



“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little”  
- Franklin D. Roosevelt

## FROM THE NCAS DESK

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**Rank in Global Hunger Index worsens while the rank for Ease of Doing Business Improves.**

**The Price We Pay for Growth**

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In solidarity  
Team NCAS

## The Price We Pay for Growth

The recent death of 11 year old Santoshi Kumari from Jharkhand due to starvation has been a grim reminder of the failure of the modern India to make hunger and starvation a part of history. In the 70 years of independent India, we have faced several droughts and famines, but they have reduced in numbers over time. Yet the 2017 Growth Hunger Index has reminded us that a growth-centred idea of development is not sufficient to rid our country of hunger. India ranked 100 out of 119 developing countries despite it being the world's fastest-growing emerging economy. The slow progress is partly due to the low budget allocation for the health in India, which is around 1.2% on an average. Moreover, the shift from hot cooked-food to packaged biscuits under PDS is also questionable.

The government is currently pushing for Digital India and the ubiquitous use of Aadhar for all schemes. And one of the reasons being pointed to with regard to Santoshi's death is that because she did not possess an Aadhar card, she was denied her PDS ration which led to her death. The shift of PDS from being take-home rations to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and usage of Aadhar for mid-day meal schemes in schools has put a huge question mark on what is the collateral that the central government is prepared to accept in their pursuit of their initiatives.

A more transparent India, which is desirable to increase accountability, is still in question despite this widespread imposition of Aadhar with the recent ordinance by the Rajasthan government protecting all the ministers and bureaucrats from being probed. The lack of protection being given to whistleblowers is clear with the current Whistleblower's Protection Act and Bill along with the deaths of RTI activists' post the Vyapam scam. While there is limited action being taken on those fronts, the Centre is willingly accepting the adverse consequence of hunger and starvation of poor women and children for its initiatives. These actions contradict the ideas of development which would ensure that everyone is safe and protected by law and equally answerable to the law. The protection of the powerful and insecurity of the weak is diametrically opposite to the idea of a social democracy. It is also unconstitutional, particularly when the Supreme Court has stated in clear terms that Aadhar cannot be made mandatory. The upcoming sessions in the apex court will decide the fate of Aadhar and its usage but the Centre has still gone ahead to pressurize its citizens to need the card for schools, various schemes, etc.

The Centre did order the state governments to not ask for Aadhar for PDS, but do we need to wait for tragic deaths like that of Santoshi's to make the government protect its citizens? The government is present to serve all the people of this nation and not just its party and the businessmen. The strike of Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, farmers, landless women, truckers, bus drivers, etc. is pointing to a new wave of change setting in. The oppressed are refusing to be ignored any further and strongly desire government action for its welfare. The wealth inequality is increasing and the lack of seriousness being displayed by the government with regard to the welfare schemes is signalling to the weak that the government is not representing their needs.

Our government should not lose touch with reality and ignore the weak and the poor. As Dewey once famously said, "The individuals of the submerged mass may not be very wise. But there is one thing they are wiser about than anybody else can be, and that is where the shoe pinches, the troubles they suffer from."

## Updates and Publications



### Events

1. **National Conference on 'Development and Governance in Contemporary India: Through the Adivasi Lens'**, jointly organized by NCAS and Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies, Mumbai University, October 6-7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The conference saw massive participation from scholars and academicians from different pockets of India. Several papers were presented and Dr. Virginius Xaxa delivered the key-note address.
2. **Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop, Hyderabad, 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> October, 2017**  
NCAS trained 22 participants from Andhra Pradesh and Telengana in collaboration with Centre for Rural Studies and Development. The theme for this workshop was 'People Centred Advocacy for SDGs'.

### Publications

1. SDG 2 & 3 in Maharashtra
2. Advocacy Primer on Nutrition

## Upcoming Events and Publications

### Events

1. Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop with CYSD, Bhubaneshwar (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November)
2. CLM Workshop - Palghar 23-25<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### Publications

1. NCAS Series on Sustainable Development Goals-Mind the Gap
2. Status Report on Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in India



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