

## Editorial

*Dear Reader,*

*Even as we read this Policy Watch edition, thousands of people are fleeing from their homes in Syria. According to UNHCR statistics, 13.9 million have been displaced due to conflict and persecution in 2014. Every day 42,500 people are forced to leave their homes. In the last four years has seen a fourfold increase in the number of people forced to leave their homes. The Syrian refugee crisis which has escalated in the past few months is a result of Syria's four year old civil war. Some reports suggest that this is largest movement of refugees since the World War. The European Union is caught between its moral duty to help people and its economic considerations. Adding to these factors is xenophobia which is prompting many EU countries to shut their doors to these refugees. One of our cover stories today presents to you the facts of the Syrian crisis and the impact of international policies with regards to refugees.*

*The second cover story deals with a crisis of different sort- the crisis facing our education system today. Decisions are being taken by the NDA government are affecting thousands of students and leaving their future uncertain. Instead of moving towards a futuristic and progressive education system we are instead being pushed backwards. Mythology is replacing history, leading institutions are being headed by inadequately qualified people and teachers and courses are under threat. If this persists education will become just a propaganda tool for the government and this has to be prevented at any cost.*

*The policy watch also included other current policy initiatives. Hope you enjoy reading and reflecting on the issues facing the world and India.*

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## Lead Essay -1

### The Sangh Parivar Attack on India's Education System

#### Introduction:

According to some media reports published in August 2014, RSS issued a diktat saying that the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) should remove four eminent educationists of India from the panel of National Council for Teacher Education (Kumar, 2014). The media also reported that RSS has forwarded a list of its volunteers, Pracharaks and office bearers to MHRD and asked for their appointments in various educational and cultural institutions.

Ever since the NDA came in power in 2014, there has been an increase in interference from the Hinduvta brigade with regard to educational, research and cultural institutions of India. What is worrying in this case is that the Sangh Parivar (RSS and its affiliates) is dictating its terms to the government to control and interfere in these institutions in order to forward their communal agenda. The impact of this is being seen in changing syllabi, ad hoc appointments and removal of heads of institutions and the content of text books in States.

The core aim of the Indian education system has been to develop scientific temperament, rationality and ultimately to explore national unity while respecting the rich diversity of culture, values, belief, faith and traditions. The Sangh Parivar has been advocating for an education system based on a pan Indian idea of ancient traditional Indian doctrines. In its approach, the Sangh Parivar ignores numerous local and regional cultural practices and rejects any global and modern influence on our education system. The increasing influence of RSS in re structuring the educational system of India under the NDA government is part of a well-planned mission. While explaining its actionable plan for education in current political situation, RSS chief Mr. Mohan Bhagwat in a meeting of Academic Council of Sangh Parivar said that we must overthrow the existing education system and re-build it around our culture (Pachpore, 2014). Mr. Bhagwat further stressed in this meeting that Sangh Praivar should grab the current opportunity in order to accomplish their desired goal. BJP being in power has helped RSS to pursue their agenda on education and this has been made clear at every opportunity.

The developments in the education policy initiated by NDA government seem to be an effort of executing this narrow educational approach of Sangh Parivar. The NDA government has adopted three broad approaches to bring in the changes they desire- a)politically controlling educational institutions by destroying their autonomy, b) denying academic excellence by replacing academicians by RSS workers and c) controlling teaching and learning process in educational institutions by dictating curriculum and content of curriculum. In the following section we wil examine each of these approaches.

#### Assault on Autonomy of Educational Institutions:

Higher educational institutions in India are largely autonomous. These institutions have been granted the right to decide on their academic activities, curriculum and academic policies without any political interference. The current autonomous system helped institutions to develop and produce high quality academic output and outcomes. In order to pursue Sangh's political and ideological agenda, the NDA government is trying to control academic institutions through executive orders and new legislations. Some of the examples of such assault on autonomy of educational institutions are as follows.

**Common University Bill:** the NDA government is pushing hard for a Common University Bill, which was initially proposed in 2009. The new amendments proposed in this Bill by the NDA government aims to destroy educational diversity of Indian higher education. Academicians have been criticizing this move as an attempt to curb autonomy and homogenize the education system. The new Bill proposes a common entrance test, common faculty (transferable from one university to another) and a common syllabus for central universities. Moreover, under the Common University

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Law, educational institutions will be asked to recover their costs from students. This will result in commercialisation of education and deny educational opportunities to many young people from the poorer and backward sections of the society.

**Attack on Freedom of IIMs:** Indian Institute of Managements (IIM), known nationally and internationally for their academic excellence because of the academic freedom and autonomy they have been granted. The NDA government is proposing a Bill to control every aspects of IIM's function. With this Bill, the government proposes to control appointment of IIM's director. It also proposes to compel all IIMs to follow the instructions laid down by the central government. With these amendments in IIM Act, the Institute will come under the supervision of the Government, which will undoubtedly reduce the autonomy of the Institute.

**Interference of MHRD in Educational Institutions:** There have been relentless efforts by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to interfere in academic and non-academic autonomy of premier institutions since last one year. The MHRD played a direct role in banning Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle of IIT-Madras, imposing requirement of having separate non-vegetarian canteens in IITs and imposing CBCS in all central universities.

### **Denying Academic Excellence:**

The Sangh Parivar has been intolerant to rational and secular thinkers, writer, artists and academicians. There are number of cases where activists of Sangh Parivar violently opposed progressive work of leading Indian academicians. Recently, senior BJP leader Dr. Subramaniam Swami reportedly wanted to burn all books of progressive historians such as Prof. Romila Thapar. On many occasions, the intolerance of Sangh Parivar resulted into brutality such as murdering rational thinkers. The recent murder of renowned Kannada writer Dr. MM Kulburgi, is believed to the third such incident where rationalists have been attacked by Sangh Parivar activists. The dissent and questioning is central to the academic work, which the RSS and the NDA government is opposed to. They have systematically threatened and forced many rational and objective academicians to resign from their post. Furthermore, incompetent RSS workers have replaced the academicians in premier educational and cultural institutions.

