

# Migrant Voice

01 July 2024




## Rescue Operation

## Saves Migrant Workers from Exploitative Brick Kiln

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**EMPOWERING DISPLACED  
YOUTH AMID CRISIS  
CHENNAI**



**"BREAKING  
THE CYCLE:  
EMPOWERING  
MIGRANT CHILDREN**



**BRIDGING  
THEORY AND  
PRACTICE**



**EMPOWERING THE  
UNSEEN WORKFORCE  
WORKSHOP**



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# EMPOWERING DISPLACED YOUTH AMID CRISIS

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION INITIATIVE IN CHENNAI

In the wake of recent violence and unrest, displaced migrant children have found a beacon of hope through this initiative offers affected youth a transformative opportunity

to rebuild their lives and secure a brighter future.

Amidst these efforts, Don Bosco Vazhikatti has played a pivotal role in nurturing and developing the skills of these young individuals during the summer months in Chennai. Supported by compassionate individuals and organizations, including St. Ann's Provincial who generously accommodated five girls and the Holy Cross Sisters who supported two girls, the program provid-

ed a nurturing environment throughout.

A total of 14 students had the opportunity to participate in this skill development initiative, marking a significant step towards their personal and professional growth. Beyond imparting technical skills, the program has fostered resilience and optimism among participants, equipping them to overcome adversity and contribute positively to society.

Against the backdrop of crisis, initiatives like these underscore the importance of investing in education and skill development as pathways to empowerment and

sustainable peace. By providing displaced youth with access to quality education and training, communities are not only rebuilding lives but also cultivating a future generation of leaders and change-makers.

As DBMS navigates its challenges, the success of this initiative stands as a testament to the transformative power of education and community support in fostering resilience and hope amidst adversity.

# "BREAKING THE CYCLE: EMPOWERING MIGRANT CHILDREN IN GUMDIPOONDI SIPCOT AND MANALI"



In the bustling industrial hub of Gumdipoondi Sipcot, thousands of migrant workers and their families reside in the Pudupettai village. These workers hail from states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand, with the majority coming from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Accompanying them are their children, who face significant educational challenges.

## **GUMDIPOONDI SIPCOT**

### **The Plight of Migrant Children**

The Pudupettai village is home to approximately 300 migrant children. Despite their numbers, an alarming 95% of these children are not attending school. Instead, they spend their days wandering, playing, or even working, deprived of the education that could transform their futures. This lack of educational access is exacerbated by the limited awareness among parents about the importance of education.

## **MANALI**

### **The Plight of Migrant Children**

The situation in Manali mirrors that of Gumdipoondi Sipcot. Here too, migrant families struggle with ensuring their children's education. Recognizing this urgent need, we have initiated a new evening study center in Manali to address these educational gaps.

## **INTERVENTION AND SOLUTIONS**

### **Evening Study Centers:**

To combat the educational neglect faced by these children, evening study centers have been established in both Gumdipoondi Sipcot and Manali. These

centers provide a safe and structured environment for children to engage in learning activities, receive homework assistance, and develop a routine that emphasizes the value of education.

### **Awareness Programs for Parents:**

We are also focusing on educating parents about the critical importance of their children's education. Through community meetings, workshops, and informational sessions, parents are learning how education can significantly improve their children's future prospects and break the cycle of poverty.

## Collaborative Efforts:

Our efforts in these regions are supported by partnerships with local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and volunteer groups. This collaborative approach ensures a comprehensive support system for the migrant children and their families.

## IMPACT AND FUTURE PLANS

### Empowering the Next Generation:

The establishment of evening study centers has already begun to make a positive impact. Children who previously had no access to education are now learning to read, write, and develop essential skills. Parents are becoming more engaged and supportive of their children's educational journeys.

### Expansion and Sustainability:

Our future plans include expanding these educational initiatives to reach more migrant children in other affected areas. We aim to ensure the sustainability of these programs through continuous community involvement and securing long-term funding.



