

# Budget Day: A black day for Dalits

*The allocation of state resources reflects not just the priority areas for the state but is illustrative of how firmly the exercise is rooted in the principles of social justice. This analysis of the 2008 Budget by a national collective of Dalit groups shows how the union government has faltered in honouring its commitments made under the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan under which it was promised that 16.7 per cent of the total planned budget would be allocated for Dalits. A report:*

**D**ESPITE several promises, the Indian state has again betrayed Dalits this year. The towering claims of achieving growth with inclusion have faltered again. The total budget allocation under the plan outlay for the year 2008-2009 is Rs 2,43,385.5 crore and under the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan the Government of India is liable to allocate Rs 40,090.90 crore (16.7 per cent of the total planned budget) exclusively for Dalits.

(During the sixth five-year plan, the Government of India introduced a strategy called the Special Component Plan (SCP), later renamed the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP), for the socio-economic welfare of Dalits. This was made mandatory for all state government and central government departments. The plan provides direct benefits to the scheduled castes (SCs) – individuals, families and hamlets: The annual budget plans of states or union territories (UTs) must earmark plan allocations according to the proportion of the SC population i.e. 16.7 per cent of the total population of the country/a particular state.)

Instead, this year it has allocated just Rs 11,715.07 crore (29 per cent of the total due under the SCSP) for the welfare of SCs, which means that the sched-

uled castes have once again been deprived, this time by Rs 29,801.89 crore. Thus, in this year's budget, 71 per cent of the amount SCs were/are due to receive under the SCSP have been diverted. This exposes the stark 'untouchability' that is being practised by the finance ministry and which runs through the whole union budget.

With the money denied them, which amounts to a total of Rs 29,801 crore, one crore Dalit (SC) children could have had access to education; in addition, one lakh health centres could have been set up in rural areas, two lakh small-scale industries could have been set up and five lakh Dalit (SC) families could have been provided with five acres of land each – in one year alone. Had the Special Component Plan been implemented over the last 27 years, India would have been totally free of poverty today!

The allocation figures are a mute witness to the history of denial and exclusion. And it is not only the past three years; this is a trend that has been ob-

served for the last 27 years. Ever since the inception of the SCSP (formerly the SCP) in 1979-80, both the union and the state governments have been

sources among Dalits has resulted in an infant mortality rate among Dalits that is as high as 83 per 1,000 (as opposed to 61 per 1,000 in the rest of the population) and a child mortality rate of 39 per 1,000 (as opposed to 22 per 1,000 in the rest of the population). Moreover, 56 per cent of Dalit women suffer from anaemia; and while the literacy rate at an all-India level is 65 per cent, the literacy rate among Dalits is only 55 per cent.

The average annual country-wide expenditure by government for Dalits was Rs 285, much lower than the sum allocated for the non-SC population, which is Rs 393 annually. Forty-five per cent of the rural poor are Dalits and as compared to non-Dalits the incidence of aggregate poverty was 70 per cent higher among Dalits. Despite these stark facts, the government has not been allocating the required amounts for the development of Dalits.

Nineteen departments/ministries have allocated budgetary amounts under the SCSP of which 13 have only negligible allocations. Hence allocations under the SCSP have been relegated to a

mere formality. Only six ministries/departments, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Department of School Education and Literacy, the Department of Higher Education, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and the Department of

Women and Child Development have actually allocated considerable amounts.

Other ministries/departments – prominently, the departments of Road Transport and Highways, Science and Technology, Land Resources, Rural Development, Youth and Sports, Agriculture Research, Commerce, Urban Development and Water Resources – have negligible or 'zero' allocations. This clearly shows

Total Budget	Total Plan Outlay	Amount Due to SCs	Amount Allocated in 2008-09	Amount Denied	% of Amount Denied
7,50,883.53	2,43,385.5	40,090.90	11,715.07	29,801.89	71

History of exclusion of SCs in union budgets (in crore rupees)

Year	Total Plan Outlay	Amount Due	Amount Allocated	Amount Denied	% of Amount Denied
2005-06 (RE)	1,43,791.31	24,013.15	6,650.89	17,362.26	72.30
2006-07 (RE)	1,72,730	28,845.91	8,344.27	20,501.64	71.07
2007-08 (RE)	2,07,524	35,274.89	11,688.11	23,586.78	66.87

making a mockery of the plan's guidelines and have blatantly violated its directions.

