

From

**TAMILNADU PEOPLE'S FORUM
FOR
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To

**SOCIAL WATCH
- TAMILNADU**

**A COLLECTIVE PROCESS
(1995-2003)**

**THE TRANSITION
- THE REVIEW
(2003)**

“In many ways, the work done by the Forum does not have many parallels in India. And, the potential synergy that exists in Tamilnadu can play a crucial role in influencing the political and policy agenda of not only Tamilnadu, but perhaps, all over India. So, such an opportunity to rebuild the Forum should not be lost.”

**- Review Report of Tamilnadu People’s Forum
for Social Development, 2003**

The Beginnings:

The **Tamilnadu People's Forum for Social Development (TNPFS)** was born, in 1995, with a group of friends and a dream.

The friends were:

- **Mr. Gnanapragasam** (then, Director, Legal Resources for Social Action and now, Campaigns Officer, Amnesty International, London)
- **Fr. Manu Alphonse** (then National Advisor, All India Catholic University Federation and now, Director, Social Watch - Tamilnadu)
- **Mr. Ossie Fernandes** (Director, Human Rights Advocacy and Research Federation)
- **Mr. Henri Tiphagne** (Director, People's Watch-Tamilnadu)
- **Ms. Christina Samy** (Advisor, SWATE)

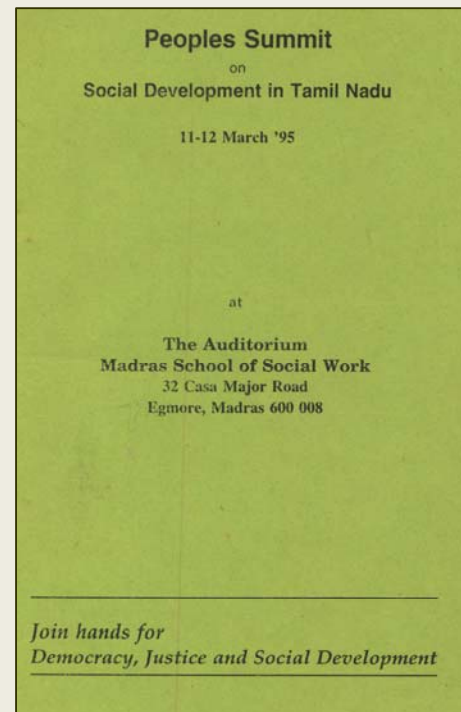
1995 was the year of the **UN Global Summit on Social Development** at Copenhagen. On that occasion, the group of friends, long involved in civil society struggles and grassroots mobilisational efforts in Tamilnadu, came together to plan a parallel **“People's Summit on Social Development in Tamilnadu”**.

The “**Parallel Summit**”, held at Chennai, during 11-12 March 1995, took stock of the various dimensions of Social Development in Tamilnadu, ranging from basic needs, rural development, ecology, health, education and human rights, to concerns of unorganized labour, dalits, tribals, small fisher folk, women and children. The participants, numbering over 200, included social activists, NGO personnel, trade unionists, academics, researchers, members of women and dalit organisations, consumer and environment groups, representatives of political parties etc. from all over Tamilnadu. About 50 speakers presented papers on various issues.

The more-than-expected success and the very positive response to the ‘Parallel Summit’ gave the organizing group the motivation to launch “An on-going Initiative on Social Public Policy Advocacy in Tamilnadu”. That is how the **Tamilnadu People’s Forum for Social Development (TNPFS)** came into existence.

The group of friends got enlarged into a **broader alliance**, as the following organizations and individuals took upon themselves the responsibility of taking the new initiative forward:

- All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF)
- ARUNODHAYA
- Association of Rural Education and Development (AREDS)
- CEDA Trust
- Centre for Development and Women’s studies (CDAWS)
- Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation (HRF)
- Initiatives: Women in Development (IWID)
- Institute of Development Education Action Studies (IDEAS)
- ISLAND Trust
- Joint Council of Tribal Associations (JCTA)
- Legal Resources for Social Action (LRSA)



- MALARAGAM
- Mr. Paulraj, Socio-political Activist
- People's Education for Action & Liberation (PEAL)
- People's Watch – Tamilnadu
- Society for Integrated Rural Development (SIRD)
- Social Need Education & Human Awareness (SNEHA)

And, over the later years, the following major networks and organizations expressed their desire to be associated with the work of the Forum and were welcomed as additional members of the Forum:

- National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) - TN
(Sept. 2001)
- Federation of Consumer Organisations in TN (FEDCOT)
(Sept. 2001)
- National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)–TN
(Sept. 2001)
- Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) – TN
(Sept. 2001)
- Human Rights Foundation for Dalit Liberation (HRFDL)
(Sept. 2001)
- Tamilnadu Fifth Schedule Campaign (TAFSC)
(Sept. 2001)
- Women's Struggle Committee, TN (Sept. 2001)
- Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) – TN
(Feb. 2002)

PROGRAMMATIC THRUSTS

The Forum, from the beginning, had been visualised to play the following major roles:

- Becoming a **Think Tank** in the Social Development sphere of Tamilnadu, intervening at crucial stages;
- Formulating a **Tamilnadu People's Manifesto** and publishing an Annual Report on the Status of Social Development in Tamilnadu;
- Taking up a continuous **Social Audit of Tamilnadu**, developing Public Policy research and advocacy and enabling People's lobbies.

And **Budget Analysis and Advocacy** was accepted as a significant tool of public policy monitoring and hence a top priority of the Forum.

Over 8 years of its existence (1995-2003), the Forum attempted to actualize its goals in terms of specific programmatic thrusts. Placing itself at the interface of grassroots movements, social researchers and policy makers, the Forum constantly tried to work towards concrete policy orientations at the State level, keeping the concerns of **its major target groups, the dalits, the tribals, the women, the children, the unorganized labour, the small fisherfolk and the physically challenged of Tamilnadu** as central to policy formulations in the State.

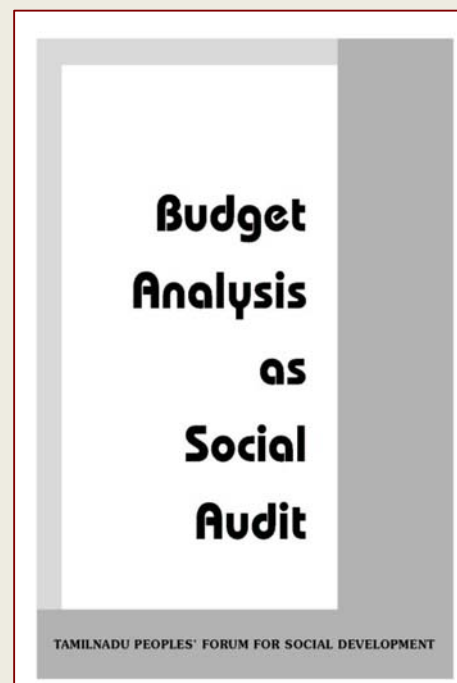
The major programmatic thrusts of the Forum, over the years, were the following:

- **BUDGET ANALYSIS, ADVOCACY & LOBBYING**
- **ELECTORAL INTERVENTIONS - PEOPLE'S MANIFESTOS**
- **PUBLIC POLICY FORMULATIONS**
- **SOCIAL MONITORING**

I. BUDGET ANALYSIS, ADVOCACY & LOBBYING:

From the very early days of the Forum, Budget Analysis-cum-Advocacy was perceived as an excellent tool for monitoring social public policy. With regard to the Budget Analysis-cum-Advocacy work, the objectives were articulated as following:

- Influencing State Budget policies and Public Policy
- Post Budget Analysis and popular dissemination through information networking, advocacy and lobbying
- Constant monitoring of various facets of social development in Tamilnadu leading to proposals of alternatives in required areas of change



(Rf the dossier, “**Budget Analysis as Social Audit – Tamilnadu Experiences (1995 – 2002)**” for in-depth details on the experiences of the Forum)

Over the years, the Forum established itself as **the premier Budget Advocacy group in the State of Tamilnadu** – as could be seen from responses from civil society, bureaucrats and policy makers as well as from the media and even national and international agencies.