"Breaking the Cycle: Empowering Migrant Children in Gumdipoondi Sipcot and Manali" stands as a testament to our commitment to transforming lives through education, one child at a time.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by migrant children in Gumdipoondi Sipcot and Manali are significant, but through dedicated efforts and community collaboration, we are making strides towards providing these children with the education they deserve. By breaking the cycle of educational neglect, we are empowering the next generation to build a brighter future.

## RESCUE OPERATION SAVES MIGRANT WORKERS FROM EXPLOITATIVE BRICK KILN



In a significant operation today, authorities rescued 14 migrant workers and 3 children from a brick kiln chamber in Mettupalayam, Thiruvallur, where they were being illegally held and forced to work despite the end of the season. The rescue was prompted by reports of exploitative conditions and unlawful confinement by the chamber's owner.

Mettupalayam, a bustling town known for its brick kilns, witnessed a distressing situation unfold as migrant workers from neighboring states found themselves trapped in exploitative labor practices. These workers, seeking employment during the active

season, were lured into working at the kiln under promises of fair wages and living conditions. However, as the season concluded, their situation turned dire when the owner of the brick kiln refused to release them and continued to demand labor.

The District Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare (DBMS) team, alerted to the situation through local advocacy groups, swiftly responded. The team, comprising officials experienced in handling labor rights violations, coordinated with law enforcement to intervene at the site. Upon arrival, they found the workers and their families cramped in small living quarters adjacent to the kiln, under constant

pressure to continue working.

"The conditions were appalling," remarked Mr. Rajesh Kumar, a DBMS official leading the operation. "The workers were living in makeshift accommodations without adequate sanitation or proper facilities. It was clear they were being exploited beyond legal limits."

The chamber's owner, confronted by the DBMS team, initially denied any wrongdoing but eventually relented under pressure from both officials and community advocates present at the scene. Discussions ensued to ensure the safe release of the workers and their children, who had been enduring harsh conditions for weeks.

"We negotiated with the owner to provide immediate travel allowances and ensure the workers could return to their home states with dignity," Mr. Kumar added. "It was crucial to address both the immediate needs of the workers and to prevent such exploitation from recurring in the future."

The rescued workers, visibly relieved yet fatigued from their ordeal, expressed gratitude for their release. Many recounted stories of how they were promised good wages and decent living conditions but found themselves trapped in debt and servitude instead.

"I came here hoping to earn for my family back home," said Ramu, one of the rescued workers from Bihar. "Instead, we were forced to work without pay, and when we demanded to leave, they threatened us. We had no choice but to endure until help arrived."

The DBMS team, along with local NGOs specializing in migrant rights, provided immediate support to the rescued families, ensuring they had access to basic necessities and medical care. Legal proceedings against the kiln owner are underway, with charges likely to include labor exploitation and illegal confinement.

"The rescue operation highlights the vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers, who often migrate in search of livelihoods but end up in exploitative situations," observed Ms. Priya Devi, an advocate for migrant



rights present during the operation. "It's crucial for authorities to remain vigilant and responsive to ensure such abuses are promptly addressed."

As the rescued families prepare to return to their homes, the focus now shifts to preventing similar incidents in the future. Advocates stress the need for stricter enforcement of labor laws and increased awareness among migrant communities about their rights and legal protections.

"This rescue is a wake-up call," Ms. Devi emphasized. "We must empower migrant workers with knowledge and support to prevent them from falling prey to unscrupulous employers who exploit their vulnerabilities."

The DBMS team plans to conduct follow-up visits to monitor the well-being of the rescued workers and to ensure they receive any additional support needed to rebuild their lives. The incident serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing challenges in protecting vulnerable populations from exploitation and abuse in the labor market.

In conclusion, while today's rescue operation provided much-needed relief to the migrant workers in Mettupalayam, it also underscores the ongoing need for vigilance and proactive measures to safeguard labor rights and prevent exploitation in India's brick kiln industry.

# BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE TRANSFORMATIVE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES WITH DON BOSCO MIGRANT SERVICES

**T**he Don Bosco Migrant Services (DBMS) continues to provide invaluable exposure programs and internship opportunities to students pursuing social work and related fields. These programs offer hands-on experience and in-depth understanding of the lifestyle and challenges faced by migrant workers. This report highlights the experiences and learnings of three students—Mr. John Paul Barjo, Mr. Bijas, and Mr. John—who participated in field visits and active ministry work through **DBMS**.

## INTERNSHIP AND FIELD VISIT BY MR. JOHN PAUL BARJO

Mr. John Paul Barjo, a second-semester MSW student from Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, approached DBMS for an internship. Recognizing the opportunity for practical learning, DBMS organized visits to various working areas, including Old Mahabalipuram Road (OMR) and Sriperumbudur.

During his internship, Mr. Barjo was guided by DBMS staff to observe and understand the lifestyle and working schedules of migrant workers. The field visits pro-



vided him with firsthand experience of the daily struggles and resilience of these workers. He gained insights into their living conditions, work environments, and the socio-economic challenges they face. This immersive experience was instrumental in enhancing his understanding of migrant issues, which is crucial for his future endeavors in social work.

## FIELD VISITS BY MR. BIJAS AND MR. JOHN

In June, Mr. Bijas and Mr. John, third-semester students from Don Bosco College, Dharmapuri, participated in field visits organized by DBMS. Their itinerary included key locations such as OMR, Manali, and Sriperumbudur. The purpose of these visits was to expose them to





the realities of migrant service and the struggles faced by unorganized workers.

Through their visits, Mr. Bijas and Mr. John gained comprehensive knowledge about the various aspects of migrant services. They observed the daily lives of migrant workers, including their housing conditions, work routines, and interactions with local communities. They also learned about the significant challenges these workers face, such as job insecurity, lack of social security, and limited access to government schemes.

Additionally, the students were educated on the schemes available from gov-

ernment departments aimed at supporting migrant workers and unorganized labor. This knowledge is crucial for social work professionals, as it equips them with the necessary information to guide and assist marginalized communities effectively.

### **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND MINISTRY WORK**

The exposure program emphasized not only observation but also active participation in ministry work. The students engaged in various activities, including community outreach, awareness campaigns, and support services for migrant workers. By

taking an active part in these initiatives, they developed a deeper empathy and commitment to the cause of social justice and migrant welfare.

Their involvement in the ministry work allowed them to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, enhancing their practical skills and problem-solving abilities. It also provided them with a platform to interact with diverse groups, including migrants, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations, thereby broadening their professional network and understanding of collaborative efforts in social work.

## **CONCLUSION**

The exposure program and internship experiences provided by DBMS have proven to be highly beneficial for the participating students. Mr. John Paul Barjo, Mr. Bijas, and Mr. John have all gained valuable insights into the lives and struggles of migrant workers, along with practical knowledge of the services and schemes available to support them. These experiences have not only enriched their academic learning but also strengthened their resolve to contribute positively to the welfare of marginalized communities. DBMS remains committed to offering such impactful programs, fostering the next generation of social workers dedicated to making a difference in society.

# SPCSA ANIMATION



*This review meeting highlighted the continuous efforts of DBMS to empower migrant communities. Through strategic planning, collaboration, and dedicated service, DBMS aims to create sustainable solutions that address the core challenges faced by migrants and ensure their well-being and development.*

*The review meeting commenced with Fr. Simolin, Director of Don Bosco Migrant Service (DBMS), providing an overview of the program's progress from December 2023 to June 2024. He highlighted the key areas of focus, including Kavarpetai Brick Kilns, Manali, Sriperumbudur, and OMR, addressing issues faced by both seasonal and settled migrants. The discussion covered a range of challenges such as labor violations, poverty, and lack of education.*

**26 JUNE, 2024**  
**DEEPAGAM HALL, CITADEL**

## **PRESENTATION BY FR. BOSCO (SPCSA)**

Fr. Bosco presented his findings on the Rag Pickers Project survey, focusing on the conditions of rag pickers, Chengalpet garment workers, and OMR domestic workers. He emphasized the importance of health and safety measures and discussed the performance framework ratio to be evaluated before and after the work. Volunteer Medical Camp

## **PRESENTATION BY FR. BOSCO (SPCSA)**

Fr. Joe discussed the contributions of DB Vazhikaatti in

supporting education and employment. He highlighted how the organization helps 1,000 students annually with their education and secures placements for nearly 800 students through career guidance, career insight programs, and WhatsApp channels.

