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Vulnerable sections ignored in budget allocation: NCDHR

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The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) has said that the budget proposals for 2010-11 have ignored the most vulnerable sections of society, particularly the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Though there is an increase in the budgets for the Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Social Justice and Empowerment, the overall denial continues to be substantial this year — over Rs.25, 000 crore, said N.Paul Divakar, NCDHR general-secretary.

Seeking intervention of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and the Planning Commission in doling out a better deal for these underprivileged sections, Mr. Divakar said strict instructions should be issued to ensure that allocations made are implemented as per the Special Component Plan (SCP) and the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) guidelines issued by the Commission.

The Total Annual Plan Expenditure for 2010-11 (BE) (excluding Central Assistance to States/Union Territories) is Rs.2,84,284 crore. According to SCP, the Dalits were supposed to get Rs.46,054 crore and as per the TSP, the Adivasis Rs.23,311.29 crore. However the allocation under SCP is Rs.20,624 crore and TSP Rs.11,745.94. It denies Rs.25,429.7 crore to the Dalits and Rs.14,137.12 crore to indigenous groups, he pointed out.

Of the 83 Departments/Ministries that have Plan allocation, only 18 have allocated SCP and TSP from their Annual Plan Expenditure. Of these 18, eight have earmarked below 5 per cent. If one analyses the allocations to the high growth departments, there is hardly any scheme which benefit the SCs or STs, the NCDHR said.

According to Mr. Divakar, consultations with Dalit and Adivasi organisations and leaders should be carried out during the budget planning, and this should be made mandatory. The SCP and TSP should be made into legislation, which defines clear entitlements for the Dalits and has necessary redressal mechanisms to ensure that all duty bearers implement these special allocations effectively.

“The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has to play an effective role in coordination and implementation of the SCP and TSP. In particular, these Ministries should ensure separate earmarking and scheme-wise allocation in their respective Annual Plans and performance analysis and granting of utilisation certificates for further allocations.”

The Planning Commission, as a monitoring and review authority, should evolve a separate set of duties and functions to ensure transparency and accountability by executives responsible for the planning, formulation, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of SCP and TSP. Each Ministry should have sufficient human and financial resources for effectively implementing the same to ensure inclusion in the growth sectors and new developments taking place, he said.

Suggesting that all State governments should constitute SCP and TSP monitoring committees wherein educated youth from these sections of the society are members, Mr Divakar said these could monitor planning and implementation at the State, Department/Ministry, district and block levels with necessary powers to intervene wherever necessary.

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