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VISION DOCUMENT

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The Council for Social Development organized a meeting at Surajkund on April 2, 2013, to re-visit its vision and objectives, to recalibrate its programme and projects and to fine tune its modalities for implementation, taking into account the recent changes in the field of social development in the country and world at large. Following are the main conclusions that emerged at the end of the discussion:

I. Philosophical Underpinning:

The vision of building a just society as stipulated in the Indian Constitution will remain the reference point for all intellectual and practical work in the Council.

Its guiding principles will be: secularism and equality, identity and justice for the citizens of India. These are at the core of social development.

II. Recent Changes:

The continuing trend of the **retreat of the State** from the broad field of social development and the resulting privatization of social services has led to further decay and dismantling of public sector structures built for sustaining social development and dispensing social goods and services.

The growth process has proceeded in such a manner as to further marginalize the deprived sections of the population and to breed social conflict and unrest on a much larger scale. In the process, social justice has taken a back seat.

III. New Thrust Areas for CSD's Activities:

1. CSD will study the implications of the phenomenon of the retreat of the State from the social sector, particularly how it has led to larger scale deprivations, decay and dismantling of public institutions, absence of long term objectives and commitment of resources for achieving social targets and the abandonment of structural and systemic approaches to dealing with social problems.
2. It will formulate ideas about how to bring the focus back on the disadvantaged sections at a time when the State which was supposed to implement the fundamental provisions of the Constitution relating to equality and justice, is serving the interest of only a few.

3. There will be an endeavor to study how bureaucratic structures have been enfeebled and reduced on account of the retreat of the State, through such means as outsourcing to private agents, adoption of PPP mode of building infrastructure and setting up institutions, and such macro-economic measures as the Fiscal Responsibility Act.
4. There will be regular assessment of the performance of public institutions through surveys, interviews and social audits.
5. CSD will closely examine whether the right-based approach to social development is really different from the entitlement approach and where these two approaches are different from welfare and charity approach. A study of this problem has acquired urgency in view of the serious problem of implementation that has arisen even when a subject has been brought under the category of fundamentals rights (as in the case of Right to Education).
6. CSD will function as a **brain trust** of the people of India committed to the vision of its founders. It will, from time to time and preferably once every year, undertake national stocktaking of the direction in which the country is moving in the social field and present alternative suggestions before the government and the people.
7. CSD will study and make an evaluation of the efficacy of the numerous experiments that are going on in the country in an attempt by the people to cope with the distress reality through self-help measures, including through the revival of cooperatives.
8. A conspicuous failure of the development process has been the lack of involvement of the beneficiaries in the conceptualization, formulation, evaluation and implementation of programmes designed to ameliorate their socio-economic conditions. CSD will study the implications of this phenomenon for the quality and relevance of the programmes and suggest alternative approaches to bring about a change in the situation.
9. CSD will continue its research and advocacy work designed to improve the conditions of the socially disadvantaged groups like the *dalits*, *adivasis*, minorities, women, children, marginal and poor farmers and workers in the unorganized sector.

It will intensify its activities in education, health, agriculture and rural development sectors.

Human rights, particularly of the weaker sections of the population, will remain one of its core concerns.

In addition, it will take up and build capacity for, research, advocacy and training in the following areas:-

(a) Sustainable development:

The related issues for study will be: water, energy, environment, climate change, land use and agriculture.

(b) Poverty in the process of urbanization:

The related issues to be studied will be:

- How cities are becoming exclusionary, pushing the poor to the periphery;
- How institutions of local self-government, particularly residence welfare associations are institutionalizing and standardizing inequality in urban areas;
- Social dynamics of small cities and towns – how they are being marginalized in the policies and programmes for urban development.
- The urban-rural divide.

(c) Impact of science and technology on social development:

Some of the aspects to be covered under this heading will be:

- How to preserve technological pluralism in Indian society;
- Role of science and technology in rural transformation;
- Role of science and technology in governance improvement.

IV. Seminars:

1. CSD will continue its robust seminar/conference activities which have served to crystallize the opinion of the civil society organizations and independent experts and their transmission to policy makers.
2. CSD will make renewed and more rigorous effort to communicate and disseminate the outcome of the deliberations in its seminars and conferences.
3. The annual national seminar coinciding with the birth anniversary of the CSD's founder, Dr. Durgabai Deshmukh, will be made a regular event.

