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COVER STORY

DIRECT BENEFIT SCHEME IN INDIA



WEEKLY ROUND UP OF NEWS ON POLICY

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Cover Story

DIRECT BENEFIT SCHEME IN INDIA

Government of India since its independence has given lot of focus on social policy in its planning procedure. Commodity line and labour line are two pillars of Indian social policy, in which subsidy and *Public Distribution System* (PDS) are examples of former and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) of later. Cash benefit is the latest introduction for strengthening the same. Cash transfers are the new tools for resolving all the problems that plague service delivery in India.

India status

Cash transfers in India are neither new (scholarships, pensions and even NREGA payments are all cash transfers) nor does the much hyped roll-out of Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) through Aadhar in 21 districts involve any scheme which is not already a cash transfer.

Indian Government has planned to begin cash transfer of phase-1 covering 34 schemes and 43 districts. Selection of district is on the basis of eighty residents having aadhar number and linked account. On the basis of phase- 1 learning, programme will be expanded. It aims to transfer Rs 3.2 trillion a year to beneficiaries of its subsidy schemes and welfare programmes. For the time being, it is only being tested in 20 districts to provide pensions to elderly and disabled people in the MGNREGS and to provide cash transfers to replace subsidies on gas cylinders, which is used for cooking starting with 10 districts in the country.

Cash Transfer is a tool that can be applied to any sector that uses resource transfers or aims to increase access to basic services. Cash has most often been seen as an alternative to food aid not only can it be complementary to food rations, but it has also proven to be an alternative or complement to any in-kind provision of assistance. Cash can increase access to services such as healthcare and education by providing necessary funds to pay for these services and related expenses.

Types of cash transfer

There are three types of cash transfer schemes existing in the world distinguished on the basis of conditionality, targeting and frequency of transfer.

1. Conditionality

- a. **Conditional cash transfer:** direct cash provision mandating fulfilment of specified condition from intended beneficiaries. It serves two purposes of cash transfer and modifying individual/ household behaviour to achieve broader social/ national goal.
Eg. Bolsa Familia in Brazil
- b. **Unconditional cash transfer:** simply transfer cash to cope with vulnerability without inducing any behavioural change

2. Targeting

- a. Targeted: support only selecting section. Targeting is based on geography or income etc.
- b. Universal: everybody receives the transfer.

3. Frequency of transfer

- a. **Systemic:** the regular recurring payment is made to the beneficiary.
- b. **Ad hoc:** there is one time lump transfer.

Technology in cash transfer programmes

Aid agencies are using innovative means to deliver cash transfers and minimise the potential for fraud.

- Kenya is using bank transfers through mobile phones for a cash transfer programme in response to post-election violence in 2008.
- In Malawi, tested smart cards as a delivery system in the *Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications* (DECT) project is used. The start-up costs for setting up the system were substantial, and the project did not fully capitalise on the infrastructure it had created. However, these cards exposed rural women to financial services.
- In Swaziland, Save the Children established accounts for their beneficiaries and issued ATM cards; in doing so, the organisation has created a level of banking infrastructure and familiarity with financial services that did not exist prior to the programme.
- In an effort to prevent refugees from 'recycling', *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) has employed biometric verification mechanisms, using iris scans for Afghans and fingerprinting for Guatemalans, to ensure that returning refugees cannot repeat the return process in order to receive multiple grants.

How do poor people spend when they receive via cash transfer?

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bharat, a trade union of self-employed women, in partnership with UNICEF conducted the study in 22 villages of Madhya Pradesh in central India from June 2011 to June 2012. An estimated 6,000 people in these villages received cash transfers funded by UNICEF during this period. The findings are as follows:

1. Cash transfers had a capacity of having a transformative effect on local communities, household and individuals by unlocking constraints to development.
2. Majority of people preferred cash transfers instead to food subsidies.
3. Their diet was diversified including fruits, vegetables, fish and meat apart from staple diet like rice and wheat. Most significantly, malnutrition among children, especially girls, had reduced in those villages where cash transfers had been introduced.
4. The study strongly refutes concerns about cash being wasted on alcohol or non-essential goods by beneficiaries.
5. Cash transfers lessened loan dependency. Many women opted to go for medical treatment rather than settling for home remedies.

Lack of bank connectivity in the countryside emerged as the major problem. The study further recommended unconditional cash transfers over conditional ones as imposing conditions leads to corruption, and conditions are difficult to fulfil since basic services are still inaccessible to millions in the countryside.

1. Table: Advantages and Disadvantages of Cash Benefits

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility: Cash enables beneficiaries to choose a more appropriate set of goods and services that better corresponds to their individual priorities than a 'one size fits all' in-kind assistance package. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational capacity: while organisations have systems, policies and staff in place for delivering in-kind assistance, these are not necessarily capable of or appropriate for implementing cash transfer projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency: Delivering cash avoids the large shipping, storage, transport and distribution costs of in-kind assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social use: cash is easier and more flexible to use than in-kind goods and may therefore be more readily 'wasted' or used in a manner that does not serve household welfare.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic impact: Transfers inject cash into local markets, with multiplier effects that can stimulate the local economy and help it recover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation: Inflation would diminish the value of a fixed cash transfer. The impact of the cash transfers themselves might cause local inflation, which erodes the value of the transfer and also disadvantages non-recipients.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity and choice: Cash can provide assistance to beneficiaries in a manner that enables them to make decisions about their own welfare in ways that in-kind assistance does not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting: Cash may be more attractive to people than in-kind assistance, increasing the chance of people undermining targeting systems through efforts to include those who do not meet the targeting criteria.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender: Because women typically have more control over food resources than cash in their households, cash could disempower women. Cash might provoke more household conflict regarding expenditure priorities than might be the case with in-kind assistance.

What is the present debate all about?

There has been a lot of debate about the apt model for the disbursement of cash such as whether the cash transfer should be universal or targeted; to a family or the individual but the major debate is around its conditionality or unconditionality.

Conditional Cash Transfer

Countries like Brazil, which began with cash transfer schemes, follow a conditional model wherein people are required to fulfil certain criteria in order to avail the scheme. The criterion is generally directed towards social protection and human development by making it

mandatory for individuals to take advantage of health, education and other benefits. Conditions in the case of a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) are specific rather than holistic; they do not prohibit but incentivise. Thus, they do not require a household to reduce its consumption of demerit goods but allow it to supplement the consumption of merit goods.

The CCT programmes have also been used to address the needs of vulnerable sections of the population such as internally displaced persons (Colombia), physically challenged persons (Jamaica) and households affected by HIV/AIDS (Zambia). In Chile, the programme makes psychosocial assistance available to all beneficiaries in an attempt to help them acquire the social skills and training needed to escape poverty. The scope of the programmes has also expanded beyond school enrolment and immunisation to cover aspects like secondary school completion (Mexico) and adult education, microcredit and housing (Brazil) (de la Brière & Rawlings, 2006). **Consequently, there is an over-all development spread across various areas other than just economic empowerment. Supporters argue that the twin objectives of poverty reduction and capacity building of the poor go hand-in-hand and not separately.**

Critics of the unconditional transfer argue that the model perpetuates dependency amongst the weaker sections and make them prone to alcoholism and deliberate unemployment since the funds substitute for income sources. This in turn has a negative impact on the economic growth as there is a decline in the revenue earned from businesses and employment opportunities.

Cash Transfer across the Globe

Cash transfer schemes have been running in different countries like Latin America, Africa and Asia successfully. Each country follows a different or a combination of models. Some of them are described below briefly

2. Table: Cash transfer model in different countries

Country	Model
Indonesia	The programme cost US \$2.3 billion. The Post Office is used as cash delivery mechanism and disbursement of cash in two instalments through community leaders. Energy Compensation Cards are issued. It was found that there existed illegal diversion of funds and there is a lack of a dedicated complaint registration.
Iran	Cash transfer was provided under the Reform Act. Cash was transferred directly. Bank infrastructure was developed and government has been taking a pro-active role in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness.
Mexico	There is a system of differential transfer on the basis of the status of the recipients of households. There were distribution centres and from 2003 there was a shift to debit card. The transfers were made to female heads. An independent impact evaluation protocol was also.
Brazil – Bolsa Familia (2003)	Bolsa Familia programme started in 2003 by merging existing conditional and unconditional cash transfer schemes. It unified four major programmes: Bolsa Escola-a minimum income grant to primary education; Fome Zero and Bolsa Alimentacao-two income grants related to food security; and Vale Gas-a subsidy scheme for buying cooking gas.
Columbia – Familias en Acción (2000)	In 2000, the Government of Colombia launched a CCT-based programme called Programa Familias en Acción for providing nutrition and education subsidy to children. Under this, each beneficiary receives a cash transfer based on the condition that their school age children attend school regularly and their younger children attend regular health visits
South Africa – Child Support Grant (1998)	In 1995 the new democratic government of South Africa established a committee to evaluate the existing system of state support and to explore new alternative policy options targeting children and families. In April 1998, the cabinet approved the implementation of the National Cash Transfer Programme called Child Support Grant (CSG).
Bangladesh – Food for Education (1993)	The Food For Education (FFE) scheme was originally launched on a large-scale pilot basis. Instead of cash, food is transferred to needy families on a monthly basis.

