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## COVER STORY

### INCLUSION OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN INDIA



### **WEEKLY ROUND UP OF NEWS ON POLICY**

Issue Coordinator : Ms. Simi Sunny

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# Cover Story

## INCLUSION OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN INDIA

*Free movement is a fundamental right of the citizens of India and internal movements are not restricted. The Constitution states: "All citizens shall have the right (...) to move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India".*

-Article 19(1) (d) and Article 19(1) (e), Part III, Fundamental Rights,  
The Constitution of India, 1950.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) 2009 states that the number of those who moved across the major zonal demarcations within their countries (internal migration) was nearly four times larger (740 million) than those who moved internationally (214 million). Of the 1.2 billion population of India (Census 2011), according to *National Sample Survey Office* (NSSO) 2007–08, around 28.5 per cent of the population in India is internal migrants. Projections indicate that internal migrants may increase in number to approximately 400 million in Census 2011.

Despite the fact that approximately three out of every 10 Indians are internal migrants, internal migration has been accorded very low priority by the government, and existing policies of the Indian states have failed in providing legal and social protection to this vulnerable group.

Data on internal migration in India is principally drawn from two main sources – the decennial population Census and the quinquennial migration surveys carried out by the NSSO.

Migrants constitute a heterogeneous category- differentiated according to gender, class, ethnicity, language and religion.

### **A comparative profile of migrants in India (2007-08):**

Migration in India is primarily of two types: (a) Long-term migration, resulting in the relocation of an individual or household and (b) Short-term or seasonal/circular migration, involving back and forth movement between a source and destination.  
The following table gives a break up of internal migration patterns among different social groups:

Social Group	Seasonal Short-Duration Out-migrants			Long-term Out-migrants				<b>80% WOMEN, 30% YOUTH</b>
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total		
ST	20.1	3.5	18.6	6.8	2.2	6.0		India has 54% of all internal migrants in the world
SC	23.7	17.5	23.1	19.2	11.8	17.9		80% of migrants in India are women, about 30% youth (15-29 yrs) and 15m children
OBC	39.5	43.6	39.9	44.5	37.9	43.3		₹70,000-1,20,000cr Estimated remittances by migrants
Others	16.7	35.4	18.4	29.5	48.0	32.8		Only 30% of these remittances flow through formal channels
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100		Housing seen as the biggest problem faced by migrant labour 

Source: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New\\_Delhi/pdf/Internal\\_Migration\\_Workshop\\_- Vol\\_2\\_07.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New_Delhi/pdf/Internal_Migration_Workshop_- Vol_2_07.pdf)

**Deprived groups:** Migration is not always permanent. Seasonal and circular migration is widespread, especially among the socio-economically deprived groups, such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). Estimates indicate that by 2050, 200 million people worldwide may become permanently displaced due to environmental factors such as sea level rise, floods, more intense droughts, and other climate-driven changes.

**Women:** As per NSSO (2007-08), around 80 per cent of total internal migrants are women. 91.3 per cent of women in rural areas and 60.8 per cent of women in urban areas cite marriage to be the most prominent reason for migration.

However, researchers believe that the macro data reports do not capture the complete picture and miss the actual reasons for migration.

**Youth:** About 30 per cent of internal migrants in India belong to the youth category in the age group of 15-29 years

#### **Construction workers and sugar cane cutters in rural Medak: An Example of Rural Migration**

*“Lingaiah (a member of the Dalit community) is a 50-year-old illiterate labourer who lives in a remote village in Medak district. He and his wife live with their two sons. Lingaiah’s family was landless.*

*About 10 years ago, the elder son began to migrate to Hyderabad for construction work. The village is only about four hours away from Hyderabad by bus and many other people migrate to the city. The son got married and they come back to the village every two months and bring money, clothes and gifts for the parents, children and other relatives. They take rice back with them. Even when they need to buy rice, it is cheaper in the village to buy from farmers rather than paying town prices in Hyderabad. The second son started migrating eight years ago. The family in the village was able to eat better and send the children to school because of the money brought back by the sons. This was a major step for a family where several generations have been illiterate.*

*They were able to borrow because their creditworthiness has improved in the eyes of the moneylenders who know that they have two migrant sons who can repay the debt. Lingaiah says that all families like his are doing the same in the village.”*

#### **Major Net Migration Flow in India (duration 0-9 years)**

##### **Lead Source States**

- Andhra Pradesh
- Bihar
- Chhattisgarh
- Jharkhand
- Madhya Pradesh
- Odisha
- Rajasthan
- Tamil Nadu
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarakhand

##### **Key Destination States**

- Delhi
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Karnataka
- Maharashtra
- Punjab

#### **Urbanisation and Migration:**

India’s urban population has increased from about 286 million in 2001 to 377 million in 2011, and is expected to increase to 600 million (out of a total population of 1.4 billion) by 2030.

The report highlights that the experience of Indian cities show that there have been two developments in the evolution of urban centres that absorb the increasing migrant population.

Firstly, influx of people from varied regions poses a socio economic and environmental challenge to cities. The outcomes are: growth of second tier cities rapid urbanisation. The greater challenge to absorb the migrant population eventually translates into increased poverty and inequality levels (both social and economic).

Secondly, focus of policy making changes from “welfare-ism to rights based approach” with the goal to ensure that basic services are accessible to all.

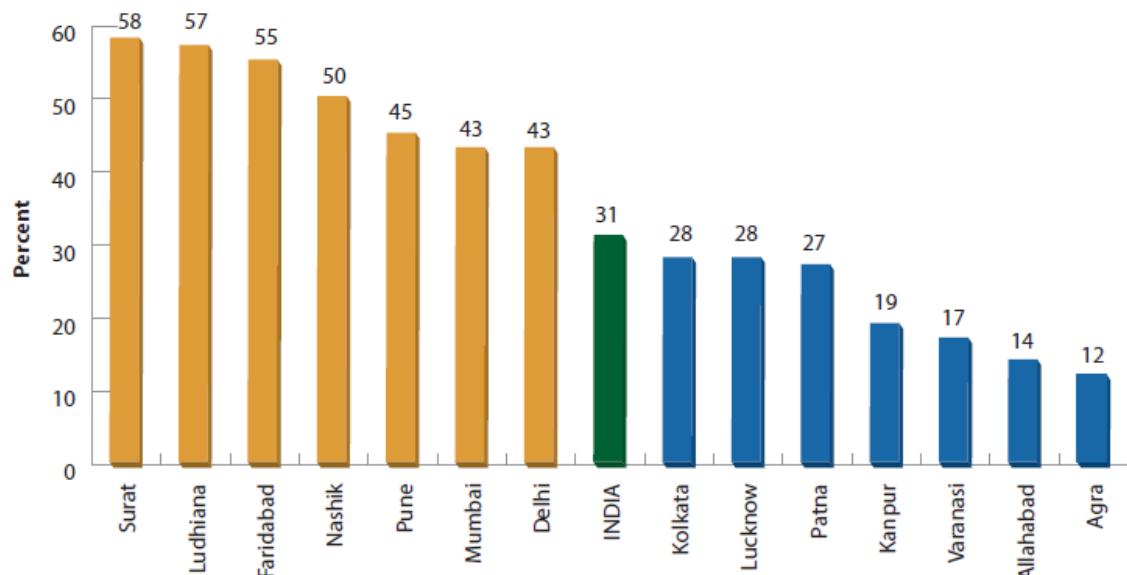
The loose definition of migration and the largely ignored concerns that it poses renders the design and delivery of their social

inclusion undefined and hence, ineffective. Migrants continually face difficulties in becoming a full part of the economic, cultural, social and political lives of society.

### Three out of every ten person internal migrants in India

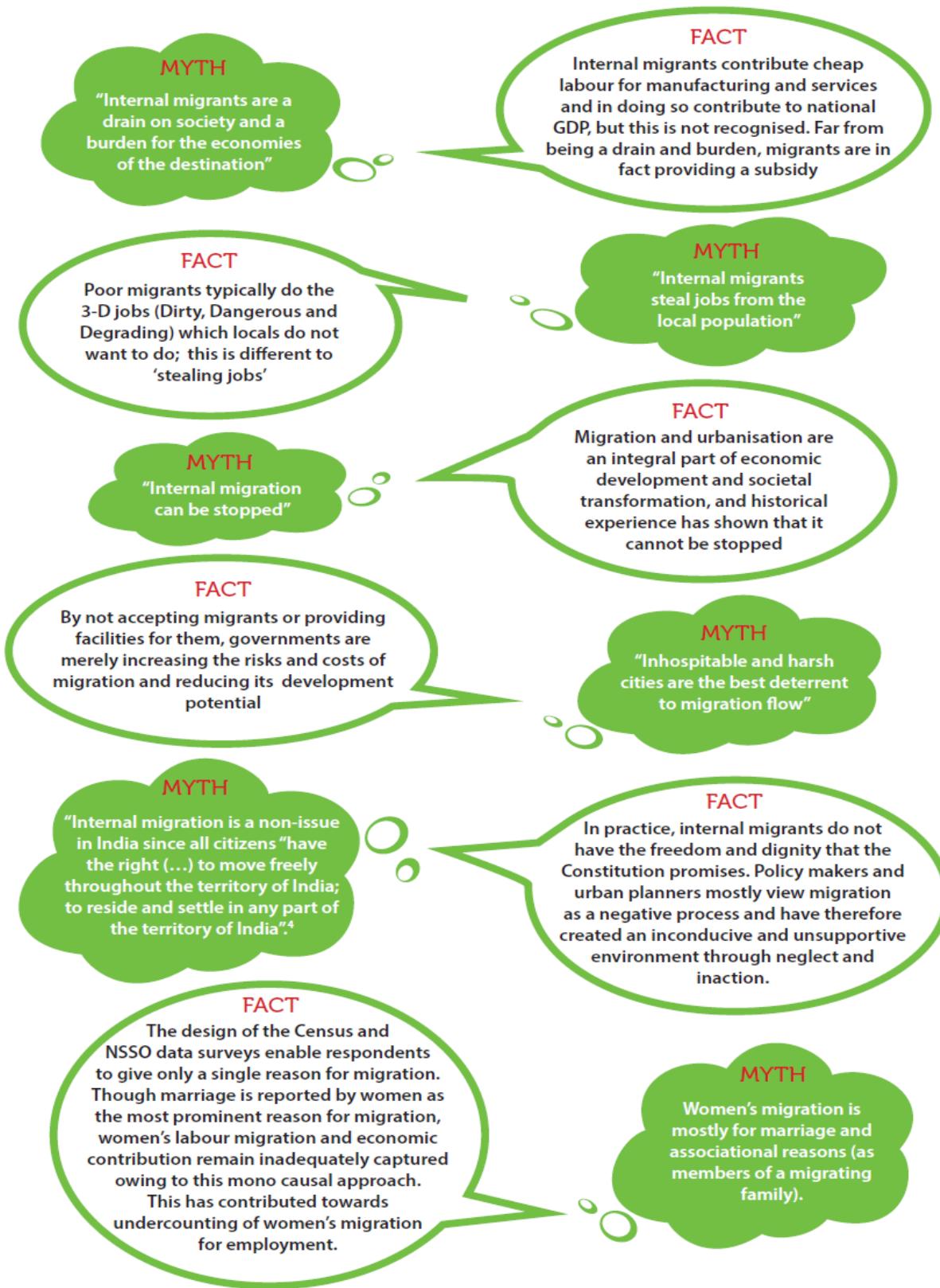
*The increase in the migration rate to urban areas has primarily occurred due to an increase in migration rate for females (from 38.2 per cent in 1993 to 41.8 per cent in 1999-00 to 45.6 per cent in 2007-08). Male migration rate in urban areas has remained constant over this period (between 26 and 27 per cent). Expectation of “better employment opportunities” as the major driving reason for migration to urban centres has been on a steep rise.*

