

# Annual Report 2008 - 2009



**STEPS Women's Development Organisation**

Near Union Office, Pudukottai - 622 001, Tamil Nadu

**Phone +91 4322 - 220583**

**Email : [stepswomens@gmail.com](mailto:stepswomens@gmail.com)**

## Introduction

STEPS Women's Organisation is a voluntary Service organisation registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Act 1975 in 1991. **Our special focus is on raising voice consistently against atrocities on women.** STEPS initially worked among schools and college students and rural women through Awareness generation programmes such as poster exhibitions, workshops, competitions, imparting defense mechanism etc. Various issues at the Local level and State Level are taken up and maximum efforts are made to find out solution or alternatives. STEPS is generally a centre for women in distress as issues concerning women.

## Vision of STEPS

STEPS as an organisation fighting for the rights of Muslim women strives to empower women subjected to violence in social and economic spheres. In its role to build a gender just, humane society, STEPS would provide opportunities for Muslims to participate in social institutions and encourage women and men to work together to live a life of harmony with the spirit and guidance of Islam.

## Objectives of the organisation

- To take up issues related to violence against women such as martial dispute, desertion, dowry harassment, sexual abuse, cheating, physical and psychological torture etc. and help the victimized women to find alternatives.
- To provide a space for the women in need and support them in their crisis period through the short stay home.
- To provide free legal aid and counseling to the people in need.
- To conduct women's awareness programmes through campaigns, public meetings, seminars, workshops, poster exhibition etc.
- To take up local issues of the people like road facilities, Balwadis, distribution of ration cards, panchayat television, land pattas, drainage, light, transport etc. and make the village women organized to get such things done.
- To be a part of district, state and national level network and be a part of lobbying and advocacy.
- To obtain socio economic and political empowerment of Muslim women
- To create a forum for Muslim women to resolve their issues and obtain the basic rights to live.

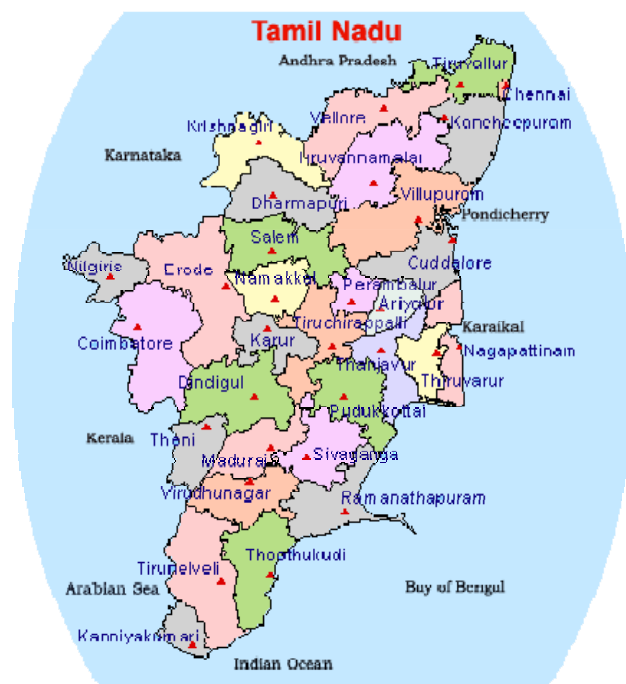
- To enable the Muslim women to lead a sustainable livelihood for themselves.

### Target community

- Marginalised women and children,
- Muslim community especially - Muslim women , Muslim girl children,
- Priority to victimised Muslim women – victims of talaq, dowry harassment, sexual harassment, second marriage, child marriage, young widow.

### Target Area :

1. Thiruchirapalli
2. Pudukottai
3. Madurai
4. Sivagangai
5. Dindigul
6. Theni
7. Thirunelveli
8. Kanyakumari
9. Thuthukudi
10. Nagapattinam



### Highlights of the activities of the organisation for 2008 - 09:

STEPS has been working for the human rights of women in general from the years of its inception. Apart from this STEPS has been working for the empowerment of Muslim women for the past 8 years. Hence, the activities of the organization carried out in the year 2008 – 09 can be looked at in two different angles.

- a) Activities for the empowerment of Muslim women
- b) Activities for the enforcement of Human rights
- c) Activities for the OCGE Process, HIVOS
- d) Advocacy and lobby with different institution
- e) List of Programmes organised, attended and visitors to STEPS.

## A) Activities for the empowerment of Muslim women

### a) District level Federation Meeting:

District level federation meetings were conducted among Muslim women SHG members and non-SHG members in their respective districts.