A. Budget Content Advocacy:

The experiences of DISHA in Gujarat in the sphere of Budget Analysis were indeed among the most helpful and crucial of the inspirations for the early work of the Forum on Budget Advocacy in Tamilnadu.

A workshop on Budget Analysis at Madurai in December 1995, organised by the TNPFS and conducted by Dr. Mistry of DISHA, provided the needed basic skills to plunge into the task of budget analysis.

On-the-spot interactions, by a team from the Forum, with Mr. Mistry & his team during the 1996 Gujarat Assembly Budget Session provided still further skills to the Forum. And the Budget Cell of the Forum started functioning in February 1996.

The 1996-`97 Tamilnadu State Budget (Revised), presented to the Assembly in July 1996, was the first major occasion, when the Cell of the Forum had its public exercise. The Budget Cell identified the following as the basic thrusts for its analysis of the 1996-97 budget:

1. Comparison of the Political Manifesto of DMK, the ruling party, and the Budget speech of the Finance Minister
2. Comparison of the 1996-97(Interim) Budget of the previous AIADMK Govt. and the present Budget.
3. Absolute and Relative Budgetary allocations for social service sectors;
4. A deeper study of the section “Introduction of new schemes”;
5. An analysis of the component of external aid in the budget.

On 24th July, the Forum released to the press its **“Comments on the Tamilnadu 1996-’97 (Revised) Budget – 15 Questions to the Government.”**

Copies of the “Comments” were distributed to legislators, research Institutions, academics, grassroots organisations and the general public. The press gave a good coverage and many acclaimed the step as novel and significant.

Since then, the budgetary critiques of the Forum – general as well as sectoral - became regular annual exercises in social auditing in the State of Tamilnadu:

- “The Anti-Social Development Bias of TN Budget 1997-98”
- “Tamilnadu Budget 1998-1999 – A People’s Critique”
- “Tamilnadu Budget 1999-2000 – A Perspective”
- “Yet Another Budget Drama
– A People’s Perspective o TN Budget 2000-2001”
- “White papers & Black Truths
– A People’s Report on TN Budget 2002-2003
and TN Finance”

One of the most satisfying dimensions of the Forum's Budget critique work was the Forum's ability to rope in a variety of civil society groups into the process of articulating the budget critiques and creating people's lobbies based on the critiques.

The Budget Critiques of the Forum were much sought after, by the opposition political parties and members of the State Legislature. And many of the questions articulated by the Forum were raised in the Legislative Assembly, verbatim, by legislators. A small group of socially committed and young legislators consistently sought the Forum's findings and materials as helps for their interventions at the legislative assembly sessions. At times, the Forum was even requested by political parties to brief their legislators on budget intricacies.

The Budget Critiques of the Forum found their way regularly into mainstream media and, much more enthusiastically, by small periodicals run by NGOs and civil society groups. They were dispatched regularly to more than 1000 addresses of those involved in civil society, universities, trade unions and movements. And requests from various people's organizations and networks to help them to include budgetary perspectives as part of their overall struggles kept growing.

B. Pre-Budget Lobbying

The major pre-budget lobbying efforts of the Forum were the following:

- Prior to the 1997-98 Budget Session, the Forum presented a 20-pages-long Memorandum, titled "**1997-98: Budget Recommendations**" to the Govt., the planning commission as well as to political parties. The Recommendations contained suggestions of a general nature with regard to overall expenditures and revenue patterns, relative importance of Social Sector etc. They also contained recommendations of a more pointed nature – dealing with individual sectors and departments.

- Prior to the 2000-2001 Budget Session, the Forum organized a pre-budget consultation with some of the former civil servants from the Finance dept. etc. The Forum prepared a 25-pages “People’s Memorandum” (both in Tamil and English) on the thdeme, “**Social Development in Tamilnadu – Serious Concerns**”. The Memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister, the Finance Secretary, the Budget Secretary as well as to the members of the legislative Assembly.

**“SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN
TAMILNADU - SERIOUS
CONCERNS”**

A PEOPLES' MEMORANDUM TO THE
GOVT. OF TAMILNADU ON THE STATE
BUDGET 2000 – 2001

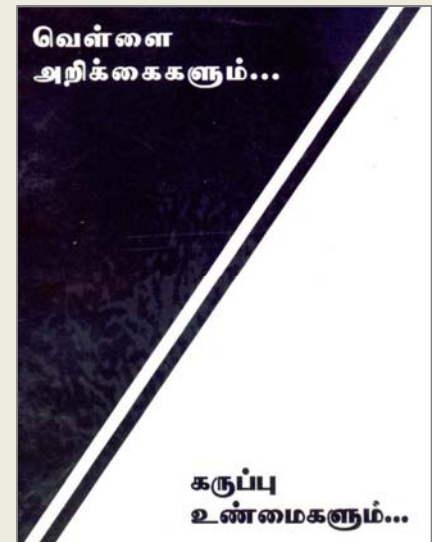
**Tamilnadu Peoples' Forum
For Social Development**

C. Budgetary Processes Advocacy:

Besides analyzing the Content of the State Budgets from a human rights perspective, the Forum also attempted to keep track of the process of budget-making and budget presentation – from the perspectives of Transparency, Accountability and People’s Participation.

In 2002, the Forum brought out the well-researched publication, “**White Papers & Black Truths**” (jn Tamil), analyzing budgetary processes in Tamilnadu over one year linked to issues like state accountability, democracy and globalisation.

The 60-pages-long publication, linking the concerns of Finance and Social Development in Tamilnadu, articulated 10 key questions to be raised in the State Legislative Assembly. The publication received very positive response, both among legislators and civil society groups, to the publication.



D. Budget Analysis Capacity Building:

There were increasing requests from and outside Tamilnadu for training and capacity building sessions in the field of budget studies. Over the years, the requests from movements, university students, and local bodies leaders, especially dalits and women, to be equipped with budgetary skills, have increased.

