

OTHER INPUTS

Corrigendum

We apologise for not being able to include these reports earlier. We are grateful to the writers for these meaningful reports on the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups.

A Tribal Assessment of the UPA-II

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The UPA-II, in its manifesto, claims that the promises it made in 2004 were delivered “in a very substantial measure”. While the government has to be commended for some historic legislations, such as The Right to Information Act, 2005, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), 2005, and The Forest Rights Act, 2006, the reality on the ground is different. The implementation of these legislations has been shoddy and the accountability structures very poor. For instance, despite getting all the documents pertaining to corruption through RTI, no proper action has been taken against the culprits. In fact, in the case of unearthing corruption in the NREGA, incidences of cold-blooded murder of activists have been reported.

Chapter 6 of Volume-I of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) on ‘Inclusive Growth’ has a focus on “Social Justice: Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities and Other Vulnerable Groups” (pp. 101-136). It is, however, quite amazing that practically all the suggestions that one would have liked to be included in the 12th Five Year Plan, are already there in the earlier document. These are in connection with the issues of development, land alienation, rehabilitation, livelihood, and other issues pertaining to tribals. The UPA-I claimed to support inclusive growth by giving equal access to the services provided by the state and equal opportunity for upward economic and social mobility. It claimed that efforts were made for socio-economic development of the marginalized groups. However, very little of what was promised could be achieved in the last couple of years - leaving the tribals dissatisfied and up in arms against the loss of their land and resources, the very foundation of their livelihood and existence. Here, we assess some of the key sectors for the performance of the UPA-II, which affect the tribals the most.

Educational development

Educational development was spoken of in terms of elementary education and literacy, higher education, district Primary Education Programme, pre-Matric and post-Matric scholarship scheme, Ashram Schools in TSP areas, and Hostel facilities for tribals. The promise to empower weaker sections of society by increasing their pre-Matric, post-Matric fee and coaching fee, to some extent has been met. The Government has decided to substantially hike the post-Matric scholarship amount and other benefits for the scheduled tribes and the disabled. Extending the coverage of beneficiaries, the Government has also decided to revise the income ceiling of parents/guardians from Rs 1.45 lakh to Rs two lakh per annum for their children to avail the benefits. A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, approved revision in the 100 per cent Centrally-sponsored scheme of post-Matric scholarships for ST students. The Home Minister P. C. Chidambaram announced that the revision has been made effective from 1st July 2010. According to the new arrangement, the monthly maintenance allowance to four categories

of day scholars have been revised from Rs 330 to Rs 550 per month in Group-I, Rs 330 to Rs 530 in Group-II, Rs 185 to Rs 300 in Group-III and Rs 140 to Rs 230 in Group-IV. Similarly, the monthly allowance for hostellers has been raised from Rs 740 to Rs 1200 for Group-I, Rs 510 to Rs 820 for Group-II, Rs 355 to Rs 570 for Group-III and Rs 235 to Rs 380 for Group-IV. For ST students, annual allowances towards study tour charges, thesis typing and printing charges and book grant for correspondence courses have also been increased (*Deccan Herald*, 03/06/2011).

The irony, however, is that while the 11th Five Year Plan is coming to a close, there are only about 78 Ashram Schools with a capacity of 9610 seats at the cost of 22.34 crore rupees and there are only about 120 hostels with 9884 students. Not only is the infrastructure (buildings, schools, facilities) inadequate, the teachers are neither well-trained nor committed. There is no holistic development of the students in these schools. Literacy rate has definitely increased in the last 50 years but there is a huge gap between the ST literacy rate and that of the General population (ST- 47.10 & General 64.8 in census 2001). Given the population of the STs, the provisions above are not even a drop in the ocean. Many promises of UPA-II, as in the case of UPA-I, seem to be on paper only.

Provisions and facilities need to be proportionate to the population of the STs. More schools are needed. Text books in tribal languages, especially at the primary level, are yet to be promoted. There is need of industrial training institutes (ITI) in TSP areas, polytechnics, and rural/community development. The quality of services in the area of education needs to be enhanced. Budget allocations and scholarships for tribals need to be substantially proportionate to their population. Critical infrastructure facilities, such as roads, communication, health, education, electricity, and drinking water, are yet to be addressed.

