

Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Election Manifesto
18th Lok Sabha

Part I

The Lok Sabha elections 2024 are taking place at a time when the secular, democratic, Republic of India faces an existential crisis created by the Modi led decade long rule of the BJP government.

India has witnessed a process of systematic dismantling of the four pillars of the constitution – secular democracy, economic sovereignty, federalism and social justice. Misusing the levers of State power and its parliamentary majority, the authoritarian-communal regime of the Modi government has used fascistic methods to bulldoze the rights of the working people of India, making India one of the most unequal societies in the world even while imposing its toxic communal ideology to divide the people on sectarian lines.

Thus elections to the 18th Lok Sabha assume critical importance as its outcome will determine if “we the people” through our vote in the elections can safeguard the secular, democratic character of the Indian Republic as ordained by the Constitution of India. We should make no mistake about it – the Lok Sabha elections are about saving India, against the effort of the BJP to transform the secular, democratic character of the Indian Republic into a rabidly intolerant, hate and violence based authoritarian and fascistic Hindutva Rashtra. This is the openly stated goal of the RSS, the father organization of the BJP which has now unprecedented access to every institution in the country, spreading its communal poison into the veins of India.

In these five years since the last Lok Sabha elections, India has also witnessed a fight back, a resistance through democratic struggles of the working people, the kisans, the workers, adivasis, Dalits, women, youth and students. Many of these struggles, in particular the historic struggle of the kisans, have proved that a people united can challenge and defeat the might and power and repression unleashed by this government. In this period, we have also seen the possibility of alternative policies such as those implemented by the Left Democratic Front government (LDF) in Kerala led by the CPI(M) which has, despite all the central efforts to strangle it financially, emerged as a beacon of pro-people policies and communal harmony.

The CPI(M) places its manifesto before the people of India with a clear understanding that it is the bounden duty of every patriot to first and foremost ensure the defeat of the BJP and its allies. The CPI(M) pledges to do everything in its capacity to strengthen this collective duty and to help the establishment of a secular government at the centre. For this, and to ensure pro-people policies, a stronger presence of the CPI(M) in Parliament is essential.

In Part I, the manifesto focuses on the main current issues. In Part II, the manifesto reflects the CPI(M)'s approach for alternative policies which affect various sections of our people.

Defend Secularism

Democracy and Secularism are inextricably intertwined. Democracy itself gets undermined if secular principles are eliminated as is being done under BJP rule.

The Constitution guarantees the right of every citizen to their religious faith including being an atheist. Under the constitution, as reflected also in several judgements of the Supreme Court, the State and government are prohibited from being identified with or promoting any particular religion. This mandatory separation between religion and politics, has been virtually abandoned. The inauguration of the temple at Ayodhya by the Prime Minister himself conducting religious rituals usurping the role of religious functionaries is a blatant assault on the fundamental principle of separation of religion from the State. Nor is it the only example. The inauguration of the new parliament building, or the Kashi Vishwanath Ganga corridor, were conducted with Modi as the high priest, leading the Hindu religious rituals and projected as State sponsored events. The signals are clear: under the BJP government, India is increasingly becoming a Hindutva State, based on a Manuvadi ideology.

The notification of the Rules for the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (CAA), on the eve of elections is a dangerous step designed to polarize the electorate. The CPI(M) and other democratic parties have strongly opposed this law since it seeks to link citizenship with religion and is thus highly discriminatory. The Kerala LDF government headed by the CPI(M) was the first in the country to adopt a resolution that it would not be implemented in Kerala. To bypass the opposition of state governments, the notified rules deprive state government representation in the panels to decide citizenship registration except as invitees. This is another assault on the constitution.

Vicious campaigns of hate and violence targeting religious minorities, particularly Muslims, are rapidly growing. Armed mobs are allowed to carry out communal attacks. The communal violence in Delhi in 2020 was an organized, pre-planned assault. No legal actions have been taken against the perpetrators, BJP ministers and leaders who gave incendiary speeches spreading hate and violence have gone scot free, but the victims have been prosecuted. BJP state governments are legitimizing private armies to assault minorities, and many have employed the policy of bulldozer politics, unlawfully demolishing the houses and commercial establishments of Muslims in the name of illegal encroachment. BJP state governments have enacted laws aiming to sharpen communal polarization. These range from issues concerning cow and cattle protection, cattle trade and meat selling, the so-called love jihad, Uniform Civil Code etc., which routinely target innocent people from minority communities, physically attacking them and legally prosecuting them. Campaigns of such vicious hate and violence have been normalized, with dangerously growing calls for the genocide of Muslims in the so-called Dharma Sansads.

The assaults on Christian minorities have also increased exponentially in this period, with the most draconian laws being adopted by the BJP state governments in the name of anti-conversion. The attacks particularly target poor tribal communities. Manipur is the tragic example of the havoc caused by the majoritarian policies of the BJP-double engine governments where tribals were specifically targeted both because

of their ethnicity as well as their religion, the vast majority being Christian. Manipur is the most graphic example of how such divisive politics can destroy diversity and pluralism, so unique to India, particularly the north-east.

The CPI(M) can legitimately claim to be an example of the unity of precept and practice in the defence of secularism. It has a proud record of standing by the rights of minority communities and the marginalized without any compromise or exception, while strongly opposing and fighting back all forces of minority fundamentalism.

The CPI(M) pledges to fight for an uncompromising adherence to the principle that religion is separated from politics, the State, the government and administration. It will fight for a law against hate speech and crimes. It is committed to scrapping the CAA.

Save Democracy

The Modi government has an undeclared policy of criminalizing all dissent as being anti-national, thus undermining the very basis of a democratic country – the right to dissent. It has indiscriminately used draconian laws such as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), National Security Act (NSA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to detain hundreds of people, including prominent and committed political, democratic activists without charges, denying them the right to bail, simply because they have opposed the policies of the Modi government. In particular journalists who refuse to surrender their duty for impartial reporting, are special targets of attack, destroying the essential institution of an independent media which is now almost fully controlled by the big business friends of the Modi government. The worst repression is faced by mass struggles of the working people. It is unheard of that an elected government should use drones to fire tear gas shells at peacefully protesting farmers, treating them as enemies of the nation, which is what the Modi government has done.

In the last five years, parliament itself has been severely undermined, with the wholesale expulsion of opposition MPs sometimes for the entire session, the bulldozing of laws without reference to all-party panels such as the Standing Committees, using a majority to push through laws without discussions.

Additionally, constitutionally mandated independent institutions designed to function as checks and balances – parliament, judiciary, election commission and others are being gravely undermined. Institutions formed through mass struggles such as the Women's Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Information Commission, have been functioning as arms of the government. Central agencies like Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax Department (IT) are functioning as the political arm of the ruling party, targeting opposition leaders. The aim is to terrorise, intimidate, bully them to join the ruling party and if they do, all charges vanish. The BJP slogan is “either join us or go to jail.”

The brazen use of money power, accumulated through a variety of dubious ways, is used for largescale horse-trading and toppling democratically elected governments. In many states where the BJP lost elections, it succeeded in forming and heading the state governments in this manner. This makes a mockery of democracy and negates people's electoral mandate.

The recent Supreme Court judgement against the entire electoral bond scheme in which the CPI(M) was a petitioner, validates the strong and principled opposition of the CPI(M) to the electoral bond scheme as an avenue for the legalisation of political corruption. Till the last, the Modi government has tried to conceal the huge funding it has received proving it to hold a record in political corruption by trying to conceal its quid pro quo with its corporate friends. The BJP under its present leadership has proved to be the most corrupt.

The Modi government has put in place the framework of a chilling surveillance State that completely violates the fundamental right to privacy of the citizens. It has put in place draconian laws like the Personal Data Protection Act, the Criminal Procedure Identification Act etc., for collection of Bio-metric data of all people detained in custody, not only the convicted. It has used the notorious Israeli Pegasus spyware against opposition leaders, journalists and social activists. The strengthening of the police State by instituting a surveillance regime threatens the basic democratic rights and civil liberties of citizens guaranteed by our Constitution.

The CPI(M) stands for the scrapping of all draconian laws like UAPA and PMLA; for steps to protect and strengthen the autonomy of independent institutions, for defence of the democratic rights of the people

Defend Economic Sovereignty

The massive propaganda blitz to portray the Indian economy as being the fastest growing one in the world with increased prosperity of the people is largely based on massive data fudging undertaken by the government. Just one instance: the nominal GDP growth this year is 9.1 per cent. To arrive at the real growth rate this is deflated by an inflation index. The government has used 1.5 as the deflator when the rate of inflation is around 6 per cent and food inflation is more than 10 per cent. If 6 is used as the deflator, close to the rate of inflation, then the real growth rate would be around 3 per cent. But government tries to conceal this dismal reality. India has a per capita GDP, which is the lowest among the G-20 countries.

The "made in India" slogan of the Modi government has actually been a "loot of India" policy. The corporate-communal nexus symbolized by the Modi regime has promoted vicious crony capitalism and the loot of national assets. For example, the National Monetization Pipeline is the phased handing over to the private sector of the entire infrastructure sector, built with public investment. With no investment, the private sector gets a license of monopoly control to mint revenue. The country's mineral wealth and natural resources have been thrown open for private loot. Various laws have been enacted and in other cases, protective laws have been amended to facilitate this loot at the expense of tribal and other forest dwelling communities who

are facing massive displacement, apart from the effects of largescale deforestation and environmental damage.

In fact the Modi government has accelerated the pace of de-regularisation of the Indian economy and privatizing the public sector, which has greatly benefited both foreign and domestic corporates. Cronies are permitted to loot people's lifelong savings from bank deposits. Since 2014, Modi government has written off Rs.17.46 Lakh Crores of bank loans. Huge tax concessions to corporates and the rich are being provided. This is sharply widening economic inequalities. *Oxfam* shows that more than 40 per cent of India's wealth is owned by a mere 1 per cent of the population. The bottom 50 per cent accounts for a meagre 3 per cent. The total number of billionaires increased from 102 in 2020 to 169 in 2023.

On the other hand, there has been an unprecedented offensive against India's working classes stripping them of their hard won rights which are replaced with pro-corporate labour codes. The basic right to unionise is also under severe attack.

The government is in fact weakening economic sovereignty by seeking to corporatise the farming sector with an all-round attack on rights of India's farmers. Though in the face of the historic one year struggle of farmers, it was forced to retract its three anti-farmer, anti-consumer laws, it has betrayed farmers by not implementing its assurances. This actually undermines India's self-reliance and economic sovereignty.

