

## EDITORIAL

*Dear Reader,*

*Nearly a month ago, RGICS presented before you a cover story on trafficking. The scope of the subject is such that it cannot be encapsulated in a few words. We then came up with the idea of working it out as a series on trafficking, where we could touch upon several aspects of trafficking. The first in this series is on trafficking and labour. About 14 million people are enslaved due to trafficking in India alone and this is based on rough estimates as authentic data on trafficking is not available. People who are trafficked meet different fates – some are pushed into prostitution, some end up as bonded labourers in brick kilns, carpet industry and tea estates, while many are exploited as domestic helps. While people within India are trafficked with states like Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh being the hotspots, India also acts as a conduit for traffickers in Nepal and Bangladesh. People from States which are poor performers on the economic front see higher incidents of trafficking. Women, children and those belonging to the marginalised sections of the society – like tribals, dalits are vulnerable to trafficking.*

*In this edition of Policy Watch, the cover story focuses on the economics of labour and trafficking. We bring you specific case studies from the textile mills of Tamil Nadu, mines of Meghalaya and the domestic helps in the cities. In each case we trace the story of trafficking – who is trafficked, how and why. It is scary to see that 90% of those trafficked are minors. The inhuman attitude of the traffickers and brokers is appalling and laws need to be made stringent to prevent exploitation of people in the name of labour.*

*Our other policy updates are on the real story behind make in India, the disconcerting news that India leads in hunger, the impact of Modi's visit to China and finally the issue of migrants.*

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## COVER STORY

### Of Lies, Deceit and Coercion: Trafficking for Forced Labour

*This is the second article in a series of 'Understanding Trafficking in India'. The following article offers an analysis of trafficking and its relationship with forced labour.*

#### Introduction:

On January 24 2015, Hyderabad police rescued around 200 minor children, working in bangle factories, trafficked from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The broker bought these children for bangle making by paying 5 to 10 thousands rupees to their parents. 11-year-old rescued Afridi said that they used to work 13-14 hours a day and earned around rupees 2000 a month. The case of Hyderabad is not unique-because millions of people in India are trafficked for forced labour (US department, 2013). The latest report on human trafficking by United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) reveals that the 40% of detected trafficked victims were used as forced labourers. The detection of trafficked victims for forced labour has increased from 32% in 2007 to 40% in 2011. Forced labour is especially prevalent in regions of Asia and Pacific where, as per the UNODC report, 64% of forced labourers are victims of human trafficking. In India, both domestic and cross border human trafficking have been used to supply labourers who are pushed into working in dismal conditions and poor pay much against their will. As per the report of U.S. Department of labour, India has largest share of forced labour in the world.

The industries of human trafficking and forced labour have a symbiotic relationship where the former provides for the latter. The attempt of the article is to understand the relation between human trafficking and forced labour. Understanding the complexity of connection between these illegal and immoral industries will help construct efficient mechanisms to eradicate human exploitation.

#### Trafficking for Forced Labour:

The ILO's Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) defines forced labour as:

*All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.*

ILO explains that the definition of forced labour encompasses trafficking in persons for the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation (ILO, 2014). As per 2012, ILO estimates, around 20.9 million people around the world have been trafficked for forced labour and sexual exploitation. 90% of forced labourers (18.7 million) are exploited in the private economy, by individuals or enterprises. Of these, 22% (4.5 million) are victims of forced sexual exploitation, and 68% (14.2 million) are victims of forced labour exploitation, primarily in agriculture, construction, domestic work, manufacturing, mining and utilities.

Table 2.1. Estimated annual profits from forced labour (US\$ billion)

Region	Forced Sexual Exploitation	Domestic work	Non Domestic labour	Total
Asia-Pacific	31.70	6.30	13.80	51.80
Latin America and the Caribbean	10.40	0.50	1.00	12.00
Africa	8.90	0.30	3.90	13.10
Middle East	7.50	0.40	0.60	8.50
Central and South-Eastern Europe and CIS	14.30	0.10	3.60	18.00
Developed Economies and EU	26.20	0.20	20.50	46.90
World	99.00	7.90	43.40	150.20

Source: ILO  
Components may not add up to the total because of rounding

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The brokers, moneylenders and other criminals involved in trafficking exploit victims for economic and non-economic gains at every stage of trafficking. Moreover, the captors gain hugely from victims by underpaying them, or not paying them at all, and sheltering them in inhumane conditions. According to the first ever estimate of the illicit trade in 2005 by ILO, the global profits made using forced labour were at least US\$44 billion per year, including the US\$32 billion from trafficking (ILO, 2014). In 2012, ILO revised estimate of profit by forced labour. ILO found that from 2005 to 2012 the profit of the industry has increased from US\$44 billion to US\$150.2 billion per year (an increase of 240% in seven years). The annual profit is high in Asia-Pacific region (US\$ 51.8) followed by Developed economies and EU (US\$ 46.9).

According to the UNODC report, men and boys are more vulnerable to forced labour trafficking. Globally 83% of men and boys detected were involved in some kind of forced labour. However, the share of women in forced labour is not less. 35% of total detected trafficked victims for forced labour were women and girls. According to ILO estimate, Asia-Pacific region have more than half of world's forced labourers. The region has around 11.7 million (56% of global total) people are in forced labour.

**Human Trafficking for Forced Labour in India:**

The estimates of human trafficking in India are in millions both for sexual exploitation and forced labour. The large unorganized economy in India acts as a market for trafficked forced labour. Agriculture is the largest industry in rural area that employ forced labour who are trafficked from various parts of India and neighboring countries. Industries such as brick kiln, stone quarry, mining, fire crackers, carpet weaving, begging, diamond industries, textile also employ labour trafficked from disadvantages regions. The estimation of illicit profit from human trafficking and forced labor in India is not available but the ever-growing incidents of human trafficking indicate that huge numbers are involved. According to a report of Asia Foundation, trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, bonded labour and forced marriages are more prevalent in India.

Number of studies and operations of anti-trafficking units in India reveals that children are highly vulnerable to forced labour. According to the UNODC report out of 1532 victims of trafficking detected by State of Delhi and local Anti-Human Trafficking Unit in year 2011-12, 1408 were exploited through forced labour. Of these, more than 97% of victims were minor. According to a report presented in Parliament by Ministry of Home Affairs in 2014, every year around one-lakh children go missing. 3.25 lakh children were missing between 2011 and 2014 (till June). More worrying is the fact that, half of them remain untraced (Tiwary, TOI, 2014). Human Right Commission of India in 2004 said the most of the missing children are trafficked.

Human trafficking for the purpose of forced labour especially recruitment of children is mostly done through organized crime. Employers of trafficked labourers in cities and at work locations recruits forced labour through middle-men and brokers. These brokers often make false promises to the parents of victims regarding their wages and working conditions. On many occasions, traffickers buy these child labours from their parents. It is also seen that criminals abduct children to supply forced labour to their business partner in cities.

Following three examples of human trafficking for forced labour in India illustrates horrible and inhumane exploitation of innocent children and girls that is hidden.

**1. Trafficking for Rat-Hole Mining in Meghalaya:**

The coal mining in Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya uses primitive technology called rat-hole mining. This entails clearing ground vegetation and digging pits ranging from 5-100 sq m to reach the coal seams. Makeshift bamboo ladders take miners down into the pits to chip away through two-feet-high tunnels where children are considered the right size to work (Hindustan Times, 2013). In its Report of Fact-Finding Mission of Human Rights Now (HRN), Japan accepts that trafficking is involved in the mines.

Coal miner in this area recruits minors from neighboring countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh through cross border human trafficking. According to Impulse NGO Network, approximately 70,000 children are brought from Nepal and Bangladesh every year. AHRC in its study found that truckloads of coal cross the Indian border to Bangladesh and return with children to work in mines. During the peak mining season (October to May), coal mine-owners or managers send information to these middle-men regarding their requirement of child labor in the mines. These middle-men go into villages and convince poor families to send

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their children to work in the coal mines. Children are lured into the mining industry with the promise of better wages and living conditions. In most cases, the children are purchased by middlemen or abducted and sold by gangs in Nepal and Bangladesh to the mining mafia in Meghalaya. The price for a child varies from 50 to 75 USD. The children reported that they were not informed of the exact nature of work to be performed, but agreed to come due to the lure of money. They are made to work mines in Jaintia Hills, which operate in remote locations (HRN, 2011; AHRC, 2010).

The children have to work for free, as their work is considered as repayment of the debt they owe, which is nothing more than the price at which they were bought. In other cases, middle-men demand up to 50% or more of the workers daily salary (AHRC, 2010).

