Farmers' traditional knowledge and practices have been built by observing weather dynamics and behaviours of plants, animals and insects. However, in recent times, the unpredictability of weather changes are undermining farmers' confidence in their traditional knowledge and their capacity to adapt to these changes. Traditional knowledge now need to be augmented by scientific information of likely weather events on a timely basis.

**In India**

Trials are being conducted in around 70 villages in Haryana, Bihar, Punjab, Odisha, and Karnataka, out of which evidence has been collected in around 60. Looking at the success of the trials in 27 villages in Karnal district, the haryana government has decided to expand it to 500 more villages in the state. The Bihar government has also sought an action plan to take it across the state. There is a similar homegrown project in India, called Climate Resilient Agriculture, started in 2011. This project of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) covers 151 villages across the country.

**Impact of Climate-Smart Agriculture in Karnal, Haryana**

- Zero tillage and line sowing instead of broadcasting of seeds increase rice and wheat yields by 10-15%.
- Zero tillage cuts diesel use by 60-85% per hectare.
- Direct seed rice, which involves the sowing of rice seeds directly, compared to the traditional method of sowing rice in a nursery and transferring the seedlings to a field with standing water reduces water use by 25% and methane emissions by 40%.
- Bed planting of maize and wheat, which is a level raised from the soil, cuts water use by 30-35%.

**What is CSA?**

- **Introduction**
  - Sustainably increases productivity and income
  - Strengthens resilience to climate change and variability
  - Reduce agriculture’s contribution to climate change

- **Background**
  - Agriculture in India today contributes only 14% of India’s GDP and provides a source of livelihood for at least 57% of its people, most of whom live in rural areas.
  - With over 60% of Indian agriculture dependent on rainfall, farming is a high-risk gamble dependent upon the vagaries of the monsoons and local meteorological conditions.
  - With increasing climate variability, the need for advance warning to farmers of the likely occurrence of irregular or extreme weather events is becoming urgent.

- **Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)**
  - CSA is an approach for developing agricultural strategies to secure sustainable food security under climate change.
  - CSA provides the means to help stakeholders from local to national and international levels identify agricultural strategies suitable to their local conditions.
  - It is in line with FAO’s vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and supports FAO’s goal to make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and more sustainable.

- **CSA approach**
  - Climate variability, irregular rainfall behaviour, and unexpected meteorological events directly impact ecosystems, water availability and biodiversity

- **Recommendations**
  - This threatens agricultural production systems, livelihoods, food, nutrition and water security.
  - It is estimated that unseasonal rains, wind and hailstorms that lashed Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in March 2014 affected about three million hectares of rabi crops with horticultural and cash crops having suffered the most
  - With India's climate expected to become warmer, intra-seasonal and inter-annual weather variability is expected to increase.
  - Studies reveal a declining trend in the all-India summer monsoon rainfall over the last 60 years, which is expected to continue.
  - This will only result in more losses, damages and grief to farmers, especially smallholder farmers who have hardly any means to cope with these climate induced disasters.

- **Climate Variability, Agriculture and Agrarian Economy**
  - Confronted with climate variability, rising costs of agricultural inputs, declining productivity, low returns and market volatility.

- **Mobile telecommunication systems are increasingly cost-effective and an efficient way of delivering weather-based agro-advisories to farmers at a large scale.**

- **Radio (especially community radio), television, newspapers, folk media, and village level public address systems will also need to be used to bridge this “communication divide.”**

- **Weather-based agro-advisories must be locale-, crop- and farmer-specific; need to also recommend soil, water, and biodiversity conservation practices.**

- **Build adaptive capacities to climate variability and strengthen the sustainability of farming systems.**

- **on-site training and awareness campaigns, technology demonstrations, farmer-specialist interactions, and engagement with local governance bodies.**

- **soil health and need-based irrigation management need to be addressed adequately.**

- **closer collaboration between public, civil society, and private technology and financial service providers so that farmers get access to accurate information, and affordable technologies.**
The number of urban planners are microscobic. Britain has 38 planners per 100,000 people. In India, the figure is just 0.23.

There are several urban local bodies without a single qualified urban planner.

Until recently, urban issues did not figure prominently in India’s public policy discourse due to the Gandhian maxim that 'India lives in villages.'

The scenario began changing slowly with the launch of the JNNURM in 2005 and with the present government’s Smart Cities mission.

Smart Cities programme, rather than strengthening the elected municipal bodies, has further undermined their authorities by outsourcing managerial responsibilities to Special Purpose Vehicles and planning tasks to external consultants.

India’s urban population is likely to exceed 590 million people by 2030 — more than the total population of the EU.

which means that over the next 15 years, we need to build 22 more cities like Bengaluru to accommodate the new urban residents.

The New Urban Agenda shows the right direction, but it is upon us to get the fundamentals of our urbanisation policy right.

cities still remain the best hope for social mobility for millions of oppressed and marginalised communities

However they increasingly mirror India’s rural social and cultural realities, its entrenched caste system and social customs.

According to a recent study of spatial inequalities in 10 Indian populous cities, rapid growth in cities has not reduced spatial segregation by caste or religion.

Dalits and Adivasis are still heavily concentrated within certain geographical areas of cities, mostly in unauthorised settlements and poor neighbourhoods.

Indian cities are on slow but sure paths towards crises of various kinds, and it is vital to reverse the current trends of segregation and inequality.

As per the Economic Survey of India, EWS (economically weaker sections) and LIG (lower income groups) together account for 95.6 per cent of the urban housing shortage in the country.

Significant increase in the demand for housing in the urban context with the growth of smaller families.

the latest official Economic Survey states that there is a shortage of nearly 20 million homes in India.

Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, government has proposed to build 2 crore houses for urban poor including Economically Weaker Sections and Low Income Groups in urban areas by the year 2022

supply-side constraints for low-cost and affordable housing include lack of availability of land, and finance at reasonable rates

Real estate developers have primarily targeted luxury, high-end and upper-mid housing segment owing to the higher returns.

high gestation period of housing projects, limited and expensive capital, spiralling land and construction costs, are bottlenecks restricting the desired growth in housing stock in India.

Focussed efforts on land and housing policy reforms

Delegation of power to urban local bodies

fostering innovative housing finance, and reduction in project costs

planned urbanisation and other initiatives of the government should ensure that towns and cities are free from slums

Adequate opportunities for gainful employment

Providing optimum quality of life to all citizens, including the marginalised sections of society.

Urban planning in India

Indian cities, spaces of discrimination

Drawbacks of Current model of urbanisation

Challenges faced

The road ahead

United Nations Habitat III conference

Solution

The new Indian urban landscape is being designed around grand concepts such as smart cities and export-oriented industrial corridors.

social and institutional barriers to the inclusion of migrants in urban life.

In our desire to be global, we are emulating outdated models of urbanisation

We are emulating the urban models of the European and American cities, which have means of attaining progress through colonization, extracting bullions and slave trade and such ways no longer exist for present day India

To attain growth through these grand models, the Government is pushing more debt-investments than investments in infrastructure development and industrialization to increase GDP. This will lead to debt slavery and inequality.

Cities built mostly on economic terms without considering or less importance to cultural and recreational aspects of human beings.

The cities do not cater for environmental disasters

Currently, India’s ongoing urbanisation offers little opportunity for inclusion of its disadvantaged populations.

Cities are not only mimicking the social and cultural structures of inequality and exclusion found in rural areas but they are also creating fault lines for future conflicts.

there is a growing phenomenon of ‘sons of soil’ or ‘outsider’ based abuse.

politicisation of India’s urban spaces — often for so-called ‘vote-bank populism’ — is creating exclusionary barriers for new migrants and also fuelling their gradual disenfranchisement.

Common problems that impact the functioning of most Indian cities are multiple jurisdictions, weak revenue base and human resource capacity deficit.