There can be no economic sovereignty without the protection of India's public sector, its natural wealth, the rights of its labour force, its kisans.

The CPI(M) is committed to policies to protect India's economic sovereignty. It holds that privatization of the public sector must be revisited and reversed. A tax on the super-rich along with a general wealth tax and an inheritance tax must be legislated, workers' rights reflected in pro-worker laws must replace the labour codes; food security depends on ensuring security of the farmers of India though a legal guarantee of MSP according to the Swaminathan Commission recommendations

Control Prices, Ensure Food Security, Strengthen the Public Health System

The Modi government's criminal mishandling of the Covid pandemic and its flawed unscientific approach led to a massive increase in suffering and casualties among the people. In that scenario, the Kerala model with a robust health care system showed an alternative. The insurance based health care in fact mainly helps the private sector. Instead there should be a combination of strengthening of the public health sector while ensuring the rights of individual patients seeking medical care.

The Modi government has concocted ways to conceal the extent of India's growing poverty by its use of a so-called multi-dimensional index which includes such factors like jan dhan account, having a toilet in the house etc. In fact every important index which actually measures poverty such as the global hunger index, the National Sample Survey and family health Surveys show high levels of malnutrition, hunger and deprivation among the people, particularly women and children. A report of 5 UN

agencies on food security (2023) shows that 74.1 per cent of Indians, approximately 1.043 billion people, could not afford a healthy diet in 2021.

The Modi government has followed policies which have led to unprecedented price increases. It has hiked the prices of petroleum products garnering revenue through increased duties to the extent of a whopping 28.33 lakh crores rupees between 2014-2015 to the first half of 2023-24. This is nothing but a massive pickpocket exercise from peoples earnings. Such price hikes have a cascading impact on hiking prices of essential commodities affecting common people, particularly women who sacrifice their own needs for family survival.

Instead of cutting the duties and ensuring expanded public distribution system which is being done by some state governments, notably the LDF government in Kerala, the Modi government has actually drastically cut the budgetary allocations for food and reduced the amount of foodgrains available to the people.

At the same time the Labour Force Survey has shown that average real wages are stagnating since 2014. The median real wages are, therefore, clearly falling leading to lower consumption. Household savings have recorded a 47 year low in 2023 (RBI). This is leading to household indebtedness with borrowing for consumption needs sharply growing. This has resulted in a depressed domestic demand which, in turn, is leading to a decline in manufacturing and hence employment generation. The key to rejuvenation of the Indian economy is policies to increase the purchasing power of the people.

The CPI(M) stands for an urgent reduction in the duties on petroleum products, policies to control price rise and along with the supply of free rations of 5 kg grains for 81 crore people, 5 kgs of subsidized grains (rice Rs 3/kg; wheat Rs. 2/kg and coarse grain at Rs.1/kg) must be restored. A Universal Public Healthcare System with state funding must be immediately implemented

Unemployment

One of the biggest failures of the Modi government has been the huge increase in unemployment. The Modi government had promised two crore jobs a year. Far from implementing this guarantee, the last five years have actually seen a reduction in jobs. India has the highest levels of unemployment recorded in recent decades contradicting the Modi government's boast of a 6-year low unemployment rate in 2023. The CMIE has shown that unemployment rate was 8.1 per cent in August 2023. The youth unemployment (15-24 years) was 23.22 per cent. Among graduates, it is a whopping 42 per cent. Even in the much fancied IT sector 65,000 employees were retrenched by the top 4 corporates between Jan-Dec. 2023. Women have been the worst hit, particularly rural women.

There are an estimated 25 lakh jobs vacant in various government departments and public sector undertakings. The government has deliberately not filled up these vacancies. Instead under its rule the quality of jobs has seen a sharp deterioration with the mass casualization, contractorization and informalization of jobs across sectors.

This includes the manufacturing sector, the public and private sector and government sector. Thus there is a huge attack on the most productive workforce in its entirety. Even recruitment in the armed forces – critical for the country's security are now being contractorised with the cruel “agniveer” scheme.

The huge loss in jobs and incomes particularly in rural India witnessed during the Covid period has hardly changed. But given the dearth of employment in urban areas, India today is experiencing a reverse migration – people returning to villages for survival. In 2023-24 around 9.84 crore households had opted to work under MGNREGA in spite of the hard work and low wages, reflecting the dearth of alternative employment. But even here the Modi government has betrayed the people by cutting down on allocations for MNREGA leading to huge wage arrears.

The CPI(M) stands for the inclusion of the Right to Work as a constitutional right. The vacancies in government and public sector posts must be filled urgently. Strengthen and expand MSMEs which can generate jobs. The budgetary allocations for MGNREGA must be doubled; a new law guaranteeing urban employment must be legislated and an unemployment allowance must be provided. The destruction of India's demographic dividend must be reversed through a change in current policies of job loss growth.

Strengthen the Universal Right to Education, Stop Privatization of Higher Education

The National Education Policy 2020 is an outright assault on the right to education with its emphasis on commercialization, centralization and communalization. The budgetary allocations for public education are less than 3 per cent of the GDP while concessions are being given to private players to change the right to education into a right to make profit at the expense of the mass of students and young people. Simultaneously the NEP advocates a communalization of education with the most outrageous omissions and commissions in syllabi, which seek to entirely distort history, promoting unscientific and irrational thinking. The trend of centralization of authority under the central government is an assault on the rights of states in the running of educational institutions in their respective states, including in the appointment of Vice Chancellors and faculty. A most disturbing trend is the appointment of persons not on the basis of merit but on the basis of loyalty to Hindutva ideologies.

The CPI(M) stands for an increase to at least 6 per cent of GDP in budgetary allocations for education; It stands for a reversal of the policies of commercialization, communalization and centralization

Strengthen Federalism, Defend Rights of States

The Modi government's disregard of the constitutional principles of federalism is reflected in its dangerous policies of coercive centralization at the expense of the rights of the states. This period is marked by a relentless all-round attack on federalism in all spheres – political, fiscal, educational, social and cultural.

Opposition ruled states are specifically targeted. Governors and Lt Governors regularly transgress all Constitutional proprieties. In non-BJP ruled states, Governors are seen to act as centres to sabotage and disturb the working of state governments. Several non-BJP state governments have been forced to appeal to the Supreme Court on these issues.

The Kerala LDF government has been targeted for financial strangulation by the Centre as it seeks to implement alternative policies.

The Union government continuously encroaches on states' rights by legislating on subjects under the State and Concurrent lists of the Constitution.

In the cultural field, the autonomy of the state governments is constricted. The Union government consciously promotes Hindi while denying equal status to all national languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.

Fiscal Federalism: The fiscal space for the states is being severely squeezed. The Modi government refused to extend the period of GST compensation to the states. States are being deprived of a fair share of centrally collected tax revenue. States were to receive a 42 per cent share, instead, what they get is around 32 per cent.

State governments are restricted from borrowings and the stipulations of the FRBM Act restrict the states' capacities to raise resources.

The CPI(M) stands for the restoration of the constitutional rights of the states which have been severely diluted by the Modi government. The CPI(M) stands for devolution of 50 per cent of the total collection of Central taxes to the states, including share of surcharges and cesses levied by Centre. It stands for a Governor to be chosen out of a panel of three eminent persons proposed by the Chief Minister; for an end to policies which promote centralization at the expense of the states.

Social Justice

Moving away from the Constitutional guarantee of equality to all for realizing the objective of social justice, the socially oppressed sections are subjected to greater injustices and discrimination.

The ten years of Modi rule have seen an all-out assault on the principles of social justice based on the Manuvadi approach of the BJP government. Instead of implementing the constitutional spirit for annihilation of the caste system, the Modi government has used cynical methods to promote narrow caste identities for political benefit while maintaining the hierarchies of the caste system. The huge backlog of vacancies for ST/SC in government and public sector posts, is an indication of its duplicitous policy on reservations for the most marginalized and oppressed sections. While the outsourcing and privatization policies of the government have hugely reduced the number of jobs, the refusal to enact a law for reservations in the private sector has diluted this constitutional guarantee. Scholarships for ST/SC students have

also seen huge arrears. Constitutional and legal rights for adivasis are being snatched away leading to displacement and destitution.

In BJP ruled states the atrocities and attacks have increased manifold against Dalits. Adivasis are subjected to erosion of their rights due to the elimination of many of the constitutional and legal provisions including the critical role of the Gramsabha. With the forests being commercialized and privatized, the displacements of Adivasis has increased exponentially. With efforts to assimilate Adivasis under a homogeneous Hindu identity, Christian Adivasis are increasingly being attacked in BJP ruled states.

The Modi government has betrayed women by linking the women's reservation law with that of the census and delimitation, postponing it indefinitely. This is a big blow to women who would have rightly got one-third reservations in this election itself. Women are facing the brunt of the economic distress with loss of jobs and incomes, forcing them into debt for survival. In particular Dalit and Adivasi women suffer the triple burden due to caste, gender and class. Sexual violence against women and children has sharply increased by 28 per cent during the ten years of Modi rule. Retrograde Manuvadi ideologies that promote patriarchal, communal and casteist practices are being actively promoted by the ruling party. The most dangerous trend has been the communalization of processes of justice in sexual crimes as was shown in the Bilkis Bano case. In addition, the protection given to supporters of the BJP based on their powerful caste connections such as in the Hathras case and in the protection given to the criminal accused of serial sexual harassment of female wrestlers, has exposed the utter hypocrisy of the ruling regime.

The CPI(M) stands for a law for reservations in the private sector and for immediate filling of vacancies in reserved posts without dilution; for protection of constitutional and legal rights of adivasis and an end to cultural assimilation. In order to acquire proper data on the OBCs in the country it is necessary to conduct a caste census along with the 2021 general census that is overdue. It stands for the immediate implementation of one-third reservations for women; for strengthening processes of justice for women victims of crimes.

Legalising Corruption

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been claiming that the BJP has provided corruption-free governance for the past ten years. He had also declared zero tolerance for corruption. However, the record of the BJP government is the exact opposite. The only difference is that corruption was legalized under the Modi regime and risen exponentially – whether it be through the electoral bonds scheme or PM CARES fund.