The Government claims to have imparted a new momentum to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan for primary education. It has also introduced a cooked mid-day meal scheme in all primary schools that feeds 15 crore children every day. However, in many schools there is more seriousness about the mid-day-meal than studies. Hence, some tribal activists have demanded the closure of the mid-day meal. Instead, they have asked for a holistic approach to the livelihood of the family that will take care of the entire family and facilitate concentration of the child in education.

The Government again claims to have increased the number of colleges, universities, and institutes of technology, management and information technology. The investment in higher education in the XIth Five Year Plan (2007-08 to 2011-12) is expected to have a huge increase – five times the investment in the previous five years. However, unfortunately the tribals benefiting from this process of development is minimal.

Economic development

Among other programmes, the UPA-I initiated the Bharat Nirman programme to transform rural India by expanding and providing irrigation, all-weather roads, houses for the poor, drinking water, electricity for all poor families and phone connectivity in all villages. If successful, this programme would certainly benefit the rural tribals. However, the rampant corruption at all levels has marred the success of the programme. The UPA talks of building on “the success of the NREGA and take the scheme forward” as if it has been a great success. An honest assessment of the scheme, however, unravels the rampant corruption that shames the country. It may have been somehow successful in some states, but the same cannot be said of the pre-dominantly tribal states, like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Economic development of STs has been very ineffective. The Government is addressing the tribal problem not as a structural problem but only as a symptom. Most of the Government efforts for tribal development (reservations, mid-day meal, PDF, and MGNREGA), seem to be ineffective. Delivery mechanisms do not seem to work. Accountability structures are ill-defined. Rampant corruption exists at all levels. Basic facilities for safe drinking water, electricity for home, agriculture, and village, and solar energy, are not available. Community centres, sheds for shops, *haat*, *bazaars*,

and stores in the village are yet to be taken care. Public Distribution Centre does not seem to be functioning well. The Government always pats its back on more than 8 percent economic growth, but the irony is that the increase in the petrol, diesel, and vegetable prices has virtually broken the backbone of the poor and the middle class. Tribals are adversely affected by the unfriendly economic policy of the Government.

The “Forest Act’

The Government claims to have significantly empowered the weaker sections of society, especially the tribes by giving them and the traditional forest-dwellers rights over land they cultivate in forest areas. The Forest Right Act 2006 has been propagated as addressing the “historical injustice” against tribals. However, the Act is yet to be effectively implemented. The Forest Department continues its highhandedness. Atrocities continue against tribals and forest-dwellers still. Elephants and tigers seem to be more precious and more important than human lives. Forest villages are yet to be developed according to the genius of the forest-dwelling communities with the support of the government. We have a couple of examples of the way the Forest Act is being implemented across the country.

While the Maharashtra government contends that there is a large number of false claims under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Rights) Act 2006, Adivasis feel they have been short-changed by the State, which has denied legitimate claims. A total of 3,39,689 claims, including 3988 community claims, were received in Maharashtra, according to the status report on the implementation of the Act till November 30, 2010, put up on the Ministry of Tribal Affairs website. Of this, 2,21,795 claims — including 1273 community claims — were rejected and 1,04,767 claims, including 423 community claims, were approved. This covered an area of 2,25,340 acres for individual claims and 18,964 acres for community claims, with a disposal rate of 96.13 percent. But at the ground level, things were different. Last year, the former Chief Secretary, J.P. Dange, issued orders to do away with land-mapping using GPS, which was time-consuming. As a result, there was no measurement of land before the titles were distributed. Official sources said this was a blunder, and had led to much confusion. In some cases, Adivasis received as little as 20 *gunthas*, or half-an-acre, while their claim was much more. Ratan Hadal from Sukhadamba in Dahanu taluka of Thane district said he had four plots but the government only accepted his claim to 35 *gunthas* (one acre is equal to 40 *gunthas*). Salu Babar had about six acres, which he had been cultivating since decades, but now he had rights to only about two-and-a-half acres. People were busy filing appeals for the rejected claims and all their time was spent in running around with bright plastic bags full of paperwork which they could neither read nor understand (*Hindu*, 09/03/2011).