Decentralisation of planning, clear demarcation of the function and authority of urban local bodies (ULBs).

Strengthening taxation base, better developed mechanism for devolution of funds for ULBs from state.

Addressing the employment issues of the migrants by focusing more on urban industrialization.

Rurban Planning, which creates growth at micro-level and impedes rural-to-urban migration.

Revamp Urban local bodies, seamless connectivity with suburban areas/ farms.

Inclusion for the elderly and the disabled, Safety of women and children.

Climate mitigation to avoid situations like Chennai floods.

Equity oriented citizen welfare program to minimise poverty through employment generation, housing, better education and skill development, improving health facilities with better sanitation and drinking water facilities.

availability of cheaper and environment friendly fuel for cooking and transport, cheaper and environment friendly mode of public transport, using environment friendly technologies such as rain water harvesting, solar devices.

It provides a roadmap on how to point urbanisation towards a more positive direction, the one that leads to more jobs, cheaper housing, cleaner energy, better transportation and greater social equity.

United Nations Habitat III conference will discuss and adopt United Nations’ New Urban Agenda.

The New Urban Agenda attempts to address the various opportunities and challenges that are associated with global urban development.

The new agenda acknowledges urbanisation as a transformative force, calling it an engine of sustained and inclusive economic growth.

With UN’s Roadmap to Urbanisation in Hand, It is Time for India to Transform its Urban Policy towards more sustainability.
India faces national water scarcity by 2050 if current trends continue.

States that usually have surplus water, such as Latur and Uttarakhand, currently experience acute water scarcity.

Resource stress can often escalate political pressures, often leaving governments grappling for quick fixes rather than long term solution.

Falling water levels will adversely affect the agricultural industry, which is almost entirely cereal-based and therefore extremely water intensive.

A struggling agricultural industry means the threat of unemployment for approximately 50 per cent of India's workforce, as well as implications for food security and human security.

With bore wells being dug deeper into the ground (where the risk of dangerous chemicals and poisons contaminating the water is high)

Destitute farmers are committing suicide

Incidents of fever, infection, dehydration, vomiting and kidney ailments

The diminishing water supply is now a source of tension between rival groups.

Water has been politicised in Delhi.

The rise of the tanker mafia is more distressing.

The concept of linking rivers is not uncommon. China introduced a similar project over a decade ago.

Interlinking of rivers will help water scarce areas to have water throughout the year.

Conserving the nation's water source through increased efficiency.

Implementing Israel's water management systems and technologies.

Long-term investment in educational programs, social awareness campaigns, improved infrastructure and facilities, and water diplomacy.

Rainwater harvesting can provide the country with reliable water supplies throughout the year.

Building check dams on riverbeds will improve groundwater levels.

Farmers should be trained and encouraged to switch to drip irrigation.

National drought policies should consider poverty eradication, economic growth and employment creation, while preserving ecosystems and tackling climate change.

The implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has a significant role in the sustainable availability of clean, adequate and safe water.

There is a need for an integrated approach, which addresses source sustainability, land use management, agricultural strategies, demand management and the distribution and pricing of water.

With growing pressures due to climate change, migration and population growth, creative and imaginative governance is needed to manage this precious resource.

A drought is a period of below-average precipitation in a given region, resulting in prolonged shortages in its water supply, whether atmospheric, surface water or ground water.

After two successive dry years, 330m people in India, around a quarter of the population, are facing acute water shortages.

Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) are contributing to the global water crisis.

Poor infrastructure, a lack of legislation, inefficient farming and groundwater exploitation has contributed to the mismanagement of the country's water supply.

A rapidly increasing population and the expanding middle class have driven up demand

water mismanagement is arguably a more pronounced factor of the impending water crisis.

The problem is not lack of adequate water, but its reckless overuse.

China, with a larger population, uses 28% less fresh water than India.

Deforestation, land conversion and degradation, as well as urban encroachment due to illegal construction, pose major threats to the water bearing capacity.

Between 85 and 90 per cent of all water consumed in India is used by the agricultural sector.

farmers have started to extract groundwater at rates faster than the resource can replenish itself

subsidised energy and water pumps because farmers form a large portion of voting population

Using subsidised electricity, farmers pump groundwater at will, drawing up more annually than China and America combined.

Maharashtra is a good example of this as its sugar belt takes up only four per cent of farmland but consumes over 70 per cent of the state's irrigation water.

NRW is the water that is physically lost (through leakages or poor infrastructure) or apparently lost (through incorrect metering and theft).

Up to 80 per cent of all surface water in India is polluted.

Poor sewage treatment facilities, little public sanitation, poverty, industrial runoff and a lack of government regulation

soaring temperatures in the summer and sporadic monsoons have served as a catalyst to bacterial growth in water, further reducing the amount of safe water.
Aadhaar offers a digitally verifiable identity, which made it possible for those enrolled to change cash at an enabled banking facility.

Since Aadhar will be linked to every scheme in future so beneficiaries once under it will move towards cashless transaction since they will be paid with transparency and no leakages.

The Aadhaar system, centred on biometric data captured to improve access to social services can help the poor to become cashless.

It will enable citizens in the deepest corners of the country to participate in the digital movement, even those who do not own a phone but want to pay digitally.

AEPS allows users to make payments to merchants or shopkeepers without credit or debit cards using their Aadhaar number and biometric authentication.

AEPS is aimed at empowering the marginalised and excluded segments to conduct financial transactions through micro ATMs deployed by banks in villages.

It would bring bank to their doorstep and save much time and transport expense.

The failure rates on Aadhaar Enabled Payment System for interbank transactions were found to be as high as 60 percent by the Watal Committee on digital payments.

The possibility of transaction failures due to a biometric mismatch are real.

Devices used for Aadhaar identification could store personal information, which, in turn, could be susceptible to a breach.

The concerns over potential misuse of biometric data by private agencies has also been highlighted by the Supreme Court of India.

Current laws and policies regarding the Aadhaar project, particularly the centralised database, are inadequate from the point of view of data security and end-user privacy.

It will promote efficiency as the information is biometrically authenticated and little room is left for discrepancy.

It will help in catering to the growing corruption as fraudulent activities would be minimised again due to biometric authentication.

The illegal access to services will also be minimised.

For example: no fake job cards for MGNREGA.

The resources would be cautiously used by the general public. For example: limited LPG gas cylinders to each household above which subsidy would not be granted.

Will further arrest leakages through Identity Authentication & Weeding out Bogus Connections which further arrest Subsidy loss & help in Fiscal Savings

Digitalisation in service delivery and Streamline PDS entitlements through Standardized process

The critical information of the Aadhaar Card can be misused by anti-social elements of the society and terrorist groups if they somehow find access to it.

The national security may be at risk if the information is leaked to foreign agencies.

Aadhaar Card is not still available to every eligible citizen of the nation. Still a lot of work needs to be done.

Technical issues like Fingerprint Mismatch needs to be resolved.

PDS dealers often give people less than what they are entitled to. Though the Aadhaar is able to tackle the ‘identity fraud’, but not able to tackle ‘quantity fraud’.

The new ordinance says to credit employee salary directly into their bank account in informal sector. eKYC and bank accounts through Aadhar will help in financial inclusion

Linking Aadhaar with Public Services

Illiteracy - Opening a bank account requires paperwork that many vulnerable citizens find difficult

Still many citizens have not registered for Aadhaar

Compulsory Aadhar usage will be arm twisting people who are not technologically savvy

Aadhaar connectivity needs presence of Banking Correspondents, branches or mobile connectivity

Data security challenge due to recent cyber attacks. The recent data theft of half a billion users from Yahoo poses a serious challenge of cyber security.

Still many bank accounts and postal accounts are not linked to Aadhar

Aadhaar is not a fool-proof method of authentication and identification failures are not uncommon.

Extend Aadhar to all citizens

Linking all bank accounts with Aadhaar

Working with CERT, NATGRID teams for data security and better access.