Percentage of Internal Migrants in Selected Million Plus Cities



Source: Census of India, 2001

## Internal Migration: Myths and Realities



**Source:** [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New\\_Delhi/pdf/Internal\\_Migration\\_Workshop - Vol\\_2\\_07.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New_Delhi/pdf/Internal_Migration_Workshop - Vol_2_07.pdf)

## **10 KEY AREAS FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

### **1. REGISTRATION AND IDENTITY**

Migrants lack documentary proof of identity and local residence due to which they are excluded from access to legal rights, public services and social protection programmes (subsidised food, housing and banking services).

The Unique Identification (Aadhar) programme (signed a MoU in 2010 with the National Coalition of Organisations for the Security of Migrant Workers) was created to combat the issue of registration. Every resident is issued a unique identification number linked to his/her demographic and biometric information, which they can use to identify themselves anywhere in India, and to access benefits and services.

### **2. POLITICAL AND CIVIC INCLUSION**

A study, *Political Inclusion of Seasonal Migrant Workers in India: Perceptions, Realities and Challenges* (Sharma et al, 2010), reveals that “around 60 per cent of respondents reported having missed voting in elections at least once because they were away from home in search of work. 54 per cent of respondents claimed that they had returned to their home villages during elections with the intention of voting, of which 74 per cent returned specifically for elections of the panchayat.”

In destination cities (where they migrate), they exercise limited political agency.

***“Being a registered voter, by definition implies stability, whereas migration or being a migrant is synonymous with mobility. There is a dichotomy between stability for voting and mobility for livelihood and the choice between voting and livelihood is obvious.”***

*-Dr. Jagdeep Chhokar, Founder and Trustee, Association for Democratic Reforms*

An upcoming bill pending in Parliament - The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011 – could further ensure a mechanism of accountability of public authorities. The bill mandates every public authority to publish a citizen’s charter, outlining timelines for delivery of goods and services. It would enable a citizen to file a complaint related to non-functioning of public authorities, violation of a law, policy or scheme or any grievance related to citizens charters, and offending officers could be penalised.

### **3. LABOUR MARKET INCLUSION**

Migrants are mostly employed in the informal economy, often working as construction workers, agricultural labourers, hawkers and vendors, domestic servants, rickshaw pullers, electricians, plumbers, masons and security personnel. Devoid of social security and legal protection, they work in poor conditions and face labour market discrimination.

The following is a list of Central Labour Laws for regulated conditions of work:

Sl. No.	Broad Categories of Conditions of Work	Description/Details	Laws that Have Provisions to Regulate the Conditions of Work
1a	Physical conditions of work	Space, ventilation, illumination, temperature, humidity, hygiene, occupational health and safety.	The Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, (1983), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
1b	Duration and timing of work	Hours of work, spread over, hours of rest, overtime work, hours of work per week, night work, paid holidays during the week	The Minimum Wages Act, (1948), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, (1986), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
2	Remuneration at work	Wages, wage forms, pay period, advances, bonus, gratuity, pension, provident fund.	The Minimum Wages Act, (1948), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), The Equal Remuneration Act, (1976), The Payment of Wages Act, (1936), The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, (1976), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
3	Industrial and labour relations	Recognition of trade unions, redressal of grievances and dispute resolution.	The Trade Union Act (1926), The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, (1976), The Payment of Wages Act, (1936), The Minimum Wages Act, (1948), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, (1986), The Equal Remuneration Act, (1976), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, (1966), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996)
4	Conditions of work of disadvantaged workers	Disabled workers, women workers, migrant workers, minority workers, bonded labour, other forms of forced labour, child labour	The Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, (1983), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), The Equal Remuneration Act, (1976), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, (1986) and The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, (1976)

Source: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002237/223702e.pdf>

#### **4. LEGAL AID AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

As migrants are predominantly engaged in the informal sector, migrants have no protection under labour laws. Government's safety measures remain unimplemented, and minimum wages are not delivered.

Poor literacy levels and no awareness act as an impediment in claiming rights and entitlements. More than half of the female migrants (57.8 per cent) and 25.8 per cent of the male migrants were illiterate.

*"I had heard about Delhi from the village women working there. They wear beautiful clothes and bring expensive gifts when they come for Christmas. The financial situation at home was worsening. I realised that work was available in Delhi and one could earn money. I also wanted to see the big city I had heard so much about. I had never attended school, but my brothers did. I felt bad so left without informing them."\**

#### **5. INCLUSION OF WOMEN MIGRANTS**

The current discourse on migration has failed to adequately address gender-specific migration experiences. The design of the Census and NSSO data surveys should be amended to better capture the actual reasons of migration.

Women migrants, especially those in lower-end informal sector occupations, remain invisible and discriminated against in the workforce.

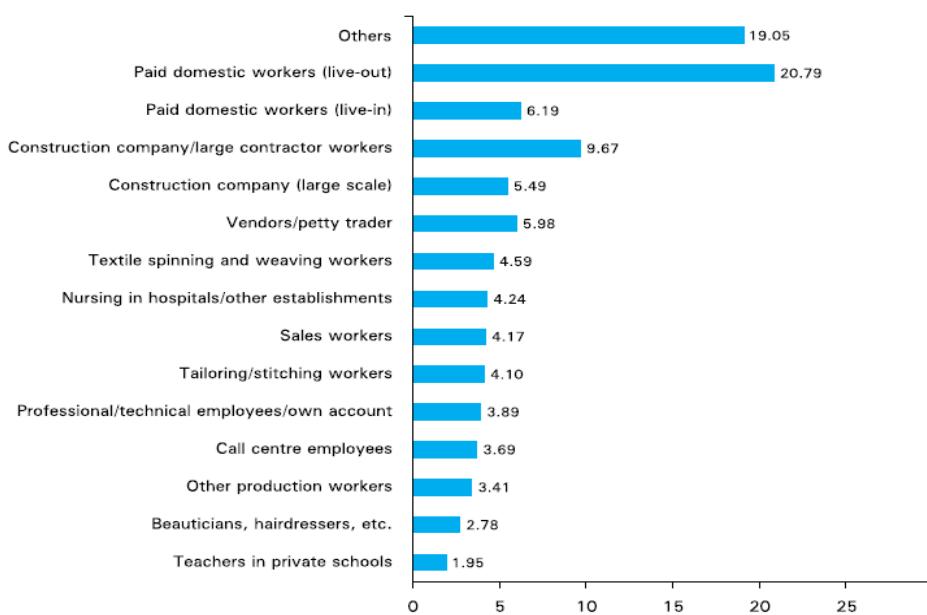
### Female Migrants in India

NSSO data (2007-08) indicates that nearly 60 per cent of female migrants in rural areas were self-employed and 37 per cent were casual workers, whereas in urban areas, 43.7 per cent of women migrants were self-employed and 37 per cent were engaged in regular jobs.

Gender-based violence of women is widespread: as per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), between 2006 and 2010, the total number of crimes against women increased by 29.6 per cent.

The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) has estimated that out of four million domestic workers, 92 per cent are women, girls and children, and 20 per cent are under 14 years of age.

The following graph shows the work-based composition of female migrants:



Source:

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New\\_Delhi/pdf/Internal\\_Migration\\_Workshop\\_-Vol\\_2\\_07.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New_Delhi/pdf/Internal_Migration_Workshop_-Vol_2_07.pdf)

### 6. INCLUSION THROUGH ACCESS TO FOOD

The Public Distribution System (PDS) in India is touted to be the largest distribution network of its kind in the world. Under the PDS scheme, each family below the poverty line is eligible for 35 kg of rice or wheat every month, while a household above the poverty line is entitled to 15 kg of food grain on a monthly basis.

In order to access grain and other supplies, beneficiaries must present a ration card that is given to them at their usual place of residence and is not transferrable. Such clauses imply that migrants are unable to access the PDS system at destination.

**The National Food Security Bill 2011 passed this year aimed to guarantee food and nutritional security in India, recognised that: “The migrants and their families shall be able to claim their entitlements under this Act, at the place where they currently reside.”**

### 7. INCLUSION THROUGH HOUSING

Migrants face difficulties in accessing housing and other basic amenities. They often live in urban slums, facing constant threats of displacement and eviction from government officials. Shelter solutions show little appreciation for the needs of seasonal migrants.

## Recommendations

- Affordable rental housing to affordable private housing, with an eventual policy shift towards provision of de facto residential rights and housing
- In-situ upgradation of existing slum dwellings could be a first step towards ensuring basic services for migrants living in slums
- Employers and contractors also need to play a role in securing shelter for migrant workers, and experiments with dormitory accommodation provided by employers (as undertaken in China)

## 8. EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

Seasonal migrants often take their children along when they migrate, which negatively impacts the regular schooling of children. This is one of the reasons for high dropout rates in schools in many states.

