

The India Social Forum: Building Another Worlds: Visions for the Future

Friday 16 June 2006, by [India Social Forum](#) (Date first published: 15 June 2006).

The proposed India Social Forum (ISF), to be organised at Delhi in November 2006, will be the third event to be organised by WSF-India after the Asian Social Forum in Hyderabad in January 2003 and the World Social Forum in Mumbai in January 2004. The World Social Forum process in India has, in the last 4 years, been successful in bringing together different political and social streams on a common platform to oppose, and resist the onslaught of Imperialist Globalisation

The ISF is being held at a time when both the WSF process and imperialist globalisation have both gathered strength. While the WSF process in 2006 has struck new roots - in Bamako (Mali), Caracas (Venezuela) and in Karachi (Pakistan) - the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America are embattled by the forces of imperialism. The proposed ISF will reflect the unity and solidarity of the peoples of Asia and Africa for a world free from hunger, debt, inequality, inequity, and exclusion.

The theme for the India Social Forum is proposed to be: BUILDING ANOTHER WORLD: VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE. It focuses on engendering dialogue, optimism and hope, by creating a space that will enable a greater mobilisation of resources for an alternative future - within India, Asia, and Africa. The envisaged central theme foregrounds the fact that a positive all-embracing vision inheres in the resistance to imperialist globalisation, and that this vision plots out quite a different future for the people of the South, particularly those living in India, Asia and Africa. The aim of this ISF is to showcase the richly textured vision produced by the wide spectrum of social and political movements in India, Asia, and Africa today, with special emphasis on the role of children, youth and women in taking forward the aspirations. Alternatives will run through all the spaces and events. *An estimated 60,000 people are expected to participate, representing diverse movements and organisations from India, Asia and Africa.*

A Vision for the ISF in Delhi

The vision for ISF in Delhi incorporates the idiom of Delhi, its language (which itself is a result of the confluence of so many influences), its cuisine, its people. For people who have a casual acquaintance with Delhi, the city is virtually synonymous with India's "babudom" - the sprawling government complexes in New Delhi, and other symbols of India's political power. But Delhi is much more than that - it is one of the oldest living cities in this part of the world, with a history that dates to almost 1500 years. It is a city where more than two-thirds are working people, to which lakhs migrate each year in search of employment, where more than a third live in temporary shelters, where more than two-thirds are working people. It is also a city with a vibrant culture, a city where cultural activists perform in A/C Halls as well as in narrow by lanes and slums. It is a city that has a vibrant student movement, a very strong women's movement, and a working class that is today engaged in fighting for its right to remain in the city. The ISF in Delhi will reflect the aspirations of the majority of Delhi's people, an ISF that speaks in their idiom.

Major Spaces

Taking the liberty to borrow from the local idiom, the following would be some of the contours of the

ISF in Delhi. The following could be some of the major “spaces” in the ISF:

- *Aawaaz (voices)*: Aawaaz represents the myriad voices in the Indian Social Forum - debating, exchanging experiences, forging alliances, discussing strategies - on the core issues of the WSF process.

This would be the largest space in the Forum and would include spaces for debate, sharing of experience, and dialogue. It would include the largest number of conferences, seminars and workshops that deepen our understanding of different aspects of imperialist globalisation.

- *Jagah (space)*: This could represent movements discussing among themselves - women, dalits, kisans, working people, etc.

This would be the place for the mass and social movements of diverse kinds, to discuss issues of shared concern in each sector and also to strategise on ways to confront the challenges posed by globalisation.

- *Dosti (friendship)*: This represents the space for sharing with our South Asian neighbours - from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh, with the Asia-Pacific and social movements from different parts of the world like Africa and Latin America. This also represents the space for broader alliance building that will go beyond India's immediate neighbourhood.

This space would focus on events on South Asia. This space will be used to explore common issues and challenges faced by us in South Asia. The space can also include exhibitions, film shows, cultural events built around such issues. This space would also focus on events sharing experiences and alternatives from other parts of the world - Latin America, Africa and Europe - and link up with concerns that we address in India and South Asia. We can think of discrete spaces within this on Latin America, Africa and Europe.

