

RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

# RGICS POLICY WATCH

Vol.-II, ISSUE-012 : October 28, 2013

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## COVER STORY

### The Informal Economy & Women's Participation



#### WEEKLY ROUND UP OF NEWS ON POLICY

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Compiled by RGICS,

Jawahar Bhawan, New Delhi.

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## Cover Story

### The Informal Economy & Women's Participation

#### Introduction: The Relevance of Informal Sector and Women's Participation

During the past three decades, in most developing countries, growth of employment in the formal sector has stagnated or at best shown a gradual ascent while the informal economy has increased significantly. For instance, **in India the informal economy accounts for about 93 per cent of total employment**, in Mexico about 62 per cent, and in South Africa about 34 per cent (Chen, 2005).

The major part of the workforce in India and other developing countries work in informal sector. The labour sector of the Indian economy consists of roughly 487 million workers, the second largest after China.<sup>1</sup> Of these over 94 percent work in unincorporated, unorganised enterprises ranging from pushcart vendors to home-based diamond and gem polishing operations.<sup>2</sup>

We present here an overview of the women's participation in the informal economy considering the experiments in governance from Emerging Countries.

#### Definition of Informal Economy

According to International Labour Organization (ILO), the informal economy refers to organizations in the informal sector (i.e. those not registered with a local authority and not paying taxes), and the activities of firms in the formal sector that employ informal workers (i.e. workers without a formal work contract and without any formal safety net).

#### Definitions used in India

**The First Indian National Commission on Labour (1966-69) defined 'unorganised sector workforce' as –“those workers who have not been able to organize themselves in pursuit of their common interest due to certain constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishments”.**

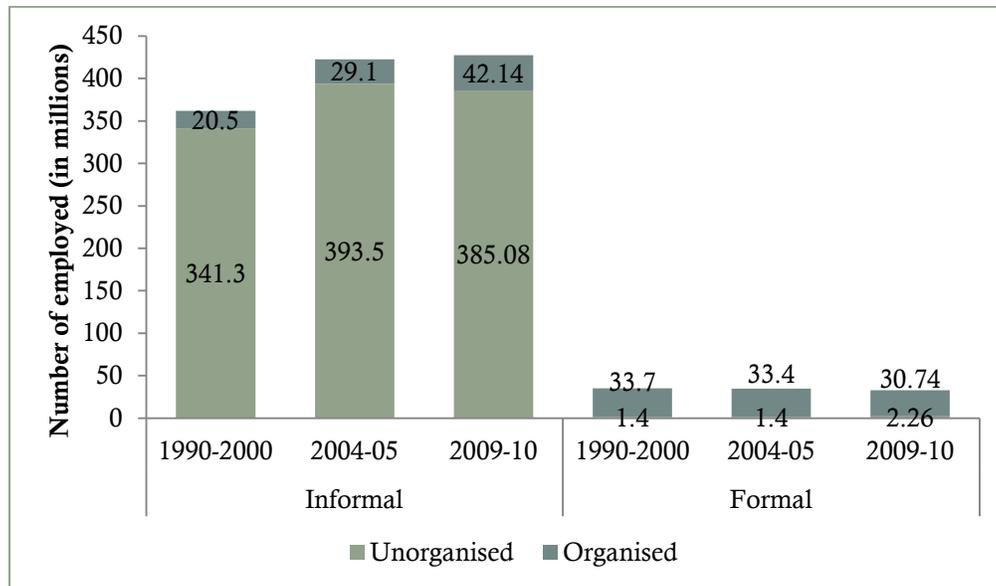
**National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) recommended the following definition of unorganized/informal sector:**

***“The informal sector consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers”.***

#### Informal Sector Representation in India

The employment in the unorganised sector declined from 86% in 2004–05 to 84% in 2009–10. This means that the share of organised sector employment has increased to 16 per cent in 2009–10 from 14 per cent in both 1999–2000 and 2004–05. However, the **increase in the organised sector employment is mainly in the informal category**. The informal employment in the organised sector has increased from 46.4 per cent in 2004–05 to about 57.8 per cent in 2009–10. The informal employment in the unorganised sector remains the same. Nearly 93 per cent of the total workforce in 2009–10 is in informal employment, a rise from 91 per cent in 1999–2000. If agriculture is excluded from the workforce, the share of informal workers in the total non-agricultural workforce drops to 85.6 per cent from 93 per cent, which is still very high as compared to that in Brazil (51 per cent), Mexico (50 per cent), Indonesia (78 per cent), Philippines (72 per cent), and Thailand (49 per cent). Graph 1 represents the formal and informal employment in organized and unorganized sector (in millions).

Graph 1: Distribution of formal and informal employment in organized and unorganized sector (in millions)



Source: Planning Commission

Table 1 shows the distribution of informal and formal sector workers by sector and sex between 1999-2000 and 2004-05. **In rural areas the share of informal sector workers in each population segment recorded more than 90 percent and the share of female workers (94.50 percent) is more than male workers (90.34 percent) in 2004-05.** In 1999-00 the situation was same for rural area but over the years the percentage share declined in rural areas. In contrast to rural areas, in urban areas around 70 percent of workers were employed in the informal sector but between the study periods the share of informal workers in urban areas increased.

Table 1: Distribution of formal and informal sector workers by gender between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 (in millions)

Sector	Sex	Informal Sector		Formal Sector	
		1990-2000	2004-05	1990-2000	2004-05
Rural	Male	178.5	197.87	18.24	21.17
	Female	98.63	117.21	5.39	6.82
Urban	Male	51.62	61.94	25.42	28.46
	Female	13.89	17.88	5.07	6.12
Total	Male	230.12	259.81	43.66	49.63
	Female	112.51	135.09	10.46	12.94

Source : NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> & 61<sup>st</sup> round survey on employment- unemployment

### **Women's representation in informal economy & gender disparities**

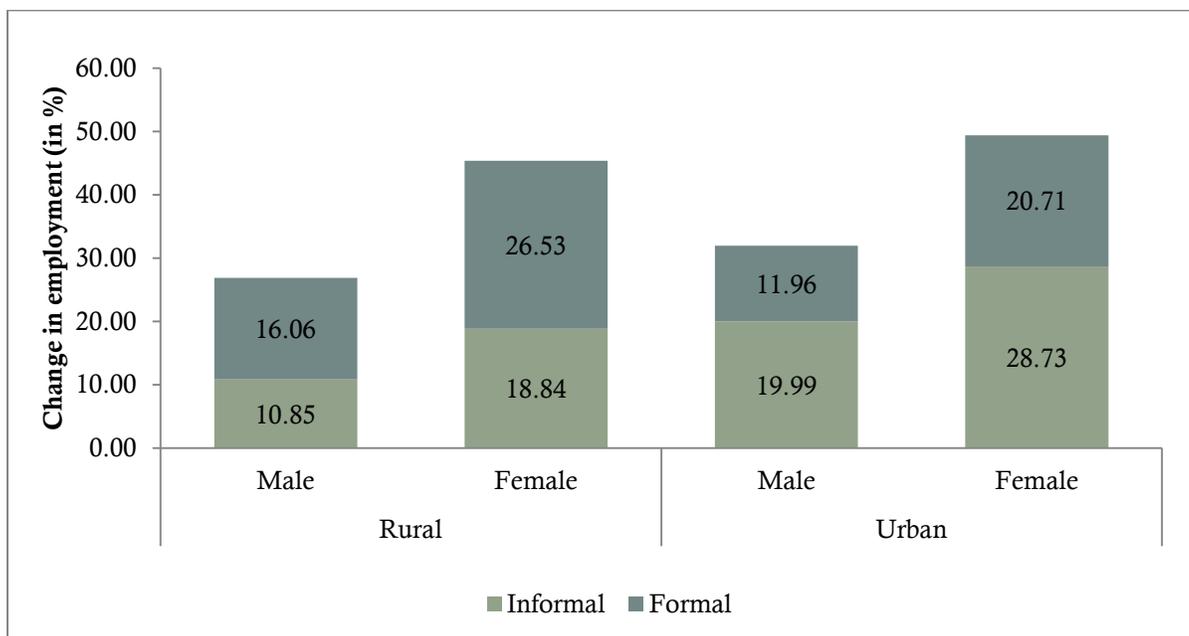
Contrary to the formal sector, women are over-represented in the informal sector in developing countries. It is the primary source of employment for salaried women, in the form of self-employment, contract labour, casual labour, or contributing family members. The most prevalent forms of work are as street vendors or home-based producers. However, **despite women being over-represented in the informal sector, gender disparities are still widespread.**