The ongoing Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) crisis is a clear reflection of the agenda of the government. Mr. Gajendra Chauhan was appointed Chairperson of FTII by ignoring several other eminent film professionals. Similar appointments have also been made at institutions like National Book Trust, Prasar Bharti, Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology and Central Board of Film Certification, Banaras Hindu University, Indian Council of Historical Research and Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. Apart from appointing hardcore ideologues at these institutions, the government has also forced academicians holding divergent views to resign in the last one year. This approach not only compromises with academic excellence but also suppresses dissenting voices, which is fundamental for the progress of academic and cultural institutions.

Concerned people and academicians have been protesting against appointment of various RSS people in educational institutions. They have been arguing that the appointment done by the government had ignored the academic wisdom required for such selection. Academicians and educationists in India see such appointments by the government as an attempt to abolish scientific and rational temperament of Indian education and promote conservative educational policy that has been created by Sangh Parivar.

### **Controlling Process of Teaching and Learning:**

The interference of Sangh Parivar in the education system is not only limited to changes in broad policy decisions and appointment of RSS workers in educational institutions. The NDA government has already created space for in classrooms for pursuing the actual agenda of RSS. Going beyond its mandate, the MHRD, through an executive order has imposed a common syllabus for all central universities. MHRD has proposed a common syllabus across universities limiting faculties' ability to design the curriculum to a mere 30%. Teachers' unions in different central universities have

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argued that the imposition of common syllabus is a violation of university and UGC laws; is against the spirit of diversity in higher education institutions and undermines the right of academic councils to prepare syllabus. A common syllabus is on the anvil for all central universities and state universities which is a clear attempt to encourage only certain kind of theoretical positions and prevent student from exploring alternate perspectives. This move has restricted the content of courses and reduced the number of courses. For instance, in the University of Delhi, the number of papers to be taught at the Graduate level has been reduced from 21 to 14. Similarly, a course on Hindu Philosophers has been introduced – using the provision for a common syllabus, thus forcing faculty members to teach Savarkar and Mahatma Gandhi as Hindu philosophers.

Therefore, it is not only about broad course curricula guidelines but the government is dictating what to learn and what not to learn. The process of controlling content of textbooks and courses is going to be controlled further as the government is now expressing an interest in reviewing textbooks. Academicians and educationists have seen this micro planning as an effort to bring textbooks of RSS' schools into the mainstream. Reviews of these textbooks by various scholars have found that content prepared by the RSS for students is highly communal and full of factual errors. Historians affiliated to premier Indian universities have time and again proved that the Sangh Parivar's perspective of history is marked by gross factual inaccuracies. More importantly, Sangh affiliated historians have tried to give simplistic, folklore-based explanations for significant periods of history and dismissed any complex interpretation and inquiry. Further, the appointment of RSS ideologues in key positions at ICHR by the NDA government is a clear indication that the government is in favour of promoting unscientific and mythical history writing. For example, in his recent visit to Ayodhya, the chairman of ICHR, Mr. Y. S. Rao, said that there is no need to prove the existence of Lord Rama and his association with Ayodhya. Under Prof Rao, ICHR is planning to invest funds on validating Hindu mythologies regarding the Aryans, use of plastic surgery in ancient times etc. Thus, the threat from RSS backed historians in ICHR is not only limited to the presentation of historical incidents in a biased and partisan light it also aims at weakening the foundations of historical research.

### Conclusion:

The average Indian today is very concerned about the importance of quality education. However, in last seven decades, the governments of independent India has failed to provide quality education to large sections of society- namely the poor and marginalised. This miss-match between high aspirations of common masses and inefficiency of system to address those aspirations have pushed people to seek for a change in education system. The Sangh Parivar is banking on this mass consensus for a change to further its own agenda. Realizing the sentiment Mr. Mohan Bhagwat in his lecture in Academic Council of Sangh Parivar said, "Today, all are seeking change in education system. Those who are opposed to the RSS school of thought also talk of changing the education pattern.... Time is ripe enough and we all must grab this opportunity to bring about desired change at the earliest (Pachpore, 2014)." It is evident that in the name of reviving the education system, the extent of intervention of the present Government in all prestigious institutions and hampering the autonomy is a huge cause of concern. Though there has been immense criticism and opposition, the government is following a very rigid, authoritarian approach. These new changes brought by the NDA government will adversely affect lakhs of students of this country.

### Prepared by:

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### Understanding The International Refugee Crisis

The island of Lesbos in Greece is witnessing a jarring clash of cultures on its beaches. On one side of the Mediterranean Sea there are rows of tourists lounging in their easy-chairs, soaking in the warm sun this summer; not far away on the other side of the Sea there are rickety black dinghies, that are nothing more than flimsy rubber tubes attached to a motor, carrying grief stricken migrants from Africa and the Middle-East. The mass exodus that is being undertaken by people from parts of Africa and Middle-East in search of a better future in Europe is represented in Figure 1 below.

The first six months of this year itself have seen the death of 137,000 refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea (The Sea Route to Europe 2015). It took the capsizing of an overloaded boat with approximately 800 migrants along the Libyan coast in April to catapult the European Refugee Crisis into mainstream media reporting. Additionally the heart-wrenching photographs of migrants and refugees arriving on the shores of Greece and Turkey have been able to draw the world attention to their plight which has been going on since a long time.

The refugee crisis isn't just about one country-Syria. There are harrowed citizens plagued by fear and persecution in African countries like South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria and Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Kenya is home to Dadaab - the world's largest refugee camp, set up in 1991! Even South East Asia is not spared as was seen in May 2015 when fishing boats crowded with refugees and migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh moved to seek protection from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Syria however bears the brunt of the being the world's biggest refugee crisis with 95 percent of its population living in neighbouring countries while thousands of others cross the Mediterranean hoping to seek asylum in Europe (The Global Refugee Crisis, 2015).

