

PARLIAMENT ELECTION 2019

Dalit Manifesto



**National Campaign On Dalit Human Rights-NCDHR
New Delhi**

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CONTENTS

S. No.	Content	Page No.
1	Right To Access To Justice	7
2	Right To Accessing Justice For Dalit Women	10
3	Rights Of Children And Youth	14
4	Access To Economic Entitlements	17
5	Access To Quality Education	19
6	Access To Employment Opportunities, Reservations In Private Sector And Entrepreneurship	21
7	Rights To Access Standards Of Health Schemes	23
8	Access To And Non-Discrimination In Respect To Adequate Food, Water, Sanitation, Clothing, Housing And During Disaster Response	26
9	Entitlement To Land And Protection Against Forced Eviction	30
10	Right To Protection Of Human Rights Defenders	33
11	Right To Protection Of Minorities	36
12	Democracy And Governance	38



‘My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is the battle for freedom. It is the battle of reclamation of human personality.

- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

INTRODUCTION

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes comprise about 16.6% and 8.6%, respectively, of India's population¹. The Constitution (SC) Order, 1950 lists 1,108 castes across 29 states in its First Schedule², and the Constitution (ST) Order, 1950 lists 744 tribes across 22 states in its First Schedule³. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities identify themselves as Dalits and Adivasi representing their affirmative struggle for Equality, Liberty and Fraternity.

Dalits and Adivasis, on one hand, become the focal point of all the political parties for rising to political power at their cost and on the other hand inciting pseudo nationalism, discrediting media and reducing to a state of empty powerlessness becoming the common practices of today. During the last five years (2014-2018) the era began with the celebration of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar not only in India but around the world. The SC&ST PoA Act, 1989, as Amended and brought into effect in January 2016. The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) & Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) Budget legislation was not considered to be enacted. The concerns of Dalit & Adivasi women and children rights have not been given priority. Reservations in Private Sector were not considered as India focused on development on the PPP model. The new developmental initiatives brought by governments have left large tribal population in distress and they were being alienated from their hold of natural resources of land and minerals.

The constitutional rights and entitlements of Dalits and Adivasis were neglected over the years and continued even after having new governments at central and state levels. They are being systematically robbed and reduced to a state of empty powerlessness giving no protection against social and economic exploiters. Despite the fact that the Right to Life, guaranteed by Article 21 of the constitution to every person, has not been made a reality for the Dalits on the other. Capitalizing on corruption,

¹ http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/hlo/pca/pca_pdf/PCA-CRC-0000.pdf

² "Text of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, as amended". Lawmin.nic.in.

³ "Text of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, as amended". Lawmin.nic.in.

development and governance issues are much talked about in the recent political lunge but the questions now on development and governance are for whom or by whom to be addressed. The promises made to Dalits and Adivasi turn out to be a mockery in itself. This also is very well accentuated in the context of unsure alliances.

As NCDHR we present this Manifesto to all the political parties and say: “Include and incorporate our demands and concerns in your political party manifesto for the upcoming 17th Lok Sabha General Elections. This will once again act as a reminder to your political parties of your obligation to be steadfast in implementing/fulfilling your promises to our Dalit and Adivasi communities, and thereby bridge the increasingly yawning gaps between the Government of India and the Dalit and Adivasi communities on the one hand and between the dominant caste groups and the Dalit and Adivasi communities as a whole on the other hand in every field of life”.

Hence we demand political parties to adhere to the constitutional rights of SC and ST particularly women and children, who are discriminated and excluded by caste and patriarchy system which maintains socio economic inequalities...Up hold Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity of the Constitution.

- 1. Art. 14: Right to Equality and Equal Protection before the law.**
- 2. Art. 15 : Right of prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.**
- 3. Art 16: Right to equal of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State and to ensure adequate representation of SC and ST through reservation.**
- 4. Art. 17: Untouchability is abolished and practice of Untouchability is forbidden and it punishable offence in accordance with law.**
- 5. Art. 21: Right to Protection of life and personal liberty to all except according to procedures established by law.**

6. **Art. 23: Guarantees the Prohibition of trafficking human beings and forced labour.**
7. **Art. 46: provides the Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections, and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.**

The Dalit manifesto was prepared in consultation with expert groups working in the concerned thematic areas of Dalit and Adivasi communities rights. We sincerely thank all those who contributed.

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1. RIGHT TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Though India has abolished the practice of ‘untouchability’ in the constitution, still it persists due to its systemic character of Caste System in the form of Culture, beliefs, social norms etc. It has been 27 years since the Indian Parliament enacted the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, followed by the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules in 1995, which was further amended in 2015, to put an end to targeted caste and ethnicity-based crimes against Dalits and Adivasis by non-Dalits and non-Adivasis. Our experiences show that violence is unleashed on Dalits by dominant caste communities either to reinforce socio-economic and power inequalities or to suppress their assertion and claims to entitlements and opportunities for socio-economic development, such as land, living wages, education, employment and so on.

Despite the protective measures, there is an increase in atrocities committed against Dalits and Adivasis by 5.5% and 4.5% respectively in the year 2016 over the previous year. The country reported 40801 cases of atrocities against the Dalits in 2016 compared to 38670 cases in 2015. Similarly, for Adivasis, the cases of atrocities increased from 6276 in 2015 to 6568 in 2016. The incidence of violence against SC women also remains persistent in different forms. The two top reported crimes with a maximum number of cases committed against Dalit women are ‘Assaults on women with the intent to outrage her modesty’ with 3172 cases (7.7%), followed by rape with 2541 cases (6.2%) in 2016.

Till 2017, only 14 States/Union Territories out of the total of 29 states and 7 UTs have set up a total of 195 Exclusive Special Courts to try cases under the PoA Act. The high pendency rate for cases under trial can be attributed to the inadequate number of Special Courts and Special Public Prosecutors (SPPs); delayed investigation and registration of cases; no day-to-day trial; and overburdened designated courts which also try non-atrocity cases as well. The phenomenon of high rates of acquittals in cases of crimes against SCs is also disturbing: There were a total of 50,357 cases that has come for trial and a total of 701 cases ended in conviction and thus the conviction percentage under the Act was 15.4%.

The states are mandated by the PoA Act to declare atrocity prone areas in order for officials to take preventive measures. However, according to the MSJE Annual Report 2013, only ten states have identified 171 districts as atrocity-prone. Such is the appalling state of affairs and level of poor coordination between the enforcement authorities and the victims/witnesses.