Karnataka features at the bottom of the ranking of States in implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA). Of the 1,63,090 applications received from individuals and communities to claim title deeds on forest land that they have lived and worked on for generations, only an abysmal 6,522 title deeds — or 3.99 per cent — have been granted. As many as 1,43,825 claims have been rejected by the Deputy Commissioners of districts across the State between 2006 when the Act came into force, and today. While Tripura ranks number one on the performance list, having granted 67.64 per cent of the claims received, Karnataka comes a distant 15, after Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, which have granted 12.87 per cent and 13.41 per cent respectively. Only three States are worse off than Karnataka: Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The remaining nine States, which include Goa, Sikkim and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, have not received claims. Karnataka has distributed 8,500.22 acres of forest land, which accounts for 0.07 per cent of the total forest area in the State (*Hindu*, 21/06/2011).

Agriculture sector

The government recognizes that STs essentially depend on agriculture. As many as 81.56 percent of the total workers (rural + urban) are engaged in primary sector of whom 44.71 percent are cultivators and 36.85 percent are agricultural

labourers. No attention, however, is given to the agriculture sector. More than 58 percent people in India are engaged in agricultural activities. However, agriculture is growing at the rate of not more than 3 percent, which is pathetic. Hence, measures should be taken by the Government to make irrigation and other facilities available for increase in agriculture growth. Agricultural land should not be used for industries and other non-agricultural purposes.

There is dire need of providing irrigation facilities and not diverting irrigational water for industries. In Jharkhand, the water level has gone down by 7 feet in some areas, according to a report. If all the MoUs signed are implemented in Jharkhand, there will not be enough water to sustain them and the people there. As promised, there should be promotion of horticulture, animal husbandry, dairy farming, sericulture, silviculture, and cottage and small industries. There should be micro-financing for agricultural activities. TRIFED meant for marketing and NSTFDC as a lending agency, are not working effectively. They should reach out to the tribals in honesty. Large-scale multi-purpose corporate societies should be established to help the agriculture sector if Government wants STs to progress. There should be interlinking of roads with bridges on rivers in order to better market their agriculture and minor forest produce; telephone and internet facilities; regular and efficient road transport and train service facilities. Water bodies like wells, and ponds, should be made for agriculture and fisheries. Tourism could be promoted but again the local people should be empowered to manage it locally with the support of the Government. It is only then that they can progress. Entrepreneurship among tribal youngsters should be developed. Tribals already have indigenous knowledge for animal keeping, poultry, farming and so on. Hence, the Government can train them to improve their productivity by integrating modern knowledge and technique with the traditional.

Displacement and rehabilitation

The Government claims to be serious about minimizing displacement and promoting non-displacing or least-displacement alternatives, ensuring adequate and expeditious rehabilitation with the participation of the Project Affected Families (PAFs)—through an independent authority, creating obligations on the State to protect right of weaker sections, particularly SCs and STs, providing a better standard of living with sustainable income, and integrating rehabilitation concerns into development planning and implementation.

It has been a positive development in Goa that all departments have been asked to earmark 12 per cent of the budget for tribal people of the state. Under pressure, the Goa government on May 31, 2011, reiterated that it had already issued a circular banning the sale of the land of Scheduled Tribes (STs) without prior approval of the Collectors. It further said that even if land is already sold to non-ST person it will not be registered. This was one of the 12 demands of the tribal people under the banner of United Tribals Alliance Association (Hindu, 01/06/2011).

However, till date, no “effective follow-up action” has been taken to operationalize the policy. Again, it is said that measures would be taken for “rigorous implementation of laws for preventing alienation of tribal land and plugging loopholes in such laws” by updating and digising land records in tribal areas, separate fast-track courts in the Scheduled Areas to deal with cases of tribal land alienation, translation of anti-alienation laws into regional languages, and possibly in tribal languages, for wide dissemination in tribal areas, and a law for urban agglomerates in Scheduled Areas on the analogy of PESA Act, 1996, needs to be considered for enactments. It should be noted that not a single point from the above ‘rhetoric’ has been translated into action from the section above. In fact, the alienation of tribal land with the support of the Union and state governments, for various purposes, is intensified. For instance, while the laws to protect tribal land in the Fifth Schedule Areas are blatantly violated, even the Act like Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 is being debated by the NDA government in Jharkhand, whether it should be abolished.

