

CESCI INDIA

NEWSLETTER



| Feature Story

25th Maja Koene Award Ceremony

The Maja Koene Award Ceremony marked a significant milestone this year as CESCI hosted the 25th edition of the award ceremony on 2 March 2026. The event brought together friends, social workers, artists, and well-wishers who share CESCI's vision of peace, justice, and social transformation.

The gathering was a meaningful occasion filled with reflections, cultural expressions, and inspiring conversations that celebrated the enduring values of compassion, dialogue, and nonviolence. The ceremony created a warm space for participants to reconnect with the spirit of constructive social action and collective responsibility.

The awards were presented by Chief Guest Ms. Aaradhana Kohli, filmmaker from New Delhi.

The programme was presided over by Ms. Anuradha Shankar IPS, President of CESCI, and Mr. Rajagopal P. V., Co-Founder of CESCI, along with other distinguished guests on the dais.

A special highlight of the ceremony was the experience-sharing by the awardees, whose journeys and reflections inspired the audience and sparked meaningful interactions among participants committed to the cause of peace and justice.

This year's awardees represent a diverse range of initiatives and grassroots efforts dedicated to building a just, equitable, and peaceful society. Their work has made a significant impact at local, national, and international levels.

| Editorial

Dear Friends,

Many of you have visited our centre, CESCI, in the past, and we know that many more of you are planning to visit us in the near future. The CESCI family deeply values the relationships and friendships that have been built over the years through our shared commitment to peace, dialogue, and social transformation.

Through this newsletter, we would like to keep our connection active and continue sharing glimpses of the work, reflections, and events taking place at CESCI. It is our small step towards staying connected with our friends, well-wishers, and partners across the world.

We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and we warmly welcome your feedback and suggestions.

With thanks
Biju Kallidumbil
(Executive Director)

| Event

Voices of Change: 2026 Awardees

Peace Activists

- Mr. Satheesh Kumar –
People's Movement for Peace,
Kannur, Kerala
- Mr. Subhash Chandra Kattel –
Nepal

Social Journalist

- Mr. Samas –
Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Social Activists :

- Ms. Sabho Bai and Ms. Munni Bai –
Chambal, Madhya Pradesh
- Ms. Meera Bai Singh –
Umaraiya, Madhya Pradesh
- Ms. Indu Netam –
Raipur, Chhattisgarh
- Mr. Shameer Bava –
Karunyatheeram Health Care
Foundation, Calicut, Kerala
- Dr. Amit Kumar –
Kumarappa Gram Swaraj
Sansthan (KGSN), Jaipur,
Rajasthan



Through honouring these remarkable individuals and organizations, CESC reaffirmed its commitment to recognizing and encouraging grassroots leadership working towards peace, justice, and social harmony.



“Congratulations for keeping alive the values which seem all but lost in today’s world. It was incredible to be part of the 25th Maja Koene Award Ceremony. The programme was conducted with such grace and warmth. It felt like being present in a rare space standing against the tide of hatred around us. Thank you for making me feel so special.”

— Aaradhana Kohli



Bapu Statue at CESCI

The statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the CESC campus is a new addition and it reminds visitors of the enduring values of truth, non-violence, and service that guide the work of the centre.

Tribute

Remembering Ransinghji: A Life of Commitment and Service

Ekta Parishad mourns the sudden demise of its National President, Dr. Ransingh Parmar (Ransinghji), aged 72, who passed away on the evening of **13th March** at the Prayog campus in Tilda, Chhattisgarh. He had travelled there to participate in an organisational meeting.

The incident came as a profound shock to all present. Shortly before the evening prayer, Ransinghji was found unresponsive. Immediate efforts were made to revive him through CPR, following which he was rushed to a nearby mission hospital. Despite all attempts, he could not be revived.

Dr. Parmar dedicated nearly five decades of his life to the service of marginalized communities. A committed Gandhian and senior social activist, he worked tirelessly for the rights of the poor, particularly advocating for jal, jangal, and zameen (water, forests, and land). He was closely associated with noted Gandhian Dr. S. N. Subbarao and played a key role in several people's movements and national padayatras led by Ekta Parishad.



Beyond his leadership roles, including National General Secretary of the National Youth Project, Secretary of Mahatma Gandhi Seva Ashram (Jaura), and Trustee of Gandhi Bhavan (Bhopal) Ransinghji was widely respected as an exceptional organiser. Colleagues remember him as a tireless institution builder and a deeply committed human being who worked with sincerity, humility, and unwavering dedication.



On the day of his passing, he had addressed over 500 workers and village leaders gathered at Prayog Ashram, speaking passionately about land rights and their importance in addressing poverty. His words, delivered just hours before his passing, now hold even deeper significance.

Following consultations with his family, arrangements were made to transport his mortal remains from Raipur to his hometown in Gwalior, a journey of nearly 900 kilometres. A prayer meeting was held at Prayog Ashram, where hundreds gathered to pay their respects.

The ambulance carrying him departed Tilda late on the night of 13th March, accompanied by colleagues and fellow members of Ekta Parishad. His final journey concluded on 15th March, when he was laid to rest in his native village, Mrigpura, District Morena, in the presence of thousands of friends, family members, and well-wishers.

