

# **CPI(M) Appeal**



**Save Adivasis'  
Jal, Jangal, Zameen**

**17th Lok Sabha 2019**

# Why Left?

**30,000**

Tribal school students were given pre-matric scholarships in Tripura under Left

**55,000**

Tribal students are given post matric scholarships'



Elect Left | Defeat BJP  
Ensure Secular Govt at Centre



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## **CPI (M) Appeal to Adivasis**

Dear Friends,

Johar!

The CPI(M) greets you, our Adivasi sisters and brothers for the relentless struggles you have fought against the Modi Government's undeclared war against your rights in the name of "ease of doing business."

In the name of anti-extremist security operations, the Government has locked up thousands of innocent adivasis in jails. Many have been charged under Sedition laws and the UAPA in totally false cases to suppress struggles. Activists who have supported the adivasi cause have also been arrested. There has been an intensification of the attacks on the democratic rights and freedom of expression of adivasis, particularly in States led by the BJP.

Everywhere you have fought for your rights to equality and justice, for the benefits of socio-economic development, for your rightful share in public expenditure, for jal, jungal, zameen, against your displacement and faced many difficulties with great courage. The CPI(M) and the red flag have stood shoulder to shoulder with you in all these struggles. It is the CPI(M) and Left parties' MPs who have raised your voice in Parliament.

The five year term of this Government is over. The dates for the Lok Sabha Elections have been announced. Now is the time to translate these struggles into your vote against this cruel and predatory Government.

And even while Modi goes around the country making another set of false promises, his Government has behind your back prepared amendments to the colonial Forest Act which will give forest officials even greater powers against you while snatching away the rights you have under the Forest Rights Act, under PESAA, under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India. This is another grave danger you face if the Modi Government returns.

In this appeal we bring you the real picture of what the Modi Government policies have been for you, the adivasis of India.

## **Attack on Forest Rights Act**

After decades of struggle for rights to jal, jungle, zameen , at last in 2006 the Forest Rights Act was enacted. Instead of strongly implementing the Act, the Modi Government has done everything possible to dilute and subvert it. The Modi Government and the BJP State Governments see the FRA as a barrier to their pro-corporate policies and their commitment to hand over forest land and the wealth of the forests to private companies. During its regime, out of every ten claims made, only two were accepted. At the national level only 44.6 per cent of individual claims made by adivasis and traditional forest dwellers (TFD) have been accepted (by 30.11.2018). In other words, many more claims have been rejected than accepted by the anti-advansi NDA government!

These claims have been rejected on bogus grounds. The CPI(M) stands for a review of every claim rejected, not by a committee of anti-advansi bureaucrats, as at present, but by an impartial committee of those who have worked among adivasis.

The greatest betrayal of the Modi Government was when it refused to defend the Act and adivasi rights to pattas and other forest rights on forest land before the Supreme Court when these were challenged by some retired forest officers. The Government deliberately did not send any Senior lawyers on the crucial days of the case. As a result, shamefully, the Supreme Court has ordered that all those adivasis and traditional forest dwellers who have not yet got their land pattas will be evicted from the forests. As a result of this decision, at least twenty three lakh adivasi families are vulnerable to eviction. At present, because of adivasi protests and the fear that they will not get adivasi votes, the Government has got a stay order. But remember it is only temporary till July. It is only if this Government is defeated that the evictions threat can be stopped.

## **Anti Advansi Policy and legal Measures**

The Modi Government also took a series of policy decisions and brought laws which take away the right to consent and allow forcible takeover of Adivasi land. The gram sabha - the central authority in adivasi areas as per the law - has been deprived of its role entirely.

For example

This Government has produced a National Forest Policy which actually is

drafted to facilitate privatization of India's forests and handing them over to companies for profits. That is why they want to destroy the Forest Rights Act because under the Act the forest land belongs to the millions of adivasis and traditional forest dwellers who have lived in the forests for generations. In contrast, large tracts of forest land have been diverted to private companies for non forestry purposes.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFFCC) has issued a series of circulars to undermine the FRA. It has prevented the implementation of the Act in areas designated as Wild Life Sanctuaries and is evicting adivasi inhabitants of these areas without recognition of their rights under FRA as well as in violation of the amendments made to the Wild Life Protection Act which had been included because of the successful efforts of the CPI(M) MPs.

