

**Social Action Movement**  
Tamil Nadu-Pondicherry

**State Conference**  
February 17-19, 2009 \* DINDIGUL  
**Dindigul Declaration 2009**

19th February 2009

We the social movements from all over Tamil Nadu and Puducherry came together on the occasion of the State Conference of Social Action Movements where the people have been resisting attempts to usurp people, their livelihoods, their lands, their cultures and the Nature. Social Action Groups are involving in establishing feminist, environmentalist, socialist, casteless and child friendly alternatives by ensuring financial democratisation, deglobalisation and decommmodification.

We are here to question the capitalist system and our united social struggles to overthrow the neoliberal governments and strengthen the peoples' staunch resistance against the policies of governments, corporations and banks which shift the burden of the crisis onto the oppressed. The roots of the economic crisis lie in over accumulation, financialisation and global apartheid and international volatility is now constraining social political and environmental progress in the developing world.

The international capitalist crisis manifests itself as detrimental to humankind in various ways: it affects food, finance, the economy, climate, energy, population migration... and civilization itself, as there is also a crisis in international order and political structures. Global crisis is a direct consequence of the capitalist system and the measures that have been taken so far to overcome the crisis merely aim at socializing losses so as to ensure the survival of a system based on privatizing strategic economic sectors, public services, natural and energy resources and on the commodification of life and the exploitation of labour and of nature as well as on the transfer of resources from the developing economies to the developed economies and from workers to the capitalist class.

The present system is based on exploitation, competition, promotion of individual private interests to the detriment of the collective interest, and the frenzied accumulation of wealth by a handful of rich people. It results in bloody wars, fuels xenophobia, racism and religious fundamentalisms; it intensifies the exploitation of women & the marginalised and the criminalisation of social movements. In the context of the present crisis the rights of peoples are systematically denied.

In order to overcome the crisis, we do grapple with the root of the problem and progress as fast as possible towards the construction of a radical alternative that would do away with the capitalist system and patriarchal domination. We work towards a society that meets social needs and respects the rights of mother nature; as well as supporting democratic participation in a context of full political freedom. We must see to it that all international treaties on our indivisible civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights, both individual and collective, are implemented. In this

perspective we must contribute more vigorously to the largest possible popular mobilization.

The social emancipation process carried by the feminist, environmentalist, casteless and socialist movements in the 21st century aims at liberating society from capitalist domination of the means of production, communication and services, achieved by supporting forms of ownership that favor the social interest: small family freehold, public, cooperative, communal and collective property. Such an alternative will necessarily be feminist since it is impossible to build a society based on social justice and equality of rights when half of humankind is oppressed and exploited.

Lastly, we commit ourselves to enriching the construction of a society based on a life lived in harmony with oneself, others and the world around by acknowledging the active participation and contribution of the native peoples. Only through the social struggle of the masses can populations overcome the crisis. In order to promote this struggle, it is essential to work on consciousness-raising and mobilisation from the grassroots. The challenge for the social movements is to achieve a convergence of global mobilisation. It is also to strengthen our ability to act by supporting the convergence of all movements striving to withstand oppression and exploitation.

### **Our demands to the State**

1. The peoples' sovereignty and autonomy ensuring their right to self-determination - guaranteeing rights to land, territory, work, education and health for all should be acknowledged.
2. Globalisation and Liberalisation promotes Privatization in India. The victims of this process are the people and public sector. Hence we demand nationalizing all the private Banking and Insurance sector without compensations and with full social monitoring. Privatisation of Health, Education and Transport should be stopped immediately.
3. Organic farming with biodiversity must be promoted with access to credit and marketing with ample subsidies. Seed Act 2005 and Special Economic Zone Act 2005 must be repealed with immediate effect. Cultivation and research of all the genetically modified crops must be banned. Community control over water, land and other natural resources should be ensured. 'Culture' of the country agriculture cannot be traded.
4. Inclusion of fisheries under "Non-Agricultural Market Access" (NAMA) must be removed. Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (CRZ) 1991 notification must be restored in its original form. Coastal Management Zone Notification (CMZ), 2008 should be squashed. Separate ministry for fisheries to be constituted and constitutional amendment to ensure self autonomy for the fishing community (sixth schedule) must be done. Moratorium on destructive development and infrastructure projects along the coast with special reference to Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project (SSCP), Shrimp industries and desalination plants. Fisherwomen should be declared as the Fishworkers and the benefits should be extended to them.

5. Tamil Nadu Tribal Areas should be included under the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution Article 244 (I). Land alienation of adivasi communities by the tourist industries, by MNCs and in the name of Mega Projects such as Dam, National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries; and appropriation of forest resources by the people from the plains must be halted and Adivasi's right to land and forest resources must be ensured under Forest Right Act 2006. The mining activities that are carried out in hill and forest areas should be stopped.
6. Amendments in the Public hearing notification and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification under environment protection Act must be withdrawn immediately. The Panchayat government must be empowered to issue the no objection certificate. In order to combat Global Warming, vehicle and factory emissions should be controlled; non conventional energy and tree plantation should be promoted. A separate Ministry should be formed for the Water and Water Resources Protection. Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Programmes should be planned and implemented.
7. The age of the child should be extended to 18 years in accordance with the UN convention on the Rights of the child. All forms of child labour should be prohibited. Compulsory free and quality education to all children up to 18 years should be ensured by enacting the Right to education act as guaranteed by the 93rd amendment of the Constitution and 6% GDP should be allocated for ensuring this development right of the children. Common School System should be implemented to impart life oriented education with due recognition to our traditional knowledge and political education to understand the present socio economic and political context. The children's right to participation should be respected and Children Gram Sabha should be established to provide space for children to voice their opinion and ideas on issues related to children and participate in the decision making and implementation process. Child Labour in any form should be abolished upto 18 years of age.

