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Please read other booklets of the series also.

Booklet 1 : Economy in Shambles

Booklet 2 : Constitution : Denied, Diluted, Dismantled

Booklet 4 : When Lives and Futures are Endangered

Introduction

This publication consisting of four interlinked booklets, marks the fourth year-on-year series on the policies of the Modi regime which started after its first year in office, in May 2015

A comprehensive look at the four years of Modi regime becomes all the more necessary given that these years have been marked by an unprecedented self-promotion drive by the Modi Government funded by public money. According to a recent RTI query, it is revealed that the Government has already spent a huge amount of Rs 4,343.26 crore rupees on advertisements through different media. Considering that the Government has refused to raise widow pensions by a single rupee in these last four years in the name of a resource crunch, such a huge expenditure on self-publicity seems obscene.

In its celebration of four years, undoubtedly dampened by its blunder in Karnataka, many claims are being made of the achievements of the regime with stress of it being pro- poor.

What is the reality?

The four booklets deal with different aspects. The first with an overview by General Secretary Sitaram Yechury is entitled Economy in Shambles and contains five fact filled articles on key issues such as the actual macro economic picture of the Indian economy, what happened to the promise of two crore jobs, on the issue of price rise, on flourishing corruption as opposed to the slogan of na khaonga na khane doonga and importantly the reality behind the hype on the flagship schemes of this Government.

The second booklet entitled Assault on the Constitution deals with the commitments made by the Government to the RSS which were never

made public but which in the last four years has become the priority concern of the Government, on how best to push the sectarian agenda of Hindu rashtra and all its attendant aspects. This is reflected in the attacks on basic features of the constitution namely secularism, democracy federalism. The booklet also has analysis on the situation in Kashmir. It deals with the foreign policy of this Government of making India a junior partner to the U.S and the dismay it has caused traditional allies and friends of India.

In the BJP election manifesto and later, there were numerous promises made to different sections of the people, to the kisans, the workers, to women and specifically to Dalits and adivasis. The manifesto had also promised health and education for all. These were promises to bring the acche din of BJP rule.

This the third booklet and the fourth, entitled Endangering Lives and Futures examine all these promises and their reality. The number of farmer suicides has gone up under this Government. The new fixed term rules in employment being brought by the Modi Government will give sanction to the hire and fire policies of workers, one of the key demands of employers; in spite of having a single party majority the Government has betrayed women of this country by refusing to bring the women's reservation Bill; Dalits have faced unprecedented attacks on their dignity, their status and their livelihood under this Government; adivasis are being displaced while the Forest Rights Act and other legal and constitutional provisions for the protection of adivasi land and identity are being diluted. AADHAR claimed to be a boon for good governance, is in fact nothing but an instrument to deprive the poor of their rights. These two booklets with a range of facts and figures expose the BJP's claim of being pro-poor.

We would request our readers to read all four booklets to get a comprehensive picture of the disastrous consequences India is facing as a result of having such a Government in office.

We hope these booklets will strengthen the struggles being waged across India to free India of its toxic rule.

The publication of these four booklets has been made possible by the hard work and contribution of many comrades. We thank in particular

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Brinda Karat

May, 2018

Sowing A Mega Crisis

BJP's Election Manifesto of 2014 and Narendra Modi's speeches during the campaign seemed literally like a wish-list of the farmers of India. It was claimed that the BJP Government would usher in *Achhe Din* and put an end to farm suicides. It had emphatically declared that "*BJP commits highest priority to agricultural growth, increase in farmer's income and rural development*". Specifically, BJP had promised 50% profits over cost of production, increased public investment, crop insurance, cheaper inputs, expansion of irrigation, more rural credit, expanding MGNREGS, poverty alleviation, etc. Four years of BJP rule under Narendra Modi has effectively derailed this "*engine of India's economic growth*" as the BJP manifesto called it.

Each of these promises has been broken. Public investment in agriculture and rural development has been drastically curtailed, agricultural credit is inaccessible and usurious money lenders are looting the farmers unchecked, input costs are skyrocketing, crop prices and Minimum Support Prices do not even cover the costs of production, procurement mechanism is being fast dismantled and private players allowed to exploit distressed farmers. Indiscriminate acquisition of land to promote corporate interests throwing to winds food security concerns and farmer's interests has become the norm. No welfare measures or pension schemes have been implemented for agricultural labour, small and marginal farmers. Agricultural wages were not in the radar of BJP's vision and so nothing has been done to increase them.

Agricultural Growth

Agricultural growth has been fairly volatile over the last four years falling to a low of -0.2% in 2014-15 from 5.6% in 2013-14. It rose to 0.7% in 2015-16, 4.9% in 2016-17 and is predicted at 2.1% in 2017-18.

