# PARTNERS IN CHANGE

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

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## **ABOUT PIC**

Partners in Change, a Society registered in 1995 under the Societies Act (1860) to promote responsible business in India, aims to build partnerships with businesses, communities and governments to co-construct policies, practices and narratives that advance responsible financing, sustainable production and consumption and decent work.

#### **OUR VISION**

We envision a world where improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people, communities and the environment is recognized and practiced as an essential part of doing business.

#### **OUR MISSION**

We partner with business communities and those impacted by business to enable responsible business practices and to remove the obstacles that limit sustainability and inclusive growth in the society.

#### **OUR VALUES**

We have condensed our organizational drivers into four key elements: ethics, empathy, entrepreneurship and excellence

ETHICS: We will continue to maintain and promote high standards of ethical behaviour in our interactions with all our stakeholders, internal and external

EMPATHY: We will always promote empathic participation of all our stakeholders in equitable and sustainable development, be it business, government or civil society

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: We will strive to help partners in developing innovative solutions for implementing responsible business practices

EXCELLENCE: We will promote an organizational culture that internalizes excellence through continuous learning and knowledge sharing

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



In 1995, Partners in Change started as an organisation working towards ensuring responsible business conduct and 25 years later, I am happy to share that we have been able to carve and sustain a space for ourselves in the realm on business and human rights. As I look back at this journey of 25 years, we pride ourselves at having been able to create unique value propositions for our stakeholders, who have over the years become our co-travellers, collaborators and partners in this journey.

PiC in the 1990s was one of few organisations talking about ethical and responsible business, and how this could lead to value creation for the communities. Progressing on this agenda, we have been one of the key proponents of the business and human rights discourse from 2009, contributing to the building blocks of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Over the years, while progressive conversations swayed in favour of a more institutionalised framework of philanthropic delivery of "good" through corporate social responsibility, human rights remained confined to the factory gate and the HR policies within it. PiC during these times continued to engage innovatively with stakeholders to build programmes that focussed toward an integration approach and not merely on the delivery of 'listed activities'. This has remained the core of conversations, dialogues, collaborations and alliances facilitated by us over these years. The announcement by the government in February 2020, inviting comments and suggestions on the content of NAP, enabled us collate these discussions and exchanges that we engaged in over the years, and coherently present it as "Voices from the Margins".

During the year, PiC continued to tread the path of engaging with new stakeholders, especially those that we fear would be left out, on business and human rights. The five-city consultation with colleges and universities, while on one hand, provided a platform to the young minds to contribute, on the other, brought in new perspectives to the discussions. While these consultations and workshops, enabled PiC to gather diverse perspectives, collaborative research, studies and analysis focusing on human rights, it also provided evidence for keeping these discussions alive and updated.

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I write to you this year, I am conscious of the challenges that are before us to reinvent ourselves in the new normal and keep supporting groups and communities, which find themselves pushed to the margins. I also hopeful that through this year, we will be able to facilitate resilience building among these groups and communities, through programmes that will usher in a new era of more meaningful conversation and actions.

#### PRADEEP NARAYANAN

Director, Partners in Change





CELEBRATING 25
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE
CORPORATE SECTOR AND
INITIATIVES



YEARS OF
PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN INDIA

## **KEY MILESTONES**

- Presently, Viraf Mehta, Advisor Partners in Change, is part of the NHRC Core group on Business, Environment and Human Rights, which is tasked with the responsibility to identify and implement mechanisms that promote UNGPs in India.
- In 2018, for the first time PiC got involved in the implementation phase of a project. PiC has been supporting farmers in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu and the Sabar De-notified and Nomadic Community in Purulia, West Bengal to enhance their livelihood opportunities and to contribute towards the socio-economic inclusion of these marginalised communities. PiC is also working in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, to reduce incidences of bonded labour in the garment industry by directly engaging with the workers and community members, especially adolescents.
- In order to build research based evidence to understand and identify human rights violations by businesses, PiC conducted a comprehensive research for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in 2018-19 on 5 publicly available company cases in the domain of accountability, labour rights, gender welfare, employees' well-being and consumer value, in order to understand the response systems companies have for grievance redressal pertaining to these issues.
- 2018 was also an important year in terms of initiative taken by the government on BHR. It formally announced a plan to develop National Action Plan (NAP) on business a human rights at the Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva. The Zero Draft of NAP was released in 2019. Over a period of 2 years, PiC held 21 consultations, collecting feedback and voices of more than 600 stakeholders ranging from students to academicians, communities to human rights defenders and civil society to businesses.
- PiC also worked with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India to develop a feedback format for the updated National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBCs), earlier known as National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environment and Economic Responsibilities of Businesses (NVGs).