The SC judgment was given on March 20, 2018, by an Apex Court of India gives a clear indication that challenges the implementation of SCs & STs PoA Act violating the rights of SCs and STs. Article 31-B of Indian Constitution will ensure that SCs and STs (PoA) Act 1989 and PoA Amendment Act 2015 (Act 1 of 2016) and its provisions once included in the Ninth Schedule cannot be deemed to be void, or ever to have **become void**, on the ground that such Act or its provisions are **inconsistent** with or take away or abridge any of the rights conferred by any provisions of Part III of the Constitution, and notwithstanding any judgment, decree or order of any court or tribunal to the contrary, these Acts shall continue to be in force. Presently, **284 legislations are included in Ninth Schedule** related to the **Zamindari Abolition, State level land reforms and reservation in educational institutions** including “**The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 (Central Act 19 of 1976)**”, **The Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of appointments or posts in the Services under the State) Act, 1993 (Tamil Nadu Act 45 of 1994)**.

Therefore We Demand

- 1. Abolition of inhuman practice of Manual Scavenging in the country within two years of forming the government.**
- 2. Include Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and Amendment Act 2015 (Act No. 1 of 2016) in the IX Schedule of Constitution.**
- 3. Enforce and implement the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and the POA Amendment Act 2015.**

- 4. Establish mandatory Exclusive Special Courts as per Section 14 of the SCs and STs (PoA) Act 1989 in each district.**
- 5. Take immediate measures to appoint Public Prosecutors of victim's choice as per Rule 4 (5) of the SCs and STs (PoA) Rules 1995 for the speedy trial of the cases.**
- 6. Conduct an open and transparent investigation under the SC and ST (PoA) Amendment Act, 2015 and prosecute those Government and Police officials under section 4 of the Act who are found to have aided and abetted criminals or found to have negligent in their responsibilities in implementing the provisions of the Act /plan and schemes.**
- 7. Immediate notification or G.O to be issued to all the state governments to frame contingency plan in line with the contingency plan framed by the Govt. Tamil Nadu and framing of schemes under the plan if any for the purposes of rehabilitation, employment, pension, strengthening socio-economic conditions of the victims.**
- 8. NHRC, SC & ST Commissions shall conduct open hearing all over the country on cases of atrocities and on the implementation of the SCs and STs (PoA) Act. The Commissions shall ask for the annual reports from the states and present the same before the Parliament.**
- 9. Ensure that the underdeveloped Dalit and Adivasi habitats, habitats prone to atrocities, and habitats which were subjected to arson or damaged are provided with land, housing, clean water, sanitation facilities and infrastructure facilities from the SCSP/TSP and from the provisions of Contingency Plan. Special focus should be given to the state of Haryana.**
- 10. NCPCR, NHRC, Women Commission and SC and ST Commission conduct in-house hearing all over the country with the victims of children from Dalit and Adivasi communities as per SC&ST POA Act., IPC, POCSO and related legislation's of children. And come out with a specific recommendation for speedy justice and relief, rehabilitation.**
- 11. Further strengthen and enforce SC/ST POA Act., with regular review and expand the reach of Act to include Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims as well as extend to Jammu & Kashmir.**

- 12. States must ensure that torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishments are not employed before, during or after any interrogation inside or outside the Police Custody by police officials**
- 13. Ratify the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.**
- 14. Ensure that government take measures to protect certain section of the SC, ST and DNT from being targeted on the pretext of habitual offenders and caste bias by the police**

2. RIGHT TO ACCESSING JUSTICE FOR DALIT WOMEN

Dalit and Adivasi women and girls continue to face the brunt of discrimination and violence on the basis of their intersecting caste, ethnic and gender identities. Despite this, currently, few measures exist that explicitly take into account intersectional caste-and-gender discrimination and accordingly devise strategies to address this discrimination and to ensure these women equally enjoy their rights. While improvements in basic literacy, health and other indicators for SC women have increased over the years, the development gap between Dalit women and others remains.

In the absence of economic development measures for SC women, a general trend today is that Dalit women are assuming de facto responsibility for continuing caste-based occupations, while Dalit men find limited opportunities to take up non-traditional labour occupations in urban areas. Moreover, significantly more ‘high’ caste women are entering into high-level occupations than Dalit women, and such disparities are increasing”.⁴

Dalit women are vulnerable to specific forms of violence. Studies reveal that over 90% of Devadasi/Jogini women forced into ritualized prostitution are scheduled caste women.⁵ Official statistics also show that over 2,500 women have been killed on the suspicion of practicing witchcraft in the

past 15 years. The former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, has noted that “An estimated 90% of manual scavengers are Dalit women who face multiple vulnerabilities and discrimination based on their caste and gender, and who are often exposed to violence and exploitation.”^{6&7}

Women and girls from SC communities are also particularly vulnerable to trafficking for sex work and domestic work⁸. Overall, while according to the 2011 Census of India, SC women constitute 8.08% of the overall population, the NHRC has noted that they, along with ST women form the majority of women engaged in prostitution, making them even more susceptible to sexual violence and other forms of abuse.⁹

Assaults on women with the intent to outrage modesty, at 7.7% (3172 cases), reported the highest number, followed by rape with 6.2% (2541

⁴ (Deshpande, A. (2007). ‘Overlapping Identities under Liberalization: Gender and Caste in India’, Economic Development and Cultural Change 55(4), pp. 735-760; Heyer, J. (2007). ‘The Marginalisation of Dalits in a Modernising Economy’, Research paper. Oxford: University of Oxford)

⁵ Black, Maggie, 2007. Women in Ritual Slavery: Devadasi, Jogini and Mathamma in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Southern India. London: Anti-Slavery International: http://www.antislavery.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/w/women_in_ritual_slavery2007.pdf>.

