

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Tasks on the Cultural Front

(Adopted by the Central Committee at its October 14-16, 2017 Meeting)

1.
 - 1.1 Culture is the arena that encompasses all manifestations of human beings in the totality of their social life. It is not something confined only to artistic expressions through various forms such as music, dance, painting, sculpture, literature and so on. Culture represents the totality of lived life- behavior, expressions, mannerisms etc. in addition to various artistic expressions. Interventions in the cultural front, hence, mean that we join the battle of ideas, at all points of time, aiming to win this battle for human liberation and ending exploitation of humans by humans and nations by nations.
 - 1.2 The present conjuncture of balance of class forces, both internationally and domestically have moved in favour of the Political Right. This has unleashed a vicious ideological offensive against struggling people seeking emancipation and against the Political Left and all forms of progressive, democratic and secular forces.
 - 1.3 At the international level, the current continuing crisis of global capitalism thoroughly negates the validity and success of Neo-liberalism, which is nothing but a euphemism for extreme capitalist exploitation. Nevertheless, global capitalism, in order to preserve its profit maximisation, pursues this trajectory, intensifying the process of brutal 'primitive accumulation' through merciless and blind extraction of human kind and nature. This necessitates a shift to the Political Right based on erecting an ideological-cultural construct designed to disrupt the growing popular discontent against neo-liberalism, that has the potential to challenge the capitalist system itself. Such a construct requires the spread of hatred on the basis of race, religion, caste, colour or any other aspect that has the potential to divide people. The resultant intolerance, hatred, xenophobia, etc., is reflected in the area of culture. This is the battle of ideas in the cultural front today that we must join to defeat the 'culture' of the Political Right.
 - 1.4 The Indian State, under the current RSS/BJP leadership, is institutionalizing a pronounced rightward shift in Indian politics. Thus, neo-liberal economic policies and an energized communal polarization combines, to mount an all-round offensive. Ideologically, the objective is to replace India's rich syncretic civilisational history with Hindu mythology and Indian philosophical traditions with Hindu theology. This, in the main, seeks to negate the very foundations of Modern India as enshrined in our Constitution, which evolved through the epic anti-imperialist struggle of Indian peoples for independence. These processes seek to undermine the modern Indian Republic on whose foundations the class struggles in India advances towards achieving the goal of a revolutionary transformation.

The battles on the cultural front are, thus, integral for advancing class struggles in India in the concrete conditions of our times. The need, in the final analysis, is to sharpen and strengthen the revolutionary weapon of social change. “Is it not a fact”, Lenin had asked, “that the task of theory, the aim of science, is here defined as assistance for the oppressed class in its actual struggle”. (*Lenin, Collected Works*, Vol. 1, page 327-8). Both ‘theory’ and ‘science’ are part of the composite understanding of culture.

- 1.5 Marx and Engels had said: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch, the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things, consciousness and therefore think. In so far therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and *regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age*; thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch." (*German Ideology*, Moscow 1976, page 67, emphasis added.)
- 1.6 This hegemony of the ideas of the ruling classes, Antonio Gramsci, explains, is not enforced merely by the State. The State is only the "outer ditch" behind which stands a powerful system of "fortresses and earth works", a network of cultural institutions and values which buttress the domination of the ruling classes.
- 1.7 This hegemony is mediated and transmitted through a complex web of social relations and the consequent social structures. The family, the community, caste, religion, its places of worship are the institutions that constantly feed the fodder to shape values and opinions bolstering ruling class hegemony of ideas. In the process, they create the myth of a 'common culture'. This 'common culture' is nothing but the selective transmission of class dominated values passed off as 'common sense'.
- 1.8 Our interventions in the Cultural Front must catalyze the revolutionary movement through the language of culture of the times, the feelings and experiences which the revolutionary classes themselves may not and often cannot muster out themselves. The creation of such a counter hegemony over society, through the creation of a 'new culture' embracing not only the relations of production but also the State (political society) and civil society is essential for the successful revolutionary transformation. Our activists in Cultural Front, in our times, while actively participating in practical life, create precisely such a counter hegemony to undermine existing social relations. They are, thus, the essential components of generating ideas, which as Marx once said, “becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the minds of the masses”. (*Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Collected Works*, Volume 3, page 182).

