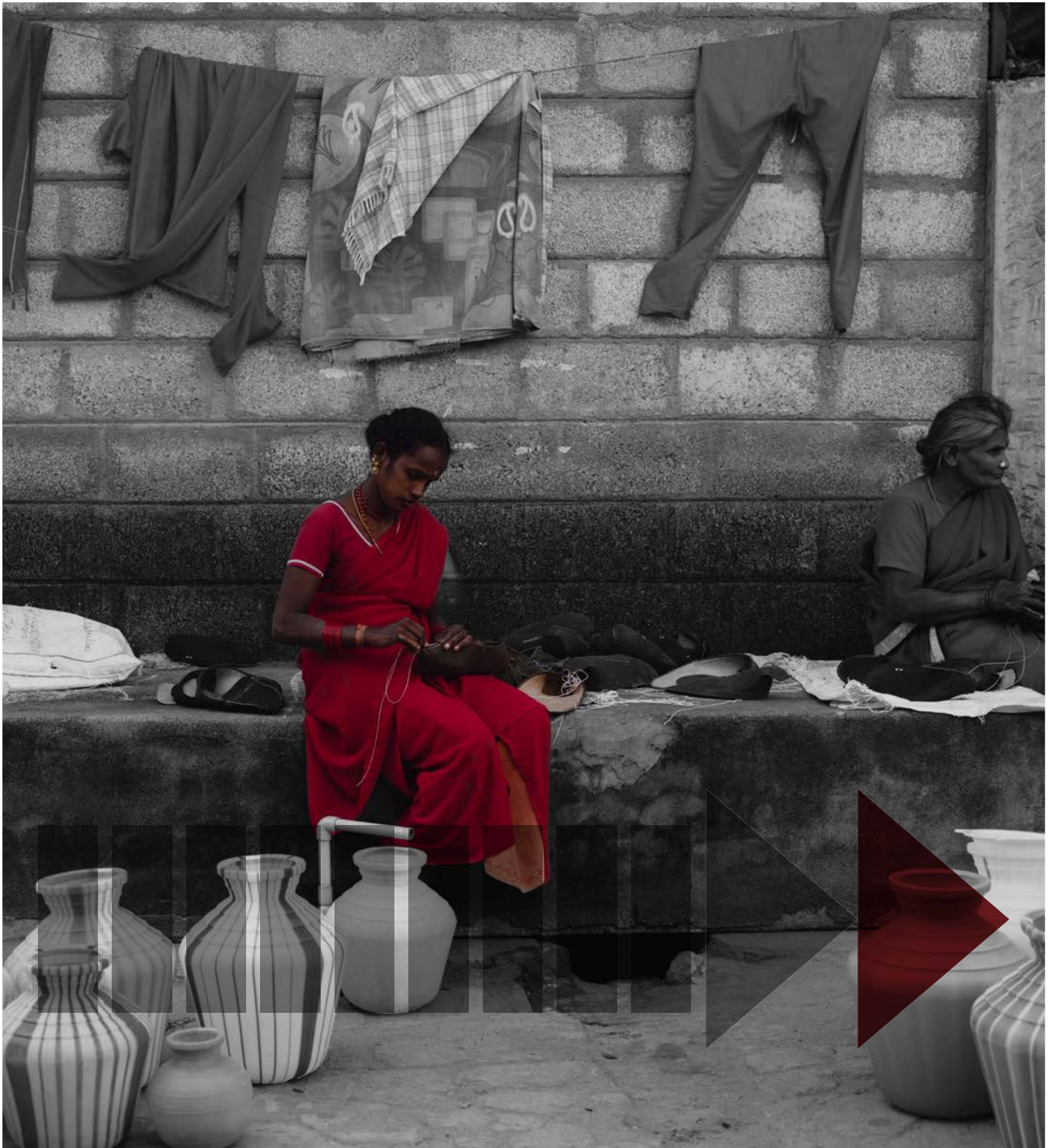


CIVIDEP INDIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



DECENT WORK & CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY



DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Dear friends,

We often underestimate the impact a dedicated group of individuals can make by showing up daily to change a small part of the world. That was my first thought when I went through this Annual Report documenting Cividep India's journey in 2023.