- In 2016, Viraf was the UN Rapporteur for the first Asia Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights, convened by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, for speeding and scaling up awareness and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the region.
- PiC shepherded the Making Growth Inclusive project in 2015.
- Measuring Commitment to Responsible Business Toolkit is released in December 2015.
- 2013 was marked as the year of 'Corporate Engagement for Inclusive Growth in South Asia' study. This gap analysis study interviewed the various multistakeholders in order to understand why there was so much talk and not much action when it came to inclusive growth within the corporate sector.
- The year also saw the analysis and publication of CSR Spending as well as Business Responsibility Report (BRR) by BSE top 100 companies, which came from an impact study that the clause of CSR within New Companies Bill 2013 would have on the CSR landscape of the country.
- PiC was part of the 'Gender Parity in Corporate Leadership in India' project done in collaboration with Oxfam India where gender disparity in the higher echelons of the corporate sector were studied in order to understand the biases that disallow career advancement opportunities for women.
- In 2012, Viraf along with other experts, supported the European Commission to develop guidance for three industry sectors on the corporate responsibility to respect human rights under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as one of its priority actions in its recent Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility.
- In 2011, PiC became one of the core members of the drafting committee of the National Guidelines on Social, Environment and Economic Responsibilities of Business (NVGs) done under the patronage of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
- In 2009, PiC was the nodal agency that worked with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights, to organise the Consultation in Asia for further informing the 'Protect, Respect and Remedy: A Framework for Business and Human Rights'.
- In 2008, PiC initiated the conversation on BHR in India. It supported and participated in the Special Representative to Secretary General's (SRSG)

- mandate that proposed a conceptual and policy framework "to anchor the business and human rights debate, and to help guide all relevant actors. An International Consultation on Human Rights and Business funded by SRSG lead to the creation of South Asia Forum on Responsible Business (SAFoRB), which focused on Human Rights agenda in business, promoting ethical businesses through consultations.
- In 2006 PiC was one of the core Drafting member of Workplace Code of Conduct for the Bureau of Indian Standards. Along with other stakeholders, PiC collaborated to develop a certifiable Indian Standard on organisational accountability, rights, employees, health and safety.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

Partners in Change worked in collaboration with Praxis – Institute for Participatory Practices and National Alliance Group for Nomadic and De-notified Tribes (NAG DNT) to respond to the challenges in light of the COVID-19 pandemic at both community as well as policy level. This includes providing direct relief; linking individual donors and government systems to people in distress; institutional linkages, included connecting with local administration and NGOs to ensure safe travel of stranded migrants; and amplifying community voices by partnering for a webinar series.

### RELIEF DISTRIBUTION UPTO JUNE 2020 PROVIDING DIRECT RELIEF

All collaborating organisations had been working in some geographies and engaging with local partners. Based on need expressed from community members, relief was extended to households in various locations. As part of the relief measures, families have been identified with support of the local organisations and have been provided with ration kits.

#### **LINKING INDIVIDUAL DONORS TO 1000 PEOPLE**

PiC had linked individual donors to families in distress. As part of the initiative, the team designed a fund-raising initiative under the banner of National Alliance Group for Nomadic and Denotified Tribes, and in collaboration with other partners and linked around 190 families/groups of migrant labourers with donors providing Rs 2,500 per family or group as cash transfer to be used for meeting ration and healthcare-related needs. This has benefitted around 1000 individuals.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES**

Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices is part of the monitoring committee setup by the Government of Delhi for the South district for food distribution during the COVID-19 crisis in order to monitor the process. PiC supported Praxis in the collation of the demands and appeals, which were being received at the helplines. In total, 280 appeals have been received, comprising around 350 families involving more than 1,300 migrant workers. In another initiative, on the request of

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

the Subdivisional Magistrate, Vasant Vihar, a rapid assessment was conducted at one of the shelters wherein 66 residents were interviewed and a plan was submitted to the local administration.

### FACILITATING EXCLUDED AND AFFECTED PEOPLE TO VOICE THEIR CHALLENGES

Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices conceived of and hosts a webinar series that brings most excluded and vulnerable people to the discussion table to gauge the effect of COVID-19 on their lives. PiC has actively supported Praxis with this initiative, which aims to capture quality data through dipstick surveys and relevant quotes through the webinars. Between April and June 2020, 18 webinars have been organised bringing in participants from marginalised groups and identities including Denotified tribes, Homeless persons, Sex workers, Children with disabilities, Farmers and Informal sector workers, Gig economy workers and Migrant workers.

Based on the funds raised PiC was able to reach out to 7300 families (5 member family) which concludes to a population of 36500 individual persons. Relief was distributed in the form of dry ration kits comprising of rice, wheat, pulses, masala, tea, sugar, toiletries and sanitary napkins sufficient for a 5 member family for over a month. Through which PIC reached out to Denotified and Nomadic Tribal communities, Adivasis, Urban Poor, Garment Workers, Daily Wage Labourers, and Migrant Labourers, etc., in 14 districts across 7 states (Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Haryana and Rajasthan) in collaboration with 11 field based partner organizations and more than 50 volunteers.













## **PROGRAMMES**

Sustainable Development Goals have emerged as an important global framework to inform and guide activities across the world. Besides providing certain long-term goals, achievable by 2030, the indicators outlined in the light of the SDGs have been globally recognised as enablers for development. Since the SDGs came into existence, Partners in Change has aligned its focus areas with the goals, their targets and indicators.



PiC has focused its energies on building sustainable partnerships between the corporate sector and social development initiatives in India. PiC's goal has been to become an organisation that is recognised both by companies and civil societies as a reliable facilitator for building partnerships for social development. With 'Leave No One Behind' as its motto, PiC works towards mainstreaming the interests of the marginalised communities in the responsible business narratives. The aim is to develop and support an inclusive ecosystem, where various stakeholders coalesce to effectively address issues at the ground. To enable this PiC forged partnerships with government institutions such as Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA); business foundations and philanthropists such as Laudes Foundation, Faisal and Shabana Foundation; multi-stakeholder initiatives with Civil Society Organisations such as Oxfam, The Freedom Fund and Azim Premji Foundation.