But is the refugee crisis simply about keep a track of their ever-increasing numbers? Rather, it is much more than that. A global refugee crisis that the world is witnessing right now also brings forth the inadequacies of countries in rehabilitating them. The deplorable refugee life passes through four stages (The Refugee Crisis 2015)- first, they are persecuted in their home countries; second, after fleeing from there they have to endure the 'dark' refugee camp life, devoid of any prospects of work for them or education for their children; third, in the hope of a better life they take a chance to cross the Mediterranean Sea under the looming danger that they may be swallowed by the same; and fourth is when the refugees finally reach Europe only to find that the governments are as clueless as they are, leaving their lives in a limbo.

#### The Burden on Europe

Some of the refugees fleeing from their adverse circumstances have had a friendly welcome in Europe. Citizens across Europe-Kos, Berlin, Barcelona, Madrid, Calais-have come forward to extend help to these refugees. Whether it is providing them with supplies of food, bottled water, nappies, sweets, shoes or offering them their homes to stay for a few nights or even putting a projector showing cartoons for the younger children, some of the Europeans have gone out of their way to do as much as they can to help the refugees at a time when the powerful authorities debate over possible approaches to deal with this problem (Migrant Crisis 2015).

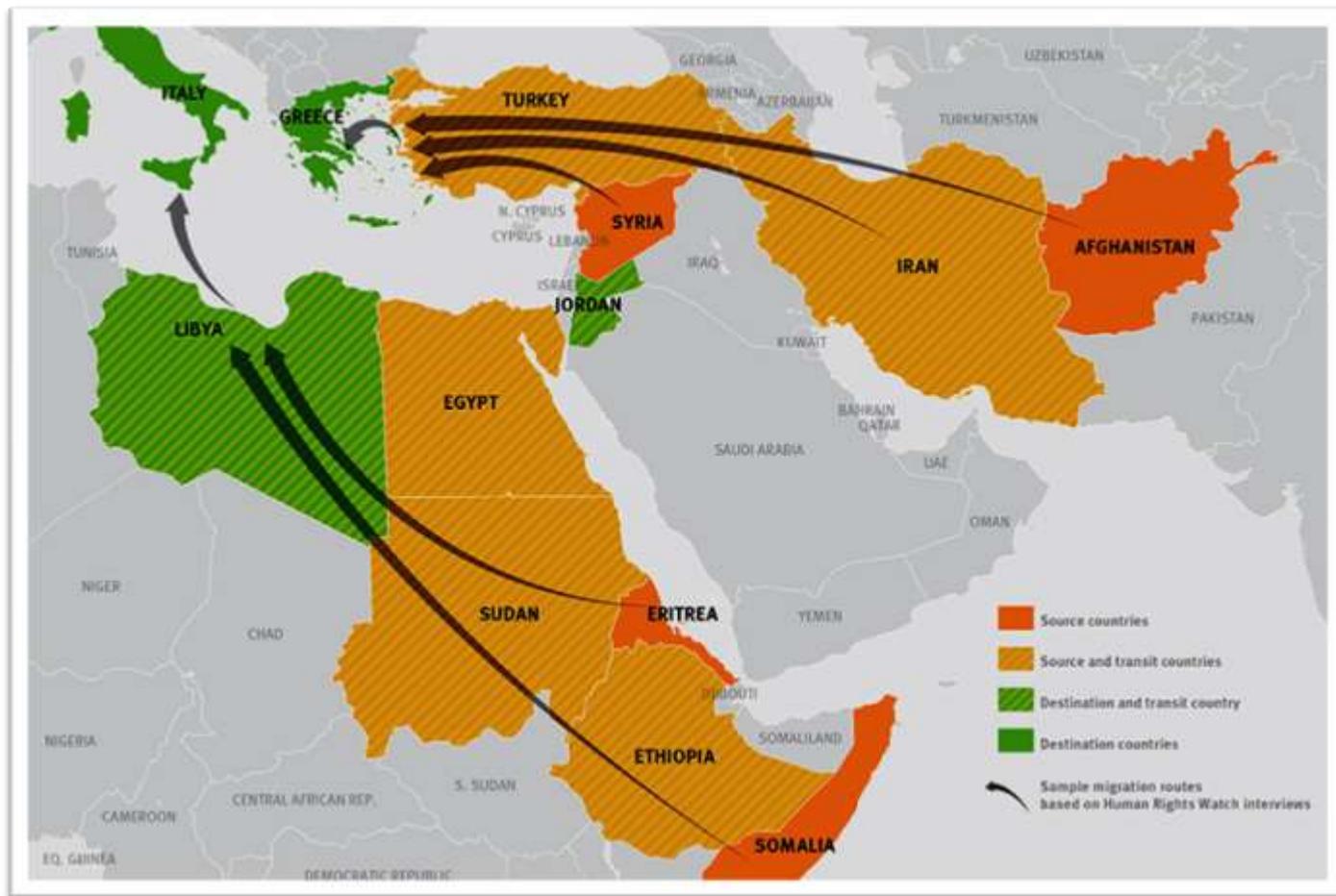
The flipside is that there are a number of people who hold the view that Europe is not responsible for the dire situation that is present in the Middle-East and therefore it has no obligation to help the massive influx of refugees who will pose a serious challenge to the economies of their respective countries (The Syrian Refugee Crisis is Not Our Problem 2015). The propagators of this opinion suggest that money is more valuable than the lives of thousands of homeless refugees reaching the shores and the thousand others who lose their lives while they are still crossing it.

Operation *Mare Nostrum* was the search and rescue operation conducted by Italy's navy and air force and funded by the European Commission to deal with the increased immigration from Africa and the Middle-East. The operation successfully saved 110, 250 people for the one year it operated. In October, 2014 *Mare Nostrum* was stopped due to

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huge economic cost (9 million Euros per month) it generated. Even though it has a found replacement in EU's Operation Triton, this operation is not as proactive as its predecessor. It operates only within 30 square miles of the coast as compared to 27,000 square miles covered by *Mare Nostrum* (Italy: End of Ongoing Sea Rescue Mission 2014). The reluctance of EU to engage aggressively in search and rescue operations can mean that the hope to avoid more number of deaths over the Mediterranean Sea is lost.