These are shockingly low levels that adversely impact farm incomes as well as ability of the peasantry to take credit for investing in their land holdings. These data are also being questioned as post truth economics especially since the Government showed high growth rates even after demonetisation.

Economists have estimated that a growth rate of more than 14.86% is required for 5 years to double farmers' incomes by 2022. Niti Aayog economists disputed this and claimed that agriculture would require annual growth rate of 10.4% to double farmers' incomes by 2022. Even if this claim is accepted one can see how far away we are from any such goal. The hollowness of their claims is all now coming back to haunt them.

Suicides

Far from ending farm suicides they are still alarmingly high despite efforts by certain states to fudge data and paint a rosy picture. Over 36,000 farm suicides were reported in the first 3 years of the BJP Government. BJP ruled Maharashtra with 11,956 farm suicides accounted for nearly one-third of the total. A glaring difference in the NCRB data on farm suicides in Punjab and the data generated in surveys by universities in Punjab has emerged. While NCRB figures show 459 suicides in Punjab in 3 years from 2014 onwards the door to door survey shows more than a thousand farm suicides every year. Bengal showed zero suicides in 2015 and 2016 while Bihar showed zero suicides in 2016 which is not the ground reality. Despite the gross underreporting farm suicide figures remain very high.

50% Profits over Production Cost

On ensuring minimum of 50% profits over cost of production (as per Swaminathan Commission recommendation), the BJP Government went back on this promise and on 20th February, 2015 it filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that it was not possible to increase the minimum support price (MSP) on the basis of input cost plus 50% as it would "distort the market". Recently, the Government has claimed that it was already giving MSP over 50% more than cost of production. This is a massive hoax because they are calculating at a lower cost of production. The difference between the two ranges from 32% for paddy to 34% for

jowar and maize and 39% for arhar on an average – farmers are losing that much. In most cases the farmers are not even getting Rs.80 for every Rs.100 spent. MSP is also notional as the procurement is minimal. Small and marginal farmers who account for more than 86 percent of all farmers do not benefit from MSP as they do not have a marketable surplus.

As a result of government's refusal to redeem its promise of giving 50% profit over cost price, farmers are estimated to have lost nearly Rs.3 lakh crore for major crops in kharif and rabi 2017-18 – this being the difference between actual prices farmers got and what they would have got had Modi kept his word.

Agricultural Worker Wages

The BJP Government had nothing to offer to the largest economic segment in India—the agricultural workers who make up nearly 55% of those involved in agriculture. These are the poorest, most downtrodden people, with a large share of dalits and adivasis. Their key demand for land is of course never mentioned but even their immediate demand of higher wages has been completely ignored by the Modi regime. The situation of agricultural wages is shocking, although landed lobbies keep lamenting about "high" wages. Recent studies have shown that after some rise between 2007-08 to 2014-15, rural wages have been stagnating under Modi rule. This is causing immense misery and hardship – but the government has no word of solace, leave aside any relief, to offer.

Growth in Real agricultural Wages (2014-15 to 2016-17)

		% change
Ploughing	M	1.7
Sowing/Transplanting/Weeding	M	3.1
	F	5.0
Harvesting/Winnowing/Threshing	M	0.5
	F	0.3
Unskilled labour	M	2.0
	F	4.7

Source: Review of Agrarian Studies, Jul-Dec 2017

Rural Job Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

While the BJP manifesto had claimed that it will link MGNREGS to agriculture, nothing has happened to strengthen and expand it. No increase in MGNREGS allocation has been made even in the latest budget. Rs.55,000 crore allotted is exactly the same as the revised estimate for 2017-18. Even by conservative estimates, more than Rs.80,000 crores will be required for the proper implementation of the programme. This callous attitude is despite the fact that over 56% of wages were pending and more than 15% of wage seekers did not find any work in 2016-17. As of 25th January, 2018 eight states had a net negative balance of Rs.1,555 crore in MGNREGS funds, i.e., they spent more than they received from Centre. In 2016-17 of the 89 million job seekers only 76 million found work. States have been witnessing a drastic cut in allocations and the average number of workdays under MGNREGS has been well below what is stipulated in the Act. Without addressing these issues their last budget talks of creating employment of 321 crore person days without any concrete proposals. Over 1.62 crore job cardholders under MGNREGA were struck off from the register in 2017-18. The average days of work provided per household was 29 in Assam, 36 in Bihar, 41 in Jharkhand and 40 in Odisha. In 2017-18, the scheme provided 45 days of work on an average to a rural household, compared to 49 days in 2015-16, when several States were under severe drought. Wages under MGNREGS continue to be lower than minimum wages for agricultural labourers in as many as 27 states and Union Territories.