The tribals demand that the Union Government must not pass the proposed Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill and Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill in their current form in the Parliament. The UPA Government tried to do this

towards the end of the 14th Lok Sabha and also on the last day of the Monsoon Session in extremely secretive manner. There was not only no debate on the matter but also lack of adequate prior information. The tribals irrespective of their religion across the country oppose this legitimization of undemocratic attempt. In spite of its promise to pass a comprehensive law regarding rehabilitation and resettlement, the bill is now stuck in the Parliament.

Tribal unrest and socio-political movements

The government recognizes that “lack of socio-economic development, physical and economic exploitation, land alienation and other problems have led to a situation in which 75 predominantly tribal districts are affected by violence”. The government promised to prevent exploitation of tribals through strict penal action against errant moneylenders, businessmen, traders, middlemen, government servants and other exploiters. The government also showed its commitment to effective implementation of the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The government wished that the practice of employment of contractors and middlemen by public sector organizations be replaced by tribes-benefitting procedures. It also sought to amend the instruments which went against the tribal societies.

All the above aspirations are beautiful, but not a single promise has been fulfilled so far despite the fact that there are already legislations to implement them. Although the UPA-I Government categorically stated in 2004 that the issue of extremism in tribal areas is not a law and order problem but a socio-economic issue, but the way this problem is being addressed in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Orissa, reveals that this problem for the UPA-II in 2011, has become a law and order problem indeed.

Self-governance

As far as self-governance is concerned, though the Government recognizes that there is increasing tribal alienation, displacement and dispossession of tribal land, apathy of official machinery to tribal problems, atrocities on tribals, growing clout of market forces, and meager advancement through planned development, still not enough has been done for giving power into the hands of the people. PESA 1996 has been completely diluted by various state Panchayati Raj Acts, thereby defeating the purpose of the legislation for empowering the Gram Sabhas. Even if the elections are held by way of decentralization of power, it has ended up as a decentralization of corruption. If the Government wants welfare/development of the tribals the bottom-line is “give them the right to self-rule” without any manipulations. However, despite the fact that the Government is aware of the lacunae, there is need of political will, a professional delivery mechanism, and a good accountability structure. Health facilities, such as Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Veterinary Centres are yet to be opened and revitalized in many rural areas predominantly inhabited by the tribals. The biggest disappointment of the UPA-II is the fact that the Gram Sabhas have not been given power that they are entitled in matters of land, forest, minerals, minor forest produce, liquor, and development. In Jharkhand, Panchayat Raj elections have taken place after 32 years and the functionaries are still in the dark as to what they are supposed to do.

Security to the people

The Indian National Congress made solemn promises to the people of our country to guarantee the maximum possible security to each and every citizen from terrorism and fundamentalism and yet the tribals today perceive the Government as a “terrorist state” for taking the lands of the tribes away and handing them over to corporate and multi-national companies.

The National Food Security Act (NFSA), which is in the pipeline, envisages guaranteeing access to sufficient food for all people, particularly the most vulnerable sections of society. It seeks to ensure every family living below the poverty

line either in rural or urban areas, by law, to 25 kgs of rice or wheat per month at Rs 3 per kg. However, it has not yet materialized. Even if it does, one wonders whether or not the NFSA too will have the same fate as the NREGA.

The government has promised guarantee of health security for all. The National Rural Health Mission is working, but no noticeable impact can be seen as yet. The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) introduced by the Congress-led UPA Government offers health insurance for poor families, but even this scheme has not been effective. The Indian National Congress has pledged that every family living below the poverty line will be covered by the RSBY over the next three years and that every district headquarters hospital will be upgraded to provide quality health facilities to all. The impact of this pledge, however, is yet to be seen.