Figure 1: Migration flows in Europe (Refugees and Volunteers Struggle Together in Lesvos 2015)



EU incurs blame for the present crisis by the dint of its weak crisis management system which prevented it from formulating a foreign policy to deal with the civil war in Syria. It has been expressed that a lack of using 'hard power' against the regime of Bashar-al-Assad a few years back has contributed to the present surge of refugees on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea (Dempsey 2015).

It is ironical that the Europeans should be reluctant and not forthcoming in providing aid to the asylum seekers since it was only less than a century ago that Europe itself suffered a massive refugee crisis. Post World War I and II there were more than 40 million refugees in Europe fleeing from being persecuted. It was this catastrophic situation which was responsible for laying down certain humanitarian conditions that need to be followed while dealing with refugees thus formulating the Refugee Convention, 1951. The Convention has been signed and ratified by all European Union Nations who by extension also agree to abide by the minimum standard of care to be provided to the refugees as laid out under the Convention. The burden on Europe to not refuse migrants is even more so as per the Dublin III Regulations which were approved in 2013 by all EU member states but Denmark. As per this law the EU member states are required to process the asylum application of those who are seeking protection under the Refugee Convention, 1951. Usually the

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member state where the refugee first reaches is responsible to provide asylum, but this rule was relaxed in wake of the large number of refugees reaching the coast of Greece and Italy since they border the Mediterranean Sea.

It is the burden of Europe and for that matter any country that is approached by refugees fleeing from fear and persecution in their own nations. The Refugee Convention, 1951 is the corner stone of international law in dealing with human beings who have had to leave their countries because they do not have any other option. It is not the burden of Italy or Greece alone, which is where the refugees first reach as they cross the Sea, but the burden of the EU and the world at large to help these people on humanitarian grounds.

### **Migrants or Refugees?**

The terminology used for addressing the thousands languishing on the Mediterranean coast after having crossed the Sea from Middle-East or the horn of Africa will determine their future in the EU. A 'migrant' refers to a person who moves out of his country to another for economic reasons, to unite with family or for studying. There is no immediate threat to the life of the migrant. On the other hand a 'refugee' is forced to flee their country of origin because of lack of protection from their governments (The 1951 Convention 2011). The signatories to the Refugee Convention of 1951 are obligated to provide protection to refugees. Sending back the 'boat people' (as referred by the Australians when they speak of refugees crossing seas in boats) from across the Mediterranean will be violative of principles of international law.

There is a lot of debate regarding what the current crisis in Europe should be termed as-whether it is a migrant crisis or a refugee crisis? European governments have been accused of preferring the use of the word migrants to address the people arriving on their shores so that they are absolved of any responsibilities towards them (Migrants or Refugees? 2015). By avoiding calling them 'refugees' the governments shirk their legal responsibilities, as laid down under the Refugee Convention of 1951, towards the people arriving to seek asylum.

Although a person moving into Europe only for getting better wages and avail the benefit of social welfare policies is a migrant and not a refugee. However, sometimes the usage of the two terms can overlap. For instance a person fleeing from being persecuted may also be seeking asylum for economic rehabilitation. It is important that migrants from underprivileged countries should not be clubbed with people who actually fit in the definition of refugees since their life is under imminent threat. As far as it is about terming the current influx of migrants in Europe, to call it as the 'refugee crisis' would be appropriate in keeping with the view of UNHCR which states that during mass movements of people owing to 'generalized violence as opposed to individual persecution' it would be safe to call them 'prima facie refugees' (UNHCR 2014).

In the face of this crisis along the shores of the Mediterranean, is it becoming for a country to send back boats over loaded with people of all age groups to return to their pathetic living conditions? Must Europe also follow the Australian asylum policy of returning all migrants reaching its shores, not even referring to them as migrants but an elusive 'boat people'?

Undeniably what Europe and the world at large are facing today is a massive refugee crisis on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The fact that people are braving the heat, undergoing dehydration, hunger, all this without the certainty that their boats will not capsize or that the rubber tube will not rupture during their arduous journeys, suggests how dire their circumstances must be at home.

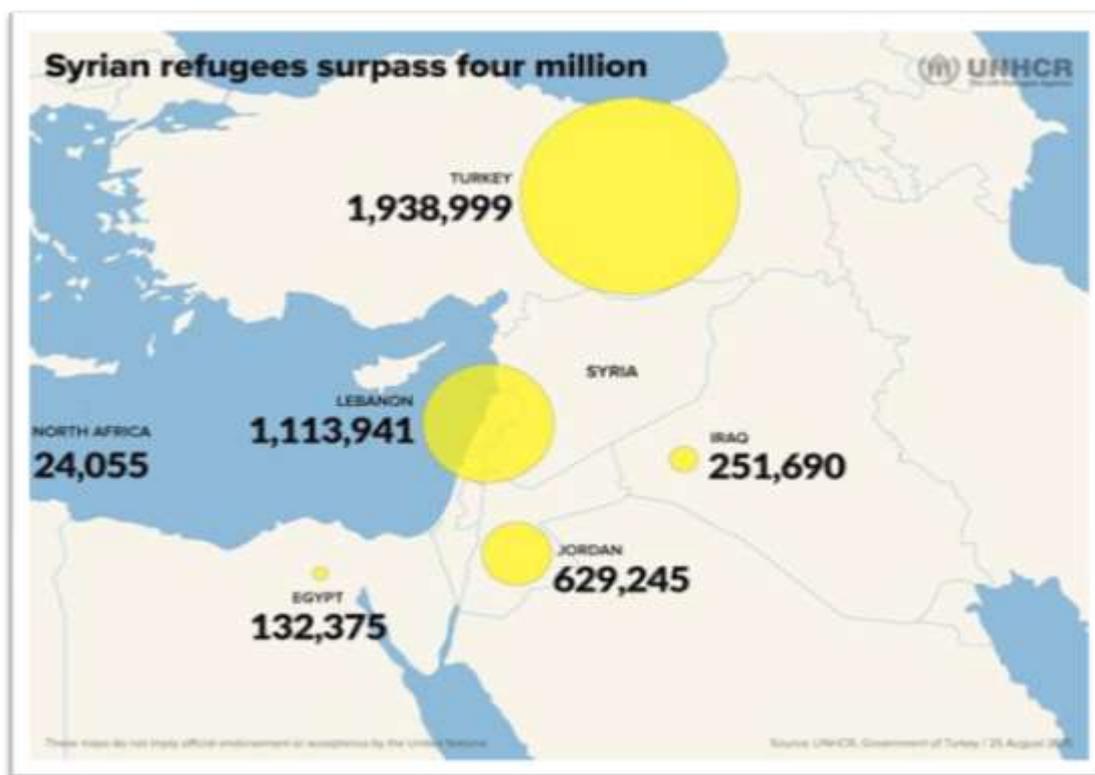
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### Is there a solution?