Funds: Budget, Bank Credit & Insurance

Despite faltering growth and a dire prediction in the Economic Survey that climate change could reduce annual agricultural incomes in the range of 15-18% on an average and in unirrigated areas up to 20-25%, the allocation for agriculture in the budget is only 2.36% of the total. Allocation to the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana saw a drastic cut from Rs.4,500 crore in the Revised Estimates to just Rs.3,600 crores in the latest Budget registering a decline to the lowest since its implementation. It is notable that the outlay for Price Stabilisation Fund which was a much hyped programme aiming to address problems arising out of

volatility in prices has come down from Rs.6,900 crores in 2016-17 to merely Rs.1,500 crores in 2018-19. This will affect farmers growing commercial crops like rubber, tea, coffee, spices etc.

Only about 41% of the agricultural credit is given to small and marginal farmers (represented by loans of up to Rs. 2 lakh), while about 14% carrying a loan size of more than Rs. 1 crore goes to institutions and corporates engaged in agricultural production. Indebtedness is growing and is the major reason for farm suicides. The much-hyped Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana saw the transfer of over Rs.21,000 crore in premium to big insurance companies and a CAG report claims that they made a profit of over Rs.10,000 crore even as farmers reeled under lethal crop losses.

Irrigation

All talk of *Har Khet Ko Pani* under the “Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana” also have come a cropper with several states reeling under recurring droughts. A recent analysis shows that this programme has mostly been confined to just five states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu which accounted for 78% of the irrigated area expansion during 2017-18. Bihar was able to add just 86 hectares. Failure of the poor states to finance 40% of the cost which is to borne by them is a major reason.

All measures of the Narendra Modi-led BJP government are aimed at aiding corporate profiteering at the expense of the peasantry. The high hopes generated by their promises have been belied and there is a strong imprint in the minds of the peasantry-*BJP-Modi Kisan-Virodhi*-which the BJP is unable to wipe away. Massive struggles of the peasantry and the toiling masses will create an atmosphere for the defeat of the most anti-farmer Government in independent India.

Workers Pay for Ease of Business

If there is one thing the BJP cannot be blamed of, it is for not fulfilling promises to workers. That's because they had no promises to offer, back in 2014 when fighting the general elections. There was mention of labour reforms to "create a conducive environment for investors". Then there were a couple of paras and four bullet points on "Labour – The Pillar of Our Growth" which said that industry owners and labour were one big family etc. and promised identity cards to informal sector workers, besides again saying that "outdated" labour laws will be changed. That's it.

But this silence has turned out to be deceptive. The Modi govt. has unleashed a brutal onslaught on the working class of the country. Real wages are dipping, regular jobs are being replaced by out-contracted jobs even in the public sector, labour laws are being dismantled, public sector is being privatized, women's employment is at an all-time low, and there is deliberate marginalization of the workers from the national agenda. The common thread running through these different aspects is that exploitation of labour has been made easier for both domestic and foreign capital, a vast army of unemployed is being maintained to keep wages depressed and as a constant threat for workers that they can be replaced any time by others, and any attempt to organize or take legal recourse are being blocked. Modi government has lived up to its promise of delivering an investor friendly environment.

Here is a look at some of the features of Modi government's assault on the workers of India.

1. Low Wages: Despite numerous representations, protests and two massive all India general strikes by 10 central trade unions, the

government has refused to concede the demand of a national minimum wage of Rs. 1800 per month, even though the 7th Pay Commission appointed by the government recommended this amount ostensibly based on the formula adopted by the Indian Labour Conference and the Supreme Court guidelines. Minimum wage for vast majority of workers remain at Rs 6000 – Rs 1000 a month. Wage growth is stagnating – there is an effective freeze on wages.

2. Contract Workers: Public sector enterprises now have over a third of their workforce on contract. In various industrial sectors like steel, coal, oil & gas, telecom, port & dock, garments & textiles, plantation, media, etc., the private sector is reported to be employing anything between 40-60% contract employees. Wages of contract workers are usually lower by 30-50% and they do not get many statutory benefits, besides being at the mercy of the employers for their jobs. Despite the statutory provision reiterated by the Supreme Court in 2016, on payment of equal wages and benefits to contract workers doing the same job as the permanent workers, the government has not taken any measure to ensure its implementation.