Consequent to the Supreme Court verdict declaring electoral bonds as unconstitutional, the data on electoral bonds as to who subscribed to it and which party redeemed it, there is now crystal clear evidence. The BJP has received Rs. 8,252 crores through bonds, which is 50 per cent of the total amount of money subscribed through bonds. The BJP has raised this money from corporates through a *quid pro quo*, whereby contracts and clearances have been given in lieu of bribes

through bonds. The other method has been extortion by using coercive action by Central agencies like the ED, CBI and Income Tax department. Further, electoral bonds opened up avenues for large-scale money laundering. Many firms bought electoral bonds whose value is multiple times of the profits they made. All said and done, the BJP has been running a bribery-cum-extortion racket through anonymous electoral bonds.

The CPI(M) was the only national party which refused to accept the electoral bonds scheme and did not receive any funding through the bonds. It has successfully gone to the Supreme Court to challenge the bonds scheme.

The BJP also got nearly 65 per cent of the Rs. 7,726 crores non-electoral bond political funding by corporates between 2013 and 2023.

The CPI(M) stands for urgent electoral reforms to curb the use of money power in the electoral system. For this, the Party wants State funding of elections and a ban on corporate donations to political parties. Corporates must fund to strengthen democracy and such contributions must be credited in a State electoral fund and used for State funding.

Jammu and Kashmir

One of the first Acts of the Modi government in 2019 was the abrogation of Article 370 and the dissolution of the state of Jammu and Kashmir converting it into two Union Territories. Along with it, Article 35 A of the Constitution was also abrogated. It thus, pushed through a longstanding Hindutva agenda of RSS of targeting the only Muslim majority state in India and abolishing the special status accorded by the Indian Constitution, as part of the Instrument of Accession. As this was being done, all political leaders in the state and various others were indiscriminately put under custody under draconian laws and severe restrictions like internet shutdown etc., were imposed.

Since then, in a series of moves the effort is being made to change the demographic character and composition of J&K, through the Delimitation Commission; eroding the domicile status of permanent residents of J&K and the erosion of land rights. The elections to the state assembly continue to be postponed.

Despite tall claims of economic development and end to terrorism, official data shows an uptick in terror activities with 71 per cent increase in the arrest of terrorists and their supporters in the Jammu region. In the whole of J&K the number of terror attacks have been ranging between 150-125 annually between 2019 and 2022. Likewise, encounter incidents remained over a hundred annually over this period. The economic situation has deteriorated with unemployment estimated to be three times the national average. Apple growers and small business owners have been adversely affected.

SC Verdict: The verdict of the Supreme Court dismissing the challenges to the abrogation of Article 370 and dissolution of the State of J&K have serious consequences for the federal structure of our constitution. Negating the fact that the

Instrument of Accession of J&K was conditional to retaining a special status contained in Article 370, the SC ruled that after accession J&K does not retain any element of sovereignty. The verdict has serious consequences for all states in the country where President's rule can be imposed and its boundaries altered or statehood dissolved in the absence of an elected legislative assembly with the concurrence of the Governor.

The CPI(M)'s continuing commitment to the autonomous status granted by Sec 370 of J&K is reflected in its using every fora to defend the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The CPI(M) stands for immediate elections to the State Assembly and also for the restoration of full statehood as a first step.

North East

The ethnic conflict in Manipur continues since May 2023 leaving hundreds of people dead, hundreds of thousands displaced. The BJP state government and Chief Minister echoing the RSS propaganda of illegal immigrants flooding the North East and Assam are wholly responsible for the ethnic conflict with communal underpinnings, and largescale violence including brutal gangrapes. The Central government simply refused to intervene and the deafening silence of the prime Minister all these months shows the utter bankruptcy of the double engine rule. The Central government has openly protected its own Chief Minister despite him being an important reason for the continuing conflict.

The Meitei-Kuki ethnic conflict has a danger of spreading to nearby states particularly, Mizoram and Meghalaya. The sharpening of polarization across the North East, particularly in Assam has made the situation dangerously tense and incendiary. Being a border state with Myanmar and given the situation in that country, a very precarious and dangerous situation arises.

Developments in both J&K and in Manipur have serious implications for our national security.

Foreign Policy

Abandonment of India's independent foreign policy: The BJP government has totally surrendered to US strategic, political and security designs and to strengthen US imperialism's designs for global hegemony. The most graphic evidence is the shameful stand of the Modi government in refusing to demand an unconditional ceasefire to stop the genocidal war against the people of Palestine. It has sided with the Zionist government backed by the US. Its defence ties with Israel and its arms trade is a black record for our traditional support to the struggle for a homeland by the Palestinian people. US imperialism continues to cement India as a subordinate ally in its strategic designs in the Indo-Pacific region. India has become a strategic defence partner signing agreements of strategic military cooperation. The QUAD has been converted into an active strategic and military alliance in the Indo-Pacific region. US-Israel-India axis is consolidating.

India has abandoned its traditional leadership role of the non-alignment movement. Since Modi became PM he did not attend a single NAM Summit. For the first time, the Indian PM went on a state visit to Israel without visiting Palestine.

These developments are having serious consequences for relations with our neighbours and India's international standing.

The CPI(M) stands for a non-aligned foreign policy which best serves the interests of our own country. It stands for good relations with our neighbours while defending every aspect of our country's security.

Defend Indian Constitution, Democracy and Improve People's Welfare

In this background it is imperative that every Indian patriot must strive to safeguard and strengthen India's Constitutional order. Given the grievously deteriorating living conditions of the people **the current policy direction of crony capitalism and the communal-corporate nexus must be reversed.**

This requires a set of alternative pro-people policies that must be implemented. The assaults on our Constitutional order and the secular, democratic character of our republic have been mounted by the RSS/BJP using its control of the government and the State apparatus.

The defence of our Constitutional order and democracy can only be achieved by ensuring that the BJP is separated from controlling government and State power. Likewise, any alternate set of pro-people policies can only be implemented when the BJP is removed from controlling the government apparatus.

The alternative policies that the CPI(M) is placing before the people is detailed in the next section.

Hence, to safeguard the Constitutional republic, to further strengthen it and to change the policy direction towards a radical people oriented one, it is imperative that the BJP and its allies are defeated in the forthcoming elections to the 18th Lok Sabha.

CPI(M) Appeals to the Indian Electorate to:

- 1. Defeat the BJP and its allies.**
- 2. Increase the strength of the CPI(M) and the Left parties in the Lok Sabha.**
- 3. Ensure that an alternative secular government is formed at the Centre.**

Part II
Alternative Policies
Highlights

The highlights of such an alternative policy platform which the CPI(M) is pledged to implement are:

- Protect the secular principle and democratic rights enshrined in the Constitution.
- Enforce the farmers' right to sell their produce at a Minimum Support Price, which is at least 50 per cent higher than the total cost of production.
- Statutory minimum wage for workers of not less than Rs. 26,000 per month; wages linked to Consumer Price Index.
- Universal public distribution system to provide 10 kgs of foodgrains per individual – 5kgs free of cost and 5kgs at subsidised rates.
- Right to free health care; end private insurance led healthcare; public expenditure on health to be raised to 5 per cent of GDP.
- Immediately implement the legislation for one-third reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies without linking it to census and delimitation; take comprehensive steps to end violence against women and children.
- Scrap the National Education Policy 2020. Major expansion of public educational system – schools and higher education – with quality upgradation; public expenditure on education to be 6 per cent of GDP; end communalization of education system and ensure its democratic character.
- Right to work as a Constitutional right; provision of unemployment allowance for the jobless.
- Old age pension with minimum monthly pension which is not less than half the minimum wage, or, Rs. 6,000 per month, whichever is higher, for all senior citizens.
- Halt privatisation of public sector enterprises and rollback privatisation in defence, energy, railways and basic services.
- Reservation in jobs and education in the private sector for SCs STs, OBCs and the disabled.
- Raise taxes on rich and corporate profits; restore wealth tax for superrich and introduce inheritance tax; restore long term capital gains tax.
- Reform the electoral system by introduction of proportional representation with partial list system; State funding in kind for electoral expenses.

In Defence of Constitution and Democracy

The CPI(M) will ensure:

Dismantling of the authoritarian set up that tramples on the Constitution, democracy and democratic rights.

This requires:

- Measures to safeguard the independence/autonomy of institutions such as the higher judiciary, Election Commission of India and other Constitutional bodies.
- Repeal the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), National Security Act (NSA) and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).
- Replace the PMLA with suitable law to prevent misuse. The ED must be divested of its law-enforcement powers.
- A full-fledged review and revision of the three Criminal Codes to eliminate anti-democratic provisions and enhancement of police powers; protect right to dissent.
- Remove death penalty from the statutes.
- Enact legislation to ensure mandatory social auditing and accountability to evaluate the impact and performance of public programmes. This must cover all areas of governance and empower every citizen to hold government accountable to its mandate.
- Scrapping of the mandatory use of Aadhaar and biometrics for all social welfare schemes.
- Ratify the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Amend the Constitution to make parliamentary approval mandatory for any international treaty.

In Defence of Secularism

The CPI(M) stands for the separation of religion and politics and for the passage and implementation of all legislative measures necessary to make this effective. Communal violence to be dealt with firmly. Secular values, scientific temper and rationality to be promoted by the State in all spheres. The CPI(M) will work towards:

- Scrapping the Citizenship Amendment Act.
- Repealing anti-conversion laws in states that target minorities.
- Removal of RSS personnel appointed in key positions by the BJP government.
- Immediate banning of all illegal private armies and vigilante groups like the various 'senas' that are attacking dalits and minorities in the name of cow protection and spreading communal hatred. Enactment of appropriate legal measures for reining in and taking action against organisations and institutions involved in spreading communal hate and attacking minorities; enact a law against lynching.

- Ensuring exemplary punishment for perpetrators of communal violence regardless of their public or official position.
- Protecting the rights of minorities to lead a life of equality and dignity without any fear or discrimination.
- Purging all school textbooks and syllabus in higher education of content reflecting communal bias and prejudices.