The general trends seen in the informal sectors of developing countries are;

- Women are employees rather than employers
- Wages are lower in the informal sector as compared to the formal sector, and within the informal sector, women earn on average a lower wage than men, with the gender-wage-gap being greater than in the formal sector.
- Women are more visible in the “lower value added” activities of the informal economy.
- The home based producers, who are the most invisible informal workers, contribute the most to global trade as they form a significant share of the work force in key export industries involving manual tasks or labour intensive operations.
- The outsourcing of goods and services of the formal sector to the informal economy is increasing.

Graph 2 clearly indicates that growth rate of women employed in the informal sector in both rural and urban areas has been high compared to that of men between 1999-2000 & 2004-05.

Graph 2: Change in the percentage growth of employment in formal and informal sectors across genders between 1999-2000 & 2004-05



## State's Initiatives

Governments in developing countries are experimenting with new regulation, policies and public investment to give women a voice in decision making, facilitate life-work balance, and access resources to start new businesses. All these different actions have one common goal in addition to a variety of specific ones, namely to change the historically inherited social norms and societal expectations about women that constrain their economic lives as consumers, workers and producers. The main types of women-focused actions are summarized in graph 3.

Graph 3: Women- focused State Initiatives

Regulation on organization to facilitate work life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Maternity leave</li> <li>•Leave to take care of children</li> </ul>
Incentivizing women's integration as workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Tax breaks for organizations employing target percentage of women</li> <li>•Minimum employee guarantee for women</li> </ul>
Supporting pro woman initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Creating innovations that reduce women's drudgery</li> <li>•Creating innovations that improve women's health</li> </ul>
Facilitating participation in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fixing quotas for women in governing councils</li> <li>•Creating state sponsored organizations that focus on women's issues</li> </ul>

## Comparison of top-down and bottom-up initiatives for women empowerment in informal economy

The practices in the developing countries indicate that many of the top-down approaches for women empowerment are less effective than desired or more effective when encapsulated in gender neutral economic development programmes because then they clash less with prevailing patriarchy. At the same time, bottom-up initiatives for gender empowerment are more effective only if there is a continuum of gendered spaces facilitating discussion and exchange of ideas and experiences to bring about transformative change. Bottom up initiatives need gendered spaces in order to ensure the security of informal and non-intimidating spaces of dialogue to women bound and isolated by patriarchal traditional norms.

***“Both formal and informal economy organizations can be promoted through increasing inclusion of women”***

1. ["India"](#). CIA, United States. 2012.
2. Planning Commission of India (2007). ["Labour Laws and Other Labour Regulations"](#). The Government of India.
3. [http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/12thplan/pdf/12fyp\\_vol3.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/12thplan/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf)
4. <http://unu.edu/publications/policy-briefs>

Prepared by:

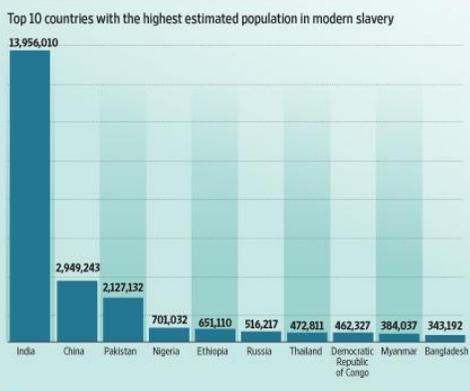
Anjana John & Shruti Issar

## India Home to the World's Largest Number of Modern-Day Slaves

(Elizabeth Roach, *Live Mint*, 17 October, 2013)

According to the first index of global slavery compiled by the Perth-based Walk Free Foundation, India is home to the world's largest number of modern-day slaves, estimated at between 13.3 and 14.7 million. India is among 10 nations that together account for the highest numbers of enslaved people, a massive 76% of the worldwide total of 29.8 million people estimated to be in slavery.

The first edition of Global Slavery Index ranks 162 countries, based on three factors: estimated prevalence of modern slavery by population, a measure of child marriage, and a measure of humans trafficked in and out of a country. The study suggests that while slavery involves the exploitation of some foreign nationals, by far the largest proportion is made up of Indians citizens within India, particularly in the form of debt bondage and bonded labour.



Poverty and caste system are significant contributing factors to modern slavery problem. Indians most vulnerable to modern slavery are those from lower caste (dalits) and indigenous communities (adivasis) especially women and children. India's most significant challenge is the high number of indian citizens in

various forms of modern slavery within India's border. Cross border migration has also affected India on a massive scale.

### Suggested Reforms

1. Undertake national prevalence estimates on modern slavery.
2. Ratify and implement the convention on the worst forms of child labour and domestic work convention.
3. Report annually on implementation and progress of efforts to combat all forms of modern slavery. This will require the establishment off protocols on the collection and compilation of data.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/pJrmmpi7HXgxvnnlMBFW1L/India-has-highest-number-of-modern-day-slaves-report.html>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013  
(Deepti Somani)

## Delhi Tops the Chart of Children Taking Ill at Mid-Day Meals

(Tabassum Barna, *The Indian Express*, 22 October, 2013)

A recent data collected by *The Indian Express* under the Right To Information Act shows that in the past 10 years, 2,069 children across the country have taken ill after consuming food provided under the mid-day meal scheme, with Delhi topping the list. According to the data, 525 children from Delhi have fallen ill since 2004 after eating mid-day meals. This is despite the fact that Delhi caters to just 11.8 lakh children in over 3,547 schools. Bihar comes second with 485 children and Uttar Pradesh third with 205.

The Centre is now rolling out a policy to monitor daily the number of children eating midday meals across the country. Till now, monitoring was not done every day. The Centre is also coming up with an emergency medical plan, which will ensure availability of

first aid and emergency numbers all schools.

“The death of children in Gandaman village in Bihar's Saran district was also because they were not given medical attention immediately. At least 21 children died by the time they reached the hospital.”

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/elhi-tops-chart-of-children-taking-ill-at-midday-meals/1185603/1>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

## Step Up NRLM Fund Use for Optimum Utilisation of Centre Transfers: Jairam

(*The Hindu*, 20 October, 2013)

Rural Development Minister, Jairam Ramesh has asked the Kerala State government to step up utilisation of funds sanctioned for the Kudumbasree Mission under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

In a letter to Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Mr. Ramesh pointed out that of the Rs.38.37 crore sanctioned under NRLM the State could utilise only Rs.17.21 crore during 2012-13, which is 44.85 per cent of the sanctioned amount. Noting the need to sensitise banks to provide credit to SHGs, on the face of high demand for credit in rural areas, the Union Minister had also asked the State government to strengthen linkages between Kudumbasree Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and banks so that credit would be available to the SHGs at low rates of interest.