THE BRAZILIAN MODEL

Cash transfers in Brazil started from the bottom and diffused upward and outward, which suggests that kinks in programme administration could be smoothed out at smaller scales and then scaled up. By contrast, India's top-down, rushed approach provides little space for weaknesses to be identified and rectified at the local level so that the most effective modalities of the programme can be scaled nationally

Key Features

Since 2003, 12 million families have joined the scheme and received around \$12 a month.

- ✓ Inequality has been cut by 17% per cent in just five years, which is perhaps one of the most dramatic achievements in welfare ever recorded. The poverty rate has also fallen from 42.7 per cent to 28.8 per cent
- ✓ Conditionality is one of the unique features of this programme that makes it mandatory for the families claiming aid to send their children to schools, get full sets of vaccinations for them in the first five years. Moreover, mothers are also required to attend both pre and post-natal care.
- ✓ This has not only improved healthcare status, but also helped in poverty reduction and boosting education levels for just 1 per cent of GDP.
- ✓ All the names of recipients are publicly available on a website. Independent evaluations found that 80 per cent of the money is reaching the poor.
- ✓ All payments are put through the banking system. Recipients use a debit card to draw out the money from their bank accounts at ATMs. The network of social services centres has increased from 1,000 in 2003 to 9,000 in 2010.

The Brazilian model Cash transfer acted as a game changer not only for the erstwhile struggling economy of the developing nation but also for the world in terms of the development and welfare state model.

There have been many challenges in the implementation of the scheme. Some of the issues have been listed below:

- Any cash transfer scheme would require that the transfers be indexed to inflation in the local area, which is highly complex. Moreover, transferring cash to households requires significant implementation capabilities. The first step is to identify all potential beneficiary households, which remains incomplete and daunting in India.
- India's highly-touted unique ID programme, even after issuing an estimated 280m ID cards over the course of three years, has failed to guarantee that the transfer is targeted accurately to only poor households.
- The next step for the cash transfer to work is to link the national ID to a bank account. In India, this seemingly simple step is a huge challenge considering that a recent World Bank study estimated that bank account penetration across India is 35% per cent, a rate that falls even lower for the poorest households. Moreover, many poor households do not have access to bank branches or ATMs.
- Furthermore, there are persistent cases of non-payment, late payment, or inadequate payment to beneficiaries. Thus, it remains unclear as to how the citizens will be able to file grievances and how the government will redress these grievances.

India's top-down, rushed approach provides little space for weaknesses to be identified and rectified at the local level so that the most effective modalities of the programme can be scaled nationally.

Conclusion

The Indian Government's ambitions of establishing cash transfer system at the proposed size and scope has the potential to deliver significant welfare gains. However, policymakers should be wary of overambitious implementation targets; in the rush for implementation the government has ignored its current administrative constraints and gone for nationwide scaling which will likely result in failure.

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SC/STs ahead of rest in Child Sex Ratio

(*The Times of India*, October 30, 2013)

Latest census data released on October 28, 2013 shows that sex ratio of Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) is better than that of others. The Child Sex Ratio (CSR) among tribals in India is 957, well ahead of the ratio of 933 among Dalits and 910 in the population excluding these two categories. The pattern holds good for most of the major states, with a few exceptions and slight variations.

The CSR, which measures the number of girls aged 0-6 years for every 1,000 boys of the same age, is a better indicator than the overall sex ratio for several reasons. Firstly, the overall sex ratio is distorted by the predominantly male inter-state migration which boosts the sex ratio in states from which there is a net out migration and reduces it in states which receive a lot of migrants. Secondly, since women typically live longer than men, this too affects the overall sex ratio.

Of the five states with the worst CSR - Haryana, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Delhi and Gujarat - Haryana, Punjab and Delhi have no ST population. In each of them, the CSR among Dalits was significantly better than among the non-SC/ST population. In Gujarat, the CSR for the ST population was nearly 80 points higher than for the 'general' population, and in J&K the gap was close to 60.

The exceptions to the trend are the three southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and Assam in the northeast. In each of these states, the CSR for STs was lower than that for SCs or for the non-SC/ST population. However, in all of them, all the ratios were among the best in the country.

Several other findings suggest that this pattern might have a relationship with 'backwardness' denying access to sex

determination. The urban CSR is worse than the rural in most states. Similarly, states regarded as backward, like Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, do better than 'developed' ones like Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat.

There is also a regional pattern with the south and the east clearly outperforming the north and the west.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/SC/STs-ahead-of-rest-in-child-sex-ratio/articleshow/24893704.cms>

Date Accessed: 1.11.2013

(Amrutha Jose Pampackal)

Rickshaw pullers in Delhi: a considerable but ignored vote bank

(Sushruti Tripathi, *The Hindu*, October 31, 2013)

The article notes that rickshaw pullers, being seasonal migrants who return to their home states to cast their votes, are not wooed by political parties despite their large presence in the Capital.

Conservative estimates show that there are approximately six lakh cycle rickshaws plying on Delhi streets, the Joint Commissioner of Traffic Police was, estimated this number at around 10 lakh. The author notes that, "If such a large number of people were to vote in the upcoming elections in Delhi, their choice could change the very outcome of the elections as they would form roughly six per cent of the total number of voters. Needless to say, parties would have left no stone unturned to woo their voters. But that is not the case."

Madhu Purnima Kishwar, founder of 'Manushi' - an organisation that works for the welfare of rickshaw pullers - believes that the primary reason for this is that as seasonal migrants do not form a vote bank in Delhi. "A majority of them come to the capital from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh,

West Bengal and other States in search of a livelihood."

However, there is increasing support for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Javed, who has been pulling a rickshaw in Delhi since 1996 says he and his friends "are tired of the current government's attitude toward problems they face and are going to vote for the AAP."

The author notes, "with the relatively insignificant percentage of voters that Delhi's rickshaw-wallas make, it will be interesting to see what impact they have - both on the elections in terms of number of voters as also on the government's attitude towards treatment of non-motorised public transport in the Capital."

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/though-a-million-strong-they-matter-little/article5299556.ece>

Date Accessed: 02.11.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

Growing pessimism among spenders affecting Indian economy adversely

(*Firstpost*, November 4, 2013)

According to some market researchers, the deep pessimism among spenders who contribute to approximately 60 per cent of the Indian GDP is a prime reason for the current economic slowdown in India.

An *Economic Times* report reveals that after the subdued sales during the festival season, some of the automakers have decided to extend shutdown of their units in Pune in order to realign their production to the high inventory levels. These companies include Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, General Motors India and Volkswagen India.

The reason for this is that the companies had dispatched a higher number of vehicles to the dealers anticipating a demand hike during the festive season. This could not be made possible, resulting in higher dealer inventory. Therefore, with the higher company dispatches and lower sales during the festival season, unsold stocks with dealers have increased.

The middle class is spending more on daily items and saving less because of the increased costs of essential items. In such a situation, it is the discretionary spends that are squeezed, which is evident through the poor sales record of the vehicles.

http://www.firstpost.com/business/wh-at-green-shoots-auto-majors-to-shut-units-after-cheerless-festival-1209667.html?utm_source=ref_article

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013

(Pallavi Ghosh)

Commerce ministry pushes for steps to help small exporters

(Asit Ranjan Mishra, *Live Mint*, November 4, 2013)

Commerce ministry has asked Export Credit Guarantee Corp. of India Ltd (ECGC) to draw up a mechanism for small firms to be paid a significant part of their shipment dues while they await payments from their overseas buyers.

ECGC is the fifth largest credit insurer in the world in terms of coverage of national exports, and provides export credit insurance facilities to exporters and banks in India to deal with payment defaults arising from political and commercial events. Typically, exporters ship their products after taking insurance from the state-owned ECGC and wait for the money to arrive. ECGC guarantees payment if the importers end up not paying their credit dues. But until then, the exporters, especially the small exporters, are squeezed for working capital.

A committee headed by G. Padmanabhan, executive director at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), set up by the central bank was the first to propose a process called “factoring” to make up for this lag and provide capital to small exporters in the meantime. “The committee observed that ECGC issues various types of policies to the exporter, but these policies are not assigned or endorsed to any third party. Due to non-assignment, the Factoring Company (a bank or financial intermediary that advances most of the invoiced amount to an exporter immediately after a shipment and the balance upon receipt of funds from the importer) does not have any control over the policy. In view of this, the Committee recommends that ECGC should design a policy for Factoring Companies for post-shipment financing. With the availability of ECGC cover to the Factoring Company, Exporter will also be benefited as both the facilities, such as financing and credit

protection, will be made available under single roof.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/pToeeATasPcNpUDEqJMpK/Commerce-ministry-pushes-for-steps-to-help-small-exporters.html>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013

(Neha Singh)

India likely to become the third largest economy by 2030: Report

(*Economic Times*, November 6, 2013)

A Standard Chartered report has predicted that India will become the third largest economy by 2030 behind China and the USA. The report observes that India only needs a modest set of reforms to trigger a growth revival and emerge from the current slowdown. Indian policy makers appear to be responding to the concerns, with monetary policy now firmly signaling an anti-inflation stance and measures being taken to address the funding of the large current account deficit, the report said. It also projected that the world is in the midst of an economic “super-cycle”- a period of historically high global growth, lasting a generation or more, driven by opening up of new markets, increasing trade, high rates of investment, urbanization and technological innovation.

