



PEOPLE'S POLICY FOR POST COVID-19 TIMES

JAN SAROKAR, AUGUST 2020

HEALTH • FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION •
EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • TECHNOLOGY
AND SURVEILLANCE • AGRICULTURE •
ECONOMY • VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES •
INDUSTRY, LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT •
CIVIL LIBERTIES, LAWS, GOVERNANCE



Organised by Jan Sarokar for Monsoon Session 2020

Brought together here, are four documents primarily drawn from the contributions of Jan Sarokar constituents and the discussions that took place either in or in connection with the Janta Parliament. Therefore, this set of documents seeks to capture the combined analysis and understanding of many people's organisations and social movements on various issues affecting ordinary and marginalised citizens and suggests possible solutions, based on their engagements at the level of theory, practice and policy.

SECTION

1

The first section comprises the core issues of immediate concern as identified by each of the anchoring groups of the Janta Parliament. During the concluding session of the Janta Parliament, various political leaders that participated requested that a short summary be prepared with action items that are a priority for the Monsoon Session of Parliament. There were also recommendations to prepare a Common Minimum Programme for opposition parties to rally around. This first section therefore attempts to serve as an executive summary of the suggestions made in the concluding session of the Janta Parliament.

SECTION

2

In the lead up to the Janta Parliament, various organisations submitted short papers briefly capturing how COVID-19 has impacted their field of concern and how this might be countered. This is the second section and makes up the bulk of the People's Policy for Post COVID-19 Times.

SECTION

3

This was followed by deliberations in the Janta Parliament on a number of themes with resolutions being adopted in each of the 11 working sessions. These resolutions have been collated and listed, which is the third section of this document.

SECTION

4

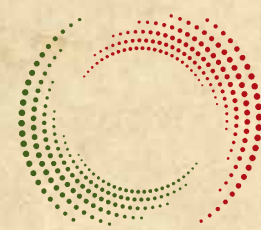
The final fourth section is an epilogue prepared in draft form placed here for examination, deliberation, change and perhaps eventual adoption. It is an attempt to begin a serious discussion on a long term vision around which Jan Sarokar and the many organisations that have come together for this exercise as well as larger civil and political society can coalesce to bring together their issues and evolve an overall vision of how the Indian State and society can realise constitutional values and goals in the 21st century. This section re-imagines the 'Directive Principles of State Policy' for the foreseeable future and serves as a first draft to begin what must necessarily be a longer, more inclusive conversation for consultation both within Jan Sarokar as well as with Indian society at large.

Participating Organisations

All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE)
All India Network of Sex Workers (AINSW)
Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)
Article 21
Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR)
Centre for Financial Accountability
Centre for Policy Research
Civis
Delhi Forum
Digital Empowerment Foundation
Environment Support Group
Extinction Rebellion India
Focus on Global South
Fridays for Future India
Greenpeace India
HelpAge India
Indian School of Democracy
Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF)
Kalpavriksh
Let India Breathe
Maadhyam
Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM)
National Fishworkers Forum
Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti
Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN)
Veditum
Vikalp Sangam
Young Leaders for Active Citizenship
Yugma Network
and others

Jan Sarokar and its constituent members:

All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA)
All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS)
All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA)
Baatein Aman Ki
Bebaak Collective
Campaign for Judicial Accountability & Judicial Reforms (CJAR)
Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD)
Dakshinayan
Ekta Parishad
Hum Hi Se Samvidhaan
Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA)
Nation For Farmers (NFF)
National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (NAPM)
National Campaign Committee of Construction Labour (NCC-CL)
National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI)
National Campaign on Adivasi Rights
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW)
National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (NPRD)
Nine is Mine
No Voter Left Behind
Not In My Name
NREGA Sangharsh Morcha (NSM)
One Billion Rising India
Pension Parishad
Peoples' Action for Employment Guarantee (PAEG)
Rethink Aadhaar
Right to Education Forum (RTE Forum)
Right to Food Campaign (RTFC)
Samruddha Bharat Foundation (SBF)
Working People's Charter (WPC)



जनता संसद

JANTA PARLIAMENT

AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM

INAUGURATION

16TH AUGUST • 11AM – 12PM

HEALTH

16TH AUGUST • 3PM – 6PM

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

17TH AUGUST • 10AM – 1PM

EDUCATION

17TH AUGUST • 3PM – 6PM

ENVIRONMENT

18TH AUGUST • 10AM – 1PM

TECHNOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE

18TH AUGUST • 3PM – 6PM

AGRICULTURE

19TH AUGUST • 10AM – 1PM

ECONOMY

19TH AUGUST • 3PM – 6PM

IMPACT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES-1:

GENDER AND RELIGION

20TH AUGUST • 10AM – 1PM

INDUSTRY, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

20TH AUGUST • 3PM – 6PM

IMPACT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES-2:

CASTE, AGE AND DISABILITY

21ST AUGUST • 10AM – 1PM

CIVIL LIBERTIES, LAWS AND GOVERNANCE

21ST AUGUST • 3PM – 6PM

SESSIONS

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

Contents

Introduction 7

Section 1

Core Demands towards a
Common Minimum Programme 11

Section 2: Sectoral submissions

Overview 20
Agriculture 32
Banking 38
Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights 41
Dalit and Adivasi Rights 44
Digital Technology 47
Disability Rights 52
Early Childhood and Mobile Creches 54
Economy 56
Education 58
Elderly 60
Environment 62
Fish Workers 66
Food and Nutrition 68
Health 70
Judicial Accountability 74
Labour 76
MGNREGA 79
Migrant Workers 81
Minorities 84
Sex Workers 86
Transparency and Accountability 88
Women's Rights 91

Section 3

Resolutions Passed 95

Section 4

Epilogue 125

Appendix: List of Links 130

Annexure 1: Environmental references 132

Introduction

If the world has gone through an unprecedented period of vulnerability, insecurity and distress during the last six months – then there is little doubt that India has been affected even more. Six months into the pandemic two indicators provide a devastating picture:

– At almost 1,00,000 cases per day India has climbed to number two on the number of COVID-19 cases globally.

– With an official figure of 23% “de-growth” India is number one in the world (amongst the major economies) on how unwell the economy is.

There is little evidence that these trends will be reversed in the near future. The Finance Minister has called this “an act of God”. This is clearly an ill-concealed excuse aimed at diverting attention from the acts of omission and commission of the government and its political leadership. Such an argument from a political dispensation is unacceptable in theory and in practice and must be challenged by the people collectively.

A wide range of public health analyses have established that the generalised lockdown imposed by the Union government on the entire Indian population from 24 March 2020 onwards was unnecessary and unjustified, since the epidemic could have been contained much more effectively through intensive and focussed public health measures, without resorting to such draconian, blanket restrictions. It is impossible to quantify the massive social, economic and human costs imposed by this lockdown, enforced without any time being given for much-needed communication or preparation. Migrant workers and their families trudged hundreds of kilometres facing police batons, ‘disinfectant’ spraying, hunger, exhaustion and even death, trying to reach their homes. These and countless other scenes of starvation, patients blocked from accessing essential care, catastrophic loss of livelihoods, and myriad other forms of human loss will remain emblematic images of this authoritarian lockdown, which sought to reduce a complex public health challenge into a law and order situation, and made people aware that they were facing a regime bent on eliminating the welfare state and replacing this with a warfare state – which often seemed at war with its own people. In order to bring people together to challenge this narrative, Jan Sarokar has launched a major initiative during the pandemic.

Jan Sarokar is a network of some of the major social movements in India. The network works with a commitment to the values enshrined in the Constitution of India and to realize the Directive Principles of State Policy that are mandated to build a more equitable and inclusive state and society. The constituent organisations and networks therefore come together to discuss, deliberate, analyse and act to help and work to realise India's Constitutional mandate, deepen democratic processes and strengthen the people's rights to liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice in India. This is an ongoing process with an effort to creatively enhance democratic participation with greater intensity – particularly so in moments of greater challenge and crisis.

Jan Sarokar has earlier brought out two documents that were prepared for, and in the course of, two major gatherings – before the 2019 general elections in April 2019 and during the Union budget in March 2020. National Jan Sansads and Jan Sabhas were held on both occasions where constituents of social movements were brought together to discuss some of the issues in the documents. The documents carried the distilled views of each social movement and campaign to a platform that would bring this sectoral expertise together for a more comprehensive view and a sound basis for working together. There was a conscious and stated effort to engage with political parties and their leadership in order to enhance the voice of peoples campaigns and social movements.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent policies of the government have been unprecedented and devastating for India's working people. These policies are not “acts of God” and most of them have been formulated in an extremely centralised, undemocratic and non-consultative manner. Many of the policies, orders and even ordinances have no basic connection with COVID-19. And with state legislatures and Parliament non-functional for close to six months, far reaching change has been pushed through with almost no democratic oversight. The underlying autocratic tendency, which has always been there in the last six years, has manifested itself as an extraordinary assault on constitutional and democratic values in the last six months.

During such times, it is imperative that people's voices must be given much more space to be

heard. In fact, it has been quite the opposite. While citizens themselves have faced draconian provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and Disaster Management Act, 2005, even their elected representatives have been marginalised and left bereft of platforms to give feedback, monitor the government and work on law and policy. The Parliament of India has not yet met since the pandemic was officially acknowledged and the most draconian lockdown was imposed on 135 crore people with four hours notice. Legislatures in many countries facing severe outbreaks of the pandemic continued to function because it is even more important to hear people's representatives during such an emergency rather than ignore them and actively deny them their constitutional space to voice peoples concerns. In India, the Budget Session was prematurely curtailed and a lockdown was imposed. A restricted Monsoon Session is going to begin almost six months later, with routine procedures to ask questions of the government, such as the Question Hour, either whittled down or removed altogether.

At a time when the pandemic and the lockdown have fundamentally altered people's lives and almost no sector or section of society has been left unaffected, Jan Sarokar followed up on a suggestion from ‘Maadhyam’ to bring together its own constituents and reach out to numerous individuals, civil society networks, social campaigns and people's movements to convene an online Janta Parliament to discuss the whole range of policies related to the social sector, democracy and the Constitution, particularly focusing on the COVID-19 period. Despite the many obvious limitations of the online mode and the challenge it poses for people already marginalised, who have to additionally contend with a digital divide, the hunger for a democratic platform and the concerted effort of the social movements made the Janta Parliament a widely attended and democratic deliberation.

There were 13 sessions in all, including an inaugural session with four speakers and a closing session where political parties were specially invited to hear summaries of resolutions from each four hour session. 10 themes were collectively identified for the working sessions of the Janta Parliament. Social movements took responsibility to anchor and plan their particular session. These ‘anchoring groups’ played a critical role in eliciting participation from across the country and planning the time and list of speakers in each session. They also prepared draft

resolutions that were voted on during the sessions of the Janta Parliament. A Secretariat was formed to coordinate with the anchor groups to make sure the agenda was followed and as few technical glitches as possible occurred. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in Hindi and English and an effort was made to make space for people to speak in any language of their choice, to be translated by their anchoring group during their intervention in the Janta Parliament. A lot of field level participation was enabled through short videos from affected people and communities.

The Janta Parliament was adjourned after 43 hours of discussions with around 250 speakers, over a hundred resolutions, over a thousand voting participants and engaging with over one lakh people on social media. Speakers included women, men, members of the LGBTQIA++ community, sex workers, migrant workers, domestic workers as well as workers from other industries, trade unionists, entrepreneurs, dalits, adivasis, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, children, elderly, persons with disabilities, farmers, street vendors, lawyers, teachers, experts, activists and representatives from a wide spectrum of political parties, among others. Participants in Janta Parliament came from different parts of the country right from Kashmir to Kerala and from Gujarat to Tripura.

There is an appendix in the end that lists the links to all the material available online including all audio visual recordings of all the sessions of the Janta Parliament (Monsoon Session 2020), including the inaugural session and closing discussion with political parties.

All of this is going to be sent electronically to all Jan Sarokar constituents, all groups who participated, all Members of Parliament and all registered political parties with Members in Parliament. A limited number of copies will be printed so that MPs and others can use the documents to raise these issues in Parliament and outside .

These discussions were rich, lively, and related to issues of crucial importance. They were conducted with a high degree of efficiency and drew heavily upon the strength, expertise and outreach of people's movements and social movements. Many political leaders and policy makers and citizens who are not a part of campaigns and movements have also enriched the ideas and deliberations. One MP even remarked

that he had found the discussions more efficiently and effectively conducted than most sessions in Parliament! But it was not that the resolutions got overwhelming support because we were in an idealistic world. Most discussions were common sense and basic and some solutions were patently obvious – if powerful vested interests could be kept at bay or asked to answer for their advocacy in an open transparent and accountable democratic platform.

The authors of the documents are the participants of these very rich and serious discussions. As the Secretariat of this amazing exercise we do no more than attempt to bring as much of it as possible in the public domain for further deliberation and, of course, action. They will all be uploaded online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com where all this material can be used by anyone who wishes to, and for Jan Sarokar to further develop it for use in bringing about positive change.

The Secretariat

SECTION

1

Core Demands towards a Common Minimum Programme

Overarching demands

1. Governments should increase expenditure, especially in social sectors, and impose a wealth tax of 2% on the richest 1% which should be backed with an 1/3 inheritance tax – the resources generated from which can provide universal coverage for the fundamental socio-economic rights to food, healthcare, education, employment and pensions.

2. Reject ordinances passed during the lockdown. Any new legislation, including in the areas of agriculture, labour, EIA and criminal law, have to be publicly discussed and debated in the Parliament before they are passed by the Parliament.

3. The government must respect and follow the spirit of federalism as envisaged in the Constitution. Several recent developments go against the spirit of federalism, including NEP 2020, GST payments to states, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2019, etc.

4. Counter the attack on democracy and by deepening democracy and empowering local self-government institutions (including gram sabhas, urban local bodies, autonomous councils and other such bodies in Fifth and Sixth Schedule Area and states with special Constitutional status) with financial and legal powers using the 73rd/74th Constitutional Amendments and other Constitutional provisions as the foundation; such powers should include the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent for any activity proposed on lands/waters in their jurisdiction as well as the right to reject projects proposed under the guise of “Development”.

5. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Covid recovery / stimulus package will not enhance the self-reliance of communities and people who are most vulnerable to crises like COVID; rather, it will destroy their existing livelihood base through coal and other mining projects, and by favouring bigger commercial players including corporates. It must instead focus on:

– the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations and youth, with substantial packages to support small-holder agriculture, pastoralism, fisheries, forestry and crafts including through the regeneration and conservation of their natural resource base, as also small and medium manufacturing, energy and community-managed

services in every settlement, providing dignified livelihoods to all migrant/casual workers and other small producers who have suffered in the COVID lockdown period, and ensuring food, energy and health security and self-reliance through local self-governance institutions in each settlement.

– Increasing and promoting social and ecological resilience of communities, building on their local ecological base, traditional knowledge and skills, and helping them avoid distress migration in search of precarious, exploitative jobs.

– The urban poor and migrant labour must be protected by strengthening workers rights, labour laws and providing social security cover through universal services, such as the right to food, health, education, housing, etc to ensure the dignity of life as promised in the Constitution. Labour who are migrating under distress must be registered in their home states as well as the states that they are migrating to and should be included in the voters list of the state that they have migrated to.

– The overall fiscal stimulus should be at least 10% of GDP without privatization of the public sector and services.

Sectoral demands

Economic activity and concerns related to the environment

Environment

1. Withdraw the draft EIA 2020 notification, and in its place, initiate a process of widespread consultation for a bringing in a comprehensive environmental regulatory regime, which includes seeking consent from institutions of local self-governance empowered under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments for any projects in their jurisdiction.

2. Withdraw all coal block auctions, and carry out a process of consultation, seeking consent, and recognition of forest rights under FRA in every village in the areas proposed for coal mining; simultaneously, draw up a comprehensive sustainable energy plan for India, drawing on the best available expertise from civil society and communities, that phases out fossil fuels, nuclear energy and large hydro, energises all settlements with decentralised renewable energy, and eliminates luxury and non-essential demand.

3. Put a moratorium on diversion of natural ecosystems for mining, industrial and other infrastructural/development projects (other than very small ones necessary for community basic needs), till such a regulatory regime and processes for full community participation in decision-making are in place.

Agriculture

1. Compensate farmers for the losses suffered this year for losses of vegetables, fruits, crops, milk and poultry produce due to hailstorms, unseasonal rains and lockdown in February-June 2020; unconditional transfer of Rs 10,000 in the name of women for all the poor rural households with emphasis on single women and female headed households for at least six months; undertake comprehensive identification of all cultivators irrespective of land ownership or title, including tenant farmers, sharecroppers, women farmers and adivasi farmers, and extending all entitlements and support systems to all of them – including bank credit, crop insurance, disaster compensation, PM-KISAN and other schemes; develop a relief package for the sector in consultation

with fish worker organisations and individuals and front load in advance a monthly allowance of INR 15,000/- for a period of at least six months to the fishworkers and those engaged in allied activities; repeal the legislations related to liberalisation of land laws and forest rights introduced in the period of the COVID lockdown;

2. In order to ensure no corporate loot in agriculture, oppose, withdraw and repeal the three agriculture related ordinances¹, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020, which increases centralisation and the input cost for irrigation, as well as the Draft Fisheries Policy 2020 and the Indo-US Trade Agreement proposal.

3. Call a special session of Parliament to exclusively discuss the agrarian crisis and related issues of farmers. Consider and pass the two vital bills crafted by the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC)² and the Pesticide Management Bill after including amendments to strengthen the regulation of pesticide companies.

Economy

1. State governments should be given their due GST compensation immediately and should be allowed to borrow from RBI directly to tackle the COVID pandemic.

2. Central and state governments along the Reserve Bank of India should come up with measures to improve the overall economy of this country, to make it more financially inclusive for people and reduce income inequality. Instead of giving corporate tax concessions governments should increase expenditure, especially in social sectors, and impose a wealth tax of 2% on the richest 1% which should be backed with an 1/3 inheritance tax – the resources generated from which can provide universal coverage for the fundamental socio-economic rights to food, healthcare, education, employment and pensions.

3. To improve the banking system, commercial banks should be restricted for retail lending with

1. a) Agricultural Produce, Commerce and Trade (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance 2020; b) The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020; and c) Essential Commodities Act (Amendment) 2020.

2. The Farmers' Freedom from Indebtedness bill, 2018 and The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative Minimum Support Prices for Agricultural Commodities Bill, 2018

special focus on small depositors and borrowers; and development banks should be revived for large scale developmental projects with due diligence in lending practices.

4. Stop privatisation of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE)

Labour and Employment

1. The government must not use the ordinance route and must pass all laws through the legislature in a democratic manner. Introduction of Labour Codes must be stopped.

2. Entitlement to work under MGNREGA should be 200 days and a similar scheme should also be introduced for urban areas.

3. On an urgent basis the registration of workers must be done under the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008, Building and Other Construction Workers Act or any other state laws on access of welfare entitlements.

Social sectors

Health

1. The Union government must allocate an additional supplementary budget of Rs 20,000 crores for the Health budget during 2020-21, with a concrete roadmap for further annual increases in the Union Health budget each year, to enable reaching the declared Union and state combined allocation of 2.5% of GDP by 2025. This additional amount should be used for major expansion of the National Health Mission leading to all states having strengthened public health services, effective medicine procurement and distribution systems, universalisation of Health and Wellness Centres, hiring required additional staff and regularisation of contractual staff including ASHAs, adequate workplace protection and working conditions for healthcare workers, enhanced measures for vulnerable sections particularly the elderly and children in terms of appropriate and easily accessible, generalisation of community based monitoring, and developing of a national Right to healthcare framework.

2. The Union Health Ministry must promptly ensure implementation of the Clinical establishments act across the country, through notification of national standards for healthcare establishments, while developing the national framework for regulation of rates and implementation of patients' rights, which will enable regulation and accountability of all private hospitals.

3. The Union government must immediately shelve the draft Health Data Management Policy (HDMP), due to the range of very serious concerns. HDMP must be discussed only after adoption of a national Personal Data Protection Bill, and public debate of the HDMP should be combined with thorough national discussion and reconsideration of the National Digital Health Mission, which itself presently has several serious flaws. The constitutional standing of the National Health Authority which has no legal standing should also be revisited, and should be replaced by an appropriate and accountable body created through an Act of the Parliament.

Food and Nutrition

1. Universal PDS: Universal expansion of the public distribution system (PDS) to ensure inclusion of all

vulnerable communities, with addition of nutritious foods; and without mandatory Aadhaar.

2. Comprehensive Children's Nutrition: Provide comprehensive Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and Mid Day Meal (MDM) nutrition for all children, including eggs, milk and fruits, from all schools and anganwadis as an essential service.

3. Maternity Entitlements: Provide universal, unconditional maternity entitlements and nutritious meals to all pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Education

1. Stop implementation of NEP 2020 forthwith and
a) Make available publicly the entire 66-page NEP-2020 document (not a summary), as approved by the Central Cabinet on 29th July 2020, at least in all the 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule under Articles 344(1) and 351 of the Constitution; Disseminate all the linguistic versions widely and make available the written feedback thus received in the public domain for reference and debate;

b) Call for written reports on NEP 2020 from all the Political Parties with representation in the State Legislative Assemblies/Councils and/or the Parliament and make them available in the public domain;

c) Send the entire 66-page NEP-2020 document in the respective languages to all the state/UT governments for scrutiny, discussion, debate and written feedback from the respective State Planning Boards; State Boards of Education; State Councils of Education and Research (SCERTs); State Higher Education Councils and other such state-level institutions; elected bodies under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and also those constituted under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution; University (including Professional Institution) Academic & Executive Councils and their respective Departments/Centres in various disciplines as well as Elected Students' and Teachers' Unions; Anganwadi Workers' and School, College and University Teachers' and Non-Teaching Staff's Organisations; Students' and Youth Organisations; state/UT-level Literary & Cultural Workers' Associations and the State/UT Bar Associations;

d) Share the aforesaid state/UT-level feedback with the respective Legislative Assemblies/Councils for democratic scrutiny and debate followed by

submission of the state/UT governments' written reports on NEP 2020 to the Central Government and the Parliament; and

e) Make available the entire nation-wide written feedback thus received from all states/UTs in the public domain and for scrutiny by the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee whose report must be made available in the public domain also to be followed by democratic debate and approval by the Parliament with consequent modifications in NEP 2020 as well as the required legislations.

2. NEP 2020 violates the following Constitutional principles and provisions:

a) Social justice agenda including reservation policy as affirmative action for SC/ST/OBC, gender, religious and linguistic minorities and PWD.

b) Exit points at classes 3, 5 and 8 and the pretext of vocational options violate the existing fundamental right to education of equitable quality till age 14 yrs and right to receive at least five years of common courses in mathematics, language, science and social science from Class VI to X.

c) Centralization of Establishment/Closure, Regulation, Accreditation, Eligibility, Curriculum and Assessment on a concurrent subject like Education, encroaching on the Constitutionally enshrined Federal rights of the States. Hence, restore education from the concurrent list to the state list, as was originally the case.

3. Extend the Constitutional Right to Education of equitable quality to children from 3-18 years of age.

4. Declare a concrete timeline and roadmap for budget enhancement for education (minimum 6 percent of GDP) without the provision for transferring the public funds to private institutions under the guise of public-philanthropic-partnership (PPP).

5. Establish a national system of government-funded free education of equitable quality through a Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools irrespective of class, caste, race, religion, gender, language, birthplace and disability and reverse policy of privatisation of education through strong regulatory framework.

Demands pertaining to various vulnerable communities

Women

1. Set Up a committee, with 50% women as its members, for gender segregated data and to study the severity of COVID impact on different sections of women and formulate mitigation strategy and its implementation.

2. Special financial allocation for the implementation of Laws to prevent crime and violence against women based on of caste, class and patriarchy; No dilution of Laws like SC/ST POA Act,

LGBTQIA++

1. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 is a deeply violative, undemocratic and mis-representative piece of legislation, decimating the rights of the very transgender communities it claims to 'protect'. We resolve that the Government should hold back finalising and notifying Rules till the challenges to the act are resolved and more participation by the community at diverse levels can be ensured.

2. This House seeks substantive emergency relief and rehabilitation measures, livelihood opportunities with safety & dignity or in their absence, fair subsistence incomes, food security, rent relief, medical facilities, including gender-affirming procedures and other support services.

Religious minorities

That the primacy of secularism as a core constitutional value in the functioning of all institutions and all aspects of statecraft, be restored and established and that the discriminatory CAA, 2019 amendments and the NPR & NRC 2003 (rule), be withdrawn and the right to equal citizenship be ensured for all.

Disabled and elderly

1. Provide a minimum support of Rs. 5000/- per month to all disabled and elderly during the pandemic period;

2. Universalisation of pensions.

Dalits and Adivasis

1. Legislate the Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan & Ensure proper implementation of the SC/ST(POA) Act, 1989 so that the mechanism like establishment of special courts and appointments of Special Public Prosecutors shall take place in order to ensure speedy trial in cases of atrocities.

2. Ensure proper implementation of Schedule 5 of Indian Constitution and laws like Forest Rights Act, 2006 and Panchayat extension to Schedule Areas, 1996. Forest based livelihood schemes and policies shall be implemented during Covid-19 pandemic so that there is no distress migration to other states for livelihood.

Democratic Rights and civil liberties

Civil Liberties

1. That the criminalisation of ordinary citizens under Epidemic Diseases Act, NDMA, UAPA, sedition (Section 124A IPC) and other penal laws be stopped immediately. Withdraw all such prosecutions, including the fabricated campaigns against activists, intellectuals, journalists, students and others in the anti-CAA protestors & supporters in Delhi and UP as well as in the Bhima Koregaon case and those protesting the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K. Stop indiscriminate imposition of Section 144 CrPC and use of force and torture by police.

2. That all prisoners be tested for COVID 19, according to the ICMR guidelines regularly irrespective of the offence and all prisoners above 60 years or with comorbidities be released on bail / parole.

3. No new laws and major change of policy should be introduced during Covid-19 times. Criminal law reform committee be suspended.

Digital rights

1. Government must ensure that there is no denial of legal entitlement for want of Aadhaar or for failure of Aadhaar authentication and uses of Aadhaar linkage and authentication must remain strictly confined to the limits set forth in the Supreme Court's 2018 Aadhaar judgment. Aadhaar should not be mandated for the payment of wages or pensions, for medical treatment, for Covid19 testing, for school and hospital admissions, or any other expanded or urgent social good. As a necessary corollary therefore, the recently notified Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Rules, 2020, which is violative of the Supreme Court's judgment, must be withdrawn immediately.

2. Government must revise the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 to include, inter alia, strict provisions curtailing the surveillance powers of law enforcement agencies and bring them under Parliamentary and judicial scrutiny. And until the Personal Data Protection Bill is enacted, the Government must halt all other efforts to draft data-related policies like the Health Data Policy (under National Digital Health Mission), the Non-Personal Data Governance Framework report etc.

Transparency and Accountability

1. Institutions of transparency and accountability such as the Judiciary, Information Commissions, Lokpal and other such commissions constituted under various laws must be fully functional using a combination of offline and online modes. Accountability laws such as the Grievance Redressal Bill, 2011 must be enacted and the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 and Whistleblower Protection Act, 2011 must be operationalized. Accountability mechanisms like Pre-Legislative Consultation must be rigorously implemented.

2. Government must proactively disclose and disseminate information in adherence to Section 4 of the Right to Information Act especially with regard to the implementation of social security schemes, utilization of funds, including PM CARES Fund and other relief funds and details of foreign aid and loans received.

Judicial reforms

1. Improve access to justice by operationalising informal Gram Nyayalayas.

2. Ensure proper accountability of judges by setting up independent judicial complaints commissions empowered to receive and investigate complaints against judges and recommend action against them and increase transparency in the functioning of the judiciary by proactively putting out all information regarding cases in the public domain and video-graphing court proceedings.

SECTION

2

Short papers submitted by various organisations, briefly capturing how COVID-19 has impacted their field of concern and how this might be countered

Overview



In a "Parliamentary Democracy" a functional and healthy Parliament, is the fulcrum of its institutional structure. It is the central pillar of a 'democratic' policy making framework, and along with public monitoring, it is the platform through which the countervailing balance of power between the different wings of government can be maintained. This is particularly important for ensuring the accountability of the executive to the people. To not have a functional Parliament at this time, is to lose the contribution of one of the most important institutions of democracy, in ensuring the better involvement of citizens, and different institutions of the state, in facing a crisis like the current pandemic.

The non-convening of the monsoon session of the Indian Parliament in 2020 in critical times of a national pandemic, assumed gigantic proportions of lack of transparency, accountability, and public monitoring. The entire process of decision making in Covid times has been cloaked in secrecy and where decisions have been taken top down in a centralized manner. The public health and lockdown policies have barely been subject to scrutiny even by the highest courts.

Under such circumstances, people and their organizations have no choice but to attempt to convene an alternative platform that involves citizens, civil society organizations, independent experts and political parties in a deliberative framework to discuss the status of each area of importance in COVID times, the challenges being faced and the range of potential policy alternatives to overcome these challenges. Given the lack of parliamentary oversight, such a platform would at least allow in their groups to place on record what they have been through over the last 5 months, how much Government policies benefitted them, what they have suffered and what their thoughts are about the future. It is clear that in such a period face to face interactions are very limited. While online communication is an incomplete form of deliberation and it is by its nature exclusive. Many civil society organizations have attempted at hybrid means of communication and deliberation

so that the views of people without access to digital mediums can have their views reflected on online platforms as well.

Many civil society organizations and social movements have come together in the past, under the banner of Jan Sarokar to hold Jan Sansads where political party leaders have been invited to listen to peoples' concerns and carry those views to Parliament. The Jan Sarokar platform brought together social movements across a range of issues to critique Government Policy as well as present practical alternatives, and communicate them to elected representatives to build and promote participatory democratic dialogue in the sphere of social justice and rights.

Today more than 50 civil society organizations, peoples' campaigns, social movements and issue based networks, including Jan Sarokar have come together to present to the Parliament, the Executive, the Judiciary and most importantly to the people of the country the true status of governance in India over the past 5 months. This report which has been collectively drawn up by civil society, lays down the manner in which key rights have been undermined in the midst of a pandemic over a range of sectors such as health and nutrition, education, employment, discrimination, civil liberties, agriculture, banking, disability rights, women's rights, judicial accountability, environment, social security amongst others. While clearly laying out the failures of the Government in meeting its constitutional duty to protect and promote the rights of its citizens during the pandemic, the report also lays out specific demands for reform in each sector that will enable the building of our lives and livelihoods in a holistic, sustainable and dignified manner.

The proposal is presented in three parts: the first consists of positive demands for increased entitlements, allocation and new laws; the second is improving and strengthening existing laws and systems and the third are policies that need to be stopped without delay.

Part I: Positive Demands

COVID crisis presents a crucial opportunity to redesign our economy towards generating tens of millions of ecologically sustainable and dignified livelihoods. The following are our positive demands, of enhanced entitlements, allocations, resources, rethinking and passing of new laws and policies.