- *Hamsafar (fellow travellers)*: This space exists to strengthen unity between movements of the peoples of Africa and India in the fight against neoliberal policies. The space will enable the forging of links from the bonds of solidarity first established in the historic decolonisation movements in both continents.

This space would focus on developing linkages and alliances between the people of Africa, Asia and India in their struggles against poverty, superstition, racism and exclusion, conservatism and violence against women, debt cancellation and other neo-colonialist policies, for better healthcare and medication, particularly in the battle against diseases like AIDS.

- *Jan Sansad (people's parliament)*: This space represents people's aspirations and plans on sectors like education, health, land, agriculture, forest, water, food, etc. Our parliamentarians could be invited to listen to the voices of the people.

This space will be dedicated to events that explore concrete alternatives in the form of peoples plans in different sectors, geographical areas and addressing real concerns of the people.

Further, there will be 'Space for Living Alternatives', 'Space for Strategy', etc. for the organisations, to demonstrate their visions and voices. Some separate space will also be provided to farmers, tribals, dalits, women, physically challenged, children and women.

We would also like that the ISF finds a resonance in the city's life, while at the same time facilitating programmes in the city that reflect its history and diversity. Such programmes could include:

- *Dilli Nama*: This can be held at different venues in Delhi to explore the diverse images of the city as created in its everyday life.
- *Numayish*: This will be in the form of exhibitions, installations and performance in order to capture different forms of artistic expressions.
- *Films for Freedom and Justice*: There are many film makers in Delhi and a screening of their films as well as films from other parts of the world depicting struggles for freedom and justice can be organised inside India Social Forum premises.
- *Food Festival*: Food festivals representing the different histories of diverse people in Delhi, could be held at different venues.
- *University Activities*: Delhi has three Central universities, dozens of polytechnics and professional institutions. In all the universities and several colleges, there could be seminars, theatre, etc, and teachers' unions like DUTA and student unions could be integrated.
- *Mobile Exhibition*: A mobile exhibition can move in the workers colonies, resettlement colonies, slums, and rural parts of Delhi.
- *Dillu Sanskriti Mandli*: Many people believe that Delhi has obtained its name from an erstwhile Dalit king of Delhi named Dillu. A Cultural troupe called Dillu Sanskriti Mandli can travel to different parts of the city to perform on concerns of the India Social Forum.

Thematic areas

At the outset it must be noted that the thematic areas are intended as a frame of reference for the planned activities, while continuing to encourage participants to feel free to propose their activities. In order to give greater visibility and organic cohesion to the freely proposed activities, they will be classified a posteriori. For this purpose, we will set up a group to analyse the set of proposals as a whole, define criteria and frame an orderly presentation for the printed Forum Programme. Each set of activities will be described and useful information given to help participants chose among activities during the Forum event.

In each thematic area and, where appropriate, in the sub-areas, there will also be a constant concern to propose strategies along with the alternatives. In the same way, it is fundamentally important to identify the processes of organization and struggle in progress, and to point to the global subjects/actors in civil society who embody the proposals.

Both the descriptions of, and arrangements for, the various activities in each thematic area and its sub-areas will ensure that gender, ethnic/racial, youth, labour, disability and ecumenical issues and perspectives run through and cut across them. This is not to eliminate the specific spaces that the various ensembles of participants wish to organize and that are proper to them, but to ensure that these do not end up functioning as self-referential forums within the WSF.

As a method of working which runs through and informs our activities as a whole, we must always seek more universal languages that valorise sensitivity and emotion. Besides permitting identity to be asserted in the diversity of forms of expression, this methodological concern impregnating our whole programme can facilitate exchanges, mutual respect and collective strategic thinking.

The broad thematic areas would be as follows:

- *Democracy, Secularism, Multiculturalism and Dignity*: A theme that will focus attention on the

struggles for democracy, cultural plurality, even as it highlights the common quest for dignity and justice, for an identity that is inclusive rather than exclusionary. It will focus on issues of Rights: Right to work, right to livelihood, right to food, right to education, right to health. Freedom would be an another anchoring point: Freedom to live in peace and without fear of violence by religious fundamentalism, sectarianism and chauvinism, freedom to choose the ways of living and working, freedom to create another worlds.