## **EXPERTISE FROM DR. JOHN AROKIARAJ**

Dr. John Arokiaraj provided insights into effective fieldwork, focusing on perfect data analysis techniques, problem-solving capabilities, and contextual research. He emphasized the importance of integration, networking, and linkage with government officials to achieve fruitful outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

The session concluded with a review meeting led by the DBMS Director, where monthly plans were assigned to all staff members. The meeting reinforced the commitment to addressing migrant issues through coordinated efforts and innovative solutions.



## FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND EMPOWERMENT FOR INTER-STATE MIGRANTS

**D**on Bosco Migrant Services stands at the forefront of empowering inter-state migrants, earning accolades and appreciation from stakeholders within the field. This initiative is not merely a service but a profound commitment to humanity, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts over individual endeavors. Collaboration is crucial in achieving greater impact, as echoed by the sentiment that joint ventures yield superior outcomes compared to solitary efforts. By fostering networks and partnerships, Don Bosco Migrant Services exemplifies a unified approach towards addressing the needs of vulnerable migrant populations.

The recent support from the INM Province of Chennai, which has allocated six brothers from the theologate for the current academic year to participate in this ministry, underscores a deepening commitment to this humanitarian cause. This strategic involvement not only enhances the ministry's capacity but also signifies the province's dedication to serving society at large.

"We believe in the power of collective action," remarks a spokesperson for Don Bosco Migrant Services. "Our collaboration with various stakeholders enables us to provide comprehensive support to migrants, ranging from skill development initiatives to educational opportunities."

The proactive role of the provincial and his team in providing support and guidance has been instrumental in advancing this mission. Their leadership ensures that Don Bosco Migrant Service continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of migrants, fostering empowerment and resilience amidst challenges.

As Don Bosco Migrant Services expands its reach and impact, it remains steadfast in its commitment to advocating for the rights and dignity of inter-state migrants. Through ongoing collaboration and shared responsibility, the initiative strives to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

**RESCUE AND REHABILITATION OF  
EXPLOITED MIGRANT WORKERS IN CHENNAI**

In June 2024, a distressing case of exploitation and mistreatment of migrant workers from Manipur came to light in Chennai. These seven boys were lured under false pretenses by a contractor promising employment at an automobile manufacturing company, inclusive of accommodation and meals. However, upon arrival, their ordeal began as they were coerced into paying exorbitant deductions from their meager wages, leading to dire living conditions and health issues.

**SITUATION ANALYSIS**

Upon their arrival in Chennai, each boy was forced to pay ₹11,000 upfront to the contractor. From this amount, deductions totaling ₹2,750 were made for purported expenses such as food, water, and hygiene products, leaving the workers with only ₹7,500. The harsh working conditions exacerbated by the intense heat led to several workers falling ill with skin diseases, necessitating them to take leave from work.

**CRITICAL INCIDENT**

On June 21, 2024, two of the boys took necessary medical leave, prompting the contractor to evict them from their shared accommodation. Stripped of even basic utensils and gas provided by the contractor, the boys were left homeless and desperate.

**INTERVENTION AND RESOLUTION**

On June 21, 2024, two of the boys took necessary medical leave, prompting the contractor to evict them from their





shared accommodation. Stripped of even basic utensils and gas provided by the contractor, the boys were left homeless and desperate.

Given the urgency of their situation, alternative arrangements were made with the owner of Restaurant Zaiton,

who generously offered free accommodation, meals, and a take-home salary of ₹15,000 per month for each worker. Strict instructions were imparted to the boys to avoid unauthorized work and adhere to legal employment channels.