The right of migrant children to education thus remains compromised, contributing to the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

**Despite the Child Labour (Prohibitions & Regulation) Act, 1986, children work for long hours as unregistered workers** on piece rate basis (in units such as construction, brick manufacture, salt making, sugar-cane harvesting, stone quarrying, plantations, fishing and rat hole mining in coal mines).

## Suggestions

- The multiplication of seasonal hostels to promote the retention of children in schools in source areas;
- The establishment of worksite schools at the destination with systems to transfer enrolment, attendance at and credits to formal schools, and bridge courses and remedial education for return migrant children;
- Establishing peripatetic educational volunteers who can move with the migrating families, initiating strategies for tracking children by issuing migratory cards, and making the school calendar flexible to accommodate migrant children, including in local government schools in both rural and urban areas,

## 9. PUBLIC HEALTH INCLUSION

Migrants are exposed to health risks including communicable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis, and occupational health hazards such as respiratory problems, lung diseases, allergies, kidney and malnutrition.

*India has the worst gender differential in child mortality in the world. A dismal trend has been revealed in child sex ratio (0-6 years), which has decreased from 927 to 914 for the same period.*

*Internal migrants suffer from a high HIV burden (3.6 per cent), which is 10 times the HIV prevalence, among the general population (National AIDS Control Organisation NACO, 2010). Their vulnerability has been attributed to personal isolation, enhanced loneliness and sexual risk taking, lack of HIV awareness and of social support networks at both source and destination.*

*Migrant women living with HIV suffer the most from multiple and intersectional vulnerabilities*

## 10. FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Migrants are unable to access banking facilities since they do not have the necessary documentation to fulfill the Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements of banks, including proof of identity and proof of address. To remit money to families left behind, they are forced to rely on informal networks (e.g. friends and relatives visiting home, *hawala*, informal couriers, or bus drivers) or else send

money through the post office by money order, which is often expensive and inefficient.

A study revealed that transferring an amount of ₹ 2,000 through a bank account was in fact cheaper (on average 3 per cent of the transfer amount), than if money was transferred through informal couriers (4.6 per cent) or India Post (6 per cent). This clearly indicates that migrants stand to benefit from inclusion in the formal bank system.

Another dimension to remittances is social remittances, which refer to the ideas, practices, identities and social capital sent from the destination to the source by migrants, which contribute to social transformations.

### Suggestions

- Linking migrants to branchless banking and business correspondents along with incorporating flexibility in bank procedures (such as relaxing KYC norms, operating no-frills accounts and having extended banking hours);
- In case migrants themselves do not possess bank accounts at the destination, an important policy recommendation would be to target banking services in geographical areas with high out-migration, to enable families of migrants to securely receive remittances

#### The ‘Floating’ Population

*“Sonelal, a native of Sheohar district in Bihar earns Rs. 7,000 per month working at a plastics factory at Baddi in Himachal Pradesh. He is able to save Rs. 3,500 for his family after spending Rs. 3,500 on food and other necessities. He shifted to Himachal Pradesh from Punjab, where he was employed for only six months a year, the rest of which he used to spend at his native.”*

*“Kaushal Paswan, in his late 20s, returned to his native Sudaspur after spending some months in Delhi. Now, his new job at a construction company as a semi-skilled labourer enables him to earn Rs. 170 per day. He works for a minimum of 25 days and earns Rs. 4,250 per month.”*

*Both Sonelal and Paswan are happy. One is earning and saving, the other is living in the midst of his own people. The two are examples of two types of migration: one involves migrants who search for work outside the state as they see it as a symbol of upward social mobility and frees them from a repressive caste hierarchy; the other is ‘forced or distressed migration’ that sees people moving because of the lack of job opportunity.”*

### INFERENCE

The, ‘Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India’ June 2013, report makes it evident that internal migration is inevitable and considerable source of development. There is a pressing need to include internal migrants in the policy frameworks. The government must acknowledge their value and presence to give mettle to the idea of inclusive development by ensuring and facilitating their constitutional and fundamental rights.

*“In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace.”*

From Article 2, UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Sources:**

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002237/223702e.pdf>

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New\\_Delhi/pdf/Internal\\_Migration\\_Workshop - Vol\\_2\\_07.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New_Delhi/pdf/Internal_Migration_Workshop - Vol_2_07.pdf)

[http://peoplemov.in/#f\\_IN](http://peoplemov.in/#f_IN)

[Census of India, 2011 and Planning Commission, 2011](#)

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Bihar/Better-days-for-Bihar/Article1-934183.aspx>

### India has the Highest Drug-Resistant TB Patients in the World

(G.S. MUDUR, *The Telegraph*, October 24, 2013)

According to a World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate, India has the highest number of Multi-Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Patients (MDR-TB). There are 64,000 cases of MDR-TB in India, the report said.

The jump in the number of cases has rather been sharp as the cases have quadrupled within a year. In addition to this, a stark 75 per cent of the cases remain undetected still and there is an urgent need to further increase the detection capacity of the nation. Secondly, enrolment of patients detected with MDR-TB is another massive challenge. In India out of the 16,588 notified MDR-TB patients with pulmonary tuberculosis, only 14,143 were enrolled for treatment in 2012.

Inadequate resources are the reason for the enrolment deficit being witnessed. India is amongst the many countries that have set up drug-sensitivity testing units, where doctors tailor specific drug regimens to patients with MDR-TB. However, the reach of these tests is contentious as the proportion of patients who are offered these tests under government programmes remains unreported.

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1131025/jsp/nation/story\\_17492671.jsp#.Um50Pkwo14](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1131025/jsp/nation/story_17492671.jsp#.Um50Pkwo14)

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Pallavi Ghosh)

### India Calls for a 'Democratic' Cyberspace at the United Nations

(The Economic Times, October 23, 2013)

India has told the United Nations (UN) that governance of cyberspace should be democratic and transparent and cannot be managed as a "private property".

"As a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and democratic society, India is fully committed to the free growth of the internet," said MP Ashwani Kumar at a UN General Assembly (GA) session on 'Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Development.'

India stressed the need for a multilateral, transparent and democratic international management for internet with full involvement of governments, private sector, civil society and international organisations.

"India has repeatedly opposed controlling the internet in the name of cyber security. It has also voiced its opposition to an approach by an inter-governmental committee in the UNs that is trying to tackle the issue of cyber security through some kind of government control."

Mr. Kumar said global internet governance can be "functional, effective and credible" only if all its stakeholders, including those in developing countries are consulted. He also said that India attaches "great importance" to the use of cyberspace and ICT as a major vehicle for achieving the goals of sustainable development.

"India remains committed to cooperate with all our partners in developing policies through the UNs to support the use of cyberspace and ICTs for sustainable and inclusive development," he said.

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-23/news/43326462\\_1\\_cyber-security-cyber-space-global-internet-governance](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-23/news/43326462_1_cyber-security-cyber-space-global-internet-governance)

Date Accessed: 27.10.2013  
(Amrutha Jose Pampackal)

### Singapore Tops World Bank 'Doing Business' Ranking; India Slips 134<sup>th</sup>

(Ben Schenkel, *Livemint*, October 29, 2013)

Singapore and Hong Kong have been ranked as the best places in the world to run a business. The 10 best places to run a business include Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand, United States, Denmark, Malaysia, South Korea, Georgia, Norway, and United Kingdom. The five worst places include Republic of the Congo at the 185th position, South Sudan at 186, Libya at 187, Central African Republic (CAR) at 188 and Chad at the 189th position.

"The study, in its 11th year, covered a record 189 economies, assessing them on measures such as the costliness of commercial regulations and the strength of public institutions. Nations are ranked based on indicators such as the time required to start a business, file tax returns and export or import goods."

India, which criticised the methodology used for the report, has slid two spots to 134<sup>th</sup> in this year rankings. Even China, which was furious to receive a ranking of 91 last year and has pressured the World Bank to drop the 11-year-old study, fell five notches this year to 96th place and was leapfrogged by Russia.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/dzX6rrlh4ddp2h2lzqLQML/Singapore-tops-World-Bank-Doing-Business-ranking-India-sl.html>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Simi Sunny)

## Rs 11,127 crores Collected for Welfare of Construction labourers, 87 per cent of it is lying unused

(Deevakar Anand, Tehelka, November 2, 2013)

The article reveals that the cess collected under the **Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act (BOCWW) 1996**, for the welfare of labourers is not being spent in most Indian states. “According to labour ministry data, Rs 11,127 crore has been collected by various state governments across the country as building and construction workers’ cess. Of this, a meagre Rs 1,448 crore (13 per cent) has been spent on the welfare of the labourers.”

The Act, 1996 had mandated all states to form welfare board for labourers and collect one per cent of the construction cost from employers and developers. Most states had not implemented the Act. In 2012, a Supreme Court Bench headed by the then Chief Justice SH Kapadia issued orders that “funds available with the welfare boards shall not be utilised by the state for any other head of expenditure of the state government.”

There are certain problems that are highlighted in the article. Migrant workforce and their registration is a problem as “they lack documentary proofs.” It is also found that contractors did not register their workers with the labour department. Moushami Das, a professor, says that the “Labour department’s apathy in dealing with welfare schemes is too stark.”

State wise data reads a varied record, with the southern states performing better in overall implementation of the scheme, supposedly due to their “vibrant trade unionism.”

State	Amount of cess collected (in Rs.)	Share of cess collected spent (in %)
Kerala	546.88 crore	82
Tamil Nadu	604.31 crore	45.99
Chhattisgarh	222.18 crore	56.43
Delhi	1,196 crore	8.53
Uttar Pradesh	739 crore	0.91
Haryana	803 crore	2.17
Gujarat	190.22 crore	0.22
Goa	14.88 crore	Nil
Himachal Pradesh	51.22 crore	Nil

The article gives suggestions that could be implemented to redress the problem.