- *From Caracas to Nairobi via India*: A theme that will focus attention on the solidarity of the peoples of the South for building joint struggles at an international level against. The aim here is to evaluate and consolidate the achievements of the people's struggles in Latin America, Africa and Asia as well as the WSF polycentric events in Caracas, Bamako and Karachi in 2005. United once by the wave of decolonisation movements in the last century, the peoples of the South have a common agenda in this century as well - the struggle against neo-liberalism, in all its expressions, be it in the fostering of militarism and militias, the severe exploitation of workers, racism, sexism, and regressive social practices, particularly against women, or the denial of education and healthcare.

Casteism, Racism, Exclusion and Discrimination: Issues of casteism, discrimination and exclusion in India and South Asia do not just provide a different take on the issues of poverty, rights, health, work and life, but they pretty much, define the issues at the heart of the violation of the right to life. It is also important to reiterate that the right to life for the discriminated and excluded communities will be futile unless their socio-economic-political abilities and inabilities are not central to these commitments. Moreover, discrimination often functions in an intersectional manner making those who experience multiple forms of discrimination, the most vulnerable. The current socio-political-economic context is further aggravating the problem. The WTO regime serves as a big impediment to the realization of food sovereignty. The privatization of natural resources and services, the withdrawal of the social and economic roles of the state, the unemployment, the diminishing livelihoods, the corporatisation have consistently pushed the corporate agenda at the expense of the already marginalized sectors of the country and the region.

- *New Liberal Globalisation, Militarism and Hegemony*: A theme that will explore the impact of corporate globalisation and free market economics on India and the third world. A theme that will examine the impact of imperialism as well as the challenges to it, coming from people's movements in the developing world - in Asia, Africa and Latin America . It will also specifically look at issues related to war and militarization. Among the issues: what is the fallout on the young, children and women - and what are the defences? ISF will offer space for the question to be raised about the hegemony of the corporate and military regimes and the domination of the powerful.

- *Worlds of Work and Labour*: A theme that will showcase the range of worker's movements, [including those of working children] and the unemployed, the challenge of unorganised and unprotected labour, including the brutalities of child labour, and economic trafficking of children, and their struggles across the country, particularly in the context of globalisation, and emphasize the validity of an alternative vision that protects workers rights.

- *Theories and Practices of Sustainable Developments*: This theme would focus on the rapacious exploitation of our natural resources by forces aligned to imperialist globalisation and peoples struggles and alternatives to safeguard these resources. The theme will especially focus on environmental and peoples' movements and initiatives on natural resources, including the peoples' perspectives on the global environmental issues and negotiations.

- *Media and Culture*: A theme that will explore the role of diverse cultural expressions, mass media, cinema, and literature, as both an instrument of imperialist globalisation, as well as a means of popular expression. The focus will also on the alternative and counter media practices.

- *Social Sector*: The issues of food, health, education and the overall social security are of utmost importance for the marginal majorities and their organisations in this country. This theme will deal with these issues from the perspectives of peoples' basic rights, entitlements, struggles and alternatives. The theme will articulate the peoples' visions in the wake of liberalisation, privatisation and GATS-WTO.

- *Young India*: A theme that will showcase the stake of the young - children, students and youth - in the plus and minus (positive and negative) forces of development and denial, query the role and obligations of State and Society, give space and articulation to the voices of the young, and profile the vibrant nature of movements of the children and youth - as children, workers, students, political activists - towards a vision of an egalitarian, equal world. A thematic space that will present the young as citizens with entitlements and with their own capacity to build needed change, and offer a doorway to inter-generational dialogue for another world in the making. This could be the special / unique character or 'USP' of the ISF initiative.

- *Women's Era*: A theme that will give centre-stage to the vision of the Indian women's movements, highlighting the breadth of its interventions in all areas of economy and polity, ranging from sexuality to work, water and literacy.