⁶ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, 2013 (31 Jan.). ‘Pillay applauds Indian movement to eradicate ‘manual scavenging’, OHCHR News, available online: www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12959&LangID=E

⁷ A national study on health services found that caste identity was important in accessing resources such as anganwadi services both as health service provider and recipient. Caste discrimination was reported in these services from almost all the study villages. In some instances, separate anganwadis in the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ caste localities was a practical solution without, however, resolving the issue (Source- C. Sathyamala et al. (2012). ‘Public Report on Health Some Key Findings and Policy Recommendations’, Economic and Political Weekly 47(21), pp.43-54)

⁸ Special Rapporteur on violence against women, 2013. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her mission to India. UN Doc. A/HRC/26/38/Add.1.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session26/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

⁹ 14National Human Rights Commission, 2004. Report on Trafficking in Women and Children in India 2002-03 . New Delhi:NHRC: <http://nhrc.nic.in/Documents/ReportonTrafficking.pdf>

cases) during 2016. Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of crimes against women at 1065, of which 557 were rape cases. Rajasthan, which has recorded 5134 cases of crimes against Dalits in 2016, reported 641 cases of crimes against women. Of these, 327 were rape cases. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh reported 1833 cases of crimes against Dalit women, of which 439 were cases of rape. However, the trend is that many cases are unreported and compromised at the local khap panchayat.

Census 2011 exhibits that 14% women and 4% men get married before the legal minimum age. This percentage varies across social groups and it has been found that SC/ST women are more prone to marriage before the legal age.

The gender gap in the work participation rate (WPR) is striking in India. For the male population, it always remained above 50% whereas, for the female population, it always remained below 30%. Female WPR records fluctuations. It was 28% in 1961 and sharply declined to 11.9% in 1971 and again increased to 19.8% in 1981. 1991 onwards, WPR is increasing and currently, it is 25.51% in 2011.¹⁰

Therefore we Demand...

- 1. Prevent Violence against Dalit and Adivasi women perpetuating out of casteism and patriarchy.**
- 2. Enact legislation for Protection of inter-caste married couples and ensure strict action is taken against perpetrators who are killing these couples in the name of so-called 'Honour'.**
- 3. Make special provision for the protection of Dalit and Adivasi elected women representatives and ensure that they are not prevented by anyone from discharging their roles in the local governance.**
- 4. Enact National Legislation to Abolish the Devadasi system in any part of the country and to provide relief and rehabilitation to the victims, including livelihood and development programmes for them and their families.**

- 5. Article 23: prohibits human trafficking and Forced labour (Bonded labour) - Although this article is not specifically articulated for the SCs and STs because the majority of bonded labour is from SC and ST women so it holds significance. Take special measures to prohibit Human Trafficking and Forcedlabour.**
- 6. Planning and budgeting from a gender lens must necessarily include the inter-sectionality framework whereby the perspectives, interests, and voices of women from the most disadvantaged groups are brought to the fore.¹¹**
- 7. Facilitate engagement between the Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment and Women and Child Development, at both central and state levels, to promote policies and implementation practices that address the specific needs of Dalit and Adivasi women**
- 8. Take proactive measures to improve Dalit and Adivasi women's legal literacy and ability to access justice, including monitoring effective enforcement of the PoA Act and providing quality free legal services of Dalit and Adivasi women.**
- 9. Introduce Special Schemes for affirmative action to increase Dalit and Adivasi women's participation in the police, judiciary and legal professions.**
- 10. Allocate Untied funds for the overall development and rehabilitation of women who were identified as manual scavengers by the govt..**
- 11. Pass the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014 with a detailed discussion with the communities involved in to have a clear perspective of the bill that it upholds Rights of All Transgender Persons.**

¹⁰ 'Status of Dalit women in India' Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, Volume IX, Number 02, p. 28&29

¹¹ (Kapur Mehta, A., M. Eapen and Y. Mishra. (2012). Locating Gender in the Twelfth Five Year Plan Approach: Issues Emerging from a Gendered Analysis. New Delhi: UN Women, p.27)

3. RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The country has brought in various legislations and policies, institutions for promotion and protection of rights of all the children. The major interventions are Commission for protection of Child Rights Act., RTE Act., POCSO Act., National Child Policy, JJ Act., Child Labour Prohibition Act., bonded labour abolition Act., Prohibition of Child Marriage Act., etc., and various policies and schemes for development of the children. Despite having these legislations and policies the issues of the children belonging to the scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe community due to their caste are not being addressed in the manner they have to be addressed, leaving these children in trauma in their life. This tendency is increasing and bullying by other caste children once and ST children which is also leaves a negative impact in the minds of the children belonging into other castes. As these vulnerabilities are not being addressed, the children from SC and ST communities are being denied access to child rights completely. The forms of structural discrimination and abuse that Dalit children face in schools, colleges and universities are often so stigmatizing that they are forced to drop out. The communities' backwardness and landlessness leave most of the families in poor economic conditions and are forced to migrate for work. During this phase, the children of these families are not able to access their right to education and are forced to work as child labourers or bonded labourers. Both Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children are completely not able to access their child right of participation, care, the best interest of the child and access to development. The youth from these communities initially get into casual labour and then turn into the unorganized labour force in the country without any social security. Illiteracy and dropout rates among Dalit children from school remain very high, and a number of Dalit children also continue to not enroll in schools at all. Legislation on the issue is limited, however, and measures to address the issue are often inadequately implemented.

Crime against children in India has increased by a sharp 11% between 2015 and 2016, according to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB). Going by absolute numbers, it's an increase of 12,786 reported crimes

against children across the country. The total number of crimes against children reported in 2016 was 106958, while 94172 crimes were recorded in 2015. This shows a steady upward trend with a significant increase of more than 500% over a period of the past one decade (1,06,958 in 2016 over 18,967 in 2006). While kidnapping and abduction accounted for 52.3% of the cases, under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) were at a worrying 34.4%.

Dalit children are forced into bonded labour by dominant castes all over India. As per the study conducted by the Campaign Against Child Labour there are 111 bonded labourers in Tamil Nadu. Dalit children were treated like slaves. Some owners or businessman forced them to work for 20 hours a day and provided either spoiled or poor quality food just to keep them alive.¹² In the year 2018 to September 1, there is a 51.5% rise in the number of child labourers rescued and rehabilitated. Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of child labourers, but no child was rescued in the state in 2017 and 2018¹³.

