

ONE DAY CONFERENCE ON
THE IMPACT OF SUMANGALI SCHEME ON ADOLESCENT
GIRLS: CHALLENGES AND OUR RESPONSE

04.08.2012, Saturday, Tirunelveli

Resolutions of the Conference

1. The Conference demands that the Government of Tamil Nadu should ban all forms of Camp labour system such as Sumangali scheme or Mankalya Thittam or Thirumagal Thirumana Thittam or in any other names that exploit and affect the life of thousands of rural adolescent girls.
2. When corporates introduce any new labour system such as camp labour system (Sumangali Thittam), the State government must set up a high level committee consisting of Government officials and representatives from civil society groups to thoroughly scrutinize the proposed schemes and those schemes must be permitted only after proper certification by the Government.
3. The conference calls for the attention of State government to look into gross labour rights violations under existing labour laws such as The Minimum Wages Act (1948), The Weekly Holidays Act (1942), The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (1976), Payment of Bonus Act (1965), The Factories Act (1948), The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act (1970), The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act(1986). The conference also demands that the National Human Rights Commission and the National Commission for Child Rights Protection must initiate proper investigation and take up stringent action to get justice for the victims.
4. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009) covers only those children in the age group of 6 to 14 years for compulsory education and does not cover the adolescents between 15 to 18 years. And therefore the conference demands that the Central Government should make necessary changes in the Right to Education Act to expand its scope so as to cover those adolescents between 15 to 18 years, as defined by the UN Convention on Child Rights. In this regard the Government of Tamil Nadu must pressurize the Central Government for making necessary changes in the existing Act.



5. The conference demands that the young women workers above 18 years of age, who have completed 480 days of work in two years in the mills, as per the Tamil Nadu Industrial Establishments (Conferment of Permanent Status to Workmen Act (1981) must be made permanent with all labour benefits and social security measures under the labour laws.
6. Our research confirms that there are thousands of girl children below the age of 18 work in the mills under Sumangali Scheme. Keeping in line with the UN Convention on Child Rights, all those below the age of 18 must be considered as child labourers and we demand that the Government should not permit the industries to engage children below 18 as labour. The Government should take strong action against those mills that engage children below 18.
7. The conference demands that the Government of Tamil Nadu must issue orders to the mills to pay the full amount as per the contract with interest to all those adolescent girls and young women who had worked under the scheme but not received the contract amount.
8. We also demand that anti-sexual Harassment Committees with due women representation, must be formed at all work places, where women work and the same must be monitored, as per the Supreme Court guidelines in Vaisaka judgement.
9. This conference demands that the Government of Tamil Nadu must make sure that, all the existing welfare schemes for the adolescent girls and rural young women must reach them, it must also initiate new measures to cover all adolescent girls so that they are trained in specific employable skills and are mainstreamed into formal employment system after the age of 18.
10. *Vaan Muhil* demands that the Government of Tamil Nadu should constitute district level monitoring committees under the chairmanship of District Collectors, with the participation of civil society organizations working for labour rights, child rights and women empowerment. These committees should inspect all the textile and spinning mills to ascertain the facts like the number of girls and young women workers engaged under Sumangali Scheme, and human rights and labour rights violations faced by them and the facilities available at the workplace.
11. The Conference urges all those women victims of Sumangali Scheme to join together under one umbrella and to launch a sustained campaign against the injustice done to them, and seeking proper remedy for them.



12. While the conference appreciates the contribution of the media in the campaign against Sumangali Scheme, it seeks continued support from the media, both print and electronic, in promoting and protecting the rights of young women mill workers and abolishing Sumangali Scheme.
13. This conference calls for joint actions by the civil society groups, social activists, academics, Trade Unions, advocates and students to initiate state level advocacy to voice against the Sumangali Scheme and to put an end to this practice.
14. Hundreds of young women workers have met with accidents at work place and suffer grievous injuries, but not received adequate compensation. Government of Tamil Nadu should issue orders to the respective mills to pay compensation to those women affected physically and mentally as per the Workmen's Compensation Act (1923) and Industrial Dispute Act (1947).
15. The conference demands that criminal cases must be booked against the agents and mill owners, who traffick young women, by luring them with false promises.
16. The conference demands that the state should come out with sustainable employment generation programmes for the youth in drought prone southern districts.
17. The Government of Tamil Nadu must set up a high-power Committee to look into the problems of the young migrants, who move in largescale from southern districts. The recommendations put forth by the committee must be implemented by this State for the welfare of these vulnerable sections.

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