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300 panchayats declared child-friendly

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KANCHEEPURAM: Hand-in-Hand (HiH), a public charitable trust, involved in poverty alleviation and child labour eradication programmes, recently declared 300 panchayats in Kancheepuram child-friendly. The trust, incorporated in 2002, is active in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

Its vision is to reduce poverty by creating enterprises and jobs. Hand-in-Hand works for the abolition of child and bonded labour by mainstreaming exploited children into government schools. It also works for the empowerment of women by organising them into self help groups (SHGs) and promoting micro-enterprises.

At a recent function where the announcement was made, labour secretary P Shankar, and former vigilance commissioner Dr Shantha Sinha, who heads the National Child Rights Commission, were present. About 238 panchayat presidents and 228 children who had benefited from the trust's programmes also participated.

The Hand-in-Hand Women's Development Project is being implemented in 18 districts of Tamil Nadu. So far, it has facilitated the formation of 27,000 SHGs covering 400,000 women. The primary focus is on training, capacity building and encouraging thrift, savings and credit among group members. Loans are also disbursed for income generating activity for family or group enterprises.

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