Alternative Economic Policies

The CPI(M) will work for economic policies that

- Restore the Planning Commission.
- Integrate growth with employment generation towards creating full employment and money in the hands of the people to boost demand.
- Enlarge the resource base by taxing the rich, corporate profits and luxury goods.
- Increase public investments in agricultural production, research and irrigation.
- Allocate adequate resources for public investment for providing physical and social infrastructure – electricity, public transport, ports, schools, colleges, and public hospitals.
- Favour the production of goods for mass consumption and not unsustainable luxury goods.
- Public provisioning and subsidies for agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, electricity/diesel.
- Provide incentives for research and development and special initiatives to increase competitiveness of small and medium enterprises that provide much greater employment.
- Scrapping the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act and setting a minimum floor for social sector spending as a binding constraint in fiscal exercise for both Centre and state governments.
- Halt any further dilution of government equity in public sector banks and strengthen the public sector in banking and insurance with strict adherence to priority sector lending norms.
- All regulatory authorities of the financial sector should mandatorily be accountable to Parliament and legislative oversight.
- Involve state governments in major economic decisions of national significance, restore decision making powers of states and allow greater fiscal flexibility for revenue raising by states.

Resource Mobilization

The CPI(M) will:

- Tax speculative capital gains by restoring Long-Term Capital Gains Tax and increasing Securities Transaction Tax.
- Ensure all the loan defaulters who have fled India to avoid legal action are brought to book and the looted monies recovered with interest.
- Restore wealth tax for the superrich and introduce inheritance tax.
- Corporate profit tax to be increased by increasing statutory rates so that effective tax rates are not low, causing huge loss of revenue.
- Taxation of capital gains from the international transfer of shares in foreign company with underlying assets in India.
- GST to be overhauled respecting the federal structure of our country and the rights of the states by sharing resources with them.

Financial Sector Regulation

The CPI(M) stands for:

- A sovereign financial regulation policy to curb the dominance of international finance capital over the State and people. Develop policies to reduce total financial liabilities in comparison to national income.
- Expansion and stabilization of non-dollar trade agreements via the Bilateral Swap Line (BSL) and other cutting-edge techniques; strengthening of financial solidarity and coordination among regional groups like BRICS+, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) etc.
- Strong and comprehensive regulations and guidelines over cryptocurrencies.
- Reversing the shift towards full capital account convertibility and reinstating restrictions on the inflow and outflow of finance capital.
- Prohibiting Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) from using participatory notes and discouraging speculative financial instruments to reduce excessive risk-taking and financial market volatility.
- Safeguarding the reserves and autonomy of RBI; strengthening the RBI's governance and regulatory mechanisms.
- Halting the issuance of new private bank licences, reviewing the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act 2012, and barring foreign banks from acquiring Indian banks.
- Strengthening public sector banks (PSBs); no PSB privatisation; overturning the proposed amendments in banking acts to lower the Union Government's stake in PSBs; including private banks under the priority sector classification; introducing efficient capital regulation to minimize risks of the banks.

- Increasing the interest rate for large borrowers; decreasing the interest rate for small loans; increasing the interest rate for savings accounts and retail deposits waving of the service charges to ordinary retail and financial inclusion customers.
- Recovering all non-performing assets (NPAs) by seizing corporate borrowers' assets, including benami properties; amending criminal laws to punish and recover willful defaults; rolling back of Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- Regulating the dominance of big tech companies like Amazon, Facebook, and Google in the fin-tech sector while maintaining data sovereignty.
- Enforce strict regulation on private microfinance institutions (MFIs) to prevent harassment of micro-borrowers. Stop PSB funding for private MFIs; separating commercial institutions from banks.
- Scrapping of the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Act 2015.
- Reinstating co-operatives as a state subject; repealing the Banking Regulation-1949 Amendment Act, 2020; permitting primary agriculture credit societies to collect deposits under the supervision of RBI; strengthening the co-operative banks to save people from the clutches of usurious lending; and exempting co-operative banks from income tax.
- Delinking Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) from commercial banks; banking sector will focus on enhancing the average person's purchasing power.
- No further dilution of government shares from the LIC; removal of GST on life, medical and general insurances; public sector general insurance companies will be consolidated to gain economies of scale.
- Prohibit illegal flows of capital to tax havens; plug loopholes in double tax avoidance agreements to ensure fair taxation.
- Strengthening of chit fund legislation to protect deposits, confiscate Ponzi scheme owners' properties, and compensate affected depositors.
- Restricting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the financial sector.

Trade Issues

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Protecting Indian interests and standing up to the US moves to increase tariffs on Indian goods and waging 'trade wars'.
- Restoring measures to protect small and marginal peasants, including quantitative restrictions.
- Keeping sectors like health, education, water resources, banking and financial services out of GATS; press for review of the TRIPS agreement.
- Reviewing existing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs); not proceeding with negotiations for FTA with European Union on existing terms.

Strengthening Federalism

For a thorough restructuring of Centre-State relations, the CPI(M) stands for:

- Replacing Article 356 with a suitable provision and amending Article 355 to prevent their misuse.
- Review the current role and position of Governors. Governors to be appointed by the President from a panel of three eminent persons suggested by the Chief Minister.
- Devolving 50 per cent of the total pool of collection of Central taxes to the states; sharing of surcharges and cesses with the states.
- Making non-tax revenues of Central government a part of the divisible pool and introduction of a suitable Constitutional amendment.
- Withdrawal of conditionalities imposed upon the states like the passage of FRBM Act; states to have a say in the composition and terms of reference of the Finance Commissions.
- Transferring Centrally Sponsored Schemes under a State subject with funds to the states.
- Constitutional amendment to make the decisions of the Inter-State Council binding on the Union Government; National Development Council to be granted Constitutional status; restoring the Planning Commission, which is to act as an executive wing of the NDC.
- Setting a target for minimum level of Local Self-Government expenditure to GDP; funds devolved to the local bodies to be routed through the state governments.

Infrastructure

The CPI(M) stands for:

- People-oriented infrastructural planning and development, not for private corporations.
- Resisting the increasing control of international financial institutions and asset management companies over Indian infrastructural sectors.
- Rolling back of the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), which facilitates private players in long-term revenue collection in core infrastructural activities.
- Rolling back of the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP); stall and reverse the long-term gift-over of brownfield infrastructural assets to private corporations through various routes of NMP; repeal privatisation and weakening of public infrastructure through disinvestment, PPP, and various other routes.
- Repealing and reversing the National Land Monetization Pipeline (NLMP); prevent the accumulation of huge, contiguous land parcels with unique rent collection capacity in the hands of private corporations.

- Promoting construction, operation, maintenance, and revenue realization of public infrastructure (power, communications, railways, roads, ports, airports, etc.) only through government departments and public sectors.
- Reversing the operation and maintenance (O&M) of public infrastructure allotted to private players; putting an end to revenue extraction (tolls, tickets, or other charges) by private O&M agencies from public highways, railways, airports, gas or electricity lines, etc., which severely burden people; reinforcing public enterprises in these works.
- Reversing the policies promoting and establishing private monopolies in renewable energy sector, energy storage, and all other future energy resources; establishing government's decisive stake in the renewable sector to protect our country's energy sovereignty; devising a strong participatory mechanism to protect the livelihood and economic scope of the communities (especially coal workers) affected in the process of transitioning to renewable energy from fossil fuel.
- Ensuring affordable electricity at subsidized rates; repealing of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022; halting prepaid smart metering in the TOTEX model by private corporations; rollback privatization of public electricity sector; reintegration of all unbundled power utilities; cancellation of existing private licenses in the power sector; eradication of the virtual private power market and dynamic pricing.
- Restricting private monopolies in essential infrastructure sectors, including ports-to-power conglomerates, data storage and handling; building a strong public sector data infrastructure to secure Indian citizens' sovereign data and implementing policies to limit the free use of personal data by private corporations.
- Repealing the Telecommunications Bill, 2023; reversing pro-private telecom policies to encourage telecom and internet penetration in rural and remote areas via public sector; strengthening public sector telecom companies BSNL and MTNL by guaranteeing a level playing field and rapid roll-out of 4G and 5G services. Ensuring the right to internet; developing national self-reliance in communication equipment manufacturing.
- Massive government investment in rail infrastructure to ensure rail security, speed, and availability; reversing privatization of railway stations, dedicated freight corridors, and goods and passenger trains; promoting indigenous technology and the manufacturing of railway rakes and equipment; assure affordability and service upgrades.
- Withdrawal of the landlord port model; revocation of the new stevedoring policy for cargo handling; revocation of outsourcing of major port hospitals under the PPP model. Modernize major ports.
- Developing warehousing corporation infrastructure to facilitate procurement of crops other than grains and primary edibles like fruits and vegetables; stop renting out infrastructure of the warehousing corporation to private monopolies

Industry

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Reversing the disastrous policies aimed to dismantle and destroy all PSUs through different administrative orders and guidelines; doing away with all DIPAM-initiated PSU privatization efforts.
- Strengthening the public sector, especially in core and strategic areas, by withdrawing the huge burden of levy, allowing efficient reinvestment of profit for modernization and upgradation, providing level playing field and access to resources, supporting weaker PSUs with fresh capital and updated technology, ensuring technology transfer in each and every import obligation, promoting greater autonomy, efficiency, and inter-enterprise coordination within the public sector.
- Introduction of a holistic long-term industrial policy, reinventing investment strategies and MoU conditionalities to ensure higher employment-investment ratio; bridging the gap between service and manufacturing by fostering complementary roles of the two to increase net productivity.
- Ensuring increased value addition and appropriation in our domestic segments of the Global Production Network executed through a tight export-import-investment policy; ensuring compliance of strict labour standards throughout the value chain of MNCs and TNCs.
- Restricting the increasing control of financial firms over non-financial ones by imposing a cap on equity investment and cross-ownership; introducing proactive lending policies from PSBs to support the financial needs of non-financial companies; promoting research and development and indigenous capacity enhancement; imposing a vigilant restriction on monopoly formation and cartelization.
- Revival of labour-intensive traditional industries such as jute mills, plantations, textiles, leather, handicrafts, and coir, among others; formulation of stringent policies to protect domestic industries from international players; promotion and development of domestic and foreign markets for Indian products.
- Encouraging micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in labour-intensive sectors with adequate incentives, infrastructure support, and sufficient credit from public sector banks; increasing financial allocation to Cluster Development Projects (CDPs); strict restrictions on entry of private microfinance into the MSME sector and waiving loans of distressed low-income groups.
- Conducive strategy for increasing entrepreneurial activities through reinforcing communitarian institutions like SHGs, Cooperatives, etc; increasing subsidized loans to these units involved especially in home and traditional industries; supporting the development of cooperatives and consortiums.