#### MAINSTREAMING THE MARGINALISED



#### **Programme Focus:**

- Promoting livelihood opportunities of the Sabars
- Improving education and health among children

Sabars are one of the principal Munda speaking tribes widely spread over hill regions within Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. They are traditionally hunter-gatherer tribes communities inhabiting rugged hilly regions. PiC has been working with the Sabar community in Purulia to capacitate them through education programmes for children, including community learning centers, enrolment drives, etc, and enabling community artisans access government schemes like artisan cards. A handicraft association has also been set-up to facilitate direct market linkages and assist the artisans who are unable to sell products, by providing them a platform to sell their products. To provide more cohesiveness to the community, PiC also worked to develop the Paschim Banga Kheria Sabar Kalian Samiti, a community based organisation working at the local level on issues facing the community.

Community Learning Centers (CLCs) were opened in 10 locations in which 196 children have been enrolled; 191 children from 11 villages were enrolled in school, with nearly equal number of boys and girls; application for 140 artisan cards were submitted after training community members on filling the forms, of which 115 cards have been issued by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India; a handicraft association was established to provide artisans with direct linkage to the market; training on goat and fish farming was provided to community members; monthly malnutrition screening for children is carried out and kitchen gardening has been started at 6 centers.













# SUPPORTING FARMERS ON NATURAL FARMING







#### **Programme Focus:**

- Promoting rural livelihoods in Krishnagiri
- Enhancing organic farming as a means to sustainable agriculture

One of the key projects that the organisation is focusing on is the use of sustainable agriculture to empower marginalised communities. Since 2015, Faizal and Shabana Foundation has been running the 'Krishnagiri Development Project' in Krishnagiri District in Tamil Nadu. The project seeks to contribute towards the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities by empowering microlevel institutions like Self Help Groups (SHGs), youth and farmers clubs by actively working with them. It focuses on evolving deeper insights into the problems faced by these groups. Facilitating farmers' collectives, strengthening natural farming and linking farmers to various government schemes are at the centre of the project. The programme seeks to contribute towards the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities by empowering them into microlevel institutions such as SHGs, youth and farmers clubs.

The previous year involved the opening of the office, recruiting staff and doing a lot of groundwork leading to holding community consultations and facilitating farmers collectives. This year witnessed more informed planning and discussions that have enabled possible strategies in three key areas, including:

- (1) Linking the farmers with interested professionals from Bangalore / Hosur through Farm exposure visits and enabling interactions with farmers and families to understand farm economics,
- (2) Farm participation through short and long-term participation in select farming cycles or entire farming cycles or joint farming, and
- (3) Linking farmers with marketing opportunities and practicing sustainable agriculture.

Several strategic planning and Review meetings were held during the year through which a plan of action was developed involving the distribution of "Seeraga Samba seeds" and millets among farmers, promotion of seed banks and training on multi-cropping techniques. Subsequently, 20 Farmer Interest Groups, and 4 Farmer Producer groups were started to enhance the collectivisation process resulting in 11 tonnes of paddy harvested and marketed. The farmers involved in the project were linked to various departments such as Horticulture, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry to avail benefits of various schemes. On the contrary, the Adolescent Boy Groups & Adolescent Girls Group groups formed in the community were linked to "Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan" scheme to integrate the youth in several sports activities.









The Team and the farmers expressed solidarity as they participated in the Fair-Trade Alliance, Kerala's 9th Seed Fest, held in Kelakam, Kerala to understand, document, conserve, exchange and propagate traditional varieties of seed and farm animals across Kerala and also exchanged traditional seeds from Krishnagiri area with other farmers.

Since the programme had begun 15 Farmers Interest Groups and 3 Farmers Producers Groups with participation of both male and female farmers were formed and linked with the Agriculture Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu. Subsequently, during the current year through the programme farmers were collectivised and 5 FIGs and 1 FPG was formed which was also later linked to the Agriculture Department. Currently 20 FIGs and 4 FPGs are functioning with 355 farmers. The programme also has vastly focused empowering women through traditional agriculture and skill development as to which a total of 400 farmers (200 female and 200 male members) were formed into recognized collectives and were linked to the Agriculture Equipment Scheme to obtain Power Trillers & Paddy Planting during the month of December 2019.

Based on subsidised equipment scheme availed by the Government of Tamil Nadu equipment's worth Rs. 5,00,000 such as weeding machine, spraying machine, ploughing machinery and tractors were distributed to farmers in villages of Chendrayagoundanur, Karikalnatham and Periyapulivarisai. As a part of the Women Empowerment aspect, 94 women in 6 batches were trained during the year in the Tailoring Centre from which 25 of them were employed and 13 members received free machines as they were linked with the Social Welfare Department. Under the 'Cloth Bag Unit' a collective of 8 women jointly generated a profit of Rs14,400 with procurement and sales of 2,400 cloth bags.