3. Unorganised Workers: 93% of workers in the country are unorganised workers having informal work relations as in construction, road transport, hotels, home based workers etc. Their wages are pathetic; working conditions onerous and living conditions very bad. Large numbers of them are migrants forced to leave their villages because of the growing crisis in agriculture and lack of work. The few benefits they have achieved through their struggles are also not implemented. For example, recently the Supreme Court noted that cess worth over Rs.37,400 crore was collected by state govts. from the construction companies for providing welfare benefits including better housing, schools for children etc under the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Fund Act but only Rs.9000 crore was spent; most of it was on administrative and other expenses.

4. Scheme Workers: Nearly 1 crore people (mostly women) are employed in various schemes of the government of India related to basic services to the poor, like education, health, nutrition etc but the government continues to refuse to treat them as workers. They are paid a pittance as 'honorarium' or 'incentive'; they have no social security.

Despite the promise to 'enhance the remuneration of anganwadi worker' in the BJP manifesto, their remuneration has not been increased by the government of India since 2011. Instead, the BJP government has cut down the share of the Government of India and is set to dismantle these schemes by privatising them.

5. Unemployed Army: Meanwhile job creation is in doldrums due to policy failures of the Modi government. Despite all the hype on 'Make in India', 'Skill India', 'Start Up India' etc, unemployment among graduates and above is reported to be 28%. In fact, widespread job losses were being intermittently reported from many sectors including steel, construction, telecom, leather, agri-processing etc. Joblessness is raging at around 7% according to CMIE while the government's Labour Bureau says that 37% of workers are under-employed. Women's employment has shrunk to an all time low of about 27%.

6. Privatisation: The government has sold off Rs. 1.96 lakh crore worth of public sector assets to private industrialists, which is more than what the UPA did in a decade. Even units in strategic sectors like defence, railways etc are being opened up for domestic and foreign participation. For the workers this means job losses, changed service conditions, abandoning of reservations while for the country it means loss of self-reliance, and even compromising of sovereignty.

7. Labour Law Amendments: What the Modi govt. has pushed enthusiastically is the so called labour reforms. This is being done at two levels: central and state, since labour is on the Concurrent List. At the central level, the government has started the process of merging 44 central labour laws into 4 Labour Codes that give freedom to hire and fire workers, to employers. The main thrust of these amendments is to drive large sections of workers out of the purview of statutory protection and their hard won rights. The BJP government which introduced Fixed Term Employment initially in the garment and textile sector extended it to all sectors. Permanent employment will gradually become a thing of the past. Workers will be under constant threat of losing their jobs. The much hyped Code on Social Security does not provide for government funding for social security. The real intent is to turn over workers' money to the stock market.

8. Labour Laws in States: The BJP state government in Rajasthan amended several labour laws including the Industrial Disputes Act, Factories Act, Contract Labour Act etc to give a free hand to the employers to 'hire and fire' workers and making it difficult for workers to form trade unions, collectively bargain and go on strike on their demands. Several other state governments under the BJP as well as Congress followed. The BJP government at the centre issued a letter directing the state governments to follow the Rajasthan government in amending labour laws.

9. Labour Depts.: Besides diluting labour laws, the very mechanism for implementing these laws – the labour departments and labour courts – are being gutted so that employers are free of any monitoring. Inspections are now to be done at random through a digitized system.

The working class and their trade unions are in continuous struggle against these attacks on their lives and livelihoods. There were two massive all India general strikes under the joint trade union movement – in 2015 and 2016- since the BJP government came to power. Lakhs of workers participated in the unprecedented three days joint trade union 'mahapadav' in 2017. In addition there were huge sectoral struggles including strikes – in sectors like coal, steel, plantation, construction, road transport, port and dock, telecom, banks, government employees, garments and textiles, scheme workers etc. These struggles could, to some extent, slow down the speed with which the government wanted to go ahead with its 'labour law reform' agenda.

In the coming months, the country is bound to see a growing wave of industrial protests against the Modi government as anger and discontent mounts among workers. As a first step, workers and farmers have announced a historic joint rally in the Capital on 5th September 2018 to challenge the government. These efforts need to be supported and strengthened by extending all the necessary help and support.

Manusmriti is their Constitution

The BJP's commitment to Manusmriti based Hindutva in place of the Constitution of India is reflected in its approach to dalits. Of course this seems to be in conflict with the other goal of the RSS, to build a pan-Hindu unity across castes. But what the four years of the Modi Government have shown is that this so called unity has to be within the framework of *varnashrama* system. Steps for dismantling and dilution of constitutional and legal provisions against untouchability and equal rights for dalits have been manifold. They have included attacks on livelihood, person, self-respect, education, employment.

Education

Barely a year into office, the Modi Government which claimed to address the needs of “aspirational India” showed its cruel contempt for aspirational Dalit youth. Symbolic of its approach was the ‘institutional murder’ of Rohith Vemula, a brilliant student of the Hyderabad Central University in January, 2015. Vemula was targeted for his vocal opposition to the core beliefs of the Sangh Parivar. Subsequently, the Government saw to it that Rohith was posthumously robbed of even his dalit identity and declared that he was not in fact an SC but an OBC.

