For over three decades now, neoliberal policies have resulted in the abandonment of the developmental, welfarist and protective role of the State. This happened through three mutually reinforcing processes, (a) A sharp decline in state expenditure on socio-economic development and welfare to retain the "confidence of investors". (b) Devastation of national production activities due to competitive cheap imports after trade liberalization (c) Incentivization of private investment in infrastructure, real estate and industry through tax and price concessions and handing over of natural resources to unleash "animal spirits". The priority given to attracting foreign investment and the lifting of restrictions on private corporate investment generated an extraordinary 'race to the bottom' among the state governments, who have been competing to offer more and more attractive concessions to woo private capital.

The Modi Government – The Savage Face of Neo-Liberal Economic Policies

However, the current Modi-led Government is not just doing 'more of the same'. On the one hand it has given a huge thrust to massive transfers and concessions to big capital (foreign and domestic) for the "ease of doing business", and on the other, it is undoing any semblance of 'human face' or 'safety net' measures to alleviate poverty, reduce economic distress or provide social services.

It is easily possible for the Modi Government to launch a massive programme to generate employment intensive growth, since the current account deficit is within control due to low global oil prices; inflationary pressures have eased primarily for this reason; the growth of GDP creates the possibility of earning higher tax revenues and there are more than abundant food stocks which can be used for partial payment of wages (instead of exporting them at cheap rates). The Economic Survey itself takes note of this opportunity, but doesn't recognize its potential for equitable growth. Instead, it advises the government to use its political strength in Parliament to bulldoze anti-people policies that will ultimately undermine growth, equity and environmental sustainability. The Economic Survey is so excited about the possibilities due to "state capacity", that it declares that "Nirvana today seems within reach". The nation can attain the objective of "wiping every tear from every eye". However, the direction of the government's policy is quite obvious.

- The Modi Government has unashamedly adopted an anti-people pro-rich fiscal policy for "Big Bang reforms". Suppose one accepts, for the sake of argument, the erroneous view that the government has to balance the budget and have no deficit on account of expenditure exceeding revenue. There are obviously two ways of doing this - by increasing income or by cutting expenditure. In a country with such high unmet social and economic needs, there is an urgent need to raise public expenditure financed by higher taxes from the rich and corporate sector. The Modi Government has done exactly the opposite: it has offered huge tax concessions and resource transfers to the rich and corporate sector while slashing developmental expenditure on social and economic services like health, education, nutrition, social security, employment, etc. Thus an ever-increasing share of the high and rising incomes of the rich and profits of the corporate sector go untaxed with low priority to revenue mobilization through taxes.

- The reluctance or "failure" of the state to tax the rich exposes the fact that it is not an impartial actor, but a partisan agency working for the interests of the capitalist and elite sections by giving them handouts in the form of tax reductions or direct transfers. As a matter of fact, these resource transfers and tax concessions are seen as a virtuous national duty, as a means to promote growth through investor friendly investment policies by unleashing 'animal spirits'. Handouts for the rich are treated very differently from welfare and subsidies; they are seen as growth generating, while the latter are supposed to be "wasteful and anti-growth". Tax concessions to corporates are labelled "tax expenditures", while welfare measures are called "subsidies" or "transfers" and seen to have no productive purpose.
- An outcome of this is that corruption and graft have become an integral part of the new growth strategy. This is rather ironic considering that neo-liberal policies were pushed under the pretext of cleansing the previous 'license permit raj' regime of corruption. The power and discretion to grant concessions and resources as largesse has meant that bureaucrats and politicians – policy makers in general – can seek kickbacks and commissions.
- It is going to get worse under the current regime – the economic survey wants increased public investment in infrastructure (power, roads railways and ports) and quick, cheap and easy clearances of all hurdles in this path. The land acquisition act in its even more rapacious form is evidently seen as central to this. The PM has centralized all powers and even senior bureaucrats and ministers are kept out of the loop when key policy decisions are taken. The pre-Budget Economic Survey too pitches for centralization of decision making powers, as it debunks federalism and the functional separation in the Constitution of the different arms of the nation – the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. Exulting in the "unique window of political opportunity" because of the huge mandate the Modi government has received, the Survey basically indicates that the government intends to bulldoze "big bang reforms" like offering even greater incentives for private investment, rationalizing subsidies, creating a business friendly tax policy and accelerating disinvestment.
- The 'Make in India' strategy is a reflection of this anti-people approach of improving the "ease of doing business" by "reducing the costs of doing business". There is really no new strategy for this. The components of this strategy are nothing new – they require a more aggressive and complete implementation of the UPA policies. These include the following:
    - Handing over of natural resources like land, minerals, water, etc. to the private sector through easing of environmental standards and facilitating easy access to cheap land and natural resources.
    - Looting the banking sector by redirecting public sector banking credit to private industry through reclassification and restructuring of unpaid outstanding debt under 'Non Performing Assets' (NPAs). While starving agriculture, the small scale sector and the poor of credit, NPAs accumulate and the capitalists refuse to repay them.