Tackling other operational challenges like data updation

The government has to address security issues, while having end-to-end encryption to ensure that the information is not misused or leaked.
In India, for its size and diversity, we probably have the smallest number of final decision-makers—the prime minister, the chief ministers and occasionally the district magistrate or the Supreme Court.

Such a centralized system in a democratic milieu is bound to be dysfunctional.

Democratic decentralization has never reached full fruition.

Constitution does not clearly assign the functions or sources of finance, but leaves it entirely to the discretion of the States.

Constitutional framework does not prescribe any pattern, standard or model of decentralisation which again is left to the discretion of State governments.

Most States have not complied with the requirement of having to appoint gram sabhas, ward committees, district planning committees and metropolitan planning committees.

Local bodies do not have any independent revenues.

There is also the problem of administrative capacity and interest groups resisting payment of taxes and user charges.

It is important to have clarity in the assignment of functions and the local governments should have clear and independent sources of finance.

States should comply with the constitutional provisions, particularly in the appointment and implementation of the recommendations of the State Finance Commission.

In order to transform present realities, it is imperative to strengthen decentralisation from below, so that voices of the poor can carry weight in village assemblies and ward council meetings.

The institutional design for decentralisation should take into account not only the developmental thrusts, but also the need to ensure local participation in decision-making.

It is time to strengthen the panchayats so that they can discharge the duties cast on them in the best manner possible.

The panchayats at the higher level have to act as coordinating bodies for the panchayats at the levels below.

The Gram Sabha should be encouraged to invite members of higher level panchayats, legislature and even the Parliament to participate in their meetings and articulate their needs in the presence of the invitees.

Another key element for the success of Panchayati Raj Institutions is the change of mindset from one that works for the people to one that works with the people.

Strengthened and responsive municipal organisations are necessary to ensure effective health and education programmes.

Training programmes that impart gender sensitivity to men hold the key to more enlightened policy, even at the micro-level.

Effective empowerment, devolution of adequate resources, and strong, independent local ombudsmen to enforce accountability.

Decentralization is not merely for local governments; it extends to states and the empowerment of all kinds of stakeholders from cooperatives to schools, local housing colonies to self-help groups.

Decentralisation involves the shifting of fiscal, political and administrative responsibilities from higher to lower levels of government.

Mahatma Gandhi, once stated, “Independence must begin at the bottom... it follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs...”

We need good decentralisation and participatory democracy system.

Democratic decentralisation promotes inclusive growth through effective provision of public services.

Village panchayats as institutions of governance existed for a long time, the founding fathers of the Constitution were not keen to empower them.

Dr. Ambedkar was apprehensive that in the hierarchical society with highly skewed nature of asset and power distribution, vesting more powers at the village level would only perpetuate exploitation of the dispossessed.

The Constitution placed local governance in the State List (Entry 5).

73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments were made to energise the local bodies in rural and urban areas to make them the institutions of self-government.

Schedules 11 and 12 were inserted into the Constitution detailing the indicative list of functions to be devolved to panchayats and municipalities by the State government.

Decentralisation implies the devolution of state authority. Decision making capacity and resources are transferred from the centre to local level.

Every great accomplishment in India was a result of local or sectoral initiative and leadership, delegation of power and devolution of resources with accountability.

Success of ISRO, the milk revolution, green revolution, conduct of elections, disaster relief, all are products of delegation, local leadership and active and sustained participation of stakeholders.

States today are stronger and more autonomous in a federal polity than ever before.

Decentralisation is vital to strengthen participatory democracy, facilitate responsive governance and enable public service delivery.

Many of the powers that have been given to local bodies are delegated powers, and the State government continues to retain overall responsibility in this matter.

The local body is a channel for directing expenditure, but it has no discretion. The result is that money allocated may not get spent. If this is to change, then flexibility at the local level is essential.

Decentralisation can be regarded as an important means for addressing gender inequality and empowerment of women.

Decentralisation has increased women’s representation and voice in our democracy.
In 1987, the Law Commission of India pointed out that the judge-population ratio in India was only 10.5 judges per million population (it is now 12 judges per million). The ratio was 41.6 in Australia, 50.9 in England, 75.2 in Canada and 107 in the United States.

The Commission recommended that India required 107 judges per million population. The judge strength could be raised five-fold (to 50 judges per million population) in a period of five years.

There is a need for more transparency in appointment of high court judges. Everything should be in the public domain.

More judges, more courts, more computers alone may not do much to improve the efficiency of courts or access to justice. Judicial infrastructure, it is clear, hasn’t kept pace with the rate of litigation.

Courts in the US have been aggressively pursuing budgetary allocations for quite some time now. While we have not yet reached such a situation in India, Barring the metros and state capitals, most of the subordinate courts lack basic infrastructure for judges, court staff and litigants.

If the Judiciary is not independent resource-wise and/or in relation to funds, from the interference of the Executive, judicial independence will become redundant and inconsequential.

The judiciary should be made responsible to present its own financial needs in a professional and competent manner, documenting its requirements. The judicial allocation should be in a transparent and accountable manner.

The budget should be such that it should be considered a mean to increase both judicial capacity and judicial accountability.

Adequacy of judicial infrastructure is a pre-requisite for reduction of pendency and backlog of cases in courts. The quantum of allocation needs to be increased to accommodate increasing manpower and information technology-related infrastructure needs.

The administrative capacity of the judiciary with respect to budget-making needs to be enhanced. High Courts and the Law Ministry should consider the idea of transparent budget-making process based on public inputs and presenting the same separately from the general budget.

Statement by Chief Justice of India about how the judiciary is not receiving enough funds once again brings to the fore the friction between the judiciary and the government.

Even back in the 1980s, the 127th Law Commission had lamented the poor quality of infrastructure. Although judiciary is independent in its functions, it is dependent on legislature for fulfilling its financial needs.

India currently spends about Rs12,000 crore a year on the judiciary. This amounts to about 0.01% of the gross domestic product (GDP).

One could compare this with the national defence allocation of around 2% of GDP which is the other large sovereign function.

A committee of the Supreme Court compared it to allocations for health and education and found it to be much lower. The judiciary is funded mostly by the states—that historically haven’t had too much to spend at their discretion given the centrally-sponsored schemes of the Union government.

Out of the special grant of Rs5,000 crore by the 13th Finance Commission for improving judicial infrastructure and services, almost 80% remained unspent.

The 14th Finance Commission urged state governments to use the additional fiscal space provided by the commission in the tax devolution to meet such requirements. The onus is now completely on state governments to prioritize funding to the courts.

“Report of the Task Force on Judicial Impact Assessment” had asked that a judicial impact office be created in Delhi and state capitals to estimate the extra expenditure on the courts to be incurred by Central and state legislation, respectively.

There is a need to move from outlay-based budgeting to outcome-based budgeting. To improve the efficiency of courts or access to justice there is a need for re-engineering, re-imagining court processes, widespread use of technology and reforms in substantive law.

To improve the efficiency of courts or access to justice there is a need for re-engineering, re-imagining court processes, widespread use of technology and reforms in substantive law.

The budget allocation to the judiciary should be made sufficiently flexible, authority to make the process speedier. Government is going well in setting up e-courts.

There is a need to increase the number of judges at all levels and encourage the use of Information and Communication technology to make the process speedier. Government is going well in setting up e-courts.

There should be a mechanism to regulate frivolous litigations. An efficient litigation policy will help a lot.

Civil court fees structure must be suitably modified and it must be made mandatory for state governments to spend the entire fees collected on building judicial infrastructure.

Strengthening judicial infrastructure and increasing the judge-population ratio. Frivolous cases that consume too much court time should be dealt with a heavy hand and exemplary costs should be imposed on such litigation.

The same must be done for cases where corporates file frivolous cases against their business rivals.
India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China.

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since Independence.

