

Brief Report of Regional Convention on Social Security of Unorganised Workers held on 10-11 February 2007 at Umariya in the Adivasi Belt of Madhya Pradesh

The convention held on 10-11 February 2007 at Umariya in the Adivasi belt (eight districts of eastern Madhya Pradesh) on various social security issues including issues which concern to forest people and other adivasies had been a historic event in which about 250 participants interacted, discussed and resolved certain important issues. The programme could start late by 2.30 pm on 10th Feb. 07 because of heavy rains in the region, which disrupted the venue, arrangements and schedule. The convention was jointly organised by Rashtriya Yuva Sangathan, Ekta Parishad, Shahdole Koyalanchal Seva Samiti, AITUC, RCMS (INTUC), Koyala Mazdoor Sabha and supported by NIWCYD and CEC. Most of the participants were local activists from Adivasi belt, gram sabha presidents, union activists, representatives of NGOs and intellectuals.

The issues taken up in the convention and discussed in detail were:

- i) Rights of forest workers, deprived workers and agriculture workers and their problems.
- ii) Implications of Indian Forest Act, 1927 and notifications issued there under; inconsistencies with new law on forest and problems with Forest Department.
- iii) Wage laws, exploitation by contractors, and inequalities in wage payment.
- iv) Social Security issues for unorganised workers; background of Nagpur Convention, Campaign for social security.
- v) Social security for agriculture workers.
- vi) Existing welfare schemes of government and their implementation.
- vii) Strategies for building a movement, organizing the adivasi workers and role of NGOs, community organisations and trade unions.

In this two day function main speakers were Dr Suneelam, MAL, MrAnil Garg, an activist, Mr Dipak Surjan, editor of Deshbandhu, Mr R Dixit AITUC, Umariya, Mr R.Malaviya, NIWCYD, Sunil Chaurasiya, union leader, Dr RS Tiwari CEC, Mr Virendra Singh, Ex MLA, Mr CS Trtipathi, Mr Santosh Kumar, Rashtriya Yuva Sangathan and others. There was an open session also when many questions were raised and suggestions were made.

The inconsistencies of new forest law, complex procedure and lack of coordination between forest department and revenue authorities were emphasized by many speakers and participants. It was resolved that state government should bring a comprehensive law on social security of workers like in many other states social security laws are successfully implemented. Participants also discussed the necessity of

forming an umbrella organization of tribal and adivasi workers and local unions could associate or affiliate with it. Trade unions also stated that they would make positive efforts in this direction. The convention declared the continuation of campaign as a movement. It was resolved that they would pursue and pressurise for the land rights of forest workers and launch a struggle or movement for asserting their rights.

The convention adopted certain decisions and drafted a memorandum for submitting to the Chief Minister and Governor of the state.