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PEOPLE'S CHARTER OF DEMANDS

For Union Budget 2009-10

People's Budget Initiative



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As developed through
National Convention on Union Budget 2009-10
held on 17 & 18 September 2008 in New Delhi

The People's Budget Initiative organises a National Convention every year to build a common understanding among different stakeholders on critical gaps in public provisioning for important sectors and for arriving at a common set of prioritised policy and budgetary demands pertaining mainly to the Union Budget. The People's Charter of Demands, thus prepared, forms the basis of our advocacy with policy makers, government departments, parliamentarians and relevant civil society actors in the ensuing months. In continuation with this process initiated in 2003-2004, a National Convention on Union Budget 2009-10 was organised by the People's Budget Initiative in New Delhi on 17 and 18 September 2008. Detailed deliberations were held during the two days on public provisioning and budgets for several critical areas such as agriculture, rural development, labour and social security, health, education, women, children, dalits, adivasis, and minorities, and on resource mobilization and fund utilization issues. In this Convention, a People's Charter of Demands was drafted for articulating a set of prioritised demands pertaining mainly to the Union Budget for 2009-10.



Rural Development and Panchayati Raj



GENERAL DEMANDS

- The Union Government should take strong measures to increase the magnitude of tax revenue under the central government tax system in particular through the direct taxes and also through indirect taxes on consumption of luxurious commodities.
- A very significant amount of tax revenue is currently being foregone as tax exemptions under the central government tax system. In this context, we demand that all tax exemptions by the Union Government to large business enterprises should be stopped.
- The magnitude of central grants for States and Union Territories under central assistance for state plan schemes should be stepped up significantly.
- Instead of proliferating Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Plan Schemes, the Union Government should transfer a major chunk of plan funds to the States as untied grants for State-specific plan schemes so that they can pursue their locally felt development priorities through appropriate schemes.
- There is a need for limiting the scope of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Poorer States, due to their limited resource mobilization capacity, find it difficult to provide matching grants for such schemes. The requirement of matching grants from States under Centrally Sponsored Schemes should, therefore, not be uniform across all States; it should be flexible so that adequate central grants are provided to poorer States.
- In the Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Plan Schemes, which are continuing, States should be given adequate flexibility to adjust the financial norms, guidelines and unit costs according to their locally felt needs.
- States should be encouraged to increase their strength of regular staff at the district and sub-district levels in all development sectors and the Union Government should enable the states in this regard through greater devolution of non-plan grants.
- Greater emphasis should be given to build capacities of district and sub-district level institutions and government staff for planning, programme implementation and monitoring under the development schemes. The existing development schemes, which already involve decentralized planning and monitoring, should provide more funds towards such kind of capacity building components.
- States should be encouraged to increase significantly the delegation of financial powers within the government administration at state, district and sub-district levels. They should be encouraged to improve the timeliness of fund flows and expedite the processes of sending sanction orders in all development schemes.
- In the budget allocations for development schemes, the amounts allocated for non-wage components, especially those which are important for monitoring and supervision activities, should be increased so that the quality of outputs and services delivered through these schemes improves substantially.
- Government's interventions for provisioning of basic services such as health, water & education should be stepped up significantly vis a vis the role played by the private sector. Further the government should show its commitment to regulate the private sector existing in social services.

Capacity Building, Knowledge Dissemination & Effective Monitoring

- Awareness about various programmes/schemes need to be created. Importance needs to be attached to training and capacity building components in various schemes. Increased budgetary allocation on these components needs to be made with particular emphasis on strengthening communication and information dissemination through innovative means.
- A National Rural Development Literacy Programme should be launched for intensive dissemination of information in order to create awareness in a rights framework about the entitlements of the beneficiaries in various schemes implemented by Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- The issue related to lack of adequate trained Human Resources at District, Block as well as GP level, needs to be taken up on priority basis. Non-plan expenditure within the State Budgets should be increased to facilitate recruitment of regular staff and qualified advisors at appropriate levels to improve planning, implementation and monitoring of RD and PRI interventions.
- Need to provide adequate budgetary resources for non-wage components in various programs/schemes in order to improve monitoring at regular intervals of rural development and poverty alleviation initiatives.
- The performance of institutional procedures towards enhancing operational efficiency of rural development schemes and Panchayati Raj Institutions should be assessed.

