



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



OVERVIEW

Centre for Tribal and Rural Development (CTRD) Trust founded in 1988, the Centre for Tribal and Rural Development (CTRD) Trust is a prominent voluntary organization dedicated to the welfare and advancement of marginalized tribal and rural communities in the Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu, India. With over three decades of committed service, CTRD Trust has played a pivotal role in enhancing livelihoods, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and housing, while empowering communities through sustainable income-generation initiatives and the establishment of Self-Help Groups, including those for differently-abled individuals.

The inception of CTRD Trust was driven by a profound recognition of the severe socio-economic challenges faced by indigenous tribal and rural populations in the remote regions of the Nilgiris. These communities were grappling with a lack of fundamental necessities, including access to clean water, adequate housing, sanitation facilities, food security, healthcare services, education opportunities, and sustainable livelihoods. In response to these pressing issues, CTRD Trust was established by founder R.S. Ranganathan with the mission to facilitate comprehensive development and empower the Adivasi and rural poor people through targeted, community-centric programs.

Message from Founder



Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

The year 2025–26 has been a remarkable journey of resilience, collaboration, and transformation. What began as a commitment to bring renewable energy and dignity to tribal communities has evolved into a comprehensive movement addressing safety, livelihood, health, and empowerment. From solar street lights protecting villages located near forest corridors to biogas systems reducing complete firewood dependence, each initiative reflects our belief that sustainable development must be practical, inclusive, and community-driven.

This year, we witnessed the strength of partnerships local communities working hand in hand with international supporters and corporate volunteers. Women stepped forward as leaders through Self-Help Groups, tribal families embraced new livelihood models such as coffee cultivation and dairy development, and adolescent girls gained confidence through health and life skills training. These are not just projects they are pathways toward long-term resilience and self-reliance.

Our progress would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our global partners, volunteers, donors, and the tribal communities who trust us. As we move forward, we remain committed to building climate-resilient, empowered, and self-sustaining tribal communities where clean energy, dignity, and opportunity are accessible to all.

With gratitude and renewed determination,

RS. RANGANATHEN

Founder & Managing trustee

VISION

Empowered and self-sufficient tribal communities with improved living conditions without damaging their cultural and environmental identity

MISSION

To equip tribal and rural communities with the appropriate tools and knowledge to enable self-sufficiency. CTRD Trust focuses on delivering comprehensive health, education, and livelihood training, promoting sustainable economic well-being, equality, and the protection of basic human rights for all individuals, irrespective of gender, age, or ability.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Promote renewable energy solutions among tribal communities to reduce dependence on firewood.

- Improve safety and reduce human–wildlife conflict risks through sustainable infrastructure such as solar lighting.
- Enhance health outcomes by introducing clean cooking technologies and reducing indoor air pollution.
- Strengthen women’s empowerment through Self-Help Group development, financial literacy, and health awareness programs.
- Establish sustainable livelihood opportunities for tribal families through initiatives such as coffee nursery development in Palamalai with the support of SODI.
- Promote dairy-based income generation by providing training in cattle care, milk production, and initiating milk collection systems.
- Support adolescent tribal girls through structured development programs that build confidence, leadership skills, and life skills.

PROJECT AND IMPACT REPORT

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Empowering tribal women remained central to our mission during the year. With the support of SODI, Germany, Self-Help Group (SHG) strengthening programs and health awareness sessions were conducted across tribal villages. Women received training in financial literacy, savings practices, group management, basic healthcare awareness, and livelihood development. These programs enhanced economic independence, improved community health knowledge, and strengthened leadership skills among tribal women.

Impact

The women empowerment initiatives have created meaningful and lasting change within tribal communities. Through Self-Help Group strengthening and financial literacy training supported by SODI, tribal women have developed improved savings habits, better financial management skills, and stronger collective decision-making abilities. Many women are now actively participating in household financial planning and community discussions, increasing their confidence and leadership roles.



Coffee Nursery Initiative – Palamalai

With the continued support of SODI, a coffee nursery is being established in Palamalai to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for tribal families. This initiative aims to promote income generation through coffee cultivation while encouraging environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. The nursery will support long-term livelihood stability and strengthen economic resilience within the tribal community.

Impact

The establishment of the coffee nursery in Palamalai, with the support of SODI, has created a sustainable livelihood opportunity for tribal families. The initiative provides access to quality coffee saplings, enabling tribal farmers to strengthen and expand coffee cultivation as a reliable source of income. This has encouraged long-term agricultural planning and reduced dependency on irregular daily wage work.



