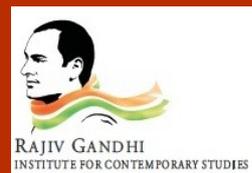


Issue
3.2

RGICS POLICY WATCH



VOL. III ISSUE - 2

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NEW FROM RGICS

Research project

- Case Studies on Public Policy Decision Making
- Region and Regionalism in India: Issues and Consequences
- Left Wing Extremism
- Consequences of declining Sex Ratio

Other Products

- Legislative brief on National Identification authority India Act, 2010
- Background Paper on Protection of Street Vendors

INSIDE THE ISSUE

- Health Minister Outlines Response Plan to Ebola Virus
- Strengthening the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- Bill for Improving Safety and Health of Workers

Disclaimer: The articles are summaries of the original article and the headlines have been changed in certain cases. For the original articles please click on the link given below the article.

A Reviewed Methodology for Measurement of Poverty



Compiled by RGICS

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Issue Coordinator : Mr. Jeet Singh

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COVER STORY

- A Reviewed Methodology for Measurement of Poverty

HEADLINE OF THE WEEK

- Health Minister Outlines Response Plan to Ebola Virus
- Strengthening the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- Bill for Improving Safety and Health of Workers

SECTION 1: THE ECONOMY

- Tourism Contributes About as Much to India's Economy as the Entire IT Sector
- Sustained Demand from the US and EU to Drive India's Apparel Exports Growth in 2014-15
- 244 Crores Lost in Rioting and Arson in Saharanpur

SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Politics and Governance:** Prime Minister asks Plan Panel to Enrol Inmates under Aadhaar; Opposition to Indian Institute of Technology Jammu Grows in Valley; A Diet of Apathy
- **Development:** Government Creates Panel to Examine NHAI Note; 28 of 38 Bihar Districts Facing Drought
- **Government:** TRAI Suggests Restriction on Political Parties, Corporate in Media; Bill to Reform Power Sector in Winter Session
- **Education:** IISc Gets UGC Nod for Four-Year Course
- **Health:** Obesity Epidemic in India; HIV Scenario in Goa
- **Transport:** Tripura Formulates Act to Regulate E-rickshaws
- **Energy:** India in 11th Slot in Energy Efficiency among 16 Nations
- **Technology:** Genetically Modified (GM) Crop Trials in India
- **Environment:** Plan to Deal with Climate Change Impact on Urban Development; Environment Clearances for Projects in India Further Eased
- **Law and Justice:** Supreme Court Dismisses PIL against Sanction in Prevention of Corruption Act; Balance Take on Probity in Public Life: Supreme Court; Tamil Nadu Government Brings Sexual, Cyber Offenders Under Goonda Act
- **Defence:** India's Defence Diplomacy: The Road Ahead

SECTION 3: SOCIETY

- **Gender:** Women Grossly Under-represented in International Politics

SECTION 4: INDIA'S WORLD

- **International Affairs:** UN Rights Council Appoints Commission to Investigate Purported Gaza Violations; Russia's Food Ban against EU, U.S. Provides Huge Opportunity for Brazil; The U.N. Security Council Veto is Literally Killing People
- **South Asia:** The Plight of Nepal's Migrant Workers; TAPI Pipeline as a unifying project in South Asia; India China Relation in Asia Pacific: A New Level of Engagement
- **East and South East Asia:** The Strategic Importance of Myanmar for India

Key Message

Policy Watch is a key instrument of RGICS's vision and strategy.

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Elected representatives and political parties have a central responsibility in channeling peoples' voice into the functioning of the State. In turn, this requires enhancing the knowledge and capacity of elected representatives and political parties on State policy.

Policy Watch informs elected representatives and other political leaders about key policy developments nationally and globally. This will enable them to intervene in policy decision making and reflect people's voice.

Produced by a dedicated and talented team of scholars at RGICS, led by our young RG-RALs, Policy Watch is a unique product that presents information and analysis about policy for a political audience. Policy Watch has by now covered over a thousand policy issues.

Team RGICS

A Reviewed Methodology for Measurement of Poverty

Poverty in India is a historical reality and a variety of methods have been proposed to measure it. A variety of welfare and food security initiatives, along with rapid economic growth since 1991, has though led to sharp reductions in extreme poverty in India however those above poverty line live a fragile economic life. Lack of basic essentials of life such as safe drinking water, sanitation, housing, health infrastructure as well as malnutrition impact the lives of hundreds of millions.

The Planning Commission is the nodal agency in the Government of India for estimation of poverty. It estimates the incidence of poverty at the national and state level separately in rural and urban areas. The incidence of poverty is measured by the poverty ratio, which is the ratio of number of poor to the total population expressed as percentage. It is also known as head-count ratio. The poverty ratio is measured from an exogenously determined poverty line quantified in terms of per capita consumption expenditure over a month and the class distribution of persons obtained from the large sample survey of consumer expenditure data of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). Poverty lines estimated using the methodology provided by the Expert Group (Tendulkar) did not reflect the actual scenario of changing India. There was a need to re-examine the poverty line and its composition and therefore in June, 2012 Expert Group (Rangarajan) was formed to examine the estimation of poverty in India keeping in mind the changed perceptions regarding the minimally acceptable standards of living in the country.

Rangarajan Report 2014: Scope and Methodology

The scope of the report has been to propose a more appropriate method of estimating the poverty line. The group of experts proposes some alternatives in order to settle the issues in the measurement of poverty. The methodology adopted by the Expert Group (Rangarajan) involves determining the poverty line basket of goods and services and the associated level of monthly per capita (total) private consumption expenditure as captured by the NSS Consumer Expenditure Surveys. Prior to that, the Expert Group (Rangarajan) tries to resolve the problem of choice among three alternative reference (recall) periods for which the NSS Surveys provide estimates of private consumption expenditure. The three reference periods are:

Uniform Recall Period (URP)

- In URP, the consumption expenditure data are collected using 30-day recall period for all the items.

Mixed Recall Period (MRP) since 1993-94

- In MRP, the consumption expenditure data are collected using 365-day recall period for five non-food items and 30-day recall period for remaining items.

Modified Mixed Recall Period (MMRP) for 2009-10 and 2011-12

- In MMRP, the consumer expenditure data is gathered from the households using the recall period of: (a) 365-days for clothing, footwear, education, institutional medical care, and durable goods, (b) 7-days for edible oil, egg, fish and meat, vegetables, fruits, spices, beverages, refreshments, processed food, pan, tobacco and intoxicants, and (c) 30-days for the remaining food items, fuel and light, miscellaneous goods and services including non-institutional medical, rents and taxes.

Thus experts are of the view that the mix of reference periods for different items underlying the MMRP -estimates may be expected to yield estimates that are closer to their “true value” and further, in all future NSS Consumer Expenditure Surveys only the MMRP estimates will be available. Thus they use MMRP consumption expenditure data of the NSSO.

In defining the new consumption basket separating the poor from the rest, the Expert Group (Rangarajan) is of the view that it should contain a food component that addresses the capability to be adequately nourished as well as some normative level of consumption expenditure for essential non-food item groups (Education, clothing, conveyance and house rent) besides a residual set of behaviorally determined non-food expenditure.

There exist three components in defining the new consumption basket.

- Food Component
- Essential non Food item
- Other non-food item

Food Component

To define the food component of the poverty line basket, the Expert Group (Rangarajan) has *recomputed the average requirements of calories, proteins and fats, per-capita per-day at the all- India level for 2011-12*, separately for the rural and the urban populations. This has been done by *reference to the 2010 ICMR norms* differentiated by age, gender and activity-status; the age and gender distribution of All- India rural and urban populations as per the 2011 Population Census; and, the broad work-status distribution, again by age and gender and separately for the rural and urban population, as per the NSS 68th Round Employment –Unemployment Survey (2011-12).

Why average requirement of Calories, proteins & fats based on 2010 ICMR norms?

The activity structure of population has also changed in such a manner that the proportion of population in the activity –categories requiring relatively higher calorie intake is now lower. The proportion of population engaged as heavy workers has reduced overtime, while that of moderate or sedentary workers has increased. This lowers the average calorie norm of the entire population because calorie requirement of moderate or sedentary workers is much less than that of heavy workers. For example, in case of male workers, the requirement per capita per day is: 3490 kcal for persons engaged in heavy work, 2730 kcal for persons engaged in moderate work and 2320 kcal for persons engaged in sedentary work; for female workers, the calorie requirement is: 2850/2230/1900 kcal per capita per day in heavy/ moderate/sedentary work.

Using the latest estimate of the age-sex-activity specific calorie norm as recommended by the ICMR (2010); the population weighting diagram derived from the 2011 Population Census 2011; and the age-gender location-specific work-status categories from the NSS 68th round NSS Employment-Unemployment Survey (2011-12), average calorie requirements have been worked out separately for the all-India rural and urban populations.

In rural areas, the lowering of the estimated calorie norm from the Task Force (from 2400 kcal to 2155 kcal per capita per day, i.e. by 245 kcal per capita per day) is the outcome of change in the population structure and the overall lowering of the average age-sex-activity-specific calorie requirement of the individuals as determined by the ICMR.