- 1.9 Culture, as a manifestation of the overall hegemony of the ruling classes, is the terrain for the growth of the organic intellectuals and the counter hegemony that they generate encompassing the totality of human existence – the human essence.

Multiple modes of human gratification, consequent to interactions with nature and fellow human beings, find expression in sensuous affirmation, feelings, behaviour, enjoyment and various faces of artistic creations. Such modes of gratification also include the negation of the intellectual ‘objects’ produced by ruling class hegemony by positing the elements of ‘counter culture’. By doing so, cultural activists erect the structures of counter hegemony. The totality of such affirmations, i.e., the totality of the multiple modes of human gratification finds expression in all forms of creative activity, the totality of which, in turn, constitute what we can call the ‘counter culture’ of the revolutionary movement.

- 1.10 Such culture is always based on the material conditions of existence. Marx, writing on production and consumption, states: “Production not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material. As soon as consumption emerges from its initial state of natural crudity and immediacy – and, if it remained at that stage, this would be because production itself had been arrested there – it becomes itself mediated as a drive by the object. The need which consumption feels for the object is created by the perception of it. The object of art – like every other product – creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. *Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object.* Thus production produces consumption (1) by creating the material for it; (2) by determining the manner of consumption; and (3) by creating the products, initially posited by it as objects, in the form of a need felt by the consumer. It thus produces the object of consumption, the manner of consumption and the motive of consumption” (*Grundrisse*, page 92). This is as true for intellectual products as it is for material products.
- 1.11 There are some, not so obvious, aspects of the culture of ‘Hindutva’, products of this rightward shift in Indian politics, being created amongst the larger issues in the terrain of ruling class cultural hegemony, in the present Indian context, that merit attention.
- 1.12 **Modernity Vs. Modernoxity:** Sense of equality and concern for the others are also considered as the defining characteristic of culture in modern society. It is not as if in a modern society all are actually equal. Yet, in spite of the many differences that exist among people, modernity demands a baseline equality so that people can live with dignity and can realistically avail of opportunities to better their conditions of existence. It is on this bedrock of equality that other differences and inequalities can be added on. But such foundational equality cannot be compromised for it is on this that claims of citizenship are made in modern societies. In feudal orders, there were rulers and subjects but no citizens.

An Iranian intellectual coined the term ‘westoxication’ as opposed to ‘westernisation’ referring to the rich flashing branded fashion wear and advanced gadgets. This can be adapted to the Indian context, as *modernity vs. modernoxity*. Intoxication with modern

consumerist display of latest commodities and gadgets is equated with modernity. This has become India's symbol of an 'emerging economy' rubbing shoulders with world powers at the G-20 high table. A mere glance at the matrimonial columns will show us as to how the most 'modern' sections of our society, including NRIs who have never stepped on Indian soil, seek marital alliances in their sub-castes. Such is the culture of modernity, not modernity. This admirably buttresses this rightward political shift.

India's march towards modernity is being subverted not merely by the tenacity of the past institutions – caste-based social oppression, patriarchal order, the khap panchayats, unequal treatment of religious minorities, etc. – alone. These are kept alive and buttressed by the values of neo-liberal consumerism, treating women as objects of display, possession and exploitation and not as human beings. This is also strengthened by the widespread opportunism inherent in our electoral system where all these unjust and unequal features of our social order are reinvigorated for electoral gains. Thus, there appears to be no contradiction when people wearing the most modern fashionable branded clothes and brandishing modern gadgets, indulge in all these practices that ought to be consigned as anachronistic in a modern democracy.

Modernity defined as equality of all citizens, irrespective of caste, creed or sex as the Indian Constitution guarantees is, thus, an inalienable component of the culture essential for establishing the counter hegemony of the revolutionary movement.