The government's own reports expose the wide disparity and uneven growth among Dalits as compared to the general population. The Census report of 2001, the National Family Health Survey and other surveys reveal that the denial of access to material and other re-

**Extent of exclusion and denial to SCs by various ministries (in crore rupees)**

No.	Ministries/Departments	Total Plan	Due as per	Due under	Amount	% Denied/Excess
		Budget	SCSP 16.7%	SCSP	Denied/ Excess	
		2008-09	2008-09	2008-09	2008-09	2008-09
		BE	BE	BE	BE	BE
1	Ministry of Civil Aviation	190	31.70	0	31.73	100
2	Ministry of Labour & Employment	771.50	128.80	0.60	128.24	99.53
3	Dept of Science & Technology	1,530	255.50	3.00	252.51	98.83
4	Dept of Biotechnology	900	150.30	2.01	148.29	98.66
5	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment	2,400	400.80	1,863.08	-1,462.28	-364.84
6	Agriculture & Cooperation	10,093.30	1,685.60	250.45	1,435.14	85.14
7	Dept of Telecommunications	375	62.60	0.03	62.60	99.95
8	Dept of Information Technology	1,680	280.60	22.51	258.05	91.98
9	Ministry of Culture	600	100.20	3.62	96.58	96.39
10	Dept of Health & Family Welfare	15,580	2,601.90	1,880.72	721.14	27.72
11	Dept of School Education & Literacy	26,800	4,475.60	4,246.77	228.83	5.11
12	Dept of Higher Education	7,593.50	1,268.10	1,048.77	219.34	17.30
13	Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises	1,794	299.60	408.11	-108.51	-36.22
14	Ministry of Panchayati Raj	4,780	798.26	20.10	778.16	97.48
15	Dept of Rural Development	31,500	5,260.50	720.25	4,540.25	86.31
16	Ministry of Textiles	2,500	417.50	89.61	327.89	78.54
17	Ministry of Women & Child Development	7,200	1,202.40	1,139.67	62.73	5.22
18	Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports	890	148.63	3.90	144.73	97.38
19	Chandigarh	309.46	52.61	11.28	41.33	78.56
20	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	88.97	1.78	0.23	1.55	87.24
21	Daman & Diu	84.79	23.12	0.36	22.76	98.45
22	Agriculture Research & Education	1,760	293.92	0	293.92	100
23	Animal Husbandry & Dairying	1,000	167.00	0		
24	Atomic Energy	3,550	592.85	0	592.85	100
25	Chemicals & Petrochemicals	295	49.27	0	49.27	100
26	Fertilisers	200	33.40	0	33.40	100
27	Coal	300	50.10	0	50.10	100
28	Commerce	1,560	260.52	0	260.52	100
29	Industrial Policy & Promotion	600	100.20	0	100.20	100
30	Posts	600	100.20	0	100.20	100
31	Consumer Affairs	209	34.90	0	34.90	100
32	Food & Public Distribution	95	15.87	0	15.87	100
33	Corporate Affairs	33	5.51	0	5.51	100
34	Development of North-eastern region	705	117.74	0	117.74	100
35	Earth Sciences	750	125.25	0	125.25	100
36	Environment & Forests	1,500	250.50	0	250.50	100
37	External Affairs	579	96.69	0	96.69	100
38	Economic Affairs	2,766	461.92	0	461.92	100
39	Expenditure	10	1.67	0	1.67	100
40	Food Processing Industries	290	48.43	0	48.43	100
41	(AYUSH)	534	89.18	0	89.18	100
42	Health Research	420	70.14	0	70.14	100
43	Heavy Industry	350	58.45	0	58.45	100
44	Public Enterprises	10	1.67	0	1.67	100
45	Home Affairs	800	133.60	0	133.60	100
46	Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation	850	141.95	0	141.95	100