Some institutions of India, such as IITs, NITs, IIMs have been globally acclaimed for their standard of education

However Indian higher education is in need of radical reforms.

Due to financial hardship, inferior schools, and social compulsions for early marriage for girls, the majority of young people drop out of school. So they have no access to higher education.

For socially disadvantaged groups discrimination at workplace lower the rate of return from (and hence demand for) higher education for them compared to other groups.

Intensive entry examination preparation in coaching classes (or private tuition) with high fees is often out of reach for poor students.

NSS data in 2014 says nearly 60% of male students in the 18-24 age group cite financial constraints as the reason for discontinuing higher education

NSS data say there are not enough government institutions nearby.

The quality of most higher education institutions in India is abysmal.

The expansion in quantity of universities and colleges has often been at the expense of quality.

Extreme faculty shortage, deficiencies in library books, laboratory facilities, computer and broadband internet, classrooms and buildings, etc.

As much as 30 to 50% of faculty positions are vacant in many institutions.

Many faculty posts are filled by under-qualified "temporary" recruits.

Rote-learning, outdated curriculum, and just cramming for exams.

Example: in a recent survey of M.A. 2nd year students in Economics in a state university in Maharashtra, only 11 out of 200 students could answer all of them correctly for 6 questions asked from Class 6 mathematics.

Over all our research quality is much below the world average.

Thousands of students every year go abroad for college education.

Approximately 18.43 percent of engineering graduates are employable, which means 80 percent of them are unemployable.

The rise of IT sector and engineering education in India has boxed students into linear path without giving them a chance to explore and discover their passions.

Two-thirds of enrolment in higher education are in private institutions.

Fees at private institutions are more than double those charged at government institutions.

Politicians have entered into the business of higher education in a big way, turning colleges into lucrative degree-giving factories.
Jallikattu is a bull taming event typically practiced in Tamil Nadu as a part of Pongal celebrations on Mattu Pongal day. It is renowned as an ancient 'sport', believed to have been practised some 2500 years ago. It is controversial because the sport often results in major injuries and even deaths.

It can initiate similar identity based protests in other parts of the country, e.g., Kambala (buffalo race) in Karnataka and Dhirio (bull fight) in Goa. The demand has neglected the Rights of animals and their protection. It will create a false thinking in the people that they can protest and force government to make legislation, thus violating Rule of Law. Protest and breakdown of law shows inability of the state government to safeguard property and their fear of ethnic movement.

The level of civilization can be judged by the way animals are treated.

A bull taming sport which gives the opportunities of social gatherings and social integration, uplifts the idea of 'unity in diversity'. However, Torture of animals can't be justified in an era where man is expected to live in harmony with nature.

A feudal tradition, that glamourises masculinity, cannot be allowed in a modern and progressive nation that has been at the forefront in reforming orthodox practices.

"Tradition" is never a sufficient justification for cruelty, and a cruel tradition should never be allowed to define a culture.

Sati system which was once a part of tradition was banned because of inhuman practice.

The tradition of bullfighting in Spain is cited to legitimise the conduct of Jallikattu and present it as a viable tourist attraction.

Spanish state of Catalonia banned the sport in 2012 after a prolonged 'culture versus rights' debate.

In 2002, Germany took animal rights to a new level by giving animals constitutional protection.

To nullify the effect of the Supreme Court judgment through the ordinance route carry a serious risk of judicial reproach.

It will give wrong message to people and it will undermine the powers of SC and the rule of law.

The Centre would go against the basic structure of the constitution by disregarding the separation of powers.

Government would be undermining the Right to life of animals and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 which prohibits cruelty to animals for the sake of entertainment.

If jallikattu is banned, livestock keepers will be forced to abandon the raising of native livestock.

lose self-sufficiency in milk production as well as promotion of organic farming.

By importing foreign breeds, multinational commercial companies will dominate the dairy industry in India.

India has already lost many cattle breeds and it can't afford to lose any more.

When a ban on jallikattu is in place, the bulls will only be bought by meat traders.

A way of life in rural, pastoral Tamil Nadu, and is indeed a celebrated feature of Tamil identity cherished in Sangam literature.

It provides financial support to the rural poor whose livelihood depends on it.

Its innumerable references could be found in Dravidian literature and the indigenous population of Tamil Nadu has held this event for years.

Animal Welfare Board of India and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) says bulls are subject to cruelty, are physically and mentally tortured for human pleasure.

The sport is directly in contravention of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

It is being played in only some of the territories so not the representation of Tamilian culture as a whole.

It has been distorted from its earlier form where only one person per bull was involved but now a hoard of people chase a single bull.

There are other possible ways to preserve the native breed.

Tradition can't be an excuse for allowing inhuman practices to flourish.

Causings pain to animals simply to entertain humans goes against the directive principles that call upon us to protect wildlife.

The safety of participants and spectators is also put at tremendous risk.

The proper course for the Centre and the State government is to persuade the Supreme Court that a jallikattu that does not involve cruelty to animals and that guarantees the safety of spectators and participants.

The proposed middle path of permitting jallikattu but tightly regulating it is potentially feasible.

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity and heritage status practices worldwide, it is customary that these ancient traditional practices are left as they are but with rules to organise and regulate them.

Follow the famous Spanish bullfighting example where measures taken to avoid lethal damage.

Create awareness regarding apathy faced by animals. Sports personalities, film stars, eminent jurists can come forward.

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Nutrition is among any human’s fundamental needs, and access is even more imperative for a child.

World Bank data indicates that India has one of the world’s highest demographics of children suffering from malnutrition.

According to Nobel Prize Winner for Economics Angus Deaton, malnutrition in India is not just related to calorie intake, but India’s dependence on a carbohydrate-based diet with low protein and fat content.

India has a major child malnutrition problem.

The Rapid Survey on Children (2012-13) found that about 4 in 10 children are stunted.

The first two years of life are the most important time for a child’s physical and cognitive growth.

many Indian women start pregnancy underweight and gain little weight during pregnancy.

This leads to low birth weight babies, high rates of neonatal mortality, and less successful breastfeeding.

widespread discrimination against women in their own homes leads to food intake

The 2016 Global Hunger Index (GHI) said 38.7 per cent of Indian children under five years are stunted due to lack of food.

The report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), also ranked India 97 among 118 countries, faring worse than all its neighbours China (29), Nepal (72), Myanmar (75), Sri Lanka (84) and Bangladesh (90), except for Pakistan (107) in measures of hunger.

The HUNGeMA (Hunger and Malnutrition) Survey shows prevalence of malnutrition is significantly higher among children from low-income families.

Malnutrition in India:

As per one of the targets under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by 2030, all forms of malnutrition

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme and Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Adolescent Girls (RASHMI).

ICDS covers the nutritional needs of children of 6 months- 3 years age, pregnant and lactating mothers

Age appropriate Supplementary Nutrition is provided to the beneficiaries at the Anganwadi Centres spread across the country.

National Health Mission (NHM), Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)

Treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition at special units called the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs), set up at public health facilities.

Specific program to prevent and combat micronutrient deficiencies of Vitamin A and Iron & Folic Acid (IAFA) in under-five children, children of 5 to 10 years of age, and adolescents.

MGREGA, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, National Rural Drinking Water Programme etc address one or other aspect of nutrition.

women with higher autonomy (both financial and physical, for example – the freedom to go to the market) are less likely to have stunted children

Leadership at the highest level must ensure that priority is given to child nutrition outcomes, with large investments in nutrition interventions

Targeted nutrition interventions to prevent and treat undernutrition as part of a continuum of care, particularly among the most vulnerable children and women

Reliance on community-based primary health care

Timely and effective policy, program, and budgetary action.

The prevention and treatment of child undernutrition in the first two years of life needs to become a national development priority.

A focus on women’s nutrition and their empowerment and well-being of their children will make India a global leader.