In its election manifesto of 2014, the BJP had promised that SC/ST/OBC education would be a priority and that members of these communities would be lifted out of poverty and transformed into entrepreneurs. The Central Government went on to do just the opposite: the SC Sub-plan was subjected to huge cuts and is virtually scrapped.

As compared to the 16.6% requirement, the allocation to SCP under Modi's rule was 8.79% of the budget in 2014-15, 6.63% in 2015-16, 7.06% in 2016-17, 8.91% in 2017-18 and 6.55% in 2018-19. The average

allocation in the period between 2014 and 2018 is 7.59% — less than half of the 16.6% target set by the government. This translates into thousands of crores of rupees.

Dalit students in institutions of higher learning face humiliation and being ‘failed’ in internal examinations by delayed or non-payment of their scholarship money forcing lakhs to abandon their educational careers. To cite a few examples, against an outstanding requirement of Rs.8000 crore, the Central Government budgeted Rs. 3,347.9 crore for scholarships in 2017-18 and has reduced it to Rs. 3,000 crores for 2018-19 (despite the number of students having increased considerably). On February 2,2018, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment told Parliament that ‘the pending scholarship claims from states for SC students amounted to Rs. 6,824.5 crore. The states of Tamil Nadu, UP and Maharashtra each owed over Rs.1,400 crore. How many dalit students deprived of education does this translate into?

New methods of manipulation are being used to deny dalits their right to teach in Government Universities and colleges. The new UGC rules of recruitment by Department, for example, will see their numbers drastically reduced. As it is, their numbers are only 7.22% of the total. With the new policy, teaching posts at BHU alone will be reduced by 59%.

Jobs

The Government has also done everything in its power to reduce dalit access to reserved seats in educational institutions and in government and public sector jobs. The relentless pursuit of privatization has virtually put an end to the constitutional provision of reservations. The Modi Government has refused to even discuss the issue of extension of reservations to the private sector leave alone bring a legislation for it. There continues to be a huge backlog in reserved quotas in government and public sector institutions.

At the same time traditional forms of income generation are under attack. In the name of “gauraksha” dalits are now deprived of their traditional work by the restrictions on cattle trade and slaughter and closure of slaughter houses. This has also affected the tannery and leather industry

in which lakhs of dalits work. The ban on sale of buffalo meat also meant the loss of a cheaper source of protein for many dalit families. This is a vital issue for a community that experiences 54% malnutrition and sees 84 of every 1000 of its children die before the age of 5. 'Gauraksha' is also the source of brutality like what has witnessed in Una on 11 July 2016, when 5 young dalits who had been asked to skin a dead animal were subjected to violence and humiliation.

As far as promotion of dalit entrepreneurship is concerned the former UGC Chairperson Prof Sukhdeo Thorat has exposed the Government's duplicity of paying fees of crores of rupees to an MNC consultancy firm for implementation of the special scheme called the SC/ST Hub. The actual allocation for the Hub is just Rs.490 crore. Under its procurement policy, the MSME ministry was required to make 4% of its purchases from enterprises run by SC/STs which number around 59.7 lakh. It has managed a dismal 0.39%.

Land

Dalits have been historically denied and deprived of land rights and that burden is reflected even today with dalits being the largest social community who are landless, a national average of around 58%. Consequently a high percentage of dalits are dependent on manual labor. However the demand for land for dalits has been ignored by the Modi Government. There has not been a single programme in these four years to distribute land to dalits either through a central initiative or in the BJP ruled governments in the states.

Atrocities against Dalits and Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA)

According to the NCRB data released in November 2017, atrocities or crime against scheduled castes increased by 5.5% in 2016 over 2015. A total of 40,801 cases of crime against scheduled castes were registered in the country in 2016 compared to 38,670 cases in 2015. The highest number of crimes are in the BJP ruled states.

With 10,426 incidents, Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of cases of atrocities against scheduled castes accounting for 25.6% followed by Bihar with 14% and Rajasthan with 12.6% in 2016. The

rate of crime against scheduled castes in Madhya Pradesh was 43.4 per lakh population followed by 42 in Rajasthan, 36.7 in Goa, 34.4 in Bihar and 32.5 in Gujarat. The all-India crime rate against scheduled castes was 20.6 last year. Conviction rates are low - just one per cent of cases registered if it is calculated on the basis of the total numbers, over half of which remain pending in courts for years.

