



# “CHILDREN MOVEMENT FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE” (CMCJ)



## WHO ARE WE

Children from marginalized farming families of Virudunagar District (approx 10million population) in Tamilnadu State between the age group of 12 to 18 united with our commitment to protecting the only earth we have to make it a livable one for every human being and concerned about protecting the same.

We started small 200 members facilitated by Resource Centre for participatory Development studies and Society for People's Education and Economic Change (both local NGOs) and motivated by Kinder Not Hilfe, Germany. Currently we have about 7000 plus members in the Movement.

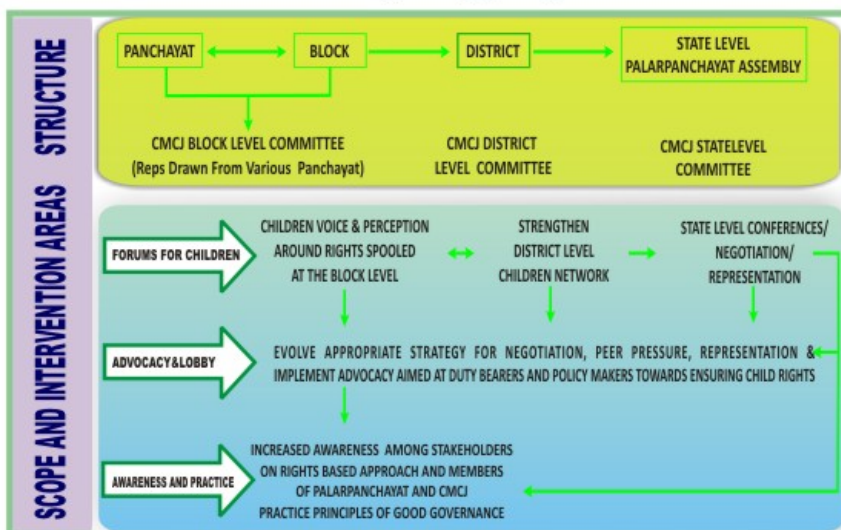
This concern was operationalised through series of debates, discussions among our peers at the community level, school centers, child clubs and Palar panchayats (children parliament) and evolved as structured association called “Children movement for Climate Justice” during one of the convention held at Tiruchuli during 2008.

Since then we gradually evolved various strategies to address the issue of climate justice by bring out simple child friendly write ups, lobby, advocacy, direct interventions, children actions, direct eco friendly learning experiments and strengthening the membership base by new awareness and enrolment camps.

**‘Children Movement for Climate Justice - CMCJ’** stems out of the Rights Based Approach practiced by the “Palar Panchayat” under the wider support of Child Focused Community Development (CFCD) intervention by Society for People's Education and Economic Change, (SPEECH) Madurai. CMCJ aims to create more equitable and just use of Natural Resources to reassure that Universal Child Right encompass the Ecological rights for children and climate justice has to be rendered by all stakeholders. Since this has emerged from the Palar Panchayat, which is a democratic good governance platform for children the movement reiterate the need for social political, economic and legal systems to enable the realization of children's' rights. CMCJ started in the year 2008 in four blocks of Virudunagar District (using the existing Palar Panchayats as their hub), envisage to cover eventually the whole Tamilnadu as a Movement of children themselves.

Children rights violations eventually end up in the vicious cycle of indifferent attitude of the adult towards mainstreaming child rights as corridor to welfare nation. Palar Panchayat program seek to build adequate awareness among the adolescent children aimed at strengthening good governance as well facilitate an enabling environment to children to

enjoy their participatory rights in practice by way of experiential learning. The strategies and approaches used in the process are pictured as follows.



## Expected Coverage

- Two third children population in Tamilnadu will join hands in CMCJ to make an impact on the environment and food security by 2015
- 50000 children will be directly involved in Palar Panchayats with 50% representations from the vulnerable sections.



CMCJ has evolved from the roots of Palar Panchayat (children Parliament) since 2003 by SPEECH, a pioneering development NGO in Child Rights Protection in Tamilnadu. The key strength of CMCJ is its firm footing in Rights Based Approach and links to mainstream panchayat system. Major activities of CMCJ include peer pressure, creating self learning experimental opportunity, negotiations, demonstrations and advocacy. These processes promote a great deal of confidence, understanding of child rights and social inclusion of the marginalised children, especially girls and differently abled ones.

It is envisioned that Palar Panchayats will scale up in each of the mainstream Panchayats of Tamilnadu, while CMCJ as a broad based Movement, will focus specifically on ecological rights, food security and demand platform for climate justice. Thus at the end of 2015 it is hoped to have a strong State level democratic children Assembly, represented by all the legislative constituency. Equal representation on gender with explicit representation for the vulnerable will be flagged as non-negotiable. These representatives will be called Member of Child Rights Protection Assembly - MCRPA. This forum will meet once a year before the regular State Assembly to make it easier for children's voice to be heard at the policy debate and formulation processes.



### THE NEED

Ever since we heard of the climate change and its scientific base, there is a grave fear that haunts our minds about our future. We do understand that our ground water reserves are depleting, draught animals which our families once used for agriculture are being wiped off, traditional food crop varieties and medicinal plants are vanishing. We are sure this trend, if continued, will create a clear vacuum of our future. Hence we, members of Children Movement for Climate justice- CMCJ, strongly feel that **WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO SAVE OUR ONLY PLANET EARTH** by mustering our strength and respond to the situation in an organized manner. We realize that we should not wait for others to do something about this; instead each one of us should immediately act to address the issue. The decision we make today, for sure, will have significant impact on our future lives, lest we feel that we will experience the consequences. Unfortunately there is not much space created for children to express themselves and are often unable to access services that they rightfully own. Hence this intervention is inevitable and need of the hour with children and all levels of the local, State and Central government structures for effective delivery of child rights, build capacity at all levels and thereby create a strong demand process to meet their obligations.

### GOAL

By 2015 enable Children to emerge as strong gatekeepers of child rights protection and are able to claim their basic rights from within the system (stakeholders at all levels) and fulfil their obligation as eligible citizens of the Nation through good governance processes.

To establish a workable model led by children to ensure food security and make the earth livable through formation of Palar Panchayat and scaling up the effort of Children movement for Climate Justice for children from other states to follow.

### RESULTS

- Children's perceptions form part of the refinement process of the policy decisions to ensure the vulnerable and socially marginalised children are given priority with appropriate budget provisions.
- Child rights violations including ecological degradation at the State level identified on a regular basis and successfully addressed through Palar panchayats and their respective committees on Climate Justice.
- Increasing Peer Pressure from grassroots and from children's camp on stakeholder concerned for effective addressing of child abuse and forms various forms child rights violations for a wider debate.
- Children relate beyond National boundaries, strengthening their networks for appropriate learning, wider debate, lobby and advocacy.



"We want to explain issues concerning our lives. Everyone says that we, children from all segments across the globe, have ecological rights and there are official sanctions for the same. Unfortunately we keep witnessing and experiencing adverse micro/macro environment and ecology which impose effects, beyond our comprehension, on us as well on our families. We earnestly trust that the adults will listen to our plea from 'Ecological Child Rights' perspective and assure us a better and healthy livable earth".

*Joan (14 years) addressing the press at the National Public hearing in New Delhi, Nov. 2009*