



## International Aid and Dalit Development "A Case study of INGO Intervention in Tamil Nadu"

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### Abstract

*This paper is the case study presentation of the empirical study on International Aid and Dalit Development "A Case study of INGO Intervention in Tamil Nadu". International Aid plays crucial role in the development of poor countries. Especially the OECD commitment to the poor nation to contribute 7% of their GDP to the poor countries. It had impacted huge flow of aids in the economic development and infrastructure building of poor countries. India is one of the recipient country to receive aids through bilateral, multilateral and also from Northern NGOs. In India the NGOs received Aids and utilized for poverty reduction and human rights promotion among the poor and excluded communities (Dalits).*

*This study reviews the impact of INGO intervention through PMDS an NGO in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu. Fifty samples were selected from each village and family census method was used for data collection. It explains the programmatic intervention of this NGO and the Impact it created in the lives of Dalits. The area of intervention was economic development and Human right promotion.*

### Key words

International Aid; INGOS; NGO; Dalit; Discrimination; Economic Development; Human rights

### Introduction

International Aid is the voluntary resource that has been transferred to poor countries either as financial or as goods to address the issues pertaining to poverty and backwardness. International aid has been accepted as a legitimate source of support by the poor nations. Carol Lancaster defines foreign aid (International Aid) as "a voluntary transfer of public resources, from a government to another independent government, to an NGO, or to an international organization (such as the World Bank or the UN Development Program) with at least a 25 percent grant element, one goal of which is to better the human condition in the country receiving the aid." [3]. [1].

International Aid plays a crucial role in developing countries, especially in addressing the issues of poverty and human right Violations in addition to the infrastructure building of poor countries.. The developed OECD Countries have made a commitment to contribute 7% of their GDP for the global development. The promise was made in 1960 with the mission to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well being of people around the world.[2] (Better policies for better lives-The OECD at 50 and beyond page 8). Gradually the number of countries enrolled as OECD countries has increased and as on today India is also one of the OECD country.. However the aid assurance made by the rich countries has not been continued for various reasons. Over the years the Aid flow has been dwindling down, as a result the development initiatives of the poor countries have been affected mainly their engagement with the poor and needy. As one of the recipient country of Aid



from OECD and other donor countries, the International Aid flow to India also reduced.

In India the International Aid has been utilized to address the issues of poverty and promotion of human rights with the marginalized in particular for the Dalit communities. It has aimed to create impact in the lives of Dalit communities. With right based approach many civil society organizations also plunged into the development field and focused on promotion of human rights of women, children and the Dalits especially to reinstate the constitutional rights and the rights declared by the UN charter for which India has agreed upon.

They have lobbied for entitlements of citizens and also challenged the state wherever the state violated the rights of the people through its regressive policies. And most of these NGOs were also the recipients' of International Aid.

The support for the civil society engagement for the above said development work was mainly from the Aid organizations in the rich countries. According to Leo Bashyam, Christian Aid “*For the majority of international NGO donors, India continues to be a priority for long-term development programmes due to ample evidence that funds are being used wisely and*

In the light of the existence of discriminatory practices and prevalence of acute poverty among the Dalit communities, the INGOs adopted different approaches to development with the funding and policy influence of INGOs. The Charity – approach for fulfilling the basic needs, the Welfare approach focused on - Giving employment based skills and carrier guidance and the Right based groups- Organized the communities to fight for the Rights.

*productively. International developments NGOs are playing an increasingly prominent role in development thinking in India.. In short they are one of the important players in the field of development in India, in shaping the policies, strategies and programmes of NGOs in India.”.*  
[3] So the role of Inter National Aid Organizations become crucial for the development of Indian communities and it has become an integral part of development initiatives in the country.

Registered NGOs along with FCRA got legal entity to get international Aid. Each International Aid Organizations (INGOs) followed their own funding policies; the funding policies were based on the ranking on Human Development Index of the recipients' countries, major issues of the country, bilateral interest of the Aid distributing countries and also considering the UN standard charters on human rights promotion. The IAOs prioritized the funding in India was mainly for women, children HIV/Aids, Environment and so on, however they seldom followed exclusive policy for Dalits.