Fiscal and Functional Autonomy of Panchayati Raj Institutions

- The Union Budget and every State Budget should have a Separate Window for allocations and transfers to Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Annual allocations to the PRIs should be made according to a pre-specified number of installments with the quantum of funds disbursed being evenly distributed throughout the fiscal year. Monitoring of disbursements should be made quarterly rather than annually. These would enable the PRIs to plan and budget efficiently for round the year activities at the beginning of the financial year.
- The number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes should be brought down significantly. Untied or block grants as part of development fund for Panchayats should be augmented both from Central and State Budgets.

- Separate Cell for Disaster Mitigation should be created within the local bodies in disaster prone areas. Funds transferred to PRIs through Centrally Sponsored Schemes for Rural Development should have specific amount earmarked for disaster mitigation.
- PRIs may be empowered to administer suitable taxes and surcharges for own revenue mobilization. State Governments should provide an incentive grant for better performance in generating own source revenue. State Finance Commission in every State should deliberate on related issues and recommendations be given strict time bound consideration.
- Every Panchayat should prepare an Annual Budget and Annual Financial Statement in a specific format with clearly marked Head of Accounts matching with that of the State Budget.

Micro Planning

- Primacy of the Gram Sabha should be strengthened for effective grassroots planning.
- Intensify training inputs and increased budgetary provisions for training of panchayat functionaries, community leaders, SHGs members and representatives of marginalised community to identify developmental gaps within their jurisdiction and strengthen participatory micro- planning.
- Make it mandatory for an elected representative and an official at the Block or Zilla Panchayat level to be present at the Gram Sabha meetings.
- Devolution of adequate funds and functionaries by the State Governments to lend credence to the process of decentralized planning.
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes and State Plan Schemes implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions should have flexibility for internalizing regional peculiarities and developmental needs.
- Allocations under the above mentioned schemes should take into account the cost of service delivery for every State and in determination of which State Planning Boards should play a significant role.
- Provisions for convergence across the schemes should be made, in which District Planning Committees under guidance and approval from State Planning Boards should play a pivotal role.
- Implementation of Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) be expedited with gender responsive elements enabling women of the community to have larger role in micro-planning.
- Social Audit by the Gram Sabhas as well as credible and impartial organizations should be extended to all Rural Development schemes.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

- The utilization of funds available under the NREGA has been deteriorating over the past two years. The government should bring out a white paper on the reasons for poor utilization of funds across the States under NREGA.
- As the coverage of NREGS extends, the average per district allocation (Centre) and expenditure (Centre + State) is witnessing a steep decline. The average per district allocation by Centre has declined drastically from Rs. 56.5 crore in 2006-07 (RE) to only Rs. 26.85 in 2008-09 (BE). The average per district expenditure has also declined from Rs. 44.12 crore in 2006-07 to Rs. 32.73 crore in 2007-08 (till 29 February 2008). The government should follow the recommendations of NAC and increase the per district allocation to at least Rs. 100 crore in 2009-10 Union Budget.
- The Centre should set up a committee to review the 'schedule of rates' for public works across the states. The revising of 'schedule of rates' in all the states should be completed within this financial year.



