

Committee for the Protection foor Democratic Rights

- TamilNadu (CPDR- TN)

Manifesto

(Ratified at the formation Meeting of 21-12-2015)

PREAMBLE

The Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights – Tamilnadu (CPDR-TN) is a mass organization committed to fight for democratic rights and civil liberties of the people of India.

PERSPECTIVE

1. In the immediate aftermath of Indian Independence from the British colonial and monarchical rule, with the adoption of the longest ever written republican constitution in 1950 that guaranteed various rights and liberties under Fundamental rights and the measures for ensuring the responsibility of government under directive principles of state policy, gave rise to hopes of a public welfare state.
2. The promulgated Republican constitution as its Preamble and its subsequent articles categorically secured to all its citizens the rights and liberties are constitutional ones are no longer at the disretions and goodwill of the rulers. The peple of India genuinely felt the transition from a monarchical or colonial orders to republican democracy would lead to the fruitions of

Justice, social, economic and political

Liberty of thought, expression , belief, faith and worship

Equality of status and of opportunity

And to promote among them all

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the Unity and Integrity of the Nation

But with the passage of time, with the provisions for violation of constitutionally guaranteed republican rights by the state leading to continuous erosion of rights, belied the hopes of the masses. The culmination of this was seen during the emergency days when the courts justified the suspension of fundamental rights.

3. The imposition of the emergency on 25 th June 1975 raised the issue of democratic rights and civil liberties before all sections of the people in a manner never tried before.
4. The emergency was imposed in the wake of huge mass upsurges. Looking back it can be seen that a steady violation of the hard won democratic rights and liberties, especially of the working class and peasantry , had begun in an earlier period much before June 1975. The Emergency marked a significant trend towards greater centralization of power when as a contradictions within the ruling class at the time, the Congress Party imposed the emergency to maintain itself and the interests represented in power.
5. The most important learnings of emergency was the manner in which the state machinery (police , bureaucracy, judiciary) and the mass media served the interests of a section of the ruling classes at the cost of the lives and the liberties of millions of the people. Globalisation, Liberalisation, and privatization policies of the Government has worsened the lives of the masses curtailing the hard won democratic rights till then. Hence, the need for a broad based democratic movement.

6. The CPDR-TN, therefore , holds that democratic rihts, including those that exist in the Constitution , can be realized only by vigilant movements and proactive expressions of the masses of the people.
7. Even today there remains an alarming gap between the reality that millions of weaker and deprived sections of the people, both in the cities and village face and the so called liberty and equality before the law guaranteed by the constitution, whereby the democratic rights and civil liberties are supposed to be equally applicable to all people. The situation particularly for the vast numbers of the people, including dalits, religious minorities and tribals is one in which all democratic rights and civil liberties are denied. The judiciary, Xustodians of the law instead of suo motto ensuring the rights given and guaranteed under the Republican Constitution, make the citizens plead before the courts of law on every occasion of infringement of the rights. The dominant section controls the power structure in society with the help of the state machinery.
8. Since the mid eighties, the Indian government adopted neoliberal economic reforms, which rely predominantly on market mechanism instead of political processes of governance. Presently the ideology of neo-liberalism is the most domineering soci-politico-economic influence in different parts of the world. It has resulted in the ‘financialisation of everything’ where economic freedom is guaranteed not to the people, bu to corporate- multi nationals and large business house. The adoption and acceptance of the neo-liberal policies increased poverty for the vast sections of the masses while concentrating wealth in fewer hands. Also seen is the decline in all social parameters, resulting in increase in child undernourishment, farmers’indebtedness and suicides. In furtherance of the state’s anti-people neo-liberal policies , the Indian state has adopted the path of militarization of internal conflicts and introduction of anti-people laws for the suppression of genuine protests and sustained struggles. Any form of resistance to this process by people is being responded to by the state in a very brutal manner.

