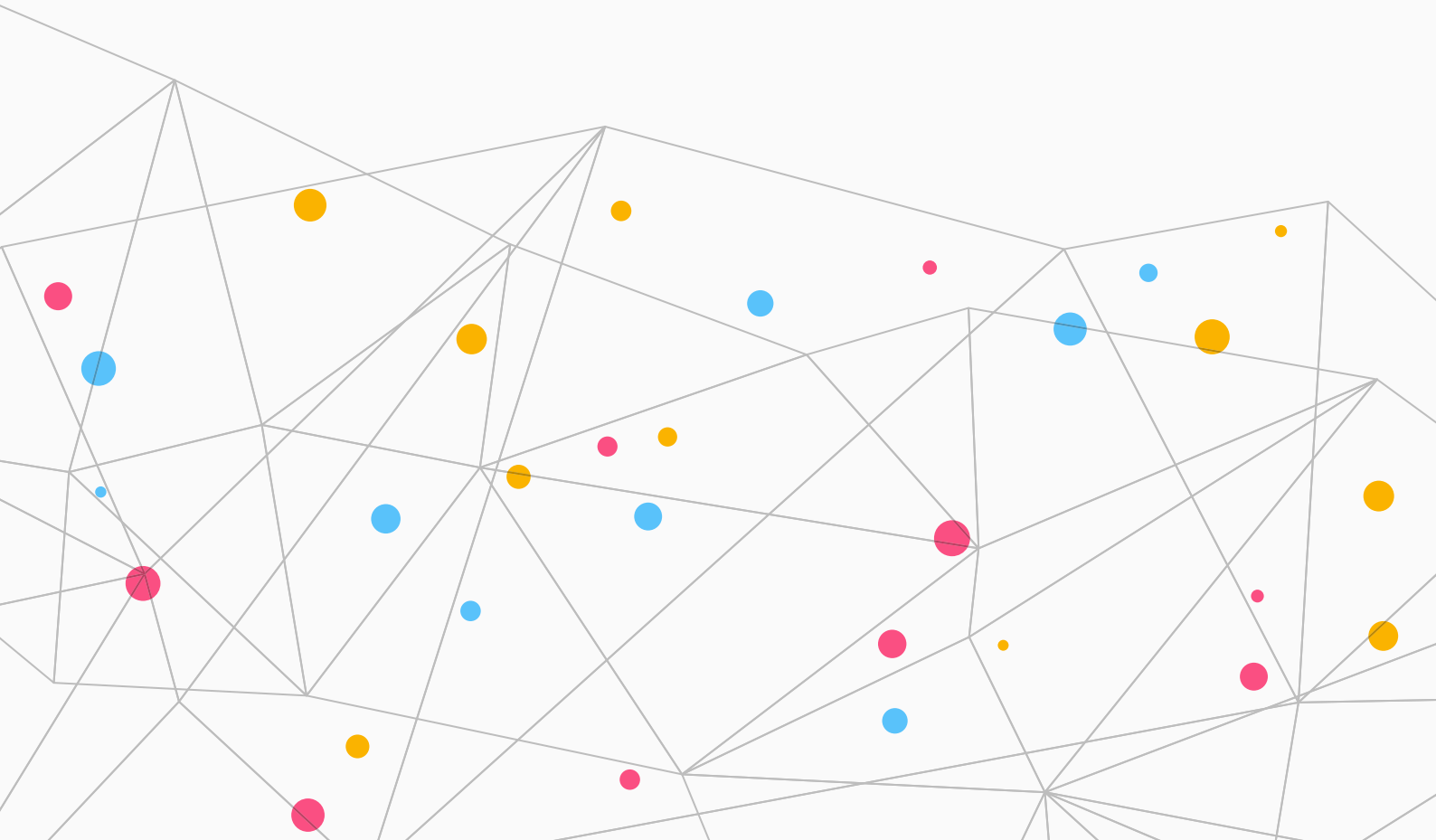




INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC-SPIRITED MEDIA FOUNDATION

SELECTIONS FROM **IPSMF** GRANTEE MEDIA

IMPACT 2019





INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC-SPIRITED MEDIA FOUNDATION

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CONTENTS

SOCIETY

THE LEDE

11

(The Green Blood Project) The Death Of Jagendra Singh Part II: The Compromise

SAPTAHIK SADHANA

13

Two interviews from the world of cinema – Article 15 and Hellaro

SIKKIM CHRONICLE

15

Sikkim's bizarre witch-hunting incident sparks public rage

THE BASTION

17

Putting the athlete first: Data protection in sports

THE CARAVAN

19

The NRC causes widespread panic among Muslim communities

COMBATING FAKE NEWS

ALT NEWS

21

Did BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters fabricate reports of unrest in Kashmir?

INDIASPEND

23

Modi Report Card: A 13-part series probed the National Democratic Alliance's flagship programmes

ALT NEWS

25

Photos of luxury hotel in Srinagar shared as bungalows owned by Kashmiri politicians

GOVERNANCE

SWARAJYA

27

People happy, soldiers confident: How Bogibeel Setu is ticking many boxes at once

MAHARASHTRA

29

Report compels state CM Devendra Fadnavis to delete self-congratulatory tweet

SIKKIM CHRONICLE

31

State's rail route development causing destruction

SWARAJYA

33

PM Modi's project to transform India's most backward Districts is working

THE NEWS MINUTE

35

NIFT reinstates all 56 housekeepers who fought sexual harassment

LAW

LIVE LAW

37

SC vs RTI: SC's stay of Delhi HC's landmark judgment enters 9th year

THE CARAVAN

39

Supreme Charge: "I have been victimised for resisting and refusing the unwanted sexual advances of the CJI"

LIVE LAW

41

Supreme Injustice: Why dismissal of SC staff who alleged sexual harassment by CJI is disproportionate

THE PRINT

43

Justice Sikri whose vote decided Alok Verma's fate gets Modi govt nod for plum posting

HYPERLOCAL

EASTMOJO

45

Indian-Australian offers Rs 20,000 to 2 poor Mizoram class X toppers

EASTMOJO

47

UN body confirms Manipur girl achievement claim is fake

THE NEWS MINUTE

49

Making clothbags, Paalaguttapalle's Dalit women are turning their lives around

SCIENCE/ENVIRONMENT

THE EPW

51

Thinking about climate change: An interactive

THE BASTION

53

"We have literally cut and presented our arms to the government": Mandi's fight to protect its forest rights

DOWN TO EARTH

55

Indian rivers crossed flood levels 25 times in August 2019

THE WIRE

57

The Sciences: What is quantum biology

BUSINESS

THE KEN

59

Fiinovation and the CSR funding pot at the end of the rainbow

DOWN TO EARTH

61

Fortified rice scheme to create Rs 3000 crore market for just five big firms

THE KEN

63

Edu-tech company Byju's has chinks in its armour

SATYAGRAH

65

How Kashmir lockdown is hitting trade

THE LEDE

67

Kudankulam nuclear power plant was signed away for mining to a private beach sand miner

COMMUNITY

AZHIMUKHAM

69

Taboos in Kerala over menstruation

IDR

71

Why there is a collective silence against capacity building

SATYAGRAH

73

How did Raneedhara in Rajasthan become a village of widows

MAX MAHARASHTRA

75

Government's resolve to distribute relief funds via banks only may lead to chaos

POLITICS

SAPTAHIK SADHANA

77

Political awareness series by Dr SuhasPalsikar

THE PRINT

79

Months before polls Modi govt plans to monitor media to flag negative publicity

AZHIMUKHAM

81

Kerala elections special series: Democracy and its illusions – a report from ground Karadippara in Palakkad

OPINION/ANALYSIS

INDIASPEND

83

Job market: A 11-part series tracks employment in India's informal sector

THE WIRE

85

Boom or Bust: What science tells us about what went down in Balakot

THE BASTION

87

Indian students' silent hymns: Of Sanskrit prayers in secular schools

IDR

89

Understand migrants' lives to understand their needs

EPW

91

Examining the Draft National Education Policy, 2019

VIDEO GRANTEES

DOOLNEWS

93

Pigs of Angamali + Muslim women voice their opinion on niqab ban in Muslim Education Society institutions

KHABAR LEHARIYA

95

Khabar Lehariya's grassroots initiative + CGNet Swara enables the release of scholarships

PODCAST GRANTEES

THINK PRAGATI

97

Yeh Liberal Aakhir Hai Kaun + Art 370

SUNO INDIA

99

Supreme Injustice: Clean chit for CJI + Rising internet shutdowns

MAKING WAVES

101

INTRODUCTION

Free and fearless journalism remains germane to the functioning of a strong democracy. As with every numbers game in India, the statistics of media proliferation in India too never fail to awe – over a lakh registered newspapers in the country, 400-plus network channels and thousands of online news conduits in multiple digital platforms and so forth - but a majority of the entities remain vulnerable to private, corporate and business ownership and unable to withstand myriad pressure.

Away from immediate notice however there has been an encouraging growth in the independent media. This has been led in part by the digitisation of news, novel forms of storytelling and philanthropic funding. Online media - both non-profit and for-profit have extended their footprint across the country, side-stepping corporate, family or business ownership.

The Independent and Public-Spirited Media Foundation (IPSMF) is proud to say that we shoulder two-thirds of all philanthropy-supported independent media in the country. Although the media grantees rely largely on philanthropic funding, the Foundation drives them to develop matching revenue streams to ensure they are on a path to sustainability.

Impact 2019 is an acknowledgment of this work. The profile of independent media would not be the same without the financial support of donors, and the time devoted by a Board of autonomous trustees that recognise democratic values and that the press can make or break a nation. This is especially pertinent in a world of fake-news and algorithm-based information. Some of the risks to media come from within.

The transformation in the media ecosystem has also seen newsrooms and organisations trying novel ways of storytelling. Media grantees use podcasts, videos, short-reads and interactive formats to engage with the audience in an effort to deliver trustworthy journalism. Digital grantee media news is now increasingly first consumed via smartphones while social media has become a distribution tool. This trend is here to stay. A multimedia platform has also seen grantees log in encouraging traffic with an overall CAGR of 229% from start of funding.

The Foundation's funding has also made the news organisations more stable, helping support a headcount of over 800 with journalists and retainers constituting around 75 %.

Our media grantees present diverse languages, audience access via a matrix of legacy and new technology platforms and content culled from boots on the ground reporting and data-driven, information-distilled analyses. To build sustainable news information platforms, the Foundation eschews a fund-and-flee approach. It supports both new (including IDR, Sikkim Chronicle, The Lede) and established grantees (like The Wire, The Caravan and EPW) with regular funding to allow the media identity to develop and thrive.

Impact 2019 includes extracts and summaries of over 60 stories from 25 select media grantees. The original narratives include podcasts, videos, audios, online and print journalism. This collection is an acknowledgment of how grantee media is covering news deserts, chasing facts and upholding the core concepts of ethical journalism.

Sunil Rajshekhar
CEO - IPSMF

Society | Impact



The Green Blood Project is a global collaboration of journalists across 60 publications that continue the work of environmental reporters who have been harrassed, jailed or killed while reporting. In The Death of Jagendra Singh Part II: Online news magazine The Lede followed up with the family of Singh, a journalist from Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, four years after he was burnt to death by local policemen and anti-social elements allegedly at the behest of then minister Rammurti Singh Verma. The first part detailed Singh's alleged murder and the second looked at the compromise arrived between Singh's family and the minister that led to a last-minute withdrawal of the case for a CBI inquiry in the Supreme Court.

The story shone a light globally on circumstances of reporters in India's small towns, the might of a politician and how a journalist can be killed with impunity. The report placed on record the lack of legal, public and state support for media carrying out its public and professional duty.

(The Green Blood Project)

The Death Of Jagendra Singh Part II: The Compromise

Why did the journalist's family suddenly withdraw their case from the Supreme Court, which pled for a CBI enquiry into Jagendra's death?

At the height of the protests following his death, Jagendra's family met with the then Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and received a monetary compensation of Rs 30 lakh from the state government of Uttar Pradesh.

Their key demand, though – a CBI inquiry into his death – was not met by the state.

Barely six months later, the family mounted a sudden U-turn. "The night before the PIL was to be heard by the Supreme Court, Rahul faxed a letter to the lawyer, Colin Gonsalves, saying he wanted to withdraw the petition," said Mudit Mathur, senior journalist with Tehelka, who had impleaded himself in a similar petition before the court.

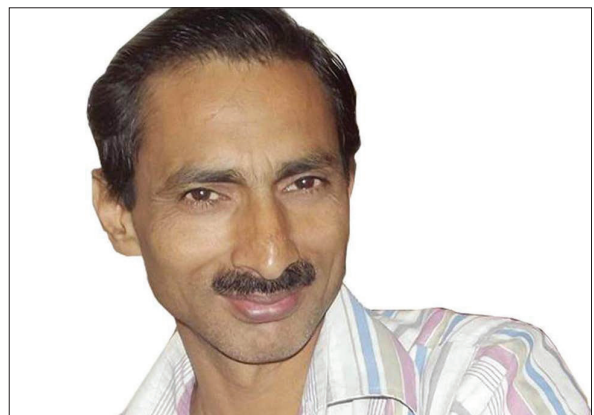
"He had been sending me messages that he was under immense pressure, that he was going into hiding, but I did not expect that he would suddenly withdraw at the last moment. The judge was predictably annoyed and we were left red-faced in court," said Mathur, sighing.

Mathur attempted to continue the second case in the Supreme Court in which he had impleaded himself. But with the family withdrawing the petition, that case too was dead, since Mathur had no locus standi.

For the first time, the facts of the case come tumbling out. In Khutar, Rahul Singh is pensive as he reminisces about that time.

Rahul Singh: See after we met the Chief Minister and made our demands, some were met, others were not met. After that a lot of pressure was piled on. People around us, our relatives, our neighbours, friends, even some officials – all of them began to put pressure on us, especially on our mother. They started to target mummy that whatever has happened has happened and to make a compromise. Mummy got scared that this is a small family and something might happen to her children. Due to pressure from mummy, we agreed to a compromise.

The Lede: What do you mean by a compromise? Did you meet with the Minister (Rammurti Varma)?



Jagendra Singh

RS: Yes, we met the Minister in Bareilly. There were a number of people. It was a big house, our uncle (Jagendra's sister's husband), my elder brother all of us were there.

First he told us that he had not done this, that he had been framed. I told him in that case, why don't you let the enquiry take place? If you are innocent, then you will go free. But he said no, whatever has happened with your father has happened and I do not want your lives to be ruined. I will take responsibility for you. I will ensure that your sister is married well. As long as I am alive I will take good care of you.

I did not do it, I was framed but whatever has happened was a very bad thing. I want to ensure you are all okay – he said similar things, there were a lot of people. Then we had to compromise.



<https://www.thelede.in/the-green-blood-project/2019/06/20/the-death-of-jagendra-singh-the-compromise>

Society | Impact



Saptahik Sadhana, a Pune-based Marathi weekly that writes on socio-cultural and political issues, featured an interview in July with actor Zeeshan Ayub who played a Dalit activist in the just-released movie Article 15, which was praised for its incisive depiction of caste realities in India.

Next followed a conversation with Abhishek Shah, director of the Gujarati movie Hellaro that bagged the President's Gold medal for the best film. Based on the theme of suppression to expression, the film takes a fresh look at the marginalization and suppression of women in society

The interviews explored the concerns of the filmmakers about deeply-entrenched and contentious social fault lines. The two accounts underscored how film continues to hold heft as cultural catalyst.

सप्रेशन टू एक्सप्रेसन मांडणारा सिनेमा - 'हेल्लारो

यंदाच्या राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार विजेत्या चित्रपटाचे दिग्दर्शक अभिषेक शाह यांची एक्सक्लूझिव मुलाखत

राष्ट्रीय चित्रपट पुरस्कारांची नुकतीच घोषणा करण्यात आली. या वर्षीचा (2018) देशातील सर्वोत्कृष्ट सिनेमा म्हणून 'हेल्लारो' या गुजराती सिनेमाने सुवर्णकमळावर आपली मोहोर उमटवली आहे. 'हेल्लारो' च्या निमित्ताने सर्वोत्कृष्ट चित्रपटाचा पुरस्कार गुजरातच्या वाट्याला पहिल्यांदाच येत आहे. (यापूर्वी केतन मेहता यांच्या 'भवनी भवई' या गुजराती सिनेमाला 1980 मध्ये २ विभागांत राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार मिळाले होते.) 'हेल्लारो' या सिनेमाचे दिग्दर्शक अभिषेक शाह यांचा दिग्दर्शक म्हणून हा पहिलाच सिनेमा. यापूर्वी त्यांनी गुजराती नाट्यक्षेत्रात दिग्दर्शन, लेखनाचं काम केलं आहे. या राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कारानिमित्त दिग्दर्शक अभिषेक शाह यांची घेतलेली ही सविस्तर मुलाखत.

प्रश्न-हेल्लारो हा तुमचा पहिलाच सिनेमा आणि तुमच्या या पहिल्याच सिनेमाला सर्वोत्कृष्ट सिनेमाचा राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार मिळाला. मागील 40 वर्षांत गुजराती सिनेमाला मिळालेला हा प्रथम बहुमान. सर्वप्रथम तुमचं, तुमच्या टीमचं खूप खूप अभिनंदन.

अभिषेक-थॅक्यू यू, थॅक्यू सो मच.

प्रश्न-गप्पांना सुरुवात करण्याआधी चित्रपटाच्या नावाविषयी कुतूहल आहे. तर आधी हेल्लारोचा अर्थ काय होतो हे जाणून घ्यायला आवडेल.

अभिषेक-हेल्लारो हा पुरातन गुजराती भाषेतील शब्द आहे. आताच्या बोलीभाषेत तो वापरला जात नाही. या शब्दाचा अर्थ पाण्याच्या प्रवाहातील उसळती लाट असा होतो. पाण्यात उसळणारी अशी लाट- जिच्या आगमनानं सारं काही हादरून जातं. परिवर्तन घडून येतं. किंवा असा एखादा धक्का- जो आतून इतक्या जोरात बसतो की सारं काही बदलून जातं. समजा की दडपशाहीचा- सप्रेशनचा असा काळ आहे; जेव्हा अशी एखादी लाट गवसते किंवा असं एखादं एक्सप्रेसन बाहेर निघतं, जे आपल्या दडपशाहीला उधळून लावतं- त्याला म्हणतात हेल्लारो.

प्रश्न-सप्रेशन टू एक्सप्रेसन...खूपच रंजक वाटतंय. खरं तर, अद्याप सिनेमाचा ट्रेलरही कुठं उपलब्ध नाहीये. मात्र सिनेमाविषयी आमच्या मनात फार उत्सुकता आहे. सिनेमाची मध्यवर्ती कल्पना काय आहे?



अभिषेक-1975 मधील कच्छमध्ये घडणारी कथा आहे. कच्छ हा गुजरातचा मोठा प्रदेश आहे. भारतात दोन मोठे वाळवंटी प्रदेश आहेत. एक राजस्थानात आणि दुसरा कच्छमध्ये. तर कच्छच्या रणामध्ये, वाळवंटाच्या मध्यभागात आम्ही एक गाव उभं केलं. या गावाचा दुसऱ्या कुठल्याच गावाशी कसलाच संपर्क नाही. 1975 च्या काळात हे गाव जगापासून असं तुटलेलं आहे की, त्यांना बाहेरच्या जगात काय घडतंय याची कल्पनाच नाहीये. बायकांची अवस्था तर त्याहून अवघड आहे. त्यांना घराबाहेर पडण्याची कसलीच मुभा नाहीये. त्या घराबाहेर पडल्याच तर केवळ पाणी भरण्यासाठी. वाळवंटातून 5-6 किमीच्या अंतरापर्यंत चालत जायचं आणि पाणी भरून आणायचं एवढ्याच कारणासाठी त्या घराबाहेर पडू शकतात. बाकी त्यांच्या आयुष्यात कुठलीच चैन नाही, मौज नाही, कुठल्याही प्रकारची अभिव्यक्ती नाही. आपण जसं नाचातून- गायनातून स्वतःशी गप्पा मारून किंवा कुठल्याही मार्गाने स्वतःला व्यक्त करतो, मांडतो, एक्सप्रेस करतो. त्या सगळ्या गोष्टी तिथं स्त्रियांसाठी निषिद्ध आहेत. अशा दडपशाहीच्या माहोलात या स्त्रियांना एक व्यक्ती भेटते



<http://kartavyasadhana.in/view-article/Inter-view-Abhishek-Shah-Hellaro-Cinema>

Society | Impact



Sikkim Chronicle is the state's first registered digital news platform. It covered how a 77-year old woman suspected of practising witchcraft was physically assaulted. The incident was the first of its kind in the state.