Agriculture



- Special budgetary support in terms of subsidy for small, marginal and landless farmers who practice and promote traditional and organic farming should be made.
- Massive restructuring of the existing cold storages as well as creation of new cold storages need to be prioritised to ensure remunerative prices to farmers for their agriculture produce.
- Increase public investment to create market and other similar infrastructure at the grassroots level to boost agriculture and allied activities through appropriate market linkages.
- Increase budgetary allocation for additional human resources and for their capacity building to implement NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) and RKVY (Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana) as part of District Agriculture Plans with special focus on land development, flood control and irrigation development.
- Special budgetary provision for skill development and access to land, agricultural credit and modern technology for women in agricultural activities needs to be made.
- Incentivise agriculture to improve sustainability & productivity of agriculture activities.
- As a social security measure, farmers of more than 60 years of age (both males and females) should be given income support and for this special provisions need to be incorporated.
- Scaling up of the NAIS (National Agriculture Insurance Scheme) programme is needed to cover more crops/weather/disaster related insurance measures in the Union Budget.
- Irrigation facilities are considered to be the most crucial input for agriculture. Central Government should increase the quantum of public investment in irrigation facilities.
- There is a need to review the scheme of chemical fertilizer subsidy as most of these subsidies are being availed by the fertilizer producing companies. Government should constitute a committee to review by co-opting members from various stakeholders like representatives from farmers' bodies, industries and other civil society organizations.
- The debt waiver scheme only covers the loans taken by the farmers from the institutional lending sources. Hence, additional budgetary provisions are needed to waive the loans taken by the farmers from non-institutional sources which accounted for 42 percent of the total outstanding loans of farmers as of 2003.
- Expenditure under capital heads of the Ministry of Agriculture has declined drastically from 10.3% in 2001-02 to 2.62% in 2008-09 out of the total expenditure. Hence, there is a need to boost the capital expenditure of the Ministry.
- Food security for the poor will be ensured if the public distribution system (PDS) in the country functions efficiently. Hence, special budgetary provisions should be made for regular monitoring of the programme and to strengthen the existing structure of PDS to bring efficiency in the system.





Social Security for Unorganised Workers



- The Central Government should enact an enabling legislation, which provides social security as a right justiciable in the court, and it should implement the Social Security Scheme through the creation of a National Social Security Fund and National Social Security Board. The State Governments should set up State Social Security Boards for the unorganised workers as well as Social Security Funds. We demand adequate budgetary allocations for the institutionalisation of a system of social security for the unorganised workers.
- The Social Security Boards, both at the national and State levels, should have proportionate dalit, adivasi and women representation and adequate representation of civil society groups.
- The social security system for unorganised workers must address the needs of both deficiency (such as, lack of access to credit/ finance, loans for housing, etc.) and adversity (such as, ill-health, accidents/ death and old age).
- The social security programmes being implemented by Central and State Governments for the benefit of unorganised workers are uneven in terms of coverage of both States and workers. These programmes need to be extended across States and workers.
- The elements of social security must be clearly spelt out. It must include benefits such as old age pension, life insurance, maternity benefits, disability benefits, minimum health care and sickness benefit. The most important element of social security largely missing from the existing schemes is health security; which must necessarily be included as a part of social security.
- No contributions from the workers (for premium of social security cover) should be asked for at least in the case of unorganised workers living below poverty line, and the Central Government either independently or in collaboration with the State Governments must finance it for them.
- Special category of workers such as migrants, dalits, adivasis and women should be given additional social security protections.
- Adequate fund allocation is necessary for awareness generation on social security schemes at the grassroot level.
- The issue of financing the social security system should be clearly defined in the legislation. An effective accountability system should also be installed.
- The Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Central Government had estimated the cost of providing social security to unorganised workers, taking into account only three basic social security coverage of healthcare, life and pension/Provident Fund for unorganised workers living below poverty line in 2006-07. If we include the estimated cost of other essential social security risks (following ILO convention), all unorganised workers in 2008-09 and the effect of inflation, there is a strong case to demand that the Central Government should allocate funds amounting to rupees seventy-five thousand crores to ninety thousand crores for providing comprehensive social security to unorganised workers.



Health



Step up Public Spending

- Along with increase in Centre's spending, States should also increase their allocation. Concrete efforts should be made to increase allocation to at least 3% of GDP with the aim to provide universal and comprehensive health services. Per capita public spending on health should be at least at the level of per beneficiary expenditure on Central Government Health Scheme or Employees State Insurance Scheme.
- All resources spent by Centre and States on health should flow through the State Budget. The practice of off-budget funding through Autonomous Societies should be stopped.

