



ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu - 630003

In collaboration with

MOTHER TERESA WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT & CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu - 624101

Organizes



A Two-Day National Seminar on

**Tribal Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Development:
 An Indian Knowledge Systems and
 Women-Led Development Approach towards
 Viksit Bharat @ 2047**



DATE

11th & 12th, June 2026

VENUE

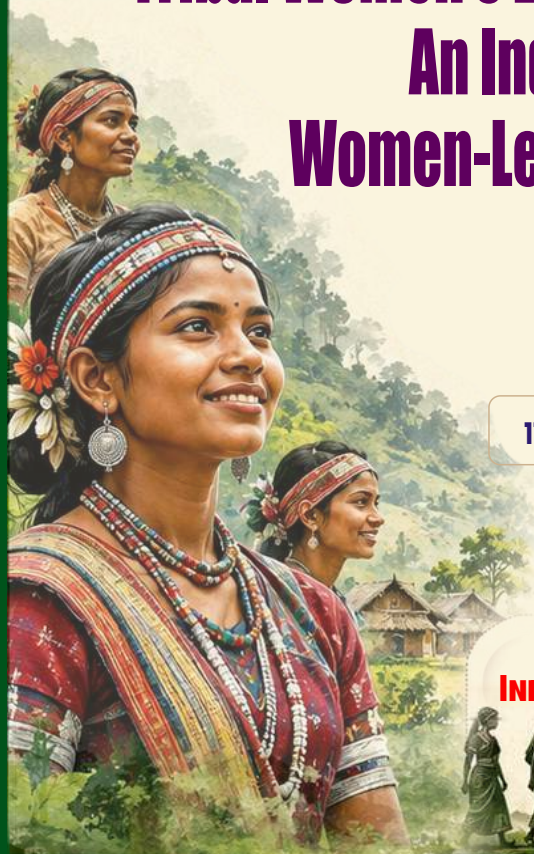


Mother Teresa Women's University
 Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu

Funding Courtesy



INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH (ICSSR), NEW DELHI



“India will prosper when our tribal communities will prosper. The welfare of our tribal communities is our foremost priority”

- PM Narendra Modi (Min. of Tribal Affairs, 2022)

About the Seminar

The Department of Women’s Studies, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, in collaboration with the Department and Centre for Women’s Studies, Mother Teresa Women’s University, Kodaikanal, is organising this two-day National Seminar. The seminar is designed not merely as a scholarly gathering but as a space of interaction between tribal women, researchers, development practitioners, civil society actors, and policymakers.

Tribal communities have long been recognised as the custodians of India’s cultural diversity, ecological wisdom, and collective traditions. They constitute approximately 8.6 percent of India’s total population, amounting to more than 104 million people, of whom nearly half are women. Despite their significant contribution to household economies, food security, forest conservation, and cultural continuity, tribal women continue to remain among the most marginalised sections of Indian society. Their lived realities are shaped by intersecting disadvantages related to gender, tribe, geography, poverty, and limited access to education, healthcare, markets, and political power.

In recent years, India’s development discourse has increasingly emphasised inclusion, sustainability, and women-led growth. The national vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047 calls for growth that is equitable, environmentally responsible, and socially just. However, tribal women often remain at the periphery of these development narratives. Their knowledge systems, livelihoods, and governance practices are rarely integrated into mainstream planning. At the same time, development interventions frequently overlook indigenous epistemologies, leading to culturally alien and sometimes disruptive outcomes.

Against this backdrop, the proposed two-day National Seminar seeks to re-center tribal women within India’s development agenda by foregrounding their voices, knowledge, and leadership. The seminar is conceptualised as both an academic forum and a participatory platform that connects research, policy, and grassroots experience.

Significance of the Seminar

The seminar is anchored in the framework of Women-Led Development, which views women not as passive recipients of welfare but as active agents of social and economic transformation. Tribal women in particular play central roles in managing natural resources, preserving biodiversity, transmitting cultural knowledge, and sustaining family and community livelihoods. Recognising and strengthening these roles is crucial for inclusive and sustainable development.

