



**Housing and
Land Rights
Network**

**National Campaign
on Dalit
Human Rights**



PRESS RELEASE

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Home Minister's Admission of Diversion of Welfare Funds for Dalits in Delhi to Commonwealth Games Welcomed; Need for Investigation and Prosecution of Guilty Officials

The **National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)** and **Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN)** welcome Home Minister Mr. P. Chidambaram's admission in the Rajya Sabha on August 31, 2010, that Rs. 678.91 crore from Delhi's Special Component Plan (Scheduled Caste Sub Plan - SCP) have indeed been diverted to meet Commonwealth Games related expenses as well as the commitment of the Government of India to return the diverted funds to the SCP.

NCDHR and HLRN had exposed this shocking and illegal diversion of funds in May 2010. The fact was subsequently confirmed by the Delhi State Government's Department for the Welfare of SC/ST/OBC/Minorities, in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application on June 30, 2010.¹

Mr. Chidambaram affirmed that, **"In my prima facie view, using Rs. 678 crore out of SCSP (Scheduled Caste Sub Plan) to the Commonwealth Games infrastructure appears to be wrong."** His admission stands in stark contradiction to the position of the Delhi Government, including that of Delhi Chief Minister, Mrs. Sheila Dixit, who had in July emphatically said, "Let me assure you that not a single welfare programme has been compromised. So nothing that we have spent is out of the welfare schemes or out of any other fund." When questioned about the diversion of funds on 3 August 2010, she categorically denied it claiming, "There has not been any diversion of funds from SC/ST Welfare Schemes." Similar statements were also made by other government officials, including Delhi's SC/ST Welfare Minister Raj Kumar Chauhan who said "not a single percentage" of funds had been diverted and Congress MP Sandeep Dixit. Mr. Chidambaram's submission in the Rajya Sabha on 31 August regarding the diversion of SCP funds clearly exposes the deceit, corruption, unethical behaviour of the Delhi government. This has resulted in the systematic violation of human rights of Dalits in Delhi. It is shocking that officials at the highest level of the Delhi government continue to indulge in denial and subterfuge in all aspects of the Commonwealth Games.

Mr. Chidambaram's latest statements in Parliament also disprove the government's flawed argument that Scheduled Castes would indirectly benefit from the Commonwealth Games. It is clear that expenditure on projects such as the Queen's Baton Relay and flyovers hold no direct benefits for Scheduled Castes and are not legally permissible under the SCP. Mr. Chidambaram also admitted that the diversion went against the 2006 revised guidelines of the Planning Commission. HLRN and NCDHR have been demanding the return of the diverted funds to the SCP and in this regard would like to commend the Honourable Home Minister for his commitment that the funds will be **"brought back."** According to Miloon Kothari, Executive Director, HLRN, "The mere return of the funds, however, is not enough. The Home Minister has admitted to the crime but not who is responsible. The guilty must be punished. Only then will justice be served."

¹ For more information, including press releases and relevant documents on the issue, see: www.hic-sarp.org.

HLRN and NCDHR call for the following immediate measures:

- an expansion of the investigation being undertaken by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to include diversion of SCP funds, including a probe into how these decisions were sanctioned, by whom, and under which authority;
- the prosecution of officials who took the decision to divert and embezzle public money;
- an audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) of the diverted funds; and,
- immediate return of the funds to the SCP in the financial year 2010-2011, and allocation of funds for measures truly aimed at promoting the development of Scheduled Castes, one of the most marginalised groups in India, such as loans and support for manual scavengers, promotion of entrepreneurship schemes, provision of loans, training and education, construction of houses and shops;
- timely submission of the report of the Jadhav Committee established by the Planning Commission in June 2010 to review implementation of the SCP and Tribal Sub Plan in all states.

The admission by the Home Minister confirms not just the serious offence of diversion of funds allocated for the welfare of Scheduled Castes in Delhi but also highlights the rampant corruption, mismanagement of funds, the complete lack of accountability and transparency, and violation of the legal and moral obligations of the Government of Delhi.

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