Fulfill Vacancies in Human Resources

- Vacancies of human resources should be immediately filled in. Regular recruitments, should replace all contractual appointments. States may be provided with additional Grants in Aid to fulfill vacancies.
- Adequate emphasis should be given to salary and other incentives, including adequate residential facilities, additional benefits for rural postings and postings in difficult terrains. Special incentives should be devised to fulfill vacancies of specialists, and human resources in tribal areas.

Step-up Public Investment in Education and Training

- Keeping in mind the huge vacancies in the public sector health institutions, more public investment should be made to augment adequate trained human resources, like doctors, nurses, paramedical services. Special initiatives should be taken to develop specialization in public health.
- Along with the creation of new institutes of training, adequate emphasis should be provided to rejuvenate the existing training institutes.

Provide Access to Medicines for All

- Government should ensure regular supply of medicines and vaccines.
- List of essential medicines should be expanded.
- Procurement of medicines should be done through government agencies and departments.

Strengthen Health Planning, Introduce Social Audit

- Planning should be done keeping in mind the burden of diseases and epidemiological considerations. Planning process should be decentralized. Emphasis should be provided to develop capacities for planning.

- Communities should be involved to a greater extent in monitoring of health services, social audit of NRHM should be introduced.

Promote Research in Traditional Medical Knowledge

- Efforts towards promotion of traditional and tribe based communities' medicinal knowledge should be prioritized.
- This knowledge should not be allowed to be patented by the MNCs. It should be ensured that those who are traditionally practicing this knowledge should be able to get benefit of it.

Regulate Private Sector, Revert Privatization of Public Health Services

- Comprehensive regulation of private sector in healthcare services is very important; they should follow proper accounting systems.
- Revert privatization of Public Health Services.
- Private health facilities, set up with public subsidies should be made accountable to fulfill their social commitments.

Health Insurance

- Swasthya Bima Yojana should not be operationalised through private insurance firms. Its' scope should be expanded to all workers in the unorganized sector.

Provide Cash Benefits at the ANC Stage

- Given the fact that peri-natal and neo-natal mortality in the country are very high, targeted interventions like the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), should do away with existing restrictions.
- At least 50 percent entitlement should be disbursed at the time of Ante-natal Care.
- Period of submission of documents required to claim JSY benefits should be at least one month after delivery. States should also contribute to maternal and child health in line with the Tamil Nadu model- Muttu Lakshmi Scheme (MLRMS), (which provides Rs. 6,000 in 6 installments, at least half of the money during ANC).

Address the Concerns of the Deprived Sections

- Within child health, highest priority should be given to children less than two years of age.
- Given the increased life expectancy in our country, budget provision for healthcare for the elderly should be increased.
- Provisioning for mental health is meager. It should be stepped up significantly.
- Greater emphasis should be given to identification of malnutrition cases, ICDS staff should be made accountable in this regard.
- Within ICDS programme there should be increased emphasis on promotion of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF).
- Focus on vulnerable groups such in urban areas as migrant labour, slum dwellers, homeless people, street children, street vendors etc. is needed. Complete absence of basic health facilities in urban slums leave these people at the mercy of informal sector, they are even left out of the ambit of most of Government Health Schemes.
- Inter-sectoral convergence with water supply and sanitation, nutrition and employment, should form the basis of health policy.