**2. Trafficking for Domestic Servitude in Metro Cities**

Increasing urbanization, rise of nuclear families where both partners work have made the domestic help indispensable. A decade ago the domestic help was sourced from nearby slums or from villages, today this has become a ‘business’ with placement agencies becoming recruiting centers for domestic help, especially in metro cities. These agencies traffic girls and children from impoverished states in rural India and make them live under extreme exploitation, first at the placement agency’s ‘transit area’, and then at the employer’s house. Research shows that most victims are sourced from states like West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh. Some cases of trafficking from Nepal and Bangladesh were also recorded (Tehelka, 2008; Economics Behind Forced Labour Trafficking, 2014). Reliable figures on how many children and girls are trafficked for domestic servitude does not exist. As per the newspaper Daily News and Analysis, “Central government data notes that 126,321 trafficked children were rescued from domestic work in the year 2011-12 in the country. This was a rise of almost 27 % from the previous year.” (Daily News and Analysis, 2014).

Placement agencies hire sourcing agents in various villages who act as intermediaries. These intermediaries convince parents and children regarding benefits to convince parents and children regarding the benefits of working in big cities. Promises of better and lucrative job options and employment opportunities lure parents into sending their children with the brokers. As per a report of Global March against Child Labour about 70% children in domestic labour were convinced to leave while others were abducted. Number of kidnapped children itself is estimated to be anywhere around 2 to 5 million. (Economics Behind Forced Labour Trafficking, 2014).

Trafficking of girls and women from rural parts of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar for the purpose of domestic servitude is a business where the traffickers gains most. According to the report of Global March against Child Labour, traffickers procure and supply as much as 4-5 girls every month or two and make up to INR 500 – 20,000 per girl. The agencies themselves receive anywhere between 20,000-50,000 INR for placing the domestic labour in employer’s house. Many times the agencies collect the labour’s wages and continue to take commission from it. “On a conservative level, agencies make anywhere between Indian rupee (INR) 23 lakhs to INR 74 lakhs per year. Moreover, the likely market for child labour in the NCR region can cause circulation of as much as INR 205 crores to INR 1554 crores illegal money in the market.” In all this the domestic labour themselves are paid less than INR 1500 per month, which is not even a third of the minimum wages for unskilled labour (Economics Behind Forced Labour Trafficking, 2014). Employers, parents, village goons and police also benefit at different levels from trafficking. “The employers get consistent domestic worker at very low costs; parents can receive an advance during the time of trafficking and on occasion the salary of their child; further, the village goons and police may also take a cut from traffickers in order to turn a blind eye to trafficking” (Economics Behind Forced Labour Trafficking, 2014).

**3. Trafficking of Rural Girls for Textile Mills in Tamil Nadu:**

Tamil Nadu is home to some 1,600 spinning mills, with a workforce of more than 400,000 workers. 60% of the total labour force consists of girls and young women (Flawed Fabric, 2014). As per surveys an estimated 80% of the women workers were under 18, and 14% to 20% were under 14 years of age. Other studies show that 10 - 20% of the workers are child labourers (Feasibility Study Report, 2014).

Recruiters for job in these mills convince parents in impoverished rural areas around Tamil Nadu to send their daughters to the spinning mills. Many a times they target areas that have undergone crop failure where communities are more vulnerable (Flawed

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Fabrics, 2014). Research shows that girls are promised a well-paid job with comfortable accommodation and three nutritious meals a day. Moreover, a lump sum amount is promised at the end of three years of work. This is especially enticing for poor families who are forced to pay dowry when their daughters are married (Flawed Fabric, 2014; Feasibility Study Report, 2014). For each girl the recruiter gets INR 1,000 and if the girl works beyond six months, another INR 1,000 is paid. However, for the girls the life in the mills is not attractive (Flawed Fabric, 2014).

Once the contract of work is signed, the workers are in control of the owners. Research found out that workers who are sourced from outside the district in which the cotton mill is located are forced to live in hostels. They are not allowed to go outside the factory premises without permission. Mobile phones are not permitted and only a common hostel phone is to be used to contact family. Normally the supervisors in the mills forces them to work longer hours and pay much less than the minimum wages. Labourers are forced to work 60 hours a week or more, all year around and paid are 120 to 180 INR per day, which is much lower than minimum wage in Tamil Nadu, which is 283.80 rupees per day (Feasibility Study Report, 2014; Flawed Fabric, 2014).

**Conclusion**

Human trafficking for forced labour is an old age crime that persists in today's globalized world. Despite a wide web of anti-trafficking laws across the world and global coordination under guidance of United Nations, the trafficking for forced labour is on rise. Moreover, the detection of victims is almost negligible as compare to the large flow of regional, national and international human trafficking. In India, children (both boys and girls) are highly vulnerable to the trafficking for forced labour. Informal and illegal industries in cities and in remote areas have been recruiting children by alluring poor and disadvantaged parents or by abducting children. Other than the organized human trafficking for industries by brokers, middle-men and criminals distress trafficking is also a big problem in India. Media recently reported a story of a debt ridden farmer couple in Harda district of Madhya Pradesh who sold their two sons, aged 11 and 12, for Rs. 35,000 for a period of one year. District collector of Harda district said that in the month of April 2015, the local administration rescued five such children from forced labour (NDTV, 2015). There are scattered but enough evidences of human trafficking for forced labour in India to suggest that a large section of both feudal agrarian and industrial economic activities is involved in this crime. The complex relation of human trafficking and forced labour makes it difficult to crack this nexus. In order to eliminate any form of trafficking we must go beyond hunting movements of human trafficking. The state policy must address problems of source area such as poverty, livelihood, starvation and other forms of deprivation in effective manner.

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## HEADLINES

### State of Food Security in the World 2015: India Leads World Hunger, Overtakes China

(*The Economic Times*, May 28, 2015)

Revealed in a report, State of Food Security 2015, released by the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome, on May 27, India accounts for the highest estimated number of undernourished people in any single country, with an estimated 194.6 million, or about one in every four such people in the world. While the number of undernourished people has fallen by 216 million between 1990-92 and 2015, from just over a billion to 795 million, India's contribution to this fall has been small, with its numbers down by just 15.5 million. In the process, India has overtaken China, which has cut its numbers from 289 million in 1990-92 to 133.8 million in the latest estimates.

India missed both the millennium development goal as well as the goal laid out at the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996, when governments committed to halving the absolute number of under nourished people by 2015. Of the 172 countries that were being monitored, 29 including Nepal met the WFS goal. China's reduction in the number of undernourished people has ensured that the south-east Asian region contributed most to the decline. Though India and China contributed to the overall hunger reduction in the developing regions, the highest burden of hunger in absolute terms was found to be in Southern Asia. The slow reduction in India, in particular, had a significant influence on results for the region.

The notable exceptions in the region were Bangladesh and Nepal. Bangladesh has reached the MDG target with the National Food Policy framework adopted in the mid-2000s being given the credit for this achievement. Nepal achieved both MDG as well as WFS target and is inching towards bringing it down to less than 5 per cent of the population.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/dubious-distinction-india-leads-world-hunger-list-overtakes-china/articleshow/47453789.cms>

Date accessed: 28.5.2015  
(Kasturi Mishra)

### SMEs Feel Lost in Make in India Days

(Mayank Mishra & Sudipto Dey, *Business Standard*, May 27, 2015)

Most of small businesses feel left out during the set of flagship programmes and announcements by the government

over the past year. Many small business owners feel the "Make in India" programme did not highlight the contribution of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in building the country's manufacturing prowess. They further added that 'while efforts to improve the business environment did strike a chord, changes on the ground were still some time away.' Most entrepreneurs feel that very little improvement in the ease of doing business has happened.

One of the reasons for the rising concerns of these owners is that the ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises does not find adequate weight in the government's scheme of things. "The ministry needs to be empowered, its efforts to bring in change are often stuck in other ministries," said an SME owner.

The expansion plans of Rohit Kanthale, managing director of Varanasi-based Fibroin Weave are on hold, which clocked a turnover of Rs 5.5 crore last year selling saris and kurtis under the Bunkar and Plush brands. He said, "I know of many schemes launched by government. But I cannot take benefit of any one. Either the eligibility criteria are hard to meet or the schemes have little for companies like ours." He mentioned that he has not seen any improvement on the front of access to raw material, skilled manpower and credible sources to raise capital in the last one year.

Gaurav Munjal, managing director of Ludhiana-based Hero Eco, which makes eco-friendly electric vehicles and bicycles said, 'small businesses appreciate transparency in clearances, but rising input cost is a hindrance when competing in the global market.'

Most SME owners that *Business Standard* spoke to are optimistic of improved sentiment. They expect the improvement to take place in couple of years. They also expect that any improvement in standards of product s& services will help SMEs to stand up to the inflow of goods into the country, while improving their export potential.