I am very happy and grateful to note that Cividep hasn't wavered from its deep-rooted commitment to ensure decent work and corporate accountability since its inception in 2000. For two decades, our mission has been steadfast: striving to uphold the rights of workers and fostering responsible decision-making among corporate entities.

The last year has been about charting new paths while reaffirming our commitment to improving workers' rights. From immersive strategy sessions to crucial team expansions and securing vital funding, I am humbled and thrilled to share our progress with you.

Education, leadership training, and solidarity served as our conduits, enabling us to reach hundreds of workers while creating knowledge centered on their needs and grim realities. We showcased the impact of policies and

business practices on workers' lives, effectively communicating these realities to influential stakeholders, to effect change. We celebrated a significant milestone, marking a decade of supporting leather sector workers, while furthering our engagements in electronics, garments, and Business and Human Rights.

Our transformative journey was strengthened by the invaluable support of our partners. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Board for their unwavering support and guidance throughout.

Since assuming the role of Executive Director in 2020, I have aimed to instill stability and continuity in Cividep's endeavours. It became evident that organisational clarity was paramount. As a team, we embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning exercise, allowing us to introspect, realign, and reaffirm our commitment.

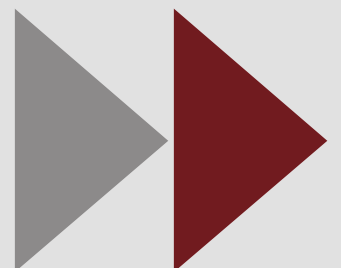
This exercise reinforced my dedication to forging deeper ties with worker communities spanning various geographies and industries, empowering them to access safe and secure workplaces. With this newfound certainty and refreshed vocabulary, the team is creating novel pathways to realise this vision.

Undoubtedly, there were moments of uncertainty, yet looking back, I see how our collective efforts have provided unwavering support to workers, gradually enhancing their lives. Though these steps may seem small, I am excited by the possibilities that lie ahead.

Deepika Rao

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2023: CHARTING NEW PATHS & CONSOLIDATING WORK

Cividep, born in the wake of India's adoption of economic liberalization, came into being in the year 2000 anticipating the challenges looming over the workforce entering global supply chains. Founded on the concern for the welfare of these young Indians, Cividep has since aimed to ensure workers' rights and corporate accountability in India's export-oriented industries.

As we mark the milestone of another year in our journey, Cividep stands at the intersection of reflection and progress.



Home-based leather workers hand-stitch shoes for global brands at low pay. Cividep works to improve awareness levels of such workers in leather, garments, electronics, and plantations sectors

From our inception, our focus has been on positively impacting the lives of low-wage workers across export-oriented sectors: garment, electronics, leather, and plantations. Our approach is distinct — combining hands-on fieldwork to intimately understand ground realities, and rigorous research to drive policy change and improve working conditions.

The year 2023 witnessed significant strides as Cividep strengthened its foundation. Our internal framework underwent a meaningful transformation, centering on Worker Engagement as the fulcrum of our activities. The strategic planning exercise delineated five key pillars — Worker Engagement, Organisational Learning,

Worker-centric Knowledge Creation, Strategic Communication, and Fundraising — that underpin our multifaceted engagements.

OUR APPROACH

Areas: Garments, leather, and electronics industries, coffee and tea plantations, & business and human rights



Worker Engagement

Educate workers on rights & entitlements

Build solidarity among workers across industries & geographies

Knowledge Creation

Build knowledge on workers' experiences & the impact of policies on them

In collaboration with academic institutions

Strategic Communication

Effective & targeted communication on workers' issues to inform, influence, & effect change

In addition, strategic hires strengthened our programmatic initiatives and domestic fundraising endeavours.