1. COVID related policies

- i. Increase the number of testing centres and its capacity to ensure that samples are taken from all such settlements which typically accommodate marginalized communities.
- ii. Take particular care of the elderly at risk by making geriatric OPDs follow a COVID Standard Operating Procedure and make tests and treatment for senior citizens free.
- iii. Make awareness on Covid-19 more accessible for linguistic diversities (including sign language users) and people with visual impairments.
- iv. Make a law as per the right to privacy judgement to regulate AarogyaSetu which should be completely voluntary.
- v. Direct private companies to provide Covid-19 specific insurance covers to all their employees.
- vi. Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health should meet immediately and assess the situation, both in terms of ground situation and the policy pronouncements, and advise the government
- vii. Reserve Bank of India should form a dedicated committee to ensure that all the COVID relief measures are implemented by banks completely.

2. Healthcare

- i. Increase public spending on health to 5% of GDP in the long run and to at least 3% of GDP by 2024. Transfer to state governments on the basis of the Finance Commission formula. Increase public investment on health research. Channelize allocation towards strengthening the public system in a sustainable manner rather than directing funds to purchase care from the ill-equipped private sector.
- ii. Expanding the Clinical Establishment Act of 2010 along with ensuring its effective, generalised implementation immediately. Establishing regulation of rates as a central feature of this Act.
- iii. Universal implementation of Patient Rights Charter, making it legally mandatory, and establishing an empowered Patient Grievance Redressal mechanism.

iv. Public harnessing of the private healthcare sector, bringing under public direction at least 80% of beds in all private hospitals above minimum size. Formation of multi-stakeholder health councils at district, city and state level. Develop community-based health and social development plan through collective and participatory approach.

v. Accessible and targeted health services for people with disabilities, co-morbidities and senior citizens. All healthcare facilities must follow provisions of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and ensure persons with disabilities can access these facilities without any barrier.

vi. Provided counselling support to minorities and scheduled caste and tribes during admission and their stay in the hospital. Take proactive steps to dispel myths in the community through messaging by frontline workers and partnering with NGOs.

vii. Increase the Geriatric Facilities for elderly in every district hospital across the country as per Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Seniors Act. Provide a universal insurance of at least Rs. 5 lacs for all elderly.

viii. Ensure sexual reproductive health services without disruption including access to contraception, safe abortion, counselling and maternal health services at all levels from the village to the district hospital.

ix. Guarantee access to free essential and lifesaving medicines and diagnostics for all through public health facilities. Investment in pharma and medical equipment manufacturing industries led by PSUs. Establish centralised and transparent procurement, and decentralised distribution to ensure regular availability of good quality generic medicines in public facilities.

3. Food Security and Nutrition

i. Immediately release more food grain stocks to state governments for free distribution for 3 months, to those in need (80% of population to be defined by the states, irrespective of ration card status).

ii. In order to avoid exclusion errors, PDS benefits must be made universal for all residents without making Aadhaar/UID mandatory.

iii. The coverage of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana must be doubled to cover all vulnerable groups such as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), old people and single women.

iv. Grains, Pulses and Edible Oils: 10kg of grains, 1.5 kg pulses/dal and 800gms of cooking oil must be provided per person per month, through the PDS, at subsidised prices.

v. Provide financial resources to ensure hot, cooked, nutritious meals with eggs and fruit or take home rations for all pregnant and lactating mothers at Anganwadi Centres.

vi. Provide compensatory food security allowance for at least 100 million families who have been excluded from the NFSA since 2013, despite population growth.

vii. Provide compensation for all families with starvation deaths.

viii. Extend the distribution of free grains and dal under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana beyond November 2020, and include the elderly.

ix. Canteens serving subsidised and nutritious meals must be set up in all cities and towns, akin to the Amma canteens in Tamil Nadu. In rural areas, open up school mid day meals or anganwadi centres for provision of food to destitute, aged, single women and disabled. Give seed/financial grants to women's groups and ensure income for women collective to cook food at anganwadis for community feeding.

x. Provide home delivery or spot feeding of a comprehensive nutrition package with cereals, pulses, oil and eggs for children under fourteen years, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls till schools and anganwadis re-open.

xi. Eggs, milk and fruits must be provided in all schools and anganwadis. For children who do not eat eggs additional provision of fruits or milk can be made.

xii. Expand the National Creche Scheme. Twenty-five percent of anganwadi centres must be converted to anganwadi-cum-crèches. The mid-day meal scheme should be extended to all children up to class XII.

xiii. Expand Ujjwala cooking gas fuel benefit to all priority and antyodaya households.

4. Education

i. Table National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) in Parliament for discussion.

ii. Extension of Right to Education Act 2009 from 3-18 years to universalise of school education.

iii. Declare timeline for allocation of 6% GDP to education.

iv. Parliament should review implementation of RTE Act and set the new timeline for its complete implementation.

v. Supreme Court to intervene for the non-implementation of RTE Act 2009 even after 10 years of its enactment.

vi. Stop exclusion through online instruction and explore alternative means.

vii. Take steps to stop commercialisation and regulate non state actors in education

viii. Address specific barriers to education faced by Dalit, Adivasi, minority children, children with disabilities, girls and other vulnerable groups.

ix. End rationalisation/merger of schools

x. Ensure disinfection of schools and ensure availability of adequate WASH facilities before their re-opening.

xi. Ensure all teachers' vacancies are filled with immediate effect and pending salaries and allowances should be paid with immediate effect.

xii. Teachers operate out of varied local schools but also government offices including local panchayat offices, post offices and ration shops. That these centres must be provided with online devices and sanitizing materials so that can continue our education in a safe environment. That these new COVID centres of learning could also become our local mental health and safety centres.

xiii. That our Parents and elder siblings could take worksheets home for the younger ones each week to study at home.

xiv. That rations for mid-day meals be provided to our mothers for all days including Sundays and holidays.

xv. The government sets up formal and regular empowered platforms to consult us and our parents on an ongoing basis. If we can hold our Children's parliaments and continue to consult with the last child.

xvi. Ensure the right to education, health and nutrition of children from migrant families affected because of COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Agricultural Sector and Farmers, Environment

i. Public investment in small-farmer based organic agriculture (shifting current fertilizer subsidy completely into this over 5 years), assistance to pastoralists, fishers and forest-dwellers, decentralized renewable energy and water harvesting, dispersed production of goods and services with a strong biomass and handmade base, integrated health services maximising nature-based healing and preventive care, and a massive livelihood programme based on regenerating the country's badly degraded soils and water systems.

ii. Remunerative Minimum Support Price for all crops at C2+50% with guaranteed procurement.

iii. Employment at minimum wage of Rs 600/day to all agricultural workers.

iv. Increase of PM-KISAN to Rs.18,000 per year and extending benefits to tenant farmers and complete loan waiver for landless, tenant, small and middle peasants.

v. Provide organic seeds and fertilisers with immediate effect and free of cost on a priority basis to women farmers, especially those who are single.

vi. Access to interest free credit. Crop credit coverage is very low and that can be improved this season with complete interest subvention.

vii. Provide bridge funds for FPOs and women's collectives.

viii. Women collective run Custom Hiring Centers (CHC) ensuring access of women friendly tools and equipment at Panchayat level to women farmers.

ix. Expand Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to include landless women who are leasing land. Joint liability groups (JLGs), a model successful in Kerala and few other states could be strengthened by bringing JLGs to be brought on par with kisan credit cards in terms of interest, insurance and other terms and conditions.

x. Expand PM Kisaan Sanman Nidhi to include women farmers irrespective of land holding and increase the amount from 6000/year to 15000 which would support farming activities that cannot be covered under NREGA.

xi. Ensure access to grazing lands to livestock workers, feed, infrastructure, health care for all livestock needs to be provided. Common lands, banjar and poramboke lands have to be surveyed and reclaimed from those who have encroached on those lands and have to be handed over to the gram panchayats for grazing animals and growing fodder for livestock and for common use.

xii. Urgent steps should be taken to reduce, eliminate, and replace sources of pollution, such that over a 10 to 15 year period, the quality of air, water and soil is brought to levels safe for human and other animal use; this includes substantially replacing private with public transport and harmful chemicals with safe substances, eliminating sources of noise, and treating all wastewater before discharging into waterbodies.

xiii. Urgently devise effective institutional mechanisms for the collection, storage, procurement and sale of non timber forest produce during the ongoing collection season, and provide necessary financial and logistical support to Gram Sabhas and forest management committees constituted under Forest Rights Act together with other PPAs for direct procurement, ensuring fair prices, from the gatherers.

xiv. MoEF to release the huge compensatory afforestation fund to the Gram Sabhas constituted under FRA to support community forest management for generating livelihoods and wage employment for tribals and forest dwellers to deal with the economic crisis.

xv. Consider and pass the two vital bills crafted by the All India Kisan Sangarsh Coordination Committee: The Farmers' Freedom from Indebtedness Bill, 2018 and The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative Minimum Support Prices for Agricultural Commodities Bill, 2018.

6. Technology and Surveillance

i. Expand tele-connectivity and 4G internet access on priority in all parts of India. Uphold Net Neutrality and establish internet hotspots in the rural areas especially among the habitations of the vulnerable communities to make sure uninterrupted access to the internet.

ii. Undertake comprehensive reforms starting with issuance of a SOP as per Supreme Court judgements prior to registration of any cases on social media content, with a nuanced approach with the Personal Data Protection Bill, NCSS and Competition Act working in tandem.

iii. Reform the website blocking process specifically focussing on removing the opacity existing in regulation.

iv. Expedite the process on the much needed Data Protection Bill. Ensure that the concerns of civil society and the public are duly incorporated en-route to a comprehensive Data Protection Bill, including the regulation of drones, which currently lies with a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

v. Rethink usage of intrusive technologies like Facial Recognition and develop foresight and safeguards before deployment.

vi. Constitute a high level inquiry and make an express statement that malware to target activists and human rights defenders is an illegal act.

vii. Political Parties should formulate a pro-active code of conduct for their online social media volunteers, integrate it within their training sessions with them and also have penalties for online abuse towards expulsion. They should commit to fair conduct in the use of digital means in election canvassing and online campaigning and adopt a digital rights section in their manifesto.

viii. Constitutional courts should do a docket review for pending litigations on issues of mass surveillance where there are no pending orders for restraint. This is given the absence of a data protection law or any meaningful surveillance reform. Review the pending cases impacting the constitutional status of Aadhaar given recent notifications and examine ways to expedite their hearings.

ix. Continued halt of biometric authentication, audit of AePS and use of NREGA payment methods instead.

x. Halt health linkage to Aadhaar, and commercialisation of health data

xi. Take action related to starvation deaths caused by tech-caused or tech-exacerbated exclusion.

7. Economy

Public Finance and Banking System

i. Allow state governments to borrow directly from RBI at repo rate, without conditions, for the rest of the fiscal year.

ii. Finance the additional spending by borrowing from RBI (deficit financing or monetised deficit).

iii. Review Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code to prevent corporations from getting undue benefit.

iv. Revive development banks to fund large scale lending to long term projects. Commercial banks should only be allowed to serve the people by focussing on retail lending.

v. No public sector bank should be privatised.

8. Impact on Vulnerable Communities: Gender, Religion, Caste, Age and Disability

i. Ensure autonomous functioning of National and State Commissions for Women with members selected through an institutionalised, independent and transparent process and no political appointees.

ii. Ensure 33% reservation for women in all commissions.

iii. Ensure prevention of all crimes against women by providing adequate budget allocation and support survivors of crimes against women. Provide adequate fast track courts to ensure justice in such cases within a legally bound time frame.

iv. Ensure zero tolerance over rural girls drop out, enrollment in higher studies and also to ensure employability, skill training of rural girls is not affected, especially of the returnee migrants.

v. Targeted financial support like fee waivers, reimbursement of internet expenses, etc., to Dalits, Adivasis, Bahujans, Pasmandas, transgender and disabled students to access online education. Accessible modes of online education for students with disabilities.

vi. Urgent action is required to improve the socio-economic conditions of Muslims, especially the most marginalised among them. All basic rights of citizenship - access to health care, education, safe and clean water sanitation, housing - must be provided in a way that is non-discriminatory, sensitive and context-specific.

vii. Treat women as Project Affected Persons in all relief and rehabilitation measures, Ensure legal and financial aid and alternative means of employment and livelihood for women displaced due to infrastructure, urbanisation and industrial projects.

viii. Physical courts should begin at all levels and the Human Rights Institutions either meet the ANNI standards or they should be closed down.

ix. Enhance pension to Rs. 3000/- for those from 40% to 79% disability; and Rs. 5000/- for those with 80% and above. Provide Rs.5000/- per month to all disabled unemployed during the Covid pandemic crisis.

x. Disability budgeting across ministries: minimum 4%.

xi. Need for the creation of space and platforms for marginalised groups to articulate privacy harms – the concerns of marginalised caste and adivasi groups, women and sexual minorities, informal-gig workers need to be integrated within technology policy. There should be efforts for the active creation of space and leadership development for members of these communities for them to collectively become an integral part of the digital rights ecosystem which is predominantly legalistic, privileged, male and upper caste in India.

xii. Sex Workers should be provided dry rations with support of free gas cylinder and direct cash transfer support of not less than Rs. 5000 per month.

xiii. Provide sex workers with universal health coverage, including mental, psychosocial health and sexual reproductive health services.

xiv. Due to vulnerable working condition, govt have to make sure to plan a relief at least 7 months for sex workers (FSW and Transgender) which includes all above provisions on board.

xv. Develop a comprehensive plan for Children of Sex Workers including access to nutritional food, access to offline and online education.

xvi. Eradicate state oriented violence, stigma and discrimination. Govt should direct the appropriate agencies for dissemination of information regarding the outbreak of pandemic, governmental measures related to livelihood and medical guidelines/ facilities, health and hygienic measures. The literatures and visuals should be in place with proper visibility.

xvii. Govt should direct the state agencies to visibly advertise and impart information regarding the social development schemes and facilities to the community at their localities.

xviii. Setup a Single Window System to access all the related documents from one spot. It would help community members to avoid denial of social security services on the basis of necessity of documents.

xix. Due to long lockdown we have seen that Domestic Violence have been arises, so it needs to be keep in mind to eradicate this. Help to report women to these crisis and work on mental health, arrange counselling. It would help the community to make sure to live in enabling environment

9. Industry, Labour and Employment

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise

i. Consider and provide debt restructuring and relief for MSMEs.

ii. The government must urgently allocate subsidies for the MSME sector, in which the wage subsidy is a major component.

iii. MSMEs should get priority from the government whenever it creates any support for the industry in the form of economic infrastructure.

iv. In addition to credit support, income support in the form of a one-time livelihood support not less than Rs. 10,000 must also be provided to city

transport sector workers such as auto rickshaw, tempo, including app-based 'gig-workers', etc. Further, the installments of loans from microcredit agencies and NBFC must also be deferred and interest must not be charged for this interim period. In addition, all app-based 'gig-workers' must also get covered under labour law regulations and the government must bring in appropriate policy to enable this.

v. All street vendors must be identified, recognised and registered as street vendors. The local government bodies must also actively increase awareness about Covid-19 to counter the communalisation of the pandemic and issue special orders to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of religion and caste.

Workforce

i. All the employees working in COVID 19 ward should be provided with adequate PPE, regular health check-ups and COVID 19 tests; long duty hours need to be reduced and regularised as employees.

ii. All workers in the healthcare sector, like nurses and ASHA workers, have been at the forefront of fighting Covid-19. All such workers must be regularised to at par with at least D-grade employees of the government. All nurses in the private sector must also receive the same employee benefits as their public sector counterparts.

iii. Expand the Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIS) to include the entire working population in the unorganised sector.

iv. All contractual workers (including safaikaramcharis) should be given special incentive/ additional wages for their COVID 19 related work.

v. All health care and allied workers both permanent and contractual involved in COVID 19 duty should be compensated Rs. 50 lakh if the worker dies and on getting infected they should be given equal treatment facilities without any discrimination.

vi. Any permanent work being done in any industry must not be done by contract workers. All permanent jobs must be done only by regular employees and therefore the fixed term employment ordinance must be scrapped immediately.

vii. Creating adequate numbers of permanent posts. All levels of public health system staff be provided with adequate and continued skill training, fair wages, social security and decent working conditions.

viii. The government must pay DA as per regular practice and pay all wages on time.

ix. RBI must have enough workforce to regulate all the banks and must be held responsible for failing to stop any kind of wrongdoing/fraud/violation by banks supervised by it. Banks should increase their employee base and not rely on third parties and digitalisation alone.

10. Workers and Livelihood

i. Provide Rs 7,500 per month for 3 months of lockdown as compensation for lost incomes and 3 months after as the economy recovers. Expansion of unemployment benefits to informal sector employees through means-testing. This livelihood support must include all segments of the population, including those both in stigmatised professions like sex work and begging, and in unseen unpaid work such as domestic work.

ii. Unconditional transfer of Rs 10,000 in the name of women for all the poor rural households with emphasis on single women and female headed households for at least six months.

iii. Monthly allowance of Rs. 15,000 up to three months be provided in advance, for fishworkers and those engaged in allied activities and develop a proper relief package for the sector in consultation with fish worker organisations.

iv. Enumerate all the returning migrants, maintain a database, do skill mapping, skill upgradation and create employment programs with the coordination from panchayat level upwards to the district and state level.

v. Recognize the urban- rural connection of migration cycles. Ensuring portability of ration cards as well as enabling women to gain access to credit on low interest for short term economic needs such as vending, hawking horticulture, poultry etc. is essential.

vi. Expansion and temporarily relaxing the age limit for attainment of pension via Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-SYMD) which offers Rs 3,000 pension to informal sector employees.

vii. Written Employee Contracts should be made mandatory to recognize the population working in the informal sector as contract-based employees with proper tenure.

viii. Redesign urban and semi-urban settlements in a manner that workplace and residence for most people are close by, self-governance through area sabhas is empowered, and urban natural ecosystems are regenerated and protected through citizens' forums.

ix. Expand entitlements under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to: increase in the guarantee of work to 200 days per person/entire year, increase in the wage rate to Rs 600/day and at least Rs.300/day as unemployment wages. There is a need to strengthen small towns through a sustainable urban employment guarantee programme and provide initial assistance to states willing to set this up. Budgets for MGNREGA must be increased by at least four times. The Ministry of Labour's orders stating that all workers should be deemed to be "at work" during the lockdown period and be paid accordingly must apply to MGNREGA workers as well.

x. Expand National Social Assistance Program as follows: A minimum universal non-contributory pension of 50% of minimum wage for all men and women above the age of 55 years and for all women in vulnerable categories irrespective of age. Index pensions to inflation. Advance payment of double pension for 6 months released in cash to be delivered to each pensioner immediately at her doorstep.

xi. Formulation of a strong law under the Social Security Code- which is yet to be finalized by the Parliamentary standing committee-, recognizing and ensuring food security, healthcare, housing, maternity and old age benefits as the rights of workers.

xii. Enact legislation for empowerment of the Transgender community and adequate economic and social support for the LGBTQ community.

xiii. Registration of workers must be done under the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008, BOCW Act or any other state laws on access of welfare entitlements.

xiv. The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) must be held urgently to collectively deliberate on labour policies. Workers organisations are ready to understand / have dialogue with the industrial fraternity and concerned government authorities in the spirit of tripartitism and social dialogue to fix the complex question of the economy.

11. Civil Liberties, Laws and Governance

i. Parliament needs to be convened at earliest to discuss a wide range of issues related to the management of and other aspects related to Covid-19 pandemic.

ii. NHRC and Supreme Court must issue regular advisories to governments, both Centre and States, to prevent violations as well as direct them to act in the interests of the people, especially the vulnerable and the marginalised.

iii. CAG needs to take independent review and assessment of the fund allocation announced for COVID-19 management, as also of such fund collections as under PM Care and audit the expenditure under these.

iv. Institutions of local self-governance must be provided with the resources, technical assistance and other forms of cooperation in order to grow their own local, self-reliant economies, using local and new skills and resources, catering first and foremost to local needs.

v. Immediately resume the physical functioning of courts. Prioritize the hearing of habeas corpus petitions as it involves the right to life and liberty. Fast-track cases of atrocities against Dalits, Adivasis and other marginalized communities. Enact a detailed and actionable strategic plan for filling up of vacancies in the lower courts and the high courts.

vi. Ensure urgent decentralised monitoring frameworks, grievance redressal mechanisms and penalties for non-implementation of all entitlements.

vii. Banks including RBI need improved grievances mechanisms, stop harassment of depositors, accountability of top management for the rise in Non Performing Assets, credit to unworthy companies, number of frauds and revolving door policies. Public Sector Banks (PSBs) need to go beyond financial accountability to environmental and social safeguards for loans given to development projects.

viii. Set up a National Environment Commission with a Constitutional status akin to the CEC and CAG, with the mandate of monitoring adherence of relevant norms and laws by government agencies and corporations, and providing a redressal and interface mechanism for the public.

ix. Review and revise India's national climate action plan to ensure widespread participation of communities likely to be most affected to bring in substantial upward revision of goals for mitigation and adaptation, specific target for emission peaking, significantly reducing elite demand for power, and prioritised actions to help climate refugees.

x. Conduct an impartial investigation in connection with the Delhi riots of February 2020 must be carried out and those found guilty must be held accountable. The real perpetrators of violence must be booked and arrested and prosecuted.

Part 2: Better Implementation

There are several existing laws, entitlements, orders and committees that need to be implemented properly. Here are some of them:

1. Provide full entitlements unconditionally, in advance, for all the eligible mothers under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and Janani Suraksha Yojana. Maternity Entitlements under NFSA: Maternity entitlements under NFSA must be provided to all pregnant and lactating women, without any conditionalities. All the backlog of maternity entitlements must be cleared immediately and for the next six months, the maternity benefit under PMMVY should be given in advance in one instalment. The amount of benefit should be increased and regularly updated according to inflation. Further, legislative provisions need to be made to ensure universal and wage-linked maternity benefits to all women.

2. The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana Scheme should be relooked into keeping in mind the Standing Committee's recommendations.

3. Implement the Supreme Court order that prisoners senior in age and with co-morbidities should be released with the required conditionalities.

4. Strictly implement provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and implement Sec. 24 which mandates "support (by the government) during natural or man-made disasters and in areas of conflict"; provision of unemployment allowance; caregiver allowance etc.

5. Accept recommendations by the UN Committee on the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities to amend the Indian Constitution to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability; Amend Sec. 3.3 the RPD Act that legitimises discrimination. Speed up certification and Unique Disability ID issuance process.

6. Implementation of the DK Basu Guidelines to the hilt and police cases be filed against errant policemen.

7. Strict implementation of local planning under MGNREGA and account for the payments delay from central government while calculating compensation for delayed compensation (As per the supreme court order). Constitute Social Audit cells and carry out social audits in all states.

8. Social audits to examine ease of use, non-exclusion of people from welfare benefits due to technology.

9. State government must ensure that every primary employer strictly adheres to paying the wages to their contractors and to the workers.

10. Timely distribution every month for pensions to elders accounts by 7th of every month as per Supreme Court order.

11. Implement the full range of ICDS services and child care including growth monitoring, referral services, nutrition and health counselling.

12. Implement the Gram Nyayalaya Act by making appropriate parliamentary and budgetary allocations.

13. Unconditional restoration of the value of secularism in all Institutions and sections of the state apparatus. The spread of hate be checked at all levels.

14. Undertake legal reforms on Internet Shutdowns as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Anuradha Bhasin case. Follow principles of proportionality, absolute necessity and transparency while administering internet shutdowns.

15. Expedite measures to share report and findings of Parliament Standing Committee on IT for the benefit of all parliamentarians.

16. Data Protection Committee should broaden and be transparent about its consultative process on the Data Protection Bill.

Part 3: Immediate Withdrawal

Right before COVID struck the country saw a mass popular uprising against the discriminatory citizenship amendment law. We stand by the original demand to repeal CAA and against the unjust repression and targeting of protestors.

1. Withdraw laws and executive powers activated during lockdown should be withdrawn. People should be counselled for violations not charged punitively. All preventive measures and actions are equitable, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and dignified.

2. Roll back National Register of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 and 2003.

3. Stop the police abuse of the law through fabricated prosecutions and withdraw all the cases against people arrested for anti-CAA protests and arrest the real perpetrators.

4. Withdraw the police state, restore freedom and democracy including ensuring the release of all those arrested, 4G Internet restored and most importantly Gol and Indians urgently listen to the people of J&K as to what they want.

5. Repeal Unlawful Activities Prevention Act with immediate effect.

6. Remove unconstitutional conditionalities in any welfare scheme, including Aadhaar.

7. RBI should immediately ask banks to stop all the service charges for saving account holders.

8. Withdraw Draft Fisheries Policy 2020 and resume consultation with stakeholders in all the vernacular languages.

9. Withdraw regressive decisions or proposals such as the Environment Impact Assessment notification, auctioning of coal blocks, sidestepping or fast-tracking of clearances.

10. Abandon Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

11. Issue a moratorium on diversion of natural ecosystems for infrastructure, mining, and commercial purposes.

AGRICULTURE

Sourced from Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch,
All India Kisan Sabha and Nation for Farmers

Sector/Issue, Tags: Agriculture, Farmers, Livelihoods

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)
2. PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana
3. PM Jan Dhan Cash transfer
4. Extension of Ujjwala Yojana
5. One Nation One Ration
6. Various state programmes
7. Aatma Nirbhar Bharat: The economic package which claimed to be of Rs 20 lakh crore or 10% of the GDP is a total hoax. The actual expenditure in this package to be borne by the Union Government is only around Rs 2 lakh crore, and the remaining announcements are mostly loan amounts estimated and announced in the previous budgets. In the entire package there is no mention about the genuine demand for income support to peasant households and guaranteed procurement with MSP @ C2 + 50%.

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19:

So awful is the situation for farming that even fears of Covid-19 and curfews have not deterred farmers from coming out onto the streets in protest. In Maharashtra, for instance, the prices farmers receive for cow milk have plummeted to Rs. 17 a litre (less than the cost of a litre of bottled water) from Rs. 30 a litre pre-lockdown. In the cities, consumers still pay Rs. 48 a litre (sometimes more). Farmers have been emptying hundreds of litres of milk on the streets in protest.

This protest unfolds against the canvas of the central government's clearing the import of 1 million tons of milk powder – which would so obviously lead to complete ruin for milk farmers across the country. And the government's decision to import milk and milk products from the USA, in exchange for the export of generic medicines to that country.

The impact of COVID has come upon Indian agriculture when it was already reeling from the effects of the neoliberal economic policies, resulting in falling farm incomes and stagnant wage rates. The unplanned lockdown which came at the time of the rabi harvests resulted in disruptions and losses to farmers as well as agricultural workers. For many, their crops lay rotting in the field because there was no labour available to conduct the harvest. For many others, who managed to complete the harvest – there was no transportation available to reach their agents or markets. Agriculture confronted both demand as well as supply side constraints. States which rely on migrant agricultural labourers for harvesting and mandi operations suffered shortage, as a result there was slowing down of the processes. The procurement of food grains in the APMC mandis saw a huge decline. Data shows that in the first phase of the lockdown there was a 94 per cent decline in procurement of food grain as compared to the same period last year. Perishable commodities like fruits and vegetables suffered the greatest losses due to lack of storage facilities. Poultry farmers and milk producers were at the receiving end of crashing prices. As a result farmers are faced with a cash constraint situation for the upcoming season for investing in either farming or other livelihood activities and lack of access to institutional sources of credit. However, the government response instead of providing immediate relief to farmers are seeing this as an opportune moment to infuse large scale reforms with a view towards greater privatisation.

In this period of pandemic when all forms of democratic deliberations are stalled, the central government has decided to bring in crucial ordinances which have deep ramifications for the country's agricultural toiling masses. Overriding the Constitutional prerogatives of the state governments, the central government has announced three upcoming ordinances related to agricultural marketing and commerce. These provide the central government sweeping powers to annul all state specific related legislations. Three crucial amendments: (i) The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance 2020 (ii) The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020 (iii) The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance 2020

These legislations have negative implications for farmers' incomes. The ordinances by deregularising agricultural markets, reduces the ambit of APMCs and provides private players a free run for purchasing farmers' produce without assuring MSPs.

Similarly, the proposed amendment to the ECA will open the floodgates for hoarding of essential commodities, and threaten food security of the country. Further, the ulterior motive of such an amendment is to attract FDI and private investment into agricultural supply chains, storage infrastructure, processing industries. Furthermore, the proposals to amend the Electricity Act and its clause to scrap cross subsidy will increase the burden of irrigation costs for small and marginal peasants as this will lead to a multi-fold rise in tariff rates.

Additionally, the central government plans to privatise coalfields and auction them to private players. Many of these identified coal fields across nine coal producing states of the country are located in forested areas which are ecologically sensitive. Concerns of displacement of tribal communities living here and their loss of farm lands have been raised by the Bhumi Adhikar Andolon. Pradhans of many of these gram panchayats have also written to the PM against the move. This has led to building a joint worker-peasant resistance against privatisation of coal fields.

These reforms fail to look at the existing inequalities of the Indian countryside or provide any economic

or social security. The COVID period has heightened food and nutrition insecurity - around the start of July, it was estimated that food grain buffer stock was around 91 million tons – in the very period that Indians have been hungrier than they have been in half a century. This exposes the intention of the Government - to shore up market prices rather than moderate them. Moreover, with NREGA halted in several states, farmers are unable to meet their livelihood needs. Women farmers have also taken a severe hit socially and economically – several reports from across the country report an increased lack of access to social security entitlements such as ration, pension, government schemes, etc., reports also indicate an increase in violence against women and in many states more and more women are being put out of work due to reverse migration. In the post COVID period agrarian distress and inequalities related to capitalist development have intensified.

The linked concerns of the migrant workers and the workers at large are also not unrelated to the agrarian situation. The plight of the returning migrants from the cities, and increasing unemployment has a direct impact on rural household incomes as most of the workforce is made of migrant workers moving from the villages to the cities, as a result of the increasing agrarian distress. A huge proportion of farms in India are dependent on such remittances to meet the costs of running the farm. At harvest time, those migrant members might get a share of the produce. With the lockdown not only did remittances collapse, millions of those migrants began returning home – putting further pressure on food expenses of already bankrupted households. The reliance of small and marginal peasants on non-farm employments has become greater.