About 86 percent of the refugees in the world are hosted by developing countries and a fairly small amount of share of these refugees was hosted by the EU countries (The Sea Route to Europe 2015). Even this small share is shared by only a few European countries- Germany, Italy, Sweden, France- who have been shouldering the responsibility of providing asylum to the refugees (Which EU countries had the most asylum seekers? 2015). When a large burden of taking care of the refugees is being borne by developing countries, it isn't too much to ask from the developed countries to contribute more towards helping these displaced people. In order to deal with this humanitarian crisis which has earned the world's empathy, a larger participation by EU countries in offering asylum has become a requirement.

There is a lack of a coherent EU migration policy. The Common Asylum Policy that is currently followed by the member states (which is in accordance with the Dublin III Regulations) does not postulate that the asylum seekers be accepted by the EU member states proportionately. The percentage of refugees granted asylum is disparate across the member states and consequently the border countries have to accommodate the majority of migrants coming from the war-torn regions beyond the Sea in lieu of the policy that a refugee will be provided asylum in the first member state he reaches. A 'harmonisation' of the immigration policy in EU is thus imminent for 'burden sharing'. It will help in accommodation of larger number of the refugees which is a necessary stop gap measure at the present hour. (Refugee Crisis Exposes Massive Flaws in EU governance 2015).

Figure 2: The number of Syrian refugees who have fled (UNHCR 2015)



The Refugee Convention was formulated on the shared understanding that the refugees are an international responsibility of the global community at large. The EU countries' asylum system is teeming with applications, so much so that Hungary is creating a wall in order to prevent the refugees from coming inside their country. While the EU

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member states divide their responsibility among themselves steps to provide asylum from other countries like the United States would be very welcome in dealing with the refugee crisis (Brookings 2015). Especially since the United States has played a role in contributing to the Syrian War which is responsible for compelling people to leave Syria and therefore it has a moral obligation to increase its intake of refugees ("European Refugee Crisis Direct Consequence of Failed Obama Policy 2015).

But the fact remains that the European refugee crisis is only a fraction of what the Middle East has been experiencing as is seen in Figure 2. Is providing asylum to refugees the solution to the problem of humanitarian crisis that the Middle-East is currently experiencing? EU countries being economically burdened by the huge number of asylum seekers is only one aspect of the crisis. There is the four-year old Syrian war that has forced its own citizens to seek asylum elsewhere and is nowhere close to being resolved. The vast economic burden incurred by Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey as they host a majority of the Syrians is a major concern which may cripple the economies in the Middle-East in the near future.

A solution to the Europe Crisis lies in recognising that both short-term and long-term measures and changes need to be implemented to fight the immediate problem of refugees reaching the Mediterranean Sea shores as well as the continual displacement of citizens from African and Middle-Eastern countries suffering from collapsing economies and governments. So whether it is about addressing the drought being caused in the Middle-East due to climate change which has been blamed for crushing the economy and pushing people to look for employment outside; or increasing the funds for UNHCR which is managing with only 23 percent of the funds that were assigned to it (UNHCR 2015); or even taking some tough decisions regarding the Syrian war that is causing havoc in these countries; some actions and policy decisions need to be undertaken rapidly.

While discussing the six fundamental principles to solve the Mediterranean crisis, António Guterres, the head of UNHCR, says that 'no country can do it alone, and no country can refuse to do its part' (UNHCR 2015). The plight of the refugees desperately moving towards Europe for protection is a humanitarian crisis. It is beyond the realms of international politics and therefore merits holistic aid from every organisation and country that can provide it.

Finally, while this huge human and political crisis plays out on the distant shores of Europe, it is also pertinent for us to honestly introspect if India were to be faced with a similar dilemma of assimilating thousands of Syrian refugees, would we be willing to do so given the current climate of 'open communalism'? The answer may be a bitter pill to swallow for a country that has prided itself on its liberal traditions. And that frankly is what should be worrying us even more! (Bhatia 2015)

**Prepared by:**  
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## Headlines

### **WEF Ranks India Low on Inclusive Growth, Development**

*(Business Standard, September 8, 2015)*

The World Economic Forum (WEF) found that India is also one of those countries who are missing major opportunities to reduce income inequality. On the one hand, India has been ranked very low, mostly in the bottom half, globally on most of the parameters for inclusive growth and development. On the other hand it has fared much better internationally when it come to business and political ethics.

Read more: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/wef-ranks-india-low-on-inclusive-growth-devt-115090800038\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/wef-ranks-india-low-on-inclusive-growth-devt-115090800038_1.html)

Date Accessed: 9.9.2015

### **The Poverty Alleviation Way to Development**

*(Jayati Ghosh, Frontline, September 4, 2015)*

“Poverty alleviation” has replaced development economics in the neoliberal approach to growth, which privileges the market mechanism. Early economists from the 16th and 17th centuries to those of the mid-20th century were all essentially concerned with understanding the processes of economic growth and structural change: how and why they occurred, what forms they took, what prevented or constrained them, and to what extent they actually led to greater material prosperity and more general human progress. And it was this broader set of “macro” questions which in turn defined both their focus and their approach to more specific issues relating to the functioning of capitalist economies.