- 1.13 **Culture Industry:** Alongside the tremendous concentration of wealth and assets, this neo-liberal reforms trajectory engenders the growth of a culture industry. Globally, the merger of Information, Communications and Entertainment Corporations (ICE), control the bulk of world's production and distribution of media and entertainment goods, seeking to convert the world into a single global cultural market.

The cultural hegemony that such a process seeks is expressed in the need to create a homogenisation of public taste. The more homogenous the taste, the easier it is to develop technologies for the mechanical reproduction of cultural products for large masses. In many third world countries (confirmed by surveys in sub-Saharan Africa), illiteracy may be rampant but the image of Walt Disney cartoon figures are familiar to the children!

Viewed in terms of class hegemony, the culture of neo-liberalism seeks to divorce people from their actual realities of day to day life. Culture here acts not as an appeal to the aesthetic, but as a distraction, diversion from pressing problems of poverty and misery. Consequently, it seeks to disrupt the energy of the people and their struggles to change their miserable existence. Michael Parenti says, "A far greater part of our culture is now aptly designated as 'mass culture', 'popular culture', and even 'media culture', owned and operated mostly by giant corporations whose major concern is to accumulate wealth and make the world safe for their owners, the goal being exchange value rather than use value, social control rather than social creativity. Much of mass culture is organised to distract us from thinking too much about larger realities. The fluff and puffery of entertainment culture crowds out more urgent and nourishing things. By constantly appealing to the

lowest common denominator, a sensationalist popular culture lowers the common denominator still further. Public tastes become still more attuned to cultural junk food, the big hype, the trashy, flashy, wildly violent, instantly stimulating, and desperately superficial offerings.

"Such fare often has real ideological content. Even if supposedly apolitical in its intent, entertainment culture (which is really the entertainment *industry*) is political in its impact, propagating images and values that are often downright sexist, racist, consumerist, authoritarian, militaristic, and imperialist." (*Monthly Review*, February 1999)

- 1.14 Both neo-liberalism and communalism, domestically, thus seek the homogenisation of public tastes. The former to strengthen its cultural hegemony and to reap superprofits. The latter, in addition to this, to pave the way for the establishment of a rabidly intolerant fascistic State – the RSS vision of ‘Hindu Rashtra’. Its slogan of "one country, one people, one culture" can acquire a real status and meaning only through such homogenization, negating the very fundamental foundations of India's rich cultural diversity. Further, both neo-liberalism and communalism seek to divert the attention of the people away from day-to-day problems and importantly weaken their struggle against the existing exploitative order.
- 1.15 The struggles for establishing the ‘counter hegemony’ of the working class and toiling masses, thus requires the need to bring back on to the cultural agenda people's issues, whose obfuscation and erasure is the *raison d'etre* of the culture of neo-liberalism and communalism.

This is the fundamental objective of our tasks on the Cultural Front.

2

2.1. Our struggle on the cultural front has to be grounded on a correct understanding of the idea of ‘culture’ in the Indian context. Indian cultural history is not singular nor without its own internal struggles. From the earliest recorded past, we have a struggle between religious beliefs and practices and the materialist traditions (such as the Lokayat school). The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), against historical evidence, considers culture as only derived from religion. Therefore, for the RSS, ‘Indian culture’ is exclusively ‘Hindu’. The RSS variety of Hinduism is a suffocated form of a much richer social and philosophical tradition. The RSS sees Hinduism as hierarchical and exclusionary, what we broadly call Manuvad. The diverse and contradictory beliefs, practices, philosophies, and rituals of the ancient to the early modern world in the Indian sub-continent are reduced by the RSS into a caricature of what actually developed in the past. Hindu traditions, which are themselves diverse, are often contradictory and rich. Our history produces the diversity of our languages, myths, rituals, habits, religious customs and creative cultural expression – a diverse outcome that we might call true ‘Indianness’. Our freedom struggle