- In 1997, the Budget team conducted a 2-day session on Budget analysis for the animators of People's Education and Action for Liberation (PEAL) trust at Madurai.
- In 1999, the Secretariat played a key role in training the network of groups and researchers in Andhra Pradesh to prepare a dalit response to the State Budget.
- In February 2002, the Forum Secretariate staff helped SAKSHI, the Human Rights watch Group in Andhra Pradesh, in their effort to critique their State budget from a dalit perspective as well as study the implementation of Special Component plan for dalits in the State.
- In July 2002, the Forum organized, in collaboration with the Commerce Department of St. Joseph's College, Trichy, a one-day session on Budget Analysis and Policy advocacy. More than 400 students enthusiastically participated in the proceedings and expressed their desire to take up budget analysis as part of their projects of study.
- In August 2002, the Forum organized a 1-day session, at Trichy, for NGO's and People's movements. About 70 participants from all over Tamilnadu took part enthusiastically.

E. Legislative Advocacy:

A great point of satisfaction for the Forum has been the fact that a small number of State Legislators, cutting across political parties, have regularly interacted with and sought the help of the Forum Secretariate during State Legislative Assembly sessions. The forum has helped them to get equipped for meaningful interventions on the floor of the

Assembly. This group has also been instrumental in popularizing our materials and research findings to their respective parties and their various forums. Even though the number of legislators regularly interacting with the Forum has been small in number, this has been crucial and significant in terms of the spread and impact of our work. This is surely a very potential area for interventions and such advocacy needs to be sustained and nurtured.

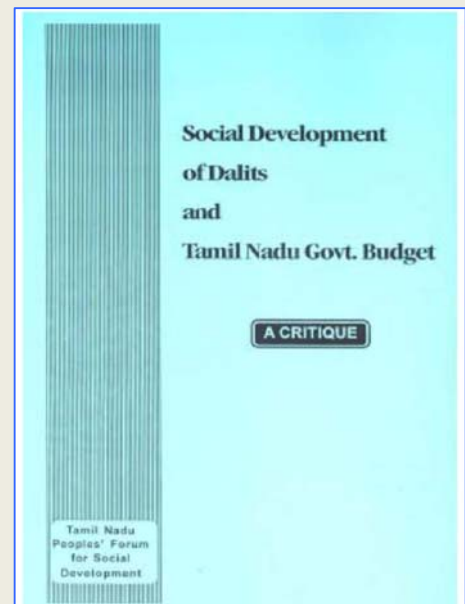
F. Sectoral Budget Advocacy:

1. Dalit Budgeting:

The greatest success of the Forum, in terms of concrete impact, has been in the field of dalit budgeting, especially around the “Special Component Plan” for Dalits.

The path-breaking dossier of the Forum, "**Social Development of Dalits and Tamilnadu Govt. Budget - A Critique**" (in Tamil and in English), published in 1999, has proved, over the years, to be the benchmark for all dalit budgeting advocacy efforts in the State and has become a model for dalit groups all over the country.

The Forum took special efforts to involve committed bureaucrats, reputed research institutions (eg., Madras Institute of Development Studies and Gandhigram University), social scientists and experienced social activists of Tamilnadu, in the preparation of the dossier.



The Critique involved an exhaustive assessment of Budgeting for dalits over the last 50 years, viewed against the actual socio-economic conditions of dalits in Tamilnadu. It contained a survey of social development of Dalits Vs non-Dalits in Tamilnadu, highlighting the gross and increasing inequalities between Dalits and non-Dalits in Tamilnadu by standards of social development. It also had a very critical-cum-professional study of the implementation of the Special Component Plan for Dalits by the State Government. Finally the critique offered concrete Recommendations towards a new way of budgeting for Dalits in Tamilnadu.

The focused work of the Forum on the functioning of the Special Component Plan for dalits in the State has made many a ripple in government circles and among policy makers.

Starting from a near-total ignoring by the State government, the consistent lobbying by the Forum, in collaboration with Dalit movements and networks and Dalit legislators, has forced the State Government to openly announce, during the 2001 Budget session of the State Legislative Assembly, a decision to constitute an empowered committee to monitor and evaluate the functioning of Special Component Plan in the State. The Forum can surely take much credit for this development!

Major dalit organisations and networks in Tamilnadu like the **Human Rights Foundation for Dalit Liberation (HRFDL-TN)** and **Dalit Mannurimai Koottamaippu (DMK)** as well as national networks like the **National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)** have extensively used our critiques in their lobbying initiatives on specific demands such as "White paper on Dalit Vacancies in government jobs", "Panchami land", etc.

The dalit budget critiques of the Forum have been helpful in adding value to dalit movements and grassroots organisations in their various struggles towards the empowerment of dalits in Tamilnadu.

The **Tamilnadu Dalit Panchayat Presidents Association** continues to incorporate our studies on Special Component Plan for dalits in their struggle for greater political and financial powers for dalits at the level of local bodies.

The birth of the **Tamilnadu Dalit Legislators Forum**, created by persistent efforts by the Forum Secretariate with the help of like-minded persons, offered strategic space in the field of advocacy at the highest levels.

2. Child Budgeting:

The request by the **Indian Council of Child Welfare (ICCW)** that the Forum be the official consultant for their 3-year study, "Setting Children on the State Agenda" of analyzing Assembly proceedings and budgets in Tamilnadu, opened to the Forum a solid avenue to go deeper into child budgeting.

Networks such as the **Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL)**, **Tamilnadu Alliance for Fundamental Right to Education (TAFRE)**, and **TN Primary Education Promotion Council (TNPEPC)** have also consistently incorporated the child-budgetary critiques and findings of the Forum in their lobbying efforts towards the empowerment of children in Tamilnadu.

Efforts at the national level, linking the work done by groups such as **HAQ** and **ICCW**, with the expertise of the Forum, resulted in more focused initiatives at the national level in the field of Child Budgeting.

3. Gender Budgeting:

The invitation of the **Tamilnadu Development Corporation for Women (TNCDW)** to the Forum to help evolve a draft policy for the State Government on “Gender and Governance” was an incentive to go deeper into gender dimensions of public policy in Tamilnadu, including its budget perspectives.

In 2001, the Forum collaborated with 4 major women’s organizations (**All India Democratic Women’s Association (AIDWA)**, the **YWCA Sahodari Project**, the **TN Women’s Rights Movement** and the **Campaign Against Sex-selective Abortions**), and prepared a Memorandum, centering on women’s rights and welfare in Tamilnadu. The Memorandum contained, among other things, concrete demands for 33% reservation for women in all public institutions, regulation of sexual harassment at workplace, domestic violence, female infanticide and Liquor as well strengthening the role of the State Women’s Commission in Tamilnadu. The Memorandum was presented to the Chief Minister and was widely circulated among legislators, the media and the civil society.

In 2002, the Forum, in collaboration with All India Democratic Women’s Association (AIDWA), the **Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS)**, **Women’s Movement Against Poverty and Violence (MAPOVI)** and **Initiatives: Women in Development (IWID)**, organized a State-level Consultation on “Gender Budgeting in Tamilnadu”. Again a Memorandum demanding gender perspectives in the budgetary processes in the State was submitted to the Chief Minister.

In 2003, the Forum, in collaboration with the above organizations, undertook an initial (though not successful) effort of exploring deeper dimensions of Gender Budgeting in the State.

The Forum's research on "Towards Gender Budgeting in Tamilnadu - Women Component plan as a policy tool" was presented at the International Conference on Gender Budgeting organized by the **Women's Centre, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar**. The request of the **National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD)** to the Forum to take responsibility for doing gender budgeting in Tamilnadu and join in the efforts of the various State groups involved in Gender budgeting opened out new possibilities of research and advocacy in the field, but could not be taken up due to organizational constraints.