Read more: [http://www.frontline.in/columns/Jayati\\_Ghosh/the-poverty-alleviation-way-to-development/article7549958.ece](http://www.frontline.in/columns/Jayati_Ghosh/the-poverty-alleviation-way-to-development/article7549958.ece)

Date Accessed: 3.9.2015

## Economics

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

States	Rural	Urban	General
<b>All India</b>	<b>4.94</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>4.06</b>
<b>Northern Region</b>			
Jammu & Kashmir	7.97	3.37	6.08
Himachal Pradesh	10.28	2.60	8.31
Punjab	6.85	5.37	6.15
Chandigarh	14.31	-0.81	0.69
Uttarakhand	4.29	3.46	3.73
Haryana	5.54	4.73	4.88
Delhi	6.73	5.42	6.30
Uttar Pradesh	3.13	3.01	2.73
<b>Western Region</b>			
Rajasthan	4.47	5.61	4.59
Gujarat	3.27	3.60	3.45
Maharashtra	7.16	3.24	4.68
Goa	8.48	4.99	5.77
Lakshadweep	12.49	3.27	7.69
Daman & Diu	18.91	8.23	14.13
Dadra Nagar & Haveli	17.43	6.62	12.52
<b>Central Region</b>			
Madhya Pradesh	3.81	4.76	4.06
Chattishgarh	8.62	1.78	5.53
<b>Southern Region</b>			
Andhra Pradesh	9.46	3.73	7.10
Karnataka	7.40	2.02	4.60
Kerala	3.61	-0.40	1.94
Tamil Nadu	3.40	2.53	3.01
Puducherry	16.63	7.39	10.19
Andaman & Nicobar Island	18.24	2.49	10.20
<b>Northeastern Region</b>			
Arunachal Pradesh	5.78		
Assam	3.81	2.82	3.05
Manipur	20.65	5.52	14.83
<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>-2.85</b>	<b>7.27</b>	<b>-1.70</b>
Mizoram	7.28	3.16	4.53
Nagaland	12.23	5.18	9.04
Tripura	7.54	4.04	6.10
Sikkim	10.42	1.24	8.70
<b>Eastern Region</b>			
Bihar	5.63	3.65	4.81
Jharkhand	5.87	2.88	4.45
West Bengal	1.53	3.56	2.28
Odisha	6.16	-0.30	3.96

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

## Economics

### **UBS Cuts India's Growth Forecast to 7.1% for FY16**

*(Business Standard, September 9, 2015)*

On account of weaker external demand prospects, Swiss brokerage UBS has revised downwards India's GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year. It has revised growth projection from 7.5 per cent to 7.1 per cent. The downward revision in growth projection comes despite lower oil prices which were expected to provide a boost to Indian growth.

Read more: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ubs-cuts-india-s-growth-forecast-to-7-1-for-fy16-115090900048\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ubs-cuts-india-s-growth-forecast-to-7-1-for-fy16-115090900048_1.html)

Date Accessed: 9.9.2015

## Governance and Development

### *POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE*

#### **India Announces New Partnership to Accelerate Financial Inclusion**

*(India Info Line, September 2, 2015)*

The Government of India is joining the UN-based 'Better Than Cash Alliance'. The new partnership is an extension of Indian Government's commitment to reduce cash in its economy. Digital financial services lower the cost of providing financial services and make it more convenient for poor people to access their accounts.

Read more: [http://www.indiainfoonline.com/article/news-top-story/india-announces-new-partnership-to-accelerate-financial-inclusion-115090200003\\_1.html](http://www.indiainfoonline.com/article/news-top-story/india-announces-new-partnership-to-accelerate-financial-inclusion-115090200003_1.html)

Date Accessed: 3.9.2015

### *GOVERNMENT*

#### **Under Fire from All Quarters, Govt. May Revoke Decision on 'Jazia Tax'**

*(Early Times Report, September 7, 2015)*

Under tremendous pressure from all quarters and facing criticism from its own alliance partner BJP, the PDP led Government in the state may revoke its decision on imposing a 12.5% service tax to pilgrims travelling to Vaishno Devi shrine by helicopter. From all political parties in the state to its main rival at Centre, BJP is under fire for what the Congress and even own leaders in the state have termed the decision no less than Jazia tax. Most likely the Government will rescind its decision.

Read more: <http://www.earlytimes.in/newsdet.aspx?q=158221>

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

#### **India Strongly Rejects Pakistan's Call for Plebiscite in J&K**

*(Indian Awaaz, September 3, 2015)*

India has strongly rejected Pakistan's call for plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that the state is an integral part of the country. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, who attended the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at the United Nations in New York condemned Pakistan's move to raise the issue of Kashmir on a platform focused on global development agenda.

Read more: <http://theindianawaaz.com/parliamentary-awaaz/india-strongly-rejects-pakistans-call-for-plebiscite-in-jk/>

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

#### **Maharashtra Government Mum on Action against 12 IAS Officials in Adarsh Scam**

*(ET Bureau, September 8, 2015)*

RTI activist Anil Galgali had written to the state government seeking details of action taken against the 12 bureaucrats implicated in the Adarsh scam on the recommendation of a two-member inquiry commission appointed by the state government. However the Maharashtra Government has refused to reveal what action has been taken against the 12 IAS officers. The committee headed by Justice JA Patil had passed strictures against the 12 bureaucrats.

Read more: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/maharashtra-government-mum-on-action-against-12-ias-officials-in-adarsh-scam/articleshow/48862742.cms>

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

## Governance and Development

### EDUCATION

#### Education policy: BJP-Ruled States Seek Law to Regulate Fees

(Liz Mathew, *The Indian Express*, September 8, 2015)

As part of a proposed new education policy, education ministers of BJP-ruled states have suggested a central law to control fees in educational institutions, an autonomous body to administer and conduct exams to check cheating, special programmes to prevent backward community students from dropping out and a gender sensitivity audit of textbooks. These proposals came up at a two-day meeting of education and culture ministers of BJP-ruled states, attended by party chief Amit Shah, on September 6-7. HRD Minister Smriti Irani was also present at the meeting on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma said many issues close to the party's ideology were discussed at the meeting. "We discussed education and culture and how we can inculcate values. The other issue was pollution of ideology, national ideology... Some people alleged that we are doing saffronisation. If at all saffronisation has been done, it has been done by the public of India. We accept the mandate of the people," he said.