S.No.	Name of the districts	No. of meetings	No. of participants
1	Dindigul	2	96
2	Madurai	2	100
3	Nagapattinam	2	108
4	Nagarkovil	2	97
5	Sivagangai	2	115
6	Theni	2	92
7	Thirunelveli	2	100
8	Thuthukudi	2	93
9	Trichy	2	103
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>904</b>

The common agenda discussed during the district level federation meetings was:

- Functioning of district level Jamaat and its activities.
- Activities of Self Help Group (SHG), Need for SHG, Savings and Credit
- Sources of financing for the Self Help Groups.
- Talaq, polygamy, dowry harassment and other issues of Muslim women.
- Discussion on the articles published in Women jamaat magazine
- Learning from Muslim women Jamaat from other district
- Sharing success stories.
- Discussing local issues, particular to the area.

### b) District level orientation meeting on Muslim Women Bank:

STEPS has been planning to establish a women's bank to enable Muslim women to access credit through the pooled savings of Muslim women. Hence, initial meetings to orient the Muslim women on the establishment of Women's bank were conducted in all the districts. 919 Muslim women participated the meeting.

Date	Name of the District	No.Of Participants
09.09.08	Dindigul	82
11.09.08	Madurai	76
10.09.08	Nagapattinam	81
16.09.08	Nagarkovil	86
13.09.08	Pudukottai	120
15.09.08	Sivagangai	93
23.09.08	Theni	56
25.09.08	Thirunelveli	89
24.09.08	Thuthukudi	139
27.09.08	Trichy	97
	<b>Total</b>	<b>919</b>

### C) District level Jamaat Meetings:

District level Jamaat meetings were conducted all the districts once in a month since October 2008. During the Jamaat meeting, the Muslim women cases are addressed, follow up of the cases are made, the plight of the Muslim women are discussed, the activities of the organization for the empowerment of Muslim women are also discussed.

S.No.	Name of the districts	No. of meetings	No. of participants
1	Dindigul	6	512
2	Madurai	6	448
3	Nagapattinam	6	504
4	Nagarkovil	6	648
5	Sivagangai	6	560
6	Theni	6	504
7	Thirunelveli	6	464
8	Thuthukudi	6	672
9	Trichy	6	448
10	Pudukkottai	6	562
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>5322</b>

### D) Organising Muslim Women Groups:

STEPS has organized 345 SHGs among 5296 Muslim women in 10 districts of Tamil Nadu. Not all the groups organized by STEPS engaged in savings and credit activities. Some of the groups regularly meet and discuss about the issues

of Muslim women, address the issues and discuss on the women Jamaat magazine. STEPS team is converting the non-savings groups into Savings and credit groups.

The details of groups formed by STEPS are as follows:

S.No	District Name	No. of groups			No. of members			Total Savings
		Savings groups	Non-Savings Groups	Total	Savings groups	Non-Savings Groups	Total	
1	Dindugal	14	30	44	225	457	682	147,890
2	Kanyakumari	24	28	52	459	522	981	924600
3	Madurai	16	5	21	241	68	309	263657
4	Nagappattinam	16	12	28	257	166	423	544550
5	Pudukkottai	14	16	30	168	207	375	602200
6	Sivagangai	6	8	14	84	112	196	312500
7	Theni	19	16	35	352	209	561	303061
8	Thirunelveli	16	18	34	268	260	528	1024500
9	Trichy	12	28	40	167	433	600	207000
10	Tuticorin	21	26	47	313	328	641	651600
	<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>2534</b>	<b>2762</b>	<b>5296</b>	<b>4,981,558</b>

The details of economic assistance received by the Muslim women Self Help Groups from STEPS during the reporting year is as follows:

S.No.	District	Banks		STEPS thro' financiers		Subsidy Loan		Minority loan	
		No. of SHG	Amount	No. of SHG	Amount	SHG	Amount	No. of SHG	Amount
1	Dindigul	0	0	9	585000	0	0	0	0
2	Madurai	5	200000	8	320000	0	0	0	0
3	Nagapattinam	5	165000	2	80000	0	0	0	0
4	Nagarkovil	0	0	16	640000	1	45000	0	0
5	Pudukkottai	0	0	13	575000	0	0	0	0
6	Sivagangai	0	0	8	400000	0	0	0	0
7	Theni	1	50000	7	330000	0	0	5	1080000
8	Thirunelveli	0	0	12	600000	0	0	0	0

9	Thuthukudi	8	1775000	17	680000	8	3720000	3	150000
10	Trichy	3	1,56,300	14	795000	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2346300</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>5005000</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3765000</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1230000</b>

**(Totally Rs.1, 23,46,300/- i.e. One crore twenty three Lakhs forty six thousand and three hundred)**

#### **e) Education Support Centre**

Two education support centers are functioning at present - in Mukkanamalaipatti and Thuthukudi districts. In each centre 30 Muslim girl children are studying. The teachers Ms. Ayisa, and Ms. Meera conduct tests regularly and analyse the progress of the children. Totally 60 Muslim children benefit on account of the education support centre.