LIST OF DEMANDS

1. Food and nutritional security and cash transfers

- i) Universalise and expand PDS with immediate effect for the next six months. Expand it to include nutritious food like, dals, pulses, oil, sugar and potatoes and onions for example.
 - ii) To address women's increased workload, strengthen community kitchens through seed/ financial grants to women's groups and ensure income for women collective to cook food at anganwadis for community feeding
 - iii) Unconditional transfer of Rs 10,000 in the name of women for all the poor rural households with emphasis on single women and female headed households for at least six months. The 500/- under Jan Dhan was inadequate and outreach was poor as Jandhan accounts not held by several women as pointed through a recent study of MAKAAAM
 - iv) Transfer NREGS wages for the lost 25-30 days at minimum wages to all NREG active workers.
 - v) Improve bank access through bank mitras or correspondents
- ### 2. Employment and Livelihood Support
- i) Addition 100 days to MGNREGA to compensate for the lost days
 - ii) Issuance of job cards of a priority basis to those who do not have them
 - iii) Identify common lands such as forests, village commons and ensure that all landless women are provided access to these lands for their needs and for NREGS
 - iv) Enumerate all the returning migrants, maintain a database, do skill mapping, skill upgradation and create employment programs with the coordination from panchayat level upwards to the district and state level.
 - v) Recognize the urban- rural connection of migration cycles. Ensuring portability of ration cards as well as enabling women to gain access to credit on low interest for short term economic needs such

as vending, hawking horticulture, poultry etc. is essential.

- vi) Remunerative Minimum Support Price for all crops at C2+50% with guaranteed procurement.
 - vii) Employment at minimum wage of Rs 600/day to all agricultural workers.
 - viii) Income support of at least Rs,7,500/- per month to all non-tax paying poor.
 - ix) At least Rs.300/day as unemployment wages under MGNREGA.
 - x) Increase of PM-KISAN to Rs.18,000/- per year and extending benefits to tenant farmers also and complete loan waiver for landless, tenant, small and middle peasants.
- ### 3. Other economic activities
- i) Provide seeds and fertilisers with immediate effect and free of cost on a priority basis to women farmers, especially those who are single.
 - ii) Access to interest free credit. Crop credit coverage is very low and that can be improved this season with complete interest subvention.
 - iii) Ensure access to guaranteed prices and markets at the village level for diverse crops
 - iv) Open up government spaces for storage facilities and issue guidelines for the same
 - v) Provide bridge funds for FPOs and women's collectives
 - vi) Women collective run Custom Hiring Centers (CHC) ensuring access of women friendly tools and equipment at Panchayat level to women farmers
 - vii) Expand Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to include landless women who are leasing land.
 - viii) Joint liability groups (JLGs), a model successful in Kerala and few other states could be strengthened by bringing JLGs to be brought on par with kisan credit cards in terms of interest, insurance and other terms

and conditions. This could be useful for numerous enterprise ideas floated by skilled returning-migrants

- ix) Expand PM KisaanSanman Nidhi to include women farmers/irrespective of land holding and increase the amount from 6000/year to 15000/- which would support in farming activities that cannot be covered under NREGA
 - x) Emphasise on nutrition and food security based integrated agro-ecological agriculture and introduce mechanisms that support the availability of seed and other inputs to align with that Ensure access to forests and commons, remove restrictions for forest dependent workers
 - xi) Ensure access to grazing lands to livestock workers, feed, infrastructure, health care for all livestock needs to be provided. Common lands, banjar and poramboke lands have to be surveyed and reclaimed from those who have encroached on those lands and have to be handed over to the gram panchayats for grazing animals and growing fodder for livestock and for common use.
 - xii) Ensure zero tolerance over rural girls drop out, enrollment in higher studies and also to ensure employability, skill training of rural girls is not affected, especially of the returnee migrants.
- ### 4. Policies and Legislation
- i) Convene special session of Parliament and State Assemblies to discuss COVID-19 related issues impacting the agrarian sector
 - ii) Consider and pass the two vital bills crafted by the All India Kisan Sangarsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC): The Farmers' Freedom from Indebtedness Bill, 2018 and The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative Minimum Support Prices for Agricultural Commodities Bill, 2018.
- ### 5. Other Demands
- i) Discuss and highlight the mega-water crisis engulfing the country - against the shadow of a terrible drought devastating farming in several states. Indeed, not just on rainfall problems but the basic class, caste and gender inequalities that pervade

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

water control and consumption in this country. To create equal control and access, particularly to the landless.

ii) Listen to testimonies of the victims of the agrarian crisis from different parts of the country. And how policies beyond their control have devastated farming in India, such as the surging privatisation of health and education, have crushed farmers and all the rural poor. Revitalize public participation in decision making on land use, land acquisition and agriculture related infrastructure. Make institutions publicly accountable.

1. Livestock economy can provide for organic matter and crop protection and ensure sustainable livelihood. After the advent of green revolution in late-1960s and economic liberalization in early-1990s, there occurred a shift away from multifunctional agriculture. There is a reduction in complementary and supplementary enterprises contributing to productivity and incomes. Farmers are gaining income from monocultures and fewer enterprises.

2. Policy support for integrated farming system and its components is an urgent need. Farmers need support with information, knowledge and inputs from agricultural research and extension system for the adoption of models of agriculture specific to agroclimatic zones. Public investment in agricultural research and extension system for enabling farmers with information and technology for local production of inputs viz., seeds, compost and biofertilizers and crop protection products and with group farming to reduce risk and access to resources for sustainable agriculture.

3. Farmers need to cope with three basic risks related to yield, price and vulnerability connected with the relations of resources-in-use in the system of production and social reproduction. The rising yield risks are: weather and input risk. Weather related risks include late onset of monsoon, low and untimely rainfall. Pest and disease risks are on the rise. Major input risks are emergent on account of availability of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, irrigation, farm machinery, credit, information and knowledge and labour. The cost of cultivation has been on the rise. The price risks are related to output marketing, which include price volatility, non-operational Minimum Support Price (MSP) system, and discrimination in price realization. Risk reduction and spreading is a necessity. There are growing risks related to rising costs of health and living, weakening non-farm employment opportunities and unreliable system of public procurement and food distribution.

4. Strategies for enhancing income can aim at reducing costs through the promotion of integrated farming systems approach, balanced nutrient management, critical moisture availability, watershed management in dry land areas, investment in and development of institutions for collective leveraging

of water resources and management of flood prone areas, provision of investment subsidy for local production of farm inputs-green manuring, bio-fertilizers, biogas and use of renewable energy sources, animal husbandry / livestock rearing by providing support for cattle sheds and maintaining and ensuring access to common grazing lands, and so on. The government should abandon the move of opening of domestic market to heavily subsidized imports of milk and poultry products to stabilize incomes in rural economy.

5. The petty producers are being forced to abandon their traditional livelihoods linked to the crop and cattle economy, artisanal production and food processing. Livestock economy faces a major challenge from the ascent of right-wing majoritarian politics promoting conservative social norms of cow protection. Most of these petty producers come from the strata of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), Muslims and other Backward Classes (OBCs). It is an assault of a new kind, requiring a new approach to the mobilization of peasantry and security of livelihoods in the countryside.

6. Attempts to restrict the space and scope for democracy through the promotion of basic minimum education criteria for fighting panchayat elections, a two-child norm and several other bizarre eligibility conditions for standing for elections. The regressive agenda is also under perusal of Aadhaar-based identity linkage for the delivery of essential services, transfer of available state support (subsidies for food and nutrition, agricultural input and banking services, and social security), all of which mostly hurt petty producers and workers.

7. As early as 2018, Nation for Farmers was demanding the holding of a special session of parliament to discuss the agrarian crisis and its related issues. It seems to us now that we need to aim much higher than that. Covid-19 has performed an incredible autopsy that lays bare in minute detail – among other things – the Great Indian Crisis of Inequality, unprecedented levels of it, and its impact on the poor and the marginalised.

BANKING

Sourced from Centre for Financial Accountability

Sector/Issue, Tags: Banking Finance

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Moratorium on loans for 6 months
2. Removal of bank charges for not maintaining minimum balance and ATM charges for 3 months
3. Credits schemes to MSMEs, NBFCs, HFCs, MFIs, DISCOMs

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

1. Moratorium on loans is only a temporary pause on the payments, borrowers will have to pay the loans with increased tenure of EMIs along with the interest. Banks are also not providing the moratorium facility to all applying for it. RBI does not have a mechanism to ensure that banks implement the moratorium facility with no discrepancies.
2. Despite the announcement by Finance Minister to not penalise the bank account holders for not maintaining minimum balance and take ATM charges for 3 months, banks have not followed it in spirit. Banks deducted charges for not maintaining the minimum balance, and the small amounts of money deposited in bank accounts of registered workers by various governments has faced the brunt of it, with workers reporting that banks deducted the money deposited by the government through bank charges.
3. Micro, small and medium businesses facing liquidity crunch are being asked to take loans instead of direct monetary relief. Banks write off the loans of big corporates but MEMEs and retail borrowers are facing the hardship, even during the worst pandemic they have not only provided with a moratorium with no cancellation of interests.
4. States governments need financial support but are forced to borrow at higher rates from market and other sources instead of borrowing from central bank at repo rate.
5. Instead of delving measures to fully support the people and businesses in such an unforeseen crisis, the measures announced by the central bank of India are merely a bandage on the wounds

LIST OF DEMANDS

1. Instead of leaving it to the banks, Reserve Bank of India should form a dedicated committee to ensure that all the COVID relief measures are implemented by banks completely.
2. To ease the suffering of the people and MSMEs, RBI should announce the interest waiver on the loans during the pandemic period and Central government should compensate for it.
3. States are raising funds at high interest rates from markets, RBI should initiate direct lending to states at repo rate.
4. RBI should immediately ask banks to stop all the service charges for saving account holders.
5. **Write offs:** Given a negligible recovery of loans that have been written off by banks, Govt should make stringent laws to recover the bad loans. Writing off of large credits should be supervised by the parliament; strict laws should be made with regard to writing off of large loans.
6. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code should be reviewed immediately. Corporations should not get benefit from the IBC process by buying companies at throwaway prices, leaving behind banks with huge losses.
7. **Accountability of the Management:** The top management of the banks should be held accountable for their actions such as the rise in NPAs by issuing credits to unworthy companies, the increasing number of frauds, appointments of chairpersons and top executives of banks immediately after their retirement in private companies which have benefited from the banks etc.
8. **Recruitment:** Banks have stopped appointing representative of the employees in their boards due to their continuous objections to anti-people policies. Employees' representatives should be appointed in all banks. The outsourcing of banking activities through contracts to third party have led to rise in cases of frauds with no liability attached to third party contractors. Banks are also pushing for digitalisation, systemically excluding a large number of people who do not have knowledge of technology or resources to access digital banking services. Banks should increase

their employee base and not rely on third parties and digitalisation alone.

9. **Environment and Social Safeguards:** Public Sector Banks (PSBs) needs to go beyond financial accountability. There is no contestation that depositors are primary financiers and stakeholders of the PSBs. That includes all account holders, including those who might be losing their land, displaced, run into health risks because of the projects funded by the banks. The largescale projects have also repeatedly violated environmental laws, causing in many places irreversible damage to ecosystems. Hence as public institutions with investments in developmental projects, banks should have environment and social safeguard.

10. **Development Banks:** Development Banks should be brought back for large scale lending to long term projects. Scheduled commercial banks should only be allowed to serve the people by focussing on retail lending.

11. **Bank Merger and Privatisation:** The mergers of banks done in recent years has not yielded any positive results. Though it has increased the limit of amount that banks can lend to single borrowers, increasing the risk of rise in bad loans of corporations. The track record of private banks in India has been very poor, be it before nationalisation of banks in 1969 or post nationalisation period with latest example of failure of Yes Bank when State Bank of India and Life Insurance Cooperation of India, both public sector institutions were asked to invest large amount of money to save the private bank. In order to maximise the profits, private banks often violate rules and RBI guidelines posing series threats to depositors' savings. No public sector bank should be privatised.

12. As a regulator of all banks, RBI must have enough workforce to regulate all the banks. At present, RBI issues guidelines and leave it to the banks to follow them. As a regulator, RBI must be held responsible for failing to stop any kind of wrongdoing/fraud/ violation by banks supervised by it.

13. Grievances mechanisms of all banks as well as RBI should be improved and no depositors should be harassed unnecessarily.

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

1. To demand transparency in public finance institutions – details of their investments, list of wilful defaulters, accounts of written off NPAs should be made public.
2. Banks should not have discretionary power to write off loans higher than a certain specified amount, parliament should supervise the process of writing off of large credits.
3. Given that banks are being run with the money deposited by people, no bank should charge the depositors for doing basic banking transactions.
4. Implement recommendations of Standing Committee on Finance on Non-Performing Assets.

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Sourced from People's Union for Civil Liberties

Sector/Issue, Tags: Civil Liberties, Democratic Rights, Human Rights, Law, Constitution

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

The last five months (due to the lock down imposed in the context of controlling the spread of COVID 19) has accelerated manifold the tectonic shifts that were taking place in the last five years to Indian democracy. Our constitutional values of secularism, liberty, fraternity, free speech and equality before the law have been consistently and severely undermined. Important democratic institutions of the State i.e. the Parliament, the Judiciary and others have not prevented, and at times enabled the process of changing the character of the Indian State, as enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

1. **Ram Janmabhoomi:** On the 5th August the PM led the state sponsored Ram Janmabhoomipujan in Ayodhya. It was not an accident that the date for the Janmabhoomipujan was the 5th of August, also the one year anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, but a clear intent to establish that secularism as a value, where all religions stand equally will not be the norm now in India, but now one single religion will dominate with the political exclusion of other faiths.

2. **J & K, One year:** The last one year for the Kashmir valley has consisted of the Central Government's use of force along with the indiscriminate use of section 144. For more than six months- communications has been forcibly restricted due to undemocratic and unconstitutional orders of the Central Government, there has been widespread detention of political leaders, intellectuals and activists, there has been state supervision over media, fundamental laws including domicile and land acquisition laws have been amended in the midst of a raging pandemic. The rise in local militancy is demonstrative of the fact that the promise of the abrogation of 370 resulting in peace and development is a perversion of truth.

3. **Attack on Equal Citizenship:** The nationwide democratic, creative and peaceful protests for equal citizenship, against the Citizenship Laws and Rules (CAA, NPR, NRC) came under violent attack in Delhi in February and folded up unceremoniously in the rest of the country, during the lockdown.

(a) **Arrest of Innocent Protestors and Dissenters:** The Delhi police under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is investigating the Delhi riots that led to the killing of 53 persons, seriously injuring hundreds of people, destructing livelihoods and personal

properties has led a biased investigation in the midst of a pandemic. The investigation is attempting to criminalize the constitutional right to protest and dissent, by conflating it with conspiracy to riot. Laws such as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967 are being used to suppress dissent.

(b) In Uttar Pradesh, the protests were violently dealt with by the UP Police through the months of December, January and February. Apart from loss of lives in several districts of UP, arrests of a large number of young protestors, including lawyers, retired policemen, activists, poets were pursued. Undignified methods like naming them publicly in order to make them feel socially vulnerable.

4. The UAPA, since its expansion and amendments as a terror law has been used indiscriminately to silence and incarcerate dissenters, those who hold a different view. With draconian provisions of 30 days judicial custody, 180 days to file a chargesheet and no bail, is being used by the present Government maliciously to silence people through incarceration. The Bhima Koregaon Case of Pune since 2018, now under the NIA, continues to be the bogey to indiscriminately crackdown dissenters under the UAPA, therefore the arrests and interrogation of activists intellectuals, cultural artists continues stridently. Similarly we have seen that in the Delhi riots, more than 17 people have been arrested under the UAPA and hundreds interrogated.

5. The muzzling of dissent and the criminalising the Media: According to a report by the Rights & Risks Analysis Group titled *India: Media's Crackdown During COVID-19 Lockdown*, between 25th March and 31st of May, "more than 55 journalists faced arrest, registration of FIRs, summons or show causes notices, physical assaults, alleged destruction of properties and threats for reportage on COVID-19 or exercising freedom of opinion and expression during the national lockdown from 25 March to 31 May 2020." The highest number of attacks on journalists was reported from Uttar Pradesh (11 journalists), followed by Jammu & Kashmir (6 journalists), Himachal Pradesh (5), four each in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, two each in Punjab, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh & Kerala and one each in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Nagaland and

Telangana. the sections that reporters were charge with included violation of the Epidemic Act, NDMA and the IPC sections of conspiracy, sedition and the UAPA.

6. The Criminalising of ordinary people :

The implementation of the National Disaster Management Act, The Epidemic Act, restraining sections of the CrPC, MV Act and the indiscriminate use of section 144 has affected the lives of ordinary working class persons of the country. The numbers are huge of criminal cases imposed under these laws and fines charged. In just the State of Rajasthan during a few months of lockdown more than 4 lakh 60 thousand people were booked under the epidemic act for violating the norms and with more than 7 crore rs collected as fines. More than 3,584 FIRs were lodged and 7649 people were arrested. More than 14 crore rupees collected as fines under the Motor Vehicle act for violating the Section 144. Under the restraining sections of the CrPC, more than 25,000 people were arrested for breaching peace and restrained. Similarly, 219 people were booked under the IT Act for hate content and 219 cases were lodged and around 300 people arrested for violation of social media norms.

7. Prisons Decongestion: The most important and suo moto directives of the SC during the lock down related to decongestion of prisons. High powered committee were required to be set up in every state, which had to work towards ensuring the release and granting of parole between 4 to 6 weeks to convicted prisoners. By and large, this directive remained unimplemented even cases of high co-morbidities related to COVID 19. and despite the spread of COVID inside the jails, the prisoners were not given this relief and human dignity. The case of 81 year old Varavara Rao, stands out who is now undergoing serious neurological problems apart from testing positive. It was a national campaign that resulted in his admission to a private hospital. Similarly the case of 100 percent disabled Saibaba, in Nagpur Jail who was not granted any relief even when his mother was on death bed. Complete opaqueness exists as far as the prison department's release of data relating to the spread of the disease in the individual prisons.

8. Encounters and the police and courts: With norms of public debate and transparency being beyond the

pale of police stations and police action, custodial torture, deaths and encounters are not even being reported and discussed.

9. The Silence of the Courts and the NHRC and other Human Rights Institutions: The Courts were inaccessible due to the lockdown due to its functioning shifting completely online. This resulted in ordinary people being pushed to the margins for any kind of access and relief via courts. Institutions like the NHRC, SC Commission, ST Commission did not take suo-moto cognizance of the extent of suffering faced by communities and drive an agenda for their protection.

List of Demands

1. Unconditional restoration of the value of secularism in all institutions and sections of the state apparatus.
2. Restore freedom and democracy in action in all parts of Jammu and Kashmir, including ensuring the release of all political detainees, restoration of Gand providing democratic platforms for dialogue.
3. The disturbing violence that took place in Delhi and other parts of the country, that emanated from the politically manufactured polarization of peaceful, democratic and constitutional protests against the CAA must be thoroughly and justly investigated in a fair and politically unbiased manner. The investigation must not be politically used to suppress dissent, in the manner it currently is.
4. Withdrawal of the CAA amendments of 2019 and 2003.
5. UAPA be repealed with immediate effect.
6. Prisoners senior in age and with co-morbidities should be released with the required conditionalities.
7. Implementation of the DK Basu Guidelines and filing of police cases against errant policemen.
8. Restart the functioning of physical courts at all levels and functioning of the Human Rights Institutions following the ANNI standards.

DALIT AND ADIVASI RIGHTS

Sourced from National Campaign on Human Dalit Rights, All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch, National Dalit Movement for Justice, SASY, RIGHTS

Sector/Issue, Tags: Dalit Rights, Adivasi Rights, Access to Entitlements, Discrimination

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Insurance cover for health workers
2. Double food entitlements through PDS
3. Loan repayment relaxations for farmers
4. Direct benefit transfers for Jan Dhan account holders (especially women)
5. DBT for workers in the unorganized sector
6. DBT for senior citizens, widows and PwDs
7. Increase in MNREGA wages and additional charges
8. Collateral-free loan facility through SHGs
9. Construction workers' benefit
10. Disability pension
11. DBT through PM Kisan scheme
12. Regular visits by health workers to marginalized settlements
13. Three meals to be provided to shelters for homeless persons and migrant workers
14. Regular sanitization of residential settlements
15. Benefit of 24% EPF in organized sector
16. Insurance cover under PM-JAY
17. Free LPG cylinders under Udyami Yojana

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

1. The community has suffered from extensive loss of jobs, which has resulted in limited wages and salaries accessible.
2. Workers are suffering from jeopardized safety at the workplace.
3. A majority of informal sector workers are casual, self-employed, and migrant population, and belong to the Dalit, Adivasi, Pasmanda and Bahujan communities. They share congested spaces and live in slums and ghettos. Severely restricted means of sanitation and hygiene makes home quarantine an almost impractical preventive measure. Poor living conditions for people living in quarantine centres and shelter homes with inadequate food and safe drinking water has made them very vulnerable to the spread of COVID 19.
4. There is a heightened risk of health hazards for people involved in unhygienic occupations like sanitation workers, low to medium level public health workers.
5. The impossibility of stocking food for people with meagre income and sanitation kits not accessible to people in low-income households, has affected their health and nutrition profile.
6. Caste atrocities on SCs, especially Dalit women have risen significantly during Covid-19 with no immediate redressal system.
7. People, especially from Dalit, Pasmanda and Bahujan communities, who have been previously involved in any kind of protests against the state (eg. Anti-CAA protests) are being targeted under the garb of violating existing law and order related to the lockdown. There continues to be widespread political targeted state action against 'accused' offenders of lockdown-related laws.
8. There is a higher risk of mental health concerns and suicides among Dalits, Bahujans, Adivasis, especially among further marginalized groups within these communities.
9. Lack of internet access deprives students from continuing their education. A lack of hostel facilities deprives them from a conducive environment to

study. Absence of targeted financial aid for higher education students will force them to drop out in search of employment.

10. Despite the SC recommendations many states have not implemented delivering midday meals to children's home during the lockdown. This will adversely affect health and well-being of thousands of children from the marginalised communities.

11. Decrease in salaries; loss of jobs at mass-level; on-the-field jobs like home delivery services, transport services; disproportionate burden on self-employed groups like domestic workers, SMEs, and absence of distinct safety and insurance plans leads to making workers vulnerable.

12. Lack of awareness around Covid-19 in regional and sign languages, inaccessible information on Covid-19 for people with visual and hearing impairments also aids exclusion.

List of Demands

1. Ensure that all preventive measures and actions taken to counter the effects of COVID are equitable, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and dignified.
2. Build social security measures (pensions), unemployment allowances for a defined period of time post the pandemic for marginalized/informal sector/ self-employed/ casual workers in order to help them re-stabilize their lives.
3. Increase the number of testing centres and their capacity to ensure that samples are taken from all such settlements which typically accommodate marginalized communities so that the scale of infections are detected by the State early enough to make arrangements for quarantine and care/ treatment.
4. Provide accessible and targeted health services for people with disabilities, co-morbidities and senior citizens.
5. Make awareness on Covid-19 more accessible for linguistic diversities (including sign language users) and people with visual impairments.
6. State-funded and institutionally supported mental health support services for marginalized groups must be provided.
7. Targeted financial support like fee waivers, reimbursement of internet expenses, etc., to Dalits, Adivasis, Bahujans, Pasmandas, transgender and disabled students should be provided to access online education. The State must build accessible modes of online education for students with disabilities.
8. The State must provide adequate living conditions in shelter homes and quarantine centres.
9. The State must put an end to politically-motivated and targeted attacks on people from marginalized groups.

ACTION ORIENTED ENGAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to accountability bodies

1. Release political prisoners who have been involved in various protests before the lockdown.
2. Build a mechanism to ensure that private companies do not exploit low and medium level employees, a large proportion of whom are from the dalit and Adivasi community.
3. Direct private companies to provide Covid-19 specific insurance covers to all their employees. This should include extending extra safety measures for workers involved in delivery services that involve direct public dealing.
4. Regular sanitization and assessment of living conditions of slums and other settlements for marginalized groups.
5. Establish internet hotspots in the rural areas especially among the habitations of the vulnerable communities to make sure they have uninterrupted access to education conducted online.

Calls for solidarity and appeals

Appeal to activists, CSOs and networks across various social movements to initiate and actively engage in cross-movement dialogues and collectively advocate for intersectional groups who are often left behind if we don't come out of our silos based on singular identities.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Sourced from Rethink Aadhaar, Internet Freedom Foundation and Article 21

Sector/Issue, Tags: Digital Technology, Digital and Civil Rights, Exclusion, Surveillance, Fundamental Rights, Aadhar

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. **Access:** GramNet (PIB Release dated August 26)
2. **Contact tracing :** Launch of AarogyaSetu (Per Prime Ministers Conference with Chief Ministers PIB Release dated Jun. 17): Lockdown guide The lockdown guidelines initially made AarogyaSetu mandatory, later reduced to a direction to ensure that this is rolled out on a “best effort basis”
3. **Innovation :** Digital India AatmaNirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge (PIB Release dated July 12)
4. **Lending :** PM SVANidhi Portal launch (PIB Release dated June 29)
5. **Platform Accountability and Data Protection** (PIB Release dated July 22)
6. **Remote learning :** ATL App Development Module (PIB Release dated July 11)
7. **Remote learning :** One Nation One Digital Program (PIB Release dated June 27)
8. In light of the pandemic, many state governments and government offices announced a halt in biometric authentication.
9. Non-personal data committee released its report, which encourages wider sharing of non-personal data to derive economic value and for other purposes like national security, to deal with pandemic, prevention of crimes etc. (all of which raise genuine concerns of greater surveillance).

10. The Joint Parliament Committee studying the Personal Data Protection Bill held its first meeting towards the end of July, for the first time since the imposition of the first lockdown. As per reports, in the meeting, several government agencies, including the Home Secretary, NIA, NCRB as well as the Census Commissioner justified those provisions of the Bill which give wide powers to the government to exempt government agencies from provisions of the Bill. As per reports, the agencies used the pandemic to justify such examples and even collection of data for NPR and NRC was cited as a justification.

11. Despite a Supreme Court order mandating periodic review of imposition of slower internet speeds in Kashmir, there has been a mechanical extension of 2G services without due application of mind to problems being faced by people to access information and services in the midst of a pandemic.

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

1. **Tech-exacerbated Social exclusion:** The pandemic exacerbated the social exclusion caused by badly designed digital and technological interventions. During this period, we have noted an increase in the mandatory use of Aadhaar, in contravention of the Supreme Court's 2018 Puttuswamy judgement on Aadhaar:

(a) **PDS:** Aadhaar continues to remain a source of exclusion. Tragically, there has been a rise in the reported starvation deaths (RTF Odisha) (ii) During the migrant crisis there were reports that Aadhaar was being demanded for train tickets. (iii) In Delhi, for issuance of Temporary Ration Cards to those not already possessing one, a web based registration required Aadhaar details to be uploaded.. (iv) The Government of Kerala has made Aadhaar mandatory for state job applicants; and to create an account in the Integrated Local Governance Management (ILGMS) system (v) Using the migrant crisis as impetus, the government announced the One Nation One Ration Card will be rolled out in 2021. The stated intention is to ensure portability of ration cards using "technological solutions. However this is likely to cause massive disruptions in a system that has already been ravaged by Aadhaar linkage and is also highly unlikely that this will solve the issue of portability of rations.

(b) **Health:** Increased use of technology for health-related surveillance, and moves towards building a health-related database: (i) AarogyaSetu was the Indian government's contact tracing app, developed in March 2020. However this was criticized for collecting excess data of users, contrary to global norms on contact tracing apps, including the solution being jointly offered by Google and Apple. (ii) Aadhaar has been required for medical interventions, including for COVID tests. (iii) The pandemic has also seen the Ministry of Health push for the digitisation of health records, as part of developing a "Health Stack,". Several commercial actors are interested in this, many of whom have been linked to iSpirt.

(c) **Proposed Databases:** (i) National Migrant Information System provides for states to collect data on movement of migrant workers. Currently this is justified on grounds of enabling contact tracing for purpose of Covid, but later it can extend

to surveillance and such data can also be later commercialized. (ii) NPR exercise – although halted for the time being, is likely to resume next year.

(d) **Poorly Designed (AePS) Aadhaar-Enabled Payments System:** The most common reason for delays in payment was the lack of bank details and Aadhaar numbers for India's estimated 5.3 crore construction workers, suggesting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's much-touted "Digital India" campaign to enable cashless payments has let down millions of the country's poorest citizens at a time when they needed it the most.

(e) **Aadhaar in Education:** The pandemic and social distancing has increased the use of technology for education, and exacerbated the inequities caused by unequal access to technology: (i) Aadhaar is mandatory for the Gol's Digilocker initiative, and the Class 12 CBSE results could not be accessed without Aadhaar. (ii) Aadhaar for school admissions continues unabated across several states. (iii) College admissions: the Government of Telanagana's Degree Online Services (DOST) mandates Aadhaar seeding for prospective students to enrol. The only permissible alternative is for the prospective students to undergo facial recognition.

2. **AarogyaSetu** is being made a pre-condition for access to livelihood and employment: (i) AarogyaSetu made mandatory for entry to Delhi District Court: (link) (ii) AarogyaSetu's use for air travel: (link) (iii) RWAs and AarogyaSetu: An anti-privacy combination (link)

3. **Digital Censorship** through blanket App Bans: (i) Blanket App Ban Guidelines: (link) (ii) 59 Apps banned on June 29 2020: (link)

4. **Growth in tracking and surveillance technologies in absence of a data protection law, and parliamentary discourse:** (i) Facial Recognition Technology deployment: (link) (ii) Drones regulation: (link) (iii) Delhi Police's use of drones for surveillance: (link) (iv) Surveillance through Call Data Records: (link)

5. **Internet shutdowns:** (i) Internet shutdowns in Jammu and Kashmir: (link 1) and (link 2) (ii) Internet shutdowns in the North-East of India: (link)

6. **Lack of Internet Access:** (i) Poor access to Internet in A&N Islands: (link) (ii) Lack of 4G access in remote parts of Odisha: (link)

7. **Use of malware to target activists and human rights defenders:** (i) Large scale phishing and malware attacks and vulnerabilities in India: (link) (ii) NSO Group comes up with new tools pitched towards governments: (link)

8. **Website blocking:** (i) Environmental awareness and activism blocked in an act of opaque censorship: (link) (ii) Privacy-friendly search engine DuckDuckGo blocked: (link) (iii) Arbitrary blocking of WeTransfer: (link) (iv) Whistleblower provides blocking orders for over 4000 websites: (link)

LIST OF DEMANDS

1. **Tech-exacerbated Social exclusion:** (i) Social audits to examine ease of use, non-exclusion (ii) Aadhaar to be delinked from welfare benefits.