Similar to the calculations made for calorie requirement, protein and fat requirements have been estimated. The average protein and fat requirement works out to be 48 gms and 28 gms per capita per day in rural areas. In urban areas, the average protein and fat requirement works out to be 50 gms and 26 gms per capita per day. A food basket that simultaneously meets all the norms for the three nutrients, with the calorie-norm being satisfied at least at the lower level of the range defines the food component of the poverty line basket proposed by the Expert Group (Rangarajan).

Further based on estimates of food consumption on MMRP, which is available for the year 2011-12 (NSS 68th Round), it is seen that the nutrient-intake norms, including the calorie –norms at the lower end of the range, are met for the persons located in the sixth fractile (25-30%) in rural areas and for those in the fourth fractile (15-20%) in urban areas. The average monthly per capita consumption expenditure on food in these fractile classes is Rs554 in rural areas and Rs 656 in urban areas.

Non food component

The non-food component of the Poverty line basket has both a normative component and, a component given by the observed consumption pattern of households in the fractile- group in which the food –component of the PLB is located. The normative component relates to the private consumption expenditure aimed at capabilities in respect of education, clothing, shelter (rent) and mobility (conveyance). Since it is difficult to set minimum norms for these essential non-food items, the *Expert Group (Rangarajan) recommends that observed expenditures on these items by households located in the median fractile (45-50 percentile) be treated as the normative minimum private consumption expenditure on these items*. For all other non-food goods and services, the observed expenditure of that fractile- class which meets the nutrient-norms (the 25th -30th percentile in rural India, and, the 15th-20th percentile in urban India) is taken to define the Poverty line basket in respect of these items.

The Monthly Per-capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) of Rs 972 (554+141+277) in rural areas and Rs 1407 (656+407+344) in urban areas constitute the new poverty lines at the all- India level as per the recommendation of the Expert Group (Rangarajan). They translate to a monthly per household expenditure of Rs 4860 / in Rural India and of Rs 7035/ for urban India—assuming a family of 5-members in each case.

Table 1: Consumption expenditure of Poverty Line Basket in Rural Areas and Urban Areas-2011-12:

Items	(MPCE in Rs.)			
	Rural		Urban	
	Sixth fractile (25-35%)	Median class (45-50%)	fourth fractile (15-20%)	Median class (45-50%)
Food	554	678	656	977
Four essential non-food items	102	141	181	407
Other non-food items	277	347	344	571
Total MPCE	933	1166	1181	1955
MPCE-Poverty Line	972		1407	

Source: Planning Commission, GOI

State Specific Poverty Line

The national level poverty lines estimated from the MMRP (Modified Mixed Recall Period) consumption expenditure distribution of NSS 68th Round are disaggregated into state-specific poverty lines in order to reflect the inter-state price differential. Using the Fisher index, the inter-state price differential is calculated separately in rural and urban areas and from these the national poverty lines (separately in rural and urban areas) in 2011-12 are disaggregated into state-specific poverty lines. The state- specific poverty lines in rural and urban areas derived in this manner for the year 2011-12 is given in Table 2.

Estimation of Poverty Ratio

The state-specific poverty ratios in rural and urban areas for the year 2011-12 are calculated from the state-specific poverty lines (in rural and urban areas for the year 2011- 12 as estimated above) and the state-specific distribution of persons by expenditure groups MMRP obtained from the NSS 68th Round (2011-12) large sample survey on household consumer expenditure of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The state- specific poverty ratio and number of poor estimated using the Expert Group (Rangarajan) method for the year 2011-12 is given in Table 3.

Table 2: State-wise Poverty Line in Rural and Urban areas for 2011-12-based on Proposed Methodology:

(Rs. per capita, per month)

S.No	States/UTs	Poverty Line	
		Rural	Urban
1	Andhra Pradesh	1031.74	1370.84
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1151.01	1482.94
3	Assam	1006.66	1420.12
4	Bihar	971.28	1229.30
5	Chhattisgarh	911.80	1229.72
6	Delhi	1492.46	1538.09
7	Goa	1200.60	1470.07
8	Gujarat	1102.83	1507.06
9	Haryana	1127.82	1528.31
10	Himachal Pradesh	1066.60	1411.59
11	Jammu & Kashmir	1044.48	1403.25
12	Jharkhand	904.02	1272.06
13	Karnataka	975.43	1373.28
14	Kerala	1054.03	1353.68
15	Madhya Pradesh	941.70	1340.28
16	Maharashtra	1078.34	1560.38
17	Manipur	1185.19	1561.77
18	Meghalaya	1110.67	1524.37
19	Mizoram	1231.03	1703.93
20	Nagaland	1229.83	1615.78
21	Orissa	876.42	1205.37
22	Punjab	1127.48	1479.27
23	Rajasthan	1035.97	1406.15
24	Sikkim	1126.25	1542.67
25	Tamil Nadu	1081.94	1380.36
26	Tripura	935.52	1376.55
27	Uttar Pradesh	889.82	1329.55
28	Uttarakhand	1014.95	1408.12
29	West Bengal	934.10	1372.68
30	Puducherry#	1130.10	1382.31
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands#	1314.98	1797.69
32	Chandigarh#	1303.17	1481.21
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli#	1008.39	1540.81
34	Daman & Diu#	1200.60	1434.93
35	Lakshadweep#	1327.77	1458.69
	All India	972	1407

Source: Planning Commission, GOI

Table 3: Poverty Ratio and Number of Poor in 2011-12 based on Proposed Methodology

S. No.	States/UTs	RURAL		Urban		Total	
		% age of Persons	No. of Persons (lakhs)	% age of Persons	No. of Persons (lakhs)	% age of Persons	No. of Persons (lakhs)
1	Andhra Pradesh	12.7	71.5	15.6	45.7	13.7	117.3
2	Arunachal Pradesh	39.3	4.3	30.9	1.0	37.4	5.3
3	Assam	42.0	114.1	34.2	15.4	40.9	129.5
4	Bihar	40.1	376.8	50.8	61.4	41.3	438.1
5	Chhattisgarh	49.2	97.9	43.7	26.9	47.9	124.8
6	Delhi	11.9	0.5	15.7	26.3	15.6	26.7
7	Goa	1.4	0.1	9.1	0.8	6.3	0.9
8	Gujarat	31.4	109.8	22.2	58.9	27.4	168.8
9	Haryana	11.0	18.4	15.3	14.0	12.5	32.4
10	Himachal Pradesh	11.1	6.9	8.8	0.6	10.9	7.5
11	Jammu & Kashmir	12.6	11.7	21.6	7.6	15.1	19.3
12	Jharkhand	45.9	117.0	31.3	25.5	42.4	142.5
13	Karnataka	19.8	74.8	25.1	60.9	21.9	135.7
14	Kerala	7.3	12.3	15.3	26.0	11.3	38.3
15	Madhya Pradesh	45.2	241.4	42.1	86.3	44.3	327.8
16	Maharashtra	22.5	139.9	17.0	88.4	20.0	228.3
17	Manipur	34.9	6.7	73.4	6.3	46.7	12.9
18	Meghalaya	26.3	6.4	16.7	1.0	24.4	7.4
19	Mizoram	33.7	1.8	21.5	1.2	27.4	3.1
20	Nagaland	6.1	0.8	32.1	1.9	14.0	2.8
21	Orissa	47.8	169.0	36.3	26.0	45.9	195.0
22	Punjab	7.4	12.9	17.6	18.7	11.3	31.6
23	Rajasthan	21.4	112.0	22.5	39.5	21.7	151.5
24	Sikkim	20.0	0.9	11.7	0.2	17.8	1.1
25	Tamil Nadu	24.3	91.1	20.3	72.8	22.4	163.9
26	Tripura	22.5	6.1	31.3	3.2	24.9	9.3
27	Uttar Pradesh	38.1	600.9	45.7	208.2	39.8	809.1
28	Uttarakhand	12.6	8.9	29.5	9.4	17.8	18.4
29	West Bengal	30.1	188.6	29.0	86.8	29.7	275.4
30	Puducherry	5.9	0.2	8.6	0.7	7.7	1.0
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands#	6.6	0.2	4.9	0.1	6.0	0.2
32	Chandigarh#	12.0	0.0	21.5	2.3	21.3	2.3
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli#	55.2	1.0	15.3	0.3	35.6	1.3
34	Daman & Diu#	0.0	0.0	17.6	0.4	13.7	0.4
35	Lakshadweep#	0.6	0.0	7.9	0.0	6.5	0.0
	All India	30.9	2605.2	26.4	1024.7	29.5	3629.9

