

## 2 Communist Party of India

The Communist Party of India, as its constitution states, "is the political party of the Indian working class, its vanguard, its highest form of class organisation, ... devoted to the cause of socialism and communism". Guided by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and applying it to the specific situation in India, it aims at achieving full democracy and socialism through peaceful parliamentary path. For this purpose it seeks to build a Left Democratic Alliance, an alternative to the Congress, to bring about "a radical realignment of political forces in favour of the working class, the peasantry and agricultural labour."

The programmes and policies of the CPI cover a wide range of constitutional, political, economic and social issues. These, as embodied in its 1996 election manifesto, are briefly stated below :

1. Strengthening of the parliamentary system and democratic rights of the people by abolishing Emergency Provisions or providing adequate safeguards against their misuse, restructuring Centre-State relations so as to make the States autonomous, retention of Article 370 granting special status to Jammu and Kashmir and creation of separate State of Uttarkhand.
2. Restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir and in north-eastern regions of the country through dialogue with the militants and insurgents, introduction of electoral reforms to curb the role of money and violence in elections.
3. To defend national unity and integrity, and to fight against all communalist and divisive forces for safeguarding secular democratic framework.
4. Abolition of bonded and child labour and implementation of measures for their rehabilitation and development.
5. Protection of the interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the people.
6. Implementation of measures to end injustices and atrocities against women, and establishment of gender equality by providing equal wages, status and opportunities to women in all walks of life.
7. Protection of the composite culture and secular character of the nation, and launching a movement to remove all feudal and unscientific ideas as well as evils of obscurantism, superstition and mysticism.
8. Development of the economy through self-reliance and on democratic lines—eliminating bureaucratic controls—and ensuring

public sector dominance in the economy.

9. Rejection of the policy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation of the national economy to protect economic sovereignty.

10. Strict enforcement of the land reform laws and protection of interests of workers and farmers.

11. Eradication of unemployment through more job-creation.

12. Providing education for all and protection of environment.

13. Reinvigorating India's policy of non-alignment, strengthening cooperation among the SAARC countries and South-South cooperation among the developing countries.

14. Rejects the Big Five's call to sign the Non-proliferation Treaty and building any defence link up with the United States.

### 3 Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Founded in 1964 by the Leftist faction in the CPI, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) prides itself on being a national party of India with a well-articulated and debated Marxist ideology and relevant policies appropriate to India. At present the CPM, with its strong mass base, is running three States—West Bengal (since 1977), Kerala and Tripura—having organised the Left Front in West Bengal and Tripura, Left and Democratic Fronts in Kerala.

To achieve its goal of socialism, the Party Programme envisages the establishment of People's Democracy led by the working class in alliance with the peasantry, fighting against the Indian bourgeoisie and its extension, the Congress. However, the original programme was later modified in the Calcutta Party Congress so as not to commit itself to an all-out confrontation with Congress on the grounds that the contradictions within the ruling class would lead some of its sections to join ultimately the People's Democratic Front which was to be a staging post to People's Democracy. Though the party programme, like that of the CPI, has not explicitly stated the possibility of peaceful transition in the country but at least by implication, it has accepted the constitutionality for the foreseeable future.

The CPM election manifesto issued on the eve of 1996 General Elections sets out in concrete terms the party's programmes and policies which cover a wide range of constitutional, political, social and economic issues:

1. Restructuring of Centre-State relations by giving more powers to the States, particularly fiscal powers.
2. Decentralisation of power upto the grass-roots levels.
3. Retention of Article 370 of the Constitution.
4. Strengthening of parliamentary democracy through introduction

of proportional system of representation, abolition of Article 356 of the Constitution, appointment of Governors after consultation with the chief ministers of States.

5. To safeguard economic sovereignty of the country reverse the policy of unbridled liberalisation and entry of multinationals, stop privatisation of the public sector and streamline public sector enterprises by giving them autonomy from bureaucratic control.

6. Take over and nationalise sick industries.

7. Ensure participation of workers in the management of industries and frame protective legislation for unorganised workers.

8. Take measures to curb price rise and ensure food security through expansion of the public distribution system.

9. Allowing entry to foreign investments...

priorities and...