



GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025



ICDS – Annual Report (2024–2025)

The ICDS Project continues to build a community rooted in inclusivity, equality, and mutual respect, working to eliminate bias and discrimination based on caste, gender, and religion. Its core aim is to empower communities to address and resolve conflicts peacefully at the grassroots level, guided by the foundational values of the Indian Constitution. This year, the project has engaged a wide range of stakeholders—including peace group members, interfaith champions, religious leaders, media professionals, frontline workers, and government officials—encouraging them to internalize sensitive social issues and respond with thoughtful, constitutionally aligned interventions.

Agents of Change:

- 1. Interfaith Peace Groups:** A total of 40 active groups—including children, youth, women, and members of the Village-Level Peace Committees (VLPCs)—have been instrumental in identifying and challenging harmful beliefs and practices within their communities.
- 2. Interfaith Champions:** 43 dedicated individuals have emerged as leaders, actively engaging with sensitive issues at both the village and block levels, promoting harmony and constitutional values.
- 3. Religious Leaders:** 23 religious leaders have united to form the “Amaithi Sangam,” an inter-religious forum that has played a dynamic role in organizing inclusive celebrations of various religious festivals (Pongal, Ifthar, Diwali and Christmas) and significant days (International Day of Peace, Women’s Day, and Human Rights Day) at both the village and district levels.
- 4. Interfaith Diwali Celebration:** The Interfaith Diwali Celebration held on October 27, 2024, in Karipatti village, Tamil Nadu, brought together religious leaders, women, and youth from diverse backgrounds to promote unity, peace, and solidarity. Organized by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and “Amaithi Sangamam,” the event highlighted shared values across faiths, empowered marginalized communities, and encouraged communal harmony through inclusive cultural activities and speeches. It served as a beacon of interfaith collaboration, breaking barriers and fostering a spirit of shared humanity.
- 5. Interfaith Christmas Celebration:** The 2024 Interfaith Christmas Celebration in Udhayapatty, Salem, united diverse religious leaders and community members to counter rising hatred and division through shared festivities, cultural performances, and acts of compassion. Organized amidst ongoing communal tensions, the event emphasized constitutional values like secularism, fraternity, and equality, encouraging unity and inclusive dialogue. By celebrating together and aiding the marginalized, the community reaffirmed its commitment to peace, harmony, and shared humanity.
- 6. Interfaith Pongal celebration:** The Interfaith Pongal celebration in Poovanur village marked a historic moment of unity, bringing together leaders across religions, castes, and communities to address rising interfaith, caste, and gender-based inequalities in

India. Organized by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and their partners, the event blended tradition with advocacy, promoting inclusivity, gratitude, and secularism through cultural activities and dialogue. It stood as a vibrant reflection of Tamil Nadu's spirit—celebrating diversity, fostering social harmony, and empowering communities toward equality and shared human dignity.

7. **Interfaith Iftar celebration:** The Interfaith Iftar celebration organized by Amaithi Sangamam in Salem on March 29, 2025, brought together religious leaders and communities to counter rising communal tensions with unity and compassion. Through shared rituals, cultural performances, and messages of peace, the event embodied India's secular spirit and affirmed that harmony is an active, collective choice. It stood as a powerful testament to solidarity, empathy, and hope in divisive times.
8. **International Day of Peace Celebration:** On September 21, 2024, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and Amaithi Sangamam organized a large-scale celebration in Salem for the International Day of Peace, featuring a 350-person peace rally, interfaith dialogue, cultural performances, and educational initiatives. Religious leaders, students, and NGOs united to promote harmony, emphasizing that peace begins with individual action and constitutional values. The event fostered deep reflection on coexistence and the urgent need for peace education in today's polarized society.
9. **Students from Schools and Colleges (953 students):** Young people are increasingly becoming vocal advocates of constitutional principles. Their perspectives are regularly assessed through questionnaires to help refine their understanding and commitment to values such as secularism, equality, and fraternity.
10. **Village Youth and VLPC Members:** These emerging leaders are now spearheading community-level initiatives, modelling personal transformation and driving broader social change through their proactive engagement.