Dr. Parmar's passing marks an irreplaceable loss to the Ekta Parishad family and to the wider community of social activists across the country. His lifelong commitment to justice, peace, and nonviolence will continue to inspire generations.



Scan to read "The Wise Banyan Tree" by Janmejay. A heartfelt reflection on Ransingh bhai's life, capturing his quiet strength, tireless service, and the enduring legacy he leaves behind, much like the sheltering presence of a banyan tree.

programs

The COSIL – Confluence of Social Impact Leaders was successfully held in CESCI Madurai from 21–23 January 2026, bringing together leaders from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), civil society organisations, NGOs, foundations, and other development practitioners from across the country. The three-day gathering created a vibrant platform for dialogue, shared learning, and collaboration among individuals and institutions committed to advancing meaningful social impact.

The event was designed as a space for cross-sector engagement and experiential learning, encouraging participants to reflect on emerging challenges and explore innovative approaches to social transformation. More than 50 leaders and practitioners from different parts of India participated in the programme, contributing their experiences, perspectives, and insights.

During the first two days, CSR leaders and representatives from CSOs and NGOs engaged in a series of interactive sessions focusing on key themes such as sustainability, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices,

Social Return on Investment (SROI), and the use of Artificial Intelligence for social impact. These discussions helped participants deepen their understanding of new frameworks and tools that can strengthen the effectiveness and accountability of development initiatives.

One of the distinctive features of COSIL was its emphasis on experiential learning. Participants took part in creative modules including pottery, folk arts, simulations, and exposure visits, which encouraged reflection, teamwork, and a deeper appreciation of cultural and community-based approaches to learning and social engagement.

The programme also provided curated spaces for CSR–NGO collaboration, enabling meaningful conversations between organisations seeking to build partnerships for sustainable development initiatives. These interactions helped identify new possibilities for cooperation and strengthened networks among the participants.

focused sessions aimed at enhancing organisational capacity. These sessions provided practical insights and tools

COSIL – Confluence of Social Impact Leaders: A National Gathering for Collaboration and Learning

to help grassroots organisations strengthen their impact and sustainability.

Overall, COSIL proved to be a rich and inspiring gathering, fostering dialogue, creativity, and collaboration among social impact leaders. The event reinforced the importance of collective learning and partnership across sectors in addressing complex social challenges and advancing inclusive and sustainable development.



| community spotlight

Celebrating Pongal with Community Children



CESCI celebrated Pongal with children from the local community. The celebration included traditional Pongal cooking, cultural activities, and joyful participation by the children, strengthening CESCI's connection with the surrounding community

Visit by Mr. Ziaul Haque IPS, DIG of Tanjore

CESCI welcomed Mr. Ziaul haque IPS, DIG of Tanjore, visited CESCI centre and engaged in discussions about various community engagement and peace-building initiatives of CESCI.



Stay in Touch

“Together, small steps create big change.”

| Livelihood

From Land Access to Sustainable Livelihoods: The Community Land Trust Model

Rajagopal Ji continues to advocate the Land Trust concept as a way to ensure community stewardship of land, equitable access, and sustainable livelihoods. Community Land Trusts for Sustainable Livelihoods

Ekta Parishad has long championed the struggle for land rights,

enabling more than 2.5 million people in India to access land for housing and cultivation.

The next challenge is ensuring that newly acquired land becomes productive and sustainable. To address this, Ekta Parishad proposes establishing Community Land Trusts supported by Common Facility Centres (CFCs) that will provide farmers with shared machinery, traditional seeds, organic inputs, and market linkages.

Each trust will support 100–150 families, helping them cultivate land sustainably and secure livelihoods. This initiative aims to transform land access into lasting economic dignity and ecological sustainability for marginalized rural communities.

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community spotlight

Visitors at CESCO

There are so many but some of the important visitors including the following personalities.

- Mr. KudeMeier from CESCO Switzerland
- Ms. Ishani and her friends from Germany
- Mr. Ajay Rastogi from Uttarakhand and Mr. Chitesh from Ahmedabad
- Ms. Sonia from Mexico



Visit by Chairperson Ms. Anuradha Shankar IPS

Ms. Anuradha Shankar IPS, Chairperson of CESCO, visited CESCO PR Puram in Nagapattinam and interacted with the team and local community while reviewing ongoing initiatives.



Visit to M.S. Chellamuthu Trust

Rajagopal Ji, Jill Carr Harris and Biju visited the M.S. Chellamuthu Trust and Research Foundation to learn about their pioneering work in mental health and rehabilitation. The visit opened possibilities for collaboration on various subjects and activities. Thanks to Chellamuthu Trust team for welcoming us.



AVI Team Visit

The Action Village India UK (AVI) team visited CESCO to understand the centre's work and explore possibilities for future collaboration in volunteer engagement and community initiatives



Stay Connected

CESCO remains committed to being a space for dialogue, reflection, and collaborative action. We thank all our friends and partners for their continued support and look forward to strengthening these connections in the months ahead.

Editorial team

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