He noted that the targeted credit mobilisation by the SHGs in the State had gone up from Rs.854 crore during 2012-13 to Rs.957 crore during 2013-14. “There should be quarterly review meetings on SHG credit linkage with all the banks and the Kudumbasree

Mission should facilitate establishment of community-based loan tracking and recovery mechanism at the level of the Community Development Society (CDS) and the Area Development Society (ADS) to instil greater confidence in the banks,” he said.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/step-up-nrlm-fund-use-jairam/article5255613.ece>

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

## Power Swaps Can Help Asia-Pacific Manage Daunting Future Energy Needs: Report

(Asian Development Bank, 14 October, 2013)

A comprehensive report from Asian Development Bank (ADB) says that cross-border power exchanges can play a central role in helping Asia and the Pacific meet its booming demand for power, which is set to sharply outpace the rest of the world's over the next two decades.

According to its projection the region will consume more than half the world's energy supply by 2035, with electricity consumption more than doubling as economic growth and rising affluence drive demand and the countries cannot meet these huge power requirements all on their own, so the region must accelerate cross-border interconnection of electricity and gas grids to improve efficiencies, cut costs, and take advantage of surplus energy.

There are big opportunities for building on existing cross-border power exchange initiatives in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Central Asia, with the ultimate goal of establishing a pan-Asia energy market by 2030. Closer cooperation will have other positive spin off effects including new economic opportunities and warmer relations. Additionally,

finding ways of removing current regulatory barriers are crucial for the broader use of renewable energy.

<http://www.adb.org/news/power-swaps-can-help-asia-pacific-manage-daunting-future-energy-needs-report>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Neha Singh)

## Over 9.3 lakh TB Patients in India undetected: Report

(Kounteya Sinha, *The Times of India*, 23 October, 2013)

World Health Organisation's World TB Report 2013 has reported that **India leads the list of the 12 countries that account for 75% of the estimated 'missed cases of TB'** (people who were either not diagnosed or diagnosed but not reported were in). There are around 3 million people suffering with TB who are not detected, with India accounting for around 9.3.lakh unreported TB cases.

Following are the important pointers of the report:

- Around 3 million people falling ill with TB are not being detected globally.
- India has around 26% of the world TB patients and homes around **31% of the world total unreported TB cases**. Another grim result states that the largest increase between 2011 and 2012 were in India, South Africa and Ukraine.
- India was followed by South Africa, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, China, Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Philippines and Myanmar in the list.
- The number of people ill with TB fell in 2012 to 8.6 million (0.5 million were children and 2.9 million occurred among women), with global TB deaths also decreasing to 1.3 million. While the number of people detected worldwide with rapid diagnostic tests increased by more than 40% to 94 000 in 2012, three out of

four MDR-TB cases still remain without a diagnosis.

- Around 16000 MDR-TB cases reported to WHO in 2012 were not put on treatment.
- A further challenge identified relates to the TB and HIV co-epidemic with less than 60% receiving antiretroviral drugs in 2012.
- In 2012, around 94,000 TB patients were eligible for multidrug resistant (MDR-TB) treatment which is a 42% increase in detected cases eligible for treatment compared with 2011.

WHO calls for India to “reach the 3 million TB cases missed in national notification systems by expanding access to quality testing and care services across all relevant public, private or community based providers, including hospitals and NGOs which serve large proportions of populations at risk”. It is also very pertinent that increased **access to diagnosis should be matched by increased access to MDR-TB care**. Dr Mario Raviglione, WHO director of the Global TB Programme, iterates that the unmet demand for a full-scale and quality response to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is a real public health crisis. He added that “far too many people are still missing out on such care and are suffering as a result. They are not diagnosed, or not treated, or information on the quality of care they receive is unknown.”

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Over-9-3-lakh-TB-patients-in-India-undetected-Report/articleshow/24600851.cms>

Date Accessed: 23.10.2013

(Mahima Malik)

## New RTGS System to Improve Financial Market Efficiency: Rajan

(*Business Standard*, 19 October, 2013)

The new Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system which is used to settle interbank fund transfers by banks and their customers and is critical in facilitating orderly settlement of payment obligations is likely to improve the efficiency of the country's financial markets.

"With its advanced liquidity and queue management features, the new RTGS system is expected to significantly improve the efficiency of financial markets," RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan said while inaugurating the ISO 20022-compliant system.

The new RTGS system is highly scalable and will have several new functionalities, as per RBI. It will have features such as a facility to accept future value dated transactions and options to process multi-currency transactions. The existing RTGS system (it was first implemented in India in March 2004 as an electronic funds transfer system across the country) will cease to be operational with the implementation of the new RTGS system.

"RTGS System Regulations 2013" will replace the RTGS (Membership) Business Operating Guidelines, 2004, and RTGS (Membership) Regulations, 2004 and soon new functionalities will be notified, as per the RBI.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/new-rtgs-system-to-improve-financial-market-efficiency-rajan-113101900545\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/new-rtgs-system-to-improve-financial-market-efficiency-rajan-113101900545_1.html)

Date Accessed : 21.10.2013  
(Shruti Issar)

## Sugar Prices Crash to 5 Year Low

(Shreya Jai, *The Economic Times*, 24 October, 2013)

"Sugar prices have fallen drastically to the lowest in the past five years in Maharashtra and north Karnataka with mills clearing old stocks to pay cane farmers. Sugar dispatch from the two regions has shot up by over 50% in a month. A lack of clarity over cane price and mounting arrears has compelled millers to sell their inventory and pay the farmers as soon as possible. The total amount of cane arrears is around Rs 4,000 crore of which Uttar Pradesh's share is highest at Rs 2,400 crore where the cane price was revised recently to Rs 280 per quintal. . Price has fallen from Rs 29.50 per kg to Rs 26 per kg and is expected to crash further by the end of October; some deals have happened at Rs 25 per kg as well."

"This is the first year when sugar trade has not witnessed any levy release mechanism and has 100% of its produce at its disposal. Data suggest that the amount of sugar released for internal consumption is highest during or after September in the past five sugar seasons. The sector is witnessing a fourth consecutive year of surplus production. According to the estimate of Indian Sugar Mills Association, the opening balance for this season (October 2013-September 2014) would be high at 10 million tonne."

As a result mills are offloading as much as they can and at whatever price possible to pay the farmers. By the time Diwali approaches, prices in general would stoop to such a low level," said MG Joshi, managing director, National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF).

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/commodities/sugar-prices-crash-to-5-year-low-demand-booms-ahead-of-diwali/articleshow/24621405.cms>

Date Accessed: 24.10.2013  
(Karishma Mutreja)

## DEVELOPMENT

### Skill Development Centres to be Launched in Villages in Punjab Soon: Minister

(*Indian Express*, 22 October, 2013)

Ajit Singh Kohar, Transport, Employment generation and Training minister has said that “Punjab government has chalked out a plan to set up skill development centres at the village-level to impart training to the less-educated youngsters in order to make them employable.”

Kohar said, “the state was committed to promote quality technical education and special emphasis was being laid on vocational training so that youngsters could get employment in local industries or start their own ventures”.

Speaking on the inauguration of the Apparel Training and Design Smart (ATDS) Centre Government Polytechnic, Khunimajra (near Kharar), he said that these were emerging industries with a huge potential and that the Government will tie up with such industries to generate employment for youngsters.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/skill-development-centres-to-be-launched-in-villages-soon-minister/1185632/>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

## GOVERNMENT

### e-KYC Service to be Launched in December

(*Governance Now*, 18 October, 2013)

Electronic authentication for 'Know Your Customer' (e-KYC) through Aadhaar is going to be launched in

December and it will give a push to the banking industry by reducing the time for entry of a customer into the banking system. “According to a report in *The Business Standard* which quoted sources from various facilitators such as National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Mastercard and Visa, pilot studies for e-KYC in the financial systems are underway and based on the results, a full fledged launch of the system is expected in December, 2013.” This facility would get a lot of people from the unbanked rural areas of India into the banking fold. At present the KYC process takes anywhere around five to seven days; in addition, the customers have to physically come to the bank and produce different kinds of identity documents. “With e-KYC, the customers will be able to authenticate themselves through Aadhaar and thus could open their accounts online. The report said that the time taken to authenticate a customer would be reduced to three days with e-KYC.”