The report prompted outrage on social media about the mob frenzy. Public opinion forced the police to act and the suspects were arrested. The victim also found public support.

Sikkim's bizarre witch-hunting incident sparks public rage

Public outrage over the assault of a 77-year-old woman forces the police to arrest the suspects

In a bizarre incident of 'witch-hunting', a 77-year-old woman was physically abused by three people. This took place on May 8 at a Melli, a small town in South Sikkim. Bal Kumari Sharma, a widow was beaten up by her neighbours who alleged her of practising witch craft.

This is the first time that such an occurrence happened and was reported in Sikkim, which led to the creation of much hullabaloo among the public and left many burning in rage.

Sikkim Chronicle travelled to the south district and carried out an in-depth investigation on the first of its kind witch-hunting incident. According to a senior police officer in Gangtok, no such case of witch-hunting has been reported before in Sikkim.

THE INCIDENT

As per the son of the victim, Arjun Kumar Sharma, it was at around 9pm that the family was preparing to sleep after dinner when three people namely, Laxmi Pradhan, Durga Pradhan and Arun Pradhan forcefully entered the house and started abusing the old woman.

"I could not understand what was happening because they broke the door and suddenly entered the room where my mother was sleeping. All three started verbally abusing and alleged that she practises witchcraft," said the son.

The three individuals are siblings and are their neighbour's children. Before she could understand what was happening, Bal Kumari was asked to sit on the bed with folded hands.

"My mother who already is a diabetic patient was crying and pleading with them not to beat her. Before I could reach to them, I and my wife were thrown out of my own house by their father, TB Pradhan. I was helpless!" he added. The family did not allow anyone to enter the house, it was informed.

NEIGHBOUR'S EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT

Pushpa Lama, who is an immediate neighbour of Bal

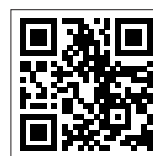


Kumari Sharma, while speaking with Sikkim Chronicle said that she was shocked and appalled to see such an incident happening in her home town.

"We heard a loud cry of the woman seeking help. I asked my son to go out and see what was happening. He came back and informed me that the old woman is being harassed by three people. I immediately reached outside the house but we were not allowed to enter inside by TB Pradhan and his other family members saying that there is a ritual being performed inside and no one should disturb the proceedings," said Lama. A phone call was made to the local police station informing of the incident by the son, Arjun Kumar Sharma.

POLICE INTERVENTION

The family members of the victim alleged that it took almost an hour for the police to reach their house when the information was given immediately by the son of the victim.



<https://www.thesikkimchronicle.com/sikkims-bizarre-witch-hunting-incident-sparks-public-rage/>

Society | Impact

THE BASTION

The Bastion, an independent digital media platform, wrote a detailed analysis titled “Putting the Athlete First: Data Protection in Sports” on the unexplored subject of performance, physiological and genetic data that is gathered from athletes. It said that consent is not sought and that athletes and their data are tracked constantly, making them one of the largest emitters of data, and by extension, vulnerable.

The reportage makes a case for a structural reform in the way athletes are made to understand and take advantage of data protection laws, such as the right to access and the right to cease the processing of their data.

Putting the athlete first: Data protection in sports

With data protection slowly being enforced across the world, how prepared is the sports sector, especially in India?

Fitbit. Apple. Samsung. Boltt. Huawei. What do all these companies have in common? The ability to tell you how fast your heart beats when you're out on your morning run; or how many steps you have taken on a busy Diwali day as you're moving door to door celebrating; or just how well you were sleeping after a long day's work. And these are just a tiny part of their rather extensive monitoring capabilities.

By moving headfirst into the wearable devices segment, all these companies have changed the way 'gym bros', fitness freaks, power-walkers, yoga aficionados and your regular 'I walk a lot around my house' types perceive and interact with physical activity.

This is especially true for athletes; given that their job demands constant peak physical levels, wearable devices and other supporting technology have created a wealth of information that can be used to achieve this goal. This kind of technology also helps other stakeholders in a sport; coaches, scouts, teams, federations, businesses and more. The value of these technologies is in their ability to capture and store the world's most valuable commodity — data.

WHAT IS ATHLETE DATA?

Bear with us for a second — especially if you're a millennial reading this — as we stroll down memory lane. Do you remember trading cards? From Pokemon and Digimon cards to the WWE and Cricket cards you would get with a bottle of Milo, they all had some data laid out that gave the player on the card a certain rating.

Although these were quite rudimentary in nature, the cards largely assigned points based on perceived skill levels. But today, with the kind of technology available in the world of sports, it is possible to break such calculations down to much better-segmented definitions. From physiological data (height, muscle-mass, blood pressure, speed, etc.) to genetic data (inherited diseases, sex, information about family, etc.), there is hardly any information about an athlete that is unknown.

With the amount of data that athletes give out on



The effort to 'maximise output', makes athlete data extremely valuable, and thus, sensitive

almost a daily basis, concerns about the management, storage and protection of the same loom large.

ATHLETES AS THE POINT OF FOCUS

The global sports industry is valued at \$488 billion as of 2018 and is expected to rise to \$614 billion by 2022. As with any industry, as it grows, the effort to understand and discover each nitty-gritty of the field, and how to improve efficiency intensifies. It is at the very heart of this industry that the athletes find their place; it is thus obvious that efforts are pooled in to make them more efficient, better their performances and by extension, draw more eyeballs.

India is feeling this love for sports as well; the sports industry here is growing at 15% per annum, as opposed to the global average of 5%. With the advent of professional leagues starting with the Indian Premier League (IPL), sports across disciplines are finding some time in the spotlight.



<https://thebastion.co.in/politics-and/sports/putting-the-athlete-first-data-protection-in-sports/>

Society | Impact



The Caravan is a monthly long-form narrative magazine in English with an online presence in Hindi as well. Its report on why the NRC was causing Muslims to panic was prompted by union home minister Amit Shah's statement in West Bengal that, without naming the community, singled out Muslims as "infiltrators" while assuring that no Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist and Christian "refugees" will be affected by the NRC exercise.

The article was a frontrunner in foreshadowing what is likely to be an ongoing exercise that has, even before a pan-India footprint, caused disquiet among millions. The account has impelled citizens groups to plan civil and legal recourse for such an eventuality.

The NRC causes widespread panic among Muslim communities

There is growing panic among Muslims outside Assam as various leaders of the ruling party have demanded that this detention centres be extended to the rest of India

On 1 September, a Twitter user living in Maharashtra sent a direct message to the handle of Indian Civil Liberties Union, a collective of lawyers and activists that aims to “fight against hate mongering, discrimination and corruption.” A Muslim from Pune, he had queries about the National Register of Citizens—a citizenship list published by the government that aims to identify who qualifies as an Indian citizen and, significantly, exclude those who do not. The final list, published on 31 August, excludes over 1.9 million individuals. These people have 120 days to prove their citizenship before foreigners’ tribunals—quasi-judicial courts empowering district magistrates to decide whether a person living illegally in India is a foreigner or not.

When assured that the NRC was for Assam, the Twitter user replied, “What if implemented across India? So wanted to correct all things in advance.” He said his grandfather had moved to Maharashtra before the 1930s, and that he was not from Assam.

The publication of the final list has created a wave of panic, with many Muslims wondering what the implications of an NRC-like exercise for the rest of India would mean. Leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party have demanded similar measures be taken in their states, such as in Delhi and West Bengal. Amit Shah, the union home minister, has repeatedly declared his commitment to making this a national project. “Various people have raised all kinds of questions about national register of citizens,” he said, during his address, in Guwahati, to the chief ministers of the northeastern states soon after the publication of the list. “I want to clearly say that not a single illegal migrant will be allowed to stay in the country by the government of India. That is our commitment.”

A gazette notification about updating the National Population Register, or NPR—a proposed database of all Indian residents, distinct from the NRC—has added to the sense of anxiety. Messages on social media urging people to collect their identity papers and government-issued documents have sent people scrambling.

“Most of the people who have contacted us are Muslims,” Shivangi Sharma, a law student, told me.



Construction of the country's first detention centre for illegal migrants underway in Goalpara, Construction work for the country's first detention centre for illegal migrants is underway in Goalpara, Assam

Sharma is a member of the Indian Civil Liberties Union, and answers a helpline dedicated to callers seeking information about the NRC. “Most of the calls and emails are from Indian Muslims who live abroad, or from rural areas, asking us about what documents are needed, how to collect family-legacy data and so on,” she said. She has fielded several phone calls and nearly sixty messages on Twitter and Facebook since 1 September.

On 1 September, a Twitter user living in Maharashtra sent a direct message to the handle of Indian Civil Liberties Union, a collective of lawyers and activists that aims to “fight against hate mongering, discrimination and corruption.” A Muslim from Pune, he had queries about the National Register of Citizens—a citizenship list published by the government that aims to identify who qualifies as an Indian citizen and, significantly, exclude those who do not. The final list, published on 31 August, excludes over 1.9 million individuals.



<https://caravanmagazine.in/politics/nrc-muslim-bjp-amit-shah-all-india>

Combating Fake News | Impact



Alt News is an Ahmedabad-based fact-checking website that tracks news information and disinformation in mainstream and social media. Its report “Did BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters fabricate reports of unrest in Kashmir?” appeared after the Ministry of Home Affairs dismissed as “fabricated” the foreign media’s reports that thousands of people protested in the Valley against the abrogation of Article 370. Alt-News concluded that the BBC and Al Jazeera videos were genuine and that large gatherings of people had protested the decision to scrap J&K’s special status.

The government attack on the media was discredited.

Did BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters fabricate reports of unrest in Kashmir?

BBC News



On August 10, BBC News had reported that thousands of protesters had taken to the streets in Soura, Srinagar against the government's decision to strip Jammu and Kashmir of its special status. The media outlet claimed that it witnessed the police opening fire and using tear gas to disperse the crowd. Despite that, the Indian government has said the protest never took place." BBC Punjabi claimed that live rounds were also fired at the protestors

Al Jazeera



Al Jazeera had also reported about the massive agitation in Srinagar where a large crowd defied government orders of a lockdown. The organisation said that the protestors were met with live fire, tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets.

Reuters

According to *Reuters*, at least 10,000 people had participated in the August 9 protest against the dilution of Article 370. The publication claimed to have spoken to a police source, an official source and eyewitnesses. Soon after these reports, the Home Ministry put out a statement claiming that the news suggesting 10,000 people protested in Srinagar is "fabricated and incorrect" and only a "few stray protests" were carried out where "not more than 20 people" were involved.



<https://www.altnews.in/did-bbc-al-jazeera-reuters-fabricate-reports-of-unrest-in-kashmir/>

Combating Fake News | Impact



In a 13-part Modi Report Card Series IndiaSpend's dedicated data-checking initiative FactChecker probed the National Democratic Alliance's flagship programmes. These included rural-jobs Swachh Bharat Mission's sewage initiative, Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (electricity-to-all-homes); the fudging of open-defecation-free (ODF) status data in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat that were declared ODF; the missed deadlines of the skills-development mission and struggling initiatives such as the crop-insurance programme; BharatNet and the Ganga clean-up NamamiGange project.

The series is meticulously researched journalism that placed on record facts and figures collated and presented for easy access. The report also presented in-depth reporting for readers looking beyond shallow coverage of bread-and-butter issues and provided an informed balance to the unquestioning cheerleading of government in more mainstream media.

Modi Report Card: A 13-part series probed the National Democratic Alliance's flagship programmes

How do the widely publicised schemes of the NDA government stack up? A probe.

Anshika Patel, 24, does not like waking up at 3 am but she has no choice. Come winter or rain, guided by the light of a cell phone flashlight, Patel, along with four or five women, heads out with a bucket or a bottle to two nearby roads.

This early morning trip is for a search of a clean spot to defecate--the Patel locality in Vishun Pur in Rae Bareilly district in western Uttar Pradesh (UP) has no toilets. Since their village is close to town and is developing fast, there are no open fields where they can defecate.

These women walk to Samoda or Rajamau roads, about 1.5 km away, making sure that no vehicles or animals hurt them as they defecate. "A few months back a woman from our area was hit by a Bolero [SUV] when she was defecating in the morning," said Patel, mother of a three-year-old daughter. "They rushed her to the hospital but she died." These women should not be risking their lives each day to defecate; Patel's village, Vishun Pur, is officially open defecation-free (ODF) as records show toilets in each of the 404 households, per the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) website.

Similar to Vishun Pur, our ground investigation in three UP districts revealed that even as there is ground-level behaviour change with awareness and greater toilet use, in the race to declare districts open defecation-free, the government has inflated numbers and sanctioned shoddy toilet construction. With inadequate focus on the quality and sustainability of toilets, India risks reversing the great strides it has made in improving sanitation, experts said.

"Sanitation is a flow problem and not a stock problem. It cannot be solved in a day, it needs an on-going solution," said Devashish Deshpande, a senior research associate with Accountability Initiative, a think tank based in New Delhi, that conducted independent verification of ODF villages in Rajasthan. UP--with a population of 204 million, equivalent to that of Brazil and with 3% its area--has been one of the biggest contributors to India's poor status in sanitation. As of October 2018, UP along with Bihar,



An elderly woman standing outside her half-constructed toilet at Bhagwan Pur, Mohan Gunj, Lucknow. The village was declared open defecation-free in June 2018. Our investigations reveal that even as toilet usage and awareness has grown in Uttar Pradesh, the race to declare districts open defecation-free has led to inflated official figures and shoddy toilet construction.

Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Telangana, Assam and Karnataka, were the only big states not declared open defecation-free by the government. If government figures are to be believed, sanitation in UP has improved: In 2014, only 35.2% of the state's households had a toilet, in October 2018, 99.9% did, as per government data. UP was slated to be declared "open defecation-free" by October 2, 2018, but the deadline was extended by three months, to December 31, 2018, as the work had not been completed nor verified, according to news reports.



<https://www.factchecker.in/in-ups-race-to-be-free-of-open-defecation-enthusiasm-for-toilets-evident-as-are-fudged-data/>

Combating Fake News | Impact



Fact-checking website Alt News examined photographs of hotels and bungalows in Srinagar purportedly owned by Kashmiri politicians that were being circulated on social media as proof of their luxurious lifestyle and their opposition to the scrapping of Article 370.

Alt News busted the fake news by reverse-searching the photographs online and found that the same property – a luxury hotel in Kashmir – shot from different angles was being passed off as the leaders' homes.

Users of Alt News app asked it to investigate and confirm if the photographs were genuine. The report was a direct outcome of citizen-media collaboration for verified news and the campaign against general disinformation.

Photos of luxury hotel in Srinagar shared as bungalows owned by Kashmiri politicians

Have a look at the Bungalows of....

Mr. Gulam Nabi Azad

Mr. Omar Abdullah

Mr. Farook Abdullah

Ms. Mehbooba Mufti

Houses in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir....

These R Government houses & maintained by the Government too at the cost of public money....

U shall soon come to know Y such people R opposing removal of Artical 370 & 35A...."

The removal of key provisions of Article 370 has unleashed a wave of misinformation pertaining to the state. National Conference leaders Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad have been targeted in the above message which accompanies a set of photographs showing what seem like fancy, lavish residential properties, purportedly owned by these leaders.



<https://www.altnews.in/photos-of-luxury-hotel-in-srinagar-shared-as-bungalows-owned-by-kashmiri-politicians/>

Governance | Impact



Swarajya is an online and print magazine which describes itself as “a big tent for liberal right of centre discourse that reaches out, engages and caters to the new India”.

In a follow-up after the Bogibeel bridge was inaugurated the publication said the bridge which was inaugurated last December after languishing under the UPA government had enabled swift connectivity between Upper Assam and eastern Arunachal Pradesh. Bogibeel also functions as a crucial force multiplier for the Indian military.

This story on the Bogibeel Bridge, a month after it was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi in December 2018, was widely shared, especially on Facebook, where it crossed over 7,500 shares. It caught the attention of Union Minister Piyush Goyal who saw it fit to play it forward.

People happy, soldiers confident: How Bogibeel Setu is ticking many boxes at once

The Bogibeel Bridge is changing people's lives in innumerable way and has become a significant strategic asset that has enhanced the country's security.

The Bogibeel Bridge, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 December last year, has started changing thousands of lives for the better. Apart from enabling easy and fast access to Upper Assam for lakhs of people living in eastern Arunachal Pradesh, this bridge also acts as a crucial force multiplier for the Indian military. And in more ways than one, this bridge — India's longest railroad bridge — has melded many divides.

For the people of eastern Arunachal Pradesh, Dibrugarh in Upper Assam is of crucial importance. This is where they source all their needs, starting from eatables, cooking oil and toiletries to construction materials and automobile spares, from. More importantly, the Assam Medical College in Dibrugarh, along with some other private healthcare facilities in the city, is the nearest super-speciality medical centre for them.

Until 25 December, getting to Dibrugarh meant crossing the Brahmaputra on river vessels, mostly large barges, that was not only time consuming, but also unreliable. During the monsoons, when the river becomes a vast expanse of swiftly flowing water with treacherous under-currents, crossing the river on ferries was highly risky. Accidents — the ferries sinking or being swept away by currents — was common. During the dry season, the river vessels used to get stuck in the many sandbanks that come up and disappear swiftly, thanks to the unpredictable river currents. And ferries would never operate at night.

SAVING LIVES

Thus, many, like Tamo Mibang's father Dina, used to die because Dibrugarh was too far away. Dina Mibang, a retired schoolteacher, was a resident of Ruksin, a small town about 34 kilometres west of Pasighat (headquarters of Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang district). On the evening of 18 April 2016, he complained of a mild chest pain. A local doctor said he had a mild cardiac arrest and advised his family to take him to Dibrugarh. "We rushed my father to the ferry ghat, but it was already dark and there were no ferries. So we had to take a very circuitous



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to people after inaugurating the Bogibeel Bridge on Brahmaputra river.

route of nearly 220 km via Pasighat, Bomjir and cross the Brahmaputra over the Dhola Sadiya bridge upstream to reach Dibrugarh. It took us eight hours to reach Dibrugarh and my father died on the way."

On 3 January this year, when Tamo brought his pregnant wife, Banung, to the Assam Medical College, it took him less than two hours to cover the distance of 114 km over the new Bogibeel Bridge. "Had it not been for this bridge, I would have had to admit her to a hospital at Pasighat, where medical facilities are minimal. Since her's was a complicated pregnancy, it would have been very risky," said Tamo, the proud father of a baby boy. Both mother and child are doing fine, and Tamo cannot thank the new bridge enough for that. Like Banung's, many lives are being saved due to this new bridge.



<https://swarajyamag.com/infrastructure/people-happy-soldiers-confident-how-bogibeel-setu-is-ticking-many-boxes-at-once>

Governance | Impact



When chief minister Devendra Fadnavis patted own government on the back for giving a grant of Rs 1,500 crore to onion farmers in December 2018, Max Maharashtra, an online magazine published in Marathi, pointed out that only Rs 150 crore had been provided for in the budget - a shortfall of a Rs 1,350 crore or 90 percent.

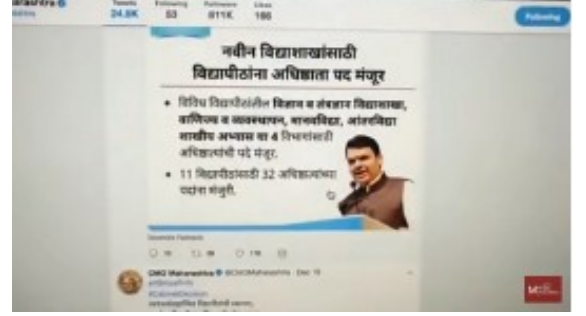
The report compelled the chief minister to delete his self-congratulatory tweet.

मॅक्स महाराष्ट्राच्या बातमीनंतर मुख्यमंत्र्यांवर ट्वीट डिलीट करण्याची नामुष्की

मॅक्स महाराष्ट्रने दिनांक २० डिसेंबरला कॅबिनेटच्या निर्णयानंतर 'राजा उदार झाला आणि हाती भोपळा दिला' या आशयाची बातमी पोस्ट केली होती. त्यामध्ये मंत्रीमंडळाने कांदा उत्पादक शेतकऱ्यांना अनुदान देण्यासाठी दीडशे कोटी रुपयांची तरतूद मंत्रीमंडळाने केली होती. मात्र, वास्तविक पाहता सरकारच्या निर्णयानुसार १ नोव्हेंबर ते १५ डिसेंबर २०१८ या कालावधीत कांदा विकलेल्या शेतकऱ्यांना प्रति क्विंटल २०० रुपये अनुदान मिळणार आहे. एकूण ७५ लाख टन कांद्याला ही मदत मिळणार असल्याचे मुख्यमंत्र्यांनी आपल्या ट्विटमध्ये नमुद केले होते. त्यासाठी त्यांनी दीडशे कोटी रुपयांची तरतूद केल्याचं आपल्या ट्विटमध्ये म्हटले होते. तसंच आतापर्यंतची ही सर्वाधिक मदत असल्याचा दावा मुख्यमंत्र्यांनी केला आहे.