The government promised a comprehensive social security to those at special risk. The tribals would certainly benefit from this law, but nothing or very little has happened so far. On the contrary, land grabbing has made the land-holders and those living on these lands, much more vulnerable now than ever before.

The government claims that the number of crimes against the Scheduled Tribes has gone down. However, in day-to-day life, atrocities against tribals seem to be on the rise. This is despite the fact there are so many legislations to protect them. Hence, the obvious conclusion is that laws are not being implemented and that there is no accountability on the part of law-enforcing agencies. Tribals demand that the existing protective laws be implemented stringently and the erring officials be punished immediately. Police Stations should be opened with all security facilities and even special cells of Lady Police for addressing the problems of tribal women who face trafficking, harassment and exploitation.

Abject poverty

The Government claims to have enhanced the quality of life of the weaker sections, especially the tribals, but there is abject poverty among the tribes across the country. In some cases there are suicides committed by the peasants and the tribals. Poverty also causes large-scale migration of tribal women as domestic workers in the megacities. Despite the hundreds of crores of rupees being spent by the Government on several programmes for the uplift and welfare of Adivasis in Kerala, a large number of them are still struggling to keep themselves alive. According to official records, about five percent of the Adivasis residing in Kerala's forests have food only once a day. The "children of the forests" are living in such hardships when the Government is claiming to provide benefits like free rice and all other benefits to the economically backward sections. The harshest of the hardships are being borne by five sections of the Adivasis living in the State's forests. As per the findings of a survey conducted jointly by the State Local Administration Department and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Department, five percent of the people in these five sections have food only once a day. These five extremely weaker sections are Kattunaikkan, Cholanaikkan, Kadar, Kurumbar and Koraga. Twenty-six percent families of these five sections do not have ration cards and therefore are not receiving subsidized food items sold through ration shops. There are 6,738 families in these sections living in the forests of Kasaragod Wayanad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Palakkad and Thrissur. As many as 1,782 families among them do not have ration cards (*Pioneer*, 03/05/2011).

Over 4,000 Chakma tribal people in Mizoram were reportedly starving last year according to a non-governmental organisation. "Over 800 Chakma tribal families comprising over 4,000 men, women and children in four villages in Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) areas of southern Mizoram have been starving for several weeks," New Delhi based Mizoram Chakma Development Forum (MCDF) said in a letter to the Mizoram government (*Deccan Herald*, 24/12/2010).

Atrocities on tribals

There are many cases of atrocities on tribals across the country. Here are some examples: A tribal Christian in Rajasthan's Pratapgarh district walked five kilometres naked on the main road to reach the nearest police station to file a complaint after anti-social elements thrashed him and stripped him thoroughly before speeding away on motorcycles (*Hindu*, 08/03/2011). There have been reports from Madhya Pradesh that while chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was presenting awards to two brave women on International Women's Day on Tuesday, around 2000 tribal women were being rounded up by the police as they marched to his house to demand ownership papers to their land (*TOI*, 09/03/2011). In spite of the Supreme Court's intervention for showing no leniency in the case of the tribal women paraded naked in Orissa's Keonjhar district, no proper action has been taken. There are also cases of gang rape of a tribal woman while in police custody (*TOI*, 19/01/2011). Police remained mute spectators as two tribal leaders were burnt alive by a mob in Balli, 60 kms in Goa, during the tribal agitation on May 25, 2011 (*IE*, 05/06/2011). The tribals work 12 hours a day, collecting and bundling leaves for *beedis* in Bastar district but they only get ten paise per bundle (*TOI*, 13/06/2011).

This has been one of the concerns that tribal girls in large numbers are being trafficked from the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, and so on. There are more than 400 placement agencies in Delhi engaged in the placement of these tribal girls. Once in the kothis, these girls are exploited—economically, sexually, and psychologically. There is unfortunately no comprehensive legislation to address the problem of the unorganized sector in which domestic help falls. In spite of promises of social security for tribals, the Government has not been able to address their problem. There are many tribal domestic workers in urban areas and the UPA promise to meet the special requirements of children of migrant workers in towns and cities through new programmes in association with civil society organizations is yet to be realized. A number of programmes are said to have already been launched to combat the still widely-prevalent phenomenon of child malnutrition.

