



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Defence
Member of Consultative Committee on Defence
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps
Co-Chairman, Vigilance & Monitoring Committee, Bangalore Urban District
Vice Chairman, National Military Memorial Management Trust, Bangalore

23 February, 2016

Dear Arunji,

Sub.: Increased Allocations to the Ministry of Women & Child Development in Union Budget 2016-17

I write to you on behalf of parents around the country, child rights activists and the National Coalition to Protect Our Children (NCPOC), seeking an enhancement of budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, specifically in the areas to ensure child safety against abuse in general and sexual abuse in particular.

The budget allocations for the Ministry has been reducing year on year. In 2015-16, there was a 29% reduction in the budget for programme for children, and hence this request.

As you would be aware, several state Governments had written to you in July 2015, seeking extra funds for strengthening the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), the judiciary, the police and other institutions that are involved in ensuring a swift and effective response to the issue of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) – that affects an estimated 53.7% of India's children, according to some studies/reports.

In order to ensure that the Government puts in place systematic, swift and effective response to CSA incidents, it is crucial that these allocations in particular, be suitably increased. In particular, India's 676 districts will require Rs. 2 lakh per month per district to start the proposed counselling services within the District Child Protection Units, which are the first point of contact



for children who have faced abuse. The infrastructure costs associated with strengthening DCPUs alone, are estimated at *Rs. 162 crore*. An additional *Rs. 35 crore* is needed, at the rate of *Rs. 1 crore per state/UT*, for monitoring and awareness generation on CSA. The members of the NCPOC, who have been engaging with the Government to propose a solution set to the malaise since December 2015, urge your immediate intervention in this regard, to at least allocate an additional *Rs. 197 crores* suitably for this purpose.

Further, the schemes launched to address a range of wider child protection centric issues, including malnutrition, right to education, health, child protection and to support disadvantaged groups - the scheduled tribes and castes - have also faced significant cuts. Allocations have been significantly less than required, and these cuts have further jeopardized the Government's Child Protection mechanisms. The proposed "devolution" to the state budgets will not help, since State Governments continue to list CSA low on their list of priorities.

Additionally, as you would be aware, the Nirbhaya Fund was allocated *Rs. 1000 crores* in the last Budget. In terms of numbers alone, there are many more children that experience abuse than women who are sexually assaulted. The estimate that *53%* of children experience sexual abuse means approximately 220 million children in real terms. Taking into account the extra vulnerabilities and difficulties in cases of child abuse - and concurrent increase in costs for investigating, prosecuting and rehabilitating - the overall expenditure is going to be higher in cases of children.

Also, the new Juvenile Justice Act is now in place and will require additional infrastructure for its implementation. The current budget for integrated child protection stands at about *Rs. 500 crores*. This amount should be suitably increased to *Rs. 1500 crores* for an effective redressal of the problem. We request that the so far unutilized funds from the Nirbhaya Fund be channeled towards protecting children from abuse – as this could also serve towards ensuring a more efficient and effective use of resources.



Given the above facts, we, the members of the NCPOC, request that Budgetary allocations towards the Ministry of Women and Child Development, especially with regard to strengthening institutions involved in addressing the issue of Child Sexual Abuse, be suitably increased in the upcoming Budget, to make up for the reductions in the previous years.

Given the opportunity, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Co-signed by:

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

IProbono



Indian Law Society, Pune

FXB Suraksha India



Sahayam Intervention Centre



Counsel to Secure Justice

Mr. Sumit Mandhwani, Representative
Delhi Public School, International, Vasant Kunj

Shri Arun Jaitley
Hon'ble Finance Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

Copy to :

1. Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister
2. Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Hon'ble Minister of Women & Child Development