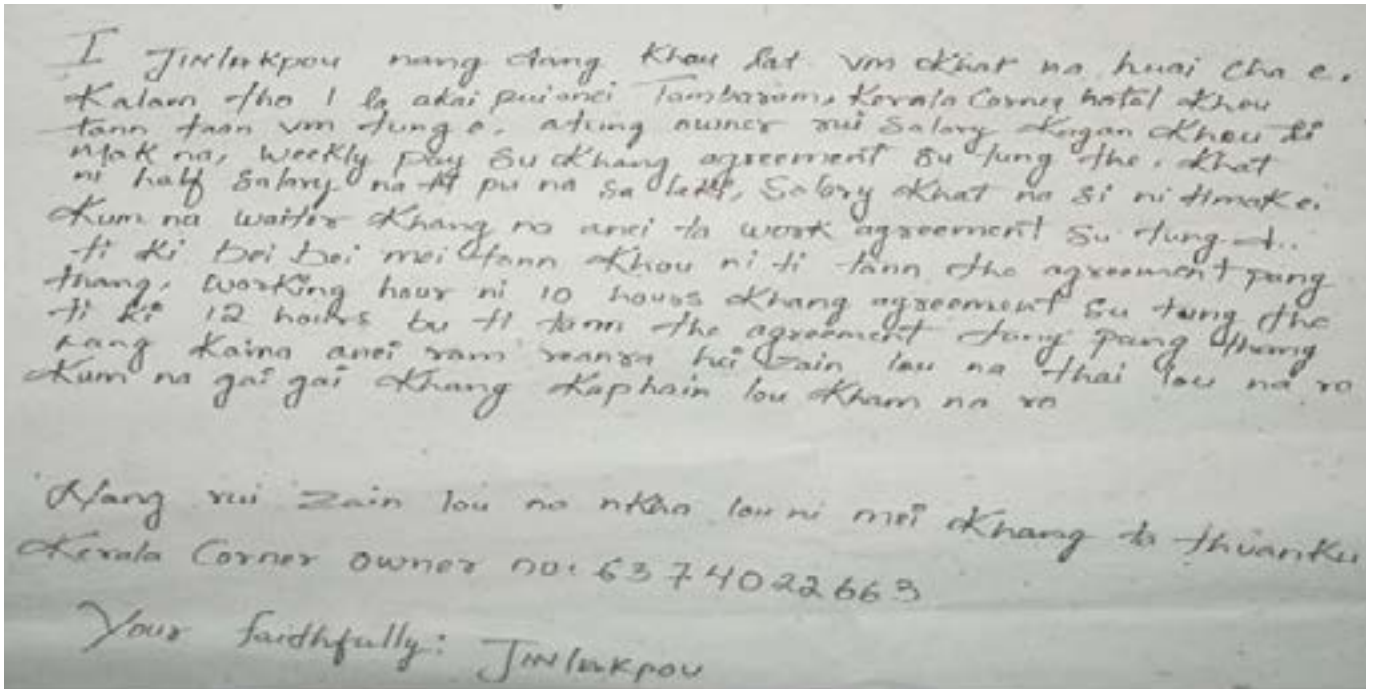


**Free accommodation, meals, and a take-home salary of ₹15,000 per month for each worker.**

## CONCLUSION

The successful resolution of this case highlights the vulnerability of migrant workers to exploitation and the critical role of swift intervention and community support. Documentation including Aadhaar cards, meeting minutes with the contractor, receipts for dinners provided, the company's address, and a complaint letter from the workers' parents substantiate the events and actions taken.

Moving forward, continuous vigilance and proactive measures are essential to safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrant workers in Chennai and beyond. This incident serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of ethical recruitment practices and robust legal protections for all workers.