The seminar also draws upon Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), especially the indigenous and tribal knowledge traditions related to agriculture, ecology, medicine, governance, and community living. These systems offer alternative development pathways that are rooted in sustainability, reciprocity, and collective well-being. Integrating tribal epistemologies into contemporary development debates can lead to inclusive development, ecologically sensitive, and socially just policies.

By positioning tribal women as leaders, entrepreneurs, knowledge holders, and change agents, the seminar aligns directly with India’s vision of inclusive and sustainable national development. It advances the principle that a developed India cannot be achieved without the empowerment and participation of its most marginalised women.



Objectives of the Seminar

- ❖ Examine the demographic, socio-economic, and regional status of tribal women in India, focusing on education, health, employment, and access to resources.
- ❖ Critically analyse the structural, cultural, and institutional challenges faced by tribal women, including gender discrimination, marginalisation, and exclusion from governance and development processes.
- ❖ Explore the role of tribal heritage, indigenous knowledge systems, and community practices in promoting gender justice, social empowerment, and inclusive development.
- ❖ Identify and recommend context-specific policies, development interventions, and best practices to strengthen the rights, participation, and well-being of tribal women.

Major Themes

- ❖ Tribal Women and Indian Knowledge Systems
- ❖ Tribal Women and Women-Led Development
- ❖ Gender Injustice and Human Rights
- ❖ Forest-based Livelihoods and the Tribal Economy
- ❖ Panchayat Raj Institutions and Political Participation
- ❖ Education, Health, and Nutrition
- ❖ Customary Laws and Tribal Women
- ❖ Multiculturalism and Identity
- ❖ Tribal Women and Viksit Bharat @ 2047

These themes will allow for interdisciplinary and policy-oriented engagement with tribal women's issues.

Sub-Themes

- ❖ **Education:** Access to formal and informal education, literacy levels, digital inclusion, educational attainment, dropout rates, and the role of education in empowering tribal women & girls.
- ❖ **Health and Nutrition:** Maternal and child health, reproductive health, access to healthcare services, malnutrition, traditional healing practices, and public health interventions among tribal women.
- ❖ **Gender Equality:** Gender roles, patriarchy, intersectional discrimination, gender-based violence, legal rights, and pathways toward gender justice in tribal societies.
- ❖ **Socio-Economic Status:** Livelihood patterns, income levels, poverty, asset ownership, social mobility, and economic vulnerabilities of tribal women.
- ❖ **Culture and Identity:** Tribal customs, belief systems, language, identity formation, cultural continuity, and the role of women in preserving and transmitting tribal culture.
- ❖ **Environment and Sustainability:** Relationship between tribal women and natural resources, forest-based livelihoods, climate change impacts, environmental conservation, and sustainable development practices.
- ❖ **Political Participation:** Representation of tribal women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, local governance, leadership roles, decision-making processes, and political empowerment.
- ❖ **Employment:** Employment opportunities, wage disparities, informal sector participation, skill development, and barriers to decent work for tribal women.
- ❖ **Entrepreneurship:** Tribal women as entrepreneurs, self-help groups, microfinance, cooperatives, social enterprises, and government support for women-led initiatives.
- ❖ **Migration:** Seasonal and distress migration, urbanization, labor exploitation, social protection mechanisms, and the impact of migration on tribal women and families.
- ❖ **Caste Equality:** Intersection of caste, tribe, and gender, social exclusion, discrimination, and efforts toward equality and social justice.
- ❖ **Legislation and Tribal Women:** Constitutional safeguards, protective laws, implementation gaps, legal awareness, and access to justice for tribal women.
- ❖ **Preservation of Tribal Folktales, Music, and Culture:** Documentation, transmission, and revitalization of indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, folk arts, and cultural expressions led by tribal women.
- ❖ **Development Policies and Tribal Interests:** Impact of development policies, welfare schemes, displacement, rehabilitation, and alignment of policies with tribal women's needs.
- ❖ **Any Other Topic Related to Tribal Women Studies:** Interdisciplinary, comparative, and emerging research themes relevant to tribal women and inclusive development.



