



PRESS BRIEF

Do not misspend the budget share of Tribal and Dalits on urban infrastructure like court and jail buildings: Citizens appeal to budget makers

Other Key Suggestions

- 1. Earmark committed funds in the education budget to recruit necessary number of teachers to make children's right to compulsory education a reality.**
- 2. Introduce Kishan Provident Fund to rescue farmers during distress times or emergencies;**
- 3. Odisha way behind the Nation in terms of Doctor-Population ratio. Ten-fold increase in the number of doctors needed to match the national ratio. Hence provide adequately in the health budget to attract new and retain the existing doctors.**

Bhubaneswar, December 24, 2012: Keeping in view the fact that State Budget 2013-14 would soon undergo legislative debating, CYSD, on 24th of December organized a daylong State level Pre-Budget Consultation to collect citizens' views on the real needs and aspirations of people.

People from different walks of life starting from civil society leaders, academics, legislators, and government took part in the discussion and reflected on how to incorporate the needs and aspirations of people in the budgetary allocations of five specific areas like Elementary Education, Public Health, Agriculture, Social Security Schemes and Schedule Caste and Schedule tribes.

Participants deplored the fact that despite the commitment to provide free schooling to every child in the state, the annual allocations of School and Mass Education has seen no enhancement in the last two years. Whatever marginal increase is visible is on account of the transfer of the MDM scheme from the W&CD to the School and mass education. In reality, when one does not take the MDM funds into account, the plan allocation for the S & ME department has declined from 1488 cr during 2011-12 to 1427 cr during 2012-13.



The participants made an appeal to the budget makers to provide special funds for putting in place a facility need audit mechanism. This will help policy makers to identify what facilities need prioritization and addressing.

Experts also debated on the current deficiencies with regard to the rural health sector, agriculture and social security schemes. Citizens decried the increasing privatization of health services in the name of PPP and demanded that health being a state subject, state cannot wash its hands from shouldering the health needs of rural poor. Enhanced allocations are urgently necessary to meet with the growing gap between the demand for and the availability of doctors, beds, and medical equipments.

More importantly, diversion of tribal sub plan funds to generic schematic expenditures including building of courts and jails emerged as a major concern. Citizens unanimously demanded introduction of a special act on TSP and SCSP fund to check such diversion of funds. There is a need for publication of factsheet comprising tax collection data from durable, non-durable and consumable goods. It was voiced for the banning of lopsided expenditures.

The eminent professionals such as Academics, Political and social activists, state and district Civil Society representatives, Media and students leaders from various prominent colleges and Universities participated in the consultation. While Mr. P.K. Sahu, Chairman, CYSO chaired the consultation, the key expectations from the forthcoming budget were presented by Sri Pravas Mishra, Odisha Budget and Accountability Center. Prof. Bishnu Mahapatra, National University of Singapore, Prof. (Dr.) Bhagabata Patro, Berhampur University, Sri Panchanan Kanungo, Former Finance Minister, Odisha, former Minister Sri Ganeswar Behera, Sri Pratap Sarangi, Member of State Legislative Assembly were present on the occasion and provided their inputs for making the budget more pro-poor. On behalf of the Government of Odisha, Mr. Aswini Kumar Mishra, Special Secretary, Finance Department presented the State's direction with regard to the budget 2013-14.