Read more: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/education-policy-bjp-ruled-states-seek-law-to-regulate-fees/>

Date Accessed: 08.09.2015

### HEALTH

#### India Stomps on Tobacco Abroad, Drags Feet on Pictorial Warnings at Home

(Aarti Dhar, *The Wire*, September 7, 2015)

While India has pledged to undertake hard-hitting measures to reduce the use of tobacco at the World Health Organization meeting in Timor-Leste, the Government has succumbed to pressure from the tobacco lobby and wavered on its promise to make it mandatory for pictorial warnings to cover 85% of cigarette and beedi packs.

Read more: <http://thewire.in/2015/09/07/india-roars-at-tobacco-abroad-drags-its-feet-on-pictorial-warnings-at-home-10183/>

Date Accessed: 8.9. 2015

### URBAN

#### Why Lakhs of People Leave Odisha to Work in Distant, Unsafe Brick-Kilns

(M Rajshekhar, *Scroll*, September 8, 2015)

Kantabanji in Western Odisha is the largest migrant labour market in the region. Numbers of migrants from this town alone are pegged to be somewhere between 100,000 and 125,000. Withering of forest-based livelihoods, few options to sustain repayment of loans, unpredictable rains are few of the reasons for this mass seasonal migration. Most of these migrants depend on local labour contractors to find them work in brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu.

Read more: <http://scroll.in/article/747416/why-lakhs-of-people-leave-odisha-to-work-in-distant-unsafe-brick-kilns>

Date Accessed: 8.9.2015

## Governance and Development

### TRANSPORT

#### **Railways, ISRO Tie-up for Improving Safety**

*(PTI, September 6, 2015)*

Indian Railways will join hands with ISRO to get online satellite images for improving safety and enhancing efficiency. The tie-up will facilitate getting images for mapping and communications to introduce Wi-Fi through the satellite system. “We will undertake a massive exercise of GIS [geographical information systems] mapping of the entire rail route and assets including buildings, land, workshops and other facilities in the network using geospatial technology,” said a senior Railway Ministry official involved with GIS mapping project.

Read more: [http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/railways-isro-tie-up-for-improving-safety/article7621817.ece?utm\\_source=MostPopular&utm\\_medium=National&utm\\_campaign=WidgetPromo](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/railways-isro-tie-up-for-improving-safety/article7621817.ece?utm_source=MostPopular&utm_medium=National&utm_campaign=WidgetPromo)

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

### ENVIRONMENT

#### **India a Credible Actor on Climate Change**

*(Satayam Malaviya, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, September 3, 2015)*

As the world is preparing for a legally binding agreement on climate change in Paris this December, countries are submitting their respective INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) as decided at the Conference Of Parties meeting (COP 20) at Lima in December 2014. India being a deciding nation for any workable climate agreement is all prepared to submit the same ahead of the Prime Minister’s scheduled speech on climate change at the UN General Assembly this month. India’s stand on climate change is in tandem with the stances of both the north and south. Indeed, it stands as a bridge between the developed north and the developing south.

Read more: [http://idsa.in/idsacomments/IndiaaCredibleActoronClimateChange\\_smalaviya\\_030915.html](http://idsa.in/idsacomments/IndiaaCredibleActoronClimateChange_smalaviya_030915.html)

Date Accessed: 3.9.2015

#### **'Problem Animals' Are Not the Real Problem**

*(Economic and Political Weekly, September 5, 2015)*

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is planning to allow the hunting of animals which it deems as vermin. In December last year, the ministry had issued a circular that proposed legalising hunting of “problem animals.” Going by the Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar’s recent statements, implementing this circular seems to be one of the more enthusiastic pursuits of an otherwise somnolent ministry. In his most recent statement on the issue, Javadekar said that the ministry will go ahead with the hunting permission as soon as it gets a response from the states. The environment ministry’s plans are likely to bring cheer to a large number of farmers in north and central India, whose crops are ravaged every year by nilgais and wild boars. Crop depredation is a serious problem in the country.

However, culling such problem creatures seems at best treating the symptom. Every animal is different in the way it relates to humans and it would be wrong to reduce all human–animal conflicts to one reason. But the fact that such conflict has reached unprecedented levels is a symptom of an ecological upheaval; a sign that animals face an acute habitat crisis. It also shows protecting animals in fragmented reserves can go woefully wrong, when at the same time large chunks of forests are being destroyed.

The environment ministry’s proposals to cull problem animals must be seen in tandem with its minister’s enthusiasm to siphon off large tracts of forests for industry. Overabundance of some animals is a serious problem. But dealing with these ecological dislocates requires a vision that a minister, who equates forest diversion with reforestation, seems incapable of. That is why one must treat Javadekar’s plans to cull problem animals with scepticism.

Read more: <http://www.epw.in/editorials/problem-animals-are-not-real-problem.html>

Date Accessed: 07.09.2015

## Governance and Development

### **Climate Change and the Syrian Conflict: Why We Need to Pay Attention**

(Sonal Prasad, *The Huffington Post*, September 9, 2015)

While many have been ridiculing the "mad scientists" who cry wolf over global warming, Syria may now be proof of how a severe drought exacerbated by rising temperatures helped trigger a violent civil unrest that has resulted in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises in recent history. Yes, it was not just oil or religion -- the sly hand of climate change played a large part too. A report published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) has underlined evidence that the severe drought in Syria from 2007-2010 was instrumental in triggering the chaos in the country. Although climate change may not be the only cause of the civil unrest, the authors of the PNAS report confidently believe that it is a tremendous "catalytic factor."

Advocates and researchers have argued over the effects and realities of climate change for many years, but now its consequences are shaping our reality. Experts say that rising temperatures and scarcity of water in the coming years will increase the risk of conflict in both high-income and low-income countries, often substantially. In short: global warming can increase the likelihood of countries going to war and Syria is a glaring example of this.