Source: Planning Commission, GOI

Comparison of Poverty Estimates in 2009-10 and 2011-12

A comparison of the poverty ratio for the two years 2009-10 and 2011-12 derived from the Expert Group (Rangarajan) method and the Expert Group (Tendulkar) method shows that the average level of poverty ratio derived from the Expert Group (Rangarajan) method is higher than that derived from the Expert Group (Tendulkar) method. The all-India poverty ratio derived from the Expert Group (Rangarajan) method is 8.4 percentage points higher in 2009-10 and 7.6 percentage points higher in 2011-12 than that derived by the Planning Commission using the Expert Group (Tendulkar) method. Though Rangarajan Committee methodology gives higher level of absolute poverty ratio, the reduction in poverty ratio from Rangarajan method is not very different than that of Tendulkar method. The estimate of poverty ratio for the years 2009-10 and 2011-12 derived from the Expert Group (Rangarajan) methodology and Tendulkar methodology are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Poverty Estimates in 2009-10 and 2011-12

Year	Poverty Ratio			No. of poor (million)		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Expert Group (Rangarajan)						
1. 2009-10	39.6	35.1	38.2	325.9	128.7	454.6
2. 2011-12	30.9	26.4	29.5	260.5	102.5	363.0
3. Reduction (%age points)	8.7	8.7	8.7	65.4	26.2	91.6
Expert Group (Tendulkar)						
1. 2009-10	33.8	20.9	29.8	278.2	76.5	354.7
2. 2011-12	25.7	13.7	21.9	216.7	53.1	269.8
3. Reduction (%age points)	8.1	7.2	7.9	61.5	23.4	84.9

Source: Planning Commission, GOI

Estimating the incidence of poverty with different poverty lines, based on the changing needs and demands of the people is a rational approach. This is not a unique situation in India, all most all developing nations do such research experiments to resettle poverty lines and estimating poverty levels, so that public delivery remains focused and useful. The latest attempt by Expert Group (Rangarajan) in India has made another scientific experiment to define poverty line with revised criteria. This possibly can give a fresh direction to the policy makers to target the delivery and improve the conditions of millions who are still below the thresh hold level. Such continuous attempts are essential to make India a poverty free nation in the long run.

Reference

Report of the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Measurement of Poverty. Planning Commission, Government of India. (2014). http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/pov_rep0707.pdf

Prepared By
Shruti Issar

Health Minister Outlines Response Plan to Ebola Virus

(Ndtv.com, August 08, 2014)

The Health Minister has issued a high alert as Ebola Virus and has warned that it may come to India with Indians traveling back from West Africa. Currently, 45,000 Indians live in states of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria where the virus has claimed over 932 lives.

While states such as Libya have declared a national emergency to tackle the issues, major airlines have halted flights flying to the affected areas. There are reports of many expatriates fleeing from virus-affected regions.

The health ministry has issued guidelines to check the outbreak of virus in India. Citizens have been advised to postpone all travel to the four countries. Authorities have been mandated to screen travellers who originate from or transit through affected nations, and track them after their arrival in India. The government will also set up facilities at airports and ports to manage travellers showing symptoms of the disease. Indian troops stationed in the affected regions have been asked to take precaution.

Though there is no cure for the disease, its spread can be contained if detected early. If cases arise, special hospitals have been designated to ensure isolation of patients. The ministry has issued notices assuring that every necessary precaution is being taken to handle the situation. An awareness campaign has been initiated and important information has been put up on government websites.

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/india-on-alert-for-ebola-virus-health-minister-outlines-plan-572816>

Date Accessed: 9.08.2014

(Shriyam Gupta)

Strengthening the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

(Anirudh Laskar, Live mint & The Wall Street Journal, August 04, 2014)

The Securities Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2014, aimed at arming SEBI with sweeping powers has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 4 2014. The Bill, if passed, will entail changes in the existing SEBI Act and the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act. The Amendments give SEBI, the capital markets regulator, powers to stop individuals or companies from pursuing a particular market – related activity.

The new powers will help SEBI:

- Recover dues from defaulters, search premises and seize documents relevant to any violation of capital markets laws.
- They will also allow SEBI to access call data records in insider trading investigations.
- The Bill provides that any pooling of funds in any unregistered scheme or arrangement, having corpus of Rupees 100 crore or more, shall be deemed to be a collective investment scheme(CIS).
- The bill provides for express powers for the settlement, to establish special courts, powers of recovery of amounts.

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in July 2013 had promulgated an ordinance to bring all types of pooling of funds with a corpus of at least Rupees 100 crores under SEBI's existing CIS norms. This ordinance was extended twice.

The Bill will help SEBI in recovering its old dues from defaulters and take direct actions in cases where it could not have earlier .It specifies a range of penalties SEBI can impose on defaulters and this will ensure that the fine matches the gravity of the crime committed. The Bill will further strengthen SEBI to deal ponzi schemes while providing safeguards to ensure that the powers are not misused.

<http://origin-www.livemint.com/Politics/ns1szTQMgvMHtLRWitO1sM/Legislation-to-arm-Sebi-with-special-powers-tabled-in-Parlia.html>

Date Accessed: 10.08.2014

(Devyani Bhushan)

Bill for Improving Safety and Health of Workers

(Press Information Bureau, August 07, 2014)

The Ministry of Labor and Employment recently proposed amendments to the Factories Act, 1948. The amendments are based on the recommendations of an Expert Committee headed by Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member of Planning Commission.

Main features of the proposed Amendments are as follows:

- Reduction in the eligibility criteria for entitlement of annual leave with wages from 240 days to 90 days.
- Provision of canteen facilities for factories employing 200 or more workers instead of the present stipulation of 250 workers.
- Provisions for shelters or restrooms and lunchrooms for factories employing 75 or more workers instead of the present stipulation of 150 workers.
- Provides permission for employment of women for night work at a factory with adequate safeguards for safety and provision of transportation.
- Prohibition of employment of pregnant women and persons with disabilities on or near machinery in motion and near cotton openers.
- Increase the limit of overtime hours to a maximum of 125 hours per quarter in public interest with the approval of the State Government.
- Currently, only State Governments are empowered to make rules under the Factories Act. It proposes to empower the Central Government to make rules under the Act on important provisions.

The objective of the Factories Act (Amendment) Bill, 2014 is to ensure improvement in safety and health of workers working in factories.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=0>

Date Accessed: 12.08.2014

(Shriyam Gupta)

Tourism Contributes About as Much to India's Economy as the Entire IT Sector

(News *NCAER*, August 08, 2014)

Even though India is counted as only 38th-most visited nation according to the United Nations, the data from the Ministry of Tourism suggests that the sector has a significant impact on the country's economy. According to estimates prepared by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), tourism contributes as much as 6.77% to India's Gross Domestic Product through direct and indirect impact. This is approximately as much as India's much promoted Information Technology-Business Process Outsourcing industry, which contributes around 7.5% to the economy according to industry body NASSCOM. The NCAER study estimated a direct impact of 3.8% towards the overall GDP, as compared to just 2% for India's mining sector, according to industry body FICCI. Through the study, in terms of employment, it is implied that almost every 4th to 5th person employed in non-agricultural activities is directly or indirectly engaged in tourism activities.

However, the tourism ministry's data shows a problematic trend wherein, although, foreign tourist arrivals in India have continued to grow for the last few years, reaching nearly 6.9 million in 2013, the relative growth has dipped steeply. From 26% in 2004 to just 5.9% in 2013, growth of foreign tourist arrivals is a serious cause of concern.

Although some of this is due to an international slowdown in tourism, there are homegrown factors like visa and paperwork problems, as well as inadequate infrastructure, that foreigners often complain about. Also, concerns about safety have risen in the last few years. A comparison with other smaller nations that receive far more tourists than India makes this obvious. Thailand got four times the number of visitors in 2013 that India did — a clear policy suggestion for, India's tourism sector, which is underperforming.

http://www.ncaer.org/news_details.php?nID=69

Date accessed: 11.08.2014

(Kasturi Mishra)

Sustained Demand from the US and EU to Drive India's Apparel Exports Growth in 2014-15

(Shruti Shah, *CMIE*, August 05, 2014)

The readymade garments industry witnessed a high growth in exports during March 2014. The country's total apparel export earnings grew by a solid 15.7 per cent. They stood at USD 14.9 billion during the year. The growth was primarily supported by an increase in exports to the major exporting destinations i.e. the US and the European Union. Improved financial health of these regions kept the demand high for Indian exports. Also, a sharp 10 per cent depreciation in the Indian rupee vis-a-vis the US dollar pushed up the export earnings.

India's apparel exports are expected to continue to grow at a healthy pace during next two years till 2016 with an expected growth of 13.3 per cent in 2014-15, with exports at 16.9 billion while estimated increase in 2015-16 is 10.3 per cent. The economies of the US and the European Union are expected to grow even stronger aiding this growth. In addition to this, Indian garment exporters are trying to access the relatively newer markets of Middle East, Latin America and Africa. Moreover, India is likely to gain at the expense of China and Bangladesh, two major apparel exporting countries, as China is tackling high manufacturing costs and labour shortage while Bangladesh is confronting high labour wages and also, compliance and safety issues. However, a stronger rupee against the US dollar is likely to act adversely on export realizations, thereby containing the total export growth.

Recently, Indian garment exporters have implored the government to accelerate the process of India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) at policy level which, if passed through, would give the country a duty free access to Europe. This will significantly boost the country's apparel exports to the region.