- 1) According to Delhi BOCWWB Secretary Piyush Sharma, “registration of building and other construction workers should be made mandatory on the lines of the Employees’ State Insurance (ESI) and Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) schemes”
- 2) He added that there “should be a pan-India card for the workers’ registration.”
- 3) A senior Labor Ministry official says that “states were mandated to constitute the welfare boards. The functioning of the boards is entirely a state matter.”
- 4) Subhash Bhatnagar, from a Committee pursuing a case against the poor implementation of the Act in the SC, claims that there is no proper mechanism under which the government is made to share information on timely basis.

A Bill for amending the previous Acts of 1996 is awaiting its moot in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill proposes to streamline the registration process by removing the 90-day condition as well as set a 30-day time limit for authorities to deposit the cess with the welfare boards.

<http://www.tehelka.com/rs-11127-cr-collected-for-welfare-of-construction-labourers-87-of-it-is-lying-unused/>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

## Over 4,200 Children Missing in Assam

(The Indian Express, October 27, 2013)

According to Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (ASCPCR), 4,234 children went missing between January 2011 and June 2013 and less than half of them have been traced so far. Of the total missing children, 1,994 were traced, which stands at just 47 per cent.

However, the data showed a positive development that the cases of missing children in the state are declining on account of numerous steps taken by various agencies. As per the data, 2,125 children went missing in 2011 and it came down to 1,852 in last year, registering a fall of 13 per cent. On the other hand, the number of missing children traced has decreased sharply. It went down by 42 per cent to 698 in 2012 from 1,196 children during the previous year. In 2013, the state has traced 100 missing children.

“Of the total 4,234 missing children, numbers of girls are almost double as that of boys. The ASCPCR stated that the crime against children has gone up by a whopping 66 per cent to 392 incidents in Assam last year with cases of rape rising by nearly four-times.”

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/over-4200-children-reported-missing-in-assam-in-30-months/1187877/>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

# Fundamental Right Includes Right to Pure Food, Beverages: Supreme Court

(PTI, October 23, 2013)

In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court (SC) held that right to life and human dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution also incorporates the right to have food articles and beverages which are free from harmful residues such as pesticides and insecticides.

A Bench of justices K S Radhakrishnan and A K Sikri held, "We may emphasise that any food article which is hazardous or injurious to public health is a potential danger to the fundamental right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. A paramount duty is cast on the States and its authorities to achieve an appropriate level of protection to human life and health."

The apex court has also asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to "gear up their resources with their counterparts in all the states and union territories and conduct periodical inspection and monitoring of major fruits and vegetable markets."

The ruling came while disposing of the petition by an NGO, Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), seeking the setting up of an 'independent expert/technical committee to evaluate the harmful effects of soft drinks on human health, particularly on the health of the children'. The bench disposed off the *PIL* seeking to set up an independent technical panel to evaluate the harmful effects of soft drinks on human health, particularly on children, saying the Food Supply and Standards (FSS) Act, the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act along with their rules and

regulations were sufficient to deal with the grievances.

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-23/news/43326672\\_1\\_food-adulteration-food-safety-standards-authority](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-23/news/43326672_1_food-adulteration-food-safety-standards-authority)

Date Accessed: 25.10.2013  
(Deepti Somani)

## CHRI assesses the Use of Right to Information in India

(*Im4change*)

The article notes that, the landmark Right to Information (RTI) Act, hailed as the biggest step since independence to build transparency in governance, owes its remarkable success to 0.3% Indians who file RTI applications.

An assessment of the RTI law in 10 States and the Central Government by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) entitled 'The Use of Right to Information Laws in India-A Rapid Study Based on the Annual Reports of Information Commissions (2011-12)' says that the number of RTI applicants amounts to only 0.5 percent of the electorate comprising of citizens aged 18 and above. The highest number of RTI applications has been rejected on the grounds of a possible breach of privacy and that most states fail to compile the number of RTI users on the basis of caste, community or gender. The highest numbers of RTI applications are filed for only five government departments and the top two happen to be the Revenue and Urban Development Departments. The Rural Development and Police Departments also figure high in many states.

The study reveals that most State Governments are indifferent in knowing how RTI is empowering women, dalits, poor and the rural populace. For example, in Chhattisgarh, 2,351 women (4.81 per cent of the total number of RTI applicants) sought information under

the Central RTI Act in 2011-12. Roughly, 2.49 per cent of the RTI applicants belonged to Below the Poverty Line (BPL) category. Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) accounted for 3.38 per cent and 3.06 per cent of the total number of RTI applications submitted in that state, respectively.

Further, the study exposes those State Information Commissions which have defaulted for a second consecutive year to display their Annual Reports (for 2011-12) on their websites. These include - Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura. Currently only the Maharashtra State Government has displayed the January to December 2012 report so far. Moreover, most State Information Commissions are reluctant to exercise their statutory power to impose penalties or to take disciplinary actions against errant Public Information Officers (PIOs).

<http://www.im4change.org/news-alerts/seven-years-of-rti-from-strength-to-strength-23145.html>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Ashwin Varghese)

## Nod to Urban Co-Op Banks for Specialised Branches

(*Business Standard*, October 25, 2013)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed financially-sound and well-managed Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) to open specialised branches, or central processing and retail assets processing centres post securing an approval from the regulator.

The approval would be subject to certain norms—

- These branches should be fully computerised, core banking solution-compliant and should be opened within the area of operation of the UCB concerned.
- These should be opened on a cluster basis (a certain number of branches would be linked to a specialised branch).
- RBI's prior approval required for conversion from a specialised branch to a normal branch and vice-versa.
- These branches should not have any direct interface/business transactions with customers, except for the creation of equitable mortgage, execution/release of loan documents and the initiation of recoveries and follow-up.

To open such branches, UCBs would have to propose the move in their annual business plan, explaining the need and the objective of such centres.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-to-permit-urban-banks-to-open-specialised-branches-113102401124\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-to-permit-urban-banks-to-open-specialised-branches-113102401124_1.html)

Date Accessed : 28.10.2013  
(Shruti Issar)

## Fraud in Indian Companies Rising, Says Report

(Geetanjali Minhas, *Governance Now*, October 28, 2013)

According to Kroll's Global Fraud Report for 2013-14, 69 per cent of Indian companies reported seven different types of frauds with insider fraud being the most common crime. The report highlights the corruption laced environment in the country spells badly for the Indian companies. The report also states that a relatively high percentage of junior employees (around 69 per cent) in India are suspected to be involved in corrupt practices.

"The financial services companies were the worst hit by frauds with almost 76 per cent of them being affected by internal financial frauds, regulatory or compliance breach and money laundering. The manufacturing sector has also been affected due to two reasons—from IT complexity (at 47 per cent) and greater complexity of products (at 28 per cent)."

Under the survey, 900 senior executives worldwide pointed out to other common frauds include:

It is reported that the "number of respondents admitting to frauds in Indian companies risen from 67 per cent last year to 71 per cent this year." The fraud levels are higher compared to other countries like Brazil, Russia and China. But "fraud discovery through internal audit" is higher in India than the global average.

<http://governancenow.com/news/regul-ar-story/fraud-indian-companies-rising-says-report>

Date Accessed: 27.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

## New Policies Needed to Adjust to New Dynamics in World Economy: UN Report

(*UN News Centre*, October 14, 2013)

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report titled 'Trade and Development 2013', countries must adopt new economic policies to adjust to structural changes in the world economy sparked by the onset of the global financial crisis five years ago.

The report argues that developed countries are not addressing the root causes of the financial crisis. It suggests that instead of implementing stimulus measures that rely on expansionary monetary policies the governments must address the fundamental causes of the crisis, in particular rising income inequality, the diminishing role of the states, and the predominant role of the poorly regulated financial sector.

Advocating South-South trade and cooperation among developing and transitions economies like India, the report also contends that developing and transition economies that heavily depend on exports must reconsider their development strategies and rely more on domestic and regional demand. Alfredo Calcagno, Head, Macroeconomic and Development Branch, Division on Globalisation and Development Strategies, UNCTAD explains "One of the main changes in our view is that developing countries must concentrate on fostering their domestic trade in order to continue to grow. This does not mean that exports are no longer important, but they need to strengthen their domestic markets to adapt to new demand conditions."

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46264&Cr=Economic+Crисis&Cr1=#.Um9PY\\_1QEXY](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46264&Cr=Economic+Crisis&Cr1=#.Um9PY_1QEXY)

Date Accessed: 20.10.2013  
(Simi Sunny)

# Urea Policy Needs Changes

(R. N Bhaskar, DNA, October 28, 2013)

Government wants to find out new ways to price urea-based fertilisers so that urea producers can afford the highly priced gas which is needed to make urea and consequently reduce the subsidies for fertilisers. Inability to deal with both could spell disaster for both the industry and the country. The underlying issues are many.

## **Flaws in the present policy**

1. It allows too much of discretion in terms of feedstock pricing for fertiliser units, and the parameters used to calculate subsidy.
2. Under the Administered Price Mechanism (APM), all PSUs and cooperative gas producers and some private gas producers had to compulsorily sell some of the gas produced to urea and power producers which leads to unfair pricing.
3. Since fuel costs are considered as a “pass through”, there is little incentive for fertiliser units in India to become efficient users of gas (or naphtha). They know that all fuel costs will be reimbursed. Thus, while globally, one tonne of urea requires around 20 mmBtu of gas, most fertiliser units in India ask for 25 mmBtu. The difference of 5 mmBtu alone translates into additional costs of over \$10 per tonne at current prices. This could be on account of inefficiency, or plain collusion, or both.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to get away from this corrosive arrangement that only hurts the country, and even the fertiliser industry. The entire urea policy needs to be overhauled.

The other option is to push public sector urea units to set up urea plants in places where gas can be got cheap like Kizad (Khalifa Industrial Zone, Abu Dhabi), or the US, or Canada (where gas prices are lower than in the US). Urea production would be viable at such locations. A buyback agreement between these units and the

respective governments would reduce the marketing and pricing risks for setting up such ventures overseas.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/money/column-policy-watch-will-india-stop-producing-urea-1909972>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Neha Singh)

## POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

### Human Rights Violation by Policemen on The Rise

(NDTV, October 20, 2013)

The number of cases against police officials has witnessed a stark rise in the year 2012. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports reveals that there have been 205 registered cases against policemen for alleged human rights violations during 2012. Whereas the combined number of cases for the previous two years stood at 109.

The report also showed that the number of officials who were charge sheeted was 19 and none of them were convicted last year.