2. **AarogyaSetu:** (i) Make a law as per the right to privacy judgement to regulate AarogyaSetu which should be completely voluntary (link 1) and (link 2) (ii) Engage with the parliamentary machinery through correspondence with the Parliamentary Committee on IT with the aim of keeping them updated about current and impending security and privacy issues: (link)

3. **Digital Censorship:** (i) Undertake comprehensive reforms starting with issuance of a SOP as per Supreme Court judgements prior to registration of any cases on social media content. (link) (ii) Avoid drastic and patchy measures. Approach the issue with a nuanced approach with the Personal Data Protection Bill, NCSS and Competition Act working in tandem. (link)

4. **Surveillance:** (i) Ensure that the concerns of civil society and the public are duly incorporated en-route to a comprehensive Data Protection Bill, which currently lies with a JPC. (link) (ii) Build in privacy safeguards into proposed laws aimed at regulating drones. (link) (iii) Rethink usage of intrusive technologies like Facial Recognition and develop foresight and safeguards before deployment: (link 1) (link 2)

5. **Internet shutdowns :** (i) Undertake legal reforms as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Anuradha Bhasin case. (link 1) and (link 2) (ii) Follow principles of proportionality, absolute necessity and transparency while administering internet shutdowns: (link)

6. **Lack of Internet Access :** (i) Expand tele-connectivity and 4G internet access on priority in all parts of India (link) (ii) IFF's recommendations to TRAI to uphold Net Neutrality, and improve Internet Access: (link)

7. **Use of malware to target activists and human rights defenders:** (i) Constitute a high level inquiry and make an express statement that this is an illegal act. (ii) Expedite the process on the much needed Data Protection Bill (iii) Ensure there is parliamentary

dialogue and oversight on such issues so that such threats can be checked in real-time. (link 1), (link 2) and (link 3)

8. **Website blocking:** Reform the website blocking process specifically focussing on removing the opacity existing in regulation. (link)

(Additional context on each of these issues with suggested reforms are present in a tabular manner linked to regular correspondence to the Standing Committee on IT (link).)

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

1. **Political Parties:** (i) Code of conduct: Formulate a pro-active code of conduct for their online social media volunteers, integrate it within their training sessions with them and also have penalties for online abuse towards expulsion. (ii) Campaigning : Commit to fair conduct in the use of digital means in election canvassing and online campaigning. (link) (iii) Manifesto: Should adopt a digital rights section in their manifesto. (link)

2. **Supreme Court:** (i) Docket review: Review the pending cases impacting the constitutional status of Aadhaar given recent notifications and examine ways to expedite their hearings. A similar exercise may be attempted by other Constitutional courts for pending litigations on issues of mass surveillance where there are no pending orders for restraint. This is given the absence of a data protection law or any meaningful surveillance reform.

3. **Parliament:** (i) Issue reports and findings: The Standing Committee on IT has been pro-actively engaging with a broad range of digital rights concerns and it would be beneficial for it to issue findings and recommendations on them to parliament for the benefit of all parliamentarians. Measures to expedite them must be explored. (ii) **Data Protection Committee:** The Data Protection Committee may announce a re-formulated schedule with milestones for completion on the Data Protection Bill. It should also broaden the list of academics, experts and civil society persons who are invited for depositions. A tentative list for which may be published in advance for transparency and feedback.

4. **Movements and Campaigns** (i) Identify regions with lack of access: Given the focus of the Union Government to increase internet access an urgent mapping or reporting must be done by all civil society organisations especially from grass roots and in geographic regions beyond metropolitan centers which highlight lack of high speed internet access due to absence of telecom infrastructure. Follow up correspondence must be sent to the Department of Telecom and in the instance of lack of response may be escalated to the Prime Ministers Office. (ii) **Engage with technology and digital rights:** Technology is becoming flatter and impacting all movements and social sector work. There is an urgent need to

engage with it deeply and form clear positions that emerge from rights based frameworks. This requires capacity and culture growth to accommodate and study these shifts. (iii) **Need for the creation of space and platforms for marginalised groups to articulate privacy harms through coalition building :** The concerns of marginalised caste and adivasi groups, women and sexual minorities, informal-gig workers need to be integrated within technology policy. There should be efforts for the active creation of space and leadership development for members of these communities for them to collectively become an integral part of the digital rights ecosystem which is predominantly legalistic, privileged, male and upper caste in India.

5. **Administrative /Oversight Bodies:** (i) Continued halt of biometric authentication (ii) Audit of AePS and use of NREGA payment methods instead. (iii) Push to halt health linkage to Aadhaar, and commercialisation of health data. (iv) Action related to starvation deaths caused by tech-caused or tech-exacerbated exclusion.

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Sourced from National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled

Sector/Issue, Tags: Disability

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Tamil Nadu announced after a struggle an ex-gratia of Rs. 1000/- for disabled who hold valid disability certificates.
2. Kerala provided door step delivery of cooked food for the elderly and disabled (apart from universal coverage of various other things). Disabled students were given Rs. 5000 ex-gratia.
3. Centre announced on March 26 an ex-gratia of Rs. 1,000/- But this benefits only 3.81% of the disabled population (those covered under the NSAP – one has to have 80% disability and BPL) or 7.6% of the working age persons with disabilities. Many states advanced two months pension.
4. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities on March 27, 2020 issued “Comprehensive Disability Inclusive Guidelines” – but in the framing of these guidelines disability rights organisations or their representatives were not involved.

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

1. Nearly 65% disabled have been out of employment, of which only 1% are from the organised sector. Most of those “employed” are engaged in the unorganised sector or doing odd jobs like vending, begging. The lockdown saw an overwhelming majority of those engaged in the informal sector losing their jobs.
2. The response of the government has been woefully inadequate. Except for the Rs. 1000/- that too limited to just 3.81% of the identified disabled population, the disabled were left to fend for themselves.
3. Even the guidelines brought out by the Central government were not implemented in most of the states.
4. Kerala was the only state which had independently brought out specific guidelines and made them available in accessible formats. The guidelines enabled universal access to benefits.
5. Access to health care has been a major issue. Most disabled have underlying health conditions. The lockdown has disrupted routine check-ups and follow ups. For instance, people with blood disorders requiring regular blood transfusions faced innumerable problems. Medicines for treatment of certain conditions continue to be in short supply.
6. CSR funds that were available for NGOs engaged in service delivery have been hit consequent to the launch of the PMCARES.
7. The government floated a proposal to dilute penal provisions contained in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Under the rubric of “decriminalisation” of “minor offences” it sought to compound certain offences etc. But following a campaign the government was forced to withdraw the proposal within a week of seeking responses.

List of Demands

1. Implement Sec. 24 of the RPD Act, which mandates “support (by the government) during natural or man-made disasters and in areas of conflict”; provision of unemployment allowance; caregiver allowance etc.
2. Accept recommendations by the UN Committee on the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities to amend the Indian Constitution to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability; Amend Sec. 3.3 the RPD Act that legitimises discrimination.
3. Frame a new disability policy in line with the UNCRPD and the RPD Act.
4. Amend the National Trust and RCI Acts; harmonise other legislations in tune with the UNCRPD.
5. Strictly implement provisions of the RPD Act, 2016.
6. States that have not frame rules should frame them immediately (Act mandates 6 months from the date of Act coming into force).
7. Appoint Disability Commissioners both at the Centre and the States. Most states do not have commissioners appointed under the Act.
8. Constitute Special Courts at the district level in all states, mandated under the RPD Act.
9. Nominate disabled persons to panchayati raj institutions.
10. Involve disabled persons organisations in all matters concerning them.
11. Speed up certification and UDID issuance process.
12. Enhance pension to Rs. 3000/for those from 40% to 79% disability; for those with 80% and above Rs, 5000/-.
13. Disability budgeting across ministries. Minimum 4%.
14. Provide Rs.5000/- per month to all disabled unemployed during the Covid pandemic crisis.
15. All websites to be made accessible.
16. All modes of transport, infrastructure and communication to be made accessible to all disabled.
17. Introduce captions for all TV programmes.
18. Amend Sec. 3(3) of the RPD Act to delete “unless it is shown that the impugned act or omission is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. (The full section reads: “No person with disability will be discriminated on the ground of disability, unless it is shown that the impugned act or omission is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”).
19. Amend Article 15(1) and 16(2) of the Constitution to include “disability” as a ground on which discrimination is prohibited.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND MOBILE CRECHES

Sourced from Nine is Mine Campaign

Sector/Issue, Tags: Child Rights, Education

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

Almost all six states have either recommended or mandated that schools should not force parents to make payment for the current academic year or increase fees for the next academic year (2020-21). While certain states like Maharashtra and West Bengal had asked schools to be sympathetic or considerate towards parents while collecting fees for the current and next academic year, other states like Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka issued mandatory orders regulating fee collection and hikes. The nature of enforcement varies – while the Delhi notification threatened action under the relevant provisions of the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Disaster Management Act, 2005 (including imprisonment up to 2 years), the Telangana notification stated that non-compliance would result in cancellation of school recognition, and invoking action against the management under the Telangana Education Act, 1982 and revocation of no-objection certificate granted for affiliation to CBSE, ICSE or IGSCSE.

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

1. The pause in the implementation of Mid Day Meals has severely undermined the nutritional profile of children of the working class.
2. The widespread loss of jobs of parents, has a direct bearing on the investments into children's health and education. Enhanced mental anguish suffered by parents manifests on their children too.
3. Girls have suffered more exclusion from access to education, due to their unequal access to phone and internet as compared to boys.
4. There have been reports of an increase in teenage marriages and pregnancies in villages.
5. Children are subject to social discrimination, as and when any elder member of the family is diagnosed with COVID.

List of Demands

6% of the total budget should be allocated to Education

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

1. Teachers operate out of varied local schools but also government offices including local panchayat offices, post offices and ration shops.
2. That these centres must be provided with online devices and sanitizing materials so that can continue our education in a safe environment.
3. That these new covid centres of learning could also become our local mental health and safety centres.
4. That our Parents and elder siblings could take worksheets home for the younger ones each week to study at home.
5. That rations for mid-day meals be provided to our mothers for all days including Sundays and holidays.
6. That the government sets up formal and regular empowered platforms to consult us and our parents on an ongoing basis.

If we can hold our Children's parliaments and continue to consult with the last child, if we young citizens of India can model inclusion without the big money available to our leaders then why can't our national and state leaders.

Sourced from Prof. Jayati Ghosh

Sector/Issue, Tags: Macro Economy

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana announced late March
2. AtmaNirbhar Bharat announced late April

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic – and even more, the draconian and ill-conceived government response – have unleashed dramatic economic collapse and humanitarian catastrophe in India. The lockdown dealt a massive blow to both demand and supply. The generalised cessation of most economic activity particularly affected informal workers (95% of workforce) who do not have legal or social protection that could provide some income during the period of lockdown. GDP growth had already fallen to 3.1 per cent in January-March 2020, and thereafter the economy has been contracting sharply. Most non-agricultural workers had no livelihood for at least two months, with migrant workers (around 100-150 million) the worst affected. Currently economic activity is being constrained both by the spread of the disease and the continuing effects of demand collapse.

The failure to control the pandemic along with extreme economic distress can be explained by ten features of the Indian government's policy response:

1. The unthinking adoption of containment strategies not suited to the Indian context;
2. Excessive centralisation and top-down control, without coordination between central and state governments;
3. Inadequate investment in and preparation of health systems, facilities and personnel;
4. Misplaced timing and delayed responses in several critical areas;
5. Parsimony of the relief measures, despite inflated declarations about the packages, and refusal to use excess public foodgrain stocks to provide free food to those in need;
6. Inadequate government spending to increase demand to counter the collapse in economic activity;
7. Misplaced focus on measures to increase liquidity and credit;
8. Further privatisation of state assets and relaxation of regulations relating to land, labour and environment;

9. Class, caste and gender biases of the policy responses; and

10. Suppression of democratic rights and crackdown on dissent during the lockdown.

Macroeconomically speaking, the worst failure has been the inadequate public spending, which is worsening the decline in demand and generating a downward spiral, in addition to depriving people of livelihoods, access to food and essential public services. This is also associated with declining resources to state governments, which are dealing with the bulk of the problems of health and livelihood distress.

This will become a huge problem very soon, because state governments that have tried to deal with the pandemic by frontloading expenditure will soon run out of funds and be bankrupt. Therefore immediate action needs to be taken.

List of Demands

1. Immediately release more food grain stocks to state governments for free distribution for 3 months, to those in need (80% of population to be defined by the states, irrespective of ration card status).
2. Provide Rs 7500 per month for 3 months as compensation for lost incomes during lockdown to 80% of population, defined as above by states.
3. Expand MNREGA to 200 days per household and provide initial assistance to states willing to set up urban employment guarantee schemes.
4. Ensure that farmers are able to sell all their crops at procurement prices or higher.
5. Double public spending on health and transfer to state governments on the basis of the Finance Commission formula.
6. Release all information on money collected under PM-CARES and distribute to state governments for relief purposes.
7. Allow state governments to borrow directly from RBI at repo rate, without conditions, for the rest of the fiscal year.
8. Do not cut other government spending in effort to reduce fiscal deficit – this will only worsen the crisis and lead to large fiscal deficit because of falling tax revenues as GDP falls.
9. Finance the additional spending by borrowing from RBI (deficit financing or monetised deficit).
10. Consider and provide debt restructuring/relief for MSMEs.

EDUCATION

Sourced from Right to Education Forum

Sector/Issue, Tags: Education, National Education Policy, Access to Information

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. National Education Policy 2020 (approved by Cabinet in 2020)
2. Guidelines for Digital Education (Pragyata)
3. Mid-day Meal
4. Strengthening Teaching Learning and Results for States (STARS) initiative

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

All 1.5 million schools remain closed in India for nearly 5 months to curb the spread of the covid-19 virus. In such a scenario, the MHRD is pushing for online education to keep children learning during this period, without taking into cognisance the digital divide existing in the country. Several studies indicate that people from marginalised communities do not have access to laptops and/or internet connection and are hence excluded. The pandemic has further enhanced the risks of dropouts, early marriages and child labours. This emphasis on digital learning has given a leeway to the private players to come up with their knowledge products and hence there is a risk of increased commercialisation of education.

In such a context, the STARS initiative doesn't address the systemic inequities in India's education system. There are concerns that this project would route public funds to private pockets without improving the public education system.

The National Education Policy 2020 was approved by the Cabinet without a debate in the parliament on it. The NEP fails to mention the extension of the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 for all children from 3-18 years. The policy, in the name from philanthropic schools and PPP, is laying the roadmap for entry of private players in education, which will further commercialise education and the existing inequalities will be exacerbated.

List of Demands

1. Ensure the right to education, health and nutrition of children from migrant families affected because of COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Table National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) in Parliament for discussion.
3. Complete Implementation of RTE Act 2009.
4. Extension of RTE Act 2009 from 3-18 years to universalise of school education.
5. Declare timeline for allocation of 6% GDP to education.
6. Stop exclusion through online instruction and explore alternative means.
7. Take steps to stop commercialisation and regulate non state actors in education.
8. Address specific barriers to education faced by Dalit, Adivasi, minority children, children with disabilities, girls and other vulnerable groups.
9. End rationalisation/merger of schools.
10. Ensure disinfection of schools and ensure availability of adequate WASH facilities before their re-opening.
11. Ensure all teachers' vacancies are filled with immediate effect and pending salaries and allowances should be paid with immediate effect.

ELDERLY

Sourced from Pension Parishad and Helpage India

Sector/Issue, Tags: Elderly Policies, Pension, Ration, Health

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Pension

- Initial release of 2 to 3 months lump sum in April'20 under IGNOAPS / state pension's schemes.
- Ex-Gratia amount of Rs. 1000/- to all BPL includes elders.
- Rs. 500/- under to Jan Dhan accounts for 3 months.

2. Health

- PM AyushmanYojna – providing free COVID testing and treatment in empanelled hospitals for beneficiaries.
- Elderly advisories issued related to Covid 19.

3. Food

- Distribution of rations via PDS or PMGKA Yojana.

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

1. Pensions

- The OAP amounts in most states is less and surviving the pandemic with the little amount is too difficult especially when livelihoods lost during lockdown
- Coverage of OAP under IGNOAPS is limited i.e. only approx. 3.83 lakhs of the approx. 11 lakhs elderpopulation nationwide. Large numbers of needy elders not covered under scheme.
- Ex-Gratia of Rs. 1000/- to BPL (includes BPL elders)
- Only 7 states have released Ex-Gratia amount of Rs. 1000/-.
- Rs. 500/- to Jan Dhan a/c for 3 months
- Only 9 states released the Rs. 500/- p.m. for either March or for March & April or 3 months i.e. March-April-May'20.

2. Health

- Inadequate COVID related facilities for e.g. hospitals, beds, Oxygen Cylinders, Ventilators, PPE Kits, Masks, Gloves, Sanitizers in most states in the initial months and continues to be so in many states and state-run hospitals.
- Private Hospitals charging very high for COVID treatment.
- Failure of health insurance schemes for poor including poor elders like PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat Scheme) to provide adequate coverage to poor elders.
- Cases of misdemeanour by health personnel
- Neglect by health system for e.g. hospitals (pvt/ govt) of providing treatments for other diseases patients due to priority given to COVID. In many hospitals in the initial months General OPDs were closed and elderly faced issues like- routine check-up visits to doctors and regular treatments/medicines of other chronic diseases like BP, Diabetes etc.

3. Food

- PDS food distribution scheme performance overall was not as per requirements during the COVID pandemic period in many states though in few states as per reports for e.g. Kerala & Bihar PDS performance was good. In Delhi as per reports by NGOs and media only 30% to 40% of PDS were distributing food via PDS Ration Shops properly.
- Lack of coverage of elders in other schemes for e.g. PMGKAY scheme under NFSA was mainly for weaker sections registered beneficiaries, thus good nos. of elderly not covered.

List of Demands

1. Pensions

- Universalize Pensions Coverage to all needy and poor elders.
- Increase Amount and Coverage to cover all needy & poor elders.
- Pension should be indexed to inflation or should be half of minimum wage.
- Timely distribution every month for pensions to elders a/cs.
- Both Central and State govts. should increase budget support for pensions.

2. Health

- Increase the Geriatric Facilities for elderly in every district hospital across the country as per MWPS Act.
- Geriatric OPDs should run with SOP related to Covid.
- Free COVID tests and treatment for senior citizens
- A universal insurance of at least Rs. 5 lacs for all elderly.
- Make Health a Universal Right for all citizens.

3. Food

- Inclusion of elderly in beneficiaries list under PMGKAY.
- Universalize and make food a Right.

ENVIRONMENT

Sourced from Kalpavriksh and Let India Breathe on behalf of Vikalp Sangam Core Group

Sector/Issue, Tags: Environment

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Coal auctions for 41 new coal blocks were announced in ecologically fragile, biodiverse areas home to tribal and other vulnerable communities. This is across areas in 5 states (Odisha, MP, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh).
2. There continue to be unmitigated Push for single window clearances.
3. Reading down of the EIA notification through Draft Amendments announced during the health emergency. Prior consultations to arrive at the text of the amendments were only with project proponents, SEIAs and SPCBs. No consultations took place with gram sabhas, panchayats, urban ward sabhas, or others likely to be directly impacted.
4. State Government initiated reforms related to land and labour laws during a pandemic. e.g. Deletion of 79A and 79B of Karnataka Land Reforms Act.
5. Deemed two year environment clearances for mining projects whose leases were transferred to fresh bidders on 31.3.2020, was announced by Government of India.
6. New green highway projects announced followed by MoRTH letter to state governments seeking faster approvals for highway projects.
7. Virtual environmental appraisals, approvals and online public hearings are taking place through the pandemic.
8. Announcement for on ground public hearings for projects with social distancing, restricted participation in matters of extreme significance such as lives and livelihoods.

9. Government orders for construction (including demolition activity, tree felling) of contentious projects, including Mumbai Coastal Road, Redevelopment colonies in Delhi, Aarey during lockdown despite not being essential.
10. Mining and other industrial activities were permitted as essential projects from the first week of the lockdown.
11. Diversion of CAF, DMF funds for Covid relief.
12. Lack of minimum support price for forest produce.
13. Announcement of Draft Fisheries Policy asking for comments during lockdown.
14. Lack of clarity on the disbursement and use of NCAP funds to combat air pollution.

(for further references see Annexure 1 at the end)

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

1. **Industrial accidents and project disasters:** fly ash dam breaches e.g. Singrauli, boats carrying coal ash sinking in Hoogly, Vishakapatnam gas leak, Neyveli TPP boiler blasts, Baghjan oil well disaster. This is all during the lockdown period there was no monitoring or supervision of projects.
2. Significant impact of the lockdown on marginalised sections, including, adivasis and other forest-dwelling communities.
3. **Reported evictions of forest dwellers**, amongst many others, during “stay at home” and “work from home” orders for citizens. This is against the MHA guidelines.
4. **Lack of possibility of on-ground protests or mobilization**, public hearings, and other such ways affected people can voice their opinions. Lack of media attention to environmental issues, due to COVID related news overpowering everything else.
5. **Significant amount of greenwashing**, attempting to show how responsive the government is to environmental issues, e.g. projecting India as a climate leader in global circles, while actually clearing huge areas of forest and giving further impetus to coal mining, and saying virtually nothing meaningful regarding climate mitigation and adaptation within India.

LIST OF DEMANDS

1. Immediate steps:

- **Withdraw regressive decisions or proposals mentioned above:** The EIA notification, auctioning of coal blocks, sidestepping or fast-tracking of clearances.
- **Issue a moratorium on diversion of natural ecosystems for infrastructure, mining, and commercial purposes:** A clear scientific link between ecological destruction and the spread of diseases like COVID-19 has been established. Even if COVID-19 originated in China, other such pathogens could originate in India, or spread widely, due to the disruption of natural balances and inter-dependencies. An immediate moratorium on the diversion of natural ecosystems projects is crucial; and instead to initiate alternatives for meeting livelihood and development needs. Expanding coal mining in the name of ‘self-reliance’ is in violation of what the current crisis has taught us.
- **Adivasis/tribal and other forest dwelling communities:** For an active environmentally sensitive COVID response & apart from immediate health and relief measures, MoTA with TRIFED and relevant state departments should (a) urgently devise effective institutional mechanisms for the collection, storage, procurement and sale of non timber forest produce during the ongoing collection season, and provide necessary financial and logistical support to Gram Sabhas and forest management committees constituted under FRA together with other PPAs for direct procurement, ensuring fair prices, from the gatherers; (b) investigate and take action on cases of forest rights violation and eviction due to mining and forest diversions, plantations by forest dept, restrictions on access to forest for livelihoods activities; (c) request MoEF to release the huge compensatory afforestation fund to the Gram Sabhas constituted under FRA to support community forest management for generating livelihoods and wage employment for tribals and forest dwellers to deal with the economic crisis; and (d) ensure all of the above with appropriate cultural sensitivity in the case of PVTGs, nomadic pastoral communities, and other vulnerable sections.

2. Medium and long-term steps

– **Generate sustainable livelihoods and infrastructure:**

COVID crisis presents a crucial opportunity to redesign our economy towards generating tens of millions of ecologically sustainable and dignified livelihoods. Significant public expenditure should be put into such livelihoods and into ecologically sensitive infrastructure. This includes: small-farmer based organic agriculture (shifting current fertilizer subsidy completely into this over 5 years), assistance to pastoralists, fishers and forest-dwellers, decentralized renewable energy and water harvesting, dispersed production of goods and services with a strong biomass and handmade base, integrated health services maximising nature-based healing and preventive care, and a massive livelihood programme based on regenerating the country's badly degraded soils and water systems. (For more details, pl. see 'People's Manifesto for a Just, Equitable and Sustainable India', brought out by constituents of the Vikalp Sangam process).

– **Promote ecological design and sensitivity in all development and livelihoods:**

Environmental sustainability must be brought to the centre of all planning, budgeting, and programmes related to development. This necessitates moving away from piecemeal EIA kind of approaches to more sectoral assessments of risk and impacts, the core involvement of communities and people likely to be impacted in the assessments, independent assessments and monitoring. A clear policy and programmatic direction is needed for ecologically sustainable and equitable ways of generating livelihoods and jobs, infrastructure, communications, etc. There are hundreds of examples of people meeting their basic needs and securing dignified livelihoods, through such ways, which can be learnt from (see for instance Vikalp Sangam). Orienting existing schemes like MNREGS, housing, agriculture, and others towards this is eminently possible.

– **Strengthen self-governance through gram sabhas, area/ward sabhas:**

Institutions of self-governance must be legally empowered to be part of all decisions affecting their ecological and environmental security, through community rights (including through the Forest Rights Act), and through prior informed consent being made mandatory. Gram sabhas, area/

ward sabhas, and other local governance institutions will need help to build capacity and generate resources, so that they can govern their lands and ecosystems, their economic and community lives in way that ensures representation and participation of marginalised sections to ensure social justice.

– **Strengthen local, self-reliant economies:** It is evident in the COVID crisis that a global economy is an extremely vulnerable system that is prone to collapse. Institutions of local self-governance must be provided with the resources, technical assistance and other forms of cooperation in order to grow their own local, self-reliant economies, using local and new skills and resources, catering first and foremost to local needs. Through this, the necessity of mass mobility and trade could be reduced significantly and help reduce and reverse rural-urban migration caused by economic and social distress which leads to very high urban densities that are ripe for epidemics.

– **Redesign urban and semi-urban settlements:**

Redesign urban and semi-urban settlements in a manner that workplace and residence for most people are close by, self-governance through area sabhas is empowered, and urban natural ecosystems are regenerated and protected through citizens' forums. The current environmental injustice that cities impose on rural areas should be transformed through programmes of urban self-reliance and sustainability, with 'smart city' approach being replaced by 'wise, equitable city'.

– **Restore, regenerate, conserve natural ecosystems:**

Natural ecosystems (forests, wetlands, grasslands, coastal/marine areas) should be restored, regenerated and conserved in at least a third of India (in both rural and urban areas), with local communities empowered to govern them.

– **Eliminate pollution:** Urgent steps should be taken to reduce, eliminate, and replace sources of pollution, such that over a 10 to 15 year period, the quality of air, water and soil is brought to levels safe for human and other animal use; this includes substantially replacing private with public transport and harmful chemicals with safe substances, eliminating sources of noise, and treating all wastewater before discharging into waterbodies.

– **Tackle the climate crisis:** India's national climate action plan should be reviewed and revised, ensuring widespread participation of communities likely to be most affected, civil society organisations, and independent experts, with a view to making it more robust and impactful through substantial upward revision of goals for mitigation and adaptation, specific target for emission peaking, significantly reducing elite demand for power, and prioritised actions to help climate refugees.

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

1. For Official Bodies:

– **Set up a National Environment Commission:** A National Environment Commission should be established, with a Constitutional status akin to the CEC and CAG, with the mandate of monitoring adherence of relevant norms and laws by government agencies and corporations, and providing a redressal and interface mechanism for the public.

– **Recognise the rights of nature:** The rights of nature should be incorporated into the Constitution and in relevant laws, with relevant sections of the public, especially local communities, empowered to be its custodians. Judgements of the Uttarakhand High Court on rights of Ganga and Yamuna, and of animals, can be used as a base, but with elaboration of what such rights would mean, and clear guidelines on how this would involve respect to all cultures (without imposition of any one faith on others, or targeting of particular communities or cultures), not affect fundamental livelihoods and food security of communities directly dependent on nature and natural resources.

2. For Parties/Movements/Civil society:

– **Facilitate local self-governance and self-reliance:** Civil society and people's movements should enable and facilitate communities to move towards swaraj / self-governance and localized economic self-reliance, as given above; and to resist imposition of destructive projects and processes on them; in all this to also facilitate struggles to remove traditional and new inequities (gender, caste, class, etc).

– **MPs, MLAs, other politically elected representatives at rural and urban level should spend more time on the ground** understanding the issues faced by people and the environment (including wildlife), dialoguing and discussing with them, and taking their issues into the forums they are members of.

FISH WORKERS

Sourced from National Fish Workers Forum,
Focus on the Global South and Delhi Forum

Sector/Issue, Tags: Fish Workers, Labour, Fisheries

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana
2. Draft Fisheries Policy 2020: The policy is export-oriented, production-driven, and based on capital investments, which will strip small scale fishers off their rights of access to commons, and also damage the environment in the long run. In addition, the policy does not talk about women. It is silent on caste and class.

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

As per the report prepared by the ICAR – Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi on the 26th of April, 2020 it has been estimated that pandemic and the lockdown have resulted in large scale disruptions in the value chain of marine capture fisheries in India. The losses have been estimated to be about INR 224 crores/day for fishing sector.

Fishworkers across the economic spectrum – from the large scale mechanised fleets to the small scale fishers across the coastline have suffered an economic blow due to the lockdown. Keeping in mind that marine capture fisheries is already a stressed sector, the loss of fish has created a dent in the economy and food security for a number of people. The share of the fisheries sector in India's Gross Domestic Product is about 1.03 % as of 2017-18 contributing Rs 1.75 trillion during 2017-18, accounting for about 6.58% share of India's agricultural GDP. According to the government's own estimates, the sector provides livelihoods to about 16 million fishers and fish farmers at the primary level and almost twice the number along the value chain.

Small-scale fisheries are finding it hard to continue fishing, leading to lack of income, and the other problem they face is the lack of food on a daily basis.

Women too, especially single women, who comprise about 75 percent of those engaged in fish marketing in the marine fish sector [at markets, by the roadside, by head loading for door-to-door sale], are also among the hardest hit by the loss of access to fish, to transport systems, to markets, and to the consumers. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, it was difficult to get elderly and young women fish workers to be registered with societies and cooperatives. Most women fish workers are still not registered with any society and therefore they cannot access government relief. This lack of data, increases the existing marginalisation.

Many of the migrant fishworkers who are stranded are living in dire straits and returned home with great difficulty where they had to live in the harbour under unliveable conditions, and are contract labourers too who no longer have a job.

Reopened fisheries also faced disrupted commodity chains, a significant lack of consumer demand, and a rising fear of being infected by COVID-19.

List of Demands

1. There should be an economic package announced for the fishing community keeping in mind that the monsoon ban season is arriving and will also affect the livelihoods of crores of fishworkers and the ones who are dependent on the occupation.
2. The Draft Fisheries Policy 2020 should be immediately withdrawn and consultations should be resumed with the stakeholders. The policy should be translated in all the vernacular languages before any sort of consultations.
3. The Pradhan ManthriMatsyaSampada Yojana Scheme should be relooked into keeping in mind the Standing Committee's recommendations.
4. National Fishworkers Forum demands that a monthly allowance of INR 15,000/- up to three months be provided in advance; This should be actually given to the fishworkers and those engaged in allied activities.
5. Develop a relief package for the sector in consultation with fish worker organisations and individuals in the following three stages:
 - (i) Short- term with a horizon period of 3 weeks until the end of the lockdown period, where there should be loan payment deferrals to a period of six months keeping in mind the ban period during the monsoon period too in the eastern and western coast.
 - (ii) Mid- term with a horizon period encompassing the ban period April 15th - 14th June, 2020 on the East coast and from 1st June to 31st July, 2020 on the West coast.
 - (iii) Long- term with a horizon period until the end of the next financial year on the 31st of March, 2021 by revisiting the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Agriculture in the budget session.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Sourced from Right to Food Campaign

Sector/Issue, Tags: Food Security, Nutrition

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. AtmaNirbhar Bharat
2. PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana
3. PM Jan Dhan Cash transfer
4. Extension of Ujjwala Yojana
5. One Nation One Ration
6. Various state programmes, see here: <http://www.righttofoodcampaign.in/home/covid-19>

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

Even before the pandemic, India had one of the largest undernourished populations in the world. After the abrupt lockdown the situation of malnutrition and starvation has been acutely exacerbated. Millions of migrants were stranded not only due to halt of all public transportation but also lack of governmental food packages. Most of the various announcements of the government during the lockdown have effectively only catered to those with National Food Security Act ration cards.