Read more: [http://www.huffingtonpost.in/sonali-prasad/time-sensitive-syrias-cli\\_b\\_8094224.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=india](http://www.huffingtonpost.in/sonali-prasad/time-sensitive-syrias-cli_b_8094224.html?utm_hp_ref=india)

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

## **LAW AND JUSTICE**

### **SC Refuses to Entertain PIL on FTII Row**

(*Indian Awaaz*, September 7, 2015)

The Supreme Court today declined to entertain a PIL seeking its intervention to end the ongoing stir at Film and Television Institute of India. FTII is opposing the appointment of Gajendra Chauhan as Chairman. A bench comprising Chief Justice HL Dattu and Justice Amitava Roy said, "It is the duty of the Centre and Information and Broadcasting Ministry to end the strike so that the tension in Pune comes to end and the careers of FTII students are not affected".

Read more: <http://theindianawaaz.com/other-top-stories/sc-refuses-to-entertain-pil-on-ftii-row/>

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

## India and World

### INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

#### **Wanted: Data Revolution to Track New U.N. Development Goals**

(Katie Nguyen, *Reuters*, September 7, 2015)

By 2030, we should be living healthier, more prosperous lives on a greener, cleaner planet helped by robust policies to combat climate change and use precious resources, like water, wisely. That is, if world leaders live up to the promise of ambitious development goals to end poverty and hunger, and promote a more sustainable way of life, over the next 15 years.

But for governments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), due to be adopted at a U.N. summit this month, there must be a push for better data to allow progress to be tracked and leaders to be held to account, experts say. Too often data that is produced is inaccurate, driven by donor priorities, released after a long time lag or omits groups on society's margins. As a result, both rich and poor countries know a lot less about their citizens than they think. "There is no data on the value of data," said Elizabeth Stuart, research fellow at Britain's Overseas Development Institute (ODI) thinktank, which analysed data flaws in a report earlier this year. "It blows my mind that we do all this policymaking and planning based on guesstimates and extrapolations and interpolations behind the guise of empiricism," Stuart told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The solution lies in investing more in national statistics offices, better use of already available data, improved data accuracy and the use of alternative data sources, experts say. The data revolution may already have begun but to be truly effective, citizen-generated and other types of data should complement traditional methods of data gathering such as household surveys and censuses, experts say.

Others caution that more data will not guarantee better policymaking and accountability.

"You can't assume that just because you have the data, governments are going to take notice of it and start changing their policies accordingly," the ODI's Stuart said. "Paradoxically, some of the governments that have the best policy around open data are also ... clamping down on freedoms."

Read more: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/07/development-goals-data-idUSKCN0R709Q20150907>

Date Accessed: 07.09.2015

#### **Migrant Crisis: Where Have the Gulf States Been?**

(Mardo Soghom, *The Atlantic*, September 8, 2015)

Few in the media or diplomatic circles have asked an important question: Where have the rich Arab countries been over the last few years, as the Syrian civil war has raged and millions of refugees have fled to neighboring countries? The only Arab countries to have accepted Syrian refugees are Jordan and Lebanon, two weak economies with very limited means. To be sure, rich Arab countries have sent some aid to refugees in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, but no major plan has even been offered that would appear to be aimed at making a serious difference.

Part of the explanation might lie in the fear such countries have had regarding migration by "other" Arabs to their lands. They have sought jealously to safeguard their wealth from possible dilution. They have also appeared concerned about possible political instability if Arabs from other countries arrive and swamp their relatively small populations. While Indian or Pakistani guest workers will always remain foreigners because of their linguistic differences with Arabs, Arab migrants speak the same language and can communicate and influence local populations, especially in volatile societies like Saudi Arabia.

Even recognizing all these concerns, though, it remains puzzling why five countries with a combined national income of \$2 trillion have not offered credible assistance to solve the current refugee crisis. After all, they have all more or less been involved—directly or indirectly—in the Syrian civil war by virtue of having either encouraged or armed various groups.

Read more: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/refugees-migrant-crisis-arab-countries/404203/>

Date Accessed: 09.09.2015

## India and World

### What Has the United Nations Ever Done for Women?

(Harriet Sherwood, Anu Anand, Maeve Shearlaw & Jonathan Franklin, *The Guardian*, September 10, 2015)

As the UN marks its 70<sup>th</sup> birthday this autumn, half of humankind may still ask: what has been achieved for us?

UN Women was established in 2010 as a “global champion for women and girls”. According to its deputy executive director Lakshmi Puri, the agency was “the first global institution created by the international community to promote and achieve gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights – all critical areas of human endeavour and aspiration”. With almost 2,000 staff in more than 90 countries and an annual budget of \$690m, its key aims are improving women’s participation in public life, ending gender-based violence and advancing economic equality.

But in the complex and often fragmented world of the UN, some issues critical to women’s lives – such as maternal health, reproductive rights, sanitation and FGM – fall within the remit of other UN agencies, or even between the cracks. More general criticism of UN Women and other bodies dealing with women’s rights comes from analysts and activists, most of whom would only speak off the record. Some said that UN Women was too focused on lobbying at government level and writing endless reports at the expense of helping the grassroots women’s organisations best placed to effect concrete change.

This month, the UN general assembly will endorse a new set of goals to tackle global poverty, inequality and climate change over the next 15 years. The sustainable development goals [SDGs] – which replace the millennium development goals adopted in 2001 – are expected to include strong commitments to women’s rights and gender equality. But women’s rights organisations fear pushback when it comes to their implementation.

Read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/10/un-womens-rights-feminism-equality>

Date Accessed: 11.09.2015

## Opinions/Books

### OPINIONS

#### Utilising MSMEs as Engines for Growth

(Charan Singh, *The Hindu*, September 11, 2015)

According to the recently released Annual Report (AR) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), gross capital formation has been declining over the years, especially households. The performance of the agriculture sector has also been slower than the previous year because of uncertain rains in the last few months. In context of continuing uncertainty in the agriculture sector because of substantial dependence on rain-fed irrigation, an alternative power pack, unutilised, is micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). As MSMEs are generally labour-intensive, they have the capability to create more jobs to cater to a young demographic country like India.

Read more: [http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Economy\\_Watch/utilising-msmes-as-engines-for-growth/article7637948.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Economy_Watch/utilising-msmes-as-engines-for-growth/article7637948.ece)

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