

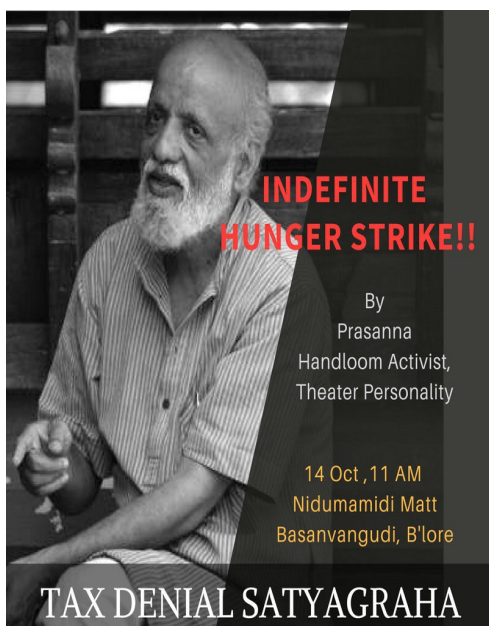
(Circulated in the National Interest and to Secure the Present and Futures of Millions of Artisans of India)

JOIN THE TAX DENIAL SATHYAGRAHA

DEMAND COMPREHENSIVE WITHDRAWAL OF GST
ON HAND MADE GOODS SECTOR

Make Hand-Made Tax Free

Indefinite Sathyagraha starts on 14th October 2017 in Bangalore



Theatre Personality Prasanna Heggodu is starting an indefinite fast demanding that the GST imposed on the handicraft/artisanal sector is withdrawn comprehensively. He will start his Sathyagraha along with veteran Gandhian H. S. Doreswamy on Saturday, 14th October 2017, 11 am at Nidumaamidi Math, H. B. Samaja Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru.

Millions of artisans who have survived even the worst attempts by the British Colonial Empire to tax them into oblivion, are now threatened by the real prospect that they may not survive as artisans. This is due to the high tax imposed on them under the GST regime. Artisans are being taxed in the 12-28% GST bracket. This when most are struggling to survive as profits are down 50% as machine made mass produced goods are dumped in local markets due to the globalised trade regime. Profits from such mass produced goods feeds the richness of the super rich, and does nothing to help the poor of India come out of poverty. Now with GST, the future of India's artisans is at stake.

If we do not act now to demand that the Government of India withdraw this unjust and brutal tax, it is likely that millions of artisans will be forced to give up their invaluable creative entrepreneurship and become part of the large and increasing pool of the unemployed in the country. Not only will this result in mass povertisation, it may also lead to mass destitution of artisanal families.

Artisans represent the most fantastic diversity of human ingenuity, producing a whole range of products that make our lives richer. They make a variety of affordable and useful products that we need, with their hands, and which does not cost the Earth. With great diversity of skills and entrepreneurial zeal, sovereign artisans have built this country as much as have the extractive, industrial and manufacturing sectors or IT and Services Sectors. But, except artisans, every other sector get tax holidays, massive loans, bad loan write-offs and also major subsidies. All that the artisanal/handicraft sector is demanding is that GST not be imposed on them.

Despite many protests, dharnas, rallies, conferences, workshops, appeals, representations, etc., the Government of India has paid no attention to the appeals of the artisanal community nation wide. Instead, the highly monetised, commercially driven, intensely commodified, and capital driven mechanism of GST, that aggressively promotes tax maximisation without any social purpose, is what the Union Government is investing its effort on. The worst affected are the artisans.

Artisanal communities are dispersed, and they are struggling to survive everywhere. A day off from work to

protest, is less food at home. So precarious is their existence today. There should have been massive protests against this travesty of our times, and in support of social and economic security of artisans. The collective conscience of India should have been troubled, and we should have stepped out in protest against this inhumane tax on artisans. But it appears we have been numbed into silence.

To awaken our collective conscience and demand the Government comprehensively scrap the GST on the handicrafts sector, Shri. Prasanna and Shri. Doreswamy will start this Sathyagraha on Saturday, 14th Oct 2017.

- You are welcome to join this Sathyagraha.
- You are also welcome to do what you can to demand the Government of India and the GST Council comprehensively withdraws tax on handicrafts.
- You are urged to demand that the Government of India does right for millions of artisanal families who will benefit if GST is removed. Thus, you will be part of a national movement to protect the amazingly creative cultural diversity of India that live with artisans, and can only prosper if they are secure.



For details on how to join or support the Sathyagraha, please contact:

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See:

In Karnataka, a 'Tax Denial Satyagraha' seeks an end to GST on handmade goods, Chandan Gowda, The Print, 5th October 2017, <https://theprint.in/2017/10/05/karnataka-tax-denial-satyagraha-gst/>

Mysuru's inlay work artisans on tenterhooks over GST, R. Krishnakumar, The Hindu, 11th October 2017, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/mysurus-inlay-work-artisans-on-tenterhooks-over-gst/article19835477.ece>

GST Is Damaging Assam's Ailing Handicrafts Industry, Say Artisans, NDTV, 13th October 2017, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/gst-is-damaging-assams-ailing-handicrafts-industry-say-artisans-1762429>

Artisans protest, seek GST rollback on handicrafts, The Tribune, 4th August 2017, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/artisans-protest-seek-gst-rollback-on-handicrafts/446663.html>