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47	Information & Broadcasting	700	116.90	0	116.90	100
48	Law & Justice	260	43.42	0	43.42	100
49	Mines	194	32.40	0	32.40	100
50	Minority Affairs	1,000	167.00	0	167.00	100
51	New & Renewable Energy	617	103.04	0	103.04	100
52	Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions	138	23.05	0	23.05	100
53	Petroleum & Natural Gas	25	4.18	0	4.18	100
54	Planning	602	100.53	0	100.53	100
55	Power	6,000	1,002.00	0	1,002.00	100
56	Land Resources	2,400	400.80	0	400.80	100
57	Drinking Water Supply	8,500	1,419.50	0	1,419.50	100
58	Scientific & Industrial Research	1,200	200.40	0	200.40	100
59	Shipping	590.25	98.57	0	98.57	100
60	Road Transport & Highways	15,055.82	2,514.32	0	2,514.32	100
61	Space	3,600	601.20	0	601.20	100
62	Statistics & Programme Implementation	1,709	285.40	0	285.40	100
63	Steel	34	5.68	0	5.68	100
64	Tourism	1,000	167.00	0	167.00	100
65	Urban Development	2,553.75	426.48	0	426.48	100
66	Water Resources	600	100.20	0	100.20	100
67	Railways	7,100	1,185.70	0	1,185.70	100
68	Finance	46,413.34	7,751.03	0	7,751.03	100
69	Tribal Affairs	2,121	0	0	0	
70	Central Pool of Resources for NE & Sikkim	650	108.55	0	108.55	100
71	Special Package for Bodoland Territorial Council	100	16.70	0	16.70	100
72	Puducherry	147.96	24.71	0	24.71	100
73	NCT Delhi	1,290.14	245.13	0	245.13	100
74	Andaman & Nicobar Islands*	1,092.62	0	0	0	
75	Lakshadweep*	265.10	0	0	0	
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,43,385.50</b>	<b>40,090.90</b>	<b>11,715.07</b>	<b>28,375.90</b>	<b>70.78</b>

\* Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep UTs have only Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) allocations and do not have SCSP allocations

only that the development of SCs will not be in the driving sectors of the economy.

It is a really derogative step for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to have cut down allocations for the pre and post-Matric scholarship scheme. Budgetary allocations have been reduced to Rs 731 crore, a sum lower than the previous year, which was Rs 811 crore. The Department of Biotechnology has been allocated only Rs 2.01 crore, which is even less than last year's allocation of Rs 2.5 crore. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has decreased the amount allocated for the SCSP this year – last year it was Rs 26.7 crore, this year it is Rs 20.1 crore. Similarly, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has allocated only Rs 1,139 crore for the SCSP as compared to last year's allocation of Rs 1,501 crore.

This gross denial and violation of rights and entitlements of the scheduled

castes and their exclusion from the right to development cannot continue. The UPA government should take the responsibility for this continuing exclusion of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes (STs) and women. In order to right the wrongs, we, concerned citizens, Dalit civil society bodies and other democratic forces demand from the UPA government that:

1. The union government release a white paper on the implementation of the SCSP (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) since its initiation.

2. The union budget 2008-09 must allocate a proportion of 16.7 per cent of the total budget, plan and non-plan, for the SCSP and 8.2 per cent for the TSP. This must be reflected in all ministries, with clearly conceived schemes for individual and family benefits for SCs and STs.

3. There should be a separate ministry for the development of SCs – a 'Ministry of

Progression of Scheduled Castes' – both at the centre as well as in states/UTs, for the welfare and development of SCs. The ministries should have the necessary expertise drawn primarily from SCs and STs, persons who will advise the 75 ministries/departments on innovating inclusive programmes.

4. The unspent provisions, if any, in any sector should not lapse but automatically be credited to a revolving fund.

5. Women contribute equally in all economic spheres. Budgetary allocations therefore, in proportion to the population of women in all areas, must be made in a special way. Special focus must be placed on entrepreneurship, health, education, skill development, land and resource management and social security of women. ■

(National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, New Delhi; [www.ncdhr.org.in](http://www.ncdhr.org.in).)