The Government of Tamilnadu should recognise the importance of human rights education in schools and ensure that it is made a compulsory subject for all children in all schools – government and private so that the directives of the UN Decade on Human Rights Education and the UN World Program of Human Rights Education are materialized within the State where a successful experiment in human rights education is already in place for the past 10 years and more initiated by civil society organizations. Sex Education should also be introduced in all the Schools.

8. Institutionalization of micro credit and saving schemes by the government must be stopped and the state should promote the self autonomy of the SHGs of women. The forthcoming micro credit bill must be withdrawn. Reservation act upto 50% in both the houses of the Parliament and Loksabha and local government for women must be tabled and enforced immediately. Gender budgeting must be tabled and debates must be initiated to engender the programmes and policies of the state. Women must be recognized as the head of the family in the ration cards issued under the PDS (Public Distribution System). Total prohibition of liquor must be declared and implemented by the

state. Amendments to the DVP act must be withheld. Women's Commission should be strengthened with ample finance.

Rehabilitation of victims of trafficking and free legal aid on the principle of reparation must be executed SITA act must be repealed. Optional protocol to CEDAW must be ratified by the Indian government.

9. Implementation of the section 17 (i) of the Constitution and SC and ST Atrocities Act must be implemented . A separate court to deal with the atrocities against Dalits and Tribals. Dalit Christian and Muslims must be declared as a separate category under SC. Para 3 of the President Order which reinstates the caste hierarchy must be repealed. Manual scavenging must be abolished and the workers must be rehabilitated. Campaign to monitor and stop the human rights violations against dalits must be launched.

The Panchami Land should be recovered and restored to the Dalit Community. All the vacancies that are reserved for the Dalit and Adivasi Community should be filled immediately. Reservations should be provided in Private Sector.

The Government of Tamilnadu should recognize the role that is expected from non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the SC/ ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 and Rules 1993 and engage in a process of active collaboration with them to make Tamilnadu free of the practice of untouchability and caste discrimination.

10. Rights of transgender and people with alternate sexual preferences must be protected and promoted by proper policy level and legal interventions
11. Implementation of the disability act with proper budget allocation must be ensured by the government Reservation for the people with disability in the local government and mainstreaming disability perspectives must be executed.
12. Integration of workers rights as proposed by ILO and the Indian constitution as a holistic legislation for unorganized workers and National urban workers employment guaranty act must be enacted.
13. Devolution of powers for the 29 subjects as guaranteed by the 73rd amendment of the constitution and 50% allocation of funds from the state central government funds must be ensured. Nyayalaya must be introduced at the gram panchayat level. DRDA must be dismantled and District panchayat governance must be empowered with powers and funds and personnel. Participation on the basis of party identity, auctioning and nomination must be declared as penal activity. Sec10 Of 205 to be removed. 50% reservations must be given.
14. Indian State should do away its trade relationship with World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and wind up all the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with different governments especially the one with European Union. Agriculture and fishery should be excluded out of the purview of the commercial trade.

15. Privatization of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) should be banned; Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act 2002 must be strictly enforced and sex- selection must be banned and institutional efforts to improve the declining child sex ratio must be undertaken; Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2008 (ART) must be withdrawn.
16. Mainstreaming gender and livelihood perspectives in the relief and rehabilitation policies and programmes of aids victims must be carried out by the state. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) prevention and reduction measures must be extended to all the women regardless of their marital state.
17. All citizens should have easy access to knowledge-based information and communication.
18. The rights of the minority communities must be protected and promoted. Mainstreaming minority perspectives in development policies and programmes and ban all the fascist and fundamentalist religious outfits
19. The Government of Tamilnadu should immediately take steps to follow the directives of the Supreme Court of India in Prakash Singh's case and come out with a fresh draft of a New Police Bill that reflects all the directions of the Supreme Court and works towards democratic policing in the State of Tamilnadu.
20. The Government of Tamilnadu should immediately ensure that the 2005 amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code to Section making way for an amendment to Sec 176 by inserting Sec 176 (1 – A) and making way for Judicial Magistrates to enquire into all deaths in custody is immediately enforced in Tamilnadu.
21. The State of Tamilnadu should henceforth take care while appointing members to the statutory State Human Rights Commission, the State Commission for Women and the State Commission for minorities and ensures that persons of experience and respect from the civil society whose have served for many years working with different sectors in the state and whose services are respected nationally and globally are also considered for appointment since they are ' human rights defenders' within the definition of the term under the United Nation's Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998.
22. The Government of India should take necessary and urgent steps to ensure that a standing invitation is extended to all Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations and that immediate steps are undertaken for the ratification of the UN Convention against Torture, the Optional Protocol I & II to the ICCPR, the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court.

23. The proposed Bill to curb the freedom and activities of the Non Government Organisations should be repealed. A Board should be constituted for the welfare of the workers employed in the Voluntary Sector.
  
24. The Srilankan government's savage aggression against the Tamil people is a violation of International Law and amounts to a war crime, a crime against humanity, and a symbol of the denial of a people's rights that can be observed in other parts of the world. The shameful genocide against Tamilians must be stopped by the Srilankan Government. The social movements reassert their active support of the struggle of the Tamilians for their right to self determination and we demand the Indian state to stop its military support extended to Srilankan government and pressurize the Srilankan Government to stop the war against the Tamilians and work out a political solution as proposed by the international communities.

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