

Plight of Street Children

Homelessness among children is increasing which are creating sociological issues

Performance Appraisal System in Bureaucracy

Analyzing the performance appraisal system in India, its lacunas and recommendations for improving it.

Pollution Problem: Rules Tough but Implementation Weak

Governance problems and lesser involvement of the society are causing the problem becoming more severe.

Digital Age & Media

Analyzing the impact of digital age on Media and how to make in more responsive.

Global Consensus on Terrorism

Role of UNSC and why it fails

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CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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THE BLUEPRINT FOR B-SCHOOL AUTONOMY

The decision

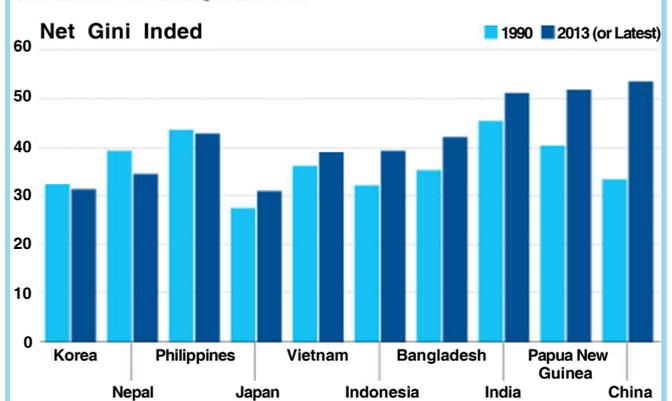
- Cabinet approves IIM bill 2017

What it does

- Grants 'complete autonomy' to IIMs
- IIMs to grant degrees instead of diplomas
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Chart 1: HIGHLY UNEQUAL INDIA



COVER STORY

Universal Basic Income: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Context

The Recent Economic Survey 2017 made out a strong case for Universal Basic Income (UBI), presenting it as a radical solution to alleviating abject poverty. It is a form of social security guaranteed to citizens and transferred directly to their bank accounts and is being debated globally.

Universal Basic Income has three components: universality, unconditionality, and agency (by providing support in the form of cash transfers to respect, not dictate, recipients' choices).

But the question arises whether India is ready for the implementation of such a huge social security scheme, whether it has sufficient resources and institutional mechanism to implement it properly.

Hereby, critically analyzing the concept of Universal Basic Income with respect to India.

India, the nation of over 1.25 billion people, till recently was the fastest growing economy of the world. However, the fact that it is home to the world's largest poor population is also a reality. Despite making remarkable progress in bringing

down poverty from about 70 per cent at independence to about 22 per cent in 2011-12 (Tendulkar Committee), however, it can be said that "wiping every tear from every eye" is a long run than being able to imbibe just a few calories.

While the poverty estimates have been questioned time to time, the fact remains that too many Indians remain trapped in poverty. To worsen the situation the sustained long-term cycle of economic slowdown and short-term shocks like demonetization and possibly a GST push might further aggravate the problem of poverty in coming times. In addition to this the continued efficiency and progress made in automation is resulting in elimination of jobs at a pace never witnessed before. The World Bank has estimated that automation threatens to eliminate a stunning 69 per cent of all jobs in India and 77 per cent in China within next two decades. All these unfavorable disruptions are indicating a piling population of poverty ridden unemployed and underemployed.

At this juncture a strong and efficient social security system of a country comes to rescue. Every financial year we see a plethora of schemes and programs with huge fund allocations in both, Union and State Budgets, targeted towards poverty alleviation and social security.

At a macro level, India spends lakhs of crores every year by providing subsidies in food, fertilizer, fuel

and subsidized services like medical services, railways, etc. The existing subsidies on food, petroleum and fertilizer subsidies cost about 3 per cent of GDP to the Indian Government every year.

The Govt has many schemes for the poor and for their welfare. However, overall assessment of the CAG and other governing bodies has found, the scheme that has been implemented by the Indian Government has many loopholes where the executives and operatives take the benefit.

To deal with this grim situation, there have been a lot of discussions regarding Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a solution for addressing the government's responsibility of social security.

The idea of moving towards a "universal basic income" is already gaining currency in the developed world, as fears of automation and consequent job losses have spurred thinkers in the West to devise ways wherein all individuals would be guaranteed some income.

Recently, Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian who drafted the latest Economic Survey has kept Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a key theme in this year's Economic Survey which shows the support and importance of UBI in the Indian context.

In the future implementation of UBI, a number of challenges lie ahead, especially the risk that UBI would become an add-on to, rather than a replacement of, current anti-poverty and social programs, which would make it fiscally unaffordable.

But UBI holds the prospects of improving upon the status quo because of the multiplicity, costs, and questionable effectiveness of the welfare programs, and the real opportunities afforded by the rapidly improving "JAM" infrastructure.

UBI's appeal to both ends of the political spectrum makes it an idea whose time has come perhaps not for immediate implementation but at least for serious public deliberation.

With the governments' call to push the idea of UBI forward, there is a need to analyze the costs for a UBI (varying between 4 percent and 5 percent of GDP), and outlining the number of ideas to take UBI forward, besides understanding the practical difficulties in its implementation.

What is Universal Basic Income?

UBI is based on the idea that everybody should be given a basic minimum income as an entitlement and not as compensation for work, which shall be directly cash transferred to the eligible beneficiaries. The individuals would, therefore, be free to use the cash as per their discretion and spend according to their individual preferences.

Universal Basic Income is a radical and compelling paradigm shift in thinking about both social justice and a productive economy. It could be to the twenty first century what civil and political rights were to the twentieth. It is premised on the idea that a just society needs to guarantee to each individual a minimum income which they can count on, and which provides the necessary material foundation for a life with access to basic goods and a life of dignity.

History and the Global Experience

Although UBI has gained popularity in recent years, the idea itself is centuries old. One of the earliest proponents proposed that the government should ensure the minimum level of subsistence for all, but only to those who showed willingness to work. Therefore the idea of a basic income was not unconditional in the past. Subsequently, many variants of the idea of basic income were proposed gradually.

In the recent times, the Swiss voted on and rejected a proposal to guarantee every adult citizen and long-term resident 2,500 Swiss francs (around Rs1.7 lakh) per month. Meanwhile, Finland is set to experiment with the idea on a pilot basis. It is likely that more countries will experiment with this idea in the coming years.

Characteristics of Universal Basic Income

The three principles of Universality, Unconditionality, and Agency (Direct cash transfers) are the hallmarks of a Universal Basic Income (UBI). A universal basic income is, like many rights, unconditional and universal: it requires that every person should have a right to a basic income to cover their needs, just by virtue of being citizens.

► **Universality - It is Universal and not Targeted**

- In the Indian context, it makes sense because of the less than satisfactory experience with targeting welfare services. **Examples:** (i) PM Grameen Awas Yojana, (ii) National Social Assistance Scheme etc.
- Apart from the standard arguments against targeting—that it often excludes a lot of the deserving households from receiving subsidies, people often fall in and out of poverty and therefore it becomes difficult to ascertain who are rightfully entitled to receive such benefits.
- With declining poverty, the accident of birth has become less important than the accident of life. People fall into poverty due to illness, drought, declining opportunities in agriculture, and urban blight.
- Thus, a universal program would not only be more appropriate, it will also reduce the burden of the bureaucracy in so far as it is engaged in identifying the deserving beneficiaries of any targeted program

► **Agency (by providing support in the form of cash transfers to respect, not dictate, recipients' choices)**

- Another feature of any proposed universal basic income scheme is cash transfer in lieu of in-kind transfer.
- There are standard arguments in favor of cash transfers over in-kind transfers (food grains provided through the Public Distribution System) as they are supposed to be much less market-distorting than in-kind transfers.

► **Unconditionality**

- The third distinguishing feature is that it is unconditional. Cash transfers are not tied to exhibiting certain behavior, and the people are free to spend the cash as they want. An example of conditional in-kind transfer in India would be the **mid-day meal scheme**, where the meal—an in-kind transfer—is conditional upon attending school.
- In the past, the poor in India have been treated as objects of government policy. Our current welfare system, even when well intentioned, inflicts an indignity upon the poor

by assuming that they cannot take economic decisions relevant to their lives.

- Thus, the universal basic income seeks to provide unconditional cash to every individual, or household, and the individuals would be free to use the cash as per their discretion and spend according to their own preferences.
- Therefore, an unconditional cash transfer treats them as agents, not subjects.

What are the arguments for Universal Basic Income?

One of the basic arguments for a universal income is that minimum income security would enable individuals to plan their lives better and undertake more meaningful activities rather than be trapped in distress-driven activities in search of subsistence.

Social Justice: It is the just and fair relation between the individual and society. It assigns rights and duties in the institutions in society which enables people to receive basic benefits

- **Social Justice:** UBI is, first and foremost, a test of a just and non-exploitative society. A society that fails to guarantee a decent minimum income to all citizens will fail the test of justice. It should be evident to anyone that no society can be just or stable if it does not give all members of the society a stake. A Universal Basic Income promotes many of the basic values of a society which respects all individuals as free and equal.
- **Liberty:** It promotes liberty because it is anti-paternalistic, opens up the possibility of flexibility in labour markets. The circumstances that keep individuals trapped in poverty are varied; the risks they face and the shocks they face also vary. The state is not in the best position to determine which risks should be mitigated and how priorities are to be set. UBI liberates citizens from paternalistic and clientelistic relationships with the state. By taking the individual and not the household as the unit of beneficiary, UBI can also enhance agency, especially of women within households.
- **Equality:** It promotes equality by reducing poverty.

- ▶ **Efficient:** It promotes efficiency by reducing waste in government transfers.
- ▶ **Productivity:** And it could, under some circumstances, even promote greater productivity. It is not an accident that Universal Basic Income has been embraced both by thinkers of the Left and of the Right.
- ▶ **Poverty Reduction:** Conditional on the presence of a well-functioning financial system, a Universal Basic Income may simply be the fastest way of reducing poverty.
- ▶ **Employment:** UBI is an acknowledgement that society's obligation to guarantee a minimum living standard is even more urgent in an era of uncertain employment generation. Moreover, UBI could also open up new possibilities for labour markets. It creates flexibility by allowing for individuals to have partial or calibrated engagements with the labour market without fear of losing benefits. They allow for more non-exploitative bargaining since individuals will no longer be forced to accept any working conditions, just so that they can subsist.
- ▶ **Administrative Efficiency:** In India in particular, the case for UBI has been enhanced because of the weakness of existing welfare schemes which are riddled with misallocation, leakages and exclusion of the poor. When the trinity of **Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (popularly referred to as JAM)** is fully adopted the time would be ripe for a mode of delivery that is administratively more efficient. The administrative argument however has to be made with some care. While Aadhar is designed to solve the identification problem, it cannot, on its own, solve the targeting problem. It is important to recognize that universal basic income will not diminish the need to build state capacity: the state will still have to enhance its capacities to provide a whole range of public goods. UBI is not a substitute for state capacity: it is a way of ensuring that state welfare transfers are more efficient so that the state can concentrate on other public goods.
- ▶ **Insurance against Risk and Psychological Benefits:** Poor households are often faced with idiosyncratic shocks such as bad health and job loss, and aggregate shocks such as natural disasters and political risk. A study finds that

the poverty component of vulnerability (risk of sudden income/consumption shortfalls) dominates the idiosyncratic and aggregate components, contributing as much as 80 percent to total vulnerability. Slightly more than 50 percent of rural households across India face one or more forms of shock, with the most prominent being aggregate shocks (crop loss, waterborne diseases, loss of property, cyclones, drought, etc.). About 60 percent of individuals use personal savings to cope with these shocks. Government assistance comes a distant second with only close to 10 percent of individuals accessing it. Additionally, there are potential psychological benefits to be made from having a UBI. The World Development Report (2015) argues that individuals' living in poverty has preoccupation with daily hassles and these results in depletion of cognitive resources required for important decisions.

- ▶ **Improved Financial Inclusion:** More profitable for Banks: Financial inclusion in India has progressed substantially since the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). While ownership of bank accounts has increased to about 2/3rd of all adults in India, active use has increased to about 40 percent. Also UBI can potentially also unlock credit constraints in the form of a higher income. Using recently released data for farmers from the Debt and Investment Survey (2013) (Conducted by NSSO), it is evident that as one moves along the consumption spectrum, the proportion of farmers taking informal loans falls and formal loans take over.
- ▶ **UBI for women:** Women face worse prospects in almost every aspect of their daily lives - employment opportunities, education, health or financial inclusion. Simultaneously, there exists plenty of evidence on both, the higher social benefits and the multi-generational impact of improved development outcomes for women. A UBI for women can, therefore, not only reduce the fiscal cost of providing a UBI (to about half) but have large multiplier effects on the household. Giving money to women also improves the bargaining power of women within households and reduces concerns of money being splurged on conspicuous goods.

What are the arguments against a universal basic income?

From an economic point of view there are many principal and related objections to a universal basic income:

► **The first** is whether UBI reduces the incentive to work. The critics claim that it will fritter away the productivity of potential workers. This argument is vastly exaggerated. For one thing, the levels at which universal basic income are likely to be pegged are going to be minimal guarantees at best. They are unlikely to crowd incentives to work. One school of thought would argue that it truly is a diminution of human dignity to suppose that the only motivation for which people work is necessity. The same kinds

of arguments used to be made against high wages: that if wages rise beyond a certain level workers will choose leisure over work. There is very little evidence to sustain that proposition.

► **The second concern is whether** income should be detached from employment? The honest economic answer to this concern is that society already does this, but largely for the rich and privileged. Any society where any form of inheritance or accepting non work related Income is allowed, already detaches income from employment. So, receiving a small unearned income as it were, from the state should be economically and morally less problematic than the panoply of "unearned" income our societies allow.

Arguments in Favour and Against UBI

Favor	Against
<p>Poverty and vulnerability reduction Poverty and vulnerability will be reduced in one fell swoop.</p>	<p>Conspicuous spending Households, especially male members, may spend this additional income on wasteful activities.</p>
<p>Choice A UBI treats beneficiaries as agents and entrusts citizens with the responsibility of using welfare spending as they see best; this may not be the case with in-kind transfers.</p>	<p>Moral hazard (reduction in labour supply) A minimum guaranteed income might make people lazy and opt out of the labour market.</p>
<p>Better targeting of poor As all individuals are targeted, exclusion error (poor being left out) is zero though inclusion error (rich gaining access to the scheme) is 60 percent⁵.</p>	<p>Gender disparity induced by cash Gender norms may regulate the sharing of UBI within a household – men are likely to exercise control over spending of the UBI. This may not always be the case with other in-kind transfers.</p>
<p>Insurance against shocks This income floor will provide a safety net against health, income and other shocks.</p>	<p>Implementation Given the current status of financial access among the poor, a UBI may put too much stress on the banking system.</p>
<p>Improvement in financial inclusion Payment – transfers will encourage greater usage of bank accounts, leading to higher profits for banking correspondents (BC) and an endogenous improvement in financial inclusion. Credit – increased income will release the constraints on access to credit for those with low income levels.</p>	<p>Fiscal cost given political economy of exit Once introduced, it may become difficult for the government to wind up a UBI in case of failure.</p>
<p>Psychological benefits A guaranteed income will reduce the pressures of finding a basic living on a daily basis.</p>	<p>Political economy of universality – ideas for self-exclusion Opposition may arise from the provision of the transfer to rich individuals as it might seem to trump the idea of equity and state welfare for the poor.</p>
<p>Administrative efficiency A UBI in place of a plethora of separate government schemes will reduce the administrative burden on the state.</p>	<p>Exposure to market risks (cash vs. food) Unlike food subsidies that are not subject to fluctuating market prices, a cash transfer's purchasing power may severely be curtailed by market fluctuations.</p>

- ▶ **The third is a concern out of reciprocity:** If society is indeed a "scheme of social cooperation", should income be unconditional, with no regard to people's contribution to society? The short answer is that individuals as a matter of fact will in most cases contribute to society. In fact, UBI can also be a way of acknowledging non-wage work related contributions to society. In the current social structure, for example, home making contributions of women are largely unacknowledged economically, since they do not take the form of wage or contract employment. It is important that UBI is not framed as a transfer payment from the rich to the poor. Its basis is rather different.
- ▶ **It is unaffordable:** The country cannot afford to offer both subsidies and universal basic income. The two are therefore mutually exclusive and there would be serious fiscal repercussions of the implementation of UBI in India. The economic survey estimated that a UBI that reduces poverty to 0.5 percent would cost 4-5 percent of GDP, based on the assumption that the top 25 percent income bracket population is not a part of it. One very challenging aspect is that it will be funded by saving the costs by eradicating almost all the prevailing government sponsored schemes and subsidies.
- ▶ **Lack of Banking Facilities:** The very important challenge will be the banking penetration required for direct transfer of cash, which in case of India is still very low. A partially implemented JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile) system will, therefore, act as an important hurdle as well.
- ▶ **Political Atmosphere:** Another factor is the political atmosphere in India. Indian politics currently lacks the maturity to give up subsidies for the greater goal of a universal basic income.

Case Study

With respect to the fear that it might induce poor Indians to work less and live off income transfers from the state, the evidence so far seems mixed. In 2011, two pilots were launched in Madhya Pradesh, funded by UNICEF and coordinated by the Self-Employed Women's Association, to study the effectiveness of income grants.

In the first pilot, eight villages were chosen, wherein every man, woman and child was provided with a monthly payment of-initially-Rs. 200 for each adult and Rs. 100 for each child. Subsequently, these payments were raised to Rs. 300 and Rs. 150, respectively.

The second pilot was held in a tribal village, where every adult and child was paid Rs. 300 and Rs. 150, respectively, every month for 12 months. Another tribal village was used as a comparison.

The results show that people who received the unconditional cash transfers in the pilot did not use it to increase leisure and reduce work. In fact, according to professor, who worked on the pilot, "grants led to more labour and work", with a shift from casual wage labour to more own-account (self-employed) farming and business activity. There was also a reduction in the migration caused by distress.

In the tribal village pilot, the UNICEF report points out that the grants enabled small farmers "to spend more time and also invest on their own farms as opposed to working as wage laborers".

Thus, it is possible that nationwide implementation of such assured cash transfers might reduce the availability of agricultural laborers willing to work in others' farms, and this can push up agricultural wages, something similar to the apparent fallout of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

More importantly, the pilots showed that those who received grants undertook small-scale investments, such as for more and better seeds, equipment repairs, establishment of little shops, etc., which potentially raised long-run productivity. Thus, even though the number of hours worked may have declined, productivity may not have declined much.

Thus, the fact that unconditional cash transfers might raise wages due to the decline in the supply of casual laborers does not seem to be a valid argument against a universal basic income.

- ▶ **UBI would Promote Vice:** Detractors of UBI argue that, as a cash transfer programme, this policy will promote conspicuous spending or spending on social evils such as alcohol, tobacco etc. This is indeed a crucial point especially if UBI is expected to replace other in-kind programs such as PDS.

How are existing programs faring in helping the poorest?

Central Schemes

- ▶ The first striking fact is the sheer number of schemes and programs run by the government. The Budget for 2016-17 indicates that there are about 950 central sector and centrally sponsored sub-schemes in India accounting for about 5 percent of the GDP by budget allocation.
- ▶ A large majority of these are small in terms of allocation with the top 11 schemes accounting for about 50 percent of total budgetary allocation.
- ▶ The largest 7 central welfare schemes are PDS - food & kerosene, MGNREGS, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA), the Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).
- ▶ Food Subsidy or Public Distribution System (PDS) is the largest programme followed by Urea Subsidy and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- ▶ The other programs include Crop Insurance, Student Scholarships, and National Handloom Development Programme etc.
- ▶ One must acknowledge though that many of these schemes have diverse benefits beyond immediate poverty reduction - for instance, student scholarships have inter-generational consequences for individuals.

State Schemes

- ▶ If the states were included, the number of schemes would be orders of magnitude larger. Moreover, schemes persist. Last year's Survey documented that most of the central sector schemes were ongoing for at least 15 years and 50 percent of them were over 25 years old.
- ▶ Even leaving aside their effectiveness, considerable gains could be achieved in terms

of bureaucratic costs and time by replacing many of these schemes with a UBI.

- ▶ But the most important question relates to the effectiveness of existing programme in helping the poorest. Here, this chapter provides some new evidence.

What are the issues with schemes and how can a UBI overcome these issues?

- ▶ **Misallocation of resources to districts with less poor:** The UBI, by design, should effectively tackle issues related to misallocation. A UBI will simply amount to a transfer of resources to be "accessed" by beneficiaries. The simplicity of the process cannot be overstated: beneficiaries are simply required to withdraw money from their accounts as and when they please, without having to jump through bureaucratic hoops. The simplicity of the process also implies that the success of a UBI hinges much less on local bureaucratic ability than do other schemes. In addition, by focusing on universality, UBI reduces the burden on the administration further by doing away with the tedious task of separating the poor from the non-poor.
- ▶ **Out of system leakages:** Conceptually, a UBI reduces out of system leakage because transfers are directed straight to the beneficiaries' bank accounts. The scope for diversion is reduced considerably, since discretionary powers of authorities are eliminated almost wholly. Furthermore, UBI's expanded coverage will likely impact out of system leakage since the state is answerable to a larger section of its citizens. Finally, given the fewer avenues for leakages, monitoring a UBI would be easier than many other schemes. Last mile concerns remain, however. Beneficiaries still need to access their bank accounts, either at local bank or post office branches.
- ▶ **Exclusion of certain groups:** Given the link between misallocation and exclusion errors, a UBI that improves allocation of resources should mechanically bring down exclusion error. Furthermore, by virtue of being universal, exclusion errors under the UBI should be lower than existing targeted schemes.

Exclusion Errors: Beneficiaries included in the list are not getting the benefit (or excluded from the benefits) due to various reasons (middleman, access to banks etc.)

But is such an idea feasible in India?

- ▶ **Financial Constraints:** An acceptable level of the UBI could be an income equivalent of the poverty line (the Tendulkar committee poverty line), which is about Rs1,090 per month for each individual, in 2015-16 prices. The total cost of providing this income to all Indians would amount to 12.5% of GDP, which is nearly equal to the size of the Union Government's budget. Thus, such a UBI which provides poverty line-equivalent income to all Indians does not appear to be feasible because of budget constraints.
- ▶ However, it may not be necessary for the UBI to match the poverty line, as studies have shown that even much lower levels of income transfer could materially improve the lives of the poor.
- ▶ A pilot study conducted by UNICEF and the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in a few villages in Madhya Pradesh in 2011 showed that a monthly unconditional grant of Rs300 to each adult and Rs150 to each child led to considerable improvement in their lives and reduced distress driven out-migration. Adjusting that amount for inflation, adopting an equivalent UBI amounting to around Rs450 per person per month in 2015-16 prices would cost 5.1% of GDP.
- ▶ This calculation is based on a Universal entitlement of Rs. 450 for adults and children as a

variable UBI (with different entitlements) would add an additional function for the bureaucracy. Hence, the proposed UBI would amount to Rs. 1,800 per month for a family of four, in 2015-16 prices.

Challenges

- ▶ One big challenge involved in the implementation of UBI relates to **the phasing out of food-related subsidies**. Any plan to replace food related subsidies has to contend with the implications of such a move on food security of the country. Whether farmers will continue to produce enough foodgrains in the absence of price incentives remains a big question. Also, the argument that food markets may not work effectively in all areas of the country, requiring state-led distribution networks to provide in-kind food transfers is acknowledged even by many proponents of cash transfers.
- ▶ **JAM (Jan Dhan Aadhar Mobile):** Effective financial inclusion is crucial to the success of the UBI. Currently, there are 26.5 crore Jan Dhan accounts (21 percent of the population) across the country. In terms of JAM preparedness, considerable ground has been covered rapidly, but there is quite some way to go.
- ▶ **Centre-State Negotiations:** The UBI amount will be a crucial factor in ensuring the success of such a programme. A key federal question will be the centre-state share in funding of the UBI. This would, like the GST, involve complex negotiations between federal stakeholders. Initially, a minimum UBI can be funded wholly by the centre. The centre can then adopt a matching grant system wherein for every rupee spent in providing a UBI by the state, the centre matches it.