## RESOLVING LABOR DISPUTE AND ENSURING JUSTICE FOR MR. JINLAKPOU & MRS. SALIE

In response to a distress letter received from Mr. Jinlakpou and Mrs. Salie, a husband and wife brought from Nagaland to work at Kerela Corner Hotel in Tambaram, Chennai, urgent intervention was initiated. The couple had been promised weekly wages but were consistently denied payment for three weeks when they demanded their rightful earnings. This non-payment issue had also affected several other staff members who had left without receiving their dues.

Efforts were made to engage with Mr. Valli Chithi, the hotel owner, to address the reasons behind the delayed payments. During extensive discussions, Mr. Chithi ini-

tially evaded responsibility and even threatened legal action when pressed about the couple's wages. It was revealed that the owner had deliberately withheld their salaries upon learning of their intention to resign due to discrepancies in working hours. The couple had been misled during recruitment about their expected working hours, which were supposed to be 10 hours but were enforced as 12 hours daily.

After hours of negotiation and mediation, Mr. Chithi reluctantly agreed to settle their pending wages and allowed them to resign from their positions. As of June 25, 2024, the matter was fully resolved, and the couple

has since secured employment at Biryani Center, Adyar, Chennai.

This incident underscores the vulnerability of migrant workers to exploitation and the critical importance of enforcing labor rights and ethical recruitment practices. Documentation supporting this case includes the initial letter received on June 23, 2024, detailing the grievances, and subsequent communications confirming the resolution.

Moving forward, continued vigilance and proactive measures are necessary to protect the rights and dignity of all workers, ensuring fair treatment and timely payment of wages in accordance with legal standards.

12 MAY, 2024  
THIRUVALLUR

**O**n May 12, 2024, Mr. Achamrongmei, son of Gaipukhan Rongmei, tragically passed away due to electrocution at his residence. The unfortunate incident was confirmed by duty doctors at Thiruvallur Government Hospital.

**POLICE AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS**

Following the confirmation of Mr. Achamrongmei's death, the B6 – Mappedu Police Station registered a case under Crime Number 161/2024, citing Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CRPC). The case was promptly processed for post-mortem with the assigned number 266/24 on May 15, 2024.

**POST-MORTEM AND FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

After a thorough investigation and receiving no objections from Mr. Achamrongmei's relatives, his body was transported to NAMDAILONG village burial ground in Assam for the final rites.

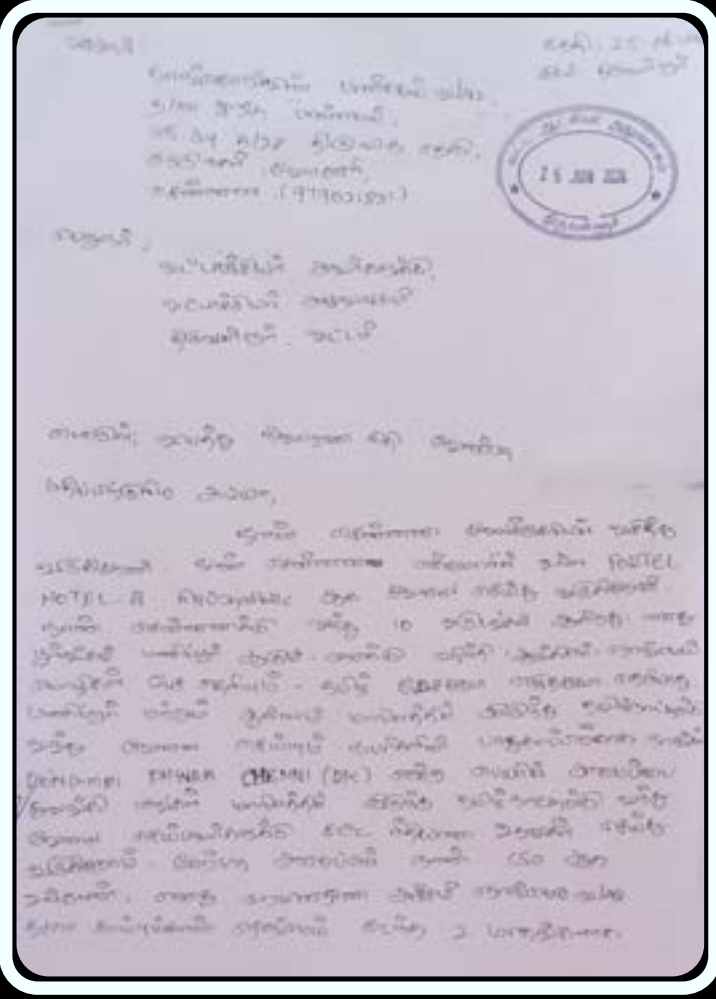
**POST-MORTEM AND FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