[kall=wshreport&nvdt=20140805102148676&nvpc=055000000000&nvtype=ANALYSIS+%26+OUTLOOK&icode=0100000000000000](http://www.outlookindia.com/news/article/Rioting-and-Arson-in-Saharanpur-Caused-Rs-244-Crore-Loss-Study/854784)

Date accessed: 12.08.2014

(Kasturi Mishra)

244 Crores Lost in Rioting and Arson in Saharanpur

(Outlook, August 12, 2014)

An analysis by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Assocham) reveals that 10 days of rioting in Saharanpur led to a loss of INR 244 crores. With 34 lakh inhabitants, Saharanpur district contributes over 2 percent to UP's Gross Domestic Product

It said that 20 per cent Micro Small Medium Enterprises, (MSMEs) of the total of over 17,000 units, have downed shutters leading to a fall in business of about INR 25 crores. Over 60,000 daily wagers engaged in furniture industry, agro-based machinery and other related jobs around Saharanpur have been the worst affected in the aftermath of riots. The estimated wage loss worth is about INR 18 crores. Economic loss is expected to rise given that industrial activity is still suspended.

Assocham has asked the government, both at the Centre and State, to take stringent action to restore law and order. It has asked the Uttar Pradesh government to set up a cell to monitor and review the performance of the government authority. Provisions of timely and adequate measures related to relief, rehabilitation, reparation and restitution should also be monitored.

<http://www.outlookindia.com/news/article/Rioting-and-Arson-in-Saharanpur-Caused-Rs-244-Crore-Loss-Study/854784>

Date Accessed: 13.08.2014

(Shriyam Gupta)

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Prime Minister asks Plan Panel to Enrol Inmates under Aadhaar

(Ruhi Tewari, *The Indian Express*, August 6, 2014)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked the Planning Commission to ensure enrolment of all jail inmates across the country under Aadhaar.

The Prime Ministers Office had also issued a directive to the Planning Commission to collect data for Aadhaar and Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme in 300 priority districts and submit a status report by August 15.

So far, some states, including Gujarat, have taken the initiative to enrol prisoners under Aadhaar. The Gujarat High Court had earlier this year asked the state to issue Aadhaar cards to all inmates, in response to an application filed by Ahmedabad resident Shobhanaben Vaghela, who sought bail for her husband Prakash so that he could get an Aadhaar card and his family could ensure supply of cooking gas.

It is likely to serve a two-fold purpose of creating a secure database for prisoners to enable more effective tracking as well as ensuring their inclusion. Officials say there is an understanding that at a time when Aadhaar and subsequently the Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme is receiving much push, it would be unfair to leave prisoners out. Aadhaar enrolment can be an “enabler” for prisoners and their families to receive the benefits of several schemes dependent on it say sources.

To achieve this, the task is expected to be assigned to state governments who, through registrars of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), would be required to set-up enrolment camps across prisons. Officials say since an address proof is required for Aadhaar, it is being considered that prisoners be allowed to give their respective prisons as the address.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/pm-asks-plan-panel-to-enrol-inmates-under-aadhaar/>

Date Accessed: 08.08.2014

(Rohit Chauhan)

Opposition to Indian Institute of Technology Jammu Grows in Valley

(Neha, *Early Times*, August 12, 2014)

The maiden budget of the National Democratic Alliance government announced the setting up of an Indian Institute of Technology in Jammu. Following the announcement many Kashmiri leaders have come out and expressed their opposition to the move, on the grounds that would alienate the Kashmiri Muslim populace. Radicals in Jammu province and Ladakh region have been raising the demand to declare Jammu province as a full-fledged state, Ladakh as Union Territory to effectively tackle militancy in Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Jammu Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee chief Saidud-Din Soz have condemned New Delhi for sanctioning an IIT for Jammu, despite the fact that the Union budget gave more to Kashmir than Jammu and Ladakh.

The budget, in fact, sanctioned an IIT for Jammu, Rs 50 crore for Pashmina promotion programme and programme for development of other crafts in Kashmir, provided for a solar power project for Ladakh, set apart Rs 200 crore for upgrading indoor and outdoor stadiums to international standards in Jammu and the Kashmir Valley and earmarked money for tourism infrastructure development and construction of building of Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM) in Gulmarg (Kashmir). However, Kashmiri leaders have only focused on the IIT, which would serve the whole state and the country.

Omar Abdullah dismissed as brazenly discriminatory and lop-sided the decision of the Union Government to sanction an IIT for Jammu.

<http://www.earlytimes.in/newsdet.aspx?q=129504>

Date Accessed: 13.08.2014

(Rohit Chauhan)

A Diet of Apathy

(Lola Nayar, *Tehelka*, August 11, 2014)

The Sahariyas, a primitive tribe of the Rajasthan state, constitute a considerable part of the below poverty line (BPL) population of the state. Till last month, the Sahariyas were being provided with 35 kg wheat free of cost. They were, in particular, being supplied an additional five-kilo kit, which consisted of two kg green gram, two kg of refined soybean oil and one kg ghee.

The new Rajasthan government has decided to do away with the free supply of ration. In the budget session in June, the government decided that every family in the below poverty line (BPL) category getting subsidised wheat under the public distribution system (PDS) would have to pay rupees 2 per kg. This would include the Sahariyas as well.

The government is claiming that it has not discontinued the scheme. However, the implementation speaks volumes as distribution of January supplies has begun only now, towards the end of July. In a family of five to seven members, this means the ration, including dal and cooking oil per head, may be very negligible. The government is claiming that mid-day meals have brought down malnutrition cases. However, in the Sahariya dominated areas like Shahabad and Kishanganj, of Baran district, an average of 80 children suffering from malnutrition are being hospitalized every day.

Currently there are an estimated 25,000 families and their population has crossed a lakh, up from 79,372 in the 2002 survey. Hunger deaths have been reported in 2004, 2009 and even in 2011, but from the 93 percent Sahariya children who were reported malnourished a decade back (15 percent of them severely malnourished), the official record was 5,240 children last year, while 2,287 children have been reported malnourished in the first six months of this year.

<http://www.outlookindia.com/article/A-Diet-Of-Apathy/291626>

Date Accessed: 11.08.2014

(Rohit Chauhan)

DEVELOPMENT

Government Creates Panel to Examine NHAI Note

(Ragini Verma, *Livemint*, August 09, 2014)

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to constitute an inter-ministerial committee to review the note prepared by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) seeking an overhaul of the existing model concession agreement to revive private sector interest in the road sector.

The model concession agreement is the contract that sets the terms of execution of a project and is signed between the concessionaire and the government, in this case the NHAI.

The note prepared by NHAI has proposed 50-60 changes in the existing model concession agreement. This includes-

- Provisions for revising total projects cost jointly with the lenders at the time of the financial closure from what was estimated at the time of bidding

- Withdrawing any waiver of pre-conditions for bidding like getting clearances
- Specific evaluation of the compensation for developer in case of any change in law affecting income from project.

The work on this draft was first started under the previous United Progressive Alliance government. This comes in the wake of demands by the industry has to relook at the model concession agreement to address the issue of resolving disputes and cost escalation, among others, to revive private sector interest in the road sector.

As many as 21 highway projects worth more than Rs.26,000 crore failed to attract bids over the last two fiscal years. The model concession agreement for highways was last revised in 2009 in line with recommendations of the B.K. Chaturvedi committee.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/bMqNNKJa31H720QrOVWSoN/Govt-creates-panel-to-examine-NHAI-note.html>

Date Accessed: 11.08.2014
(Rohit Chauhan)

28 of 38 Bihar Districts Facing Drought

(Bihartimes.in, August 10, 2014)

28 districts in Bihar may be facing drought because of shortage of rain by almost 28 percent. Officials of the meteorological department in Patna noted that scanty rain in the last 10 days have affected crops production heavily. They predict no change in the coming days.

A large part of central Bihar is irrigated by water from the Sone River and regulated through canals. However they are running dry. Nearly two-thirds of Bihar's population, who earn their livelihood from agriculture and agricultural activities, is dependent on rain.

The Chief Minister has said that if there is no rain in the next few days, he shall declare the state drought hit. If Bihar were declared drought-hit, it would be the fourth drought in the past five years. Last year government declared 33 of the 38 districts drought-hit due to a rainfall shortage of nearly 25 percent.

<http://www.bihartimes.in/Newsbihar/2014/Aug/newsbihar10Aug1.html>

Date Accessed: 12.08.2014
(Shriyam Gupta)

GOVERNMENT

TRAI Suggests Restriction on Political Parties, Corporate in Media

(Deccan Herald, August 12, 2014)

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) suggested setting up of a single independent media regulatory authority comprising eminent non-media person for TV and print media to maintain highest editorial independence and curb illegal practices like paid news and private treaties in media. Aiming to maintain plurality of news and views, the TRAI has also recommended restriction on political bodies and corporate entering the television and newspaper business.