प्रत्यक्षात ७५ लाख टन कांद्याला प्रति क्विंटल २०० रुपये अनुदान द्यायचे असेल तर ती रक्कम दीड हजार कोटी रुपये इतकी भरते. याचाच अर्थ अनुदानासाठी आवश्यक असलेल्या रकमेच्या दहा पट कमी तरतूद सरकारने केलेली आहे. सरकारला अजून १३५० कोटींची तरतूद करावी लागेल. असं आम्ही पोस्ट केलेल्या बातमीमध्ये म्हटलं होतं. दरम्यान महाराष्ट्राचे एकूण वार्षिक कांदा उत्पादनच ७० ते ८० लाख टन असताना मुख्यमंत्र्यांच्या पोस्टमध्ये १ नोव्हेंबर ते १५ डिसेंबर २०१८ या दरम्यान ७५ लाख टन कांदा उत्पादक शेतकऱ्यांना लाभ होणार असल्याचा उल्लेख करण्यात आला होता.

मॅक्स महाराष्ट्रने केलेल्या या पोस्टनंतर मुख्यमंत्र्यांच्या अधिकृत ट्विटवर अकाउंटवरून हे ट्विट डिलीट करण्यात आले. मात्र, मुख्यमंत्र्यांच्या ट्विटर अकाउंटवरून ट्वीट डिलीट करण्यात आल्यानंतर मुख्यमंत्री कार्यालयाकडून या नंतर कोणताही खुलासा अद्याप पर्यंत करण्यात आलेला नाही.



https://youtu.be/eZ69Z894_wc

Governance | Impact



Sikkim Chronicle in its despatches reported on how nearly 50 houses in the Zitlang village in east Sikkim had begun to crack owing to the effect of construction of a railway route nearby. The Chronicle visited the village and the construction site. The villagers had failed to get the concerned authorities to take note of their concern.

The SC's report prompted an emergency meeting between the sub-divisional magistrate at the block development office in Duga and villagers.

State's rail route development causing destruction

Construction of the Sevoke-Rangpo rail route project has caused cracks in the homes of Zitlang village

Development and destruction go hand in hand. Infrastructural development in most cases is like walking on the edge where if not careful, one ends up paying a high price.

Sikkim through a short span of time has witnessed mass developments and infrastructural development is one of them. Being a geographically sensitive region, this tiny Himalayan state has time and again faced topographical conflict. However, despite all the incompatibility, there has been hard tries to balance between the natural resources and the man-made structures making them compatible with each other.

In the line of infrastructural development is the ongoing Sevoke-Rangpo rail route project. This ambitious project has brought along a major problem for the residents of Zitlang village in East Sikkim. The houses in the village have started developing cracks due to the construction triggering protest from the villagers.

Zitlang village is located almost 45kms far from the capital of Sikkim, Gangtok and the tunnel for the first railway in the state passes below this village.

SIKKIM CHRONICLE carried out an investigation regarding the same and visited the village, the construction site and interacted with the people and the concerned authorities.

ABOUT THE RAILWAY PROJECT

Sikkim is fully dependent on National Highway 10 for connectivity with the other regions of the country. Flight operations from Sikkim's much-hyped Greenfield airport have now come to a halt since June 1 following unprecedented weather conditions.

The second option now remains the 52kms under construction railway link which connects West Bengal and Sikkim. The link will run through 14 tunnels, each of which will be 8 meters in diameter. This is the first railway line which will connect Sikkim with the rest of the country. In 2009, the project cost was estimated at Rs 1,339 crore but now it has been increased to Rs 4,087 crore. The project which has been taken up by Ircon



The railway tunnel at Kumrek village



A damaged house

International Ltd., a government PSU, is likely to be get completed by 2022.



<https://www.thesikkimchronicle.com/states-rail-route-development-causing-destruction/>

Governance | Impact



Online and print magazine Swarajya reported on the rewards system of initiated by Prime Minister to elevate 115 most-backward districts. It was premised on “greater the development, greater the financial support”. A Niti Aayog meeting chaired by Modi in June found impressive change in one year.

This story dives into India's Most Backward Districts to learn - through data - whether Modi's scheme were effecting any change there. The situation is found to be improving which, the publication felt, was important to put “out there”.

PM Modi's Project to transform India's Most Backward Districts Is working

Once the districts were selected they were given initial scores (baseline) based on 49 performance indicators (81 data points) under five themes

On 15 June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the fifth meeting of the governing council of Niti Aayog. On the agenda were four key issues: water management, agriculture reforms, security in left-wing extremism affected districts and achievements/challenges of the aspirational district programme.

PM Modi noted that many districts have witnessed huge transformation in the past one year and he praised the local teams working to create 'champions of change' out of the most backward districts of the country.

What is so special about this initiative that the Aayog took it up as one of the top agendas to be discussed in the very first meeting of PM Modi's second term? Apart from the fact that the PM Aspirational District (PMAD) project demands effective implementation of cooperative federalism in true letter and spirit, where coordination of centre, state and district officials is needed to bring a change on the ground, what must've encouraged the government to put its foot on the accelerator is the tremendous progress achieved by these districts in such a short span.

But first things first, a short introduction of the PMAD is in order here. It was announced by Modi in January last year while addressing a gathering of district magistrates and commissioners of India's 115 most backward districts which rank at the bottom on development parameters such as education, skill development, basic infrastructure, health, nutrition, agriculture resources, financial inclusion, et cetera.

In his speech at the launch, the Prime Minister had emphasised the need to change the mindset and label them as "aspirational" rather than "backward", in line with his government's approach of using politically correct terminology (for instance, viklang are now officially called divyang). Once the districts were selected, they were given initial scores (baseline) based on 49 performance indicators (81 data points) under five themes - Health and nutrition (weightage in final score: 30 per cent), Education (30 per cent), Agriculture and water resources (20 per cent), Basic Infrastructure (10 per cent), Skill Development (5 per cent) and Financial Inclusion (5 per cent).



The PM Aspirational District project was announced in January 2018

In April, the districts started entering data. In May, baseline scores were put out on 'champions of change' real-time monitoring online dashboard and first base rankings were announced. In June, the first delta ranking was published. The second delta ranking came out in October.

Since, the programme is evidence-based, availability of authentic and reliable data is central to its success. While districts can be relied on to enter data about many indicators, there are some areas which are surveyed every few years. To get regular and timely data on these specific pointers, the government has partnered with Tata Trusts, Piramal Foundation, and IDinsight who also help in third-party validation of the data entered by the district administration.



<https://swarajyamag.com/politics/pm-modis-project-to-transform-indias-most-backward-districts-is-working>

Governance | Impact



Online platform The News Minute which covers events in South India, reported on a #MeToo story that unfolded in NIFT, Hyderabad. Fifty-six house-keeping staff from NIFT Hyderabad were asked to leave the campus after they accused a stenographer D Srinivas Reddy of sexual harassment. While Reddy continued in his job the women were throw out of the campus for filing a complaint with the police and staging protests.

After TNM reported on the matter NIFT reinstated the women and set up an internal complaints committee to look into the issue.

Win: NIFT reinstates all 56 housekeepers who fought sexual harassment

The women were reinstated a day after TNM's report on the issue created a national discussion

A day after TNM reported on the housekeeping staff at NIFT Hyderabad who lost their jobs after accusing an employee of sexual harassment, all 56 women have been reinstated to work from Thursday. The women were protesting against the alleged sexual harassment they faced at the hands of D Srinivas Reddy, who is still working as a stenographer in the NIFT campus.

The group was led by their supervisor, Ratna Kumari, who first filed a complaint with the cops against the accused last October. Speaking to TNM, Kumari said that she got a call from the agency contractor on Wednesday afternoon asking all the women staffers to return to the campus on Thursday.

"We all have now returned to the campus and are continuing with our duties. As of now, our jobs seem to be safe. But none of the authorities from NIFT have approached us yet. We have learnt that Srinivas Reddy is also here and is currently in a meeting with the director," Parveen, a woman staffer told TNM.

TNM has also learnt from sources close to the Internal Complaints Committee that that the director general of NIFT has come down to Hyderabad from Delhi and an ICC meeting will be constituted on Thursday to look into the matter. After the women protested against Srinivas Reddy, NIFT authorities had floated a new tender which demanded the contractor to terminate all the existing workers on the campus and deploy a new workforce.

Murali, the contractor, told TNM that he has been verbally promised by the state labour commissioner to make the tender invalid and ensure that all the women are back in their jobs at NIFT. Also, the existing contract will be valid for the next two years, he added.

Trouble brewed in the campus after the women staffers filed a complaint against Srinivas last October, accusing him of sexual harassment. Srinivas used to allegedly take pictures of the women without their consent and would ask them to sleep with him. Unable to bear the harassment, 2-3 women had quit their jobs in the past year.



The NIFT campus, Hyderabad

After the case surfaced, the women were continuously threatened by NIFT authorities to compromise in order to safeguard their jobs. To ensure the women did not remain on campus, the authorities picked faults with their work and alleged that the staff were lethargic. They further floated a tender with an additional clause to ensure that a new workforce was deployed in the campus.

Despite multiple attempts to reach out to the NIFT authorities on the issue, a response has not been received.



<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/win-56-women-who-fought-against-sexual-harassment-nift-reinstates-all-workers-103954>

Law | Impact



Live Law, in its sixth year now, is a comprehensive legal news portal with the aim of “making judiciary more transparent and accountable”.

In January its report SC vs RTI highlighted the long pendency of the appeal filed by the Supreme Court Registrar in the SC against the Delhi HC judgment holding that the Right to Information Act (RTI) is applicable to SC. The report analysed the elevation of two judges who replaced two other selected candidates without disclosing reasons despite prior judgments bringing the judiciary within the RTI ambit. After the HC judgement, a division bench of SC referred the matter to Constitution Bench in November 2010 but the matter did not move thereafter.

The January story generated a lot of discussion. Within weeks, the Supreme Court listed the appeal, which had been pending for nine years, for hearing. In April, the SC reserved orders on the appeal after concluding the hearing. Both developments were widely referenced for debates on judicial accountability.

SC vs RTI: SC's Stay Of Delhi HC's Landmark Judgment Enters 9th Year

The verdict had said that Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of India were “public authorities” under the RTI Act

The recent Collegium decisions to elevate Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna to SC left many bewildered. The decision was in reversal of an earlier proposal made on December 12 to elevate Justices Pradeep Nandrajog and Rajendra Menon. The exact reasons for reversal remain unknown. There were also questions raised as to why Justice Khanna was chosen ignoring seniority of other judges, especially three other senior judges from Delhi HC, his parent court. The public and the legal fraternity have no means to know the reasons which led to these decisions.

This latest controversy has brought to the fore another issue of seminal importance - the applicability of Right to Information Act (RTI Act) to the judiciary. The issue is remaining unresolved in appeals pending in the Supreme Court since 2010.

On November 26, 2010, a Division Bench of Justices B. Sudershan Reddy and S S Nijjar had referred the matter to Constitution Bench, observing that the “questions involve the interpretation of the Constitution raise great and fundamental issues”

THE QUESTIONS REFERRED BY THE DIVISION BENCH WERE :

Whether the concept of independence of judiciary requires and demands the prohibition of furnishing of the information sought? Whether the information sought for amounts to interference in the functioning of the judiciary?

Whether the information sought for cannot be furnished to avoid any erosion in the credibility of the decisions and to ensure a free and frank expression of honest opinion by all the constitutional functionaries, which is essential for effective consultation and for taking the right decision?

Whether the information sought for is exempt under Section 8(i)(j) of the Right to Information Act?

But no constitution bench has been formed yet to decide these issues. The issue arises out of an order passed by the Central Information Commission in 2009, directing the SC Registry to furnish information to



Subhash Chandra Agarwal, who had sought information as to whether judges of SC and HC had given declaration of their income and assets to the Chief Justice of India.

Jolted by the unexpected disclosure order from CIC, the SC administration rushed to the Delhi High Court, challenging it. The order was vehemently challenged before the Single Judge of the HC, with the Attorney General appearing for the SC. However, the single judge-Justice Ravindra Bhat- decided against the SC and upheld the order of the CIC in the judgment delivered on September 2, 2009.

The judgment held that Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of India were “public authorities” under the RTI Act, having statutory duty to furnish information sought by citizens regarding the functioning and administration of the SC. While upholding the CIC order, Justice Bhat rejected the argument that information of judges' assets was exempt under Section 8(1)(e) of the Act as it was received by CJI under “fiduciary capacity”.



<https://www.livelaw.in/columns/is-rti-act-applicable-to-judiciary-sc-decision-142313>

Law | Impact



The Caravan in April 2019 published Supreme Charge, a report based on a sworn affidavit by a former Supreme Court employee that she was sexually harassed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi in October 2018. After spurning his alleged overtures, she and her family faced "consistent persecution", including the loss of their jobs and, subsequently, arrest and torture in police custody. Along with the affidavit that was sent to all 22 SC judges, she submitted video recordings of several incidents she refers to in the document.

The Caravan is one of the four publications that broke this story. Justice Gogoi called an extraordinary session of the Supreme Court, within three hours of the charges going public, to address the allegation. A three-judge committee was set up later to investigate the allegation.

Supreme Charge: "I have been victimised for resisting and refusing the unwanted sexual advances of the CJI"

A former employee describes two incidents of molestation by Gogoi in her affidavit allegedly days after he took oath

In a sworn affidavit, copies of which were sent to the residences of 22 Supreme Court judges yesterday, a former employee of the Supreme Court of India accused the chief justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, of sexual harassment and persecution. The former employee describes two incidents of molestation by Gogoi in her affidavit, both of which allegedly took place in October 2018, only days after he was appointed to India's highest judicial office. After she refused his alleged sexual advances, the former employee writes, she and her family faced "consistent persecution," including the loss of their jobs and subsequently, arrest and torture in police custody. "I say that the CJI has misused his position, office and authority and abused his clout and power to influence the police," she writes. "I have been victimised for resisting and refusing the unwanted sexual advances of the CJI and my entire family has also been victimised and harassed due to that."

Along with her affidavit, the former employee also sent the judges copies of video recordings of several incidents she refers to in the document—in particular, that a Delhi Police official accompanied her to the CJI's residence in January this year, where she was asked to apologise to his wife. The videos also indicate that Rajnath Singh, the union home minister, and Amulya Patnaik, the commissioner of the Delhi Police, were made aware of the incident at least as early as 11 January 2019.

In the affidavit, the former employee describes how, in the months preceding his ascension to the post of CJI, Gogoi took a special interest in her professional and personal life, eventually transferring her to his residential office on Tees January Marg, where she was asked to work with him at close quarters. She writes that on two separate occasions, on consecutive days, the CJI touched her and embraced her against her will. During one such incident, "I was forced to push him away with my hands," she states. The former employee further writes that Gogoi instructed her to not speak about the alleged incidents with anyone, and threatened her with dire consequences if she did so.

In the four weeks following the alleged incidents, the



Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi

former employee was transferred thrice to different sections within the Supreme Court. Towards the end of November, disciplinary proceedings were initiated against her. She was accused of having "acted in a manner prejudicial to discipline" for expressing her anxiety regarding her frequent transfers; trying to "bring influence and exert pressure from unacceptable quarters" for approaching a colleague to ask if a lack in her abilities had resulted in these frequent postings; and showing "insubordination, lack of devotion to duty and indiscipline" by taking a casual leave on a Saturday. She was dismissed from the Supreme Court on 21 December 2018. By the end of that year, her husband and his brother, both of whom worked with the Delhi Police, were also suspended from their respective jobs.



<https://caravanmagazine.in/law/former-supreme-court-employee-accuses-cji-ranjan-gogoi-sexual-harassment>

Law | Impact



Live Law is an online legal news portal that aims to make the judiciary “more transparent and accountable”. Live Law extensively covered the process adopted by the SC to deal with the sexual harassment allegations raised by a former SC staff against the CJI. An exclusive story was published, detailing how a disproportionate punishment of dismissal from service was imposed on the complainant.

The report set out judicial and administrative precedents and processes that brought to public domain the functioning of the apex court, and their potential ramifications for the future.

Supreme Injustice: Why dismissal of SC staff who alleged sexual harassment by CJI Is disproportionate

“Sentence has to suit the offence and the offender. It should not be vindictive or unduly harsh. It should not be so disproportionate to the offence as to shock the conscience and amount in itself to conclusive evidence of bias”.

Protesting a change of seat in office; raising a grievance to the President of Employees Association regarding change in seating arrangement; and absence from duty on a half-day for taking child to a school function - are these acts of grave indiscipline which justify termination of an employee's service?

To do so will be against the principle of proportionality.

In the case of the former Junior Court Assistant of the SC, who has come out with sexual harassment allegations against the CJI, these acts resulted in her dismissal from service on December 21, 2018.

This officer, who has been in the service of Supreme Court since May 2014, has an otherwise unblemished record. Her Annual Confidential Reports are endorsed with the grading “Good” in the first year and “Very Good” in the following years.



Statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the apex court campus

Between August to November, her postings were changed three times. On August 27, 2018, she was appointed at the residence of CJI. Within 2 months, she was transferred and posted at Centre for Planning and Research(CPR) on October 22, 2018. She was again transferred and posted at the Library on November 22, 2018, following her alleged acts of subordination at the CPR.

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

The charges do not sound grave; at best, they are trivial transgressions or isolated instances of insubordination, which could be dealt with a censure, or any minor penalty, or any other major penalty except dismissal.

F.No.44/2014-2015-SCA(I)
Dated: 2P May, 2015

MEMORANDUM

_____ is hereby informed that in terms of Office Memoranda No. 21011/1/2005-Estt.(A), Part-II dated 14.5.2009 and 23.7.2009 issued by the Department of Personnel and Training, to the extent made applicable to the Court servants in terms of the order of Hon'ble the then Chief Justice of India, as notified vide Circular dated 12.9.2009, the following Grading, Marks and Remarks (if any) recorded in his/her Annual Confidential Report for the period 2014-2015 is/are communicated to him/her :-

| | |
|---------|----------------------------|
| Period | : 02-05-2014 to 31-03-2015 |
| Grading | : GOOD |
| Marks | : 39 |

F.No.44/2015-SCA(I)
Dated: 05 August, 2016

MEMORANDUM

Mr/Ms _____, JUNIOR COURT ASSISTANT is hereby informed that in terms of Office Memoranda No. 21011/1/2005-Estt.(A), Part-II dated 14.5.2009 and 23.7.2009 issued by the Department of Personnel and Training, to the extent made applicable to the Court servants in terms of the order of Hon'ble the then Chief Justice of India, as notified vide Circular dated 12.9.2009, the following Grading, Marks and Remarks (if any) recorded in his/her Annual Confidential Report for the period 2015-2016 is/are communicated to him/her :-

| | |
|---------|----------------------------|
| Period | : 01-04-2015 to 31-03-2016 |
| Grading | : VERY GOOD |
| Marks | : 44 |



<https://www.livelaw.in/columns/why-dismissal-of-sc-staff-who-alleged-sexual-harassment-by-cji-is-disproportionate-144434>

Law | Impact



The Print is an online news, analysis and opinion magazine. Its report in January 2019 exposed how the Modi government had decided to nominate Supreme Court judge AK Sikri to a plum Commonwealth post in London after his retirement, and days before Sikri cast the decisive vote that led to the ouster of Alok Verma, CBI director at the time who was in the crosshairs of the government.

This report was one of The Print's biggest exclusives in recent times. The scoop triggered massive outrage and led to Sikri withdrawing his consent to be nominated to the post.

Justice Sikri whose vote decided Alok Verma's fate gets Modi govt nod for plum posting

Justice Sikri was part of the three-member panel that decided to remove Alok Verma as CBI chief this month.

The Narendra Modi government decided last month to nominate senior Supreme Court Judge A.K. Sikri to the vacant post of president/member in the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal (CSAT).

The judge, second in seniority after Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, will join the CSAT after his retirement as Supreme Court judge on 6 March. The members of the prestigious tribunal are appointed for a four-year term, which may be renewed for one more term.

On 8 January, Justice Sikri's vote proved decisive in the ouster of the then CBI director Alok Verma over corruption charges, a decision that has drawn a lot of flak, including from those connected to the probe against Verma.

His vote was important since he was the third member of the high-level committee — apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leader of the single-largest party in opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, both of whom had diametrically opposite views on Verma's future in the CBI — asked to take the politically-sensitive decision by the Supreme Court.

Justice Sikri had the same view as the government at the meeting, where Kharge gave a strong dissent note.