WOMEN COMPONENT PLAN

(A Holistic Gender Budgeting Tool)

By
Manu Alphonse

Tamil Nadu Peoples Forum for Social
Development

(Paper Presented at the International Gender
Budget Workshop; 22-24 September 2003;
At Women's Study Centre, Utkal University,
Bhubaneswar, India)

(Besides the above three specific areas of budget analysis and advocacy, the Forum, over the Years, did also elementary budgetary work regarding tribals and labour, as well as on issues like Basic Right to Education, Right to work and Food Security & Right to Water.)

G. National / International Networking

Though basically a State-level public policy initiative, the Forum extended its arms outside Tamilnadu too, trying to network with forces of similar perceptions and options.

In 1999, the book, "**Understanding the Budget: As if people mattered**" by the National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), contained a chapter on "Budget Analysis: Experience of Tamilnadu", by Fr. Manu Alphonse (the co-convener of the Forum), describing the experiences of the Forum in the field of budget analysis and advocacy.

Over the years, the Forum played active roles at many national level consultations in the field of Budget Advocacy, e.g., the "National Workshop on Budget Analysis and Policy Advocacy" organised by the

Ford Foundation in October 1999, and the "National Consultation of Methodologies of Government Monitoring" organised by **Public Eye Centre, Bangalore**.

The efforts of the Forum, over the years, to link its budgetary work with similar work done in other parts of the country, took a creatively concrete shape, in 2000, as “**People’s BIAS (Budgetary Information Analysis Services)**”. The “People’s BIAS” was visualized as a strong network of groups, organizations and movements across India using Budgetary Studies as a tool for public policy monitoring and social change. Besides the Forum, National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune, DISHA (Gujarat), ASTHA (Rajasthan), HAQ (Delhi), CEHAT (Mumbai), YUVA (Mumbai), PUBLIC EYE (Bangalore), SAMARTHAN (Mumbai), CYSD (Bubaneswar) and Nagarika Seva Trust (Bangalore) were the founder-members of the Network.

The “People’s BIAS” initiative led over the years to the setting up, in 2003, of the **Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)** at New Delhi.

Very early, the Forum was identified by The International Budget Project of the **Centre for Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington**, as one of the 7 major initiatives in India involved in professional budget advocacy. The Forum was chosen as a participant at the International Budget Analysis Conference organized in Mexico. The major research articles and publications of the Forum have regularly been posted in their web-site www.internationalbudget.org

II. ELECTORAL INTERVENTIONS – PEOPLE’S MANIFESTOS

The germinating idea of interventions at elections through “**People’s Manifestoes**” had already been sown during the 1995 “Tamilnadu People’s Summit”. And, over the years of its existence, the Forum effectively and consistently used the strategy of “People’s Manifestoes” to advocate its development agenda among the masses and the political class of Tamilnadu, for interventions during elections to the national Parliament, the State legislature and the local bodies.

In November 1995, as elections to local bodies in Tamilnadu were announced, the Forum responded by organizing a State-level Convention on Panchayat Raj. The deliberations at the Convention got crystalised

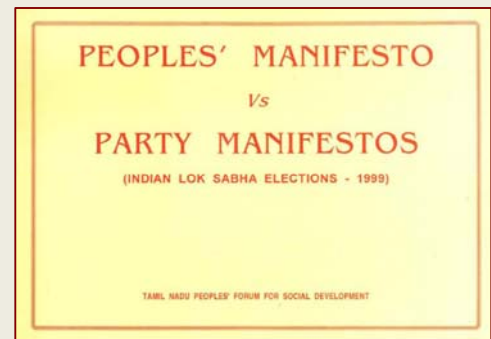
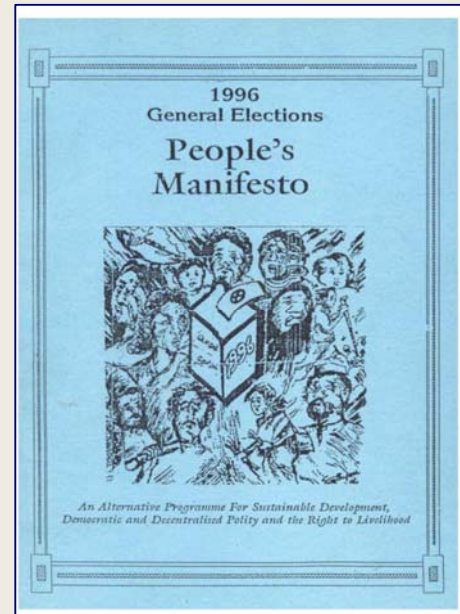
into the adoption of 2 major documents for public lobbying by the Forum: **"Panchayat Elections in Tamilnadu - A People's Charter"** & **"NGO Statement of Panchayat Raj in Tamilnadu"**.

The 1996 General elections led to the pioneering initiative of **"The Tamilnadu People's Manifesto"**, initiated and brought out by the Forum. It was a massively collective exercise, initiated by the Forum, involving almost 500 individuals from a vast number of NGOs and people's organizations.

The Manifesto was a Social Charter towards "An Alternate Programme for Sustainable Development, Democratic and Decentralised Polity and the Right to Livelihood". It provided a benchmark and a social development agenda for the Forum and for civil society groups in Tamilnadu against which to confront political parties during election campaigns.

As the build-up to the 1999 Lok Sabha Elections, the Forum published **"People's Manifesto Vs Party Manifestos"**, a research publication, comparing the Manifestos of 6 major national parties (BJP, Congress, CPI, CPM, CPML & RJD) and 6 major State parties (DMK, MDMK, PMK, ADMK, TMC and Puthiya Tamizhagam), against the Forum's own "Tamilnadu People's Manifesto".

The study compared the various manifestos tabularly over all the major concerns of the Forum in the three major spheres of a) Economic tasks for Sustainable Development, b) Political tasks for Democratic Polity and c) Social tasks and the Right to Livelihood. The document was much sought after by major national development institutions including UN bodies such as ILO and UNICEF, as excellent training material for social monitoring of election manifestos.



The Forum also released, to the press and the public, its election Document, "**Social Development, Politics and the 1999 Lok Sabha election**". The Statement had two major parts: 1) "Social Development Concerns in Tamilnadu and India", 2) "Our appeal to political parties in Tamilnadu".

During the 2001 elections, the initiative of the Forum was qualitatively different. Moving away from merely the NGO world, the Forum brought together 30 major State-level networks and people's movements of Tamilnadu, including front organizations of left political parties, to reflect about the challenges posed by the new elections. Two major consultations were held in February and **April** 2001 to plan the strategies.

The outcome of the efforts was the release of the 35 pages-long Statement, "**Elections in Tamilnadu 2001 – Tamilnadu People's Charter against Globalisation & Fascism**". The Statement, signed and released in the name of the 30 organisations, issued a 4-point call to People's Movements and a 20-point demands to Governments and political parties, besides highlighting concrete social development demands of women, dalits, tribals, children, fisher folk, urban poor, unorganised labour and the physically challenged.