TRAI also said that entities such as political and religious bodies, urban, local, panchayati raj, and other publicly funded bodies, as well as Central and state government ministries, departments, companies, undertakings, joint ventures, and government-funded entities and affiliates be barred from entry into broadcasting and TV channel distribution sectors.

Authority has also suggested for providing an exit route option for any such bodies already been given permission to set up media organization. In its recommendations on issues relating to media ownership, the regulator said the genre of news and current affairs is of utmost importance and has direct relevance to the plurality and diversity of viewpoints. Hence, it should be considered as a relevant genre in the product market for formulating cross-media ownership rules.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/425071/traai-media-ownership-restrict-political.html>

Date Accessed: 13.08.2014

(Jeet Singh)

Bill to Reform Power Sector in Winter Session

(The Times of India, August 7, 2014)

The government is proposing to introduce a Bill, amending the Central Electricity Act, in the winter session of Parliament to improve the tariff policy and regulations in the power sector. The power ministry is working out different tariff structures for different times of the day for easy availability of power for maximum hours in electricity deficit areas. It will soon consult states over the issue as the tariff matter comes under the states' domain.

Besides, the government has decided to promote domestic power companies to help increase solar power generation in the country. Announcing these decisions in Rajya Sabha, power minister Piyush Goyal said the government will allow only 100% indigenous domestic companies to participate in the tendering process for 1000 Megawatt solar power plants for defence sector. The measure would be implemented from this year itself, he added.

The minister, who also holds the coal portfolio, said while the power plant capacity has increased by 60% in the last few years, coal production has gone up by 7-8%. The government has decided that all power plants over 25 years' old will get automatic exemption from clearances and automatic coal linkage for setting up plants with higher capacity.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Bill-to-reform-power-sector-in-winter-session/articleshow/39782367.cms>

Date Accessed: 11.08.2014

(Rohit Chauhan)

EDUCATION

IISc Gets UGC Nod for Four-Year Course

(Deccan Herald, August 12, 2014)

With the change in nomenclature and structure of undergraduate science degree of deemed university Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, granted to continue with its four-year undergraduate programme in science (BS). In a letter to the IISc earlier this week, the University Grant Commission (UGC) had asked the premier research institute to discontinue its four-year BS programme on the ground that it was in violation of the 10+2+3 pattern. The IISc, however, later approached the commission with a detailed clarification that the programme was not a general undergraduate course in science but a degree in research.

With new nomenclature and courses structure, students admitted to the BS programme, will now get a BSc degree after completion of the third year of the course. They will be granted a BSc research degree on completion of the fourth year of the programme, a Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry official said on Tuesday. "The UGC has agreed to the institute's proposal," the official said. The IISc, which is a deemed university under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, has been offering a four-year undergraduate programme in science (BS) since 2011.

Soon after forcing the Delhi University to scrap its four-year undergraduate programme, the UGC came up with a notification on July 5, specifying the nomenclatures and duration of degree programmes for varsities and other higher educational institutions. In the gazette notification, the higher education regulator said that general undergraduate honours or general degree programmes, like BA, BSc and B Com, should be of three years' duration,

MPhil one to one-and-a-half years duration and doctoral 2 years.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/425171/iisc-gets-ugc-nod-4.html>

Date Accessed: 13.08.2014

(Jeet Singh)

HEALTH

Obesity Epidemic in India

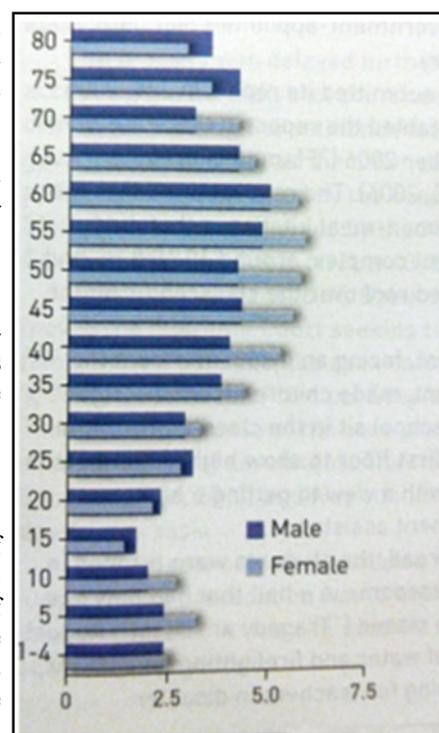
(Frontline, August 22, 2014)

India is facing the daunting task of dealing with malnutrition and stunted growth, however, according to a report published by The Lancet, India ranks third amongst the countries with most obese people, after China and the United States.

Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal and excessive fat accumulation that could impair health. A body mass index (BMI) greater or equal to 25 is overweight, while a BMI greater or equal to 30 is obesity, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) standards.

Overweight and obesity as a problem is now not only exclusive to high-income countries, but is on the rise in middle and low-income countries as well, especially in urban areas. More than 30 million children under the age of five live in developing countries as compared to 10 million in developed countries.

The paradox in India is that malnutrition of the poorest is matched by obesity amongst the wealthiest. Using data from 1980 to 2013, researchers of this study found that 3.7 per cent of men and 4.2 per cent of women in India are obese. The rise in obesity can be attributed to a shift in diet of Indians from coarse grains to refined wheat and rice as staple food. The affluent have taken to consuming more fats, oils and sugary food, this along with an increasingly sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise have compounded the problem.



Obesity is generally agreed as a public health concern and a major cause for heart disease, diabetes and arthritis. The Lancet study of 2009 shows that moderate obesity (BMI 30-35) can cut life expectancy by two to four years while severe obesity (BMI 40-45) by a decade.

Obesity can be tackled through a variety of increased government intervention ranging from regulation of advertisement to taxation of obesity causing foods. The Centre for Science and Environment has recommended a ban on junk food and regulation of its advertising on school premises.

<http://www.frontline.in/other/data-card/obesity-epidemic/article6287597.ece>

Date Accessed: 07.08.2014

(Afreen Faridi)

Prevalence of obesity in India in 2013,
by age (in per cent)
Source: IHME, University of
Washington

HIV Scenario in Goa

(Mayabhushan, *The Pioneer*, August 12, 2014)

In response to a starred question asked by BJP legislator Nilesh Cabral, about HIV cases in Goa, state Health Minister Laxmikant Parsekar, on Monday, told the Goa Legislative Assembly that Goa does not have a single village unaffected with HIV. "There are 15,000 people affected with HIV, which means that one per cent of people in the state are affected with it. There is not a single village in the state which has no person affected with HIV," Parsekar told the Legislative Assembly. However, he added, "Right from 2003 till 2008, the state was recording around 1,000 cases annually. But since 2009, the number has gone down to about 550 annually." He also added that, in 2012, 554 fresh cases were reported which came down to 532 new cases last year and this year, till June, 246 fresh HIV cases were reported.

With these statistics in mind, the incident last month, at Rivona, where the Parents Teachers Association at a church-run school tried to first block the entry of thirteen HIV+ students and later 23 other students suspected of having HIV, puts the otherwise progressive and united state in a bad light. Beneath the tourism industry, Goa struggles with HIV especially among the migrants, truckers, prison inmates, street children as well as commercial sex workers.

While the minister added that various awareness measures taken up by the state government along with NGOs are showing results, the state needs to work actively to remove the ignominy associated with HIV/AIDS so as to stop the affected from getting victimized by the society.

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/hiv-present-in-every-ward-village-in-go.html>

Date accessed: 12.08.2014

(Kasturi Mishra)

TRANSPORT

Tripura Formulates Act to Regulate E-rickshaws

(*Times of India*, August 05, 2014)

The Delhi HC refused to lift its ban on e-rickshaws plying in Delhi until laws and rules to regulate them were framed and implemented. On the other hand, Tripura has since long brought these vehicles within the ambit of legal intervention and is probably the first state to do so. E-rickshaws are three wheeled carts powered by an electric motor.

Replicating the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the state framed the 'Tripura Battery Operated Rickshaws Rules 2014' to regulate the movement of battery-operated rickshaws in urban areas of the state. The rules were notified in January this year, mandating a driving license and a minimum age of 20 years for one to get such a license.

The licence stands valid for three years, unless it is cancelled or suspended for any default. The licence fee of the battery-operated rickshaw is Rs 300 and the renewal fee is Rs 100. The operator of the rickshaw will have to pay annual road tax of Rs 100. The Act sets the area where the rickshaws can operate, limiting it to the area of Municipality or Nagar Panchayat from where the permit has been issued.

The Act also sets a speed limit of 15 km/hr on e-rickshaws and provides for constant regulation of safety standards.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Tripura-shows-way-to-regulate-e-rickshaws/articleshow/39654123.cms>

Date Accessed: 07.08.2014

(Afreem Faridi)

ENERGY

India in 11th Slot in Energy Efficiency among 16 Nations

(Vishwa Mohan, *Times of India*, August 08, 2014)

The United States based non-profit American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) has analyzed the world's 16 largest economies covering more than 81 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and about 71 per cent of the global electricity consumption and has ranked them on an international score card.