About the Alagappa University

Alagappa University has emerged from the galaxy of institutions initially founded during 1950's by the Padma Bhushan Dr. RM. Alagappa Chettiar (06.04.1909 - 05.04.1957). Alagappa University is a State Government University established by an Act of the Tamil Nadu State Legislature in 1985 as Unitary type; later became Affiliating type during 2002. The University is situated at Karaikudi, in the District of Sivaganga, in the State of Tamil Nadu. Alagappa University's campus sprawls across 435.98 Acres of lush land, (428.15 acres in Main Campus and 7.83 acres in Thondi Campus) creating a highly secure, eco conscious and student friendly learning ambience. Alagappa University was brought into existence by a Special Act of the Government of Tamil Nadu in May 1985 with the objective of fostering research, development and dissemination of knowledge in various branches of learning. Alagappa University is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India. The University has 44 Departments, 3 Academic Centres and 2 Constituent Colleges (AUCE, AUCPE) on its campus. 45 Colleges located in the districts of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram are Affiliated to the University. The University is offering UG & PG programmes in the four Faculties (Arts, Science, Education, Management). The University is having International Collaborations with Universities / Institutions of Higher Learning in countries like U.S.A, UK, Australia, Singapore, China, Malaysia and South Korea. The University's motto is "Excellence in Action" and the University keeps before it the vision of excellence in all spheres of its action.

About the Department of Women's Studies

Since its establishment in 1988, the Department of Women's Studies at our University has been dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach, recognizing "Women" as its central focus, transcending disciplinary boundaries. Our mission is to promote gender equality, empower women, and educate students through effective teaching programs and practical training. We aim to prepare students for impactful careers as social activists, service professionals, coordinators of NGO projects, feminist and social researchers, fostering a vibrant academic community dedicated to advancing gender equality and social justice.

Vision

Our vision is to harness the potential resources of women for national development, reflecting a holistic approach to the nation's progress. We aspire to play an interventionist role by integrating the gender perspective into various domains, contributing to knowledge generation in policy and practice. As catalysts, we strive to promote and strengthen women's studies through teaching, research, dissemination of knowledge, and field action.

Mission

Our mission entails taking proactive steps to initiate gender perspectives across various fields, serving as catalysts for change through teaching, research, knowledge dissemination, and practical interventions. We aim to empower our students to critically engage with contemporary gender issues, equipping them to navigate and contribute meaningfully to evolving discourse and information. Through our diverse offerings, including B.A. Gender Studies, postgraduate, M.Phil, and Ph.D. programs, we foster a community committed to advancing gender equality and social justice.

The faculty members, research scholars and students of the Department of Women's Studies have published more than 500 research papers in the reputed journals. Further, the department has organized more than 200 Conferences/ Workshops/Webinars/Special Lecture Programs, Research Methodology Courses etc.,

Features

- ❖ Pioneering: The first statutory Department of Women's Studies in a general university in India.
- ❖ Government Collaboration: Operates the Tamil Nadu Government Mahalir Thittam.
- ❖ Entrepreneurial Support: Designated as a Nodal Hub by the Entrepreneurship Development and Innovative Institute, Department of MSME, Govt. of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Advocacy: Hosts the Gender Champions Club, recognized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development.



About Mother Teresa Women's University

Mother Teresa Women's University (MTWU), the only Women's University of Tamil Nadu State Government is situated at Attuvampatti, Kodaikanal, the "Princess of Hill Stations" and the most popular multicultural tourist centre. The University, whose foundation stone was laid by the legendary Noble Laureate for peace, Mother Teresa, was established in 1984 under the Act 15 of Tamil Nadu with the lofty vision of "Empowering Women through Education". The University plays a catalytic role in women empowerment and building inclusive society.

MTWU has its Research and Extension Centres at Chennai, Madurai, and Coimbatore, and a Centre for Women's Studies at Pallapatti, Dindigul for promoting women entrepreneurship. This University offers PG Programs (M.A., M.Com., M.Ed., M.B.A., M.Sc.) and Research programs (Ph.D.) in Arts and Sciences. As an affiliating University, MTWU governs 12 women's colleges in Dindigul and Theni districts.