Conclusion

- ▶ The most important thing is to remember that the yardstick for assessment is not whether UBI can be perfect or faultless but only whether it can improve substantially upon the status quo. As discussed earlier the UBI is likely to be more effective than existing programs in reducing misallocation, leakage and exclusion errors.
- ▶ Whether a farmer is ready to give up fertilizer subsidy, a housewife is ready to buy kerosene and LPG on market rates and whether people are ready to pay for healthcare services and

non-subsidized electricity and other fuel bills. The task is surely not going to be an easy one. UBI is also, paradoxically, more feasible in a country like India, where it can be pegged at relatively low levels of income but still yield immense welfare gains.

- ▶ Despite all the challenges, the implementation of UBI shall be started shortly on a pilot basis in some select states and based on the experience; it shall be rolled over to rest of the states in a phased manner.

SPECIAL ISSUE

Plight of Street Children

Context

Homelessness among children is a serious issue in today's society. They are suffering from lack of food and shelter. Children are commonly born into this situation and have no control over their living arrangements.

Most of these children go through life living on the streets or in homeless shelters. Health care is very limited or even non-existent for these children. Physical, psychological, and emotional damage is very frequent in homeless cases.

Their problems are often related to domestic, economic, or social disruption. They are not only limited to: poverty; breakdown of homes and/or families; political unrest; acculturation; sexual, physical or emotional abuse; domestic violence; lured away by pimps, Internet predators, or begging syndicates; mental health problems; substance abuse; and sexual orientation or gender identity issues.

The twenty-first century presents a hostile face to many millions of children around the world especially who lived on the streets. An increasing number of children are being forced to the streets as result of poverty, abuse, torture, rape, abandonment or orphaned by dreadful diseases. The risks of children living street life are great and their vulnerability to exploitation is enormous.

Street children live in an environment devoid of the affection, love, care and comfort of a family life. They are impelled by circumstances to struggle to fulfill their most basic needs like food and shelter at a very tender, impressionable age.

A 2016 survey by Save the Children in Lucknow, Mughalsarai, Kolkata- Howrah, Patna and Hyderabad found 84,563 children living on the streets. An older study by the same organization in Delhi put their number at 50,000.

There are many reasons for the increase — most of which can be attributed to the lingering economic downturn, such as layoffs, a lack of affordable housing, income inequality, and home foreclosures.

The Problems of Homeless Children:

- ▶ **Health:** Poor health is a chronic problem for homeless children. Half of all children in India are malnourished, but for street children the proportion is much higher. These children are not only underweight, but their growth has often been stunted; for example, it is very common to mistake a 12 year old for an 8 year old. Street children live and work amidst trash, animals and open sewers. Not only are they exposed and susceptible to disease, they are also unlikely to be vaccinated or receive medical treatment.
 - Only two in three Indian children have been vaccinated against TB, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio and Measles;
 - Only one in ten against Hepatitis B.
 - Most street children have not been vaccinated at all.
 - Child labourers suffer from exhaustion, injury, exposure to dangerous chemicals, plus muscle and bone afflictions.

- ▶ **Poverty:** Poverty is the prime cause of the street children crisis. Children from well-off families do not need to work, or beg. They live in houses, eat well, go to school, and are likely to be healthy and emotionally secure. In order to survive, a poor child in India will probably be forced to sacrifice education and training; without skills the child will, as an adult, remain at the bottom of the economic heap.
- ▶ **Abuse:** Many of the street children who have run away from home have done so because they were beaten or sexually abused. Tragically, their homelessness can lead to further abuse through exploitative child labour and prostitution.
- ▶ **Education:** When a child is abandoned and left isolated on the streets, they are uneducated about why they are alone. Thousands of kids blame themselves for their desertion, even though they are not to blame. Street children are forced to face unwanted and awful obstacles at an extremely young age. Both girls and boys do not have a role model to follow, and try to survive day by day. Even though the right to education is a fundamental right, the street children are devoid of this fundamental right.
- ▶ **Child Labour:** Common jobs are the collecting of firewood, tending to animals, street vending, dyeing, begging, prostitution and domestic labour. Children that work are not only subject to the strains and hazards of their labour, but are also denied the education or training that could enable them to escape the poverty trap.
- ▶ **Security:** Homeless children are excluded from stable protection because children are neglected from the attention of their loved ones. Children are extremely vulnerable. They do not know how to differ from right and wrong. India has the largest number of street children in the age group of eight to eighteen years; these children are exposed to a risky social environment daily.
- ▶ **Violent Environment:** The street is an unprotected environment where street children are exploited frequently. In some places, street children may even face the possibility of physical injuries or death from violence. Common sources of violence are: the police, gangs, drug syndicates, those who operate commercial sex businesses, death squads, other street children,

families and sexual partners. Street children may prostitute themselves in order to survive—often to meet their addictions. A great deal of the exploitation remains clandestine. It occurs through contacts in nightclubs or bars or through high-end escort services where the abuse takes place in privately rented apartments.

- ▶ **Sexual and reproductive health problems:** Common sexual and reproductive health problems include sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Sexual and reproductive health problems affect both girls and boys.
- ▶ **Expose to diseases:** Constant physical and mental strain and living in environment least protected against health hazards makes street children highly prone to infectious diseases.
- ▶ **Insecurity and Anxiety:** Street children develop a number of psychological problems due to insecurity and continued anxiety, violation, maladjustive behavior throughout their lives. After being migrated to the street, children have to face police, the employer, the local criminals, and exploitation all as their own.

Responses by Government

- ▶ A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Care and Protection of Children in Street Situations for their rehabilitation and safeguarding was released by Ministry for Women & Child Development. The SOP aims at streamlining the interventions within the current legal and policy framework. The purpose of the SOP is to identify processes that should be set in motion once a child on the street has been identified as a child in need. These processes would be within the existing framework of rules and policies and would create a convergence of the various agencies. Besides it also provides a step-by-step guideline for all the stakeholders for care, protection and rehabilitation of these children.
- ▶ The government has also launched **Integrated Scheme for Street Children** is for organizations who are working for the welfare of street children's. Under the scheme government will provide 90% of the expenses to the organizations providing shelter, food, education and other basic necessities to the children's who are destitute, living on street, slum

residents etc. Goal of this scheme is to safeguard the children especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation such as children of sex workers and children living on streets.

- ▶ Ministry of labour has included street children in their livelihood training programmes.
- ▶ The Indian Council of child welfare has included street children in their programmes.

Benefits of Integrated Scheme for Street Children:

- ▶ **Provides shelter:** The scheme provides shelter to the street children and prevent their life of destitution.
- ▶ **Nutrition:** The scheme takes care of nutrition of such homeless children
- ▶ **Non-formal Education:** Under the scheme the non-formal education is also provided, so that the children get introductory knowledge before they start actual education
- ▶ **24x7 drop in shelter service:** The establishment of 24x7 drop in shelter service will be there to make sure that irrespective of time no children miss out the shelter service by the scheme
- ▶ **Programme implementation:** The scheme makes sure that various programme necessary for the betterment of their life is implemented
- ▶ Under this scheme organization can receive up to Rs 15 lakhs per year

Recommendations for improvement

- ▶ **Shelters:** Shelters for homeless families need to be created across the city, as per the directions of the Supreme Court in the PUCL Vs. Union of India case (Writ Petition (C) 196 of 2001), where all state governments have been directed to construct 24-hour shelters for the homeless population in all cities with population of more than 5 lakh at the rate of one shelter of 100 capacity per lakh of population.
- ▶ **Basic Amenities:** The civic authorities should provide basic amenities like water, sanitation and anganwadi facilities (through the ICDS) to all families living on pavements and in de-notified slums so that health and hygiene conditions of these families can be improved.
- ▶ **Education:** For street living children, more night shelters should be started with access to food and nutrition, drinking water, and sanitation

facilities and link them with the education system as per mandatory provisions of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009. These shelters may be implemented through NGOs, supported by the civic authorities (by providing them space and financial aid), or run by the government.

- ▶ There is a need to bring all children in the 6 to 14 age group into the education system through better implementation of the RTE Act. Steps need to be taken to admit and keep children in schools; requiring intervention at two levels. Firstly, there is need to identify, support and encourage school-going children through educational sponsorships and tutorials. Lack of educational support and conducive climate in families struggling with daily survival and other challenges, require such intervention. Secondly, steps are required to identify children who have not yet been enrolled into schools.
- ▶ **Effective Implementation of the Schemes:** A significant number of street children belong to the SC/ST categories. The Department of Social Justice and Assistance (SJA), GoM, and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (SJE), GoI, should examine their existing schemes to include this group and extend educational support to them.
- ▶ **Identification:** The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and NGOs should actively reach out to street children.
- ▶ Children into rag-picking, especially at hazardous sites such as dumping grounds, are a cause of serious concern. Urgent steps need to be taken to provide alternate housing to families living at these sites and rehabilitate children found working there. The role of employers is important – they need to be educated on the hazards – and in enforcing the law.
- ▶ In case of children in the 16-18 years category, steps should be taken to link them with vocational education, apart from regular or open schooling.
- ▶ The Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPUs) created under the JJ Act at all police stations should play a proactive role to reach out to street children who are vulnerable to physical/sexual abuse.

- ▶ **Rehabilitation:** There is a need to create and set up de-addiction and rehabilitation facilities for children into substance abuse. A dual strategy for rescue and outreach should be devised.
- ▶ The Social Work Departments along with the Preventive Social Medicine (PSM) Departments attached to Municipal or Government Hospitals should make special efforts to reach out to such

children through regular outreach and health camps at various locations where such children may be found. Girl children who have attained the age of puberty could be periodically counseled. A system of distributing sanitary napkins, awareness about reproductive health and sexuality, and regular check-ups could be carried out in these health camps.

Performance Appraisal System in Bureaucracy

Context

Bureaucracy or the Civil Service is the backbone of administration, a vehicle of development and a buffer-system for smooth political transformation in any country today. It involves management of people and so it is rightly called the soul of all management.

The system of confidential reports or performance appraisal, as it is called in public administration, is an important tool of management of people. The system of **confidential reports** may be defined as a periodical stocktaking of the quality, quantity and style of the present and potential performance of an officer with a view to providing personnel information to government and developmental feedback to the officer concerned.

Recently, a senior IAS officer has been sacked for non-performance and corruption charges, in a rare action taken by the government in "public interest." The action came after a departmental review of the officer's service found him unfit for the job. The CBI has filed a case against him for allegedly possessing disproportionate assets.

Hereby, analyzing the performance appraisal system in India, its lacunas and recommendations for improving it.

Human resources are an agency's most valuable asset. They define the efficiency, effectiveness and over-all quality of service in any industry. The government sector is no exception. The need to establish an effective system that accurately evaluates the performance of its workers for the purpose of determining tenure, transfers or promotions, and appropriate incentives is of absolute urgency.

Thus the **performance appraisal system** has been designed to assess the performance of civil servants. The end or ultimate goal is to optimize the achievement of governmental policies and programmes through optimization of the development of the government servant. The performance of every Government servant is assessed annually through his/her Confidential Report.

However, the focus of the civil services in India is on process-regulation: compliance with centrally prescribed standards and rules; in other words, how things should be done and how inputs should be aligned. With such focus on processes, systems in government are oriented towards input usage- how much resources, staff and facilities are deployed in a scheme, programme or project and whether such deployment is in accordance with rules and regulations. The main performance measure thus is the amount of money spent and the success of the schemes, programmes and projects is generally evaluated in terms of the inputs consumed.

While such an approach satisfies the considerations of economy of inputs and compliance with process regulation, it fails to indicate what are the results

achieved by the activities of government in general and deployment of public funds in particular. In fact, the focus on input for accountability and control has led to a situation in which civil servants are rarely held accountable for the outcomes.

Compliance with rules is not sufficient for achieving outcomes. Obviously, the objective must be to shift the focus away from traditional concerns such as expenditure and activity levels towards a framework that would manage for results by developing robust indicators to assess performance in terms of results.

Some popular methods used in the performance appraisal process are:

- ▶ Management by objectives;
- ▶ 360-degree appraisal;
- ▶ Behavioural observation scale; and
- ▶ Behaviourally anchored rating scales.

Appraisal process in India

The performance of every Government servant is done for assessing the performance of the Government servant and his/her suitability for his/her further advancement in his/her career on occasions like confirmation, promotion, crossing of EB, selection for deputation, selection for foreign assignment etc.

The Reporting Officer, at the beginning of the year, has to set quantitative/ physical targets in consultation with each of the Government servants, whose reports he/ she is required to write.

The Confidential Report is initiated by the Government servant to be reported upon, who gives a brief description of his/her duties, specifies the targets set for him wherever applicable, achievements against each target, shortfalls, if any, constraints encountered and areas where the achievements have been greater.

Issues

- ▶ **System of confidential reports:** The system of confidential reports as it exists in the Indian Civil Service is based on the **old bureaucratic pattern of the colonial days**, notwithstanding the fact that with the passage of time some significant changes have been introduced in it, some of them on the lines of modern management thinking.

- ▶ **Performance reviews:** Unlike the politician, who has to go to the electorate every five years seeking votes as his 'appraisal' for the performance, bureaucrats come with a seniority-based promotion and a defined retirement age, and hence they are least bothered about their performance reviews. Even these Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) are often 'managed'.
- ▶ **Absence of team work:** Most of the bureaucrats' approach is to 'control' and 'govern', and not 'work as a team' for development. Thus while the government had done reasonably well on the policy front, it fell short on implementation and delivery because of an absence of teamwork; they were, too often, working in silos.
- ▶ The majority of bureaucrats work for themselves. And then, there are egos, differences, grudges and dislikes for fellow bureaucrats. So there is never a 'team approach' in whatever they do and this drags the performance of the government.
- ▶ **Traditional governance structure:** Our bureaucracy is more 'procedure driven' than 'outcome driven'. Traditionally governance structures in India are characterized by rule based approaches. The focus of the civil services in India is on process regulation; compliance with centrally prescribed standards and rules.
- ▶ **Assessment:** A greater weightage is given to subjective factors than objective in the performance appraisal, from which promotions and postings flow. The current system assigns 60% weightage to personal attributes and functional competency (a subjective assessment) and just 40% to work output (an objective assessment). This has created a situation where 90% of bureaucrats were rated 'outstanding' (scoring 9 on 10) without even having a face-to-face meeting with the appraiser.
- ▶ **Nexus (Bureaucracy politicians):** The concept of a "committed bureaucracy" is followed in certain states. Civil servants were aligned to political parties, leading to a spate of transfers and hounding out of bureaucrats following a change in political dispensation.
- ▶ **Lack of innovative approach:** Bureaucrats failed to innovate "as they know, in the government, no one will question them if they stick to the status quo".

- ▶ The role of the senior bureaucrat is to advise the ministers about the long-term social pay off of any proposed policies so that these are not determined by short-term political priorities. The accountability relationship can be anything from all-pervasive to minimalistic and it is left to the incumbent minister to interpret it in a manner that is most convenient to him/her. This leads to either collusive relationship or to discord between the two, both of which can adversely affect the performance of the bureaucracy.
- ▶ Performance of the bureaucracy depends, to a great extent, on its relations with their political masters; i.e. the politicians/ministers. Bureaucracy in India is accountable to the ministers in charge of the department, but in practice, the accountability is vague and of a generalized nature.
- ▶ In India, performance of the bureaucracy depends, to a great extent, on its relations with their political masters; i.e. the politicians/ministers. Bureaucracy in India is accountable to the ministers in charge of the department, but in practice, the accountability is vague and of a generalized nature. Since there is no system of *ex ante* specification of accountability, the relationship between the ministers and the bureaucrats is essentially issue-sensitive and bureaucrats deal with the ministers as the issues present themselves. This leads to either collusive relationship or to discord between the two, both of which can adversely affect the performance of the bureaucracy.

There is a lot of discontent among public servants of India regarding the way the system of confidential reports operates. It is felt that the confidential reports do not satisfy their essential conditions, namely, adequacy, relevance, objectivity, comparability and precision. The basic flaw in the working of the system is that generally no targets or standards are laid down beforehand and the officer is usually uncertain about the targets for which and the standards against which he would be assessed.

No progress is possible unless there is periodical stock-taking of the work done and the direction taken. Periodical review of the performance and potentiality of an officer is, therefore, necessary. The present system of confidential reports or performance appraisal in India suffers from certain basic shortcomings as explained above. It adversely

affects the working of the bureaucracy. Therefore, drastic reforms are necessary in this system

Steps Needed

In the 21st century, bureaucracy has to maintain pace with the rest of the sectors in society. Far-reaching changes in the global economy, increased global interdependence and a sea change in the way governments function have made it all the more necessary to build a competent, well-functioning civil service.

- ▶ Civil servants should view civil society organisations and the private sector as partners in the process of the country's governance. There is need to shift from pre-eminence of governance to effective governance with a focus on **decentralization and citizen-centricity**.
- ▶ Performance appraisal system should follow two-in-one objective – development of the policies and programmes through optimization of performance and potentialities of the officers.
- ▶ As of now, we have an appraisal system that looks at ACRs (Annual Confidential Report), which only accounts for an individual's performance. If the performance and payment of the bureaucrat were based not just on his individual performance, but also the performance of his department/ministry and the overall performance of the government, then the bureaucrats would work as a team and give up the silo approach. So the first change required is a move from ACR to CPR (Comprehensive Performance Review).
- ▶ In the political field, the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution have brought about a major change. Rural and urban local governments have to be enabled to become **institutions of self government**. To bring this about, the existing system of administration at the district level has to undergo fundamental changes.
- ▶ We need to begin the desperately needed change by making a fundamental shift in **accountability**, ensuring that the bureaucracy becomes merely one of the many potential service providers to ministers. This can be done by ministers contractually appointing specialists who are committed to delivering their party's policy platform as their advisers. No file would then go to a minister without these advisers having had a look.

- ▶ There should be proper **classification of the bureaucracy** as per the level and separate forms should be devised for each category. All forms, however, should invariably contain some common components – record of critical incidents, self-assessment component and report of potentialities.
- ▶ A private secretary (PS) to a minister is considered an important bureaucrat, but he is a junior IAS officer (below the rank of joint

secretary), and hence he plays safe while dealing with his seniors, as one day he might have to work under them. The loser in this case always is the minister. We thus need to consider that the PS to a minister should be a special-secretary-rank officer.

- ▶ There should be clear **guidelines** for all officers regarding the targets and standards. It should be development-oriented, time-bound, confined to two levels.

Conclusion

It is rightly said, “We cannot march through the 21st century with the administrative systems of the 19th century”. Bureaucracy should, therefore, adopt the people-production approach in place of the present judgmental one. There should also be equal emphasis on improvement in the present performance of an officer as on his development or sprucing up for the proper shouldering of future responsibilities.

Performance appraisal formats to be made job specific - the appraisal format prescribed for civil

servants should have three sections i.e. (i) a generic section that meets the requirements of a particular service to which the officer belongs, (ii) another section based on the goals and requirements of the department in which he/she is working, and (iii) a final section which captures the specific requirements and targets relating to the post that the officer is holding. Performance appraisal should be year round: provisions for detailed work-plan and a mid-year review should be introduced for all services.

Draft on Animal Cruelty

Context

Cruelty to animals, also called animal abuse or animal neglect, is the intentional infliction by humans of suffering or harm upon any non-human animal, regardless of whether the act is against the law. More narrowly, it can be the causing of harm or suffering for specific gain, such as killing animals for food or for their fur.

Laws concerning animal cruelty are designed to prevent the needless cruelty.

India has one of the most comprehensive laws on the subject of Wildlife Protection; but unfortunately, domesticated animals do not enjoy specific protections under the same.

Thus, Environment Ministry Invites Comments on Draft Notification for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dog Breeding and Marketing) Rules, 2016 to Prevent Infliction of Unnecessary Pain or Suffering on Animals.

Therefore some ethical issues are involved when the issue of animal cruelty is to be considered.

Introduction

Breeding, marketing and sale of dogs has come to stay as a high-level commercial venture in India, involving thousands of breeders and pet shops in a multi-crore industry. An enormous need has also emerged for lakhs of pups of specific breeds from

prospective pet owners, most of whom are ignorant regarding the basics of healthcare and management of dogs. This has resulted in the mushrooming of unscrupulous breeders indulging in backyard breeding activity in the most unhygienic conditions, cruelly exploiting the animals for easy money; and in pet shops sourcing and selling pups from such breeders, which, though seemingly of pure breed, are actually of poor quality, and often diseased, resulting in heavy mortality, or weak and unhealthy animals that are ill-treated, and in many cases simply abandoned on the street. Not only is this compounding the street animal problem, this unethical trade also has high zoonotic potential which is a public health concern.

To reduce the cruelty against the animals Environment Ministry has released draft on 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dog Breeding and Marketing) Rules, 2016'.

The objective of the Rules is to make dog breeders and their marketers accountable and to prevent infliction of any cruelty in this process.

There were also no specific rules, or guidelines for mandatory registration of breeders and establishments and requirements to be met by such breeders.

Dog breeding and their marketing trade also mushroomed all around. At times, some cruelty has been caused in breeding and marketing of dogs, with little or no accountability.

The proposed Rules provide as under:

- It will be **mandatory** for all dog breeders and the dog breeding establishments to **register** themselves with the State Animal Welfare Board of the respective State Governments.

- ▶ It defines the breeding requirements/conditions for sale.
- ▶ It defines the requirements to be met by the breeders and the establishments used for breeding, or housing dogs, such as health-related requirements, housing facilities, manner of housing dogs, conditions for sale, breeding, micro-chipping, vaccination etc.
- ▶ An inspector authorized by the State Board can inspect the establishment.
- ▶ It is mandatory for dog breeders to maintain proper records of both male and female dogs, their breed, micro-chip number, number of litters, sale, purchase, death, rehabilitation etc.
- ▶ Every dog breeder is required to submit **yearly report** to the State Board regarding animals sold, traded, bartered, brokered, given away, boarded or exhibited during previous year or any other information asked for by the State Board.

Non-compliance of the proposed Rules will lead to cancellation of the registration of the dog breeder.

Ethical Dimensions

- ▶ All animals (not just the lovable or attractive ones) have rights that apply all the time (not just when it is convenient).
- ▶ Pet is any animal kept by human beings as a source of companionship and pleasure. The human-animal bond can facilitate healing, aid attachment, and provide a source of comfort to survivors and their children.
- ▶ This selfish desire to possess animals and receive love from them causes immeasurable suffering, which results from manipulating their breeding, selling or giving them away casually, and depriving them of the opportunity to engage in their natural behavior. They are restricted to human homes, where they must obey commands and can only eat, drink, and even urinate when humans allow them to.

- ▶ Actively promoting issues such as vegetarianism or banning the use of animals in medical research.
- ▶ In biomedical research, alternatives to live animals should be used whenever possible.

Hence it is only ethical to keep an animal as a pet if both the animal's biological and psychological needs are properly catered for. Any action that causes pain to another creature is simply not morally permissible. The lives of all creatures, great and small, have value and are worthy of respect.

Most animal welfare Acts will provide particular examples of cruelty. These may include:

- ▶ Torturing or beating an animal;
- ▶ Confining or transporting an animal in a way that is inappropriate for its welfare;
- ▶ Killing an animal in an inhumane manner;
- ▶ Failing to provide appropriate or adequate food or water for an animal;
- ▶ Failing to provide appropriate treatment for disease or injury; and
- ▶ Failing to provide appropriate living conditions.