As per the NFSA on an average 67% of the population were to receive these cards in 2013. But currently, only 60% of the population has these NFSA ration card based on Census 2011. The government has not accounted for the population increase in the last decade. Further, exclusion errors are rampant in targeting in welfare schemes. Insistence on aadhaar has increased exclusions.

Numerous surveys have evaluated the efficacy of government schemes. Some states are doing better than the Centre. Various states like, Kerala, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Odisha, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and some others have announced relief packages to ensure that socially and economically backward classes are not left to fend for themselves. For example, In Chhattisgarh, the state government has decided to provide 1 kg grams per ration card and 5 kg rice per person to all ration cardholders (except APL cardholders) under Chhattisgarh Food Security Act (non NFSA) for free till November 2020.

List of Demands

1. Public Distribution System

- Universalisation of PDS: In order to avoid exclusion errors, PDS benefits must be made universal for all residents without making Aadhaar/UID mandatory.
- Double the Antyodaya Coverage: The coverage of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana must be doubled to cover all vulnerable groups such as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), old people and single women.
- Grains, Pulses and Edible Oils: 10kg of grains, 1.5 kg pulses/dal and 800gms of cooking oil must be provided per person per month, through the PDS, at subsidised prices
- Provide compensatory food security allowance for at least 100 million families who have been excluded from the NFSA since 2013, despite population growth
- Provide compensation for all families with starvation deaths
- Extend the distribution of free grains and dal under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana beyond November 2020.

2. Migrants

- Expand to a universal PDS in a manner where workers can access the PDS entitlements from their current location of residence, irrespective of whether they have documents such as ration cards, residence proof etc.
- Expand AtmaNirbhar Bharat entitlement for 6 months.

3. Community Kitchens/Feeding Centres

- In urban areas: Canteens serving subsidised and nutritious meals must be set up in all cities and towns, akin to the Amma canteens in Tamil Nadu
- In rural areas, open up school mid day meals or anganwadi centres for provision of food to destitute, aged, single women and disabled.

4. Children

- Provide home delivery or spot feeding of a comprehensive nutrition package with cereals, pulses, oil and eggs for children under fourteen years, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls till schools and anganwadis re-open

- Eggs, milk and fruits must be provided in all schools and anganwadis. For children who do not eat eggs additional provision of fruits or milk can be made.
- The National Creche Scheme must be strengthened and expanded. Twenty-five percent of anganwadi centres must be converted to anganwadi-cum-crèches. All MGNREGA worksites must have provision of child care services in accordance with the Act.
- The mid-day meal scheme should be extended to all children up to class XII.
- Implement the full range of ICDS services and child care including growth monitoring, referral services, nutrition and health counselling.

5. Women

- Maternity Entitlements under NFSA: Maternity entitlements under NFSA must be provided to all pregnant and lactating women, without any conditionalities. All the backlog of maternity entitlements must be cleared immediately and for the next six months, the maternity benefit under PMMVY should be given in advance in one instalment. The amount of benefit should be increased and regularly updated according to inflation. Further, legislative provisions need to be made to ensure universal and wage-linked maternity benefits to all women.
- Community Meals: take-home rations or Free, hot and cooked nutritious midday meals with eggs and fruits must be provided for pregnant women and lactating mothers in anganwadi centres.
- Expand Ujjwala cooking gas fuel benefit to all priority and antyodaya households
- Ensure urgent decentralised monitoring frameworks, grievance redressal mechanisms and penalties for non-implementation of all entitlements

6. Cyclone and Floods: A number of regions in the country, especially in Eastern India, are affected by a double burden of COVID and cyclones/floods. These areas need special attention to ensure all of the above. Provision of cooked food in these areas must be set up immediately, along with a special package of rations that includes cereals, pulses, oil, eggs, milk, fruits and vegetables.

Sourced from Jan Swasthya Abhiyan

Sector/Issue, Tags: Health

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. In April, Centre announced Rs. 15,000 crore as Covid-19 emergency response and health system preparedness package, which is less than 0.1% of country's GDP. Out of Rs. 15,000 crore, Centre is to release Rs. 7,774 crore for immediate use and Rs. 7,226 crore for medium term support till 2024. The Rs. 15,000 crore package is out of the loan grant India has received USD 1 billion funds for Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness from World Bank, the conditionalities under which promote the agenda of vigorous privatisation of the health sector.

2. Under the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance Scheme for Health Workers fighting COVID-19", an insurance cover of Rs. 50 lakh is being provided for a period of 90 days to Health Workers. However, this accident insurance scheme covers only cases where the worker loses her life. It does not provide any support to health workers if they get infected by COVID-19 and need treatment, care and support. Further, private sector workers are included in the scheme only if they are drafted for COVID-19 responsibilities. Moreover, the figure of 22 lakh health workers is a gross underestimation of the actual size of the workforce

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

The response of the Union and most State governments has remained inadequate at a time of a national health emergency. There has been no planning or scientific basis for the lockdown and un-lockdown strategy. Moreover, too little has been done too late in regulating the private sector or commissioning their services to tackle the pandemic crisis. The crisis has been heightened further due to the lack of transparency in governments' approach; data has been kept away from public scrutiny. There has also been inadequate testing and a grossly inadequate provision of PPE kits.

During this time, the private sector has completely failed to respond to the COVID crisis. There was a vociferous demand by the private sector for maintaining high rates of testing (Rs. 4500), whereas the actual cost of testing when done in public facilities is much lower. There have been a number of cases of denial of care after which some state governments entered into agreement with private sector hospitals and also requisitioned their services. Reports of gross overcharging by the private sector abound. After intervention by the health rights groups and other civil society, some State governments have fixed the rates of treatment for Covid19 in the private sector. However, the private sector continues to flout the government orders and cases of overcharging are still rampant. PMJAY insurance based scheme has largely failed to provide care to needy patients during the COVID epidemic.

– Non-covid patients suffering from such diseases as Cancer, Hepatitis C, HIV AIDS, TB, patients needing regular dialysis etc. have been denied treatment at hospitals due to over-emphasis on Covid-19. Adequate alternative arrangements have not been made for ensuring that regular health services and medicines are available. Many lives have been lost owing to this.

– Maternal and child health services have been severely hit. The immunisation services, distribution iron and folic acid tablets and other services have hampered.

– Pregnant women have had to face severe difficulties in accessing delivery services. Those coming from containment zones have had to suffer more as they were denied admission and treatment.

– Private healthcare sector has been charging exorbitantly for Covid-19 related admissions and testing, as well as for care of non-Covid conditions, along with violations of Patients rights.

– Health workers, especially frontline healthcare workers such as ASHAs and Aanganwadi workers, are working under adverse circumstances. They are overworked and in some cases not even being paid their regular wages in full and in time. There have been protests by ASHA workers in various States demanding minimum wages. Even now they do not have adequate personal protective equipment.

– The sanitation and MTS workers are not being paid their due wages and many of the unions have had to resort to legal measures to ensure the due payment.

– There have been sudden lay-offs of many Home Based Care workers

– The vulnerable and the marginalised communities, such as the religious minorities, Dalits, sex workers, LGBTQI, are facing increased violations and denials

List of Demands

1. Increase public spending on health to 5% of GDP in the long run and to at least 3% of GDP by 2024.
2. Channelize allocation towards strengthening public system in a sustainable manner rather than directing funds to purchase care from the ill-equipped private sector.
3. Abandon PMJAY.
4. Strengthen preventive and public health services, primary health care in both rural and urban areas; increase allocation for Health & Wellness Centres.
5. Guarantee access to free essential and lifesaving medicines and diagnostics for all through public health facilities.
6. Investment in pharma and medical equipment manufacturing industries led by PSUs.
7. Establish centralised and transparent procurement, and decentralised distribution to ensure regular availability of good quality generic medicines in public facilities.
8. Use compulsory licensing to promote manufacturing ARTs.
9. Creating adequate numbers of permanent posts. All levels of public health system staff be provided with adequate and continued skill training, fair wages, social security and decent working conditions.
10. Strengthen IDSP and other disease surveillance system.
11. Increase public investment on health research.
12. Expanding and strengthening the Clinical Establishment Act of 2010 along with ensuring its effective, generalised implementation immediately; Establishing regulation of rates as a central feature of this Act.
13. Universal implementation of Patient Rights Charter, making it legally mandatory, and establishing an empowered Patient Grievance Redressal mechanism.

14. Formation of a well-staffed public regulatory network functioning at national, state and district levels.

15. Public harnessing of the private healthcare sector, bringing under public direction at least 80% of beds in all private hospitals above minimum size. This publicly funded measure would replace the problematic PMJAY scheme.

16. Formation of multi-stakeholder health councils at district, city and state levels.

17. All health care and allied workers both permanent and contractual involved in COVID 19 duty should be compensated Rs. 50 lakh if the worker dies and on getting infected they should be given equal treatment facilities without any discrimination.

18. All contractual workers (including safaikaramcharis) should be given special incentive/ additional wages for their COVID 19 related work.

19. Regularise all health scheme workers as employees.

20. All the employees working in COVID 19 ward should be provided with adequate PPE, regular health check-ups and COVID 19 test; long duty hours need to be reduced.

21. Expand the Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIS) to include entire working population in the unorganised sector.

22. Ensure sexual reproductive health services without disruption including access to contraception, safe abortion and maternal health services at all levels from the village to the district hospital.

23. Provide sex workers with sexual reproductive health (including maternity and safe abortion) information and counselling for mental health issues in one place.

24. There has been a massive loss in trust in the public health system especially among the Schedule Castes and Minorities. Provided counselling support to minorities and scheduled caste and tribes during

admission and their stay in the hospital. Take proactive steps to dispel myths in the community through messaging by frontline workers and partnering with NGOs.

25. Urgent action is required to improve the socio-economic conditions of Muslims, especially the most marginalised among them. All basic rights of citizenship - access to health care, education, safe and clean water sanitation, housing - must be provided in a way that is non-discriminatory, sensitive and context-specific.

26. All healthcare facilities must follow provisions of RPD Act 2016 and ensure persons with disabilities can access these facilities without any barrier.

27. Establish strong decentralised and participatory planning processes through effective Panchayati Raj institutions with strong involvement of communities.

28. Develop community-based health and social development plan through collective and participatory approach.

29. Establish effective Grievance Redressal Mechanism.

30. Ensure social accountability and transparency in the system.

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

1. Parliament needs to be convened at earliest to discuss a wide range of issues related to the management of and other aspects related to Covid-19 pandemic. At least the Standing Committee on Health should meet and assess the situation, both in terms of ground situation and the policy pronouncements, and advise the government.

2. Bodies such as NHRC and Supreme Court need to keep a close watch on the developing situation and take suo-motu cognisance of health rights violations and denials. NHRC and Supreme Court must issue regular advisories to governments, both Centre and States, to prevent violations as well as direct them to act in the interests of the people, especially the vulnerable and the marginalised.

3. CAG needs to take independent review and assessment of the fund allocation announced for COVID-19 management, as also of such fund collections as under PM Care and audit the expenditure under these.

4. Political parties and their representatives need to raise demands for pro-people policies to be adopted by the government, both within parliament and assemblies, as well as through broader movements, thus keeping governments in check.

5. Civil society movements/groups/networks/ individuals need to come together and forge alliances and give voice to people's demands and ensure that the vulnerable and the marginalised are not discriminated against in treatment and provision of health services, that they are not exploited at the hands of the private sector, raise voice against the exploitation of health workers across different categories, and fight for the rights of patients and health workers while demanding publicly organised systems for Universal Health Care.

JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Sourced from Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms

Sector/Issue, Tags: Law, Judicial Accountability, Access to Justice

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

Even before the lockdown was announced on the 24th of March, the Supreme Court had suspended its regular functioning and as a result many urgent matters such as habeas corpus petitions in the Kashmir context, petitions challenging the constitutionality of Citizenship Amendment Act, petitions challenging the abrogation of Article 370, bail petitions, electoral bonds matters, were not being heard. The suspension of regular physical hearing has adversely affected the citizen's right to access justice..

The pandemic and the announcement of the lockdown without any preparation threw millions of people out of jobs and created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The judiciary especially the higher judiciary was seen as abdicating its responsibility and oath to protect fundamental rights of citizens during this lockdown and to hold the executive accountable for violating these rights. This abdication is seen in the manner the courts have dealt with cases relating to the migrant crisis. The court dismissed petitions which sought ensuring safe transport and financial security for migrants. Statements made by SC such as there are no migrants walking on the roads were accepted at face value without asking for any evidence, even when it was clear that people were facing an unprecedented crisis. Finally the SC took up the issue suo moto after widespread criticism, though it was too little, too late.

List of Demands

1. Immediately resume the physical functioning of courts.
2. Prioritize the hearing of habeas corpus petitions as it involves the right to life and liberty.
3. Enact a detailed and actionable strategic plan for filling up of vacancies in the lower courts and the high courts.
4. Implement the Gram Nyayalaya Act.
5. Make appropriate parliamentary and budgetary allocations for the implementation, growth and success of the Gram Nyayalayas Act.
6. SC to appoint in house committees to investigate serious charges with documentary evidence made against Judges and the elevation of such judges without even a proper investigation into those charges.
7. Put in place a full time and independent judicial appointments commission and a judicial complaints authority to examine complaints against judges and to take action.
8. Decentralise the power to allocate cases and dismantle the continuing sole authority of the Chief Justice which has led to its abuse by successive Chief Justices.
9. Create grassroot-level support and demand for setting up requisite gram nyayalayas at the sub tehsil level in the country.

LABOUR

Sourced from Working Peoples Charter, NREGA SangharshMorcha, Peoples Action for Employment Guarantee and Stranded Workers Action Network

Sector/Issue, Tags: Labour, Employment

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) : The first financial package announced did not have measures to support the migrant workers during the nation-wide lockdown.

2. Labour Reforms: Several states have notified relaxation in labour laws citing industrial growth. These states are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, amongst others.

3. State Government Reforms: Uttar Pradesh has appointed a Commission for Employment and Planning for the workforce. Madhya Pradesh has created a special commission for migrant workers. Himachal Pradesh and Odisha have started urban employment schemes. Various states governments have given employment income from the State Welfare BOCW boards.

4. Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: As a part of this, the Finance Minister had announced various measures including setting up of Labour Codes for Universalization of right of minimum wages, free food grain supply to migrant workers for a period of two months and the announcement of One Nation, One Ration Card among others.

5. Migration Crisis: The Supreme Court in May took suo moto cognizance of the migrant crisis and directed the Central and the State governments to facilitate their travel to their respective states, as well as to take further steps to formulate employment schemes and skill-mapping exercises for migrant workers.

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

1. Anti-labour law reform 'labour codes' are being pushed as never before. One code 'wage code' has already become statute but yet to be implemented, and the remaining are under consideration with parliament standing committees. These codes are meant to substantially remove basic statutory protection.

2. States pushes labour ordinances- to increase working hours, non-compliance of labour laws etc. Centre has made increasing 'ease of doing business' as one of the conditions for states to be able to access additional funds during a time when there is a lot of pressure on state finances.

3. Lack of registration has prevented informal workers from getting to access COVID led government scheme benefits and other social security entitlements.

4. At present, more than 14 crore individuals are jobless, if we include the daily wagers/contract/casual, there are more than 24 crores who are out of livelihood at present.

5. The MSMEs sector have reported that 30% to 35% units may not be in position to start their activity.

6. 100% FDIs in PSUs like railway, defence, port & dock, coal, Air India, banks and insurance including space science and atomic energy.

7. DA freeze and wages withheld/wage cut across sector.

8. City transport sector such as auto rickshaw, tempo and other forms of traditional mode of transport have been worst affected. The issue of micro loan and NBFS led credit to such workers.

9. Health care and other public services workers including private nurses situation got deteriorated despite their unprecedented contribution. Many workers were laid off at private healthcare services, wage cut and increased working hours without any precautionary measures.

10. Street economy: The livelihood of street vendors has been severely impacted.

11. There has been increased privatisation in the coal sector and there have also been debates of FDI in mining sector.

List of Demands

1. The relaxation in labour statutes are against the principles and ethos of the Constitution and Supreme Court order over the years which were further strengthening the labour laws. Since the labour laws do not cover a large section of the workforce, especially the informal workers, we are of the opinion that the change and reform must be done immediately and in a manner that ensures that all workers get their just entitlements. On urgent basis the registration of workers must be done under the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008, BOCW Act or any other state laws on access of welfare entitlements.

2. The government must urgently allocate subsidies for the MSME sector, in which the wage subsidy is a major component. Further, MSMEs should get priority from the government whenever it creates any support for the industry in the form of economic infrastructure.

3. The government must not disinvest in any public sector enterprises, such as railways, airlines, mining, etc. These are national properties and therefore they belong to the people of India and must not be put under private control. Apart from other important reasons, this is also being demanded to ensure the welfare of the employees working in these industries.

4. The government must uphold the principle for equal pay for equal work. Any permanent work being done in any industry must not be done by contract workers. All permanent jobs must be done only by regular employees and therefore the fixed term employment ordinance must be scrapped immediately. For example, all public sector enterprises such as banks (especially Bank Mitras), municipalities, hospitals, etc.

5. The government must pay DA as per regular practice and pay all wages on time. This is imperative to even spur demand and get the economy going again. Further the government must do the auditing of all industries and support such industries, including wages, social security, etc, with subsidies so that they will be in a position to pay employees on time.

6. In addition to credit support, income support in the form of a one-time livelihood support not

less than Rs. 10,000 must also be provided to city transport sector workers such as auto rickshaw, tempo, including app-based 'gig-workers', etc. Further, the installments of loans from microcredit agencies and NBFC must also be deferred and interest must not be charged for this interim period. In addition, all app-based 'gig-workers' must also get covered under labour law regulations and the government must bring in appropriate policy to enable this.

7. All workers in the healthcare sector, like nurses and ASHA workers, have been at the forefront of fighting Covid-19. All such workers must be regularised to at par with at least D-grade employees of the government. All nurses in the private sector must also receive the same employee benefits as their public sector counterparts.

8. All street vendors must be identified, recognised and registered as street vendors. The local government bodies must also actively increase awareness about Covid-19 to counter the communalisation of the pandemic and issue special orders to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of religion and caste.

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations

1. Local authorities must put in extra efforts to put in governance mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of existing welfare schemes or any directives issued by higher authorities under the NDMA, Epidemic Act, etc.
2. The government must not use the ordinance route and must pass all laws through the legislature in a democratic manner.
3. The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) must be held urgently to collectively deliberate on labour policies. Workers organisations are ready to understand / have dialogue with the industrial fraternity and concerned government authorities in the spirit of tripartitism and social dialogue to fix the complex question of the economy. It is pertinent to mention that India being a founding member of ILO cannot undermine the very principles of globally agreed decent work agenda.
4. Appeal to citizens to not discriminate with street vendors or anyone else on the basis on race, gender, caste or religion.

MGNREGA

Sourced from NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, Peoples Action for Employment Guarantee and from APU's brief on MGNREGA

Sector/Issue, Tags: Employment Guarantee, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Livelihood Security

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. The central government announced an additional allocation of Rs 40,000 crores for NREGA in 2020-21 to meet an increase in the demand for employment.
2. Government of Odisha increased wage rate by Rs.91 in Keonjhar district from the state budget.
3. The Government of Odisha has come up with a plan to provide 200 days of entitlement for employment in MGNREGA to every job card holding families in 20 of the most vulnerable blocks from four districts. The state has committed to set aside Rs. 500 Crores or the additional 100 days.

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

1. 48 percent of the Total NREGA budget (revised) for 2020-21 has been spent in the first 4 months.
2. 43 percent payments transactions for the month of July are pending from the Central Govt.
3. Less than 12 percent of NREGA funds left with the States to implement the programme. States like Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have less than 5 percent of their allocated funds left. This is at a time when there is an unmet demand for employment of more than 27 percent and 14 percent in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra respectively. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana have a balance of less than 10 percent.
4. 38 lakh new job cards made since April 2020. In Telangana there has been a 4.56 percent fall in the number of new job cards issued this year compared to previous year. 14.68 lakh new job cards were issued in Uttar Pradesh alone which is an 8.64 percent jump from previous year.
5. 4.17 lakh households have completed 100 days of employment. 2.26 lakh households had completed 100 days of work till July 2, 2020. It has almost doubled in just one month. However this is only 0.78 percent of those who have been employed under NREGA this year. The scale of households completing 100 days of employment is much higher in states like Andhra Pradesh (1.90 lakh), and Chhattisgarh (70,000). Roughly, 25 lakh households have completed more than 70 days of work till 02nd August. This is a testament to NREGA's continued importance and underscores the need to increase NREGA entitlement to at least 200 days per household.
6. 40 percent increase in the persondays of employment generated in the first quarter of 2020-21 compared to first quarter of 2019-20. This is yet another indicator of the importance of NREGA.
7. 1.52 Crore people who demanded work have not been provided employment. More than 12 percent unmet demand for employment in all the districts under Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan (GKRA).

List of Demands

1. The MGNREGA allocation be minimally increased by Rs. 1 Lakh Crores for the rest of FY2020-21. This will allow uninterrupted implementation till the time by which an accurate estimation of the upcoming demands can be mapped.
2. Funds should be released in advance to the Gram Panchayat to run works and Sarpanchs be given power to authorize opening of works.
3. All procedures for NREGA should be substantially simplified. Entitlements for NREGA should be made applicable for an individual and not for a household, and every individual must be provided work without any restriction. Anybody willing to work must be given work for the full year and not have ANY limitation on the number of days.
4. A large number of rural residents don't have a job card and getting new job cards might be time consuming. As such, any person wanting to do NREGA work must be allowed to work irrespective of whether they have a job card. Job card registration can be done at the worksite.
5. The Government must ensure that NREGA workers receive the full minimum NREGA notified wage rate for the State within 7 days of completion of work instead of 15 days. The Schedule of Rates could be suitably modified to reduce work output required for earning the minimum wage rate by 50%, or piece-rate payment of wages should be suspended and wage payments on the basis of time rate be initiated.
6. Timely payment of wages is of critical importance at present. Overcrowding in rural banks is a common problem. To ensure good practices of physical distancing in such times, NREGA wage payments should be made in cash by the Gram Panchayat. To ensure that transparency and accountability is maintained, cash payments should be made for every ward publicly on a predetermined day. The example set by the State of Odisha for releasing pension payments publicly at the Gram Panchayat can be followed.
7. All those above the age of 50 years who are not being permitted to come to work, should be paid their full minimum wage per day, for the duration of the period that they are not being permitted to work.

Along the same lines, all ailing and disabled workers who are not permitted to work due to the existing medical advisory should be paid full wages till they are allowed to resume work. The Central Government should also ensure payment of 90 days of wages to all pregnant women workers in the 2nd and 3rd trimester as well as to the lactating women with infants aged less than 6 months.

8. Helpline numbers must be constituted where workers can call and register their demand for work and apply for any job card related procedures. The helpline number should be able to register demand electronically on the MIS as soon as the demand is registered. This is essential because demand for work applications are not being accepted on the ground. Each block must have a separate helpline number to cater to all the panchayats in that block. This is to ensure that there are no language issues on the phone and to avoid helplines getting overburdened. There need to be multiple people in each block running these helplines

(Source of all figures : www.nrega.nic.in, Ministry of Rural Development, Gov. Reports downloaded between 31 July - 10 August, 2020)

MIGRANT WORKERS

Sourced from Stranded Workers Action Network

Sector/Issue, Tags: Migrant Crisis, Labour

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)
2. Labour Reforms
3. State Government Reforms
4. Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan
5. Migration Crisis

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

Some key observations related to the migrant crisis in various sectors apart from labour and employment:

1. Nutrition/Healthcare: Health concerns due to no access to safe drinking water (due to non-availability of fuel). Lack of proper access to maternity care during the lockdown.

2. Technology and surveillance: Workers were expected to register themselves on online websites for ration (Delhi) and travel (most state governments). Moreover, states like Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand had launched apps to support their residents stranded in other states. Issues with internet connectivity, no access to smartphones, difficulty in understanding the functioning of these apps/websites were major concerns of the workers.

3. Civil liberty, laws and governance: Workers in some parts faced police harassment and brutality, making it difficult to access food, water, ATM, banks and ration.

The unplanned, unilateral lockdown pushed millions of migrant workers in a state of crisis. The government response to provide relief to migrant workers has been largely inadequate. As SWAN's report, based on the relief work, shows, workers had to face the situation of hunger, lack of basic amenities and shortage of money. Also, the delay in travel support and the multiple contradictory government orders related to travel, further aggravated the situation. The lack of immediate and effective government response found the large section of the migrant labour force in a vulnerable state, leading to a humanitarian crisis.

While there was a delay in immediate government action, it was seen that most of the employers across the country did not give full wages or any kind of support to their workers during the nation-wide lockdown, further increasing the precarity.

List of Demands

1. Need for a National Employment Policy: strengthening of MGNREGA. Budgets for MGNREGA must be increased by at least four times and make MGNREGA works applicable for the entire year and not just for 100 days. The Ministry of Labour's orders stating that all workers should be deemed to be "at work" during the lockdown period and be paid accordingly must apply to MGNREGA workers as well.
2. Since a lot of migrant workers in big cities are from small towns, there is an urgent need to boost employment opportunities in small towns. To this end, there is a need to strengthen small towns through a sustainable urban employment guarantee programme.
3. Wage compensation to the workers in the informal sector, at the minimum wage notified for the area, for the entire period of the lockdown, and 3 months after as the economy recovers.
4. Social security as the right of the workers: Formulation of a strong law under the Social Security Code- which is yet to be finalized by the Parliamentary standing committee-, recognizing and ensuring food security, healthcare, housing, maternity and old age benefits as the rights of workers.
5. The state government must ensure that every primary employer strictly adheres to paying the wages to their contractors and to the workers.
6. Ensure advance payment of double pension for 6 months released in cash to be delivered to each pensioner immediately at her doorstep.

7. Provide full entitlements unconditionally, in advance, for all the eligible mothers under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and Janani Suraksha Yojana.
8. This livelihood support must include all segments of the population, including those both in stigmatised professions like sex work and begging, and in unseen unpaid work such as domestic work.
9. Call for ensuring job security for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in construction and small and medium scale industries. Written Employee Contracts should be made mandatory to recognize the population working in the informal sector as contract-based employees with proper tenure. This would also allow monitoring and prevention of wages not being paid in tandem with Minimum Wage Act, 1948- a practice which currently affects 42% of the workforce.
10. Expansion and temporarily relaxing the age limit for attainment of pension via Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-SYMD) which offers Rs 3000 pension to informal sector employees.
11. Expansion of unemployment benefits to informal sector employees through means-testing.

Action Oriented Engagement and Recommendations:

With uncertainty about employment and on the brink of food insecurity, workers are relying on direct and immediate aid from local, state and national authorities for relief. Direct aid- in the form of direct payment or food banks has allowed families to survive in the pandemic. Such services need to continue and be operational on a district level to avoid bureaucracy and delay in an unprecedented situation where delay costs lives. Dedicated volunteers to transfer money (based on the SWAN model) can be extremely effective to not only help distressed individuals but also avoid economic collapse of small businesses surviving on regular purchase by food-insecure households

MINORITIES

Sourced from Bebaak Collective

Sector/Issue, Tags: Religious Minorities, Communalism, Discrimination

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

The Muslim Community in India is one of the most marginalized communities in India. The Sachar Committee report found that Muslims have the lowest average monthly per capita expenditure among all socioreligious groups in the country. The past year has been particularly challenging for this community that has seen unprecedented social, religious and state discrimination and violence.

Growing communalisation, discrimination and violence has led to ghettoisation of Muslims in large metro cities, with poor living conditions and inadequate access to water sanitation and housing. The impact of these episodes of violence has also been felt most by those most marginalized within the Muslim community. Within the community, Muslim women who are already marginalized face a peculiar predicament. Struggles for equality in personal law, especially the issue of triple talaq, have seen gains, with courts denouncing the practice. At the same time, however, these wins have also been appropriated by the right-wing to further demonize Muslim men and the Muslim community in general. Muslim women have remarkably been at the forefront of both struggles, however – asserting their right to self-determination and equality as women within the community, as well as their citizenship as Muslims within the larger body politic.

The onset of the COVID 19 pandemic and response measures such as the lockdown have further strained a community already pushed to the brink. The pandemic hit the country at a time when the Muslim minority was agitating against the discriminatory citizenship law (Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019) which, in conjunction with the National Register of Citizens, poses the immediate threat of detention and possible statelessness for many marginalised people. As the pandemic disrupted the nationwide agitation which was gaining momentum, the unprecedented

sit-in protests led by Muslim women across the country had to go into a hiatus, but the everyday discrimination and violence against minorities continued through the period of the lockdown.

KEY ISSUES

1. The Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 was passed in December 2019; it is a piece of legislation that discriminates against Muslims specifically. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights called the Act “fundamentally discriminatory”. The United Nations Secretary General expressed concern that it has the potential to render a large majority of Muslims stateless. The worst affected will be Muslims from the lower sects as many do not possess documentation to prove citizenship.
2. The passage of the Act led to protests across the country that were met with violence, curfews and suppression of internet services.
3. The government has used the situation of the COVID-related lockdown to crackdown on anti-CAA protestors especially in Delhi, even as those who instigated the riots in February 2020 have not been charged.
4. The lockdown has been detrimental to a large segment of dispossessed people in India, and so also to those within the Muslim community. A large proportion of Muslims in big cities like Mumbai live in slums with inadequate access to water and sanitation that is required to protect oneself from coronavirus infection.
5. The lockdown has led to loss of employment and livelihoods for informal workers, among whom marginalized communities including Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims are over-represented. Further, the dilution and/or suspension of labour laws under the pretext of reviving the economy stands to further jeopardize the health and well-being of those working in the informal sector.
6. There has been a systematic communalization of the pandemic following the incident in March where a large Muslim religious gathering was held and attended by people from different parts of the world, and became a hub of transmission of coronavirus.

This has had a detrimental impact on pandemic control, with Muslim communities becoming suspicious of health department officials, as well as further worsened the trust between Muslims and the State.

7. There are several emerging reports of discrimination against Muslims in accessing healthcare and within the health system. Instances of Government hospitals designating different wards for Muslim patients, denying healthcare services to pregnant Muslim women and government hospital staff openly spewing hate against Muslims.
8. Reports have emerged of Muslims losing their already precarious livelihood due to outright discrimination and boycott eg. vegetable vendors who were rendered jobless on account of being labelled “carriers of the virus”.
9. Despite the upsurge in the number of domestic violence amongst women, as women and children were quarantined inside their homes with their oppressors and abusers, Muslim women do not have the privilege of reporting to the police as they have witnessed police brutality in their neighbourhoods. They inhabit a fearful and antagonistic relationship with the police and law which deters them from approaching state institutions. Thereby, locking them into a situation of double oppression.
10. Despite overwhelming evidence of dispossession and vulnerability of certain sections of the Muslim community, recommendations of the Sachar Committee report and Kundu Committee report remain unimplemented.
11. Budgetary allocations to the department of minority affairs remain underutilized year after year, despite the gross need for implementation of minority development schemes.