Assam, despite having registered the maximum cases, did not charge sheet a single official.

The cases registered against policemen involves charges relating to disappearance of persons, illegal detention, fake encounter killings, violation against terrorists/extremists, extortion, torture, false implication, failure in taking action, indignity to women, atrocities on SC/ST and other cases.

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/human-rights-violation-205-cases-against-policemen-in-2012-437105>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013

(Pallavi Ghosh)

### None Of the Above Candidates or not, Highest Poller will Win, Clarifies Election Commission

(The Hindu, October 29, 2013)

The Election Commission (EC) on Monday October 28, clarified that if the number of electors who had utilised the None of the Above Candidates (NOTA) option in the EVM/Ballot paper exceeded the votes polled by any of the candidates, the candidate with the highest number of votes would be declared winner.

The Supreme Court, in its verdict on September 27 this year, asked the EC to provide a NOTA option on the EVM and ballot papers so that the electors who did not want to vote for any of the candidates could exercise their option in secrecy. In a release, the EC said: "As per the provisions of clause (a) of Rule 64 of Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, read with Section 65 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the candidate who has polled the largest number of valid votes is to be declared elected by the Returning Officer (RO). Therefore, even if the number of electors opting for NOTA option is more than the number of votes polled by any of the candidates, the candidate who secures the largest number of votes has to be declared elected".

Election Commission further clarified that, if the number of contesting candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled, the RO has to declare all the contesting candidates to be duly elected. In the case of elections to the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies, where there is only one contesting candidate in the fray, the RO has to, under the relevant provisions, declare the sole contestant as elected.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/nota-or-not-highest-poller-will-win-clarifies-ec/article5282908.ece?homepage=true>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013

(Jeet Singh)

### RSS Wants Centre to Probe Radical Groups

(Vinay Kumar and K.A. Shaji, The Hindu, October 21, 2013)

A meeting by the national executive of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) held in Kochi ended with the RSS adopting two resolutions demanding an extensive probe by Central government agencies into the activities of radical groups and their links and sources of funding. It called upon the government to effectively manage the borders.

The resolution, expressing concern at attacks on Hindu nationalist forces and increasing violence, focused on the spread of terror network in southern states, including Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It also criticised the government for 'competitive minority appeasement.'

The resolution claimed that coastal areas of Karnataka, like Bhatkal, have become storehouses of weapons and terror trainings, and that these forces are planning to attack Hindu religious places like Tirupati, Madurai and Sabarimala.

Further, it demanded a ban on outfits like the Popular Front of India (PFI) claiming that radical forces were turning Kerala into a 'hotbed of anti-social and anti-national activities' and that northern Kerala was becoming a safe hideout and training ground for terror elements.

The resolution accused the *United Democratic Front* (UDF) government in Kerala of protecting Islamic militancy and preventing a CBI probe into the communal carnage at Marad in 2002.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rss-wants-centre-to-probe-radical-groups/article5276357.ece>

Date Accessed: 27.10.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

### Imminent Need for the Privacy Act

(Surabhi Agarwal and Somesh Jha, *Business Standard*, October 29, 2013)

## SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

It's been three years since the Bill on Privacy was proposed, yet the law has not seen the light of day. Meanwhile, citizen data digitisation is moving at a pace like never before in the country. Concerns have mounted in the wake of projects such as the National Population Register (NPR), Aadhaar and the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID).

"In the absence of a Privacy Bill, the only data protection, pseudo, is through Section 43A of the Information Technology (IT) Act. Unfortunately, that is not a data protection law; it is only a data security provision," said Sunil Abraham, executive director of the Centre for Internet and Society (CIS).

Implications of the Act:

- The government or a private agency will have to adequately inform citizens before collecting data
- State the purpose and only collect as much information as is necessary for said purpose
- Define the time period for which data will be stored
- State the security measures taken to protect data
- Put into place penalties in case of misuse

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/saving-privacy-as-we-knew-it-113102900024\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/saving-privacy-as-we-knew-it-113102900024_1.html)

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Divashri Mathur)

## GOVERNMENT

### Public Land Protection Force to Cover All Districts in Kerala

(Prabhat Nair, *The New Indian Express*, October 28, 2013)

The Public Land Protection Force (PLPF), which has been designed for evicting encroachments on public lands, is set to expand to all the districts in Kerala.

The proposal of the State Land Bank for extending the service of PLPF is under the active consideration of the government. The PLPF, which is now deployed only in Idukki, will be extended to other districts since it was found to be effective in tackling encroachments on public land. "The decision was taken in the wake of increasing encroachments on public lands. The government is very keen on evicting encroachers and also to curtail illegal encroachments on government lands." The officials claimed that there was a decrease in the level of encroachments after the formation of the PLPF in Idukki. The PLPF has been bestowed with many powers. On detection of fresh encroachments the members of PLPF can physically remove trespassers after informing the same to the Platoon Head. "In case of difficulties in physically removing encroachments, a case should be registered against the encroacher at the local police station under the Kerala Land Conservancy (Amendment) 2009."

<http://newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Public-Land-Protection-Force-to-cover-all-districts/2013/10/28/article1859565.ec>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Social Security Scheme for Indians Launched in UAE

(*The Economic Times*, October 29, 2013)

The Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) scheme

was launched with the aim to ensure safety, protection and welfare of overseas Indian workers. The scheme was launched by Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs for the overseas Indian workers in **Emigration Check Required (ECR)** Category working in ECR countries.

The objective of the scheme is to encourage and enable overseas Indian workers by giving support to "save for their return and resettlement in India, for their pension and obtain complimentary life insurance cover during the period of overseas employment."

The minister also hinted at other major "initiatives like extension of Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to all the missions, signing of social security agreements and MoUs with major countries having Indian populations, e-Migrate project to facilitate the migration process."

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/nri/nris-in-news/social-security-scheme-for-indians-launched-in-uae/articleshow/24861560.cms>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

### Call For Tribal-Centric Development Model

(*The Hindu*, October 17, 2013)

During the release of the report 'Problems and People's Struggles in Kalingaseema' authored by tribal activist Juvvada Suryanarayana, K N Malliswari of the Democratic Writers Forum called for a greater focus on providing basic amenities to villages and tribal hamlets in the Scheduled areas.

Development in tribal areas should seek to protect and promote the unique lifestyles and culture which is prevalent there. The development process should prioritise provision of connectivity, education and health and **there is a need for evolving a tribal-centric development model.**

The government has a number of welfare schemes in place and expenditures are also booked under it, but unfortunately all the expenditure is only on paper and nothing really reaches the beneficiaries. There is no compulsion to implement the welfare schemes properly. The ruling class is out to weaken the tribal people and throw open their natural resources for exploitation by capitalists. Development in the Agency area has systematically eliminated the tribal people from their habitations.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Visakhapatnam/call-for-tribalcentric-development-model/article5243707.ece>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013

(Neha Singh)

## CONNECTIVITY

### Department of Telecommunication s seeks approval for Broadband

### Connectivity at Panchayat Level

(Sounak Mitra, *Business Standard*, October 29, 2013)

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has sought approval from the Telecom Commission on its proposal to ensure broadband connectivity at gram panchayat level.

It has proposed to establish a framework for the delivery of high speed broadband or closed user group connectivity from district headquarters and two other locations in the gram

panchayats for government services that can be delivered to the public along with a community access to broadband.

This will ensure an extension in both vertical connectivity up to district headquarters level and horizontal connectivity to three locations in each gram panchayat for providing government services in partnership with the ministry of rural development and thus would ensure community wifi connectivity in each gram panchayat.

Under the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project, the government wants to connect 0.25 million gram panchayats across the country with optical fibre cable for offering broadband services.

DoT hopes to complete the NOFM project in three phases wherein, the first phase will cover 0.1 million gram panchayat and completion is expected by September 2014. The second phase will also cover 0.1 million gram panchayat and completion is expected by July 2015. The third phase will cover remaining 50,000 gram panchayat and completion is expected by March 2016. Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) will implement the project, and the ministry of rural development will be the anchor institution.

The total cost of the NOFN project is estimated to be Rs 20,000 crore and DoT has proposed that the initial capital expenditure of Rs 3,750 crore of the project will be provided from the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

The operating expenses of Rs 1,860 crore (excluding taxes) will be funded by the ministry of rural development, according to recent communication of the DoT.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/do-t-seeks-approval-for-broadband-connectivity-at-panchayat-level-113102900018\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/do-t-seeks-approval-for-broadband-connectivity-at-panchayat-level-113102900018_1.html)

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013

(Shruti Issar)

## E-Governance

### Hopes Rise as India Crosses 1 Billion Transactions

(J Srikant, *The Economic Times*, October 29, 2013)

Government agencies and departments have recorded over a billion e-governance transactions so far this year, watershed for the world's largest democracy that is betting on technology to cure its ills.

Gujarat topped the list with around 389 million transactions while online payment for utility and government services was the most used government service with about 258 million transactions clocked in the year.

India is in the process of implementing a large-scale e-governance programme which includes a vast information technology network to facilitate speedy delivery of public services. In this there are 31 'mission mode' projects being implemented by the central and state governments. It is estimated that the government will spend Rs 36,800 crore on IT products and services in 2013.

The project also aims to connect 2.5 lakh gram panchayats. The network has been launched in pockets of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Tripura, with some 80,500 transactions already recorded.

Currently, the most prominent e-governance scheme is the Unique Identity Aadhaar project which is targeting to enroll 600 million people by 2014.

A year ago, the country successfully commissioned an e-passport project where digitisation of applications and internal files vastly improved the time taken to issue new passports.

Sanjoy Sen, senior director at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India, said, "E-governance helps in reducing cost and bottlenecks for the user and also brings down the time to get the work done. It is an important factor in today's economy." Further, Sunil

Abraham, executive director of Centre for Internet and Society (CIS) Government should look at financially incentivising setting up of cyber cafes in rural India as these are an important aspect of improving the accessibility.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/e-governance-hopes-rise-as-india-crosses-1-billion-transactions/articleshow/24834881.cms>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Ashwin Varghese)

## **EDUCATION**

### **Why Girls Drop Out of Schools in Class 9**

*(Rediff, October 26, 2013)*

A survey based programme on an innovative scheme implemented by the Odisha government, finds various reasons for the high dropout rates in schools, especially in higher classes and amongst Scheduled Caste (SC)/ Scheduled Tribe (ST) girls. The survey- led programme covered 2,832 girls in 167 schools. The Odisha government ran a pilot scheme under which “each SC and ST girl in class IX was given cash transfer if she maintained a school attendance rate of more than 75 per cent.” The objective was to reduce dropout rates and increase attendance rates.