- Prohibiting foreign direct investment in retail trade; regulating e-commerce and local corporate retailers through a licencing policy; and creating the government's own e-commerce platform to promote small producers and manufacturers.
- Introduction of public sector digital platform services to break the monopoly of global corporations like Amazon, Uber, Zomato, etc; ensuring systematic government support and protection for indigenous start-ups and cooperatives in the expanding digital economy.
- Proactive initiative to bring more IT jobs and technological growth to Tier-II and Tier-III cities without compromising workers' rights; boosting IT hardware and component production; introduction of state-owned IT companies to digitize all departments and their services; developing rules to regulate algorithms, AI/ML, and other emerging technologies with the goal of democratizing their benefits to the public.
- Progressively amending the SEZ Act and Rules to eliminate tax advantages and limit indiscriminate land use; ensuring strict implementation of labour laws in all SEZs.
- Critical reconsideration over IBC; resisting measures over siphoning of public funds through the PLI schemes; strict measures against unconditional loan waivers to big private corporations.
- Repealing the amendment in the MMDR Act framed to allow monopolized commercial mining of critical minerals like rare earth materials, lithium, etc., essential for future energy security; halting further incentivization, liberalization, and privatization of the mineral sector, including crude oil exploration.
- Rolling back the dismantling of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing units; reversal of private entry into the defense production industry; halt FDI inflows.
- Developing a holistic policy for Coal India Ltd (CIL) capacity augmentation and a comprehensive coal logistics plan; hand-over all the private allotted unexplored coal blocks to CIL; reducing the dependence on imported coal and judicial inquiry into the fraudulent coal import by private companies.

Revival of Agriculture

To reverse the agrarian crisis, revive agricultural growth and ensure enhanced incomes for the farmers, the CPI(M) proposes the following concrete steps:

- Ensure legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price (MSP), which will be at least one and a half times the comprehensive cost of production (C2+50 per cent).
- Expand the coverage and implementation of the MSPs; increase the number of crops for which MSPs are announced; ensure effective procurement in all states; Increase the number of APMC *mandis* in India to 10,000 within three years.

- Radically reduce the cost of agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, diesel, water and electricity by strictly regulating the corporate lobby and increasing government subsidies.
- Double public investment in agriculture in three years, with special focus on irrigation, and rural market infrastructure; focus on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) with respect to all water resources.
- Ensure cheap, timely and adequate supply of institutional credit to agriculture; reform guidelines to ensure that institutional credit is not diverted to corporate interests in agriculture; introduce a new target to ensure that an overwhelming proportion of the direct credit to agriculture is provided to small and marginal farmers.
- Revive the cooperative credit system in India; ensure that credit cooperatives are democratically run with regular elections held.
- Scrap the Nutrient Based Subsidy regime in fertilizers; increase subsidies to agriculture and reinstate fertilizer price control to ensure availability of quality agricultural inputs at affordable prices.
- Reverse changes in the intellectual property regime that favour big businesses in agriculture; ensure the strict regulation of private agricultural research vis-à-vis seed prices, royalties, farmer's right to save seeds, and the protection of biodiversity.
- Repeal unequal and exploitative multilateral and bilateral Free Trade Agreements like India-ASEAN FTA, India-EU FTA; ensure that all trade negotiations protect India's economic sovereignty and cooperative federalism.

Land Issues

The CPI(M) shall:

- Reverse the dilution of land-ceiling laws intended to favour corporates and large agri-businesses.
- Ensure speedy and comprehensive steps for implementing land reforms; incentivise state governments to take possession of remaining ceiling surplus lands and immediately distribute all surplus land taken possession of; ensure priority to SCs and STs in land distribution; provide for joint *pattas* that safeguard the equal right of women to land ownership; provide enhanced funding for state governments to establish new land tribunals to ensure time-bound resolution of legal issues.
- Ensure registration of all tenancies; protect the rights of tenants in all states; ensure benefits to all tenants including subsidies, insurance, and income support by giving Licensed Cultivator Cards.
- Amend the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 to ensure its universal application on all laws requiring land acquisition; rigorous definition of public purpose, full and prior informed consent from all affected persons, binding social impact assessment and

compensation and R&R in such a manner as to ensure a far better quality of life and share in enhanced land value.

- Prevent the encroachment and takeover of common lands like pastures, community forests, scrublands, etc.
- Protect all government and public sector land held in public trust from transfer by lease, sale, diversion or any other manner to the private sector.
- Handing over of cultivable wasteland to landless and poor peasant households free of cost, with priority to SCs and STs; joint pattas to be distributed including equal right of women to the land.
- Provide house sites and homestead land to all sections of the rural and urban landless.
- Record tenancy and protect the rights of tenants in all states where this has not been done.

Food Security

To work towards a hunger free India, the CPI(M) will:

- Seek elimination of the present targeted system and establishment of a reformed and strengthened universal public distribution excluding income-tax payees. No linkage with Aadhaar.
- Provision of 10 kgs of foodgrains per individual – 5kgs free of cost and 5kgs at subsidised rates.
- Support initiatives of state governments in this sphere.
- Along with foodgrains, the PDS will supply essential commodities such as pulses, edible oil, sugar, kerosene at controlled prices.
- The food supplied through ICDS and Mid-Day Meal Schemes will get higher allocations to ensure hot cooked nutritious meals and be brought under the Food Security law as a legal right.
- Implementation of Food Security Act allowance of Rs 6000 for pregnant women without conditionalities.
- Special measures like free kitchens for vulnerable sections of the population such as migrant workers, destitutes, widows, disabled persons.
- Strengthen the rationing system in remote and hilly areas to ensure that adivasis and other vulnerable sections have easy access to food security.
- Twelve LPG cylinders per year to be provided at subsidized rate with no Aadhaar linkage.
- No cash transfers in lieu of foodgrains.

Curbing Price Rise

The CPI(M) proposes a series of measures to control rising prices of essential commodities. These include:

- Reversing the deregulated regime of pricing of petroleum products and establishing an administered price control mechanism.
- Reducing central excise and customs duties on petroleum products.
- Controlling prices of natural gas and price of subsidized gas cylinders.
- Banning futures trade in agricultural commodities as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee.
- Acting strictly against hoarding and black-marketeering of essential commodities and strengthening provisions of the Essential Commodities Act.
- Strengthening disclosure norms for private stocks of foodgrains held in godowns and warehouses.
- Strengthening PDS and using buffer stocks judiciously as a countervailing measure against rising market prices.
- Controlling export of foodgrains when prices are high and rising.
- Ensuring control of the prices of essential medicines.

Foreign Policy

CPI(M) stands for:

- An independent and non-aligned foreign policy; promotion of cooperation among the developing countries and strengthening multi-polarity.
- Withdrawal from the strategic alliance of the US and oppose its policies of intervention, sanctions and regime change in sovereign countries.
- Withdraw from all the foundational agreements with the US that compromise our national sovereignty and are detrimental to our interests.
- Scrapping all security and military ties with Israel and demand UN imposed sanctions on Israel.
- The establishment of the State of Palestine, with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital.
- Strengthening our relations with all our neighbours and immediate resolution of issues concerning shared resources in a mutually beneficial manner.
- Negotiated settlement of the border dispute with China and promotion of all round relations.
- Resuming talks with Pakistan for the resolution of all outstanding issues including cross-border terrorism and for the promotion of people-to-people relations, cultural and sporting events.

- Engagement with the Sri Lankan government for the devolution of powers to the Northern and Eastern regions of the country, where Tamil speaking-people will have autonomy within an united country.

Security Matters

The CPI(M) works for:

- Exit from alliances like, India-US Defence Framework Agreement, QUAD and I2U2.
- Removal of all military bases in our region, particularly the US base in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean where nuclear weapons are stationed.
- Complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons.
- Denial of access to Indian naval, air and military facilities for refueling and stationing purposes by countries that are involved in armed intervention/combat anywhere in the world.
- A policy that does not allow the militarisation of space and polar regions.
- Peaceful resolution of conflicts through diplomacy, dialogues and discussion; promotion of friendly relations.
- De-militarisation of cyber-space; protection from cyber-attacks and phishing; protection of the privacy of all individuals and prevention of snooping and surveillance over individuals.
- Parliamentary oversight over security apparatus and ensuring accountability.
- Prioritisation of human lives and their protection through building an effective coordination mechanism between various intelligence agencies and ensuring immediate action on credible intelligence.
- Expanding, developing and strengthening of our public sector defence units, which have a major role in ensuring self-reliance to meet the needs of our country's security and defence.
- Transparency and accountability in defence deals to prevent corruption. Fast tracking of investigation, trial and punishment in cases of corruption particularly those concerned with the defence of our country.

Jammu & Kashmir

The CPI(M) is committed to:

- Restoration of Article 35A and 370 of the Constitution; Ladakh being given regional autonomy; holding elections to the state assembly immediately.
- Urgently initiating a political process through a dialogue with all the concerned parties.

- Initiating confidence building measures in Kashmir, by talking to all sections of the society and acting upon their genuine grievances.
- Ensure economic development of the state, focusing particularly on generating employment for the youth and reconstructing the damaged infrastructure.
- Withdrawal of AFSPA, except in border areas.

North-East

The CPI(M) is committed to:

- Ending the conflict in Manipur through a political settlement. For this, the chief minister has to be removed; there has to be negotiations with all concerned for a settlement which assures the equal rights of all communities.
- The immediate completion of the NRC process in Assam according to the Supreme Court guidelines; no Indian must be excluded; those left out should be allowed to speedily go through the application process; those included should be issued identity cards immediately; blocked Aadhar cards should be revalidated.
- Declaring the North East as a priority region for development; developing physical infrastructure and special employment schemes for the youth; Indo-Bangladesh border fencing to be completed expeditiously.
- Protecting and expanding the administrative and financial powers under the Sixth Schedule; protection of the identity of the various ethnic groups and nationalities.

In Defence of the Rights of the Working People

Working Class

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Ensuring statutory minimum wage for workers which is not less than Rs 26000 per month; minimum wage to be linked to the Consumer Price Index; ensuring strict implementation of not more than eight-hour work a day. Legislative measures for ensuring provision of living wages as per article 43 of the Constitution.
- Periodic wage revision for all Central PSU workers without insisting on any affordability condition.
- Setting up the 8th Central Pay Commission for central government employees and payment of unpaid Dearness Allowance/Dearness Relief dues from January 2020 to June 2021.
- Recognising all workers employed in different central and state government schemes (anganwadi workers, ASHA, MDM workers, etc.) as workers/*employees* and providing them with all attendant benefits including statutory minimum wages, social security benefits like pension, gratuity etc., and ensuring their trade union rights.