The report says that the super-cycle is transforming the world economy and the share of emerging market economies could rise to 63 per cent of the world GDP by 2030 from 38 per cent currently. The major driving forces of the rapid growth would be urbanization and the growth of the middle classes, especially in Asia.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-likely-to-become-3rd-largest-economy-by-2030-report/articleshow/25327223.cms>

Date Accessed: 7.11.2013

(Simi Sunny)

Sugar economy faces crisis in riot- hit UP belt

(Anil Sasi , Surbhi Khyati, *The Indian Express*, November 6, 2013)

Riot-hit Muzaffarnagar may be looking at a crisis in its sugar economy. This has major economic implications for Muzaffarnagar, where farmers make up nearly 70 per cent of the population.

The government generally wraps up meetings with millers and farmers for designating cane areas to factories by September, after which the cane commissioner issues 'reservation orders' directing farmers to supply cane to their designated mill. This year, the government has completed the process of reservation and declared dates for 24 cooperative sector sugar mills to start crushing. However, private sugar mills have declined to obey. The industry has also demanded that the government declare the State Advisory Price (SAP) for 2013-14 before the mills start crushing.

Implications:

- Large number of youth may find themselves unemployed
- Farmers can't prepare for their next crop, wheat, which is generally sown by the second week of November
- Cane growers may have to burn their crops to make way for wheat or sell at a much lower price than the SAP of Rs 280 per quintal fixed in 2012-13

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/sugar-economy-faces-crisis-in-riothit-up-belt/1191378/0>

Date Accessed: 6.11.2013

(Divashri Mathur)

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Sale of 5kg LPG cylinders allowed at pumps across the Nation

(*Livemint*, November 4, 2013)

“After the success of pilot programmes in five metro cities, 5kg cooking gas (LPG) cylinders will now be sold at petrol pumps across the country. The scheme, launched on October 5, allowed petrol pumps owned and operated by oil companies in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore to sell the 5kg cylinders. Company owned and operated outlets make up for three per cent of the 47,000 petrol pumps in the country. Now, the sale of these smaller cylinders is permitted at all petrol pumps across the country. The smaller cylinders will be sold at market rates and will not be subsidised. The scheme, however, will be deferred in Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, where assembly elections are being held in November and December.

The scheme will be a boon for the migratory population such as students, IT professionals and BPO employees, as well as people with odd work hours. It offers them the flexibility to pick up cylinders and obtain refills at the time of their choice because petrol stations are open for longer hours than LPG dealers. This decision is expected to benefit the common man as sale of 5kg LPG cylinders at market price with minimal documentation would facilitate easier availability of LPG at more selling points.”

<http://www.livemint.com/Industry/Vp8Moi7p5hXuy2aNAQZ3JL/Sale-of-5kg-LPG-cylinders-allowed-at-pumps-across-nation.html>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Karishma Mutreja)

Portugal may stop granting citizenship to Goa residents

(Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, *The Times Of India*, November 5, 2013)

The Portuguese embassy in India has recommended to its government that the country should end the policy of granting nationality to Goan residents born before December 20, 1961, and their descendants to improve bilateral ties between the two countries and avoid legal disputes over dual citizenship.

According to a senior government official the Portuguese Government has to take a political call on whether to continue with this practice and for how long. Portugal does not have any cut-off date for granting nationality to people from former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Goa was liberated from Portuguese rule in December 1961 and ties have been uneven between the two nations. Having snapped diplomatic ties over the status of Goa in 1955, they were only restored in 1974. In 2012-13, of around 2,200 Goa residents who got Portuguese nationality, 500 were government employees which are a matter of concern for the Indian state. Portuguese Government officials acknowledge that for most applicants, the objective of citizenship is entry into the European Union (EU) to try and find work in the more prosperous parts of the continent. Anyone becoming a Portuguese national has to give up Indian citizenship as the country does not allow dual nationality. **Since 2011, names of 1,968 Goan residents with Portuguese nationality have been deleted from the voters list in Goa. The policy has led to several legal disputes over Goan government officials said to have Portuguese nationality.**

<http://lite.epaper.timesofindia.com/mobile.aspx?article=yes&pageid=5§id=edid=&edlabel=ETD&mydateHid=05-11-2013&pubname=Economic+Times+>

[+Delhi&edname=&articleid=Ar00503&publabel=ET](#)

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Neha Singh)

Re-thinking financial education for the poor: linking practice with earning

(*Micro World*, October 15, 2013)

A new research by Zollmann and Collins establishes that “traditional financial education, especially for the poor, is not appropriate in terms of its content and teaching approach.” Their work finds that in order to enable large-scale financial literacy, **linking financial education to real financial products** is essential because this makes more relevance to consumers who can use and test the products and make better decisions. Another important revelation is that emphasis on “peer mentoring” is especially important as poor take decisions driven by the experiences of others.

The research finds that financial decisions that poor make “rarely come from analytical choices or allocation of funds.” Participants also reported difficulty in learning “money management” as it is more about the experience than academics alone. The researchers explore alternative ways and try to find whether it “would it be better to make them [the poor] test financial products (low value and low risk ones- for example consultation and auditing expenses and bank balances) to ensure that product performance is consistent with their understanding.” They suggest that usage of financial products must be integrated with the education programmes so that the participants could test the practicality of lessons they learn.

Another interesting finding is that the poor tend to learn from the experiences of their peers when it comes to financial products and

decisions. “Thus, **peer support** in the process of financial education may be important, leading to more comfort and product knowledge.”

The research also highlights the subtle puzzle in the proposed approach, stating whether it is justified for “financial institutions to use these [financial] goods to market their products, even though education is made to protect people against exploitation by these.”

The example of Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services (KGFS) is mentioned which is working on a better model of imparting financial literacy. It takes into account the needs of the consumers, marketing of financial products and also enables consumers to make better decisions. “It maximises the financial well being of every individual and every business with an assessment of their specific needs for financial products” and imparts education on the basis of the same. “Asset managers of KGFS are evaluated on the welfare of their customers (net assets, level of protection, product diversification ...) and not on the number of products they sell.”

<http://www.microworld.org/en/news-from-the-field/article/re-think-financial-education-poor>

Date Accessed: 30.10.2013
(Mahima Malik)

GOVERNMENT **Rice packets:** **project launch in** **Kerala**

(The New Indian Express, November 3, 2013)

The pilot project of the national-level distribution of 5kg rice packets will be launched soon in Kerala. It will be carried out as part of checking irregularities and increasing product quality. “The project aims at replacing the existing practice of transporting food grain in 50 kg bags. The new system is formulated in accordance

with the provisions of the Food Security Act.”

“The process of packing the food grain in five kg packets will begin at Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. The Centre will also include sugar under the project which will benefit 82 crore persons belonging to Above Poverty Line category.” The Centre will also support the State Government in setting up smaller intermediary go downs close to ration shops to prevent irregularities. “The go downs with a capacity 100 to 500 tonnes of grain can be set up with the support of panchayats, Kudumbashree and those employed under MGNREGS.” The implementation of the act will help Kerala to save about `600 crore annually.

<http://newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Rice-packets-Project-launch-in-the-state/2013/11/03/article1870070.ece>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Anjana John)

Govt. launches **integrated online** **bus ticketing portal**

(Moulisree Srivastava, Live Mint, November 01, 2013)

Government-backed online bus ticketing facility “busindia.com” has launched a national integrated portal which would bring government-run buses across all the states on one platform. Started in 2009, busindia.com was developed and maintained by Radiant Info Systems Ltd. in partnership with the Central Institute for Road Transport (CIRT) to take bus booking online.

“We have 16 states onboard as of now and will have another 10 in six months. By then, we will have 90 per cent of bus inventory including state buses and private operators on our portal,” said the co-founder, chairman and chief executive of Radiant Info Systems, adding that the company had invested around Rs.200 crore in the

initiative since its inception. At present, the online bus booking portal has an inventory of 360,000 seats with a network of 147,000 buses available online through various state transport corporations.

http://www.livemint.com/Politics/pRjs_sRQUHoHsCfILmju0UP/Govt-launches-integrated-online-bus-ticketing-portal.html

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Anjana John)

Assam launches **pension scheme for** **poor and** **unorganized sector** **workers**

(Business Standard, October 31, 2013)

Assam has become the fifth state in the country to launch the pension scheme named ‘Swavalamban’ to benefit people in the age group of 18-60 belonging to low-income group and unorganised sector.