It is in this background that the Supreme Court gave its retrograde judgement diluting the provisions of the POA. This could happen because the Central Government did not argue against the proposal in court. When there were countrywide protests on April 2, 2018 and a spontaneous bandh in which thousands of young dalits participated, the BJP governments used the armed might of the police to suppress the protests. There was police and upper caste gang firing in several BJP ruled states leading to the deaths of nine protestors. Four of those who died in Madhya Pradesh were killed by BJP goons.

No Vikas for Tribals

Despite the slogans of *Achche Din* and “*Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*” the Adivasi communities have faced a massive assault under the four year misrule of the Modi government. The government has, on the one hand rolled out benefits for big business while on the other, it has deprived adivasis of funds. It has also diluted various existing laws, like the Forest Rights Act and Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act. (PESA) snatching away whatever benefits adivasis could derive from them. The Tribal Sub-plan has been shelved and allocations for adivasis are at an all-time low. It needs to be remembered that 45% of adivasis in rural areas and 24% in urban areas live below the poverty line. Hence their need for support from government funds was and remains the most.

The BJP had promised to bridge the development deficit between Adivasis and rest of the population by “creating an enabling ecosystem of equal opportunity” by furthering economic justice and political empowerment as per the Constitution. But the Adivasi experiences of past four years have been overall disappointing, disempowering and disillusioned.

A National Tribal Advisory Council with the Prime Minister as its Chairman was constituted in 2015 that seriously undermines the constitutional status of existing Tribal Advisory Councils. Likewise, there are public announcements about the National Tribal Development policy but no consultations or initiations have been done till now.

Ease of Business: Forest, Land, Displacement

Last year, the Prime Minister made an ambitious announcement that all individual and collective claims under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) will

be settled in two months. But in reality, only 20-25% claims have been settled till now. More than half of the claims made under the FRA have been rejected.

The FRA was enacted in 2006 to grant adivasis and traditional forest dwellers right to live out of the forestlands, denied to them in the past because of archaic colonial laws. However, since the times of its notification in 2008, successive governments and corporates that want to tap into the enormous natural resources of forests have seen the Act as an obstruction in their path of privately-funded projects.

Adivasi communities are being systematically denied their traditional rights by using legal loopholes. In many cases in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, the governments are watering down the provisions to divert forestland for mining purposes. This conspiracy is particularly prevalent in BJP ruled states. For example, in Latehar district of Jharkhand, fake Gram Sabha consent was submitted for getting permission for a coal mine. In Chhattisgarh, officials did not recognize FRA claims for 12 villages because an iron ore mine is proposed in that area. In Chhattisgarh's Sarguja district, the government cancelled Community Forest Rights (CFR) because the Adani group – a close crony of PM Modi - had plans to set up a mining project. In this way, thousands of CFRs have been denied to favour mining activity in the forested regions.

While legally, the consent of Gram Sabha is a must when it comes to diversion of forestland for industrial projects, the government has made repeated attempts to subvert the role of this body. The right to consent from villagers for mining projects has been removed. The Centre had in 2015 approved diversion of 35,867 hectares of forestland for infrastructure projects. Projects affecting tribal areas worth Rs.5 lakh crore were cleared without permission of Gram Sabhas. Proposals of the TSR Subramanian committee for fast track clearance of projects in tribal areas which were shelved earlier after objections from the Parliamentary Committee, are again being pursued aggressively which will displace lakhs of adivasis. This is despite the fact that Modi's own Ministry of Tribal Affairs has insisted that consent of Gram Sabha is mandatory in cases of diversion of land.

Unfair Laws

A slew of unjust and exploitative laws have been put in place to snatch away forests and lands that tribals live in or use. The purpose is to hand these lands to corporates for extractive industries.

- In August 2016, the **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016** has come into force. This Act provides for setting up Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) at both central and state level to ensure expeditious and transparent utilization of amounts realised in lieu of forestland diverted for non-forest purpose. It allows diversion of forest land provided the new user will pay a stipulated amount that will be used to grow new forests. Apart from the fact that most of the funds remain unspent, the major question still remains that from where will the land to plant new trees come from?

The Campa Bill will in effect dilute recognition of tribal communities' rights, including rights to resources, as gram sabhas will no longer have the power to decide on such matters. Instead those powers will be handed over to the forest department, which may form its handpicked panel to do the job. Given the fact that the forest department always had a conflict with the rights of the gram sabha, one can easily foresee what will happen.