DECISION TAKEN AT 'HIGHEST LEVELS'

The CSAT is the final arbiter of disputes between its 53 member-countries.

It has eight members, including the president, selected by Commonwealth governments on a "regionally representative basis from among persons of high moral character who must hold or have held high judicial office in a Commonwealth country or who are jurisconsults with at least 10 years' experience".

There is one vacancy in the tribunal currently and India hasn't been a member of the CSAT for several years now. Terms of several existing members are also getting over in the next few months, sources said.



Former CBI Director Alok Verma

Sources in the Supreme Court told ThePrint that Union Minister for Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad wrote to CJI Gogoi last month, apprising him of the External Affairs Ministry's decision to nominate Justice Sikri to the coveted post and seeking his consent.

The decision to nominate Justice Sikri to the post was taken "at the highest levels", the sources added.

It is learnt that CJI Gogoi replied to the government in the affirmative after checking with Justice Sikri.

Asked if the government had requested the CJI to nominate a judge or unilaterally chosen Justice Sikri, a source said, "The government was clear that it had him (Sikri) in mind when it wrote to the CJI. Maybe, somebody in the government had already taken his consent."



<https://theprint.in/india/governance/judiciary/justice-sikri-whose-vote-decided-alok-vermas-fate-gets-modi-govt-nod-for-plum-posting/177191/>

Hyperlocal | Impact



Reporting from the north-eastern states beyond the “chicken neck” of the country, EastMojo adopts new technologies to deliver stories. Its coverage prompted an Indian-Australian man to financially aid two class X toppers from underprivileged families in Mizoram.

The good deed came about when the Sydney-based engineer happened on the “hurdle-laden success stories” earlier in the month in EastMojo.

Indian-Australian offers Rs 20,000 to 2 poor Mizoram class X toppers

Both the students -- Lalrinnungi, a vegetable seller's daughter, and Given Lawmnakima Thiak, a farmer's boy -- secured ranks in the recently-declared state board exam results

While the world seems to be covered by a cloud of hypocrisy and malevolence, an act of kindness has once again lit it up. Restoring faith in compassion and empathy, an Indian Australian man has come to the aid of two poor students from Mizoram in the remote northeastern part of India.

The philanthropist, who chose to remain anonymous, has donated a sum of Rs 20,000 each to two bright students -- Lalrinnungi, a vegetable seller's daughter from Sihphir's Neihbawi village near Aizawl, and Given Lawmnakima Thiak, a farmer's boy from Bilkhawthlir village in Kolasib district. Both of them achieved distinction in the recently-declared Class X board exams results.

Incidentally, the Good Samaritan happened to the hurdle-laden success stories of the two students earlier this month on EastMojo.

Going through the reports, the Sydney-based engineer decided to help the pupils get a better education, given the fact that they are already bright and hardworking, and some help could get them a shot at better education and life.

The philanthropist informed EastMojo's correspondent about his willingness to help them, and turning his word into reality, he transferred Rs 20,000 each for the two students, to the reporter's bank account and asked for his help to deliver the gift.

The gift was handed over to the two children in the presence of their parents and St Joseph Higher Secondary School's principal C Laltlansanga by Mizoram Journalists' Association (MJA), an umbrella body of all working journalists in the state to which the reporter belongs.

Asked why he found interest in helping the poor children, the Indian Australian philanthropist said he wanted to simply help people, especially the poor children, as he himself was brought up by his poor parents, who were farmers.

Originally hailing from Chennai, the kind-hearted person has been living in Sydney for over 35 years along



Mizoram chief minister Zoramthanga felicitating Lalrinnungi (middle, front row) and others recently

with his wife and a son, who is already married. This is not the first instance when the Good Samaritan has helped deserving children get good education. He has also sponsored the education of many school children from Nepal and India till their graduation.

As reported earlier, 16-year-old girl Lalrinnungi, whose parents earn a living out of selling vegetables on the roadside and rearing pigs, had topped Mizoram's High School Leaving Certificate examination. She helps her parents and supplements their family's income by selling vegetables on holidays and vacations to support her education.

Another the story which caught the sympathy of people was the struggle and success story of a 15-year-old boy. Given Lawmnakima Thiak did not give up education despite many hurdles and clinched distinction in the board exams with letter marks in all the subjects.



<https://www.eastmojo.com/mizoram/2019/05/30/indian-australian-offers-rs-20k-to-2-poor-mizoram-class-x-toppers>

Hyperlocal | Impact



EastMojo published a report debunking a Facebook story that had gone viral on social media. A United Nations spokesperson confirmed to EastMojo that the report of a seven-year-old girl from Manipur being invited to address the international organisation on disaster risk was fake news.

EastMojo had initially covered the little girl's story but after fact-checking retracted its report on what turned out to be fake news. Its investigation was covered by other media.

UN body confirms Manipur girl achievement claim is fake

I can confirm that Manipur girl, Licypriya Devi Kangujam, is not an official speaker at the Global Platform 2019 in Geneva, UNISDR communication head tells EastMojo.

A fake story has once again gone viral on social media. This time the story is about a seven-year-old Manipur girl, Licypriya Kangujam, who has been "selected" to address the United Nations (UN) in the sixth session of Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019 to be held from May 13-17 at the UN headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

In a new twist to the confusing story, the girl, on Friday, allegedly wrote a post on her now-deleted Facebook profile, saying, "Finally I decided not to attend the program in Geneva next month as I am completely in depression. Even my visa and flight tickets was ready. This is not the way to treat your "Ningol" [daughter]" (sic)

Referring to Imphal Free Press (IFP), which debunked the story about Licypriya being invited to the UN and her father being a con man, she alleged, "One local paid media in Imphal" has killed her career by spreading lies about her in the name of her father.

The girl went on to share an official United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) website link to show an "invitation-cum-confirmation letter", signed by Ms Elina Palm, Coordinator, Global Platform, UNISDR. She said that she didn't share the invitation before because it would expose her conference ID number and signature.

Following this, EastMojo cross-checked the facts relating to Licypriya's invitation with Stephanie Speck, Chief, Communications, Advocacy, Knowledge Management and ICT, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction where she said, "I can confirm that Licypriya Devi Kangujam is not an official speaker at the Global Platform 2019 in Geneva."

The alleged highly deceiving link shows a letter in the name of Licypriya Devi Kangujam confirming her registration for the event. On further investigation of the website link provided by Licypriya, several other such confirmation letters were also found. The link too was shared with Speck, the Chief of Communication at UN office for Disaster Risk Reduction, for which no comment was made.



A fake story went viral on social media about Licypriya being invited to address the UN in May

The story about her invitation to UNISDR was first published in Guwahati-based media house, reportedly based on a press release received from International Youth Committee (IYC) claiming that the seven-year-old has been selected to address a session at the UN headquarters in Geneva on May 13-17. However, it was taken down after Imphal Free Press contacted them and raised doubts about the legitimacy of the story.

Imphal Free Press brought to the fore the fact that IYC Chairman Dr Kangujam Kanarjit Singh is the same person who they exposed as a con man.

Kangujam Kanarjit, who is behind the Global Youth Summit and World Youth Summit, is charged of cheating and fraud. The man is also involved in an alleged sham case wherein he allegedly sold same property to multiple people.



<https://www.eastmojo.com/manipur/2019/04/27/un-body-confirms-manipur-girl-achievement-claim-as-fake>

Hyperlocal | Impact



The News Minute's chronicle of how the women in Paalaguttapalle village in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh were turning their lives around by making a living out of cloth bags gave them a lot of visibility. The drought-stricken village had been forced to switch from agriculture to mangrove culture, leaving villagers with little by way of work. The enterprising women then began to make cloth bags.

After the media attention, they were invited in 2019 to speak at summits in Vizag and Hyderabad and were awarded for their work. They have also added pickle-making to their portfolio.

Making clothbags, Paalaguttapalle's Dalit women are turning their lives around

Once poverty-stricken, the women of Paalaguttapalle turned their lives around by making cloth bags, which today have customers in the US, UK and Canada

There is no pucca road that leads to Paalaguttapalle, a small Dalit hamlet in Andhra's Chittoor district. Finding the place isn't easy either. Several wrong turns and a lot of asking around later, "Oh, the women who make bags? Their hamlet this way," said a lady pointing this reporter in the right direction. As we approach the hamlet, there is no board to mark Paalaguttapalle's location – but the cloth bags from this small Dalit hamlet in Andhra's Chittoor district have reached four different countries.

We enter the village on a chilly Saturday morning, and women are gathered outside Rani's house collecting bags that she and the others stayed up all night stitching. "We got a sudden order for 100 bags last night and they need to be delivered in the next few days. We had to finish them today for the order to reach on time," Rani says, as they gather inside their tiny office room to start packing the bags.

Paalaguttapalle has faced the brunt of the drought that hit parts of Rayalaseema in 2010-2015. This small hamlet of just 70 Dalit families, on either sides of a railway track, comprises landless farmer families, who until a few years ago, were fully dependent on agriculture. But with drought hitting the state, land owners began converting their lands into mangroves. As a result, the locals were left with little or no work. Some of them were forced to migrate to nearby towns and cities in search of work.

Roopa, a resident of the hamlet, says that there were days where they didn't have enough money to serve their families daily meals, unless they were lucky to find some work. "If we managed to find some work for the day, we would earn a maximum of Rs 50. We had to make do with that," she adds.

At the time, Aparna, a software engineer from Chennai was living in the hamlet. She had moved there around 1995 and was living with the community. At the time of the drought, when livelihood became a challenge, the women of the hamlet and Aparna began looking for ways to earn an income.



The enterprising women with their bags.

"Initially they were making pickles and we were trying to sell it through people we knew. They would also collect gooseberries from the forest, powder them and try to sell that. I saw that the women were extremely capable and began asking people for suggestions. Around three years ago, someone suggested tailoring to us. So, I asked Annapurna (a resident), who had a sewing machine, to make a cloth bag. It turned out well and a friend of mine gave an order for 100 bags for his store in Hyderabad. Annapurna gathered three more women and delivered this order, and that's how it all started," Aparna says.

This was the turning point for the women of Paalaguttapalle. Within days of delivering their first order, several other orders started coming in. The best thing about the bags these women made, Aparna says, was that quality was consistent, because of which word spread.



<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/making-cloth-bags-paalaguttapalle-s-dalit-women-are-turning-their-lives-around-92612>

Science/Environment | Impact



EPW (Economic and Political Weekly) created a debate kit on climate change that combines expertise and research on various aspects of climate change on one screen. This goes beyond what other climate change repositories, such as by the NASA, do by presenting India-specific research while keeping in view developments in climate change negotiations at the world stage.

EPW has the unique distinction of having covered all climate change negotiations that have taken place to date and this project taps into that unique distinction and creates a “one-stop-shop” on climate change which will be of use to lay readers, scholars and researchers alike for the years to come.

Thinking about climate change: An interactive

This debate kit is intended for curious readers and experts looking for a repository of accessible information and articles on the the subject

HOW TO USE THIS INTERACTIVE

Spin the earth and hover to view the topics. Click on the highlighted segment to read a short introduction and explore more through the list of articles. Navigate between the topics either by clicking on the earth or on the “explore” button at the end of the text.

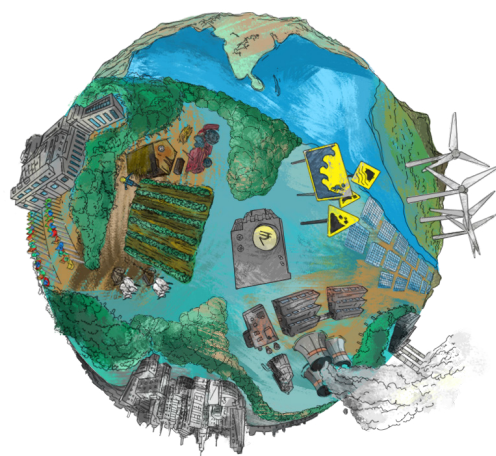
The earth's climate has been undergoing change—for example, glacial advances and retreat—for millennia. However, the current warming trend is seen by scientists to be linked to unprecedented human activity since the middle of the 20th century. The average surface temperature of the earth has risen about 0.9 degrees celsius since the late 19th century, largely due to increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere.

The warming of the earth has resulted in the melting of polar ice caps, leading to a rise in sea and ocean levels. At the same time, as oceans absorb most of the increased heat, they lead to the melting of ice shelves. Glaciers across the world are retreating, snow is melting faster, and extreme weather events (particular high temperature and intense rainfall) are becoming common due to warmer, wetter air.

Projected climate change by mid-21st century is likely to result in negative impacts on marine ecosystems, fisheries, agriculture, groundwater resources, renewable surface water, posing a huge risk to food security, particularly in tropical and temperate climate zones. Populations that are infrastructurally disadvantaged, particularly in the developing world, are likely to be most at risk of disease, displacement, and hunger.

While these climate change risks will manifest themselves over a multi-decade period, countries are expected to implement risk mitigation and adaptation programmes as agreed upon under international accords like the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Debates around climate change at the climate summits have often taken either of the two sides—that the only solution/response to climate can be to adapt oneself to live within natural boundaries, constraining



Climate change risks will manifest themselves over a multi-decade period

resource use and consumption or that resource use is essential to human survival, but science and technology can be utilised to control resource exploitation as well as to mitigate the ill effects of climate change.

This debate kit aims to provide a glimpse into the major concepts and themes in scholarship from the EPW, pertaining to climate change. It is intended for curious readers looking for a quick overview of the topic as well as experts looking who are seeking a repository of accessible information and articles on climate change.



<https://www.epw.in/engage/article/world-environment-day-climate-change-interactive>

THE BASTION

Digital media platform The Bastion looks at subject-specific news analysis in public policy, academic discourse and journalism. It examined the failure of the Forest Rights Act, in Mandi in Himachal Pradesh where locals who have been given opaque 'Nil certificates' and communities who depend upon forests for their livelihoods are systematically (and legally) denied their fundamental rights of livelihood.

The report helped drive attention to the continuous manipulative measures of the officials to undermine communities, and became a much-needed mouthpiece for over 1.5 lakh affected families in Mandi.

“We have literally cut and presented our arms to the government”: Mandi’s fight to protect its forest rights

In Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, where forests thrive and streams flow, and communities depend upon forest land for livelihoods, resolutions have been passed at village level explicitly stating that no one there has forest rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. These have been produced as ‘Nil certificates’ through an unlawful process stifling local decision making, which upon connecting the dots seem to be an extension of the administration’s infatuation with quickening the pace of proposed ‘developmental’ projects in the district.

WRITTEN BY VAISHNAVI RATHORE

The curvy highway that cuts through Himachal Pradesh’s Mandi district remains a busy one, with HRTC buses passing frequently. During the months of March and April, the sides of the road remain busy too, as a few sellers sit with baskets of bright red rhododendron, a flower found in the Himalayan region, which is used to make pickles, jams, juices and chutney.

Further into a village in Mandi, a young boy listens to a track on YouTube, while ushering his cows to the common pastures, glancing at the golden wheat fields, which will be ready to be cultivated in a couple of weeks. With 47% of forest land in the district, even as modernity intersects everyday life, communities depend upon these forests for their livelihoods. But, registers of most of the Forest Rights Committees (FRCs) in the district blatantly, in a few lines announce, “In this revenue village, no one has a right on the forests.”

QUESTIONABLE IMPLEMENTATION

Nil’ or ‘Zero’ certificates at Panchayat and revenue village levels indicate that Nil claims were made under the Forest Rights Act, (FRA) 2006 almost all across Mandi. FRA, which aims to protect the interests of communities dependent on forest land for bonafide livelihoods and provide legal recognition to forests, is a lost opportunity here. But how was this possible?

One of the initial steps to claim both individual and community rights as per the provisions of the Act is to invite claims from the communities post the formation of the FRCs. All such proceedings are to be duly recorded in a register, with at least 50% signatures proving a quorum. Following this, files need to be prepared, where claimants



Mandi’s villagers discuss land ownership rights.

fill forms, which are supposed to be provided by the government, and attach any two pieces of evidence from the list provided in the Act, to prove their dependency. In Mandi’s case, however, Nil certificates appear as a resolution in the FRC registers (figure 1) and then manifest into filling a form (figure 2). This step is not only absent in the Act, but was also carried out without any representative being aware of the Act itself. With this, the rights of lakhs of probable claimants remain compromised.



<https://thebastion.co.in/politics-and/environment/we-have-literally-cut-and-presented-our-arms-to-the-government-mandis-fight-to-protect-its-forest-rights/>

Science/Environment | Impact

**Down
To
Earth**

Environment and development Asian fortnightly Down to Earth reported that Indian rivers crossed the highest flood levels 25 times in 2019.

Part of a series on tracking extreme weather events in India due to climate change, the coverage was not only read widely but also appeared in discussions in 20 discussion platforms. The report was also frequently cited in many public meetings on climate change in India.

Indian rivers crossed flood levels 25 times in August 2019

This caused extreme floods in many states, according to Central Water Commission data

Floods wreaked havoc in most parts of the country in August 2019 after various rivers at 25 stations crossed their highest flood level (HFL), according to Central Water Commission (CWC) data.

The flood situation is extreme when the water level of a river touches or crosses the HFL recorded at any forecasting site so far, read the CWC definition.

For example, two rivers in Maharashtra – Warna and Krishna – and one in Karnataka – Dudhganga – not only crossed danger marks but also the HFL of 2005 on August 8 and 9. Both Maharashtra and Karnataka suffered damages in devastating deluges last month.

Water level of Warna in Sangli rose to 546.954 metre on August 9 when its HFL was 546.324 m from August 5, 2005, according to CWC's Samdoli station records. Same day, Krishna touched 544.185 m at Arjunwad station and this was beyond its HFL (543.69 m) in 2005.

Similarly, Godavari in Nashik rose to 563.31 m on August 8 when its HFL was 563.01 m from August 2, 2016.

July had seen just one episode of extreme flood situation when Kamalabalan in Madhubani district of Bihar rose to 53.01 m, which was beyond its HFL and the danger level (50 m).

CLIMATE CHANGE'S DOING

Climate change has impacted India severely. Extreme rainfall events and widespread floods have increased manifold over the last several decades.

States like Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat received 36, 30, 22, and 31 per cent more rainfall than normal between June 1 and September 18, 2019. This is the highest among the big states of India.

Moreover, rise in average global temperatures led to a worrying trend of no rain for long periods and then a sudden bout of excessive rainfall causing extreme weather events, particularly floods. Such floods take lives, destroy homes and agricultural yields as well as result in huge revenue losses.

Kerala was reeling under a seasonal rainfall deficit of



A heavily flooded home in Maharashtra.

27 per cent till August 7. But between August 1 and 7, the saw 22 per cent excess rainfall and then on August 8 it received 368 per cent more rainfall than normal, which led to floods, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) records.

By August 13, the incessant rainfall in the state reduced the seasonal deficit to 3 per cent. The floods ended up killing more than 100 people and displacing 1.9 lakh.

Floods are also a result of gross mismanagement of dams and lack of coordination between states.



<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/natural-disasters/indian-rivers-crossed-highest-flood-level-25-times-in-august-2019-66818>

Science/Environment | Impact



News website The Wire kicked off its first edition of Quintessence, a series that focuses on fundamental ideas in science, with a question: What is Quantum Biology? The column explored how scientists are exploring whether the non-deterministic rules of quantum mechanics may somehow guide biology as well. One of the areas of research is the quantum underpinnings of smell, origin of consciousness and "(speculatively) the origin of life itself."

Quintessence offers articles about fundamental ideas in science. The mainstreaming of science in mass media encourages logical thinking, enquiry and natural curiosity about the world we live in. Topics like What is Quantum Biology curate globally trending themes in the sciences for a mass audience in an accessible format and present a counter narrative for the extreme credulous and superstitious communities in an unevenly developed society.

The Sciences: What is quantum biology

The people who created quantum mechanics in the early 20th century were curious if the same rules could guide biology as well

We're quite familiar with how matter behaves. For example, you intuitively know how hard you need to bounce a ball on the floor to allow it to jump over a barrier. But we don't have the same kind of handle on subatomic particles. If you need an electron to cross a tiny barrier, you don't need to bounce it (and you might not be able to). Sometimes, it can just tunnel through the barrier to get to the other side.

This is because the ball's behaviour is governed by the principles of classical mechanics, which has certain rules about what a ball can and can't do. The electron's behaviour, on the other hand, is dictated by the terms of quantum mechanics, which might not allow things that classical mechanics does but allows others that seem completely bizarre. For example, did you know that scientists have been able to entangle pairs of photons such that when one of them changes, the other one changes instantaneously even if it is hundreds of kilometres away?

Unlike classical mechanics, which allows us to calculate exactly where a ball will land after five bounces, quantum mechanics is non-deterministic. There's no telling where an electron will be five minutes from now, just a well-calculated probability.