4. CSD's fortnightly **Social Development Forum** will also be made a regular event. Some of the themes to be discussed under this forum on a regular basis will be:
 - annual discussion on the Union Budget from social development perspective;
 - annual discussion on the Human Development Report of the UNDP and those Annual Reports of the UNCTAD and World Bank which have aspects of social development as their major themes.

V. Training:

1. CSD will continue with its current practice of conducting every year a short course on Research Methodology and another on Displacement and Rehabilitation.
2. It will revive its short course on the concept, significance, scope and dimensions of social development.
3. The idea of offering a nine-month course in social development has been under consideration for a while but deferred due to paucity of faculty and logistic reasons. This will be operationalised at the propitious moment.
4. Special courses will be designed and offered in other areas of concentration by the CSD such as sustainable development and social impact of projects involving displacement.
5. Consideration will be given to organizing a **short term** summer/winter school for those who are likely to be the agents of change in the Indian society.

VI. CSD as a Centre for Data Analysis, Processing and Publication:

With the establishment of the SDI Unit in the CSD it should be possible for it to function as a centre for the analysis, processing and dissemination of data relevant to the study of the problems of and the formulation of projects in the field of social development. CSD's future activities in the area could include the following:-

1. The SDI Unit should prepare data sheets and tables relating to major macro and micro level developments in the country in the field of social development. This should be regularly fed into major on-going research projects.
2. CSD should build a data archive on social development that includes:

Statistical data collected over the years for preparing the Social Development Index.

Primary data collected during the course of empirical studies conducted by CSD faculty members for various projects, including those done for the Social Development Report.

Processed data compiled in convenient forms, available from the National Sample Surveys, Census and other surveys undertaken regularly by official and non-official sources.

3. The SDI Unit should analyze and process the data relevant to social development, available from NSS, Census and other surveys, prepare graphs, tables and charts presenting the data in a convenient form, and disseminate them on a quarterly basis with brief comments, in a printed form or by e-mail.
4. CSD will examine the possibility of developing:
 - Human Distress Index
 - Human Freedom Index
 - Human Equity Index.

VII. Publications:

1. CSD will consider bringing out a Hindi version of the *Social Change* with possible collaboration of a like-minded institute.
2. CSD will consider bringing out a quarterly newsletter on its activities and/or a quarterly review of major developments in the social field. (It will be necessary to put a qualified person in place before undertaking this task).
3. CSD will bring out monographs and occasional papers mainly prepared by its scholars, for free circulation.

VIII. Communication:

1. Renewed efforts will be made to improve the public visibility of CSD's flagship publications, particularly the *Social Change* and *India: Social Development Report*.
2. CSD's website will be strengthened and improved as an effective tool for disseminating information relating to CSD's activities, outcome and principal

policy conclusions and recommendations flowing from these activities, and facts and data of public interest in the area of social development.

VIII. Approach:

1. While CSD will continue to work primarily in the area of research and advocacy to influence government policies, it may consciously undertake such research as may trigger social action and influence public discourse for the advancement of socially disadvantaged.
2. In research, the principal focus will be on empirical research, including field surveys, participant observations and social audit.
3. CSD will select areas in the country either already studied by it in the past, including in the process of the preparation of the SDR or those which have become strategically important, to be repeatedly studied on a systematic basis in order to capture changes in social trends, attitudes and practices.
4. CSD will carve out a niche for itself as a centre of excellence for research and advocacy work in the areas of:
 - (a) land and the marginalized;
 - (b) deprivation of the *Adivasis*; and
 - (c) school education.

In building such a centre, it will work in collaboration with other institutions, particularly universities, and, above all, its Southern Regional Office which, among others, is doing pioneering work in the field of the empowerment and the development of the *Advivasis*,

5. It will collaborate with Central and State governments, other research institutions, universities and international agencies for carrying out joint large scale projects, particularly those involving field surveys in different parts of the country.
6. CSD will develop links with international development agencies located in India, particularly UNDP, Delhi Sub-regional Office of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, World Bank and ADB, business organizations and the media.
