

Minutes of the 8th Civil Society Meeting for Scheduled Castes held on 22-23rd of August 2022 at Dyana Ashram, Santhome, Chennai.

I. The key feature of this year's meet was the participation of political party representatives.

The following spokespersons came for the exclusive session on the first day:

1. Tr. Veerapandian – State Committee Member – CPI - 9840854707
2. Tr. K. Siva - South Chennai, District Secretary –CPI - 9444231216
3. Tmt. K. Krishnaveni– TN Untouchability Eradication Front – CPM - 9445575740
4. Tr. M.P. Ranjankumar– Congress - 9940388888
5. Tr. K.S. Mohan – BSP – Co-Ordinator - 9841677613
6. Tr. K.O. Karuppan - All India Dravida Makkal Munnetra Katchi– State Publicity Secretary - 9486843922

All of them conceded to the demand that adequate representation of SCs should be ensured in party posts also. Each representative explained to what extent this is being done in respective parties. Of course much more needs to be done was the general consensus.

A platform needs to be established for regular civil society dialogue with political party representatives. Social Watch and PAALAM have come forward to organize such a meet once in two months at least. The first meet will be scheduled in October 2022.

Parties will take up with the Govt. the matter for quick issue of orders on the announcement made for 5% preferential procurement of Government goods and services from SC/ST entrepreneurs and also run the program as a leading light of economic and social changes in the lifestyle of SC/STs.

The recent efforts of Untouchability Eradication Front (தீண்டாமை ஒழிப்பு முன்னணி) to ensure the rights of the Saandror Panchayat Presidents were applauded. An appeal

was made to the CPI party to change the nomenclature of the movement by substituting the word 'Atrocity' for 'Untouchability'.

A suggestion for organizing saandror MLAs of all parties for a meet with Chief Minister was made.

II. Change in the outlook of saandror identity and approaches in planning.

The fact that saandror (SC) and Aandrors (ST) are caste-less class of people should be driven into the conscience of these people as well as into the perception of authorities. Schemes run for Saandrors and Aandrors are not for any belonging in the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy or social structure as is being constructed commonly. SC/STs inevitably need specially designed state support in order that these caste-less people do not come to suffer or get subjugated by the caste structure outside, which of course is a cruel reality in India and spreading abroad for.

From this point of view planning for SC/STs should take a turn in the direction of strengthening SC/STs in all walks of practical life instead of the current dominant thrust on alleviation.

From this stand point it becomes vital and meaningful that at least 10% of Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes /Development Action Plan for Schedule Tribes (DAPSC/DAPST) (SCSP/TSP) budget is utilized for innovative modern and futuristic schemes. This forum had impressed this approach upon the authorities for the last one decade, presenting them with basket of new schemes every now and then.

III. Activation of Post Matric Scholarship (PMS)

The vital role played by PMS in zooming up enrolment and GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of SC/STs in higher education was highlighted.

A strong appeal was made to remove all bureaucratic hurdles being raised in the last few years on which repeated representations have already been made.

Attention of authorities was brought to the non implementation of PMS in several areas like.

1. Raising of Post- Matric Scholaship (PMS) for Arts and Science courses.
2. Extension of PMS for left over courses like Para- medical, Deemed University, NIFT, Agriculture, Law and management quota MBBS.
3. Extension of PMS to Self Financing and Matric Schools for 11th and 12th standards.

IV. Overseas Scholarship

Tamil Nadu Government was praised for brining in this new scheme Speedy issues of guidelines was requested. Plea was made for releasing grants for all applications made so far.

V. 5% Procurement preference for SC/STs.

Credit goes to the new Tamil Nadu Government for initiating this scheme, which was held up by the previous regime for over 10 years. Quick issue of orders was requested.

VI. Up grading Schools under the Adi Dravida Tribal Welfare Department (ADTW).

The following suggestions emerged.

1. Jettison the schools from non- teacher bureaucracy.
2. Form management committees and hierarchical administrators only from the teacher community.
3. All teacher posts in all schools should only go to SCs.
4. Hand over all Elementary Schools to local panchayats and continue aid.
5. Cease creating new schools and concentrate on the 120 odd Higher Secondary schools.

VII. Development Action Plan for Scheduled Caste's (DAPSC)

For implementing the schemes under Agri and Animal Husbandry sectors, as a pre - requisite and a pre - launching pad, census of SC's landholding in clusters of over 20 acres should be identified in all blocks. A separate funding for this Agri census can be provided in 2023 DAPSC.

VIII. Recommendations for the State Education Policy

1. The Civil Society emphasizes the "exclusive approach for excluded people".
Mainstreaming at all times only maims and makes the Saandrors and Aandrors suffer minority conscience. Mainstreaming also leads to erosion of native intelligence, mores, environment both geographical and metaphysical, pride and prudence.
2. No reservation approach in education for Saandrors (SCs) and Aandrors (STs).
Instead whole some 100% coverage should be planned at each stage of upward mobility. Conscious planning and data analysis is required for 100% coverage up to 12th Standard. Thereafter 100% elevation to the next degree (12th to UG; UG to PG; PG to Phd). Should be ensured for all Saandrors who qualify at the feeder course.

Special thrust strategies for all stand alone schools under the ADTW department should be drawn futuristically.

IX. Change in Housing Scheme

Various housing schemes of the past and present have brought a modicum of improvement in physical comfort.

Futuristic schemes should have plausible components of forming a habitat, rather than individual houses that can ensure elevation of social stature, dignity of living and political consolidation. Samathuvapuram models and vertical flats in urban areas should be planned prudently.

Area of housing unit should not be less than 400 sqft.

X. Revamping Tamilnadu Housing and Development corporation (THADCO)

THADCO should cease functioning as a minion of SCA (Special Central Assistance). THADCO has all along been trapped into this SCA minimalization pattern with the result of not able to provide any elevation to SCs or create entrepreneurs in any real sense of its meaning.

THADCO should shed all its definitions of beneficiaries and systems of selection of beneficiaries. It has unnecessarily, unproductively and infructuously burdened itself with the so called welfare orientation rather than its core goal of creating entrepreneurs. Most of the current activities are repeats of programs run by Rural Development Dept, AgriDept and Training Dept.

Therefore a drastic shift needs to be made and THADCO should shift gears to become a change agent of producing entrepreneurs amongst Saandrors and Aandrors in industries as classified in India – viz - Micro, Small and Medium.

THADCO should only process proposals forwarded to it by Banks after the Banks have vetted and approved them. THADCO should only concern itself with the release of subsidy after verifying the SC/ST status – nothing more on the feasibility of schemes or fitness of the applicants.

Date: 28.08.2022

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