



**9th State Level Conference on Dalit Women
Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement (TNDWM)
Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu, India
19th- 20th July 2007.**

The 9th State level Conference of Dalit Women in Tamil Nadu, which was organised by Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement (TNDWM), has taken place in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu, India on 19th- 20th July 2007.

The conference has started with the Rally from Arakkonam Taluk Office to Ambedkar Nagar by claiming equal rights to Dalit women. The focus of the Rally was, also, to invite the public to join the two day events. From all over Tamil Nadu thousands of women participated and district Dalit women leaders garlanded the Ambedkar statues. Dalit women were beating drums which attracted the public. This year, the conference particularly focused on Dalit women's rights and social equality. Although TNDWM has mobilised Dalit women's movement so far in all over the state for decades with launching the chance of women to come together once a year, the situation for Dalit women in Tamil Nadu became worsened. Particularly due to the

recent inclusion of Special Economic Zones between Chennai and Kancheepuram, the landless women, who are frequently from Dalit caste, who have worked in the agricultural lands in the region are in perils of expulsion. It was, then, the right time to share the rights struggle of Dalit women for pursuing social equality. This is the only



platform provided for Dalit women in Tamil Nadu at the moment.



At the conference, several guests have invited to explain participants about the current situation of Dalit women. Particularly, **Dr. Gabriel (Tamil Nadu)**, and **Ms. Asha Ramesh (Karnataka, India)** explained about oppressions towards Dalit women which can be caused by globalised patriarchal society. Dr. Gabriel emphasised the needs of unite against new economic tendencies, and Asha claimed that the sexual exploitation in which perpetrated Dalit women even in Tamil Nadu, and share the struggles in other states and in national level.

In order to overcome the situation, **Ms. Ruth Manorama (Karnataka), Winner of alternative Nobel Peace Prize 2006**, emphasised the needs to complete the project for pursuing Dalit democracy in local and national politics. As she saying whilst Gandhi called Dalits as “Harijan”, which refers to “children of God”, means fatherless.

Dalits do not accept the term used by Gandhi. Dalits themselves (ourselves) are more like Human Beings, and obviously Dalits, and Dalit women should be respected for their activities to embrace their rights.

Besides of keynote speeches from the guest, local participants shared their experience on their struggles for equality. **Ms. Santhanamary** from Ramanathapuram district explained the struggles even in organising movements for equality. In her district, an active Dalit leader was murdered by the upper caste peoples, and this caused great loss in the movement. **Ms. Rajamani**, from Thanjavur, meanwhile, emphasized the importance of sharpening one's perspective as Dalit women activists, as wives, not to allow others to control their lives. Through training, she could believe that Dalit women can take crucial parts of movements for the rights. Other District Dalit women leaders shared their gains and losses that they have experienced.



Dalit women exposed that none of the government schemes are reaching the Dalit

community such as free supply of gas stove, gas, colour TVs and rice supplied in the public distribution shops. These problems were raised by Dalit women in a participatory way and this was done by passing mike to the floor provoke the women whoever very spontaneous, and were made to be active.



At the end of the conference the resolution was explained by Burnad Fatima. N. and was approved by all Dalit women present. Through the document, Dalit women demands that land for cultivation, housing, and all common properties such water and trees should be given to Dalit women. Also, the conference stressed that all Dalit children should get good education and Dalit women should be granted the rights to enter temples for worshipping. The conference, in addition, emphasized that Prevention of Atrocity Act has to be implemented to punish the perpetrators. The resolution committed to the government policies as well. Dalit women strongly urged that the central government should spent the amount of 2800 crore

through special component plan has to be spent on Dalits. Dalit women, furthermore, found importance in the implementation of Ranganatham Mishra Committee report. Reflecting the influence of "advanced" technologies to the grassroots women the resolution dealt with those issues as well. Dalit women also claimed to stop all kinds of research and new technologies on reproduction.