- Scrapping all anti-worker and pro-employer amendments to labour laws through Four Labour Codes.
- Strengthening the implementation of all labour laws including the law on interstate migrant workers; payment of retrenchment/closure compensation to affected workers and implementation of ID Act provisions; strengthening labour departments and enforcement agencies; opening of Industrial Tribunals and Labour Courts in all districts and industrial centres.
- Improving the legislation on Unorganized Sector Workers and implementing the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Labour; special social security measures for migrant workers and plantation workers; constituting national fund for unorganised workers; legislation for universal coverage of all unorganised workers with social security benefits including old age pension, health, maternity and child care benefits, accident and life insurance.
- Enacting legislation to concretely define the working conditions of Gig/Platform-based/App-driven workers and those 'working from home'; Ensuring coverage of IT & ITES workers under all labour laws debarring any provision for exemption through appropriate enactment.
- Scrapping of 'New Pension Scheme' and the PFRDA Act and putting in place a benefit-defined pension scheme with adequate funding by employers and government for all workers/employees ensuring at least a pension of 50 per cent of last drawn pay with indexation.
- Withdrawing the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- Ensuring recognition of trade unions through secret ballot and protection of trade union rights; making recognition of union mandatory by law in all establishments; ratification of ILO Convention No 87 and 98 (dealing with workers' rights in SEZ) and No 189 (on domestic workers); holding of Indian Labour Conference, annually without fail.
- Adopting an effective scheme for workers' participation in management in both public and private sector; strengthening bipartism and tripartism; no decision to be taken on any issue related to labour without discussion with trade unions, ensure regular, meaningful social dialogue with workers representatives.
- Discouraging contractualisation and casualisation of work; stringent implementation of The Contract Labour (Regulation And Abolition) Act, 1970; equal wages and benefits for contract workers as regular workers for doing similar job; stop outsourcing and contractorisation of jobs of permanent and perennial nature; revoking 'Fixed Term Employment'; protecting the right of contract workers and workers in the unorganized sector to exercise their fundamental right to unionize and strike.
- Ensuring equal remuneration for women workers in all areas of work including home-based work; social security for working women in the unorganized sector,

including maternity benefits, pension and health insurance; implementing paid maternity leave of 26 weeks, maternity benefit and crèche facilities and elderly care for all women workers.

- Strict implementation of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act; ensuring safety measures for women working in night-shifts.
- Workers to have active and effective participation in all Welfare Boards constituted for their welfare.

Fish workers

- Setting up special welfare board for fish workers and providing them identity cards and social security schemes.
- Banning foreign trawlers and destructive fishing practices by big trawlers; scrapping of deep sea fishing related policies that allow big corporate fishing in our territorial waters and EEZ, while restricting access to domestic small fishers.
- Withdrawing the CRZ notification 2018 which deprives fishers of their right to the coasts.
- Scrapping Blue-Economy Policy that allows private and foreign corporates to extract rich mineral resources from our ocean-bed.

Farmers

- Ensure comprehensive freedom from debt and loan waiver to all small, middle and distressed farmers and agricultural workers in rural India, covering both institutional and private debt owed to moneylenders.
- Implement a universal, comprehensive crop insurance scheme for all farmers allowing for state-specific flexibilities in design; ensure that insurance covers yield risks and price risks; establish weather monitoring stations in every village; expand the role of public insurance companies in crop insurance coverage; establish a price stabilization fund for protecting farmers from price risks.
- Ensure legal guarantee for an adequate monthly pension for small, marginal, and middle farmers and agricultural workers.
- Promote and strengthen cooperatives for agricultural production, credit supply, dairy farming, water use, input purchase, crop storage, processing, value addition and marketing; strictly ensure that the cooperative system outside the multi-state cooperatives function under the state governments.
- Promote the establishment of farmer producer companies as well as women's self-help groups, joint liability groups and other women's collectives in agricultural production; ensure that these collective associations are immune to private corporate appropriation.
- Ensure adequate subsidies are extended to the production, supply, and retail sale of animal feed; protect livestock farmers from fluctuations in input prices.

Design and implement a comprehensive livestock insurance scheme that covers all diseases as well as epidemics.

- Extend labour subsidies to small and marginal farmers by bringing them under the cover of the MGNREGS.

Agricultural Workers

- Enacting comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers to ensure minimum wages, the right to bargain and measures of social security such as pensions, accident compensation etc., with central funding.
- Removing the cap of 100 days of work in MGNREGS and raising it to 200 days of work; ensuring that wages paid under the MGNREGS are not lower than the minimum wage of Rs 700 per day in any state. Ensuring the timely payment of unemployment allowance when workers are not provided with work under the MGNREGS.
- Increasing the minimum wage of all rural and agricultural workers to Rs 700 per day; ensuring equal wages for the same work to men and women agricultural workers; providing special allowances for pregnant agricultural workers. Revamping the entire mechanism for effective and strict enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act.
- Providing all agricultural workers with minimum basic amenities, such as housing, sanitation facilities, drinking water, medical facilities, first-aid and transport in the event of injuries.
- Providing for decentralized tripartite boards, with single window system and pan-Indian eligibility, to protect migrant agricultural workers.
- Recognizing the rights of landless agricultural workers as persons affected and eligible to receive full compensation as well as resettlement and rehabilitation in all cases of land acquisition and displacement under the LARR Act, 2013.
- Safeguarding the constitutional rights of Dalit and Adivasi agricultural workers and specifically ensuring the comprehensive development of Dalit and Adivasi habitations.
- Providing for separate legislations and courts for the protection of Dalit and Adivasi agricultural workers against all forms of caste, ethnic, religious and gender based oppression.
- Providing public supported childcare and crèche facilities in all agricultural workspaces.

For Equal Rights and Social Justice

Women

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Implementing 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies immediately without linking it to census and delimitation.
- Enacting a law for equal rights in marital and inherited property for all women; strengthening laws relating to maintenance for women and children; ensuring protection and adequate maintenance and rehabilitation for all deserted women.
- Putting in place a series of measures to prevent, curb and punish those responsible for the horrific increase in violence against women and children, which include:
 - Accepting the Verma Committee recommendations which have been left out of the present amended law; changes in educational curricula to include subjects related to gender equality; steps to make public spaces safer for women; ensuring safe access to all public places for women with disability; increasing punishment for caste based crimes against Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women; penalties on any personnel including police personnel who sabotage or delay cases; setting up of fast track courts; make marital rape an offence; safeguard existing Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code; support victims of sexual violence and acid attacks through a fully funded rehabilitation scheme especially for children who are victims of sexual violence; adequate budgetary allocations for implementation of the laws against domestic violence and against sexual harassment. Strict implementation of the PCPNDT Act (against sex determination tests and female foeticide) and the activation of defunct monitoring committees.
 - Enacting the following new legislations: a stand-alone law against so-called honour crimes; a law against trafficking of women and children; strengthening the law for maintenance of women and children including a scheme such as the one initiated by the erstwhile Left front government in Tripura providing an allowance for deserted women; special schemes for single women including widows and female headed families; a law to ensure linkages between SHGs and banking institutions and guarantee of subsidised interest rates of not more than 4 per cent with special concessions for SHGs of SC/ST women; protective legislation for domestic workers and for homebased workers; special schemes for female headed families.
 - A code of conduct for all elected representatives in different spheres to adhere to standards of decency in public comments and discourse about women and against sexist and misogynist language which demeans and insults women.
 - Increasing allocations for women in gender budgeting to at least forty per cent of allocations from the present claims of 30 per cent.

Children

The CPI(M) strongly advocates and will work for the rights of children. It is committed to:

- Universalisation of the ICDS to cover all children from the age of 0-6 years. Reverse all measures towards privatisation of the ICDS; more allocations per child to

ensure nutritious meals for children in anganwadis and in schools and provision of creche facilities in anganwadi centres.

- Expansion of the Right to Education Act to include all children from the age of 3-18 years. Implement provisions contained in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 concerning inclusive education.
- Provision of adequate number of child friendly playgrounds in neighbourhoods.
- Amendments in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act) to remove the distinction between hazardous and non-hazardous work in order to ban all forms of child labour and to ensure implementation of schemes with additional allocations for the rehabilitation of all working children.
- Special measures to close the continuing gap between children from adivasi, dalit and socially vulnerable groups and others through specific measures including additional allocations for setting up residential schools and hostels with modern facilities; stringent action against discrimination at any level.
- Complete coverage of basic services, such as supplementary nutrition, immunization, preschool non-formal education, regular health checkups and quick referral services.
- Strict implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.
- Provision of shelter and social services to street children; more effective steps to trace missing children.
- Ensuring a total re-haul and reform of the juvenile justice system and institutions to sensitize them towards helping them reintegrate into society as responsible citizens.

Youth

The CPI(M) is committed to:

- The inclusion of the Right to Work as a constitutional right.
- Provision of jobs or unemployment allowance.
- Lifting the ban on recruitment in central government and state government services; filling up of all vacant posts in central and state governments within a time bound framework.
- Drafting a new National Youth Policy to address the concerns of the youth.
- Setting up Sports Missions sponsored by both central and state governments to promote sports activities and training facilities for youth.
- Promoting the all round – physical, cultural and social – development of youth by opening up avenues in the fields of their choice.
- Firm action against the spread of drugs menace.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The CPI(M) stands for the abolition of the caste system and all forms of caste oppression.

- Enactment of a central legislation for Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes and for the Tribal Sub-Plan which will provide for Plan outlays at the Centre and the states equivalent to their respective populations.
- Distribution of 5 acres (per each) of arable land for cultivation to all landless families from SC and ST communities.
- Enactment of a central legislation to provide reservations in the private sector.
- Enforcement and implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and the POA Amendment Act 2015. Take steps to incorporate SC/ST (PoA) Act under Schedule IX of the Constitution.
- Establishment of mandatory Special Courts as per Section 14 of the SC, ST (PoA) Act 1989 in each district.
- Enactment of a special Act for the prevention of caste, religious and gender based discrimination in educational institutions and work environments.
- Immediate conduct of a Caste Census as part of general census.
- Universal access to hostels and scholarships for all SC and ST students.
- Filling all backlogs in reserved seats and posts and in promotions through a special timebound recruitment drive.
- Implementation of reservations in all hitherto excluded sectors.
- Amendments to remove loopholes in the legislation for prevention of manual scavenging and a timebound rehabilitation scheme with adequate allocations.
- Regularisation of contract labour in safai services.
- A special drive with budgetary allocations to close the continuing gap between SC/STs and other communities in housing and civic facilities.
- Extending reservations to dalit Christian and Muslim communities.