Dalits the last rung in the caste hierarchy were discriminated and intimidated for ages on a daily basis for reasons of not their own. Even after 68 years of independence, growing atrocities on Dalits are reported in all part of the country for the 23% of the population though equality is enshrined through constitutionally.

Rising intolerance of other caste groups towards the Dalits often lead to caste clashes. Dalit girls have been raped, molested and even



murdered in many a times. The progressing poverty among Dalits are linked to the caste based discrimination, which denies the equitable share of power and opportunity, the right to claim their share in land, common properties, and revenue of the state. This has been here for centuries with the caste oriented social, political and administrative structures.

The struggle of Baba Sahib Ambedkar and other reformists for Dalit liberation has created awareness about Dalit Rights and resistance among Dalits on atrocities and unjust practices. However, the state measures through constitutional provisions have not yielded the expected results.

Dalits has been discriminated and victimized by the oppressing communities like elsewhere in Tamil Nadu also. According to the 2011 census the Dalit population comprise of 19 percentage of the total population of the state. [4] Dalit communities has been excluded and discriminated for ages. The kind of discrimination faced by Dalits varies from the practice of untouchability to atrocities in various forms. The caste Hindus always had a clear agenda in alienating and discriminating the Dalits. The mindset of untouchability of the caste Hindus went to the extent of building an '*untouchability wall*' in Uttapuram village in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu. The discriminatory mindset of the caste Hindus and other oppressive communities continued even today despite the reformative efforts by prominent Dalit leaders like Rettamalai Srinivasan, Ayothi Dasan, self respect movement leader EVK. Periyar and even with the influence of Ambedkarism. The political mobilization in the post nineties often seen as

a threat to the communal forces and the oppressive communities adopted newer ways to exploit and discriminate Dalits.

### **Problem statement**

In order to address the issues of poverty and human right violations, India had huge resource inflow from the International Aid communities. Being a poor nation the NGOs, in the development scenario seldom made any distinction in the initial stages while addressing the issues of poverty. The absence of conscious effort to address the Dalit need has left out the Dalit issues of untouchability. This has also resulted in inadequate disbursement of resources for Dalit development. Moreover, while accepting the country tradition without political analysis of the existing social structure had also influenced aid distribution negatively on Dalits. The development scenario had difficulties to facilitate the resource flow based on the size of the Dalit population.

After the withdrawal of the funding, the experiences with the charity and welfare approach is that there is a vacuum between the people and the organization. The Community seldom had any control over the programmes and it has not really addressed the age old issues of poverty and casteism. Emergence of people's organizations and issue based networks are the outcome of the NGOs with right based approach.

The expected result of addressing the basic livelihood issues to reducing the poverty among the Dalits, promotion of human rights however with the approach and strategy adopted by these agencies have not yielded



the desired fruits. As the instances' of untouchability is common in the region.

## Objectives of the study

- To study the impact of intervention of INGOs in addressing the socio-economic development of Dalits in the given geo political belt.
- To Study the approaches and, strategies in reducing the human rights violation at the community level.
- Study the NGOs priority sectors in its intervention and the pattern of aid distribution.

The above said objectives were analyzed through the present socio economic indicators of the households and the level of transformation took place to understand the development and contribution of INGOs. The approaches and, strategies in reducing the human rights violation at the community level were also analysed.

## Methodology of the study

The study was done through using the family census method. Fifty households were selected randomly from each of the villages of Dutt nagar and Odayathur of Kallakurihi Taluk in Villupuram District. Interview schedule were administered for data collection and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also conducted in each of the village. This study is under taken in three organizations in the district of Villupuram. And here one case study is presented. Descriptive design was used to describe the data. The study was conducted in February 2013 in two of the

working villages of Peoples Multipurpose Development Society (PMDS)

The collected data were analyzed through descriptive method and census methods of tools were used to collect data.