- Passing of **Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act** is a deathblow to the Adivasi areas. The recommendation of 100% equivalent of royalty to be put in a fund for tribal development has been ignored. The new law talks of just 30% amount being put in the fund.
- After failing to dilute the existing **land acquisition law**, BJP government is diluting it through State govts. In Jharkhand, the BJP government has brought changes in the Santhal Pargana Tenancy and Chotanagpur Tenancy Acts. These changes remove all protection that the tribal lands had regarding transfer of lands to corporates. In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP-BJP coalition government is forcibly acquiring land for Polavaram multi-purpose project destroying lives and livelihoods of nearly 80,000 adivasis.
- There were many other small but significant changes in diverse laws

that will damage the interests of adivasis. These include delinking environmental and forest clearances to allow work on linear projects, such as highways; allowing mid-sized polluting industries to operate within five km of national parks and sanctuaries instead of 10-km limit; attempts to downgrade the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to an administrative body and exemption from public hearings for certain output range coalmines.

Deep Cuts in Tribal Sub-plan

The Modi Govt has shelved the Tribal Sub-Plan (as also the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan) after Plan and Non-Plan distinction was removed. Instead, allocation is done only under the tribal welfare head. Adivasis have been deprived of vast resources because of deficient allocation consistently by the Modi government While the Tribal Sub-plan has to be allocated 8.6% of total budgetary allocation for central schemes and centrally supported schemes for direct benefit and development of adivasis, the Modi government has allocated less than half in the past four years. The total loss to adivasis is about Rs.1.14 lakh crore. In the same period, Rs.15 lakh crore worth of concessions were given to corporate houses and the rich, as per budget information on revenue foregone.

	TSP Allocation as share of CS+CSS
2014-15	5.63%
2015-16	4.30%
2016-17	4.36%
2017-18	5.43%
2018-19	4.53%
Average for 5 years	6.77%

Skill Development and Vocational Training

An important contribution to real economic upliftment of adivasis could be done by imparting relevant skills and vocational training so that income generation can be facilitated. But the Modi government has

slashed funds for this by more than 50% in the course of its last four budgets.

Year	Funds for skill development and vocational training(in Rs. Lakhs)
2014-15	37,296
2015-16	27,946
2016-17	20,229
2017-18	16,458

Hindutva Campaign

Besides depriving Adivasi communities of funds and resources, the Modi government and the Sangh parivar outfits have made continuous attempts to bring the Adivasi community into the fold of its own version of Hindutva. Seeds of discord are being sown against adivasis of other faiths, mainly Christians. Campaigns like Ghar Wapsi are being carried out and laws against conversion are being brought in. In the name of cow protection, beef eating, which is common among many Adivasi communities is being targeted. This attack on food habits of the people is depriving these communities of essential nutrition while spreading poisonous hatred against each other.

Repression in the name of Anti-Maoist operations

Adivasis in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and elsewhere are facing immense State repression in the name of anti-Maoists/Naxal operations. Security forces indulge in typical atrocities, including alleged rape and murder, in adivasi communities living in villages categorized as Maoist infested. Searches and raids to supposedly find the Maoists or their supporters are carried out in brutal fashion terrorizing the local population. Reports on incidents of rape of tribal women are being suppressed in the name of security operations.

In sum, despite Modi and his Sangh parivar's claims of being friends and well wishers of adivasis, the past four years have revealed an arrogant hostility towards them. All the promises of bringing "vikas" to tribal communities have fallen flat and are now revealed for what they really were: false promises to win votes.

Women: Unsafe and Economically Insecure

It is now four years since PM Modi came to power. His road to the PMO was paved with numerous promises. Promises which are probably lying somewhere in the basement of the BJP's office. Many of these forgotten promises were made to the women of the country.

BJP's manifesto for the 2014 general elections had a section pompously titled "Women - the Nation Builder" which said that BJP understands the role women play in the development of society and nation, and that it is committed to the cause of women's empowerment, promising schemes for improvement in women's health, education, etc. They also assured that 33% reservation for women would be made a reality.

But neither in the manifesto nor in the four years of Modi rule have we seen any concrete plan of action to reach these goals. On the contrary, women's condition has gone from bad to worse.

Reservation for Women

BJP had said in its 2014 manifesto that they were "committed to 33% reservation in parliamentary and state assemblies through a constitutional amendment". Four years have passed but there has not been a single step taken by the party or its government to this end. There are just 9 women among the 75 ministers of the present government. Earlier too they had often proclaimed support for 33% but never actually did anything. In the remaining one year of their term, the BJP must bring in the Bill and get it passed as it has the requisite numbers.

Women's Employment

Employment is one of the core issues when it comes to women

empowerment. Women participation in the workforce has always been low and continues to be so. According to the 5th Employment-Unemployment Survey done by the Labour Bureau, share of working women came down from 25.8% in 2013-14 to 23.7% for 2015-16. This is one of the lowest women's work participation rates in the world. Meanwhile, joblessness among women increased from 7.7% to 8.7% in the same period. So, the Modi government has failed to stop or reverse the trend of falling women's participation in work that started in the early 1990s. This is not really surprising because under Modi, there has been no attempt to boost employment in general, and nothing for women specifically.