Can the same set of rules somehow guide biology as well? The people who created quantum mechanics in the early 20th century tried to answer this question. In 1944, Erwin Schrödinger published a slim book entitled 'What Is Life?'. Among other things, he wondered in it if quantum physics could explain the remarkable fidelity with which children inherit genetic information from their parents.

Schrödinger and Niels Bohr both attempted to bring foetal ideas from this union of biology and quantum mechanics to the forefront of science. But after their time, quantum biology remained largely neglected. Physicists weren't captivated by it, chemists didn't buy it and biologists didn't care about quantum mechanics.

Scientists observe quantum phenomena, including tunnelling and entanglement, in highly sophisticated experiments that have to be carefully insulated against noise. This is not just sound but, as with sound, it is any



The European robin: The humble migratory bird is the quantum biology's poster child.

unwanted disturbance that interferes with a system's regular performance. In fact, the more noise there is, the harder it is for a system to maintain its quantum nature, and resist a classical one. This is why many of the experiments are operated at really low temperatures, where vibrations in the experiments' instruments are also suppressed. It's curious then that quantum mechanics could even be at work inside living matter, which is essentially a warm, liquid soup of disorder.

As usual, it seems nature might have found a way to make it work. In the late 1960s, American scientists presented evidence of quantum biology at work in enzymes. Enzymes are complex protein structures that dramatically speed up biochemical reactions. There are two ways to understand how they do this: quantum mechanics and classical mechanics. However, researchers found that classical mechanics couldn't account for the size of the speed gain, so scientists started looking for answers using quantum tunnelling, which seemed more promising.



<https://thewire.in/the-sciences/what-is-quantum-biology>

Business | Impact



The Ken has a unique business model in that it is a subscription-based digital platform which publishes every weekday one (and only one) analytical India-specific story on technology, start-ups, business, science or healthcare.

In July The Ken wrote how Fiinnovation, a CSR consultancy company, was accused by several non-government organisations of failing to provide CSR funding, despite taking an advance of 4% of the funding amount as upfront fee. Working as a conduit between corporates and NGOs in the Rs 10,000 crore-plus CSR sector, Fiinnovation charges 10% commission from the NGOs on their requirement.

Following the publication of the report, some NGOs got their money back, including Delhi based Simple Education Foundation. More complaints of fraud also came to light.

Fiinnovation and the CSR funding pot at the end of the rainbow

Government mandated CSR spending opened the floodgates for funding for non-profits in need. It also created an opportunity for shrewd firms looking to be the middlemen between the corporate and social sectors.

On 18 February at the World Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Congress in Mumbai, Soumitro Chakraborty, CEO of Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt Ltd (Fiinnovation), was the toast of the town. The Congress focused on companies helping implement sustainable development goals in health, education and the social sector. That night, Chakraborty won the 'CEO of the year' award for Fiinnovation's work in the social development sector.

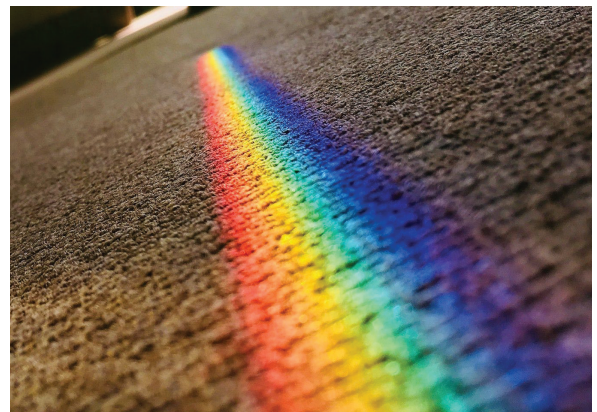
This was hardly a coming-out party for Chakraborty. Indeed, the bespectacled CEO and his Delhi-based organisation have frequently been conferred with a number of CSR-related awards. Already a decade-old, Fiinnovation calls itself a fundraising consultant firm—helping non-profits raise CSR funds from corporates.

Fiinnovation's rise to prominence in the CSR space coincides with the government's 2014 mandate that companies spend 2% of their three-year average annual net profit on CSR activities each financial year. This is applicable to firms with at least Rs 5 crore (\$730,000) net profit or Rs 1,000 crore (\$146 million) turnover or Rs 500 crore (\$73 million) net worth, starting in the year ended March 2015. Ever since then, CSR funding has snowballed. According to estimates by ratings agency CRISIL, CSR spends by Indian corporates in the four years since the government mandate crossed the Rs 50,000 (\$7.3 billion) crore mark earlier this year.

Ever since then, CSR funding has snowballed. According to estimates by ratings agency CRISIL, CSR spends by Indian corporates in the four years since the government mandate crossed the Rs 50,000 (\$7.3 billion) crore mark earlier this year.

And as this pot of CSR gold grows larger, it presents an opportunity for shrewd firms like Fiinnovation looking to be the go-between in these interactions between the worlds of commerce and social work. Fiinnovation's revenue grew by 13% in the year ended March 2018, clocking in at Rs 9 crore (\$1.31 million).

But even as revenues grow and accolades come thick and fast, there is a rising tide of accusations against



Fiinnovation. Small, disparate organisations across the country claim that Fiinnovation signed agreements with them to raise CSR funding, but never came through. The upfront payments—the company charges a 10% commission, of which 4% is paid in advance—made to Fiinnovation were, in many cases, never returned.

According to a list accessed by The Ken, somewhere around 5,000 organisations have faced similar issues. The list was shared by a former company insider who requested anonymity. The Ken could not independently reach out to each one of them, but of the thirteen we reached out to, all told a similar story—Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed, no funds raised. Only two of them got a refund of commission.



<https://the-ken.com/story/fiinnovation-and-the-csr-funding-pot-at-the-end-of-the-rainbow/>

Business | Impact

Down
To
Earth

Asian-centric environmental journal Down to Earth investigated the windfall to five companies manufacturing fortified rice as a tool to combat malnutrition in India. It also argued that fortification is not the way to fight malnutrition.

The story got a rebuttal from the FSSAI and Rajiv Kumar of NITI Aayog while many farmers' organisations reacted to it in support.

Fortified rice scheme to create Rs 3000 crore market for just five big firms

The Centre's decision to provide only fortified food items under state schemes rekindles the debate on whether fortification helps combat malnutrition and who actually benefits from the move

Addressing the nation in his monthly radio programme, Mann Ki Baat, on August 25, 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that rice provided to India's poor categorised under five government schemes, including the public distribution system and mid-day meals, will soon be fortified with micronutrients such as vitamin B12, iron and folic acid, to help fight malnutrition.

The government believes that micronutrients, which enable the body to produce enzymes and hormones essential for growth, can play a crucial role in the country where 38 per cent children under five years are stunted and 36 per cent are underweight, as per the National Family Health Survey 2015-16.

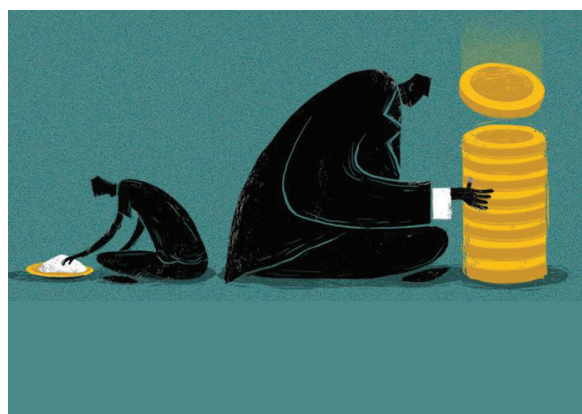
The rice fortification scheme will be implemented in 15 districts of 15 states on a pilot basis from this kharif season. The announcement has rekindled the debate on whether fortification helps combat malnutrition and who actually benefits from the move.

"There is no proven case in any part of the world where fortification has reduced malnutrition," says Umesh Kapil of the department of gastroenterology and human nutrition unit at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi.

"Sometimes it can have the opposite effect. Natural foods contain protective substances such as phytochemicals and polyunsaturated fat that are adversely affected by the process of blending micronutrients," says Delhi-based paediatrician Arun Gupta.

Fortification is a lucrative business and a government backing translates into an assured market worth crores of rupees. Globally, just five multinationals — Germany's BASF, Switzerland's Lonza, France's Adisseo and the Netherlands' Royal DSM and ADM — manufacture micronutrients and all Indian entities that sell micronutrients import from them.

"These multinationals govern the world market through a cartel," says Vijay Sardana, a Delhi-based agribusiness and trade analyst.



Rice is the fifth food item that the government is promoting with fortification — salt, edible oil, milk and wheat being the others. The total annual market for fortification of rice, wheat and milk, as per 2018-19 demand provided by the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (MOCAFPD) and the volume of fortifying mixture required given by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), is over Rs 3,000 crore.

Fortified rice alone will create an assured market of Rs 1,700 crore because its process is costlier than the other items.

For the first time since the 1980s, when the government made addition of iodine to salt compulsory, there is a renewed focus on fortification of food items. The decision on fortification of wheat was announced last year and is being implemented in 12 states under India's flagship Poshan Abhiyaan to improve nutrition among children, adolescents, pregnant mothers and lactating mothers.



<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/food/fortified-rice-scheme-to-create-rs-3-000-crore-market-for-just-five-big-firms-66761>

Business | Impact



Business web portal The Ken ran two stories on Byju's, India's and Asia's largest edtech company, valued in excess of \$5 Billion, that exposed the chinks in its armour. The first story – The Loan Crisis at Byjus's- questioned the efficacy of its products; the second – Byju' Fun Learning Could Use Unlearning - exposed its unscrupulous method of acquiring customers, which was also in minor violation of the RBI regulation on third party lending.

Several parents came out to report how they were conned into taking loans; they formed WhatsApp groups to raise their voices. Investors in edtech companies were alerted to the dodgy sales strategy of not just Byju's but edtech companies in general. Together, the two stories raised awareness for consumers and investors, as well as the bar for effectiveness of such solutions.

Edu-tech company Byju's has chinks in its armour

By partnering with lending companies like Capital Float and Bajaj Finserv, Byju's was able to break through the affordability barrier. But sales agents with aggressive targets are pushing multi-year subscriptions and ever-larger consumer loans on to unsuspecting customers.

"Come fall in love with learning," said the photo of a cherubic kid wearing oversized glasses on the receipt the parent waved at the camera. But there's little love in words she and three other parents used in the video—a complaint to the Chennai Cyber Crime Department.

"I did not know they were signing me up for a 12-month loan for Rs 50,500 (\$729) from some company called Capital Float," she said.

"They took our biometrics saying it was for EMIs," said another.

"They" was Byju's, India's edtech behemoth.

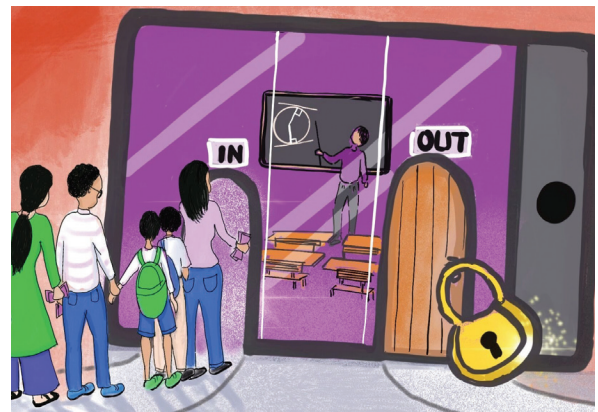
With revenue of Rs 1,430 crore (a little over \$200 million) for the year ended 31 March and a valuation of over \$5 billion, founder Byju Raveendran's eponymous startup is already an unparalleled success story, and not just for the edtech sector.

Since the launch of its learning app in 2015, the company has known no barrier to growth. Soaring revenues, users and even celebrity endorsements have bolstered its growth and put a significant distance between Byju's and its nearest competitors like Toppr and Extramarks. Raveendran, a regular fixture across education and start-up conferences worldwide, has ushered in an era of homegrown entrepreneurs with global ambitions.

"I strongly believe that the next big education company will be built in India," Raveendran said in a previous interview with The Ken for an earlier story.

All the fanfare and glowing PR, however, masks systemic issues with how Byju's products are marketed, sold and paid for. Even a cursory internet search throws up a dense litany of allegations of mis-selling and unwanted loans pushed on to customers by Byju's sales executives.

On the one hand are vocal parents, who've aired their complaints to anybody willing to listen. On the other



are the third-party loan providers who are being burnt by Byju's growth-at-all-costs sales tactics, unwilling to talk. Riding on Byju's growth spurt was supposed to be a secure way for lenders such as Capital Float to power their loan book. Instead, they are smarting from accusations of cheating and harassment by the very borrowers they acquired through Byju's.



<https://the-ken.com/blog/byjus-and-the-art-of-the-deal/>

Business | Impact

सत्याग्रह
समाचारों से

Satyagrah, the Hindi co-publication of online English news portal Scroll, reported that in March the government halted the Line-of-Control trade route between Salamabad in Pakistan and Uri in India. The trade took place four days a week and was based on barter system and zero-duty. For those whose livelihoods depended on the two facilitation centres on either side, this was a devastating decision. How the Kashmir lock-down hit Trade presents the fall-out.

The story was a grim reminder of the price the little people often pay in times of conflict.

कैसे बिना चेतावनी के लागू हुआ एक फैसला कश्मीर में हजारों लोगों को कंगाली के कगार पर ले आया है

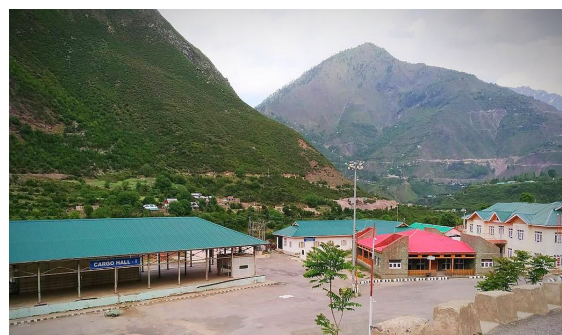
गृह मंत्रालय के एक फरमान के बाद अचानक ही जम्मू-कश्मीर में सीमा पार व्यापार को बंद कर दिया गया है

साल 2008 में भारत और पाकिस्तान की सरकारों ने कई साल तक चले विचार-विमर्श के बाद 'सीमा पार व्यापार' को मंजूरी दी थी. इसके बाद बारामुला जिले के सलामबाद इलाके में रफ़ीक़ अहमद आवान के साथ-साथ कई और स्थानीय लोगों की ज़मीनें अधिग्रहीत की गईं. इन ज़मीनों पर 'ट्रेड सेंटर' बनाए जाने थे. रफ़ीक़ की ही तरह बाकी सारे लोग भी अपनी ज़मीनें, जो कि उनकी कमाई का प्राथमिक साधन थीं, न रहने के बाद- सलामबाद के इस 'ट्रेड सेंटर' पर मजदूरी करने लगे. करीब 11 साल से इन लोगों की गुज़र-बसर हो रही थी. लेकिन अचानक भारत सरकार द्वारा इस व्यापार को बंद कर दिये जाने की घोषणा ने रफ़ीक़ जैसे 370 अन्य मजदूरों की रोज़ी रोटी छीन ली है.

'हालत यह हो गई है कि अब शायद भीख मांगने के अलावा और कोई चारा नहीं बचेगा,' रफ़ीक़ ने सत्याग्रह से बात करते हुए कहा. उनका यह भी कहना था कि उनके चार बच्चे और उनके अन्य घर वाले भुखमरी की कगार पर हैं. रफ़ीक़ ने बताया, 'जो जमा कर रखा था वो पिछले दो महीने में खतम हो गया है. और सिर्फ मेरी नहीं सारे मजदूरों की यही हालत है.'

मामला सिर्फ रफ़ीक़ और 370 मजदूरों का नहीं है. संकट नियंत्रण रेखा के दोनों तरफ से काम कर रहे लगभग 600 व्यापारियों का भी है और उनसे जुड़े सैकड़ों ट्रक चालकों का भी. यानी हजारों लोगों की आजीविका पर ग्रहण गया है. जैसे श्रीनगर के लाल बाज़ार में रहने वाले मीर मुनीर. उन्होंने मार्च में 45 लाख रुपए के मिर्ची के बीज नियंत्रण रेखा के उस पार भिजवाने के लिए गाड़ियों में चढ़ा दिये थे. लेकिन व्यापार बंद हो जाने के कारण इन्हें भिजवा नहीं पाए. सत्याग्रह से बातचीत में उनका कहना था, 'आपको क्या बताऊं मैं किस-किस तरफ से नुकसान हो रहा है. बीज पड़े-पड़े सूख रहा है और इसका ज़ाहिर है वज़न कम हो रहा है. बैंक से पैसा उठाया है और बैंक को कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता है कि मेरा व्यापार चल रहा है या नहीं, वो तो अपना ब्याज और असल लेके रहेगा.'

मुनीर ने बीज के बदले उस तरफ से खज़ूर और मिसवाक मंगाए थे,



रहेंगे तो रमज़ान के बाद न खज़ूर किसी काम के हैं न मिसवाक. मुझे समझ नहीं आ रहा है मैं क्या करूं.' यही हालत बाकी करीब 300 व्यापारियों की है जिनका करोड़ों रुपया फंसा हुआ है, ज़मीनें गिरवी हैं और जो इस वक़्त पाई-पाई को मोहताज हैं.

सवाल यह है कि भारत सरकार ने यह व्यापार बंद करके इतने लोगों के व्यवसाय पर क्यों लात मारी है. क्या सरकार का कदम जायज़ है? क्या यह व्यापार फिर कभी हो जाएगा? लेकिन पहले समझना यह होगा कि यह व्यापार दरअसल है क्या.

कश्मीर और पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर (पीओके) के बीच इस व्यापार की कल्पना 2004 में तब के प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी और पाकिस्तान के राष्ट्रपति जनरल परवेज़ मुशर्रफ ने की थी. लेकिन यह अमल में लाया गया 2008 में जब तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह और पाकिस्तान के राष्ट्रपति आसिफ अली ज़रदारी न्यूयॉर्क में मिले. इस व्यापार का मक़सद दोनों देशों के बीच विश्वासबहाली था. चर्चा के बाद दो व्यापार मार्ग खोले गए- उरी स्थित सलामबाद और पुंछ के चाकंडे बाग से.



<https://satyagrah.scroll.in/article/127838/kashmir-seema-paar-vyapaar-rok-mushkilen-report>

Business | Impact



As part of the Green Blood series, The Lede detailed in a comprehensive report how the Kudankulam power plant near Tirunelveli had been handed over to a private beach sand miner and the intense lobbying involving the German government to lift the ban that followed the exposé.

Following the publication of this story, the Government of India issued a Gazette notification stating that all private beach sand mining was banned and that the state governments had cancelled all leases. Any exports of BSM was to be channelised through the government-owned IREL only.

Kudankulam nuclear power plant was signed away for mining to a private beach sand miner

In The Green Blood Project we also detail the intense lobbying by the German government to lift the ban on beach sand mining in Tamil Nadu

Under the hot sun of mid-March in 2011, hundreds of fishermen, activists and villagers along the coasts of Tirunelveli assembled at the tiny fishing hamlet of Idinthakarai. They were protesting against the Kudankulam nuclear power plant situated barely six kilometres away.

The state government with J Jayalalithaa at the helm, initially went soft on the protesters, almost encouraging them. She had a political point to score against the UPA 2 government at the Centre, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The protests against a much-delayed nuclear power project signed between Russia and India during Deve Gowda's stint as Prime Minister, had been going on in coastal Tirunelveli since the 1980s.

It turned into a huge protest, that made the world take note, only in 2011. By March 2012 though, with the state wracked by incessant power cuts, Jayalalithaa changed her stance. She needed the power that Kudankulam could generate. A police crackdown began.

21 cases of sedition were filed against 8956 people, 21 cases against 11,000 people for waging war against the state. 12,000 protesters from three villages were named as accused in a variety of cases. Over 1800 protesters were arrested and later released. The protests were dismantled by the Jayalalithaa government in 2012. In 2013, the power plant reached criticality and began to generate power.

But there was something quite interesting taking place behind the scenes of the Tamil Nadu Geology and Mining Department as well as the Central Ministries of Mines and the Ministry of Environment and Forests during this time.

ALLOWING A MINER TO MINE A NUKE POWER PLANT

Construction of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant began in 2002. The construction itself was delayed for several reasons and protests too were taking place sporadically by locals, largely fisherfolk. The land on which



The Kudankulam power plant seen from beach.

the plant is built officially belongs to the Department of Atomic Energy, a portfolio held by the Prime Minister of India. It is a high security zone.