Now is the time to combine the existing technical knowledge with the political will to change the lives of millions of children and women in India.

NGOs like Save the Children can add increased access to nutrition, as well as counseling of nutrition choices to India’s less fortunate.

Introduction:

Concerns:

Timely initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth

Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life

Full immunization and bi-annual vitamin supplementation with deworming

Therapeutic feeding for children with severe acute malnutrition

Adequate nutrition and anaemia control for adolescent girls and breastfeeding mothers

Micronutrients are required in small quantities and responsible for vital functions of the human body.

High-impact interventions:

Status of malnutrition:

Steps taken by Government:

causes of child stunting.

poor sanitation spreads diseases that sap children’s energy and stunts their growth.

Poor health of a child’s mother and Women’s undernourishment

poverty also play a role.

lack of food (macronutrients), the quality (micronutrients) as well as the capacity to absorb and utilize nutrients.

Non-exclusive breastfeeding

Reduced appetite due to infection

On average, children who are stunted do less well in school, earn less, and die sooner than children who are not.

It affects women more than it affects men due to the specific nutrition needs of women during adolescence, pregnancy, and lactation.

Undernourished girls grow up to become undernourished women who give birth to a new generation of undernourished children.

Undernourished children are much more likely to suffer from infection and die from common childhood illnesses (diarrhoea, pneumonia, measles, malaria) than well nourished children.

Undernutrition puts women at a greater risk of pregnancy-related complications and death (obstructed labor and haemorrhage).

Undernourished boys and girls do not perform as well in school as compared to their well-nourished peers, and as adults they are less productive and make lower wages.

Widespread child undernutrition greatly impedes India’s socio-economic development and potential to reduce poverty.

Way Forward:

Progress India has made in tackling malnutrition:

India’s decades of investment in child malnutrition programmes is paying off.

End-2014 results saw a dramatic fall in the number of underweight kids, as well as stunted according to official nutrition data.

Instead of 46%, today over 72% of infants below 6 months are breastfed, beating the World Health Assembly’s targets for India for 2025.
Reservation in India is the process of facilitating a person in education, scholarship, jobs, and in promotions who has category certificates. Reservation is a form of quota-based affirmative action. Reservation is governed by constitutional laws, statutory laws, and local rules and regulations.

SC, ST and OBC, and in some states Backward Classes among Muslims under a category called BC(M), are the primary beneficiaries of the reservation policies under the Constitution – with the object of ensuring a level playing field.

The reservation system aims to uplift the lower sections of society which, through the ages, have been exploited and deprived of rights and basic amenities. They are supposed to become a part of mainstream society and, as a result, people will start accepting them.

The reservation system in India dates back to 2nd century B.C. where the upper class enjoyed certain added privileges. A caste-based reservation system was originally thought of by William Hunter and Jyotirao Phule in 1882.

The reservation system that exists today was introduced in 1933 when British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald presented the ‘Communal Award’: The system was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi while B.R. Ambedkar supported it.

To counter this situation Poona Pact was signed, according to which country would have a single Hindu electorate, with seats reserved for Dalits.

In 1990s the recommendations of the Mandal Commission were implemented in government jobs.

The caste-based reservation cannot be claimed to be completely irrelevant as even today, the lower class is exploited and discriminated against after 62 years of the abolishment of untouchability as is evident in the case of Rohith Vemula.

Due to historical negligence caste based reservation are a political necessity in India.

Affirmative Action has helped many backward communities in getting education and jobs, which were denied them since long.

Though Meritocracy is an important aspect, but is meaningless without equality.

To the great extent caste based reservation reduced the gap between upper and lower castes.

A study to measure the impact of reservations on efficiency, concluded that reservations have not hampered the efficiency of administration, rather they have enhanced quality.

The example of the Indian railways proves that where SC/ST employees are more in number, the results have been better.

Many people of lower castes have stepped up the social ladder and are now on an equal footing with the ‘general’ population.

On the other hand, many upper castes are still suffering from poverty and illiteracy.

The present reservation system can harm the economic structure of the country as it could bring down the efficiency of its labour.

Caste based reservation is one of the many issues which may develop into communal riots.

Many times economically sound people enjoyed the benefits of caste based reservation, leaving aside real needy people.

Recent agitations by the Patel/Patidars in Gujarat, the Marathas in Maharashtra and the Jats in Haryana demanding inclusion in the list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEdBCs). These are dominant castes whose members are major landowners in their states.

The national and state backward class commissions have found that these communities are not socially and educationally backward and not inadequately represented in the services. Castes that should be actually benefitted are not being benefitted, and the others are reaping the benefits of the reservation system.

Today, the reservation system has just become a tool for politicians to gain vote banks. The Jat agitation in Haryana resulted in several deaths, cancelation of hundreds of trains, and the loss of many working days in schools and workplaces across Haryana.

One community after another will start demanding reservations due to the success of others.

The country needs a better basis of reservation which includes the poor and the backward groups and excludes the rich and the dominating sections among all castes. The present reservation system requires serious amendments.

Before extending reservation to more groups, the entire policy needs to be properly examined, and its benefits over a span of nearly 60 years have to be gauged. The benefits should flow to the vast majority of underprivileged children from deprived castes; not to a few privileged children with a caste tag.

We have to address the anger and aspirations of poor families among unreserved communities.

Along with improving school education outcomes, a more rational model of reservation based on equity and common sense must be envisaged.

The government’s responsibility now is to conduct regular surveys and re-examine the reservation policy in the present scenario.

In Ashok Kumar Thakur v. Union of India, Justice Ravindran opined that when more people aspire for backwardness instead of forwardness, the Country itself stagnates. If we would demand more and more backwardness, then it is obvious we cannot move forward, and our progress would ultimately get stagnant.

The idea of reservation policy should be maintained, and the actual backward classes who are in real and not fiction denied access to education, job opportunities etc be benefitted.

Arguments for Reservation

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Arguments against Reservation

reservation system in India

Way Forward

Arguments for Reservation

Arguments against Reservation

Conclusion

Reservation System in India
The steady increasing electoral participation points out to the positive interventions made by Election Commission of India to secure the same.

Free and fair elections attract more voters. The measures taken by ECI to attract voters include:
- Introducing Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to make voting process interactive by showing the details of their votes
- Introducing Short Message Service and Toll Free Numbers so that people can ask details regarding enrolment process and address of polling station
- Live Monitoring of Sensitive Areas to ensure that no mischievous activities are carried at the polling station
- Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) to increase awareness and education about the electoral process
- Replacing ballot papers through electronic voting machine to make the voting process easier
- Organizing National Voters’ Day, Voter Fest and employing school children and renowned personalities as ambassadors to persuade people to cast their votes

Panchayat and municipal corporation elections come under the purview of the State Election Commissions, which does not provide for the independence enjoyed by the Central Election Commission. Because State Election Commission’s terms and conditions are subject to the whims and fancies of the state government. Consequently, these elections are not as free and fair as those conducted by the Election Commission of India.

There are a number of high court judgements questioning the fairness of such elections. These are dominated by local issues based on caste, creed and other petty matters that the opposition parties always question the neutrality of the conduct of such polls.

Bringing the administrative control of State Election Commissions under the purview of the Central Election Commission will help conduct more fair elections. Appointment of state election commissioners and deployment of central paramilitary forces by the Election Commission of India can help conduct more fair elections.

The Commission over the years has conducted number of laudable electoral reforms to strengthen democracy and enhance fairness of elections. The Commission should be empowered to punish the greedy politicians for violation of Code, Laws, and Orders of the Courts.

A country’s administration should be governed not by the bullet but the ballot.

The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering election processes in India. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.

The Election Commission operates under the authority of Constitution per Article 324, and subsequently enacted Representation of the People Act.

Role of EC to increase voter’s participation

- Guardian of Free & Fair Elections.
  - Issues a Model code of Conduct for political parties and candidates to conduct elections in free & fair manner.

