

Solidarity gathers Momentum for People's Struggle

The peoples struggle for land and safe environment in Sipasarubali area in Puri district, Odisha is continuing in the face of repression.

The leaders as well as activists who were arrested in July 2015 on several false charges have finally come out on bail. Their absence in the field for some months, no doubt, created a difficult situation for the people. But they did not lose confidence. They continued the struggle with the help of remaining leadership; solidarity extended by different political parties, mass organisations, democratic fora and intellectuals. The people's struggle has been on two fronts. One: the people continued to repeatedly place their demands before the govt. They included: according the right over the land in possession of poor; abandoning of setting up of so called Samuka Hotel Project in the coastal area; ensuring the safe guarding of natural environment protections in the area and the withdrawal of all false cases foisted on the leaders and activists of the movement. Two: The people are demanding the prevention and stoppage of illegal and forcible cutting and smuggling of wood in the area by the wood mafia. This has been going on unabatedly ignoring the people's protest and intervention. This is also continuing owing to the failure of govt to effectively intervene and act in spite of repeated appeals and complaints from people.

On Oct 26th night, Com. Srikanta Mohanty , the leader of Chasi Muliya Sangha, Odisha was arrested by the police on false charges in an attempt to deprive the Sipasarubali Peoples movement from the leadership. The people of the area, the political and democratic forces swiftly reacted against this move. Next day, the protesting people, the members of "sipasarubali Andolan Samanvaya Samithi" (SAS) presented a Memorandum to the District Magistrate, Puri demanding the unconditional release of Com. Srikanta Mohnaty, withdrawal of all cases and action against the police officials who foisted the false cases against him.

On November 17, 2015 the Sipasarubali Andolan Samnavaya Samithi organised a GANA SAMAVESHA before the office of district Collector, Puri. Com. Srikant Mohanty was released on bail by this time. More than 1000 people-mostly landless poor women from Sipasarubali area and several other pockets of Puri district have taken part in the meeting. A team of delegation from SASS has presented a Momorandum to the district collector. The meeting was addressed by Sir Prafulla Samantra, Rabi Das, Narandron Mohanty, Ajay Kumar Jena, Ashok Pradhan, Jagannath Deb, Batakrishna Swain, Tapan Upadhyaya, Basudev Dash, Srikanth Mohanty, Abhiram Behera, Bhimsen Swain, Eshwar Chandra Pradhan, Kishan Pattanaik etc. They all are the representatives or leaders of different political and mass organisations or democratic fora who constituted the SASS.

The speakers criticised Govt's inaction on just and democratic demands of the people; They denounced the Govt's policy of repression; they criticised the Govt's failure to take effective steps to implement the directives of Green Tribunal to protect the forest in the coastal area and failure to act upon the complaints from the people, UJJSS and SASS to prevent and stop the cutting of trees illegally and forcibly by the wood mafia. The speakers assured the UJJSS and the people of Sipasarabali that they would do everything to mobilise support and solidarity of widest masses of people in the state to their just and democratic struggle. The people have returned to their villages in the enthusiastic mood and with a hope in the future.

Nov. 31.