On 12 August 2011, then Industries Secretary Sundaradevan signed an application giving permission to VV Mineral to mine beach sand minerals over a total area of a whopping 300 acres across six villages of Tamil Nadu.

The villages covered are Thiruvambalapuram, Chettikulam, Vijayapathi, Koodankulam, Irukkandurai and Levinjipuram in Tirunelveli district. This application had been pending clearance since 1994. The mining leases were given for a 20-year period. Strangely, the Ministry of Environment and Forests had given the mining firm environmental clearances even before the state government granted the mining lease.



<https://www.thelede.in/the-green-blood-project/2019/06/20/kudankulam-nuclear-power-plant-was-signed-away-for-mining-to-a-private-beach-sand-miner>

Community | Impact



At the peak of the controversy sparked by the Supreme Court verdict to overturn the custom barring women of menstruating age from entering Sabrimala temple, Malayalam news portal Azhimukham reported extensively on the taboos in Kerala around menstrual cycles.

The reports brought to the mainstream discourse the various myths and customs that led to women being shunned during their periods. The series also spotlighted the gender and cultural politics tied to the issue and helped promote a progressive space for informed debate on religious conservatism.

നവോത്ഥാന കേരളത്തിന്റെ ആർത്തവ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യങ്ങൾ

"ദേ, നോക്ക് ചേച്ചീ... ഈ പാത്രം കണ്ടോ? ഇത് 'ചീക്ക' പാത്രമാണ്", ശ്രേയ ഒരു പാത്രവും എടുത്തുകൊണ്ടാണ് എന്റെ മുന്നിലേക്ക് വന്നത്. പാത്രം കാട്ടിക്കൊണ്ട് അവൾ ഒന്ന് കൈപൊത്തി ചിരിച്ചു. "ഇത് വീടിനുള്ളിൽ കൂടി ഇങ്ങോട്ട് എടുത്തെന്നങ്ങാൻ മറ്റേമ്മ (അച്ഛന്റെ അമ്മ) അറിഞ്ഞാൽ... ഹെന്റമ്മോ... പിന്നെയൊരു ഉപദേശം തൊടങ്ങും. വീട് മുഴുവൻ പുണ്യാഹം കൊണ്ട് നിറയും", വീണ്ടും ചിരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് തന്നെ ശ്രേയ തുടർന്നു. ഇതിനിടെ അവൾ പറയുന്നതെല്ലാം റെക്കോർഡ് ചെയ്യാനോ, വീഡിയോയിൽ പകർത്താനോ ഞാൻ ശ്രമിക്കും എന്ന് മുൻകൂട്ടി കണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് അവൾ തടഞ്ഞു.

"എന്റെ പൊന്ന് ചേച്ചീ, എനിക്ക് തല്ല് മേടിച്ച് തരല്ലേ. മറ്റേമ്മ അയൽക്കൂട്ടത്തിന് പോയത് കൊണ്ടാണ് ചേച്ചിയോട് സംസാരിക്കാനെങ്കിലും പറ്റിയത്. വേണമെങ്കിൽ എന്റെ പേര് കൊടുത്തോ. പക്ഷെ ഫോട്ടോയും വീഡിയോയും ഒന്നും വേണ്ടേ", ഇല്ല എന്ന് ഉറപ്പ് കൊടുത്തപ്പോൾ ശ്രേയ പറഞ്ഞു തുടങ്ങി, അവളുടെ 'ആ നാല് ദിവസങ്ങളെ' കുറിച്ച്. "എനിക്കത്ര വയസ്സാണെന്ന് ചേച്ചിക്കറിയാമോ? 14. എന്റെ പ്രായത്തിലുള്ള കൊച്ചാണ് തമിഴ്നാട്ടിൽ ഗജയിൽ തെങ്ങുവീണ് മരിച്ചത്. എന്റെ പൊന്നമ്മച്ചിയാണേ സത്യം, എന്റെ ചേച്ചീ, ഞാനെപ്പഴും സ്വപ്നം പോലും കാണും. ഞാനും അത് പോലെ ചത്ത പോകുന്ന സീൻ. സത്യം പറഞ്ഞാ അങ്ങനെയൊക്കെ എന്തേലും നടന്നാലേ എന്റെ വീട്ടുകാർ മാറുമെന്നുള്ളൂ. ഈ പാത്രം കണ്ടോ, നാല് ദിവസം ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കാൻ എനിക്കും അമ്മയ്ക്കും ചേച്ചിക്കുമായിട്ട് മാറ്റി വച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതാണ് ഇത്. പീരിഡ്സ് അല്ലാത്ത സമയം ഈ പാത്രം തൊടാൻ പോലും പാടില്ല. ഇതീ തൊട്ടാ നമ്മള് പിന്നേം അശുദ്ധമാവും. പക്ഷെ, ഒരു കാര്യമുണ്ടല്ലോ ചേച്ചീ, ഞങ്ങളുടെ വീട്ടിലെ പട്ടിക്ക് ചോറുകൊടുക്കുന്ന പാത്രം ഞങ്ങളെല്ലാവർക്കും എല്ലാ ദിവസവും എടുക്കാം, തൊടാം. പക്ഷെ ഈ പാത്രം മാത്രം ആ നാല് ദിവസമല്ലാതെ തൊടാൻ പാടില്ല. തൊട്ടാൽ മറ്റേമ്മ അമ്പലത്തിൽ പോയി പുണ്യാഹം വാങ്ങിച്ച് തളിക്കും. എന്നിട്ട് വീട്ടിൽ വച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഫോട്ടോയ്ക്ക് മുന്നിൽ, 'അറിവില്ലാ പൈതങ്ങൾ ചെയ്തു അപരാധം പൊറുക്കണമേ' എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞ് മൂന്ന് തവണ തൊഴുത് പിടിച്ചോണ്ട് വട്ടംകുറങ്ങും.



<https://www.azhimukham.com/kerala-menstruating-women-in-kerala-and-it-taboos-report-by-kr-dhanya/>

Community | Impact



India Development Review (IDR) is an independent media platform for the development sector; its editorial focus is on cross-sector solutions, cutting-edge ideas and real-world practice. It probed the reasons for the “collective silence against capacity building.” One of its recommendations was the collaboration among large funders to champion non-profits in the country.

As a direct result of IDR's article, many philanthropies (Omidyar Network, EdelGive Foundation, Nilekani Philanthropies, Ford Foundation, MSDF, MacArthur Foundation and Children's Investment Fund Foundation) are coming together to form a funders collective on capacity building.

Why there is a collective silence against capacity building

Nonprofits work on some of the most challenging social problems, and they need the right talent and tools, along with capital to cover their true costs.

Capacity building is one of those topics that many nonprofit leaders avoid bringing up with funders. They prefer instead to talk about their programmes and beneficiaries. That's where their passion lies, and, not surprisingly, it's where funders want to invest. However, not having the conversation around capacity building often means that nonprofits and funders risk neglecting to invest in it. Our own experience, along with a growing body of research, makes the case that nonprofits simply can't achieve their full potential unless they invest and build the core capacity needed to deliver their programmes over the long term.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN ON A PRACTICAL BASIS?

Take, for instance, a nonprofit on a mission to establish rural health clinics across a district. To deliver a bundle of health services in remote areas, at scale, it will need a clear strategy to guide its work, build effective leadership, recruit staff, manage a finance department and fundraising team, and create and implement robust MIS and M&E systems. These are elements of core capacity that will support and advance the nonprofit's delivery of health services. In their absence, the nonprofit will be severely limited in its scale, and possibly its impact.

Yet in our experience, many nonprofits are not explicitly bringing up these issues with funders. For their part, funders often are not thinking in this way while partnering with nonprofits. This collective silence leads to a 'starvation cycle' that leaves nonprofits so hungry for core capacity that they struggle to achieve their full potential.

In contrast, capacity building in the business world is a foundational concept. Corporate investors expect companies to build strong central organisations, because they understand that their success depends on it. Nonprofits also need to build strong core capacity if they are to succeed. More so, if we aspire to solve big, vexatious social problems, we need to adequately equip nonprofits with good talent and tools, as well as capital to cover their true costs.

THE PROBLEM WITH CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING

What personal experience has shown us about the importance of capacity, Bridgespan's research has



illuminated. In the United States, major funders highly favour programme grants at the expense of capacity building. In fact, three-quarters of US foundation giving goes to specific programmes or projects. At the same time, most major US foundations limit spending on indirect costs (which includes capacity building) to 15 percent of a total grant, which is less than half of what nonprofits spend on average.

Chronic underfunding ultimately also takes a toll on a nonprofits' financial health. Bridgespan examined the financial records of nearly 300 nonprofits, that account for a third of the combined spending of the top 15 US foundations. The results came as a surprise. More than half (53 percent) suffer from frequent or chronic budget deficits—defined as at least two of the past five years. And 42 percent had fewer than three months of reserves (specifically, liquid unrestricted net assets) in the bank to cushion financial shortfalls. In fact, 30 of the 300 organisations showed no reserves—making them technically insolvent.



<https://idronline.org/why-is-there-a-collective-silence-around-capacity-building/>

Community | Impact

सत्याग्रह
समाचार से

Online independent Hindi news portal Satyagrah narrated How Raneedhara in Rajasthan turned into a Village of Widows (90 women between the ages 20-35) owing to the prevalence of silicosis in the region where mining and stone work are the main sources of employment.

The in-depth report highlights the social and health impact of unsafe labour practices.

राजस्थान का राणीधरा 'विधवाओं का गांव' कैसे बन गया?

राणीधरा राजस्थान के सिरोही जिले के पिंडवाड़ा ब्लॉक में पड़ता है

फ़र्ज करें- आपके सामने अपने परिवार को पालने की शर्त है कि एक गर्द भरा थैला, आपको अपने चेहरे के चारों तरफ लपेटना होगा. वह भी इस तरह कि उसमें से कम से कम हवा आर-पार हो सके. मजबूरन आप ऐसा कर भी लेते हैं. पर इसके थोड़ी देर बाद ही सांस ले पाना दूभर हो जाता है, आप हांफने लगते हैं, खून की उल्टियां करते हैं. कुछ समझ नहीं आता. घबराहट इतनी बढ़ती है कि आप बेदम होकर गिर पड़ते हैं. उस थैले को चेहरे से हटाने की बेहिसाब कोशिश करते हैं, लेकिन नाकाम हो जाते हैं. बेसुधी की हालत में बीवी-बच्चों और बूढ़े मां-बाप की धुंधली शक्लें, आंसू बनकर आंखों में तैरने लगती हैं. आप जैसे-तैसे फिर उठते हैं, कुछ करने की कोशिश करते हैं, फिर दम भरता है और कुछ देर बाद आप फिर खून उगलकर नीचे गिर जाते हैं. और इसी बीच आकर कोई आपसे कहता है कि बेइंतहा तकलीफ का यह सिलसिला आपको घंटे, दिन या हफ्ते नहीं बल्कि मरते दम तक, हर घड़ी, हर पल झेलना पड़ेगा. तो आप पर क्या गुजरेगी!

कहने-सुनने में ही सिरहन पैदा करने वाली ये भयावह स्थिति काले साये की तरह राजस्थान के हजारों बांशियों के जीवन का हिस्सा बन चुकी है. इसकी वजह है 'सिलिकोसिस' बीमारी. दरअसल, प्रदेश की आबादी का एक बड़ा तबका सिंचाई के साधनों की अनुपलब्धता और कोई अन्य रोजगार न होने की वजह से खनन और पत्थर की घिसाई के काम से जुड़ा है. वहां उड़ने वाली धूल या पत्थरों का बुरादा जिसे सिलिका भी कहा जाता है, मौत बनकर इन लोगों के सीने में धीरे-धीरे इकठ्ठा होता रहता है. आमतौर पर सिलिकोसिस में मरीज़ की वही स्थिति होती है, जिसका हमने ऊपर ज़िक्र किया है.

केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय द्वारा संचालित नेशनल हेल्थ पोर्टल (एनएचपी) के मुताबिक सिलिकोसिस एक लाइलाज बीमारी है यानी इसका बचाव ही उपचार है. यही कारण है कि सिलिकोसिस की पहचान होने के बाद मरीजों को जो प्रमाणपत्र मिलता है, उसे वे अपना 'डेथ वारंट' या 'डेथ सर्टिफिकेट' कहकर बुलाते/ बताते हैं.

राजस्थान में यह बीमारी किस तरह महामारी का रूप ले चुकी है, इस बात का अहसास हमें सिरोही जिले के पिंडवाड़ा ब्लॉक में पड़ने वाले राणीधरा गांव आकर हुआ. गरासिया जनजाति बहुल इस गांव में करीब पचास घर हैं. एक घर में कम से कम दो परिवारों (बाप और बेटे) की भी रिहायश मानकर चलें तो यहाँ करीब सौ पुरुष और इतनी ही महिलाओं की आबादी होनी चाहिए. लेकिन गांव के महंत हिम्मत



चालीस से अधिक उम्र के सिर्फ दो हैं. इसके चलते ढाणी की शक्ल वाले इस गांव में नब्बे से ज्यादा विधवाएं रहती हैं जिनमें से अधिकतर की आयु पच्चीस से पैंतीस साल के बीच है. यही कारण है कि आस-पास के इलाकों में राणीधरा को 'विधवाओं का गांव' भी कहा जाता है. इनके अलावा राणीधरा में कम से कम सौ बच्चे ऐसे हैं जिनके सर से बाप का साया छिन चुका है. यहां कई परिवार ऐसे भी हैं जिनमें कोई पुरुष सदस्य न बचने की वजह से गृहस्थी की पूरी जिम्मेदारी कच्ची उम्र की बेवाओं पर आ गई. इसे विडंबना की हद कहा जा सकता है कि मजबूरन उन महिलाओं को भी उन्हीं कारखानों और खदानों का रुख करना पड़ा और वे भी अपनी जान से हाथ धो बैठीं. इसलिए इस गांव में एक बड़ी संख्या अनाथ बच्चों की भी है जिनकी देख-रेख उनकी बुजुर्ग दादियां कर रही हैं.

सत्तर वर्षीय रंगीबाई उन्हीं अभागी दादियों में से एक हैं. सत्याग्रह से हुई बातचीत में वे रह-रहकर उस घड़ी को कोसती हैं जब उन्होंने अपने दोनों बेटों और बड़ी बहु को पत्थर घिसाई के काम पर जाने दिया था. हमारी तरफ इशारा करते हुए वे स्थानीय भाषा में कहने लगती हैं, 'तुम्हारी सी उम्र के मेरे दो बेटों की मिट्टी बीते तीन साल में सिमट गई. बाद में बहु भी अपने पीछे दो बेटियों और एक बेटे को बिलखते छोड़ गुज़र गई.' इन बच्चों को अपने बेटे-बहु की निशानी मानकर रंगीबाई जैसे-तैसे उनका पेट पालने की हरसंभव कोशिश करती हैं. लेकिन उन्हें इस बात की बेहद फ़िक्र सताती है कि उनके बाद इन बच्चों की देख-रेख कौन करेगा?



<https://satyagrah.scroll.in/article/125608/rajan-tha-raaneedhara-vidhwaayen-report>

Community | Impact



Online Marathi news magazine Max Maharashtra reported how the state government's resolve to distribute relief funds for the drought- and famine-affected via only banks could lead to chaos as bank access was uneven.

The government took note of the concerns raised in the article and reversed its decision.

सरकारचा गोंधळ थांबेना... पूरग्रस्तांना रोखीने नाही खात्यात पैसे द्यायचे आदेश

राज्यातल्या पूरग्रस्तांना तात्काळ मदत देण्यासाठी राज्य सरकारने 154 कोटींचा निधी वितरित करण्याचा निर्णय घेतला आहे. मात्र **मदतीची रक्कम बांधितांच्या खात्यात जमा करावी, रोखीने देऊ नये असे आदेश** देऊन राज्यसरकारने पूरग्रस्तांच्या अडचणीत आणखीनच वाढ केली आहे.

पूरपरिस्थितीने बाधित असलेल्या जवळपास तीन लाख लोकांना अद्याप पर्यंत पुरेशा खाण्या-पिण्याची तसंच औषधांची व्यवस्थाही होऊ शकलेली नाही. मदत आणि बचाव कार्यासाठी बोटी कमी पडल्याने बचाव कार्यातही प्रचंड विलंब होत आहे. अशातच **अंगावरच्या कपड्यानिशी बाहेर पडलेल्या लोकांना आता कपडे आणि गरजेच्या भांड्यांसाठी देण्यात येत असलेल्या मदतीकरता बँकेच्या दरवाजात जावं लागणार आहे.**

पूरग्रस्त भागांमध्ये वीजपुरवठा येत्या काही दिवसांमध्ये सुरळीत होईल असं सरकार तर्फे सांगण्यात आलं आहे. रस्ते ही अद्याप पर्यंत खुले झालेले नाहीत. जनजीवन सुरळीत झालेले नाही, बँका सुरू झालेल्या नाहीत, अशा वेळी बँक खात्यातच पैसे पाठवण्याचा निर्णय सरकारसमोर मोठी अडचण निर्माण करू शकतो. याआधीच्या सर्व आपदांमध्ये जिल्हाधिकारी कार्यालयांमार्फत रोखीने मदतीचं वाटप करण्यात येत असे.

महाराष्ट्र शासन

क्रमांक:-एससीबाय-०७/२०१९/प्र.क्र.५८ म-११
महसूल व वन विभाग,
१४ वा मजला, नवीन प्रशासकीय इमारत,
मंत्रालय, मुंबई-४०० ०३२,
दिनांक:- ०८ ऑगस्ट, २०१९.

प्रति,
विभागीय आयुक्त,
नागपूर, नाशिक, पुणे, कोकण विभाग.

विषय:- राज्यातील विविध जिल्ह्यातील पूर परिस्थितीमुळे बाधित झालेल्या नागरिकांना विशेष दराने मदत देण्याबाबत अर्थसंकल्पीय प्रणालीद्वारे निधी वितरित करण्याबाबत.

संदर्भ:- महसूल व वन विभाग, शासन निर्णय क्र.सीएलएस/२०१९/प्र.क्र.१५७/म-३, दिनांक ०८/०८/२०१९.

महोदय,
उपरोक्त विषयाच्या अनुषंगाने महसूल व वन विभाग, शासन निर्णय क्र.सीएलएस/२०१९/प्र.क्र.१५७/म-३, दिनांक ०८/०८/२०१९ अन्वये निर्गमित करण्यात आला असून त्यासोबतच्या परिशिष्टामध्ये नमूद केल्यानुसार रुपये १५४,००,००,०००/- (अक्षरी रुपये एकशे चौपन्न कोटी फक्त) इतका निधी मागणी क्र. सी-६, प्रधान लेखासौर्य- २२४५-नेसर्गिक आपत्तीच्या निवारणासाठी अर्थसहाय, ०२ पुर चक्रावाढे इत्यादी, १०१, अनुग्रह सहाय्य, (१२) राज्य आपत्ती प्रतिसाद निधीच्या मानकाव्यतिरिक्त खर्च, (१२) (०१) रोख भत्ता मृत व्यक्तीच्या कुटुंबियांना सहाय्य व जखमींना मदत, ३१ सहाय्यक अनुदाने (२२४५, २१९४) या लेखासौर्यांमध्ये पुनर्विनियोजनाद्वारे उपलब्ध करून देण्यात आलेल्या निधीतून रुपये १५४,००,००,०००/- इतका निधी अर्थसंकल्पीय वितरण प्रणाली (BEAMS) द्वारे वितरित करण्यात येत आहे. तसेच मदतीची रक्कम बांधितांच्या बँक बचत खात्यात थेट जमा करावी. कोणत्याही परिस्थितीत मदत रोखीने अदा करू नये. उपलब्ध निधी अनावश्यक रितीने कोषागारात आहरीत करून तो वाटपा अभावी बँकेत ठेऊ नये.

२. सदर निधी संबंधित जिल्ह्यांना दिनांक ०८/०८/२०१९ रोजीच्या शासन निर्णयासोबतच्या परिशिष्टामध्ये नमूद केल्याप्रमाणे वितरित करण्यात यावा. तसेच त्यातील अटी व शर्ती आणि त्यात नमूद वित्तीय शिस्तोच्या सूचनांचे काटेकोरपणे पालन करण्यात यावे.

आपली विश्वासू,
(राजेशी राजेंद्र)
वित्तीय सल्लागार व सह सचिव

सहपत्र:- संदर्भीय शासन निर्णय.



<https://www.maxmaharashtra.com/govt-re-solved-to-distribute-relief-funds-via-banks-only-may-lead-to-chaos/48604/>

Politics | Impact



Saaptahik Sadhana, a Pune-based Marathi weekly on socio-cultural and political issues, invited political scientist Dr SuhasPalkshikar to write a 12-part political awareness series. The articles explored concepts of politics, freedom and representation. Dr Palshikar develops each concept by speaking about its definition, current status and the obstacles and opportunities in its implementation.