Registration of Political Parties and Allotment of Symbols
- The Election Commission has fixed the legal limits on the amount of money which a candidate can spend during election campaigns.

Use of Scientific and Technological Advancement like introduction of EVM and computerization of the electoral rolls.
- Election Commission – A Tribunal for Adjudication

Checking Criminalization of Politics.
- Cancellation of Polls due to rigging at any polling booth

Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968, states “When rival sections or groups of a recognised political party each of whom claims to be that party, the commission after taking into account all the facts and circumstances of the case decides that one such rival section or group is recognised, none such section or group is recognised, decision of the Commission shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups.

This applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties.
- For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.

In case of disagreement, the EC asks the party to prove its strength through its elected representatives (MPs and MLAs)
- The party claiming the particular symbol if proves its majority through its elected representatives claims the symbol

So far there hasn’t been any court case with respect to allocation of symbols.
- In cases like the split of CPI in 1988 a breakaway group approached the ECI urging it to recognise them as CPI (Marxist)

The ECI recognised the faction as CPI(M) after it found that the votes secured by the MPs and MLAs supporting the breakaway group

In case of split in AIADMK in 1997 the issue was resolved before EC was forced to make a decision on which group should retain the symbol.

In 1997 ECI introduced a new rule where the splinter group had to register itself as a separate party and could claim national or state party on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.

Solution

- Role of Election Commission
- local body polls
- EC’s powers in a dispute over the election symbol in case a party splits?

Conclusion
First thing the government has to do is increase the number of judges. Expand the Supreme Court with the best high court judges. Increase the number of national law schools to get even more lawyers into the system. Raise the number of private law colleges and get in foreign legal firms if necessary.

A ten-year plan to increase the strength of the judiciary five-fold

It should be a long-term goal.

Today the Indian citizen is active 24x7 and many services are open round the clock, round the year. We should also have a special “night shift magistrate” in every town that can handle emergency cases and not have people waiting till the courts open.

We need out of the box solutions to escape from the mess we are in.

There are stalling of cases, absatism, Dates are missed, Medical emergencies crop up, some problem with paperwork and so on and so forth. It is time this “open secret” must be addressed.

A committee of retired judges should be appointed to find out the problems that lead to the stalling of cases, their remedies and implement them.

There are some cases that will go through the circuitous route of the sessions court, high court, Supreme court and the presidential appeal process.

This could take decades, waste so many court hours and get so many judges to look into the matter. Such cases should be identified and sent straight to a fast track court. After that the appeal could go straight to the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court can have special benches across India so that the poorer citizens can have greater access.

Our courts should be fully digitised and technical experts should be brought in to streamline the whole process right from when a person files a case, to updating it, to the final verdict. We can even have a group of editors to condense all verdicts.

We have to do a major overhaul of “de-Britishising” of the system.

For example, we have Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that criminalises homosexuality. Britain came out with the Sexual Offences Act 1987 that ended up decriminalising homosexuality.

Expeditious disposal of cases by setting up a special “social justice bench” to deal with the pendency of cases having social issues which are on rise and needs specialised approach.

disposal of petty, compoundable criminal matters and other civil disputes through Lok Adalats as an alternate dispute resolution mechanism

amendments in law are also required to speed up the disposal process

More judges of sufficient quality in the lower judiciary could go a long way to ease the burdens on the Supreme Court.

Having four to five clerks for each judge to help filter out appeals, write memos, and draft decisions, which is the norm in countries such as South Africa or the United States, could greatly reduce the judges’ workload.

Brazil disposes of about 100,000 cases every year with far fewer judges. To take on such a large load, clerks and other staff take a central role in drafting decisions for the many routine matters.

Create a separate constitutional court, which would only hear constitutional claims, while the final appeal for all other claims would be with a supreme court of appeal.

Such a system exists in Germany and several other countries.

Judicial process needs to be streamlined. Lawyers need to be penalised for delaying matters without reason.

Addressing the backlog is necessary to maintain India’s “constitutional democracy,” to adhere to “the rule of law” and to “guarantee order and stability in society”

The country’s progress depends on a strong judicial system which can provide quick justice because justice delayed is justice denied.
The Constitution recognises the position of religion, caste, language and gender in the social life of the nation.

Social mobilisation is a powerful instrument of bringing marginalised groups into the mainstream.

After centuries of structural and institutional discrimination, these markers of identity had acquired a certain social significance.

It was that which allowed B.R. Ambedkar to form the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, a political party exclusively devoted to Dalit emancipation.

Candidates might have to speak about genuine, legitimate concerns of citizens on the basis of religion, caste, language etc and holding them guilty of electoral malpractice for the same will hit at the idea of democracy.

An increasingly activist Supreme Court has allegedly blurred the separation of powers between itself and the other organs of the government.

It will prune many of the divisive arguments made by candidates during electoral campaigns.

Concerns of historic prejudices and social discrimination would take a back seat.

Violative of Article 19 and the right to free speech and expression.

Inculcating the idea of brotherhood and broader outlook in the society.

Increased focus on developmental works done by candidates and focus on merit rather than caste based politics.

Promotes secularism in India through ‘Universal Citizenship’.

Judicial activism, as this judgement is conceived as amendment of RPA, 1951.

The verdict will prevent political parties from disturbing communal harmony through their speeches.

Since appeasement based on religion, caste etc are ruled out, young politicians with fresh ideas may benefit in elections. This could improve the productivity of the legislature.

The judgement may also hinder empowerment of socially oppressed castes through social mobilisation which defeats the purpose of secularism.

Mobilisation of marginalized groups like Dalits will be affected.

The Supreme Court ruled that politicians cannot seek votes on the grounds of caste, creed or religion.

The Court verdict dealt with the question whether a religious leader’s appeal to his followers to vote for a particular political party would amount to electoral malpractice under Section 123 of the Representation of People Act.

Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, defines a corrupt electoral practice as follows:

“The appeal by a candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of a candidate or his election agent to vote or refrain from voting for any person on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community…”

The section does not specify whether “his” refers to the speaker seeking votes, or the audience from whom votes are being sought.

Did the underlined word “his” qualify only the electoral candidate (and his agent, or persons speaking with his consent)?

Or did it also qualify the person to whom the appeal was addressed (the elector)?

Impact of the judgement:

For Citizens:

Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act

Four out of seven judges held that the law was trying to achieve the purity of elections.

The purity of elections required that appeals to caste, religion, language, and community be kept out of the electoral process.

In the view of the majority, an election that was fought and decided on the ground of religion, race, caste, community was a distortion of democracy.

Democracy depended on voters exercising their franchise on the basis of rational thought and action, appeals to religion, language, and caste were inherently emotive and irrational in nature.

The basic purpose was to curb communal and separatist tendencies.

Secularism required the complete exclusion of religion from public life.

Religion can have no place in such [secular] activities for religion is a matter personal to the individual.

The word “his” in Section 123(3) was to be understood broadly, referring to both the speaker as well as the audience.

In the public sphere, we must participate as rational individuals and not on the basis of religion, caste, language, or community.

Such a law was permissible, because a candidate was supposed to represent her entire constituency, and not just a subset of it.

For Democracy:

The majority view

The question before the Supreme Court

The majority held that Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act dealt with the question whether a religious leader’s appeal to his followers to vote for a particular political party would amount to electoral malpractice.

The Court ruled that politicians cannot seek votes on the grounds of caste, creed or religion.

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Fake news — the deliberate creation of factually incorrect content to mislead people for some gain — is becoming an increasingly serious problem.

Fake news is viewed as a serious threat to the democratic process.

This era raised an issue of fake news going viral on social media and shaping the beliefs of people around the world.

Pakistan’s Defence Minister threatened Israel with a retaliatory nuclear attack, in response to a fake news report that the Israelis had said they would use nuclear weapons against Pakistan if it sent ground troops to Syria.

