



### BIO - INFORMATION

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2. Date and Place of Birth : 21.05.1967  
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3. Office Address : **Vaan Muhil Trust**  
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5. Areas of Specialization : Human Rights Education, Constitutional Rights,  
Child Rights, Dalit Rights, Minority Rights, Labour  
Rights and Human Trafficking
6. Profession : Advocate by profession but activist by choice
7. Working Experience : Development Sector for more than 30 years  
Presently working with Vaan Muhil Trust, an NGO  
based in Southern Tamil Nadu
8. **Present Positions:**
  - a) Executive Director, **Vaan Muhil Trust**, a non-governmental organization based in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu since June 2003.
  - b) Chief Organizer, **Constitutional Rights Education Program (CRE)** in Schools and Communities in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Odisha since January 2021.
  - c) One of the Founding Members of **Tamil Nadu Alliance (TNA)**, Coalition of five Networks and over 100 grassroots organizations working for the rights of young women workers in Textile sector in Tamil Nadu
  - d) State Convenor, **Working People's Coalition - Tamil Nadu (WPC)**, a

collective of federations, networks, activists, grassroots organizations and individuals working among unorganized workers that engages in advocacy efforts on social protection issues of informal sector in Tamil Nadu.

- e) Member of **India Working Group (IWG)**, a national level network involved in meaningful engagement with policy makers on Human Trafficking issues in 11 states in India since 2016.
- f) State Convenor, **Campaign Against Camp Coolie System (CACCS)**, a collective of 24 civil society groups taking up labour rights issues in Textile sector in Tamil Nadu since August 2012.
- g) Organizing Secretary, **Joint Action Committee against Custodial Torture (JACCT)**, a collective of 45 socio – political movements to take up custodial torture issues and establishing international human rights standards in custodial institutions since May 2020.
- h) State Committee Member, **Human Rights Defenders Federation (HRDF)** – Tamil Nadu since 2019.

#### 9. Academic and Professional qualifications:

| Name of the Institution                                              | Degrees                                                                                              | Grade                     | Years         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Sacred Heart College,<br>Poonamallee, Chennai                        | Bachelor's Degree in<br><b>Philosophy</b>                                                            | Distinction               | 1986-89       |
| University of Madras, Chennai<br>(through Distance Education)        | Bachelor's Degree in<br><b>English Literature</b>                                                    | First Class               | 1986 - 89     |
| Government Law College,<br>Trichy                                    | Bachelor's Degree in<br><b>Law</b>                                                                   | Second<br>Class           | 1992 - 95     |
| Annamalai University,<br>Chidambaram (through<br>Distance Education) | Master's Degree in<br><b>Labour Law and<br/>Industrial Relations</b>                                 | First Class               | 1996 - 98     |
| National Law School of India<br>University , Bangalore               | Post Graduate Diploma<br>in <b>Human Rights Law</b>                                                  | First Class               | 1999 - 2000   |
| Faculty of Law, the University<br>of New South Wales, Australia      | Diplomacy <b>Training<br/>Program<br/>(International Human<br/>Rights Law and UN<br/>Mechanisms)</b> | Successfully<br>Completed | January, 2000 |

|                                                                        |                                                 |             |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Madurai Kamaraj University,<br>Madurai<br>(through Distance Education) | Master's Degree in<br><b>English Literature</b> | First Class | 2002 - 2004 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|