- Repeated policy utterances on 'reforming' labour laws and further flexibilizing the labour market. This may at first sight seem odd because from the point of view of profits, labour costs today constitute barely 2.4 per cent of total costs. Over 92 per cent of labour is unorganized, so further labour flexibility is unlikely to result in a substantive increase in profits. What this will do, though, is to send out the strong political message that this government has abandoned all protectionist and welfarist pretensions and is willing to fully and openly ally with the owners of capital to subjugate labour.
- Further deregulation of private investment, including allowing the entry of more foreign direct investment into sectors such as railways, defence and insurance.
- The most objectionable part of this policy is the thrust towards even greater reliance on public-private partnerships, a model that utterly failed during the two UPA tenures. As we saw, this is more fiscally demanding as far as public spending is concerned and is productively inefficient and fails to attract the investment in crucial infrastructure areas.

Reduction in Total Expenditure of the Central Government

The total expenditure of the Union Government has declined from Rs.17, 94892 crores in 2014-15 (BE) to Rs.17, 77477 crores in 2015-16 (BE) mostly on account of the reduced Plan expenditure by Rs. 1, and 09723 crores. From spending over 15% of the national income in the mid 2000s, it is now spending only 12.6%. **Each one per cent fall in expenditure is equal to a budget cut of Rs. 141089 crores. So this fall in expenditure as a ratio to GDP means an expenditure cut of over 3.38 lakh crores.**

Taking the budgetary spending of the Centre and States together, India's total government spending compared to the size of its economy at 27 % of the GDP is far lower than that of developed and most developing countries. It is also one of the lowest among some of the fastest growing economies in the world, like Brazil (41.1%), Russia (37.9%), South Africa (33.1%) and Mexico (29%). This is because of lower levels of central tax revenue. India has a tax-GDP ratio of 10.3% for the union government and 17.9% for centre and states combined. This too is far below comparable countries like South Africa, Russia, and Brazil, where it is 28.2%, 30.6% and 33.7% respectively.

A progressive structure of taxation means that that those who earn more, pay more taxes according to their ability to pay. In India, we have the opposite situation where for every Rs 100 collected as tax revenues, approximately Rs 70 comes from indirect taxes on goods and services consumed by the masses, (for e.g. match boxes, etc.) by the poor and most vulnerable sections of society, while a small share comes from taxes on income, profit, capital gains, property, etc. **Most of the proposals in this year's budget are to increase indirect tax revenues, together with direct tax exemptions, which increase the regressive nature of the tax structure.**

Withdrawal of Central Government from Schemes

The government has divided schemes into three categories – those which will receive full support from the centre, those which will receive only capital costs and those to be discontinued. The union government has announced that it will continue to fully support only schemes which (a) represent national priorities like poverty alleviation, or (b) schemes mandated by legal obligations and those backed by cess collection or (c) those targeted to benefit the socially disadvantaged groups like SCs, STs, Muslims and physically challenged sections of the population**. We should note that this does not include important schemes related to children and women such as ICDS or schemes for protection and prevention of violence against women.**

Selected Schemes to be fully supported by Union Government

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), Multi Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities (MSDP), Pre-Matric Scholarship for children of those engaged in unclean occupation, Scholarship schemes (Post and Pre Matric) for SC, ST and OBCs, Support for Machinery for implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989, National Programme for persons with Disabilities, Scheme for providing Education to Minorities, Umbrella scheme for education of ST Children, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY), Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)- SABLA, National Nutrition Mission (NNM), Scheme for protection and development of women, Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (Financed from Education Cess), Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Schemes of North Eastern Council, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) including Annapurna, Social Security for Unorganized Workers Scheme, Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), Cess backed allocation for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY), Roads and Bridges financed from Central Road Fund, Project Tiger, Project Elephant