These are only a few examples to show what the promises of the UPA-II were and what has been its performance.

DALITS: Piecemeal Commitments versus Substantive Transformation

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) with inputs from Sayantoni Datta

The Indian state has continued to subvert social justice agendas within its social policies. Irrespective of political party perspectives, the agenda is fragmented due to vote bank politics. This has meant piecemeal commitments and failure to substantially transform the situation of the weakest sections of society. This disjointedness is clearly evident in the UPA II's commitment and its performance as well.

The UPA II promised 'impetus to the weaker sections', through the proper allocation of funds for effective development and welfare, education, reservation in legislatures, ending caste discrimination and violence, and social and food security measures, in its Manifesto.

At the time of release of the manifesto, none of the political parties managed to bring in a Dalit perspective within their manifestos. Were one to compare the demands under the Dalit Manifestoes by civil society with the UPA Manifesto in 2009, several aspects seemed to have fallen through the cracks. Some of these were:

- Ensuring reservation in the private sector
- Reintroducing the earlier truncated land reforms
- Proper implementation of the Prevention of Atrocities Act
- Educational Equality and Parity for Dalits

II

The most obvious indicator that reflects the UPA II Government's rolling out of its manifesto commitment towards an 'impetus to the weaker sections of society' with respect to Dalits, is the performance in implementation of the Special Component Plan (SCP). Analysis of the SCP revealed some startling findings which suggest the contrary.

- Budgetary allocations under the SCP in the Union Budget ranged between 6% and 8% for five consecutive years from 2007-2011, which is far below the SC population of 16.53%. The 2009 manifesto clearly states a commitment of allocations in SCP 'in proportion to the Dalit population'.
- There has been an increasing trend in the trajectory of denials to SCs under the SCP over these five years. Serious diversions have been found in allocations. Funds to ensure inclusion of Dalits within 'growth processes' was instead diverted to make heavy infrastructure such as ports, highways and Game Complexes! Similar trends are observed at the state level showing a lack of impetus given to regulation and monitoring.
- Where actual allocations have been made, these have poor focus. The flaw in effectiveness of programmes for Dalits was clearly cited in the Mid Term Appraisal of the 11th Five Year Plan.
- While the constitution of the Jadhav Task force in November 2010 hailed a new era of reflection on better implementation of the SCP, the recommendations failed to bring on board the issues of lack of accountability of the Ministries in allocating under SCP for so many years. This point having been continuously raised by civil society in the past.

III

While the Report to People 2010-11 is silent on the Special Component Plan, some reconsideration on the recommendations in the Mid Term Appraisal (MTA) of the 11th Plan on schemes and programmes have been acknowledged. However, major implementational issues remain. Some of these unacknowledged aspects mentioned in the MTA for the 11th Plan which need to be stressed are:

- Stated mechanisms need to be introduced to prevent disruption in provision of scholarships for Post Matric Scholarship.
- Better hostel and maintenance facilities and lesser time taken in construction of SC Girls Hostels under the Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana is needed
- The role of National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC) as well as other Corporations working for the weaker sections needs to be redefined. They need to focus their activities mainly towards financing Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY). The Corporations extend loans to SCs through the State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) against a guarantee. It is very difficult for poor SCs to manage the guarantee and, therefore, there is a need to look at doing away with the clause of guarantee. The viability of these corporations - NFSDC/SCDC - need to be reassessed considering that the low rate of recovery of loans has diminished the resources of these corporations
- Legal and judicial changes are recommended to eliminate issues of discrimination and protection against atrocities.
- Law on rehabilitation/land acquisition and resettlement is still in the midst of discussion, the peculiar situation of Dalits, especially share-croppers and the landless have to be taken into account.

IV

'Rapid economic growth' is the buzzword under UPA's rule, in its Report to People, the UPA places targets and profit achievements on economic resurgence but there is no mention of the word Dalit there. Post-liberalization industrial

policies at national and state levels resulted in dismantling many of the labour provisions. As a result of this, the bulk of the labour force comprises the unorganized sector. 90% of those belonging to Dalit community are in menial jobs in the private sector.¹ Dalits are also concentrated mostly in the low productive activity with 'uncertain and oppressive' conditions. However 'resurgence' does not look at these issues.