#### **f) Parents Meeting**

Parents meetings were conducted in the months of June 08 to interact and inform parents regarding the progress of each student and to discuss the need for the improvements. Motivation was given to the parents to educate the girl children and their suggestions were also heard during the meeting.

#### **g) State Level Campaign on the rights of Muslim women**

The 5<sup>th</sup> state level campaign on the rights of Muslim women was conducted: poster exhibition, notice distribution and fasting of Muslim women on 25.06.08 opposite Railway station, Trichy were the main features of this campaign. During the campaign, 650 Muslim women from 12 districts of Tamil Nadu participated. Mrs. D. Sharifa, President of STEPS and J. Christy Subatra, EC member of STEPS along with representatives from solidarity organisations participated in the campaign. As usual the campaign was started with Kirath by Mrs. Meharunisa followed by Welcome address of Mrs. Subaitha. Ms. Fareetha Begam explained about the objectives of conducting the campaign programme. Slogans on Muslim women rights and songs were continuously sung by the Muslim women. The campaign started at 11.00 am and concluded at 4.30 pm. Press reporters meeting was also held during the campaign. The demands of the women Jamaat were circulated to the reporters.

#### **h) Fifth State Level Conference of Muslim women**

The 5<sup>th</sup> state level conference of Muslim women was held at Siva sakthi Mahal, Nagapattinam district on 24.08.08. Ms. Quidisia Gandhi, IAS, Ms. Fathima, High court Lawyer, Programme officer, women Development Corporation,

Nagapattinam, Mr. H.M. Sacha Mubarak, Counselor, Nagapattinam, Ms. N. Shanthi, Professor, Nagapattinam were the special guests for the conference. The conference was presided over by Ms. Quidisia Gandhi IAS. District level leaders of Tamil Nadu Muslim women Jamaat members shared their experiences during the conference. District coordinators spoke of the progress and achievements of Muslim Women's jamaat over the last 8 years. 650 Muslim women from 10 districts of Tamil Nadu participated in the conference. Though Nagapattinam is known for being orthodox and is considered communally sensitive, women braved the religious leaders and attended the conference in large numbers. So, for us, it was really a big triumph to successfully conduct our conference in Nagapattinam.

### **Sixth State Level Conference of Muslim women.**

The 6<sup>th</sup> state level conference of Muslim women was also conducted on 07.03.09 at SS Mahal at Pudukottai district. We did this because we thought this was the best way to acquaint visitors to STEPS with our work. Ms. Ireen Dubel, HIVOS, Programme officer, Gender, Netherlands, Ms. Seema Nair, HIVOS, Programme Officer, Gender, Bangalore, Mr. Madhu Mehra, Partners in Law and Development (PLD), New Delhi, Ms. Jaya, PLD, New Delhi, Mr. Subramanian, High court lawyer, Deepa Dhanraj, filmmaker, Ms. Bonita Aleaz, Professor, University of Calcutta were the special visitors for the conference. Ms. Fatima Lawyer, Ms. Kavitha, Secretary, STEPS and the women jamaat leaders presided over the state level conference. 430 Muslim women from 10 districts of Tamil Nadu participated. During the conference, the jamaat leaders shared their experiences, including a cheating case, involving one Ms. Amjat Begam of Ariyalur. Ms. Kavitha, Secretary, STEPS distributed rs.3,35,000/- to Muslim women groups as a micro credit loan. The Entrepreneurs who received economic assistance through STEPS exhibited their products once the conference venue.

### **i) Dialogue with Muslim men**

Dialogue with Muslim men was conducted in Trichy district on 12.03.09. This was the first dialogue with Muslim men in Trichy district. STEPS already has some men supporters in Trichy: they are associated with the mosque support group and have participated in some of our campaigns. But this was the first meeting at which men in Trichy actually interacted with STEPS about its activities and our vision of empowering Muslim women. Ms. Narkis explained the activities of the organization and the special focus on Muslim women. Followed by the introduction, women jamaat leaders from Trichy district spoke of the progress of

the Muslim women jamaat, the cases handled by the jamaat and its ultimate objectives. The Muslim men raised their doubts and it was get clarified by the women jamaat members and STEPS team members.