Under this Government linear infrastructure projects in adivasi areas such as roads, railway lines, power lines etc. are "fast tracked" giving up the earlier guideline of the "principle of avoidance" so as to protect the eco system. Now trees can be chopped even before forest clearance. Policy shifts have included quick clearances for medium sized coal mines without any requirement for gram sabhas or consent for those affected. Coal blocks have been taken out of what were termed " inviolate" areas. Irrigation projects with a command area of up to 2000 hectares along with thermal, projects upto 15 mw are in the automatic clearance route. Even in wild life areas, companies do not require permission for preliminary surveys. The mandatory requirement of taking the consent of gram sabha for any project in their area under the Fifth Schedule and PESAA has been eliminated.

### **Anti- Adivasi Laws**

At the same time as these policy based assaults on adivasi rights, the Modi Government enacted two laws which directly hit adivasi interests. The first was the CAMPA Act, the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority Act which was passed by Parliament in 2015. Through this law, the fund collected from corporates as compensation for the takeover of forest land, amounting to thousands of crore rupees was distributed to the affected States for plantation of new forests in compensation. But where is the land to plant new forests to come from? More adivasis will be displaced in the name of afforestation. The money has been used to serve the interests of State Governments. Adivasis have not been consulted at all. Gram Sabhas have been totally

ignored. The Authority set up is dominated by bureaucrats with no representation of adivasis. Moreover afforestation priorities are mainly to serve the needs of the timber and paper industry with their choice of trees being planted. Worst of all, the law does not guarantee the full implementation of the FRA or the right of control of adivasis over community forest resources.

The government also pushed through the Mining and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act 2015. The Act is a charter for handing over the mineral wealth of the country to private loot and plunder. This act has done away with the requirement of mandatory consent of adivasi and other landowners for mining under the surface of the land owned/occupied by them. The act has extended the period of private leases from 30 years to 50 years. The amendment overrides the landmark 1997 Samatha judgement which upheld the rights of adivasis to a share in the mineral wealth of the country. Even the earlier recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee that at least 26 per cent of the profits from mineral wealth mined should be shared with adivasis under whose land the minerals are, was scrapped by the Modi Government.

The Coal Bearing Areas Act further criminalized legitimate protest even as it once again ignored the rights of adivasis. Environmental and forest clearances are being granted to every applicant at breakneck speed - regardless of the rights of local communities. The system of time-bound single window clearances for big projects undermines due process of environmental and social impact assessment, consultation with and prior informed consent of affected persons.

The Government also tried to amend the Land Acquisition Law to remove the protection given to farmers, however inadequately, by the 2013 laws. It brought an ordinance three times to weaken and dilute the law but had to retreat in the face of massive protests and the United opposition in Parliament. However the Central Government got as many as 13 State Governments run by the BJP and their allies to make the amendments which permits forcible acquisition of land without consent and without any social impact assessment including adivasi land in Fifth Schedule areas.

These policies and laws are leading to a new wave of displacement of adivasis.

**6 / Save Adivasis' Jal, Jangal, Zameen**

It is well known and documented in Government reports that in the first four decades after independence, 85 lakh adivasis were displaced due to various projects, which is 40 per cent of total displacement. This means that Adivasis who were just 7.5 per cent of the population at that time bore a disproportionately massive burden of displacement. Only 21 lakh adivasis, that is just around one-fourth were rehabilitated. 60 lakh lost forever their land, their forests their livelihoods.

Today under the neo-liberal regime, and the Modi Government, adivasis are faced with another huge wave of displacement causing immense suffering to Adivasi families.

On the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, the Modi Government displayed a most callous approach when the Supreme Court gave a judgement diluting the law. Only in the face of the massive protests by dalits and adivasis throughout the country, did the Government move the amendment to retain the provisions. However in this period the implementation of the law has been very poor even as the incidents of assaults increased. 19641 – about 20,000 cases – were registered under POA between 2014 to 2016. Shockingly, conviction rate dropped from about 31 per cent to 20 per cent in this period.