Furthermore, the funding pattern and sharing of expenditure between the State Government and the Central Government for several crucial social sector schemes has changed. From now on the centre will only bear capital costs (like building, vehicles, equipment) while the states will have to meet all running revenue costs like salaries, consumables and inputs. **This in effect means a steady phase out of Union government funding since capital expenditure on most of the listed programmes are tiny with a much larger revenue component to be met by States. So if the state governments are financially constrained (which by and large they are), these vital programmes will be adversely affected.**

Selected Schemes where Centre bears only Capital Expenditure

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Swaccha Bharat Abhiyaan (Rural and Urban), National AIDS and STD Control programme, ***National Health***

Mission, National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA), Strategic Assistance for State Higher Education - Rashtriya Uchcha Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA),* ***National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Rural Housing- Housing for All (IAY), Integrated Child Development Service,*** *PMKSY(including Watershed programme and Micro irrigation).*

Some schemes have been discontinued, the most notable amongst them being the Backward Regions Grant Funds.

Schemes to be discontinued by the Centre

National e-Governance Plan, Backward Regions Grant Funds, Modernization of Police Forces, Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyaan (RGPSA), Scheme for Central Assistance to the States for developing export infrastructure, Scheme for setting up of 6000 Model Schools, National Mission on Food Processing, Tourist Infrastructure

Clearly, a bulk of the financial burden to provide for the social sector in areas like health, education, housing etc. as well as address the needs of socially disadvantaged sections of the population has been pushed on to the States on the false excuse of higher tax devolutions.

Rising Burden, Falling Transfer of Funds to States

The Union government's claim that the devolution to states has increased due to 'co-operative federalism' is false because the overall spending capacity for the states has in fact declined. Though the share of states in central taxes and non-plan grants as share of GDP does show an increase, the total Union resources transferred to states has declined because of the sharp reduction in central assistance to states from Rs 3,29,712 crores to Rs 1,95,778 crores. **Therefore even as national income grows, the transfer to states as a share of GDP falls from 6.2% to 5.9%.**

States are already spending, on an average, between 35-40% of their total budgets on the social sector, which has steadily increased since 2004-06 when it was around 30%. It must be remembered that the states have very limited avenues for resource mobilization since a bulk of the taxation powers are vested in the Union government. Also, they have enacted FRBM legislations binding them to fixed ratios of fiscal and revenue deficits which they cannot breach. This implies that State governments will find it very difficult to meet their greater burden to cater to social sector needs in the absence of higher Union transfers to states for the purpose.

Tax Concessions and Handouts to the Rich

In order to improve the "ease of doing business" in India and be more investor friendly, several sops were announced in this year's budget too. For one, the Corporate Tax is to be reduced from

30% to 25% over the next four years, starting next financial year. Secondly, General Anti Avoidance Rules (GAAR) are once again deferred by two years; to apply prospectively from 2017. This will encourage corporates and others to cheat on tax payment through the abuse of tax treaties, use of tax havens for the purpose of reducing tax bills and other cunning tax avoidance arrangements that will deny the country taxes. Wealth tax too has been abolished and replaced with 12 % surcharge on the super-rich who are a small section.

The 'Statement of Revenue Impact of Tax Incentives under the Central Tax System' states that the aggregate revenue impact of tax incentives is projected to be Rs.589285.2 crores for 2014-15. **The revenue foregone is estimated to be 43.2% of total tax revenue for the year 2014-15.**

- Exemptions of corporate profits given to industries located in SEZ are estimated to be Rs.19,000 crores.
- Custom duty exemption given to gold and diamond traders is Rs 75,592 crores in 2015-16. This is 56% higher compared to the exemption given in the previous year
- Effective tax rates for cement manufacturing companies are as low as 5.84%
- Some mining contractors are charged with an effective tax rate of just 7.23%
- In the financial services sector, leasing companies are charged with a very low effective tax rate of 1.84%
- Effective tax rates for some of the film distribution firms are 9.23% against the statutory rate of 33.27%

Decline in Social Sector Spending by Central Government

The total expenditure of the Union government under its different social sector ministries/departments (excluding food subsidy) has remained more or less the same (Rs 235662 crores RE 2014-15 compared to Rs 236722 crores BE 2015-16); if food subsidy is included the trend remains the same (Rs.123366 crores RE 2014-15 compared to Rs.125474 crores BE 2015-16). But in this period, Governments have claimed that GDP has been growing by over 5 % each year, so the meager Rs 2000 crore increase pales into insignificance in comparison to rising national income (which is mostly concentrated in the hands of the rich and can be easily taxed). The share of social sector expenditure (including food subsidy) as % of GDP was 3.40% in 2010-11, 3.12% in 2011-12 and is now down to 2.57%. **This means that even if the really small 2010-11 ratio of social sector expenditure to national income was to be maintained, the Union government would be spending Rs. 1.4 lakh crores more on the social sector than what it is doing.**