<http://www.governancenow.com/gov-next/egov/e-kyc-will-boost-banking>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Anjana John)

### Govt. to Rehabilitate Bonded Labourers through NRLM

(*PTI*, 18 October, 2013)

Alarmed over the prevalence of bonded labour in the country, the government has decided to initiate massive programmes to rehabilitate and provide alternative livelihood for people living in conditions of modern-day slavery.

Minister of Rural development announced that the programme would initially be launched in 10 critically vulnerable districts having substantial population of bonded labourers. Under the programme, initiatives shall be taken up to rehabilitate bonded labourers and create conditions for

alternative livelihood through the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

The ten districts are Gaya in Bihar, Bastar and Kondagaon in Chhattisgarh, Prakasam and Chittur in Andhra Pradesh, Kanchipuram and Vellore in Tamil Nadu, Bolangir and Bargarh in Odisha and Gumla in Jharkhand.

The main instruments to locate and rehabilitate the bonded labourers will be women's self-help groups operating under NRLM. He further added that these self-help groups will be joining hands with several NGOs on the ground and NRLM will become an institutional partner of the “Bandhua 1947 campaign” to combat bonded labour.

Bandhua 1947 is a national-level campaign in India which aims at mobilising people to advocate with their government to protect millions currently vulnerable to bonded labour and fight for their rights. Shantanu Dutta, convenor of Bandhua 1947 welcoming the move, termed it as a ‘game-changer’ and a solution to fully eradicate bonded labour through government partnership.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/nCKH4mDsBUifvaSJv9ADiM/Govt-to-rehabilitate-bonded-labourers-Jairam-Ramesh.html>

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

## PANCHAYATI RAJ

### Connecting 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats via Broadband- a “Tall Order”: N Ravi Shankar

(Ankita Lahiri, *GovernanceNow*, 18 October, 2013)

In the opinion of N Ravi Shankar, Administrator of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and Chief Managing Director of BBNL, the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) program which aims to link 250,000 gram panchayats via broadband is highly ambitious and lays out “tall orders” that seem unlikely to be achieved by October 2013, the prescribed deadline. Additionally, as NOFN grows and I&B sector digitalization converges with it, it is expected that the masses will gain access to broadband and its services. This can be achieved only by 2015, an extension of the prescribed deadline.

A ground level survey has identified challenges which will delay the project. As a precondition to using the optical incremental fibre, a ground level survey covering all villages had to be carried out to estimate “what exists on the ground in order to optimise (the resources) by taking the minimum length.” The survey concluded that “on an average 2 kilometres of fibre per gram panchayat would be needed for 2,50,000 gram panchayats.” Secondly, creating bandwidth is only a start, the major challenge is that of using it and making it popular amongst masses.

The government is coordinating to bring all the major stakeholders in the loop- the “ministries of Telecom, rural development, panchayati raj, HRD, health and family welfare and women and child development so that the

demand aggregation will be such that the NOFN infrastructure will be very well utilized by all.” A special purpose vehicle, Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) which works with three “implementing agencies,” BSNL, Power Grid Corporation of India and Railtel, was created to oversee the progress of the project.

<http://www.governancenow.com/view/s/interview/250000-gram-panchayats-two-year-tall-order>

Date Accessed: 20.10.2013

(Mahima Malik)

## EDUCATION

### 87,000 Kids in Maharashtra Still Out of School

(Prasad Joshi, *The Indian Express*, 22 October, 2013)

According to government records, Maharashtra has close to 87,000 out-of-school children despite the fact that more than three and a half years have passed since the Right To Education (RTE) Act came into effect in the state. “When it comes to district-wise data, Pune has maximum number of out-of-school children in the state, with more than 16,500 away from schools.”

As many as 31,268 lower primary (Classes I-V) students — including 13,133 girls — have been out of school, while 49,820 have not attended upper primary schooling (Class VI-VIII). A close look at district-wise data of out-of-school children in Maharashtra reveals that several big cities like Thane, Nashik and Aurangabad account for maximum number of such children. “While the government is planning special training for out-of-school children, it failed to undertake such measures in the past three years, alleged social activists.” Activists also criticised the government for relying heavily on schools and respective school management committees (SMCs) for tracing out-of school

children and making them beneficiaries of RTE Act.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/87000-kids-in-state-still-out-of-school-maximum-in-pune/1185527/2>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Anjana John)

### Financial Literacy Classes Soon in Government Schools of Tamil Nadu

(R. Sairam, *The Hindu*, 21 October, 2013)

The American India Foundation, a non-profit organisation that works across India in the field of education, is contemplating financial literacy classes in government schools of Tamil Nadu. It is already conducting such programmes in 33 government schools in Haryana, Punjab and New Delhi for students from low-income families.

“The Foundation was at present implementing IT-enabled educational programmes at 40 Chennai Corporation schools and 27 Coimbatore Corporation schools in Tamil Nadu. It has projects running in seven States now and had completed projects in 20 other States.” Rather than taking financial literacy as a separate subject, which might be viewed as an additional burden by students and teachers, the financial concepts will be integrated with subject curriculum of mathematics and social science. This project was being implemented now as a pilot project. It would be scaled up after consulting the State Governments.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/financial-literacy-classes-soon-in-govt-schools/article5256235.ece>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Anjana John)

## URBAN

### JNNURM: Kerala Performed Worst

(*The New Indian Express*, 22 October, 2013)

Performance of Kerala is the lowest, when it comes to implementation of projects under the Urban Infrastructure Governance (UIG) scheme of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). According to a study by the PRS Legislative Research, Kerala has the lowest number of completed projects under the UIG and Urban Infrastructure Development for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT).

“Only one out of the 39 sanctioned projects have been completed in the state. While states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have recorded a completion rate of 68 per cent and 57 per cent respectively, Kerala has realised a mere three percentage of projects.”

<http://newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/JNNURM-Kerala-performed-worst/2013/10/22/article1848897.ece>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Anjana John)

### JNNURM to Adopt an “Aam Aadmi Approach” in its Second Phase

(B Dasarath Reddy, *Business Standard*, 21 October, 2013)

According to Arun Maira, member of the Planning Commission, the second leg of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) aims to adopt an “aam admi” centric approach in providing assistance to local bodies besides empowering them to make their own planning.” Another important aspect is that “the assistance will be available to any city that comes up with plans based on the local needs of the citizens irrespective of the size of population

unlike in the past where it was restricted only to big cities.”

The new developments under the existing scheme lay various benefits. The changes will make the “program cover 300 million more people who are expected to migrate to urban centres in the next one decade besides providing the same to the 350 million people who are living badly in the cities.” Such a centrally-assisted urban development initiative will be focussed on the needs of the local people with participation of the people. “Centre will now focus on training and capacity building exercise to make the local bodies competent enough to design programmes on sanitation, drinking water and urban housing among other things.”

“Those MLAs and MPs, who are supporting the cause of local planning, are finding themselves more electable as the urban youth are strongly against the ‘mai bap’ culture in governance,” Arun Maira said.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/next-edition-of-jnnurm-to-go-aam-admi-way-planning-com-member-arun-maira-113102100491\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/next-edition-of-jnnurm-to-go-aam-admi-way-planning-com-member-arun-maira-113102100491_1.html)

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013

(Mahima Malik)

## ENERGY

### Amendment Proposed in Electricity Act to Enforce Renewable Energy Purchase Obligation

(Ankur Paliwal, *Down to Earth*, 18 October, 2013)

Most states in India are not meeting their targets for purchase of renewable energy. To set matters right, the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has asked the Union

power ministry to amend the Electricity Act. It wants provisions in Act to ensure strict implementation of renewable energy targets by state governments.