The survey involved several discussions which reveal that “increased dropout rate in higher classes is not something that is prevalent only among the poor.” Various reasons are cited to explain the high dropout rates, particularly after class VIII. Firstly, as commonly stated, “secondary schools are further away from the village and this distance, coupled with the lack of transport and lack of safety (for girls), are major reasons why girls drop out after class VIII.” Secondly, midday meals are given only till class VIII. Thirdly, data shows that “30 per cent of the dropouts stopped attending

school because they were about to get married or had been married.” More importantly, the main reason found is that girls did not want to go to school, either because “the school environment was unfriendly or the student could not understand what went on in class.”

The big revelation is that parents and girls do not feel the need and usefulness in attending schools. It is also found that there is lethargy in school authorities as well; stating that because there is automatic promotion till class VIII, teachers are generally ignorant to evaluate students. This further pushes them to drop out in higher classes.

It finds that improving schools and hiring more teachers (i.e. supply side factors) without focus on increasing the “demand” for education will not improve education level in the country. Concurring with the economist, Santhakumar, the article suggests that education needs to be promoted as a change agent that creates “positive externalities” for all. An educated society creates gains for all in contrast to an uneducated society, hence assuming education to be a “private affair” is incorrect.

<http://www.rediff.com/news/column/why-girls-start-dropping-out-of-school-in-class-9/20131026.htm>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

## **HEALTH**

### **Tripura Government to Introduce Generic Medicines in State**

*(The Echo of India, October 21, 2013)*

Learning from the successes of Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, the Tripura government has decided to introduce generic medicines in government hospitals. “Compared to generic medicines, commercial or branded medicines are costly and sometimes out of reach of the

common people. The Tripura government has decided to introduce generic medicines in all government hospitals and make good stocks of the medicines in the state.”

“Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu are the two states which have successfully introduced generic medicines to give a sigh of relief to the poor.” Computerised billing system would be introduced in Tripura for selling generic medicines and 300 such drugs would be made available in hospitals and primary health centres.

<http://www.echoofindia.com/agartala-tripura-govt-introduce-generic-medicines-state-40790>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

## **SPORTS**

### **Arunachal to Get Road Map for Sports Development**

*(Nagaland Post, October 27, 2013)*

Arunachal Pradesh is set to get a road map for the overall development of the sports sector, particularly focusing on the rural areas of the state.

At a high level meeting between Union minister of youth affairs. Jitendra Singh and chief minister Nabam Tuki the road map for integrated development of sports was discussed in detail. Singh stated that his “ministry was committed to charting out a comprehensive plan for the development of sports in the state in the current fiscal. It would focus on development of sports infrastructure and facilities to promote talent from the block level.”

Approaching the central government for additional support to implement the state Youth and Sports Vision chief minister Tuki said “sportspersons not only contribute in the field of sports but in all spheres of society. He added there was a need to create a long-term ecosystem for sports talent, trainers and teachers to fully realise the objectives of youth development in the state.”

## SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Currently Arunachal has declared 10 per cent reservation in jobs for sportspersons in the departments of sports and youth affairs, environment and forests and police of the state government to promote overall development of sports and sportspersons in the state.

<http://www.nagalandpost.com/Channe lNews/Regional/RegionalNews.aspx?news=TkVXUzEwMDA0ODIwNA%3d%3d>

Date Accessed 29.10.2013  
(Junty Sharma Pathak)

### **ENERGY**

### **Largest Dirty Expansions By 2020**

*(Green Peace)*

The world is quickly reaching a point of no return for preventing the worst impacts of climate change. The fossil fuel industry is planning 14 massive coal, oil and gas projects that would increase carbon emission to dangerous levels.

Coal fired power plants are the biggest source of manmade CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. A third of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from burning coal. This makes coal energy the single greatest threat facing our climate. To avoid the worst impacts of climate change, including widespread drought, flooding and massive population displacement caused by rising sea levels, there is a need to keep global temperature rise below 2°C (compared to pre-industrial levels). To do this, global greenhouse gases emissions must peak by 2015 and from there go down to zero.

Apart from climate change, coal also causes irreparable damage to the environment, people's health and communities around the world. While the coal industry itself is not paying for the damage it causes, the world at large is.

**Quit coal for real solutions**

1. We need an energy revolution that substitutes wind, solar, energy efficiency and other modern technologies for dirty energy sources like coal.

2. Carbon, Capture and Storage (CCS) is a plan to capture carbon emissions from power stations and bury them underground. The technology will not be ready for at least another 20 years, too late to save the climate.

Unfortunately, governments across the world are allowing industry to spend hundreds of billions of dollars to build hundreds of new coal-fired power stations worldwide in the coming years. If they are built, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from coal are expected to rise 60 per cent by 2030.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/internation al/en/campaigns/climate-change/coal/>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Neha Singh)

### **TECHNOLOGY**

### **India Begins Countdown to launch Mars Orbiter Spacecraft**

*(Press Trust of India, October 29, 2013)*

India is all set to launch its Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) on November 5 this year. This is the country's first inter-planetary venture, a shining star in the country's space programme.

Once launched, the spacecraft would go around the earth for about 25 days. It will thereafter embark on a 300-day voyage to the Martian orbit on November 30 and finally reach the earth in September 2014.

The Mars Orbiter spacecraft is scheduled to be launched at 2:36 pm (Indian Standard Time) onboard *Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle* (PSLV)-C25 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota.

The cost of the entire mission is Rs. 450-crore with Rs. 110 crore spent for building PSLV-C25 that would launch and another Rs. 150 crore for the spacecraft. The remaining amount was spent on augmenting ground segment, including those required for deep space communication.

The countdown, which is going to be for more than 56 hours, begins at 6am on November 3.

[http://www.ptinews.com/news/410513 5\\_Countdown-for-Mars-mission-to-begin-on-Sunday.html](http://www.ptinews.com/news/410513 5_Countdown-for-Mars-mission-to-begin-on-Sunday.html)

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Pallavi Ghosh)

### **This Application Makes Tree Census Easier and Quicker**

*(Anurag Hende, DNA, October 26, 2013)*

Smart Survey has developed "android-based software" that takes and feeds details in a minute that can possibly make tree census a quicker and convenient task.

The software is touted to be more efficient than the manual process of tree census. Sandeep Gohad, director of Smart Survey said that under manual process, a surveyor requires around 10 minutes to note all details of one tree in a particular format which further has to be fed in PMC's server. With the software, "it takes only one minute to fill up all the details as well as to feed the details in the server." The software has a formula which calculates the ideal number of trees required in a particular area.

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) took more than five years to complete this year's city tree census using the "manual process wherein the civic body counted 32 lakh trees in the city." A practical usage of the application has shown that the number of trees in that [Deccan] area is lesser than the requirement.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/pune/report-this-app-makes-tree-census-a-minute-s-job-1908850>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

## Future of Street Lighting - a Road Surface which Glows in the Dark

(Melanie Hall, *The Telegraph*, October 20, 2013)

Cambridge City Council in the United Kingdom has experimented with a new technology called 'Starpath', which can one day replace streetlamps as a cheaper and more energy efficient form of lighting. The City Council has covered a pathway with ultraviolet particles which turn blue when the sun sets, thus illuminating the road. Under this technology luminous particles are spread on a standard path before being sprayed with a protective film to maintain their glow. These particles absorb light during the day before emitting the artificial glow in the evening, when darkness sets in. The technology has been developed by Surrey-based firm Pro-Teq Surfacing.

This environmental friendly technology can be of significant benefit by allowing cash-strapped towns to keep their streets safely lit at night while eliminating the cost of street lights. It is an important alternative in times when the "cost of power is going up and power stations being turned off".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/10391802/starpath-glow-street-lighting-council-cambridge-city.html>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Karishma Mutreja)

## Cloud Computing can Help the SME Sector Grow and Transform

<http://www.dnaindia.com/pune/report-this-app-makes-tree-census-a-minute-s-job-1908850>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Mahima Malik)

(Lakshmi Iyer, *The Hindu*, October 29, 2013)

The latest *Boston Consulting Group* (BCG) research says that if more Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) adopted the latest IT tools in India they could boost revenues by \$56 billion and create more than 1.1 million jobs in the country. Cloud computing is a technology which has changed the way IT solutions are being delivered.

The SME sector is the backbone of the Indian economy as it employs around 40 per cent of the Indian workforce. Ironically, the contribution of this workforce is a huge mismatch of numbers as it contributes approximately only 17 per cent to the GDP.

Advantages of Cloud Computing:

- It's simple, cost-effective
- Helps implement technology quicker
- Cuts down costs as the service is provided on pay per use basis or subscription basis
- Secure network
- Maintained by service provider
- Custom cloud-based solutions are available for different verticals under SMEs
- Helps in collaborative work among various team members in online mode
- Enables access to new markets with better branding and prompt delivery

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/cloud-computing-can-help-the-sme-sector-grow-and-transform/article5282471.ece>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Divashri Mathur)

## ENVIRONMENT

### Government to Enhance Forecasting Capabilities to Tackle Natural Calamities

(Gaurav Jain, *LiveMint*, October 29, 2013)

The government has decided to set up a committee to enhance its forecasting capabilities and preparedness to combat natural calamities. The move comes in after two major natural disasters in the country - the floods in Uttarakhand and cyclone Phailin, which affected Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

Mr. M. Shashidhar Reddy, vice chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) announced that the committee will be headed by the secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and will focus on calamities where there are no or little early warnings such as earthquake, flash floods and urban floods. He further announced that ministries have also agreed to allocate a part of their budget towards disaster management but the minimum percentage of the annual budget which shall be earmarked is yet to be worked out.

Acknowledging that the first casualty in case of calamity is communication infrastructure, a committee will be formed to provide satellite telephones to all the Himalayan states. The government plans on making 'multipurpose multi-disaster shelter homes' in the states more prone to natural calamities. It is also working towards setting up a 'single-number disaster helpline'.