Looking ahead, our sights are set on growing Worker Engagement and solidarity across geographies and industries, and we are armed with a renewed strategic plan that will guide us for the next five years to improve the lives and working conditions of young Indians.

2023 SNAPSHOTS



FASHIONING CHANGE

We started working with multinational fashion brands to enhance working conditions in their Karnataka and Tamil Nadu factories. Focus is on improving health & safety standards, and fostering dialogue between workers and management



CHAMPIONING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

In partnership with UNDP India, we trained development practitioners on national and international Business and Human Rights tools, empowering them to seek remedy against labour and environmental rights violations by businesses



HELPLINE FOR WORKERS

We launched the Chennai Facilitation Centre of India Labourline to provide legal aid and mediation for informal and low-wage workers



FUTURE FORWARD

Engaged in fruitful discussions, debates, and crafted a 5-year strategic plan, charting the course of our organisation's impactful journey ahead!



RESEARCH MILESTONE

Cividep teamed up with Cardiff University to compile and study a databank of 600 workplace grievances as reported by Bengaluru garment workers. The Operationalising Labour Rights research study explores access to remedy for violations around wages and working conditions.



LEADING WITH LESSONS IN RIGHTS & LEADERSHIP

Low-wage workers in the manufacturing sector, particularly the youth, minorities, Dalits, migrants, and women, are often first-time entrants into industrial employment. As they are largely unfamiliar with industrial relations and labour rights, Cividep tries to bridge the gap:

Education & Capacity Building: Conducted 200+ study circles, training sessions, & workshops to inform workers about rights and entitlements.

Solidarity & Leadership Building: Held workshops to cultivate peer learning and solidarity among workers, to safeguard their interests collectively.

Aiding Workplace Issues: Supported in dealing with various issues - accessing social security benefits to mediation support. Our 400+ interventions addressed the immediate needs of workers.

Highlights

Uniting Bengaluru's Garment Workers: Cividep and its local partners, hosted two significant worker gatherings through a project supported by Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives. More than 800 workers took part in one conclave and presented a petition to the



Garment workers participate in a Worker Conclave organised in Bengaluru by Cividep and local partner organisations

CM's office against the recent worker-unfriendly amendments to the Karnataka Factories Act.

Solving Grievances: Cividep has always supported workers in resolving issues with their Provident Fund, Employee State Insurance, pension, and registration with welfare boards. This year, it stepped up these efforts through the establishment of the Chennai Facilitation Centre of the India Labourline (a national labour helpline), which settled several cases related to wages, social security, and compensations.



10 Years In Ambur

In South India's leather export hub of Ambur, Tamil Nadu, Cividep recently celebrated 10 years of empowering workers. Our Worker Resource Center set up in 2013 has become a hub for home-based workers and factory and tannery employees to learn and advocate for themselves. Recent highlights include women home-based workers successfully promoting state health insurance among their peers, and shoe factory workers collectively seeking and being sanctioned a new dispensary in the district, supported by the ESI (team in pic).



WORKER ENGAGEMENT

INTERVENTIONS AND IMPACT



OUTREACH

970 VISITS/MEETINGS

Encouraged workers' participation through:

- Village visits
- Factory gate visits
- Community visits
- Puppet shows



STUDY CIRCLES

107 SESSIONS

Greater awareness through sessions on:

- Labour Rights
- Social Security
- Health
- Gender
- Working conditions



TRAINING SESSIONS

68 WORKSHOPS

Training for workers facilitated by external experts, including legal and medical professionals and government officials



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

7 SESSIONS

- Leadership & communication
- Collective bargaining & advocacy
- Grievance Mechanisms



WORKER SUPPORT

396 GRIEVANCES RESOLVED **231 COUNSELING SESSIONS**

- Grievance resolution/Mediation for wage theft, social security & accident claims, unfair work
- Mental health & counselling support for garment workers



WORKERS' VOICES ECHO IN RESEARCH

Through worker-focused research, Cividep aims to influence the conversation about labour rights and corporate responsibility. It creates knowledge that resonates with government and industry leaders, civil society representatives, media, and the public.