### **Minor Forest Produce price protection another jumla**

In 2013, the then UPA government had launched a scheme for 'marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and development of value chain for MFP'. This has, however, remained very poorly implemented. During the current government's regime, allocations for procurement of minor forest produce have fallen from Rs. 277 crores to Rs. 130 crores. Even this was not fully spent leaving adivasis to the mercy of private traders. Having done practically nothing on this issue for 5 years, in December 2018 and February 2019, the government revised minimum support price regime for various MFP items. There is, however, no budgetary allocation in the recent budget to cover this increased cost nor are there any procurement centres set up. Obviously, this announcement is nothing but another jumla in the election year.

### **Scrapping the Tribal sub plan**

Tribal Sub-plan is critical for adivasi development but Modi Government has scrapped the whole concept of planning reducing it to just some accounting mechanism. Instead of allocating budgetary amounts in

Save Adivasis' Jal, Jangal, Zameen / 7

proportion to the adivasi population, that is at least 8.6 per cent of budgetary allocations, the Modi Government has in each of the five years, cut the amount which should have been given by over 20000 crores each year. This means that while big business houses have been getting tax concessions amounting to lakhs of crores of rupees, adivasis have been deprived of over one lakh crore rupees during the Modi rule, by the shortfall of between thirty to forty per cent every year. And even the amount of money spent, has nothing to do with the actual requirements of adivasis but are included in general expenditure. Even highways are included in the name of adivasi development! The CPIM) stands for a law to ensure implementation of the Tribal Sub-Plan with a minimum of 8.6 per cent of budgetary expenditure annually.

### **Dereservation and Unemployment**

The policies of Privatisation of public sector and Government services as well as a ban on recruitment in most Government departments in the centre, has led to a virtual dereservation of jobs for STs. When the number of jobs is drastically reduced, what jobs will get reserved. There is a huge backlog in reserved posts for STs. In particular in category A and B of Government jobs. ST posts remain vacant and then are shifted to the general category, in other words dereserved, on false grounds that there are no suitable candidates. Often repeated inquiries are held into the “genuineness” of ST certificates harassing ST employees. Discriminatory attitude towards ST employees by officers is also common.

The Modi Government refused to bring any legislation to extend reservations to the private sector. Large-scale privatisation and outsourcing in industries such as mining have meant that reservations for adivasis have been diluted. Privatisation and outsourcing have also resulted in replacement of permanent labour with contract workers. This has hurt adivasis employment.

At the same time there has been a sharp increase in unemployment rate among adivasis during the last five years. The NDA government has stopped publication of employment data because these expose the complete failure of this government. The report, which did become available in spite of efforts to suppress it, showed that between 2011-12 and 2017-18, the unemployment rate among adivasis increased by 3.6 percentage points for rural men, 1.1 percentage points for rural women, 3.6 percentage points for urban men and 2.8 percentage points for urban women. In other words,

**8 / Save Adivasis' Jal, Jangal, Zameen**

there has been a sharp increase in unemployment among adivasis everywhere.

At a time when agrarian distress is so high, the law which could have brought some relief, namely the guarantee of work through the implementation of the MGNREGA has not only suffered from low allocations, financial mismanagement and low levels of availability of work, large amount of arrears of workers have accumulated because of lack of funds.

### **Adivasis deprived of the Right to Education**

Although there is a law for the right to education, in practice Adivasi children are deprived of this right because of underfunding of public education and specifically because of the criminal neglect of Adivasi schools and hostels under the Modi Government.

In 2018-2019, the entire budget for all the nine education schemes for adivasis was a meager amount of just Rs. 2166 crores. While the central funds for ashram schools have been stopped, the alternative of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), to be started in each block in which there is at least 50 per cent adivasi population and at least 20,000 adivasis, has made very slow headway. Only Rs 30 lakhs per school have been allocated for building the entire infrastructure of a residential school. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has estimated that out of 6000 blocks in the country, 564 are eligible for such schools. However, there are only 205 functional EMRs, of which only 74 were set up in the four years of the Modi rule.