The objective of the series was to improve political understanding. Younger readers found the format and content educative.

राजकारण म्हणजे काय?

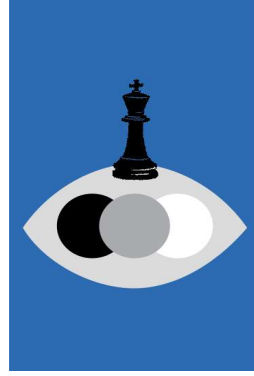
राजकारण ही गोष्ट अतोनात आकर्षक असते आणि त्याच वेळी संशयास्पद मानली जाते. औपचारिकपणे राज्यशास्त्र शिकणारेदेखील राजकारणाकडे निंदाव्यंजक दृष्टीने किंवा तुच्छतेने पाहतात, असा अनुभव किती तरी वेळा येतो. मात्र तरीही, 'राजकारण ही काय भानगड आहे?' असं कुतूहल राज्यशास्त्राच्या विद्यार्थ्यांच्या पलीकडे अनेकांच्या मनात असतंच. त्या कुतूहलाला चर्चेची वाट फोडून देण्यासाठी राजकीय घडामोडींच्या भोवताली असणाऱ्या संकल्पना, शब्दप्रयोग, सिद्धान्त, वगैरेची थोडक्यात तोंडओळख करून देण्याची योजना या सदरामागे आहे.

सामाजिक वास्तवाचा विचार करणारे शब्दप्रयोग, त्यातून आकाराला येणाऱ्या संकल्पना, प्रमेये या सर्वांबद्दल नेहमी लक्षात ठेवायला पाहिजे अशी एक अगदी प्राथमिक बाब म्हणजे- त्या सर्वांचे अंगभूत स्वरूप चर्चात्मक असते. म्हणजे त्यात वादाला, मतभिन्नतेला- इतकंच नाही तर अर्थाच्या बहुविधतेला वाव असतो. भौतिक विज्ञानाच्या काही क्षेत्रांमध्ये जसा नेमकेपणा आलेला आहे तसा ज्ञानाच्या सगळ्याच क्षेत्रांमध्ये आलेला नाही, येईल असेही नाही आणि यायलाच हवा अशातलाही भाग नाही.

त्यामुळेच, या सदरात होणारी चर्चा, सांगितले जाणारे मथितार्थ किंवा केले जाणारे युक्तिवाद हे अंतिम नसतील, हे लक्षात ठेवणे अगत्याचे आहे. मात्र, याचा अर्थ, राज्यशास्त्रात किंवा एकूण सामाजिक शास्त्रांत संकल्पनांच्या अर्थाची अंदाधुंदी असते असे नव्हे; तर त्या अर्थाच्या मागे दृष्टिकोनाची चौकट असते. त्या-त्या चौकटीच्या अंतर्गत विचार आणि तर्क यांची शिस्त आपण वापरत असलेल्या शब्दप्रयोगांना असावी लागते.

राजकारणाची चर्चा सुरू करताना 'राजकारण म्हणजे काय?' हाच प्रश्न सर्वप्रथम घ्यायला हवा. गटबाजी, कुटुंबातील हेवेदावे, कंपनीमधील सहकार्यांच्या एकमेकांच्या विरोधातल्या कारवाया, इथपासून अनेक गोष्टींना सहजगत्या 'राजकारण' म्हटले जाते. ते जरी खऱ्या अर्थाने राजकारण नसले, तरी राजकारणाच्या व्यापक अर्थांमध्ये स्त्री-पुरुष संबंधांमधील विषमतेपासून आंतरराष्ट्रीय असमानतेपर्यंत अनेक बाबींचा समावेश होतो, हेही खरेच.

म्हणूनच, राजकारण म्हणजे काय असं शोधायला लागलो की- राज्यशास्त्रासारख्या सामाजिक शास्त्राच्या प्रवाही, बहुविधतापूर्ण आणि म्हणूनच चर्चात्मक स्वरूपाची तोंडओळख आपल्याला



राजकारण
म्हणजे काय ?

सुहास
पळशीकर

पहिल्याच फटक्यात होते. एके काळी राजकारण म्हणजे राज्यव्यवहाराशी संबंधित बाबी असं मानलं जाई; तर दुसऱ्या टोकाला अलीकडच्या काळात अगदी 'कौटुंबिक' व्यवहारांसह सगळ्या सामाजिक परस्परसंबंधांमध्ये राजकारण असतेच, असे सांगणारे विचार प्रचलित झालेले दिसतात. आजही राजकारण करणाऱ्यांच्या दृष्टीने तो 'सेवेचा मार्ग' असतो; तर उलटपक्षी, चळवळी करणारे अनेक जण आपल्या कार्याला सामाजिक कार्य मानतात आणि निवडणुका, पक्षीय काम, वगैरेंना राजकारण मानतात.

मात्र, समाज असतो तिथे राजकारण असणं ही अगदी स्वाभाविक व अपरिहार्य बाब असते. राजकारण नाही असा समाज दाखवता येणार नाही. राजकारणाबद्दल छातीठोकपणे सांगता येईल अशी दुसरी बाब म्हणजे, राजकारण आणि सत्ता यांची संलग्नता. कारण जिथे अनेक लोक एकत्र येतात तिथे एकमेकांवर प्रभुत्व आणि वर्चस्व गाजवण्याचे प्रयत्न सार्वजनिक बनतात. या अर्थाने, सत्ता हा सगळ्या राजकीय विश्वाचा अविभाज्य घटक आहे. सत्तेचा पाठपुरावा करणं चांगलं की वाईट, असा नैतिक वाटणारा प्रश्न गैरलागू आहे. कारण समाजाचं सार्वजनिक अस्तित्व सत्तेच्या सभोवतीच गुंफलेलं असतं. म्हणजे, दुसऱ्यांना दडपण्यामधून किंवा त्यांच्यावर वर्चस्व गाजवण्यामधून सत्ता व्यक्त होते, तशीच ती सगळ्यांसाठी काही व्यवस्था लावण्यामधूनदेखील व्यक्त होते.



<http://kartavyasadhana.in/view-article/Suhas-Pal-shikar-On-What-is-politics>

Politics | Impact



Online magazine The Print ran an exclusive in January about on a tender floated by the Press Information Bureau, the communication arm of the government, to monitor traditional, online and social media and flag any “negative publicity” of the PMO and other ministries during the run-up to the 2019 General Elections.

The report said that the feedback from the agencies chosen to do the job would be classified in a way that the PIB could maintain a log on individual journalists, coverage of a particular event and prominent Twitter handles. The report suggested the BJP was planning to use the information culled by the government agency to tailor its campaign.

The project was shelved by both the government and the BJP after The Print's report.

Months before polls Modi govt plans to monitor media to flag negative publicity

PIB to hire private agencies to keep tab on all media platforms and help the government firm up its communication strategy ahead of the 2019 polls.

The Narendra Modi government has tasked its chief communication arm to step up monitoring of social, digital as well as traditional media and flag "negative publicity" of the PMO and other crucial ministries, just months before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The BJP-led government hopes to use the information to firm up its communication strategy, raising questions of whether it is using government resources to source inputs for the party's election campaign.

In line with the government's wishes, the Press Information Bureau (PIB), its official communication arm, floated a tender last month, inviting proposals from external agencies for "media aggregation, analysis and feedback services" with regard to print, electronic, online and social media.

Individual agencies, which will have to submit their proposals by 6 February, can apply separately to monitor each of the four media arms.

The PIB proposal, however, comes days after the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, through the Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL), a PSU, had invited fresh tenders from social media experts and agencies that can prepare sentiment analysis reports, which gauge the mood of the electorate and create content for campaigns on flagship government schemes to be launched across all media platforms.

The agencies will work for the I&B's New Media Wing (NMW), which along with the Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) already keep a tab on media platforms.

While the NMW tracks online platforms and social media, the EMMC exclusively deals with all channels, including news channels, and prepares reports on their coverage and flags violations in advertising and the programme code.



Sources said the I&B Ministry and the PIB floating similar tenders indicates a lack of coordination between the agencies and may lead to duplicity of work, efforts and finances. But a senior government official, privy to the development, justified the decision saying that a 360-degree media monitoring was a long-standing demand of PIB officers and was not part of any election strategy.

"The PIB was not aware of the NMW's tender. The other media monitoring units such as the New Media Wing and EMMC do not share their analysis reports and inputs with the PIB officers, who look at publicity affairs of individual ministries," the official said.

"The focus of PIB is also print media. So, monitoring of all other media, especially online and social media was required for better understanding of media coverage of news developments."



<https://theprint.in/india/governance/months-before-polls-modi-govt-plans-to-monitor-media-to-flag-negative-publicity/173396/>

Politics | Impact



In the run-up to the 2019 general elections, Malayalam news and views portal Azhimukham ran a Kerala election series on the “disenfranchised”, which looked at labour employed in the tea and coffee estates and the spice plantations in verdant Karadippara in Palakkad. The investigation found much of the workforce did not have documents, including voter identification cards, and were forced to toil in conditions that amounted to bonded labour.

This series exposed the limitations of democratic practices in mainstream political parties. It also brought into renewed focus the oft-neglected intertwined themes of political exclusion, labour exploitation, political participation, system building and transparency.



വോട്ടവകാശമില്ല, ജീവിക്കുന്നതിന് തെളിവുമില്ല; കരടിപ്പാറയിലെ അടിമജീവിതങ്ങൾ

പാലക്കാട് കൊട്ടം ചുടിൽ തിളച്ച് നിൽക്കുകയാണ്. ഇന്നോളം അനുഭവിച്ചിട്ടില്ലാത്ത ചുടിനെ നേരിടാനാവാതെ ഭൂരിഭാഗം പേരും വീടുകൾക്കുള്ളിലേക്ക് വലിയുന്നു. കിലോമീറ്ററുകൾ കടന്നാൽ മാത്രം നിരത്തുകളിൽ ഒറ്റയ്ക്കും തറ്റയ്ക്കും ചിലരെ കാണാം. തണൽ എന്ന് പറയാൻ റോഡുകൾക്കിരുവശവും ഇടക്കിടെ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുന്ന തെങ്ങിൻ തോപ്പുകളും തലയുയർത്തി നിൽക്കുന്ന പനകളുടെ നിഴലുകളും മാത്രം. ഉച്ചച്ചൂടിയാണ് മീനാക്ഷിപുരത്തെത്തുന്നത്. പാലക്കാടൻ ഗ്രാമജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അകവും പുറവും അന്വേഷിച്ചിറങ്ങിയ ഞങ്ങൾക്കിടയിലേക്ക് കാളീശ്വരി എത്തുന്നത് അവിടെ വച്ചായിരുന്നു.

"നാൻ മെമ്പർ. സ്രാമ്പി പഞ്ചായത്ത് മെമ്പർ. കോൺഗ്രസ് പാർട്ടി", തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പ് വിശേഷങ്ങൾ അറിയാനായി വന്നതാണ് ഞങ്ങളെന്നായിരുന്നു കാളീശ്വരിയുടെ ധാരണ. തിരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പോ രാഷ്ട്രീയമോ അല്ല ഞങ്ങളുടെ വിഷയം എന്ന് ആവർത്തിച്ച് പറഞ്ഞിട്ടും അവർക്ക് മനസ്സിലായതുമില്ല. രാഷ്ട്രീയ പാർട്ടി പ്രതിനിധികളുടെ കൈകടത്തലുകളില്ലാതെ പച്ചയായ ജീവിതങ്ങളെ തിരയണമെന്നുള്ളതിനാൽ കാളീശ്വരിയെ അവിടെ ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച് മറ്റൊരിടത്തേക്ക് പോവാമെന്നായിരുന്നു ചിന്ത. എന്നാൽ ആ ചിന്തയെ അവർ തന്നെ മുറിച്ചു. "അവങ്കളെ പാത്ത് പോ അമ്മാ. എന്താവത് കെടച്ചാ... അത് താൻ മുഖ്യം... അവ പെരിയ കഷ്ടത്തിലേ. അവങ്കൾക്ക് ഒന്നുമേ ഇല്ലെ. ഭൂമി ഇല്ലെ, ആധാരം ഇല്ലെ, റേഷൻ കാർഡ് ഇല്ലെ, അവങ്കൾക്ക് അരിസിയും കെടക്കലയേ... ഒരു നാൾ വേലെ ഇല്ലെന്നു കൊഴെന്തകളടക്കം പട്ടിണി".



<https://www.azhimukham.com/kerala-election-special-series-democracy-and-its-illusions-a-reportage-from-ground-karadippa-ra-in-palakkad-by-kr-dhanya/>

Opinion/Analysis | Impact



In a Jobs Market series of stories from nationwide labour hubs--places where unskilled and semi-skilled workers gather to seek daily-wage or contract jobs—the data-centric IndiaSpend tracked employment in the country's informal sector. This sector absorbs the country's mass of illiterate, semi-educated and qualified-but-jobless individuals, and employs 92% of India's workforce. Reporters sent in their despatches from Indore, Jaipur, Perumbavoor, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Bengaluru, Bathinda, Haryana, Pune and Harola.

By delving into the lives and hopes of informal workers, this 11-part series provides a ground-level perspective to ongoing national controversies over job losses at a time when the unemployment rate in 2017-18 was reported at 6.1%, a 45-year high. The countrywide reportage represented journalism that is crucial for analysis beyond bait-and-click headlines but has become rare in times of inadequate financial support for resource-intensive stories.

Job market: A 11-part series tracks employment in India's informal sector

About five million men, mostly from the unorganised sector, lost their jobs over the two years following demonetisation, says a recent report

Kurubarahalli is a congested corner of India's technology capital, packed with narrow roads, alleys, heavy traffic, shops and darshinis, as small self-service eateries are called here. The area starts humming with activity as early as 7.30 am.

Among the first to arrive at the labour hub here are daily wagers seeking employment. On any working day you can see 1,000-1,500 workers waiting to be picked up for jobs, mostly as plumbers, painters, carpenters and masons. Women search for jobs as helpers, mixing concrete or moving bricks.

Labour contractors arrive here on motorcycles or auto-rickshaws to pick up the day's supply of workers, most of whom they know by face. The official minimum wage for a skilled worker is Rs 600 a day for men and Rs 300 for women. By noon, those who can will have found a job, and by 2 pm the labour hub will have emptied out.

Among those waiting at Kurubarahalli for cleaning and plastering jobs was Swamy, 36. He migrated to Bengaluru five years ago from Pandavapura in Mandya district, 130 km southwest of the capital city. An illiterate man, he wanted to earn enough to provide a good "convent" education for his three daughters, one of whom is physically challenged and in need of constant care.

Swamy must now be satisfied with two to three days of work a week. In November 2016, the Modi government decided to withdraw 86% of India's currency, by value, knocking the bottom out of the casual jobs sector which ran on cash payments, as IndiaSpend reported in this 2017 series. Till then, Swamy and his wife, a domestic worker, were together earning about Rs 25,000 a month. Today, they struggle to collectively make between Rs 10,000-Rs 15,000 per month. The 20 days of work a month that Swamy was once assured of have dwindled to 10.

About five million men, mostly from the unorganised sector, lost their jobs over the two years following demonetisation, said an April 2019 report, the latest



At the Kurubarahalli labour hub in Bengaluru, daily wagers start arriving around 7.30 am in search of jobs, mostly in the construction sector. Before demonetisation, most workers could find jobs 20-25 days a month. Now the search for a job, even for a couple of days a week, is a 'nightmare', workers told us.

estimate of job losses, published by the Centre for Sustainable Employment (CSE), Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. The numbers would spiralled if women were to be included. In 2016, urban Karnataka hosted around 300,000-400,000 workers in the construction sector, said D Rajashekhar, professor of economics at the Institute of Social and Economic Change.



<https://www.indiaspend.com/in-indias-it-capital-only-the-lucky-get-10-days-of-work/>

Opinion/Analysis | Impact



Multi-lingual online platform The Wire examined the security impact of the Balakot strike from the vantage of science. Posing the central question of the Air Force strike and its alleged casualties in the Pakistani territory, it noted that neither side was keen to offer independent verification of claim and counterclaim.

Supported with satellite imagery and cross-media references, the narrative injected some healthy scepticism and analysis in an otherwise charged debate.

Boom or Bust: What Science tells us about what went down in Balakot

The challenge is to correlate the limited damage visible in satellite imagery with the effects of different kinds of explosives on a structure like the madrasa building.

Did the Indian Air Force strike the various structures at the madrasa in Balakot with lethality sufficient to have caused “heavy casualties”, as foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale told reporters on February 26?

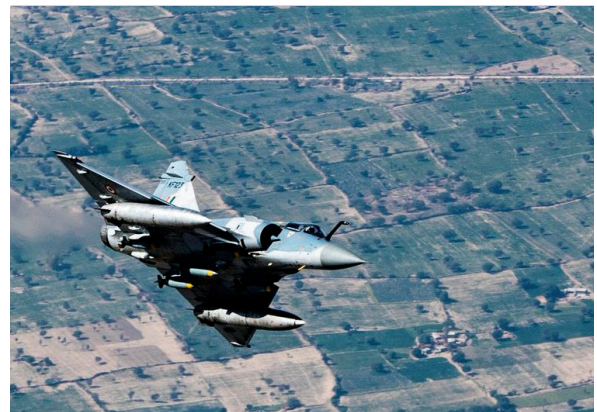
Sections of the Indian media and of course BJP politicians believe it did and have even put a figure on the number of dead terrorists that ranges from 250 to 400. Pakistan has denied any damage or casualties and said the Indian payload landed on a nearby forest. On their part, international analysts have raised doubts about the Indian version based on their reading of pre- and post-airstrike satellite imagery of the madrasa.

While the truth is known to both the Indian and Pakistani governments, neither side appears keen to allow independent verification of its claims. The Pakistani military has prevented reporters from visiting the madrasa while the Indian government has also been circumspect about sharing imagery of the sort the US, Israeli and western air forces routinely release into the public domain.

In this vacuum, different people are resorting to different ways to settle the matter for themselves – including chest-thumping. In this clamour, there is now a debate among ammunition and aviation experts, who are trying to piece together what they know about the bombs the IAF dropped to figure out what might have happened on the ground.

Since World War II, missiles and their warheads have been designed to do things other than just be dropped and blow up. In the Balakot case, virtually the entire Indian media has reported that the IAF dropped 2,000-pound (1b 1 lb = 0.45 kg) bombs over the madrasa. This claim, which has never been properly sourced, seems extremely unlikely based on post-airstrike satellite imagery.

It also reinforces the need for authentic, verifiable information about what happened in Balakot. However, with the governments’ silence and campaigns for the national elections gaining momentum in India, it is important to understand what is possible and why, and to keep from getting carried away.



An Indian Air Force Mirage 2000.

According to media reports, the bombs were delivered using a guidance kit called SPICE, which can convert unguided bombs into guided ones. It is manufactured by Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, an Israeli company, and is used by the Israeli and Indian air forces.

The SPICE 2000, which can carry 2,000 lbs of bombs, is one of India's most powerful (non-nuclear) air-to-surface weapons, depending on its configuration. And thanks to its precision guidance and long range, such weapons are often used as ‘bunker busters’: devices that can penetrate heavily fortified structures to blow them up from the inside.

At the same time, a bomb weighing 2,000 lbs (907 kg) can effect different kinds of damage on the ground, depending on its own specifications as well as those of the targets. This forms the crux of the current debate, which takes off from sections of the media sharing higher resolution satellite images than were previously available of the Balakot madrasa after the IAF strike.



<https://thewire.in/security/boom-or-bust-what-science-tells-us-about-what-went-down-in-balakot>

THE BASTION

Digital media platform The Bastion questioned whether 'apolitical' Sanskrit prayers be held in secular state-owned schools? What are the implications of this imposition on minority sentiments and parents choices while sending their children to school?

The detailed research presented the context for informed arguments on both sides of the aisle. The themes of hyper-nationalism, religion and secular instruction were explored with gravitas missing in the hyperbole of of a large swathe of the mainstream media.

Indian Students' silent hymns: Of Sanskrit prayers in secular Schools

The practice of reciting Sanskrit prayers in Kendriya Vidyalayas has come under particular scrutiny of late, for allegedly imposing religious sentiments on students from diverse backgrounds.

Students of all age groups stand in neat files, with their hands respectfully folded and eyes closed while reciting their morning prayers. Despite belonging to diverse ethnicities, this is a familiar occurrence for students across India every morning, during their school assemblies. This exact routine of reciting Sanskrit (and sometimes Hindi) prayers is being questioned in an ongoing Public Interest Litigation. A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India is set to determine the constitutionality of such practices in state-recognised or state-funded educational institutions, like the Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) schools.