defined itself in terms of this diversity, calling Indian culture 'syncretic'. It understood nationalism to be inclusive of all the currents of Indian culture and society, while being united in its anti-colonialism and its patriotism. For Hindutva forces, on the other hand, 'nationalism' is a stick with which anyone deviating from the norms prescribed by them can be beaten. In fact, the local, 'lokdharmi' and 'desi' traditions are threatened by Hindutva's aggressive drive to homogenise different cultural expressions and practices. The position taken by Hindu religious extremists and their communal organisations is complemented by religious extremists from minority communities who are supported by their own reactionary and communal organisations. These various forces are all engaged in a 'competitive communalism' to maintain control over their own communities. Misinterpreting religious precepts to suit their narrow political interests, a culture of exclusion and hatred is propagated by all of them. Communalism of all hues serves the interests of the exploiting classes by breaking the unity of the toiling masses.

2.2. Communists working on the cultural front need to pay special attention to the use of obscurantist retrograde ideas by powerful sects and institutions which oppress minorities, tribals, dalits, women, and other marginalised communities. They also have to study as deeply as possible the life, work and writings of reformers and revolutionary thinkers who from ancient times have spoken up against caste society, against human-made divisions between one human being and another, and against gender oppression. The Buddha, the Basavanna, Akka Mahadevi, Bhakti and Sufi poets, the Sikh Gurus, Kabir and Lalan, Birsa Munda, Ayya Vaikunda Swamy, Jotirao and Savitribai Phule, Narayana Guru, Periyar, Rammohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Munshi Premchand, Vallathol, Babasaheb Ambedkar, among others, have contributed to these traditions of protest. Heterodox traditions in our country over the ages found a new voice in the social reformers and rationalist thinkers who stirred up the consciousness of the people from the early 19th century when we were under foreign subjugation. This became part of the inheritance of our Freedom Struggle. We need to remember also that wherever the Communist and progressive movements have grown and struck roots in India, they have only been able to do so by engaging deeply with the issue of the social liberation of tribals, dalits and women. This is an inseparable part of the ideological struggle we have waged and will continue to wage through the cultural front.

2.3. Colonial historiography divided Indian history into 'Hindu,' 'Muslim' and 'British' periods. The RSS takes over this periodisation without any critique because it suits their communal designs. In this scheme, the medieval centuries are projected as a period of darkness and decline, when the so-called 'Hindus' were allegedly conquered by 'foreigners', while the modern period's actual colonialism by Europeans is not painted in so harsh a light. This is a direct assault on Muslims and betrays a softness towards imperialism. Not only does the communal notion of history reproduce the colonial narrative about India, but it is also filled with factual falsehoods. For example, the RSS argues that the 'Aryans' were a race that originated from India. Their method is not that of modern historiography, but it is the procedure of mythology. For the RSS, religion is the defining force of history. Their interpretation is utterly unscientific and diabolic. The RSS tries to deny or to co-opt the non-Vedic traditions of ancient India. They suppress the syncretic popular traditions in Indian history. They falsely project all Muslim rulers as tyrants. They suppress the role of the

communal forces as collaborators with colonialism. This fabricated history is used to propagate their communal viewpoint and divide the people with a view to dominate them. The RSS is not simply anti-minorities – it stands in favour of the minuscule minority within the majority community who oppress and exploit the majority within the majority community. To assert the rational, scientific, secular and pro-people approach to Indian history, without whitewashing or distorting histories of oppression and tyranny, is a critical part of our work on the cultural front – as it has been for the past hundred years. The battle for the past is part of the battle for the future. It cannot be ignored.

3

3.1. We draw inspiration from the work of the Progressive Writers' Association (established in 1936) and the Indian People's Theatre Association (established around 1942) in the anti-colonial struggle. PWA set as its main task 'to rescue literature and other arts from the conservative classes in whose hands they have been degenerating so long to bring arts in the closest touch with the people and to make them the vital organs which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead us to the future we envisage'. Similarly, IPTA set itself the task of organising 'a people's theatre movement throughout the whole of India as the means of revitalising the stage and the traditional arts and making them at once the expression and organiser of our people's struggle for freedom, cultural progress and economic justice'. In essence, this remains our task today as well although we have to take stock of historical changes that have taken place since that time.