Renewable purchase obligation (RPO) is an obligation on state power distribution companies (discoms) to purchase a certain amount of renewable power. This amount or percentage is decided by state electricity regulatory commissions every year. As per the National Action Plan on Climate Change, India is supposed to gradually increase the share of renewable energy upto 15 per cent in the total energy mix by 2020.

Tarun Kapoor, joint secretary MNRE said, “We have been noticing that most states discoms are not meeting RPOs. It is because state electricity regulatory commissions do not penalise discoms for not meeting targets. Though there is a provision of penalty of Rs 1 lakh, but either it is rarely enforced or even if it is imposed the amount is very less.”

Some state power regulatory commissions declare very less RPO targets or in some cases even keep them constant while there should be an increase in target percentage each year. That is why a need was felt to make clear provisions in The Electricity Act of 2003 so that renewable energy targets can be strictly and legally enforced, Kapoor added.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/amendment-proposed-electricity-act-enforce-renewable-energy-purchase-obligation>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Jeet Singh)

## TECHNOLOGY

### Young Indian Innovator wins UN Award

(UN News Centre, 10 October 2013)

Varun Arora, a young innovator from India, is among the ten people from around the world who were selected for a United Nations award that recognises the work of youngsters as entrepreneurs and their use of technology to change the world.

Varun Arora was selected for his product *Open Curriculum*, an online platform for local educational material for standard, primary and secondary schooling.

“The recipients of the 10 Young Innovators Competition organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Telecom come from a wide range of countries including India, Uganda and Vietnam and have worked on diverse issues such as marine protection, reduction of food waste and immigration.”

The UN competition is open to young social entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 26 and seeks innovative digital solutions in the form of start-ups or initial concepts meeting global developmental challenges.

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46241&Cr=technology&Cr1=#.Umn\\_U\\_mLC2U](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46241&Cr=technology&Cr1=#.Umn_U_mLC2U)

Date Accessed: 20.10.2013

(Amrutha Jose Pampackal)

### 3-D Technology: Additive Technology For Making Objects

(Martin LaMonica, *MIT Technology Review*, 23 April, 2013)

Additive 3-D Technology is a process of making a three-dimensional solid object of virtually any shape from a

digital model. 3D printing is achieved using an additive process, where successive layers of material are laid down in different shapes. 3D printing is also considered distinct from traditional machining techniques, which mostly rely on the removal of material by methods such as cutting or drilling (subtractive processes). Prototypes of brackets for airplane engines show how additive manufacturing can produce complex, precisely designed shapes like the one at right.

A materials printer usually performs 3D printing using digital technology. There has been a large growth in the sales of these machines, and their price has dropped substantially. According to Wohler’s Associates, a consultancy, the market for 3D printers and services was worth \$2.2 billion worldwide in 2012, up 29% from 2011. GE, the world’s largest manufacturer, is on the verge of using 3-D printing to make jet parts.

**Why It Matters:** Because it can potentially make complex parts more cheaply, additive manufacturing could revitalize many advanced manufacturing sectors.

**Breakthrough:** GE will use 3-D printing to produce a key metal part for its new jet engines.

**Key Players:** GE Aviation, EADS, United Technologies, Pratt & Whitney

<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/513716/additive-manufacturing/>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Neha Singh)

### Super Grids: A High Power Circuit Breaker Could Finally Make DC Power Practical

(Kevin Bullis, *MIT Technology Review*, 23 April, 2013)

High-voltage DC power lines can efficiently transport electricity over

thousands of kilometers and for long distances underwater, outperforming the AC lines that dominate transmission grids now. But for a century, AC prevailed because high-voltage DC could be used only for point-to-point transmission, not to form the integrated grid networks needed for a stable electricity system.

The Swiss conglomerate ABB has solved the main technical hurdle to such grids. It has developed a practical high-voltage DC circuit breaker that disconnects parts of the grid that have a problem, allowing the rest to keep working. DC grids would be more efficient at connecting far-flung sources of renewable energy, allowing utilities to average out local variations in wind and solar power while bringing power to areas without much sunshine or wind. Solar power from the Sahara could power cloudy Germany, and wind power from all over Europe could keep the lights on at night.



**The result:** more reliable renewable energy that can better compete with fossil fuels.

**Why it matters:** DC grids could be far more efficient and make it possible to link widely dispersed wind and solar farms.

**Breakthrough:** Practical high-voltage direct-current circuit breakers.

**Key Players:** ABB, Siemens, EPRI, General Atomics.

<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/513736/supergrids/>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Neha Singh)

**ENVIRONMENT****Tribal Welfare  
Body Bans Bauxite  
Mining**

(S.N.V Sudhir, *Deccan Chronicle*, 17 October, 2013)

The Andhra Pradesh Tribes Advisory Council has passed a unanimous resolution banning bauxite mining. A high-level committee set up by the Union ministry of environment and forests to study the socio-economic and ecological impacts of the proposed bauxite mining in Vizag Agency in 2011, had recommended going ahead but only after getting approval from the AP Tribes Advisory Council.”

Cancellation of lease licences and MoUs to APMDC [Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation], to mine bauxite, and other private companies, for the supply of the mined ore, had led to a standoff between the government and Union tribal welfare minister V. Kishore Chandra Deo.

“It’s high time that the state government cancelled the MoUs it had signed with the private companies on moral grounds as the Tribes Advisory Council unanimously resolved disallowing bauxite mining,” said tribal rights and anti mining activist, G. Srinivas.

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/131017/news-current-affairs/article/tribal-welfare-body-bans-bauxite-mining>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

**Supreme Court-  
Mandated Panel to  
Study Impact of  
Hydro Projects on  
Environment**

(Urmi A Goswami, *The Economic Times*, 23 October, 2013)

In an effort to ensure that a disaster like the Uttarakhand flood is never repeated, the Supreme Court had mandated the environment ministry to set up an expert group “to determine whether hydropower projects along Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers and their tributaries contributed to environmental degradation.”

The 17 member group, headed by Ravi Chopra (member of National Ganga River Basin Authority) has been asked to assess both existing and under-construction projects in the region over the next three months. The expert committee has “to determine the validity of Wildlife Institute of India’s findings” regarding 24 proposed projects, that the institute considers, will have adverse ecological impacts.

The group will find out whether the defined environmental procedures are followed by project developers and will “review compliance of existing protocols for construction activities in the two river basins.” It will identify projects in which the environmental damage caused cannot be mitigated and will “safeguard measures to counter adverse impacts where possible and suggest changes in the project parameters where required. “

“The experts will also draft a Himalayan policy which will take into account the state’s unique ecological, social and cultural characteristics to formulate a course of development that does not endanger environment.”

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/supreme-court-mandated-panel-to-study-impact-of-hydro-projects-on-environment/articleshow/24560721.cms>

Date Accessed: 23.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

**No Transportation  
of Sand across  
Tamil Nadu  
Border, Says High  
Court**

(*The Hindu*, 21 October, 2013)

Dismissing a writ petition which complained against the interference of authorities in free transportation of sand to other States, the Madras High Court has said, “no transportation of sand should be allowed across the border unless such inter-state sale and transportation are permitted by the competent authorities” while directing the Secretary, Industries Department (Mining and Geology), and the Director General of Police, to issue suitable directions for effective implementation of mining laws.

Justice S. Manikumar pointed out that as per the Tamil Nadu Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1959; the transport of sand across the border was not permitted without permission from authorities. He further noted that illegal mining and transportation of sand, to Kerala and other high demand states, continue “despite the State government bringing in a rule in this regard in 2003.”

After “the State took over sand quarrying from 2003, illegal quarrying and transportation were rampant. The activities of private operators were unabated, the court said and added that judicial notice could also be taken of incidents frequently reported in the media that officers were threatened with dire consequences, when they tried to stop illegal transporters.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/no-transportation-of-sand-across-tamil-nadu-border-says-high-court/article5255688.ece>

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

## Supreme Court Reminder to FSSAI on Monitoring Pesticides in Food Commodities

(Down To Earth, 24 October, 2013)

Delivering a judgement on a case relating to use of chemical additives in soft drinks, the Supreme Court held the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) responsible for monitoring and exercising control on soft drinks as per the rules, regulations and provisions in the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006.

