

KERALA STATE KARSHAKATHOZHILALI FEDERATION (BKMU)

REPORT OF WORK

(2)

The following is the report of functioning in Kerala after the last Executive Committee meeting of the BKMU.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL

The convening of State level meeting of the party comrades who hold charge in the Agricultural Labour Front and the decisions taken were reported in the previous meeting.

We have again met to evaluate the progress. The activists having responsibility attended from all the districts as also the Secretaries of the District Committees. There is general progress in the activities in the District.

Such meetings were conducted at the District level also. The progress discernible is due to the attention bestowed by the party at Constituency - Taluk levels as well as the District level.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership work for the year 1989 was terminated in the month of March. The final lists from all the Districts have not been received yet. The membership as per available records is 56800.

It was decided that the membership for 1990 may be collected by the end of this year.

50TH ANNUAL

We have celebrated the 50th anniversary of the organisation of Agricultural Labourers in a befitting manner. The State level celebration was in Alleppey (Alappuzha) District. It was in Kuttanad, in the District of Alleppey that the organization for the Agricultural Labourers was first formed in the State. There was massive demonstration and public meeting at Kuttanad. Old veterans were invited and due respect paid. As part of the programme, District conference, too, was held. The 50th Annual celebrations were held in many other districts.

It was decided to convene panchayat - constituency District level conferences on the basis of membership for the year 1989. District Conferences with respect to the following Districts have been over:

Trivandrum, Malappuram, Trichur, Palghat, Alleppey and Idukki. Dates have been fixed for conferences in other districts.

AGITATION:

Our organisation has decided to launch a strong agitation upholding the following demands.

- The Government of Kerala concur upon a wall considered priority in Expenditure. Prime consideration be given to the weakest sections.
- All agricultural labourers who have completed 60 years of age be disbursed pension without insisting on other conditions. All arrears be disbursed.
- Land and houses be granted to the landless and the homelets.
- Expedite decisions in cases pending with the Land Boards.
- Take over surplus land
- Issue (Pattayam Certificates' for land holdings.
- Conduct Re-survey on all plantations in Kerala and the surplus be taken over and distributed.
- Rescind all loans below Rs.10,000/-.
- Take immediate steps to proceede with welfare fund for Agricultural Labourers.
- Bring forth a thorough and perfect central Act.

On 24th June 1990, the Resolve for Agitation was declared in a convention in Trichur (Thrissur).

The decision is to encircle, on 20th August, the District Collectorates and obstruct entry from all sides. In Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram) the obstruction will be around the State Government Secretariat.

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Ten thousand volunteers will take part at each centre of agitation.

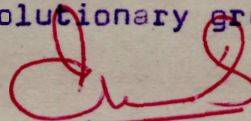
To achieve this aim district-wise conventions are stated for July constituency-wise and Panchayat-wise conventions will also be convened. Publicity vehicle tours have also been planned for the First Week of August.

The publicity work as well as the organisational arrangements for the collectorate encircling and obstruction agitation of August 20th have been given a start.

We have succeeded in creating a new awakening and excitement among the labourers.

It is in making this agitation a success that our organisation is concentrating all its potentialities.

With revolutionary greetings,



K.E. ISMAIL

General Secretary, B.K.M,U

6. 7. 90

Aug 1990
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DOCUMENT ON DECLARATION OF RIGHTS
OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, KERALA

We have come to a situation where there is no other way left to solve the living problems of the downtrodden agricultural workers except through a powerful struggle. Hence the Kerala state khet mazdoor union is preparing for a powerful struggle .

Agricultural workers are the poorest among the poor. They are economically exploited and socially oppressed.

It is they who are directly hit by price rise, unemployment and droughts.

So far as the majority of them are concerned the desire for a house and a piece of land still remains a dream.

The attitude of the state Government towards the 40 lakhs sweating and toiling agricultural workers has been one of uttar negligence.

It was as a result of the struggles we had conducted in the past that we had been able to secure some concessions.

The Agricultural Workers Act, Pension scheme, welfare fund and social security measures- all these were secured as a result of these struggles.

The posture of the Karunakaran Government is to nullify even these hard eafned gains.

The Karunakaran Government had come to power with a declaration to increase the pension of agricultural workers to Rs.100/- but not only that pension was not increased the government was not prepared either to clear the arrears or to make timely payment of pension. The functioning of the welfare fund is without any life. The old age pension , the destitute pension and pension for the handicapped are not being paid on the ground that government have no money.