3.2. We stand for a culture based on rationality, the scientific temper and the spirit of inquiry and questioning. These elements already exist in our public education system in spite of its many lacunae and in spite of the fact that its universalisation is prevented by the granite block of reactionaries and their class allies. Many eminent academics and scholars even from the days of colonial rule helped to build up traditions of progressive thought in the arena of the physical and the social sciences. This does not remain confined within the university campus but expresses itself through popular science movements as well. While the ideology of extreme capitalism is aggravating the unbridled profit-motive everywhere and destroying the public education system, the popular science movements are jeopardised by the growing sway of anti-rational, anti-scientific and superstitious ideas. But we have to preserve and develop such movements as invaluable resources in our struggle. Let us not forget that in most recent times, people like Pansare, Dabholkar, Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh have bravely laid down their lives in the cause of scientific thinking.

3.3. The history of cultural forms and practices in India is a long and rich one. The classical or 'high' traditions in literature, music, theatre, fine arts, etc., have for generations been appropriated by the wealthy and the powerful and have been used exclusively for their entertainment. As a matter of fact, what is considered 'high' or 'classical' art is very often an outgrowth, refinement and codification over time of what is considered 'folk' or 'low' art. We don't discard 'high' or 'classical' art as carrying only retrograde ideologies and representing feudal and bourgeois tastes.

We have to re-appropriate and reinterpret them, understand the living messages that they bear for all humanity and disseminate them in a way that would make them meaningful for the people. Re-appropriation, in this context, doesn't mean merely reproducing these arts as timeless and immutable. We need to discard any regressive or obscurantist features in them. We need to explore creative and innovative ways of taking them forward in both form and content. The people should be able to access all that is best in culture. We have to see them as part of our own cultural inheritance.

3.4. In the erstwhile Soviet Union, People's China, Vietnam, Cuba and in other countries too there have been revolutionary changes towards progress and socialism. In their revolutionary movements and efforts to build a new society, cultural struggles and innovations have played an important part. We should study and absorb not just their experiments with cultural forms, but also the progressive social changes they have sought to initiate in the area of gender, race, ethnicity, etc., and in the entire new conception of humanity. This should form an essential part of our intellectual repertoire. We might also learn from their mistakes.

4

4.1. The cultural groups, fronts, platforms and associations in different parts of India in which party members are active have to involve a very broad spectrum of artists, cultural activists and intellectuals in their activities. Excellence and creative energy have to be attracted into such activities. For this, our approach must be broad, inclusive and non-sectarian. The artist or intellectual who has a commitment to larger democratic, progressive and secular values must be given a space on our platform for wider participation in cultural activity even if there are differences of opinion on specific matters. We should also consciously encourage non-Party artists to be part of the leadership of cultural organisations associated with us.

4.2. The Salkia and Kolkata Plenums have emphasised the importance of democratic and independent functioning of mass and class organisations. This becomes even more crucial in the case of cultural organisations, which must be given relative autonomy. Cultural organisations cannot be seen as mere appendages of the Party. The correct approach in this can only be evolved if the Party as a whole, as well as all its class and mass organisations recognise the importance of cultural intervention in the struggle for social change. Within the cultural organisations too it must be ensured that the spirit of free and critical thinking is encouraged. It is only by ensuring this that we can develop younger and newer leadership in the cultural sphere. A special effort must be made to ensure that women and artists from Dalit, Adivasi and other marginalised and disadvantaged groups and communities, including minorities, are encouraged to be more active in all levels of the organisation. They should also be entrusted with leadership roles.

