

**C I T U**  
**Xth ALL INDIA CONFERENCE**  
**HYDRABAD.**

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**27th-31st DECEMBER 2000**

**ALL INDIA PLANTATION WORKERS FEDERATION**

**- REPORT -**

# Report of All India Plantation Workers Federation

Dear Comrades, Delegates.

I would like to present before you a brief report on the industrial position, organizational activities and important Campaigns which have taken place in the Plantation Sector after the IXth Conference of Cochin.

Before going to the report let me pay tribute to the beloved leaders who have departed from us Comrade Vimala Ranadive the President of our Federation known to the Plantation workers all over India died on July 24-1999 at Bombay. Comrade Vimal Singha the Vice President of the Federation was martyred by antinational extremist in Tripura Com: Dhaniram Kosala working committee member and leader of the Plantation workers of Assam also left during this period Com: V. S. Chandrasekhara Pillai working committee member and leader of the Plantation workers of Kerala has also left. In Assam CITU State Committee member and leader of Plantation workers Sitha Marandi along with Miaspia Gulia and Nammanan Gulia were murdered by management goondas.

## **Tea Plantation**

Tea Plantations in India are located in the state of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Karnataka. The industry faces a very Serious crisis due to the policies adopted by the present Government of India. The policies of import liberalisation and Globalisation are playing havoc. The sharp fall in the price of tea is because of the indiscriminate import of tea from Sri Lanka and other Countries. Though India is a party of WTO agreement India can impose duty of 150% for imported Tea, from SAARC Countries it can be 35% Tea from Sri-Lanka is imported at the rate of 7.5% giving a severe blow to the industry.

Due to the crisis in Plantation the management is denying benefit to the workers. There is no regular payment, medical benefits are curtailed. No new recruitment some estates have closed and some major estates are at the brim of closure.

Trade Unions and managements of plantations, in the present context, have to jointly approach the Government of India to suspend the import of tea to suspend the excise duty for the time being and persuade Russia and other countries to purchase tea from India.

## **Coffee Plantation**

India accounts only 4% in the world production of coffee. Karnataka is the major producer followed by Kerala and Tamilnadu. The liberalisation policy has affected the industry and the price of coffee has come down. Earlier the main work of Coffee Board was pooling and marketing of coffee. Hence that system was abolished through amendment to Coffee Act.

The managements are denying benefit to the workers. Some managements are giving only 5 days work in a week. Contract system is now wide spread and number of permanent workers are declining. Due to the financial crisis some estates are at the brim of closure.

## **Rubber Plantations**

India holds 4th position in the world for the production of Rubber. Kerala is the largest producer in the country followed by Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Karnataka. The WTO agreement has seriously affected the industry. Though rubber is an agricultural product and plantations paying agricultural taxes, the masters of WTO considered it as an industrial product. The maximum import duty that can be imposed on rubber is only 25%. In the case of agricultural product it is 150%. So import of rubber is very easy and it is very seriously affecting the industry.

The price of rubber has crashed down. The average price in 1996 per kg: was Rs. 51.22, 1997 Rs. 39.88, 1998 Rs. 30.13, 1999 Rs. 29.97 and now it is Rs. 27. Though the Government has revised the bunch mark price in 1998 to the tune of Rs. 34.05 per kg. There is nobody to purchase it on that price. Though the price of rubber has come down tremendously the price of Tyre and tube has not been reduced.

Nine lakhs small holdings are there in Rubber. Due to the crisis their condition is pitiable. The position of the worker is also pathetic. In some estates even weekly store cash is not given regularly. So many estate has been closed. The giant profit making plantation companies are now at the brim of closure. Around 4 lakhs workers are finding their livelihood from working in this industry.

Cardamom, Zincona, Cashew and Oilpalm are the other sectors of Plantation in which the workers of the Federation working Apple, Kenduleaf, Banana, Orchards, Forest are the Sectors in which the workers can be included in this federation.