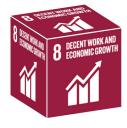
Through the holistic engagement with farmers the project established an initial working method of the "Community Seed Bank" titled as "Iyarkai Vivasaya Vithai Vangi" with the FIG members and as part of a pilot initiative, the farmers were oriented on how to procure traditional seed varieties of Paddy & Millet. Subsequently to inculcate the natural farming practices as a sustainable method, the farmers through the seed committee's purchased traditional variety of Seeraga Samba Paddy seeds (1,023 Kgs) and the same was distributed to 198 farmers out of 355 farmers in 20 FIGs. 140 Farmers prepared Seeraga Samba nurseries and 107 farmers transplanted the seeds saved to their respective fields. The seed bank method has benefited the farmers to procure the seeds easily. In order to conceptualize the work performed a new model titled the Farm Stay Programme - a Farmers' Business Model had been piloted with 10 farmers (in four FIGs) to add an additional revenue to the Ennegollu Panchayat. As the model has had a positive impact, the programme will further be extensively working on preparing a modus operandi including the functional and financial aspects.

# STRENGTHENING LABOUR RIGHTS IN GARMENT SECTOR













#### **Programme Focus:**

- Strengthening labour rights
- Reducing incidences of child labour and bonded labour in the garment supply chain

The prevalence of bonded labour is high in many districts of Tamil Nadu, among which Dindigul is one such area. To address the issues of bonded labour and to strengthen labour rights among mill workers in the district, community engagement in 20 villages was undertaken. The programme aims to reduce the number of individuals entering conditions of bonded labour and exploitation in spinning mills with a keen focus on adolescent girls and vulnerable populations such as migrant workers. In Dindigul district, spinning mill hubs are high around the Sanarpatti Block where tens of thousands of girls and young women have been recruited into employment schemes in the textile industry that have resulted in forced labour, excessive hours of work, gender parity often leading to the appalling effects on their mental and physical health.

During the year, the team engaged with 244 girls from AGG and 241 boys from ABG groups. Subsequently several CSG groups were formed in the target area with 285 members and 75 members in 7 SHG groups. 516 members were supported for availing various social security schemes and entitlements including the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Voter ID, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and Aadhar card.







Since the evolution of the programme, the team has reached out to adolescent girls and boys working in mills to address the issues of bonded labour and strengthen them by increasing their access to education. The CSG members have been actively engaged in local administrative elections where 6 members had been elected as Ward Members and 3 members were elected as Presidents. Apart from engagement with workers and adolescents, several studies were facilitated during the year. One such study was on the use of toilets in the target locations. The study was presented on World Toilet Day, at the Union Office in Sanarpatti amidst authorities from several departments. A pre-consultation workshop on Gender and Business was facilitated with 34 participants, which included 14 mill workers, 5 adolescent boys, 10 adolescent girls, and 5 village researchers on the working conditions and issues faced by women mill workers which were contributed as recommendations to the National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights (Zero Draft).

# PROMOTING A RESPONSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE GARMENT SUPPLY CHAIN











#### **Programme Focus:**

- Strengthening labour rights in the garment sector
- Advocating for elimination of child labour in supply chains
- Educating children on responsible apparel consumption

The global supply chain is constituted of millions of small, medium and large manufacturers in every region of the world. The programme aims to delve deeper to identify and improve the socio-economic conditions of labourers working across the value chain of cotton garments, mainly concentrated in the state of Tamil Nadu. On this note, PiC has been working on sensitising and empowering the workers in the garment sector from Dindigul and Tiruppur districts of Tamil Nadu.



The focal point has been to understand the overall picture of the value chain as a network and the labour welfare involved in its course of action. During its tenure, the programme identified the process flow in spinning and garment mills by mapping the process from procurement of raw materials (cotton) to the delivery of the product at its final destination as ready made garments.









As the supply chain segment in garment mills handles the entire flow of garments, a detailed study was effectuated to acquire more information on the departments involved in cotton farming, spinning, ginning and packaging, in order to identify the working conditions of the labour force in the supply chain including wages, nature of work, working shifts, challenges, and barriers. On this fundamental basis several case stories were collected and presented at the Gender and Business workshop at Dindigul.

Since the initiation of the programme several meetings and training sessions have been facilitated with the workers from textile and garment sectors from Dindigul district. The discussions have mainly encircled upon the issues faced in their working conditions where several sessions were organised with the group to develop best labour pratices. The programme involves workers from department of Cotton Farming, ginning, spinning, Knitting and Weaving, Dyeing, Printing and Production inclusive of Cutting, Tailoring, Ironing, Checking and Packaging. With an outreach to more than 130 members in Dindigul District the programme has been mainly focused on promoting awareness on various labour acts including the Minimum Wages Act, PF/ESI, Maternity Act, POSH and various best labour practices.