- The National Health Mission (NHM) is one of the most important schemes in the health sector whose allocation in Budget 2015-16 shows a decrease of about Rs. 3900 crores. Overall, health outlay has declined by about Rs 6000 crores from Rs 37965.7 crores to Rs 32068.2 Crores (BE).
- Allocations for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) have declined from Rs 28258 crores to Rs 19800 crores; allocation for Mid Day Meal (MDM) has declined from Rs 13215 crores to Rs 7775

crores. The total allocation of the Department of School Education and Literacy and Department of Higher Education together, in 2015-16, is Rs. 69,075 crores, which is a 16.5% decline from 2014-15 (BE).

- The Union government has almost halved the budget for the Swachha Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) from Rs. 12100 crores in the 2014-15 (RE) to Rs. 6236 crores in 2015-16 (BE).
- The allocation of Rs.73270 crores under the Ministry of Rural Development for 2015-16 is down from Rs 83852 crores in 2014-15. Under MGNREGA there were unpaid wages in the year 2014-15, to the tune of about Rs 6000 crores. Accounting for these unpaid wages, the effective allocation stands at only about Rs. 27,200 crores, a cut of Rs 6000 crores from the previous year.
- Though there has been a small increase in allocation under food subsidy in absolute terms in the current budget (i.e. Rs. 124,419 crores in 2015-16 (BE) against Rs. 122676 crores in 2014-15 RE), food subsidy as a proportion of GDP and the total Union Budget has remained around one 1% and 7% respectively.
- The Union Budget 2014-15 has violated guidelines to allocate Plan resources for the Tribal Sub Plan and the Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) at least in proportion to the ST and SC populations at 8.6% and 16.6% respectively. Instead the allocations are 7.8% for SCSP (down from 10.3%) and 5.1% for TSP (down from 6.4%), respectively. In Rupee terms the fall in TSP is from Rs 26715 crores to Rs 20536 crores and in SCSP from Rs 43208 crores to Rs 30851 crores.

Cuts in Expenditure and Closure of Schemes for Women

What is shocking is the manner in which the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) 2015-16 and the allocations to the Ministry of Women and Child Development reveal lower allocations and closure of quite a few significant schemes for women. The Gender Budget too has been severely cut by 20% (less by Rs. 20,000 crore) from about One lakh crores to Rs 79,258 crores. An analysis of GBS 2015-16 reflects the following changes:

Allocations to Select Schemes as Reflected in Gender Budget Statement (GBS) (in Rs. Crores)

	2014-15 (BE)	2015-16 (BE)
Mid-Day Meal Scheme	3965	2771
SABLA	700	10
Scheme for Protection and Development	315	78

of Women*		
RMSA	1500	1010
RUSA	660	347
IAY	16000	10025
ICDS	10735	7502

* Includes National Mission for Empowerment of Women, *Swadhar Gruh*, Restorative Justice for Rape Victims, Assistance to Implementation of PWDVA Act, 2005

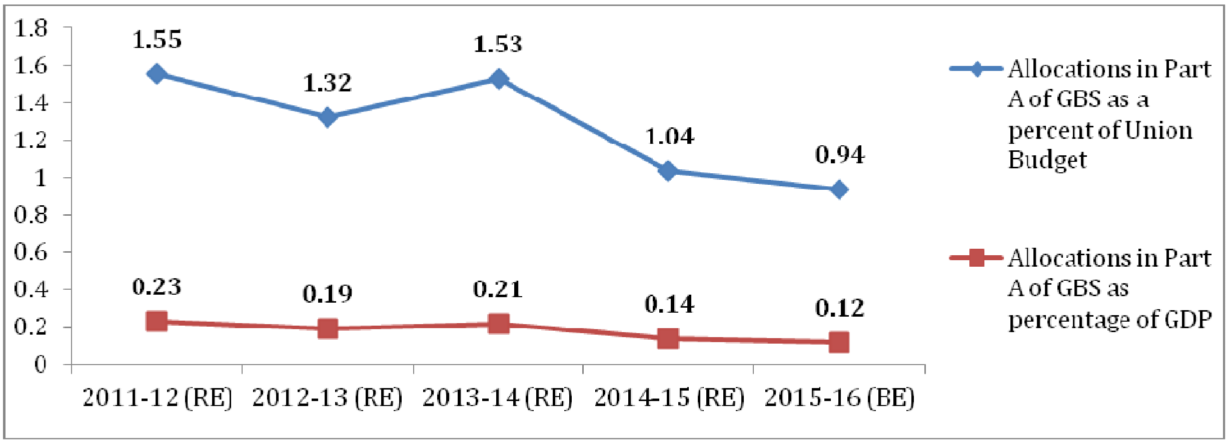
- Among the continuing schemes, allocations have been reduced in the Mid-Day Meal, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls- SABLA and Umbrella Scheme for Protection and Development of Women.

