

**Brief Presentation on
STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION ON CHILDREN AND THE BUDGET 2008-2009
&
PRO CHILD BUDGET CAMPAIGN LAUNCH
'DEAR LEADERS - YOUR CHILDREN'
March 14, 2008, Vijayawada**

A state level advocacy program for revision and hike in the 2008-2009 budget allotted for children in AP was organized by Child Rights Advocacy Foundation in collaboration with MVF, HELP and HAQ center for child rights, Delhi and Wada Na Todo Abhiyan – (AP). With the solidarity support groups as campaign partners APACR, AGS, CACL, CACT, CADME, CASA, CWS, FFCR (Vjw) GDFCR (Gnt), FIST (Ogl), BAVITHA, NATSAP, NDWM, NOVAK, YAR, NNDFCR, SANGAMITRA SERVICE SOCIETY (VJW), TDF, TNP+ .



A march for the child budget:



...freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed...

A heaped up crowd of Children, NGOs, Activist, surrounded by the cameras of Media peeping to click the collage of the colorful banners, placards, write ups holding high with a message 'hike for budget children' at Press club, Vijayawada was addressed by friends of children.

The gathering was moved to the peak of spirit with speeches of the friends of the children. Senior Human Rights Advocate Mr. Karnati Ram Mohan the chief guest and flagged off the march and Mr. Subba Raju, former MLA of Vijayawada, remarked the State Government for not prioritizing the rights of the children in the budgets.

The mountain of the gathering melted to a double lane marched from press club, the slogans, echoed streets of Vijayawada; children shouted at the top of their voice to make the state heed. Empty promises do not meet the needs of children. Children are a special category and they are entitled with special needs. Their childhood can't wait, it needs immediate response. Hence a demand for the revision and hike in the 2008-2009 budget for children in AP.



The march was flagged off at press Club and ended at Tana Rescue shelter. The march was led by the Children from various Organizations, Conveners, Activist among them Mr.Ram Mohan from NATSAP, Mr.Venkatreddy (MVF) Mr.Ch.MuraliMohan,(CACL), Fr.Thomas Koshy (CRAF), Mrs.Annie Namala(IIDS) and Ms.Madhumita (HAQ), Mr.Murali Mohan, Mr. Pothuraju Venkat, Mr.Premkumar, Mr.K.L.Raju, Mr.Vijayakumar, Fr.Thomas Pallithanam, Dr.Ignatius, Fr,Micheal and Mr.JohnRaj were some of them who accompanied the March.

II. STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION ON CHILDREN AND THE BUDGET 2008-2009

The Tana Rescue shelter, the venue of the public meeting hall chairs were filled with Children and the adults had to stand out on the borders of the hall. Mr.Gode Prasad had to request the children as the consultation is only for the adults and a consultation for children shall be held after the exams are over. Children were informed about the state consultation and its objectives and a song from Mr.Lakshman cheered children. The children who participated in the rally had to leave the consultation hall as they were having the pre final exams.



Mr. Gode Prasad expressed the words of welcome to the State Level Budget Consultation organized at TANA Child Rescue Shelter by CRAF in collaboration with HELP, HAQ (New Delhi) and MVF,



Hyderabad. Before children left the venue, important dignitaries were welcomed on to the stage the Chief Guests, State leaders, resource persons and Networks conveners. Among them were Mrs. Madhumitha, HAQ, center for child rights, Delhi, Mrs. Dolon Bhattacharyya, MVF Hyderabad, Mrs. Annie Namala, IIDS, New Delhi, Mr. Bhaskar, HELP, Mr. Venkata Reddy, MVF, Ch. Murali, Convenor, CACL, Fr. Thomas Koshy, chairman CRAF, Fr. Thomas Pallithanma, Wadana Todo Abhiyan – (AP). Mr. P. Venkat, GDFCR (Gnt) Mr. John Raj FFCR (Vjw)), Mr. Premkumar FIST (Ogl), Mr. K. L. Raju, NDFCR, Mr. Vijayakumar CDFCR, Mr. Joseph Raj, SANGAMITRA SERVICE SOCIETY (VJW), Mr. Moses TDF and Mr. Shanthiraj, APDAPC.

The participants were introduced to the objectives of the day's consultation and requested to extend collaboration in a given time to draw concrete plan of actions to campaign for the revival of the budget.

The objectives:

1. to demystify the share of children in the central and state budget 2008 – 2009
2. to build the capacity of the NGO on Budget to advocate for the rights of children
3. to express the grave concerns on the allotment of budgets for children in 2008-2009
4. to launch the campaign to lobby for the reallocation of budget for children
5. to insist with the Govt. not to divert the allocated budget for the children to other sectors
6. to demand the Govt. to fully utilize the allotted budget for children.
7. to constitute people's body at state level to monitor and to review once in six months the children budget.
8. to influence the political manifestos of the political parties for the coming elections

Fr. Thomas Koshy in his introductory words informed that both the central and state budgets failed to keep its promises to children. There is wide gape between commitment and implementation. The UPA Govt. has promised 6% GDP for children health and education yet budget presented without raising the allotment to the promised sectors. Suggested that NGOs and CSO have moral obligation and duty to campaigning for the equitable share of allocation in budget for children and ensure the allotted amount is fully utilized for the children.