4.3. Culture is not the domain of only the cultural organisations. The mass and class fronts in which Party members work also need to engage in cultural activities. It is important to engage the broader cultural community with issues that confront people in their daily lives. But we should be careful in gauging what they themselves are interested in and what activities they themselves are best at when trying to draw them into our campaigns. Similarly, this engagement should not be limited to

electoral politics alone. Wherever possible, comrades should enter and work in existing cultural organisations which are not dominated by communal or anti-social elements. This is to try and give them a progressive, secular and democratic direction.

4.4. We need to distinguish our reaction to an artist's subjective and personal views from an objective assessment of the artist's work. Our activists can only assess and evaluate what may help us in moving towards our goal by exposing themselves to and engaging with many different kinds of cultural initiatives going on in society. Where can we still find creative and communicative spaces which allow freedom of thinking and progressive initiatives? Where have these been completely co-opted and distorted by the profit motive or by social/religious obscurantism? In this search for resources to strengthen our struggles we cannot be bound down by rigid pre-conceptions but have to test the ground on our own on the basis of resources we have already identified.

4.5. There are a number of secular, democratic cultural organisations in different parts of the country. Even within a state, we have a number of progressive and secular cultural organisations and individuals working in the different art forms in which our Party members might also be active. We should endeavour to forge the largest possible unity, cooperation and convergence wherever possible. For this purpose, we can explore the possibility of organising cultural congresses or assemblies, festivals, workshops, and seminars. We should explore the possibility of having inter-state social media groups which may help us to respond quickly and in a unified manner to immediate issues, especially in the case of censorship and attacks on freedom of expression.

With the overall approach spelt out above, the main tasks on the cultural front are:

5.1. To uphold a standard in our behaviour and daily practices, through continuous self-study and self-criticism, such as would enable us to win the confidence of and to be in communication with our basic classes, consisting of the toiling masses both in rural and urban India.

5.2 To view the field of culture holistically, not simply as 'art', but as 'lived life' of the people. Cultural factors – including, but not limited to, the intonation in our speech, the flavours of our food, the colours and cut of our clothes, and so on and so forth – shape all aspects of the ordinary, everyday life of the people. For exactly this reason, we have to shift our focus from cultural interventions – an instrumentalist 'use' of art and culture to make a point – to interventions in culture – i.e., to infuse progressive, secular and democratic ideas in the very fabric of daily life, in how everyday life is organized; in society, the organisations and in family.

5.3. To reclaim social space for traditions of secular democratic culture; for this we have to be deeply acquainted with trends of progressive thought in our own country and in other parts of the world that have resisted dominant hegemonies, with traditions of anti-colonial thought, with classical, modern and folk art forms and their exponents who carry a living message for the people, as well as with the history of Marxist thought and revolutionary movements towards socialism; and be able to apply such knowledge to combat authoritarian monolithic and sectarian trends in culture.

5.4. To resist all forms of intolerance whether in the name of cultural nationalism as advocated by communal forces, or in the name of ‘religious emotion’ or in the name of ‘caste superiority’; to recognise and encourage linguistic, ethnic, regional diversity in the cultural practices of the people, to promote better communication and understanding among such diverse practitioners and to stand up for thinkers and artists under attack for representing these diverse traditions.

5.5. To resist obscurantism, bigotry, superstition, irrationality; to defend the system of public education as well as the autonomy of scientific, scholarly and cultural institutions; to oppose attacks on centres of higher learning and research; to defend the rationalist, syncretic and secular traditions of the cultural renaissance of our history and the Freedom Struggle.

5.6. To stand up against and expose the widespread exploitation of people’s sufferings, their deep need for emotional succour and for faith by ‘religious’ institutions and ‘spiritual’ leaders of different denominations who use religion like big business, propagating irrationality and superstition, sowing seeds of divisiveness and communalism among their followers.

5.7. Communal and extremist organizations are active in many places of worship. The activities associated with festivals there are dominated by communal divisive propaganda aimed at misleading the people. Efforts should be made to prevent this to the extent possible through intervention of our activists depending on the concrete situation prevailing in each place.