தமிழகத்தில் தேர்தல்கள் -
2001

பன்னாட்டு நிறுவன
ஆதிக்கங்களுக்கும் மத, இன,
சாதிய, பாலிய வெறி
அடக்குமுறைக் கலாச்சாரத்திற்கும்
எதிரான
தமிழக மக்கள் அறிக்கை

The Forum Secretariat worked also on 2 major compilations, "**Women & Manifestos in Tamilnadu**" and "**Children & Manifestos in Tamilnadu**". These were used as basic study materials to identify the approaches of different political parties.

After the elections and the formation of the new State Government, the 30 signatories of the Charter came together. Expressing great satisfaction at the initiative of the Forum in bringing together so many people's movements, they expressed the desire to continue to work with the Forum and explore the possibilities of a **Broad-based Alliance in Tamilnadu against Globalisation and Fascism**.

Organisations that brought out the 2001 People's Charter

- **AADHI TAMILAR PERAVAI** (powerful dalit movement in western districts of Tamilnadu, especially among Arunthathiyars)
- **AADHI TAMILAR VIDUTHALAI IYAKKAM** (strong dalit movement in the northern districts of Tamilnadu)
- **ALL INDIA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY FEDERATION (AICUF)** (Progressive Student Organisation)
- **CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD LABOUR (CACL) – TN**
- **DALIT CHRISTIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT (DCLM) – TN-PONDY**
- **DALIT SENA**
- **DALIT STRUGGLE COMMITTEE** (Forum that has consistently campaigned to retrieve panchami lands taken away from dalits)
- **FEDERATION OF CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS IN TAMILNADU (FEDCOT)** (major network of consumer organisations)
- **NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS (NAPM) – TN**
- **PULICAT FISHERFOLK UNION**
- **SWATE** (Women's organization, strong in Karur District)
- **TAMILNADU AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS UNION**
- **TAMILNADU ANTI-LIQUOR MOVEMENT**
- **TAMILNADU ARUNTHATHIYAR YOUTH FRONT**
- **TAMILNADU DALIT WOMEN'S FORUM**

- **TAMILNADU ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**
- **TAMILNADU FEDERATION FOR RIGHT TO EDUCATION (TAFRE)**
- **TAMILNADU FEDERATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS** (Forum that mobilises lakhs of disabled poor in Tamilnadu)
- **PENNURIMAI IYAKKAM** (powerful movement among slum women in Chennai)
- **TAMILNADU MUSLIM MUNNETRA KAZHAGAM (TMMK)** (powerful and progressive forum among Muslims in Tamilnadu)
- **TAMILNADU SLUM DWELLERS UNION** (Major union working among urban poor in Chennai and other cities)
- **TAMILNADU TRIBAL PEOPLE'S UNION** (strong in Western districts and others)
- **TAMILNADU VILLAGE PANCHAYAT PRESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**
- **VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (VHAI) - TN**
- **TIRUNELVELI AND THOOTHUKUDI BEEDI WORKERS UNION**
- **WOMEN STRUGGLE COMMITTEE** (Network of women's organizations in Tamilnadu)
- **TAMILNADU PEOPLE'S FORUM FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (TNPFSO)...**

III. PUBLIC POLICY FORMULATIONS

Based on the quality and credibility of our interventions, programmes and research studies, there have been increasing requests from governmental and non-Governmental bodies as well as UN

Specialised Agencies to help them to develop draft public policy formulations in various sectors. Among the various agencies that, over the years, sought the help of the Forum are the following:

- In 2001, **Tamilnadu Development Corporation for Women** identified the Forum as one among the 8 organisations in Tamilnadu, given the task of formulation of a new gender policy for the State Government.

The Forum was specifically asked to evolve a process of collective reflection in Tamilnadu on the theme of “Gender & Governance”. The major 2-days State-level consultation, organized by the Forum in collaboration with the **Women’s Centre, Alagappa University, Karaikudi**, brought together more than 100 women’s activists, researchers, bureaucrats and university students and came up with a concrete policy framework on “Gender & Governance” to the State Govt.



- In 2001 again, based on the request of the **Aadhi Tamilar Peravai** (The State-level dalit movement working among the 3rd sub-caste of dalits, the Arunthathiyars), the **Aadhi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department of Tamilnadu** requested the Forum to undertake a pilot study on the socio-economic conditions of Arunthathiyars in Coimbatore district, towards evolving concrete schemes for their empowerment.
- In 2001 again, **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Chennai** identified the Forum as one of the 3 organisations in the State towards creating a framework for child-friendly Budgeting and Policy Framework in Tamilnadu.
- In 2003, **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**, Chennai, selected the Forum as its collaborating agency and entrusted the Forum with the task of training of trainers in its Project on Elimination of Bonded labour in Tamilnadu.

- As mentioned earlier, the **Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW)** appointed the Forum, in 2001, as its official consultants, for its 3-year study on Tamilnadu Government budgets and Assembly proceedings, towards evolving a Child policy and realistic Child Budgeting in Tamilnadu, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- **Action Aid India** has constantly used the resources of the Forum secretariate, in the field of public policy articulations and monitoring.

IV. SOCIAL MONITORING - SECTORAL INITIATIVES

The Forum, from the beginning, had positioned itself at the interface of grassroots struggles, social research and social policy making in Tamilnadu. Hence, during the initial years, the Forum visualised a series of Sectoral Workshops on different dimensions of social Development in Tamilnadu, with the following objectives:

- Creating a substantial data base on the major sectors of our concern
- Monitoring deeper the Government policy and the various specific programmes vis-à-vis respective sector
- Establishing on-going contacts with bureaucrats, academics and researchers as well as all positive forces in the sector, and
- Documenting an Inventory of Alternatives as well as Resistance Forces in the Sector.

Workshops in all the spheres of interest of the Forum were intended to be taken up and organized by the various member organizations of the Forum, in collaboration with the Budget Cell / Secretariate of the Forum.

In 1997-98, three major **State-level Sectoral Workshops** were organized:

- Workshop on **Rural Development** (organised by AREDS, in collaboration with the Budget Cell of the Forum) in September 1997
- Workshop on **Coastal Realities in Tamilnadu** (organised by the Coastal Action Network, on behalf of the Forum) in January 1998.
- Workshop on **Social Development of Dalits** (organized by IDEAS, Madurai, in collaboration with the Budget Cell of the Forum) in October 1998.

All the three workshops brought together bureaucrats, academics and grassroots activists in the field, and the lively interactions yielded substantial information and data - laying the foundation for interfaced perspectives on Public Policy in the respective Sector in the State.

In November 1998, the Forum organized, in collaboration with major women's organizations in Tamilnadu, a 10-day **State-level Campaign on "Violence Against Women in Tamilnadu"**. The Forum organized 3 major Consultations in Madurai, Tiruchy and Chennai. The Forum also released the Tamil version of the Indian Supreme Court Judgement on Sexual harassment at workplaces. A detailed compilation of cases of violence against women in Tamilnadu was undertaken and published by People's Watch (TN), one of the member organisations of the Forum.

In 2003, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, requested the Forum to organise a South India Consultation on "Socio-Economic Rights and Public Policy in India – Challenges and Alternatives" as part of a national initiative. Based on this request, the Forum, in collaboration with **Vaanmuhil**, organized, in November 2003 at Trinelvei, a 2-day State-level Consultation on "**Globalisation and the denial of Livelihood Rights – Challenges and Alternatives**".