Indian MSME sector consists of approximately 45 million units and produces more than 6,000 products, ranging from traditional to high-tech items. It employs around 101 million people and contributes 8-9% to the country's GDP. Thus, government needs to re-energise such a crucial sector.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/smes-feel-lost-in-make-in-india-days-115052700035\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/smes-feel-lost-in-make-in-india-days-115052700035_1.html)

Date Accessed: 28.05.2015  
(Shruti Issar)

## ECONOMY

### Macro Economic Dimension of India

**Table 1: General Inflation Rates in Indian States: May 2015 (%)**

States	Rural	Urban	General
<b>All India</b>	<b>5.59</b>	<b>4.69</b>	<b>4.99</b>
<b>Northern Region</b>			
Jammu & Kashmir	10.36	4.61	7.98
Himachal Pradesh	10.72	4.14	8.99
Punjab	9.66	6.31	8.02
Chandigarh	13.33	1.89	2.18
Uttarakhand	4.19	3.88	5.43
Haryana	7.24	6.68	8.67
Delhi	6.72	6.21	8.24
Uttar Pradesh	4.21	3.53	5.83
<b>Western Region</b>			
Rajasthan	6.97	6.57	4.94
Gujarat	3.67	4.61	9.25
Maharashtra	7.63	4.87	8.44
Goa	6.23	7.04	3.26
Lakshadweep	15.34	4.25	15.37
Daman & Diu	13.21	11.44	5.08
Dadra Nagar & Haveli	20.5	6.3	15.93
<b>Central Region</b>			
Madhya Pradesh	4.74	6.68	4.03
Chattishgarh	9.05	5.44	4.22
<b>Southern Region</b>			
Andhra Pradesh	8.52	4.78	9.23
Karnataka	6.75	4.58	2.05
Kerala	5.95	3.12	3.37
Tamil Nadu	4.51	3.97	9.66
Puducherry	15.26	8.7	2.23
Andaman & Nicobar Island	14.28	3.77	8.97
<b>Northeastern Region</b>			
Arunachal Pradesh	3.69		
Assam	4.55	4.08	3.37
Manipur	19.48	6.78	21.3
<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>-1.3</b>	<b>8.47</b>	<b>-4.93</b>
Mizoram	8.11	13.77	9.55
<b>Nagaland</b>	<b>15.51</b>	<b>5.16</b>	<b>2.19</b>
Tripura	8.37	-1.17	6.43
Sikkim	9.53	2.98	8.6
<b>Eastern Region</b>			
Bihar	4.69	4.12	0.16
Jharkhand	4.36	3.64	5.18
West Bengal	-0.28	2.14	1.68
Odisha	9.84	2.81	9.43

- Source: State-wise monthly inflation rates are estimated from year on year Consumer Price Index (CPI) data of MOSPI.
- There is one month time lag in CPI data (From the month February 2015 onwards the New Series is introduced with base 2012=100) provided by MOSPI, Government of India.
- The 2014 May data at state-level with base 2010 is here converted to new base 2012 with linking factors of MOSPI 1.22, 1.20 and 1.21 for rural, urban and combined respectively

## ECONOMY

### Ease of Business a Difficult Job

(Mayank Agarwal, Remya Nair, *Live Mint*, May 25, 2015)

Doing business in India can sap the strength of the most resourceful. Bureaucratic red tape, poor infrastructure, corruption and archaic labour laws have long thwarted entrepreneurship and stymied economic growth. Not surprisingly, the World Bank has ranked India close to the bottom in its ease of doing business index: 142 among 189 countries. After coming to power in May 2014, the Prime Minister announced his government's mission to improve the nation's ranking in the index to Top 50. While major reforms, such as the goods and services tax (GST) and the land acquisition bill are yet to get Parliament approval, the government has taken a series of small steps. The initial euphoria among businessmen, however, has somewhat diminished with the government's failure to quickly push through major economic legislation through Parliament and unexpected tax demands on foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).

To ensure transparency, the Government has focused on projects such as eBiz, which was introduced before it came to power but had never got the required push. EBiz is an online platform that aims to provide a single-window clearance mechanism to enable businesses to apply for all required approvals, in a bid to improve transparency.

While these steps have been welcomed by business owners, environmental activists have criticized some of them. "Doing good business actually means doing environmentally responsible business. I wish the government recognizes this," said advocate Sanjay Upadhyay, who runs Enviro Legal Defence Firm. He further added that "We are not against development at-all, we just want the government to make environmental compliance cheaper than non-compliance."

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/1xg8SwjrtwZdj0JxJmsmJ/Ease-of-business-a-difficult-job.html>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Devyani Bhushan)

### India Inc Expects More Reforms in Major Areas from Modi Government

(*Deccan Herald*, May 25, 2015)

Industry expects some major initiatives and forward movement in key sectors of road, power, coal, non-renewable energy to be essentially led by the public sector investment in the next two quarters by the NDA government in the coming years. ASSOCHAM observed that the rural

economy needs immediate support in the absence of market risks and unfavourable weather conditions with attendant issues for a host of industrial sectors like farm equipment, motorcycles, sugar mills, food processing and fertilisers.

According to the industry assessment, for kick starting the economic growth, domestic consumer demand has to be revived with improving the sentiment on employment opportunities. Sectors like tourism, aviation are some of the low hanging fruits on which the government has moved ahead as they have huge employment opportunities.

Industry, however, is of the view that a holistic view must be taken about the stressed assets in banks to check non-performing assets. "But some of the innovative initiatives like monetisation of gold would bring in much-needed stability in the country's balance of payment by way of reduction in gold imports," said ASSOCHAM President Rana Kapoor said. "Besides, there are hopes that the GST Bill would finally move towards being a law," Kapoor said.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/479524/india-inc-expects-more-reforms.html>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Devyani Bhushan)

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

### POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

#### Hindutva Voices Undermine Governance Agenda

(Prashant Sood, *Statesman*, May 25, 2015)

For a government that assumed office on the promise of good governance and development, the first year in office has been marked by several intemperate remarks on Hindutva from a few BJP ministers, MPs and functionaries. A string of controversies over the past year, however, threatened to take focus away from the government's "good governance" agenda.

Right-wing fringe elements, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) functionaries and a few BJP ministers and MPs made remarks that created an uproar within and outside parliament. The ghar wapsi programme in Agra last December, by an outfit linked to the RSS, the ideological fountainhead of the BJP, stoked a major controversy. TV channels brought the event into homes across the country which led to disruptions in parliament, with the government stating that it does not support either conversions or re-conversions. It also suggested a bill against conversions. Attacks on churches in Delhi also drew wide media attention, with the government clarifying that these had "no communal overtones" and were "law and order problems". Bharatiya Janata Party MP Sakshi Maharaj terming Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse as a "patriot" and Union Minister Giriraj Singh's remarks on Congress president Sonia Gandhi's colour of skin kicked up controversies, forcing these parliamentarians to issue regrets. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's purported remarks on Mother Teresa, his views on ghar wapsi and remarks of Sangh functionaries about the cultural identity of Indians being Hindutva also led to controversies. BJP MP Yogi Adityanath's remarks about "love jihad" and his demand that non-Hindus should be banned from entering Har Ki Pauri in Haridwar also led to criticism from Opposition parties.

Prime Minister, who had faced criticism over his "silence" on the activities of right-wing elements and incidents of attacks on churches, told a gathering of Christian leaders in February that his government will ensure complete freedom of faith and will not allow any religious group to incite hatred against others "overtly or covertly". The opposition parties also criticised the Government stating that "incendiary remarks" were often uttered even by ministers against entire communities and institutions.

<http://www.thestatesman.com/news/india/hindutva-voices-undermines-governance-agenda/65257.html>

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(Devyani Bhushan)

#### To Quell Labour Unrest, Smart Cards for Unorganised Sector in the Works (Anil Sasi, *The Indian Express*, May 26, 2015)

In the face of the fact that the country is facing a possibility of nationwide protests by trade unions, the NDA government has plans to announce an umbrella social security scheme for the unorganised labour sector workers to placate the labour unions and opposition parties, who have accused the government of being anti-labour. Currently, unorganised sector workers account for an estimated 82.7 per cent of the country's total labour force. This section has largely been devoid of the benefits of labour regulations and most social schemes. Under the proposed scheme, this section is expected to get multiple facilities, through the medium of new cards called U-WIN, or the unorganised worker's identification number.