### **j) State level Muslim Women Jamaat Meeting**

The Tamil Nadu Muslim Women Jamaat meets once a month, with representatives from 10 project districts and other parts of Tamil Nadu participating in the meeting. Generally the Jamaat meeting starts with Kirath (Prayer) followed by reading of a portion of Quran, which emphasizes the rights of Muslim women. Then different petitions, which have come for enquiry for final settlement, are discussed. The petitioners are informed of the Women Jamaat meeting earlier and they come with their family, some times with some representatives from the male Jamaats. The issues are sorted out by the women Jamaat members in a humanist way, solutions are provided consulting both the parties. The decisions taken in the meeting are received in writing by both the parties and only after we know that they have agreed to the decision. During the month of October 07 and March 2008, the Jamaat meeting was conducted for two days based on the issues to be discussed with the Jamaat members. The nature of enquiry depends up on the nature of case.

**The details of the Jamaat meetings conducted in STEPS office, Pudukottai are as follows:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>	<b>No. of districts participated</b>	<b>No of cases resolved</b>	<b>Visitors / Observers</b>
03.04.08	68	11	2	-
13.05.08	65	10	3	-
18.06.08	66	12	2	Mr.Rajasekaran, India Today reporter
18.07.08	62	10	2	-
29.07.08	63	10	-	-
13.09.08	68	10	-	-
22.12.08	65	10	1	-
19.01.09	63	10	1	Ms.Geetha, Writer Ms.Deepa Danraj, Film Maker
08.03.09	65	10	4	Ms. Seema Nair, Hivos Programme officer Ms.Ireen Dubel Ms.Madhu Mehra, UN Reporter , Ms.Jaya,PLD
<b>Total</b>	<b>585</b>		<b>14</b>	

**Details of the Jamaat members:**

S. No.	Name of the district	No. of members in Women Jamaat	No. of men Jamaat members in favour of Women Jamaat
1.	Dindigul	692	42
2.	Kanyakumari	801	54
3.	Madurai	333	12
4.	Nagapattinam	300	15
5.	Perambalur	271	15
6.	Pudukottai	260	20
7.	Sivagangai	671	30
8.	Theni	587	20
9.	Thirunelveli	601	43
10.	Thuthukudi	855	50
11.	Tiruchirapalli	232	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5603</b>	<b>321</b>

STEPS team members are taking efforts to make the women not associated with STEPS through the savings groups or non-savings also to register their names as women jamaat members.

**k) State Level Legal Aid cell:**

STEPS has been addressing the issues of Muslim women for the past 10 years through counseling, police intervention, enquiry with men jamaat and legal assistance.

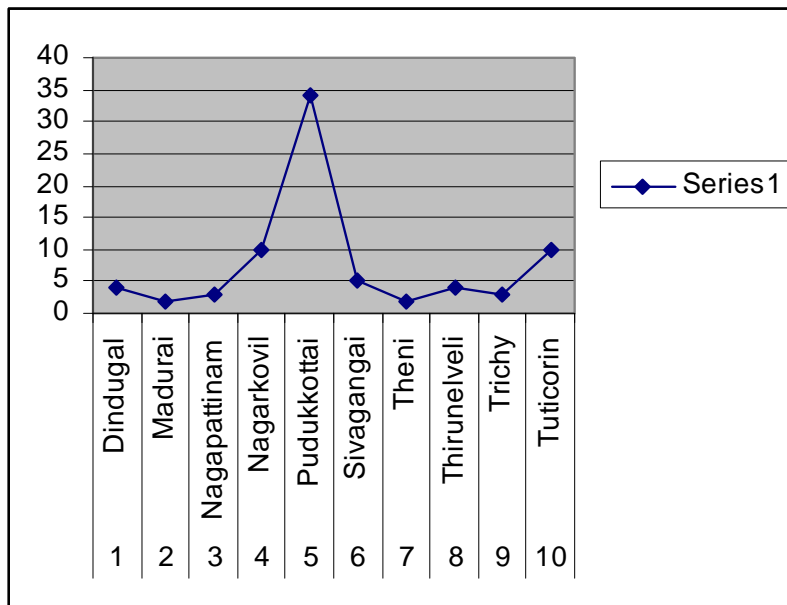
**The details of the cases addressed by STEPS for the year 2008 –09 are as follows:**