The government is trying to hit the empty stomachs of these poor people in the name of financial stringency. Even in the midst of financial stringency this government does not find any difficulty to give concessions to those organisations which enter the field with strikes and other tactics of struggle. It is on the issues of agricultural workers and harijans that the government shows its distregard and negligence.

We can not allow this position to continue. It is for this reason that the state agricultural workers' union is preparing for a struggle by rallying the agricultural workers of Kerala.

WELFARE FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.

It was through an amendment made in the Agricultural Workers Act in 1980 that the Welfare Fund was introduced in place of the provident fund originally envisaged in section 8 of the Act. The Welfare Fund came into existence with effect from 9.7.1990.

But after the present government came to power neither the fund required for elementary expenses, nor the necessary staff are provided. In effect there are no activities for registration of applications and distribution of identity cards. Uptill now this government has not taken any steps to receive the cultivators' share to the welfare fund.

Therefore necessary funds and personnel required for the functioning of the welfare fund should be provided immediately. Effective office functioning should begin in all the districts for registration and for providing identity cards to the agricultural workers and also for receiving cultivator's share to the fund.

MINIMUM WAGES SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED

The minimum wages notified in 1984 have now been revised by government. The wage rates which came into force from 1 May, 1992 are Rs. 40.20 for men and Rs. 30/- for women.

In all regions necessary steps should be taken to ensure payment of wages at the new rates.

PENSION FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

Pension should be increased to Rs. 100/- and it should be paid with arrears immediately. Today income limit has become the main obstacle for getting pension for agricultural workers of pensionable age. In no other sphere pension is provided on the basis of income. Hence in the case of agricultural workers also pension should be provided without income limit. The income limit should be totally abolished. Implementation committees should be constituted at panchayat level for the selection of deserving applicants for pension.

HOUSE AND LAND

Government should take prompt measures to solve the issues of housing and land. Just as the L.D.F. government in 1987 introduced a scheme to provide landless and houseless SCS and STs land and houses, this government should take a census of landless and houseless agricultural workers and formulate a scheme to provide them land and houses within a specified period and should start implementing it.

DISTRIBUTE SURPLUS LAND

When people thirsting for a piece of land are still waiting in Kerala in thousands and ten thousands the government are keeping the surplus ceiling lands with them without distribution.

Steps should be taken to provide land to those who are living in huts constructed on roadside, riverbanks, on the side of the canals and channels and on rocks.

This problem can be solved if ceiling is imposed on urban lands and plantations and a resurvey is undertaken on plantations.

The present condition of the Laksham colony houses^{Houses} built under the one lakh housing scheme is very deplorable. Financial aid should be provided to carry out timely repair work on these houses.

In some places in the state Laksham colony houses are put to "japti" under court orders for failure to repay loans advanced earlier.

This type of grabbing from the begging bowl is grossly unjust. The loan of Rs. 4000/- advanced to the inmates of the Laksham colony should be written off.

This government should be prepared to implement immediately the LDF government's declaration for restoration of all alienated tribal lands to their legitimate owners.

Employment is diminishing every year in the agricultural sector, Unemployment in this sector is very acute. The use of agricultural lands for other purposes leads to the increase in unemployment. Therefore the government should take measures for the strict enforcement of the provisions of the Land Utilisation Act. At the same times steps should also be taken to find a solution to the problems of unemployment.

The functionings of the SC & ST Development Corporation and the corporation for the development of Converted Christians from SC & STs should be redesigned and they should be made to function effectively.

**WELFARE CORPORATION FOR AGRICULTURAL
WORKERS SHOULD BE FORMED**

The life of agricultural workers is full of privations and difficulties. A Welfare Corporation for Agricultural workers should be formed for organising welfare activities among them and for securing social educational, economic and all round progress for them. We appeal to the government to form welfare corporation for the agricultural workers and to find urgent solution to the limited problems mentioned above by implementing a series of comprehensive schemes through the corporation.

We call upon the entire agricultural workers of Kerala to rally unitedly behind the activities for the realisation of the above mentioned demands. We appeal to workers, peasants and the general public to extend their assistance and cooperation to the agricultural workers in the struggle for their rights.

For the Kerala State Karshaka-
Thozhilali Federation.

K. E. Ismail, MLA
General Secretary