Success Story

Over the past three years, the Good Shepherd Sisters and their Partners-in-Mission, through the ICDS Project, have been fostering harmony in A. N. Mangalam village by addressing caste, religious, and gender divides. Among their efforts, the Thirumurugan Men's Group has become a catalyst for change, with members like Mr. Sakthi exemplifying personal transformation. Once harbouring religious biases, Sakthi's participation in group training inspired him to embrace secularism and fraternity, as outlined in the Indian Constitution. His interfaith outreach—celebrating Diwali with a Muslim neighbour and later being welcomed during Ramadan—has helped model unity and mutual respect within the village. Now an advocate for social harmony, Sakthi spreads these values, demonstrating how individual change can ripple through an entire community. This initiative highlights the power of education, dialogue, and inclusive action in building a more cohesive society.



Empowering Vulnerable Children in Salem District

Annual Report (July–December 2024)

Overview

From July to December 2024, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and their Partners-in-Mission made significant strides in safeguarding and uplifting vulnerable children across 20 villages in Ayothiyapattinam Block, Salem District. This period marked tangible progress in child protection, education, leadership, and community engagement.

Key Achievements

- *Children's Parliaments* were formed in all 20 villages, involving 588 children (444 girls). These young leaders submitted 15 petitions, leading to the installation of CCTV cameras, new school toilets, and improved infrastructure like roads and bus stops.
- *Adolescent Empowerment*: 811 adolescents received life skills, leadership, and career training through structured bi-monthly sessions.
- *Education & Protection*:
 - 7 school dropouts were reintegrated.
 - 3 child marriages were prevented through community and authority intervention.
 - 5 Supplementary Education Centres were launched to support academic growth.
- *Community Engagement*:
 - Village-Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs) were revitalized to safeguard child rights.
 - Monthly parents' meetings encouraged education and child welfare.

Major Events

- *World Day Against Trafficking (July 30)*: Awareness drives on human trafficking.
- *Independence Day (Aug 15)*: Cultural events celebrating children's voices.
- *Children's Day (Nov 14)*: District rallies spotlighting children's rights.
- *Human Rights Day (Dec 10)*: Orange Day campaigns to end violence against women and children.

Looking Ahead (2025)

Expand child protection networks, Strengthen adolescent leadership initiatives, and Advocate for policy reforms for sustainable impact

Success Story

“A New Path to Success: Master Prathap's Journey Back to Education”

Name: Prathap / Father's Name: Moorthi / Native Place: Pallipatti / Region: Aythiyapattinam / District: Salem

Master Prathap, a young boy from Pallipatti in Salem district, had to discontinue his education due to personal and financial hardships. Known for his mechanical aptitude, he lacked the direction to pursue his interests until Mr. Robert, a dedicated social worker, intervened. Recognizing Prathap's potential, Mr. Robert counseled him and his family on the value of vocational education and facilitated his enrollment at a local Industrial Training Institute (ITI). With continued mentorship and support, Prathap thrived in the ITI, becoming one of the top students in his trade and regaining the support and pride of his family.

Together, we are building a future where every child thrives.





Socio-Economic Empowerment of Tribal and Dalit Women in India

Annual Report 2024–2025

Introduction: Advancing Economic Justice

In 2024–2025, the Economic Justice Project remained steadfast in its commitment to uplift marginalized Tribal and Dalit communities in India, particularly focusing on women's socio-economic empowerment. The year saw the successful engagement of 250 women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), 200 men through Men Support Groups (MSGs), and 104 adolescent girls through targeted programs. By fostering entrepreneurship, nurturing male allies, and developing young leaders, the project created a vibrant ecosystem of inclusive growth and social equity.

Community Mobilization: Strengthening Grassroots Participation

A key achievement this year was the formation of strong grassroots groups. The project established 12 SHGs with 188 women and 12 MSGs engaging an equal number of men. Seven adolescent girl groups were formed, benefitting 104 girls, while eight Children's Parliaments, involving 184 participants, provided platforms for civic learning and expression. These efforts laid the foundation for collaborative community development driven by collective action.

Economic Empowerment: Building Sustainable Livelihoods

The project emphasized skill-building and entrepreneurship. Exposure visits to AMS Poultry Farm inspired 15 women and 4 men, with 9 women successfully launching poultry enterprises. Training in mushroom cultivation, conducted in partnership with Indian Bank, equipped 25 women with new income-generating skills. Additionally, 90 participants were trained in market linkage and value addition, resulting in the creation of 26 women-led business networks. Crucially, 97 women received guidance on accessing government schemes such as those offered by TAHDCO, ensuring greater economic inclusion.

Civic Engagement: Promoting Rights and Participation

On March 8, 2025, International Women's Day was celebrated with 188 participants, promoting awareness of women's rights, emergency support mechanisms, and gender equality. Sixty women received training on Panchayati Raj, empowering them to engage actively in Gram Sabha processes. The project also strengthened its advocacy through partnerships with 33 media and NGO stakeholders who pledged ongoing support.