Therefore we Demand

- 1. Legislate “Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence Against Children in Educational Institutions, Bill – 2018” drafted by Campaign towards Zero Discrimination in School Education (CZDE) on Prevention of Discrimination and Promotion of Equality in School Educational Institutions foregrounding the principles and targets laid down in Convention on Rights of Child.**
- 2. India as one of the signatories of the UN Convention on Rights of Children adheres to all the principles and guidelines laid for children’s rights.**
- 3. Ensure equal access, non-discrimination for Dalit Children and youth in respect to prevention, identification and eradication of exploitative labour arrangements, rehabilitation schemes for forced, bonded and child labourers and access to education.**

¹² (Pratiksha. (2013, 17 June). ‘Dalit children forced into bonded labour’. Retrieved Nov. 2013 from <<www.newsrepublic.in/2013/06/17/dalit-children-forced-into-bonded-labour/>>)

¹³ <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/nov/20/515-per-cent-rise-in-the-number-of-child-labourers-rescued-rehabilitated-this-year-1900682.html>

- 4. Devise innovative and quality schemes under SCP and TSP allocations for promoting the “best interests of Dalit children”, in particular in the areas of adequate food and nutrition, basic health care and quality education.**
- 5. Establish quality ITIs in every block under the National Skill Development Mission for imparting employable skills exclusively for the unemployed Dalit youth that provide job opportunities within and outside their states.**
- 6. Ensure the implementation of Article 15 of the Constitution of India Prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth that no child belonging to SCs and STs are discriminated on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.**
- 7. Ensure the right to free participation and right to be heard about their thoughts and complaints in an appropriate manner.**
- 8. Extend the purview of RTE Act to 18 years, in line with the internationally recognized definition of childhood and make free education for the children belonging to SCs and STs considering their economic status.**
- 9. Amend the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act to ensure all children avail of RTE provisions and harmonize the age definition of all child-related legislation’s in line with the National Policy for Children 2013.**
- 10. Ensure that the National Crime Records Bureau of India annually reports with segregated data on crimes against SC and ST children**

4. ACCESS TO ECONOMIC ENTITLEMENTS

Specific legal, policy, programmatic and budgetary measures are required to ensure equal access, non-discrimination and security of life for Dalits in respect of economic entitlements through enactment of Scheduled Castes Component and Scheduled Tribe Component and its effective implementation: Scheduled Caste Component (SCC), in the words of the Indian Planning Commission, is “a policy instrument designed to ensure the fulfillment of constitutional guarantees and entitlements enjoined for the SC communities.” The spirit of the Plan has been consistently thwarted in its application and implementation by most of the departments at the Central and State level, denying Dalits all over the country hundreds and hundreds of millions of Rupees, which are legitimately due to them, year after year. Government agencies like the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and the SC/ST National and State Commissions, have continually deplored the neglect of SCP by both the Central ministries as well as various States.

Planning Commission Working Group on the — “Empowerment of Scheduled Castes” 2007 stated that allocations for Special Component Plan for SCs have been inadequate at the national level and that many states have failed to allocate as per the normative SC population percentage. Although allocations in many states seem to have increased in these years, such allocations, in fact, are only notional. After studying the compiled allocations for SCP for various years from Statement 21 of Expenditure, Vol.1 of Union Budgets, GOI 2005-06 to 2011 – 12, some civil society organizations like NCDHR & Centre for Budget Governance Accountability came to the conclusion that the amount denied to SCs from 2005 to 2009 amounts to US \$ 20.8 billion and this means that annually around US \$ 5.2 billion have been denied through non-implementation as per the policy requirements of the Special Component Plan for SCs.¹⁴

¹⁴ Joint Stake holders Report on Caste Based Discrimination in India, for 13th Session of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council – India (21st May - 1st June 2012), Submitted by National Coalition for Strengthening PoA Act, Page 12.

Therefore We demand

- 1. Enact a Central Legislation for Scheduled Castes component and Scheduled Tribes component Budgets with monitoring mechanisms on the implementation of the same.**
- 2. Remove all outdated and irrelevant Schemes pertaining to SCs and STs.**
- 3. Devise new schemes for Dalit and Adivasi men, women, youth and children for their survival needs and developmental needs planned and developed with their participation which are monitored by the community every year.**
- 4. Launch special saving schemes for SCs and STs by creating credit societies to provide credit at lesser interest rates from the banks SC and ST Development Corporation for starting business/entrepreneur ventures in clusters, especially in areas where infrastructural facilities already exist.**
- 5. Introduce economic schemes to benefit SC and ST individuals and families directly by way of enabling them to acquire, own and build up material assets in the form of agricultural land, irrigation facilities, house sites, cemetery/cremation, common property resources for grazing cattle and collecting firewood, etc.**
- 6. A special Component plan for Dalit and Adivasi women should be introduced in the SCC and STC with specific guidelines for implementation.**

5. ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Discrimination against Dalit children in the educational system is widespread. Alienation, social exclusion, and physical abuse are present at all levels of education. The forms of structural discrimination and abuse that Dalit children face in schools, colleges and universities are often so stigmatizing that they are forced to drop out. Illiteracy and dropout rates among Dalit children from school remain very high, and a number of Dalit children also continue to not enroll in schools at all. Legislation on the issue is limited, however, and measures to address the issue are often inadequately implemented. Despite the professed government focus on SC education, the India-level literacy rate for SCs continues to be lower than that of other castes:

As per the 2011 census, the overall SC literacy rate was 66.1%, 62.8% in rural areas and 76.2% in urban areas. This was much less than the general literacy rate of 73.0%. Gender-wise, the literacy rate for SC women (56.5%) was much lower than for SC men (75.2%), women in general (64.6%) and men in general (80.9%).

Therefore we demand

- 1. Remove all entrance examinations (National and State) for professional courses and only consider Intermediate/+2 marks obtained in college as the eligibility criteria for admission into medical and other technical courses.**
- 2. Article 335 which allows relaxation in qualifying marks for admission in educational institutes or promotions for SCs/STs in employment. Take special measures to guarantee the Constitutional Provision.**
- 3. Bring about a specific policy, programmes and schemes with adequate budgetary provisions are required for Dalits to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access and opportunity towards quality (higher) education in all public and private (higher) educational institutions.**

4. Take measures for specific legal, policy, programmatic and budgetary measures to ensure equal access, non-discrimination, freedom to exercise right, and security of life for Dalits in respect of: equal access to primary and secondary education that is free and is of quality, equal opportunity to receive tertiary (higher) education, admissions to public and private higher educational institutions etc.
5. Develop mechanisms to end discrimination in Higher Educational Institutions by implementing and monitoring UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher educational institutions) Regulations 2012.
6. Launch schemes benefitting SCs and STs in the area of Developing Human Resource Capacities (data processing, computing and software development, trade and market development, digital advertisement, entrepreneurial skills development, etc.) which will provide professional qualifications to them necessary for open competition in the job market and for promotion to higher posts.
7. Effective implementation of the Post-matric, Under-Graduate, Post-Graduate, Post-Doctoral and Overseas Scholarships and this must be increased in beneficiary coverage.
8. Special funds should be created for getting coaching to write international competitive examinations for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students for accessing higher educational opportunities overseas.
9. Adequate hostels should be constructed specifically for young girls based on the demand and should be of high quality with all modern facilities.

6. ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, RESERVATIONS IN PRIVATE SECTOR AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dalits continue to be one of the poorest segments of the Indian population. Many remain confined to their traditional menial and lowly valued caste occupations even today. They form a bulk of the informal, unorganized sector workers, who subsist on low wages with poor working conditions and no social security. They also continue to face widespread exclusion and discrimination in the arena of labour and employment. Policy and legislative measures to promote equal rights and opportunities for Dalits in employment, including reservation in government employment, have not made sufficient inroads into this situation to date. Dalits continue to be significantly underrepresented in most professional jobs and in the private sector. In particular, Dalit representation in India's high industries, exports, imports, and electronic industries sector is dismal. Moreover, public sector disinvestment is estimated to have left a large number of Dalit employees jobless. While reservation in government jobs exist, this does not yet extend to the private sector.

Dalits remain restricted to caste-based manual labour occupations or congregated around the bottom rung of government services. In 2004-05, 95% of SC/STs were in the unorganized sector, a sector that is synonymous with low wages and lack of employment or social security. The situation has not fundamentally changed in 2013.¹⁵

According to the Working Group on the Empowerment of SCs, over 113,450 job opportunities were lost by SCs in the central government in a period of ten years. A decline of 10.07% job opportunities was noticeable. This is in addition to the loss of opportunities in various state government employment sectors.¹⁶

¹⁵ (Sengupta, A., K.P. Kannan and G. Raveendran. (2008). 'India's Common People: Who are They, How Many are They and How do They Live?', Economic and Political Weekly 43(11), pp.49-63)

¹⁶ (National Coalition for Strengthening PoA Act. (2012). Joint Stakeholders report on Caste Based Discrimination in India, submitted at 13th Session of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council – India 2012. New Delhi: NCDHR, para. 31

SCs are under-represented in the ownership of enterprises. SCs accounted for 16.4% of India's population in 2001 but owned only 9.8% of all enterprises in 2005, which employed 8.1% of all non-farm workers.¹⁷

At present, Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) constitute an overwhelming majority of the enterprise's sector and contribute significantly employment generation. Among registered MSMEs, however, only 10.2% are owned by SC entrepreneurs in rural areas and only in 5.5% in urban areas. Moreover, 98.4% of SC enterprises are micro-enterprises.¹⁸

Therefore we demand

- 1. Enact Central Equal Opportunity and Equality laws or special legislative measures to prohibit discrimination in the capital market, labour hiring, workplace, private enterprises, etc.**
- 2. Comprehensive Employment Policy covering private sector employment, with a special emphasis on the Scheduled Castes and Tribes such as private employment market, private capital market, private education and housing, access to inputs, products, and consumer goods market.**
- 3. Extend Reservation to Private sector and it should apply to multiple spheres, namely private employment, market, private capital market, agricultural land, private education and housing, access to inputs and services, products and consumer goods.**
- 4. Give reservations to SCs and STs in High Courts, Supreme Court, Defense, and in Rajya Sabha**
- 5. Fill all vacant SC and ST reservation posts with candidates and as recommended by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.**

¹⁷ Iyer, L., T. Khanna and A. Varshney. (2013). 'Caste and Entrepreneurship in India', Economic and Political Weekly 48(6), pp. 52-60, at p.54

¹⁸ (Development Commissioner, MSME. (2011). Fourth All-India Census of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises 2006-07. New Delhi: Ministry of MSME, Tables 9.2, 9.3 & 10.1)

7. RIGHTS TO ACCESS STANDARDS OF HEALTH SCHEMES

Widespread caste differentials in relation to health exist amongst Dalit women and children in terms of availability and accessibility of healthcare services. Health education is severely lacking amongst Dalits, which leads to an increased risk of STIs/STDs and other contagious and life-threatening illnesses. SC women and children remain particularly affected by disparities in healthcare.

The rate of infant mortality is much higher in case of SCs (66.4%) more than the national rate (57%). In the neonatal period, the mortality rate is much higher among SCs (46.3%) than the total neonatal mortality rate of 39%. The child mortality (death of a child between first and fifth birthday) rate is higher in SCs (23.2%) [than] the total child mortality rate of 18.4 in India. The possibility of the child dying before the fifth birthday is higher among the SCs (88.1) than the other castes.”¹⁹

The third National Family Health Survey 2005-26 provides disaggregated data on SC health:

- o 47.9% of SC children are underweight as compared to the all-India average of 42.5%.
- o 15.5 % of SC women aged 15-19 have had a live birth versus an all-India average of 13% for the same age group.
- o 39.7% of SCs receive all basic vaccinations, while the country average is 45.14%.
- o 58.3% of SC women were anemic, while only 51.8% of non-SC/ST/OBC women were anemic.

¹⁹ (Singh, D. (2009). ‘Development of Scheduled Castes in India – A Review’, Journal of Rural Development 28(4), p.533)

²⁰ (Betancourt, R. and Gleason, S. (2000). ‘The Allocation of Publicly-Provided Goods to Rural Households in India: On Some Consequences of Caste, Religion and Democracy’, World Development 28(12), pp.169-182)

The state provisioning of medical services in rural areas is also biased. The higher the percentage of rural SCs in a district population, the lower the level of public services.²⁰

In spite of dedicated funding from the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan to improve sanitation infrastructure, SCs often have limited or no access to functioning toilets. Statistics show that only 23.7% of SC households have toilet facilities within their premises as compared to 42.3% of general category households.²¹

The National Family Health Survey-II (1998-99) documented a similar picture of lower accessibility and poorer health statistics among the 'lower' castes.²²

Around 16% of Dalits have no access to doctors or clinics, and only 58% of SC children have been immunized.²³

Reports show that SCs and STs are disproportionately affected by hunger and malnutrition, infant, child, and maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diarrhoea, malaria and other water-borne diseases.²⁴

²¹ (Singh, D. (2009). 'Development of Scheduled Castes in India – A Review', Journal of Rural Development 28(4), p.538)

²² (Jacob, K.S. (2009, 22 Aug.). 'India – Caste and Inequalities in Health', The Hindu)

²³ (Guha, R. (2007). 'Adivasis, Naxalities, and Indian Democracy', Economic and Political Weekly 47, pp. 3305-3312)