## Analysis and Interpretation Intervention of PMD

A very few Dalits own land and assets,

Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu, the study area is one of the most backward district with 28.3% of the population belong to the SC/ST category. The Dalits in Villupuram district are also the victims of caste discriminations. Landlessness, unemployment, serving as bonded labours, migration, untouchability, lived in utter poverty and hunger, poor health and socio economic conditions, inadequate housing and illiteracy were also part of Dalit life in this district victims of epidemics along with atrocities , and all forms of discrimination atrocities.

Christian missionaries made their presence in these villages and also many household had ex-servicemen/ soldiers in Indian Army. The study villages was predominant with Christian faith ,which had given basic education for the majority .These villages were geographically situated on a highway and therefore, their access to greener pastures like Bangalore and Chennai.

At the initial years of PMD , *“Dalits were only longing to get good food and aspiring to be free from hunger and torture from the upper caste communities. The Dalits were forced to lead the life as bonded labors”*.said Mr.Arokiasamy, the president, of PMD.



During the mid seventies the educated youth with orientation from social and religious movements (AICUF) had plunged into development in Tamil Nadu. Most of these Dalit youth were the first generation literates. The Christian missionaries also supported Dalit cause. The Fire crisis in Odayathur village brought together the missionaries and the educated youth in this locality. The crisis and the socio political atmosphere were favorable to initiate the organization, PMDS and started the development work. PMD “wanted to create new social, economic and political path for the Dalits” [5]

They have made a list of untouchability practices, the exploitation of Dalit labor for low wages, sexual abuse on Dalit women, keeping them as bonded laborers, Discrimination within the church, Separate burial ground, no entry into their worship place and eateries, Discrimination as a Dalit teacher, Non acceptance of Dalits as leaders in the Panchayats, as cooks in schools, Lack of basic amenities like electricity, water etc are denied based on caste, They have faced discrimination and derogatory treatment by caste Hindus of all age groups.

In contrary to the realities of deteriorating and victimization of Dalits, India is projected a global player. So in this juncture International Aid plays a crucial role in restoring dignity and human right to Dalit communities..

Peoples Multipurpose Development Society (PMDS) is an NGO based in Villupuram, district, Tamil Nadu. It was initiated in the year 1972 to intervene for the holistic of Dalit through abolition of caste based

*discrimination by invoking various Laws that protect Dalit fulfillment of basic needs by demanding them as human rights, economic independence through agricultural development and social equality for all.*

The organization initially adopted welfare approach to development for building infrastructure and basic amenities. In dealing with the issues of discrimination they have followed human rights approach.

### Collectivization

Dalit communities were organized into sangams /associations based on the prevailing practical needs of the community. The issues such as water, street light, access to transportation, housing, health facilities, accessing government programmes made easier for the NGO to mobilize the Dalits. The first level of intervention was getting those entitlements for the community. This has gained people’s confidence for PMD. Self Help Groups (SHG) was formed and it has been linked with banks for loans.

### Community enhancement initiatives

PMDS while working with the communities identified the need for supporting them directly through different grants in order to enhance their capacity to survive and to fight back poverty and the issues of dignity.

The organization had educational support as one of the support areas and provided educational support for aspiring students as one time grant and for some students availed continues support throughout the education



etc. Among the total 100 respondents 39 of them said that they have received educational grant for their family members. And among them 93.8% of them admitted that they were the recipients of one time grant. And the rest got these support for one year to three years respectively. 80 percentage of the respondents availed up to Rs 25000 and 27 percentages of the respondents got educational support above Rs 25000.

PMD engaged in skill development trainings, for the Villagers. Among the total respondents 24 percentage of them were benefited from a onetime grant as support for skill training and 38 percent of the respondents reported that they got the

support for about an year and 21 percentage of them also said that the support for them lasted for one to three years. 9 respondents shared that they were the beneficiaries of the support which was for more than five years, which means PMDS supported 92 percentages of the respondents of the total respondents .