Protecting Children and Empowering Youth

Child protection was a critical component, with 16 safeguarding sessions reaching 341 children—170 boys and 171 girls. These sessions covered topics such as abuse prevention, early marriage, and personal safety. Children's Parliament activities engaged 161 young participants in mock elections and community initiatives, while 60 youth leaders were trained

to advocate for education and health reforms. These youth engaged in meaningful dialogue with panchayat leaders, driving tangible improvements in their communities.

Men as Allies: Redefining Gender Roles

Recognizing the importance of inclusive change, the project actively engaged 60 men in gender sensitization workshops. These sessions fostered a shift in attitudes, with men committing to support women's education, entrepreneurship, and domestic responsibilities. Their pledge to offer emotional, logistical, and economic support marked a vital step toward shared responsibility in community transformation.

Empowering Adolescent Girls: Building Confidence and Resilience

Adolescent girls participated in dynamic training sessions that addressed hygiene, emotional well-being, digital safety, and managing peer pressure. These sessions equipped them with life skills, encouraged responsible digital behaviour, and promoted a strong sense of self-worth and autonomy.

Impact Overview: A Year of Transformation

- Over 500 individuals directly impacted across women, men, youth, and children
- 9 women-led poultry enterprises launched
- 26 women-established business networks created
- Significant increase in male participation in women's empowerment
- Youth-led advocacy resulting in community improvements
- Enhanced access to government schemes and stronger media/NGO collaboration

Conclusion: Pathways Forward

The Economic Justice Project has successfully nurtured a network of empowered women, engaged men, and motivated youth leaders. Looking ahead, the project will focus on scaling entrepreneurship initiatives, expanding access to entitlements, deepening youth leadership programs, and reinforcing partnerships with local institutions. Through sustained collective effort, the journey toward economic justice and inclusive development continues.



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ANNUAL REPORT from April '24 to March'25

Empowering Women and Children Through Skills and Solidarity

Introduction

For over 25 years, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have been a steadfast presence among the marginalized communities of Ayodhiyapattinam Block in Salem District, Tamil Nadu. Guided by the principles of compassion, justice, and dignity, the Sisters have focused their efforts on empowering women and children through skill development and education.

In alignment with Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—Gender Equality—a tailoring training programme was implemented in selected villages, aiming to uplift women and girls from the most disadvantaged communities. This initiative seeks not only to equip them with vocational skills but also to foster self-reliance and resilience in the face of systemic inequality.

Major Activities and Achievements

1. Observation of Significant Days

To promote awareness and advocacy around education, gender equality, and human rights, the following important days were observed with community participation and engagement:

- International Day of the Girl Child – 11 October 2024
- National and International Children's Day – 19 November 2024
- Orange Day & Human Rights Day – 10 December 2024
- International Women's Day – 8 March 2025

These observances served as platforms to engage communities in dialogue, celebrate achievements, and highlight the continuing challenges faced by women and children.

2. Staff Capacity Building

Recognizing the importance of a well-informed and capable team, several training sessions were conducted to strengthen staff competencies in:

- Children's Parliament and Project Management
- Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures specific to the Good Shepherd framework

These trainings ensured that staff members remain equipped to uphold child safety standards and deliver high-impact community programs.

3. Tailoring Training Centres

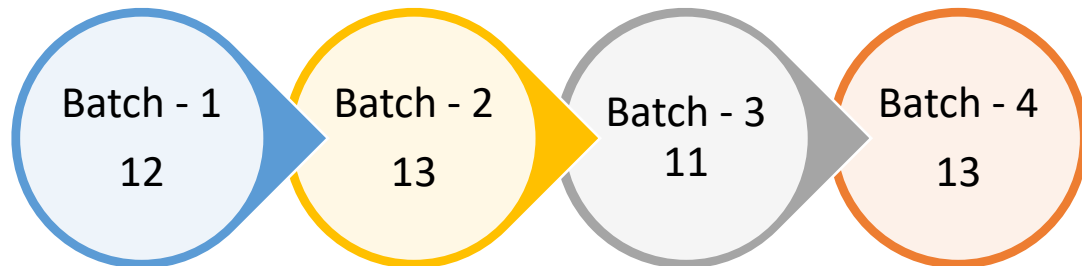
A major milestone was the successful relocation of the Tailoring Training Centre from Pallipatti to Poovanur village. This was made possible through active collaboration with Panchayat leaders and government officials, who provided public space for the initiative.