In the ancient Indian era, In Hindu culture, defines that- 'the same soul that is in a human being is the same in all animals'. It is also an animate thing, so we have to treat everything equally. Thus we have to treat all the animals with grave respect. Cruelty to animals, also called animal abuse or animal neglect, is the human infliction of suffering or harm upon non-human animals, for purposes other than self-defense or survival.

Hence the cruelty against animals shakes the basic foundation of Indian philosophy of peace and non-violence.

Global Gag Rule

and Women Rights

Context

Increasing global chorus for recognizing and giving women more rights, especially reproductive rights, has been disturbed by the 'Global Gag Rule' or 'The Mexico City Policy', which has been reinstated by Trump administration. It stops US aid funding to NGOs that offers abortion services or provides abortion related information. The reinstating of the Global Gag Rule is expected to cause increase in unsafe abortion, reduced access to family planning services, with most effected being the developing countries. More importantly it questions a woman's right to decide what happens to her body and when.

What is Global Gag Rule?

Global Gag Rule is a United States government policy that blocks US federal funding for NGOs that provide abortion counselling or referrals, advocate to decriminalise abortion or expand abortion services. It is also called as **Mexico City Policy**, named for Mexico City, the venue of the United Nations International Conference on Population where it was announced, the policy was instituted by U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

For the past couple of decades, whenever Republicans have been elected they've typically reinstated the Gag Rule, and when power passes to Democrats, they usually lift it again.

Trump not only reinstated the policy but expanded it, making it cover all global health organizations that receive U.S. government funding, rather than

only family planning organizations that do, as was previously the case.

What its supporters say?

- ▶ Supporters of the policy have argued, using the example of the Philippines, that the ban prevents overseas health organizations from using U.S. government funds to contravene the contraception and abortion laws of the countries in which they operate.
- ▶ Supporters also argue that the policy prevents the health agencies from promoting abortion at the expense of other birth control methods.

How it impacts Women Rights and health services?

In its new format it will not only hamper family planning efforts but other health related services also. As per new rules a civil society organization providing TB, malaria related services along with family planning services will not be able to access funding for its TB < malaria programme also. Whereas earlier funding for its family planning service would have been stopped if provided any help related to abortion.

US is the single largest bilateral funder for family planning programs in the world. Some of the money goes to the United Nations, but it's mostly for civil society, many of those groups work on safe abortions, as well as contraception and HIV. The order hit wider civil society programmes, such as contraception provision and campaigns to combat HIV/AIDS.

- ▶ The Global Gag Rule restricts people's right to make informed health decisions, as well as harms the health and lives of poor women by making

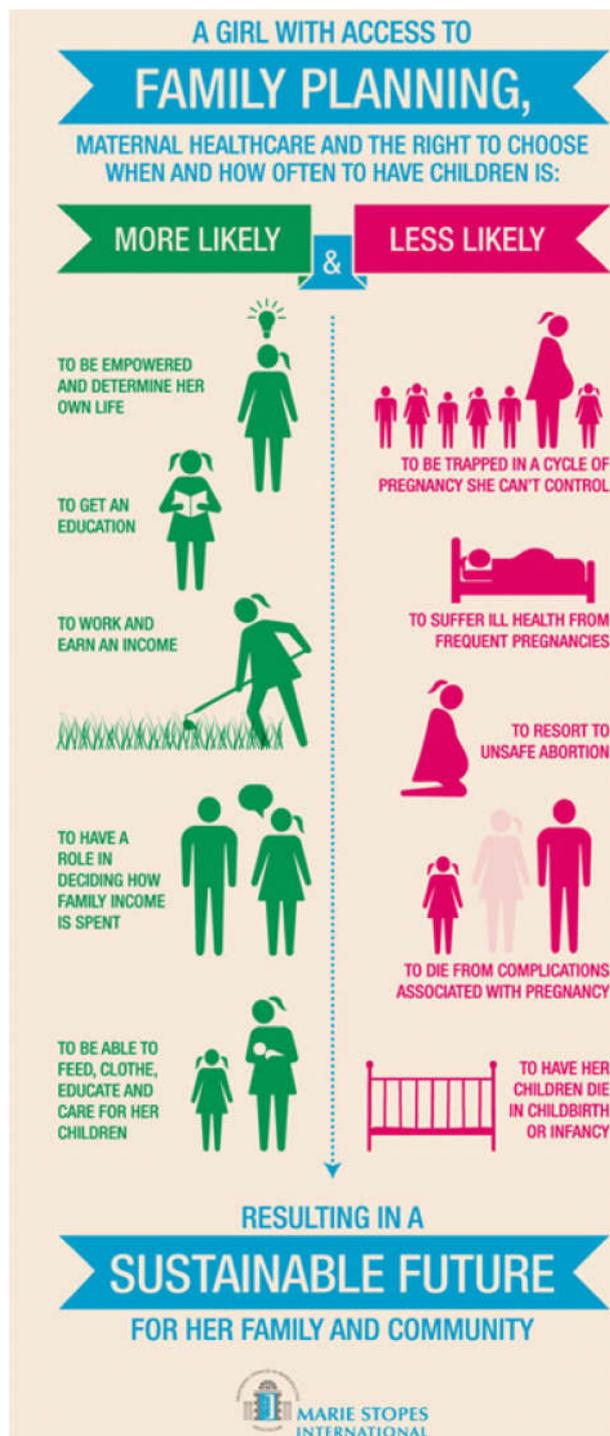


Fig. 1

it more difficult to access family planning services. Women’s autonomy over her body is violated by the order.

- ▶ Also it unnecessarily burdens women for pregnancy – especially in case of unwanted, because only women will have to suffer and not the men and thus indirectly re-inforces inequality.

- ▶ An unwanted pregnancy can mean intense personal hardship, adverse health outcomes, and even death — 830 women die each day from pregnancy or child-birth-related complications, the vast majority of whom live in the developing world.
- ▶ A 2011 Stanford University study, published in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization, examined the impact of a previous iteration of the Trump Global Gag Rule in 20 African countries. It found that the policy was strongly “associated with increases in abortion rates in sub-Saharan African countries.” Because of reduction in family planning services.
- ▶ Aid workers, academics and activists warn that it could also bolster political opposition to women’s reproductive rights as any advocacy work which supports abortion will be affected.
- ▶ It will affect the education campaigns, research work which is being carried by various NGOs in the area.
- ▶ With access to safe abortion reduced, it will increase the instances where women go for unsafe abortion and it increases the risks of maternal mortality.
- ▶ Developing countries on South America, Africa and South Asia are expected to be the most affected by the policy.
- ▶ **Instance of cultural colonialism:** American religious values, by way of the Global Gag Rule, will be imposed on countries as far flung as Kenya and Peru, Ethiopia and Nepal. Since 1994, 34 countries have liberalized their abortion laws, the gag order imposes American values on these countries.
- ▶ Critics also argue that the ban promotes restrictions on free speech as well as restrictions on accurate medical information.

In all the debate surrounding Global Gag Rule is that women right over her body has been treated like a football, with Democrats and Republicans kicking the law as per their moral values, rather than on rationality and scientific principles. As a result of this lives of million women continue to suffer across countries. There is a need for countries, NGOs to come together and respect women’s rights over her body and stop being guided by the policies of one country.

Global Consensus on Terrorism – Role of UN Security Council

Context

Terrorism is the use of intentionally indiscriminate violence as a means to create terror or fear, in order to achieve a political, religious, or ideological aim. Terrorism transcends cultures and geographical boundaries. It cannot be associated with any one religion, nationality or ethnic group and affects all countries and regions.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the **Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** in 2006. The strategy is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism.

Through its adoption that all Member States have agreed the First time to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism, not only sending a clear message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and manifestation but also resolving to take practical steps individually and collectively to prevent and combat it.

These practical steps include a wide array of measures ranging from strengthening state capacity to counter terrorist threats to better coordinating United Nations system's counter-terrorism activities.

2016 marks the 10th anniversary of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Introduction

Global terrorism is defined as acts of crime or violence intended to further political or religious ideologies. The terrorism can consist of threats, violence or intimidation to coerce a government, group or society in general.

Global terrorism comes in many forms including suicide bombings and attacks on foreign lands. One major example of global terrorism is the September 11, 2001 attacks where members of a terrorist group called Al Qaeda flew planes into the World Trade Center in New York City.

Not all terrorism takes place on such a large scale, however, and it is more common to see suicide bombers killing civilians and other groups of people in countries around the world.

As of today, the biggest display of terrorism that is taking place in the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as ISIL. The group intends on overthrowing the current government through violent acts, mainly directed at their rivals the Shia which is the other dominant religion of the region. Terrorists groups like this often recruit members, especially from countries in which they tend to attack to gain access or inside information.

When terrorism takes place, it affects not just the country in which the violence or threats are taking place, but it involves many countries. Stricter security and global cooperation is often required to try and prevent the terrorists groups from succeeding in their cause.

The **United Nations** has helped rally international efforts for counter terrorism. It now oversees sixteen conventions that target different aspects of terrorism, including terrorist financing, hijacking, acquiring

weapons of mass destruction, and hostage taking, to name a few. The **UN Security Council (UNSC)** has strengthened the international legal foundation for counterterrorism efforts by issuing numerous binding resolutions.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously passed the **UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy** in 2006 and reaffirmed support for it later. The strategy pulls together existing UN norms and activities into a single document and serves as a comprehensive guide based on four pillars i.e. addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, preventing and combating terrorism, building state capacity and bolstering the UN's counterterrorism role, and ensuring respect for and the protection of human rights in counterterrorism efforts.

Recent Issue

More than 100 countries challenged United Nations Security Council powers in an effort to restrict their use of the veto with a joint pledge not to oppose resolutions on mass atrocities. In the most recent example of this power being exercised, **Russia** and **China** voted against a draft resolution that would have condemned a crackdown on anti-government protests in **Syria** and called on Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, to step aside.

UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Plan of Action

The States Members of the UN resolve:

- ▶ To consistently, unequivocally and strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to **international peace and security**.
- ▶ To take urgent action to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and, in particular:
 - To implement all **General Assembly** resolutions on measures to eliminate international terrorism, and relevant General Assembly resolutions on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;

- To implement all **Security Council** resolutions related to international terrorism and to cooperate fully with the counter-terrorism subsidiary bodies of the Security Council in the fulfillment of their tasks, recognizing that many States continue to require assistance in implementing these resolutions.
- ▶ To recognize that international cooperation and any measures that we undertake to prevent and combat terrorism must comply with our obligations under international law, including the **Charter of the United Nations** and relevant international conventions and protocols, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law.

UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, 2006 is guided by four fundamental pillars:



Fig. 2

- ▶ Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism:
 - To continue to strengthen and make best possible use of the capacities of the UN in areas such as conflict prevention, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement, rule of law, peacekeeping and peace building, in order to contribute to the successful prevention and peaceful resolution of prolonged unresolved conflicts.
 - To continue to arrange under the auspices of the UN initiatives and programmes to promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions, and to promote mutual respect for and prevent the defamation of religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures.
 - To promote a culture of peace, justice and human development, ethnic, national and religious tolerance, and respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs or cultures by establishing and encouraging, as

appropriate, education and public awareness programmes involving all sectors of society.

- ▶ **Measures to prevent and combat terrorism:**
 - To refrain from organizing, instigating, facilitating, participating in, financing, encouraging or tolerating terrorist activities and to take appropriate practical measures to ensure that our respective territories are not used for terrorist installations or training camps.
 - To cooperate fully in the fight against terrorism, in accordance with our **obligations under international law**, in order to find, deny safe haven and bring to justice, on the basis of the principle of extradite
 - To ensure the apprehension and prosecution or extradition of perpetrators of terrorist acts, in accordance with the relevant provisions of national and international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law.
- ▶ **Measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in this regard**
 - To encourage Member States to consider making **voluntary contributions** to United Nations counter-terrorism cooperation and technical assistance projects, and to explore additional sources of funding in this regard.
 - To take advantage of the framework provided by relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations to share best practices in counter-terrorism capacity-building, and to facilitate their contributions to the international community's efforts in this area.
 - To welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to institutionalize, the **United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force** within the Secretariat, in order to ensure overall co-ordination and coherence in the United Nations system's counter-terrorism efforts
- ▶ **Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism**
 - To reaffirm that General Assembly resolution 60/158 of 16 December 2005 provides the fundamental framework for the "**Protection**

of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism".

- To reaffirm that States must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law.
- To reaffirm the United Nations system's important role in strengthening the international legal architecture by promoting the rule of law, respect for human rights, and effective criminal justice systems, which constitute the fundamental basis of our common fight against terrorism.
- To support the **Human Rights Council**, and to contribute, as it takes shape, to its work on the question of the promotion and protection of human rights for all in the fight against terrorism.

Global Terrorism Index

The **Global Terrorism Index (GTI)** is an attempt to systematically rank the nations of the world according to terrorist activity. The index combines a number of factors associated with terrorist attacks to build an explicit picture of the impact of terrorism over a 10-year period. It is the product of Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) analyzes the impact of terrorism for 163 countries, covering 99.7 per cent of the world's population.

Top 6 Countries with high GTI

- ▶ Iraq
- ▶ Afghanistan
- ▶ Nigeria
- ▶ Syria
- ▶ Egypt
- ▶ Pakistan

Global Peace Index

The **Global Peace Index (GPI)** is an attempt to measure the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness. It is the product

of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

The GPI indicates Iceland, Denmark, Austria, Portugal, and New Zealand to be the most peaceful countries and Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Iraq to be the least peaceful.

Issues

► Abuse of U.N. Security Council Veto Power

► There are **five permanent members** in the United Nations Security Council - the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China and Russia - hold the power to impose a veto on the council's resolutions. According to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council will make decisions "by an affirmative vote of members, including the concurring votes of the permanent members". The word "veto" itself does not occur; its place is taken by the clause that requires all five permanent members to concur in order for a resolution to pass. In total, 263 **vetoes** have been exercised since 1946, the year after the UN Charter was officially ratified.

■ **Russia** has used its prerogative more times than any other permanent member. Moscow has blocked resolutions 127 times since the UN was formed. Moscow's last two vetoes have been on resolutions relating to **Syria**.

■ The **United States** did not exercise its first veto until 1970. Since then; it has used its veto 79 times, with more than 40 related to issues in the Middle East.

■ The **United Kingdom** has used its veto 31 times; the first in 1956 when it joined France in opposing a resolution ordering Israel to withdraw from Egypt.

■ **France** has used its veto 17 times, most recently against the 1989 resolution on US involvement in Panama.

■ **China** has used its veto nine times.

► China's decision to veto India's proposal to ban Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar at the UN

■ On December 30, China's decision to veto India's proposal to ban Jaish-e-Mohammed

(JeM) chief Masood Azhar at the UN capped a terrible year in bilateral ties.

■ China's economic corridor through Pakistan, India's invitations to Uighur, Falun Gong and Tibetan activists, the expulsion of Chinese journalists from Mumbai, the Chinese block on Nuclear Suppliers Group membership for India, and the rumblings over the South China Sea all added to tensions between the two countries; the Chinese decision to put a permanent block on the Azhar proposal aggravated them further.

■ **Azhar's case** - In the past, Beijing blocked India's proposals at the UN to designate Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin and Abdul Rehman Makki and Azam Cheema of the Lashkar-e-Taiba as terrorists, and blocked questions on how designated terrorists Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi accessed funds in Pakistan despite UN sanctions.

■ It seems unbelievable that 15 years later, despite his complicity in everything from the Parliament attack to the Pathankot attack and everything in between, Azhar hasn't yet been added to that list, largely due to China's ignominious role.

■ It would be a mistake, however, if New Delhi sees China's move purely in bilateral terms, and ignores the larger trend it represents: of a fragmenting global consensus on terrorism. The impact of this fragmentation can be seen at several levels now: at the UN, in the tussle between the U.S. and Russia, and for India, in regional ties.

► Lack of global consensus

■ After the 9/11 attacks, the global consensus to fight the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and all allied groups was formed by the UNSC resolution on terrorism (UNSCR 1373) in 2001.

■ Already, in 1999, the UN had set up an al-Qaeda/Taliban sanctions committee (UNSCR 1267) to impose strictures on anyone dealing with the Taliban and Osama bin Laden.

■ While the implementation of these resolutions has been questionable, there was little doubt that all member states essentially believed that the Taliban, al-Qaeda and their allies formed a common global enemy.

- In January 2010, at an international conference hosted by the U.K., the UN and the U.S. openly backed efforts to talk peace with the Taliban.
 - In 2011, the UNSC made it simply the al-Qaeda sanctions committee, separating the Taliban committee so as to facilitate talks by delisting Taliban leaders being engaged.
 - In December 2015, the UNSC made a further shift by renaming it “ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee” (UNSCR/2253).
- **US - Russia**
- Apart from the UN, shifting U.S.-Russia ties have also made a great impact on the global terror consensus.
 - In 2001, Russian President Vladimir Putin was one of the first foreign leaders to speak to President George W. Bush, expressing full support for the U.S. fight against al-Qaeda, which would in turn help Russia with its Islamist threat as well.
 - Not only that, Mr. Putin reversed Russian policy of decades, allowing the U.S. to set up bases across Central Asia and virtually take over Afghanistan’s security command.
 - That relationship no longer exists, and Russia is questioning the U.S. presence in bases in Afghanistan.
- **Russia, China and Pakistan coming together**
- Russia’s other moves — a new closeness with China and growing ties with Pakistan— is a third factor impacting global consensus.
 - A trilateral meeting of the three countries last month in Moscow called for a “flexible

approach” to remove some Taliban figures from the UN sanctions list as part of efforts to “foster a peaceful dialogue between Kabul and the Taliban movement”.

- On the other side, the U.S. has been pushing for the removal of other groups in Afghanistan from sanctions, like the Hizb-e-Islami’s Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (a former Central Intelligence Agency-funded fighter), a move that Russia blocked at the UN.
- Clearly, the global leaders are picking their teams. Ironically, neither side has yet pushed for the banning of the new Taliban chief, Haibatullah Akhundzada, a reminder of how far away we have come on that global consensus.
- Also lying in the dust is India’s decades-old proposal for a **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism**.
- Russia’s Pakistan engagement cannot be disconnected from India’s concerns either. It is significant that among the P5, the U.S., U.K. and France co-sponsored India’s resolution against Azhar, China vetoed it, but Russia, India’s traditional backer, did nothing at all.
- At the BRICS summit in October 2016 and the Heart of Asia conference in December 2016, it was the Russia-China combine that kept India’s desire for tough statements on “cross-border terrorism” from Pakistan at bay, and it was the Russian envoy who told India not to use “multilateral forums for bilateral issues”.

Conclusion

If UN Member States committed to take concrete action to keep the strategy relevant and contemporary, Global consensus on counter terrorism actions are necessary in the light of emerging new threats and evolving trends.

The member states must restate that they cannot allow themselves to send a message of disunity to the world when the peoples and the community of nations face such a grave challenge. Doing so will

enable the UN to continue to improve its response to new and evolving threats to international peace and security, to the 2030 Agenda, the pursuit of the rule of law and the realization of human rights for all.

If India is to stick to its course, of securing its citizens and borders, the answer may lie in bridging ties with all nations involved, including some that now lie across this divide.

FDI Status and Issues in India

Context

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment made by a company or individual in one country in business interests in another country, in the form of either establishing business operations or acquiring business assets in the other country, such as ownership or controlling interest in a foreign company. It acts as the critical driver of economic growth.

To harness it for economic growth, the Government of India has amended FDI policy to increase FDI inflow. It also launched Make in India initiative in September 2014 under which FDI policy for 25 sectors was liberalised.

Hereby, analysing the FDI status in India, issues faced in proper implementation of it and steps needed for improving it.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is direct investment into production in a country by a company located in another country, either by buying a company in the target country or by expanding operations of an existing business in that country. Foreign direct investment is done for many reasons including to take advantage of cheaper wages in the country, special investment privileges such as tax exemptions offered by the country as an incentive to gain tariff-free access to the markets of the country or the region. Foreign direct investment is in contrast to portfolio investment which is a passive investment in the securities of another country such as stocks and bonds.

Apart from being a critical driver of economic growth, foreign direct investment (FDI) is a major source of

non-debt financial resource for the economic development of India. Foreign companies invest in India to take advantage of relatively lower wages, special investment privileges such as tax exemptions, etc. For a country where foreign investments are being made, it also means achieving technical know-how and generating employment.

India has retained its position as the third most preferred investment destination behind the US and China and could attract higher foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2016 even as global flows are expected to fall sharply, according to multilateral agency UNCTAD.

Restrictions in FDI

With the recent change in FDI policy, FDI is allowed in almost all sectors except,

- ▶ Atomic Energy and Railway operations
- ▶ Lottery Business
- ▶ Gambling and Betting
- ▶ Business of Chit Fund
- ▶ Nidhi Company
- ▶ Agricultural (Allowed in limited areas).
- ▶ Housing and Real Estate business (Allowed in limited areas).
- ▶ Trading in Transferable Development Rights (TDRs).
- ▶ Manufacture of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes, of tobacco or of tobacco substitutes.

Recent Changes in FDI policy - sector wise

- ▶ 49% FDI under automatic route permitted in Insurance and Pension sectors.

- ▶ Foreign investment up to 49% in defence sector permitted under automatic route. The foreign investment in excess of 49% has been allowed on case to case basis with Government approval in cases resulting in access to modern technology in the country or for other reasons to be recorded.
- ▶ FDI limit of 100% (49% under automatic route, beyond 49% government route) for defence sector made applicable to Manufacturing of Small Arms and Ammunitions covered under Arms Act 1959.
- ▶ FDI up to 100% under automatic route permitted in Teleports, Direct to Home, Cable Networks, Mobile TV, Headend-in-the Sky Broadcasting Service.
- ▶ FDI up to 100% under automatic route permitted in Up-linking of Non-'News & Current Affairs' TV Channels, Down-linking of TV Channels.
- ▶ In case of single brand retail trading of 'state-of-art' and 'cutting-edge technology' products, sourcing norms can be relaxed up to three years and sourcing regime can be relaxed for another 5 years subject to Government approval.
- ▶ Foreign equity cap of activities of Non-Scheduled Air Transport Service, Ground Handling Services increased from 74% to 100% under the automatic route.
- ▶ 100% FDI under automatic route permitted in Brownfield Airport projects.
- ▶ In order to provide clarity to the e-commerce sector, the Government has issued guidelines for foreign investment in the sector. 100% FDI under automatic route permitted in the marketplace model of e-commerce.
- ▶ Requirement of 'controlled conditions' for FDI in Animal Husbandry (including breeding of dogs), Pisciculture, Aquaculture and Apiculture has been waived off.

FDI data

In last two years, Government has brought major FDI policy reforms in a number of sectors viz. Defence, Construction Development, Insurance, Pension Sector, Broadcasting Sector, Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Cardamom, Palm Oil Tree and Olive Oil Tree Plantations, Single Brand Retail Trading, Manufacturing Sector, Limited Liability Partnerships, Civil Aviation, Credit Information Companies, Satellites- establishment/operation and Asset Reconstruction Companies. Measures undertaken by the Government have resulted in increased FDI inflows at US\$ 55.46 billion in financial year 2015-16, as against US\$ 36.04 billion during the financial year 2013-14. This is the highest ever FDI inflow for a particular financial year. However, it was felt that the country has potential to attract far more foreign investment which can be achieved by further liberalizing and simplifying the FDI regime.

Determinants of FDI

- ▶ Stable economic and socio policies have attracted investors.
- ▶ Interest loans, tax breaks, grants, subsidies and the removal of restrictions and limitation attract investors.
- ▶ Availability of cheap and skilled labours.
- ▶ Presence of Information and communication network/technology, powers, financial institutions, and legal system and other basic amenities which are must for the success of the business.