The court directed the FSSAI to conduct periodic inspections and monitoring of major fruits and vegetable markets for presence of pesticide residues. The court also asked the FSSAI to put in public domain all information about pesticides and chemicals that have been tested while monitoring for compliance of standards since 2008. The court verdict highlighted the importance of public communication on food safety and risk, food safety surveillance and other monitoring activities covering all stages of the food business.

The Center for Science and Environment said that current regulatory framework with respect to advertisements of soft drinks as per the FSS Act and Advertising Standards Council of India code is not good enough and needs to be revised. Also, periodic testing and monitoring by the FSSAI should not be limited to raw fruits and vegetables. Packaged and processed food commodities, including soft drinks should also be tested.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/supreme-court-reminder-fssai-monitoring-pesticides-food-commodities>

Date Accessed: 25.10.2013  
(Simi Sunny)

## AGRICULTURE Centre to Raise Wheat Support Price by Rs 50 a Quintal

(Business Standard, 18 October, 2013)

On Thursday, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) cleared an increase of Rs 50 a quintal for procurement of wheat during 2014-15 considering the surging food inflation. CCEA also approved an increase of Rs 50 for mustard MSP, Rs. 100 for chana (gram) MSP, Rs. 50 for masur MSP and Rs. 200 for safflower MSP.

“Wheat MSP has been increased by Rs 50 per quintal to Rs 1,400 for the 2014-15 crop year (April-March) as against Rs 1,350 last year,” said Food Minister K V Thomas.

Wheat is the main crop grown in the rabi (winter) season. Wheat sowing begins in October and harvesting starts from April. India produces 90-95 million tonnes of wheat every year.

The wholesale price index-based food inflation has been hovering around 18 per cent for August and September. However, the rate of price rise in wheat declined to 5.90 per cent in September from 7.60 per cent in August.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-to-raise-wheat-support-price-by-rs-50-a-quintal-113101700732\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-to-raise-wheat-support-price-by-rs-50-a-quintal-113101700732_1.html)

Date Accessed : 22.10.2013  
(Shruti Issar)

## Future of Farming: Perennial Polyculture

(Mark Bittman, *The New York Times*, 22 October, 2013)

Wes Jackson from The Land Institute has predicted that a prairie-like system

capable of providing food for humans would be viable within 100 years.

Today we are dependent upon annual monoculture (planting a new crop from a single plant each year). This increasingly popular style of agriculture reduces soil loss but increases the need for herbicides. It's a short-term solution, requiring that we poison the soil to save it.

So, there is a need to shift from monoculture to perennial polyculture where the fields containing varieties of mutually complementary species are planted once and harvested seasonally but remain in place for years. Perennial polysystems are one way forward, because they allow producing grains, legumes, oils and other foods with a host of benefits. In perennial polycultures, the plants may fertilize one another, physically support one another, ward off pests and diseases together, resist drought and flood, and survive even when one member suffers. Perenniality is a complex trait, controlled by multiple genes. If Jackson is successful, we could see prairies producing different kinds of foods in commercial quantities with little or no chemical applications.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/23/opinion/bittman-now-this-is-natural-food.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/23/opinion/bittman-now-this-is-natural-food.html?_r=0)

Date Accessed: 23.10.2013  
(Neha Singh)

## LAW AND JUSTICE

## Victim of Bigamous Marriage Entitled to Maintenance: SC

(LiveLaw, 21 October, 2013)

In a judgment having far reaching consequences, the Supreme Court has held that if a man deceitfully marries a woman hiding the subsistence of earlier marriage, he is obliged to pay maintenance to her under Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr. PC).

A Bench of Justice Ranjana Desai and A.K. Sikri held if a husband is already married and dupes a victim by suppressing the fact of alleged first marriage, he cannot be permitted to deny the benefit of maintenance to the respondent, taking advantage of his own wrong.

“Justice Sikri also emphasized that while dealing with the application of destitute wife or hapless children or parents under this provision, the Court is dealing with the marginalized sections of the society. The purpose is to achieve “social justice” which is the Constitutional vision, enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution of India. Preamble to the Constitution of India clearly signals that we have chosen the democratic path under rule of law to achieve the goal of securing for all its citizens, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It specifically highlights achieving their social justice. Therefore, it becomes the bounden duty of the Courts to advance the cause of the social justice. There is a non-rebuttable presumption that the Legislature while making a provision like S. 125 Cr.PC, to fulfil its Constitutional duty in good faith, had always intended to give relief to the woman becoming “wife” under such circumstances. This approach is particularly needed while deciding the issues relating to gender justice.”

<http://www.livelaw.in/a-victim-of-bigamous-marriage-is-entitled-to-maintenance-rules-supreme-court/>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

## **SC Paves Way for Stricter Regulation of Colas, Fizzy Drinks**

(Monalisa and Suneera Tandon, *LiveMint*, 22 October, 2013)

The Supreme Court has ordered regular monitoring and inspection of aerated soft drinks, paving the way for stricter regulation of colas and other

fizzy drinks. The order came in response to a public interest litigation which raised the issue of allegedly harmful content, including carcinogenic elements, in soft drinks, claiming companies kept people in the dark by concealing the content.

Justice K.S.P. Radhakrishnan handed the task to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), ordering regular monitoring of chemical additives in carbonated drinks. Given the statutory framework for regulating food and food products and subsequent rules and regulations that have been laid down, the judge said companies making aerated soft drinks must comply with such regulations.

The petition filed by the civil society body, Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), wanted a special panel to be set up in order to keep a check on soft drink contents and manufacturers.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/Fjx43naBLI5AGsNsCivZmO/Supreme-Court-paves-way-for-stricter-regulation-of-colas-fi.html>

Date Accessed: 23.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

## **NHRC Takes Up ‘Fake Encounter’ Proceedings in 46 Cases in Manipur**

(*The Sangai Express*, 24 October, 2013)

The National Human Rights Commission team stationed at Imphal has initiated due proceedings of 46 unjustified killings including fake encounters which happened in Manipur during the past few years. The first bench comprised of Chairperson KG Balakrishnan and Member Satyabrata Pal while the second bench was formed by Members Cyriac Joseph and SC Sinha.

During the proceedings the victim families reported that police took their statements but they were not informed that the same exercise was meant for magisterial enquiries. Inquiring whether any magisterial enquiry was conducted into any of the 22 cases, the “NHRC team demanded the officials of the State Home Department to produce documents collected in the course of any magisterial enquiry, if there was any.”

The Home Department officials were further questioned about the unusually slow pace of investigation and failure to respond to the show cause notices sent by the Commission with regard to some selected cases listed among the 22 cases for which proceedings were initiated.

<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/tseit-m-31708-nhrc-takes-up-fake-encounter-proceedings-in-46-cases/>

Date Accessed 25.10.2013

(Jyoti Sharma Pathak)

## GENDER

### Ministry Sets up Task Force to Address Issues of Transgender Community

(Smriti Kak Ramachandran, 20 *The Hindu*, October, 2013)

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has set up a task force to assist with drafting a policy for the welfare of the transgender community. The task force will address concerns ranging from how to identify a transgender and getting the actual numbers to finding solutions to everyday problems of healthcare, education, legal aid, social security and social discrimination.

