

SSN: AFFIRMATIONS



POORA KAAM, POORA DAAM
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The draft text of Affirmations was prepared during 'Chintan Shivar' by Social Security Now (SSN) at the YUVA Centre, Mumbai on September 29-30, 2010. The purpose of the chintan shivar as envisaged during the meeting of the national working group held in Bhopal (August 6, 2010) was to debate, understand the nuances and work out a concept note on universal social security. Earlier during the national convention of the SSN held at Patna (January 8-11, 2010) SSN had given a call for non-targeted, non-discriminatory universal social security.

Recognising that Social Security is a right for all the people as recognized by the ILO conventions, the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, CEDAW, the UN Convention on the Rights of Child and other international conventions, commitments and treaties

Recognising that social protection including right to education and child rights, right to health, right to housing, right to food and right to work is not just a necessity but a basic right of all people and ensuring this is the responsibility of the state

Acknowledging that right to education and child rights, right to health, right to housing, right to food and right to work are indivisible elements of right to life as guaranteed by the Constitution of India (Article 21)

Realizing that today more than 80 per cent of world's population, most of whom are from South Asia, are denied any form of social protection

Recalling that social protection including social security is a powerful tool for alleviating poverty and inequality

Understanding that sustainable resolution to the recurring global economic crisis can only be sought through ensuring minimum social protection including social security as articulated in the United Nation's Social Protection Floor Initiative and ILO's Suggestions on Global Jobs Pact

Recalling that the Indian legislative provisions on social security exclude majority of workers from enjoying any form of social security and the Indian planning process has given them only arbitrary schemes

Recalling that the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act (UWSSA) in December

2008 enacted by the UPA government failed to provide 42 crore unorganised workers their right as promised, did not incorporate the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour nor was it debated in public domain, enlisted some schemes which have restricted coverage, applicable only to targeted BPL categories of population, did not define social security; did not include social security schemes in the body of the Act denying the workers the benefit of consistency and justiceability, did not cover unemployment and livelihood rights, did not universalize social security and did not have enabling provisions to empower those who have traditionally faced difficulty in exercising their rights such as the dalits, adivasis and women

Understanding that in the age of neo-liberal globalization, the dynamics of labour and labour relations is acquiring new dimensions, that economies are getting closely integrated into global value chains radically altering the existing occupational structure, that occupations (such as farm workers, fish workers and forest workers) traditionally not a part of the market economy are fast becoming integrated into the global market and becoming prone to its vagaries, that small peasants and marginal farmers are being forced to work as un-skilled and casual labour, that organized employment is getting transformed into casual employment, contract employment and self employment and that the process of informalization is hence altering the composition and structure of workforce and it is a method of capital accumulation and it magnifies the existing vulnerabilities, insecurities, increases poverty and deprivation

Recognizing that most women are engaged in unpaid and unrecognized work within the household (productive and reproductive) and workplaces and yet remain invisible in national statistics and their contribution unaccounted in the GDP

Recognising that the targeted approach has not helped in addressing particularity or vulnerability as the process of identification is time taking, arbitrary and involves huge administration cost, means test expensive and faulty and its implementation insufficient, that it exclude rather than include vulnerable population in the process of targeting and that the targeted benefit is never a right, although targeting could be a useful tool if premised on the universality of these rights

Recognising that as the Constitution of India bestows special rights to the traditionally vulnerable and marginalised communities, we hold that that targeting without universality is a charity and universality without particularity will deny social justice and is an affront to dignity and therefore the principle of social justice is a non-negotiable in delivering universality

We, the members of Social Security Now (SSN) abiding by the principles of inclusive social and economic justice, economic rights, gender justice, dignity and security of labour and vulnerable communities, democracy and participation in decision making

Affirm non-targeted, non-discriminatory universal social security for all people living or working in India is a basic right

Affirm that it is the government's responsibility to provide and fulfil this basic right for all people regardless of the status of economic development of the country and

Affirm that the government cannot abdicate its responsibility and accountability by privatising social security

Affirm that social security will be tokenism if adequacy and sustainability are not guaranteed

Affirm that social security should ensure health care, protection of child rights, disability benefits, maternity benefits, accident and medical care, unemployment benefits, old age pension and livelihood loss compensation and the benefit of pension and provident fund

Affirm that social security should address among other things the social inclusion of dalits, non-displacement of adivasis, housing and land rights of dalits, adivasis and women, vulnerabilities of migrants and recognition of unpaid work of women

Affirm that state should provide 6 per cent of the GDP for non-targeted, non-discriminatory universal social security as all people living and working in India have the right over the wealth collectively produced in India

Affirm that economic justice be ensured by ensuring living wage to all which is need based not less than the wage of the lowest paid employee of the central government as defined by the Pay Commission and the ILC with periodic revision

Affirm that all workers in all work situations must enjoy core labour rights

Believe that assuring basic income to all living and working in India will be a genuine step towards economic justice and a means to prevent poor from extreme vulnerabilities

Affirm that identification of recipients should be simple and friendly and not obstructive and exclusionary

Mumbai, September 30, 2010

Social Security Now (SSN), formed in 2006, is a network of over 500 workers organisations, people's movements, organisations campaigning for social security, organisations of dalit, adivasis and other socially disadvantaged groups. Centre for Education and Communication (CEC) is the National Secretariat for the SSN.

SSN National Working Group Members: Bindrai Institute for Research Study and Action (BIRSA), CBCI Commission for Labour, Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON), Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), Cornerstone Trust, Delhi Forum, Delhi Shramik Sangathan (DSS), Foundation of Educational Innovations in Asia (FEDINA), Harit Recyclers Association (HRA), Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), Indian Social Institute (ISI), Jan Sangarsh Manch, Laya, Lok Sangharsh Morcha, National Campaign Committee for Unorganised Sector Workers (NCC-USW), National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements (NFDLRM), National Forum on Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW), National Institute of Women Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD), nidan, Nirmala Niketan, Pragatishila Shramik Manch (PSM), Programme on Women's Economic Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR), Uttar Pradesh Gramin Mazdoor Sangathan (UPGMS), Vigyan Foundation, Women's Voice, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA)

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