Issues related to FDI

Ease of doing business is probably one of the biggest stumbling blocks India faces in attracting FDI. The bureaucracy, corruption, labour and land acquisition laws are frighteningly complicated and slow down the entire process of setting up a business. India got 130th position out of 190 in ease of doing business ranking by World Bank. Specific issues are:

- ▶ **Stringent labor laws:** Large firms in India are not allowed to retrench or layoff any workers, or close down the unit without the permission of the state government. This is very much in line with the job security provided to public sector employees. Most importantly, the continuing

barrier to the dismissal of unwanted workers in Indian establishments with 100 or more employees paralyzes firms in hiring new workers and increases contract labour. Labor-intensive manufacturing exports require competitive and flexible enterprises that can vary their employment according to changes in market demand and changes in technology, so India remains an unattractive base for such production in part because of the continuing obstacles to flexible management of the labor force.

- ▶ **Liberalization in exit barriers:** While the reforms implemented so far have helped remove the entry barriers, the liberalization of exit barriers has recently got policy attention. This is a major deterrent to large volumes of FDI flowing to India. Though Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 are in place who well it is implemented is still a question.
- ▶ **High corporate tax rates:** Corporate tax rates in Emerging market Economies are generally in the range of 15 to 25 percent, corporate tax is still high though government is determined to reduce it to 25% in coming years.

- ▶ **Quality of infrastructure:** Quality of infrastructure is directly related to profitability of business as good infrastructure reduces the costs. China has been able to attract FDI due to good infrastructure at place. India need to invest in Roads, electricity, Ports, waterways, Railways to create world class infrastructure to attract FDI.
- ▶ **Skilled labour:** Cheap skilled labour is another important requirement for attracting FDI. Though India is going through Demographic dividend it can offer cheap labour, this is more important because in China wages are going up. But the issue is of skill gap remains.
- ▶ **Retrospective Taxation:** One of the most controversial economic issues in the last five years was the tax dispute between Vodafone and the tax department. Retrospective taxation negatively impact investors' sentiments and questions robustness of policies.
- ▶ Other factors which hinder FDI inflow are Land acquisition and Environment clearances. Multiplicity of clearances from both centre and state add to hindrances.

Conclusion

Foreign direct investment plays an important role in India's dynamic growth. Thus, the government should establish and implement effective and autonomous

regulatory institutions- restraining anti-competitive conduct by firms, labour and environmental regulation to improve the flow of FDI in India.

GST Council

has Resolved Issue on Dual Control

Context

GST is the biggest indirect tax reform India has seen in decades and is expected to absorb several state level levies into one thus creating a uniform tax regime. This is expected to help the economy widen the tax base over a period of time, improve tax compliance and tax to GDP ratio.

Despite these benefits various issues like dual control and cross empowerment, taxation rights in territorial waters, administrative mechanism of IGST etc are holding up the biggest taxation reform.

However, the recent meeting of GST council on 17th January was successful in resolving the two most contentious issues of dual control & cross empowerment and taxation rights in territorial waters indicating an emerging consensus on various issues.

Hereby, analyzing the issue in brief and its impact.

The Constitution (122 Amendment) Act has paved the way for GST which is a landmark reform considering the sweeping changes it brings about in the indirect tax regime in India as well as in distribution of powers between the Centre and states vis-a-vis such taxes.

GST is an indirect tax that will subsume several indirect state and federal taxes such as value added tax (VAT) and excise duty, and different state taxes, central surcharges, entertainment tax, luxury tax and a slew of related levies by local bodies. GST is a 'destination-based' tax, which means it is charged where goods are consumed, as opposed to where they are produced.

About GST Council

As per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution, the GST Council has to be constituted by the President within 60 days of the commencement of Article 279A.

As per Article 279A of the amended Constitution, the GST Council will be a joint forum of the Centre and the States. This Council shall consist of the following members namely:

- ▶ Union Finance Minister... Chairperson
- ▶ The Union Minister of State, in-charge of Revenue of finance... Member
- ▶ The Minister In-charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government... Members

As per Article 279A (4), the Council will make recommendations to the Union and the States on important issues related to GST, like the goods and services that may be subjected or exempted from GST, model GST Laws, principles that govern Place of Supply, threshold limits, GST rates including the floor rates with bands, special rates for raising additional resources during natural calamities/disasters, special provisions for certain States, etc.

What are the main contentious issues?

- ▶ Under GST, the states and the Centre will collect identical rates of taxes on goods and services. For instance, if 18 percent is the GST rate on a good, the states and the Centre will get 9 percent each called the CGST and SGST rates.
- ▶ The Centre will also levy and collect the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on all inter-State supply of goods and services. The IGST mechanism has been designed to ensure

seamless flow of input tax credit from one state to another.

Since GST works on the principle of **One Assessee One Authority**, the levying of SGST and CGST and their collection has created some serious administrative issues which need to be resolved. Some of them are:

► **Dual control and cross empowerment**

- The issue at stake is nothing but an **administrative arrangement**. The demand of some States that since small assesses are more close to them and they are powerful political constituencies, they alone should have the right to tax them. In this background, the larger question now is - what would happen to the solemn **Doctrine of One Assessee One Authority**.
- Dual control meant dual administrative control of state and center for administering same taxation system. Cross empowerment means each government empowering other to collect its part of tax.
- Center government wanted that vertical split between assesses, whereas states wanted horizontal split under which assesses below 1.5 cr threshold would be assessed by states.
- As per the understanding between the Centre and states, 90 percent of the GST taxpayers with up to Rs 1.5 crore turnover will be assessed by states, while 10 percent will be assessed by the government. As far as those above Rs 1.5 crore turnover is concerned, the assessment will be done on a 50:50 basis between the Centre and states.

► **Tax in territorial waters:**

Territorial waters are waters upto 12 nautical miles from baseline.

Conventionally service tax and customs are charged by the Government of India in those areas. Some states had, as far as fishing business is concerned the Constitution provides for fishing rights to states in that area. Some states have been levying taxes in the nature of sales tax/VAT.

Since states have been levying these taxes, they want to continue to levy them, but the contra argument is that high sea area strictly doesn't fall within the definition of state and as per Constitution

is a Union Territory and taxation authority must rest with Union. This issue is currently before the Supreme Court.

Apart from it, states see it prospects of future growth of taxation in this area and thus want to keep control over it.

In 17th January meeting it was decided that states will be empowered to tax any economic activity in territorial water up to 12 nautical miles.

Other remaining issues

- **Administrative mechanism for IGST:** States also want control over administering the IGST mechanism. The union law ministry, however, is of the view that only the Centre should have administrative authority over IGST.
- **Distribution of revenue from higher tax rate bracket:** States want the revenue from highest tax slab to be distributed in the ratio of 60:40 for states and centers instead of 50:50. The Centre and states have already agreed to a five-slab structure for GST rates - 5, 12, 18 and 28%, as well as a cess of 28% on sin and luxury goods such as tobacco, big cars and aerated drinks. The cess is likely to be in proportion to duties attracted by these items currently and items of common use are put in exemption list. There are currently around 300 items in the exemption list from central excise duty and 90 from the states value added. Minimizing the items i.e. goods and services in exemption list and deciding rate slab for various item under heavy lobbying from industry is posing another challenge. For instance makers of refrigerators in 200 litre category with chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) made a representation to bring this item in the 18% slab as against the 28% slab as the item, is used by common man nowadays.
- **Compensation:** Under law, the Centre will have to fully compensate states for any revenue loss for five years after migrating to the new tax system. Many states are pushing the Centre for a grand bargain of sorts, for offering higher compensation for potential revenue loss on account of demonetisation.

The negotiations and delays display both the strengths and weaknesses of our federal system, wherein the grand bargaining delays a highly beneficial legislation and at the same time states are able to safeguard their interests.

Income Inequality in India

Context

A study released by rights group Oxfam indicate signs of a rise in income inequality. India's richest one per cent now hold 58 per cent of the country's wealth. The figure is higher than its global equivalent of about 50 per cent. The study showed that only 57 billionaires in the country have the same wealth (\$216 billion) as that of the bottom 70 per cent population. Globally, just 8 billionaires have the same amount of wealth as the poorest 50 per cent of the world population.

India's richest 1 per cent holds a huge 58 per cent of the country's total wealth - higher than the global figure of about 50 per cent. This shows that India not only has one of the highest levels of inequality in the region, but it also shows very large increases in inequality since 1990. Its net Gini index of inequality (based on income net of taxes and transfers) rose from 45.18 in 1990 to 51.36 in 2013. Only two countries in the Asia-Pacific region-Papua New Guinea and China-are more unequal. Indeed, the net Gini coefficient in India is much higher than the average of 43.69 for Latin America, long excoriated as one of the most unequal regions in the world.

This suggests economic reforms since 1990's have only helped a few and tickle down effect has not taken place. According to Kuznets hypothesis income inequalities first rises with increase in income and then decreases due to tickle down effect but this does not seem to work in India's case. Since the rich typically spend a smaller portion of their income compared with the poor-who spend almost all of their income-rising inequality is a threat to aggregate demand in the economy.

According to Raghuram Rajan, Rajan given the size of India's economy, the number of billionaires it produced was extraordinary compared with emerging market peers such as Brazil, or with developed market peers such as Germany. Moreover, the fact that most billionaires gained wealth because of their access to natural resources such as land or government contracts raised disturbing questions about the nature of India's growth process.

The **Gini index** is a measurement of the income distribution of a country's residents. This number, which ranges between 0 and 1 and is based on residents' net income, helps define the gap between the rich and the poor, with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality. It is typically expressed as a percentage, referred to as the Gini coefficient.

Chart 1: HIGHLY UNEQUAL INDIA

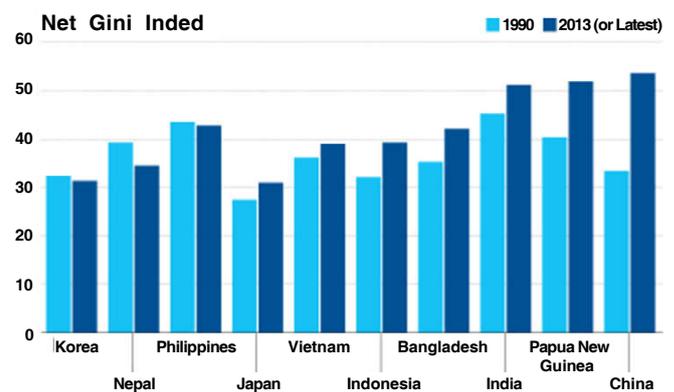


Fig. 3

Why does it matter?

The sharp rise in inequality in India - and in many countries around the world - is damaging, and countries need to make an effort to curb it. Rising inequality will lead to slower poverty reduction, undermine the

sustainability of economic growth, compound the inequalities between men and women, and drive inequalities in health, education and life chances.

A growing body of evidence has also demonstrated that economic inequality is associated with a range of health and social problems, such as mental illness and violent crime. This is true across both rich and poor countries. Inequality hurts everyone.

Rising caste conflict in India arising out of demand for reservations in jobs is an illustration of the rising inequalities. Huge inequality in wealth distribution within the Patidar group in Gujarat has led some of them to demand reservations in government jobs. Same is the case in Jat agitation in Haryana.

What are ways to improve the situation?

- ▶ India needs to set up strong agriculture-friendly policies that benefit both small farmers and landless workers.
- ▶ Growth has to be based on labour-intensive industrialization, so that enough jobs exist for both people who leave rural areas and the millions working in the informal sector.
- ▶ Providing skills and education for the millions who join the workforce each year
- ▶ Progressive taxation - Tax effort currently at 16.7% of GDP, is low (about 53% of its potential) and the tax structure is not very progressive since direct taxes account for only a third of total taxes. Tax structure need to be more progressive with inclusion of those who have benefitted from informal economy, but do not pay tax.
- ▶ Social spending, on public services such as education, health and social protection, is also important. Only 3% of GDP goes towards education and only 1.1% towards health.
- ▶ Reducing misallocation, leakages in government redistribution of resources. The idea of Basic Income (not Universal) should be given a serious thought.
- ▶ Introducing an Inheritance Tax and Raising the Wealth Tax. The philosophy behind inheritance taxes is that wealth should be created and earned, rather than inherited.
- ▶ Due to unavailability of information, government also fail to capture the assets held by some people in offshore 'tax havens' (e.g. Mauritius, Cyprus, Cayman Islands etc). Indian companies have liberally used tax havens in Mauritius, Cyprus, the Cayman Islands, etc., for tax planning and transfer pricing. Names of Indian nationals and companies in the Panama Papers is an indication that Indian companies are not far behind some of their global peers in tax dodging. It is therefore of critical importance that Indian companies pay fair taxes and stop tax avoidance and evasion in any form.
- ▶ The proportion of public spending on health by India is significantly lower than that by countries like Sri Lanka, China and Thailand. This is not so because India is poorer than these countries, but mainly because of the very low priority. Thus in order to meet the sustainable development goals, the proportion spent by the government on health services must be increased with special focus on primary health care and augmenting health human resources.

Conclusion

India has committed to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and to ending extreme poverty by that year. But unless we make an effort to first contain and then reduce the rising levels of

extreme inequality, the dream of ending extreme poverty for the 300 million Indians - a quarter of the population - who live below an extremely low poverty line, will remain a pipe dream.

Digital Age & Media

Context

Human beings have a desire to know what is happening around them, understand and interpret its significance for them and for society and react accordingly. This desire has been fulfilled by various mediums like verbal communication by government officials, newspaper, radio, TV (all traditional form of media) and the most recent being the internet.

In this process content and comment, both have had great importance. The new form of media, the digital media is challenging both the content and comment emanating from traditional media, reinventing age-old practices of public communication and challenging its privileged role as gatekeepers of news and entertainment. At the same time propaganda disguised as news is flourishing, posing a great risk to society.

Hence, hereby analysing the impact of digital age on Media and how to make it more responsive.

Digital news media includes online journalism, blogging, digital photojournalism, citizen journalism and social media. Though the power of digital media has empowered people in several ways, on the flip side unethical and irresponsible handling has been creating serious internal security issues. The mayhem created by hoax text message to scare North Eastern people is a case in hand.

Today, citizens without journalistic training and who do not work for mainstream media call themselves journalists, or write in ways that fall under the general description of a journalist as someone who regularly writes on public issues for a public or audience. However, this form of journalism is creating many issues.

How digital age is changing and challenging media?

- ▶ **Real time news stories and media ethics:**
 - People in internet age are looking for real time or live feed of events rather than periodic news or only periodic news during night or morning. It puts media ethics under severe pressure. Newsfeeds on facebook, tweeter are example of this. The basic media ethics requires communicating only after verification of facts, cross checking, taking views from all the stakeholders and ensuring an ethical balance between national security, integrity and freedom of speech.
 - The speed with which social media works is such that many a times news appears first on social media and later on traditional platforms.
 - It put additional pressure on news writer and presenter to give his analysis in very short time.
 - Checking of facts, taking viewpoints of all stakeholders and creating a balance becomes a challenge.
- ▶ **Coverage of issues:** Digital platforms have provided an alternative to traditional media. Earlier public watched or listened what was shown to them. But now because of crowdsourcing of newsfeed various news which otherwise could have been ignored are being shown. The news

flogging of lower caste persons by upper caste in Una is an example of it.

- ▶ **Two way communication:** Earlier postcard method of two way communication between the newswriters and readers has given way to continuous feedback through comments, likes, shares etc. This helps news providers to rectify their mistakes. Many a times they have to face the wrath of trolls, which shake their conscience.
- ▶ **Diversity of news sources and setting up of preferences:** Internet facilitates individuals selecting his preferred news feeds and various platforms are coming which collate news from different sources and minimize chances of one sided reporting and diversity of opinion is maintained, which ultimately leads to balanced view.

However these digital platforms are also putting certain challenges like:

- ▶ **Outside the self-regulating mechanism or media ethics:** Certain distribution platforms like whatsapp, facebook are completely outside the purview of **Press Council of India** or self regulation by editorial board.
- ▶ **Rumour mongering:** Digital media has lead to emergence of internet and proliferation of 'clickbaits' wherein rumors are spread in the form of news and people believe them to be true. Eg in nano-gps chip in Rs. 2000 note indicating a new innovative step to check black money, Trump claim of shooting incidents rising by 50% from 2015-16 when they rose from 68 to 69. Most of these platforms are used of propelling false news and rumour mongering. Use of these means in Muzzafarnagar riots is well known.
- ▶ **Fierce competition between traditional and digital media:** This fierce competition between the two is causing the traditional media going TRP frenzy and putting media ethics on back-burner.
- ▶ **Blurring of distinction between news, paid news:** What used to be a clear delineation between creative content, advertising, and non-fiction is being challenged by new media which could have elements of all three.
- ▶ **Building of mistrust towards the mainstream media:** Emergence of internet giving anti-mainstream media individuals their own "public sphere" an alternative space for information

sharing, networking and production of ideas and "values" that is deeply anti-mainstream. This deeply ingrained mistrust towards the mainstream media by conservative circles and groups resulted into people questioning the facts and truth provided by media.

What could be the consequences of uncontrolled and unchallenged digital media?

- ▶ Media as an institution is build on trust. Digital media through its false news machinery hits at these very roots. If media loses its credibility it will be the greatest loss for democracy.
- ▶ False news vitiates the election process, creates fissures in society, hoodwinks government institutions and therefore attacks society, nation, state in every form.

Therefore there is a great need that such trends must be checked.

Principles to be followed by the media:

- ▶ Respect human rights and dignity.
- ▶ Promote communal harmony, religious tolerance and international understanding.
- ▶ Treat controversial public issues in an imparial manner.
- ▶ Ensure the objective presentation of news and fair and unbiased comment.
- ▶ Protect the national interest/news harmful for the national security.

What are the emerging trends in media space?

- ▶ Internet has brought various new trends in media space. Many new media houses operating only on the digital platform have emerged.
- ▶ The cost of printing, setting up studios, acquiring space for building has gone down. Media houses are using it to provide better researched news article. They can in future use saved resources for better training of their resource persons.
- ▶ With increase in freelancing activity and greater availability of freelancers, experts a newswriter gets more time to understand issue in detail and write better write-up.

- ▶ Greater diversion of young readers to digital platforms is resulting into diversion of advertisement resources to digital platforms. This in future can make survival of traditional platforms difficult and they will have to adopt new strategies to remain relevant.

What should be done to overcome the challenges emerging to press from digital platform?

Every challenge emerging from digital platforms must be tackled in such a way that the freedom of press and the idea of media as fourth pillar of democracy remains. Therefore certain measures which can be taken are:

Established media houses must enter into digital media platforms and must use this space to continuously engage with masses with credible news stories.

- ▶ Since the reach of national news channels is limited to national capital and state capital, it gives lot of opportunity for rumour mongers to act in villages or backward areas. It also shows that national media generally ignores issues from rural areas. Emergence of digital platforms gives media houses to establish their network in rural and backward areas and get credible information from there. It will help in countering the negative impact of digital platforms.
- ▶ Local governments, officials at local level must be used for establishing truth about the facts. Efforts must be made to empower local self governments to digitally empower them to provide

credible information on local issues.

- ▶ Governments machinery must act proactively to counter the propaganda machinery of anti-social or anti-national elements through intelligence gathering and providing right information through whatsapp, facebook.
- ▶ Strict regulations for posting of content and the verification of content; their enforcement must be ensured for online platforms. Some sort of regulations for opening of accounts, user verification for opening and operating accounts should be done, so that fake accounts are not used for rumour mongering and those who play with the law must be brought to books.
- ▶ Ensuring that media houses earn their revenue through subscriptions rather than advertisements. This will also ensure its freedom from government pressure because government ad spending forms major part of their revenue.

In such a mutable context, the only need to make sure is that **media are up to speed as regards innovation** and that our **regulatory framework is adapted to the new environment**. Therefore focus should be on **three main aspects**:

- ▶ Media convergence across platforms, so that unverified news are countered.
- ▶ Secondly, a regulatory modernisation for the digital single market, including for audiovisual media services;
- ▶ Finally, focus on the importance of preserving media freedom and pluralism.

Increase in International Trade Disputes

Context

The world's second-biggest steel producer Japan is threatening to take India to the WTO over restrictions that nearly halved its steel exports to the South Asian nation over the past year, a step that could trigger more trade spats as global tensions over steel and other commodities run high. Besides concern over India's protection of its domestic steel industry, Japan is also worried about the more rough and tumble climate for global trade being engendered by incoming U.S. President Donald Trump, and feels it must make a strong stand for open and fair international markets.

Hereby, analysing the concept of trade protectionism, its impact on free and fair trade practices and global economy.

Recently India has imposed Minimum Import price (MIP) as growing imports from steel surplus countries like China, Japan and Korea with predatory prices have been a major concern for the domestic industry since September 2014. India has also imposed anti-dumping duties on certain steel products to guard domestic players from cheap imports. These measures are called anti dumping measures. In response Japan has dragged India to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute settlement system. This development is part of increase in Trade Disputes across the world since global economic crisis. The shrinking GDP growth in West has given way to protectionist sentiments which favour domestic production to save jobs.

Trade Protectionism

In economics, protectionism is the economic policy of restraining trade between states (countries) through methods such as tariffs on imported goods, restrictive quotas, and a variety of other government regulations. Protectionist policies protect the producers, businesses and workers of the import-competing sector in a country from foreign competitors. According to proponents, these policies can counteract unfair trade practices, to allow fair competition between imports and goods and services produced domestically. WTO rules allow countries to use methods of protectionism but in a limited manner and in specific cases.

Countries use a variety of ways to protect their trade.

- ▶ **Tariffs:** A tariff is a tax on imports, which can either be specific (so much per unit of sale) or ad valorem (a percentage of the price of the product). Tariffs reduce supply and raise the price of imports. This gives domestic equivalents a comparative advantage. As such, tariffs are distorting the market forces and may prevent consumers from gaining the benefit of all the advantages of international specialisation and trade.
- ▶ **Quotas:** Quotas have the effect of restricting the maximum amount of imports allowed into an economy. Once again, they reduce the amount of imports entering an economy and increase the equilibrium price within the market. The government receives no revenue from a quota, as it does with a tariff, unless it can set up a system of licences.
- ▶ **Exchange controls:** The government could limit the amount of foreign currency available for paying for imports.

- ▶ **Export subsidies:** Export subsidies allow exporters to supply the market with more product than the natural equilibrium would have allowed. Foreign consumers will enjoy increased economic welfare as the price of their purchases fall. Domestic employees might enjoy more wages and job security. But taxpayers are footing the bill for this. Domestic firms might divert trade into exports and ignore the home market. This could lead to increase in domestic prices.
- ▶ **Administrative obstacles:** Countries can set administrative hurdles. For example, they may

require significant levels of paperwork and then deal with these processes slowly making it difficult for importers to compete on a level playing field with other firms.

- ▶ **Health and safety standards:** Countries may set onerously high health and safety standards for goods that are imported, once again making life difficult for importers.
- ▶ **Environmental standards:** Countries can set high environmental standards that they know only domestic firms are likely to be able to achieve, once again making life difficult for importers.