In fact, the Modi government has continued to treat women workers and employees as 'voluntary' workers deprived of job security, minimum wages and social security. There are nearly one crore scheme workers, mostly women, employed in various government schemes like ICDS, NHM, Mid-Day Meal scheme, etc. that continue to provide essential health, education and other care services who suffer from this discrimination. Although the BJP Manifesto had specifically promised to increase anganwadi wages, in the first full budget, Modi government allocations for the scheme were slashed from Rs.18,108 crores (2014-15) to Rs.8,400 crores (2015-16). Even by 2017-18 the allocation had been raised to only Rs.16,334.88 crore, which is less than what it was four years ago.

Nutrition

Women's health and nutritional condition is another area on which Modi sarkar's work has been minimal. In the age group of 15-49 years, 53.1% non-pregnant women and 50.3% pregnant women suffer from anaemia according to the 4th National Family Health Survey (2015-16). Only 21% pregnant women had received full antenatal care, which consists of minimum 4 antenatal visits, at least 1 tetanus toxoid injection and iron and folic acid taken for 100 or more days. Only 36.4% pregnant women received financial assistance under Janani Suraksha Yojana.

On 31st December 2016 PM Modi claimed that he was launching a scheme for the pregnant and lactating women of the country, when it

was just a pan-India expansion of the already existing Maternity Benefits Scheme. While expanding the scheme they limited its scope. Earlier the scheme's benefits were given for first two live births whereas now the cabinet has limited this to only one. The scheme has also been linked with Aadhaar card which further excludes thousands of women from attaining the benefits of the scheme.

NFHS 4 shows that 41.9% women in the age group of 15-19 years are underweight, showing the extremely precarious state of health. This is mainly because of lack of adequate nutrition. But the government has refused to address this widespread problem and even cut funds for schemes meant to provide nutrition for women in this age group.

Violence

There has been an increase in crimes against women during the Modi regime, NCRB data shows. Shockingly, there has been a decline in conviction rates in these years showing that the administrative push to punish the guilty has been lacking. In 2013, the last year before Modi took over, there were 3,37,922 recorded crimes against women which is about 52.2 per lakh population. This increased to 3,38,954 in 2016, that is, 55.2 per lakh in 2016. Cases of rape has gone up from 33,707 in the year 2013 from 38,947 in the year 2016.

The rate of conviction has however dipped from 21.3% in 2013 to 18.9% in 2016 mainly indicating laxity in prosecution. In fact, BJP has gone along with court engineered dilution of Sec. 498 A of IPC which provides for punishment to husbands or relatives for cruelty against wives. This is understandable because the BJP-RSS ideology as espoused by its leaders, ministers and elected representatives often blame women for violence they suffer rather than the perpetrators. There are many recorded cases of BJP leaders or supporters saying that women should obey their dress code or not go out in the night if they want to escape crimes. With this attitude, it is not surprising that the prosecution and punishment of guilty has taken a back seat.

In the year 2016 the highest rate of rape incidents were reported in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, all BJP governed states. Recent reports indicate that in the first 10 months of Yogi

Adityanath's rule in UP, crime against women have reached a new high.

Hindutva view of women

The callous attitude of the BJP towards the condition of women in the country is not at all surprising if one traces their ideological roots. The BJP is the offspring of the RSS whose ideology doesn't allow women to be considered equal or even humans. They do not want women to have equal rights or even an independent identity; in the *Hindu nation* women are needed only to fulfil their duties set by patriarchy. This is the root cause of complete disregard towards women's burning problems including jobs, security, health and political representation.

How the BJP's Hindu fundamentalist thinking colours their approach even towards rape and violence against women was chillingly revealed in the recent abduction, rape and murder of an eight year old girl, in Kathua, Jammu. The accused were all Hindus and, it has now been revealed, they committed this atrocity because they wanted to terrorise the Muslim Bakerwal community (to which the girl belonged) and make them flee the village. Despite the revelations, the local Hindutva groups and BJP continued to support the accused, and took out a march in their defence. A BJP MLA who participated in the march is now a cabinet member in the PDP-BJP govt. of Jammu and Kashmir.

Now that 2019 is near one should not be surprised if Mr. Modi bring back the old promises from the dingy basement of the BJP office. Of course they will be all dusted and packed in the new wrappers.

Four Years of Modi Govt Misrule

Why it has to end

Promises Broken, People Betrayed



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