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## Tamil Nadu



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### "Governments should talk to non-violent groups"

S. Annamalai



**P.V. Rajagopal.**

MADURAI: Governments across the world should talk to non-violent groups to resolve social conflicts. On the contrary, they were willing to negotiate with people who took to guns, said P. V. Rajagopal, leader of Ekta Parishad, a people's organisation.

Speaking on the sidelines of a working committee meeting at the Centre for Experiencing Socio-Cultural Interaction (CESCI) at Kadavoor village near here, Mr. Rajagopal regretted that there were no takers for non-violence and violence had become a "highly paying business." The problem today of the marginalised people, especially those living in Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa, was acute as the space had been occupied by multinational companies on the one side and violent groups on the other. People were getting killed in the crossfire between private armed groups and government forces. "Industrial houses are making the best use of this conflict" and a huge exploitation of minerals was going on under the cover of "conflict zone," he said.

Any person opposing the development model of the day was equated with a "Maoist" and it tantamount to opposing the government, the nation and the party in power. The time had come now for social movements to put their foot down and articulate views non-violently to get back people's rights. With the objective of protecting the livelihood resources of the poor, which had been grabbed by MNCs and national institutions, the Ekta Parishad would launch 'Jansatyagraha 2012' with a rally from Kanyakumari to Gwalior, beginning on October 2, 2011. From Gwalior, Gandhian volunteers, joined by farmers and peasants, would undertake a "do or die march" towards Raj Ghat.



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They would reach Raj Ghat on November 3, 2012, seeking action against grabbing of resources.

Mr. Rajagopal said that they wanted to prove that non-violence would still work in a highly violent state. The march was an attempt to protect the resources, he said and wondered why the government was reluctant to negotiate with those who followed Gandhian principles.

He recalled that successive Prime Ministers, starting from Jawaharlal Nehru, used to consult leaders like Acharya Vinobha Bhave.

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