PROTECTIONISM STRATEGIES

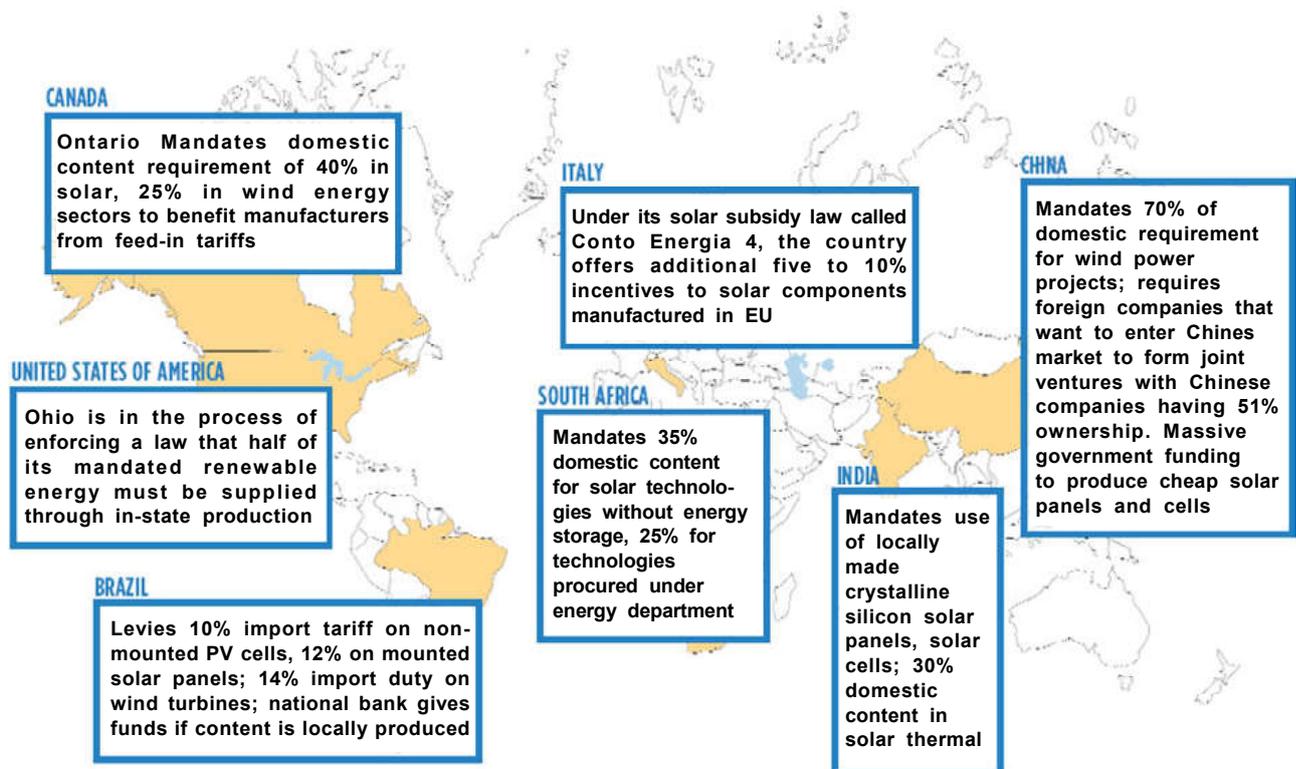


Fig. 4

Why Trade Disputes are increasing?

The main reason for rising trade disputes prolonged economic slowdown since global economic crisis in 2008.

Protectionist stance of West

A new WTO report indicates a worrying rise in economic protectionism. Countries are imposing new protectionist trade barriers at the fastest rate since the onset of the recession in 2008.

The anti-trade sentiment fuelling this growing protectionism is evident in the rhetoric of various

politicians and their constituents, particularly in the US and Europe. The recent Brexit referendum delivered yet another blow to the free market rules that have been enforced for decades in the West.

There appears to be a growing hostility to international trade of any kind, and many of the trade barriers being imposed will only hurt the economies they're supposed to help. If the anti-trade trend persists, the already ailing global economy will only further struggle to improve, and the prosperity of future generations will be compromised.

Unfortunately, the West's growing protectionism goes far beyond reasonable, limited measures to protect domestic industry. There is evidently a growing general hostility to international trade. This can be seen in the strong opposition to a number of major international trade deals currently under negotiation or awaiting ratification. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) under negotiation between the US and EU has faced harsh criticism. Similarly, the massive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal recently concluded between the US, various Asian countries and Australia has been widely attacked in the United States.

China's excess capacity in steel and Aluminium

Protectionist measure has their counter effect. If one country's illegal trade practices are hurting another country's economy, that nation has the right to respond in lawful ways in order to protect their domestic industries. Indeed, many of the trade measures recently adopted have been in response to massive Chinese overproduction of various materials, particularly regarding steel and aluminium products. This overproduction is due to excess capacity. The glut has led to a steep drop in steel prices, with China's industry dumping cheap exports into countries around the world and threatening to put their domestic producers out of business, costing thousands of jobs. In response, countries have imposed high tariffs onto Chinese steel imports to protect their domestic producers. For ex. India has effectively taken counter dumping measures against China's cheap export of Steel.

Conclusion

While trade barriers are often healthy and necessary responses to other countries' harmful policies, the growing protectionist tendencies seen in the US and Europe are concerning. International trade brings tremendous economic benefits for the world, propelling economic growth and raising wages and standards of living. The TPP, for example, is expected to raise American incomes by \$131 billion, according to one estimate. While some jobs may be

WTO Dispute Settlement System

A dispute arises when one country adopts a trade policy measure or takes some action that one or more fellow-WTO members considers to be breaking the WTO agreements, or to be a failure to live up to obligations. Dispute settlement is the central pillar of the multilateral trading system, and the WTO's unique contribution to the stability of the global economy.

Settling disputes is the responsibility of the Dispute Settlement Body (the General Council in another guise), which consists of all WTO members. The Dispute Settlement Body has the sole authority to establish "panels" of experts to consider the case, and to accept or reject the panels' findings or the results of an appeal. It monitors the implementation of the rulings and recommendations, and has the power to authorize retaliation when a country does not comply with a ruling.

WTO tries to maintain the scenario of free and fair trade mechanism based on following principles:

- ▶ Free trade is the only type of truly fair trade because it offers consumers the most choices and the best opportunities to improve their standard of living.
- ▶ Free trade promotes innovation because, along with goods and services, the flow of trade circulates new ideas.
- ▶ By supporting the rule of law, free trade also can reduce the opportunities for corruption.

lost to countries overseas, the net economic benefits are significantly positive. Trade obstructions like tariffs, however, usually do more harm than good. If politicians and ordinary citizens alike wish to make the world a better, wealthier place, they will have to stop closing their economies off to the outside world and embrace the economic realities of globalization. It is trade, not tariffs, which will bring the prosperity we seek.

H-1B Visa Rule Change and Impact on IT Sector

Context

With the proposed executive order of President Donald Trump and three bills being introduced in Congress, the H1-B visa regime in US is going to change drastically. This will have significant impact on foreign nationals working in US as well as the companies hiring them in terms of their profitability and quality of employees.

India's Information Technology (IT) sector will face temporary setback to move workers from India to the US.

Hereby, analyzing the concept of H-1B visa, impact on IT sector, etc.

The **H-1B** is a non-immigrant visa in the United States under the Immigration and Nationality Act, section 101(a) (15) (H). It allows U.S. employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in specialty occupations. The act prescribes the duration of stay under H1-B visa for three years, extendable to six years in US. It also limits to 65,000 the number of foreign nationals who may be issued a visa or otherwise provided H-1B status each fiscal year (FY). However, in practice the number of H-1B visas issued each year is significantly higher than the 65,000 cap, with 117,828 having been issued in FY2010, 129,552 in FY2011, and 135,991 in FY2012.

Indian IT companies have significantly benefitted from this liberal visa regime so far which has helped them into hiring skilled labour at lower costs from developing countries including India thereby

controlling their wage bills, bringing efficiency and cost competitiveness in their operation and earning higher profit margins on their product. Further, outsourcing from US MNCs has emerged as one of biggest business opportunities for Indian IT companies due to its various advantages such as English speaking skilled labour, cost competitiveness and technological prowess. A large part of (almost 2/3rd) revenue of Indian IT companies comes from outsourcing thereby making them to rely on US.

Companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, and Wipro, which get over 60% of their revenue from the US, have been bracing themselves for such tightening of laws. And in recent years, these efforts have intensified significantly. In 2016, TCS applied for only 4,000 new US visas, as against 14,000 in 2015 and was granted only around 1,300 visas that year.

Impact on Indian IT Companies

With the proposed legislations and executive order the \$ 150 billion IT Industry will come under tremendous pressure.

Tighter visa regime- The executive order seeks to introduce tighter visa regime in US. It seeks to better compliance and regulations of the law. With the close scrutiny and compliance, the number of H1-B visa issuance will come down compared to actual figures thereby affecting the employment opportunities of high skilled engineering graduates.

Expensive Hiring- The three bills being introduced in the congress have made provision for increasing the H1-B minimum wage to \$ 130,000 from the current wage of \$ 60,000 thereby making it difficult for IT companies to hire foreign workers.

Profitability erosion of companies- Increasing wage bill will significantly make erosion in the net profitability of the companies. According to an estimate this could add \$3.5-4 billion to the tech industry's wage bill leading to 30-40 % erosion in their net profit. For tier II companies, the short-term blow could be harder as they don't have much onsite resources and bank on labour arbitrage to sell services.

Pressure for onsite hiring- New Bills being introduced by the Trump administration in the US Congress seek to make outsourcing not only tougher but more expensive. This comes at a time when protectionist sentiments that call for onsite hiring of locals are spreading globally. This move will pose a serious of challenges to Indian IT companies as nearly half of workers among the 2, 50,000 foreign nationals are working in India rather than onsite. Further, Indian Companies hire employees from different nationalities. For example Mindtree employees 16,100 people of 55 nationalities and Infosys has 129 nationalities among its nearly 2 lakh-strong workforce.

Skill Gap- The pressure of local hiring will further create mismatch in demand for digital skills. More worrisome is a shortage of program management skills, architecture and design skills at local level. Further, US have huge shortage of local students enrolled in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Courses.

Conclusion

NASSCOM (The National Association of Software and Services Companies) reacting to the draft released a statement that -"If skills aren't available in the US and as per law you can't bring workers in then either the job will remain undone or the job will be shifted to India or some other location outside the US".

It is important to understand that skilled migration has benefitted the global economy, and diversity and inclusion have actually made Silicon Valley the magnet for global talent. Indian IT sector has helped in creating jobs, providing quality services and taxes being paid by them that has benefited USA economy positively so far to the US administration.

Such visa restriction will be catastrophic for the US and it will significantly loose not only workforce but

Industry body Nasscom reckons a demand supply gap of as high as 80 million over the next decade for digital skills. Unfilled jobs in the US will be 2.4 million by 2018 which will significantly affect quality of employees in companies thereby innovation and competitiveness of Industry will affect. And Indian IT industry will not be isolated from this process.

Arguments in Favour of Bill

Though tech firms claim they use the H1B visas to hire highly skilled workers in areas that lack top talent, the fact that a majority of the visas are awarded to outsourcing firms from India has drawn criticism from US politicians.

They claim that companies such as TCS and Infosys misuse the work visa program to bring low-level IT workers into the US.

Around 70% of H1B visas were given to workers from India.

If implemented, the reforms may force Indian companies to make fundamental changes in their business strategies, including hiring more American workers and raising salaries they pay to employees working on client sites in the US.

The changes will mean that there are fewer H1B visas to go around, and companies will end up paying more for the people they send to the US on H1B visas which would make things worse.

also investment from tech companies. However, the Indian IT industry should learn to adapt the new normal as India's Chief Economic Advisor, Arvind Subramanian has rightly pointed out that the medium-term political outlook for globalisation and in particular for the world's "political carrying capacity for globalisation" may have changed in the wake of recent developments. "In the short run a strong dollar and declining competitiveness might exacerbate the lure of protectionist policies. Therefore, Indian IT companies should prepare itself to cope up with higher wage bills and reduced net profits. It should focus on streamlining its operations and diversify their business and trade to other countries of the world to remain relevant.

To conclude this bill should ideally have been backed by the aspect of availability of skills as well and not only increasing the minimum wage.

Right Wing Shift in EU

Context

Euroskeptical wave is sweeping European Union nations. Win of **Antonio Tajani, a centre-right Italian**, for the post **European Parliament President** has taken the populist wave spreading across the Europe to the European Parliament, a very important organ of European Union. EU which once seemed invulnerable to populist wave has fallen for it. Populist wave is spreading across countries like Poland, France, Italy etc. It will be a challenge for EU to keep the idea of regionalism intact in these difficult times when continent facing various challenges like migration crisis, security threat from terrorist attacks, economic slowdown, etc.

What is the meaning of Right Wing politics and which countries see its rise

Right wing means conservative or reactionary section of political parties. They focus on individualism, nationalism, gradualism or status quo.

Against it is left wing politics which believe in egalitarianism, rapid changes, welfare and redistribution, etc.

Why right wing wave is trending across Europe?

Fall of "too big to fail" Lehman Brothers in 2008 seemed to have exposed the limits of right-wing orthodoxy and unbridled free-market capitalism. Yet, years on from Lehman's implosion, right-wing parties are thriving across countries and there is rise in this trend. Recession, euro, EU,

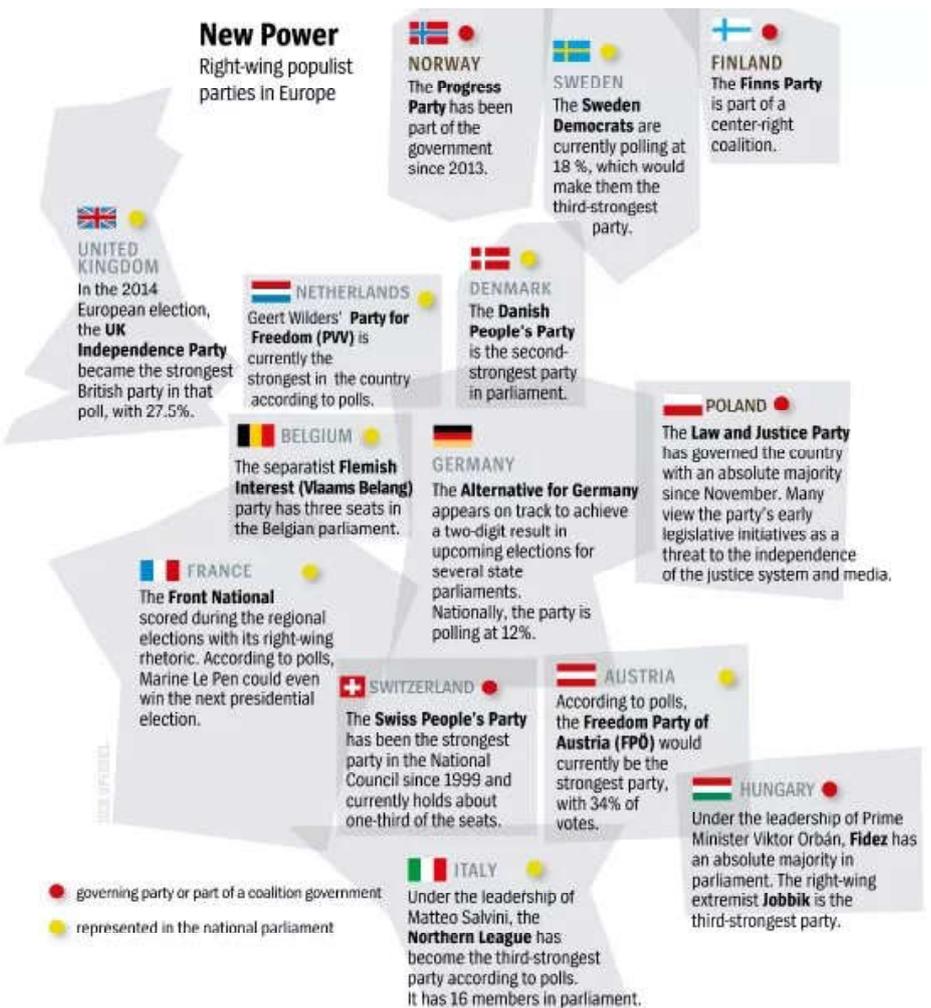


Fig. 5

perception of loss of sovereignty to Brussels, failure to freely make their laws in time of crisis and threat to employment from immigration are the main reason for this rise.

- ▶ The recession of 2008 and the economic hardship caused by it had resulted into a perception that the economic hardships are because of the globalization, free trade, easy visa regimes and immigration, etc.
 - ▶ There is a feeling that the money from well performing countries in EU is being squandered on some countries which are deliberately mismanaging their economies.
 - ▶ The leftist forces may be an answer when inequalities are rising but not during recession periods. In times of crises, conservatives might be trusted more, as they are seen to keep an eye on a balanced budget. When there's growth, social democrats are - or were - trusted to spread the wealth."
 - ▶ Leftist parties ideologically cannot take tough stance against immigration issues. The crash has also damaged the left by making voters more insular and defensive, especially towards immigration.
 - ▶ In some countries leaders of populist-right parties have portrayed themselves as the protectors of a welfare state under attack from liberal immigration policies. The Danish People's Party, for instance, has branded itself as "representing classical social-democratic values combined with a tough line on immigration"
 - ▶ The growth of idea of free and individual choice (individualism) since 1970 undermined the traditional drivers of left-wing thought: solidarity and state interventionism.
 - ▶ Right-wing parties have also been helped by the collapse of manufacturing, the decline in trade union membership and the rise in self-employment.
 - ▶ Throughout Europe, the right-wing parties have very charismatic and strong leaders, epitomized by Nigel Farage in the UK, Marine Le Pen in France and Kristian Thulesen Dahl here in Denmark, whose personalities and public speaking abilities seem to be drawing in the votes more so than their party manifestos.
- ▶ A clear feeling among the population that most of our laws are directly dictated by Brussels have created a re-birth among the Danish right-wing parties in 2015 elections and across other nations.
 - ▶ The recent incidents of bombing in Europe and security threats emerging from volatile middle-east have made people of various nations skeptical of the process of globalization and anti-immigrant.
 - ▶ Rise of populists politics world over which basks on threat perception and give rise to xenophobia.

Why election of a right winger to the post of President of EU Parliament is important?

- ▶ This year EU must work on tricky reforms to Europe's migration and asylum systems, as well as ratifying a controversial trade deal with Canada.
- ▶ The EPP-ALDE agreement (Antonio Tajani is representative of this coalition: EPP -ALDE) calls for action when "European principles" are breached, which could mean steps against Poland's populist government.
- ▶ The deal also seeks a bigger role for the parliament in Brexit talks. MEPs must approve the final settlement; their vote may take place in early 2019.

Since many of the issues which will be very crucial for the future of EU will be decided in near future and therefore the new leadership emerging across Europe and EU will play a great role in it.

What could be the implications of this rightward shift?

This rightward shift will have very severe implications for global economic, globalization, regionalism with geo-political ramifications. Some of the possible outcomes can be:

- ▶ Weakening of the EU and many countries may seek to opt out of the EU system.
- ▶ Till now EU was a single block on various issues, with right wing parties emerging if nations opt out of EU or seek to have separate policies then solution to various issues like migration crisis, recession will be difficult. It will further prolong the hardships.

- ▶ Reaching a consensus on various EU policies will be difficult and it will further delay policies and impact efficiency of EU working.
- ▶ Russia may try to interfere or seek alliance with some of the European countries, which will complicate the strategic and security situation.
- ▶ If some of the countries impose ban on immigration, like done by USA, it will increase tensions between West Asian and European countries.
- ▶ For countries like Indian it will be easy to negotiate trade deals with countries easily, rather than a block.

Conclusion

The story of the European Union is a great success story after all. Just think of the Nobel Peace Prize, which the EU received in 2012, and for good reason. This peaceful order should not be taken for granted,

nor should these open borders nor this reciprocal sense of solidarity. This is why Europe should not give in to the extreme right and instead demand further commitment and passion for the cause that is Europe.

World Bank Role in Social Development in India

Context

World Bank (WB) is one of the five institutions created at Bretton woods in 1944, of which India was a founding member. World Bank comprises of two institutions i.e. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).

The World Bank group is affiliated to United nations maintains its unique governance structure, with an official goal of "reduction of poverty", thus directly contributing towards sustainable development goals.

World Bank has initiated many social development programmes in India ranging from alleviating poverty to inclusive growth.

Hereby, analyzing the role of World Bank in social development of India.

Introduction

Poverty is more than low income - it is also about vulnerability, exclusion, unaccountable institutions, powerlessness, and exposure to violence. Social Development promotes social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable by empowering people, building cohesive and resilient societies, and making institutions accessible and accountable to citizens. Social Development focuses on the need to "put people first" in development processes.

Working with governments, communities (including Indigenous Peoples' communities), civil society, and the private sector, Social Development translates

the complex relationship between societies and states into operations. Empirical evidence and operational experience show that Social Development promotes economic growth and leads to better interventions and a higher quality of life.

The World Bank's work in social development supports measures for poor, excluded, and vulnerable women and men to have equal access to opportunities and to contribute to social and economic progress and share in its rewards. It brings voices of the poor and vulnerable into development processes by making evidence-based policy and program contributions

World Bank has also been actively engaged in improving economic and social status of women, tribals through targeted programmes so that they can become part of mainstream.

Addressing common needs, overcoming constraints, and giving consideration to diverse interests helps maintain cohesion and prevents conflict. The Bank also supports community organization and empowerment to demand more effective, efficient, responsive, and transparent public institutions and service providers. This approach helps communities confront a range of negative trends and shocks whether economic, political, or environmental.

Role of Different Institutions under World Bank group

A. IBRD

IBRD provides commercial or concessional loan to only sovereign states or projects backed by sovereign states. Its loans are aimed to improve transportation and infrastructure, education, domestic policy, environmental consciousness, energy investments, healthcare, access to food and potable water, and access to improved sanitation.

B. IDA

International Development Association (IDA) helps the world's **poorest countries** and aims to reduce poverty by providing interest-free loans {called IDA Credits} and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities and improve people's living conditions.

C. International Finance Corporation

IFC was created in 1956 to foster private sector investment in developing nations. It finances the **private sector investment**, mobilizing capital in the international financial markets, and providing advisory services to businesses and governments.

D. Multilateral Investment Guarantee

MIGA promotes **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** into developing countries to help support economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve people's lives.

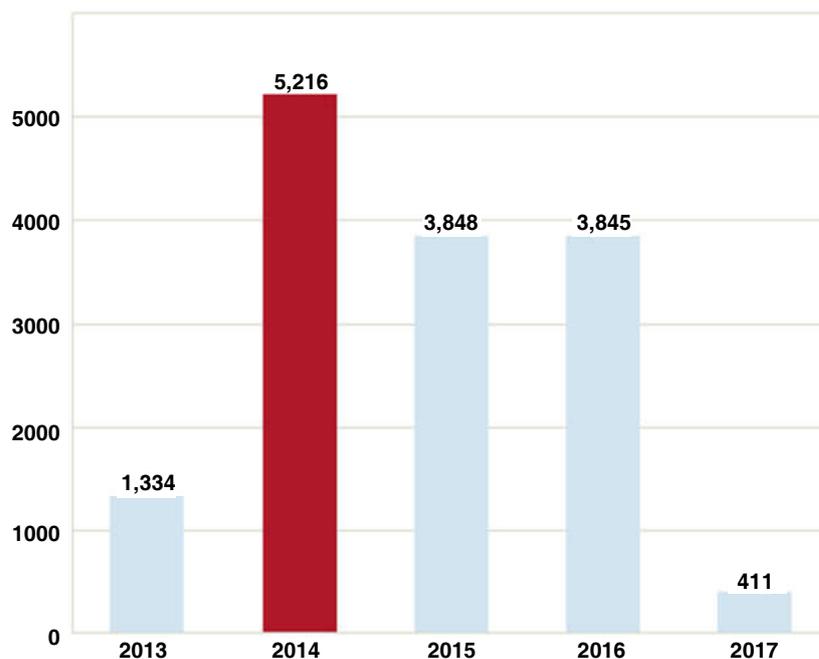
E. ICSID

International centre for settlement of investment disputes: It is an international arbitration institution established for legal dispute resolution and conciliation between international investors.