As the garment supply chain is vast - from cotton farming to stitching and packaging, the making of a ready-made garment involves a diverse range of skilled workers. As a part of working across the supply chain of garment workers learning from them about the skills, techniques and science of making school uniforms over a period, a small group of 30 workers were formed into a cohesive group called the Gethu Group. As an informal group Gethu is a workers' think tank who meet on timely basis to discuss the diverse issues faced by workers in this textile supply chain. PiC is currently the group's Secretariat and the groups has helped to develop a tremendous understanding on the making of school uniform from the lens of science as well as a social dimension. As an attempt to bring forth their voices and the challenges that they are facing, the group has also initiated 'Gethu Post' that unravels several issues faced by the Garment industry workers in their working conditions, health and livelihood during Covid-19. The Gethu Post aims to be a bilingual blog that caters to workers as well as those interested in Tamil Nadu garment industries. Several studies were made on different aspects such as wages, PF/ESI, menstruation, indebtedness, right to food, Government Relief entitlements during Covid-19 and the findings were represented in the Gethu Post. Further the programme has been outlined to extend in other districts such as Coimbatore, Karur, Tirrupur and Erode in Tamil Nadu to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the labourers in textile and garments and to understand the severity and changes in labour practices.

Additionally, the insights were also ulitlised to develop a school curriculum depicting various processes and steps involved in supply chain management among garment workers and to highlight the labour challenges. With a broader picture of enabling children into responsible consumption, PiC has been working in partnership with Laudes Foundation to promote Child Rights Friendly School Uniforms. With the aim of reducing the incidence of child labour in the school uniform supply chain in India, PiC has been engaging with children to develop a child-friendly curriculum on responsible business. Several consultations were organised by mobilising a community of school children around responsible consumption and by raising demand for child labour free production of school uniforms. To promote a child labour free supply chain, interventions were made in advocating with the Government to be a Model Procurer and encouraging businesses to move towards a transparent and diligent supply chain. The overall aim of the project is to reach 10,000 children over the next two years to help them learn about responsible consumption.

# BUILDING HUMAN RIGHTS NARRATIVE IN BUSINESS PRACTICES























#### **Programme Focus:**

- Promoting Public disclosure on responsible business
- Influencing educational curriculum
- Contributing to fora on business and human rights

Promotion of Human Rights into business practices lies at the core of all initiatives that PiC is working and conceiving. In February 2019, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) launched the Zero Draft of National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP), demonstrating its commitment towards integrating human rights in business practices. The MCA invited comments and discussions around this elaborate document to ensure the plan well captures the uniqueness of India's situation and the challenges facing it. Taking cognizance of

this distinctive opportunity, PiC and its partners worked towards incorporating the voices of the marginalised communities into the NAP. To this effect, consultations were organised in 5 cities including Guwahati, Delhi, Bhubaneshwar, Jaipur, and Bangalore to collate the voices of businesses, communities, Government functionaries, trade unions, civil societies, and academic institutions, to ensure that these unheard voices find the right platform for visibilising their issues. 250 participants from 200 different organisations representing interests of communities, workers, and vulnerable and marginalised groups participated in these consultations.

Besides the consultations, several workshops were held with students as it has been observed that students, particularly those who have graduated from schools, are an important constituency for informing a child-friendly plan. The basis of representing the voices of students was because they carry with them their experiences as a child while being a youth, looking forward to gaining new insights in business and other professional fields. With the motive of making opportunities available to them to make contributions to a plan that aims to integrate human rights concerns into business policies, systems, and strategies consultations were organised in 7 cities across India, including Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Dindugal, Haryana, Hyderabad, and Guwahati. The idea behind these consultations was to sensitise and empower students about the significance of Human Rights in Business and the NAP development process, and to ensure that their views and concerns find adequate space within the NAP. In the past year PiC has held more than 22 consultations, collecting feedback and voices of stakeholders ranging from students to academicians, labourers to human rights activists.







# COMBATING ADDICTION AMONG CHILDREN AND MAKING THE INDUSTRY ETHICAL





#### **Programme Focus:**

- Utilising CSR as a public narrative to promoting unethical products
- Influencing educational curriculum
- Contributing to for a on business and human rights

Research done by PiC demonstrated that the tobacco industry uses surrogate advertising to influence children into addiction. Placements of advertisements at kiosks, diversification into FMCG and stationary products, are some of the ways that not only helps tobacco companies in brand building, but also creates visibility among children. Social media is another major tool being used to influence children and youth. Being easily accessible, companies are using various social media platforms to their full advantage to disseminate information about their products, which is helping them gain popularity among their targeted age groups. The primary objective of the project was to help strengthen The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (COTPA) as an instrument for protecting rights of child.

In this context, the organisation facilitated a research based on the premise that using CSR and the network of organisations, the industry is changing the public narrative about their companies and its activities. Under the project, PiC developed a well-researched document for dissemination with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Government of India (MoHFW) for awareness about how the companies are trying to improve their public image by showcasing themselves to be ethical and responsible by working on social issues as a part of CSR. This research study centers on the intersection of politics, media and social responsibility which will comprehend the involvement of various groups supporting the cause of the industry.

#### PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE FINANCING



#### **Programme Focus:**

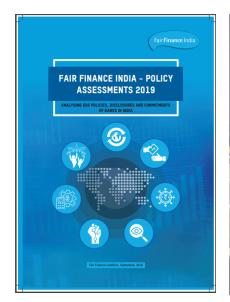
- Encouraging sustainable banking and financing by undertaking policy assessments
- Understanding responsible financing and readiness of banks to adopt sustainable strategies

Financial institutions as custodians of a large sum of the public's money, have considerable wider impacts not just to the good of the economy, but also to the prosperity of the society that the economy is intended to serve, and to the environment on which we all depend. To improve this situation and make the financial institutions more transparent and accountable, PiC aimed to reach out to banks to make them aware of the status of responsible financing in India and give them an overall picture of where the banks stand in this regard.

