



24.06.06

State Level Launches of the National Project on Prevention of Torture

In our country, incidents of women, the poor, children, Dalits and members of minority communities being subjected to torture in workplaces, Police Stations and Schools by Govt. Officials has become an everyday occurrence. From the year 1995 People's Watch - Tamil Nadu has been undertaking joint efforts for creating a torture free society and getting due justice and relief for the victims of torture by means of legal intervention along with various solidarity organizations.

With the noble aim of taking this forward beyond Tamil Nadu to other states of India, People's Watch - Tamil Nadu seeks to model and initiate a national campaign against torture in the following 10 States in India: Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar

To make the above mentioned states torture – free in the coming three years, 5 districts in each of these states will be selected as model districts where torture monitoring and awareness campaigns will be taken forward. One model Taluk will be selected where awareness on torture would be created to make the Taluk into a model Taluk in the course of time. In these 10 states, 100 Human Rights Monitors would be trained to monitor incidents of torture. In addition, 10, 000 persons including Law Enforcement Officials, Police Officers, Members of the Judiciary, Public Prosecutors, Prison Officials, Social Activists, members of Human Rights Organizations, advocates, medical practitioners, psychiatrists, educationists, politicians, labour unionists, press persons and members of the parliament will be trained to take forward the task of preventing torture.

As a beginning to this, the project which is to be implemented in Tamil Nadu is being launched today, 24.06.06, at this Cultural Night against Torture. In Tamil Nadu, the 7 districts - Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Sivagangai, Thanjavur, Salem and Vellore have been selected as the model districts for the prevention of torture. Sivagangai, the headquarters of Sivagangai District, has been selected as the model Taluk. After this program, project is to be launched in the remaining seven states too, on the 26th of June, in observance of the United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

In this function for the state – level launch of the National Project on Preventing Torture, Mr. Henri Tiphagne, the National Director of the Project, Dr. Parthasarathy, the State Director of the Project for Tamil Nadu, Dr. Vasanthi Devi, the Former Chairperson of the State Commission for Women and the present Chairperson of the Institute of Human Rights Education and Mr. A. K. Subramaniam, a victim of police torture and Mr. Sangan a victim of untouchability are participating.

Objectives:

- Protecting potential victims of torture, particularly those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized communities
- Collecting statistics regarding the incidents of torture that happen in India, documenting them and taking law based actions
- Taking forward an awareness campaign on torture and campaign against torture.
- Promoting favourable policy level changes, forming of anti – torture legislation and pressurizing the govt. to implement it.

Demands:

- Govt. of India! Ratify the UN's Convention against Torture!
- Sign the UN's Optional Protocol against Torture!
- Sign the UN's Optional Protocol against All Kinds of Discriminations against Women!
- Announce torture as a separate punishable offence!

- Take action on the STF officers who subjected people to torture as per the report of the Sadashiva Commission, set up by the National Human Rights Commission!
- Governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka! Provide due compensation immediately to the women, children, the aged and men who were subjected to torture by the STF!
- Govt. of Tamil Nadu! Stringently implement the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
- Let Pappapatti and Keeripatti continue to be reserved Panchayats and thereby ensure the Right to Participation of the members of the Scheduled Castes!
- Ensure prevention of Domestic Violence against Women and Sexual Harassment at workplace as they too are forms of torture!
- Ensure protection of the rights of the transgender community that continues to get humiliated and ostracized!
- Govt. of Tamil Nadu! Enact law to prevent all kinds of corporal punishment in classrooms as it is also violation of right to education!
- Stringently implement the Supreme Court's guidelines regarding arrest and detention, especially the guidelines given in the DK Basu vs. State of West Bengal Case!
- Govt. of Tamil Nadu! Fill the vacancies that have long been left unfilled in the State Human Rights Commission of Tamil Nadu
- Give legal recognition to all human rights commissions