What has been the role of World Bank in development projects in India?

- ▶ India has been one of the main beneficiaries of developmental assistance from World Bank. India received support to the tune of USD 5 billion in 2014 for different projects. Social development projects focusing on areas of community development, health, education, sanitation, agriculture, women have been an important area where loan assistance from World Bank has been used. Following figure gives amount committed by WB for different financial years.
- ▶ Apart from providing loan assistance World Bank has been involved in providing knowledge support in efficient implementation of programmes.
- ▶ Achievement of MDG and SDG has been an important objective of financial and technical assistance provided by World Bank. Replicating best practices, innovating has been the main benefits of WB supported programmes.
- ▶ Focus of good governance, participative approach and community building and thus achieving sustainable development has been the hallmark of World Bank led projects.

India: Commitments by Fiscal Year (in millions of dollars)*



*Amounts include IBRD and IDA commitments

Fig. 6

Important programmes launched by WB

Various programmes have been launched by World Bank covering different areas. Some of the noteworthy programmes are:

Project Name	Amount in million USD
Uttarakhand Health Systems Development Project	100
Bihar Rural Roads Project	200
Nagaland Health Project	48
Additional Financing for Financing Energy Efficiency at MSMEs Project	5.19
Bihar Transformative Development Project	290
North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project	470
Tejaswini: Socioeconomic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls & Young Women	63
Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project	135
India: Madhya Pradesh Citizen Access to Responsive Services Project	35
IN Swachh Bharat Mission Support Operation	1500

Some of the important programmes have been discussed below:

- ▶ **The India Elementary Education Project (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or SSA)** (IDA \$1.25 billion over two projects, Specific Investment Loans) is an example of a project that reaches out to groups that have been excluded, aiming to boost the enrollment of children from poor families, marginalized and tribal groups and those with special needs. It has helped the government enroll more than 17 million out-of-school children in elementary school, including girls, first-generation learners from long-deprived communities and minority communities, and children with special needs. The number of out-

of-school children declined from 25 million to 8.1 million (less than 5 percent of the age cohort 6-14). Approximately 2.9 million children with special needs have been identified and are being covered with a variety of interventions, like residential centers, home-based education.

- ▶ **Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project, popularly known as JEEViKA (livelihoods):**

- A World Bank project has supported 1.8 million women in rural Bihar to organize themselves into self-help groups and federations.
- Women in Bihar are running commercial organizations like producer companies contributing to increase in agricultural productivity and realization of better prices of their produce.
- The institutional platform of empowered women is now being scaled up by the government of Bihar all over the state to cover 4.5 million more women.

- ▶ **Tejaswini: Socioeconomic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls & Young Women Project:** "The benefits of a country's demographic dividend hinges on the productive employment of its working age population. In Jharkhand, an estimated 56 percent of young women (ages 15-24) are neither engaged in education, nor employment or training. Empowering these women through skills training and helping them complete their secondary education will improve their lives as well as allow them to contribute to Jharkhand's development."

This is the first World Bank project in India that is solely focused on the welfare of adolescent girls and young women which will support adolescent girls and young women, ages 14-24, to complete their secondary level education and acquire relevant skills for the job market.

- ▶ **Telangana Rural Inclusive Growth Project:** with a support of US\$ 75 million project to enhance the agricultural incomes of small and marginal farmers in the state, and ensure increased access to services related to health, nutrition, sanitation and social entitlements.

It will focus on increasing economic opportunities for small and marginal farmers, especially from

scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households, by helping them gain access to extension services, quality inputs like improved seeds, market linkages, and institutional credit. Investments will also be made in improving access to services in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and increasing coverage and effectiveness of India's social safety net programs.

- ▶ **Nai-Manzil scheme:** The Government of India and the World Bank signed a US\$ 50 million credit for the Nai Manzil: Education and Skills Training for Minorities Project to help young people from minority communities complete their education and gain from market-driven training programs with the aim of improving their employment outcomes.

The project will support the Government of India's National Nai Manzil (New Horizon) Scheme, a comprehensive education and skills development program for youth from minority communities, launched in August 2015. The project will reach out to disadvantaged youth from minority communities and support their enrolment in open schooling, as well as provide hands-on vocational training. It will also provide post-placement support to assist them in finding sustainable employment.

Transport and social development

Transportation is responsible for the development of civilizations from very old times by meeting travel requirement of people and transport requirement of goods. Such movement has changed the way people live and travel. In developed and developing nations, a large fraction of people travel daily for work, shopping and social reasons. Transport too

help in social development as it provides connectivity to health, education centres and market.

Thus World Bank is also supporting many transport initiatives:

- ▶ **National Highway Development Project:** The World Bank is financing highway construction on the Lucknow - Muzaffarpur corridors. It is also involved in other sector activities such as improving road road safety.
- ▶ **Rural Roads Program:** The project supports the PMGSY in providing all weather roads to villages in four states - Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.
- ▶ **State Roads Projects:** State Highways are being upgraded in the states of Kerala, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.
- ▶ **Mumbai Urban Transport Project:** The project aims to improve transportation in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region by fostering the development of an efficient and sustainable urban transport system - suburban rail, bus and link roads - and building effective institutions.
- ▶ **Sustainable Urban Transport Project:** The project aims to promote environmentally sustainable urban transport in various cities and support implementation of the India National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP).

Through various programmes focusing on creation of physical infrastructure like rural roads, electricity grids and strengthening of social infrastructure World Bank has both directly and indirectly helped in social development by building inclusive society, ensuring equity and justice; providing participation and voice to the excluded.

Pollution Problem – Rules Tough but Implementation Weak

Context

Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into the natural environment that causes adverse change. Pollution can take the form of chemical substances or energy, such as noise, heat or light. Pollutants, the components of pollution, can be either foreign substances/energies or naturally occurring contaminants.

Many rules and regulations have been implemented by the government to address the problem but enforcement of rules for tackling air pollution is "weak".

Governance problems and lesser involvement of the society are causing the problem becoming more severe.

Besides stringent rules, if the problem of implementation is solved with the involvement of the government and society, we can reduce the harmful impacts of the pollution.

Introduction

Pollution is the process of making land, water, air or other parts of the environment dirty and unsafe

or unsuitable to use. Pollution occurs in different forms; air, water, soil, radioactive, noise, heat/thermal and light. Every form of pollution has two

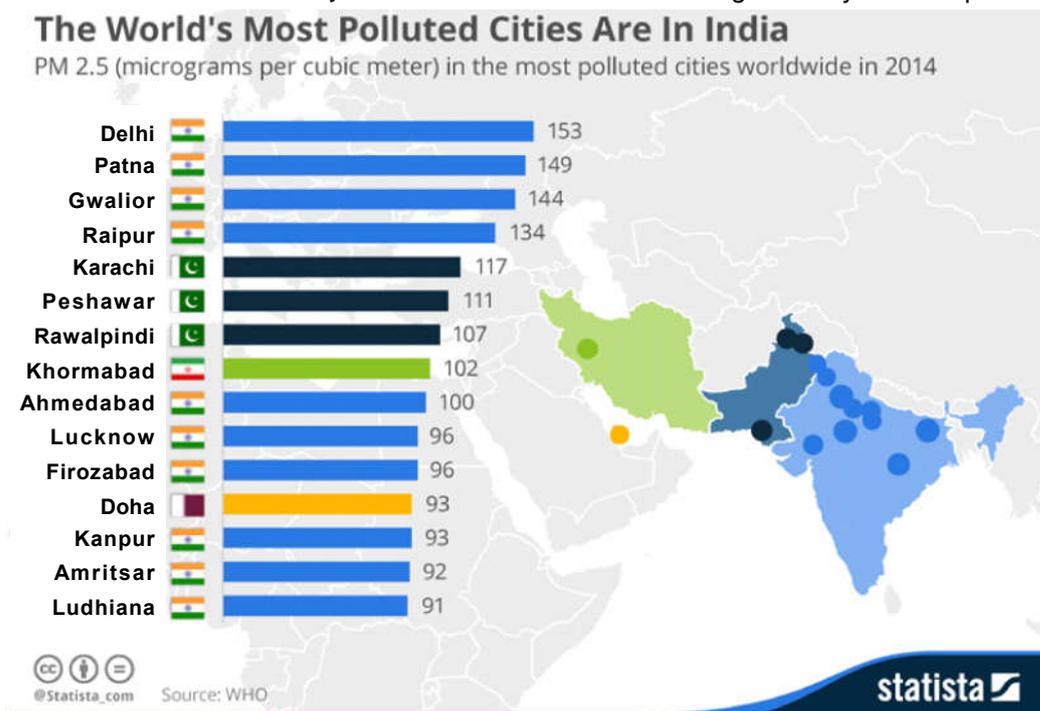


Fig. 7

sources of occurrence; the point and the non-point sources. The point sources are easy to identify, monitor and control, whereas the non-point sources are hard to control.

A point source of pollution is a single identifiable source of air, water, thermal, noise or light pollution. Non-point source (NPS) pollution includes both water and air pollution from diffuse sources. Non-point source water pollution affects a water body from sources such as polluted runoff from agricultural areas draining into a river, or wind-borne debris blowing out to sea.

Two things are paramount to understand regarding the issue of pollution. First, there are several different sources of pollution, each of which needs a separate solution. Second, pollution doesn't know borders: pollutants are carried for hundreds of kilometers which means that not all of any regions' pollution originates in that place. And likewise, it also contributes to pollution in nearby regions.

Many rules and regulations have been implemented by the government to address the problem but enforcement of rules for tackling air pollution is "weak".

Governance problems and lesser involvement of the society are causing the problem becoming more severe.

Effects of Pollution

- ▶ **Environment Degradation:** Environment is the first casualty for increase in pollution weather in air or water. The increase in the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere leads to smog which can restrict sunlight from reaching the earth. Thus, preventing plants in the process of photosynthesis. Gases like Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide can cause acid rain. Water pollution in terms of Oil spill may lead to death of several wildlife species.
- ▶ **Human Health:** The decrease in quality of air leads to several respiratory problems including asthma or lung cancer. Chest pain, congestion, throat inflammation, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease are some of diseases that can be caused by air pollution. Water pollution occurs due to contamination of water and may pose skin related problems including skin irritations and rashes. Similarly, Noise pollution

leads to hearing loss, stress and sleep disturbance.

- ▶ **Global Warming:** The emission of greenhouse gases particularly CO₂ is leading to global warming. Every other day new industries are being set up, new vehicles come on roads and trees are cut to make way for new homes. All of them, in direct or indirect way lead to increase in CO₂ in the environment. The increase in CO₂ leads to melting of polar ice caps which increases the sea level and pose danger for the people living near coastal areas.
- ▶ **Ozone Layer Depletion:** Ozone layer is the thin shield high up in the sky that stops ultra violet rays from reaching the earth. As a result of human activities, chemicals, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), were released into the atmosphere which contributed to the depletion of ozone layer.
- ▶ **Infertile Land:** Due to constant use of insecticides and pesticides, the soil may become infertile. Plants may not be able to grow properly. Various forms of chemicals produced from industrial waste is released into the flowing water which also affects the quality of soil.

Government Measures

Right to healthy Environment is our basic right

The concept of human rights in general emerged after the Second World War, but the right to a healthy environment, as one of those human rights, was never a priority. Today, this right is an emerging concept that is being hotly debated in the human rights arena. A healthy environment is an essential aspect of the right to life, not only for human beings but also for other animals on the planet.

Constitutional Provisions for Clean and Healthy Environment

Article 21 - The right to clean environment is within the right to life as guaranteed under the Article 21 of the Constitution. The person will be able to lead a good and happy life if he/she is healthy and is not suffering from any health hazards and he is not denied any of his other Fundamental rights. Further, the person will only remain healthy if he is living in the healthy environment and his surroundings are

clean. We need fresh air to breathe, fresh water to drink, shelter to live, etc. These all we derive from the nature. So, in order to lead a dignified life one needs to protect his or her environment.

Environmental, ecological, air, water, pollution, etc. should be regarded as amounting to violation of Article 21. Environmental protection, therefore, has now become a matter of grave concern for human existence. Promoting environmental protection implies maintenance of the environment as a whole comprising the man-made and the natural environment.

Institutional Framework

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is the nodal agency in the administrative structure of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India's environmental policies and programmes

The broad objectives of the Ministry are:

- ▶ Conservation and survey of flora, fauna, forests and wildlife
- ▶ Afforestation and regeneration of degraded areas
- ▶ Protection of the environment and
- ▶ Ensuring the welfare of animals
- ▶ Prevention and control of pollution

Central Pollution Control Board - CPCB

The *Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)*, statutory organisation, was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Further, CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

What are the prescribed solutions to contain pollution globally?

- ▶ Sustainable transportation
- ▶ Industrial emission reduction
- ▶ Solid Waste Management
- ▶ Clean cook stoves and fuel
- ▶ Solar lighting and electricity
- ▶ Renewable power
- ▶ Energy efficient homes

Issues in Implementation

▶ Governance problems

Even though we are able to push certain legislations and adopt the principles needed for sustainability, the big gap lies in the implementation.

- **Weak State capacity:** One of the issue is Weak state Capacity defined as the ability of the government to administer and its capacity to design and implement rules or policies. For instance , Environmental laws are pretty strong but it does not necessarily lead to enforcement and implementation.

For example: As per a study by IIT Kanpur, road dust accounts for 38 per cent of Delhi's pollution. To reduce the dust, municipal corporations will have to manage their construction activities a lot better and contractors will be required to spray water to eliminate dust, cordon off construction areas, complete projects in a time-bound manner, use drilling instead of digging among other things.

Regulating the rules would require a PWD that is a lot less corrupt and a lot more competent. In order to get there, the government would have to start by imposing regulations and raising penalties for non-compliance and disciplining engineers who did not enforce the rules.

- **Federal problem:** Another characteristic of the air quality problem is its federal nature, which requires various State governments and the Centre to work together.

▶ Social dimensions

As competing political interests may not put pollution on priority for all governments, public pressure becomes crucial.

- **Lack of awareness:** Poor access to pollution information means people don't have basic information about what's in the air and water their communities depend on. Without information, the public's ability to participate in key decision-making processes-such as siting of industries and monitoring and regulation of pollutants-is limited.

- **Increasing the culture of consumerism:** Excessive consumption that often leads to generation of wastes and lack of proper disposal system making the problem more severe. Not adopting the measures like reuse, recycle and reduce in order to contain waste generation.
- **Increasing use of private vehicles:** No restriction on number of private vehicles per household thus reducing the use of public transport and increasing frequency of vehicles on roads.
- **Increased E-waste and increasing energy consumption** causing increase in pollution level in the environment with its harmful impacts.

Way Forward

There is no practical way for citizens to coordinate on a solution except through the government. Thus

administrators can take the following steps to involve citizens:

- ▶ Organizing campaigns and programmes in the locality to increase awareness about sources of pollution and their possible impact.
- ▶ **Public transport:** Improving the public transport facilities (recent initiative of AAP to use new buses).
- ▶ **Education:** Educating people about the concept of the 4R's(Refuse, Reduce, Recycle and Reuse)thus reducing the load of dumping and increase their contribution for Green GDP and Sustainable Development.
- ▶ **Delhi's odd-even strategy:** This signals towards using efficient transportation methods such as public transport, car pooling, e-rickshaws, etc
- ▶ **Installing more number of dumping grounds and Garbage Bins on the streets.**

Conclusion

Pollution not only affect humans by destroying their respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological systems; it also affects the nature, plants, fruits, vegetables, rivers, ponds, forests, animals, etc, on which they are highly dependent for survival. It is crucial to control pollution as the nature, wildlife and human life are precious gifts to the mankind.

The role of administration has to be participatory rather than regulatory to curb the menace of pollution. Contribution of citizens and policy measures has to be complementary to reduce the pollution level. The role of administrators is more of persuasive nature and the end steps have to be taken by citizens only to enjoy a healthy life.

Autonomy to Institutes of Higher Education (IIM Bill 2017)

Context

The term Autonomy means 'self norm' or the condition of being independent. The term may be applied both to the individual person and to a group or an institution. An autonomous person is the one who is able to act according to his or her own direction. Similarly an autonomous institution is one who is able to regulate its own affairs.

Autonomy in the context of Educational Institutions is a matter of debate for many years in India as the Higher educational institutions in India are in the process of transition in the face of globalization.

Some of the important organizations involved in responding to the challenges of developing a knowledge economy and seeking this transition in higher education are the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Planning Commission, and the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). Each of them has its own perspective on what ought to be the future of higher education.

While there is need for consensus-building and closer interaction among these bodies, the importance of acknowledging and promoting academic freedom should also be recognized.

Given the challenges of globalization and privatization, there is an urgent need for emphasizing academic freedom as a core

component of ensuring higher academic standards and the development of curriculum that will meet the needs of the future.

The state and the private sector need to recognize that the creation of knowledge and development of the higher education sector cannot take place without recognizing academic freedom.

Recently Union Cabinet cleared Indian Institute of Management Bill, 2017 and it aims to declare IIMs as Institutions of National Importance with more autonomy and freedom.

The move will give global recognition to courses offered by the IIMs, especially the newer institutions.

The bill provides for a periodic review of IIMs' performance by independent agencies. The annual report on the IIMs will be placed in Parliament and the comptroller and auditor general will be auditing their accounts.

Introduction

Education is the source of Knowledge and wisdom to make intelligent choices and reach the goal of human development. Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development.

On these lines, Higher Education in modern society seeks to preserve, transmit and advance knowledge. Many experts, committees and commissions have underlined the importance of education as an

instrument of change and progress. The task of nation building depends on the quality and number of persons coming out of our schools and colleges.

Recently, Cabinet approved Indian Institute of Management Bill, 2017 considering the long term demands of the IIMs Autonomy. The IIM Bill 2017 allows the elite B-schools to award degrees instead of diplomas, grants freedom in terms of administration, recruitment and daily functioning. The

bill will allow IIMs **complete autonomy combined with adequate accountability.**

The IIM Bill has been prepared with the aim of furthering excellence in these premier institutions. The bill will ensure IIMs are board-driven, with the chairperson and director selected by the board. This means neither the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry nor the President of India will have a say in the selection of top executives at these B-schools.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR B-SCHOOL AUTONOMY

The decision

- Cabinet approves IIM bill 2017

What it does

- Grants 'complete autonomy' to IIMs
- IIMs to grant degrees instead of diplomas
- Periodic independent review of IIMs' performance
- Under Parliament's scrutiny, CAG to audit IIMs' accounts
- Management of IIMs to be board-driven
- Diluted coordination forum reduces risk of political hijack of IIMs

Background

- ▶ Indian Institutes of Management are the country's premier institutions imparting best quality education in management on globally benchmarked processes of education and training in management. IIMs are recognized as world-class management Institutions and Centres of Excellence and have brought laurels to the country.
- ▶ All IIMs are separate autonomous bodies registered under the Societies Act.
- ▶ Being societies, IIMs are not authorized to award degrees and, hence, they have been awarding Post Graduate Diploma and Fellow Programme in Management. While these awards are treated as equivalent to MBAs and PhDs, respectively, the equivalence is not universally acceptable, especially for the Fellow Programme.
- ▶ Currently, the boards of IIMS largely make recommendations and the government either accepts or rejects their proposals. This includes

subjects like the appointment of directors and the chairman of the board of governors.

- ▶ To solve the issue a bill was drafted in June 2015 but it became controversial because of concerns that it may erode the autonomy of these premier institutions. The IIMs protested against the bill when the first draft was put up for public feedback.
- ▶ Following intervention by the Prime Minister's Office, the HRD ministry made changes to the draft, accommodating most of the demands of the elite schools. Most disputed issues were the composition of IIM boards, selection of board chairmen and course fees,
- ▶ Again the Union Cabinet chaired by the PM Modi has approved the new bill termed as the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bill, 2017, under which the **IIMs would be declared as Institutions of National Importance which will enable them to grant degrees to their students.**

Higher Education in India

The Key to Make India a Developed Nation:

- ▶ Developed nations in the world have made use of the great opportunities inherent in the system of Higher Education and ushered in the required paradigm shift to build the knowledge capital and pave the way for real development.
- ▶ India has great potential to become a developed nation by 2020 if we refocus our attention on the system of Education. Education, in general, and higher education, in particular, plays a key role in the realization of India's extraordinary potential and aspirations for economic and technological development.
- ▶ Precisely because of this potential and its implications for individual advancement, there is greater awareness and an extraordinary demand for higher education among the youth.

Issues in the Quality of Higher Educational Institutions

The debate on the quality of the educational institutions and the courses they offer has been and continue to be in the limelight for many years. The demographic dividend is still an elusive panacea given the academic excellence existing in the country. Not many higher educational institutions from India are listed in the global ranking of academic excellence while on the other hand, meritocracy has given way to mediocrity and political intervention in the running of academic institutions in most of the cases.

India has adopted a highly centralized control in higher education by constituting different (sometimes, overlapping) bodies to manage the sector from the time of independence. These structures are not well suited to take up the present challenges and the global demands in the field of education sector. Various reforms are proposed in the education sector in order to meet these changing circumstances.

- ▶ One of the priority areas of suggestion is 'Autonomy' to the colleges of established track record. The autonomy debate starts with what kind of autonomy is meant for these colleges. According to the various committee reports appointed to study this matter, the first step in the process is the academic autonomy to be granted. It gives the freedom to the institutions

to design the course, syllabus, examination time tables etc.

- ▶ The present university system in India is doomed to fail as it focuses more on the administrative job than on the research and innovation. Most of the universities have more than hundred colleges affiliated to them. These colleges are by and large located far off from the universities thus the distance hindering the sharing of the resources and responsibilities like faculty, library, syllabus upgradation etc.

The following are some of the important issues relating to academic freedom

- ▶ **Understanding Academic Freedom:** The concept of academic freedom should be further examined in the light of globalization and new challenges posed to higher education. There is need for a public debate on the inherently difficult issue of how academic freedom in Indian universities can be balanced with an equally important value of ensuring transparency and accountability within public and private institutions.
- ▶ **Academic Freedom as Social Responsibility:** Protecting academic freedom ought to be part of the social responsibility of both individuals and institutions. There are a variety of issues relating to educational policy and governance of educational institutions in which the state and its instrumentalities need to play a legitimate role.
- ▶ **The state's Role and Responsibility** in protecting academic freedom should not be limited to being discrete and exercising self-restraint in its possible interventions. It should also ensure that other actors, including the media, political parties and the citizenry do not by their actions undermine academic freedom.
- ▶ **Academic Freedom as a Human Right:** The importance of protecting academic freedom inevitably makes a case for recognizing that it is indeed part of the national and international human rights framework.

What does the Autonomy means?

- ▶ The term Autonomy means 'self norm' or the condition of being autonomous. Autonomy may be applied both to the individual person and to a group or an institution. An autonomous person

is, fundamentally, one able to act according to his or her own direction. Similarly, an autonomous institution is one able to regulate its own affairs.

- ▶ To guarantee higher quality and to attain better performance in teaching and learning processes it is necessary to encourage the involvement and commitment of all those involved with the process like teachers, students and the management. Foisting of orders and command would necessarily be a factor impeding the innovation, competence and commitment of those involved in the very process and such a course for achieving excellence is therefore, undesirable.

Institutional Autonomy in India:

Institutional autonomy is based upon the argument that the institutions can properly undertake the work expected of them by the community which supports them only if they have freedom of choice and of action. This does not exempt them from public interest and criticism, nor does it mean that their policies should not be under review by themselves, and by others.