²⁴ (CERD. (2007). Concluding Observations on India report. UN Doc. CERD/C/IND/CO/19, para.24)

Therefore We Demand

- 1. Provide Quality multi-specialty medical services and facilities to Dalit and Adivasi communities.**
- 2. Ensure the establishment of Muhalla Clinics in urban and Primary Health Center in Rural areas to reach out the most vulnerable communities.**
- 3. Ensure the proper functioning of Ayushman Bharat launched by the Prime Minister of India to maximize its benefits to SCs and STs.**
- 4. Establish the health and hygiene education center at the constituency level.**
- 5. Ensure the block level hospitals with facilities to perform operations, administer emergency specialized care and interventions, pathological laboratories and blood bank.**
- 6. Increase the budget allocation for health care of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities.**
- 7. Establish a targeted monitoring system on the health care of women of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe for remedial measures.**

8. ACCESS TO AND NON-DISCRIMINATION IN RESPECT OF ADEQUATE FOOD, WATER, SANITATION, CLOTHING , HOUSING AND DURING DISASTER RESPONSE (DRR)

Dalits continue to face numerous ‘untouchability’ practices and discrimination, which affect their equal rights to access food, water, sanitation, clothing, and housing. They are forced to stand in separate queues at some public distribution (ration) shops or given lesser quality grains in such shops. They are prevented from using common water taps on par with other castes in many villages. Their residential areas are often the last to receive sanitation facilities. Dalits are still expected not to wear good clothes, as this is seen as showing equal status with others. They also continue to be residentially segregated in both villages and towns. Those trying to rent houses in dominant caste areas often face outright denial of housing based on their caste. Moreover, when Dalits contest this discrimination in order to enjoy a decent standard of living, they often face violence.

The midday meal scheme started in 1995-96 in few districts with 33.4 million children covered that year, and increased to 105 million children across the country in 2000-02. The number of SC children covered under this programme, however, has fallen from 22,638,260 in 2003-04 to 22,004,919 in 2004-05, causing concern in the context of reported caste discrimination.²⁵

In 2011, only 21% of SC households have drinking water sources located in or near the houses and only 29.4% of SC households enjoy tap water from a treated source. While the Census data shows that only 2.9% of SC households continue to draw water from rivers, canals, ponds, lakes or other sources (not taps, hand pumps, wells, tube wells or boreholes), no mention is made of whether all these sources provide potable drinking water.²⁶

²⁵ (Social Watch. (2006). Citizens Report on Governance and Development 2006. Delhi: Pearson Education-Longman)

In 2011, 62.1% of SC households continue to lack toilet facilities and resort to open defecation, and only 32.9% of SC households have toilets within their homes.²⁷

India experiences natural disasters, flash floods, drought and man-made disaster frequently and most of the Dalit and Adivasi living locations are prone to frequent disasters. During disaster response, the affected Dalits and Adivasis are excluded and discriminated based on their caste. The caste dynamics sprout during rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations at ground level in such way that leaves affected Dalits and Adivasis of double impact of the disaster such that they are left to take care of themselves. Disaster Management Act 2005 says there should not be any discrimination based on caste, religion, region, gender, ability, age etc, during relief, rescue and rehabilitation operations, but the experiences tell a different story.

²⁶ (Office of the Registrar General. (2013). Census of India 2011: Household Tables. New Delhi: Government of India, HH-6 SC)

²⁷ (Office of Registrar General. (2013). Census of India 2011: Household Tables. New Delhi: Government of India, HH-8 SC)

Therefore We Demand

- 1. Provide adequate housing for all SC and ST families to live with dignity.**
- 2. Launch schemes for SCs and STs to provide total habitation development in urban as well as rural areas, which shall include all the civic amenities and facilities such as clean and safe drinking water, adequate housing, sanitation, internal and external link roads, electricity, telephonic, digital and postal links, community hall with 24 x 7 day electricity and computers to be used as study centers for children and for other common developmental and welfare activities of the community.**
- 3. Establish access to adequate housing, food, water and sanitation as legal entitlements, providing a basis for individuals and groups to hold governments and other stakeholders accountable for realizing the rights.**
- 4. Ensure that all infrastructure programmes supported by state institutions facilitate SC and ST communities to access water, food, sanitation, land, irrigation, and social infrastructure proportionately and without discrimination.²⁸**
- 5. Offer incentives and subsidies – government loans, grants, etc. – to STs and SCs to operate public distribution system shops that may be located in the ST and SC localities.**

For Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

- 6. Bring change in the Disaster Management Act 2005 for grievance re-redressal mechanism to enable the people affected of disaster to voice out their complaints to the state and national mechanisms.**
- 7. Bring guidelines for inclusive disaster risk reduction as mandated by the Disaster Management Act. 2005 on non-discrimination.**

²⁸ (National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights & Indian Institute of Dalit Studies. (2005). Dismantling Descent Based Discrimination: Report on Dalits' Access to Rights. New Delhi: NCDHR and IIDS, p. 50)

- 8. Any disaster affected enumeration details disaggregated caste wise should be pasted in ward of the affected area or panchayat for taking community approval for inclusive disaster risk reduction.**
- 9. The Dalit and Adivasi community youth who are living in vulnerable locations should be trained on Disaster Risk Reduction in a time-bound manner.**
- 10. The Disaster Management Authority should acknowledge Caste induced vulnerability of affected Dalits and Adivasi communities and establish their village, block, district, state, and national level plans to address those vulnerabilities.**

9. ENTITLEMENT TO LAND AND PROTECTION AGAINST FORCED EVICTION

Poverty and inequity in rural areas of India are centrally linked to land ownership. The land is an important asset, a symbol of social status and political power for the socio-economically better off sections in the rural areas. However, for the socio-economically marginalized sections such as SCs, STs, and BCs, the land is a critical source of survival and livelihood as well as security from violence to a large extent. Therefore, increasing access and rights to land for SC and STs especially for the women in these communities is important, since obtaining even a small amount of land could potentially be a single most important instrument for their socio-economic empowerment. There is now enough evidence to suggest that the persistence of the historically oppressive caste system combined with globalization induced policies have alienated large sections of the poor, especially the Dalits from land. The neo-liberal paradigm of development articulated and implemented by successive governments have only further adversely affected the landless poor and especially the Dalit and Adivasi communities.