Likewise 85percentage of the respondents were the recipients' of housing programme while 88.9 percentage among them availed it as a onetime grant while 12 percentage of them received the support for one year and among them 93 percentage of the respondents received the amount above Rs 25,000/-.

**Table.1.Economic indicators**

Economic indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Increase In Self Earnings	13		6	20	61	100
	13.0%		6.0%	20.0%	61.0%	100.0%
Access To Productive Tools And Technical Know-How	15	17	19	44	5	100
	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	44.0%	5.0%	100.0%
Ownership Of Productive Assets (Land, Animals, Machinery)	4	6	12	36	42	100
	4.0%	6.0%	12.0%	36.0%	42.0%	100.0%
Micro Enterprises	22	24	38	8	8	100
	22.0%	24.0%	38.0%	8.0%	8.0%	100.0%
Productive Assets	69	6	1	11	13	100
	69.0%	6.0%	1.0%	11.0%	13.0%	100.0%
Marketing Linkages			13	33	54	100
			13.0%	33.0%	54.0%	100.0%
Increasing In Purchasing Power	10	8		35	47	100
	10.0%	8.0%		35.0%	47.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey Data

Sixty one percentages of the respondents admit that they strongly agree that their self earning has increased and 44 of them agreed saying that their access to productive tools and technical knowhow has improved. This table also indicates that 54% of the respondents got the experience for marketing linkages. And 47% of them said that their purchasing power has increased. It indicates the economic backup provided by INGOs to Dalit communities in PMD working area. However 69% of the respondents disagree that it has helped them to get productive assets such as land and other tools for agriculture.

**Table.2.Occupation before Intervention**

Occupation	Name of the Villages		Total
	Odyathur	Duth Nagar	
Farm Labourers	25	11	36
	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%
	50.0%	22.0%	36.0%
Marginal Farmers And Farm Labourers	10	15	25
	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	20.0%	30.0%	25.0%
Non Farm Labours/Migration	6	12	18
	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	12.0%	24.0%	18.0%
Cultivators	6	10	16
	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
	12.0%	20.0%	16.0%
Others	3	2	5
	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	6.0%	4.0%	5.0%
Total	50	50	100
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey Data

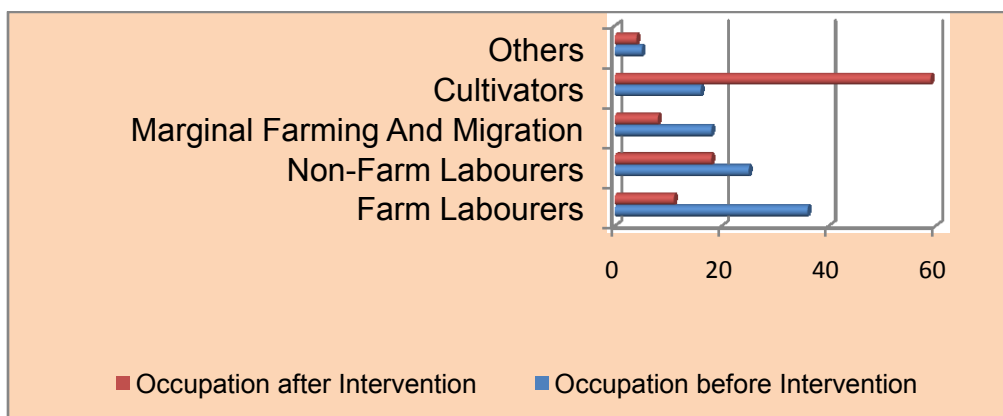
**Table.3.Occupation after Intervention**

Occupation	Name of the Villages		Total
	Odyathur	Duth Nagar	
Farm Labourers	11		11
	100.0%		100.0%
	22.0%		11.0%
Non-Farm Labourers	7	11	18
	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
	14.0%	22.0%	18.0%
Marginal Farming And Migration	2	6	8
	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
	4.0%	12.0%	8.0%
Cultivators	27	32	59
	45.8%	54.2%	100.0%
	54.0%	64.0%	59.0%
Others	3	1	4
	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	6.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Total	50	50	100
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey Data

The above two table shows the changes happened in the villages with regard to occupation from the total respondents who were working as farm labours before the intervention was 36% which was reduced to 11% after the intervention. The number of farm labors ad migrant workers is also reduced from 25% to 8 %. The number of cultivators has increased from 16 to 59 percentages.