The conference provided not only an opportunity for speaking out but also various forms of the expression. The stage was filled with many cultural programmes such as songs, drumming, and dance, which cannot be presented at the mere cultural programme provided by state authorities in India. The strong and continuing sounds of drum symbolised ironically the voice of Dalit women which cannot be stopped without eradicating equal space in whole life in India.



TNDWM is not the ordinary movement- this movement should bring the model of

mingling with other communities to fight for the equality which is the goal for all social movements. From this year, the nomads from their movement (Naricuravar), movement among Dhobi, Muslim women's movement, Tribal movement and Fisheries, are formally invited to participate to the conference, and all the participants also reaffirmed that the movement would take up the issue of STs for Naricuravar together

with Dalit women. The movement demanded for the acceptance of Naricuravar as ST status- it was clearly mentioned in the conference resolution. TNDWM, likewise, sincerely thanks to the support from all our friends for the conference, and would continuously secure the solidarity with other Asian Women's Movement in the region.



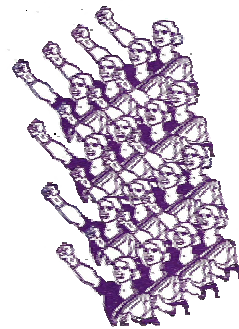
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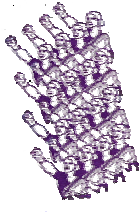
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Resolution

of the 9th State Level Conference

of Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement 2007

TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT:

I.1. Tamil Nadu Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government as per its election manifesto should give two acre cultivable land to the landless Dalit women.

I.2. The State government should give five cent housing land and build houses with basic amenities such as; kitchen, toilet, and living bed room.

I.3. All Dalit children should get free education.

I.4. Dalit children – both girls and boys- should be prevented from becoming child labourers. The state and central government should take necessary legal action.

I.5. 1989 SC/ST Prevention Atrocities Act should be implemented perpetrators should be punished as per the law.

I.6. As per the Special Component Plan 2800 crores should be totally spent for Dalits. Budget should be allocated according to the population. Budget directed for Dalits should not be diverted for other programs.

I.7. Village common properties, such as land, water and trees the State should see the Dalits get their equal.

I.8. Practices of untouchability in temple entry continues even after 60 years of independent. State should take action to implement the law to stop this.

I.9. Dalit women refuse to accept new reproductive technology imposed on Dalit women. This should be removed immediately.

I.10. The State should encourage activities conducted by Dalit Artists and recognize them with Awards.

I.11. Land which is owned by small farmers and Dalits should not be given to the big business.

I.12. Narikuravar (the nomads) should be included in the list of ST.

II. TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT:

II.1. As per the constitution the conference demand for the Government to abolish untouchable and eradicate caste system.

II.2. The Parliament and the Supreme Court should immediately accept the recommendation of Mishra Committee on reservation which urges them that both Dalit Christian and Muslims should be included as Dalits. As religious conversion does not bring any change of Socio, Economic situations, government should give reservation to Dalit Christian.

III. TO TAMIL NADU DALIT WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

III.1. Dalit Women's Movement reaffirms that Dalits are not Hindus. Dalit women should not requested follow the ritual of Hindu religion.

III.2. Dalit women should oppose Special Economic Zones (SEZ) because it is destroying the Dalits' livelihoods in the women.

III.3. Dalit women's Movement should work towards caste eradication, abolishing untouchability and fight for equality joining other movements fighting for caste struggle.

III.4. Dalit movement should involve Dalit women to develop Dalit women Leadership to bring the movement in all districts. It will be started with Ambedkar Education by joining Dalit Resource Centre, Madurai and Dalit Education Centre, in Vellore.

III.5. Dalit women's Conference Thidal will be the centre place for Dalit Women's political Training Pasarai.

III.6. Dalit Women's Movement experiences will be documented through booklets, CDs on the 10th Conference which will be held in a very special way.