Only 38% of SCs compared with 61% of dominant castes operated land holdings in 2004-05. The majority of SCs (62.0%) are landless, and a little over one-third operate small areas (0.1-2.5 ha). Barely 2% operate more than 2.5 ha of land. Dalits also have more limited access to irrigation than non-SC/STs, with most (77% of SCs) enjoying little or no access as compared to 63% of non-SC/STs.²⁹

²⁹ (NSSO. (2005). National Sample Survey 61st round, 2004-05. New Delhi: Government of India)

Therefore We Demand

- 1. Distribute 5 acres of arable land for cultivation for a family from SC and ST communities.**
- 2. Entitlement of assigned land must be in the name SC and ST woman only.**
- 3. Implement Land Ceiling Acts (States specific) to acquire surplus land from landlords and re-distribute the same to Landless SC and ST communities.**
- 4. Identify Boomidhan/Bhoodan lands that are in the hands of Govt. or with the encroachers and see that these lands are re-distributed to Landless SC and ST communities.**
- 5. Implement Tenancy Laws to ensure that the names of SC and ST Tenants are incorporated in Revenue records and protect them from the eviction by Landowners.**
- 6. Implement the Tenancy Laws (Regulation of Rent) and see that SC and ST Tenants pay only fair rent to the landowners.**
- 7. Ensure that the names of SC and ST are incorporated in the Govt. Land records who own Temple lands as Tenants and see that they pay a fair rent.**
- 8. Acquire Panchami/Mahar Lands earmarked for SC and ST communities, but are in the encroachment and occupation of Non-Dalits and redistribute them to Landless SC and ST communities.**
- 9. Grant Pattas-entitlements-for the Poramboke lands that are under the enjoyment of SC and ST communities.**
- 10. Repeal the Minimum Wages Act and see that Landless SC and ST Agricultural labourers are paid 'living' wage considering the current market costs.**
- 11. Use the Land Acquisition Act to acquire and distribute:**
 - a. The lands vested with SEZs;**
 - b. The excess lands vested with Mega projects**

c. The lands that are in the hands of Realtors

- 12. Right to Fair Compensation, Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013; To ensure the protection of SC and ST communities who are evicted, displaced and migrated from their lands for mega projects/public causes.**
- 13. Forest Rights Act – 2006; Ensure protection of SC who live in Forest areas;**
- 14. PESA Act – 2005 – Especially to ensure the protection of SC from eviction and displacement**
- 15. Real Estate (Development and Regulation) Act 2013; Ensure protection of SC and ST communities from eviction and displacement;**
- 16. Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 2015; Ensure protection of SC and ST communities from eviction, displacement, and migration. If evicted to provide Fair compensation, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement.**
- 17. provide Land for burial ground/cremation for Dalits;**
- 18. Ensure that the traditional skills of SC and ST peasants and agricultural labourers are recognized and reintroduce the natural and organic farming by using traditional seeds and organic manures.**
- 19. Provide importance for the production of food crops than industry based cash crops;**
- 20. Establishment of Fast Track Courts with time marked a reference to settle the pending land cases in the country in which Dalits and Adivasi communities are involved.**
- 21. Allocation in SCP for the purchase of land, digging wells, buying Agri-based equipment, for organic cultivation and land development;**
- 22. Bring out a National Land Policy where the interests of Dalits and Adivasis are protected.**

10. RIGHT TO PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Since the adoption of the Declaration of the United Nations on the Defenders of Human Right (1998), no Human Rights protection mechanism for Human Rights Defenders has been established yet in India. There is no inter-governmental organization in charge of the protection of human rights, nor any instrument ratified at the regional level with regard to these rights. Violations and threats against HRDs often involve officials and there is no independent body to promote HRDs rights. Consequently, there is an urgent need to build effective protection mechanisms to protect HRDs at a national and regional level and end attacks on individuals and groups striving to defend and promote human rights in India.

The major problem in dealing with the violations against HR defenders is the lack of protection mechanisms. HRDs are exposed to great risk and threats from both police and law enforcement authorities as well as from the dominant communities. They are often victims of serious life threats and attacks by the perpetrators who do not get proper judicial punishment. Particularly women HRDs are more victimized by their own family, community and also by the dominant caste. While the violations against HRDs are on the increase, impunity for all these violations remain widespread. Complaints to police and related authorities on violations rarely receive any response. Investigating authorities, such as the police, are often involved in these violations themselves. At the same time, state institutions for access to justice – the police, the prosecution, and the judiciary – are dysfunctional. The police often fail to intervene to stop assaults against defenders by private actors and does not carry out proper investigation upon complaints. The prosecution does not do its job to prosecute the perpetrators. Court delay and lack of independence result in cases going nowhere.

In January, the Home Ministry said that it had refused to renew the foreign funding license of the NGO known as People’s Watch because it had allegedly portrayed India’s human rights record in a “negative light” internationally.

In March, GN Saibaba, an activist and academic, was convicted with four others and sentenced to life imprisonment by a Maharashtra court for being a member of and supporting a banned Maoist group. The conviction was based primarily on letters, pamphlets, and videos, and used the provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, a law which does not meet international human rights standards.

The same month, Jailal Rathia, an Adivasi activist, died in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, after allegedly being poisoned by members of a land mafia he was campaigning against. In April, Varsha Dongre, an official at Raipur Central Jail in Chhattisgarh, was transferred after she posted on Facebook that she had seen police torturing Adivasi girls.

In May, four men were arrested in Chennai and held in administrative detention for more than three months for attempting to stage a memorial for Tamils killed in the civil war in Sri Lanka. The same month, the Odisha state police arrested Kuni Sikaka, an Adivasi activist opposing bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri hills, and released her only after presenting her to journalists as a surrendered Maoist.