#### 10. Experiences in Human Rights interventions, training and campaigning

- Organized sessions on **Constitutional Rights, Child Rights, Dalit Rights, Women Rights, International Human Rights Law, National Human Rights Institutions** and the **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989** for human rights activists, NGOs, women groups, dalit rights activists, law students and school and college teachers in 1997-2002, as part of ten member resource team for Human Rights Education, organized by **Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE)**, Madurai, Tamil Nadu.
- As member of the **Resource team for the Campaign on Custodial Justice and Prevention of Torture** (2002-2003), organized eight district level seminars on custodial Justice and Torture in Southern Tamil Nadu and, as part of the **State-level Campaign Committee Against Torture**, initiated by **Amnesty International**, took lead role and actively participated in state level seminars, workshops and consultations in Tamil Nadu during 2002 – 2006.
- Part of the Organizing committee for the one day State level conference on **Application of Human Rights Law** for advocates and law students in Tirunelveli on 18 October 2003, jointly organized by Vaan Muhil Trust and All India Lawyers Union, wherein 200 advocates and law students participated.
- Organizing Secretary for the two day state level conference on **“Reservation in Private Sector”** in Tirunelveli on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> October 2004, jointly organized by Social Watch and Vaan Muhil Trust, in which 10 political party leaders, 8 well known academicians and 5 leading human rights activists took part (first of its kind in Tamil Nadu nearly 500 people took part in the conference).
- Organized a two-day workshop on the **Impact of Globalization on the Marginalized Communities: Challenges and Alternatives**, jointly organized by Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Social Development and Vaan Muhil Trust, in Tirunelveli on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2003.
- As convenor for **Tsunami Resource Centre for Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi District**, organized district level workshops and consultations on livelihood rights of coastal communities, issues of fisher women, community based disaster preparedness and environmental protection in 2006-2009 in southern Tamil Nadu, with the support of UNDP.

- Part of organizing committee that screened Tamil film on **Doctor Ambedkar** in Tirunelveli on 08<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011, organized by **Tamirabharani Panpattu Arangam**, involving 18 socio – cultural movements and 10 dalit activists. (Nearly 10,000 people witnessed the film on Ambedkar).
- Part of the organizing Committee that organized a **State level Public Hearing on the menace of Usury** in Tirunelveli on 10 December 2017, in which 60 cases were taken up for hearing.

#### **11. On Labour Rights, Bonded Labour, Modern slavery and Human Trafficking:**

- Conducted a one day state level **conference against Sumangali Scheme: Contemporary Form of Bonded Labour in Textile and Spinning Mills**, organized by Vaan Muhil Trust in Madurai on 28.05.2010 (wherein state level leaders addressed and nearly 600 young women mill workers from 10 southern district attended)
- Organized a state level seminar on **Overseas Migration : Issues and Challenges in Tirunelveli** on 10.10.2010, in collaboration with the **Department of Sociology, Manonmanium Sundaranar University**, Tirunelveli
- As part of the State level Campaign Against Sumangali Scheme, organized a one day state level conference for young women survivors and Textile Workers on 04.08.2012 at Tirunelveli, which was inaugurated by High Court Judge Mr. D. Hari Paranthaman (wherein 1200 women workers participated).
- Under the banner of **Campaign Against Camp Coolie System (CACCS)**, of which Vaan Muhil Trust is the nodal agency, **public demonstration** was organized in Madurai on 31.07.2013 to highlight Labour rights issues of textile women workers and to demand the State Government to take appropriate action on labour exploitation in spinning mills in Tamil Nadu.
- Was invited by **Catholic Women Groups (KFB)** in Austria to take part in the month long **Lenten Campaign** in March 2014, and to speak about the labour rights issues of young women workers in Tamil Nadu Textile sector and addressed gatherings in different forums in Vienna, Salzburg, Linz, Graz, Innsbruck and St. Polten during the Campaign.
- As part of **India Working Group (IWG)**, working on issues of slavery, human trafficking and labour exploitation, have taken active part in **six national level consultations** on strategies to exert pressure on MPs to bring a domestic Law on the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection, and Rehabilitation) Bill, in

Kolkotta between 2016-2018, organized by Change Mantra, a Kolkotta based advocacy group.