A man fired an assault rifle in a pizzeria in Washington, D.C. after reading online that it was involved in a child trafficking ring linked to Hillary Clinton.

In India, a fake story said there was a GPS tracking chip embedded in the new Rs.2,000 note.

In countries like Myanmar, deceptive internet content has reportedly contributed to ethnic violence.

It has influenced elections in Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere.

The Real Effect of Fake News

Everyone with an Internet connection and a social media presence is now a content generator.

Access to the web at all times has raised expectations for real-time news and constant entertainment.

competition among websites and social media platforms has sometimes resulted in the generation of fake news.

With platforms such as Facebook, that have hundreds of millions of users, news, fake or otherwise, spreads rapidly.

Social Media platforms work depending on computer algorithm which is aligned with market interests, they are growing to be ideal platform for propagation of fake news.

Most of the fake news stories are produced by scammers looking to make a quick buck.

Facebook and Google, which have made it possible for fake news to be shared nearly instantly with millions of users and have been slow to block it from their sites.

No regulator in social media platform as we have in Print or Television media.

Free service has given access to everyone to post whatever they want and thus create a trend in fake news spreading like wildfire.

Everyone is in hurry to LIKE/SHARE/COMMENT rather than checking the authenticity of the news.

Recent Incidents

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Solution

Effective and modern legislations are to be brought to effectively tackle fake news in modern platforms of Internet and social media.

To implement the laws, a strong monitoring system, technological and capable human resources have to be put in place.

Awareness campaigns on legal and social consequences of fake news.

Actions taken against fake news should not put a curb on right of individual for free speech and expression.

Facebook now needs a new Marshall Plan to tackle the crises of bogus information spreading like wildfire to its population of 1.8 billion monthly users.

Investing in fact-checking tools and processes that prevent the spread of hate and fake news on the internet.

It the people who have to take responsibility of caring, loving and developing society and stop spreading fake news.

Generation and spreading the Fake News

Fake news gaining prominence

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Impact

Mainstream media in India is more impacted by the phenomena of fake news.

Fake news sparks panic, raise conflicts and contentions among society as one see in the case of Cauvery dispute when malicious rumours and fake news led to the antagonism.

Ex: in 2012 assamese were targeted in bangaluru because of fake news.

Imposing hefty fines like Germany which is considering imposing a €500,000 fine on Facebook if it shares fake news.

Social media and news organisations can regulate themselves through rigorous internal editorial and advertising standards.

Broad forms of what constitutes fake news need to be defined.

News and social media companies have a moral responsibility to ensure that they do not misrepresent the facts to their audiences.

The best defence is common sense, a healthy dose of disbelief.

People should gather news and info from verified news outlets and sources.

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Introduction

While the news may be fake, its impact is real and potentially far-reaching.

The abundance of fake stories during the U.S. presidential elections has raised concerns about their impact on election results.
The new law is the latest step towards improving and protecting the rights of every expatriate worker in Qatar.

Freedom of movement is guaranteed under the new rules, including giving workers the right to change jobs.

The exit visa formally needed to leave the country under “kafala” will be abolished, although workers will still need their employers’ permission to go home.

The new law should also offer greater contract protection.

Any workers mistreated will automatically be allowed to change jobs.

It will boost the global image of Qatar as a responsible country.

It will have a burgeoning effect on economy and now more workers prefer to come to Qatar.

A sense of social security in the form of free movement.

Amnesty International says these inadequate changes will continue to leave workers at the mercy of exploitative bosses.

Right groups say that migrant workers will still need employer’s consent to return home.

This new law may get rid of the word ‘sponsorship’ but it leaves the same basic system intact,” says Amnesty International.

Human Rights Watch said the changes left the “fundamentally exploitative characteristics of the kafala system in place”.

The new law does not go far enough to protect, in particular, South Asian manual and semi-skilled labourers who have been hired to build billions of dollars of infrastructure projects related to World Cup 2022.

An employment visa, rather than the sponsor should regulate the migrant workers’ entry to the destination country.

The migrant worker must be in possession of her passport, travel documents and mobile phone at all times.

Migrant workers basic human right to freedom of movement must be upheld, particularly for migrant domestic workers who should not be forcibly confined in the home.

Workers must be able to change or terminate employment at will without losing valid immigration status and without having to obtain the employers permission.

Policies on labour mobility should be developed with reference to the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2008) to ensure a rights-based approach.

Strict enforcement measures should be introduced for recruitment agencies and employers that violate migrant workers rights.

Countries of origin and destination should ratify and implement key ILO conventions related to Migrant workers.

The kafala system is a system used to monitor migrant labourers, working primarily in the construction and domestic sectors, in Lebanon, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

Under “kafala”, all foreign workers working in these countries require a local sponsor, in the form of an individual or company, and need their permission to switch jobs or leave the country.

This allowed for the exploitation of labourers and was at the core of criticism of Qatar’s labour practices.

Ever since Qatar was chosen to host the 2022 World Cup, its labour laws have been internationally condemned and “kafala” has been at the heart of that criticism.

Qatar has now replaced Kafala system by modernised, contract-based system that safeguards workers’ rights and increases job flexibility.

The system was compared to modern-day slavery and left vulnerable workers with little protection and open to abuse.

Employer consent was required to change jobs, leave the country, get a driver’s license, rent a home or open a checking account.

The kafala system was the main reason for abuse of the rights of low-income migrant workers.

High-income professional expatriate workers are also deeply affected by the abuse of the system by companies.

This practice has been criticised by human rights organizations for creating easy opportunities for the exploitation of workers.

Migrant workers are often denied the right to justice for violation of their rights under the Kafala system.

The Kafala system denies the migrant worker the basic human right to freedom of movement.

There are 2.1 million migrant labourers in Qatar from countries including Nepal, Bangladesh and India.

Qatar formally announced the end of its controversial “kafala” system, arguably the biggest ever labour reform undertaken.

Contract-based system to govern the gas-rich Gulf emirate’s foreign workers would take its place.

Under the new law, foreign workers must still obtain their employer’s permission to travel abroad, but the interior ministry has created “grievance panels” to adjudicate disputes if a worker is not allowed to leave.
populist leaders are globally identifying religion, region, caste, creed, colour and other issues which is antithetical to democratic credentials and democratic institutions.

Melting of glaciers, rising sea level, seasonal variations and extremities of weather pose the threat to world

Rising cyber attacks, Internet based terrorism. Fake news, have affected every nook and corner of the world

Rise of right wing governments in West is leading to heightened nationalism which is putting globalisation at peril.

Russia’s leanings towards China are indicative of attempts at creating a bipolar world with US on one hand and Russia-China on the other.

Continued disturbance in West Asia has resulted in massive civilian casualties and mass exodus to European countries.

Organisations like UN, MTCR are losing significance.

Global supply and demand factors have ushered in lower global commodity prices. It will create challenges for many resource-exporting countries.

Shift from multilateral trading practices towards regional trading agreements as seen in TPP, TTIP and RCEP.

The traditional approach of state-based interaction in multilateral institutions like the UN to cope with these trends is unlikely to be effective.

It is Multi-stakeholder multilateralism, where state work along with the private sector, civil society and local governments to address challenges.

However, nations are in different stages of formation—pre-modern, modern, postmodern—it is unlikely that all of them would be willing or able to adopt the new approach.

The UN is even slower to adapt to the changing global challenges (with one or two exceptions) than its constituent member states.

Both reports identify the crisis with democracy. It might be on account of the dramatic changes brought about by rapid economic growth and technological innovations, which have translated into greater income inequality at the domestic level.

For instance, in the US, between 2009 and 2012, the income of the top 1% grew by more than 31% while that of the rest grew by less than 0.5%.

Other democracies, such as India, which benefited from globalization, also have similar income inequality.