**Chart-1.Occupation before and after intervention**



This graph also shows that the intervention of PMD has created value addition in employment opportunities from farm labors and migrant labors to cultivators .The agricultural inputs and the loan for deepening of well has helped the small and marginal farmers to take up agriculture as a main source of livelihood. This can be seen as a model for value

addition in economic self reliance projects for Dalits.

**Right to Redeem Dignity**

As part of Human Rights based approach Awareness building on the rights were carried out in the villages with the support of INGOs.



**Table.4.The Awareness level of the Respondents**

<b>Awareness-PURTICULARS</b>	Yes	No	Total
Have you heard of Human rights	88	12	100
	88.0%	12.0%	100.0%
Fundamental rights – entitlements	100	-	100
	100%	-	100.0%
Women rights	65	35	100
	65.0%	35.0%	100%
Livelihood Rights	100	-	100
	100.0%	-	100.0%
Child Rights	93	7	100
	93.0%	7.0%	100.0%
sex selective abortion	90	10	100
	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Female infanticide	87	13	100
	87.0%	13.0%	100.0%
ANTI-CHILD LABOUR ACT	91	9	100
	91.0%	9.0%	100.0%
Non Discrimination	100	-	100
	100.0%	-	100.0%
Freedom, Justice and Peace	84	16	100
	84.0%	16.0%	100.0%
Human rights-constitutional rights on Equality	12.7%	87.3%	100.0%
	100	-	100

Source: Survey Data

The above shown table indicates the level of awareness of the respondents with regard to the basic concepts of human rights. Above 80 percentage of them are aware familiar with the terms on Human rights.65 % of the respondents said that they are aware that women has rights. However 87 % of them are unaware of the constitutional rights on equality.

**Table.5.The level of knowledge of the Respondents**

<b>PARTICULARS</b>	yes	no	Total
<b>knowledge</b>			
SC/ST Act	85	15	100
	85.0%	15.0%	100.0%
Schemes and Programmes for SC/St	76	24	100
	76.0%	24.0%	100.0%
Reservation Policy	71	29	100
	71.0%	29.0%	100.0%
gender equality	46	54	100

	46.0%	54.0%	100.0%
DV ACT	36	64	100
	36.0%	64.0%	100.0%
ANTI-RAPE LAW	8	92	100
	8.0%	92.0%	100.0%
Prevention of sexual harassment	10	90	100
	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%
Dowry act	83	17	100
	83.0%	17.0%	100.0%
How To File An Fir	13	87	100
	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
POCSO ACT	10	90	100
	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey Data

Eighty five percentage of the respondents has knowledge about SC/ST Act, 76% of them has the knowledge about the Schemes and Programmes for SC/ST, 71 % of them has knowledge about the Reservation Policy. Above 60% of them has knowledge on Dowry Act.

However 64% of the respondents do not endorse gender equality and when it comes to women's right, the knowledge limits to Dowry Act. Majority of the respondents they lag behind the awareness on recent legislations like DVACT, Act on Prevention of sexual harassment at work place, POCSO ACT, Anti-Rape law 2013, and only 13% of the respondents are knowledgeable on how to file the First Information Report. Inputs on the legislations enacted in the year 2000 and above was not given by PMD, which means the respondents are unaware of important legal tools to ensure the rights.