5.8. To support and stand by creative efforts embodying ideas which look forward to a more egalitarian future for human society where not just economic but social exploitation on the basis of caste, gender, etc., will have no place.

5.9. To support and stand by traditional art forms of the labouring people and to work for the recognition of the dignity of these art forms and their value to society; many of these art forms, while embodying the people’s own creativity, also provide a livelihood for their exponents (puppeteers, painters of narrative scrolls, rural and urban street performers, rural gymnasts, etc.); these are now either being completely co-opted by big religious institutions/big business or being destroyed so that the labouring people who are their original practitioners, patrons, beneficiaries and consumers are facing a cultural hiatus; these artists have to be encouraged so that they may serve the people with their creativity.

5.10. To mobilise cultural forces (intellectuals, artists, writers, teachers and researchers, users of social media, etc.) against specific instances of oppression or injustice (economic, political, caste-based, gender-based, against minorities, etc.) so that they may use their special skills in innovative and creative ways in defence of the people and society.

5.11. To resist commodification of cultural values instigated by mindless consumerism and hedonism; not only does commodification mean that all cultural products today have to be mediated through the market, but that corporate capital seeks to assert its absolute ownership over all such products that seem to have any market value in its view and even over the creativity of those who produce them, that is, artists, authors, performers, etc. Slavish submission to the whims

of a corporate-run global cultural market destroys the vital mental faculties both of the artists and of the people who are the real repositories of culture; this must be resisted at all costs.

5.12. To struggle to re-appropriate spaces within the world of technologically advanced print and audio-visual media for the people who are being deprived of the benefits of such advances because of the stranglehold of corporate capital over electronic media; this is leading to the domination of mindless advertisements strung together by trivialised news, nasty and superfluous reality shows and retrograde, patriarchal and misogynist serials and other electronic products. On-line publications, social media, documentary films, community radio, etc., are some of the ways in which such technology can be used to reclaim some space that would be of more relevance to the people; those who have expertise in these areas need to be encouraged and motivated in this direction in a planned and systematic manner.

5.13. To stand up to protect children, students and youth so that they may have opportunities to develop their independent creative faculties; to ensure that their aspirations are not swallowed up by the ruthlessly competitive consumerist values of the times or by the cult of hatred and mutual destruction; their educational rights and their rights to the most advanced knowledge have to be asserted; there have to be many-sided efforts to put them in touch with our best intellectual and creative traditions both within and outside educational institutions.

5.14. We live in a world where various extremist, sectarian and terrorist outfits and ideologies are gaining ground and engaging in violent activities. This is being misused to move towards greater forms of authoritarianism by governments across the globe. Wherever possible, special powers are also being usurped by the State. In many cases, common people are persuaded or forced to support such measures in the name of national security. We stand in defence of civil liberties, democratic and human rights wherever they are infringed upon by the authoritarian State; we oppose the use of the military and paramilitary forces against civilians; we oppose the draconian laws that give the State unbridled power and freedom to suppress dissenting views.

5.15. In order to achieve the above tasks, Party will have to pay renewed attention to the work in the cultural front at every level and cadres need to be deputed with time bound targets of goals fixed.

5.16. Mass organizations and other organizations of employees such as teachers, service organizations, scheme workers etc., are to be encouraged and directed to form cultural wings like song squads, street theatre troupes etc. Work in the cultural front should not be abandoned or segregated as a task merely for cultural front activists alone.

5.17. Help to organize 'Balavedi' or 'Balasangham' for young boys and girls in neighborhoods in order to nurture them on democratic, secular, progressive lines through cultural, educational and sports activities. Wherever such activities are already successful, help them to further expand and consolidate the same.

5.18. States where cultural front activities are absent, immediate planned steps need to be initiated to correct this inadequacy.

5.19. Creative practitioners of arts and culture shall organize periodic cultural congresses to (a) galvanize activities at various levels and (b) to give general direction to future programme and creative interventions.

5.20. Periodic review shall be undertaken as to what extent this task document has been effectively implemented at various levels, in a time bound manner.
