

For the candidates of 15th Lok Sabha Election: Pre Election Public Manifesto of citizens of the Kosi Region

We, the citizens of the Kosi Region, would like to bring to the attention of the candidates of the 15th Lok Sabha Election, the main needs and views of this region, through this public manifesto.

In relation to floods and long term water logging

After the construction of the east and west banks on the Kosi river, people in about 386 villages within the Indian borders have had to face water logging for several months every year. As a result of this, the thousands of families who have to take refuge along the riverbanks live in very difficult conditions. There is an added problem of lakhs of people residing outside the banked region who live in fear of their lives during the monsoons, fearing a breach in riverbanks and resultant floods. In relation to this we demand that:

- On the principle ‘nobody be left out’, an integrated plan of flood management and preparation should be made such that not a single family is forced to face the disastrous consequences of floods. A serious exchange of views should take place with the local people in the making of such a plan and there should be an arrangement for enough discussions before the agreement of the plan.
- A complete evaluation of gains and losses of the policy of embankments should be done on the basis of experiences of the last five decades and arrangements should be made for compensation against losses of moveable / immovable property to families affected due to the breached embankments.
- At least 20 boats should be available for a population of every 1000 in the flood affected villages of the region; prior storage of at least 100 kilograms of food grains per family and suitable housing facility

should be arranged beforehand (with safe drinking water and wash room facilities for at least ten lakh persons) for families displaced due to water logging.

- An ‘early warning system’ should be in place in all flood affected villages and construction of at least one multi-storied structure on some raised ground in every village, where people can take shelter.
- A ‘Disaster Management Authority’ with suitable powers should be set up, which can take immediate action in case there are lapses in flood management, which guarantees distribution of relief items and works towards rehabilitation according to the Calamity Relief Fund/National Calamity Contingency Fund and which guarantees transparency in budget allocation and spending by government agencies for disaster management.
- Arrangements for pumping out water from national highways 31, 57, 106 and the railway zones in the region (Barauni Katihar, Mansi Darbhanga, Saharsa Forbesganj, Purnea Saharsa, Saharsa Mansi, Darbhanga Nirmali etc.) should be made.
- To ensure the free flow of waters of the river Kosi into the Ganga; and for the sand filled in River Ganga from Manihari to Kusaila and from Farrakka to Naugachia to be removed.

In relation to opportunities for development

The nearly 12 lakh people settled within the two embankments of Kosi are forced to live a life deprived of the basic amenities. The regions here need major interventions for development through systems like ‘Kosi Affected Development Authority’. Based on the national standards in force, we have the following demands:

- At least 40 Primary health centres and 240 sub health centres be established in the region (according to one primary health centre per 30,000 people and 1 sub health centre per 5000 people). In spite of a

population of nearly 12 lakhs within the embankments, at present, practically, there is not a single P.H.C or S.H.C working there.

- At least one animal health centre cum prime fodder distribution centre to be established in every division where veterinary doctor, medicines and good fodder are available.
- Establishment of at least one school with a sufficient number of classrooms and teachers on some raised ground within one kilometer in every village and establishment of at least one bank per a population of 15,000.
- The migrant workers of the region to be registered with the local panchayats and Inter State Migration (employment regulation) Act 1979 be implemented.
- Bihar Money Lenders Act, 1938, (with amendments of 1939 and 1972) be implemented and the widespread exploitative moneylending business be checked.
- That there be a regular implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), in the region and public safety and the reach of housing projects be extended. In case a minimum of 100 days of employment is not provided to families registered under NREGA, responsibility should be fixed and the minimum wages should be increased to at least Rs.150/-.
- For an integrated planned development of the region, provision of sufficient amount of electricity, facilities for irrigation, potable water and the means of maintaining cleanliness and arrangement of communication facilities.
- The following arrangements to remove the isolation of regions within the embankments.
 - A minimum of four lane transport arrangement within the villages next to the embankments on a daily basis.

- Ferries between the ends of the river and the rivulets at different points and arrangements for free travel.
- A road bridge to be constructed between Kiratpur and Rasiyari.
- National highway to be constructed from Birpur to Bihpur.
- Arrangements to remove sand from the fields of many flood affected villages of the region, especially to the south of the embankments (like the flooded Alamnagar and Chausa divisions in Madhepura; Rupauli division in Purnea; Kursala division in Katihar; Mahaeshkhut and Pasraha divisions in Khagaria and Birpur, Rangra, Navgachiya division in Bhagalpur)
- The region's fallow land to be allotted to the landless. Women's ownership also to be recorded in the land documents.
- A serious implementation of The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 for the alleviation of SC people who are victims of widespread episodes of atrocities and crimes.
- A social security pension and suitable employment opportunities to be provided for the physically handicapped, present in large numbers in villages of Kiratpur and Chanshyampur (e.g. Jamalpur village)
- The regions within the embankments to be given the status of a separate constituency under the vidhan sabha and lok sabha.

In relation to improving the systems of local administration

- The representatives of the Bihar Panchayati Raj institutions should be given financial power and authority to spend a minimum of Rs. 25,000 (and make a provision) in a non-centralised manner for disaster relief.
- The public representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions to be legally authorised to question the decisions and actions of administrative officers in relation to disaster management.