List of Demands

1. **Roll back NRC and CAA:** We believe that the CAA is unconstitutional since it discriminates based on religion. Coupled with the NRC it bodes statelessness and mass persecution of minority groups like Muslims. Therefore, we want both the Act and the NRC process to be rolled back indefinitely.
2. An impartial investigation in connection with the Delhi riots of February 2020 must be carried out and those found guilty must be held accountable.
3. Urgent action is required to improve the socio-economic conditions of Muslims, especially the most marginalized among them. Access to health care, education, safe and clean water sanitation and housing, are all basic rights of citizenship, and efforts must be made to provide these in a way that is non-discriminatory, sensitive and context-specific.
4. **Specific attention to caste-based marginalization within Muslim communities:** Like all religious groups in India, caste-based discrimination continues to operate among Muslims and those most deprived belong to lower castes. Both affirmative action and concerted efforts to address development concerns among these groups is required.
5. **Access to improved educational:** The Sachar committee had reported how Muslim areas didn't have schools, and existing ones were in bad shape. Despite dedicated schemes for minority education, these remain under-utilized. The situation of the pandemic has erected more barriers and not everyone can access online education; this fosters even deeper inequality and worsens the situation of those already lagging behind. Education of children should be prioritized, through a concerted effort by state and central government.
6. **Equal opportunity commission:** The Sachar committee in line with its findings of the bleak socio-economic status of Muslims, had strongly recommended setting up of an ‘Equal Opportunity Commission’ address grievances and discrimination against Minorities and other marginalized communities. While an expert group was constituted for this purpose which prepared a report on how such a commission can be operationalized, it only focusses on redressal of grievances and not on prevention of discrimination through systematic reform in employment.

SEX WORKERS

Sourced from All India Network Sex Workers (AINSW)

Sector/Issue, Tags: Sex Workers, Livelihood, Access to Social Security

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

No allocation and schemes announced by any govt. for sex worker's welfare during pandemic.

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

KEY ISSUES

1. **Dry Ration need to provide to all KPs** which would be based on their basic family needs. It would be given once in a month at least till March 2021.
2. **Lost Livelihood:** Everyone is resuming work but sex workers can't come back to work due to rules of physical distancing. During this pandemic, we have completely lost our work.
3. **Financial Help to KPs:** At least 5000 Rs need to transfer to each Key Population which helps her to feed her family during this bad time.
4. **Transportation to KP:** Most of the community members have stucked at various spots. Govt. must arrange their transportation to evacuate and send them to their places.
5. **SRH services Support to Sex Workers** must be reach to their door step. Because this time, sex workers can't come out for basic services related to SRH, but they need some guidance to come forward.
6. **Eradicate Gender based Violence:** Due to long lockdown we have seen that Domestic Violence have been arises, so it needs to be keep in mind to eradicate this. Help to report women to these crisis and work on mental health, arrange counseling. It would help the community to make sure to live in enabling environment.

National AIDS Control Organisation running HIV Prevention Program with community since 3 decades but no direct specific service during this pandemic have been received by community. Although NACO writes to Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to link Key Population with Social Security schemes but there is no clear plan how they will process to link hidden community.

Private, corporates have come forward to help our community, with their support we have been reaching to millions of community members with very small support of Dry Ration, some financial help.

List of Demands

1. Avail Dry Ration to Community with support of Free Gas Cylinder.
2. Direct Money Transfer to Key Population. Amount would not less than 5000 Rs per month.
3. Universal Health Coverage including mental, psychosocial health and SRH Services.
4. Eradicate state oriented violence, stigma and discrimination.
5. Due to vulnerable working condition, govt have to make sure to plan a relief at least 7 months for sex workers (FSW and Transgender) which includes all above provisions on board.
6. Comprehensive plan for Children of Sex Workers including access to nutritional food, access to offline and online education.

Action Oriented Engagement & Recommendations

1. Govt should direct the appropriate agencies for dissemination of information regarding the outbreak of pandemic, governmental measures related to livelihood and medical guidelines/ facilities, health and hygienic measures. The literatures and visuals should be in place with proper visibility.
2. Govt should direct the state agencies to visibly advertise and impart information regarding the social development schemes and facilities to the community at their localities.
3. Setup a Single Window System to access all the related documents from one spot. It would help community members to avoid denial of social security services on the basis of necessity of documents.
4. Civil Society must join hands with sex workers issues and incorporate our demands in their common agenda.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Sourced from National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information

Sector/Issue, Tags: Transparency, Accountability, Transparent and Accountable Institutions

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. PM Cares Fund
2. Various relief and financial assistance schemes under PMGKY
3. AtmaNirbhar Scheme

Brief Status of concerned sector during COVID-19

1. Right to Information Act:

With the entire nation going into a total lockdown on 25 March 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19, millions of individuals across the country were deprived of income generating opportunities. For the poor and vulnerable, the national economic and health crisis has led them to become increasingly dependent on government relief and welfare programmes to access their basic rights and entitlements. In such a scenario, proper functioning of Information Commissions is vital to ensure that people are able to access information about the functioning of the government, including various welfare schemes. Assessments conducted by Satrak Nagarik Sangathan and CHRI found that the COVID-19 induced lockdown severely impacted the functioning of the Information Commissions. Between the period March 25, 2020 and May 15, 2020, 21 out of 29 information commissions did not hold any hearings. Only the Central Information Commission, and four state commissions were holding hearings and disposing appeals/complaints on all matters. While, three State Information Commissions were available only for urgent matters or those involving life or liberty. Websites of 11 commissions out of 29 had no information/notification regarding the functioning of Information Commissions. As a result, effectively in most places, people had no recourse if their right to information was violated.

2. Proactive Disclosure of Information regarding welfare schemes:

Several large schemes and programmes were announced under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana and AtmaNirbhar Scheme. Very little, if any, information is available in the public domain regarding the utilization of the funds in violation of section 4 of the RTI Act. In fact the media has reported large delays and under utilisation of the schemes. In fact both these large schemes are funded through loans by the World Bank and even the requirement therein to publicly disclose information about implementation is not being followed.

3. PM CARES Fund:

The Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund was created in March 2020 with the intention to combat, contain and provide relief measures for the COVID-19

pandemic in India. Since its inception, the PM CARES Fund has been shrouded in secrecy, raising several concerns regarding the utilisation of the Fund, purportedly meant for public welfare. In fact even a copy of the trust deed vide which the fund was set up has been denied under the RTI Act claiming that the fund is not a public authority! This not only militates against the principle of public accountability but appears to be contrary to the RTI Act, as a majority of the trustees are ministers in their ex-officio capacity thereby effectively ensuring control of the government. Further, it is hosted within the premises of the PMO, uses the national emblem and the domain name of the website uses the same suffix as official websites (gov.in). Information regarding donors, amount received and utilization of the fund is not available on the PM Cares website or any other government website and has been denied under the RTI Act.

4. Accountability laws and structures remain non-starters

Despite passage of several years, the Lokpal has pretty much been a non-starter, first due to the delay of 4 years in the appointment process and then due to the government delaying promulgation of rules for another year! The Whistleblower Protection Law which was enacted in 2014 is yet to be operationalised by promulgating rules. The Covid crisis showed how such a law could have been of immense use as from across India there were horrifying reports of the pathetic state of health care facilities, under reporting and fudging of data, negligence and refusal to treat those suffering from Covid. In fact several HCs had to step in to oversee administration of hospitals.

List of Demands

1. Effective Functioning of Information Commissions

– Although challenges thrown up by the crisis are immense, Commissions like the CIC, have shown that it is possible for commissioners to continue to hear and adjudicate on cases despite a lockdown. It is absolutely critical that all information commissions conduct hearings and dispose cases to ensure people can exercise their fundamental right to information and put in place mechanisms that use people friendly technology to hold hearings in case physical hearings are not possible.

– Even as commissions become fully functional, cases related to life and liberty - especially matters regarding food distribution, social security, health and COVID 19-related issues – must be prioritized and taken up in a time-bound manner by the ICs for hearing and disposal. This would require the commissions to set up systems to identify and fast track such cases.

– Commissions must direct public authorities to disseminate relevant information under Section 4 of the RTI Act in local languages and in the most accessible manner.

– During a time where physical distancing is the norm, State governments must take immediate steps to create portals for the submission RTI Applications and First Appeals modelled on the Central Government portal : <https://rtionline.gov.in/> to ensure that people can continue to file RTI application and seek information.

2. Proactive Disclosure and Monitoring

– All information regarding implementation of schemes and utilisation of funds should be made available on government websites. It must also be widely disseminated through off-line modes like sms, whatsapp, public announcements and prominent poster/boards/wall paintings in villages and slums and at points of disbursement such as ration shops, banks and hospitals to ensure that those without access to the internet are also able to obtain the necessary information.

– Transparency is essential to ensure money is spent on the most pressing priority needs during the crisis. Relevant governments should proactively disclose information about money received and disbursed under various relief funds, including the PM CARES Fund and various Chief Minister relief funds, to enable public scrutiny. Declare all such funds to be public authorities under the RTI Act.

– Proactive disclosure of all foreign aid, bilateral and multi-lateral, and loans received during the COVID period and the uses to which they have been put in the country.

3. Operationalise accountability laws and institutions

– Properly operationalise the Lokpal Act.

– Operationalise the Whistle Blowers Protection Act.

– Enact the Grievance Redressal Bill (Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011), which lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in 2014, to provide for an accessible, decentralized and responsive system for time-bound redress of citizens' grievances in the states and at the centre, to empower people to realize their rights and entitlements.

– Rigorous implementation of the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy for all legislative and policy making and reform, especially in light of the Supreme Court's observations that the draft document must be translated into local languages for the consultation to be widespread and meaningful.

– Revive and re-introduce the National Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill in order to create a credible mechanism for receiving and inquiring into complaints of misbehaviour and incapacity of judges of the constitutional courts.

4. **Roll back regressive amendments made to various laws** like the IT Act, RP Act, RBI Act and Companies Act which enable unlimited anonymous funding of political parties through electoral bonds by corporates including Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies.

5. **Complete transparency** about all proposals considered, plans approved, consultancies and contracts issued and other actions taken including funding approved and disbursed for the Central Vista Project in Delhi.

6. **Complete transparency about the quantum of land** (individual village and town-wise) included in land banks and those handed over to the Department of Industries and Commerce for industrial development **in Jammu and Kashmir**.

7. **Proactive disclosure** to all information related to government action & response, spending, testing, deaths, details of agreements signed with private hospitals with regard to COVID-19

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Sourced from National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW)

Sector/Issue, Tags: Women Rights, Discrimination, Violence

Notable new Schemes / Guidelines/ Financial Allocations announced during COVID-19 period:

1. Pension Allotment

2. Rations and Free cooked meals to tide over the problem of hunger and starvation

Brief Status of concerned Sector during COVID-19

KEY ISSUES

1. Economic Crisis: There has been a sharp decline in family incomes as there is a loss of employment due to the sudden declaration of the lockdown.

2. Rise in crimes/violence against women: starvation, disease, lack of access to healthcare and unknown mental trauma during this period. According to National Commission for Women, 116 complaints were received between March 2-8, 2020, that increased to 257 between March 23- April 1, 2020; 69 of these complaints were of domestic violence. Other complaints included right to live with dignity, which increased to 77 from 35 cases earlier.

3. With loss of livelihoods, women have faced starvation, indebtedness, extreme stress, unsafe migration and non-COVID-19 morbidities beyond the reach of treatment.

4. Over 70% of the public health system comprises of frontline women workers, as health workers, cleaners, paramedics, caregivers, sanitation workers and are among the lowest paid and at the bottom of the health hierarchy.

ASSESSMENT

1. The government response has been half-hearted and patchy.
2. The withdrawal of rations, cooked meals, access to healthcare has had major repercussions. There are regular reports of women losing their children at birth, and sometimes their own lives, due to inaccessibility of healthcare services.
3. The regulation and capping of fees in private hospitals has been skewed. It was an attempt to regulate prices of Covid patients, but the parallel rise of fees in other services has impacted women most. There have also been several cases of pregnant women being turned away from hospitals on trying for admission at the time of delivery in some cases leading to their deaths.
4. With the increasing numbers of COVID-19 patients, health-care workers including nurses (of whom approximately 88.9% are women) remain much more vulnerable to the virus. They had limited/no access to basic protective equipment and infrastructure.
5. The response to the government has been of repression or of announcements that were implemented on paper. The role of the civil society in fighting for rations, pensions, access to healthcare, wages shows the gravity of the challenges that women have had to face.

List of Demands

1. Strengthen the eco-redressal system of services and build coherence across all institutional services of the state (helplines, legal aid, police reporting, transport services, shelters, etc.).
2. A gender lens to provision of economic and social security relief measures, including food security and other special measures for vulnerable women, who are the last to eat in most families. Married, single, differently-abled and all other inclusive categories of non-binary need to be provided with life-saving and livelihood packages with dignity.
3. On the political front, the long standing demand for including women in policy making needs to be reiterated and enforced. Till women are not allowed to voice solutions to problems of hunger, security, access to healthcare, discrimination and marginalisation, the exclusion and invisibilisation of their identity will continue. The stakeholders need to assert their voices.
4. Ensure Universal Maternity Entitlements and remove conditionalities that exclude women from benefiting from its provisions.
5. Remove unconstitutional conditionalities in any welfare scheme. Prioritise all vulnerable groups including single women and minority women headed households.
6. Treat women as Project Affected Persons in all relief and rehabilitation measures, Ensure legal and financial aid and alternative means of employment and livelihood for women displaced due to infrastructure, urbanisation and industrial projects.
7. A minimum universal non-contributory pension of 50% of minimum wage for all women above the age of 55 years and for all women in vulnerable categories irrespective of age.

Action Oriented Engagement & Recommendations

1. Regularise ICDS, ASHA, Midday Meal and other scheme workers with wages, pensions and other social security benefits.
2. Provide hot, cooked, nutritious meals with eggs and fruit or take home rations for all pregnant and lactating mothers at Anganwadi Centres.
3. Ensure at least Rs. 6000 as Maternity Entitlement to all pregnant and lactating women as was the provision in the NFSA.
4. Enact legislation for empowerment of the Transgender community and adequate economic and social support for the LGBTQ community.
5. Ensure autonomous functioning of National and State Commissions for Women with members selected through an institutionalised, independent and transparent process and no political appointees. Ensure 33% reservation for women in all commissions.
6. Ensure prevention of all crimes against women by providing adequate budget allocation and support survivors of crimes against women. Provide adequate fast track courts to ensure justice in such cases within a legally bound time frame.
7. Universalise old age pension and ensure pension for all single women starting particularly with those from the vulnerable sections.

CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY

- There are a lot of women led movements seeking justice. A few need critical attention:
1. The deforestation caused by mining rights given across the country from Kashmir to Kerala, need immediate attention.
 2. Calls for action, like that given by NFIW to stop child and human trafficking due to the lockdown needs to be addressed.
 3. The helpline proposed to be set up for senior citizens within two days to be also made available for pregnant women to enable them to access medical facilities and to arrange for transportation for them to visit hospitals for check-ups, delivery and post-delivery consultation, whenever required. The helpline number shall be publicized adequately in the newspapers and social media and also through Delhi Police wherever possible.

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



INAUGURAL SESSION
AUGUST 16 • 11 AM


SPEAKERS
JUSTICE A. P. SHAH
SONI SORI
JIGNESH MEVANI
SYEDA HAMEED

SESSIONS TO FOLLOW

- HEALTH • 16TH AUGUST • 3PM - 6PM
- FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION
17TH AUGUST • 10AM - 1PM
- EDUCATION • 17TH AUGUST • 3PM - 6PM
- ENVIRONMENT • 18TH AUGUST • 10AM - 1PM
- TECHNOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE
18TH AUGUST • 3PM - 6PM
- AGRICULTURE • 19TH AUGUST • 10AM - 1PM
- ECONOMY • 19TH AUGUST • 3PM - 6PM
- IMPACT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES-1:
GENDER AND RELIGION • 20TH AUGUST • 10AM - 1PM
- INDUSTRY, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT • 20TH AUGUST • 3PM - 6PM
- IMPACT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES-2:
CASTE, AGE AND DISABILITY • 21ST AUGUST • 10AM - 1PM
- CIVIL LIBERTIES, LAWS AND GOVERNANCE • 21ST AUGUST • 3PM - 6PM

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 2:
HEALTH
16TH AUGUST • 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

SPEAKERS
Abhay Shukla – Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA)
Ameer Khan – SOCHARA and JSA
Amilata Gaba – GTU and JSA
Amsha Nidhi – JSA
Indrani – O.P. Jindal Global University and JSA
Renu Khanna – SAHJ and JSA
Sandhya Y.K. – SAHJOG and JSA
Shakuntala – JSA Mahazathi
K.K. Shailaja – Minister of Health and Social Justice, Government of Kerala (TBC)

TOPICS
Systemic challenges and systematic demands in government health system in the times of COVID-19
Private Health Sector: high costs, denial of patients rights, need for regulation and public control
Rights of Healthcare and allied workers during and beyond COVID-19
Vulnerable Populations in the times of COVID-19
Democratisation of the Health System

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 3:
FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION
17TH AUGUST • 10 AM - 1 PM

TOPICS / KEY DEMANDS
Universal food entitlements
• Universal nutritious rations; without mandatory aadhaar
• Comprehensive MDM and ICDS nutrition for all children
• Universal maternity entitlements
• Free community kitchens

SPEAKERS
More than 25 speakers from different parts of India

ANCHOR:
Right to Food Campaign

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com • # JantaParliament • # JantaAwaaz
@rozzi_roti | righttofood | rozzirotiabhiyan

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM




SESSION 4:
EDUCATION
17TH AUGUST • 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

MAIN SPEAKERS
Prof. Sharitha Sinha, Former Chairperson NCFER, ex-Principal Officer
Prof. Namita Nazari, Delhi University Teachers Association (DU,TA)
Prof. Madhu Prasad, President member in All India Forum for Right to Education (AIRTE)
Ambarish Rai, National Convener RTE Forum
Ashu Ghosh, President, Jawahar' Nehru University Students' Union
Ashutosh, Education Minister, Children's Parliament, NINEEMINE
Asha Mishra and Dr. C. Ramakrishnan, BGVS
Javed Ali Khan, Member of Parliament

TOPICS
RTE Act 2009 extension from pre-primary to secondary education
National Education Policy, 2020
Online Education and Digital Divide
Privatisation and STMS project
School Financing and closure
Social Inclusion
Other Issues

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 5:
ENVIRONMENT
18TH AUGUST • 10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED
Kalpavriksh
National Alliance of Peoples' Movement
Environment Support Group
Greenpeace India
Vedluttu
Fridays for Future India
Extinction Rebellion India
LetIndiaBreathe
Parivaran Suraksha Samiti
Vikalp Sangam

TOPICS
Discourse of environmental governance in India with specific focus on EA 2020 notifications, mining and other extractive industries, Climate Crises, Water Issues, Natural Ecosystems and Wildlife, shrinking democratic spaces, and alternative peoples' agenda on environment (with a special focus on youth)

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 6:
TECHNOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE
18TH AUGUST • 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

A critical appraisal of the government's policy agenda on technology, exclusion and surveillance

TOPICS
1. Pandemic tech: Evaluating technological and surveillance interventions adopted to combat the pandemic
2. Digital Exclusion: Access to the internet and the right to health, education, access to justice, and the ease of business
3. Technology-enabled exclusion, and Aadhaar's continuing stranglehold of the welfare system
4. Listening to Communities: an intersectional, LGBTQI and feminist informed approach to technology
5. Surveillance Reform: facial recognition technology, workers' surveillance
6. Data and Databasing: understanding personal and non-personal databases
7. Threats to Freedom of Speech and Expression
8. Technology in governance: Outlining the government's constitutional and ethical obligations

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 7:
AGRICULTURE
19TH AUGUST • 10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

SPEAKERS
Afsar Jafri
Ajit Navle
Dinesh Abrol
Hannan Mollah
Hira Jhangplani
Jesu Rethinam Christy
Jitendra Chaudhury
Kavita Kuruganti
Kiran Vissa
Krishna Prasad
Mamidilaya Gramam
Rythu Coolie Sangam
Dr. Neelam Gorhe
P. Sainath
R. Ramakumar
Rajkumar Sinha
Rani More
S. P. Shukla
Sagar Ramdas
Sejal Dand
Soma K. P.
T. Peter
Ulka Mahajan
Vijoo Krishnan
Wekowee Tsuhah
Yogendra Yadav

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM




SESSION 8:
ECONOMY
19TH AUGUST • 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

SPEAKERS
Dr. TM Thomas Isaac
Com. Sitaram Yechury
Prof. Prabhat Patnaik
Prof. CP Chandrasekhar
Dr. Jaya Mehta
Paranjay Guha Thakurta
D Thomas Franco
Prof. Ritu Dewan
KE Raghunathan
Pooja Parvati

Organisations involved:
Economic Research Foundation
Centre for Financial Accountability

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 9: 20TH AUGUST • 10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM
IMPACT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES-1 (GENDER AND RELIGION)

Focus on
LGBTQIA • Sex workers • Women • Religious minorities

Issues
Rights • Violence • Stigma • Discrimination

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 10:
INDUSTRY, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
20TH AUGUST • 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

SPEAKERS
Amarjeet Kaur- All India Trade Union Congress
Shiv Gopal Mishra- All India Railworkers Federation
SQ Zama- Bharat Kavidha Mazdoor Sangh
Baba Adhav- Hamal Panchayat
Rajeev Khandelwal- Aajeevika Bureau
Niranjan and Nicolas Murmu- Migrant Workers
Binca Joseph- United Nurses Association
Nitin Pawar- All India Transport Workers, Pune Kishan Panchayat
Subhash Bhatnagar- National Campaign Committee for Contribution Labour
Sitaram and Jashikha- Unions affected worker
Sabina Dewan- Just Jobs Network
Sheikh Saleuddin- Indian Federation of Agricultural Worker Unions
Clifton Rozario- AICCU
Fazlur Rahman Ansari- Textile Trader
Amit Basole- Azim Premji University
Babu Mathew- National Law School of India University
Dharmendra Kumar- ICI Watch
Vishwas Litagi- Trade Union Joint Action Committee
Sister Uday- Mangalore Domestic Workers Union and Configuration of Free Trade Union of India

Join us in the discussion through the following Zoom details:
Meeting ID: 961 1108 8102. Passcode: 586492

Online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM




SESSION 11:
IMPACT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES-2 (CASTE, AGE AND DISABILITY)
21ST AUGUST • 10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

Issues dealing with
Adivasis • Notified and de-notified tribes
Dalits • Disabled • Elderly

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

जनता संसद
JANTA PARLIAMENT
AUGUST 16-21, 2020 • 10 AM - 6 PM



SESSION 12:
CIVIL LIBERTIES, LAWS AND GOVERNANCE
21ST AUGUST • 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

SPEAKERS
Bimal Julka
Anitha Sethi
Anjali Bhardwaj
Nikhil Dey
Venkatesh Nayak
Pradip Pradhan
Pankaj Jogi
Rakesh Dubbudu
Angela Rangad
Benish Mehraj
Gazi Muzamil
Naveed Bukhtiyar
Nazeer Lone
Gautam Kothari
Shalish Gandhi
Ashish Ranjan Jha
Justice Madan B. Lokur
Arun Shourie
Prasanna
Alok Prasanna
V Suresh
Apoorvanand
Shehla Rashid
Shahrukh Alam
Mihir Desai
Lara Jesari
Devika Prasad
Vrinda Grover
MP Pawan Khera (INC)
MP Mahua Moitra (TMC)
MP D Ravikumar (VCK)

Join online at jantaparliament.wordpress.com

SECTION

3

Resolutions passed by the
Janta Parliament

RESOLUTIONS ON
HEALTH

Resolution 1

Make the Right to healthcare a justiciable right through the enactment of appropriate legislations both at Centre and State levels.

Resolution 2

Expand and strengthen the public healthcare system to ensure quality health care for all, increase substantially the public expenditure on Health care, to 3.5% of GDP in next five years

Resolution 3

Ensure effective, generalized implementation of the Clinical Establishment Act (2010) immediately

Universal implementation of the Patient Rights Charter

Resolution 4

Adopting an effective model of public engagement with the private healthcare sector

Resolution 5

Safety and security of Health care workers involved in COVID 19 job

Regularise all contractual health workers

Resolution 6

Increase public investment in education and training

Overhaul the National Medical Council (NMC) and the Nursing Council of India along democratic lines

Resolution 7

Make health care fully accessible. Cater to all health needs and requirements of vulnerable populations

End discrimination

Resolution 8

Ensure comprehensive treatment and care for persons with mental health issues

Recognise gender based violence as a public health issue

Resolution 9

Establish participatory Right to Health Care councils at state and district levels in each state

Universalise Community based planning and monitoring of health services

Resolution 10

Effective, prompt and just grievance redressal system

The privacy of citizens should not be compromised through official digital health platforms

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Resolution 1

ON UNIVERSAL PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM WITHOUT MANDATORY AADHAAR

- Universalisation of PDS: In order to avoid exclusion errors, PDS benefits must be made universal for all residents without making Aadhaar/UID mandatory.
- Double the Antyodaya Coverage: The coverage of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana must be doubled to cover all vulnerable groups such as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), old people and single women.
- Grains, Pulses and Edible Oils: 10kg of grains, 1.5 kg pulses/dal and 800gms of cooking oil must be provided per person per month, through the PDS, at subsidised prices
- Compensatory Food Security Allowance: Provide compensatory food security allowance for at least 100 million families who have been excluded from the NFSA since 2013, despite population growth
- Compensate Starvation Deaths: Provide compensation for all families with starvation deaths
- Extend PMGKY: Extend the distribution of free grains and dal under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana beyond November 2020.

Resolution 2

ON RATIONS FOR MIGRANTS AND ALL VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

- Protect vulnerable communities: Expand to a universal PDS in a manner where migrant workers, homeless, sex workers, trans people and all vulnerable communities can access the PDS entitlements from their current location of residence, irrespective of whether they have documents such as ration cards, residence proof etc.
- Extend Atma-Nirbhar: Expand Atma Nirbhar Bharat entitlement for 6 months

Resolution 3

ON COMMUNITY KITCHENS AND FEEDING CENTRES

- Community Kitchens in urban areas: Free canteens serving subsidised and nutritious meals must be set up in all cities and towns, akin to the Amma canteens in Tamil Nadu
- Rural Feeding: In rural areas, open up school mid day meals or anganwadi centres for provision of food to destitute, aged, single women and disabled.
- Flood and Cyclone Areas: A number of regions in the country, especially in Eastern India, are affected by a double burden of covid and cyclones/floods. These areas need special attention to ensure all of the above, and along with it urgently ensuring compensation, support for rebuilding houses, etc. are provided. Provision of cooked food in these areas must be set up immediately, along with a special package of rations that includes cereals, pulses, oil, eggs, milk, fruits and vegetables.

Resolution 4

ON COMPREHENSIVE ICDS AND MDM NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN

- Provide home delivery or spot feeding of a comprehensive nutrition package with cereals, pulses, oil and eggs for children under fourteen years, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls till schools and anganwadis re-open
- Egg and Fruit: Eggs, milk and fruits must be provided in all schools and anganwadis. For children who do not eat eggs additional provision of fruits or milk can be made.
- Crèches: The National Creche Scheme must be strengthened and expanded. Twenty-five percent of anganwadi centres must be converted to anganwadi-cum-crèches. All MGNREGA worksites must have provision of child care services in accordance with the Act.

- Mid-Day Meal extension: The mid-day meal scheme should be extended to all children up to class XII.

- Implement the full range of ICDS services and child care including growth monitoring, referral services, nutrition and health counselling.

- Make ICDS supplementary nutrition in anganwadis and mid-day meals in schools an essential service.

Resolution 5

ON UNIVERSAL MATERNITY ENTITLEMENTS

- Maternity Entitlements under NFSA: Maternity entitlements under NFSA must be provided to all pregnant and lactating women, without any conditionalities. All the backlog of maternity entitlements must be cleared immediately and for the next six months, the maternity benefit under PMMVY should be given in advance in one instalment. The amount of benefit should be increased and regularly updated according to inflation. Further, legislative provisions need to be made to ensure universal and wage-linked maternity benefits to all women.

- Community Meals: take-home rations or Free, hot and cooked nutritious midday meals with eggs and fruits must be provided for pregnant women and lactating mothers in anganwadi centres.

- Expand Ujjwala cooking gas fuel benefit to all priority and antyodaya households

- Ensure urgent decentralised monitoring frameworks, grievance redressal mechanisms and penalties for non-implementation of all entitlements

RESOLUTIONS ON EDUCATION

Resolution 1 ON LANGUAGE, MLE, AND TRIBAL

– Revise the new National Education Policy to clarify the questions regarding the multi-lingual education and medium of instruction being the mother tongue especially with respect to tribal learners. Languages of tribals should be mentioned specifically in the language section and languages of tribal children should be the medium of instructions for tribal children.

– Recruit teachers from tribal communities in tribal areas; make special provision to build capacity of teachers from tribal communities.

– Textbooks should be available in tribal languages up to class 8 and supplementary materials should be also available in large number for the tribal community.

– Provisions to be made for establishing and strengthening institutions for both translations to multiple local languages including tribal languages and preservation of tribal languages. Private schools also need to be regulated for use of mother tongue and concrete plans need to be developed to ensure that all schools adhere to this and not on wherever possible basis.

Resolution 2 ON GROWING PRIVITIZATION OF EDUCATION

– Make necessary steps to strengthen the public education system, ensure it is adequately financed, resourced and empowered

– Develop and enforce a comprehensive, regulatory framework for private schools and non-state actors in education and put in place mechanisms to monitor private education providers and hold them accountable for those practices that have a negative impact on the enjoyment of the right to education

– Issue a notification under the provisions of Section 10 (2) (1) of the Disaster Management Act, putting in place a moratorium on private schools hiking fees until normalcy is restored and institute a helpline for parents to report grievances and ensure that they are responded to within 48 hours

– Ensure that all states effectively implement the mandate of 25% reservation of entry-level seats in private schools for economically and socially disadvantaged children under RTE Section 12(1)(c) and extend the policy till Class 12th and issue policy guidelines with respect to reimbursements for pre-primary admissions under RTE Section 12(1)(c) and disburse the stipulated share of funds to state governments for the same. The government needs to take concrete action to address discrimination and exclusion against children admitted.

– Scrap the proposal of development of a national PPP framework as part of the STARS project mandate, FDI in education and other actions which result in a greater role for the private sector in education.