Scheduled Tribes

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 various laws, which in the name of ease of doing business, removes the 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.
- Ensuring MSP for minor forest produce procured by adivasis and protecting the rights of the adivasi women.
- 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; 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 free and subsidised foodgrains.
- Enhancement of scholarship for tribal students and time bound audit of all tribal hostel and upgrading of facilities.

Minorities

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Making the Minorities Commission a statutory body with enhanced powers and jurisdiction and enhancing the status of its chairperson and members.
- Formulating a sub-plan for the Muslim minorities on the lines of the tribal sub-plan in order to implement Sachar Committee recommendations; the Minority Area Development Programme introduced after the Sachar Committee to be augmented, and amended to ensure adequate resources and special initiatives in the sphere of employment, education and health to be undertaken targeting districts where the Muslim population is concentrated.
- Enacting the 'Prevention of Atrocities Against Minorities Act' in order to prevent the continuing attacks on minorities including Christians.
- Implementing the recommendations of the Ranganath Mishra Commission report. As an immediate measure all OBC Muslims who form the vast majority of the

Muslim community to be included in the OBC quota with specific State wise allocations.

- Earmarking 15 per cent of priority sector lending by banks for the Muslims; subsidised credit to be ensured for the self-employed Muslim youth.
- Special emphasis to be laid on the education of Muslim girls; scholarships and hostel facilities should be substantially increased for Muslim girl students.
- Promoting the teaching of Urdu in schools; Publishing good quality textbooks in Urdu and filling vacancies of Urdu teaching posts.
- Ensuring compensation and rehabilitation to all those Muslims acquitted in cases of terror and also ensuring punishment of officials responsible for implicating them in false cases, subjecting them to torture etc. Setting up of fast track courts to try all such cases.
- Compensation for all victims of mob lynching.

OBCs

- Ensuring proper implementation of 27 per cent OBC reservation in Central educational institutions; extending OBC reservation to all private educational institutions.
- Strengthening the National Commission for Backward Classes.
- Simplifying procedures for issuing OBC certificate.
- Designing comprehensive package of schemes, on the lines of those drawn up for SCs and STs, for employment and poverty alleviation of OBCs from the economically weaker sections.

LGBTQ+

- Amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 to address concerns raised by the community.
- Legal recognition and protection to same sex couples similar to marriage - 'civil union'/'same-sex-partnerships', legislation/s on similar lines as Special Marriage Act, 1954 so that the partner can be listed as a dependent, for inheritance, alimony in case of divorce etc.
- A comprehensive anti-discriminatory bill covering LGBTQ+.
- Reservation in education institutions; ensuring horizontal reservation in employment.
- Ensuring crimes against LGBTQ+ persons are treated on par with crimes against non-LGBTQ+ persons.
- Measures to address bullying, violence and harassment of gender non-conforming and LGBTQ+ students, staff and teachers in educational spaces; enforcement of UGC anti-ragging policy amendment (2016) that addresses ragging

based on sexual orientation and gender identity, ensuring accessible and safe bathrooms for trans, intersex and gender non-conforming students, staff and faculty.

- Sex change surgeries of LGBTQI should not be done without their informed consent.

Persons with Disabilities

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Recognition of the issues of persons with disabilities as cross-sectoral; redesigning various programmes and schemes with the objective of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPD Act).
- Introduction of disability budgeting in line with gender budgeting; 5 per cent allocations across ministries be earmarked for the disabled; enhanced allocations to be made for fulfilling the various mandates of the RPD Act and also for implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.
- Comply with RPD Act mandated provisions on accessibility.
- Removal of GST on aids and appliances.
- Simplification of the certification procedure, speedy certification and ensuring the universal validity of UDID cards.
- Extending reservations in education and employment to the private sector; enforcing the mandate of inclusive education.
- Uniform disability pension of a minimum of Rs 6000/- linked with the minimum wages/cost of living in the state; an equivalent amount be given to caregivers by introducing a caregiver allowance; AAY cards be provided to all disabled; free and universal health coverage for all disabled.
- Supporting women with disabilities for livelihood and housing as well as for exercising sexual and reproductive rights.
- Amending Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution to include 'disability' as a ground on which discrimination is prohibited; harmonising all laws in consonance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

FOR PEOPLES' WELFARE

CPI(M) will work for:

Education

- Stopping the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020; no to commercialization, communalization and centralization of education.
- Public expenditure on education to be 6 per cent of GDP

- Steps to remove communal content in education and text books. Ensure no Vice-Chancellors or key personnel in State funded institutions have anti-secular views.
- Academic excellence and professional competence will be the sole criteria for all appointments to bodies like Universities, the Indian Council for Historical Research, Indian Council for Social Science Research, University Grants Commission, National Council for Educational Research and Training, etc. A review committee of experts will be set up to reverse the communalisation of syllabus.
- Establishing a Common School Education System; stop closure or merger of government schools; upgrade government schools on the Kerala model; bring down student ratio to 20:1
- Implementing the Right to Education Act to provide free and compulsory elementary education; amending the RTE to institutionalise the concept of neighborhood schooling, extending it beyond the elementary level and providing free education for all continuing students; ensuring every school is RTE compliant.
- Expanding secondary education to reduce dropouts and making it universal; improving quality of education and infrastructure in SSA schools, allowing flexibility of rules, timing and other aspects to ensure retention of girl students and pupils in backward areas and for otherwise marginalized groups.
- Set-up Gender Sensitisation Committees Against Sexual Harassment in university and college campuses.
- Enacting legislation to regulate fees, admissions and curricula in private educational institutions.
- No FDI in higher education.
- Formulating scientific, progressive and democratic curriculum and syllabi at all levels of education in a way that recognizes India's social and cultural diversity.
- Regularise teachers currently employed as contract or para teachers.
- Ensuring democratic rights of students, teachers and non-teaching staff in all educational institutions; students' union elections to be made mandatory in all higher educational institutions.
- Stop attacks on the autonomy of higher education institutions.
- Enhance public funding for higher education.
- Reinstate overseas fellowship for students from the marginalized communities.
- Enact Rohit Act to provide guidance and help to students from the dalit and adivasi communities; mental health camps and accessible helplines for students.

Health

- Make right to free health care justiciable through enactment of appropriate legislations at both Central and state levels.

- Retain health services as a state subject with strong emphasis on federalism.
- Public expenditure on health to be raised to 5 per cent of the GDP, with at least 2 per cent coming from the Centre.
- Out-of-pocket expenditure on health to be brought to below 25 per cent of health spending; expand and strengthen the public healthcare system to ensure free availability of quality health care at all levels, including entire range of medicines, diagnostics and vaccines, and accountability to local communities.
- Scrap the government-funded PMJAY/Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme and replace it with a Public-centred Universal Health Care system.
- Reverse the privatisation of health care services and outsourcing of services through PPPs.
- Extend and reform the ESI scheme to effectively protect workers' health in both organized and unorganized sector, and also covering occupational health.
- Effectively regulate the private health care sector, especially corporate hospitals which should be brought under the Clinical Establishment Act. Modify the National Clinical Establishment Act, 2010 ensuring implementation of the Patients' Rights Charter and standardization of reasonable rates and quality of various services.
- Ensure right-based access to comprehensive treatment and care of persons with mental illness through integration of the revised District Mental Health Programme with the National Health Mission.
- Adopt a people-centred, rational pharmaceutical policy with effective cost-based price controls, elimination of irrational and hazardous formulations, and a comprehensive generic medicines policy covering labeling, prescription and availability at all retail outlets; ensure availability of essential drugs free of cost at all public health care facilities.
- Initiating programs to break monopolies of pharmaceutical multinational companies in critical areas.
- Revive public sector pharmaceutical units to harness them for production of essential drugs and vaccines, and reverse privatization trends; reinstate Open-Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) programmes and collaborative R&D for affordable medicines; remove GST for life-saving and crucial medicines.
- Strictly control and regulate clinical trials and prohibit unethical clinical trials; develop a justiciable charter of rights for clinical trial participants.
- Resist dilution of India's Patent Laws and reject provisions in Free Trade Agreements that obstruct domestic production of low-cost generic drugs.
- Effective, appropriate regulatory oversight of AYUSH system of medicine, while supporting evidence-based use of such systems.

- Give priority to the setting up of new public colleges to train doctors and nurses, especially in under-served areas such as in the North East and in poorer states. Training institutes to be set up for health workers.
- Make compulsory the Ethical Code on Marketing Practices of Medicines.

Employment Guarantee

- Enactment of a legislation for employment guarantee in all urban areas.
- 200 days of work under MNREGA to be assured; the list of permissible works under the MNREGA to be expanded to include all activities that improve the quality of life in rural areas; withdrawal of the App based attendance system
- Special packages to support labour-intensive industries in creating jobs.
- Check unemployment through policies encouraging labour intensive establishments; link financial assistance/incentives/concessions to employers with employment generation in the concerned establishments.
- Fill up all vacant posts in government departments; lift the ban on recruitment and 3 per cent annual surrender of government posts; ensure the filling of all backlog posts.

Senior Citizens

- Enabling senior citizens to live with dignity by immediately establishing a publicly-funded, universal and non-contributory Old Age Pension System with a minimum amount of monthly pension not less than 50 per cent of minimum wage or Rs 6,000/- per month, whichever is higher, as an individual entitlement for all citizens of India except income tax payees or those receiving higher pension from any other source.
- Indexing the pension to consumer prices for automatic annual revision.
- Setting up a single window system for Old Age Pensions.
- Building a network of old-age homes/day-care centres/palliative care centres with State support; more support for geriatric care

Ex-Servicemen

- Implement One Rank, One Pension, in full measure; address concerns regarding new rules for casualty pension and disability compensation awarded to armed forces personnel
- Ensure the welfare of retired central paramilitary forces personnel, widows and dependent persons, treat them on par with those from the armed forces.
- Constitute a Commission for ex-servicemen headed by an ex-armed forces officer to address grievances and issues of ex-servicemen.