“Manual labourers, workers from the unorganised sector, tea garden labourers, Aasha and Anganwadi workers, rickshaw and hand -cart pullers, farmers, etc are those at whom the ‘Swavalamban’ scheme is aimed at,” said Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi.

As per the scheme, a subscriber can contribute a minimum of Rs 1,000 and maximum Rs 12,000 annually and a sum of Rs 1,000 would also be contributed by the government. When the subscriber attains the age of 60, the subscriber would receive 60 per cent of his savings at one go and the rest 40 per cent would be paid to him on monthly basis.

The facility for investment of the pension fund of the individual subscriber would be provided by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) through different Pension Fund Managers. Regional rural bank,

Assam Gramin Vikash Bank (AGVB), would act as the aggregator in this pension scheme.

All subscribers have to submit registration forms with identity proof to AGVB for enrolment in the system and they can get a Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) from National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/assam-launches-pension-scheme-for-poor-and-unorganized-sector-workers-113103101094_1.html

Date Accessed: 4.11.2013

(Shruti Issar)

Planning commission seeks nod to use unutilised rural roads funds to build houses

(Elizabeth Roche, *LiveMint*, November 5, 2013)

The Planning Commission has sought the Ministry of Finance's (MoF's) approval to use funds meant for laying rural roads but utilised by states to instead build rural houses and enhance connectivity in districts affected by Maoist insurgency.

In a letter to Finance Minister P Chidambaram dated October 27, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia has proposed redirecting funds from the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) funds towards Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) to increase the latter's target for 2013-14 from 24.80 lakh houses to 30 lakh houses. This proposal comes after Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh sought an increase in IAY budget by Rs 3,000 crore to be offset by a reduction in the PMGSY budget.

Mr. Ahluwalia added that in his meeting with Ramesh in September, both "agreed to support the shift of an additional Rs1,000 crore from PMGSY to enhance connectivity in Left Wing Extremism (Lwe) or Maoist affected districts...I have pointed out to the minister rural development (Ramesh) that the above proposal involves a substantial reduction in the allocation for PMGSY which in itself is an important programme. He recognises this but his response is that some of the states are simply not in a position to prepare suitable projects in PMGSY to absorb the amounts provided in the budget estimates."

According to the rural development ministry website, the ministry was allocated Rs80,000 crore in this year's budget; the PMGSY's share of funds under this totals Rs21,700 crore while rural housing has been allocated Rs15,184 crore.

In February, the Union cabinet cleared a proposal that allowed for Maoist extremism-affected villages with a population of 100 or more to be linked by the PMGSY. Such Maoist-affected areas will have multiple-access roads and not just one, a long-standing demand of security forces engaged in anti-Maoist operations across large swathes of the country. The government has earmarked Rs 8,000 crore for this part of the programme, the rural development ministry said in a statement in February.

http://www.livemint.com/Politics/HQ_H64zju8HBuqyAYFxtfj/Plan-panel-seeks-nod-to-use-unutilised-rural-roads-funds-to.html

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013

(Deepti Somani)

PANCHAYATI RAJ

Gaps in women leadership in van panchayats in Uttarakhand

(Aditi Bishnoi, *The Hindu*, October 27, 2013)

The article talks about the efforts of women leaders of "Van Panchayats" (forest councils) who play important roles to nurture civil forests and highlights the various "administrative hurdles" they still face. Research undertaken by Alternative Futures (AF), a Delhi based research and development think tank in collaboration with "Central Himalayan Environment Agency (CHEA)" finds that despite the reservation in VPs, male members make decisions while women members merely implement them. The article mentions recommendations to give women leaders not only reservation for presence in the council but also strengthen their voice in decision making.

Van Panchayats have reservations for women and its members make rules for the day-to-day management of their forest after consulting villagers. However, there are gaps in women's participation in the VPs. "Lack of awareness about the rules as well as policy inadequacies" are stated to be the major challenges.

It is highlighted that "administrative hurdles" restrict the effectiveness of women leadership. Under the Van Panchayat Regulation, 2005, the control of management of panchayat forests is solely under the Forest Department and so they have to approach various officers (in order to take permission for activities in their area). This also affects their income generation capacity.

Additionally, "excessive responsibilities on the Sarpanch" and

no assistance to achieve targets proves to be a disincentive to acquire the position.

One of the recommendations that AF came up with for Uttarakhand Department of Forest is the “need for women’s reservation in the quorum for the meetings where decisions related to VP’s work are taken.” It is proposed that “there should be a third or 50 per cent female presence in the quorum to ensure they have a definite say in decision making.” For this, the government needs to issue a gazette so that even the District Collector can give the orders.

Another CHEA initiative proposes “carbon sequestration.” Under this, women Sarpanch are taught simple ways that sequester carbon which benefits the entire region, for example, planting broad leaf trees like bhimal helps in absorbing carbon and increasing oxygen levels.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/forest-connections/article5276058.ece>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013
(Mahima Malik)

EDUCATION

35 cluster universities planned by MHRD

(The New Indian Express, November 04, 2013)

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is considering the creation of 35 new cluster universities in the country by pooling the resources of three to five existing government and government-aided colleges under the **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)** programme. This is in addition to the ministry’s plan to upgrade 45 autonomous colleges into degree-awarding institutions.

According to RUSA draft guidelines, which have been released for consultation, the 35 cluster

universities will receive `55 crore each (a total of `1,925 crore) in the current plan and another `65 crore in the next plan. All the participating colleges will be converted into constituent colleges of the newly created university. “As a prerequisite, the colleges should have adequate academic, physical and technical infrastructural facilities, been in existence for 15 years, should have an existing combined enrolment of 2,000 students and should ideally be within a radius of 15-20 km from the lead institution.”

http://newindianexpress.com/states/tamil_nadu/35-cluster-universities-planned-by-MHRD/2013/11/04/article1871029.ece

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Anjana John)

Community teams up to bring girls back to school

(UNICEF, October 11, 2013)

This article highlights efforts made by community members, government and UNICEF in Udaipur to relink out-of-school girls back to education. It offers valuable suggestions for other regions in India which faces similar problems. Steps taken by the community:

1) Getting transport to children’s’ door steps- unsafe terrain, poverty and illiteracy, migration to neighbouring cities for labour was a major reason why children did not attend schools. To address this issue, transport service was started in 2008 and since then attendance rates, which were as low as 10-20 per cent, increased by 80 per cent in 2013.

2) Getting parents motivated- To address social barriers preventing girls from going to school, innovative methods to convey the message of staying in school, including night discussion meetings, prayer groups, singing songs were used.

3) Panchayat involvement -As an important part of the initiative, NGOs and community workers joined hands with local governance structures like the panchayat to set up monitoring mechanisms and to track the performance of children in schools.

4) Out-of-the-box solution by teachers

Incentives, in form of prizes (stationary etc) and facilitating students during prayer sessions, were offered to students, particularly girls for showing up on time or regularly attending school.

The concerted efforts and the support of the community workers, panchayats, teachers, principals and NGOs have ensured that the number of children attending school has increased from 40 percent in 2008 to over 90 per cent, at present.

http://www.unicef.org/india/reallives_8463.htm

Date Accessed: 3.11.2013
(Divashri Mathur)

Move on tribal education flayed

(Anirudha Mishra, The Times of India, November 03, 2013)

Social workers in Bhubhaneshwar have severely criticised the government’s announcement to impart mother-tongue based early childhood education in 19 tribal languages calling it a poll gimmick, noting that in 2012, under the then chief minister B K Patnaik, a similar decision was taken to impart education in 10 tribal languages, but there is an acute shortage of textbooks and trained teachers in those languages. A social worker noted that given the same situation a fresh announcement to include nine more languages appears seems strange.

“More than 14 lakh tribal children don’t have access to pre-school education and the dropout rate is almost 50 per cent by Class V. To improve the figures, we need to have more textbooks in their languages,

culture-appropriate curriculum and anganwadi centres with educated tribal workers. But these are yet to happen," pointed out tribal campaigner Sudhir Kumar Digal. Since the State government could not get pre-school textbooks published in 10 languages for tribal children, why are they announcing to have education in 19 languages? This gives an impression that it may be a pre-election stunt, said another activist Gopinath Majhi."

To which school and mass education secretary Usha Padhee said, "We are aware of the problems and have already provided the requisite curriculum to women and child development department. The printed materials would be sent to anganwadi centres soon. Also, we are recruiting more than 3,000 tribal youths as teachers, who would teach in those 10 languages."

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-03/bhubaneswar/43628302_1_19-tribal-languages-tribal-education-childhood-education

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Ashwin Varghese)

HEALTH

Spurt in injecting drug user's forces centre to open more therapy centers

(The Hindu, November 04, 2013)

Government has decided to increase the number of Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) centres in the country from the present 52 to 300 by the end of this year. It is decided because of rapidly rising number of injecting drug users. Of the existing OST centres spread across 14 States, Manipur and Nagaland alone have 29 where around 3,000 injecting drug users are availing themselves of the services.