The Ministry had a consultation with activists and members from the transgender community and received a feedback on the problems faced by the community. Activists have urged the task force to come out with recommendations to address the anomalies such as under representation of transgender due to flawed information gathering process that does not count the 'other gender' unless specifically cited and simplifying the process of changing their gender on documents.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/ministry-sets-up-task-force-to-address-issues-of-transgender-community/article5253715.ece>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

## CHILDREN

### Child Marriage High in Rural Bihar, Jharkhand: Report

(*Bihar Times*, 22 October, 2013)

Child marriage rates are high in Bihar followed by Jharkhand according to a recent survey report. The marriages of 69.6 percent of girls in Bihar and 58.1 percent in Jharkhand since 2011 took place before they attained the age of 18, the survey by a NGO stated.

The baseline surveys carried out in Bihar and Jharkhand have shown that increase in education levels have also not resulted in measurable decrease in the incidence of early marriage. The survey also shows that 95 percent of the respondents are aware of the negative consequences of early marriage but still the practice has been rampant. "The important aspect now is to see how can a media campaign change the attitude, spark actions to reduce early marriage, as television has emerged as the most common media with nearly 58 percent of households having access to television," said N.Raghunathan, director, Catalyst Group, which was associated with the survey.

<http://www.bihartimes.in/Newsbihar/2013/Oct/newsbihar22Oct1.html>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013

(Anjana John)

### Play Areas a Must for All Residential Projects

(Bindu Shajan Perappadan, *The Hindu*, 21 October, 2013)

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) intervene into the vertical expansion of housing units and shrinking of parks and play areas for children across the country. The Commission has written to town

planners and State governments asking them to clear housing/residential projects only if safe and adequate 'play zones' are made available for children.

The Commission has said that before granting permission for any residential project, the proposal should include a clause on allocating a "safe and uninhabited outdoor playground for children for their physiological and mental health development".

NCPCR member Vinod Kumar Tikoo said, "We have instructed that for children residing in the housing complex there should be free ingress and egress at all reasonable times. The safety and security of children should be the paramount consideration while granting permission for construction of a residential complex. So there has to be provision for proper boundary walls around the residential complex, with the deployment of security personnel to look after the safety of children." He added, "Playgrounds and parks for children are not shrinking in the cities, they are practically vanishing. This is what has forced the Commission to take such a strong stand."

Meanwhile, the salient features of the recommendations include a central location for playgrounds within residential areas, areas allocated for various types of play, adequate barrier-free play areas and a space that provides children an opportunity to think and reason.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/play-areas-a-must-for-all-residential-projects/article5255934.ece>

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013

(Jeet Singh)

## **REGIONALISM**

### **Communities in Odisha Develop Resilience to Extreme Weather Conditions Under a Joint Initiative**

(UNDP)

A UNDP partnership, in collaboration with the Government of Odisha and supported by the Australian Agency for International Development, has been providing financial and administrative support to communities to enable them develop resilience to adverse “climatic conditions and reduce their vulnerability to disasters.” For example, strengthened water management system and technical support have “increased the crop yield to more than three times” along with a “declining incidence of waterborne diseases. Under the program, “three villages in the Satyabadi Block came together to identify their most pressing vulnerabilities and ways by which they could address the misery brought by an increasingly erratic rainfall.” Statistics reveal that “around 2,100 hectares of land was cultivated in 2012, more than three times that of 2011 in Bambarada village of Puri.”

The first step in the identified scheme is to “improve flood-water drainage from their fields.” Under the support of UNDP and funded by AusAID, the Kharbar canal was “cleaned out and reconnected to the river, and its progress was monitored by a committee of farmers.” The initiative has reduced water logging and led to faster drainage. “In Dokhandapur village, the UNDP-AusAID partnership supported the village in establishing a rain water harvesting pond. Connected to a small filtration plant, piped water is now supplied to the village in an area where the nearest source of clean drinking water was two kilometers away.”

The program is a testimony to the fact that collective action of “high risk communities” can bring significant benefits. Villages have gone beyond the purview of the defined project and have taken a number of measures that ensure their well being. “Communities are improving the quality of water in the village pond by growing vegetables around the pond to prevent the area being used for open defecation.” Also, “the villagers have established a common bank account and the funds are used to buy seed and other necessary inputs to sustain activities.”

<http://www.undp.org/content/india/en/home/ourwork/crisispreventionandrecovery/successstories/too-much-or-too-little--communities-adapt-to-extreme-weather-con/>

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

### **Regional Parties in N-E Unite Together**

(*The Shillong Times*, 21 October, 2013)

All most all the regional parties of the North Eastern region have allied together to form the North East Regional Political Front, a common platform to pursue the issues concerning the region and make the voice of the region heard at the national level. “The Front would be expanded in the future with induction of members from other states as well.” In a meeting held last week Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio elaborating on the objectives of the NERPF, said, “The Front will work to safeguard the territorial, cultural, social and political rights of the people of the region and protect the distinctive features of every tribe and community.” He also added that “the main objective behind the NERPF was to lend a collective voice to the people of the region as their individual voices were unheard at most times.” “He was, however, non-committal on the issue of fielding common candidates in the upcoming general elections and whether the Front will have any proximity with the main national

parties, the Congress and the BJP.” “The meeting further demanded a fresh look at the Centre-state relations and constitutional safeguard for the indigenous people of the region.

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has been named the convener of NERPF, while former Assam Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta has been named the chief advisor. Former Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr. Donkupar Roy, Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling and former Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga have been also named advisors.

“The Front has, meanwhile, demanded scrapping of the land swap deal with Bangladesh and the AFSPA from the North East and expressed concerns at repeated Chinese incursions and reports of building of mega dams by China on the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra.”

<http://www.theshillongtimes.com/2013/10/21/regional-parties-in-n-e-unite-together/>

Date Accessed 25.10.2013  
(Junty Sharma Pathak)

## INDIA IN THE WORLD

### Pact on Border CBMs with China

(Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 22 October, 2013)

An agreement to put in place more confidence building measures to keep peace on the Line of Actual Control is all set to be signed during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's three-day visit to China that began on October 23, 2013.

The Border Defence Co-operation Agreement, comprises a new set of confidence-building measures for border management. According to officials, this will provide an additional mechanism that builds on the 1993 Peace and Tranquility Agreement.

Seeking to pitch over what officials described as "media hype" on Chinese intrusions, the Indian establishment is eager to convey to domestic audiences that the LAC is "our most peaceful border [where] not a shot has been fired since 1975."

Significance:

- Face-offs at the LAC cannot be ruled out until boundary issue is solved
- 'Management' of border issues within a set framework is vital
- Case in point: The Depsang incident where status quo was restored within three weeks compared to a six-year face off in 1986-93

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/border-pact-with-china-today/article5263159.ece>

Date Accessed: 23.10.2013

(Divashri Mathur)

### 46 Percent Global Wealth Owned by Richest 1 Percent: Credit Suisse

(NDTV Profit, 9 October, 2013)

Credit Suisse's World Wealth Report has revealed that global wealth has risen by 68 per cent over the past 10 years to reach a new all-time high of \$241 trillion and the United States accounts for nearly three quarters of the increase.

"The top 1 per cent alone owns 46 per cent of all global assets. The richest nations, with wealth per adult of more than \$100,000, are concentrated in North America, Western Europe and among the rich Asia-Pacific and Middle Eastern countries. On the other hand, two thirds of adults in the world have assets worth less than \$10,000 and together account for just 3 per cent of global wealth. Since mid-2012, the number of millionaires worldwide has risen by nearly two million, the vast majority of them in the United States, the report said. By contrast, Japan lost 1.2 million millionaires during the same period.

For Africa and India, the population share exceeds the wealth share by a factor of ten, the report showed. The biggest emerging markets, the so-called BRIC countries - Brazil, Russia, India, and China - are each estimated to have around 5,830 such ultra-high net worth individuals.

Nevertheless, the number of billionaires in the BRICs has risen from 5 percent of the world's total in 2000 to 19 per cent in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of billionaires in China alone rose from 1 to 64, the study showed. By contrast, the number of billionaires in older developed countries such as France and Japan fell in that period."