In August, activist Medha Patkar and three others protesting against inadequate rehabilitation for families affected by the Sardar Sarovar dam project (see below) were arrested on fabricated charges and detained for more than two weeks.³⁰

Therefore we Demand

- 1. Takes steps to conform to the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially:**

Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels;

³⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/india/report-india/>

Article 12.2, which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;

- 2. Ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international human rights instruments ratified by India.**
- 3. Take steps to nullify the illegal charges against all the Human Rights Defenders across India after proper and unbiased investigations.**
- 4. Ensure the establishment of the inter-governmental organization in charge of Human Rights Defenders’ Protection.**
- 5. Bringwhistle blowers Act to safeguard the human rights defenders across India.**
- 6. Enact a special legislation to ensure the protection of the Dalit Human Rights Defenders.**
- 7. Establish specialfast-track courts for the speedytrial of cases of human rights defenders who become targets of wrested interests.**

11. RIGHT TO PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

Communal violence, long an issue in India, has historically affected Muslims and Sikhs at large till the early 1990 and thereafter it spread onto Christians in India. The most affected persons in these communal clashes are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who have converted due to various reasons into other religions. The constitution of India has included Sikhs as Scheduled Caste has resulted in extending affirmative actions to them and their civil and political rights were taken by the legislation's and policies that are present. But from 1990 onwards the Christians especially who were converted from scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe were subjected to violence in various parts of India, the recent significant one is of Kandhamal, in Odisha³¹ state in which justice has to yet prevail. Apart from these the Christians who have converted from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe face caste-based discrimination within the churches and in their living locations from other caste dominant communities, which defies their progress and development in enjoying their fundamental rights at all levels.

In the past five years, the official data shows more than 700 outbreaks of communal violence in 2016 alone, with 86 killed and 2,321 injured. However, the actual figures are likely to be considerably higher as many incidents go unreported. Religious minorities are especially vulnerable to the threat of communal violence. Muslims, in particular, while making up less than 15% of the population, have typically made up the large majority of victims.³²

The failure of authorities to prevent or investigate attacks against religious minorities has created a climate of impunity which, unless urgently addressed, is likely to encourage continued attacks.

³¹ Tribe-Caste conflict and the question of Christian insecurity in Odisha: the case of Kandhamal, <http://albertscience.com/asset/images/uploads/14685621396781.pdf>

³² https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MRG_Rep_India_Jun17-2.pdf

Therefore we demand

- 1. Make Constitutional Amendment include Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims into the Scheduled Caste list through Article 341 (1) for safeguarding their rights and entitlements.**
- 2. Document the incidents of civil and political rights violations with socio-economic perspective to bring in the necessary policy and legalizations and change in present legislation's in the best interest of minority communities.**
- 3. The government must ensure existing legislation protecting the rights of minority religious communities and institutions, and in some cases, strengthened, with the full commitment of police, judiciary, and other actors.**
- 4. Ensuring accountability to the victims of attacks also requires more comprehensive documentation and prosecution of incidents, as well as broader efforts to address widespread discrimination across India towards its religious minorities.³³**
- 5. Implement the recommendations made by the Ranganath Misra Commission and Sachar Committee.**
- 6. Extend affirmative action benefits to Dalit Christians especially in Education, Employment and Election processes;**
- 7. Include provisions and schemes for Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims in SCCP and TSP.**
- 8. Create specific provisions in Land distribution, industrial / business / trade / market advancements.**
- 9. Bring Minority institutions under RTI and RTE fold.**
- 10. Ensure that Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims do not face discrimination for want of cemeteries.**
- 11. Ensure Christian Institutions of all nature, provide legitimate space to Dalit Christians.**
- 12. Ensure Dalit Christians live a life with equality, dignity, space, and justice in par with others.**

³³ https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MRG_Rep_India_Jun17-2.pdf

12. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

In the words of Ana Gomes, Member of European Parliament, we can't have democracy without political parties and we can't have true democracy without [activists] joining those political parties and fighting for the things we think are right...

Parliamentarians have great power. Even one voice in the parliament with courage and stamina can make a difference...for the SCs and STs Communities' voices, LGBTQ community's voice...for women's voices...it can make a difference. But in recent years, many civil society activists and other citizens have started to view the relationship between society and its government representatives as an unbridgeable gap. The shrinking space of democracy has been hampered and relationships between democracy and governance have been swayed away. The reason for this is obvious that the governance systems are stymied by short-term thinking and the tactical considerations of those in power today. Therefore the political parties have to proactively look into the need for radical solutions grounded in the democratic values for the future.

Challenges today are closing democratic space through new repression: powerful authoritarian states proliferate repressive norms globally and undermine regional and international rules-based mechanisms that are important for safeguarding democratic norms and standards. Restrictive laws on civil society organizations (CSOs), public gatherings, political organization and the media are becoming more sophisticated and pervasive. In his recent report to the UN Human Rights Council, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association also points out global repressive trends, including the increased adoption of restrictive legislation regulating civic space; the use of national security, anti-terrorism and public order laws against civil society actors; criminalisation of peaceful protest; stigmatisation of and attacks against civil society actors; restrictions targeting particular groups, particularly the LGBTQI community; and limitations of rights during electoral periods.

Access to information, communication with others and public-government engagements are all taking place in digital spaces and changing rapidly. This infrastructure, critical to our social and political engagements, is increasingly being shaped by non-democratic norms of internet governance. Authoritarian regimes are using sophisticated tools of digital attacks, surveillance, censorship, and control. These challenges are being accelerated by the weaponization of disinformation and the manipulation of the information space, particularly through social media. Tech companies are struggling to respond to these digital threats and to keep internet space democratic.

Therefore we demand

- 1. Ensure Amendments needed in Part IX of the Indian Constitution under article 243 regarding devolution powers by creating list IV for Local Government.**
- 2. Ensure the government need to improve on information sharing to citizens about happening in government especially in rural communities, be more responsive, accountable and accessible to the needs of citizens,**
- 3. Ensure the promotion and protection of democracy in the Electoral process, free, fair and violence free poll**
- 4. Separate polling both for SC/ST in the atrocities prone wards/booths within the constituencies of all elections to ensure fair exercising democratic rights of Franchise.**
- 5. Ensure the spaces to CSOs, Writers, Human Rights Defenders, Media, and social analysts for the Freedom of speech, expression, and assembly.**
- 6. Provide protection for the SC/ST elected representatives in local government particularly women representatives also from the Discrimination and violence.**
- 7. Implement all record of UN UPR III**
- 8. In order to improve the standards of Human Rights in India, the Govt. of India shall implement all recommendations of the United Nations, Universal Periodical Review – III, 2017**

CONCLUSION

Our firm demand to our Political Representatives as we propose the action points through Dalit Manifesto that they stand with our proposals. We look forward to our people's representatives and their parties not to despair us from our hopes but to fulfill our hopes. Over the years Dalits and Adivasis have been not rendered justice, equality or fraternity in the country as envisaged in the constitution of India.

We therefore once again place before all the political parties, civil society and to the public in general the aspirations, the safeguards, and entitlements required by capacitating vulnerable communities for a democratic India.



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