The card is being touted as a starting point for schemes that would extend life and disability cover- including health and maternity benefits and also, old-age protection- for unorganised sector workers. The strike called by trade unions is meant a protest against the changes proposed by the Centre in the Industrial Disputes Act and other labour regulations, the Centre's disinvestment policy and the recent proposal to allow investment of Employees Provident Funds Organisation (EPFO) funds into equities.

According to an official from the labour ministry, the Government, through the registration and issuance of U-WIN cards, also wants to create a central database of all unorganised sector workers in the country, since details of these workers are usually inadequate, which makes it difficult to enrol them for government schemes. As of now, these cards would be issued by the district administration of individual states, who have been asked to devise their own roll-out plan. The project is said to be funded largely by the Centre and will then be linked to Aadhar and bank accounts of these workers. According to officials the aim here is to cover all unorganised workers under social security scheme benefits covered under the Unorganised Worker's Social Security Act, 2008. The aim also is to extend primary, preventive and even secondary health services to unorganised workers, alongside life-insurance and pension through the single U-WIN card. To register for the card a person must at least be 14 years of age and must issue a declaration that he or she is in unorganised worker. According to officials linking the card with Aadhar and bank account numbers will provide a common platform for these workers to access social security schemes implemented by various departments and ministries.

"The card, launched on December 25, 2014 in Gujarat on a pilot basis, will eventually replace the earlier smart card

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

issued under the Rashtriya Swastha Bima Yojana. As per latest data from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), the country's unorganised labour accounts for 82.7 per cent of the total labour force, including a significant share of workers engaged in low income generating activities." To start the process of issuing these cardsthe labour ministry is coordinating with state labour departments. Based on the consultation held with state labour secretaries guidelines for registration of unorganised workers have already been circulated to them. To check the possibility of duplication in registration, in case of migrant workers, the U-Win cards will be authenticated by Aadhar and a biometric de-duplication software that would be in-built in the UIDAI database.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/to-quell-labour-unrest-smart-cards-for-unorganised-sector-in-the-works/#sthash.Uu1Dn90t.dpuf>

Date Accessed: 27.05.2015  
(Rohit Chauhan)

## GOVERNMENT

### Prime Minister's Visit to China: The Myths and Realities

(R.S Kalha, IDSA, May 25, 2015)

As the dust settles after the visit of Prime Minister to China, it is time to take a calm and dispassionate look at where we stand in the context of Sino-Indian relations. There was no change in the Chinese position, both on the final settlement of the boundary question as also on Modi's request for early clarification of the Line of Actual Control [LAC], was amply clear. Prime Minister was clearly disappointed with the Chinese attitude which was spelt out in the presence of the Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, when he exhorted China to "re-consider its approach on some of the issues that hold us back from realizing the full potential of our partnership". It would be recalled that since November 1985 the Chinese have been insisting that India give "concessions in the eastern sector" for the boundary talks to proceed further.

On the trade deficit issue, Chinese commentators tried, once again, to put the onus back on India. Prime Minister during his visit did set up a 'task force' to resolve ticklish trade issues, but it remains incomprehensible why the Chinese have been allowed to dump steel in India without corresponding measures. Chinese steel exports to India have gone up by 71 per cent this year. Both President Xi and PM Li did promise to bring down the trade deficit, but it remains to be seen how effective their promise is. Whether the Chinese were impressed by Modi's intervention also remains to be seen.

On regional strategic issues, there seems to have been little movement. Although the PM stressed that "China's support for India's permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council, and for India's membership of export control regimes like Nuclear Suppliers Group will do more than just strengthen our international cooperation", the Chinese simply acknowledged India's desire without any commitments. Thus giving forward traction to Sino-Indian relations remains a formidable task.

[http://www.idsacommments/PrimeMinisterModisVisitt\\_oChina\\_rskalha\\_250515.html](http://www.idsacommments/PrimeMinisterModisVisitt_oChina_rskalha_250515.html)

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(Devyani Bhushan)

### Disclose Travel Expenses of Ministers: CIC Panel

(The Hindu, May 24, 2015)

A Chief Information Commission (CIC) - constituted panel asked that the details of domestic and foreign visits of Union Ministers be proactively disclosed and updated in light of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) refusing to disclose information about expenses incurred on foreign visits by the Prime Minister of India.

The CIC-constituted panel noted that voluntary disclosures of information have been "below par." The committee, consisting of former CIC A.N. Tiwari and Information Commissioner M.M. Ansari, presented a report titled "Transparency Audit: Towards and Open and Accountable Government." The committee asked the government to disclose details regarding places visited, institutions/individuals interacted with, members in the official delegation, modes of conveyance, travel expenses and sources of funding and outcomes of visit. "These disclosures should be updated once in every quarter," added the committee.

It is to be noted that the PMO has been refusing to disclose information related to expenses incurred on foreign visits made by Shri. Narendra Modi, making various excuses such as the records sought are 'vague.'

The panel said that, "a democratic government keen on empowering the people and delivering to them goods and services speedily and efficiently, cannot allow walls of secrecy to separate them from the very people they serve."

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/reveal-travel-expenses-of-ministers-cic-panel/article7241710.ece>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Afreen Faridi)

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Mr. Modi's War on Welfare

(G. Sampath, *Hindu*, May, 26, 2015)

It is now an established fact that one area where the NDA administration has acted with a sense of purpose, urgency and resolve is in slashing social expenditure. Be it education, health, agriculture, livelihood security, food security, panchayati raj institutions, drinking water or the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes sub-plan, central government funds earmarked for social protection have been cut.

The NDA's various Pradhan Mantri Yojanas, in contrast, put the onus of social security on those who lack it the most, the poor themselves. Launched by the Prime Minister on August 15 last year, the Jan Dhan Yojana has been touted as an initiative for financial inclusion, a slippery term that can be spun to say one thing and mean another. It could mean real financial empowerment, which is what it is being projected as. What it entails in reality is having your income, however meagre, made accessible (via the banking system) to global financial capital, which has run out of options in the economies that have finished emerging and don't know what to do. None of the NDA's Schemes are rights-based, which means they can be wound up at any time, or the benefits denied on technical grounds. These Schemes are contributory, and earnings-linked. If the poor don't have jobs, they won't have an income, and if they don't have an income, they won't have money to put in the Jan Dhan accounts, (which is why 58 per cent of them are lying empty). And if they don't have money to put into their accounts, they will default on their insurance premiums and pension payments and if they default, well, there ends their social security from the Pradhan Mantri Yojanas. All the three schemes the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, and the Atal Pension Yojana operate on an auto-debit basis from the Jan Dhan bank account. All three state categorically in their rules that if there is insufficient balance to keep the insurance/pension plan going, the benefits will cease.

But the NDA dispensation is under pressure to obey the rules of fiscal correctness. Yet fiscal discipline is not the only agenda behind the savage spending cuts in its very first year. The aim is also to prepare the ground for fundamentally altering the default settings of social welfare in India from a rights-based one that honours the dignity of the poor, to a paternalistic one that will push thousands more of the landless poor into a debt trap, depress rural wages, and make them ever more dependent on government charity, and at the brutal mercy of the unorganised labour market.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/modi-government-is-determined-to-dismantle-the-twopronged-welfare->

[paradigm/article7244983.ece?homepage=true](http://paradigm/article7244983.ece?homepage=true)

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Devyani Bhushan)

### EDUCATION

#### Government is Failing to Reform

#### Higher Education

(Alya Mishra, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 26, 2015)

This article casts light on the lack of a clear higher education direction and expresses concern over the government's repeated attempts to take control of some of India's best institutions, undermining their institutional autonomy, and centralising control of higher education. While a National Policy for Education to be formulated was announced along with committees to look into the functioning of the University Grants Commission, the HRD Minister is sitting on a pile of files and has delayed key appointments.

There is a huge backlog of appointments of vice-chancellors and other vacant senior posts in publicly-funded universities. In March 2015, the PMO rejected the appointment of physicist Sandip Trivedi as the new director of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, on "technical grounds". This was the first time in the history of the premier research institution that a director's appointment was vetoed by the PMO, which also vetoed an appointment committee's choice of director for the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research in Bangalore, which has not had a director for over a year now. According to a Ministry Director, many high-level university appointments are stuck because they have not been cleared either by the PMO or the RSS. March 2015, saw the resignation and its subsequent withdrawal of Anil Kakodar, chairman of the standing committee of the IIT Council, and December 2014 saw the tendered resignation of Raghunath K Shevgaonkar, director of IIT Delhi, after a politicised disagreement with the HRD Ministry. Earlier in July 2014, the HRD Ministry's controversial appointment of RSS-linked Y Sudershan Rao as Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) had received criticism from academicians over his ineptness for the position. Under Mr. Rao, the ICHR has surprisingly disbanded the editorial board and advisory committee for its prestigious in-house journal Indian Historical Review, a move that has received flak from senior academicians as being detrimental to the institution's quality.