Education

- **Fundamental Right to Education** – The Central Government must address the concerns with regard to financial provisioning for ensuring Right to Education at the earliest, starting with enacting the Bill after making specific changes in the draft Bill. The Centre should make a clear commitment to provide the entire additional funding required to ensure Right to Education for all children including children below 6 years of age and universalizing early childhood education. Providing adequate resources and recruitment of adequate staff for a year of pre-schooling in all primary and upper primary schools needs to be concretized.
- **6% of GDP for Education** – We reiterate our demand for raising total public spending on education to at least 6% of GDP in 2009-10. Given the fiscal constraints of the State Governments, the Centre should take the lead in augmenting public spending on education. However, allocations for education from the State Budgets must increase along with the increase in Union Budget outlay for achieving this benchmark which has been long overdue.
- **Setting up a National Commission on Education** – There is an urgent need to establish a National Commission on Education. The last Education Commission was set up in 1964. With the policy framework of the governments having changed considerably since 1960s, it is only appropriate that a Commission be constituted to address the relevant and emerging issues in education policy and financing.
- **Pattern of Fund Sharing under SSA to be modified** – Doing away with the existing pattern of financing SSA which requires the contribution of States to increase progressively until 2011-12, the Centre must step up its share of the funding. Moreover, the requirement of matching grants for SSA should not be imposed uniformly for all States.
- **Education Cess only for incremental spending over the usual budgetary support** - Along with increases in the spending out of the proceeds from education cess, there should be no reduction in the usual budgetary support for elementary and secondary education from the Union Budget.
- There should be greater decentralization and delegation of powers to grassroot organisations through revamping and strengthening of institutions like Village Education Committee (VEC), and ensure representation of PRIs in decision-making and planning bodies at all levels.
- **Addressing Quality Issues** - Greater investment in recruitment, retention and capacity building of qualified education professionals. There is an acute need to provide budgetary support for interventions pertaining to quality issues, such as providing sufficient physical facilities and infrastructure, making available adequate teachers with requisite qualification, teacher training (both in-service and during recruitment), effectiveness of teaching-learning processes, attainment levels of students, institutional strengthening (such as NCERT, SCERTs, SIEs, DIETs, BRCs, etc.), curriculum and attention to pedagogy.
- **Interventions to ensure access for educationally deprived categories** – In order to ensure enrolment and retention of girl children, SC/ST children and children from other deprived sections, greater support in terms of infrastructure and other measures is necessary. In this regard, apart from ensuring that there are facilities such as separate toilets for girls in schools, various systems of entitlements such as free textbooks, uniforms and scholarships must be strengthened.
- **Check increasing role of private sector in education** – The Eleventh Plan proposals for financing education (at all levels) shows an increasing reliance on the private sector that is camouflaged in different ways, such as the community contribution, public-private partnership, user fees, voucher system etc. This needs to be reversed.
- **Regulation of foreign institutions in higher education** – With the proposed opening up of higher education to foreign private institutions following the acceptance of GATS, foreign institutions providing higher education would be allowed to operate in the country. There is not just the danger that private players of indeterminate quality and poor credentials fleece the students for a 'foreign' degree but also the overall issue of privatization of this critical stage of education. There is a need to put in place appropriate mechanisms to regulate and monitor this sector.