Lov Verma, Secretary, Department of AIDS Control, said, "Injecting drug use is no longer confined to the

northeast states of Manipur and Nagaland. We have hotspots of drug use in Punjab, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar." OST involves replacing a drug user's primary drug of use (opioid), for example heroin or spasmoproxicon, with a medically safe drug in a safer mode of administration under medical supervision.

HIV among injecting drug users remains a great challenge in the northeast, with Manipur still having the highest HIV prevalence among *People Who Inject Drugs* (PWID). "There are similar challenges emerging in other states which need to be emphasized," added Mr. Verma.

Representing the Indian Drug Users' Forum (IDUF), Abou Mere urged the government and other stakeholders to look into the issue of drug overdose and Hepatitis-C, causes of unnecessary deaths every year.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/spurt-in-injecting-drug-users-forces-centre-to-open-more-therapy-centres/article5310116.ece>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Jeet Singh)

New drug could potentially treat lung cancer

(The Indian Express, November 04, 2013)

A new experimental drug called MK-3475 is said to have the potential for treating non-small cell lung cancer since the preliminary results showed that the tumours of 24 per cent of the subjects had shrunk.

Dr Edward Garon, director of thoracic oncology at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), presented the preliminary results of a study of this new drug.

A total of 38 patients with non-small cell lung cancer were given MK-3475 every three weeks.

For those who responded, the average amount of time their tumours remained shrunk is at least 62 weeks. Based on this data, another trial phase that will compare two different doses of MK-3475 to standard chemotherapy for lung cancer has begun enrolling patients.

The drug allows the immune system to properly detect the cancer and activate T cells to attack and kill cancer cells.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/new-drug-could-potentially-treat-lung-cancer/1190808/>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Pallavi Ghosh)

Three million miss TB diagnosis: World Health Organization

(The Nation, 05 November, 2013)

"About three million people do not receive Tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis yearly", the World Health Organization (WHO) has said. According to a WHO report, about three quarters of the cases are in 12 countries. "75 per cent of the estimated 2.9 million missed cases, that is, people who were either not diagnosed or diagnosed, but not reported to National TB Points (NTPs) – were in 12 countries. They are India (31 per cent of the global total), South Africa, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia; China, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Nigeria, and Ethiopia; the Philippines and Myanmar."

According to WHO Director of the Global TB Programme, quality TB care for millions worldwide has driven down TB deaths. But far too many people are still missing out on such care and are suffering as a result. They are not diagnosed, or not treated, or information on the quality of care they received is unknown. "WHO estimates Global TB report for this year that the three million people who are currently undiagnosed by health systems

account for one third of all those falling ill with TB yearly. According to the report, reaching the missed cases is among the five priority actions to accelerate progress towards 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).” The report also said that the response to testing and treating all those affected by Multi-Drug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB) is inadequate. WHO estimated that 450,000 fell ill with MDR-TB last year alone, with China, India and Russia carrying the highest burden of the disease.

<http://thenationonlineng.net/new/three-million-miss-tb-diagnosis/>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013

(Anjana John)

Centre plans 3,000 ‘Jan Aushadi’ stores to sell drugs

(Deccan Herald News Network, November 03, 2013)

The Central government plans to open up 3,000 Jan Aushadi stores all over the country in the next three years to sell 360 generic medicines in collaboration with charitable trusts and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which will make money by selling medicines.

The Jan Aushadi programme began in 2008; however the response so far has been lukewarm because of poor Supply Chain Management (SCM) and availability of only a small basket of medicines. The Central government now plans to infuse Rs 150 crores and overhaul the scheme to make it more people-friendly.

Under the revamped scheme which has received approval from Planning Commission, medicines would be procured by the Department of Pharmaceuticals from public sector units and private firms. Subsequently, the drugs would be handed over to low-cost pharmaceutical stores for retail sale. Owners of these low-cost pharmaceutical shops would get a margin of 16 per cent from medicine

sales. There will be an additional government incentive, at the rate of 10 per cent of the sales volume.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/366893/centre-plans-3000-jan-aushadhi.html>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013

(Deepti Somani)

Minister acknowledges nexus between doctors and pharmaceutical companies in Jammu and Kashmir

(Kashmir Observer, November 02, 2013)

The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state government has acknowledged that there is an issue of doctors prescribing medicines from specific pharmaceutical companies for monetary benefits. This comes at a time when the High Court (HC) has sought the government’s response on action taken against those doctors that have been found accepting gifts and monetary benefits from pharmaceutical companies.

The Minister for Health and Medical Education (MOHME), Taj Mohiuddin, on this matter said, “Though, maximum medicines are available in the hospitals but the doctors doing private practice prescribe the medicines of particular companies to get the monetary benefits... the government has decided to be tough against these erring doctors and more over the medicines will be subjected to a thorough testing.”

He further said that the government has no objections if the companies produce quality medicine however, production of substandard medicine will not be tolerated.

Replying to a query about why private practice is not banned in the state he

said, “HOD’s have already been instructed to carry out the private practice in the hospitals. However, we are waiting for the Supreme Court decision. As soon as some decision comes from the Supreme Court (SC) the private practice will be completely banned and uprooted.”

<http://kashmirobservers.net/news/top-news/minister-admits-unholy-nexus-between-doctors-pharma-companies>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013

(Ashwin Varghese)

TRANSPORT **Government drafts policy to deal with faulty vehicle makers**

(Ajith Athrady, Deccan Herald, November 03, 2013)

With an aim to discourage automobile producers from resorting to frequent recalling of vehicles citing manufacturing defect, the Ministry of Road Transport (MoRT) is working on a new policy which shall impose penalty on faulty vehicle makers.

The ministry has sent a draft policy to Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), a research institute of the automotive industry with the Ministry of Heavy Industries for its comments. Senior officials have commented that the ministry will hold discussion with all stake holders and finalise the policy after receiving the comments.

Though, vehicle manufacturers recall their products on a voluntary basis, incidents of vehicle recall by automobile producers has increased which prompted the govt. to formulate a policy on the subject.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/366863/govt-drafts-policy-deal-faulty.html>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013

(Deepti Somani)

Secretary road transport and highways reviews road safety issues

(Press Information Bureau, November 06, 2013)

In the monthly review meeting on road safety, the Secretary of Road Transport and Highways, Vijay Chhibber with the officials and representatives of International Road Federation (IRF), Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE), Indian Head Injury Foundation (IHIF), Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) etc. has reviewed road safety issues.

It was decided that after conclusion of the current proposal, of amending Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVRs) to mandate fitment of Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) to certain categories of transport vehicles, its extension to more categories of vehicles would be taken up immediately.

“It was decided to initiate action to mandate Truck Body Code also under CMVRs after successful implementation of the Bus Body Code.”

Further, “Secretary (RTH) directed that since the Hon’ble Minister had already approved the next two pilot projects on cashless treatment of road accident victims, expeditious action should be taken to launch the next two projects at the earliest.”

Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE) highlighted that “more investment in road safety was warranted keeping in view the gravity of problem; in 2011, whereas 1,399 people were killed in terrorist attacks, 1,42,465 people lost their lives in road accidents.”

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=100419>

Date Accessed: 07.11.2013
(Ashwin Varghese)

TECHNOLOGY Will India’s low cost Mars mission rewrite space economics?

(Koppillil Radhakrishnan, First Post, November 04, 2013)

India’s first Mars Mission marked the 50th anniversary of sending a rocket in space. Mangalyaan (Marscraft) will study the surface and atmospheric composition in the Red Planet and look for signs of life. As part of Indian Space Research Institute’s (ISRO’s) scaled up space programme, the India’s first interplanetary reflects its technological capability, skilled workforce, and frugal engineering, and hopes to show that it is a low-cost player in the high-cost exploration business.

The Rs 450-crore mission is being executed just 15 months after the government approved it in August 2012. The satellite is built by Indian scientists and engineers. It is being launched from Indian soil, using an indigenous rocket and will carry home-grown instruments to read the biochemistry of Mars. If it ends in success, India will be one of the elite few of space powers to have explored the planet, after the former Soviet Union, the United States and Europe.

“There is current debate in a democracy like India over spending millions to increase space presence but it is a fact that the nation cannot afford to ignore space as a vital resource. Space for India today is not merely a destination but it is an engine that has become critical to its economic growth, strategic interests and very way of life. “The achievements from technology development and strategic capabilities can be applied to other sectors of the economy, triggering innovation, and help the emerging space economy.