The SC has previously sought to clarify that the interpretation of Article 28 (3) is limited to protecting the individual freedom of conscience of any person attending a state-affiliated educational institution by ensuring that they are not compelled to partake in 'religious instruction' or 'religious worship'.

This is not the case in Article 28 (1), which categorically prohibits 'religious instruction' in the case of institutions wholly maintained out of state funds. The petitioner in the KV case claims that the practice of chanting Sanskrit and Hindi prayers constitutes 'religious instruction' under Article 28; therefore, it ought to be prohibited. No submissions have been made in relation to 'religious worship' that is separately covered under Article 28 (3).

In fact, the courts are yet to interpret what "religious worship" even comprises of. So, in the KV case, the bench's interpretation of 'religious instruction' and 'religious worship' will be pivotal in deciding whether the recital of Sanskrit shlokas or Hindi prayers qualifies as either. Even if students are free to forego these prayers, it is conceivably difficult for a child to oppose their peer and school administration during assembly events. Clearly, even beyond state-funded educational institutions, there may be compelling ramifications of these routinized 'neutral' prayers on students and their parents, with equally disruptive opinions on either side of the commotion.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

Counsels representing the Union of India in the KV



Of Sanskrit Prayers in Secular Schools

matter have focused on the 'universality' of the prayers sung in KV schools, going so far as to highlight that certain verses of the Mahabharata also appear in the Supreme Court emblem without detracting from its secularity.

Some educators also echo this line of reasoning, emphasising the all-encompassing nature of Sanskrit shlokas and their religious neutrality. A member-in-charge of the Gurukula project led by Mumbai-based charitable trust Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, Acharya Ramchandra Bhat believes that reciting Sanskrit prayers could generate academic interest in the language.

Citing the continued linguistic and historical relevance of Sanskrit in academic institutions around the world, Bhat dismisses the matter of reading of Sanskrit prayers and shlokas in government schools as a non-issue, lamenting that "this political context did not exist" until recently.



<https://thebastion.co.in/politics-and/education/indian-students-silent-hymns-of-sanskrit-prayers-in-secular-schools/>

Opinion/Analysis | Impact



IDR's article on domestic migration looked at the different kinds of moving communities of people and the societal and economic challenges they faced and posed.

IDR's article on migration was republished in Times of India, the first in a longer term collaboration wherein IDR articles will be published weekly on the latter's online platform, and will form the core of their coverage on the development sector

Understand migrants' lives to understand their needs

India's development story is deeply interlinked with migration, yet we lack comprehensive policies that directly support migrants.

With the world's largest emigrant population, hundreds of millions internal migrants, and one of the largest immigrant populations in the world, India's development story is deeply interlinked with migration. Systemically, important industries like textiles and construction are almost entirely dependent on migrant labour, while remittances form the backbone of economies as diverse as Kerala and Bihar. No social or economic policy area or developmental programme can function without engaging with migrants. Yet, there is no comprehensive migration policy framework at the central or state level in India. Even the nonprofit sector and civil society in general, have not engaged with this issue in a direct and sustained manner, with some notable exceptions such as Aajeevika Bureau and Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development.

There are many interventions and policies that support migrants, albeit indirectly. And unfortunately, most of them exist in silos.

As a result, most interventions and policies are unable to fully grasp the particularities of migrant lives and decision making. For instance, initiatives targeting migrant workers often ignore their families (both at source and destination). Policies to prevent human trafficking focus only on intermediaries (contractors, sub-contractors, and recruiters) while ignoring the role of employers, and the overall shortage of decent and safe jobs in the economy. As a result such policies are not only ineffective but also invariably curtail people's ability to migrate.

One natural solution is the inclusion of migrants themselves in designing and implementing projects. A recent ILO report on the lessons learnt from their Work in Freedom programme has excellent insights on this front.

At India Migration Now, the organisation I lead, we engage with many nonprofit, industry, and government organisations to better understand how migrants are supported in India. Based on these interactions, I would like to make three interdependent suggestions to ensure policies and interventions for migrants are more effective:



1. PLACE THE MIGRANT HOUSEHOLD AT THE CENTRE OF ANY INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT MIGRANTS

Migration is one of many important livelihood strategies utilised by migrant households. Such households tend to be multi-locational i.e. they are located at source and destination(s). By placing multi-locational households at the centre of their approach, policies and intervention can be more in tune with migrants' own aspirations and decision making.

It is important to remember that a migrant is an important contributing family member but not the only contributing family member. Invariably, families at both source and destination (often multiple destinations) work together to maximise the benefits of migration. For instance, the initial cost of migration is often borne by the whole household. Focusing only on individual migrant workers, as is the case for most initiatives in India, also invisibilises the role of women and children (whether migrants or left behind).



<https://idronline.org/understand-migrants-lives-to-address-their-needs/>

Opinion/Analysis | Impact

EPW

In peer-reviewed academic journal the Economic and Political Weekly Kumkum Roy's article "Examining the Draft National Education Policy, 2019" is a detailed response to the new Draft Education Policy. She analysed each section of the nearly 500-page draft minutely, pointing out contradictions in the text and spelling out the possible implications the implemented policy will have.

The analysis addresses the potential lacunae in the policy by delving into caste-based and gendered inequalities that the plan exacerbates; these are aspects which have not been discussed much in mainstream media

Examining the Draft National Education Policy, 2019

Social scientist Kumkum Roy analyses each section of the nearly 500-page draft minutely and finds it will exacerbate existing problems

The draft National Education Policy, 2019 (henceforth NEP) was amongst the first documents to be released by the new government that took over on 30 May 2019. In the public domain from 1 June 2019, with suggestions invited till 30 June, it requires careful scrutiny. Even prior to its release, and within a day of the declaration of the results of the momentous elections on 23 May 2019, the Hindu reported that Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP) had prepared a project to invest Rs 1.5 lakh crores in higher education over the next five years. So it is important to see what we are looking forward to.

My approach to the document is shaped by my location as a student of history since 1973, and as a teacher of history in colleges and universities in Delhi since 1983. It is also shaped by my interest in the teaching of the discipline in schools for several decades.

The 484-page draft (which includes six pages devoted to acronyms), consists of four parts: dealing with "School Education," "Higher Education," "Additional Key Focus Areas," and "Transforming Education," with an addendum, and 14 appendices. It is animated by a vision to create an "India-centred" education system that will lead to the creation of an "equitable and vibrant knowledge society" (p 41).

The text is sophisticated, complex and challenging, with a vast sweep from early childhood care and education (henceforth ECCE) to higher education. Its strengths include the welcome recognition of education as a public good,[1] rather than as a commodity to be consumed. There is also an occasional acknowledgement of diversities. For instance, categories such as transgender children find a passing reference (p 153).

Further, there is an attempt to restore the term "autonomy" to some of the meanings we were familiar with, even as this is almost immediately circumscribed (compare for instance p 241 with Chapter 17). The policy envisages space for teachers to create and transact courses at least in higher education, and insists on the continued allocation of public funds to strengthen the educational system (p 208). There is also a welcome assurance that the contractualisation of the teaching profession will come to an end (p 209).



However, there are other, fundamental issues that require attention. I will attempt to highlight some of these. This list is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive. It is simply illustrative.

TIMELINES/DEADLINES

As a student of history, I looked for dates. The document begins with an undated message from Prakash Javadekar, as Minister, Human Resource Development, Government of India (p 1). The report was submitted on 15 December 2018 (p 3), so one may assume that the message was inserted sometime between December 2018 and May 2019.

More importantly, the document sets out deadlines for achieving various goals.[2] A plan for outlining the operational and financial implications of ECCE is slated to be ready by the end of 2019 (p 51), with the expectation that this will be achieved by 2025 (p 45). The same date (that is, 2025) is set for achieving foundational literacy and numeracy for all students in Grade 5 and beyond (p 55).



<https://www.epw.in/engage/article/examining-draft-national-education-policy-2019>

Video Grantee | Impact



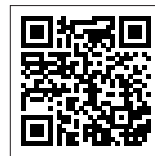
Angamali lies north of the city of Kochi, a place enriched with cultural and devotional centers. In May, DoolNews' story *How came Pigs in Angamali?* explored the economic and cultural narrative of this historical place where pork trade remains the spine of the municipality's economy.

Angamali is known also for its centuries-old churches which remain a historical link to modern India. The presence of pork as a delicacy can be traced to Kerala's links with the Portuguese. The podcast won critical appreciation for its anthropological-cultural narrative. The podcast had nearly 5 lakh views on Facebook with close to a thousand comments.

The Muslim Educational Society (MES) runs around 150 institutions in Kerala. In May it issued a circular banning niqab in its institutions. DoolNews, a Malayalam digital news and story platform, did a podcast to see what the local Muslim women thought of the decision. The majority of them welcomed the ban. They pointed out that the niqab was never worn in north Malabar earlier and that the women knew the distinction between right of choice of dress and gender power.

The story bagged more than three lakh views and was well appreciated.

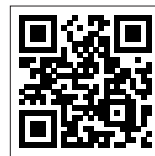
അങ്കമാലിയിൽ എങ്ങിനെ പന്നികളെത്തി? |



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZ9SfHuNA0U>

നിഖാബ് വിവാദം |

മുസ്ലീം സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് എന്താണ് പറയാനുള്ളത്? |



<https://youtu.be/iXpZpCipWTA>

Video Grantee | Impact



Khabar Lahariya : Video news portal Khabar Lahariya stories on agriculture or water have been frequent catalysts. In a story on a dry canal in Banda resulted in irrigation facilities for thousands of farmers.

This also caught the attention of the Google News Initiative, which is heavily promoting local news channels.

It is a voice-based portal to discuss issues in the Central Gondwana region in India. It is freely accessible via mobile phone and online and allows anyone to record and listen to stories of local interest. The platform is moderated by journalists.

In a hyperlocal triumph, caller Ratnesh Sahu from Rewa noted that government scholarships had been released after two years following a message that had gone out on Khabar Lahariya.

Khabar Lahariya's grassroots initiative



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iSz_rXJcoU

CGNet Swara enables the release of scholarships



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd4SfEDPb1E>

Podcast Grantees | Impact



On Think Pragati, a digital media platform for debates, discussion and news: Pranay Kotasthane and Saurabh Chandra co-hosts of a fortnightly programme, posed the question: Who after all is the Liberal? The answers were explored through the writings of Friedrich August Hayek, an Austrian-British economist and classical liberal philosopher.

The podcast made space for engagement with thoughtful analyses and informed critiques in the backdrop of an onslaught against 'liberals'. Historian Srinath Raghavan joins converses with Amit Varma in an episode of The Seen and the Unseen to discuss the issues at the heart of the Kashmir problem.

ये लिबरल आखिर है कौन?

लिबरलिसम अर्थात् स्वतंत्रवाद आज एक विस्फोटक शब्द हो गया है। लेकिन ये लिबरल होने का आखिर मतलब क्या होता है? इस प्रश्न का उत्तर खोजते हुए हम फ्रेडरिक हायेक (1899–1992) के लेख पढ़ने लगे। हायेक लिबरल विचारधारा की एक महत्वपूर्ण हस्ताक्षर हैं। *The Use of Knowledge in Society*, *The Road to Serfdom* और *Law, Legislation and Liberty* हायेक के कुछ धामाकेदार लेख हैं जो आज भी बेहद परसंगिक हैं। उनकी पहली किताब के प्रकाशन को हाल ही में 75 साल हुए तो हमने सोचा उनके विचारों से हमारे श्रोताओं को अवगत कराया जाए।

लिबरल विचारधारा और हायेक की इन रचनाओं पर चर्चा करने के लिए हमारे साथ है अमित वर्मा। अमित एक लेखक और पॉडकास्टर हैं। अमित कई अखबारों में लिबरलिसम, क्रिकेट और राजनीति जैसे विषयों पर लिखते हैं। उनका अंग्रेजी पॉडकास्ट *The Seen and the Unseen* भारत के सर्वश्रेष्ठ पॉडकास्ट में से एक है।



<https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/puliyabaazi/E37Puliyabaazi.mp3>

Kashmir and Article 370

Kashmir is in lockdown, and Article 370 is history. What does this mean for Kashmir — and for India? Historian Srinath Raghavan joins Amit Varma in episode 134 of *The Seen and the Unseen* to discuss the historical, geopolitical, ideological and moral questions at the heart of the Kashmir problem.



<https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/seenunseen/E134SeenUnseen.mp3>

Podcast Grantees | Impact



Suno India: The describes itself as a multi-lingual platform for audio-stories on news that matter without reaching for the megaphone. In Rising internet shutdowns – an attack on our Freedom, the podcast marked the 10th day of complete communication shutdown in Jammu and Kashmir. It noted that access to the internet, deemed a basic human right by the United Nations, had been suspended in the State 51 times this year. Apar Gupta of the Internet Freedom Foundation discussed the legal and civil challenges ordinary citizens could mount against internet shutdowns.

Suno India shows have consistently remained in the top charts of Apple iTunes/ podcasts in India and is steadily building their listener base.

Suno India Show. ran this headline for its audience: Supreme Injustice – What Does Clean Chit For CJI Against Sexual Harassment Plaintiff Mean For Women In India? The show reached out to Nikita Saxena of The Caravan, who jointly broke the story, for her point of view on the craft of journalism and the themes of justice, gender and #MeToo.

The journalist's comments brought the discussion to a different audience and gave the topic wider reach.

Rising internet shutdowns – an attack on our freedom

Today marks the 10th day of complete communication shutdown in Jammu and Kashmir. Even as relaxations are being announced in some parts of the State, a vast majority of the population living in the Kashmir valley continue to remain cut off from accessing telecommunication services including landlines, mobiles and internet services. This happens to be the 51st time just in this year that access to the internet which has been declared a basic human right by the United Nations has been suspended in the State. Official Data is hard to come by for shutdowns like this.

The Suno India Show reached out to Apar Gupta, Executive Director for Internet Freedom Foundation to understand more how these shutdowns take place and its impact on people and whether there are any legal and civil challenges ordinary citizens could mount against internet shutdowns.



<https://www.sunoindia.in/the-suno-india-show/rising-internet-shutdowns-an-attack-on-our-freedom/>

Supreme Injustice - Interview with Nikita Saxena who scooped the CJI story for The Caravan

A month ago, a woman employee of the Supreme Court of India accused the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi of sexual harassment at the workplace. An hour after the story broke in the media, the CJI constituted a special hearing wherein he called the allegations against him a 'bigger plot to deactivate the office of CJI'. Three days later, a committee with sitting judges junior to the CJI began investigating into the complainant's allegations. On May 6th, the in-house committee gave a clean chit to CJI. The Suno India Show reached out to Nikita Saxena, Staff Writer for The Caravan who broke the story for the magazine on the allegations and the subsequent clean chit and what this could potentially mean to women across the country who are victims of workplace harassment.



<https://www.sunoindia.in/the-suno-india-show/supreme-injustice-what-does-clean-chit-for-cji-against-sexual-harassment-plaint-mean-for-women-in-india/>

Making Waves

The IPSMF longlist this year was a rich haul of 122 stories. The honourable mentions curated in this section have been selected to reflect the range of subject, delivery formats and the coverage locations of the grantee media.



Are Sikkimese women married to non-Sikkimese men deprived of their rights? In this podcast interview with Pushpa Mishra of 'Daughters of Sikkim' forum, Sikkim Chronicle discussed restrictions around property rights, employment and certificates of marriage and identification for women from the state marrying non-locals.

This topic highlighted an under-reported complex legal problem. After the podcast aired, the forum was approached by several couples and women seeking help on this issue.



As part of her bail condition, a magistrate in Ranchi asked a young girl to distribute five copies of the Quran following her arrest for an "offensive" Facebook post against the Muslim community. Reflecting on the case in a podcast titled Jaggi Decodes India's Dhimmi State, Swarajya's editorial director, R Jagannathan, described how "how misunderstanding true secularism in India often yields ridiculous effects."

The video was well-received with over 2,000 shares on Facebook.



The report How WhatsApp facilitated Serial Caste Clashes in Tamil Nadu looked at social media-instigated flare-ups between Vanniyars and Dalits in at least three villages. C Lakshmanan, an expert on Dalit studies, told The Lede, "Particularly literate and semi-literate youth are more casteist than ever. It is horrifying. And on WhatsApp and social media the content is completely unverified, unedited and casteist."

The account was picked up by civil rights groups and privacy advocates to highlight the use of social media in disinformation and propaganda. The district administration reacted to the story and held citizen meetings to defuse the situation.



In Plight of Teachers in Un-aided Schools Malayalam news portal Azhimukham reported on the exploitation of school teachers by their managements of institutions which lacked government oversight.

The story was followed by other media and the government decided to bring in new legislation to ensure the minimum salary in the un-aided schools.



Dasari Kondappa, one of the few remaining proponents of the Bhakti Movement from Telangana who plays the Burra Veena, an indigenous near-extinct musical instrument, had fallen on hard times. TNM called attention to his plight.

The news prompted academics, journalists and filmmakers to extend sustained financial assistance to make sure Kondappa's future was secure.



In this video podcast edition of Cut the Clutter, The Print's editor-in-chief Shekhar Gupta analysed "What has made Modi the most dominant leader two generations of Indians have ever seen."

A succinct analysis and commentary, the podcast earned more than 500,000 views. The podcast garnered more than 500,000 views.

THE BASTION

Created in collaboration with Save the Children India, the two-part series From Streets to Schools studied the education and identity rights of street children across Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai. It was part of SCI's commitment to give 2 lakh children legal identity and access to rights.

The video podcast reached over half a million people and helped raise money for the #TheInvisibles campaign.



In a three-part series The Lede exposed how in Sarsala village in Telengana, a Forest Officer who drew nation-wide sympathy for having been allegedly attacked by villagers had instead engineered a violent crackdown on tribals who were trying to save their land pattas from compensatory afforestation. The tribals had been arrested for "attacking" the officer.

A day after publication of this story and its wide dissemination, 21 villagers lodged in jail were finally given bail after 2 months.



The Marathi online magazine detailed how lakhs of soya bean farmers in Mazalgaon taluka in Beed district in Maharashtra were denied their crop insurance claims despite paying the premiums regularly.

Once the news made the headlines, the government initiated the release of insurance money to the farmers.



Writing on Mining in Tribal Land, TNM reported that Adivasis living near Kalyanapulova reservoir in Andhra Pradesh area were bearing the brunt of indiscriminate granite mining in the Eastern Ghats that has resulted in the groundwater depletion and crop failure.

While the mining activity is yet to stop, an official probe concluded that the companies failed to obtain permission for mining activity in the region.



In Liberals who Loved and Lost Modi, The Caravan scrutinized the disenchantment of prominent liberal commentators who had whole-heartedly supported then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi in the run-up to the 2014 general elections and well into his first year as prime minister but were later appalled by the "unexpected" extreme right-wing ideology of the Modi regime.

The article placed on record a before-and-after critique of eminent social and political scientists from the progressive spectrum.



In 'How a Flawed Understanding of PCOS Robs Women of Their 'Femininity'', EPW studied the understanding of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) among medical professionals in the patriarchal framework and the way women experience infantilisation at the hands of doctors.

The article has been a valuable resource for researchers and scholars focussing on health, healthcare, gender and family.



An autobiography of the Onion in Down to Earth's Hindi edition viewed the onion as a political victim and why farmers, irrespective of this staple's clout, suffer the most.

It has turned into a popular web story and is cited every time the price of onion goes up. Several doctoral students studying agrarian distress have sought the field reports that the report drew on.



Max Maharashtra ran a report on malnourishment and looked at how a young girl, Poonam Choudhury, was declining rapidly because her family didn't have access to any of the government welfare schemes.

Poonam and her family were given ration cards so that they could get fair-priced food supplies.



In 'Gay and Proud', Sikkim Chronicle tried to break the stereotypes attached to alternative sexualities in Sikkim by this first-ever video podcast on LGBTQI communities in Sikkim, their issues and travails.

This video was applauded by the people of Sikkim. Viewers expressed their appreciation for sensitising them to the issue.



Afghan Cricket and Robert Mugabe saw Saptahik Sadhna outline the journey of Afghan cricket from its birth in refugee camps in Pakistan to its presence in its first-ever World Cup.

The story highlighted how cricket has had a moderating impact on the political violence in Afghanistan and drew readers' attention to the issues of democracy and development there.



In 'The circular economy: How Rwanda tries to chart its course in hostile global waters', Down to Earth reported on the suspension of the African nation's duty-free privileges on its exports by the US as a reaction to Rwanda's imposing import restrictions on used clothes from the USA. This story also looked at the circular economy of India as well.

This story is being used by fair trade groups in the Africa to take up a campaign on saving the local weavers and has lessons for the circular Indian economy as well.



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