MTWU offers B.Ed. programme through its constituent college in Ananthagiri campus, Kodaikanal. The University also takes higher education to the doorsteps of aspiring women by offering UG and PG Programs in Arts and Science through Distance Education Mode.

The Tamil Nadu Common Wealth Mother Teresa Women's University International Centre is an additional credit to the University for cultivating competent women with relevance to global standard. The University has remarkable research and project records through MHRD, UGC, DST, TNSCST, TANSCH, and ICSSR funded Departments with State of Art facilities. With potential infrastructure and committed staff and faculty, MTWU offers yeoman service for building intellectual, sustainable, and socially responsible young minds for the Nation.

About the Department

The Department and Centre for Women's Studies, established in 1999 and recognized by the UGC, stands as a pivotal institution for women's empowerment in Tamil Nadu. Through a wide range of initiatives—including feminist theory building, gender sensitivity training, gender education, and leadership skill development—the department aims to foster social, economic, political, and cultural empowerment, along with gender equality.

As the first Women's University in Tamil Nadu to offer regular B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. programs in Women's Studies, the department holds a significant position in academia. The discipline of Women's Studies enriches and transforms other academic fields by integrating feminist perspectives, thereby broadening the scope of research and policy debates.

The department actively engages with women from marginalized communities, including Dalits, Tribal populations, laborers, and sexual and religious minorities, amplifying their voices and concerns within academic and policy-making spaces. By promoting the understanding and participation of women in policy formulation, the department strives to build a just and secular society in India. In its outreach efforts, the department operates the Women's Studies Training Centre in Pallapatti, extending its services to rural communities. This center offers livelihood opportunities, awareness programs, and entrepreneurship training, empowering rural women to achieve economic independence and social upliftment.

Notably, students of Women's Studies have secured positions in various government departments, including the police force, schools, and libraries, making valuable contributions across diverse sectors. Moreover, the department has fostered the emergence of micro-level women entrepreneurs among its graduates, highlighting the tangible impact of its initiatives on economic empowerment and societal transformation.

Vision

- ❖ To empower women through education, research, and advocacy by fostering gender equity and social justice in all spheres of life, in alignment with the legacy of Mother Teresa's compassion and service.

Mission

- ❖ To promote interdisciplinary teaching and research on women's issues, with a focus on empowerment, development, and gender justice.
- ❖ To integrate gender perspectives into academics, administration, and outreach activities of the university and its affiliated institutions.



CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited on any of the sub-themes of the Seminar. Contributions may take the form of a paper.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACT AND FULL PAPER

- ❖ The abstract (500 words) and full paper (10 to 12 Pages) should be submitted by email to twiksit2047@gmail.com. A Peer Review Committee will short-list the selected papers.
- ❖ Selected full papers will be double blind reviewed by the experts for the publication in the edited volume (with ISBN).
- ❖ The papers should be submitted in soft copy (in MS-Word, Times New Roman, font size 12 with 1.5 line spacing and one-inch margin all around and a maximum of 10 to 12 pages). Papers without a soft copy will not be accepted.
- ❖ The research papers shall be preferably in the standard research format, Introduction, objectives of the study, hypothesis / research questions, methodology, techniques of data analysis, findings/ results, conclusion, references and statistical tables, in that order.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS

Accommodation for two days will be provided at nominal charges for outstation paper presenters in the University Guest House on a twin-sharing basis, subject to availability and on a first-come, first-served basis.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Faculty, Academicians and Professionals	: Rs. 400/-
Research Scholars	: Rs. 300/-
Students (PG)	: Rs. 200/-

IMPORTANT DATES

Last date for submission of abstract	: 05.06.2026
Submission of Full Paper	: 08.06.2026
Seminar Dates	: 11 th & 12 th June 2026

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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Alagappa University, Karaikudi

Dr. K. KALA
Vice - Chancellor
Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal

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