Highlights

Human Rights in Fashion: Developed an HRDD framework with the support of the [STITCH consortium](#), from a CSO perspective. It was informed by surveys of garment workers in India's garment hubs - Bengaluru, Tiruppur, and Delhi-NCR. HRDD aids enterprises in managing adverse human rights impacts of their business decisions.

Gender and Work: Cividep's research shed light on the gendered challenges female garment workers face in Karnataka. It revealed the cyclical nature of social and economic challenges, emphasising how children of garment workers inherit their parents' economic struggles.

Health Challenges of Women Garment Workers: Cividep's latest occupational health research revealed how the working conditions of women garment workers



Cividep team has in-depth discussions with garment workers on their health vulnerabilities

are closely linked to health issues. The findings of [this study](#), which was supported by the [MAP project](#), have led to a collaborative effort with a leading brand to create better health and safety guidelines in their Tamil Nadu factories.

Decent Leather Project: [The report](#) on the Ambur leather industry's working conditions highlighted how workers' struggles concerning wages and working conditions continue despite the business recovery post-pandemic.



Social Life of Grievances

The [Operationalizing Labour Rights \(OLR\) project](#), a collaborative study by Cardiff University and Cividep, led to the collection and analysis of close to 600 workplace grievances. The project uncovered the obstacles workers encountered while seeking justice for labour rights violations. The OLR research findings were recently presented by Prof. Jean Jenkins and Cividep Founder Gopinath Parakuni (in pic). The findings have contributed to the third phase of the UN OHCHR Accountability and Remedy Project (ARP III).



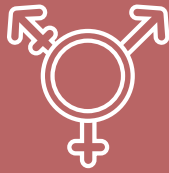
WORKER-CENTRIC KNOWLEDGE CREATION

RESEARCH STUDIES AND IMPACT



OPERATIONALISING LABOUR RIGHTS

Preliminary findings contribute to the UN OHCHR Accountability & Remedy Project



LOOKING THROUGH THE GENDER LENS

Study shows that Ready Made Garment (RMG) tailoring and allied jobs fail to uplift, and garment workers' children remain low-wage workers



MAPPING HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS

Developed a Human Rights Due Diligence Framework for global garment value chains, from a civil society perspective



DEEP DIVING INTO WOMEN'S HEALTH

Team developing health guidelines for Indian supplier factories of an international brand



EXAMINING LABOUR BEHIND LEATHER

Findings being used to seek better working conditions with brands and multi-stakeholder initiatives



INFLUENCING THE INFLUENCERS

Through Strategic Communication, Cividep strives to amplify its worker-centric knowledge and help bring about change across global value chains. The team has successfully engaged a diverse array of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, academics, industry bodies, trade unions, government authorities, the judiciary, the media, and the public.

Highlights

Health and Safety in Factories: Under the support of the MAP project, a civil society group was constituted to create gender-sensitive health and safety protocols in garment and shoe factories in India and Indonesia.

Promoting Responsible Business: Partnering with UNDP India, Cividep held workshops with grassroots civil society organisations, informing them about national and global guidelines and instruments related to business and human rights. These guidelines enable access to remedy in cases involving violations of workers' and environmental rights by companies. Additionally, a handbook on Business and Human Rights instruments is being developed in Indian languages to create more awareness.



Cividep's Kaliyaperumal Narayanan (in centre) at a consultation organised by the Tamil Nadu government on state health insurance

Facilitating Workplace Dialogue: Cividep has been conducting dialogue workshops in garment factories to improve communication between workers and management.

Digital Narratives: To reach a wider audience, a microsite showcasing Cividep's research and insights on the garment industry is being developed, underlining the lived experiences and challenges faced by garment workers.