More than 150 participants, including trade unionists, representatives of movements and parties and University students participated at the Consultation which looked deeply, especially, into Livelihood Rights such as **Right to water** and **Right to Free and Compulsory Education**, and worked out strategies for legal and civil society interventions. The



Consultation also helped prepare the participants for the **World Social Forum, Mumbai**.

In October 2004, responding to the hot debates around the idea of Reservation for Dalits in private sector, Social Watch-Tamilnadu, in collaboration with Vaanmuhil, organized, at Tirunelveli, a 2-day Conference on **“Reservations in Private Sector”**. A 150-pages dossier was prepared as study material for the participants, who numbered more than 350 students, activists, lawyers, members of political movements and intellectuals.



Leaders of almost all the major Dravidian, Dalit and Left parties and movements in Tamilnadu addressed the Conference. The Resolutions of the Conference, released to the Press and media, urged the Central and State Governments to ensure adequate reservation for dalits and backward castes for employment in private sector.

TAMILNADU SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Reliable data on social development in Tamilnadu, in a user-friendly form and with proper perspectives, has always been a challenge and an unmet need. Hence, right at the birth of the Forum, the members felt the need for and floated the idea of an annual Tamilnadu Social Development Report. But due to limitations of personnel and finance, the wish could not be actualized.

In 2000, the Forum attempted a limited version of a Tamilnadu Social Development Report, which was cyclostyled and used for private purposes.

In 2001, the Forum brought out the exhaustively documented **“Tamilnadu Social Development Report 2000”**. The feedback from different sections involved in policy matters in the field of social development in Tamilnadu has been very positive.

International Organisations such as UNICEF and ILO asked for bulk number of copies, to be used as source material for training. The more than positive responses, both within Tamilnadu and outside, to this pioneering effort, have provided the Forum an added impetus to its efforts in on-going social monitoring, creation of database on social development

in Tamilnadu as well as repackaging the data in suitable and relevant forms.

“The Report is very elegantly produced and I hope it will serve as a good reference material apart from giving an account of the conditions of the people, especially the deprived people of our State.”

- Dr. C.T.Kurien, (Former Director of Madras Institute of Development Studies and a respected guide to many civil society groups and movements)

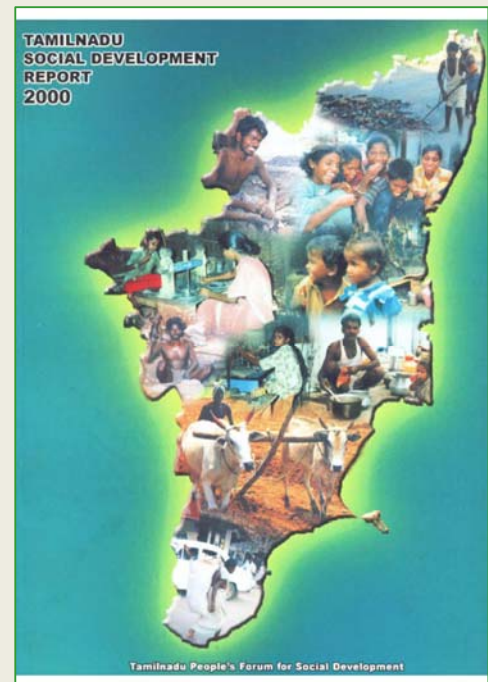
“Unlike the conventional Reports on Development, loaded with development jargon, this activist-friendly Report at the State level is a boon to the activists / researchers like us who are involved in social development.”

- Initiatives: Women In Development (IWID)

“Great work! First time such an amount of Govt data and NGO data have been brought together and presented with a perspective and excellently too”

- Mr. Nallamuthu, Director, Press Bureau, Government of India

Lack of resources, financial and in terms of personnel, has stood in the way of the Forum in publishing further versions of the Report, though there have been regular requests from local, national and international organizations to update the 2000 Report and publish a new one.



THE TRANSITION

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THE REVIEW

The visit, in July 2000, of the President, Secretary General and Asia Desk-in-charge of 11.11.11 (formerly called NCOS), the Belgian Flemish Agency that had been financially supporting the work of the Forum over the years, provided an occasion for a Review. The lively conversations paved the way for initiating a process of assessing the long-term impact of the work of the Forum in Tamilnadu.

And in 2002, following broad-based deliberations, it was decided that the Forum undertake a Review, leading to Strategic Planning for the future.

Substantial documentation was generated by the Secretariate of the Forum, facilitating a more involved process of the evaluation.

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES:

Given the unstructured nature of the Forum, conflicts and tensions had constantly arisen among the members and office-bearers regarding functions, roles and responsibilities. These demanded urgent attention and greater clarity as well as practical organizational solutions.

The most urgent among these were the following:

MEMBERSHIP

- Keeping in mind the original thrust of the Forum and as per requests arising, more and more organizations and networks had joined the Forum as “members”, besides the original founder-members.
- There was no fixed criterion for membership, nor was membership strictly defined. There was no distinction between elements of ownership, beneficiaries, collaborators etc.
- Responsibilities, roles and accountabilities of members were not defined. Members’ inability or unwillingness to take responsibilities for the activities of the Forum was a major limitation of the Form.

OWNERSHIP

- Initially the original members proved to be sort of ‘owners’, but serious differences of perceptions as well as styles of functioning among them had led to lots of conflicts. On the other hand, there were no mechanisms, within the Forum, for democratic and effective resolution of conflicts.
- Though there had been haphazard attempts to develop a Working Committee, a well-structured and regularly functioning Working Committee did not emerge.

LEADERSHIP

- Initially, the Forum had one Convener and a Working Secretary in charge of the Budget Cell, which, for all practical purposes, functioned as the secretariate of the Forum.
- In September 1999, the Forum decided to have a system of 3 Conveners, or rather, one Convener and two Co-Conveners. The Working Secretary of the Budget Cell became the Co-Convener, in charge of the Forum Secretariate
- In 2001, one Co-Convener resigned, citing ‘his inability to contribute and take responsibility for the tasks expected of a Co-Convener’. Since then, the Forum functioned with one Convener and one Co-Convener, the Co-Convener being in Charge of the Secretariate.
- The Co-Convener (in charge of the Forum Secretariate) was in charge of all the programmes undertaken by the Secretariate and was in charge of the staff and the day-to-day functioning of the Secretariate. He was expected to submit regular programmatic and Financial Reports to the Working Committee.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Convener were never laid down and problems of double jurisdiction between the Convener and the Co-Convener led to lots of conflicts and tensions.

SECRETARIATE

- Initially the Budget Cell functioned at AICUF House, Sterling Road, Chennai.
- In March 1999, the Cell moved to a new rented premise at West Mambalam, Chennai. Simultaneously, the Cell became effectively the Secretariate of the Forum.
- In October 2001, the Secretariate moved to the present rented premises at Choolaimedu High Road, Chennai

FUNDING

- From the beginning, the Forum had decided to receive foreign funds only for the expenses of the Secretariate, and it was expected that the members of the Forum would share expenses of the programmes of the Forum.
- Over the 7 years, 11.11.11 from Flanders, Belgium, was the Forum's sole financial partner. Starting from a block grant of about Rs. 4 lakhs in 1997-98, the Agency provided about Rs.10 lakhs per year till 2002.
- It was decided that until the time that the Forum gets registered and develop its own independent legal identity, funds would be routed through one of the member organizations. AREDS accepted the responsibility of routing the funds to the Secretariate and, till the end, remained the sole agency for routing funds.