S.No.	Category of the Case	No. of Cases
1	Dowry Harassment	2
2	Second Marriage	4
3	Family Problem	8
4	Drunken violence	3
5	Cheating	6
6	Family violence	15
7	Murder	2

S.No.	Category of the Case	No. of Cases
8	Talaq	4
9	Threaten to death	3
10	Property problem	4
11	Suspicion	6
12	Protection	4
13	Harassment	7
14	Illegal Contact	4
15	Others	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>

Details of cases addressed in different project districts are as follows:

Issues addressed at the district level



S.No.	Name of the district	No. of Cases
1	Dindigul	4
2	Madurai	2
3	Nagapattinam	3
4	Nagarkovil	10
5	Pudukottai	34
6	Sivagangai	5
7	Theni	2
8	Thirunelveli	4
9	Trichy	3
10	Tuticorin	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>

#### I) Staff / Volunteer capacity building training :

The district co-coordinators have attended various other trainings organized by different institutions at the National level:

S.No	Date	Name of the training	Venue	Staff attended
1.	02.08.08 to 31.08.08	Gender Diversity and Development	Visthar, Bangalore	Mr. Aslam and Ms.Nargis
2.	05.09.08 to 14 . 09. 08	Gender and Development training organised by IWID	Mahabalipuram, Chennai	Ms. Faritha Begam and Ms. Hamsoon
3.	21.10.08 to 23.10.08	Monitoring CEDAW in Tamil Nadu, organised by EKTA,	Madurai	Ms. A. Pondijothi
4.	16.12.08 to 18.12.08	National workshop on Human rights Monitoring, organised by CWS	Hydrabad	Ms. Narkis, Ms. M. Eswari and Ms. Jenagam
5.	27.01.09 to 29.01.09	Workshop on 'Devising Effective Campaign Communication Strategies using ICTs"	Bangalore	Mr. Aslam Ms. M.Padmavathi
6.	24.02.09 to 27.02.09	Workshop on Changes, Results and Organisation Practices, organised by HIVOS	Bangalore	Ms. Fareetha and Ms. Padmavathi

Apart from these trainings, district level co-coordinators are participating in the district level meetings and programmes organised by other NGOs regarding gender issues.

### **m) Training of Muslim Women Jamaat Committee members:**

STEPS team members acquired the skills of providing training to Muslim women on Shariat rights (By shariat we mean the codified and existing Muslim personal law, relating to the Indian Penal Code. Provisions in the Quran are also discussed). Hence the team members have provided the training on Shariat to the Muslim women in 7 districts of Tamil Nadu. The training was provided on the following rights of Muslim women :

- Islamic marriage law and law of Mahar
- Procedures of Talaq and Kula
- Issues of Dowry in Islam
- Domestic Violence Bill 2005.

The staff members with the help of high court lawyer Ms.Fathima Sulthana provided the training to the district level women group members in a participatory manner. Experience sharing of the participants over their life was also discussed during the training.

### **n) Publication**

STEPS has been publishing women jamaat magazine as a quarterly magazine to disseminate the knowledge and the information on the issues of Muslim women, shariat rights etc. under the following headings.

- Editorial
- Poems written by Muslim women
- Issues of Muslim women – national context – (translated versions are published)
- Quotations, sayings and articles from Quran – in favour of women.
- Short write up – on women rights.
- Case diary – Case history of Muslim women addressed by STEPS.
- Reports of the activities of Muslim women Jamaat.

One book has been published during the first half of the year and the second book is under printing.

STEPS has also prepared a draft manual on the existing laws that Muslim women need to know about, based on the Shariath trainings.