[http://profit.ndtv.com/news/economy/article-46-per-cent-global-wealth-owned-by-richest-1-per-cent-credit-suisse-369109?ndtv\\_profit\\_rhs](http://profit.ndtv.com/news/economy/article-46-per-cent-global-wealth-owned-by-richest-1-per-cent-credit-suisse-369109?ndtv_profit_rhs)

Date Accessed: 24.10.2013  
(Karishma Mutreja)

### India-China Agree to Establish Sister Cities

(DNA, 23 October, 2013)

In furtherance of their desire to promote closer engagement in the fields of public policy, education, health, science and technology, tourism and culture, India and China have agreed to establish sister city relations between Delhi-Beijing, Bengaluru-Chengdu and Kolkata-Kunming.

The two countries have agreed to maintain regular contacts between the designated authorities from both sides to promote the initiative. The sister-city agreement will undertake exchanges involving delegations, interactions between institutions and sharing of experiences in areas of mutual interest.

The countries will cooperate in the fields of education, culture, sports, youth affairs, urban planning, waste-water management, infrastructure, environment, public health and exchange of trade and commercial delegations. The exchange activities will be undertaken in prior consultation with India's East Asia Division of the Ministry of External Affairs and China International Friendship Cities Association (CIFCA).

The Agreement does not create any binding obligations between the two countries.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-india-china-agree-to-set-up-sister-cities-delhi-beijing-bengaluru-chengdu-kolkata-kunming-1907805>

Date Accessed: 20.10.2013

(Amrutha Jose Pampackal)

## India Must Widen the Scope to Trade with Iran

(ET Bureau, *The Economic Times*, 24 October, 2013)

United States has given 180 days exemption from American sanctions to various Asian countries including India on the strength of the commitment to reduce oil imports from Iran. This has led to a critical situation since India has to find a safe way of obtaining further exemption without reducing oil imports given its already high current account deficit.

“In these days of pronounced global interdependence, India’s demand would get added support from the prospect of India’s growth and, therefore, the world’s growth dipping, in the absence of relief accorded to India’s current account deficit by rupee-denominated oil imports from Iran.”

India has to step up its exports to Iran to counter the \$5 billion worth of rupees which has been accumulated with the National Iranian Oil Company. Increasing exports to Iran in general could reduce, if not completely offset, the need to make payments in hard currency for oil imports. It is a strategic moment for India to leverage its economic and diplomatic weight to obtain greater freedom to trade with Iran, and to offer Iran quality goods and services that it would want to import from India in exchange for oil exports to India.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/editorial/india-must-widen-the-scope-to-trade-with-iran/articleshow/24623829.cms>

Date Accessed: 25.10.2013  
(Simi Sunny)

## EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

### “4-P Program” Helps the Poor in Philippines to Break Poverty Cycle: UNDP Official

(ABS-CBNnews.com, 19 October, 2013)

A UNDP report applauds the efforts of Philippines’ Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) “Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps),” a program which “provides conditional cash grants to poor households to improve their health, nutrition and education, particularly of children until age 14.” The scheme focuses on the welfare of the younger generation and empowers them under programs (particularly health and education) to “break the cycle of poverty.”

The intervention came following reports of Philippines to have “lagged behind its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to improve maternal health.” The P120 billion program provides help through Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) and “provides cash grants of a maximum of P 1,400 per month (P500 for health plus P900 for education) for five years as long as the conditions are complied with.” It also focuses on issues that are instrumental to break intergenerational poverty trap cycle such as nutrition for children, maternal health and early child development.

UNDP Associate Administrator Rebeca Grynspan also “suggested that the government conduct feeding programs for poor students as an incentive for them to stay in school.” She also cited the example of “Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998- where

providing food twice -- breakfast and lunch resulted in higher attendance.”

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/10/19/13/pantawid-breaks-poverty-cycle-undp-official>

Date Accessed: 20.10.2013

(Mahima Malik)

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Saudi Arabia Rejects Security Council Seat

(Atul Aneja, *The Hindu*, 19 October, 2013)

Saudi Arabia rejected a rotating seat at the Security Council on October 18<sup>th</sup> as mark of protest against the perceived inaction by the Security Council to resolve international conflict. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, the kingdom had for the first time been elected by the General Assembly to become a non-permanent member.

Basis for Rejection:

- Security Council’s resolution backing a deal that commits Syria to destroying its stockpile of chemical weapons to avoid possible western military strikes
- Failure to settle the Israel-Palestinian issue
- Inability to turn West Asia into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction

Member countries prize the seat because it gives them a two-year term along the five permanent members, albeit without veto power.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/saudi-arabia-rejects-security-council-seat/article5249813.ece>

Date Accessed: 21.10.2013

(Divashri Mathur)

## OPINIONS

### Will NOTA be the Winner - Never

(Tarun Chaturvedi, *Business Standard*, 18 October, 2013)

Noting the Election Commissions clarification that the NOTA option will have the same effect as not voting for any candidate, the author notes that even if the number of NOTA votes is more than that secured by the candidates, he who secures the largest number of votes among the contesting candidates shall still be declared elected.

Arguing that electoral victory in India is based on the doctrine of “majoritarianism”, he adds that many a times, “candidates who have secured only 35% of the votes polled, have emerged as a winner and that too when only 60% of the eligible voters exercised their franchise. This means that only 21% of the eligible voters in the constituency actually wanted the candidate to be their representative. The candidate has won only because the remaining 79% either did not vote or wanted someone else as their representative.”

He argues that, in “a country where on an average 35% to 40% of the electorate does not exercise its franchise, the introduction of the NOTA option in the EVM’s has no meaning at all.”

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/will-nota-be-the-winner-never-113101800674\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/will-nota-be-the-winner-never-113101800674_1.html)

Date Accessed: 23.10.2013  
(Ashwin Varghese)

### 2014 Elections: An Unprecedented Opportunity For The Women Of India

(Dr. K.D. Singh (MP, Rajya Sabha), *Oxford Policy Blog*, 14 October, 2013)

In India, women got the right to vote in the year 1930 but they are still not seen as a coveted constituency. Even after coming to occupy some of the highest offices in India today, women members of Parliament account for about 85 seats in a total strength of 787 MPs (in both Houses of Parliament). The Women’s Reservation Bill, which was passed by the Rajya Sabha in 2010 but not by the Lok Sabha so far, is hanging fire.

Until now, political parties have been using electoral strategies like distributing saris and cookers to women instead of addressing the real issues such as women’s education, health, sanitation, security, etc. However, these elections could potentially rewrite the rules of the game.

Women voters in the recent state general elections outnumbered men courtesy of increased political and social awareness. According to the election committee statistics, the turnout of women voters in states like Uttar Pradesh increased from 46 percent in 2007 to 59.48 percent in 2012. In Goa, the turnout increased to 81.74 percent in 2012, which is 11.23 percentage points up from 2007 results. Women voters also outnumbered men in states like Punjab and Uttarakhand in last year’s state elections. The increase in women voter turnouts is a very positive trend for the country. However, this increased awareness needs to be channeled to shape agenda so that the long ignored concerns of women are addressed.

One of the outstanding women issues that have been poorly addressed since independence is provision of sanitation and drinking water facilities. Access to clean and private sanitation facilities will not only improve the health of the women in the country but also have a salutary effect on rape and other forms of sexual violence. Another major concern for women is provision of adequate food for their families. Having discussed all of the above issues, there is no doubt that crime against women needs to be addressed in a systematic manner. The government was quick to pass the anti-rape Bill under public pressure after the Delhi gang rape but now it needs to introduce educational initiatives to attack the patriarchal mindset, improve law enforcement agencies and empower the rape victims through legal assistance.

<http://policyblog.oxfordindiasociety.org.uk/>

Date Accessed: 22.10.2013  
(Neha Singh)