To fund such projects, a National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF)

will be set up and assistance will also be taken from the World Bank.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/naW9tLnOskd6YKZl4hXVGO/Govt-to-enhance-forecasting-capabilities-to-tackle-natural-c.html>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

### **No Updates in a Decade to Quake Protection Norms**

**(Moulishree Srivastava, *LiveMint*, October 28, 2013)**

As per leading seismologists, bridges, dams and buildings across India are vulnerable to earthquakes because government guidelines for making them quake-resistant have not been revised for over a decade—although there is enough new seismic data available to update them.

The norms for earthquake protection are laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) through its Indian Standards on Earthquake Engineering, also known as the standard code. The BIS code for earthquake engineering deals with the standards that are required to help ensure that buildings and other infrastructure are able to withstand minor earthquakes, suffering minimum losses.

The standard code for buildings has remained untouched for over a decade, while those dealing with bridges, dams and embankments have not been revised for up to three decades; internationally, the practice is for a revision every five years.

According to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) data, India has been hit by 10 major earthquakes over the last 15 years, resulting in over 20,000 deaths. Around 60 per cent of the nation's land area is under threat of moderate to severe earthquakes—that is, it can experience seismic events of a magnitude of seven and above on the Medvedev-Sponheuer-Karnik (MSK) intensity scale—equivalent to

intensity six on the Richter scale. This seismic zone includes the entire Himalayan belt, stretching to the North-East, as well as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Industry experts say a key reason for not upgrading codes is the self-sustaining financial model of BIS, due to which the institution has been economising in a manner which is not desirable.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/jIej0kTVt3vImCteQCEVK/No-updates-in-a-decade-to-quake-protection-norms.html>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

### **AGRICULTURE Shrinking of Agricultural Land in Manipur**

**(Emelda Ahongshangbam, *E-Pao*, October 29, 2013)**

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Manipur which contributes a major share to the total state domestic product and provides employment to a large number of people. But it is in a dire state, as the total cultivated area is less than 10 per cent of the total land area and half of the cultivated land falls inside the valley, making it susceptible to encroachment and urban population expansion. Due to increase in the population, the shrinking of agricultural land has become a matter of concern in Manipur. The utilisation of agricultural land for other purposes, like construction of government offices, private schools, brick fields in the mainland for housing purposes, etc. has been on the rise in the last 10 years. And besides, acquisition of land for expansion of Imphal Airport at Malom and Ningombam area and expansion of Power Sub-Station at Yurembam both in Imphal West District, has further reduced the available land area for cultivation.

As a result of it, the production of food grains has decreased and the livelihood of farmers has been crippled thus leading to poor conditions of the family. Until and unless, a law is enforced by the govt. to deal with land utilisation especially cultivable lands, the problem of diminishing agricultural land would not be able to solve. There is also the urgent need to organise various awareness programmes and campaigns at different parts of the state to bring about a change in the mindset of the people for proper utilisation of the available agricultural land in Manipur.

[http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=education.Science\\_and\\_Technology.Shrinking\\_of\\_agricultural\\_land\\_in\\_Manipur\\_By\\_Emelda\\_Ahongshangbam](http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=education.Science_and_Technology.Shrinking_of_agricultural_land_in_Manipur_By_Emelda_Ahongshangbam)

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013

(Neha Singh)

### **20 Million Tons of Wheat Wasted in India Every Year: Report**

**(Business line, October 25, 2013)**

A report by Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), UK suggests that India's poor harvesting methods coupled with inadequate storage and distribution system contribute significantly to the food wastage globally.

According to the report the reasons (for wastage) range from poor engineering and agricultural practices, inadequate transport and storage infrastructure to supermarkets demanding cosmetically perfect foodstuff and encouraging consumers to overbuy through sales promotion offers. The report highlighted the food-water-energy nexus which means increase in yield would result in increase in demand for energy and water. It estimated that by 2030, there will be 30 per cent increase in global demand for water, and energy

requirements would increase by 40 per cent by 2035.

This loss can be reduced by mechanical handling in field, gutters on buildings, sealing cracks and holes to stop rodents, installing temperature control for perishable products and standardised transport crates. If we are able to curb this loss, it would add about \$100 billion to the Indian economy.

Retailers need to curb wastage at the supermarket level by not promoting buy-one-get-one free schemes or food at half-price that leads to over purchase behaviour by the consumer. The report also said that the hospitality industry, globally, wastes about one-third of its procured food. At the household level, 30-50 per cent of the food bought ends up in the bin.

[http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/20-mt-of-wheat-wasted-in-india-every-year-report/article5272311.ece?ref=wl\\_industry-and-economy](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/20-mt-of-wheat-wasted-in-india-every-year-report/article5272311.ece?ref=wl_industry-and-economy)

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013

(Neha Singh)

### **LAW AND JUSTICE**

## **Madras High Court Comes out with New Norms to Designate Senior Advocates**

*(LiveLaw, October 29, 2013)*

With a view to bring greater transparency in the judicial system, the Madras High Court (HC) has come out with new norms on conferring the designation of Senior Advocate.

According to the norms, for an advocate to be appointed as a senior advocate in the Madras HC, completion of 15 years of professional experience and landmark judgments delivered by such a person, are the

two main prerequisites. The other requirements include declared gross income from the profession not less than Rs. 7 lakh annually for the past three years; at least 15 judgments where the advocate has contributed to the growth of law, in the preceding three years.

It is for the first time that the norm for designating senior advocates has been made public by a HC. The move was welcomed by the Madras Bar Association.

<http://www.livelaw.in/madras-high-court-comes-out-with-new-norms-to-designate-senior-advocates/>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013

(Deepti Somani)

### **DEFENCE**

## **MHA Seeks to Install Mobile Towers along China Border**

*(Vijaita Singh, The Indian Express, October 28, 2013)*

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to prepare a feasibility report on installing mobile phone towers in far-flung areas on Indo-China border. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which is deployed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), had requested the MHA to explore the possibility of telecommunication facilities at the border outposts.

A senior ITBP official said, "We want to monitor the situation sitting here in Delhi too. There are occasions when the information takes lot of time reaching the concerned officer, this delay our response time also..... Communication is still a big challenge for our jawans posted in these areas. We do have satellite phones and our communication set up but they also have their limitations."

The government has sanctioned Rs 1,260 crore to fortify the BOPs and

upgrade the facilities for ITBP jawans, to be spent in a phased manner till 2017. The funds will be used to improve the living conditions of the ITBP jawans at 69 posts along the 3,488 km border. Minister of State for Home R P N Singh said, "At 69 outposts (of ITBP), we want to give solar-backed power in an eco-friendly way so that our jawans in front posts have electricity 24 hours... this is one of the big spending that we are going to do in ITBP and (also) upgrade forward posts."

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/mha-seeks-to-install-mobile-towers-along-china-border/1188088/>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013

(Jeet Singh)

## GENDER

### Women's Education in India can Bring down Under 5 Mortality by 61 per cent: UNESCO

(Trithesh Nandan, *Governance Now*, September 24, 2013)

As India has one of the world's highest child mortality rates, the latest UN study says that rate would have been down by three-fifths had women in the country completed secondary education.

"If all women in India had completed secondary education, the under-five mortality rate would be 61 per cent lower," says United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in its latest report. The global monitoring report has been released on the eve of the UN General Assembly (GN) discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

The report says that lives of 2.1 million children under five were saved between 1990 and 2009 because there was improvement in girls' education. The report finds south and west Asia and sub-Saharan Africa to be the places where early marriages of girls take place. "In these regions, 3.4 million young women give birth by the age of 17. If all young women completed primary schooling, this would result in 340,000 fewer early births, and if they all completed secondary education the total would fall by two million," the study notes. The report also points out that children in India still lack equal access to education. It says that the quality of education improves economic growth. The report, prepared by an independent team, will be published in early 2014.

<http://www.governancenow.com/view/s/think-tanks/womens-education-india-can-bring-down-u-5-mortality-61-percentunesco>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

### India Ranks 101 on Global Gender Gap Index

(PTI, October 26, 2013)

Indicating a poor state of affairs on gender parity front, India has been ranked at a low 101st position on a global Gender Gap Index despite an improvement by four places since last year. The index, compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), has ranked 136 countries on how well resources and opportunities are divided between men and women in four broad areas of economy, education, politics, education and health.

While India has been ranked very high at ninth place globally for political empowerment, it has got second-lowest position (135th) for health and survival. Its rankings for economic participation and opportunity are also low at 124th and for educational attainment at 120th.

While India has moved up four positions from its 105th position in 2012, it still remains lowest-ranked among the five BRICS nations. Top-four positions on the global level have been retained by Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The countries that are ranked below India also include Japan (105th), UAE (109th), Republic of Korea (111th), Bahrain (112th) and Qatar (115th).

The overall ranking of 101st is also its highest in the past seven years. India had ranked better at 98th position in the WEF's inaugural Gender Gap Index in 2006.

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/131026/lifestyle-offbeat/article/india-ranks-101-global-gender-gap-index>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Deepti Somani)

## Gaps in Surrogacy

### Bill

(Aarti Dhar, *The Hindu*, October 27, 2013)

Women's health activists have asked the Centre not to rush into finalising the 'Assisted Reproductive Technologies (Regulation) Bill, 2013' and, instead, hold wider deliberations with women's rights organisations, queer rights, human rights and legal rights organisations across the country.

Sama Resource Group for Women and Health notes that the bill in its present form "is inadequate in protecting and safeguarding the rights and health of women going for IVF techniques, recruited as surrogates and children born through commercial surrogacy."

The group said, "the Draft Bill should effectively regulate and monitor consultancies, surrogacy agents, surrogacy home operators, private agencies and travel/tourism firms, law firms involved in offering and promoting ART and surrogacy services."

The suggestions also includes the pattern of payment - in the best interest of the surrogate - to be clearly stated in the bill apart from provisions for the status of the child in case of death of individual or the couple commissioning surrogacy.