### o) Programmes Attended by STEPS Team

Date	Programme Name	Participants Activity	Participants
25.04.08 to 05.05.08	Inauguration of Film Festival 'SPICE IN' at Kabul, Afghanistan	Inauguration	Ms. D. Sharifa
17.07.08 to 22.07.08	People's SAARC at Colombo, Srilanka	Projection of STEPS Documentation film.	Ms.D. Sharifa
02.08.08 to 31.08.08	Gender Diversity and Development organised by Visthar, Bangalore	Attended Training	Mr. Aslam and Ms.Nargis
05.09.08 to 14.09.08	Asian level workshop on Gender and Development training organised by IWID at Mahabalipuram	Delivered speech Participation	Ms. D.Sharifa, Ms. Faritha Begam and Ms. Hamsoon
08.09.08 to 10.09.08	Financial Management and Accounting	Attended Training	Ms.C.Sathya and Ms.Easwari
29.09.08 & 30.09.08	OCGE Final Retreat at Bangalore	Participation	Ms. D.Sharifa , Ms. M. Padmavathi, Ms. Faritha Begam and Ms. Backyalakshmi
21.10.08 to 23.10.08	Workshop on Monitoring CEDAW in Tamil Nadu, organised by EKTA, Madurai	Participation	Ms. A. Pandijothi
24.10.08 to 27.10.08	III International Congress on Islamic Feminism, at Barcelona, Spain	Delivered speech	Ms. D. Sharifa and Ms. Faritha Begam.
15.11.08	Justice Krishna Iyer Memorial Award function, Organised by SOCO Trust, Madurai	Delivered speech & Received award	STEPS team and jamaat members
14-Dec-08	Consultation on Issues of Muslim women, organised by Corner stone, Chennai	Participation	Ms. Fareetha begam, Ms. Nargis, Ms. Subaitha.
16.12.08 to 18.12.08	National workshop on Human rights Monitoring, organised by CWS, Hyderabad	Participation	Ms. Narkis, Ms. M. Eswari and Ms. Janagam
27.01.09 to 29.01.09	Workshop on 'Devising Effective Campaign Communication Strategies using ICTs" Organised by HIVOS at Bangalore	Participation	Mr. Aslam Ms. M.Padmavathi
11.02.09 to 18.02.09	Mushawah, Sister In Islam, Malaysia	Delivered speech	Ms. D. Sharifa
21-Feb-09	Tamil Nadu Women's Co-ordination Committee meeting	Participation	Ms. Janagam and Ms. Pandijothi
24.02.09 to 27.02.09	Workshop on Changes, Results and Organisation Practices, organised by HIVOS, at Bangalore	Participation	Ms. Fareetha and Ms. Padmavathi
03.09 to 30.03.09	National Consultation on the implementation of Concluding observations of the CEDAW committee at Delhi	Participation	Ms. D. Sharifa and Ms. Narkis Begam

**p) List of Visitors to STEPS**

Date	Name of the visitor	Purpose of Visit
09.04.08	Reporters Fatima Najm and Namrata Tawa, Bombay	Interview with Ms. D. Sharifa for Times of India.
09.05.08	Ms. Tanzeem, Vimochana, Bangalore	To learn about Muslim women programme in STEPS
09.05.08	Ms. Sajida Begam, Tanzeem UI Mohsinath, Bangalore	To learn about Muslim women programme in STEPS
09.05.08	Ms. Tabassum, Vimochana, Bangalore	To learn about Muslim women programme in STEPS
19-01-09	Ms.Geetha, Ms. Deepa Danraj film Maker, Mr.John Research Scholar From HIDF.	Jamaat Meeting
08.03.09	Ms. Madhu Mehra and Ms. Jaya, PLD, New Delhi	6th State level conference of Muslim women
08.03.09	Ms. Ireen Dubel, HIVOS, Netherlands	6th State level conference of Muslim women
08.03.09	Ms. Seema Nair, PO, Gender Desk, HIVOS, Bangalore	6th State level conference of Muslim women
08.03.09	Ms. Bonita Aleaz, Professor, Calcutta University	6th State level conference of Muslim women
08.03.09	Ms. Deepa Dhanraj, Feminist Film Maker, Bangalore	Documentation of STEPS

**B) OCGE Process – Activities**

**i) Training on Social Analysis:**

During the first ToT on social analysis, the entire team felt that there is a need for an elaborate understanding of Social Analysis. Hence, a three days training on Social Analysis was given by Mr. And Mrs. Lucy Xavier, between 1.07.08 and

3.7.08, at Kurtralam, Thirunelveli district. All the staff members and Jamaat leaders participated in the Training. During the training, analysis was made on different institutions in the society, different levels of government, starting from local panchayat up to United Nations organizations, World Bank etc. The evolution of human society was also discussed in detail.

#### **ii) Training on Shariat**

Training on Shariat and manual preparation on Shariat was made on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2008. Mrs. Fathima Sulthana, High court lawyer provided the training to the staff members and Jamaat leaders from 13 districts of Tamil Nadu. A detailed discussion on Talaq, Kula, Maintenance, property rights, marriages in Islam, Rights of Muslim women in Islam, Domestic Violence act 2005 was made during the workshop. A draft design for the Shariat manual was also prepared by the resource team and STEPS team.

