe assured Corporation, one K Swakaran said - "The incident would be investigated. We would sense industrial sites to

பெண்களின் பாதுகாப்பு விழிப்புணர்வு கருத்தரங்கம்

கொடிபேட்டை நகரில், பெண்களின் பாதுகாப்பு விழிப்புணர்வு கருத்தரங்கம்

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Thank you

Our donors

The Freedom Fund, UK

Karl Kubel Foundation for Child and Family

All volunteers and Local contributors for their supports and contributions

To volunteer and to contribute

If you wish to participate in our initiatives in Ensuring safe & secure water and Overall hygienic sanitation (Toilets) for healthy environment in Schools your contributions are welcome

- ✚ Renovation/construction of school toilets with supply of water
- ✚ Water purifier to schools
- ✚ Installing incinerator at Girls school
- ✚ Volunteer as WASH educator in schools/community



Let your small contribution help 522 students accessing 20 Children Resource Centres learn the skills for their life.

- ✚ Books, Maps, Charts
- ✚ Indoor and out -door games materials
- ✚ Notebooks, Writing aids, geometric boxes
- ✚ Uniforms, Sports -wear (t-shirts, shoes)
- ✚ Constructing safe space for children to study and learn



Contact us...

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