## **Important Organizational Activities Since IX Conference**

The South Zonal meeting comprising leaders of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka was held at Virajpetta in Karnataka on February 14-1997.

There was very good discussion on organizational matters for 6 hrs.

The 5th state conference of the Karnataka Plantation workers Federation was held at Sidhapur in Kodagu on 15th and 16th February 97. 250 delegates attended. After the meeting there is a successful rally of the Plantation workers.

A day School for Plantation workers was held at Shakleshpur in Karnataka on 28th and 29th June 1997. 35 workers attended. The school was very helpful for the movement of Plantation workers of Karnataka.

The Second Zonal conference of North East was held at Siliguri in Darjeeling on 14th and 15th July 1997. It was a well attended conference from Tripura, Assam and Bengal. 30 delegates participated in the discussion.

Three day Trade Union class was held at Trivandrum on 25th to 27th July 1997. 43 comrades representing the major plantation Unions of Kerala attended in the class. The class was very successful and useful.

The South zone conference was held at Gudalloor in Tamil Nadu on October 24, 25 of 1998. Seventy delegates from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka attended. After the meeting there was procession and public meeting at Gudalloor.

The North Zonal Committee met at Siliguri on 13 and 14th December 1999. Most of the comrades from Tripura, Assam and Bengal attended. The organizational discussion in the committee helped for the growth of movement in these states.

Training course for plantation women. The class was organised by AIPWF CITU and ILO. It was held at Coonoor from 22-24 October 1999. 24 activists from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka participated. It was a good experience to the Women workers.

The conference of Cha Bagan Mazdoor Union of Bengal, was held on 22, 23 and 24th March 99. After the conference there was a very good rally of the workers in which thousands of workers participated.

The Kerala Plantation Labour Federation held its conference in Kumily on May 29, 30 2000. 290 delegates attended. There was a seminar on globalization and its effect in Plantation Industry. The representation of the managements also attended on the seminar. There was a rally of plantation workers at Vandiperiyar in connection with the conference.

Tripura tea plantation workers state conference was held at Durgavadi tea estate on 23rd and 24th January 2000. On 23rd there was

a very good procession of plantation workers. Three hundred delegates attended the conference.

A three day workshop for the leaders of the plantation sector was held at Ponmudi in Trivandurm Dist. for the State of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on July 14, 15 and 16 2000 28 comrades attended the workshop. It was a new experience for the participants.

The National Conference of Trade Unions in plantations held at Eranakulam on 20th and 21st August 2000 is an event in the history of the plantation workers movement in India. Com: M. K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU, Sri. Sajiva Reddy President INTUC, Sri. Subramanyan President H.M.S, Samar Sen Gupta General Secretary UTUC and the leaders of AITUC attended the convention. Members of the planters organization also attended for one session. It helped for the growth of joint movement in plantation with the help of Central Trade Unions.

The convention of Karnataka was held on 14th October 2000 at Chikkamangalloor, with the slogan 'Save Plantation Industry and Save Plantation Workers'. Leaders of CITU, AITUC, INTUC and Independent Unions and 15 planters representative attended. The total participants were three hundred. It has given a very good response among the workers planters and the public.

Somany strikes, Secretariate Marches and processions by the workers of the plantation in various part of India has taken place by raising the demands of plantation workers. 12 day strike of Bengal, Manchola Estate strike, Assam workers Secretariate March. Kerala workers Secretariate March, Regional Jadhwas of Kerala are some of them.

## Membership

The 1998 membership is given below.

Assam — 26529	Karnataka — 3500
Bengal — 110394	Tripura — 8000
Kerala — 60009	TamilNadu — 3869

Total — 212301

Out of 30 lakh membership of CITU plantation industry contributes 212301 membership. But in an industry having 20 lakhs of workers our Federation has a long way to go.

Comradly,

**Ananda Pathek**  
Working President

**Adv. P. Lalaji Babu**  
General Secretary