#### **iii) Leadership Training:**

Leadership training was provided as ToT to the core team members of STEPS by the members of HIDF under the OCGE process. Mr. Haritha Sarma and Ms. Shobana provided the training to the staff members. The training was held between 16.09.08 and 18.09.08. The training programme concentrated more on developing the leadership qualities, difference between organization roles and relationship and managing the roles, staff dynamics etc. All the core team staff participated in the training programme.

### **C) Activities for the enforcement of Human rights.**

#### **Addressing the issues of women in distress:**

STEPS has been addressing the human rights issues of the community for the past 20 years. Cases of women subject to domestic violence, sexual harassment, family level problems, cheating, suspicion, murder are some of the issues being addressed by STEPS.

Apart from the individual cases, the community issues for basic amenities, land rights were also addressed by STEPS. STEPS is a center for women at distress. Family counseling, individual counseling, lobby with local institution, local community, and respective police personnel are the different strategies adopted by the organization to resolve the issues of human rights violation.

### **Case Study**

Name of Petitioner : **Ms. Vijayalakshmi**

Address : Saathivayal Village, Kulathur Taluk, Pudukottai District.

#### **Case Details:**

Vijayarani's parents provided 10 Sawaran gold Jewels, vessels and other household appliances during her marriage. Her Husband's family pledged all her jewels and separated them from their family. Now Vijayarani and her husband are living separately. But still the property hasn't been partitioned yet. They didn't provide anything from their family to Vijayarani. They refused to give back her jewels too. Vijayarani approached village panchayat many times, but she didn't get proper solution. So she approached STEPS to get back her jewels and property share.

Petition was given to Mathur Police Station through STEPS. When Saathivayal Panchayat leader, and her husband's family called for counseling, they accepted to give back her jewels within three months. Three months later Vijayarani and staff of STEPS gone and got back her jewels. She was advised to proceed with legal activities for obtaining property share.

### **Case Study**

Name of Petitioner : **Ms. Uma Maheswari**

Address : Nayudu Street, Chitharevu, Dindigul

#### **Case Details:**

Five years ago Uma Maheswari got married. Her parents provided Rs.1, 00,000/- as dowry during her marriage. Since she delivered a female child, she had been sent to her mother's house. But in her mother's house they advised to go back her husband's house. In her husband's house they threw all her utensils out. So Uma made a complaint in women police station. There she didn't get any justice and so she went to court. In court they ordered to live together. But her husband didn't obey the court judgment. Then she approached steps for solution.

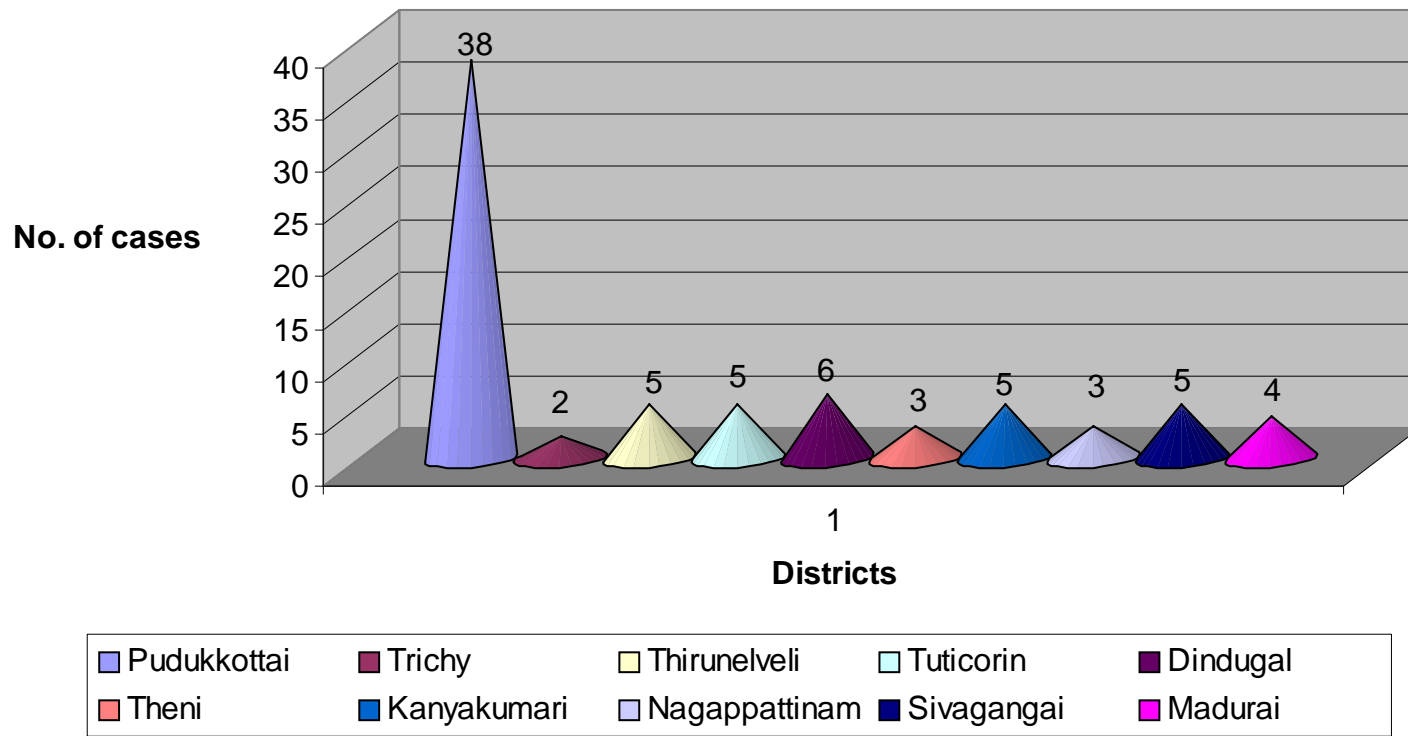
They have given a petition to women police station through STEPS. But her husband didn't come for first enquiry, so the date has been postponed. She is appealing to court for justice. .