On June 18, 2024, the death certificate was collected from Mr. Soundar VAO at the Mappedu office.

**CONCLUSION**

The tragic incident of Mr. Achamrongmei's untimely demise has been handled with due diligence by the authorities, ensuring all necessary legal and procedural steps were taken. The family has been provided with the death certificate, and the process for accident relief is underway, with the supportive involvement of Don Bosco Migrant Services.

**"FROM TRAGEDY THE ELECTROCUTION OF MR. ACHAMRONGMEI" TO RESOLUTION**



**ACCIDENT RELIEF PETITION**

On June 25, 2024, an accident relief petition was submitted to the Tahsildar of Thiruvallur Taluk office. However, due to the Tahsildar's unavailability because of a scheduled meeting, the petition was directed to the Thabal Section Office for further processing upon the suggestion of the Director.

**SUPPORT FROM DON BOSCO MIGRANT SERVICES**

Don Bosco Migrant Services is actively following the case to ensure that the victim and his family receive all possible support and favor. Their involvement aims to facilitate the relief process and provide assistance to Mr. Achamrongmei's family during this difficult time.



## **EMPOWERING THE UNSEEN WORKFORCE A WORKSHOP ON UNORGANISED WORKERS' RIGHTS AND WELFARE**

**29-30 MAY, 2023:**  
**JMUNAMARATHUR,**  
**JAWADHU HILLS**

**DAY 1**  
**Collaborative Workshop  
with Unorganised Work-  
ers**

On 29th May 2024, we had the opportunity to participate in a workshop held at Jmunamarathur, Jawadhu Hills, focused on the welfare and rights of unorganised workers. The workshop highlighted the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, which empowers both Central and State Governments to develop and implement suitable welfare schemes for unorganised workers. This Act mandates the registration of every unorganised worker with the District Administration, with



the stipulation that the worker must be at least 14 years old.

The discussions underscored the importance of these welfare schemes, designed to provide social security to a significant segment of the workforce often neglected in traditional employment frameworks. The session provided

a comprehensive understanding of the legal framework and the procedures involved in registering unorganised workers, ensuring they receive the benefits and protections afforded by the Act. This initial session set the stage for a deeper exploration of the issues and challenges faced by



unorganised workers and the measures required to address them.

## DAY 2

### Collaborative Workshop with Unorganised Workers

On 30th May 2024, the second session of the workshop delved deeper into the plight and struggles of unorganised workers. The discussions focused on Part II of the PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL POLICY, particularly Article 4, which mandates each member to formulate, implement, and periodically review a coherent national policy on occupational safety, health, and working conditions. This policy should be developed in consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers, considering national conditions and practices.

This session was particularly enlightening as it provided insights into the practical implementation of occupational safety and health policies for unorganised workers. We learned about the significant gaps in safety and health standards that unorganised workers face, often working in hazardous conditions with minimal protection. The discussions highlighted the need for continuous dialogue and collaboration between employers, workers, and government bodies to create a safe and healthy working environ-

ment.

The workshop also emphasized the importance of periodically reviewing and updating these policies to reflect the evolving needs and conditions of the workforce. This proactive approach ensures that unorganised workers are not left behind in the rapidly changing labor market. Overall, the second day's session was an invaluable learning experience, shedding light on the systemic issues affecting unorganised workers and the critical role of national policies in addressing these challenges.