- ▶ One of the important areas of institutional autonomy is in the **selection of staff and students**. Although pay scales and, under certain circumstances, conditions of employment may require government approval, the individuals appointed to posts, even at the highest level, are ultimately a matter for the institutions' Councils alone.
- ▶ Student numbers are determined by government on the advice of the UGC, but the acceptance or rejection of applicants for places is entirely a matter for the institutions.
- ▶ Another aspect of institutional autonomy lies in the determination of curricula and the setting of standards. Although choices will necessarily depend upon prior educational achievement at school and upon employers' and professional bodies' needs and expectations of graduates, and there will be financial limitations in some disciplines, responsibility for what is taught and how well it is taught lies with the institutions.

Concerns

- ▶ The recent controversies related to autonomy debate are worth examining. Objections are

raised to the high handedness of Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) in the autonomous functions of **IIMs and IITs**. The debate is more or less to retain the autonomous functions with these institutions of national importance and do away with the proposed new framework of administration by MHRD.

- ▶ The academic community strongly argues that the quality of higher education and research can be assured only if educational institutions are given autonomy in academic and administrative matters.
- ▶ The **Gajendragadkar Committee**, which examined the concept and practice of academic autonomy states "The concept of University autonomy is often misunderstood. It is not a 'legal concept', not even a 'constitutional concept.' **It is an ethical concept and an academic concept.**"
- ▶ This concept does not question that, in a democratic society like ours, legislatures are ultimately sovereign and have a right to discuss and evaluate education. The universities make the claim for autonomy not as a matter of privilege, but to discharge their duties and obligations effectively and efficiently."
- ▶ Institutions of higher education are accountable to society and to the Government. From a moral and legal perspective, accountability is based upon a sense of responsibility, to be responsible to one's clients (students and parents), to colleagues and unto oneself.

Indian Institute of Management Bill, 2017

The IIM Bill has been prepared with the aim of furthering excellence in these premier institutions. The bill will ensure IIMs are board-driven, with the chairperson and director selected by the board. IIM Bill states the further planning declaring **IIMs to be institutions of National Importance**.

What are the salient features of the Bill?

- ▶ IIMs can grant degrees to their students.
- ▶ The Bill provides for complete autonomy to the Institutions, combined with adequate accountability.
- ▶ Management of these Institutions would be Board driven, with the Chairperson and Director of an Institution which will be selected by the Board.

- ▶ A greater participation of experts and alumni in the Board is amongst other important features of the Bill.
- ▶ Provision has also been made for inclusion of women and members from Scheduled Castes/Tribes in the Board.
- ▶ The Bill also provides for periodic review of the performance of Institutions by independent agencies, and placing the results of the same on public domain
- ▶ The Annual Report of the Institutions will be placed in the Parliament and CAG will be auditing their accounts.
- ▶ There is also a provision of Coordination Forum of IIMs as an advisory body.
- ▶ The Bill still lacks some features. For eg. The IIM bill is silent on reservations in teaching staff recruitment or the faculty reservations. Government. has not issued any formal directive to IIMs to implement faculty reservations yet.

Conclusion

Untangling 'Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions' is feasible by adopting certain practical steps.

- ▶ Funds and scholarships could be instituted to fund the students more than the colleges.
- ▶ The ease of establishing and sustaining the higher educational institutions should be more simplified under a regulatory board so that the demand and supply mismatch in the sector could be minimized.
- ▶ This could pave way for independence and establishment of brand of the colleges on the basis of the market tested qualities essential

for the survival of both the graduates and the institution.

- ▶ Academic freedom is essential for the success for any kind of educational institutions.
- ▶ Allowing IIMs them to grant degrees instead of diplomas. This move will give global recognition to courses offered by the IIMs, especially the newer institutions.
- ▶ Along with the academic freedom, the need of the hour is to encourage these institutions to raise resources for attaining its global standards and scale which are independent of any political interference and academic bureaucracy.

India - US Relations Defence Trade & Technology Initiative

Context

In light of Government's Make in India campaign, India has been emphasizing upon co-development and co-production of defence equipments in India. To achieve this goal, Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) was launched with US.

DTTI (DTTI) aims to strengthen India-US cooperative research, co-production, and co-development of capabilities needed for the sustainment and modernization of our military forces and the growth of our economies.

It is not a treaty or a law. It is a flexible mechanism to ensure that leaders from both the nations US and India remain persistently focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with growing defense partnership.

The DTTI intends for Indian defense companies to collaborate with US partners in co-production ventures, where the US would provide technology and guidance for building weapon systems.

in New Delhi. So far, US have bestowed this status upon the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and the US treaty allies such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Philippines. Defense cooperation between the US and India is a strategic priority for both nations. On this line New Delhi has been emphasizing upon co-development and co-production of defence equipments in India.

To achieve this goal, Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) was launched. DTTI initiative led to number of agreements such as LEMAO, CISMOA and BECA. LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement) would help in expediting high end technology transfer processes from United States to India. Besides LEMOA is an amended version of traditional Logistics Support Agreement (LSA). The other two agreements are Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA) which is likely to be negotiated by both sides after the successful implementation of LEMOA.

Background

India was designated Major Defence Partner status during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to US in June, 2016. Since 2014 some major agreements were signed between India and US. It included Defence Framework Agreement in 2015, which laid a blueprint for collaboration between the defence establishments and the logistics support agreement Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).

Three "Foundational Agreements"

- ▶ Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement or LSA Logistics Support Agreement (LSA).

Introduction

Indo-US defence ties have been on an upswing for the past decade. In 2016, both the Houses of the US Congress have passed a Bill that confers on India Major Defence Partner (MDP) status.

MDP status puts India on a par with the closest allies and partners of the US. The agreement was reached between Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter

- ▶ Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA).
- ▶ Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).
- ▶ Significance of these agreements is the expected gains in defence co-production with the US as the latter eases the terms of technology transfer.

Recent Development:

U.S.-India Defence Technology and Partnership Act in US Congress which would institutionalize Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) framework between India and US. There is also Ongoing debate regarding signing of agreements like Logistics Support Agreement (LSA) which will allow use of Indian bases for logistic purposes and vice versa, and likewise Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), Emergence of US as the largest arms supplier to India.

The DTTI Aims to:

- ▶ Transform the bilateral defense relationship into one that is limited only by independent strategic decisions, rather than bureaucratic obstacles or inefficient procedures.
- ▶ Strengthen India's defense industrial base by moving away from the traditional "buyer-seller" dynamic toward a more collaborative approach.
- ▶ Explore new areas of technological collaboration from science and technology cooperation through co-development and co-production.
- ▶ Expand U.S.-Indian business ties.

Factors Responsible for Change in Bilateral Relations:

- ▶ India's foreign policy is changed from Socialist Model to Capitalist Model. This change is gradual since 1991. Reasons being the Disintegration of USSR and liberalization of the economy in 1991 and another is that, US realized huge economic potential of India.
- ▶ Security Concerns post 9/11 terrorist attack in US - US realized that collaboration is needed. Hence, US congress did amendment for enhancing security and defence cooperation with India. Further gave the status of "Major Defense Partner", for a Non-NATO ally.

- ▶ Large Indian Diaspora
- ▶ US's interest in Asia-Pacific region - India is viewed as a Balance of Power in the region. Hence USA can counter China. Also, USA is **Greatest Naval Power** in the world. Therefore help of USA is needed for India to fulfill its dream to become **Maritime Power** in Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ USA is the Knowledge Power in the world which is important for India.

Impediments in Defence Partnership

- ▶ Offset policies
- ▶ The major impediment is Washington's reluctance to share high-end technology

Why should India be alert and wary?

- ▶ India losing its strategic and sovereign defence sphere to US because of the need to provide bases to US.
- ▶ India's lack of defence infrastructure in the wake of expansionist china cannot be balanced with such partnerships in long run until unless India has a full-fledged and sustainable defence industrial complex. One lesson that India can learn from its over-dependence on Russian defence infrastructure for several decades in last century.
- ▶ Such partnership might get involved India in geopolitical problems which are not of its own making.
- ▶ India should play a role to diffuse global conflict rather than escalating the tensions.
- ▶ US's role towards Pakistan is not clear, its support of Pakistan both economically and through the supply of defence equipment has led to an upsurge in India's defence expenditure as well. Such situation has not led the subcontinent to get rid of actual problems like health, illiteracy and poverty.
- ▶ Increased presence of US in Indian Ocean region because of support to Pivot to Asia, through these agreements can disturb the peace and stability.
- ▶ Relations with China can take a backseat as it can view relations a counter to OBOR and a containment of China.

Conclusion

The emergence of DTTI as an integral and enduring component of India-U.S. security cooperation is a sign that the relationship has matured to a level of strategic importance. DTTI will strengthen India's "Make in India" initiative and both sides committed

to convening all new DTTI working groups prior to the next DTTI Group meeting anticipated for February 2017. India should tread on this path very carefully and enrich the US India defense relationship in the future.

Out of School Children: Issues and Steps Needed

Context

Education is the basic requirement for human development. With education, employment opportunities are broadened and income levels are increased. The development of an individual and the progress of a nation depend on education. It is also the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values and thus is the strongest force in the development and growth of a child in preparing him/her to be a responsible, intelligent, and capable citizen.

Education is also equally important to improve the women's status and autonomy. It contributes to an increase in confidence and decision-making power within the household.

Out-of-school children's consist of both children who dropped out and those who never attended school.

It is common knowledge that financial constraints or domestic chores are the main reasons cited by people for dropping out of education. But data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) shows that 13 out of every 100 Indians between 5-29 years did not attend school or dropped out because they did not consider education "necessary."

In the past decade, millions of children around the world have gained access to educational opportunities. But there is still much work to be done. By the end of the 2014 school year, 61 million

children of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years), 60 million young adolescents of lower secondary school age (about 12 to 14 years), and 142 million youth of upper secondary school age (about 15 to 17 years) were out of school. An estimated 250 million children in the world cannot read, write or do basic math - 130 million of them have attended school. The children excluded from learning opportunities are among the most vulnerable and hard to reach in the world. They come from the poorest households and often have to work to help support their families. Some face discrimination as ethnic minorities. Others live with disabilities. Most often they are girls.

Causes:

Despite succeeding in increasing enrolment through schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, India is struggling to keep its children in school, and the reasons are not necessarily economic.

- ▶ **Related to Schools:** The poor quality of schooling is responsible for low retention:
 - Lack of school infrastructure such as drinking water and toilets.
 - Pupil-teacher ratios, school-working days, teacher-working hours.
 - The quality of school infrastructure and teachers is still poor in India causing people to drop out. This is especially true of migrants. With the need for transfer certificates, residence certificates and other such formalities, people find the entire educational system burdensome.
 - Increasing cost of education.
 - Poorly functioning schools, high teacher absenteeism, the large number of teacher vacancies, poor quality of education and inadequate funds.

► **Others:**

- Poor academic performance
- Children were not interested in studies: 13 out of every 100 Indians between 5-29 years did not attend school because they did not consider education 'necessary,' according to NSSO data.
- Low levels of learning and achievement
- The children, at risk, such as orphans, child-laborers, street children and victims of riots and natural disasters, do not necessarily have access to schools.
- Slum dwelling population is vulnerable due to associated influences such as low socio-economic status, lower parental literacy rates, high of juvenile delinquency, and low status of female children.

The National Sample Survey had estimated that **three out of four children currently out of school in India are Dalit (32.4%), Muslim (25.7%) or Adivasi (16.6%)**. In real terms, the numbers were **Dalit (2 million), Muslim (1.5 million) or Adivasi (1 million)**.

Initiatives taken:

- Supply-side barriers to schooling have been addressed to a great extent as the outreach of the elementary schooling system has expanded, mainly through **SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan)**. Along with more schools being constructed, school infrastructure has improved with the provision of pucca buildings, drinking water, blackboards and toilets.
- Other strategies include recruiting more teachers including para-teachers to deal with teacher shortage and hiring female teachers to boost girls' enrolment. These policy measures have led to a significant improvement in school enrolment and attendance at the primary level
- After the enactment of the **RTE Act**, Out-of-school children are now identified by a school-mapping exercise in the community and the identified children are directly enrolled in formal government schools in age-appropriate grades. These children are provided Special Training which can last from 3 months to 2 years, depending on their need, so that they can attend regular classes at the earliest possible.

- In certain areas, the Indian government has introduced **KGBVs** (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya) which provide free residential facilities and schooling for out of school girls from marginalised communities who are 11 years or above.
- **Ashram schools** for tribal children and hostel facilities for different disadvantaged groups have also been set up for children in remote areas. Parents have indicated a demand for these schools.
- For Muslim children, several schemes have been developed by focusing on special schemes in areas with minority concentration: modernising madrasas, and expanding schooling infrastructure for this community.
- In 2009 the **National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education (NCFTE)** was formulated based on the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. All teachers, existing and those aspiring, have to acquire professional teacher education. They are also required to clear a **Teacher Eligibility Test (TET)**.
- Difference in language and culture has been a major barrier in education of children belonging to ST groups. Several state governments have attempted to address this through the **MLE (Multi Lingual Education) strategy**. These schools have been piloted in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh, and scaling up is in progress.
- The classroom processes are changing too. Special programmes like **ABL (Activity Based Learning)** are implemented in several states to enable the children to learn through activities and at their own pace.

Steps Needed:

- Education should be made compulsory for all, the state Government, the district magistrate and BDO should be made responsible if the compulsory education policy is not implemented in true spirits.
- We should respond quickly to early indicators of a potential dropout, such as absenteeism, by **counseling** the student and parent.
- The **school conditions** need to be made more girl-friendly, like appointment of more female teachers, provision of separate toilet for them, and doing away the physical punishment.

- ▶ Need to extend scope of **School Surveys** to collect details of children enrolled in grades 1 to 12 and to include schools of all management types. For use in planning and monitoring, additional details of all enrolled children such as age, address, and grade enrolled in the previous year should be collected.
- ▶ The focus has to be on improving the **quality and way of teaching** because poor outcomes are a result of poor schooling and poor teaching.
- ▶ **Enrolment Data from All Schools:** Government and private - should be collected. The enrolment registers should be maintained correctly by developing and utilizing standard record keeping register at all schools.
- ▶ The school teachers should be given clear instructions and capacity to identify a child who has not attended school continuously for 45 days and finding out whether the child has changed school or dropped out, and update the enrolment register accordingly.
- ▶ **Provide Support to Stakeholders in Use of Education Data:** Statistics on school access and infrastructure are useful tools at both macro and micro levels for planning, monitoring and implementation.
- ▶ **Need for Multiple Indicators of Schooling:** Since multiple factors such as illness and low learning levels influence retention and age appropriate learning it is important to collect data on children in school related to their attendance and grade completion by age.
- ▶ **More information on in-school children** such as learning levels, mother tongue, special needs if any, attendance and age, which may influence a child's likelihood of dropping out need to be collected. This will help in diagnosing the reasons why the child is at risk and planning on its basis to bring all children in school.
- ▶ **Ensuring Social Inclusiveness:** Especially with regard to girls and SC/ST children, sensitising teachers, and convincing parents of first generation students of the value of education always makes a big difference.
- ▶ **Need to Monitor Attendance:** The schooling status of a child may change over the year with changes in the child's attendance. So an annual exercise of community mapping may not succeed in identifying all children who are out of school. It needs to be supplemented by monitoring of attendance by school teachers and SMC members, and follow up action. Such timely action may prevent some children from dropping out.
- ▶ **Need to Harmonise Definitions and Methodologies:** No one data source can provide a comprehensive picture of the out-of-school children issue. In India there are several sources, which usually highlight different issues. It is important to ensure that the indicators built from different datasets are complementary and not contradictory. For the purpose the definitions of indicators from different sources and where possible, the methodologies used, should be harmonised.

Conclusion

It is important to emphasize here that improving the school infrastructure, quality of education and huge investment in school education can only reduce the extent of dropout to a limited extent. Unless and until there is considerable improvement in the economic status of households and change in the social attitudes of parents, achieving the goal of universalisation of school education will remain a major challenge for India.

Vocational training in skills for income generation and continuing education should especially be strengthened. Efforts towards awareness of gender

justice and women empowerment are to be stressed upon as women motivate the society for girls to be married at an older age; they work for spacing between child birth leading to a healthier mother and child and also population control.

Clearly, if the Right to Education is not to remain merely a paper exercise, policy makers need to delve deep into the broader social and political architecture of our society at the grassroots. To address the huge problem of dropouts, policy makers need to look at the factors that lead children to leave school at various stages.

China's Presence in Arabian Sea & its Implications on India

Context

As China aspires to become a global power and challenges the existing world order, permanent overseas bases, overseas hosting warships and long range strategic aircrafts lend muscles to China's diplomacy. It signals China's arrival on the global stage as a power capable of guarding its interests worldwide. One such region in which China is increasing its presence is Arabian sea.

Gwadar port in Pakistan and military bases in Djibouti forms the two important parts of Chinese 'string of pearls' designed to secure Chinese vital interests in Indian Ocean. However, this increased Chinese presence is emerging as a security threat for India and creating complications for Indian strategic thinkers.

Introduction

China, already at the centre of world trade, plans to spend billions of dollars to revive intercontinental land routes and develop maritime links to expand commerce. In the context of China's expanding clout, China's relations with the littoral countries in Arabian Sea region including through trade, investment, defence exchanges and arms supply, nuclear cooperation and infrastructure development is a matter of concern for India.

Further, management of operations of Gwadar Port in Pakistan, which was built by Chinese companies with Chinese official financial assistance, has been taken over by a Chinese company. China along with the Pakistani navy would deploy its naval ships to safeguard the strategic Gwadar port and trade routes under the \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC).

China and Pakistan are currently building the nearly 3,000-km economic corridor linking Pakistan's Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea with Xinjiang to improve connectivity between the two countries. The move would open up a new and cheaper cargo route for transporting oil to China as well as export of Chinese goods to the Middle East and Africa.

Chinese Presence in Arabian Sea:

China's 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) initiative, particularly the Maritime Silk Road component, is an ambitious plan to connect China to Europe and Africa through land and sea. Fundamentally an economic initiative, it has an inherent military component too. Like for the protection of extended sea lanes, China needs overseas bases from where its Navy could operate in the Indian Ocean Region.

China's Emerging Naval Ambitions:

- ▶ The growing threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean has provided China with the perfect pretext to enact this policy and establish a naval presence in the Arabian Sea and its branches.
- ▶ In January 2009, the PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) joined an international naval force protecting merchant shipping from piracy in these waters - The westernmost seas in which the PLAN has been deployed.
- ▶ A critical Chinese imperative is the protection of Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) traversing the Indian Ocean carrying the bulk of China's burgeoning oil imports.
- ▶ China's energy security depends on supplies from West Asia and therefore China through naval presence in Arabian sea wants to ensure its energy security.
- ▶ Chinese economic relations with West Asia have been on ascent in recent. This has given China an

- opportunity to diversify its relations in defense sector also and has been part of anti-piracy operations.
- ▶ It is to challenge United States unbeatable naval dominance of the Indian Ocean, more so with India and the United States having strategic convergences in the Indian Ocean Region. It also shows Chinese readiness to fill any void created by retreating US.
 - ▶ To add a maritime dimension to the China-India military confrontation in the High Himalayas as an additional pressure point against India.
 - ▶ China wants to establish its presence in world order, which is in consonance with its economic power. West Asia, South Asia being zones of instability and in requirements of investments gives enough opportunities to China to increase its presence.

CPEC, Gwadar Port and the China's Naval presence in IOR:

The Gwadar port, opened in 2007 with an initial \$200 million in funding from China, had been a commercial failure because of Pakistan's inability to use it effectively. China wants to overcome its 'Malacca Dilemma' as more than 80 per cent of its oil imports travel through the Straits of Hormuz. Given its reluctance to rely on US naval power for unhindered access to energy, it has moved to build up its naval power at choke points along the sea routes from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea.

The Gwadar port is central to this aim. Gwadar is situated about 400 km away from the Straits of Hormuz at the apex of the Arabian Sea. It is a key asset for China now when Beijing and Islamabad are busy building the nearly 3,000-km-long economic corridor linking the Gwadar port with Xinjiang.

The Chinese-Pakistani relationship has now moved beyond the "higher than Himalayas and sweeter than honey" phase.

Nowadays, Chinese strategists are openly talking of Pakistan as their nation's only real ally. Also China's submarine operations in the Indian Ocean and the Chinese-Pakistani naval cooperation are challenging naval

supremacy and have the potential to change the regional naval power balance.

Besides, China is also busy redefining the territorial status-quo in the region. By deciding to construct major civil, energy and military infrastructure projects in the CPEC, which runs through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, China has accorded de facto 'legitimacy' to Pakistan's illegal occupation of these areas.

What are its implications for Indian Security?

The emergence of a Chinese Blue Water Navy with ambitions of global reach and force-projection ambitions carries serious implication for Indian security. Primarily, it will impact Indian naval ambitions to be the predominant naval power in the Indian Ocean and India's growing legitimate naval interests in the Western Pacific.

- ▶ The India-China border dispute was largely a land-air contingency. Now, the PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) adds the third dimension and needs to be factored in future planning and preparations.
- ▶ India also depends on Middle East for its energy supplies. Presence of Chinese naval forces in this region will make India much more vulnerable.
- ▶ China is an all weather friend of Pakistan. Continued Chinese presence will significantly alter the power balance in Indian Ocean and South Asia. It will give more wings to Pakistan anti-India designs.
- ▶ India has been actively engaged in strategic dialogues with West Asian countries. Increasing Chinese presence in Arabian Sea, with more resources as compared to India will give effect Indian diplomacy in the region.
- ▶ Forgetting the Indian imperatives of 'sea control' of the Indian Ocean, India even to exercise 'sea-denial' capabilities would require a significant expansion in quick-time of Indian Navy combat and surveillance assets.
- ▶ It will impact the peace and stability of Indian Ocean.

GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

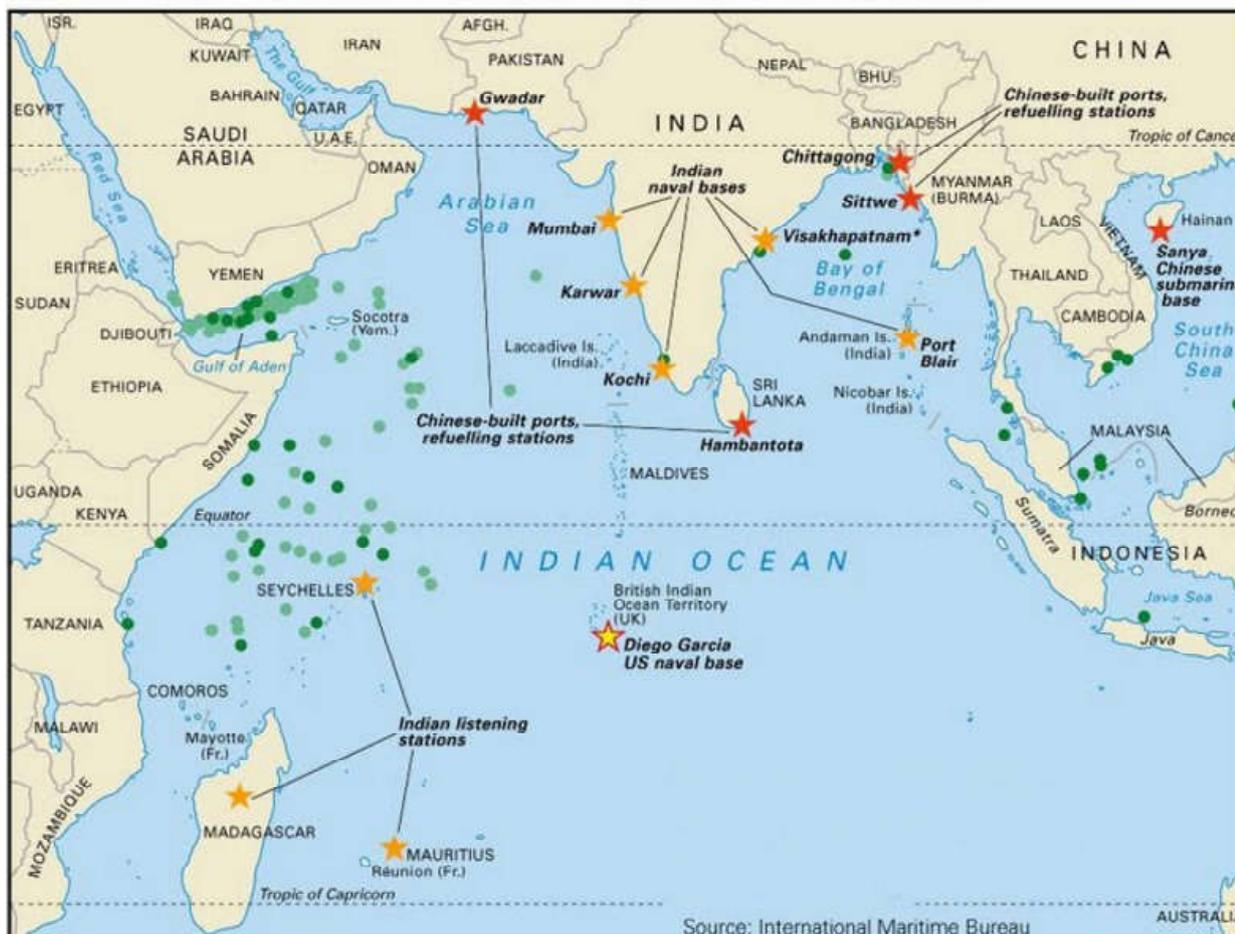


Fig. 9

What should be the Indian Response?