In the past year, PiC undertook policy assessments of a sample of eight Indian banks (public and private), across 10 themes across Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) which were drawn from existing international standards and frameworks and are well aligned with India's National Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Finance as well as National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct.

- 1. Environment Nature and Climate Change;
- 2. Social Labour Rights, Human Rights, Gender Equality, Financial Inclusion, and Arms;
- 3. Governance Transparency and Accountability, Corruption and Tax.

The assessment served as a baseline that enables the Indian banking sector to prepare itself for facing and addressing challenges around sustainability and





responsible financing. It also provides an opportunity for Indian banks to assume the leader's role in transforming the Indian banking sector to set a benchmark for sustainable, responsible and fair finance.

Additionally, other interventions and engagements undertaken throughout the period. One-on-one engagements were enabled with various banks including SBI, Yes Bank, HDFC Bank, and bodies such as the Indian Banking Association. The idea behind these meetings were not only to understand from the financial institutions about their understanding of responsible financing but also to explore their readiness to adopt sustainable strategies as a part of their core operations. The response was positive from all the institutions, almost all of them emphasised the need for a regulatory push in this area. Apart from this, other major events were executed in the last quarter of 2019 including:

- 1. A webinar was facilitated on Integrating the ESG Criteria for Indian Banks as there was a need to facilitate a knowledge-sharing platform to help the banks, other financial intermediaries as well as consumers comprehend ESG, and to bridge the knowledge gap surrounding ESG and its practical implementation.
- 2. Adding to the addendum a session was organised at the Inclusive Finance India Summit which is annually organised by ACCESS Development. The session titled 'The Growing Significance of Sustainable Finance' aimed at bringing together various actors working in financial inclusion to discuss their respective roles on what it takes for policymakers and regulators to enable more sustainable finance, and for banks and other financial institutions to integrate the principles of ESG and achieve it.

# SUPPORTING THE NHRC WITH INFORMATION ON MARGINALISED WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES









#### **Programme Focus:**

- Understanding the functioning of the grievance redressal mechanism in companies
- Analysing public disclosure of the grievances addressed by companies

Knowledge sharing and dissemination about issues of Business' abuse of Human Rights is a critical step towards initiating discussions around the need for a more radical approach towards addressing these violations. As a part of the process, a comprehensive secondary research was conducted on 5 publicly available company cases in the domain of accountability, labour rights, gender welfare, employees' well-being and consumer value, to understand the response systems companies have for grievance redressal mechanisms vis-à-vis human rights violations. For the study, case studies of 5 different companies from different domains such as FMCG, hydropower, investment, tobacco, and extractive industry were analysed. The cases and violations, therein, were studied from the lens of how the companies addressed and disclosed the issue in the public domain and the same was presented at a meeting with NHRC in February 2020. The project aimed at developing case studies with research based evidence, that can be used by the state, nonstate actors and corporates for mobilising efforts to institutionalise systems that address issues faced within and outside workspace by the companies.

In order to build research based evidence to understand and identify human rights violations by businesses, PiC conducted a comprehensive secondary research for the NHRC on 5 publicly available company cases in the domain of accountability, labour rights, gender welfare, employees' well-being and consumer value, to understand the response systems companies have for grievance redressal pertaining to these issues. This study can be used by state, nonstate actors and corporates for mobilising efforts to institutionalise systems to address issues faced within and outside the workspace by the companies.

# ORGANISATIONAL RETREAT







The five-day organisational retreat witnessed knowledge sharing, mutual learning, reflection, evaluation and team building. The organisational development activities examined how individuals place themselves within the organisation and what aspirations and expectations they have from them, and vice-versa. Skill building sessions centred around building upon the basics of technical expertise in using Microsoft power point, Excel and Teams effectively. Discussions on contemporary issues ranged from water rights and climate change to mental health, child protection and inclusion from the lens of different marginalised communities like Dalits and DNTs. The sessions were held in the form of a panel discussion, the idea behind which was to understand issues and debates significant for India and how the organisation was placed within those debates. The retreat also has sessions casteism, environmental crisis, migration of labour and destruction of culture, and a strong community ethos that aims to overcome these challenges.

# **PIC TEAM**











#### **EKTA VERMA**

#### **Programme Assistant**

Ekta has been with Partners in Change since September 2017. Her area of research includes corporate disclosures, including for the India Responsible Business Index and the Status of Corporate Responsibility in India Report. She also supports the communications unit of Partners in Change. She is currently working on understanding tobacco companies' relationship with multiple stakeholders and is also undertaking research and programmatic work on responsible banking and finance.

#### **GEETHANJALI BALAKRISHNAIAH**

#### **Development Trainee**

Geethanjali has an academic background in Development Management. She has been involved in many projects focused on informal workers, health and decent work etc. Her key competencies are documentation and training, and she has been involved in communications on multiple mediums such as digital story-telling and preparing Information Education Communication (IEC) materials. She also supports the communications unit of Partners in Change.