The details of the different cases addressed in 10 districts of Tamil Nadu during the year 2008 – 09.

**District wise cases addressed during 2008 - 2009**

S.No.	Nature of case	Pudukottai	Districts									Total
			Trichy	Thirunelveli	Thoothukudi	Dindigul	Theni	Kanyakumari	Nagapattinam	Sivagangai	Madurai	
1	Dowry harassment	2				1	1		1			5
2	Second marriage	6				1	1	1		1	1	11
3	Family problem	4		1					1			6
4	Drunken violence	1			2	1						4
5	Cheating	2										2
6	Sexual abuse				1			1		1		3
7	Family violence	8	1	2		1				1	1	14
8	Death	1					1	2				4
9	Divorce	1									1	2
10	Threaten to death	1										1
11	Property problem	5							1			6
12	Suspicion		1	1		2						4
13	Protection to life	2								1	1	4
14	Harassment	2		1						1		4
15	Illegal contact	1			2							3
16	Others	2						1				3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>76</b>

### Human Rights cases during 2008 - 09



#### Family Counselling at Help Line :

STEPS has been attending to the petitions coming to the Help Line of All Women Police Station in 8 districts of Tamil Nadu namely Thiruchirapalli, Pudukottai, Theni, Dindigul, Nagapattinam, Nagarkovil, Thoothukudi and Thirunelveli. The district level co-ordinators attend help line at their district level. The advocacy lobby with police department enables STEPS to find solution to the problems of the women at distress. STEPS tries to speed up the government mechanism according to the emergency of the petitioner and make them to attend to the cases irrespective of the caste and creed. It is also evident that when our staff members are attending the counselling and follow-up the cases, there is no space for corruption in any form.

#### **D. Advocacy and lobby with other institution :**

##### Working with Police department :

STEPS is very closely working with police department in addressing the issues of women. The district co-ordinators in 8 districts of Tamil Nadu are attending to the helpline for counselling regularly. This brings cordial relationship with the police department.

##### Working with academic institution :

STEPS is considered as resource centre by the academic institution for the exposure and field visit of students studying human rights, gender and Social work. Ms. D. Sharifa is periodically providing seminar on Gender in American institute of journalism.

##### Working with Media :

The activities of STEPS regularly flashed once in 15 days in print media – leading daily papers, Tamil Magazine etc. The visual media also record the activities of STEPS and flash it in the television.

#### **E. Future Plans**

STEPS has been addressing the most critical issues of women in general and Muslim women in particular keeping the slogan of the organisation 'Self Respect is the First STEP of Women's Liberation'. Considering the status of the activities implemented at

present and the requirement of the women STEPS plan to establish the following in future.

- a) Resource centre for Muslim women
- b) A women's Bank
- c) State level legal Aid Cell

STEPS would focus its attention towards mobilising resources for the accomplishments of the above mentioned dreams in future.