



SCP in Tamil Nadu - Lopsided Growth and Development...

John Kumar*

Planning process, especially at the Union level, has undergone drastic changes, since the era of structural adjustment programmes. Forced by the political and economic compulsions of neo-liberal policies, governance process in the country has tried to attune itself, to the vagaries of Globalisation, Liberalisation and Privatisation, largely to the detriment of social sectors. Despite the challenges raised from different quarters, including the media, about the plight of the people at the margins vis-à-vis the growth prospects, the so-called claims of 'trickle down' (of fringe benefits) is cited as the possible way-out.

But those claims have not been proved, either through the overall development and growth process or through the policy measures for delivering goods and services to the economically weaker sections. On the other hand, ensuring constancy of growth of the market-led economy too has been very difficult in the context of the recession experienced by the countries around the world.

The broad, sloganeering goals of the recent Five Year Plans of Union Govt., viz., **Inclusive, Faster and Sustainable Growth** have scarcely yielded the desired results.

The brunt/burden of the market-led model of economic growth has been heavy upon the vulnerable groups of our society viz., the marginalized and minorities esp., the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Critiquing the country's economic position amidst the Asian countries, a columnist of a leading daily (The Hindu 23rd July 2013) writes, "India's GDP per

capita is pitifully low compared to that of the Asian power houses, ...and the fruits of its much-vaunted high growth in recent years are poorly distributed. ...restricting ourselves to the income criterion misses an important element when it comes to evaluating the standard of living; ... we refuse to acknowledge how important this (standard of life) is in enabling people to lead a dignified life"

The failure in addressing squarely, the needs and conditions of the marginalized groups, have forced a majority of them to live an 'undignified life'. Propelled by the shift towards lop-sided market-led growth, which increasingly continues to deny the rights and entitlement of the disadvantaged; the semi-urban and rural population (mostly the SCs and STs) get further alienated from their land, land-based agrarian engagements/activities and also the other livelihood opportunities.

And, these disadvantaged sections, who form a conspicuous majority, increasingly end up **being excluded**, because of the systemic flaws. This needs to be countered with stricter enforcement of existing acts, laws and verdicts of the Supreme Court, diligent execution of policy provisions, and focused monitoring of the policies and strategies in action; for example, the progressive policies like **Special Component Plan (SCP) for the Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub-plan for the Scheduled Tribes**. These should be ensured, progressively realized and the allocations should be utilized fully, through innovatively explored programs.

In terms of programs for the marginalized, the perspective of minimum requirement fulfillment should be replaced by that of maximum fulfillment of needs, and an attempt should be made to consciously

bridge the gap. The Post-Millennium and +15 goals and the International covenantal standards of human and social development have to be aimed at, if not as the mandate, at least as a redressal mechanism to '**right the wrong**' done to the disadvantaged sections down the history of social and economic development of this country.

In the state of Tamilnadu, more than that in many other states, the attempt for creation of '**growth-ambience**' for Foreign Direct Investment swallows and eats-up a high share of common property resources.

The euphoric empty promises by successive Govts.' radical Political Manifestos, filled with populist schemes, tend to deviate the attention of the masses and dilute their struggles and demands for social justice. The policies and guidelines, pretty much remain on paper with partial fulfillment or empty words.

The following are the illustrations explaining what's really happening in the state of Tamilnadu with regard to implementation of Special Component Plan (SCP) for the Scheduled Castes. Though this radical and strategic development policy came into existence almost 3 decades ago, it has been kept in hibernation and denied any attention.

Responding to the civil society representations during the late 90s', the Govt. of Tamilnadu, reviewed the state of affairs with regard to the implementation of SCP and announced in its policy documents (during two consecutive budget speeches) that,

"The Government is aware that the allocation for the Special Component Plan for Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare is not commensurate with their total population.

We propose to review the progress and achievements under the Special

* John Kumar is the Director of Social Watch-Tamil Nadu (SW/TN), Chennai



Component Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan on a regular basis”

- Tamilnadu Govt. Budget Speech 2001-02

“The Review of the implementation of the Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan for the welfare of the Adi-Dravidas and tribals reveals discrepancies in the actual allocation of resources for the welfare of people belonging to these communities.

A High Level Committee has been formed to prioritize schemes based on specific requirements of the Adi-Dravidas and Tribals under the Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan”

- Tamilnadu Govt. Budget Speech 2002-03

But these announcements viz, **1. Review the progress and achievements ... on a regular basis; and 2. The formation of a High Level Committee to prioritize schemes based on specific requirements;** remain largely unfulfilled till date, though they are claimed to have been achieved in the Annual Reports of SCP and the performance reports; But, when we analyse closely, whether they adhere to the guidelines and queries of the Union Planning Commission, they seem to be lackadaisical, in the pattern of evolving or conceiving programs, the corresponding budget allocation needed and the mode of implementing them under SCP.

The apparent increase in fund allocation, in the recent years, under SCP through the sectors and departments for programs/schemes are merely a shift of expenditure accounts with different renewed nomenclature viz., **‘what had been so far general / common program meant for all (poor/marginalized) people’, have been brought and shown under the Special Component Plan (SCP) with a certain proportion of fund culled out of general schemes, and categorised with the budget code of ‘789’.** Starting from 2006-07, these aforementioned categories of expenditure have been increasing in leaps and bounds, without in any way corresponding to qualitative increase in terms of growth and development of the sector. They are neither innovative, nor particularly

focusing on the entitlements of the SCs or their empowerment.