Dairy Development & Milk Collection Training

To further diversify livelihood opportunities, SODI, Germany, supports dairy development training programs, were conducted for tribal families. Training focused on cattle care, milk production management, hygiene practices, and basic dairy operations. Support was also extended to help initiate milk collection activities, enabling families to generate regular income. This initiative supports self-reliance and strengthens livelihood of tribals.

Impact.

The dairy development initiative has strengthened livelihood security among tribal families by improving cattle care practices, milk production quality, and organized milk collection systems, leading to a more stable and regular source of income. Families are now better equipped to manage livestock scientifically, resulting in improved animal health.



The ARSH (Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health) training

The ARSH (Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health) training program was conducted to empower adolescent tribal girls with essential knowledge on health, hygiene, nutrition, emotional well-being, and personal development. In tribal communities where access to accurate health

information is limited, the program created a safe and supportive space for girls to learn and openly discuss their concerns. Sessions focused on menstrual hygiene management, mental health awareness, self-care practices, communication skills, and confidence building. As a result, participants have gained improved health awareness, greater self-confidence, and stronger decision-making abilities, encouraging them to continue their education and actively participate in their personal and community development.

Impact

The ARSH (Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health) training programs have created greater awareness and confidence among tribal adolescent girls. The sessions focused on health education, personal hygiene, emotional well-being, and life skills development. As a result, girls have gained improved understanding of their physical and mental health, enabling them to make informed decisions.



Advancing Green Energy

The year 2025–26 marked a transformative chapter in our journey toward sustainable tribal and rural development. Through strong international partnerships, grassroots participation, and institutional strengthening, we significantly expanded access to renewable energy solutions while empowering tribal and rural communities across the Gudalur, Palamalai, Gudulupet, and surrounding regions. Our integrated approach focused on clean energy access, women’s empowerment, environmental conservation, youth engagement, and long-term institutional sustainability.

Renewable Energy- solar energy

With the generous support of Green Energy Against Poverty e.V., 100 solar street lights were installed across villages in the Gudalur block, an area situated along forest fringes and active wildlife corridors. These villages frequently face human–elephant movement, particularly after dark when poor visibility increases vulnerability and fear among residents. The absence of adequate lighting had long restricted mobility and heightened the risk of unexpected wildlife encounters. The introduction of solar-powered street lighting has significantly improved night-time visibility, serving as a preventive safety measure while promoting climate-friendly, renewable energy solutions in ecologically sensitive tribal regions.



IMPACT

The impact has been especially profound for women and children. Earlier, stepping outside after dark for essential needs such as nature calls, fetching water, or attending livestock was accompanied by anxiety and safety concerns. Today, illuminated pathways provide dignity, confidence, and security. Community spaces are now actively used in the evenings for gatherings, shared meals, and meetings, strengthening social cohesion and local engagement. Small businesses are able to function for extended hours, enhancing livelihood opportunities. This initiative demonstrates how clean energy infrastructure can simultaneously reduce risk, support community life, and build safer, more resilient environments.

CLEAN COOKING & HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Indoor air pollution remains one of the major health risks in rural households. Through the continued partnership with Green Energy Against Poverty e.V., smokeless chulha training and installations were conducted. Families were trained on the use and maintenance of improved cooking systems designed to reduce smoke emissions significantly.

Impact

This intervention has led to noticeable improvements in respiratory health, reduced firewood consumption, and safer kitchen environments. Women and young girls, who are most affected by traditional cooking smoke, now benefit from healthier living conditions and time savings. The initiative not only improved household health but also contributed to environmental sustainability by lowering dependence on firewood.



BIO GAS UNITS FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Many tribal families in Gudalur Palamalai and Gundlupet depend completely on firewood collected from nearby forest areas for their daily cooking needs. This not only causes health problems due to indoor smoke but also increases pressure on forest resources and puts women at risk while collecting firewood.

To address this challenge, portable biogas units were installed in Palamalai with the support of Green Energy Against Poverty e.V.,. Similar portable biogas systems were introduced in Gundlupet with the support of the German Consulate General Bangaluru.

Community level biogas construction efforts were strengthened with the active involvement of corporate volunteers from Airbus, Germany, whose participation symbolized the power of global–local collaboration in grassroots development. In addition to contributing their time and technical expertise on the ground, Airbus also provided financial support for the initiative, enabling the successful construction and implementation of the biogas systems. Their engagement enhanced the quality of technical execution, strengthened community participation.