Besides, while the government has announced new IITs, IIMs and AIIMS in less prosperous states, the challenges,

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

including availability of land, building infrastructure and recruiting quality faculty, remain. Additionally, a 38% vacancy rate in premier institutions such as the IITs, and 30% to 40% in central universities seriously undermines their quality. Key appointments, including the head of NCERT, and the head of the Central Board of Secondary Education have been delayed. Romila Thapar, eminent historian, has said that the government is pursuing “reckless reforms”. Referring to the Central University Act, she has accused the government of bringing in, without consultations, a “centralisation of the education system that will reduce universities and colleges to teaching shops and coaching centres.” Academicians complain that the Ministry must stop meddling in the affairs of academia and encourage academic autonomy.

<http://chronicle.com/article/Indias-Prime-Minister-Is/230391?cid=megamenu>

Date accessed: 27.5.2015  
(Kasturi Mishra)

### Modi Government Playing Politics at the Cost of School Children

(*Scroll, May 24, 2015*)

A majority of children across India are enrolled in government schools and most of them hail from the poorest and most socially marginalized groups. Historically getting children into school has been a national priority and the numbers have begun to look very positive over the past few years. This is partly because education has been made a Fundamental Right and because programs like the Midday Meal Scheme and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, financed by the Central Government and implemented by the States, have created some incentives for parents to send children to school.

Unfortunately, the National Democratic Alliance government has all but pulled the plug on the programmes that aim to keep the poorest children in school. Even as the Centre drastically slashed budgetary support for social development programmes linked to childhood development and school education in this year's budget, senior government ministers and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders are using words such as “growth and development” while giving an account of their year in government.

The Central Government, in pursuance of a flawed idea of development, clearly believes that social development – basic education, affordable health care and other essentials for fully participating in the life of a democratic nation – is not part of “the development agenda” and not the government’s problem to fix. To justify cuts in budgetary

support to education, the government cites the 14th Finance Commission award which gives states a higher share of tax revenues. Even if one accepts the argument that the Finance Commission award will offset the cuts and that state governments will make the same allocations to these programmes as before, the changes needed to keep these centrally funded and monitored programmes running will take time. However, bureaucratic processes, in poorer states, are not designed for quick responses to sudden changes. As a result programs and their final beneficiaries – poor school children – will take a hit.

A report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, chaired by Smt. Satyanarayan Jatiya, tabled in Parliament on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, notes that “in the year 2015-'16, the plan allocation has been reduced by a whopping 24.68 per cent”. The report called into question the commitment of governments to the “universalization of quality elementary education for all.” The report also stated that “the Committee, in the new scenario, feels worried about the pace as well as scale of the on-going schemes. There is no clarity regarding the amount of money that the States will allocate to bridge this gap and more importantly spread over what period of time. They might take quite a while before they are able to finalize/prioritize their activities. The fate of these schemes is hangs in balance while the Department [MHRD] continues to sound helpless. . The Department of course, pleaded with the Committee to recommend the release of some minimum funds to sustain the schemes till the plans by the States are finalized.

The Parliamentary Committee has warned that the budgetary cuts in school education and child development programs could come at a ‘humongous social cost’. In the case of social development, the Modi government wants to leave implementation of social welfare programmes to the states, and hold on to clever politics. Since the political gains of social development programs accrue to state governments and by pulling the plug on them, the Centre loses nothing, the Modi government is playing politics on crucial issues like education and children’s welfare. “State governments that cannot fill the funding gaps will face the political heat, while the Central government creates the space for itself to do deals with individual states, through special grants. This is clever politics, at the expense of the country’s poorest.”

<http://scroll.in/article/729556/modi-government-is-playing-clever-politics-at-the-cost-of-indias-school-children>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Afreen Faridi)

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

### URBAN

#### DDA Land Pooling Policy Approved

(*Business Standard*, May 27, 2015)

The Ministry of Urban Development by approving regulations for Land Pooling Policy in Delhi has paved way for development of about 100 residential projects across the outer part of the capital. The development across outskirts of Delhi will bring in about 14-16 lakh units of housing. The policy of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was approved by the ministry with 5 amendments as per the sources. The amendments include:

- Timely external development of necessary infrastructure by the DDA
- Enabling farmers in paying the development charges
- Ensure mandatory housing for economically weaker sections (EWS)
- Transparency in allotment of returnable land
- Full utilisation of approved floor area ratio (FAR)

As per the Delhi Master Plan-2021, DDA in association with the private sector will undertake urbanisation of about 20,000 hectares of land. In the association of private sector and DDA, private sector will be responsible for assembling land which would then be made available to the DDA for redevelopment.

Over last 10 years DDA has been unable to acquire any land, which mandated the need for such a policy, under the Delhi Master Plan 2021. About 20,000-25,000 acres of land will be unlocked through 95 villages. The Master Plan 2021 seeks to build housing units to cater to the needs of rising population of Delhi, which is expected to reach 23million by 2021 as against present 17 million.

As per the amendments, for any delay beyond the date of completion of the development by Land Pooling Agency, DDA shall be liable to pay a penalty. Either penalty of 2 per cent of External Development Charges (EDC) per year for the first two years and 3 per cent of EDC per year thereafter to the Developer Entities (DE) (farmers/land owners) or five years whichever is later till the external development works are completed. Further farmers unable to pay EDC, will be allowed to give up a part of the returnable residential land and will get 35 per cent of the returnable residential land instead of 43 per cent.

Developer Entities shall mandatorily undertake construction of houses for EWS, as independent block amounting to 15 per cent FAR over and above the maximum permissible residential FAR (400 per cent).

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/dda-land-pooling-policy-approved-115052700052\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/dda-land-pooling-policy-approved-115052700052_1.html)

Date Accessed: 28.05.2015  
(Shruti Issar)

### ENERGY

#### Global Energy Subsidies Touch a New High

(*Down To Earth*, May 21, 2015)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its latest estimates, has projected the total global energy subsidies at US \$5.3 trillion. This number is more than double of what was predicted by the IMF in 2011 and amounts to about 6.5 per cent of the global GDP. The amount spent on subsidies for global energy is higher than the total global government expenditure on healthcare, which the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates as comprising six per cent of the global GDP. The IMF defines energy subsidies as the difference between what consumers pay for using energy and the “true costs” of producing that energy plus the government taxes subject to energy usage. This includes the supply costs borne by the producer and the costs of damage to health and environment due to energy consumption.

Energy consumption has been in focus in recent years due to growing concerns over global warming and the detrimental impacts of fossil fuel utilization on health. The issue of energy subsidy gains relevance as fossil fuels have been strongly linked to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and high levels of air pollution. As more and more reports reveal the shocking numbers of deaths due to air pollution, subsidies on energy are under a scanner. “A 2014 report by the WHO estimated that a total of seven million people had died from exposure to air pollution in 2012. This number corresponds to one in eight deaths globally.”

The IMF has classified energy subsidies as pre- and post-tax subsidies. Pre-tax subsidies refer to the concessions afforded to people and companies on the expenditure to supply energy and post-tax subsidies are the environmental, health and other costs associated with energy consumption that are harder to measure. “According to IMF, pre-tax subsidies added up to a total of US \$542 billion (0.7 per cent of world’s GDP in 2013) but are projected to fall to US \$333 billion (0.4 per cent GDP) in 2015 on grounds of declining energy prices. Meanwhile, the post-tax subsidies, by comparison, have been estimated at a massive US \$4.9 trillion (6.5 per cent GDP) for the year 2013 while projections for 2015 are slated at an even higher \$5.3 trillion (6.5 per cent). The disparity with respect to the US \$2

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

trillion estimate that was set for 2013 by the IMF in their 2011 report has been explained through the cumulative inclusions of inflation and income growth (40 per cent), country-specific environmental damage, air pollution and traffic congestions (30 per cent) and erstwhile unknown damages (15 per cent). The final 15 per cent is accounted for by incorporating new evidence put forth in the 2014 WHO report linking air pollution to various diseases.”

Coal is the most inefficient resource among major energy sources included in the report. It accounted for 40 per cent of the global total post-tax subsidies at for 2013 at US \$2 trillion or 2.7 per cent GDP. The subsidies on coal are projected to reach US \$2.5 trillion in 2015 (3.1 per cent GDP) through local pollution and carbon emissions. In emerging and developing countries, having high levels of coal usage, account for about half of the total post-tax subsidies in 2013. Energy subsidies amount to more than 16 per cent of the GDP on an average in the region. The IMF report underlines the urgent need for country- and region-specific reforms in energy pricing to more effectively reflect and tackle the costs of energy consumption.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/global-energy-subsidies-touch-new-high>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Afreen Faridi)

## ENVIRONMENT

### NDA Government Unclear on Implementation Strategy for Climate Change

(Down to Earth, May 25, 2015)

Since the Modi Government came to power there has been a lot of speculation about its seriousness regarding climate change. The Prime Minister's remarks at various forums have shown a lot of inconsistency—from “Climate has not changed. We have changed” to “India can offer natural leadership on climate change”. Although there have been a number of announcements domestically, there is much to be done if they are to fulfil their commitments.