Resolution 3 ON FINANCING SCHOOL CLOSURE

– Strengthen all schools in the neighborhood and make them RTE compliant. It is all the more important to reopen closed schools for enrolling the children of migrant families who moved to the villages due to the COVID-19 crisis.

– For this Government should spend at least 6 percent GDP on education

– Stop SATH-E like initiatives and build schools in far-flung tribal regions where villages are situated far and due to distance, children are still not able to attend school. It is also important to consult local authorities and civil society than profit-making international consulting firms on issues of school education.

– People's representatives should take up the responsibility of implementing RTE Act in their constituency in letter and spirit.

Resolution 4 ON MAKING RTE A JUSTICIABLE RIGHT

– Amend RTE Act to include children up to 18 years, in line with the internationally recognized definition of childhood, by including ECCE, Preschool and Higher Secondary Education as a justiciable and enforceable right

– Strengthen public provisions for ECCE, School Education, and Higher Secondary Education for all under 18 years as per Right to Education Act 2009, and quality standards set by National ECCE Policy 2013 and National Education Policy 2020.

Resolution 5 ON NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY – ATTACK ON INDIA'S FEDERAL STRUCTURE

– Withdraw proposals in NEP 2020 to constitute agencies and mechanisms that centralise planning, governance, determination of curricular and pedagogic parameters, research, accreditation, entrance examinations and decision-making

– Provide for the required provisions in NEP 2020 to strengthen the state/UT-level bodies like State Planning Boards, State Councils of Higher Education, State Councils of Educational Research and Training, District Institutes of Education and Training and Block/Cluster-level support structure

– Under Article 246 of the Constitution, transfer education from the Concurrent List to the State List (Schedule VII) through Constitutional Amendment in the forthcoming session of the Parliament.

Resolution 6 ON NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY – DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION

– Provide common courses up to Class 12 and the 'choice' among streams of subjects be introduced only at +2 level, as is presently the case;

– Provide for exams of one appropriate academic standard for all;

– Provide formal education in appropriately equipped schools to all children, with fully eligible and trained permanent teachers appointed at all levels; and

– Withdraw all policy provisions for recruitment of 'volunteers, social workers, counselors, local eminent persons, school alumni, active and healthy senior citizens and local community members, public-spirited or otherwise' at various stages of education for informal undefined roles altogether.

Resolution 7

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONSTITUTION

- Withdraw all policy provisions from NEP 2020 that undermine Reservations (both admissions & recruitment-promotions) and other dimensions of Social Justice through the concept of 'merit' that essentially represents socio-economic 'privileges'
- Provide Reservation quota (both admissions & recruitment-promotions) as an integral part of 'Merit' as well; and
- Restore the entire prevailing Constitutional agenda of Social Justice (including Reservations in both admissions & recruitment-promotions) in all aspects of education policy from 'ECCE to Higher Education (including Professional Education)' for admissions, recruitment-promotions, additional socio-cultural and pedagogic support,
- Access to scholarships/fellowships/subsidies and provision of hostels at all stages of education.

Resolution 8

ON HEALTH NUTRITION AND PROTECTION

- Steps should be taken for child protection, including identification of children at risk of violence and abuse during the lockdown. Safety of children in shelter homes and on the migration routes is essential. Members of Village Level Child Protection Committee must be tasked for tracking children at risk, especially girls who are vulnerable to early marriage or trafficking. Schools must be instructed to track all children, especially girls, once normalcy returns to ensure that no child drops out.
- Ensure the right to education, health and nutrition of children especially from migrant families affected because of COVID-19 pandemic. Increase budgetary allocation for Mid-Day Meal, food and nutrition and health. To safeguard food security of India's children, ensure smooth implementation of the notification for home delivery of mid-day meals.
- Ensure all teachers' vacancies are filled with immediate effect and teachers are adequately trained and sensitised to provide psycho-social and emotional support to children, once schools remain.
- Recognise ICDS as essential service and Anganwadi workers as essential workers
- NEP 2020 should be tabled in parliament for discussion.-
- Budgetary allocations are necessary to prepare schools for classroom teaching while ensuring physical distancing, filling of all vacancies, and provision of adequate facilities for handwashing, sanitation, and safe drinking water.

RESOLUTIONS ON

ENVIRONMENT

Resolution 1

ON STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY REGIME

- Withdraw clearances given to mining, industrial, and infrastructural projects in ecologically and culturally sensitive areas in the last 5 months, and auctioning of coal mining blocks;
- Withdraw the draft EIA notification 2020, and begin widespread consultation to draft a comprehensive environmental regulatory regime, coordinated by a team of independent people with substantial environmental expertise (including from local communities), formed in consultation with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on S&T and Environment, and including a thorough, participatory review of experience of the existing EIA notification;
- Put a moratorium on diversion of natural ecosystems for mining, industrial, and infrastructural/development projects (other than very small ones necessary for community basic needs), till such a regulatory regime is in place;
- Assess India's commitments under international agreements relating to environment, and take legal and programmatic steps to fulfil these;
- Place ecological sustainability at the centre of all planning, budgeting, and programmes related to development, rather than being considered an externality or a formality for clearance purposes.

Resolution 2

ON ELIMINATING POLLUTION

- Take urgent steps to reduce, eliminate, and replace sources of pollution, such that over a 10 to 15 year period, the quality of air, water and soil is brought to levels safe for human and other animal use; this includes substantially replacing private with public transport and harmful chemicals with safe substances, eliminating sources of noise, and treating all wastewater before discharging into waterbodies;
- To enable the above, substantially revise the National Clean Air Plan, and amend the Water

and Air Acts, and relevant notifications under the Environment Protection Act, increasing the autonomy of all pollution control and monitoring institutions under them, ensuring transparent procedures for appointing independent chairs and members; also specify ambient water quality standards for different uses and a statutory process for publicly determining the most beneficial use for each water body, thereby setting effluent discharge permits for all activities in the catchment.

Resolution 3 ON TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

– Review and revise India's national climate action plan, with widespread participation of communities on the ground likely to be most affected (especially their marginalised sections such as women, children, landless, Dalits and adivasis), civil society organisations, and other independent experts, with a view to making it more robust and impactful through substantial upward revision of goals for mitigation and adaptation, specific target for emission peaking, significantly reducing elite demand for power, reorienting the national energy policy away from fossil fuels, large hydro and nuclear towards decentralised renewable energy, and prioritised actions to help climate refugees;

– Take steps for environmental justice and a just transition that include reparation and wealth redistribution from elites and rich populations that have caused much of the problem, including the increasing millions hit by more severe climatic disasters, to marginalised sections who are facing the brunt of the crises, including through climate and ecological taxes on the rich.

– South Asia being one of the two most climate vulnerable regions in the world, and our climate and environmental security being inextricably intertwined with our ecological connections to our neighbours, revitalize regional cooperation mechanisms like SAARC with a strong environmental focus, and enable continuous dialogue with all neighbours on achieving ecological security and peace in the region.

Resolution 4 ON REGENERATING, RESTORING, CONSERVING NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS

– Regenerate and conserve natural ecosystems (including forests, coastal & marine, grassland, wetland, desert and mountain areas) over at least a third of India, enabling local communities that live amidst them to govern and sustainably manage them, including as Community Conserved Areas;

– Pass a comprehensive natural ecosystem conservation policy, and promulgate conservation and community governance laws for all ecosystems; this includes a new Forest Policy that prioritises decentralised decision-making, local livelihoods, integrated conservation and sustainable use, and transparent and accountable regulation; a new Indian Forest Act that is in consonance with the FRA and PESA, making the forest bureaucracy accountable to local communities; and similar laws for coastal and marine, wetland, grassland, desert and mountain ecosystems.

– Stop eviction and dispossession of communities in the name of wildlife conservation, militarisation of project tiger areas, conversion of agricultural lands near protected areas into tourism resorts, and afforestation (including through the use of CAMPA funds) on lands communities depend on;

– Recognise the rights of nature as a Constitutional right, building on the traditional respect that all traditions in India have accorded it, using recent court judgements recognising the rights of Ganga, Yamuna and animals, but with elaboration of what such rights would mean, and clear guidelines on how this would involve respect to all cultures, and not affect fundamental livelihoods and food security of nature-dependent communities.

Resolution 5 ON STRENGTHENING SELF-GOVERNANCE AND SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH VILLAGE AND TOWN ASSEMBLIES

– Fully empower institutions of local self-governance, including gram sabhas, area/ward sabhas, and other relevant customary, to be part of all decisions affecting their lives, including planning and budgeting processes, through appropriate revisions of panchayat laws (or others relevant to Schedule 5

and 6 areas and states with special constitutional status), laws recognising community rights (including through the ecosystem and rights related legislation suggested above), and through legally mandatory prior informed consent;

– Support such institutions to build capacity and to generate resources, building on traditional or local community ecological knowledge, for the above, in a manner that ensures full representation of marginalised sections to ensure social justice;

– Enable local, self-reliant economies, through all relevant schemes and programmes including MGNREGS, using local and new skills and resources, catering first and foremost to local basic needs, and building larger trade on this (rather than undermining it); through such measures, significantly reduce distress rural-urban migration, and enable workers who have gone back home in COVID times to stay on if they want to with the security of dignified livelihoods;

– Pass a framework law, flowing from the 74th Constitutional Amendment, spelling out the goals and structure of decentralised democratic urban governance empowering urban local bodies (ULBs) like neighbourhood assemblies/area sabhas; require state laws to be amended accordingly, including autonomous control of ULBs over local water bodies, green spaces, setting of green taxes, municipal public transport, and accountability of para-stals like water supply and sewerage boards to ULBs;

– In all of the above, ensure central participation of the most marginalised sections, including women, children, landless, 'disabled', adivasis, and dalits; and of youth.

Resolution 6 ON GENERATING ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE, DIGNIFIED LIVELIHOODS AS PART OF COVID RECOVERY

– Put maximum resources in a recovery package towards generating tens of millions of ecologically sustainable and dignified livelihoods, such as: small-farmer based organic agriculture (shifting current fertilizer subsidy completely into this over 5 years), assistance to pastoralists, fishers and forest-dwellers, decentralized renewable energy and water harvesting, dispersed production of goods and services with a strong biomass and handmade

base, integrated health services, cottage industries including crafts, and a massive livelihood programme based on regenerating the country's degraded soils and water systems;

– Assist community-to-community learning exchanges and civil society networks that can enable dissemination of lessons from successful initiatives, and direct government agencies to use such examples, for the above purpose;

– Fundamentally re-orient the Atmanirbharbharat packages, which currently favour corporatisation and big players, to the above approach, ensuring that they are fully accessible to and in the control of the most marginalised people in society;

– Abandon the urbanization and energy-intensive infrastructure centric growth policies, and reorient the economy to a more sustainable and equitable, lower energy and material consumption, labour and knowledge centric growth trajectory;

– Revise the draft National Fisheries Policy 2020 and the PM-MSY scheme which are currently oriented towards culture fisheries and big investment, in a manner that will benefit small scale fisheries and food security and livelihoods of traditional fishing communities;

– In all of the above, prioritise the most marginalised sections, including women, children, landless, 'disabled', adivasis, and dalits.

Resolution 7 ON IMPROVING FLOOD MANAGEMENT

– Bring operation of all reservoirs of live storage capacity over 50 Million Cubic Meters under the proposed Dam Safety Act with updating of rule curves & emergency action plans keeping in mind updated river cross sections and carrying capacity assessments in the downstream area; similarly, the annual embankments maintenance should be a legal requirement; draft dam safety act should also be amended to bring it under independent authority;

– Bring flood forecasting under an independent agency for flood management, whose mandate should include rivers, reservoirs and areas;

– Ensure environmental clearance and hydrological impact assessment for any intervention in any river/ river basin;

– Ensure an effective and transparent flood relief mechanism and timely disbursement of National Disaster Relief Fund and State Disaster Relief Fund;

– At the end of each flood season, issue a report about what happened with respect to flood disasters, reservoirs, embankments and disaster management, through independent assessments that will also recommend fixing accountability

Resolution 8

ON IMPROVING URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT

– Urgently bring out a National Urban Water Policy in a consultative way, driven by a committee of independent minded persons; this should also define a water smart city, including right to water and equitable water distribution, and steps like consumer accessible water flow metres in homes and offices;

– The policy should drive towards use of the rain to the maximum possible extent within the city through rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge (avoiding any pollution risk), local water storages, promotion of water recharging pavements, rooftops and campuses, ensuring decentralised sewage treatment and recycling;

– Ensure that a city gets water from external sources only after exhausting all the local options mentioned above;

– Enact legal measures for urban drainage and floodplain; and enable every city to have its flood forecasting and disaster management authority.

RESOLUTIONS ON

TECHNOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE

Resolution 1

ON THE ISSUE OF AADHAAR-RELATED DENIALS OF RATIONS, PENSIONS, AND MGNREGA WAGES

– Direct all the State Governments to provide ration, pension, NREGA wages and all such benefits which are paid for from the Consolidated Fund of India, to all the beneficiaries as per their entitlement- without insisting on production of Aadhaar number or its authentication.

– Desist from using Aadhaar for any purpose not expressly allowed by the five-judge bench judgment of the Supreme Court in Justice Puttaswamy v. Union of India decided on 26th September, 2018, particularly, for any purpose connected with children such as for entrance examination registrations, school or college admissions etc.; or for the provision of health services or health insurance;

– Draw up a scheme of compensation for all NFSA and pension beneficiaries and MGNREGA workers for the period in which they lost their entitlements or wages due to non-seeding or non-authentication of Aadhaar or other technical reasons.

Resolution 2

ON THE ISSUE OF ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND AVAILING INTERNET-BASED SERVICES INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION, AND JUSTICE

– Ensure free and equitable access to telecommunications, Internet and other modes of communication services across the length and breadth of the country through suitable policy and budgetary allocations;

– Ensure that any restriction in access to telecommunication, internet and communication services be made in a transparent manner, only for a limited period of time, complying with principles of compelling necessity and proportionality, periodically tested for review and in the least restrictive manner;

– Ensure that access to education, health, employment opportunities, governance, justice and welfare schemes is not made available exclusively through a particular technology or communication medium alone, and that every effort is made to provide suitable online and offline alternative access mechanisms to prevent exclusion

Resolution 3

ON THE ISSUE OF DATABASING AND/OR COMMODIFICATION OF DATA

– Introduce appropriate amendments in Personal Data Protection Bill and other laws to ensure that such legislations respect, guarantee, protect the right to privacy of all citizens, even as they provide for and realize the highest standards of transparency for the government and other public authorities.

– Encourage and promote privacy- respecting business practices instead of encouraging greater commodification and commercialization of data

– Adopt transparent and consultative procedures in designing laws and policies relating to data protection and governance

– Desist from using extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic as an excuse to push for unjustified, rights-violating databasing practices.

Resolution 4**ON THE ISSUE OF THE DATA RIGHTS OF WORKERS, INCLUDING MIGRANT WORKERS**

- Recognise the data rights of platform workers and their importance in ensuring the workers' well-being.
- Recognise community harm and enable collective bargaining on data rights to prevent data-extractive relationships that lead to surveillance and discrimination
- Ensure that workers are actively engaged to form bottom-up data stewardships and enable them to negotiate with platforms.

Resolution 5**ON THE ISSUE OF DIGITAL COURTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

- Ensure that digital courts are built in a people centric manner considering the lived experiences of all actors involved whether litigant, lawyer, judges or the public at large. These include the practical, financial, infrastructure and knowledge barriers of accessing digital courts.
- Ensure that lack of access to technology and internet services does not hinder access to courts by building alternative solutions that account for digital divides. In areas with poor internet connectivity solutions like open-air courts be considered.
- Ensure that digital courts remain open for public viewing and that the digital court system is designed to be an open court system.
- Encourage consultation with members of the bar, the bench and civil society organizations on the kind of access to court concerns that have been amplified in times of Covid-19 for those seeking justice, and determine ways to adopt systemic responses to address them in digital courts.

Resolution 6**ON A FRAMEWORK LAW FOR DIGITAL RIGHTS**

- Initiate the process of evolving through bottom-up, participatory consultations, an indivisible and integrated approach to digital rights, protecting and promoting people's rights to personhood, dignity, equality, privacy, and self-determination, and furthering social and economic justice.
- Introduce a "Framework Law for Digital Rights" establishing principles, guarantees, rights and obligations for a people-centric governance of digital, data, AI and related frontier technologies.
- Ensure that the Draft Personal Data Protection Bill is built on the first principles of such a framework law, effectively tackling state and corporate incursions into privacy and preventing unauthorized and harmful processing of data.
- Set up an autonomous constitutional authority for digital rights to enforce, and address violations of, such a framework law, that is independent, transparent and accountable to the public.

Resolution 7**ON THE ISSUE OF SURVEILLANCE**

- Ensure that unlawful and unconstitutional mass surveillance through intelligence and law enforcement agencies is curtailed by bringing appropriate legislation to protect the right to privacy in the face of widespread surveillance technologies like NATGRID and the proposed Automated Facial Recognition System
- Ensure that any surveillance is carried out in accordance with law, for specific purpose, under strict oversight and supervision, follow the principles of necessity and proportionality, made amenable to auditing and disclosure at regular intervals and effective remedy is provided for victims of invasion of privacy;
- Bring under strict parliamentary and judicial oversight all law enforcement agencies which may be empowered to carry out surveillance and/or interception, by suitably legislating upon the subject after thorough and broad-based public consultations

Design and implement ethical, rights-based frameworks for use of any surveillance-enabling technology by law enforcement agencies through an open, consultative process

- Suitably legislate to regulate facial recognition technology and integration of such with other technologies keeping in mind multiple applications of the technology and craft a framework tackling each application under guidelines proportional to the plausible hazardous outcomes.
- Strictly ensure that restrictions are imposed on the use of facial recognition technology in law enforcement unless suitable legislation to regulate the same is drafted.
- Prohibit by law the use of technologies like Facial recognition Technologies, Deep Fakes in election campaigning or any other activity pertaining to elections.
- Impose stricter regulations on tech start-ups that provide surveillance tools to the government and public alike without transparency and due process and place a rights-based framework for customers
- Create special safeguards against surveillance for women, LGBTQI communities, religious and ethnic minority communities as well as other communities vulnerable to invasion of privacy, discrimination and violence
- Desist from providing blanket exemptions from prosecution under laws enacted or policies framed to uphold citizens' bodily, informational, and decisional privacy to any government agency carrying out surveillance and interception functions
- Encourage critical review by experts as well as civil society of technological tools which the government plans to deploy, in order to discover and address any potential for data leaks or other acts harming individual privacy.

Resolution 8**ON THE ISSUE OF AFFIRMING HUMAN RIGHTS WHEN DEPLOYING TECHNOLOGY**

- Ensure that the fundamental right to privacy is at the heart of designing and deploying any technological intervention in governance and welfare
- Ensure that the freedom of speech and expression online is effectively protected and ensuring that laws restricting speech are narrowly construed and implemented in a democratic and non-partisan manner
- Ensure that no technological intervention or tool and communication medium is imposed on people violating their right to choose whether or not to adopt a particular tool or medium
- Ensure that technology and communication tools like Radio and Bluetooth, which are more accessible, economical and within reach of population with limited connectivity or low digital literacy, should be promoted through suitable regulatory changes and policy interventions
- Ensure that specific needs and concerns of vulnerable and marginalized populations including women, children, tribal, LGBTQI, religious, ethnic minority communities are paid special attention while designing technological interventions so as not to exclude or further stigmatize while accessing technology.

RESOLUTIONS ON AGRICULTURE

Resolution 1

- No to corporate control and loot in agriculture
- Reverse the decline of public investment in agriculture, health and education.
- Establish firmly the rights and entitlements of women farmers who do bulk of the work in agriculture
- Extend all support systems and entitlements to tenant farmers, sharecroppers and agricultural workers, who may not have title to land but do the actual cultivation
- Establish firmly the land rights of Dalits and Adivasis; stop eviction of Adivasis from their forest lands.
- Implement land reforms and hold time bound land redistribution programs for landless prioritising single women, Dalits and Adivasis.
- Promote Integrated Farming System Approach.
- Formulate a national policy for women farmers from farm suicide affected households for land rights, social and economic security and immediately announce full loan waivers of suicide affected households from central support.

Resolution 2

ON REINSTATING DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

- Repeal the three ordinances a) Agricultural Produce, Commerce and Trade (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance 2020; b) The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020; and c) Essential Commodities Act (Amendment) 2020 as these are undemocratic, and are anti-farmer and will only result in reduced crop prices for farmers, undermine seed security even further and also result in increased food prices for consumers.

– Withdraw the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 and also waive the electricity bill of farmers, small shopkeepers, small and micro entrepreneurs and small business people as long as the Covid-19 pandemic does not recede. DBT Scheme should not to be approved.

– Repeal the legislations related to liberalisation of land laws and forest rights introduced in the period of the COVID–lockdown.

– Stop all evictions from forest lands and fast track the IFR and CFRA pending claims

– Withdraw the new notification on Environmental Impact Assessment

– A special session of Parliament and state assemblies to exclusively discuss the giant agrarian crisis and related issues.

– Listen to testimonies of the victims of the agrarian crisis from different parts of the country. Increase public participation in decision making.

Resolution 3

ON EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

– Compensate farmers for the losses suffered this year for losses of vegetables, fruits, crops, milk and poultry produce due to hailstorms, unseasonal rains and lockdown in February-June 2020.

– Remunerative Minimum Support Price for all crops at C2+50% with guaranteed procurement of all agricultural products including fruits, vegetables and milk.

– 200 days of work per worker (not per family) under MGNREGA to compensate for the lost work due to lockdowns and large reverse migration from cities

– Issuance of job cards of a priority basis to those who do not have them

– Comprehensive Identification of all cultivators irrespective of land ownership or title, including tenant farmers, sharecroppers, women farmers and adivasi farmers, and extending all entitlements and support systems to all of them – including bank

credit, crop insurance, disaster compensation, PM-KISAN and other schemes.

– Employment at minimum wage of Rs 600/day to all agricultural workers.

– Income support of at least Rs.7,500/- per month to all non-tax paying poor.

– At least Rs.300/day as unemployment wages under MGNREGA.

– Increase of PM-KISAN to Rs.18,000/- per year and extending benefits to tenant farmers and women farmers, not limiting it to those who own land

– Ensure full implementation of Forest Rights Act across the country, and issue pattas to lakhs of pending applications including community rights applications

– Stop displacement of farmers and agricultural workers from agricultural lands, and ensure full implementation of the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 without dilution.

– Loan waiver to landless, tenant, small and medium peasants.

– Identify common lands such as forests, village commons and ensure that all landless women are provided access to these lands for their needs and for NREGS

– Enumerate and maintain a database of all the returning migrants. Conduct their skill mapping and undertake programmes for skill upgradation in coordination with local government bodies.

– Recognize the urban- rural connection of migration cycles. Ensuring portability of ration cards as well as enabling women to gain access to credit on low interest for short term economic needs such as vending, hawking horticulture, poultry etc. is essential

– Livestock economy and animal husbandry needs support-cattle sheds, protection and access to grazing lands and milk economy. Oppose Indo-US Trade Agreement proposal.

Resolution 4

ON FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY AND CASH TRANSFERS

– Universalise and expand PDS with immediate effect for the next six months. Expand it to include nutritious food like, millets, dals, pulses, oil, sugar and potatoes and onions for example.

– Ensure ICDS, MDMS are covered under essential services and promote local procurement and processing of all meals under these programs.

– To address women's increased workload, strengthen community kitchens through seed/ financial grants to women's groups.

– Unconditional transfer of Rs 10,000 in the name of women for all the poor rural households with emphasis on single women and female headed households for at least six months. The 500/- under Jan Dhan was inadequate and outreach was poor as Jandhan accounts not held by several women as pointed through a recent study of MAKAAAM

– Transfer MGNREGS wages for the lost 25-30 days at minimum wages to all active workers under the scheme.

– Improve bank access through bank mitras or correspondents

Resolution 5

ON OTHER AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT

– Provide seeds and fertilisers with immediate effect and free of cost on a priority basis to women farmers, especially those who are single.

– Access to interest free credit in Kharif 2020. Crop credit coverage is very low and that can be improved this season with complete interest subvention.

– There should also be a waiver of interest of loans to Self Help Groups and from MFIs, re-scheduling of the same and stopping of any recovery by the lenders.

– Support to forest foods, millets and other traditional crops in form of coverage under MGNREGS days, income support and drudgery reduction tools for production and processing.

- Proposed ban on 27 pesticides should be approved and implemented immediately.
- Pass the Pesticide Management Bill after including amendments to strengthen the regulation of pesticide companies.
- Ensure access to guaranteed prices and markets at the village level for diverse crops
- Open up government spaces for storage facilities and issue guidelines for the same
- Provide bridge funds for FPOs and women's collectives
- Women collective run Custom Hiring Centres (CHC) ensuring access of women friendly tools and equipment at Panchayat level to women farmers
- Implement Kisan Credit Card scheme for those who are not land owners (sharecroppers, women farmers) & expand Kisan Credit Cards to include landless women's' collective farming groups who are leasing land.
- Joint liability groups (JLGs), a model successful in Kerala and few other states could be strengthened by bringing JLGs to be brought on par with kisan credit cards in terms of interest, insurance and other terms and conditions. This could be useful for numerous enterprise ideas floated by skilled returning-migrants
- Emphasise on nutrition and food security based integrated agro-ecological agriculture and access to forests and commons, remove restrictions for forest dependent workers
- Ensure access to grazing lands to livestock workers, feed, infrastructure, health care for all livestock needs to be provided. Common lands, banjar and poramboke lands have to be surveyed and reclaimed from those who have encroached on those lands and have to be handed over to the gram panchayats for grazing animals and growing fodder for livestock and for common use.
- Reduce Diesel prices immediately by half as international prices have decreased by 60% since 2014, but the rates fixed by the Government have increased twice.

- Discuss and highlight the mega-water crisis engulfing the country - against the shadow of a terrible drought devastating farming in several states. Indeed, not just on rainfall problems but the basic class, caste and gender inequalities that pervade water control and consumption in this country. To create equal control and access, particularly to the landless.

Resolution 6 ON POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

- Consider and pass the two vital bills crafted by the All India Kisan Sangarsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC): The Farmers' Freedom from Indebtedness bill, 2018 and The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative Minimum Support Prices for Agricultural Commodities Bill, 2018.
- Thoroughly discuss the reports of the National Commission for Farmers (Swaminathan) Reports lying in Parliament since 2004-06. That means a discussion on, among other things, productivity, profitability, sustainability, finance, trade and investment, technology and technology fatigue. Also, a halt to the privatisation of agricultural research and technology. The fight against privatisation in these and other sectors is the fight of the farmers, labourers and all poor and marginalised people across the country.

Resolution 7 ON FISHWORKERS

- There should be an economic package announced for the fishing community keeping in mind that the monsoon ban season is arriving and will also affect the livelihoods of crores of fish workers and the ones who are dependent on the occupation.
- The Draft Fisheries Policy 2020 should be immediately withdrawn and consultations should be resumed with the stakeholders. The policy should be translated in all the vernacular languages before any sort of consultations.
- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana Scheme should be relooked into keeping in mind the Standing Committee's recommendations.

- A monthly allowance of INR 15,000/- up to three months be provided in advance; This should be actually given to the fish workers and those engaged in allied activities.

- Develop a relief package for the sector in consultation with fish worker organisations and individuals in the following three stages:

- Short- term with a horizon period of 3 weeks until the end of the lockdown period, where there should be loan payment deferrals to a period of six months keeping in mind the ban period during the monsoon period too in the eastern and western coast.
- Mid- term with a horizon period encompassing the ban period April 15th - 14th June, 2020 on the East coast and from 1st June to 31st July, 2020 on the West coast.
- Long- term with a horizon period until the end of the next financial year on the 31st of March, 2021 by revisiting the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Agriculture in the budget session.

RESOLUTIONS ON ECONOMY

Resolution 1 ON BANKING ISSUES

- Given that banks are being run with the money deposited by people, no bank should charge the depositors for doing basic banking transactions.
- Implement recommendations of Standing Committee on Finance on Non-Performing Assets.
 - To ease the suffering of the people and MSMEs, RBI should waive the interest on the loans during the pandemic period.
- Development Banks should be brought back for large scale lending purpose. Scheduled commercial banks should only be allowed to serve the people by focusing on retail lending.
- Micro, small and medium businesses should be assisted with direct monetary relief instead of credits.

Resolution 2 ON CORPORATE CORRUPTION

- Stringent laws should be made to recover the bad loans. Writing off of large credits should be supervised by the Parliament.
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code should be reviewed immediately. Corporations should not get benefit from the IBC process by buying companies at throwaway prices, leaving behind banks with huge losses.
- To bring transparency in public finance institutions – details of their investments, details of willful defaulters, accounts of written off NPAs should be made public.
- Release all information on money collected under PM-CARES and distribute to state governments for relief purposes.
- Take back and stop the tax concession given to corporates in September 2019.

Resolution 3 ON ECONOMY

- States should be allowed to borrow from RBI at repo rate.
- Expand MNREGA to 200 days per household and provide initial assistance to states willing to set up urban employment guarantee schemes.
- Ensure that farmers are able to sell all their crops at procurement prices or higher.
- Double public spending on health and transfer to state governments on the basis of the Finance Commission formula.
- 2 percent wealth tax along with inheritance tax on the top 1 percent rich, this alone can help in securing better food security, health system and education for all.
- Government should contain fiscal deficit through borrowing from RBI.

RESOLUTIONS ON INDUSTRY, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Resolution 1 ON HAWKERS

- All street vendors must be identified, recognised and registered as street vendors. The local government bodies must also actively increase awareness about Covid-19 to counter the communalisation of the pandemic and issue special orders to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of religion and caste.
- Provide vending licence and space to all street vendors
- Ensure time bound access to social security for all street vendors, which includes assistance for health, nutrition, education and livelihood enhancement
- Convert loan scheme to cash assistance

Resolution 2 ON GIG ECONOMY WORKERS

- All workers working under aggregator platforms work under non-existent and non-enforceable contracts. Government of India must constitute a legal framework to regulate aggregators and enforce decent work conditions and minimum social security for gig workers

Resolution 3 ON AUTO RICKSHAW DRIVERS

- Auto drivers should be treated as public servants, as autos are considered a public service
- Government should consult auto drivers and their collectives before taking any policy decision regarding auto drivers. State Transport Authority and the Regional Transport Authority must include rickshaw drivers as its members

– Auto drivers must have social security benefits. They should have a legislation like the Mathadi Law in Maharashtra, and there should be a Rickshaw Driver Board established for their welfare
Introduce a regulation to permit purchase of new autos with 0% interest

– Enable auto drivers to adapt to the changing world by supporting setting up of companies run by auto drivers themselves which promote the use of technology in their work

Resolution 4 ON MGNREGA

Entitlement to work under MGNREGA should be 200 days

Resolution 5 ON LABOUR RIGHTS

– On urgent basis the registration of workers must be done under the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008, Building and Other Construction Workers Act or any other state laws on access of welfare entitlements.

– The government must uphold the principle for equal pay for equal work.