#### JHUMKI DUTTA

#### **Project Manager**

Jhumki has been working with PiC since 2016. She brings to the organisation her skills in engaging with businesses and government entities for responsible business practices and advocating for public disclosure. An able communicator, she is at ease working with communities at the grassroots level as well as in presenting their issues at different fora. She is currently supporting our work on Business and Human Rights and research on tobacco companies and the pathways they follow in engaging with multiple stakeholders.

#### **MANOJ KUMAR**

#### Office Assistant

Manoj supports the administration and finance team as an office assistant in their day-today activities. He looks after office logistics. His key interest area is in issues of disaster management, especially in the context of hill communities.

#### **NAROTTAM JOSHI**

#### **Senior Finance Officer**

Narottam joined PiC in 2019. He has an experience of more than 10 years in the

development sector. His key roles include financial management, budget monitoring and MIS development. He also periodically reviews accounting guidelines, policies, and procedures, and suggests amendments as necessary for improving accuracy, risk control, and timely reporting.

#### PRADEEP NARAYANAN

#### **Director**

Pradeep has been leading Partners in Change since June 2014. He has been guiding PiC to continue to be an organization that works on integrating human rights in business operations – especially the supply chain. As principal investigator for the India Business Responsibility Index, he supports the organisation's research into public disclosures on responsible business.

#### **PRAGYA SHAH**

#### **Programme Assistant**

Pragya, a lawyer by training, has been working with Partners in Change since February 2017. She has contributed to projects related to the pharmaceutical sector; gender and decent work; and corporate responsibility. She is currently looking at safe migration among Sabar communities and issues of labour rights and practices.

#### **SOWMIYA KANNAN**

#### **Development Trainee**

Sowmiya holds her Masters in Development Management. She is competent in community engagement, participatory research, impact assessment, data analysis, documentation and training. She has previous experience of working on a study related to the level of social acceptability pertaining to e-Kranti among general public. She has contributed to projects related to the gender and decent work; and issues of labour rights and practices and corporate responsibility. Her area of interest lies with Labour Empowerment and Digital Transformation.

#### **STANLEY JOSEPH**

#### **Programme Manager**

Stanley, who is based in Chennai, joined Partners in Change in April 2017. He has organised consultations with government, civil society and businesses on labour practices and has facilitated research on the same during his 17-year work experience. He is currently supporting work related to sustainable agriculture and organic farming in Tamil Nadu, along with engagements on labour rights.

#### **VIRAF MEHTA**

#### Advisor

Viraf led Partners in Change between 2002 and 2010, before rejoining the team as advisor. A social anthropologist by training, he has been at the forefront of Corporate Social Responsibility in India since 1988. He is instrumental in making different policy shifts, including that of National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business. He was earlier with Tata Group between 1986-2000, and has served on several International and National Committees, including the Bureau of Indian Standards, the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs and the erstwhile Planning Commission. He is one of India's leading voices for a national business and human rights framework.

# KRISHNAGIRI DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TEAM

#### **GOWTHAMI**

#### **Village Level Worker**

Gowthami is working as Village level worker and supporting cluster coordinator in organizing farmer's collective's meetings, data collection and organic farming related activities.

#### SHANTHI

#### **Tailoring Teacher**

Shanthi is the tailoring teacher since 2018 and she is involved in implementing the Women Empowerment Initiative by teaching tailoring course to women in the community. She also supports them in stitching bags and their marketing.

#### **SHANMUGAPRIYA**

#### Admin Accounts cum MIS Assistant

Shanmugapriya supports the project with documenting and maintenance of office administration documents and financial support with project implementation.

#### **RANI**

#### **Cluster Coordinator**

Rani has experience in community mobilization and project implementation and has been working with the team since 2018. Currently she is in-charge of 4 villages: Ennegollpudhur, Ennegollu, Vinayagapuram and Kakkanpuram.

#### **SIVAKUMAR**

#### **Team Leader**

Sivakumar has been working as the Cluster Coordinator in KDP since the past four years. Currently as the programme lead he is incolved in community mobilization, project planning and implementation across various sectors.

#### **MAHALAKSHMI**

#### Office Assistant

Mahalakshmi supports the team as an office assistant in their day to-day activities. She looks after office logistics and caterings.

#### **VAANAVIL PROGRAMME TEAM**

#### **DHANA LAKSHMI**

#### **Field Coordinator**

Dhana Lakshmi has 10 years of teaching experience 3 years prior experience of working with mill workers. She is currently the field coordinator for 7 Villages: Kurumbapatti, Nochiodaipatti, Sanarpatti, Thavasimadai, Kosavapatti, Velampatti and Viralipatti.

#### GOMATHI

#### **Field Coordinator**

Gomathi has 3 years of prior working experience with mill workers. She is currently the field coordinator for Ayyapatti, Avilipatti, Ellapatti, Kaverchettipatti, Konapatti, Pethampatti and Sedipatti.

#### MICHAEL PACKIA SELVAKANI

#### **Admin Accounts cum MIS Officer**

Selvakani with 8 years' experience in finance joined Vaanavil in 2019. She maintains all office administration documents and provides financial support regarding project implementation

#### **RAJALAKSHMI**

#### Field Coordinator

Rajalakshmi has 2 years' of experience as a Marketing Executive and 3 years of working experience with mill workers. She is currently the field coordinator for 6 Villages: Kallupatti, Kulakaranpatti, Pannaipatti, Pugalaipatti, Rajakapatti and Siluvathur.