With respect to definitions, the present draft defines 'Couple' as a relationship between a male person and female person who live together in a shared household through a relationship in the nature of marriage. Therefore, the Bill has confined itself to provision of [Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) within a heteronormative framework...as per the definition gay couple(s) cannot access ARTs in India, once the Bill is implemented. Current clause in the Draft Bill is discriminatory, baseless, and a violation of rights to equality, freedom, and reproduction, claims Sama.

### SECTION 3: SOCIETY

<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/society/gaps-in-surrogacy-bill/article5276062.ece>

Date Accessed: 27.10.2013  
(Ashwin Varghese)

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **Domestic Workers in India Face Horrific Abuses: Human Rights Watch**

(*The New Indian Express*, October 28, 2013)

Roughly 40 per cent of domestic workers globally are employed in Asia, and domestic workers in countries like India face “horrific abuses”, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW). “Despite the widespread problem, Asia has been slow to enact reforms to protect domestic workers,” the US-based rights body said along with the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

“Domestic workers from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia experience horrific abuses. The governments of these countries should pick up the pace of reform to introduce long overdue protections for both domestic workers at home and those migrating abroad. More than 25 countries have improved legal protections for domestic workers, with many of the strongest reforms being in Latin America. Philippines is the only Asian country to have ratified the Domestic Workers Convention.”

HRW, IDWN and the ITUC have documented many domestic workers in Asia and those migrating from Asia to the Middle East who experience a wide range of abuses. These include unpaid wages, restrictions on leaving the households where they work, and excessive work hours with no rest days. Some may face psychological, physical or sexual abuse and can get

trapped in situations of forced labour, including trafficking.

“In Asia, domestic workers’ and migrants’ rights groups and trade unions have focused on building awareness and political will to lay the groundwork for future ratifications. The most active dialogue is taking place in Indonesia, India and Nepal. The report notes incremental reforms in India, Singapore and Thailand.”

<http://newindianexpress.com/world/Domestic-workers-in-India-face-horrific-abuses-Human-Rights-Watch/2013/10/28/article1860414.ece>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

## **DEMOGRAPHY**

### **Uttarakhand Needs Smarter Projects, World Bank's India Head Says**

(*The Economic Times*, October 27, 2013)

“Rain and flash floods have pushed back development works in Uttarakhand by decades and the challenge at the moment is to build smarter projects without impacting the fragile environment of the hilly region,” said World Bank’s country director Onno Ruhl...after the approval of a \$250 million credit for the rehabilitation work in the state by the World Bank’s board.

He said “this project will incorporate lessons from previous national and global post-disaster recovery projects to ensure that recovery is targeted, effective and more resilient to future disasters.” It was also noted that the assistance will help the government of Uttarakhand with immediate relief efforts by building houses and public infrastructure, including small roads and bridges. A crucial aspect of the programme will be to put in place information and communication systems to give early warnings.

The article points out that, India had sought assistance from multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for undertaking rehabilitation work in Uttarakhand. ADB, too, is expected to finalise its assistance package.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/environment/developmental-issues/uttarakhand-needs-smarter-projects-world-banks-india-head-says/articleshow/24774119.cms>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Ashwin Varghese)

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### German Minister Demands 'Complete' Answers for US Spying

(*The Huffington Post*, October 27, 2013)

Germany's Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich has sought "complete information" from Washington on the alleged U.S. surveillance of Chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone and any other snooping. The accusations surfaced when a report by news magazine-Der Spiegel-alleged the presence of a document in the NSA database indicating Merkel's cellphone being listed as a target in 2002.

The Interior Minister further stated that if there has been an interception of cell phones in Germany, then there has been a violation of a German law and offenders must be held accountable. Merkel had earlier brought the issue up with the US President Barack Obama and complained against her phone being monitored. German spy chiefs plan to discuss the issue in Washington shortly.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/27/us-spying-on-germany\\_n\\_4167717.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/27/us-spying-on-germany_n_4167717.html)

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Pallavi Ghosh)

### UN Rights Expert Urges Laws Supporting Right to Food

(*The Jurist*, October 27, 2013)

In the global battle against chronic hunger and malnutrition, many nations have joined hands to recognise and

adopt the right to food as a fundamental human right.

Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, attributed the progress to the collaborative efforts of both state and non-state entities. He said further that interlocking contributions have led to substantial inroads in resource production, food access and social protection of the right to food.

According to De Schutter, governments can incorporate right to food into their constitutions and laws and the courts can thereafter uphold it as a fundamental economic and social right. Non-government entities can continue to monitor compliance with the law.

De Schutter's report will be part of the 2014 Committee on World Food Security's (CFS's) review of progress made under the Right to Food Voluntary Guidelines adopted in Rome in 2004.

<http://jurist.org/paperchase/2013/10/un-rights-expert-urges-laws-supporting-right-to-food.php>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Pallavi Ghosh)

## SOUTH ASIA

### Bangladesh : Paying the price of a deadlock on Caretaker Government

(*The Guardian*, October 27, 2013)

The violent protests in Bangladesh initiated by the opposition party and its supporters demanding the formation of a caretaker government to oversee the upcoming elections poses yet another challenge to smooth and peaceful transfer of power.

Clashes between the police officials and activists have worsened the situation as people on both sides continue to be injured and die. The shutdown continued till the night of October 29. Among other instances of

violence include explosions of homemade bombs in Dhaka and elsewhere, torching of vehicles and bombs thrown at the official homes of two senior justices and the offices of four television stations and newspapers late on Saturday October 26.

A system of caretaker governments that took people from outside the parties had been in operation for 15 years, but the government scrapped it after a Supreme Court ruling declared that the system contradicted the constitution.

The country has been alternately ruled by Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia since 1991. But peaceful transfers of power have remained problematic.

<http://www.theguardian.com/global/2013/oct/27/bangladesh-clashes-strike-tension-mounts>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Pallavi Ghosh)

## Bhutan to Become World's First 100 per cent Organic Country

(*Daily Mirror*, October 24, 2013)

Bhutan is looking forward to be the world leader in organic farming. The Ministry of Agriculture in the country has come up with a national organic programme which aims to make Bhutan the first country to be 100 percent organic. "Pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilisers have found little acceptance among Bhutan's population and have only been used on around 1.5 per cent of the country's agricultural land. Soon it is hoped this figure will drop to zero."

The small country of approximately 700,000 inhabitants was virtually closed off to the outside world until the 1960s but has begun opening up in recent decades. This programme is targeted to be successful by 2020. The country is also planning to increase its agricultural productivity.

This type of policy is a result of the importance Bhutan gives to the population's "gross national happiness" above economic growth by looking at the spiritual, physical, social and environmental health of its citizens and natural environment.

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/business/features/37546-bhutan-looks-to-become-worlds-first-100-organic-country.html>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013  
(Anjana John)

## MIDDLE-EAST

### **Saudi Women Drive to Protest Against Ban**

(*The Guardian*, October 26, 2013)

60 women drove cars in Saudi Arabia as a mark of protest against the ban placed on women prohibiting them to drive in the kingdom on October 26. Videos of women driving have been circulated through The YouTube apart from 50 other phone messages that show or claim women to have been driving.

There have been no arrests or fines imposed by the police officials this time. However, previous attempts of protesting against the ban have witnessed strong official action with activists being imprisoned for even a week.

The issue has been brought up in the shura (advisory) council and the situation seems to have warmed up for the women. Though, there is no specific Saudi law banning women from driving, women are not issued licenses. Therefore, some of the protestors got their driving licenses from abroad.

The ban is the handiwork of a few powerful clerics who influence the monarchy to enforce the driving ban on the grounds that it will spread "licentiousness.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/26/saudi-arabia-woman-driving-car-ban>

Date Accessed: 28.10.2013  
(Pallavi Ghosh)

## EUROPE

### **IMF Urges Slovenia to Recapitalise Banks to Avert Bailout**

(*The Guardian*, October 28, 2013)

Slovenia, the fastest-growing euro zone member in 2007, was badly hit by the global crisis due to its dependence on exports. Therefore, since 2012 it has been in a recession caused by lower demand for its exports, a credit crunch and falling domestic consumption. Presently, "Slovenia is struggling to avoid becoming the next euro zone state to take an international bailout under the weight of 7.9 billion Euros (\$10.9bn) of bad loans in the mostly state-owned banking sector." Therefore, it has been advised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to immediately address the issue of recapitalising its banks.

According to Bank of Slovenia's governor, Bostjan Jazbec, Slovenia will recapitalise its banks later this year or next year based on results of external stress tests of Slovenian banks. "The government has reserved 1.2 bn Euros for recapitalisation of its main banks, but analysts believe the tests may show significantly higher capital needs. The government hopes to avert a bailout by raising taxes, cutting spending and through privatisations including telecoms provider Telekom Slovenia."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/28/slovenia-banks-recapitalisation-imf-eurozone>

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(Karishma Mutreja)

## OPINIONS

### New Economic Model For Sustainable Economy in a World of Finite Resources

(Dan O'Neill & Rob Dietz, *New Economics*, October 21, 2013)

The author argues that the economic growth is the number one priority of a country but this model of growth has sharply increased inequality in recent years. At the same time, increased economic activity has led to greater resource use, dangerous levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, and declining biodiversity. There is strong evidence that economic growth has become uneconomic, in the sense that it is costing people more than it's worth.

According to author policies should focus on reducing resource usage, limiting inequality, fixing the financial system, creating meaningful jobs, reorganising business, and changing the way of measuring progress. Taking inequality into account for measuring economic progress will be helpful. Studies show large gap between the rich and the poor results in a variety of health and social problems across society, including increased crime, more mental illness, and decreased trust. Moreover, inequality also has negative environmental consequences. Higher inequality leads to greater status competition and thus to higher levels of resource use than are necessary to meet people's needs.

Following strategies could be used to reduce inequality:

1. **Introducing a minimum and maximum income.** A recent survey conducted in Britain found that 74 per cent of Britons support the idea of

a decent minimum income for all people.

2. **Including equality to measure progress.** Our main economic indicator, the GDP is a poor measure of social welfare.
3. Instead of GDP, we should have indicators that measure the things that really matter to people, such as health, happiness, equality, and meaningful employment.

Dan O'Neill and Rob Dietz are authors of **Enough is enough: building a sustainable economy in a world of finite resources**.

<http://www.neweconomics.org/blog/entry/the-new-economics-of-enough>

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(Neha Singh)