Mr.Venkata Reddy MVF while addressing the participants informed pre budget consultation was organized by MVF at Hyderabad and all the floor leaders of various parties were presented with the previous budget analysis and yet nothing happened. Children are only the categories who are discriminated in the budget allocations and expenditure on children not fully spent. He expressed his agony though the allocations are made for name sake; the budgets are diverted to other programs. The budgets on children are not seen as investment. Where as common man and his family puts all their earning of the hard toil for the well being of children



The state convener CACL, Mr. ChikkuMurali Mohan convincingly expressed that if budgets are not allotted, all the rights of the children are mere waste. There is close connectivity between the rights and budgets. If the budget are not allotted for education, the schools don't functions don't function properly, as a result children drop out and this creates child Labour and finally end the life of child in perennial poverty.

Fr.Thomas Pallithanm, the convener of the Wadana Todo Abhyian (AP Chapter) explained, The 'Wadana Todo Abhyian' 'keep your promise' the leaders are suppose to keep their word to children. The MDGs are to be achieved by 2015, the states are expected to reach the stated goals by allocating required resources especially that should be coined with budgets. India is nowhere in realizing the MDGs.

As a national campaign organization, it has taken up 'NINE is MINE 'to demand for the 9% of the budget for children as envisaged in UPA documents. He also expressed that the amended JJ Act 2006, the mere title need to be changed. Children of India don't need justice, they need 'care and protection' sufficient care and protection on children will prevent exploitation on children. This should express strongly in the budgets. Budgets are the expression of Govt's intentions to its people.

Once the inaugural addresses are over, Mr.Gode Prasad welcomed Mrs. Madhumita to present 'children and central budget 2008-2009'. She in her presentation tried to educate participants on the central budget. Her presentation and first glance at the budget 2008-2009 is attached.

Mrs. Dolan Bhattacharya, children budget researcher form MVF, presented the state budget. Please find attached her presentation.

Later Mrs.Annie Namala from IIDS, New Delhi presented her talk from the perspective of "BUDGET – DALIT CHILDREN EQUITY & INCLUSION". She touched upon the relevance of budget allocation to the growth and development of Dalit children. the importance of tracking budget of the SC,

ST and BCs (Muslim) in particular as in the cases it is mostly allotted budget for this group mostly unspent? And as result it creates a group of exclusion. It keeps them far from the basic developmental needs. What does the budget give to Dalit children today- what it does not give? How do we promote equity & inclusion?

She stated that there is Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan to be allocated as 16% and 8% of the budget, but the fact is that so far 6% budget is not allocated fairly till date for the development of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes. She stated that Budget Denial is the development denial.

For the equity and inclusive she demanded, At a time when we are tracking budget for children, tracking it for the most marginalised children –SC, ST, Muslim, Need to recognize that caste barriers are real to Dalit children, address it through policy and legislative means, Track implementation and diversion of special provisions and demand full implementation, has to be a task for all of us and not some of us.

The national budgets fail to capture the full picture of exclusion for children. Tackling the root causes of exclusion needs attention in the budgets. Pl. find attached the PP presentation of Mrs.Annie Namala.

Questions and clarifications:

The participants from the presentations drew few questions, which were addressed by the plenary consisting of Mr.Venkatreddy, Fr.Thomas Pallithanam, Mrs.Annie Namala, Mrs.Dolon bhattachray and Mrs.Madumita Purkayastha.

The participants have been perceived from the presentation:

What Budget Does?

- ✧ Translate Governments Promises and Commitments into Practice
- ✧ Reflect Socio-Economic Priorities of the Government
- ✧ Impact on lives of all citizens
- ✧ Greatest impact on those who have little political influence (Poor & marginalized)

NGO and Civil Society Budget work: Why?

- ✧ To make policy makers sensitive to popular needs and concerns
- ✧ Awareness on Government Performance
- ✧ Create Public Pressure on issues of the marginalized sections
- ✧ Engaging institutions of governance to empower the marginalized through advocacy and Capacity Building
- ✧ Strategize the use of knowledge to influence policies

Need for Budget Advocacy

- ❖ Budget analysis is very important to scrutinize the Government Budgets from any perspective.
- ❖ Mere analysis of the Budgets alone cannot influence the policy making unless it is supported by proper public action or advocacy to promote the findings in public forums so as to influence the common mindset.
- ❖ Budget analysis is an advocacy tool for developing public understanding on policy priorities of the Government. This would eventually empower the people to seek Governments' accountability.
- ❖ This process would provide us a large operative space that is unexplored to tactfully engage with the State, and this alternative mechanism using democratic space goes beyond traditional means of public activism.