- The government indicated it would potentially include four new missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, but this is yet to be finalised.
- The National Adaptation Fund is yet to become operational.
- Big targets were set for renewable energy. But the sector still needs a clear strategy and roadmap for how the targets will be achieved.
- Doubling of the coal cess to fund clean energy projects

was expected to give a major boost to renewable energy investments. But funds are being diverted to other environment cleaning projects.

#### National Adaptation Fund: one year since the announcement, no progress on utilisation of funds

In July 2014, the Finance Minister had announced an allocation of Rs 100 crore for a newly established National Adaptation Fund which would assist national and state level activities to meet the cost of adaptation measures that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse affects of climate change. In 2015, an additional Rs 150 crore was announced in the 2015-16 Budget however, this fund is yet to be operationalised.

#### Bold targets for Renewables, but implementation is yet to be seen

The Centre has set highly ambitious targets to achieve—100 GW of solar capacity, 60 GW of wind power, 10 GW of biomass and 5 GW of hydro projects by the year 2022. However, the absence of a clear roadmap, structural deficiencies in India's renewable apparatus and bureaucratic hurdles will make it hard for these targets to be met.

#### Will India's doubling the cess on coal bring sustainable change?

In its latest financial budget, the NDA government doubled the coal cess from Rs 100 a tonne to Rs 200 a tonne. The coal tax fills the coffers of the National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF), which has already mopped up around Rs 17,000 crore (\$2.76 billion). “By September last year, 46 clean energy projects worth Rs 16,511.43 crore (\$2.7 billion) were recommended for funding out of the NCEF, but disbursement has been slow.” Criticism had also been mounted about the use of funds for other environmental projects such as cleaning of the Ganga.

#### Wind energy, health, waste to energy conversion and coastal management yet to see light of day

The executive committee on climate change recommended that four missions (dealing with Wind Energy, Health, Waste to Energy Conversion and Coastal Management) be added under National Action Plan on Climate Change in 2014. This was aimed at broadening India's response to climate change. However, no progress has been made so far.

#### International climate negotiations

“India repeated the importance of equity in the new climate agreement, but was fiercely against any kind of external review of climate targets to be put up by all countries as their contribution towards climate change.” Many civil society groups believe that an external review is the only way equity can be brought back into the agenda of climate change.

## GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

### HFCs

India, in April 2015, submitted a formal proposal to amend the Montreal Protocol to include the phase-down of HFCs (hydro fluorocarbons). However, the proposal seeks a very long “grace period” of 15 years. This essentially means that there will be unfettered growth of HFCs—a gas with high global warming potential—before the gas will need to be phased down.

### State climate action plans

Thirty-two states and union territories have submitted their state action plans that will shift the focus to implementation at the ground level. While the first year of the Modi government did see a slew of State Action Plans being approved, the plans of six States and Union Territories remain pending.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/reveal-travel-expenses-of-ministers-cic-panel/article7241710.ece>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015

(Afreen Faridi)

### No Change in Yamuna Pollution Despite Drop in Sewage Flow, Says Environment Ministry

(*Daily News and Analysis*, May 28, 2015)

The Environment Ministry's Annual Report (2014-15) noted that despite reduction in discharge of sewage water into Yamuna, sewage continues to remain the prime cause of deteriorating water quality in the river.

Decrease in discharge is attributed to “diversion of treated or untreated wastewater for irrigation and increased efficiency of wastewater collection, transportation and treatment system.” As per the Yamuna Action Plan I and II government has spent Rs 1,514.70 crore. The money has been used to create new sewage treatment capacity of 942.25 million litres per day (mld) in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Irrespective of the investment, the 40 km stretch of the river in Delhi is still polluted. The area includes Palla, Wazirabad Barrage, Nizamuddin Bridge and Okhla at Kalindi Kunj. This is because the fresh water levels in the river have fallen to a level where it cannot maintain its self-purification. Fall in fresh water levels can be attributed to reduction in the rainfall in the catchment area or increased rate of water abstraction from the river.

“The water quality status of the stretch suggests that values of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) observed during first ten months of 2014 was well above the prescribed limit of 4.0

milligram/litre (mg/l) at Palla and was in the range from 6.4-11.0 mg/l. It depletes significantly after Wazirabad Barrage and remains critical in remaining part of the stretch.” Biochemical Oxygen Demand values at Okhla (9-79 mg/l) were above prescribed limit. The deteriorating quality of Yamuna after Wazirabad barrage is because of wastewater from domestic sources.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-no-change-in-yamuna-pollution-despite-drop-in-sewage-flow-says-environment-ministry-2090034>

Date Accessed: 28.5.2015

(Shriyam Gupta)

## AGRICULTURE

### A Year of Rural Distress

(Himanshu, *Livemint*, May 25, 2015)

The current government came to power by winning a sizeable number of seats in states with a predominantly rural population - Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, which accounted for more than half the total seats the party won. During the 10 year UPA rule, the rural areas and agriculture saw one of the best spells of growth and prosperity, due to policies that implied a shift in terms of trade in favour of agriculture. This was brought about as a result of the increase in support prices, the increased investment in agriculture and irrigation as well as an increased credit flow to rural areas. Additionally, high international commodity prices, growth of agricultural productivity and increased public expenditure in rural areas along with employment generation meant that rural areas not only witnessed incomes growing at their fastest pace in three decades, they also saw significant poverty reduction.

In this past one year, partly due to the drought in 2014 and unseasonal rain in 2015, the picture has been grim. However, the story goes beyond this to reflect indifference and lack of understanding of the rural economy. Since August 2014, distress signs were visible as agricultural commodity prices started moving south following the global collapse in commodity prices. The shifting of the terms of trade away from agriculture, the lack of clarity on the fertilizer subsidy and stocking policy compounded the misery of farmers. Additionally, the government decided to delay Food Security Act and froze on bonuses provided by state governments, adding to the woes. Moreover the slowdown in implementation of MGNREGA also meant that non-farm jobs in times of stress in the rural economy were no longer available. This adversely affected wage growth in rural areas. The data on sale of consumer durables in rural areas as well as productive investments such as tractor

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purchases now reflect a decline in rural income growth.

Consequently, the agriculture sector has not only been affected by nature, but also by the shocks created by government policy. While the rural economy is distressed, there are no signs of revival in rural demand. The drastic cuts in spending on agriculture and irrigation as a result of the 14th Finance Commission's recommendations could lead to a slowdown in agricultural investment. With the manufacturing sector not showing any signs of revival, the workers in farm sector are likely to swell up in the absence of alternatives. Thus, the process of structural transformation of the rural economy is at risk.

<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/7GJMqqXB4RiYYm4Cdgp3N/A-year-of-rural-misery.html>

Date accessed: 27.5.2015

(Kasturi Mishra)

## SOCIETY

### GENDER

#### Government's Shaky Race to Protect Indian Girls

(Aparna Kalra, *Scroll.in*, May 25, 2015)

This article highlights the existing shortcomings in the framework to protect the girl-child by way of programmes such as "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.", launched in January. Several such programmes have been launched in the past. The 1990s saw three such programmes, and since 2005, there have been 11 schemes. However, the current scheme has several gaps. For instance, gynaecologists designated for the task, are burdened with many other tasks, including running rural health centres, delivering contraceptives and ensuring polio inoculations to new borns. According to April 2015 data by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, every day, about 2,000 girls die – aborted or starved, poisoned or otherwise killed after birth. The estimates of women so missing range from two million to 25 million.

Beti Bacha, Beti Padhao programme focuses on changing mindsets. However, the money is yet to reach the districts. Rs 100 crore was allocated for the programme in the 2015-16 budget. Each district in the hundred gender-critical districts will get Rs 55 lakh for 2014-15, followed by Rs 31 lakh in 2015-16. However, as a designated gynaecology office in Amritsar informs, no money has been received on this ground, while the Minister is unavailable to answer. Additionally, the effort is confused and uncoordinated, split by bureaucracy. Dhanalakshmi, Bhagyalakshmi, Rajalakshmi, Ladli, Balri Rakshak Yojana, Indira Gandhi Balika Suraksha Yogana, Balika Samridhi Yojana, Beti Hai Anmol, Mukhya Mantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Kanyadan Scheme – all of these have had limited efficacy, even in the presence of funds, due to complicated eligibility criteria and conditionalities. In most schemes, the involvement of local village institutions, NGOs and women's groups is rather limited. While the Ministry of Social Welfare has been the nodal ministry for some schemes, state governments run parallel programmes to flaunt at election time. Multiplicity of organisations to tackle the same problem make it difficult to evaluate progress. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao needs to have one nodal agency responsible for the progress.