Germany is the global leader in energy efficiency. Ageing power plants, inefficient ways of electricity generation and industrial practices put India at number 11 in this energy efficiency ranking. The (US) having second highest per capita energy consumption in the world, comes at the 13th position- behind China, France, Japan, United Kingdom (UK), Canada and Australia among others. Besides the US, four other countries- South Korea, Russia, Brazil and Mexico- are below India because of inefficient ways of energy consumption.

Per capita energy consumption of all these countries is, however, much higher than India which with less access to energy sources and lesser number of private vehicles, pollutes less as compared to other economies. India is among the top nations in transportation energy efficiency as it has far lower number of passenger miles travelled per capita than any other major economy.

The major take away from this score card are:

- A country that uses less energy to achieve the same or better results, reduces its costs and pollution, creating a stronger, more competitive economy. Rich nations on the other hand like US, Canada, UK etc. emit more green house gases due to high energy consumption.
- Secondly these rankings provide elbow room to countries like India and Brazil, during climate change negotiation where they may insist for their "right to grow" by highlighting how developed countries continue to pollute more.
- Thirdly, there are substantial opportunities for improvement in energy efficiency in all economies analyzed.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Old-power-plants-put-India-in-11th-slot-in-energy-efficiency/articleshow/39849119.cms>

Date Accessed: 10.08.2014

(Devyani Bhushan)

TECHNOLOGY

Genetically Modified(GM) Crop Trials in India

(*Times of India*, August 07, 2014)

India's Environment minister's recent pronouncements have sent confusing signals about central government's stand on GM crops. A day after allaying members' concerns in parliament over GM crops, the government on August 6, 2014 has sent hints that it may eventually give its nod for field trials of certain varieties of GM crops including rice, brinjal, chick-pea, mustard and cotton.

"We are not saying no to science. Nobody can say no to science. We have to take proper caution. We have to take proper action," said environment minister of India. His remarks assume significance because the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) - the central biotech regulator-has given its approval for the field trials of these GM crops last month, the matter is pending before the environment ministry of India which has the mandate to give a final nod. India has, so far, released only GM (Bt) cotton for commercial cultivation since 2002.

A lot of concern has been raised on GM crops as they use a toxic protein from naturally occurring soil bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis*(Bt), to kill insects. While supporters say, GM crops can help improve yields and stabilise food prices. However many Indian scientists, environmentalists and farmers oppose them.

India has many reasons including complete dependence on seed imports, to avoid such technology until the facts become clearer with greater international experience. On the other hand, there is consistent demand from the scientific community to allow them to go for field trials as it is the only way to find out the bio-safety details of GM crops. Government has to consider three issues: judicial, safeguards and processes into account before giving approval for field trials of GM crops.

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31808&articlexml=Cant-ignore-science-Javadekar-on-GM-crops-07082014012053>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2014

(Devyani Bhushan)

ENVIRONMENT

Plan to Deal with Climate Change Impact on Urban Development

(Ashwin Dayal and Anna Brown, *UNICEF Office of Research*, 2014)

Cities in developing countries provide important channels to millions of rural poor for a way out of poverty. However, these massive congregations are highly vulnerable to dangers of climate change. Authors of the article have described challenges related to climate change in cities and possible way ahead.

The impact of climate change on rapid expansion adds a new challenge to the already ill-equipped infrastructure. Warmer temperatures, heat waves and drought, water shortages, increasingly concentrated rainfall levels, severe and prolonged flooding of urban drainage systems, outbreaks of disease: these are all the dire consequences of climate change realities that city planners struggle with.

Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN), which is a network of ten crore cities in Asia, was launched to deal with such problems. It focuses on developing resilience of the poor and vulnerable sections of the society, who are least equipped and bear the maximum brunt of climate change. The network works with climate data and sees how it can be incorporated in land use and infrastructure planning in cities and towns to ensure long term safety of infrastructural investments.

Climate change data has grown increasingly sophisticated; however, it still lacks downscaling to suit the needs specific locales. Such localised data is needed to provide town planners and engineers the information needed to develop climate change resilient infrastructure. Decisions taken today shall affect our cities over 50 to 100 years- when climate change impact will increase in severity. There is a need to apply what is already known- for example, not allowing construction in low lying areas, developing drainage systems to cater to future rainfall projections. There is an enormous space for innovation, in developing new forms of low-cost construction and design that can withstand floods, storms and heat pressures for low income families.

The need of the hour is incorporating long term planning and recognizing the key role that decentralization plays on the ground, for aligning commercial and community needs, while factoring in climate change.

<http://www.unicef-irc.org/e-book/Climate-Ch-web-D215/files/assets/basic-html/page47.html>

Date Accessed: 07.08.2014

(Afreen Faridi)

Environment Clearances for Projects in India Further Eased

(Srestha Banerjee, *Down to Earth*, July 05, 2014)

Ministry of environment, forest and climate change in India is working towards streamlining Environmental Clearance (EC) process by delegating more powers to the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs) for granting EC. This delegation to state authorities has been effected through June 2014 amendments to the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006. The ministry has also announced that environmental and forest clearance and applications will be accepted online for expediting the clearance process.

According to EIA Notification 2006, depending on the size and potential impact of the proposed developmental projects, these projects are categorised into A and B category. Category A projects are appraised by the Central Expert Committee and cleared by the Union Ministry, while category B projects are cleared by state authorities-SEIAAs.

The June 2014 amendment involves modifications in sectors such as thermal power, river valley projects, mining, paper and pulp industry, distilleries and fertilizers. Under the category of thermal power a new sub category-“use of municipal solid non-hazardous waste as fuel”, has been included for which projects of more than 20 mega watt (MW) capacity will be cleared by the centre and projects between 15-20 MW will be cleared by SEIAAs.

Projects of more than 15MW capacity using biomass fuel will also be cleared by SEIAAs. Under “irrigation projects” category clearances for projects with culturable command area below 2000 hectares, has been done away with. A considerable dilution has also been proposed for projects lying in vicinity to protected areas, notified eco sensitive areas, critically polluted areas and inter- state boundaries of river valley projects.

These amendments have been questioned by activists on the ground that they provide less buffer for protected areas and have been prompted by industrial lobby and various state governments.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/nda-government-further-eases-environment-clearances-projects>

Date Accessed: 06.07.2014

(Devyani Bhushan)

LAW AND JUSTICE

Supreme Court Dismisses PIL against Sanction in Prevention of Corruption Act

(*Indian Express*, August 07, 2014)

A two-Judge Bench of the Supreme Court dismissed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), seeking direction to declare Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 unconstitutional. Section 19 in the Prevention of Corruption Act mandates prior sanction for prosecution of legislators, bureaucrats and other public servants. The PIL was filed by Manzoor Ali Khan, an Advocate practicing in Jammu and Kashmir.

The bench led by Justice TS Thakur held that, “A fine balance has to be maintained between need to protect a public servant against mala fide prosecution on the one hand and the object of upholding the probity in public life in prosecuting the public servant against whom prima facie material in support of allegation of corruption exists, on the other hand.”

Manzoor Ali Khan alleged that the provision had become a tool to shield corrupt public officials, highlighting instances such as the Taj Corridor case. The court appreciated the concerns raised and cited particular judgments such as in 2G and Vineet Narain Cases where the court set a timeline of three months for the competent authority to decide upon requests of sanctions, deeming them granted if the authorities failed to respond in the stipulated time span.

The current case dealt with post investigation stage. A requirement of sanction at a pre-investigation stage, as provided by Section 6A of the Delhi Special Police establishment Act, had already been declared unconstitutional by

the Supreme Court in May.

However, while dismissing the petition the Court held that the Parliament and the appropriate authority must consider restructuring Section 19 of the PC Act in such a manner as to make it consonant with reason, justice and fair play.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/sanction-to-prosecute-politicians-bureaucrats-sc-refuses-to-strike-down-law/>

Date Accessed: 09.08.2014

(Afreen Faridi)

Balance Take on Probity in Public Life: Supreme Court

(Samanwaya Rautray, *The Economic Times*, August 07, 2014)

The Supreme Court has refused to strike as unconstitutional Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, that makes prior sanction mandatory for prosecution of a bureaucrat or elected member of any house, saying misuse of law cannot be a ground to do so.

The court said the discretion to grant sanction must always be exercised within three months on a prima facie examination of charges against an officer. It can take another month if the attorney general has to be consulted. However, the investigative agency or private complainant can file a complaint in court or a chargesheet in 15 days of expiry of that limit. A fine balance has to be maintained between the need to protect a public servant against untruthful prosecution. Requirement of sanction protects an innocent public servant against untruthful prosecution.

The ruling came on a PIL by filed by Manzoor Ali Khan, a practising advocate in Jammu & Kashmir, who claimed that in J&K several government officials were charged for corruption but in absence of requisite sanction, they could not be prosecuted.