- *Developing Alternatives*: A theme that will explore the development of alternatives that will be part of a NEW WORLD.

The broad schedule of events at ISF 2006 is as follows:

Date	9.30 am to 12.30 pm	1.30 pm to 5.30 pm	7 pm to 8.30 pm	8.30 pm to 11.00 pm
9 th November	Registration	Opening Plenary (open to public)	.	.
10 th November	4 Panels (1,000 people) each seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Movement Dialogues seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Film shows, cultural events	Cultural Events
11 th November	4 Panels (1,000 people) each seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Movement Dialogues seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Film shows, cultural events	Cultural Events
12 th November	4 Panels (1,000 people) each seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Movement Dialogues seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Film shows, cultural events	Cultural Events

Date	9.30 am to 12.30 pm	1.30 pm to 5.30 pm	7 pm to 8.30 pm	8.30 pm to 11.00 pm
13 th November	Movement Dialogues seminars, workshops, testimonies, street theatre, film shows, other cultural activities	Closing plenary (4 pm onwards)	.	.

Detailed Listing of sub-themes for ISF 2006

Democracy, Secularism, Multiculturalism and Dignity

Alternative visions, practical experiments and struggles for inclusive, plural and radical democracy

Autonomy, separation, reconciliation, toleration

Just and Democratic Governance

Human Rights, Constitution and Law

Indian Diaspora

Visions for a new State and Civil Society, with reference to:

- religious intolerance and majoritarian tendencies.
- gender and the 'double' exclusion of women
- non- citizens, migrants and refugees

Cultural imperialism and shaping subordinate identities

Globalisation and cultural resistance

Fundamentalism and Sexual Identities

From Caracas to Nairobi via India

The Politics of International Aid

Hunger and Poverty

Racism and Exclusion

Battling AIDS

'Community' vs. women

Building Alternative Futures

Indian Diaspora

Casteism, Racism, Exclusion and Discrimination

Exclusion, discrimination based on caste, class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, ability/disability

Social Security and Social Opportunity

Affirmative Actions in Public and Private Sectors

Labour Market Discrimination

Deprivation, Domination, Displacement, Descent-based occupations

Social Inclusion, Social Justice and Inclusiveness

Politics, Movements, Struggles on Social Justice

Displacement and Forced Migration

Caste and Communalism

New-Liberal Globalisation, Militarism and Hegemony

Corporate Globalisation, Free Trade and Debt

Globalisation of Finance and Trade

Transnational Corporations, Corporate Control and Self-reliance

Trade or Justice

Human Security

World Economy, WTO, World Bank and IMF

India in the new World Order

Multinational Companies

International Trade Negotiations

Corporate Social Responsibility

Alternative Economic Spaces

War on Terror: US Militarist Agenda and Resistances

Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Palestine

Global Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons

Imperialist War and Control of Resources

UN, International Law and War

Zones of Conflicts, Border Areas and Peace in South Asia

Internal Conflicts

State Terrorism: Civil and Political Rights

Self Determination and Nationalities

Theories and Practices of Sustainable Development

Livelihood Rights: Biodiversity and Livelihood; Land, Water and Livelihood; Energy and Livelihood; Urban Livelihood

Poverty and Wealth; Atmospheric Commons, Community Rights on Genetic Knowledge

Community Rights on Resources, Environmental Rights, Right to Information

Market, Trade and Environment

Environment, Industry, Labour

Environmental Movements

Alternative Technologies

Risks and Disasters

Worlds of Work and Labour

Work, Labour and Employment

Globalisation, Liberalisation and Labour

Dynamics of Labour Movements

New Industries, New Labour

Informal and Small Sector Labour

Law & Labour

Social Security and Well Being

Technology and its Impact

The Problems of Agriculture and Rural Labour

Footloose Labour: Issues, Rights and Struggles of Migrant Labour

Media and Culture

Cultural expressions as tools of imperialist globalisation and counter culture challenging the status quo

Globalisation and the media.

