



**Social
Security
Now!**

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Press Release

'Allocate 5 % of GDP for universal social security', Social Security Now urges

'Allocate 5 % of GDP for universal Social Security', urged Social Security Now (SSN), in a demonstration held at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on February 26. Around 200 people including workers, representatives of trade unions, civil society organisations, people's movements and other concerned individuals from different parts of the country marched to Parliament. They emphasised that the state should provide universal social security which is non- targeted and non discriminatory, as all people working and living in India have the right over wealth collectively produced in India. Thousand crore rupees earmarked for social security for unorganised workers is totally inadequate, they said.

Speaking on the occasion, members of SSN explained the importance of universal social security. According to J John, Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), "The root cause for sustained increase in hunger in India is the conscious decision by the political elites not to provide universal social security as a right to those working and living in India. Indian rulers escaped always by arguing that there is no wealth to divide. In a recent judgement, the Supreme Court of India has broken this myth and ordered the State to provide mid-day meals to all children in schools. Social security along with wages are the key components of distributive justice and this must be non- targeted and non discriminatory." Ashok Chowdhury, National Forum for Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) said, "Social Security is a fundamental right according to Article 21 A which ensures the right to live with dignity. But while government is spending millions for corporate interests, social security is nowhere a priority for the government." Tula Ram Sharma, Uttar Pradesh Gramin Mazdoor Sangathan (UPGMS) added, "Social security schemes are not benefiting unorganised workers." Other SSN members who spoke included Shashi Pandit, Harit Recyclers Union (HRU) and Tika Ram, Migrant Nepalese Association (MINA).

SSN demands also include comprehensive amendments to the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008 - define social security; social security benefits to be included in the body of the Act; extend social security to all people living and working in India, irrespective of status or nature of employment, quantum of wages, gender, race and caste; provision for dispute settlement; and creation of a social security fund. The social security act should also address issues such as social inclusion of dalits, displacement of adivasis, housing rights of dalits and adivasis, unpaid work of women, land rights of women and vulnerabilities of migrants.

Prior to this, SSN observed a National Action Day on February 23, 2010 where, SSN members submitted memorandum to district collectors of around 100 districts across the country. Mass meetings and demonstrations were also organised in various places.

Issued by

Ramya Raveendran
For Social Security Now

About SSN: Social Security Now (SSN) is a national campaign demanding social security as a right for all people living and working in India. SSN comprises of about 500 civil society organisations, people's movements, trade unions, farmers' associations, dalit movements and other groups. The uniqueness of this campaign is the active involvement of dalits, adivasis and other socially disadvantaged groups, asserting that social security is the legitimate right of all 'social classes' in India.

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 Hawkers Federation (NHF); 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).