Khan said that the discretion inherent in the sanction provision was being misused by the Central government and the State government to protect dishonest politicians and government officials. But the court refused to strike down the provision.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-08-07/news/52555950_1_sanction-servant-supreme-court

Date Accessed: 11.08.2014

(Rohit Chauhan)

Tamil Nadu Government Brings Sexual, Cyber Offenders Under Goonda Act

(*The Telegraph*, August 12, 2014)

The Tamil Nadu Assembly passed 17 bills on August 12, 2014, the final day of Budget Session. This included two amendments to the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug-offenders, Forest-offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic offenders, Sand-offenders, Slum-grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982, popularly known as Goonda Act - bringing even first time sexual offenders and cyber crimes under its ambit. The Goonda Act provides for preventive detention of certain types of offenders whose activities have the potential to affect the public order, for one year. Now, those who have been convicted of sexual or cyber crimes once, but have not committed any offence after that, can be picked up and detained up to a year. The move to include sexual offenders has been prompted by the Delhi rape-and-murder case of 2012.

The Opposition members argued that the amendment would make preventive detention provisions vulnerable to misuse. However, the bill counters this point by saying: "There are instances where a single act has the potential to disrupt public order and therefore it will not be meaningful to wait for habitual commission of offences by a person before resorting to preventive detention."

The bill comes as a response to the law and order problems set off by sexual assaults, especially on girl children, and police requests for preventive detention as a deterrent. In case of cyber criminals, such checks were considered necessary after several instances occurred where personal information, such as credit card details, was extracted from individuals by emails pretending to be from reputable companies. It also aims to counter online threats to women that post digitally modified pictures and offensive photos of children. This move is seen as sending a clear message, on a policy level, that such crimes will not be dealt with lightly.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140812/jsp/nation/story_18712775.jsp#.U-sF1qWTbdk

Date accessed: 13.08.2014

(Kasturi Mishra)

DEFENCE

India's Defence Diplomacy: The Road Ahead

(C.Raja Mohan, *Observer Research Foundation*, August 08, 2014)

Amid the shifting balance of power and the mounting regional tensions in East and West Asia, many countries in Asia and the Indian Ocean hope that India would take on a larger security role in the region. But to dismay of India's Asian neighbours, Delhi is unwilling. There is a huge gap between the regional expectations of India as a stabilising force and Delhi's performance as a security actor in the region.

While the Ministry of External Affairs and the armed services understand the value of defence diplomacy, they have struggled to persuade the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The reason for this lies in the nature of the MoD, which has created no internal institutional capacity to engage foreign defence establishments.

The United States had expected India to emerge as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean and beyond. In the mid 1980s India, opened the door for defence cooperation with Washington and laid the basis for a more systematic military engagement with America and the West, as well as with the East Asian neighbours. In early 2002, India undertook joint missions with the United States armed forces in the Indian ocean, deployed Indian navy in South China Sea, signed agreements for bilateral defence cooperation with countries in East Asia and revived security cooperation with countries in the Middle East and Indian Ocean. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA I) continued the incremental expansion of India's defence engagement. From 2006 however India was reluctant to these international and regional defense partnerships.

The new government has the option to recognise the advantages of a defence diplomacy that mobilises external partnerships to accelerate India's defence modernization, shapes its regional strategic environment and helps India emerge as an indispensable element of a new balance of power system in the Indo-Pacific.

<http://orfonline.org/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=70305&mmacmaid=70306>

Date Accessed; 10.08.2014

(Devyani Bhushan)

GENDER

Women Grossly Under-represented in International Politics

(Farai Morobane, *SAIIA*, August 07, 2014)

This article discusses why, despite formal movements towards advocacy and implementation of mainstreaming policies, quota systems, gender networks, NGOs and decentralization of power, there is still a gross minority of women occupying leadership roles in international politics. A 2013 World Economic Forum report covering 115 countries notes that women have closed over 90% of the gender gap in education and in health but only 15% when it comes to political empowerment at the highest levels of government. Although 97 countries have some sort of gender quota system for government positions, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women hold only 17% of parliamentary seats and 14% of ministerial-level positions world-wide, most of which are related to family, youth, the disabled, and the elderly.

Two identified reasons are gender stereotypes and lack of adequate support structures to check existing institutions. A factor for stereotypes is that they represent women as a homogenous interest group. They equate women in leadership with the fact that women should be concerned with empowering other women and supplementing women's rights. They believe that women are emotionally driven and hence, avoid contention and bring world peace. This relates to the stereotype that women are essentially the 'nurturer', 'peacekeeper' and 'negotiator'. This should not be the reason; women are required in these positions because women have historically been kept away from public spaces for the very fact that they are women.

Therefore, though it is necessary to have quotas in place at policy level, we need to delve deeper into the quality of women's roles in these spaces. While it is important to be concerned with the decrease in numbers, we also need to see the status of gender relations and behavioral ideas around gender in government spaces. Growth in numbers definitely points towards improvement in gender parity. But politics requires a phase in which the elemental and systemic inequalities that prevent women from making legitimate leaps in political leadership are examined.

<http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/women-grossly-under-represented-in-international-politics>

Date accessed: 12.08.2014

(Kasturi Mishra)

REGIONALISM

The Return of Kashmiri Pandits

(*Rising Kashmir*, June 08, 2014)

The return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley seems to be on the current Government's agenda. However, the members of the community remain skeptical about their homecoming in the absence of consensus on political and economic guarantees. Panun Kashmir, an organisation of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, asserted that the return and rehabilitation policy of Kashmiri Pandits would be incomplete without addressing the geo-political aspirations of the community.

According to official data, 24202 families migrated out of the valley after the armed conflict broke out. A total number of 38,119 families comprising 1,42,042 Kashmiri migrants stand registered with the Revenue and Relief Ministry, through a UPA government sanctioned special package for their return and rehabilitation.

Grants had been announced by the outgoing United Progressive Alliance government (UPA) in April 2008 for return and rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits. The then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh had released a package which included assistance of Rs 7.5 lakh per family for reconstruction of fully or partially damaged houses, assistance of Rs 2 lakh per family for dilapidated houses, assistance of Rs 7.5 lakh per family for purchase of a house in Group Housing Societies for those Pandits who had sold their properties during the period of turmoil in 1989 and in the subsequent years.

With the improvement in the situation in the Valley, the government decided to construct 200 flats at an estimated cost of Rs 22.90 crore at Sheikhpura Budgam in 2004. Eighteen flats had also been constructed through Jammu and Kashmir Housing Board at Mattan Anantnag.

The flats constructed with proper infrastructure were for the accommodation of the Pandits who had not migrated but were displaced from their villages. But on ground these packages have failed to lure the migrants so far as very few have returned to the valley.

However, at present issue of creating separate communities for resettlement of Kashmiri Pandits has raised concerns of ghettoisation and widening the gap between the Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits.

<http://www.risingkashmir.com/return-of-kashmiri-pandits-there-is-more-to-it-than-meets-the-eye/>

Date Accessed: 10.08.2014

(Afreen Faridi)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UN Rights Council Appoints Commission to Investigate Purported Gaza Violations

(UN News Centre, August 11, 2014)

This article highlights the move of the United Nations Human Rights Council on August 11, 2014 to appoint three members to its independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate purported violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip. The Council had decided - by a vote of 29 countries in favour, with 17 abstentions and a sole negative vote by the United States- to launch the inquiry at its emergency meeting on 23 July, 2014.

The Council's President, Ambassador Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Gabon), announced that the human rights body appointed Amal Alamuddin (United Kingdom), Doudou Diène (Senegal) and William Schabas (Canada) to serve as members on the international Commission. Mr. Schabas will also serve as the Commission's Chair.

Mandate of the Commission:

- Establish the facts and circumstances of violations and crimes perpetrated
- Identify those responsible
- Make recommendations to ensure that impunity is ended and those responsible are held accountable
- Recommend on ways to protect civilians against any further assaults

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has cited that since conflict began in the region on June 13, 2014: at least 1,948 Palestinians, the majority of them civilians, have been killed in the conflict, along with 67 Israelis. In addition, some 425,000 people are seeking shelter. Further, around 11,855 housing units in Gaza have been destroyed or severely damaged by Israeli attacks, and another 36,000 have suffered damage.

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48459#.U-moI_mSyVI

Date Accessed: 12.8.2014

(Divashri Mathur)

Russia's Food Ban against EU, U.S. Provides Huge Opportunity for Brazil

(The Moscow Times, August 08, 2014)

Russia is imposing a "full embargo" on food imports from the EU, US and some other Western countries, in a retaliatory response to sanctions over Ukraine. The US and the EU have accused Russia, which annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in March, of creating tensions in eastern Ukraine by supplying arms and expertise to a pro-Moscow rebellion. The ban covers all imports of meat, fish, milk and milk products, fruit and vegetables from the United States, the European Union, Australia, Canada and Norway. It will last for one year.

Russia depends heavily on imported foodstuffs, most of it from the West, particularly in the larger cities such as Moscow. As the nation's agricultural sector has continued to suffer from poor efficiency and shortage of funds, experts find it unlikely that local producers will be able to step up production to fill this gap soon enough. While the government claimed it will act swiftly to replace Western imports by importing more food from Latin America, Turkey and ex-Soviet nations to avoid empty shelves and price hikes, analysts predicted that it will only speed up inflation.

