

India Social Forum 2006 - SD India partner CCD participated in the event.

The Indian social forum as the continuation of World Social Forum organised in Mumbai in the year of 2004 was held in New Delhi, 9-13 November 2006. The five-day event with the slogan of "another world is possible" had over 500 seminars lined up on topics such as gender bias, foreign direct investment, Dalit and tribal concerns.

Twenty-one-year-old Kemi G of the French West Indies lives in Paris, and came to ISF because she happens to be working in Mumbai as a law intern in a human rights organisation. "I know about the ISF as I am interested to keep in touch with organisations and forums which work with disadvantaged groups — from women, refugees, Dalits. I believe this is the only time in one's life to be able to work and make a difference to these marginalised people. I do not know where I will be a few years from now, but I will be happy to remember that I did send one child to school, gave one woman a job. The ISF was attended people like Kemi G who came from Asia, Africa, Latin American countries in search of alternate ways to make a just society. "It is the vibrant democracy and the people's zeal to struggle that has brought me to this great country," said Eileen Kuttab, an activist from Palestine.

The dominant issues in Indian democracy from a people's perspective, such as caste, class, gender, liberalisation, displacement, war, religious fundamentalism, environment, labour and work, had been discussed in specific forums.

Social activists Medha Patkar and Aruna Roy concluded the ISF with a call to make governments accountable and answerable to the people, and to fight for the rights of the marginalized sections. Social activist Aruna Roy asked the people to come together to raise their voice against special economic zones (SEZs), which would displace thousands and take away the livelihoods of thousands others dependent on agricultural land.

Expressing solidarity with the people's struggle, Lebohang Phekoin, South African activist working for the rights of indigenous people, said the Forum was an opportunity to create linkages and solidarity.

Centre for Culture and Development (CCD), a partner of SD India, was able to actively participate in the ISF with the discussions on cultural resistance to globalization. CCD highlighted the need and importance of strengthening indigenous resources in the process of development and reviving the traditional village community maintenance system to promote self reliance.

Mr. Scott Zimmerman invited Mr.S.A.Samy of CCD at the forum to devise and implement the UN concept of Sustainable Tourism for eradication of poverty in the project area. He was willing to visit the project area to study the possibilities of collaboration. It was a good opportunity to find and share our work with many like minded NGOs in finding ways for eradication of poverty and empowerment of marginalized and Dalits. CCD was able to attend the ISF because of the generous help of Subud sister Mardijah Simpson. We thank her for her support.

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