Susmita Mohanty, founder and CEO of Earth2Orbit argues that to become

competitive in global market India requires to overhaul its space policy. It also requires ISRO to amend its policy on contracts, Indian industry to share risk and investment, and the two to co-develop and co-innovate. A successful Mars mission would also be a great booster for India’s space diplomacy.

http://www.firstpost.com/india/will-indias-low-cost-mars-mission-rewrite-space-economics-1209273.html?utm_source=ref_article
Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Neha Singh)

ENVIRONMENT

Municipal solid waste rules amendments:

Ministry of Environment and Forest asked to formulate new draft

(M Suchitra, *Down to Earth*, November 02, 2013)

The Karnataka High Court has directed the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) not to notify its proposed controversial amendments to the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) (Management and Handling) Rules of 2000. The court, on October 24, ordered MoEF to consider all the objections filed against the amendments and then prepare new draft rules and place them before the court.

A division bench of the court observed that the MoEF's move to comprehensively amend the existing law governing MSW management would promote a regressive approach of collecting waste without segregation at source. The court noted that the proposed amendments would undo all the efforts taken up in the past decade in implementing the rules of MSW (Management and Handling) Rule, 2000. The proposed amendments will particularly harm the progressive waste management initiatives going on in Bengaluru for the past one year under the direct supervision of the High Court (HC), the judges said.

The division bench issued the order while considering a submission filed by Bengaluru-based non-profit Environment Support Group (ESG). The submission pointed out that the proposed modifications to the existing rules were highly retrograde and promoted unjust, unscientific and unnecessary techniques of MSW management.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/municipal-solid-waste-rules-amendments-moef-asked-formulate-new-draft>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Jeet Singh)

Centre bans mining in sensitive zones along sanctuaries in Goa

(*Business Standard*, October 31, 2013)

Union Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) imposed a ban on mining around the Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of six wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in Goa (namely : Cotigao wildlife sanctuary, Netravali Wild Life Sanctuary, Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park, Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary, Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary and Madei Wildlife Sanctuary). The Central government shall also constitute state level ESZ Monitoring Committee (SESZMC) under section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 to monitor the compliance of the ESZ notification for the state.

The ministry in its notification has prohibited all new and existing mining of minor and major minerals, stone quarrying and crushing units with immediate effect in all the six sanctuaries.

"The existing mining leases shall be phased out in a time bound manner (five or 10 years) subject to the final orders of Supreme Court of India," said the notification on Bhagwan Mahaveer and Netravali Wildlife Sanctuaries. In addition, it also said the state government shall also ensure that a proper and mine closure plan for rehabilitation and ecological restoration shall be completed soon.

<http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-bans-mining-in->

[sensitive-zones-along-sanctuaries-in-go-a-113103101062_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/sensitive-zones-along-sanctuaries-in-go-a-113103101062_1.html)

Date Accessed: 4.11.2013
(Shruti Issar)

Solid Waste Management Plan

(Poornima Chikarmane and Anjor Bhaskar, *Info Change*, August 2013)

Solid waste management accounts for over 50 per cent of overall municipal budgets and manpower, but municipal authorities collect only 50 per cent of the waste and recycle a negligible five percent. Technology and privatisation are the solutions being proposed everywhere. But public-private partnerships are turning out to be more about using public money for private profit. The author argues that the possible solution can be integration of informal sector waste pickers into the management of domestic and commercial municipal waste.

An estimated 115,000 MT of solid waste are generated every day in India, increasing every year by five per cent. Almost three-fourths of the total waste (83,378 MT) is accounted for by seven mega cities, 38 metro cities, and 388 Class I cities (2005). Conventional modes of Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSWM) required waste to be collected, transported and dumped on unsuspecting villages by municipal governments as part of their constitutional obligations. City governments spend between Rs 500 and Rs 1,500 per tonne on solid waste collection, transportation, treatment and disposal. However, the expenditure is unevenly distributed, with waste collection accounting for about 60-70 per cent of the expenditure being spent on collection, the rest being on transportation with hardly any expenditure on waste treatment and disposal. DEA, Government of India (GOI), 2009). MSWM accounts for over 50 per cent of overall municipal budgets and manpower. Yet, municipal authorities are unable to collect more than 50 per cent and to recycle a negligible five per cent of the total waste generated in

their jurisdictions. The informal sector does most of the recycling, nearly 15 of the total waste generated (*National Institute of Urban Affairs* (NIUA), 2005).

Municipal governments charged with the responsibility of 'public cleansing' have never acknowledged the existence of the informal waste sector, much less sought complementarily with it. This disconnect exacerbates the complexities that are involved in managing the detritus generated by cities in an era of consumerism, globalisation and the privatisation and corporatisation of waste management. Solid Waste Collection and Handling (SWaCH) waste pickers cooperative is the country's oldest and largest attempt to reconcile formal and informal waste managers through the integration of waste pickers in the management of domestic and commercial municipal waste.

Uncollected and non-recyclable waste causes not only visual pollution but also invisible air pollution and groundwater pollution. There is thus a massive 'gap' between the requirement of cities, or demand for waste management, and its supply.

<http://www.infochangeindia.org/urban-india/analysis/messing-around-with-waste.html>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Neha Singh)

LAW AND JUSTICE

In UP's overcrowded Jails, 60 per cent of inmates are under trials

(Neha Shukla, *The Times of India*, November 04, 2013)

The article reveals that the jails in UP are grossly overcrowded and "more than half of the prisoners in different jails are under trials." It is emphasized

that the pitiable state of jails is due to "negligence" and forms a case for human rights violation.

According to the data mentioned in the article, many jails in various districts have high number of under trials that exceed the capacity of jails. The state has a total of 65 jails (including three special jails, five central jails and district jails). Out of the total 81,027 prisoners (against the actual total capacity of 48,298 prisoners), 55,460 ,i.e. more than 60 per cent, are under trial prisoners.

The following data is mentioned in the article:

Jails in:	No. of under trials	Total no. of prisoners
Ghazipur	532	594
Mau	402	494
Balrampur	243	284
Jails in:	Capacity in jail house	No. of prisoners
Agra central jail	1050	1895
Naini central jail	2060	2229
Varanasi	984	1,813
Bareilly	2,053	2,369
Fatehgarh	1,610	2,259

In Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Gorakhpur and Meerut, the number of prisoners is less than the capacity of the jails.

In 2013, the Supreme Court had issued a notice to the centre, states and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) giving them five weeks time to respond to a PIL which claimed that "64.7 per cent of the total prison population of the country is of under trials." SC urged NCRB 'to intervene and direct government to frame a policy to grant bail to prisoners facing

trial for offences in which punishment ranges between three and seven years.' However, UP's record to enforce such guidelines has been disappointing. Jails continue to be congested and justice delayed.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-04/india/43657674_1_up-jails-undertrial-prisoners-capacity

Date Accessed: 4.11.2013

(Mahima Malik)

DEFENCE

India to lay 14 strategic railway lines near China and Pakistan border

(*The Echo of India*, October 27, 2013)

As part of preparations to meet challenges from China and Pakistan, India is planning to lay 14 strategic railway lines close to borders with these two countries to help in easier and faster movement of troops. The railway lines are besides 73 roads being constructed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. The railway lines have been planned in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. "Of the 73 roads with a total length of 3812 km, laying of 61roads covering 3,404 km have been assigned to Border Roads Organisation (BRO), the sources said. 27 of the 61 roads are being constructed in Arunachal Pradesh, 12 in J&K, 14 in Uttarakhand, five in Himachal Pradesh and three in Sikkim."

The infrastructure development is being carried out as China has made strides in this regard and India is lagging much behind. "Defence Minister A K Antony conceded in Parliament last month that China is "superior" in terms of border infrastructure as India was late in

deciding on building roads and other capabilities near the LAC because of the impact of the 1962 war.”

<http://www.echoofindia.com/new-delhi-india-lay-14-railway-lines-near-china-pak-border-41079>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013

(Anjana John)

GENDER

Economic census survey to include a separate category for transgender

(*The Indian Express*, November 03, 2013)

The sixth economic census that counts the number of establishments in the country is set to include the businesses run by members of the transgender community under a separate category that acknowledges their identity.

According to the census manual prepared for the survey transgender would include eunuchs and hermaphrodites. This is a step ahead of the decennial census of 2011 that had a separate category of "other" in the gender section along with "male" and "female".

The results of the sixth economic census started last year are likely to be released early next year.

The results of the economic census will help in analyzing the economy for policy planning as well as planning to revisit the structure and parameters of national accounts, annual survey of industries, etc.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/in-a-first-economic-census-to-count-transgenders/1191067/?rheditorpick>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Pallavi Ghosh)

Child marriage: one of the main reasons for crib deaths in West Bengal: National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights

(Shiv Sahay Singh, *The Hindu*, November 01, 2013)

According to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) child marriages of girls in remote areas of West Bengal is one of the main reasons for infant deaths in the State's hospitals.

During a visit to the Malda Medical College and Hospital (MMCH), Vinod Kumar Tikoo, member of NCPCR, noticed that a number of women who had give birth were below the child-bearing age.

Mr. Tikoo noted that infant deaths cannot be brought under control unless the issue of child marriage is tackled, saying while describing that, "malnourished girls married at a young age give birth to babies with low birth weight and the cycle of infant deaths continues."