Disappearing girls adversely affect the number of brides and lead to women trafficking. Additionally, contrary to global trends, there is a fall in women in India's workforce over the

2000s despite a rise in industrialisation. Another worrisome figure is the number of people punished under the law the criminalises pre-birth gender testing, which is no more than 32 over 2011-2013, while cases reported were 563. The Supreme Court of India noted, in May 2015, that thirty states have not had even one conviction under the law. Experts note that Female foeticide increases with easy access to medical facilities, ability to pay doctors and the availability of good roads, which cut down travel time, i.e. progress means more danger for women. Against this vast background, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao needs a more integrated and focused approach, rather than plain populism, in order to achieve its target.

<http://scroll.in/article/729630/modis-shaky-race-to-save-indias-girls>

Date accessed: 27.5.2015  
(Kasturi Mishra)

#### The Blinkers aren't Off Yet!

(Nikita Lamba, *Tehelka*, May 30, 2015)

On International Women's Day this year Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the various policies his government has brought in for the empowerment of women such as 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Andolan' campaign promoting the education of the girl child and the 'Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana' to support the marriage and education of young women. Surprisingly on the same day the government decided to ban Leslee Udwin's documentary 'India's Daughter' claiming that it would mar the country's image. The government decision to ban the documentary and denying an opportunity for public discourse on the plight of women revealed a major flaw in the ruling BJP's narrative on women empowerment and freedom.

During the election campaign for the general elections the BJP promised to reserve 33 per cent sets in Parliament for women. Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeated this promise in all his campaign speeches as well. Surprisingly, only 8 per cent of the candidates fielded by the party were women. Even after being in power for a year the government has done little to deliver on its promise.

The discourse around women's security grew loud in the wake of the Nirbhaya case. It was of little consequence as the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported 3 lakh cases of crimes against women in 2013. The situation has not seen any improvement in the one year of the BJP rule. "In January and February this year, 300 cases of rape and more than 500 cases of molestation were registered with the

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Delhi Police alone.” National spokesperson for the BJP Meenakshi Lekhi explained by saying that law and order is a state subject, which means that the Centre has little control over a state’s law and order situation. The government’s step of introducing gender sensitisation programmes organised for the CRPF in 2014, followed by similar modules in other states is a welcome step. However, within the party itself BJP MP’s kept making insensitive and chauvinist remarks against women. A statement made by Giriraj Singh is a prime example. The party has been claiming that these are individual views and not of the party. Sakshi Maharaj’s offensive remarks that every Hindu women should produce at least four children to prevent the religion from an alleged takeover by a rising Muslim population is another instance. It was also reported that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad awarded Hindu families with 10 or more children.

According to women rights activists like Kavita Krishnan denying women the freedom to choose whether or not to have children, and how many, and when, speaks ill of the government’s real intentions in taking various steps in the name of women’s empowerment. Deriving strength from the party’s soft stand on the issue affiliate groups like the Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP) launched a campaign in Delhi University on 7th October, 2014, against live-in relationships and love jihad betraying a larger belief that to keep a women safe it is necessary to keep an eye on what she does, who she talks to and more. The student branch of the BJP “justified their campaign against the right of adults to choose who to live with by saying that the exercise of this constitutional right is contrary to what “Indian culture” demands of the country’s youngsters and posed a threat to the “traditional Indian family”. The party and its affiliate groups have also in the past prescribed dress codes and ways for women to conduct themselves in public and private spaces.

Also, the party promised that it would take steps to check female foeticide, dowry, child marriage, trafficking, sexual harassment, rape and family violence; however the party has shied away from making marital rape a crime in India. ““In order to justify marital rape, the BJP uses an oft-repeated argument of the Sangh Parivar that preserving the family at all costs is integral to maintaining the social fabric,” says Krishnan.” Another area where the government has failed is to improve the access of healthcare to women. The lack of medical care acutely affects women from rural India and those belonging to Dalit, Adivasi and OBC communities. “Despite the BJP manifesto stating that “program for women healthcare in a mission mode, especially focussing on domains of Nutrition and Pregnancy — with emphasis on

rural, SCs, STs and OBCs (sic)”, no allocations were made under these heads in this year’s Budget.”

**“Important Bills related to women’s issues are yet to see the light of day. The Assisted Reproductive Technologies (art) Bill to ensure the health and safety of surrogate mothers in India has not been tabled. The proposed Acid Attacks Victims Welfare Fund to cover the medical costs of acid-attack survivors has not taken off.” The government has also failed to amend section 377 of the Indian Penal Code to decriminalise the LGBTIQ community.**

<http://www.tehelka.com/the-blinkers-arent-off-yet>

Date Accessed: 30.05.2015  
(Rohit Chauhan)

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### AFSPA Removed in Tripura after 18 Years: Why it was Enforced and Why it's Gone Now

(Anshu Lal, *Firstpost*, May 28, 2015)

In a recent development the State government of Tripura has decided to withdraw the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 18 years after it was first enforced in the State. State Chief Minister Manik Sarkar that this is being done in view of the significant reduction in the level of terrorist activities. The decision has been based on a review of the law and order situation conducted by state security forces. Based on the report, the council of ministers made a recommendation to the Union Home Ministry to issue a notification to withdraw AFSPA.

The Act provides complete impunity to security forces in case of any human rights violation, using which they can shoot at sight, arrest anybody without a warrant and carry searches without warrant. “The Central Act was first enforced in Tripura on 16 February, 1997, when terrorism was at its peak in the state, which shares an 856-km long border with Bangladesh. Members of two separatist groups - National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) - are still sheltered and accused of getting arms training in Bangladesh. These two groups have been demanding the secession of Tripura from India.”

Local human rights groups and political parties have long demanded the repeal of the Act in the State citing examples of human rights and violations and excesses committed by

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the armed forces. Tribal parties like the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura and Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura have been saying over the last many years that the Act has been forced in the State to suppress the State's 33 percent tribal population. In Tripura ever since that Act was enforced it was reviewed and extended after every six months following the provisions laid down in the Act. The Tripura government in June 2013 reduced the operational areas of the AFSPA to the area under 30 police stations. Before that, out of 72 police stations in Tripura, AFSPA had been force in 40. According to media reports Tripura witnessed a rapid decline in terrorist activity over the past years, and saw a large number of militants surrender. Apparently talks about repealing the Act had been in progress with the Union Home Ministry over the last few months. However, perhaps the most prominent evidence of the decline of militancy and separatism in Tripura came when the state recorded over 84 percent voter turnout in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, one of the highest voter turnouts in the country, according to the Election Commission. The move has been welcomed by Congress leader and former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram.

<http://www.firstpost.com/india/afspa-removed-tripura-18-years-imposed-gone-2266770.html>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015

(Rohit Chauhan)

## INDIA AND WORLD

### INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

#### UN Welcomes 200 People Brought Ashore But Warns 3,500 More Stranded in Southeast Asian Waters

(United Nations News Centre, May 22, 2015)

United Nations (UN) noted that 200 people stranded off the Myanmar coast were brought to shore and has appealed for the rescue of 3,500 others who are still distressed at sea. It is estimated that 2,000 people are still stranded on boats in the Bay of Bengal, and 1,500 further to the south in the Andaman Sea area.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has partnered with the Myanmar Government to ensure that basic needs of the 200 rescued people are met. It has stressed that disembarkation needs to take place all across the Myanmar region before monsoon begins. The agency will partner with Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to assist people in the region who are distressed at sea.

Response by UNHCR has been increased in regions of Indonesia's Aceh and North Sumatra provinces, where 1,800 Rohingyas and Bangladeshi's have arrived since 10<sup>th</sup> May. Over 1,000 Rohingyas have also landed in Malaysia where "UNHCR has offered its assistance to the Malaysian authorities and is awaiting a response. In Thailand, UNHCR is distributing relief items to recent boat arrivals and others found after their jungle camps were abandoned by smugglers."