Women



- Until now, the gender budgeting efforts have primarily concentrated on expenditures in 'women related' sectors and several crucial aspects like taxation, trade, capital flows, etc. have remained out of its purview. Gender budgeting should not be confined to the programmes/schemes run by the ministries, rather its success is largely contingent on how far the macro level policies are engendered.
- Concerns of women cannot be addressed through the Ministry of Women and Child Development alone. It is important to prioritize universalisation of gender budgeting (including gender audit) and gender outcome assessment in all Ministries/Departments at Central and State levels. All the sectors need to make concerted efforts to address women's concerns through:
 - Recognising women's contributions, addressing their gender specific concerns and organising their voice;
 - Investing in skills of women and upgrading their work spaces and providing common work facilities;
 - Providing them access to new technologies and credit schemes;
 - Paying special attention to caste and minority based exclusion within gender.
- Although, 50 Central Ministries/Departments have already set up Gender Budget Cells, hardly any information is available on their functioning. Therefore, it is imperative that it be made mandatory for Ministries/Departments which have already set up Gender Budget Cells to share the initiatives taken and their results in the public domain.
- The allocation for National Commission for Women should be significantly stepped up from the present level of Rs. 7 crore. Also, the functioning of State level Commissions for Women needs to be strengthened.
- There is a need to place a Women's Development Officer in each block to engender the planning, monitoring and awareness generation of the existing schemes/programmes.
- Many Ministries still do not explain the assumptions behind placing specific proportions of funds for women in the Gender Budgeting Statement. Proper justification needs to be given by every Ministry/Department reporting in the Statement.
- Since most of the jobs created for women during the Tenth Plan have been in the form of domestic service, which is characterised by low-remuneration, drudgery and limited upward mobility, it is important to take explicit note of this and to take immediate steps to recognise domestic work as work, organise these women, ensure that they are paid minimum wages and that their labour rights are protected.
- Given the spate of recent natural disasters, it is extremely important to ensure that any disaster relief work explicitly incorporates women's specific vulnerabilities in disaster situations. Given the lead provided by the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 (1325), which stresses "the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security", it should be similarly binding that disaster relief be gender responsive and women be given decision making roles in such operations.
- Crimes against women have registered an increase over the years and the conviction rates remain abysmally low. There is a need to provide of an incentive grant from the Union Government to the States to ensure proper implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. In addition, adequate budgetary provisions should be made to make the women's helpline – 1091 functional and effective.
- Although Ministry of Women and Child Development was created as a nodal Ministry for the advancement of women and children, there is enough evidence to show that women's concerns still go largely unaddressed. Therefore, it is imperative to create a separate Ministry with the mandate of women's holistic development.



Children



- Protection of children in difficult circumstances still remains a largely neglected area.
 - Hence, Union Budget outlays for ongoing child protection schemes such as Integrated Child Protection Scheme, National Child Labour Project, Scheme for Prevention & Control of Juvenile Social Maladjustment, Scheme for Rescue of Victims of Child Trafficking, and Short Stay Homes should be enhanced significantly.
 - At the same time, budgetary provisions should also be made for monitoring the implementation of these schemes.
 - Provisions should be made to ensure at least one Girl Child Home for every two districts in the country.
 - The amount of relief/compensation given to the exploited girl child should be enhanced.
- In order to achieve universalisation of ICDS with acceptable quality of services delivered, outlay for ICDS needs to be stepped up significantly. At the same time, strong measures need to be taken to address all of the identified bottlenecks in its implementation.
- Plan outlays from the Union Budget on child specific schemes should be stepped up, recognising the dependence of States, especially the backward States having a large share of disadvantaged children, on Central Governments Schemes for children.
- Targeted interventions by the government for improving child survival and child health, e.g. the schemes like Reproductive & Child Health (RCH) programme, Routine Immunization Programme and Pulse Polio Eradication (all of which are presently under the National Rural Health Mission), should receive adequate fund support in Union Budget 2009-10. The bottlenecks in the implementation of these schemes should be addressed immediately both by the Union and State Governments.
- Union Budget for 2009-10 should incorporate special measures towards stepping up the public spending on education for children. Some of the important schemes delivering child education, e.g. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid Day Meal, also require the Government to take wide-ranging measures for improving the process of their implementation.