Further, the prevalence of anemia and malnutrition among women has always been a matter of concern but remains unaddressed. All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (AIHH&PH) has pointed out that the state ranks 24 in terms of anaemia and 23 in case of overall nutritional status of women in the country.

Mr. Tikoo noting an infrastructural void said that, "there are about 40 beds in the paediatric ward but the number of children admitted there was 65. I found that a normal child was put on a same bed with a septicaemia patient. The lives of both children,

instead of one, are being put at risk when this happens."

The NCPCR has suggested that primary health centres should be augmented so that the pressure on the district medical college and hospitals is reduced.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/child-marriage-one-of-the-main-reasons-for-crib-deaths-in-west-bengal-ncpcr/article5303028.ece>

Date Accessed: 02.11.2013
(Ashwin Varghese)

REGIONS

Banks to set up Automated Teller Machines in Gram Panchayats in Karnataka

(Nagesh Prabhu, *The Hindu*, November 04, 2013)

The article says that in order to make centre schemes like Mahatma Gandhi *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act* (MNRGA) more effective in Karnataka and ensuring timely payments to workers, the "State government has asked all nationalized banks to set up Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in all Gram Panchayats (GPs)." The presently applied model of relying on business correspondents in unbanked villages (called branchless banking) has caused "delay in payment of wages." The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) have decided to conduct a mapping of all GPs for ATMs- which is expected to save time and money of the villagers and lead to timely payments.

T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, Secretary, says "there are 5,630 GPs in the state but there are no bank branches in more than 3,000 GPs." Such deficiency of banks leads to wastage of time, effort and money for the villagers who are forced to travel long distances to

collect payments from branches located in distant cities.

Using business correspondents has not been of much help to ensure timely payments either. Estimates state that “in 2012–13, the RDPR deposited nearly Rs. 1,600 crore in banks for payment of wages to MNREGA beneficiaries. But business correspondents disbursed only Rs. 70 lakh to beneficiaries residing in unbanked villages.”

It is suggested that “payment of wages through ATMs will prevent delay and filling of withdrawal and deposit slips as required at banks.”

Banks have been implementing the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) scheme in seven districts — Bellary, Gulbarga, Chitradurga, Yadgir, Chamarajanagar, Dharwad, and Mandya. EBT is a smart card-based project which “eliminates bogus claimants and help the exchequer save money.” According to data by RDPR, “nearly 20 per cent of claimants of pension under various social security schemes are bogus.” Transaction fees to the banks implementing EBT is being paid by the state government.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had also issued guidelines to provide banking services to 13,684 villages up to March 2014, it has covered around 3,862 villages having populations of less than 2,000.

Estimates state that “a total of 1,52,110 households are working under NREGA as on November 03, 2013 and 9,841 households completed 100 days of work. A total of 4,29,767 accounts were opened in these districts.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/banks-told-to-set-up-atms-in-all-gram-panchayats-in-karnataka/article5310006.ece>

Date Accessed: 5.11.2013

(Mahima Malik)

DISABLED

HC seeks report from state government on shelter homes for differently-abled children in Pune

(*OneIndia News*, November 03, 2013)

In the wake of reports of physical violence being meted out on six differently-abled children at Yerwada mental facility, the Bombay High Court (HC) has sought information from the State government regarding the status shelter homes and facilities in Pune.

The four homes that existed for special children were closed down by the government for serious violations of rules last year.

The Court has directed the Maharashtra government and Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities to elaborate about the steps being taken to address the situation. The report is to be submitted by November 27. The court also directed the authorities to ensure that the six boys are shifted to Sasoon hospital in Pune.

The Yerwada facility near Pune houses adults suffering from various mental disorders. The six destitute children were allegedly physically abused by a person identified as Mane.

<http://news.oneindia.in/india/no-shelters-for-children-with-spl-needs-in-pune-hc-concerned-1335242.html>

Date Accessed: 03.11.2013

(Pallavi Ghosh)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UK scraps visa bond scheme

(*Business Standard*, November 04, 2013)

“India’s diplomatic efforts have shown success, as the government of Britain has announced its decision to drop its controversial visa bond scheme. It was to take effect as an experiment from this month. In a major relief to Indians aspiring to either work or visit there, the government decided to “not to proceed” with the scheme, which entailed paying a personal cash bond of £3,000 (Rs 2.8 lakh) before entering that country. The decision has been announced almost a week before British Prime Minister David Cameron’s visit to India on November 14. The scheme was announced in June.

The project, announced as an experiment, was aimed at addressing concerns on misuse of visas, checking those who overstayed or stayed on, to tackle immigration abuse. For this, the UK Government had categorized some countries as high risk, such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nigeria and Ghana.”

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/diwali-gift-uk-scraps-visa-bond-scheme-113110400707_1.html

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013

(Karishma Mutreja)

UK must Act to halt mutilation of girls – a report

(*The Guardian*, November 04, 2013)

Responding to the rampant practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the United Kingdom (UK), a group of health professionals have come up with a report recommending

aggressive steps to eradicate the practice.

The report advocated that FGM be treated as a form of child abuse and that evidence of it must be reported to the police.

According to the report more than 66,000 women in England and Wales have undergone FGM. Moreover, more than 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of it. Girls at risk are defined as girls born to a woman who has undergone FGM or one who lives closely with someone who has.

Although, FGM has been outlawed in the UK since 1985, migrants from countries have continued the practice within and outside the country. There have been no prosecutions in Britain for continuing the practice.

Among other recommendations are government-funded awareness strategies and accountability of health workers in terms of their failure or success in detecting FGM cases and reporting it to the authorities.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/nov/04/uk-mutilation-girls-report>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013

(Pallavi Ghosh)

India should not challenge China in Central Asia: a report

(*Economic Times*, November 05, 2013)

A Chinese state-run think tank *Global Times* in a report has said that India should cooperate with China to tap energy in resource-rich Central Asia instead of challenging it. It has also cast doubts over the realisation of Turkmenistan- Afghanistan- Pakistan- India (TAPI) gas pipeline project soon.

The TAPI project is in its initial stages and it faces risk with the Afghan situation and India-Pakistan relations.

Due to its geopolitical disadvantages and the current oil and gas exploration in Central Asia, India can hardly enter this field as an independent investor.

"A wise choice would be to cooperate with the West, Russia or China. Judging from energy policies in China and India, New Delhi should seek mutual benefits with China, rather than attempting to challenge the more experienced power in this region," the article said.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-11-05/news/43695065_1_tapi-gas-pipeline-project-turkmenistan-gas-exploration

Date Accessed: 7.11.2013

(Simi Sunny)

SOUTH ASIA South Asia to become fastest waste producer by 2025

(Nikita Mehta, *LiveMint*, November 01, 2013)

As per a paper published in the *Nature* journal, South Asia is likely to become the fastest growing region of waste by 2025. The paper points out that although the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are the largest waste generators, producing around 1.75 million tonnes per day, East Asia today is the world’s fastest growing region of waste.

The authors of the study have stated that in the past century, as the world’s population has grown and become more urban and affluent, waste production has risen tenfold, and that by 2025 it will double again.

A 2012 World Bank report said that urban India generates 109,589 tonnes of waste per day; as compared to urban US which generates 624,700 tonnes per day, the highest in the

world and the second largest is urban China at 520,548 tonnes per day. India's waste generation will more than triple to 376,639 tonnes per day by 2025, especially with the population of urban India expected to rise to 538 million. Waste reduction and dematerialisation efforts in OECD countries are countered by trends in East Asia, particularly in China, the study said. China's solid-waste generation is expected to increase from 520,550 tonnes per day in 2005 to 1.4 million tonnes per day in 2025.

Experts in India have continuously stressed on the importance of segregation of waste to avert crisis in the future. Swati Ramanathan, co-founder of Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, stressed on the need to segregate the wet waste from the non-wet waste, but the largest challenge is to improve the key incentive systems for waste contractors.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/XsXf3cmvKjaoHPnlo31YOH/South-Asia-to-become-fastest-waste-producer-by-2025.html>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Deepti Somani)

India electricity flows to Bangladesh in first South Asian high voltage direct current cross-border link

(Asian Development Bank, October 04, 2013)

A new transmission line from India to Bangladesh will mark South Asia's first-ever High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) interconnection between two countries and a key step forward in regional power sharing and cooperation.

This groundbreaking link will help provide urgently needed power to Bangladesh. More importantly, it is a key milestone for South Asia as it

looks to set up a regional energy market to make the best use of its diverse and unevenly distributed energy resources. The transmission line will link the eastern electrical grid of India to the western grid of Bangladesh. The HVDC interconnection allows better control over power flows and improved stability on the two grids.

The Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) built and financed the infrastructure in India. Only about half of Bangladesh's people have access to electricity. Expanding supply will help businesses and improve the delivery of essential services like education and healthcare. Buying electricity from India will also help gas-reliant Bangladesh diversify its energy sources and the link will later allow it to tap into energy resources from other parts of the region.

The contracts will allow Bangladesh to buy power from India more cheaply than buying it from rental plants in Bangladesh. The cross-border trading also enables the two countries to trade electricity based on variations in their seasonal and weekly demand.