Adrian Edwards, agency spokesperson for UNHCR, noted that the smuggling network is not one country problem but is an international issue where transnational organizations are at work. There is a need for international co-operation to respond to the issue.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50944#.VWQHwUtlpF>

Date Accessed: 25.5.2015

(Shriyam Gupta)

### SOUTH ASIA

#### Rohingya Crisis: A Test for Asian Humanitarian Instinct

(Economic & Political Weekly, May 23, 2015)

This article highlights the urgent need for countries to formulate humanitarian policies that address the crises such as that of the Rohingya of Myanmar. Successive governments of Myanmar have refused to recognize the

Rohingya as citizens, despite Myanmar having 135 distinct ethnic groups. The Rohingya are Muslims originally brought into Burma as labour by the British colonial power from what is now Bangladesh. Due to persecution, thousands of Rohingyas flee to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and even Bangladesh. In 2012, ethnic clashes between Buddhists and Rohingyas displaced over one lakh people. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that between June 2012 and June 2014, an estimated 87,000 people from the Myanmar-Bangladesh border area left in search of refuge. The anti-Rohingya campaign in Myanmar, spearheaded by Buddhist monks, makes statements against "Muslim hordes" much like those made by Sangh Parivar in India.

In the face of increasing ethnic violence, thousands of Rohingya are being compelled to take the highly risky route by sea by paying human smugglers so that they can find refuge somewhere. However, this seems virtually impossible as countries increasingly adopt the policy of pushing back these boats. Thailand and Malaysia have forced the boats back at gunpoint. Although -Indonesia's Aceh province has offered shelter to a little over a thousand refugees, its doors remain closed. The Philippines has been sympathetic and offered help. Australia remains unapologetically unsympathetic. Neither India, China nor Bangladesh has expressed any sympathy.

India is reportedly investing \$120 million to build a port in Rakhine province while China has a 35-year plan to build railways, ports and special economic zones there. The two supposedly big powers in the region are well placed to use their economic and political influence with the Myanmar government. There is an immediate need to address the urgent humanitarian crisis of an estimated 4,000 Rohingya women, men and children drifting without food or medicines in the Bay of Bengal. Even if this is a global phenomenon, nations in the Asian region put an end to the indifference to help in the face of this man-made humanitarian crisis.

<http://www.epw.in/editorials/adrift-and-alone.html>

Date accessed: 27.5.2015

(Kasturi Mishra)

**OPINION/BOOKS****OPINIONS****The Suicide of a Teenage Sportswoman Recently Showcases All that is Wrong With Indian Sports**

(*Economic and Political Weekly, May 23, 2015*)

Sixteen-year old Aparna Ramabhadran and three of her fellow sports women consumed poison at a water sports facility run by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in Alappuzha in Kerala. The suicide pact was signed suicide by the sportswomen because of harassment by 'seniors'. Media reports quoted their parents saying that the girls were being harassed continuously and that even the coach beat one of them.

The sports ministry has directed SAI to setup a 24-hour helpline at all its centers and appoint counselors to visit them regularly. A full-time woman warden at all girls' hostels is also to be appointed and officers at the level of assistant directors manage have been asked to manage these centers. Whether these directives will be implemented is another question.

The politicians have captured sports in India and thus welfare of sportspersons is often neglected. Sports has become a political arena which is used for It is seen financial dominance, elections, tenures and carving out areas of influence. "Far from addressing issues of the psychological health of sportspersons, which is a specialised and complex field in itself, the poor physical infrastructure at training camps and hostels is distressing." Athletes and players have often complained about poor infrastructure and lack of basic amenities. Indian contingent for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games were forced to live in abysmal conditions while training at the National Institute of Sports, Patiala. More shameful was the suspension of Paralympic Committee of India by the International Paralympic Committee for chaotic conduct of the 15th National Para Athletic Championship in Ghaziabad. Further, media periodically reports cases of harassment by coaches, which rarely evokes any action from authorities.

Many sportspersons living in government accessing government facilities come from poor background. Staying away from home and training in highly competitive fields they need attention. However, poor administration and political one-upmanship between administrators takes attention away from sportspersons.

Setup in 1984, SAI has grown to over 250 centers and 75

core centers today. Its objective was to give impetus to sports in India by providing infrastructure and grooming youngsters. Though it continues to train thousands of young aspirants it has failed to live up to its promise. This may be because of lack of funds as sports are not high priority in India (with the exception of cricket). Success in sports like badminton, boxing, wrestling, shooting, etc, can be credited to initiatives by individual coaches or sportspersons. It's time that India recognize the worth of its sportspersons who are succeeding despite adverse situations and give sports its due. .

<http://www.epw.in/editorials/indias-attitude-towards-sports.html>

Date Accessed: 25.5.2015  
(Shriyam Gupta)

**BOOKS****The Underside of Growth**

(Stanly Jhony, *Frontline, May 29, 2015*)

The book examines the challenges before South Asia, stressing the need to overcome mass poverty and address environmental damage. The question whether economic globalisation and liberalisation are good for Third World countries is still a hotly debated one. The defenders of globalisation, including successive governments in New Delhi since the early 1990s, would say market-driven policies have modernised economies, rejuvenated growth and lifted millions out of poverty. But actual data would contest these claims. India is a case in point. The country attained faster economic growth after it started implementing market reforms. For example, gross domestic product (GDP) expansion averaged 7.7 per cent in the 10 years starting 2004-05, the highest growth seen in any decade, considerably higher than the previous 10 years' average growth of 6.2 per cent. But did this high GDP growth translate into employment generation and poverty reduction? The government would say yes. Planning Commission data suggest India's poverty declined to a record 22 per cent in 2011-12 from 37.2 per cent in 2004-05. But this claim is widely disputed.

According to a study by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research in New Delhi based on the NSSO data, employment in the five-year period ending 2009-10 grew by 2.7 million while average economic growth over the same period was 8.7 per cent. This means that the average number of jobs created annually during this period was 540,000, compared with an estimated 12 million people who joined the workforce every year. In other words, high economic

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growth does not necessarily create employment opportunities and reduce poverty. India's story is not an isolated one. Rather, it represents a trend visible across the Third World, especially in South Asia, where almost all nations follow the market-driven economic model and are obsessed with high economic growth numbers. While most of them do attract huge private investment and achieve high economic growth, those numbers do little to address the central problems of their political structures.

Social and economic inclusion is an imperative for the development of democracy, but free-market economic policies actually hamper the progress of such inclusion. The governments in the region all claim to be committed to "inclusive growth", but the reality is far from such claims. "Inclusive growth will involve broad-basing the growth process by giving the middle class and the poor access to productive assets, high quality skills and equitable access over the markets for capital, high wage employment and markets for goods and services," write Hussain and Dubey. Socio-economic inequality comes with a heavy price. Some chapters in the book seem to suggest that better regulation of the market and proper institutional mechanisms would help South Asia tackle these challenges. Such arguments overlook the fact that the real problem is systemic. Structural inequality, environmental degradation and violence are part and parcel of the capitalist order.

<http://www.frontline.in/books/the-undersideof-growth/article7197357.ece>

Date Accessed: 26.05.2015  
(Devyani Bhushan)

### Book Review: Rendezvous with Rebels; Journey To Meet India's Most Wanted Men

(Gargi Gupta, DNAIndia, May 24, 2015)

This book, by Rajeev Bhattacharyya provides an insight into the history of northeast insurgency. The history is provided as a context for the travelogue through one of the world's

most beautiful, inaccessible and dangerous terrains. Rendezvous With Rebels is an account of the journey that the author, a Guwahati-based journalist, along with photographer Pradip Gogoi, made to the hideout of Paresh Barua, co-founder of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in Myanmar in order to interview him, in a top-secret assignment. Paresh Barua and 'Baba' Khaplang, of the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland, are the two most prominent leaders of many insurgencies in the northeast, for decades.

The book throws light on the complex history of northeast insurgency, especially the major ones in Assam and Nagaland, the principal cast of rebel leaders, their shifting alliances between themselves and with the governments of India's immediate neighbours — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Pakistan and China — who have provided them shelter, arms and training. Thousands have died in this guerrilla war that has dragged on, in some cases since independence, and none of the military operations, accords, ceasefires and talks have brought lasting peace. The author encounters insurgents of the NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland) and UPPK (United People's Party of Kangleipak), on his trek. He finds Paresh Barua's camp in Myanmar located close to Khaplang's and that of Manipur's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and (United National Liberated Front (UNLF). Increased cooperation between these groups has brought them together to form the United National Liberated Front of western South East Asia, which may bode ill for the region.

The book brings a striking revelation of how deep the Naga hills are overrun with rebels and outfits wanted by India, and how they co-exist in close proximity, sharing rations and intelligence, and sourcing weapons as a collective.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/review-book-review-rendezvous-with-rebels-journey-to-meet-india-s-most-wanted-men-2088580>

Date accessed: 27.5.2015  
(Kasturi Mishra)

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