Urban Issues

In the background of rapid urbanisation taking place and the lopsided development, CPI(M) commits itself to:

- Special measures for the protection of interests of the informal and unorganised workers in urban areas.
- Stop the privatisation of drinking water, sanitation, health, education and other essential public services.
- Stop eviction drives and demolition of slums. Ensure in situ development of basic facilities.
- Expansion of public housing facilities, public transport and parks.
- Steps to curb all kinds of pollution and environmental degradation.
- Work towards a New Urban Policy that prioritises common peoples' welfare over private real estate interests.
- Ensure the decentralisation of powers to urban local bodies by strengthening the 74th Constitutional Amendment.
- Ensure the transfer of sufficient financial resources to urban local bodies from the government to meet the requirements of developing proper housing, water and sanitation facilities for all the residents.

Environment

- Make the system and processes of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Clearances at state and central level effective, time-bound, transparent, accountable and free of conflict of interests; repeal EIA Notification 2020 and issue revised guidelines.
- Plan and initiate economy-wide measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, while providing for a just transition from fossil fuels; promotion of renewable energy such as solar and wind.
- Evolve a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through a participatory process involving all stakeholders especially states to tackle climate impacts such as on agriculture, extreme rainfall and related landslides and urban flooding, heat waves and urban heat islands, coastal erosion and sea-level rise.
- Evolve sustainable and environment/climate-friendly development strategies for the fragile Himalayan region and eco-sensitive regions of Western Ghats and the North-East.
- Thoroughly revise National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) towards rapid and goal-oriented reduction of air pollution in urban areas.
- Urgently initiate measures to prevent degradation and destructive development of river beds and flood plains, including in urban areas.

- Repeal provisions of Biodiversity Amendment Act 2023 which permits transfer of knowledge regarding bio-diversity resources to corporates.
- Scrap the environmentally disastrous and pro-corporate Islands Development Plan for Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep island chains; re-examine feasibility and location of proposed naval base in A&N
- Scrap environmentally dangerous National Oil Palm Mission with highly inflated claims of yields and focusing on eco-sensitive North-East and Andaman Islands

Water Resources

- Re-formulate National Water Policy treating water as a scarce public good; tackle the growing water crisis; enhance equitable water availability for optimized domestic use, irrigation and industry through effective protection of rivers, expansion of water bodies and increased groundwater recharge; appropriate legislation, effective regulation and demand management of water; water audits and measures to conserve, treat and recycle water especially in urban areas;
- Equitable provision of WHO-standard piped potable drinking water to all households
- Halt privatization of water resources and water distribution utilities in urban areas, and recognise the right to water as part of the right to life.
- Check pollution of rivers and other water bodies through effective legislation, regulation and enforcement of sewage and other waste-water treatment and recycling policies; withdraw provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment, 2024 allowing Centre to override State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)
- Undertake comprehensive review of the programme for inter-linking of rivers.
- Implement measures to protect and improve catchment areas of major rivers especially in the Himalayan region; take all steps possible to check glacier melting.

Science and Technology (S&T)

Enhance public funding of indigenous research in S&T to at least 2 per cent of GDP, with due importance to basic research

- Strengthen the university system in research and development (R&D); increase the number of research fellowships; increase number of faculty research positions in institutes; increase quality and quantity of PhDs.
- Decentralize systems and processes for research funding; scrap the highly centralized National Research Foundation (NRF) set up under the NEP.
- Review decision to close down many government-funded S&T Institutions; resume government support for a restructured Indian Science Congress

- Earmark funds for state-level initiatives for S&T interventions to tackle peoples problems e.g. drought, water resource management, rural livelihoods, issues faced by marginalized communities
- Provide requisite mission-mode R&D funding for identified sectors of the ‘4th Industrial Revolution’ such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), bio and nano-technology etc; also focus on agricultural research to break monopolies of MNCs and enable climate-resilient agriculture/horticulture.
- Take systematic measures to increase participation of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) research and jobs; encourage academic freedom and culture of research towards reversing brain drain.
- Regulate AI, genetic engineering, data-mining and IT-based surveillance so as to ensure public good.
- Promote scientific temper, spirit of inquiry and reform as directed by the Constitution; revive Vigyan Prasar with an independent Advisory Body and mandate for science popularization and cultivation of scientific temper.
- Promote free and open source software (FOSS) and other new technologies, free from monopoly ownership through copyrights or patents; “knowledge commons” to be promoted across disciplines eg like biotechnology, AI and drug discovery.
- Recognise digital infrastructure as public infrastructure to be used for public good.
- Invest in public communication networks and free knowledge access to scientific and other academic publications without copyright barriers; mandate all public funded research to be made accessible to all.

Surveillance and Privacy Issues

- Stop all forms of digital surveillance by State agencies without explicit and specific warrants and under strict judicial supervision; prevent use of malware, hacking or other intrusive technologies such as Pegasus to gain control over citizens’ phones, computers and other digital devices.
- Scrap the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023), which is meant to cement digital authoritarianism by giving State agencies broad powers of surveillance over citizens and also big businesses a free hand to use citizens’ data for their own profits.
- Introduce new legislation to give a proper justiciable framework for the Supreme Court's Puttuswamy judgement on privacy as a fundamental right; also enact new legislation to create an independent constitutional authority to oversee violations by government as well as private businesses of citizens’ right to privacy.
- Strengthen the Competition Commission of India to be able to effectively curb and regulate the power of telecom and digital monopolies.

- Roll back the draconian provisions of the Telecommunication Act 2023 related to surveillance and interception, internet shutdowns, weakening of encrypted services, and KYC requirements of social media users.
- Roll back the draconian IT Amendment Rules (2023) which grants the government total censorship powers by providing for the establishment of a fact check unit, established at the sole discretion of the Union government, and aimed at attacking online criticism

Culture and Media

- All languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution to be equally encouraged and developed; no imposition of Hindi.
- Promoting secular, progressive and democratic culture; attacks on cultural personalities and productions by the communal forces to be firmly dealt with.
- Curbing glorification of violence and commodification of women and sex.
- Taking Internet governance out of US control to an appropriate international body; promoting a people-centric internet which builds on social justice and free from control of global corporations; promoting a global internet regime that protects the right to privacy and does not allow mass surveillance by either governments.
- Steps to control the spread of fake news and act on those groups and individuals promoting fake news.
- Legislate to protect journalists from arbitrary arrests and malicious prosecution.
- Encourage cooperative and collective media organisations to ensure free flow of information; Prasar Bharati Corporation will be strengthened as a genuine public broadcasting service.
- Cross-media ownership will be regulated to prevent monopolies and crony companies controlling the media; FDI will be banned in the print, digital and electronic media.
- A common Media Council for print, electronic and digital media will be set up, with representatives from the media, media unions and independent public persons; a Media Commission will be established to study the deplorable working conditions of journalists and the new trends in the media since the onset of globalisation.
- Working Journalists Act will be restored and strengthened to include journalists and workers from all – print, digital and electronic media organisations to ensure decent wages and job security; a new wage board for journalists in print, electronic and digital media to revise wages in media organisations will be constituted.
- The 2021 amendments to the IT Rules will be withdrawn and the draft Registration of Press and Periodicals Bill, 2022, will be reviewed; the draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023 replacing the Cable Television Networks (Regulation Act), will not be considered.

FOR INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The CPI(M) stands for:

- Protecting individual rights and freedoms and for the review and reform of all provisions that place unreasonable restrictions constraints on freedom of speech, expression and individual rights.
- Protecting the independence of Statutory, Constitutional and Regulatory Bodies by ensuring transparency in appointments to oversight, regulatory and adjudicatory bodies, like the CVC, CBI, ECI, National/State Human Rights Commissions, Lokpal, Lokayuktas, Womens' Commissions, SC/ST Commissions etc., and for adopting measures to prevent and control corruption of all kinds, especially in high places; effectively redressing grievances, protecting whistle blowers; making access to justice, speedy and affordable; and reforming the electoral system.

Fighting Corruption and Increasing Accountability

- Steps to strengthen the institution of Lok Pal and ensure its independence from the executive, based on the experience of the functioning of Lok Pal in the past four years.
- Empowering regulators and investigating agencies to thoroughly probe corporate crimes.
- Private Financial sector institutions, banking and insurance sector in particular, and all public-private partnership projects be brought under the purview of Lokpal Act, Whistleblowers Protection Act and other related anti-corruption legislations.
- Instituting effective mechanisms for providing protection to RTI users and anti-corruption crusaders and amending the Whistleblowers Protection Act to make it effective.
- Strengthening the Right to Information Act and establishing institutionalised mechanisms for citizens to participate in all aspects of decision making in governance; implementing Section 4 of the RTI Act, for a transparent and participatory pre-legislative process soliciting citizen feedback before laws are passed.
- Stop the misuse of the Official Secrets Act (OSA) and reform it suitably.

Judicial Reforms

- Constituting a National Judicial Commission as an independent Constitutional body comprising of representatives from judiciary, executive, legislature and Bar for appointments, transfers and to examine instances of commission/omission of judges and to ensure judicial accountability.
- Reforming the judicial system to provide speedy relief at affordable cost to the common people; filling up vacancies in the judiciary.

- Suitably amending the definition of criminal contempt in order to prevent its misuse in suppressing dissent.
- Public declaration of assets by Judges to be made mandatory.
- Ensuring adequate representation and diversity in the judiciary at all levels.

Reform of the Election Commission

- Amend ‘The CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act’, 2023 to provide for members of the EC to be appointed by the President on the advice of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and Chief Justice of Supreme Court.
- Election Commissioners must be legally debarred from enjoying any office after their retirement either under the Government or as a Governor or member of a legislature.
- The Representation of the People Act to be amended to specify the jurisdiction of election observers.

Electoral Reforms

- Introduction of proportional representation with partial list system.
- State funding in the form of material for recognized political parties; prohibition of corporate funding to political parties.
- To ensure faith is restored in democracy, by appropriately amending the rules regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs); re-sequencing of the electronic units in the polling booths – voting units, control units and VVPAT. At least 50 per cent of VVPAT must be tallied with that recorded in the control unit, before declaration of results.
- Bring the election expenditure of political parties under ceiling like that of candidates; ensure transparency and accountability of electoral expenditure.