<http://www.adb.org/news/india-electricity-flows-bangladesh-first-south-asian-hvdc-cross-border-link?ref=countries/india/news>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013
(Neha Singh)

First international flight from Mandalay to Manipur

(The Sangai Express, November 04, 2013)

Chief Minister of Manipur O Ibobi "convened a high-level meeting and discussed the scheduled landing of the first international flight from Mandalay, Myanmar at Tulihal Airport on November 21, the opening

day of Manipur Sangai Tourism Festival 2013."

"The meeting also discussed about opening a passport office and a visa camp office in Manipur at the earliest possible time." Notably, the Chief Minister had already raised a proposal of opening a passport office in Manipur with the Prime Minister, the Union Home Minister and the External Affairs Minister. The State government is also ready with a submission to the Regional Passport Office (RPO), Guwahati, informing about the site of the mini passport office to set at Imphal and to take the necessary measures to step up the office at the earliest.

"The meeting also deliberated at length about necessary statutory notifications for Customs and Immigration at Tulihal Airport ahead of launching international flight operation from and to the airport. Different types of works and duties lined up in the process of making Manipur sub-regional hubs of civil aviation were divided among different departments during the meeting."

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=1.051113.nov13>

Date Accessed 07.11.2013
(Junty Sharma Pathak)

AFRICA

Polio eradication: not yet 100 per cent in Nigeria

(Oyeyemi Gbenga-Mustapha, *The Nation*, November 05, 2013)

Though, there has been improvement in polio eradication in Nigeria, the country is not yet free from the disease.

"According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the yearly number of polio cases recorded worldwide fell by 99 per cent between 1988 and 2000, when the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) was

established. However, tackling the last one per cent has been difficult.”

Although the number of countries where polio was endemic fell after the launch of the GPEI, from at least 125 in 1988 to 20 in 2000, progress in eradicating the disease has since slowed down. “In 2006 polio was still endemic in Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. Last year, only India was declared polio-free.” According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), though Nigeria is on the right track to stop polio, three states – Borno, Yobe and Kano – account for 72 per cent of cases; and the number of states with ongoing circulation of the virus fell from 11 during the same period last year to nine. Nigeria has recorded 52 per cent drop in polio cases and 63 per cent reduction in vaccine rejection. Despite the efforts, insecurity and misconception of the vaccine, in the upper region of the country are the major challenges militating against eradication of Polio in Nigeria.

<http://thenationonline.net/new/polio-eradication-yet-100-2/>

Date Accessed: 05.11.2013

(Anjana John)

OPINIONS

India: end funding restraints on organizations

(Human Rights Watch, November 03, 2013)

The report criticizes the regulation of foreign funds for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) by the government. It argues that the state is allegedly misusing the Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Act (FCRA) of 2010, denying permits to NGOs to avail foreign funds for being critical of it.

For instance, the act was used to target groups protesting against nuclear plants and big infrastructure projects. The Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) with a network of more than 700 NGOs across India was another group to have lost permission.

Under the law, the Central government can restrict those allowed to obtain prior permission before accepting a foreign contribution. The government can also enquire about the utility of the contribution, the source of the funding, and how it is received.

The FCRA has been criticized internationally for restricting the right of NGOs to freely seek and receive financial and other resources for their management and activities.

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/31/india-end-funding-restraints-organizations>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Pallavi Ghosh)

Innovations in payment systems to drive financial inclusion: Ernst & Young

(Press Trust of India, October 24, 2013)

According to an “Ernst & Young (EY) report” which focuses on financial inclusion in India, “innovations in payment systems” should be the focus as it is estimated that huge amount of payments (worth over Rs. 8,74,300 crore) are expected to be made “through **pre-paid instruments** in the coming years.” It establishes that rising “urbanization, middle class and aspirations” offer various opportunities and this is the time to “tap the large unbanked population of India.”

The report estimates that “over Rs. 8,743 billion in payments is likely to be made through pre-paid instruments in FY 2020. This will be more than **12 times the volumes in FY 2013.**” Presently, prepaid instruments contribute only 3.62 per cent to the Indian card market, but the report forecasts that “it would increase dramatically over the next decade.” The phenomenal increase is expected considering the “proliferation of m-wallets, money transfer and other new applications.”

The report says that the priority should be to understand “what combination of payment products and services will work in the Indian context.” These innovations will cut different sectors- like financial services, telecom and retail- and will accelerate inclusion.

<http://profit.ndtv.com/news/industries/article-innovations-in-payment-systems-to-drive-financial-inclusion-ernst-young-370388>

Date Accessed: 29.10.2013
(Mahima Malik)

An incomplete democracy

(Michael Kugelman, Wilson Centre, October 22, 2013)

Pakistan’s military continues to cast a long and often dominant shadow over Pakistan. It is ruled by the military for half of its 66-year life. Now, it has taken steps toward democracy, but the process is far from complete.

In March, for the first time, a democratically elected government completed a full term and there was a smooth transfer of power. Today, the military is not itching for another coup, but it continues to wield tremendous influence, often with impunity. Its power is enhanced by Pakistan’s Constitution, which prevents high courts from challenging its actions. The military’s vast economic holdings, ranging from cereal to cement, are rarely subjected to scrutiny.

“For years, civilians have deferred to the security establishment on security matters and this has not changed during Mr. Sharif’s tenure so far. Despite a series of deadly terrorist attacks, his government has not offered a clear security or counterterrorism strategy. However, it authorized a 15 per cent increase in next year’s defence budget.” A stronger civilian government in Pakistan does not necessarily mean a stronger democracy. In a true democracy, no institution, no matter how essential, should enjoy such unchecked power.

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/incomplete-democracy>

Date Accessed: 04.11.2013
(Neha Singh)

BOOKS

Policy paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making

(Written by *Deborah Stone* and
Reviewed by *Think A Bit*)

The author's approach to policy analysis is outlined in her work "Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making." The strongest point that the book makes is "that the mainstream scientific approach utilised by various disciplines such as political science, economics, public administration and policy analysis, misrepresents and diminishes politics, and thus a more appropriate form of political analysis based on political reasoning is needed." She presents her model of political analysis ("polis model") and contrasts it with the conventional model based on rationality. The term 'model' itself has been described and applied differently, standing for "fairly descriptive and qualitative." She presents four constructs (i.e. "model of reasoning"):

1. **Actual "model of reasoning"**: As politics is the struggle over ideas seen from multiple perspectives rather than "objective facts." Stone's basic conclusion is that "reasoning must be political and thus rational policy analysis must only find its place after key political conflicts is resolved and shared meanings are achieved."

2. **The "model of society"**: In politics, collective action is motivated by loyalty to groups, products or organisations in order to achieve social change and public welfare rather than only individual material gain. Information is incomplete, ambiguous and interpreted. This is in contrast to establish "market model of rational, self-interested, utility-maximising individuals"

where information is considered to be free flowing. Additionally, "in the market, collective action is generated by competition to maximise individual material status."

3. **"Model of policy making"**: Under this are presented two contrasting views: one which looks at policy making to be like a "production model" - with a defined sequence and following a set of ideas and goals; and the other which highlights the "struggle for ideas, classifications, labels, and boundaries." It is not necessary that ideas follow an order or are always clearly defined, but "argumentation, dialogue and multiple perspectives allow policy paradoxes and contradictions to be interpreted and understood to allow participants to clarify underlying value conflicts." It establishes that problems, goals and solutions are changeable and contextual.

4. **"The notion of criteria"**: The "polis model" (political model) has its criteria inescapably tied to "goals and basic values such as security and liberty." Thus, political debate is about both-standards, categories and criteria as well as policy goals and solutions themselves.

Further, Stone describes that "there is no such thing as universal truth," and that all claims about policy goals, instruments and categories are "politically constructed" and their "interpretation is key to understanding." She highlights three groups of challenges:

- Challenge of "goals," namely: equity, efficiency, liberty, and security. As established principles, the rational principles unite all and there stands no conflict in their acceptability but their "interpretation" differs in specific situations. For example no one is "against"

liberty but as soon as specific definitions and meanings are attempted, there is enormous variation.

- Second challenge is that of "problems." Here, the primary claim is that "decisions could further lead to problems" as it accepts the assumption that arriving on a decision implies "imposing one best way to do something."
- Thirdly, "solutions"- In the polis model, solutions are "ongoing strategies for structuring relationships and coordinating behavior to achieve collective purposes." Hence, the implicit conventional belief that a solution "fixes" a stated problem does not hold validity here.

Stone considers "defining inducements, rules, rights, and powers, with the use of certain facts" as a part of the process to reach to "solutions". These are again strategies that influence "people's behavior and coordinate collective action." Interestingly, the "polis approach embraces 'irrationality' as a core part of the system as it considers the notion of reason as inherently political."

<http://reachandywilliams.weebly.com/stone-2002-policy-paradox.html>

Date Accessed: 4.11.2013
(Mahima Malik)