FINANCE

- Constant tensions and mutual accusations between AREDS, the routing agency and the Forum Secretariate led, in August 2001, to the constitution of a Finance Committee of the Forum.
- Finance Committee consisted of
 - Mr. Henri Tiphagne, Convener
 - Mr. M.L.Doss, member
 - Fr. Manu, Secretariate-in-charge, member

- The Financial Working Document, prepared by the Finance Committee, was approved by the Forum in May 2002

REVIEW OF TNPFS (Preliminary Report)

Mr. John Samuel, the then Director, National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune, was unanimously chosen by the members of the Forum as the external facilitator for the Review. Clear terms of references were evolved.

Mr. John Samuel met 12 core and founder members of the Forum in two sittings (at Chennai on 17.12.2002 and at Madurai on 18.12.2002). Based on the interactions as well as perusal of the documentation prepared by the Forum secretariate, Mr. John Samuel presented a Review Report.

A summary of the Report findings is given below.

Review:

- A Review (based on feedback of 12 original members of the Forum and on documents presented), not an Evaluation. It does not include the views of the external stakeholders who have been associated with the work of the Forum.
- The present analysis should ideally lead to an in-depth process of external and internal Review of the Forum, leading to a Strategic Planning, geared towards revitalizing and, if necessary, restructuring the Forum,

Context:

- Conceiving of the Forum both as “a knowledge-action learning network” and on the other “a platform wherein social development issues in relation to the right to livelihood of the marginalized can be articulated and advocated”

- Though there were similar processes in other parts of the country, the process in Tamilnadu was the only one wherein active networking emerged out of the process
- Subsequent developments within the Forum and the widening gap among the founder members about the role, relevance and direction of the Forum also indicate the challenges involved in sustaining any networking process over a period of time, without losing the shared identity, responsibilities and ownership.

Analysis:

- One of the key reasons for some of the institutional problems of the Forum is the lack of clarity about the role and responsibilities of the office bearers. It was also due to the lack of real institutional mechanisms for regular communication, collective decision-making process, conflict resolution and accountability.
- Varying perceptions about the funding and the process of institutionalization. The funding pattern and the routing of the fund through one of the founding organizations was also one of the areas that lacked clear cut articulated policy framework and agreement with regard to the fund-management, financial accountability and accounting procedures
- Communication gaps and the sense of “double jurisdiction” in many areas affected the smooth functioning of the Forum.
- The multiple perceptions that existed in the relationship between the Forum Secretariate and the routing agency also reflected in the relationship between the Convener and the Co-convener, as the Convener’s primary identity and involvement was with the routing agency
- Given the significantly different perceptions with regard to fund management and account, a Finance management Committee was formed
- Varying perceptions about the role of the Convener viz a viz Secretariate, the lack of statutory basis (The forum is still a non-

registered informal formation) and lack of clear-cut institutional policies created confusion and resultant stagnation of the networking process.

“Thus the limitations of the Forum are largely because of the ‘projectisation’ of some of the key functions, without adequate envisioning, planning and policy framework.

In fact it is not the presence of institutionalization that resulted in the stagnation of the network.

It is precisely the absence of institutionalization in terms of clear vision, mission, structures, management, accountability patterns and general policy and programme framework that resulted in role confusion and multiple expectation and the resultant frustrations of all the people involved in the process.”

Suggested Options:

1. The preliminary Review to be followed up with a **Broader Review Process** (involving all stakeholders) that would include a **process of Strategic Planning**.
2. It would be helpful if the present work of the Secretariate can be recast as that of a **Policy Resource-cum Resource Centre**, whose primary constituency would be the Forum and an articulated policy to provide all the information and research support to the Forum.
3. Forum to be registered as a **Membership-based Organization** with clear-cut vision, mission and functions with collective, democratic and participatory leadership
4. An **Interim Committee** (with a convener with clear cut mandate) can take up the responsibility of facilitating the Review and Strategic Planning process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

*“Creating
Something Bigger
and More Enduring
Than Yourself”*

The **Working Committee of the Forum**, which met on **07.05.2003**, had an extended and in-depth discussion on the Review Report and came up with many decisions including the following:

1. A 3-day Strategic Planning session will take place during 28 – 30 July 2003 and will be facilitated by Ms. Rosemary Vishwanath, an independent management consultant and director of Learning Network, Bangalore. Mahabalipuram will be the venue of the meeting.
2. Prior to the session, the Forum will organise a day of interaction with its various stakeholders on 23rd June. It was suggested that we could have a session in the morning with persons, coming from outside Chennai, and a session in the afternoon/evening for those based at Chennai. The outcomes of the session would flow into the Strategic Planning session.

A list of the persons who could be invited for the interaction was worked out and invitations were sent to about 55 persons.

Persons who were invited:

- Mr. Gnanapragasam, Development Officer, Amnesty Asia
- Mr. Ravichandran, Convener, HRFDL,
- Mr. Christudoss Gandhi IAS (Tamilnadu Govt.)
- Mr. Mahendran, Deputy Gen. Secretary, CPM (TN)
- Mr. Rameshnathan, Vice President, NESAI, Bangalore
- Mr. Gunasekharan S., Tamilnadu Tribal association, Bhavani
- Mr. Dayalan, DFDL, Chengalpet
- Mr. Paul Divakar, National Convener, NCDHR
- Mr. Shanmuga Velayutham, Tamilnadu Forces,
- Dr. Ananthalakshmi, Indian Council of Child Welfare, Chennai
- Ms. Maria Sathya, Project Officer, ILO (Chennai office)
- Mr. Thomas, formerly convener, CACL
- Mr. Fatimson, Campaign for Food and Livelihoods, Madurai
- Fr. Amal K, AICUF
- Dr. Antony Cruz, Trichy

- Mr. Arul, State Secretary, Pasumai Thaayagam
- Mr. Ashok Bharti, NACDOR
- Mr. Athiyaman, Aadhi Thamizhar Peravai
- Ms. Bimla Chandrasekar, EKTA
- Mr. Chidambarathan, TN Physically Handicapped Assn
- Mr. Devaneyan, Freelance Journalist
- Director, Ambedkar Centre, Madras University
- Ms. Enakshi, HAQ, Delhi
- Ms. Gabriel Dietrich, NAPM (TN)
- Mr. George Thomas, UNICEF, Chennai
- Mr. Gladstone, Dept of Social Work, Loyola, Chennai
- Mr. Gunasekaran, Pondicherry University
- Mr. Israel, Janodhayam, Chennai
- Dr. Janakarajan, MIDS
- Dr. Jeyakumar MLA (Congress)
- Mr. Gilbert Rodrigo
- Mr. Jeeva, SIRD, Madurai
- Ms. Jeevarathinam, CAN, Nagapattinam
- Mr. John Samuel, NCAS
- Ms. Kannaki Packianathan, Director, TN State SC/ST Commission
- Mr. Karuppan IAS (Retd.)
- Ms. Lally, Labour Inspectress
- Prof. Lourdunathan, Arul Anandar College, Karumathur
- Fr. Michael Doss, ISI, Bangalore
- Mr. Mimroth, Rajasthan
- Ms. Mirunalini, CDAWS, Chennai
- Mr. Murugavelrajan, MLA (PMK)
- Mr. Narayan, Samarthan, Mumbai
- Mr. Nizamuddeen, FEDCOT
- Mr. Paulraj, Madurai
- Ms. Radha, Convener, CACL (TN)
- Ms. Regina Papa, Women's studies center, Karaikudi
- Mr. Renganathan, TAFSC
- Mr. Sagayam, PGC, Chennai
- Ms. Saulina Arnold, TNVHA
- Mr. Siluvappan, HEKS India, Chennai
- Mr. Simon Joseph, CRY
- Mr. Suresh, Equations, Bangalore
- Dr. Thangaraj, MIDS