Even the meager scholarship amounts are released after considerable delays causing great hardship and forcing students to either drop out or to take loans. In the post-matric scholarship scheme, the mounting arrears amounted to a huge sum of 716.25 crore rupees till August 2018..

Lack of adequate funds have meant that schools are in a deplorable state with 80 per cent schools with adivasi students without electricity and more than 26 per cent without drinking water facilities. In schools with only adivasi children, 70 per cent of toilets for boys and 65 per cent of toilets for girls do not have flush to clean.

Given such massive gaps in availability of basic facilities for education, it is not surprising that a large number of adivasi children do not manage to get even 10 years of schooling. As far as higher education is concerned only 16 per cent of adivasi youth in the age group 18-23 years are in college.

### **Glaring gaps in provision of basic services**

The condition of adivasis in access to basic amenities is also much worse than other social groups. The gaps are particularly glaring in rural areas with a much larger proportion of adivasi households being denied and deprived of basic amenities like electricity, toilets, water supplies, drinking water and so on. Health facilities are just shocking in adivasi areas causing deaths which could have been avoided. Even today thousands of adivasis become victims of malaria, including the dreaded cerebral malaria.

Food security is a critical issue and malnutrition is high among adivasis. Of all the social groups, extent of child malnutrition is highest among adivasi children. In case of adivasi children of up to 5 years, 45 per cent were underweight; the corresponding proportion among all children was 36 per cent. Instead of ensuring cheap foodgrains of good quality in adivasi areas, the condition of supplies are highly irregular and riddled with corruption.

### **The RSS Agenda of Hinduisation of Adivasis**

Along with this multipronged attack on adivasis rights and livelihoods, adivasi cultures, languages are sought to be bulldozed into the Hindutva framework. For this RSS NGOs have been getting huge funds from the central and BJP led State Governments. Aggressive campaigns in the name of ghar wapasi have been intensified against those adivasis who believe in Christianity. with some BJP led States like Jharkhand adopting the most draconian anti-conversion laws targeting adivasi priests and believers.

This war against adivasis is to help corporates capture the forests, their natural resources, their minerals and their land and absolve the government of its responsibilities to provide public services. This model of development driven by capitalist policies penetrating into adivasi inhabited areas has brought destruction into the lives of India's adivasis. The BJP Government has intensified these assaults.

It is for all these reasons, that in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections it is essential to defeat the BJP-RSS Modi led Government.

*The CPI(M) appeals to you*

**Save India, Save Adivasis, Defeat the Modi led BJP  
Government and its allies  
Strengthen the left and the CPI(M)  
Ensure the formation of a Secular Government**

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Filling all vacancies for ST reserved posts in all Government services within a legally mandated time framework.
- Protecting land rights of adivasis and restoring land illegally alienated from them. Withdrawal of amendments to LARR which in the name of ease of business removes all right of consent of Adivasi communities for land acquisition.
- Withdrawal of National Forest Policy which advocates privatisation of forests and replacement with an appropriate policy protecting tribal rights.
- Implementing the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, in full; amending the Act to include other traditional forest dwellers with 1980 as the cut-off year; no eviction of Adivasis from their habitat.
- Removal of all amendments to Forest Conservation and Environment related rules and government circulars which dilute the role of gram sabhas in decision making powers regarding areas in their jurisdiction.
- Protection of rights under PESA and Fifth Schedule. Ensuring recognition, protection and development of tribal languages and scripts. Tribal languages such as Bhili, Gondi and Kok Borok to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution; the concerned state governments must recognize the language of adivasis as the state's official language.
- Automatic inclusion of adivasis in the declared domicile list of the state governments with their ST identity and rights irrespective of their migration from one state to another.
- Including all tribals in the Food Security Act entitled to subsidised foodgrain.
- Enhancement of scholarship for tribal students and time bound audit of all tribal hostel and upgrading of facilities.

( from the CPI(M) Election Manifesto,  
17th Lok Sabha 2019 )

# **Vote CPI(M)**



**Defeat the BJP alliance**

**Increase the Strength of the  
CPI(M) and the Left**

**For an Alternative Secular Government**

March, 2019

Price : Rs. 5/-

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