Further expanding this impact, a biogas unit are established with support from M3M Foundation. This initiative improved sanitation, reduced environmental pollution, and provided sustainable cooking fuel to beneficiary households. Collectively, the biogas interventions have reduced carbon emissions, minimized deforestation, and strengthened community awareness around renewable energy adoption.

Impact

- Reduced dependence on firewood among tribal households
- Improved respiratory health by reducing indoor smoke
- Decreased pressure on nearby forests
- Reduced risk for women collecting firewood from forest areas
- Improved sanitation and waste management
- Organic manure production supporting tribal agriculture
- Strengthened energy security within tribal communities

These biogas initiatives have provided a safe, sustainable, and dignified renewable energy solution for tribal families while protecting both people and forests.



HOUSING SUPPORT FOR THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY

With the assistance of Green Energy Solutions, housing support initiatives were undertaken to improve the living conditions of vulnerable tribal families. Financial support as well as volunteer

assistance was provided for the construction of houses in Gundlupet, Karnataka, ensuring that families received safe and stable shelter. These interventions focused on creating secure, dignified living environments while integrating sustainability principles into housing design and construction.

IMPACT

The project reflects our belief that sustainable development must address not only renewable energy access but also basic human dignity. By combining financial backing with hands-on volunteer engagement, the initiative strengthened community resilience and provided long-term security for families in need.



Tourism day in tribal village.

World Tourism Day was celebrated with tribal communities to promote sustainable and responsible tourism in forest-based regions while highlighting the rich cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the tribes. The program brought together tribal leaders, women's Self-Help Groups, and youth to showcase cultural performances, traditional foods, handicrafts, and biodiversity conservation practices. The event emphasized the role of tribal communities as protectors of forests and encouraged eco-tourism as a livelihood opportunity that respects nature and culture. The celebration strengthened community pride, increased awareness about conservation, and created new possibilities for income generation through community-based tourism initiatives.



Education, Research & Youth Engagement

The year also witnessed strong academic collaborations that enhanced research-driven development. Students and interns from premier institutions including SP Jain Institute of Management and

Research, SPJIMR, MUMBAI, Bharathiar University, Gudalur, Madras Christian College, Chennai and Queen Mary's College, Chennai actively engaged in field-based rural development initiatives.

Over 50 students participated in internships, research studies, and community immersion programs. Their contributions included sustainability assessments, tribal livelihood documentation, renewable energy feasibility studies, and program evaluations. These collaborations not only enriched academic learning but also strengthened evidence-based development planning within our organization.



Strategic Programs & Institutional Development

The OMG Program brought together teachers and tribal girls to foster mentorship, educational encouragement, and leadership development. In addition, the Tribal Smart farming Project agreement and exhibition conducted at KG College of Arts and Science highlighted innovative approaches to tribal empowerment and smart village development.

Significant institutional milestones were achieved through progress in NSE/BSE registration documentation



Expanding Operational Presence

The inauguration of new offices in Palamalai and Gudulupet strengthened our grassroots presence and operational capacity. These centers now serve as hubs for renewable energy implementation, women empowerment programs, youth engagement activities, and community coordination.



Conclusion

The year 2025–26 marked an important milestone in CTRD Trust’s ongoing journey toward inclusive, sustainable, and community-led development. Across tribal and rural regions, the Trust’s integrated approach, combining renewable energy access, livelihood diversification, health improvement, women’s empowerment, and youth engagement, has delivered tangible outcomes while strengthening long-term resilience.

By expanding clean energy solutions such as solar lighting, smokeless cooking systems, and biogas units, CTRD Trust not only improved safety and health outcomes but also reduced environmental pressure on fragile forest ecosystems. Livelihood initiatives in coffee cultivation and dairy development enhanced income stability for tribal families, while Self-Help Group strengthening reinforced women’s leadership, financial independence, and collective decision-making.

Equally significant has been the focus on adolescent girls, youth engagement, and institutional partnerships, ensuring that development interventions are knowledge-driven, future-oriented, and locally rooted. Collaborations with international partners, corporate volunteers, academic institutions,

and community leaders have demonstrated the power of collective action in addressing complex rural challenges.

As CTRD Trust moves forward, it remains committed to deepening its impact through scalable, climate-resilient, and culturally respectful development models. Guided by community participation and strengthened by partnerships, the organization will continue working toward a future where tribal and rural communities live with dignity, security, opportunity, and self-reliance.