- Mr. Thirumavalavan, MLA (DPI)
- Mr. Thomas Jeyaraj, CCRD
- Ms. Vasantha, GUIDE
- Ms. Vasuki, AIDWA
- Prof. Victor Louis, St. Joseph's, Trichy
- Mr. Vimalanathan, NESAI
- Dr. Vinod Viyasulu, Bangalore

TNPFSD “OPEN SPACE”

(23.06.2003)

On the 23rd June an “Open Space” meeting for all stakeholders was held at Hotel Abu Palace in Chennai between 10.00 to 16.30 hours. Of the about 55 invitees, 45 attended, most of them for the entire day. The unstructured and open-ended methodology followed at the sessions provided the participants enough space to set the agenda and to talk about what was important to them, rather than the organizers pre-deciding the content of the discussions.

The “Open Space” was structured as a collective exercise to review the experiences and outcomes of TNPFSD and evolve a response for the future, around key questions:

- What have been our dreams? & Where are we today?
- What have we been able to do? & What should we be doing in the future?
- What are the spaces for intervention? & How should we use them?

THEMES PROPOSED:

The participants divided themselves into groups, with themes of their choice, for deeper deliberations and suggested specific recommendations towards the future. The themes for group deliberations were the following:

- Bridges Across Spaces
- Budget Analysis & Developing Alternate budget allocations

- Dalits – Public pressure and lobbying on behalf of dalits
- Data Computation – Micro Level for the various constituencies of the Forum
- “Do we need a Forum and a Budget Cell?”
- Review strategies and propose the shape of the future
- Right to Land, Water and Livelihood
- Sustaining the Initiative within the Current Context
- What do we mean by Social Development?

Overall, the open space exercise served to re-confirm the relevance and tasks of the Forum and to point to future directions.

At a working committee meeting at the close of the day, the decision to have a 2-day strategic visioning workshop, which would take forward the process, was agreed upon.

The Strategic Visioning for the Forum took place on 28-29 July 2003 at the Golden Sun Beach Resort, Mahabalipuram.

Members who participated at the session:

Mr. Antonysamy
 Mr. Henri Tiphagne
 Fr. Manu Alphonse
 Ms. Christina samy
 Mr. L.A.Samy
 Ms. Beulah
 Mr. M.L.Doss
 Fr. John Kumar
 Ms. Rosemary (Facilitator)

Core Values of TNPFS:

The group identified what it believed should be the core values of the TNPFS. The following is the list of core values from which the underlined were chosen as the most central Core Values:

- Democracy
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Equity

- Collective functioning (embodying transparency, participation, accountability)
- Commitment to People's political process, new power equations

The group went on to define these core values in greater detail viz providing and operative definition for each core value.

1. Commitment to Collective functioning

Collective functioning embodies democracy, transparency and accountability.

It is:

- A membership-based organisation consisting of networks, movements, NGO, trade unions, research institutes, professionals, intellectuals, policy makers etc. (committed to the political empowerment of the marginalised)
- Collective that speaks in one voice on social, economic cultural rights related issues and processes.
- Led by a collective elected leadership
- An organisation that has commonly accepted norms of accountability for its leadership and membership
- An organisation that ensures regular and effective flow of communication
- An organisation that has effective mechanisms to ensure collective fund raising and financial management
- Collective functioning

It is not

- A Federation
- A Network

2. Equity

- Equity is enlarging the space for the marginalised (dalits, women, tribals) {how about other marginalised like small fisher folk, minorities, unorganized labour?}
- To participate and share the resources (human and material)

It is:

- Positive discrimination
- Participation of the marginalised in the membership and at all levels in the structure of the Forum
- It does not exclude other potential contributors (who share the vision and extend solidarity) to the Forum

3. Belief in People-centered power equations

- Aligning with civil society organisations such as movements, political parties, trade unions etc to ensure the political empowerment of the marginalised communities, in particular, women, dalits, tribals, fisherfolk, unorganized labour, minorities, urban poor, displaced persons, small & marginal farmers and migrants.
- It will not align with forces, which are against the rights of the people and working against people-centered power equations (e.g., communal forces, fundamentalist, pro-LPG forces.)

Core Purpose:

The group identified the following as the Forum's Core Purpose (and roles):

As a membership based organisation to enhance the capacity to lobby, advocate policy changes favorable to the marginalised by

- ◆ Providing the public policy dimension to issues raised by its members through various activities
- ◆ Providing perspective dimension to issues/trends/struggles emerging in Tamilnadu in relation to the national & global power relations and their impact on people's political empowerment and their economic social cultural rights

(The forum should not duplicate initiatives and efforts already underway – but support and be in solidarity with such efforts)

Vision for TNPFS:

After a long process of debate, searching for the right phrases and nuances, the group arrived at a consensus and adopted the following vision statement:

The Tamilnadu People's Forum

Envisions politically empowered egalitarian casteless secular communities unitedly marching towards a humanity based on equality, justice and peace.

Believes that collective functioning and people-centered political processes will enable the marginalised to face the tyranny of the market, communal and fundamentalist forces and fascism.

Commits itself to work in solidarity with marginalised communities in Tamilnadu, for the full enjoyment of their economic social and cultural rights.

The group then set itself to work on the task of Alignment of its structures and processes in alignment with Values & purpose.

Basic Future Structure:

There should be two separate bodies

1. Membership-based unregistered larger Forum
2. Independent Registered (legal) Resource Centre

TNPFSD Working Committee Meeting

(18.08.2003)

Members Present:

Mr. Antonysamy
Ms. Beulah
Ms. Christina Samy
Mr. Doss M.L.
Mr. Henri Tiphagne
Fr. John Kumar
Fr. Manu Alphonse
Mr. Ossie Fernandes
Mr. Samy L.A.
Ms. Virgil D'Sami

RESOLUTION:

The present Budget Cell / Secretariate will be registered as a separate Resource center. The relationship between the Forum and the Resource Centre will be laid down in the form of a “Memorandum of Understanding”.

Following this, Fr. Manu, Co-convenor in charge of the Secretariate of the Forum, accepted the responsibility of developing the envisaged Resource Centre.

In early 2004, the Resource Centre was named ‘SOCIAL WATCH – TAMILNADU’ and efforts were made to develop it as a Public Policy Research-cum-Advocacy Centre.