Felt experience at the consultation:

- ❖ It's eye opening of many of the participants to know the budget allocation for children
- ❖ Budget allotted for children is not in proportionate to the child population.
- ❖ Budget allocation for children is not increasing as par with other sectors
- ❖ Allocation for budget for children is considered as welfare and not as investment.
- ❖ Budget allotted for children seems to remaining unspent.
- ❖ There is no strong lobby body or platform to work with Govt to increase allocation of budget for children.
- ❖ The lack of coordination and collective effort from the NGOs and Civil Society Organizations is also a reason for not increasing of children share in the budget.

III. Campaign Launching 'for the revisal of budget allotted for children 2008-2009

The campaign was launched symbolically by lighting the lamp wigs by Mr.Venkatreddy, MVF, Mr.David Peram, CRS. Ms.Madhumita, HAQ and two girl child representatives.



Mr.Gode Prasad the campaign facilitator presented the below strategic plan of action to the participants to campaign for the revisal of the children budget. While addressing partners of the campaign informed that it's a;

The "No Excuse" Campaign

We know what to do

We know when to do it

We know who should do it

We have adequate resources

We can monitor progress

There is no excuse not to fulfil the...

... Demand for allotting budget for children"

To recap the members understanding on the campaign, what a campaign is? Explained

The main challenge of the campaign is to change political attitudes by socializing the children issues of children at the community level. There are many possible definitions for a campaign and the activity of campaigning. Some of the more useful definitions are as follows:

- ✧ Campaigning is speaking up, drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision-makers towards a solution.
- ✧ Campaigning involves putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building support for action to solve the problem.
- ✧ Campaigns can involve many specific, short-term activities to reach a long-term vision of change.
- ✧ A campaign is a series of actions directed at changing the policies, positions or programmes of any type of institution.
- ✧ Campaigning involves working with other people and organisations to make a difference.
- ✧ Campaigning consists of differing strategies aimed at change at the local, provincial, national and/or international levels.

“ROAD MAP” of the campaign

Action Plan:	Responsible	Time scheduled
1. Email Campaign Present sent of demands to Chief Minister by email	~ preparation of demands and mail to the campaigning partners by campaign facilitator – CRAF~ All members of the campaign forward set of demands to CM	Mar 22, 2008
2. Letter Campaign Present set of demand to Ministers, MP, MLAs and MLCs of AP.	~ Prepare set of demands by - CRAF~ post campaign letter to all the elected representatives	April 31, 2008
1. Campaign for Mobilizing and involving people the NGOs socialize the issue at local community with children, SHG and CSOs. And build awareness on the need for the allocation of budget for children.	~ the partners of the campaign ~ prepare the campaign flyer - CRAF	April 5-15 2008
2. Submission of Appeals Present the appeals to Local MLA at the Constituency level by NGOs	~ the NGOs of the campaign partners present demand to the local MLS	April 15-30 2008
3. Media Campaign release press statement, brief media on the children budget etc.	~ the partners of the campaign	April 15-30, 2008

Expected results of the campaign:

- The elected peoples representatives are contacted to raise voice on behalf of children to increase the budget for children MLAs (294) MLCs (90) and MPs(42)
- More than 150 NGOs across state in 23 districts take up the campaign activities and lobby with the local leaders for the hike in the children budget.
- The NGOs and Local communities are familiarized and realize the importance of lobbying for the children budget.
- Elected representatives are continuously kept in live with request for children budget.
- Effective partnership of child based NGOs, Networks and collations for child budget.
- Facilitates vertical and horizontal linkages to Communication between different Govt official and elected representatives.
- NGOs envisage partnership of children, parents and CBOs in holding the campaign programs.

Mr. Gode expressed that the Campaign provides an umbrella of common message under which the individual issues /concerns of each and every ones can work. In this way we can build up significant pressure on decision-makers.

CRAF has Agreed:

1. Support and provide Campaign materials (hand bill)
2. Duly acknowledge all the campaign partners organization names on the campaign hand bills.

Campaign partners has Agreed:

1. Undertake the campaign in their respective electoral constituency
2. Represent the Demands to the Local MLAVMLC and MP
3. Hold press meet or give media
4. Conduct awareness meetings with community members
5. Submit a report of the campaign to secretariat, CRAF

The partners of the campaign at the state consultation unanimously welcomed the state plan of action by clapping to show their wiliness to take up the campaign at respective electoral constituency.

Mr. Gode reminded the participants once again that the campaign begins at the community level after the assembly sessions are over and when MLAs and MPs are at the constituency.

He concluded that the campaign is based on hopes and dreams, rather than fears and problems and wished every one to be part and parcel of the campaign for the pro child budget to realize the rights of the children in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