- Participated in the one day **Round Table Conference on Human Trafficking** on 03.08.2017, in New Delhi organized by **Swaniti Initiative**, Delhi
- Part of the organizing Team that compiled cases for the **state level Public Hearing** on protection of young women workers in textile and garment industries in Tamil Nadu organized by the **Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women** in Chennai on 23.10.2018.
- Involved in Two month long **Post card campaign** in November – December 2018, as part of CACCS on the need for a **comprehensive legislation to prevent human trafficking** in India and mobilized over 50000 signatures from community members in 100 working village in 10 districts involving 15 NGOs working in this sector.
- Organized district level Seminars and consultations on the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2018, as part of Campaign Against Camp coolie system, in collaboration with **the District Legal Services Authorities** in 2018-2019 in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Virdhu Nagar, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Karur, Trichy, Tirupur, Dindigul and Pudhukottai.
- Taken part in the Designing of Curriculum for Youth Leadership Training Program on 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019, in New Delhi, jointly organized by the **Freedom Fund and PRAXIS**.
- Taken Part in the one day national level workshop on strategies for combating human trafficking on 05.03.2019, in New Delhi, jointly organized by the **Human Trafficking Legal Centre Washington D.C and Free the Slaves**
- Actively participated in the three day workshop with journalists on the issues of bonded labour, **Modern slavery and Human Trafficking**, held on 20-22 June 2019, at Chennai, organized by the Freedom Fund
- Participated in the one day National level consultation with Parliamentarians on the **Strategies to Combat Human Trafficking** in India, Jointly organized by Swaniti and India Working Group, on 23.11.2019 in Constitutional Club, New Delhi wherein 22 MPs from 8 political parties (from 7 states) took part.
- Taken part in the two day national level consultation **on Victim Compensation for Victims of Human Trafficking**, organized by Sanjog on 17-18 January 2019, in Kolkatta and shared the experiences from Tamil Nadu.

## 12. Compilations and Publications

- Co - authored a book **on Social Analysis in Tamil** (First print in 1994, Second print in 1996)
- Editor of **Manitha Urimai KANGANI** for four years (a human rights bulletin, published by People's Watch (1997-2001)
- Published a **guidebook for social activists and dalit movements on SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules**, in April 2002 (Reprint 2004)
- Compiled eight **Human Rights Intervention Series** in Tamil on specific rights issues and **reading materials for training programs** on human rights for college and school teachers, college students, young lawyers, dalit activists, NGO leaders and district level police officers in 2001 - 2009
- Written articles in Tamil on **International and National Human Rights Mechanisms** and their effective functioning and one of them appeared in a leading **Tamil Daily, Dinamani on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1998**, the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Written an article in Tamil on the **Prevention of Terrorism Bill in Tamil daily, Dinamani** on 27th July, 2000
- Translated into Tamil the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**, the 10<sup>th</sup> - 14th Periodic Reports of the Indian Government in 1996 and **the Alternate Report by South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre along with the Observations and Concluding Remarks of the International CERD committee**, published by People's Watch - **Tamil Nadu in 1997**. (First print in May 1997, reprint in July 2001)
- Translated into Tamil the Report on **Attacks Against Religious Minorities** in India brought out by **Human Rights Watch - New York and a Critique of Justice Wadhwa Commission** on the gruesome murder of Rev. Graham Steins, published by **South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre**, New Delhi in January 2000.
- Part of the editorial team to design modules for **Constitutional Rights Education** for children in schools in Tamil and in English, an initiative of Vaan Muhil Trust supported by MISEREOR, Germany (June 2021).

- Published two modules titled, **We the People of India**, textbooks for children on Constitutional Rights Education in Tamil and in English.

### 13. Studies and Study Reports:

- Part of the study team that involved in the **National level research on Public Report on Health** in 2006, in collaboration with the **Council for Social Development**, New Delhi, supported by IDRC (International Development Research Centre, Canada).
- Undertaken a detailed study on **the implementation of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and Rules 1995** in six atrocity prone southern districts in Tamil Nadu with 386 registered cases under the Act between 1996 to 2001 and brought out the 400 page report in 2007.
- Translated into Tamil a 250 page study report **on violations against Adivasis in Tamil Nadu** (a book titled **Adivasis Speak Out**, published by Books for Change, Bangalore) – Published in Tamil by VRDP, Salem in 2008.
- Translated into Tamil a 150 page Training Manual on **Community Based Disaster Preparedness** for NGOs and activists, a UNDP publication in 2009, which was used by UNDP in all training programs for NGOs in Tamil Nadu.
- Undertaken a study on the **impact of Sumangali Scheme on Adolescent Girls** with 1632 samples in 120 village panchayats in four districts of Southern Tamil Nadu, in 2010, supported by KFB Austria.
- Undertaken a detailed study on **the Health Status of Adolescent Girls working in spinning mills**, with 250 samples in four blocks in Tirunelveli district in 2014, supported Every Child.
- Translated the Supreme Court Judgment on the Rehabilitation for Manual Scavengers by a three members bench in the Supreme Court headed by Justice Sathasivam on 24 February 2014 and an article on the Scavengers and Clean India Campaign in May 2015
- Written three articles on **National Education Policy 2019** in Tamil, highlighting how the Policy is against the interests of the poor and the marginalized children and against the social fabric of India and Pluralist Character.