Spotlight On Gender Research

India's garment industry employs more than 12 million, predominantly unskilled female workers. Despite its economic contribution, the sector faces issues of low wages, exploitation, and job insecurity. Dr. Supriya RoyChowdhury, in collaboration with Cividep, highlights this in a recent study, supported by the STITCH consortium. This [insightful essay](#) in Deccan Herald newspaper by Dr. Supriya (visiting professor, NIAS) and Cividep's Rekha Chakravarthi (in pic) delves into the findings, demonstrating how gendered labour precipitates a crisis in social reproduction.



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

INTERVENTIONS AND IMPACT



CIVIL SOCIETY SOLIDARITY BUILDING

Engaged with **200+** grassroots social organisations through trainings on Business & Human Rights, and industry roundtables to build solidarity.



STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Presented research findings with **14+** Brand and initiated stakeholder dialogue to improve working conditions with **4** international fashion brands



SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORKS

Supported **10+** International networks including OECD Watch, ANROEV, Clean Clothes Campaign, Good Electronics, Electronics Watch



MEDIA OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Facilitated coverage of working conditions in industrial clusters in **17+** media articles
The Cividep newsletter reached 800+ subscribers;
social media posts reached 2000+ followers



GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Last year, Cividep undertook various initiatives to improve workplace culture and efficiency. These included adopting new technology to streamline administrative processes, fast-tracking strategic planning, making crucial hires, organising team meetings to unite remote employees, and providing regular mental health support for all staff.

Ways To Work Together: Cividep organised quarterly team meetings uniting staff from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to discuss project progress and collaborative actions. Sectoral and capacity-building sessions on field outreach, communication practices, and strategic planning were held during these two-day meetings. A residential meeting held in Ambur in Tamil Nadu gave several employees a chance to understand how the local team helped improve the working conditions of the leather sector workers.

A 5-Year Plan: The team held consultations with experts from civil society and academia, and conducted intensive in-house workshops as part of a Strategic Planning process. These helped to understand the necessary organisational changes that Cividep could undertake to improve efficiencies. The final document, which is under preparation, will set the direction for the next five years.

Crucial Hires: Expanded the team by adding Director (Programmes), Lead (Fundraising), field officers, and a field coordinator. Also saw the departures of Manager (Programmes), project coordinator, and field coordinator.

Board Alignment: Board member Suhasini Singh exited. The organisation will undertake a board assessment and development process before appointing new members.

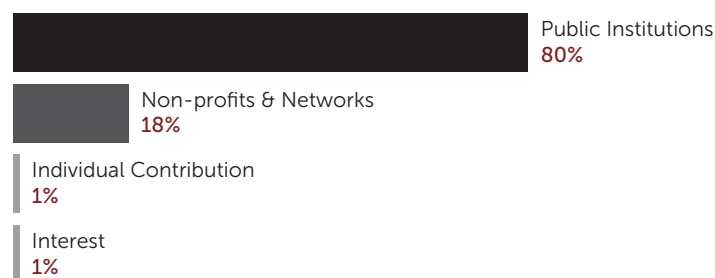
New Processes: Initiated the adoption of Enterprise Resource Planning software to digitalize HR and admin processes. Efforts are on to integrate attendance and leave processes via the new system.

Awareness Session: Reconstituted the internal committee for investigating workplace sexual harassment complaints. The committee also conducted a PoSH awareness session for employees.

Health Support: The organisation held regular mental health sessions for all its employees, including group support and work sensitivity sessions. The session durations went up in 2023. Cividep also held support sessions on the challenges of fieldwork, and care work in personal spheres.

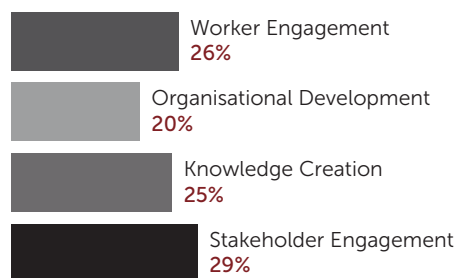
Financials

INCOME



TOTAL - 40207045

EXPENSES



TOTAL - 51674117

(Project cycles follow calendar year while overall data is of 2022-23 financial year)



COLLABORATORS & PARTNERS





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and supporters!**

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