The program trained 49 women from the village panchayats of Valasaiyur, Pallipatti, Thailanur, Poovanur, and Achakutapatty, through:

- Two batches in Pallipatti
- Two batches in Poovanur

Each participant acquired essential tailoring skills, enabling them to pursue home-based businesses or employment in local garment units. This transition has created sustainable income-generating opportunities and fostered a spirit of entrepreneurship.

Batch-wise No. of Young Women Benefited from Tailoring Training



Conclusion

Now in the 25th year, this program continues to be a beacon of hope and transformation for the communities it serves. Women who once faced economic vulnerability and social exclusion are now stepping into roles of leadership and financial independence. Many have reintegrated into formal education or started their own ventures.

The impact of the programme extends beyond economic empowerment—it acts as a protective shield against abuse, exploitation, and marginalization. Empowered women are raising their voices, challenging norms, and becoming agents of change in their families and communities. This intervention stands as a testament to the power of solidarity, education, and skill development in unlocking the potential of those who have long been silenced.



Good Shepherd Sisters – Prison Ministry, Salem

Annual Report April 2024 to March 2025

“Hope Behind Bars”

A Year of Compassion in Motion

Rooted in the compassionate spirit of St. Mary Euphrasia, the Prison Ministry at Good Shepherd Convent continued its quiet yet profound mission in 2025. Focused on the women’s ward at Salem Sub-Jail, this ministry is a noble expression of voluntary service — carried out by Sisters who give their time, presence, and hearts to women behind bars. Each Thursday, a Good Shepherd Sister entered the prison not as a figure of authority, but as a companion bearing hope, prayer, and the power of human connection. Through counselling, scripture reading, and compassionate listening, the ministry brought emotional relief, spiritual growth, and a reminder that every person is worthy of dignity and redemption. It remains a deeply humane and sacred calling — a light in one of society’s most forgotten places.

“I go not to preach, but to listen; not to fix, but to understand. These women carry stories that need safe spaces.” – Sr. Arockiamary

Moments That Mattered

➤ **Christmas Celebration – December 22, 2024**

A time of deep spiritual significance, the Christmas celebration brought warmth and joy. Presided over by Superintendent of Police Mrs. Geetha, the energetic celebration was filled with music, games, and activities. The traditional sharing of cake was more than festive — it was symbolic of shared humanity. Through skits and scripture readings, the message of forgiveness and new beginnings was brought alive.

➤ **International Women’s Day – March 6, 2025**

Celebrated within the prison walls, this day became a space of reflection and recognition. Women inmates were honoured for their resilience and given a platform to express themselves through activities, songs, poetry, and testimony. The theme, “Every Woman, a Phoenix,” echoed through every corner of the jail. Sisters shared words of encouragement, reminding inmates of their dignity and inner strength.

➤ **Quarterly Review Meetings**

Every three months, the Sisters, Fathers, lay collaborators, and the Bishop of the Salem Diocese come together to reflect, review, and rejuvenate the efforts of the Prison Ministry. These quarterly gatherings serve as a meaningful time of discernment — to celebrate what has worked well, identify areas for growth, and envision new, compassionate approaches to promote hope and healing among the women behind bars. Through shared wisdom and a united spirit, they strive to deepen the impact of this ministry and continue offering pathways of dignity and transformation to the inmates.

Every Thursday: A Ritual of Presence

The most consistent and powerful ministry happened not on stages, but in the silent, small group sessions every Thursday. Here, Sr. Arockiamary met the women where they were — emotionally, spiritually, and mentally.

- Personal counselling for emotional healing
- Prayer and meditation circles
- Group sharing to rebuild trust and sisterhood
- Quiet moments of laughter and tears
- A reminder that they are still daughters, mothers, sisters — and beloved

Looking Ahead: Grace in Action

In 2026, the Prison Ministry envisions:

- Introducing art and journaling therapy for expression
- Celebrating Mother's Day and Diwali to expand inclusivity
- Hosting forgiveness circles to heal relationships within the prison

With unwavering commitment, the Good Shepherd Sisters continue to be a bridge — between despair and dignity, punishment and possibility, confinement and compassion.

**"There is no lock on the human spirit that love cannot open."
Let 2026 be another year of unlocking hearts behind bars.**





Let Us Learn Skilfully Draw Good Out
of What Would Otherwise Cause Us Harm

St. Mary Euphrasia