Media and alternative visions of another world

Sponsorship and Censorship

Alternate media

Media as an instrument of exclusion and a space for democratic struggle (social audit of old and new media, changing content and form, state-owned media vs. public broadcasting)

Social Sector

Right to Food, health and education

Right to Shelter

GATS, WTO and Service Sector

Employment, Work and Security

Privatisation of Health and Education

Social Security

Urbanisation, Development and Well-being

Reproduction, Health and Sexual Rights

HIV and AIDS

Child Rights

States and Social Sector

Young India

Young Visions

Vision of a new India through the lens of children

Globalisation and its impact on children and youth

Youth, Work and Employment

Youth and Student Movements

Youth: Rights, Respect, Responsibilities

Children and Youth for Peace

Media and Culture - the vision for Children and Youth

Women's Era

Women, Caste, Class

Women Work, Labour and Globalisation

Sexuality, Obscenity, Community

Women, War, Terror and Violence

Gender, Power, Equations

Women Social Spaces

Contribution of Feminism

Patriarchy

Trafficking

Women and Communalism

Nation, Law and Women's Rights

Reproductive Health and Women's Lives

Women's Movements and Organisations

Developing Alternatives

Alternatives to Corporate Globalisation

Decorporatisation and Decentralisation

Just and Sustainable Trade and Financial Systems

Deepening Democracy

Economic Democracy

Principles for Sustainable Societies

Development for Dignity

Social Movements, Mass Organisations and Alternatives

Ideologies and Alternatives

Resistance Movements

Forms of Movements

Note: Each of the thematic axes need to be fleshed out in the form of sub-themes. Each theme will need a group that works on developing these and also in developing concept notes for the different axes.

Format for the events:

- Opening and Closing Plenaries

- Conferences (1,000 capacity - 9 WSF organised, one on each thematic axes, and 9-18 more self

organised)

- Seminars (500, 200, 100 capacity - all self organised - possibly approx. 200 such seminars)
- Workshops (50 capacity - all self organised - possible approx. 200)
- Testimonies (some WSF organised, some self organised)
- Panel Discussions (some self organised, some WSF organised)

Note: The above will need to be expanded with more concrete numbers.

From: wsfindia vsnl.net

Reply-To: Information about WSF Process in India

To: newsletter wsfindia.org

Subject: [Newsletter]

Programme Consultation : India SocialForum 2006

Date: Thu, 15 Jun 2006 12:28:24 +0000 (GMT)

INDIA SOCIAL FORUM - November 2006 - DELHI

Dear Friends,

India Social Forum (ISF) has been proposed in Delhi between 9-13 November 2006, to further advance the movement against neo-liberal globalisation, sectarian politics, casteism, patriarchy and militarisation.

The Indian Working Committee of WSF-India has taken some initiatives to prepare a draft Programme Note for the ISF. Through meetings, discussions, emails and list serves, the Programme Note has been revised many-a-times in the last few months. This is a part of the journey of the evolution of programmes in ISF.

The last India Working Committee meeting of WSF-India, held in Delhi, decided to invite comments, suggestions, additions, ideas, to develop the ISF programme further. To do so in an inclusive, diverse and participatory way, we are initiating a discussion. We will finalise the Programme Note after getting your comments on the visions, spaces, themes, sub-themes, etc.

You can send your comments by filling up the Consultation Form, attached alongside or by writing to us (Yamini Mishra: yamini.mishra gmail.com, Richa Singh richa_acc yahoo.com CC to Mukul Sharma: mukul1961 yahoo.co.in, Ayesha Kidwai: ayesha.kidwai gmail.com, Amit Sengupta: ctdsf vsnl.com). You can also post your comments at Programme Group, World Social Forum India, 14/187 Lower Ground Floor, Main Shivalik Road, Malviya Nagar (Adjacent to Sunil Nursing Home), New Delhi 110017, Ph: 91 11 26674123

The deadline for sending the comments is 30 June 2006.

India Social forum 2006 strives for 'BUILDING ANOTHER WORLD: VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE'. This can only be achieved by evolving a vibrant programme for ISF together.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mukul Sharma, Ayesha Kidwai, Yamini Mishra, Amit Sengupta

On behalf of Programme Group, ISF 2006