#### 14. Participation in International Seminars, Trainings and Conferences

| Country                                     | Purpose/ Thematic focus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Month & Year      |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Brazil</b>                               | Participated in Inter-Continental Youth Exchange program, organized by <b>International Movement for Agricultural Rural Catholic Youth (MIJARC)</b> and represented Tamil Nadu Catholic Youth Movement                                                                                                | October 1992      |
| <b>Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands</b> | Visited Catholic Youth Groups as part of the world coordination committee meetings and represented Asian Catholic Youth Movements                                                                                                                                                                     | October 1993      |
| <b>Mali &amp; Senegal W. Africa</b>         | Took Part in International Cultural Exchange Program, organized by <b>International Catholic Youth Movement (MIJARC)</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | October 1994      |
| <b>Australia</b>                            | Participated in <b>Diplomacy Training program</b> in Darwin, organized by <b>Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales</b>                                                                                                                                                                        | Jan-February 2000 |
| <b>Philippines</b>                          | Part of the International Solidarity Team on ten days visit to the affected Mindanao Region, organized by <b>Initiatives for International Dialogue, Davao city, Mindanao.</b>                                                                                                                        | May 2000          |
| <b>Belgium</b>                              | Attended a week long <b>International seminar on Agricultural Trade and Civil Society in a Globalized World</b> , organized by MIJARC and visited a few youth groups and alternative forums.                                                                                                          | July 2002         |
| <b>USA</b>                                  | Participated in the three week long <b>International Visitors Leadership Program on Human Rights Policy, Law and Administration</b> , organized by <b>the Department of State, USA</b> and visited number of civil society groups in Washinton D.C, Chicago, Ohio, Birmingham, Phoenix and Los Angels | April – May 2005  |
| <b>Italy</b>                                | Taken part in the <b>International Conference against Death Penalty</b> , Organized by Communitia di Sant Egidio in Rome supported by E.D (Made a presentation on the legal provisions on Death Perally in India)                                                                                     | December 2009     |
| <b>Sri Lanka</b>                            | Undertaken a <b>two week long field visit to war torn area in Jaffna and Vanni region</b> after the Civil war and brought out a report in Tamil on the post war situation in Sri Lanka                                                                                                                | July 2011         |
| <b>Austria</b>                              | Participated in a month long <b>Lenten Campaign on the rights of young</b> women workers in Textile sector, organized by Catholic Women groups in Austria (visited six provinces and made presentations to communities and youth groups).                                                             | March 2014        |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Ireland</b>  | Part of the three member Evaluation Team to evaluate <b>Women Empowerment Projects</b> in India, supported by Misesan Cara and to present the findings of the evaluation before the Board of Misesan Cara in Dublin           | January 2017   |
| <b>UK</b>       | Participated in <b>NGO Alliance Forum 8.7</b> on 12-14 September 2017, in London, organized by the Freedom Fund and ILO to bring together leaders of CSOs working to end forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. | September 2017 |
| <b>Sweden</b>   | Actively participated in the four days international conference of Human Rights Defenders from 10-14 April 2018, in Stockholm, Sweden, organized by Civil Rights Defenders.                                                   | April 2018     |
| <b>Thailand</b> | Participated in the <b>Freedom from Slavery Forum</b> , on 2-5 December 2018, in Bangkok organized by <b>Free the Slaves</b> , USA, Global March Against Child Labour, Walk Free Initiative and the Freedom Fund              | December 2018  |
| <b>Malaysia</b> | Taken part in the <b>Second Global Summit of Tamil Entrepreneurs and Professionals</b> held on 3-5 May 2019 at Kuala Lumpur                                                                                                   | May 2019       |
| <b>US</b>       | Participated in the week long <b>UN General Assembly Week Programs</b> from 22 <sup>nd</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2019, in New York City organized by the Freedom Fund                                               | September 2019 |
| <b>France</b>   | Participated in the <b>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Forum</b> on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector in Paris, France between 10 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2020         | February 2020  |