- ▶ India will have to significantly bolster its naval capabilities, with higher allocation and higher indigenization as the main thrust areas.
- ▶ Case exists for Indian Navy to organize a third fleet in addition to its Western Fleet and Eastern Fleet. A dedicated “**Indian Ocean Fleet**” is an imperative now. Also India at all times must have four Aircraft Carrier Groups.
- ▶ Given India's high stakes in the Indian Ocean, it is important for it to ponder the possibility of

using both soft and hard power resources to create dependencies for the other countries, and the same time, seek possibilities to engage with China.

- ▶ India can take strategic call of increasing its naval presence in South China Sea, increase its strategic engagement with other likeminded countries like US, Japan, Vietnam etc. Malabar exercise, Chabahar port etc. are a response to increasing Chinese influence in Indian Ocean region.

Conclusion

India can best hope for a peaceful rise of China and peaceful co-existence, but will have to prepare for the worst. Indian strategic capacities have been hampered because of paucity of resources, delay in decision making and implementation. All these hamper India's strategic interests. At the same time India is no match for China in terms of

resources. Therefore the options remains with India in such situations are increased engagements with China to minimize perceived security threats and built an environment where both co-operate and consult each other and also increase engagements with countries like Japan, US etc.

India & UAE Relations

Context

The UAE is one of our most valued partners and a close friend in an important region of the world.

During the recent visit of Shaikh Mohammad, UAE and India recently added a new momentum to their deepening bilateral engagement, signing a total of 14 wide-ranging agreements including a strategic comprehensive partnership and deals on defence and maritime cooperation.

Both the countries particularly focused on implementation of various decisions taken during last two meetings and agreed to sustain the momentum of relations in key areas, including energy and investments. An ambitious roadmap of engagement to make our comprehensive strategic partnership purposeful and action oriented has also been shaped during the visit.

Sheikh Mohammad, who was the chief guest at the 68th Indian Republic Day celebrations on 26, January 2017, welcomed the strengthening bond between the UAE and India and praised the new impetus in bilateral ties.

Introduction

In August 2015, PM Modi became the first Indian prime minister to visit the UAE in 34 years, and set in motion a chain of events that would broaden the bilateral relations beyond being just a business relationship. After that in the past 17 months, the PM Modi and Sheikh Mohammed have met on three separate occasions to strengthen ties on trade,

investment and energy domains. These three key areas are the most visible features of India-UAE ties, but over the past few years, another element has been swiftly entering the discourse between the two countries i.e. Security.

Recently, The visit of Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) armed forces, to India on the occasion of the India's Republic Day celebrations provided an opportunity for both countries to further strengthen a relationship.



Fig. 10

What is the current status of engagements?

Both the countries have historical relations but significant turnaround in relations has been witnessed with three high level engagements in past two years.

- ▶ **India and the UAE see each other as vital to their national growth and development.**
- ▶ **On the Trade front**
 - UAE is India's third-largest trading partner and total trade between the two countries stands at about \$70 billion.
 - For the UAE, India represents its largest export market, buying about 15 percent of its exports.

Over 2.8 million Indians (and a significant number of undocumented expatriates) live in the UAE, more than any other country with the exception of Saudi Arabia.

► Defence Engagement

- Under defence cooperation agreement, 2003, two sides are cooperating in training, joint exercises, information sharing etc, but not in equipments.
- In recent joint statement, the two sides agreed to cooperate in joint manufacture of defence equipment in India.

► Strategic Sphere

- UAE also backs India for UNSC seats

► Security Aspects

- India and the UAE signed an extradition treaty back in 2000, however, there was very little else that could be considered a component of a strategic relationship.
- In 2017, security cooperation has now become a proportional component (alongside trade and investment) of the relationship.
- After agreeing to elevate the relationship to a '**comprehensive strategic partnership**' during Modi's August 2015 visit to the UAE and looking 'forward to the early signing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement' during Sheikh Mohammed's February 2016 visit to India, both sides moved to draw up and finalise a framework agreement that was signed on Wednesday.
- Cooperation between both sets of security agencies has already helped India get access to operatives of terrorist outfits - who attempt to mingle with the South Asian diaspora in the UAE - and the fact that the Emirates are no longer a safe haven for 1993 Mumbai blasts accused Dawood Ibrahim (who is believed to have abandoned the UAE and moved to Pakistan) and his cohorts.

- Further cooperation on the security front can only mean a further boost for India in its counter-terrorism effort.

What have been the key highlights of the Recent Visit?

The 14 bilateral agreements signed during Zayed's three-day visit underscores the breadth of engagement that now exists between the two countries.

- Agreements were signed for cooperation in defense, cyber, space technology, trade and investment, energy, infrastructure, and agriculture, among others.
- **A commitment to a "comprehensive strategic partnership for the 21st century".**
- Strategic partnership and will to co-operate on various security issues have been given special emphasis by both the countries.
- The UAE was the first Islamic country to criticize the Pathankot and Uri terror attacks. It then supported India's surgical strike inside Pakistan.
- UAE had already showcased their consensus to "coordinate efforts to counter radicalization and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred, perpetuating and justifying terrorism".
- Besides the terrorism angle, there's the geopolitical angle that is closely linked to the UAE's perceived clout in both the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- In the UN, the OIC frequently tables resolutions against India regarding the situation in Kashmir and the GCC tends to lean in Pakistan's direction on the matter. Perhaps, another offshoot of this strategic partnership is that the UAE might be a bit more accommodating of India's concerns about Kashmir.
- A part of the security construct between India and the UAE is the decision to strengthen defence ties and increase cooperation in the field of maritime security.

Conclusion

India has invested a lot in this relationship and will be hoping that a deeper and more comprehensive engagement with the UAE will help this government reap the benefits in areas as

diverse as the "Make in India" initiative, the "smart cities" project, infrastructure-building, oil, renewable energy as well as security and counterterrorism.

Miscellaneous News

Context

Hereby compiling the important short notes of January (16 to 31), 2017.

KYOTO PROTOCOL (2nd Commitment 2013-20)

The Government on 24 Jan, 2017 gave its nod to ratify the second commitment period(2013-20) of the Kyoto Protocol that commits countries to contain the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

About Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which commits its Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets.

- ▶ Recognizing that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere as a result of more than 150 years of industrial activity, the Protocol places a heavier burden on developed nations under the principle of "**common but differentiated responsibilities.**"
- ▶ The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005.
- ▶ The detailed rules for the implementation of the Protocol were adopted at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2001, and are referred to as the "Marrakesh Accords."
- ▶ **First Commitment Period: Its first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012.**
- ▶ **Second Commitment Period:** The second commitment period began on 1 January 2013 and will end in 2020.

- ▶ **The Kyoto Protocol** legally binds developed countries to emission reduction targets and there are currently 192 parties to the Protocol.

Second Commitment Period

In Doha, Qatar, on 8 December 2012, the "**Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol**" was adopted. The amendment includes:

- ▶ New commitments for Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol who agreed to take on commitments in a second commitment period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2020
- ▶ A revised list of greenhouse gases (GHG) to be reported on by Parties
- ▶ Amendments to several articles of the Kyoto Protocol which specifically referenced issues pertaining to the first commitment period and which needed to be updated for the second commitment period.
- ▶ During the first commitment period, 37 industrialized countries and the European Community committed to reduce GHG emissions to an average of five(5%) percent against 1990 levels.
- ▶ During the second commitment period, Parties committed to reduce GHG emissions by at least 18 percent below 1990 levels in the eight-year period from 2013 to 2020.

Status of the Doha Amendment (2nd Commitment period)

- ▶ Only 75 countries have so far ratified the Doha amendments. It requires ratification from a total of 144 of the 192 parties of the Kyoto Protocol to become operational.
- ▶ More than four years after they were finalized, the Doha amendments have still not become operational because majority of the countries,

including most developed countries, have not yet ratified it.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON CHILDREN

Introduction

The Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India is going to set up a National Alliance against Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation with the aim of developing a comprehensive outreach system to engage parents, schools, communities, NGO partners and local governments (PRIs and ULBs) as well as police and lawyers to ensure better implementation of the legal framework, policies, national strategies and standards in relation to child protection and child rights.

Child Abuse

Child sexual abuse is a multi-layered problem which negatively impacts children's safety, health and well being. Research from world-wide indicates that children's exposure to violence and abuse is associated with long-term physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Child abuse is finding new forms and channels through mobile and digital technologies.

Online child abuse and exploitation amplifies existing forms of offline bullying, stalking and harassment. It also facilitates the sexual exploitation of children through the production and dissemination of child sexual abuse materials and by facilitating the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. Online abuse knows no national boundaries.

Laws to Protect Children

India has a comprehensive legal framework for protection of child rights in the form of :

- ▶ Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015
- ▶ POCSO Act, 2012 along with RTE Act 2009 and
- ▶ Recently amended Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2106

But there is limited awareness of online risks for children, both among parents and guardian and children themselves. Therefore, to ensure protection of children from online sexual abuse, all stakeholders must work together under National Alliance on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.

Objectives of the National Alliance on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation:

- ▶ Bring a common definition of child pornography including amendment of acts (Information technology Act, POCSO Act).
- ▶ Set up a multi-member secretariat based in MWCD with a portal inclusive of a hotline for reporting and strengthening existing service delivery systems.
- ▶ Provide a platform for Government/ NGOs and other child rights activists for networking and information sharing.
- ▶ Document and showcases success stories and best practices in terms of prevention of online abuse and exploitation of children.
- ▶ Inform and educate member organizations, parents, teachers, front line service providers and children on the rights of the children and various issues related to online child abuse and exploitation.
- ▶ Provide a forum for advocacy for child rights and policy inputs based on research and studies

GLOBAL TALENT COMPETITIVENESS INDEX 2017 (GTCI)

Introduction

India was ranked 92nd among 118 countries in the recently released 2017 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) list. The GTCI measures how countries grow, attract and retain talent, providing a resource for decision makers to develop strategies for boosting their talent competitiveness. The index is produced by global business school *INSEAD* in partnership with *Adecco Group* and *Human Capital Leadership Institute (HCLI)* of Singapore.

GTCI 2017

- ▶ The **theme** of this fourth edition of the GTCI is ***Talent and Technology: Shaping the Future of Work.***
- ▶ The 2017 report explores the effects of technological change on talent competitiveness, arguing that while jobs at all levels continue to be replaced by machines, technology is also creating new opportunities.
- ▶ However, people and organisations will need to adapt to a working environment in which

technology know-how, people skills, flexibility and collaboration are key to success, and in which horizontal networks are replacing hierarchies as the new leadership norm.

- ▶ Governments and business players need to work together to build educational systems and labour market policies that are fit for purpose.
- ▶ **Switzerland and Singapore** occupy the top spots in GTCI 2017, with four Nordic countries in the top 10 (Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway). The United Kingdom and the United States rank third and fourth respectively.
- ▶ High ranking countries share key traits, including educational systems that meet the needs of the economy, employment policies that favor flexibility, mobility and entrepreneurship, and high connectedness of stakeholders in business and government.

GTCI and India

- ▶ India's ranking is worst among the five BRICS countries. China (54th), Russia (56th), South Africa (67th) and Brazil (81st). It noted that BRICS countries are not getting stronger and both China and India have slipped from their year-ago rankings.
- ▶ In this edition of the list, India slipped by 3 places compared to 89th rank in 2016 GTI. India stood on a relatively solid in pool of global knowledge skills compared with other emerging markets. But in terms of retaining and attracting talent indices, India ranked lowly 104th and 114th, respectively.
- ▶ Overall a major challenge for India is to attract talent from abroad, particularly in the context of large emigration rates of high-skilled people. India has been able to create a stable pool of global knowledge skills, but still experiences a brain drain. India's ranking will improve only if it improves in its regulatory (94th) and market (99th) landscapes.

LIGO - LASER INTERFEROMETER GRAVITATIONAL-WAVE OBSERVATORY

Introduction

India's first LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) laboratory will be set up in Aundh in Hingoli district of Maharashtra. Last year, Union

Cabinet has given "in principle," approval for a proposal to have a gravitational wave detector in India. The project is being piloted by the Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Science and Technology. Govt approved Rs 1200 crore for the project, and this will be the third LIGO observatory in the world, and the first one outside the U.S.

About Gravitational Waves

- ▶ Gravitational waves are ripples in the curvature of spacetime which propagate as waves, travelling outward from the source at the speed of light.
- ▶ It was predicted in 1916 by Albert Einstein on the basis of his Theory of General Relativity.
- ▶ Gravitational waves transport energy as gravitational radiation and pass through matter without interacting with it.
- ▶ In 2016, Scientists have discovered Gravitational Waves (GW) for the first time.
- ▶ These waves were detected by the scientists working at two **LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory)** facilities in United States.
- ▶ LIGO scientists have detected these gravitational waves produced by collision of two black holes located 1.3 billion light years away from earth.

LIGO Experiment

- ▶ The LIGO experiment has 4km long L-shaped tunnels and uses lasers to measure changes in the distance between two ends. When the GW enters into LIGO, it stretches space and direction, and disperses space in another direction i.e. these waves disturb the light emitted lasers. Scientists by measuring the interference (disturbances) of lasers light map the disturbed space which has been compressed or stretched.
- ▶ Gravitational waves or ripples in space-time captured by space detectors could soon be used to discover when and how some of the universe's largest black holes were born.
- ▶ The two current LIGO Observatories are located at Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana and are operated by Caltech and MIT. The LIGO project is run with the collaboration of 90 universities and research institutions. Thirty people of Indian origin are part of the LIGO project.

LIGO India Laboratory

- ▶ The site at Aundh in Hingoli district has been chosen for carrying out experiments on the ambitious LIGO project that proved existence of gravitational waves.
- ▶ The setup of LIGO-India laboratory will involve construction of 8 km-long beam tube at ultra-high vacuum on a leveled terrain.
- ▶ The Aundh site is suitable flat site for carrying out the experiments as the four kms strips require an unhindered straight and flat site for studying the lasers.
- ▶ The LIGO-India laboratory will help to bring considerable opportunities in cutting edge technology for Indian industries

INTERNATIONAL VACCINE INSTITUTE (IVI)

Introduction

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the proposal for India's full membership of the International Vaccine Institute (IVI) Governing Council. The move involves payment of annual contribution of US \$ 5,00,000 to the International Vaccine Institute (IVI), **Seoul, South Korea**.

About International Vaccine Institute (IVI)

- ▶ IVI is an international nonprofit organization devoted to developing and introducing new and improved vaccines to protect the people, especially children, against deadly infectious diseases.
- ▶ It was established in 1997 on the initiatives of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
- ▶ Its work is exclusively on vaccine development and introduction, specifically for people in developing countries, with a focus on neglected diseases affecting these regions.
- ▶ Currently, IVI has 40 countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) as signatories to its Establishment Agreement.

India's Membership

- ▶ In **2007 India joined IVI**, with the approval of Cabinet. India is a long-term collaborator and stake-holder of IVI.

- ▶ In December, 2012 the Board of Trustees (BOT) of IVI approved the formation of its new governance structure. As per the new governance structure of IVI, a member State has to contribute to the IVI by paying a portion of its core budget. Since India is classified in Group-I, it has to pay an annual contribution of US \$ 5, 00,000.

Web Portal 'ShaGun'

Introduction

The Union HRD Ministry launched a dedicated **web portal 'ShaGun'** for the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**. 'ShaGun' aims to capture and showcase innovations and progress in Elementary Education sector of India by continuous monitoring of the flagship scheme - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

ShaGun

ShaGun has been coined from the words 'Shala' meaning Schools and 'Gunvatta' meaning Quality. It has been developed with a twin track approach:

- ▶ First is the Repository with an engaging interface that focuses on positive stories and developments in the field of School Education. In this repository, best practices will be documented in the form of videos, testimonials, case studies, and images, which will display state-level innovations and success stories that are driving improvements in performance under SSA. This repository has a decentralized management structure that enables State governments to choose, upload and manage their own content.
- ▶ Secondly, it has an online monitoring module to measure state-level performance and progress against key educational indicators. It has been developed to collect and report data which will enable the government and administrators to track the efficiency with which SSA funds are being utilized and the results that this is delivering. SSA is a centrally sponsored scheme providing universal access to education to children in the age group of six to fourteen years of age.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan and ShaGun

- ▶ SSA has been operational since 2000-2001 to provide for a variety of interventions for universal

- access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education and improving the quality of learning.
- ▶ In this direction Ministry of HRD is trying to codify the learning outcome to set assessment standards for abilities with regards to comprehension, mathematics, language etc
 - ▶ It will thus ensure that "all children acquire at least the minimum levels of learning" from Class I to Class VIII under Right to Education Act, 2009.
 - ▶ Minister of HRD launching this e-initiative termed it as a global democratic forum enabled by technology which will give a peek in the Indian elementary education scenario and spread constructive lessons.
 - ▶ This first-of-its kind platform will give due recognition to people, State governments, schools, teachers working towards improving Elementary Education across the country.
 - ▶ ShaGun will also help monitor progress of implementation of SSA by assessing performance of States and UTs on key parameters and thereby serve as a platform for the central government for effective planning and deliver on the promise of providing quality education to all.

INDIA INNOVATION INDEX

Competitive and cooperative federalism is key to India's progress. On this line, the World Economic Forum, NITI Aayog, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Cornell University will work together to develop an *India Innovation Index* that will provide impetus to Indian states to drive the innovative spirit.

India Innovation Index (III)

- ▶ The India Innovation Index Framework will be structured based on the best practices followed in *Global Innovation Index (GII)* indicators and additionally by adding India-centric parameters those truly reflect the Indian innovation ecosystem.
- ▶ This initiative will be the point of reference for all international agencies to collect India's up to date data points for global indices and analytic.
- ▶ This index will encourage states to compete with each other and, in turn, lead to better policies for inclusive growth.

- ▶ The index will be based on key pillars of innovation and sub-indices that together will assist in tailoring policies that promote inclusive growth.
- ▶ The pillars include
 - the strength of institutions
 - capacity of human capital and research
 - Supporting infrastructure and
 - The level of business sophistication, among others.
- ▶ The index will measure and rank the innovation performance of all Indian states with the aim of moving India towards an innovation-driven economy.
- ▶ The index will spur competition and ensure progress towards innovation at the local level in India.

Global Innovation Index (GII)

- ▶ The Global Innovation Index (GII), co-published by World-Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Cornell University and INSEAD with CII as a Knowledge Partner since inception in 2007, has been ranking world economies including India according to their innovation capabilities and outcomes. It uses 82 indicators among a host of other important parameters.
- ▶ It has established itself as both a leading reference on innovation and a 'tool for action' for policy makers.
- ▶ India currently ranks 66th out of 128 countries on the Global innovation Index (GII) 2016.

NATIONAL STEEL POLICY 2017 (NSP 2017)

Introduction

The Ministry of Steel has prepared the draft policy named "The National Steel Policy (NSP), 2017" to ensure that the steel sector follows a sustainable path of development.

Govt aims to bring sustainable path of development, so that the country can, over time, reach the global efficiency benchmarks. Key goals in this respect are:

- ▶ Augmenting capacity to 300 MT by 2030-31 in environment friendly manner

- ▶ Mineral conservation
- ▶ Improving Quality of steel products
- ▶ Use of technology and indigenous R&D effort

The National Steel Policy 2017 (NSP 2017) is an effort to steer the industry to achieve its future potential and strategy to deal with various impediments like high input cost, availability of raw materials, dependency on imports, financial stress etc.

The draft policy has been uploaded on the Ministry of Steel website for inviting suggestions from the public, Governments of the States / Union Territories, steel industry, mining industry, industry associations, and other stakeholders and persons and entities concerned. The last date for receipt of the comments/suggestions is 23 January 2017 (Monday).

National Steel Policy 2017 (NSP 2017) - Key Features

- ▶ The draft policy lays out two alternatives of its vision - "to create a globally competitive steel industry that promotes inter-sectoral growth" or "to create a self-sufficient steel industry that is technologically advanced, globally competitive and promotes inclusive growth."
- ▶ The Steel Ministry has proposed setting up Greenfield steel plants along India's coastline to tap cheap imported raw materials such as coking coal and export the output in a more cost-effective manner,
- ▶ The policy, which envisages to more than double India's domestic steel production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030-31, anticipates a requirement of 10 lakh crore of fresh investments to meet that goal and expects at least 11 lakh new jobs being created in the process.

SUNSPOT

Introduction

Recently a group of scientist unveiled a new view of the dark, contorted centre of a sunspot that is nearly twice the diameter of the Earth, along with other invisible details of our Sun,

What are sunspots?

Sunspots form on the surface of the Sun due to strong magnetic field lines coming up from within the Sun through the solar surface and appear visibly as dark spots compared to their surroundings. These sunspots which can become many times bigger than the Earth are always dark because they are much cooler than the surrounding surface of the Sun itself. A big sunspot can have a temperature of 3700°C. This sounds like much but if we compare this with the temperature of the photosphere of the Sun which is about 5500°C, then you see that there is a considerable difference. As a matter of fact, if we could take a sunspot out of the Sun and place it into our night sky it would only be as bright as the full moon, a very big contrast with the bright Sun itself.

Sunspots are a common sight on our Sun during the years around solar maximum. Solar maximum or solar max is the period of greatest solar activity in the solar cycle of the Sun, where one solar cycle lasts about 11 years. Around solar minimum, only very few or even no sunspots can be found.

A sunspot consists of two parts:

- ▶ The dark part (umbra)
- ▶ Lighter part around the dark part (penumbra)

Recent Observations

The recent results are an important expansion of the range of observations that can be used to probe the physics of our nearest star. The Atacama Large Millimetre/submillimetre Array (ALMA) antennas had been carefully designed so that they could image the Sun in exquisite detail using the technique of radio interferometry. Astronomers have harnessed ALMA's capabilities to image the millimetre-wavelength light emitted by the Sun's chromosphere.

Researchers, including those from European Southern Observatory (ESO), produced the images as a demonstration of ALMA's ability to study solar activity at longer wavelengths of light than are typically available to solar observatories.