– Any permanent work being done in any industry must not be done by contract workers.

– All permanent jobs must be done only by regular employees and therefore the fixed term employment ordinance must be scrapped immediately

– The government must pay DA as per regular practice and pay all wages on time. This is imperative to even spur demand and get the economy going again

– Installments of loans from microcredit agencies and NBFC must also be deferred and interest must not be charged for this interim period

– The government must not use the ordinance route and must pass all laws through the legislature in a democratic manner. Introduction of Labour Codes must be stopped

– The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) must be held urgently to collectively deliberate on labour policies.

– Government must introduce a white paper on labour, employment and industry

Resolution 6 ON MSME

The government must urgently allocate subsidies for the MSME sector, in which the wage subsidy is a major component. Further, MSMEs should get priority from the government whenever it creates any support for the industry in the form of economic infrastructure.

Resolution 7 ON PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKINGS

– The government must not disinvest from any public sector enterprises, such as railways, airlines, mining, etc. These are national properties and therefore they belong to the people of India and must not be put under private control. Apart from other important reasons, this is also being demanded to ensure the welfare of the employees working in this industry

Resolution 8 ON MEDICAL WORKERS

– All workers in the healthcare sector, like nurses and ASHA workers, have been at the forefront of fighting Covid-19. All such workers must be regularised to at per with at least D-grade employees of the government.

– All nurses in the private sector must also receive the same employee benefits as their public sector counterparts.

Resolution 7 ON COAL WORKERS

Stop commercialization of coal mining

RESOLUTIONS ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES – PART I

Resolution 1 ON WOMEN

– 33% Women's representation in all mechanisms including Task Force setup by Prime Minister for COVID mitigation and there after

– To prevent all forms of violence against women and minor girls perpetuating out of caste, class and patriarchy.

– To ensure strict enforcement of all laws related to Women such as Domestic violence Act, POCSO Act, SC/ST PoA Act, etc to Render Justice.

– To increase allocation of budget to effectively address the violence against women and minor girls.

– Increase budgetary allocations for the implementation of laws to prevent crimes against women.

– No privatisation of public sector hospitals, 6 percent GDP for health

– To prevent drop out particularly of girl students, provide all necessary equipment and facilities of online education for girls

– 50 percent houses should be allocated for migrant women in migrant workers housing scheme announced by PM

– Rs 10000 per month as financial assistance to all those who lost their livelihood, especially women.

– Increase Central Govt. share amount to Rs 1000 for all social security pensions like widow pension, old age pension, single women

– Release all political prisoners, intellectuals, activists and students etc who are jailed on false charges.

- Release all children and youth of Kashmir jailed at the time of announcing abrogation of Article 370
- Justice to Half widows of Kashmir and all states where AFSPA is in place.

– All outstanding loans taken by Self Help Groups must be waived Interest free loans NOT collateral free loans, should be made available to SHGs women

– Stop harassment of SHG women by MFIs' agents and middlemen.

Resolution 2 ON SEX WORKERS

– COVID-19 Specific Response: Recognize vulnerability, social marginalization and the existential crisis sex workers are facing during COVID 19; Provide mandatory free ration, financial assistance of Rs 7000 and access to health care services without stigma and discrimination.

– Community Involvement at Policy level: Meaningful involvement of sex workers in the development, implementation, management and evaluation of policies and programming. Strengthen community-led responses and rights-based programming.

– Integrated health, nutrition and support services: Plan health care interventions, supply of nutrition, counselling, HIV testing, and distribution of condoms and medicines with sex workers with safe abortion and SRHR services.

– Single window mechanism for social protection and entitlements: Set up the single window mechanism to deliver social security, legal rights and welfare schemes to sex workers; mitigates systemic barriers in accessing pension, housing right to education for children of sex workers and legal aid services

– Mechanism to address Gender based Violence and Mental Health: Set up mechanism to address gender based violence against Sex Workers and other key population. Set up Community Sensitive helpline to address mental health and other gender related issues.

– Sex work as Work and Sex workers as informal workforce: Decriminalize, de-stigmatize and

recognise sex work as work and sex workers as unorganised labour; create and strengthen SHGs of sex worker, develop supplementary livelihood and facilitate interest free loans for them to set up micro business.

Resolution 3 ON LGBTQIA++

– The Parliament must revisit all laws concerning transgender, queer and non-binary people in the light of the two Supreme Court judgements, firstly, the NALSA Judgement of April, 2014 affirming rights of transgender persons and secondly, the Navtej Johar Judgement of September, 2018 de-criminalising homosexuality. This understanding must inform the (re)framing and implementation of all existing laws, to harmonize them with this constitutionally established way of seeing gender identity and sexuality as fluid, self-determined and beyond the binary, thereby altering rigid and discriminatory notions of identity, family and community.

– This House resolves that non-implementation of NALSA Judgement in six years and not publicizing the Navtej Johar judgement, de-criminalising all consensual sexual acts between adults the government of India is in contempt of the Honourable Supreme Court. The same must be implemented and publicized immediately.

– The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 is a deeply violative, undemocratic and mis-representative piece of legislation, decimating the rights of the very transgender communities it claims to 'protect'. The Act goes against the grain of NALSA judgment and its constitutionality is currently challenged before the Supreme Court by the community members, through multiple petitions. Pending finality of judgement on that, and given the vulnerabilities created due to the current Covid 19 pandemic and lockdown across the country, hurried rule-making by the Social Justice Ministry is not in the interest of the community. We resolve that the Government should hold back finalising and notifying Rules till the challenges to the act are resolved and more participation by the community at diverse levels can be ensured.

– Complete rollback of the all-India NPR-NRC-CAA, also because it makes citizenship and rights

dependent on documents. The lived realities of transgender persons and many other queer persons, involve a lot of family violence, forced migration, lack of access to documents of self-identification, making the aforementioned laws / policies further instruments for discrimination, marginalization and exclusion of these particular communities. These and other similar laws undo the right to self-identification granted to transpersons in the NALSA Judgement and are therefore unconstitutional.

– In the context of the pandemic, we want the Govt to acknowledge the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the transgender, queer, intersex and non-binary people and also its failure in providing any reasonable and timely support to the majority among them. This House seeks substantive emergency relief and rehabilitation measures, livelihood opportunities with safety & dignity or in their absence, fair subsistence incomes, food security, rent relief, medical facilities, including gender-affirming procedures and other support services. The Govt must also ensure a climate of non-discrimination against trans, queer, intersex and non-binary people and accessible redressal mechanisms, especially at a time when acts of discrimination, stigma, stereotyping and violence both by State and society on marginalised bodies is on the rise

– The State must ensure full rights, equality and freedom for LGBTQIA++ persons in all spheres of public and private life including education, employment, healthcare, inheritance, adoption and property, partnerships and family. Enacting an anti-discrimination law to ensure this and adequate changes in laws addressing gendered sexual violence is critical for this to happen in terms of recognition of crimes, penalties and reparations.

– The State must immediately legislate on reservations for trans people and ensure a safe, dignified, healthy, supportive learning environment for LGBTQIA++ students in schools, colleges and all educational institutions, covering them under existing and emerging anti-harassment and anti-ragging provisions. Trans and queer students are further marginalized due to the digital divide, exacerbated during lockdown and all such policies that make access to education difficult must be rescinded. State must pro-actively support education of trans and queer people in the context of Covid challenges

– The right to self-determination of all individuals with regards to their gender identity, without medical interventions or documentary proof, as upheld by the Apex Court in NALSA must be protected. Self-identified pronouns and gender-neutral language and terms in both official and informal spaces must be ensured.

– The Criminal Law Reforms Committee constituted by the Home Ministry is non-inclusive, non-transparent and mandated to make sweeping proposals for law-reform which cannot happen without broad-based consultations with trans and queer people. This House resolves that the said Committee be dissolved forthwith and no law reforms be undertaken in pandemic times.

Resolution 4 ON MUSLIM WOMEN

– Roll back NRC and CAA is unconstitutional since it discriminates based on religion. Coupled with the NRC it bodes statelessness and mass persecution of minority groups like Muslims. Therefore, we want both the Act and the NRC process to be rolled back indefinitely.

– An impartial investigation in connection with the Delhi riots of February 2020 must be carried out and those found guilty must be held accountable.

– Urgent action is required to improve the socio-economic conditions of Muslims, especially the most marginalized among them. Access to health care, education, safe and clean water sanitation and housing, are all basic rights of citizenship, and efforts must be made to provide these in a way that is non-discriminatory, sensitive and context-specific.

– Access to improved educational: The Sachar committee had reported how Muslim areas didn't have schools, and existing ones were in bad shape. Despite dedicated schemes for minority education, these remain under-utilized. The situation of the pandemic has erected more barriers and not everyone can access online education; this fosters even deeper inequality and worsens the situation of those already lagging behind. Education of children should be prioritized, through a concerted effort by state and central government.

– Specific attention to caste-based marginalization within Muslim communities: Like all religious groups in India, caste-based discrimination continues to operate among Muslims and those most deprived belong to lower castes. Both affirmative action and concerted efforts to address development concerns among these groups is required.

– Equal opportunity commission: The Sachar committee in line with its findings of the bleak socio-economic status of Muslims, had strongly recommended setting up of an 'Equal Opportunity Commission' address grievances and discrimination against Minorities and other marginalized communities. While an expert group was constituted for this purpose which prepared a report on how such a commission can be operationalized, it only focusses on redressal of grievances and not on prevention of discrimination through systematic reform in employment.

Resolution 5 ON DALIT CHRISTIAN WOMEN

– GOI should constitute a high-level committee to study the socio, economic and educational condition of Dalit Christians with specific disaggregated data on status of Dalit women. (like Sachar committee)

– Dalit Christians should be given SC status as they continue to face discrimination with in the church as well outside the church

– Reservation have to be given for Dalit women in education, employment and in Political participation considering their gender (minority) status.

– Dalit Christians/especially Dalit Christian women should have protection under SC/ST prevention of atrocities act.

– Other minority groups should stand in Solidarity with Dalit Christians and support their demands on constitutional safeguards.

– Within church Dalit Christian women should not be prevented from being ordained to ministry or priestly office. Special provisions have to be made for such women to hold highest positions like Bishop.

– DCW should be given reservations in the Christian minority institutions in education, employment, promotion. This should be mandatory in government aided Christian minority institutions.

– A separate law has to be enacted to safeguard couples who marry outside caste and this law should protect Dalit Christian men and women

RESOLUTIONS ON **VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES** – PART 2

Resolution 1 ON ADIVASI AND DALITS

– Legislate the Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan .

– Ensure proper implementation of the SC/ST(POA) Act, 1989 so that the mechanism like establishment of special courts and appointments of Special Public Prosecutors shall take place in order to ensure speedy trial in cases of atrocities.

– Social security schemes to be introduced for Dalits and Adivasis to ensure that they are able to access health care during a pandemic like Covid 19.

– Provide reservation to Dalits and Adivasis in Private Sector employment

– Ensure proper implementation of Schedule 5 of Indian Constitution and laws like Forest Rights act, 2005 and Panchayat extension to Schedule Areas, 1996.

– Forest based livelihood schemes and policies shall be implemented during covid 19 pandemic to stop adivasis from migrating to other states for livelihood.

Resolution 2 ON DISABILITY

– Provide a minimum support of Rs. 5000/- per month to all disabled during the pandemic period;

– Allocate 5% budgetary support across ministries for implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act

– All disabled who register be provided work under the MNREGA as also in the proposed Urban Employment Guarantee Act;

– Provide devices with accessibility features to students with disabilities;

- Make health system accessible; more allocations for mental health;
- Implement Sec. 24 of RPD Act to provide support during disasters, unemployment allowance and caregiver allowance;
- NCRB to maintain disaggregated data on violence against disabled women
- Amend Article 15(1) & 16(2) of the Indian Constitution to prohibit discrimination on grounds of disability;
- Amend Sec. 3(3) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act to delegitimize discrimination

Resolution 3 ON ELDERLY

- Take particular care of the elderly at risk by making geriatric OPDs follow a COVID Standard Operating Procedure and make tests and treatment for senior citizens free
- Increase the Geriatric Facilities for elderly in every district hospital across the country as per Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Seniors Act.
- Provide a universal insurance of at least Rs. 5 lacs for all elderly.
- Extend the distribution of free grains and dal under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana beyond November 2020.
- Inclusion of elderly in beneficiaries list under PMGKAY
- Universalize Pensions Coverage to all needy and poor elders.
- Increase Amount and Coverage to cover all needy and poor elders.
- Pension should be indexed to inflation or should be half of minimum wage.
- Timely distribution every month for pensions to elders a/cs.
- Both Central and State govts. should increase budget support for pensions.

RESOLUTIONS ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Resolution 1 ON TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Undo the regressive amendments to the RTI Act to ensure Information Commissions function independently
- Institutions of transparency and accountability Judiciary, ICs, Lokpal, Commissions set up under various laws, are key during this pandemic to secure peoples' rights and prevent state excesses- all must be fully functional using a combination of online & off-line modes
- Enact and operationalise Whistleblowers Protection Act, Grievance Redress Bill
- Overhaul Lokpal- regressive amendments & partisan manner of appointments has defeated the purpose of the law
- Government must proactively disclose information as per the RTI Act- especially matters regarding food distribution, social security, health, relief funds, PM Cares Fund and other COVID 19-related issues.
- Roll back regressive amendments made to various laws like the IT Act, RP Act, RBI Act and Companies Act which enable unlimited anonymous funding of political parties through electoral bonds.

Resolution 2 ON JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND REFORMS

- Improve access to justice by operationalising informal Gram Nyayalayas.
- Improve the quality and independence of judicial appointments by setting up Judicial Appointment Commissions to select judges at all levels in a rational and transparent manner

– Ensure proper accountability of judges by setting up independent judicial complaints commissions empowered to receive and investigate complaints against judges and recommend action against them.

– Increase transparency in the functioning of the judiciary by proactively putting out all information regarding cases in the public domain and video-graphing court proceedings.

– Improve independence of judges by removing all government influence in appointments of retired judges to Commissions/Tribunals, etc.

– Improve court and roster management by having a professional court management team to rationalise and streamline listing of cases for better distribution of cases among benches, towards a more efficient disposal without inordinate waste of time of litigants, judges and lawyers.

– Ensure adequate representation and diversity in the judiciary at all levels by ensuring fixed representation for women in the lower judiciary and progressively applying such standards to the appointments made in the higher judiciary vis-a-vis women, SC/ST and other minority communities.

– To increase budget for judiciary from less than 1% to 4% and audit the judiciary

Resolution 3 ON CIVIL LIBERTIES

– That the primacy of secularism as a core constitutional value in the functioning of all institutions and all aspects of state craft, be restored and established.

– That Civil and democratic rule and 4G internet be restored immediately in J & K. repeal AFSPA & PSA, release all prisoners under detention laws and the Government of India open a dialogue with the people.

– That UAPA be repealed with immediate effect. The law on sedition, Section 124A IPC be repealed with immediate effect.

– That the discriminatory CAA, 2019 amendments and the NPR & NRC 2003 (rule), be withdrawn and right to equal citizenship be ensured for all.

– That all dissent be respected. There should be a stop to the criminalizing of intellectuals and media personnel through fabricated prosecutions. All criminal cases be withdrawn and all jailed journalists released.

– That all malicious prosecution and vilification campaigns against the anti CAA protestors and supporters in Delhi and UP be stopped and fabricated cases be withdrawn

– That UNCAT be ratified immediately and a compatible anti-torture law be enacted. All custodial deaths and encounter killings by police be investigated, abolish prior sanction to prosecute.

– That the criminalisation of ordinary citizens under Epidemic Diseases Act, NDMA and other penal laws be stopped immediately. Withdraw all such prosecutions. Stop indiscriminate imposition of Section 144 CrPC and use of force by police.

– That all prisoners, be tested for COVID 19, according to the ICMR guidelines regularly irrespective of the offence. All prisoners above 60 years or with comorbidities be released on bail/ parole.

– That all Human Rights Institutions should be proactive in cases of human rights violations and meet the Paris principles for NHRIs. .

– No new laws and major change of policy should be introduced during Covid-19 times. Criminal law reform committee be suspended.

SECTION

4

Epilogue:

A draft for discussion towards
a contemporary vision

Epilogue

The Directive Principles of State Policy for the Advancement of the “Idea of India” relevant to the 21st century – a preliminary draft to develop a comprehensive vision based on further deliberation and consultation

Introduction

The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) are provided for in Part IV of the Indian Constitution.¹ The DPSP provides social, economic and cultural rights to people to engage with the challenges of social and economic unfreedom or inequality. Social, economic and cultural rights, which are placed in Part IV under the title DPSP, are not backed by strong legal sanctions as is the case with Part III. At the turn of the 21st century, with the advent of campaigns and social movements seeking to upgrade the DPSP to the status of fundamental rights, India got started into a new phase of mobilization of political and civil society formations and this development made possible that the executive as well as the courts could innovate to provide access to justice and offer to the vast sections of SC/STs, DNTs, OBCs, Minorities, Women, Transgender a promise of escape from social and economic unfreedom.²

Social and economic rights are not only a right to public good but also a right to participate in the evolution of common good. Due to the alignment of political and bureaucratic apparatus, judiciary and media with the majoritarian politics of majority under perusal the conditions are now less favorable for the participation of people in the structures of governance and in the system of production on the ground. The civil and political society needs to move away from the focus on sectional demands because the majoritarian politics is trying to divide the marginalized and deprived people. There is the challenge of building the cross-class alliances to achieve the unity of marginalized and deprived people on the ground. The mobilization for cross-class alliances means that the DPSP should help

1. In India, the actually existing representative democracy falls well short of fulfilling the ideals of justice. The marginalized and deprived people continue to be denied their social, economic and cultural rights due to the deep-rooted flaws in the system of production and the structures of governance in place. In the Indian constitution, the founders of republic provide fundamental rights in Part III to guarantee political and civil freedoms.

2. Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) fighting a PIL in 2001 in the supreme court on hunger and starvation which led to the enactment of legislations that paved the way for the partial realization of such rights as right to food, later right to work / employment guarantee, right to information, right to education, right to health and so on.

the people to organize for jointly planning and developing the shared access to natural resources, new and emerging capabilities and local markets under development with the help of funding from the state.

The DPSP should enable the new strategies to target the challenge of reassigning the means of production to the working people and of establishing social control over the structures and processes of development and use of land, water and biodiversity. The DPSP should assure the landless their own access to water and waste, means of transport and development of energy and environment, public education and public health development as a right. The DPSP must enable the structures of cooperation and social solidarity to emerge, achieve self-reliance, gain freedom, empower and help the people to preserve pluralism, cultivate diversities—social, biological and cultural, and develop critical modernity. The DPSP advances a set of clear and avowed borrowings from the liberal humanitarian traditions of the world as a whole.

The DPSP for the 21st century should continue to focus on the spaces for cultivation of secularism in the society and of values arising out of special and peculiar Indian inequalities and problems created by colonialism and the values that aim at blending the traditional and modern modes of life and thought. The DPSP must help the movements to deal with the challenge of erosion of citizenship, secularism, federalism and democracy, guarantee the separation of executive and judiciary and foster the autonomy of media and education. The state is openly pursuing the agenda of majoritarian politics, suppressing the minorities—Muslims in particular, shifting away from the enforcement of guarantees given to nationalities for the development of their own respective languages, imposing the tenets of Manuvad to suppress the Dalits and OBCs. The DPSP for the 21st century will have to frame the agenda in a way that also put restrictions on commodification of commons, checks on the path of crony capitalism and of political and economic corruption involving brazen attacks taking place on the integrity of electoral processes and target neoliberalism.

The DPSPs for the 21st century can be conceptualized as a process of adding new goals and instruments (layering), of adding new rationales and goals without changing instruments (drift) and of adding

instruments without altering rationales (conversion). Thus, the process of transformation of DPSPs can be pursued by prioritizing the following socio-economic and political rights:

1. The right to land and include entitlements of land for shelter, kitchen garden, poultry, cattle shed, energy, water and waste management and grain storage; the right to seek protection, compensation and redressal against unreasonable acquisition or diversion of agricultural land for commercial purposes and creation of land banks for profiteering, promotion of inappropriate land use and actions leading to degradation of land, water, flora and fauna, livestock, agroclimatic zone specific ecosystem services;
2. The right of poor to create and nurture resource development facilities and pooling of usufructs of commons for value addition to advance their own livelihoods within the areas covered by wetlands, local common lands, forests, rivers, ocean and so on with a view to gain competitive access to local resources, markets and capabilities and to prevent the corporates from encroaching the resources belonging to people as a whole; the right to public assistance for the creation of common goods, and to freedom from indebtedness and guaranteed remunerative prices through public procurement for agricultural commodities;
3. The right to seek redressal of grievances building up from the menace of stray animals by removing all legal and vigilante-imposed restrictions on cattle trade, compensating farmers for destruction of crops by wild and stray animals and supporting animal shelters;
4. The right to guaranteed employment for 200 days per family, and ensure wage payment within the period guaranteed by statute and at par with legal minimum wages for unskilled farm labour in rural including nearby urban settlements for the development of services and infrastructure required for the protection of ecosystem services;
5. The right to participate in the determination of product, process and area level system wide standards required for the promotion of sustainable use of resources and infrastructure; the right to seek a universal public food distribution system for the delivery of cereals and nutri-cereals, pulses, sugar

and oils without linking it to Aadhar or biometric identification and without shifting to direct cash transfer;

6. The right to seek protection of livelihoods and erosion of income occurring due to corporate plunder embedded in the dissemination of unsustainable practices and solutions promoting substandard seeds, hazardous agro-chemicals and contract farming terms to farmers;

7. The right to seek dignity and adequate remuneration to domestic worker, sanitation worker, waste management worker, care worker by providing recognition and constituting statutory welfare boards, policies and schemes;

8. The right to seek guarantee of credit, security of bank deposits of senior citizens, financial inclusion of urban and rural poor, dalits and minorities and protection of public sector undertakings against the damage arising from the promotion of unsustainable lending being undertaken to the corporates;

9. The right to seek digital inclusion, online speech, accountability of technology platforms and protection of public interest from the loss of privacy occurring due to the sale of data collected from public to the third party;

10. The right to learn in mother tongue, gain access to higher education for lifelong learning of skills and education for the engagement with new and emerging challenges of sustainable development due to climate change and neo-liberal governance of globalization;

11. The right to healthcare through enactment of legislative measures to be adopted at Central and State levels to provide healthcare entitlements to all.

12. The right to clean environment, seek redressal against pollution of air and water, gain adequate access to drainage, sanitation and climate mitigation and adaptation facilities for the reduction of risk to public health;

13. The right to decent work, housing and social security for workers as an obligation of the state to ensure access to adequate care and shelter for the workers migrating for work from the rural areas to cities;

14. The right to gain adequate access to energy security and obligation of the state to ensure a reduction, reuse and recycling of wastes;

15. The right to prevent wasteful water use, protect catchment areas and ensure healthy rivers and make the public authorities liable for the ecological degradation of Himalayas, the damage to coastal ecosystems and forests and the failure to provide adequate protection to the livelihoods of ecosystem dependent vulnerable communities;

16. The right to seek protection, security, pension and compensation and justice through a legally binding framework to the victims of communal, sectarian and sexual violence;

17. The right to seek transparency in judicial appointments and accountability of judges through the creation of independent judicial complaints commissions empowered to receive and investigate complaints against judges and recommend action against them;

18. The right to prohibit and prevent the discrimination of disabled through the amendment of Article 15 of the Indian Constitution to include disability as a ground of discrimination;

19. The right of women to seek representation for women and minorities in legislatures and public employment, police, armed forces and judicial services;

20. The right to diversity and equal opportunity in employment and education for social, linguistic, and religious minorities;

Appendix: List of links

Homepage:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/>

About Janta Parliament:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/about/>

List of organisations who convened the Janta Parliament:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/organisations/>

Details about the schedule and sessions:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/schedule/>

● Inauguration

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MghCBWldWOY>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/18/press-release-inaugural-session/>

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PyfGtdcNzeAKf1l2kzW44cy5PdXj1Nwln/view?usp=sharing>

● Health

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEnCdEwE8AE>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-health-session/>

Resolutions: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ho_1ucvf6OO_K_jA6wQWGUN-ZiRNiVHB/view?usp=sharing

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QK7U5Oako6OadfulUo4zQpDs5nPPQ-18/view?usp=sharing>

● Food security and nutrition

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNC4uKLI5-E>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-food-security-and-nutrition/>

Resolutions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1InBEtrMt-oXloP-JroNizijREhITRoA/view?usp=sharing>

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dVjnkGvLFCO8VYjus51pTE9fA31OmmU/view?usp=sharing>

● Education

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY5DZ5S7ZQ>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-education/>

Resolutions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19NMmHroDFQEe3zszSjTtRHVata6jXDN/view?usp=sharing>

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZilrUWWINmkSzBZXTLkxeBQXGUNzh5pK/view?usp=sharing>

● Environment

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRuzHuH-o_k

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-environment-session/>

Resolutions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WOLqCnE8ugoGChFe8lsIRZej7lvjyVHM/view?usp=sharing>

Poster: https://drive.google.com/file/d/12xYK9CU2pgT_hJctp8OKJVUlugN3MLzM/view?usp=sharing

● Technology and surveillance

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bszYmUyYoM>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-technology-and-surveillance-session/>

Resolutions: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14nkTIYzKKdm_4OjVZmi78jfwNump8nD5/view?usp=sharing

Poster: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wdU34j_2MF8ne4bGQNoKbmouAabuQXt4/view?usp=sharing

● Agriculture

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISYFKVlo9E>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-agriculture-session/>

Resolutions: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1p8LOhuLxzlgACj8oVqp8yu3UK6H7oo_f/view?usp=sharing

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-jKjf2WN581sD2kra2FSPPX6O9IGpDYe/view?usp=sharing>

● Economy

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUv_Akfd7to

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/23/press-release-economy-session/>

Resolutions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZPotc6BHvuuDdcuDCMsuiR-68HhFMKz/view?usp=sharing>

Poster: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-DatWysjQv9XbPktHXqWTh9H_uOx4erP/view?usp=sharing

● Impact on Vulnerable Communities-1: Gender and Religion

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc7cwEVL6CM>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/25/press-release-impact-on-vulnerable-communities-part-i-gender-and-religion/>

Resolutions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R-PLFpwjxKLxbZ43JhnTg3m2QfEfx9oa/view?usp=sharing>

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tAJdaMAjBD7ONa9lEST9h9bIAiSSNu6l/view?usp=sharing>

● Industry, Labour and Employment

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehbpXKyqvPQ>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/25/press-release-industry-labour-and-employment/>

Resolutions: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pcdcLzOBn_cGHwLm1eLLHTRdGLmJrB/view?usp=sharing

Poster: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_sDs3PuHlr1re05Rsggmh_utey2tApan/view?usp=sharing

● Impact on Vulnerable Communities-2: Caste, Age and Disability

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6zHO5CTFKk>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/25/press-release-impact-on-vulnerable-communities-part-ii-caste-age-and-disability/>

Resolutions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19JUSoVooyYiPSLyliMBJ-aetZ7AeB8T/view?usp=sharing>

Poster: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hsu59jLn_Yoxef3zBcDOFSN4MsqHb3A/view?usp=sharing

● Civil Liberties, Laws and Governance

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WssQey-y7tA>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/25/press-release-civil-liberties-laws-and-governance/>

Resolutions: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pP3hNkgLw3iQhb_9pOOPEhtz6MFwinz9/view?usp=sharing

Poster: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GgZoa3tkNP3CZ6DXJfdymIgvNTwg23n5/view?usp=sharing>

● Concluding session

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-laT-OifGQs>

Press release: <https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/2020/08/26/press-release-concluding-session-of-the-janta-parliament/>

Archive of all posters, including general ones about Janta Parliament as a whole:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ca8Jmodc1R1oioqWwfrkIecURuBMuW?usp=sharing>

All videos of the Janta Parliament:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHnQhpUpFEENqUEX7BowX5w>

All documents (policy proposals, resolutions, etc) pertaining to the Janta Parliament:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/policy-proposals/>

Archive of all the press releases and media coverage:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/media/>

Contact details and social media handles:

<https://jantaparliament.wordpress.com/contact/>

Annexure 1:

Additional references to actions of Government on environment, during COVID period

Coal Package

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/narendra-modi-launches-auction-process-for-41-coal-blocks-for-commercial-mining/article31858048.ece>

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/chhattisgarh-govt-red-flags-coal-block-auction-in-biodiversity-rich-forests/story-YINHJl2SkrlUXQAwfgaGvM.html>

Commercial Coal Mining: Spelling Doom to Forest Communities, Biodiversity, Climate Change Action

<https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2020/06/commercial-coal-auction-spelling-doom-to-forest-communities-biodiversity-climate-action>

Dilution of Environment Impact Assessment (Notification 2020)

<https://science.thewire.in/environment/eia-2020-environmental-degradation-draft/>

<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/03/indias-proposed-overhaul-of-environment-clearance-rules-could-dilute-existing-regulations/>

Virtual Clearances of Projects

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/during-lockdown-moefcc-panels-cleared-or-discussed-30-projects-in-biodiverse-forests/article31649606.ece>

<https://thelogicalindian.com/environment/what-govt-did-to-environment-21499>

Virtual public hearings like sand mining hearings by Pollution Control Board in Maharashtra and Aarey Metro Bhavan hearing by MMRDA

<https://www.mid-day.com/articles/state-government-to-hold-public-hearing-on-metro-bhavan-construction/22894456>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/bombay-hc-issues-notice-to-state-govt-mpcb-on-using-zoom-for-public-hearings-on-sand-mining-projects-6451163/>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/env-group-opposes-digital-public-hearings-for-sand-ghat-auction/articleshow/76185672.cms>

Demarcation of CRZ lines

<https://india.mongabay.com/2019/01/india-changes-coastal-rules-bonanza-for-the-industry/>

<https://thewire.in/law/coastal-law-crz-draft-policy-making>

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/governance/coastal-regulation-zone-notification-what-development-are-we-clearing-our-coasts-for-63061>

JK State forest department being converted to Jammu and Kashmir Forest Development Corporation

<https://freepresskashmir.news/2020/06/25/jk-forest-department-converted-into-a-corporation-assets-now-under-companies-act/>

<https://www.thekashmirmonitor.net/govt-creates-jk-forests-dev-corp-company-to-take-over-erstwhile-sfc/>

Ecosensitive Areas Notification

<https://www.newsclick.in/Government-made-Disaster-Western-Ghats-Declared-Ecologically-Sensitive>

<https://science.thewire.in/environment/indias-environment-ministry-unlocked-many-protected-areas-during-the-lockdown/>

Announcement of Draft Fisheries Policy asking for comments during lockdown

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/national-fishworkers-forum-flays-draft-fisheries-policy-2020/article31921539.ece>

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/take-a-fresh-look-at-draft-national-fisheries-policy-organisations-urge-centre/article31945304.ece>



jansarokar2019@gmail.com