- The Union Government has reduced allocations for a number of schemes impacting women: *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Rashtriya Uchcha Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Indira Awas Yojana* (IAY) and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

- Three schemes that were previously reported in the GBS have been discontinued i.e., *Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Yojana*, Backward Regions Grant Fund and Scheme for setting up 6000 Model Schools.

Part A of the GBS reports funds exclusively for women. This has been low and falling almost continuously. The amount of funds intended exclusively for women have fallen as a percentage of the Union Budget and GDP in 2015-16, indicating reduced priority for women.

Allocations in Part A of GBS as a Proportion of the Union Budget and GDP



Note: GDP figures upto 2010-11 based on old series (2004-05). GDP Figures from 2011-12 onwards based on new series (2011-12)

***Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget Documents, Various Years**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is the nodal ministry for the “welfare, development and empowerment of women”. The budgetary allocations to the Ministry have declined from Rs. 21,193 crores in 2014-15 (BE) to Rs. 10,382 crores in 2015-16 (BE).

Allocations to Schemes to be fully supported by Union Government
(In Rs. Crore)

Schemes	**2014-15**		**2015-16**
	(BE)	**(RE)**	**(BE)**
Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana	400	360	402.23
Swadhar Gruha	115	30	50
Restorative Justice to Rape Victims	20	0	0
Rashtriya Mahila Kosh	20	0	0
*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**	90	45	97
One Stop Crisis Centres	20	0	2
Women’s Helpline	10	0	1
National Mission for Empowerment of Women	90	10	25
Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA)	700	630	10
Assistance to States for Implementation of Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act,2005	50	0	0

Note: Figures include lump sum provision for North East Region (NER) and Sikkim
*Does not include lump sum provision for the NER
***Source:* Compiled by CBGA from the Union Budget documents**

Most of the schemes that were fully supported by the Union Government have either been discontinued, or will in all likelihood be withdrawn in the near future. The Scheme for Assistance to States for Implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* and Restorative Justice to Rape Victims have zero allocation. Allocations to Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA), Women’s Helpline, *Swadhar Gruh* and one Stop Crisis Centres have been drastically cut. *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana* will continue to be implemented in only 53 districts on a pilot basis.

The need to build up budgetary outlays, particularly to deal with violence against women, has been disregarded in Budget 2015-16. Several critical schemes to address the requirements of women in distress have been withdrawn like ‘One Stop Crisis Centre’ in each district of the country. Even the BJP’s own Manifesto that promised operationalisation of the Scheme for Restorative Justice to Rape Victims and introduction of an Acid Attack Victim’s Welfare Fund has been ignored.

Another Rs.1000 crore has been added to the Nirbhaya Fund making it a total of Rs.3,000 crores (Department of Economic Affairs). This fund has remained mostly unutilized or is meeting expenditure for existing Schemes.

The allocations to *Swadhar Gruh* and SABLA are coming from the Nirbhaya Fund. Resources under the *Nirbhaya* Fund were meant for substantive interventions for safety and security of women and not for meeting expenses under ongoing schemes.

The biggest hit is the shared ICDS. The Union Government allocations to ICDS in BE 2015-16 is Rs. 8,754 crore as against Rs.18,391 crore in BE 2014-15. The Union Government will only provide capital expenditure (such as construction of *Anganwadi* Centres etc.). The states will have to meet the recurring revenue expenditure (like honorarium to *Anganwadi* Workers), which is the main expenditure under the scheme.

