

## **Budget 2016: Once Again Fails to Deliver for the Dalit Adivasis**

*The Union Budget has failed to deliver on the needs of the marginalised section of population. The spending has been much lower than what was budgeted.*

On February 29, Union Finance Minister delivered the second full budget of the BJP-NDA government. Though we applaud the allocation of Rs.500 crores under the stand-up India scheme for SC/ST entrepreneurs, the overall allocation under SCSP TSP is extremely poor.

The allocations for SC under the Union Budget 2016 is only 7.6% when the due amount under SCSP budget should be 16.8% which should amount to Rs.91,301 and 8.6% under TSP which should amount to Rs.47,300 Crores. Thus denying a total of Rs 75,764 crore. NCDHR condemns this denial in allocation.

The budget comes at a crucial point with UGC withdrawing non-NET fellowships and death of Rohith Vemula a PhD student at Hyderabad University. The underlying issue of both these instances has been denial of mandatory funds to research scholars. Paul Divakar, General Secretary, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, holds the finance minister accountable when and questions, “Where is the missing Rs.75,773 Crores? Yet another massive denial & disinterest to bridge the growing development gap.”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar reasoned that higher education was an important instrument, to seek power and dignity for all. Hence advocated for public education being critical for the empowerment of Dalit and backward classes. Access and opening of educational institutions by the historically excluded groups has been a moment of rupture in history and met with violent backlash from the dominant community.

The events of the previous months— cutting of non-NET fellowships, denial of fellowship money to PhD students in Hyderabad and other universities— point at this violent backlash from the dominant community. The Union Budget 2016-17 is another example of this violent backlash. The denial in money allocated for the purpose of higher education to be accessed by the community further makes their struggle for equality a tougher one. Additionally, it acts as violation of constitutionally mandated rights of the SC/ST community.

Of the total of Rs 897 crore allocated under UGC. 60% goes towards capital assets and another 30% towards grants-in-aid and only 8% directly benefitting SC and ST students.

If we analyse the allocation sector wise, over 86% of the Dalit budget is spent on Social Service, Welfare and Housing Sectors. They do not form the triggers for development except for Higher education. Without greater allocations for Agriculture and allied, Rural Development Schemes, Energy, Industry and Mineral, Science and Technology and Communication, the overall growth of the SC and ST will be very lopsided. Innovation is needed to design schemes for the Dalit & Adivasi men and women in these sectors.

The budget continues to marginalise Dalit-Adivasi women by allocating a measly 1% to Dalit women and 2% to Adivasi women without taking into account the needs, and voices of

women. The schemes lack an understanding of their lived reality and are blind to the concerns of the Dalit and Adivasi women.

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