#### **SIBIJA BENSIGAR**

#### **Project Manager**

Sibija Bensigar joined Vaanavil in 2019 with Social work as her background. She has an experience of 4 years in Community Development Project planning, implementation, and monitoring through community-based organization. She has experience of working in relevant project for 1 year.

# **GOVERNING BODY**

| Name              | Professional<br>Engagement   | Gender | Position          |
|-------------------|--|--------|-------------------|
| Javid Chowdhury   | Social Service and<br>Former Civil Servant   | Male   | President         |
| Jyotsna Bhatnagar | UN World Food,<br>Private Sector<br>Partnerships<br>Programme                              | Female | Secretary         |
| Nicole Menezes    | Co-Founder and<br>Director, Leher  | Female | Member            |
| Pramod John       | Executive Director,<br>Prakruthi   | Male   | Member            |
| Ravi Narayanan    | Chair of the Asia<br>Pacific Water Forum   | Male   | Member            |
| T.V. Ramanathan   | Professor and Head,<br>Department of<br>Statistics, Savitribai<br>Phule Pune<br>University | Male   | Member            |
| Pradeep Narayanan | Director, PIC  | Male   | Ex-Officio Member |

None of the governing board members are related. The minutes of the meetings of the governing board have been documented and circulated. The governing board approves programmes, budgets, the annual activity report and audited financial statements. A board rotation policy exists and is being practiced. The governing board ensures the organisation's compliance with existing laws and regulations.

## **GOVERNANCE**

#### **Human Resource Policy**

PiC has a clear and well-structured Human Resource Policy, which informs team members about their rights and obligations. The HR policy documents current organisational practices and norms in a standardized format for user-friendly reference. It contains the key policies, goals, benefits and expectations of PiC. The document is seen as evolving and dynamic and is open to additions and amendments according to the changing needs of the organisation and its staff. The HR policy also included specific policies such as:

- a. Diversity Policy (Affirmative Action/Disabilities/HIV-AIDS)
- b. Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy
- c. Grievance Redressal System
- d. Whistleblower Policy

## Compliance with Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redresser) Act 2013 – An update

An extensive session on Gender and Sexual Harassment was held during the Retreat, where the organisation's policies were analysed from a gender lens. Various points ranging from issues travel timings to working hours; creating policy for working from home to provision for paternity leaves were discussed and various action points were put in place.

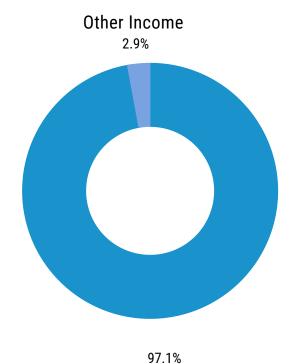
Additionally, various aspects of harassment were also deliberated upon. The team members discussed perspectives on what constituted sexual harassment. They were also informed about the internal and external members of the ASH committee and the mechanisms in place to record a complaint.

No incidents of sexual harassment were reported in the financial year.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

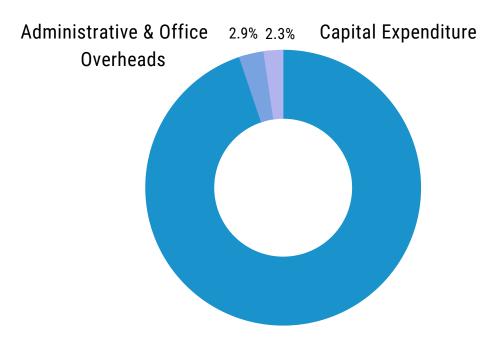
#### **SOURCES OF FUNDING**

| Sources of Funding (INR)                                |            |      |            |       |  |  |
|---|------------|------|------------|-------|--|--|
| Activity  | 2019-2020  | %    | 2018-2019  | %     |  |  |
| Income raised through<br>Grants                         | 36,019,695 | 97.1 | 7,999,000  | 50.38 |  |  |
| Income from Interest                                    | 1.057,221  | 2.9  | 497,000    | 3.13  |  |  |
| Income raised from<br>Research and Capacity<br>Building | -          | -    | 7,366,000  | 46.40 |  |  |
| Other Income  | -          | -    | 14,000     | 0.09  |  |  |
| GRAND TOTAL   | 37,076,916 | 100  | 15,876,000 | 100   |  |  |



#### **DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENSES**

| Distribution of Expenses (INR)       |            |      |            |      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------|------------|------|--|--|
| Activity                             | 2019-2020  | %    | 2018-2019  | %    |  |  |
| Programme Expenses                   | 22,164,508 | 94.8 | 9,721,000  | 89.6 |  |  |
| Administrative & Office<br>Overheads | 675,937    | 2.9  | 1,049,000  | 9.7  |  |  |
| Capital Expenditure                  | 544,864    | 2.3  | 83,000     | 0.8  |  |  |
| GRAND TOTAL                          | 23,385,309 | 100  | 10,853,000 | 100  |  |  |



# PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS



Azim Premji Foundation



Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids



Corporate Responsibility Watch



Fair Finance India



Faizal and Shabana Foundation



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Foreign and Commonwealth Office



Laudes Foundation



National Alliance Group for De-notified and Nomadic Tribes







Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices



The Freedom Fund



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