The Economic Survey, 2014-2015 the Government states that it aims at 'Wiping every tear from every eye'; in reality it has increased the burdens of the poor and working people. The Modi Government's Budget reveals its callous attitude towards women. If anything, it has brought tears of anger in women's eyes. The Budget reflects the mindset of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) that views women's primary role as within the home, and invisibilises their huge and meaningful contribution to the economy and society, as workers and citizens. It shows how neoliberal economic policies, in tandem with conservative forces further marginalize women. Inflation and job losses are sought to be glossed over by emphasizing and glorifying women's role in the family. This also facilitates the burdening of women with care work within the household especially when the state is giving up its responsibilities in the spheres of health, education, child and elderly care.

AIDWA pledges to fight these anti-poor, anti-women policies of the Modi-led BJP government!

WE DEMAND:

1. Restoration and enhancement of allocations to the Ministry of Women and Child Development - In particular:
2. The Umbrella Scheme for Protection of Women should be strengthened. Given the huge increase in sexual crimes against women, the allocations for the scheme (Restorative Justice) for the relief and rehabilitation of rape victims should be enhanced. The Central assistance for the implementation of the PWDV Act should not just be restored but increased considering that state governments are reluctant to fund it. The Acid Attack Victims Welfare Fund for covering treatment costs, as committed in the BJP manifesto should be introduced.

3. There should be adequate funds for setting up at least one “One Stop Crisis Centre” in every block on a priority basis to ensure immediate relief to women survivors of violence.
4. Assistance for Construction of shelter homes for single women/destitute and widows is grossly insufficient and needs to be enhanced so that there is at least one such home in each block in the country.
5. Instead of cutting funds for the ICDS program, it should be universalised, for which an allocation of at least Rs 24000 crores should be made in the current budget.
6. The *Nirbhaya* Fund of Rs 3000 crores should not be diverted to other schemes, and should be utilised for putting in place comprehensive measures including relief and rehabilitation of victims, safety plans for women, gender sensitisation training, etc. It should be administered by the WCD Ministry.
7. Funds should be made available so that ASHA workers and *Anganwadi* Workers and *Anganwadi* Helpers are regularised; they should be paid minimum wages and provided with social security.
8. The allocations for MNREGA should be such as to provide for payment of minimum wages for at least 100 days of work, and include payment of arrears on account of wages.
9. The food subsidy should be increased substantially to at least 2% of the GDP in order to universalise the Public Distribution System and provide a minimum of 35 kgs of cereals at not more than Rs 2 per kg, along with other essential commodities at controlled prices.
10. The government should provide for a minimum universal non-contributory publicly funded pension for Rs 3000 per month for all women above the age of 55 years, and for all widows and disabled women irrespective of age. Special pension schemes for women who are victims of state violence, the “half widows” of Kashmir, and those affected by violence in conflict areas should be designed with adequate funding.
11. At least 6% of the GDP should be allocated for public health care with emphasis on strengthening rural health care infrastructure. All forms of user fees in the public health system should be withdrawn and essential drugs and diagnostics provided free of cost in all public health facilities. The entire essential drug list should be brought under price control. The approach towards women’s health should also focus on a life-cycle approach, to address the differential concerns related to women’s health. There should be enhanced allocation for training of nurses.
12. At least 6% of GDP should be allocated towards implementation of the RTE Act, improving quality of education and enhancing higher education
13. The cuts in allocations for sub-plans for dalits and tribals should be restored, the budgets enhanced in line with the proportion of these sections (8.6% for ST and 16.6% for SC) in the population. There should be a substantial increase in the allocation for the development of minorities. There should be at least 30% allocations for women within schemes for SC, ST, Denotified Tribes, Minorities and other socially deprived groups.

14. The government must stop giving tax concessions to the rich and corporate sector and instead raise taxes on the wealthy and the corporate sector. It should take effective measures to unearth and recover huge accumulation of black money in the economy, including unaccounted money in tax havens abroad and use it for strengthening social security programmes.
15. Measures should be taken to reverse the current trend of declining government expenditure. Public expenditure for employment generation, basic needs and the social sector must be increased.
16. The Union Government must provide the financial resources through the provision of a higher proportion of flexible or untied funds to States for them to fulfill the bulk of the economic and social developmental activities as per their constitutional responsibility. This is particularly important at a time when several Schemes are being transferred from the centre to the states. The sharp cut in the plan funds and central assistance devolved to the states must be reversed and devolution must be brought up to at least 8% of GDP.
17. It is necessary to make available data on beneficiaries of different welfare schemes disaggregated on the basis of gender, caste and community groups in order to enable a proper assessment of their outcomes on different social groups of women. The Gender Budget statement should reflect the challenges identified by each department in attaining gender parity and the schemes that have been designed with a view to address these issues.

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