While several accounts of scams and the levels of corruption in governance have been highlighted, civil society has continuously raised the need to address underlying challenges to this corruption and the shocking levels of inequality it is reinforcing. P. Sainath compares the assets of 825 MLAs with 825 landless labour households, where the 'total self-declared value of 825 MLAs is around Rs.2,128 crore. As many as 231 of these MLAs are into their second term. They increased their assets by 169 per cent on average, between 2006 and 2011 in comparison to 825 landless labour households who are drowning in debt'. Speaking of 'debt' itself, while it is difficult for SC/STs to get loans, the lopsided nature of policies is evident in how the government/s are bailing out sick industries through incentives, concessions and tax cuts, which in turn are hardly able to generate dignified and gainful means of employment for SCs. On the other hand SCs, continue to face discrimination in accessing loans and credit or loan waivers. Either their farming practices are considered 'traditional', or Dalits who are share-croppers are still to get gainful recognition of their occupational status in many parts of the country.

It must be appreciated, that the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh publicly stated the need to 'eliminate manual scavenging in the next six months', however it is hoped that Mr. Singh's new sense of urgency and his verbal commitments on the issue, will find translation into schemes and budgetary allocations for manual scavengers which was lifted after a short while of their introduction in the initial years of UPA II's rule.

Dalit communities recognize education as critical for development, dignity and socio-economic mobility. For this, they demand a seamless system of education with equal and equitable access to quality education at pre-school, school, technical and higher education. While the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for upper primary school was 72.8 % it is only 5% for SCs when it comes to higher education. However UPA has continued to focus on mainly piecemeal commitments such as Scholarships, Hostels and fellowships.

Data from the National Family Health Survey-III (2005-06) clearly highlights the caste differentials in relation to health status which includes reduced access to maternal and child health care, stunting, wasting, low weight and anemia in children and anemia in adults. Similarly, neonatal, postnatal, infant, child and under-five statistics clearly show a higher mortality among the SCs and the STs. Problems in accessing health care are higher among the scheduled castes and this situation is not very different from 1998-99. The emphasis on a disaggregated approach on Dalits in the area of health is still missing.

A Report Card of the last 20 years on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in 2010 has shown negligible decline in the crimes against SC/STs. In 2007, annual average of 33,956, and daily average of 93 crimes were recorded against SC/STs. Though the UPA manifesto hopes to address caste violence, not only were severe cases of caste violence and rape of Dalit women recorded in Kandhamal, Mirchpur, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh during this term, which is a black dot in our Independent history, but also the UPA fails to put a clear mandate on their implementation of the POA Act.

Though 'reservation in legislatures' is a firm commitment repeatedly voiced by the UPA II government and even articulated clearly by both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi, the Chief of Party, as crucial to realizing better principles of democracy, the stories are different on the ground. Dalits face severe violence before they are able to enter into politics, they are discriminated against within the larger political sphere and fear raising Dalit issues even within their parties in the fear of being ostracized. However, bringing in adequate policies in official monitoring and

1 <http://www.dsruk.org/other/Submission%20to%20the%20Trade%20and%20Industry%20Select%20Committee.pdf>

protection of Dalit candidates and elected representatives, social audits to prevent corruption during elections and adequate quotas need to be instituted in lower levels of the bureaucracy for SC women and men, ST women and men. Information needs to be made accessible so Dalit representatives are able to serve their communities better.

Though the UPA reports that 80% of the claims under the Forest Rights Act have been given titles, there have been several occasions where district administration have not admitted the claims of Other Traditional Forest Dwellers. The UPA's turnaround on forest rights in the POSCO case is one such example. Neglect of fisherfolk interests is another such example. In most of the mega projects, Dalits have been the worst affected.

How far have Dalit interests been integrated into economic growth and into the bigger framework of governance? Have they suffered the costs of growth more than others? While the answers to these questions are being repeatedly voiced by the civil society, the UPA government refuses to ask these questions.