However it was noticed that the interest in dealing with the issues of discrimination in the initial years of PMD intervention has

not sustained as we see the prevalence of many issues of untouchability such as separate residential areas, graveyards and worship places and also the control of village resource like ration shops are still situated in the caste Hindu locality. The participants said that still the caste Hindus do not accept inter caste marriage with Dalit boy or girl neither others accept the political leadership of Dalits. It was also shared that though there is not any clashes between the communities, they do not wish to maintain cordial relationships.

During the FGD the villagers shared few instances of restoring human rights. The training on 73rd amendment of PRA has prompted the youth of Dutt Nagar to lobby with state to declare Dutt Nagar as a Dalit Panchayats based on the population and it was the first Panchayats declared as Dalit Panchayats in India. Based on the knowledge on POA and also with the support of Dalit political movements the villagers filed cases against the oppressive castes and it has helped



to bring down the caste based violence almost too nil level in these villages.

The agricultural inputs and skill training had created employment opportunities and it has installed courage in them in challenging the oppressive structure and caste for better wages.

They have also challenged the issues of Disrespect of Dalit elders by others, right to Entry in common path, for Staking Dalit women in public. In another incident for some small issues between the youths of Dalits and the oppressor community, the oppressor community vandalized the houses and other assets, unlike the past they have reacted by mobilizing the community and media advocacy .

During the period of PMD intervention they have taken up a number of issues pertaining to discrimination. With regard to Atrocities they have responded that they were facing Denial of livelihood opportunities'. . The factors facilitated the entry of PMD was the socio political situation in the villages , the prevailing oppression was being questioned by the politically assertive Dalit movements and other NGOs. The presence of Christian missionaries and the educated youths from these communities, the neo rich dalits in the villages (ex –servicemen/soldiers and teachers)also stood favorable for social action initiatives against the oppressor.

### **The intervention of INGOs in PMD**

In pursuing their mission to restoring social justice and dignity to the oppressed 22 INGOs

supported PMD. The support was through programmatic intervention to build houses, sanitation, water and electricity facilities which were an issue of survival and dignity for Dalits. The initial contribution of the INGOs in building the basic infrastructure and meeting the practical needs was the most crucial input made in the lives of the poor Dalits.

The support for Educating the Dalit community ,along with the government initiatives on education has influenced the socio economic structure of the region. Educational support has been used as ladder for their economic improvement . through addressing the basic needs the community gained self esteem and dignity which got the courage to challenge the oppressor. In the operational villages of Dutt nagar and Odayatur, PMD has ventured into erecting drinking water pumps, sanitation etc which has prevented the Dalits from victimizing the ill treatment of caste Hindus.

During the study period it was observed that all most all the respondent has sent their wards for higher education. They are also aware of the opportunities' for Dalits through reservation.

The inputs for agriculture, skill development, IGP and SHG have contributed to the economic stability of Dalits. The economic inputs helped to an extent to arrest the total dependency of the Dalits on the oppressor communities for livelihood.



## Gaps/Recommendations

- Even today the below mentioned issues of untouchability still exist in these villages and they live in separate localities, has different grave yard and separate worship places etc like any other Dalit villages in the state, neither the organization nor the communities has challenged and continue to be the victims of untouchability .
- The INGO intervention has seldom offered any strategy such as networking, advocacy to confront the social evils at the local, national or global level despite their economic growth. The interaction with few of the INGOs revealed that their development understanding and the vision of the INGOs were limited to programmatic inputs rather political.
- Political mobilization of Dalits has not taken place as strategy in the intervention and therefore the vision of the INGO and PMD need to align with the vision of the community for political and social change.
- The absence of political orientation and Dalit driven policies has not sustained the political mobilization of Dalits for socio economic liberation .

## Conclusion

The economic growth and educational support for both the villages were contributed by the financial inputs of INGOs. The INGO were instrumental in providing a life with self esteem. However withdrawal of the INGOs, without creating political mobilization and networking left the larger community to be the practicers of untouchability. PMD and the INGOs need to reflect where they stand in achieving the *new social ,economic and political path for the Dalits*’.

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