9. The meaning of democratic rights for the working class is the right to work and the right to a living wage and the right to engage in various forms of struggle for their demands, the right to organize in trade unions of their own free choice, the right to elect their representatives. And the right to go on strike without the intervention of the state. These rights won by the working class through the course of many years of hard struggles are being progressively trampled upon and are sought to be annulled altogether by the state. EPZs and SEZs have created a situation of ‘state within state’ wherein no laws of the land is applicable. Without any legal recourse, the conditions created by massive contractualisation, casualisation and informalisation of labour , allpart of the neo-liberal startegm, has de facto denied any labour law protection or basic rights to the vast majority of workers.
10. The dalits, who are th e traditional victims of the Hindu Social order and tribals, who remained physically excluded frm the mainstream for centuries are still repressed and exploited with impunity. Dalits suffer layered injustice, one being part of the working class and two, because of the social prejudice. Dalits and tribals have been living precarious lives sans any democratic rights.
11. The rise of Hindutva since the 1990s has grown to menacing proportions. These right wing religious and sectarian forces brandishing religious nationalism which has been menacing the lives of religious minorities, particularly Muslims, and Christians and others who oppose such tyranny. We oppose religious majoritarianism which impinges upon the democratic rights of the people.
12. The state is increasingly become a police state with totalitarian powers. People are being incarcerated under draconian laws merely because they are ‘different’ in religion, culture and ideology, or because they are questioning the policies of the state, or because they are mobilizing people in their struggle for democratic rights. The ‘ internal security’ syndrome has resulted in enactment of draconian laws penalizing ideologies, thereby every act of

resistance of the people by branding them ‘anti – national’ or ‘terrorist’ or ‘extremists’ , duly demonized through the massive propaganda of the state supported by corporate media.

13. It is a constitutional guarantee and peoples’ democratic right to believe in any ideology and act in accordance to it. The Indian state has historically resorted to instituting draconian laws to curb peoples’ movement for asserting democratic aspirations. These laws are utter negation of peoples’ basic democratic and civil rights.
14. People are increasingly being pushed to take shelter of the occult and divine. Activists and organizations opposing these forces and working in furtherance of scientific temperament and reason are being silenced.
15. Despite the promises of equality between sexes in the Constitution, women have always been , and remain socially, economically and politically oppressed. The fundamental forces have added to their woes by assuming moral policing, by perpetuating patriarchy and by further curbing of their expression in the private and public sphere.
16. There has been a systematic distortion of history and science to suit the ends of the ruling classes by indoctrinating the masses into political inertia and to suppress rational thought and intellectual rights.
17. The neo-liberal era has resulted in the state disinvesting from social welfare measures. The Indian health care sector ranks among the most privatized health care sectors in the world.
18. Students confront an undemocratic educational system which serves neither their needs nor the needs of the masses of the people. They have been systematically reduced to be the inert potential ‘human resource’ for consumption of the corporates. Campus politics that ought to train students to become democratic citizens is getting decimated. Neo-liberal policies of the Indian state have not only neglected students, but also have progressively made them degenerate into insecure and self obsessed individuals. The education system stands today as

a multi layered market system that supplies varied kinds of education to various market segments according to their purchasing capacity and has cut off entire rural India from the access to quality education.

19. India is a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic country. Democratic rights include the right of people to their cultural, linguistic, ethnic aspirations. The struggle of the mass of the people to genuinely participate in the cultural, economic and political forces that affect their everyday lives constitutes a vital force in the creation and sustenance of a truly secular and democratic country.

OBJECTIVES

1. To monitor the state of democratic and civil rights of people and act as peoples' watchdog against violations by the state.
2. To educate people on the situation of their democratic and civil rights and to create public opinion regarding violation thereof and to sensitize people to act against the violation thereof in any manner through organizing and holding public meetings , seminar, lectures, conferences on significant right issues.
3. To conduct fact finding s and issue statements relating to significant issues of violation of democratic / civil rights and publish periodical bulletins in print and/ or digital form.
4. To agitate against the violation of democratic/ civil rights to pressure the government to act and/ or to sensitize against such violation..
5. To seek legal remedies against the actual and /or potential violation of peoples' democratic/civil rights through courts of law.