Scheduled Castes



- At least 16.2 per cent of the Plan Budget allocation by the Central Government should be earmarked for the welfare of Dalits. All the Central Government Ministries / Departments should earmark atleast 16.2 per cent of their Plan Budget for the welfare of Dalits. All Ministries/Departments should develop divisible schemes and the excuse of inability to develop any divisible schemes for Dalits by Ministries/Departments which implement infrastructure related projects like construction of roads, flyovers, energy etc should not to be entertained.
- A fresh classification of Ministries (regulatory and service oriented) should be undertaken. Within service oriented Ministries, those engaged in activities, which are divisible in nature, should be made to strictly comply with the guidelines for formulation and implementation of SCSP (Schedule Caste Sub Plan).
- Modalities should be worked out for earmarking of resources for such service oriented Ministries/Departments which implement infrastructure related projects like construction of roads, flyovers etc.
- The earmarking of fund under SCSP in proportion to SCs population should be ensured by the Planning Commission at the time of deciding the annual plan for each Ministry. The planning Commission should finalise the SCSP in consultation with relevant Ministries /Departments.
- The scheme-wise allocation of earmarked fund should be separately indicated under a separate budget head by the Ministries in the expenditure budget of the relevant Ministry /Department.
- The Planning Commission & the Finance Ministry should not accept the budget demands by any Ministry unless it contains the scheme wise allocation under SCSP.
- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment should be made the nodal Ministry to oversee the effective implementation of SCSP by the Central Ministries and also by the State Governments.
- Within SCSP, special focus should be given to dalit women, children and sub-castes.
- A special revolving fund for Dalits in the lines of 'Contingency Fund' with Rs. 100 crore should be created to address any form of atrocity against Dalits.
- The Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry should consult civil society organisations during the formulation of SCSP.
- In order to adhere to the decision made at the 51st National Development Council (NDC) meeting to bridge socio-economic gaps between SC/ST and general category in a period of 10 years, the government should bring out a white paper on the present socio-economic gaps between Dalits and general population.
- An 'Integrated Land Development Scheme' should be introduced by the Centre for providing all the necessary facilities like creation of bore wells, power supply, bringing the lands to a cultivable stage and providing necessary farming techniques to barren lands belonging to Dalits.
- The government should fix the rehabilitation benefit at Rs. 2 Lakh for manual scavengers & others (like devadasis etc).
- Loans to Dalits without collateral security should be facilitated with backward and forward linkage in order to ensure repayment of loans and sustainability.



Scheduled Tribes



- It is found that only few of the Central Ministries/Departments have been earmarking some funds towards Tribal Areas Sub-Plan (TSP). Therefore, there is an urgent need to follow the guidelines of the TSP and all the Central Government Ministries should earmark funds in proportion to the Schedule Tribes (ST) population i.e. 8.2 percent of the their total plan budget towards TSP.
- The Planning Commission should consult civil society actors and community leaders at the time of formulation of annual plans with regard to TSP
- The Planning Commission should not approve the plan budget made by any Ministry/Department unless it contains the scheme wise allocation for STs and follows the guidelines of TSP.
- Special budgetary provisions should be made to reduce poverty concentration among ST communities by providing them access to alternative sources of livelihood. Apart from this, specific targeted number of ST beneficiaries of each developmental programme should be identified in a time bound manner.
- Adequate resources should be earmarked for creating necessary infrastructure for ensuring easy access to basic facilities by the tribal communities.
- The government departments implementing TSP should not interpret their expenditures on entire regions with high concentration of tribal population as expenditure under TSP. Rather they should ensure that the resources earmarked under TSP must reach out to beneficiaries belonging to tribal communities.
- We demand for effective implementation of Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in all tribal areas to strengthen the stakes of the tribal communities in the development process.
- Actual implementation of programmes/schemes under TSP should be improved with regular monitoring and supervision and social audits of all these programmes.



Minorities



- The Central Governments' Ministry of Minority Affairs should be allocated more funds considering the level of backwardness of minorities and their population.
- Inclusion of a separate Sub-Plan may be considered for Religious Minorities in the Budget 2009-10 for better fund allocation.
- The domain of the Ministry of Minority Affairs should be widened to include issues like livelihood and employment generation opportunity for the women of minority community.
- Separate institutional mechanism for implementation and monitoring of Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme and Multi Sectoral Development Programme for Religious Minorities at block, district and state level should be immediately set up.
- The Multi Sectoral development Programme for minority dominated districts should focus more on the livelihood issues of minority community.
- Government should priorities immediate constitution of Minorities Commission in the States which still do not have them. These State Commissions should also be provided adequate human resources and proper infrastructural facilities.
- Government should introduce special programme/scheme on sensitisation of the administration, police and judiciary on vulnerabilities of minority community.