Yet, by this skewed accounting, the Tamilnadu Govt. tends to give the impression that it has fulfilled, at least one of the criteria of Special Component Plan viz., the **‘proportionality’**. And, it is all the more glaring when TN Govt. claims and proves success through its supposedly objective achievements, in terms of both financial and physical targets, published in its performance budgets

In the following enlisted programs during the 11th Plan, we see the phenomenal increase in budget amount ranging from

10 percent to 70 percent; but, at the end of it, the desired qualitative change in standard of life of the SCs is missing: when there is a sevenfold increase in budget amount, and there is not even a twofold increase in quality & standard of their lives – where are these planning and budgeting leading us all to?

Could the budget flow and accounting procedures for SCP schemes be verified and proved at the district/field level? These are a few of the programs of SCP, we see with huge up-scaling in the last five years – Are they based on any empirical evidence? (Refer to the following table)

Tamil Nadu State Budget : Schemes under Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan							
(Rs. in Lakh)							
Demand No.	Head of Account	Schemes	Account 2006-07	Account 2007-08	Account 2008-09	Account 2009-10	Pre-Account 2010-11
5.	2401789JA	Procurement and Distribution of Paddy and Millet seeds (to SC farmers)	448.99 (Nearly Rs.5 Cr.)	543.33	705.23	4807.64 (Rs. 48 Cr.- almost 9 times increase)	2771.70 (Rs. 28 Cr. more than 5 times increase)
5.	2401789JB	Multiplication and distribution of Pulses seeds	142.17 (Nearly 1.5 Cr.)	157.91	174.79	231.08	604.08 (Rs. 6 Cr. which is 4 times increase)
5.	2401789JC	National Agri. Devp Prog Rashtriya Kishan Vikas Yojana (NADP-RKVY) Agri. Engineering Dept under SCP	....	....	....	....	1033.44
5.	2401789JI	Scheme for improvement of income of farmers operating pumpsets to irrigated lands under Special Component Plan	61.34	....	99.38	247.40 (4 times increase -nearly Rs. 2.5 Cr.)	....
5.	2401789JO	State subsidy to Agri..Insurance scheme to Non-Loanee tenant farmers and Loanee farmers in Horticulture dept. under SCP	....	....	13.45	2726.63 (20 fold increase compared to 10 th FYP Plan)	66.01(5 times increase before completion of A/C)



Demand No.	Head of Account	Schemes	Account 2006-07	Account 2007-08	Account 2008-09	Account 2009-10	Pre-Account 2010-11
5.	2401789JP	National Agri. Insurance scheme	....	....	....	8045.07 (40% increase compared to 10 FYP Plan)	8000.07
5.	2401789JQ	Incentive to Farmers during paddy Procurement under Special Component Plan	....	....	....	1422.01	4720.01
5.	2401789UH	Oil Seeds production prog.	232.91	246.66	263.76	277.09	291.48

All and sundry under SCP

Besides, the general schemes being shifted and accounted under SCP (with new or the same names), the populist schemes too being accounted under SCP which can be seen from the following two schemes through the department of Animal Husbandry by the present Govt. of Tamilnadu.

The SCP allocation which did not exceed, even one crore, till 2010-11, suddenly jumped to nearly Rs. 50 Crore:

- 1. Free distribution of goats Rs. 33.75 Cr.
- 2. Free distribution of cows Rs. 14.01 Cr.

The schemes that are not immediately relevant to the SCs and directly assisting in their need, are being included under SCP in the 2012-2013 budget year For example,

- 1. Expansion of Veterinary Dispensaries in the Districts Rs. 61.76 Lk.
- 2. Mobile Units for Veterinary Dispensaries Rs. 21.95 Lk.

- How does the Govt. explain the sudden disproportionate increase in expenditure shown under schemes which (hitherto, were accounted and spent under general category)?
- How are they determined, by-passing the nodal agency ADTW department?

These are all questions that go unanswered in every budget.

The State has also failed in the other two basic criteria of SCP viz, the principles of 'Universality' and 'Convergence'; especially, the latter criterion could only be achieved through inter-sectoral approaches in fulfilling its financial commitments, where two or more departments collectively engage in evolving programs, mutually share and allocate fund for programs particularly focused on assisting SC families and individuals. Also, this could be possible only through

participative and innovative mode of evolving schemes that would augment income generation, e.g. through encouraging entrepreneurial ventures, definitely focusing at empowering the SCs. But, on the contrary, we have evidences to show TN neither kept its promises nor followed the guidelines of the Union Govt. Here is the claim of TN almost a decade back:

“While the central objective (of SCP) is the economic development to achieve a lasting solution to the socio-economic problems, it is intended to comprehensively cover economic, educational and social development along with the fulfilment of minimum needs and human resources development.

The measures for securing the scheduled castes full access to modern, secondary and tertiary sectors, including public services, protection and promotion of

their demand over land and resources, measures for expansion of the resource base and effective protection against discriminatory practices. All these constitute into the part of SCP.”

- Special Component Plan for SCs, Adi Dravidar and Tribal welfare, Chennai, Tamilnadu, 2003.