This ban provides a massive opportunity for meat and grain exports from agricultural polestar Brazil and a smaller one for its Latin American neighbors. Russia's government met with various Latin American embassies on August 6th, 2014 to explore the options of other food providers. There is also a great opportunity for India's Amul, to get a presence in Russia. The acute shortfall in dairy and cheese products implies that Amul might be able to gain a pres-

ence in Russia. However, a combination of good marketing, quality regulation and attractive packaging is a must for Indian products to do well in foreign markets.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russia-s-ban-against-eu-u-s-food-imports-provides-huge-opportunity-for-brazil/504783.html>

Date Accessed: 12.8.2014

(Kasturi Mishra)

The U.N. Security Council Veto is Literally Killing People

(Scott Sheeran, *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2014)

The conflicts in Gaza, Iraq and Syria have brought to light the structural problems of the UN Security Council, especially veto power, in dealing with international tensions. The UN charter asks the five veto holders (P5) to not use the power in cases where they are involved. But this has not been the case.

Russian annexation of Crimea with its threat of veto has limited UN's response to the crises in Ukraine. The continuous bombing of Gaza by Israel has evoked no response from the international organization. Moreover, in the Syrian war the Security Council has been a mere bystander. Such inadequate response to international crises due to veto is a large cause for concern.

The reform efforts over the past 60 years have regrettably come to naught, as the P5 have a veto over any proposed changes to the veto mechanism. The French initiative for 'voluntary regulation' by asking P5 to not use veto if the decision is related to "mass crime" offers hope.

The alternative to the status quo is to not permit veto's use in the most egregious situations of civilian suffering, which the initiatives hopes to do.

The support of UK and US would be crucial is getting this initiative through. Prospects for veto reform would be better aided by seeking an advisory legal opinion from the International Court of Justice. This may be challenging, as it would require majority support from the General Assembly.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/08/11/the-un-security-council-veto-is-literally-killing-people/?hpid=z11>

Date Accessed: 11.08.2014

(Shriyam Gupta)

SOUTH ASIA

The Plight of Nepal's Migrant Workers

(Kamal Dev Bhattarai, *The Diplomat*, August 11, 2014)

This article highlights how despite being cheated and frequently facing atrocious working conditions, young Nepalese are still flocking abroad for work. According to data more than 1,500 young Nepalese go aboard seeking employment opportunities every single day. At present, 3.5 million young Nepalese are working abroad.

Prolonged political transition, economic depression, and the closure of industries are the main reasons for the alarming level of unemployment (with a youth unemployment rate of 38 percent in 2012) in the country.

Nepali migrants find themselves cheated at virtually every stage, particularly by brokers and manpower agencies and are unsafe very often. According to official government data, two migrant workers die abroad each day on average, with the death toll topping 240 between January and mid-April this year alone. An Amnesty International report on 2011 pointed out that majority of migrant workers are not paid in accordance with the terms of their contract, are forced to work without rest days, are locked up and physically abused.

A new constitution if drafted within the next year can possibly pave the way for economic development and jobs for the nation's young adults.

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/the-plight-of-nepals-migrant-workers/>

Date Accessed: 12.8.2014

(Divashri Mathur)

TAPI Pipeline as a unifying project in South Asia

(Dawn, August 08, 2014)

Several South Asian countries such as Afghanistan, India and Pakistan are facing dire energy crisis after failing to increase domestic energy capacity. By 2040 Afghanistan's population would grow by three times, pushing up its energy demands; by 2050 Pakistan's electricity requirements would grow three fold; while India's energy demands are growing 2.8 per cent annually.

The 1800 km long Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline can serve as a solution to many issues plaguing the region besides supplying cheaper alternative to current source of imported oil and natural gas, which costs in the range of \$16 to \$18 per million British Thermal units. The project is estimated to annually deliver up to 33 billion cubic meters of gas to the member countries.

The project has the potential to bring about regional peace and security by linking neighbours towards economic growth and prosperity. India and Pakistan would receive 1.365 billion cubic feet of gas per day (bcfd) while Afghanistan would receive 0.5 bcfd. Afghanistan would receive \$450 million annually under this agreement; generating much needed employment for Afghan youth. It will also catalyse opening of new markets in landlocked Turkmenistan. TAPI pipeline can provide economic opportunities to all member countries besides having considerable geopolitical significance by lessening the dependence of member countries on imports from the West. China has also expressed interest in becoming a part of this project.

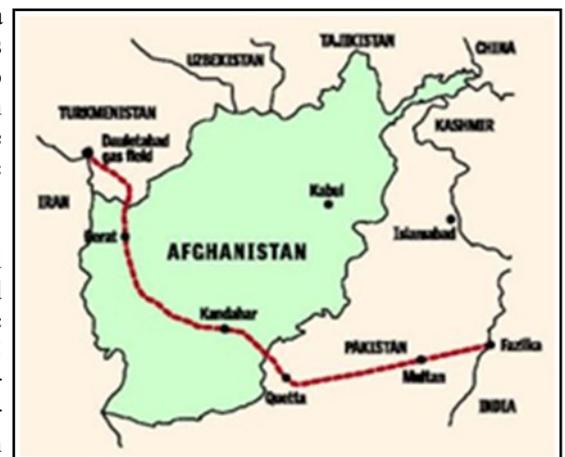


Figure 1 Proposed TAPI Gas Pipeline
Source: The Hindu Business Line

TAPI project faces a number of challenges, the most formidable being unstable political relationship between Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, causing considerable delay in the project. The US opposes the Iran-Pakistan link in the pipeline due to Iran's nuclear programme, despite having deep interests in its success as two US firms seek to gain from the multi-billion dollar award. Guarantee of safety of the pipeline also is a major concern, especially in Afghanistan.

India has strongly batted for giving the project a big boost in response to Chinese aggressiveness in securing their energy needs from the Central Asian Region.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1124005/sharif-vows-to-complete-tapi-project>

Date Accessed: 10.08.2014

(Afreen Faridi)

India China Relation in Asia Pacific: A New Level of Engagement

(Jagannath P. Panda, *Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses*, August 05, 2014)

In the first meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi in Brazil, on the sidelines of the 6th BRICS summit (July 14-16, 2014), China invited India to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit meeting in Beijing, scheduled for November 2014.

The Indian side viewed the Chinese invitation as a “significant gesture.” It is important to understand why Beijing extended this invitation to India without prior consultation of other APEC economies for following reasons:

- Firstly Chinese offer especially on APEC was to win some level of trust and confidence at political as well as diplomatic levels that China wants a “cooperative” partnership with India at regional or global levels.
- Second, Beijing’s invitation was a “political statement”, which expounded a “leadership position” that China aims to carry forward with regard to Asia-Pacific. This would strengthen China’s position as an ardent advocate of a non-western dictated world order, where it can have a major say and leadership position.
- Third, China’s invitation is linked with China’s regional foreign policy strategy where both “connectivity” and “partnership” are important themes. APEC theme for the November meeting is “shaping the future through Asia –Pacific Partnership.” On these themes, India factors in China’s regional strategy.
- Fourth, China’s invitation was to advocate that India must review its “western orientation” and “Anti-China” mindset.
- Fifth, for China, a better understanding with India on the issue of regional economic integration, may eventually compel the APEC economies, specially the US, to relax the norms and make the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which is currently stalled, flexible in favour of the developing economies.

Therefore for all the above mentioned reasons, Beijing’s invitation to India has significant implications for Asia-Pacific and also for India-China bilateral ties.

http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/BeijingsAPECCallonIndia_jppanda-050714.html

Date Accessed: 10.08.2014

(Devyani Bhushan)

EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

The Strategic Importance of Myanmar for India

(Sridhar Ramaswamy and Tridivesh Singh Maini, *The Diplomat*, August 12, 2014)

The Foreign Minister’s visit to Naypyitaw, Myanmar has brought to light the importance of Myanmar for India’s Look East policy.

The bilateral relationship between the two neighbors goes back to Treaty of Friendship signed in 1951. This was strengthened by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit in 1987 and signing of bilateral trade agreements in 1994. India did not open up to the authoritarian regime and it was only over a period of time that India started engaging with the military junta of Myanmar.

The relationship between the nations has been growing. Trade has plumed from \$12.4 million in 1980 to \$2.18 billion in 2013. Moreover, many Indian companies have made significant economic and trade agreements in infrastructure and other areas via trade events such as India Product Show 2012. Besides commerce, India is also helping Myanmar by setting up high-speed data links in 32 cities. Regular film festivals and student exchange programs have built strong cultural relations between the two countries.

As the only country ASEAN country that shares a border with India, Myanmar can act as a bridge to South-East

bus service from Imphal to Mandalay become important.

India has to compete with China for influence in Asia. In this regard, use of soft power is important. A democratic process and respect for institution gives India an advantage over China. However, the onus is now on the present government to take the relationship to a higher level.

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/the-strategic-importance-of-myanmar-for-india/>

Date Accessed: 12.08.2014

(Shriyam Gupta)

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