The Global Risks Report 2017 and Global Trends: Paradox Of Progress, both reports identify a number of common trends and factors. They are:

Rising income and wealth disparity

The challenges of climate change

The increasing polarization of societies

The growing cyber dependency, without the attendant secure infrastructure

Ageing population, especially in richer countries, but a growing working population in poorer countries

Rapidly growing technology, such as artificial intelligence and automation providing new opportunities but also causing disruptions in traditional economic models

Changing nature of conflict

Use of social media for diplomacy- Online platforms are increasingly being used for diplomatic dialogues For eg- Israel was issued nuclear warning by Pakistan, US is increasingly using Twitter to announce policy decisions and their take on various issues

Currency depreciation and Rising inflation expectations

For India with the huge young workforce, automation further increase the Unemployment problem.

Britain and USA decision regarding Visa norms and labour migration can affect India’s IT sector.

For India, climate change can result into droughts, floods, Cyclones etc. India ranks high on Global Climate Vulnerability Index

Cyber attack impacts India’s drive of being digital economy.

Spillover of refugees from neighbouring countries. Ex - Rohingyas from Myanmar

India’s richest 1% now hold a huge 58% of the country’s total wealth

Demand for reservations due to job scarcity. Ex - Jat, Kapu protests
India is looking into major reconstruction projects in Syria
India has renewed its commitments to its pre-war projects, specifically the Tishreen power plant
Leveraging the BRICS grouping to engage in post-war reconstruction work
providing security guarantees for India’s people and companies who will be undertaking developmental activities in Syria.
Investment in oil projects which are vital for India’s energy security.
Delhi also has major interests in stability in the Middle East given its increased dependency on oil and gas imports.
Geopolitically, India will see Syria as an opportunity to strengthen its position as a potential security partner for Middle Eastern states
India can play an important role on the international stage to spread peace in the Middle East, because it has very good relations with all states
Provide training and support to the Syrian armed forces besides defence equipment to tackle terrorism
Undertake humanitarian efforts. Ex - sending medical personnel, providing generic medicinal drugs, etc.
Leverage its clout in financial institutions like New Development Bank and AIIB to channelize funds towards Syrian reconstruction

India and Syria enjoy friendly political relations based on historic and civilizational ties
Both countries share colonial experience; a secular, nationalist and developmental orientation
Both countries were on the silk route through which civilisational exchanges took place for centuries.
Although India is majorly silent on Syria crisis but steps like abstaining vote in UN for immediate ceasefire shows its inclination towards unified Syria and Assad government.

India and Syria have maintained good ties through the war years.
similar perceptions on many international and regional issues and both are members of NAM
India supported Syria’s legitimate right to regain the occupied Golan Heights
Syrian recognition that Kashmir is a bilateral issue as well as support of India’s concerns and even candidate at various international forums
Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru and Indira Gandhi are remembered with great respect in Syria.

Bilateral relations
India has extended Line of Credit (LoC) to Syria for iron and steel plant and power plant
Bilateral Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and the Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement have been signed
Syria-India Joint Business Council (JBC) was inaugurated in 2010
The Cultural Exchange Programme, and Literary exchanges between India and Syria
India and Syria have problems because of cross-border terrorism.

Way Forward
India can actively take part in more reconstruction plans as it did in Afghanistan
India should become a part of International negotiation to build a consensus with the Global community on the Syrian issue.
Aspirations of rising as responsible global power and stronger pitch for UNSC permanent seat requires India to take decisive stands on global affairs including Syria
Keeping in mind India’s limitations in the region, India should work with United Nations and its agencies in helping Syrian people.
India, which is always an upholder of human rights and always pursues actions on moral and ethical issues should voice its concern strongly

Concerns / challenges
Syria has become the battleground of the war of the hegemony of the powerful countries.
Political instability and security issues for Indian companies and people.
India is still a emerging power and need to establish herself before advocating an order in the world
India receives much of its remittances from middle east countries. An unstable middle east is a serious concern for India
New Delhi’s willingness to give political and diplomatic priority to its immediate neighbours and the Indian Ocean island states. Providing support and capacity building, India’s biggest ever defence sale to Mauritius, providing humanitarian assistance to Nepal or Sri Lanka.

With Bangladesh, the completion of the Land Boundary Agreement, improvements in energy connectivity, and steps taken towards accessing the port of Chittagong. Extending connectivity through Chabahar in Iran or Kaladan in Myanmar.

Developing issue-specific groupings that are not held hostage to consensus. For example, Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) grouping – meant to advance motor vehicle movement, water power management, and inter-grid connectivity. With respect to all of its neighbours, including Nepal, India has taken concrete steps over the past two years to promote goodwill and deepen economic and social connectivity.

One of the major objectives of India’s foreign relations has been to leverage international partnerships to advance India’s domestic development. This includes improving technological access, sourcing capital, adopting best practices, gaining market access, and securing natural resources.

The recently amended tax treaty with Mauritius is one example of how diplomacy can be used to benefit both investors and the government. India still has a mountain to climb to fully harness external inputs to advance economically, socially, and technologically.

With “Act East,” the purpose was to show greater intent in realising what had long been an aspiration for India: to become an integral part of Asia. The new policy emphasises a more proactive role for India in ASEAN and East Asian countries. Indian concerns regarding China’s rise and the upsetting of Asia’s delicate balance of power.

Require a greater priority on improving border infrastructure, on overland connectivity to Southeast Asia via Bangladesh and India’s Northeast.

Terrorism emanating against India by entities based in Pakistan and supported by elements of the state remains a top priority. Much of China’s historical support for Pakistan has been driven by its desire to balance against India. India’s efforts at internationally isolating it and its offering a viable alternative model of South Asian engagement remain the only real prospect for resolving the Pakistan problem on India’s terms.

India is not yet fully a player in the seat of the rules of the international order, but it is taking steps to seek full membership of the most important global governance platforms. India is already a member of the G20, the East Asia Summit, and the BRICS coalition, a testament to its status as a large country with a fast-growing economy.

New Delhi also naturally aspires for permanent membership on the UN Security Council. India has recently embarked upon institution building of its own. The International Solar Alliance represents one such effort.

Through this policy initiative, India started to reach out its maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) with proposals of enhanced economic and security cooperation. With this India can assert strategic supremacy over the IOR and its relations with its maritime neighbours.

In an attempt to strengthen ties with India’s western neighbours, specially the Gulf countries government proposed this policy to complement its Act East policy concerning East Asia.

The foreign policy of the government concerns the policy initiatives made towards other states. The Ministry of External Affairs is responsible for carrying out the foreign policy of India. Foreign policy is currently focused on improving relations with neighbouring countries in South Asia, engaging the extended neighbourhood in Southeast Asia and the major global powers.

India’s priorities and strategic objectives:

Prioritising an integrated neighbourhood; “Neighbourhood First.”

Bridging diplomacy and development

Acting East as China rises

India’s foreign policy

Pakistan: Engagement and isolation

India as a leading power: Raising ambitions

Indian Ocean Outreach

Link West policy

Recent Developments

Shortcomings of India’s foreign policy

Pakistan: Engagement and isolation

India as a leading power: Raising ambitions

Indian Ocean Outreach

Link West policy

Need of the Hour

Concerns

Country’s strategic thinking continues to be guided by bureaucracy rather than strategic thinkers and specialists. Fundamental lacuna is without a grand strategic blueprint. Despite its stated global ambitions, India is confined to its South Asian geopolitical space. New Delhi’s diplomatic efforts is revolving around the issue of Pakistan-backed terrorism and is talking about it at every major international forum instead of larger issues such as foreign direct investment, global partnerships, institutional reforms, economic diplomacy, etc.

Reducing India’s foreign policy focus to terrorism to such an extent demonstrates how tactical we are in our approach.

India does not have a comprehensive national security doctrine which could help pacify insurgencies, manage borders better or fight cross-border terror.

Even as India is increasing its geo-strategic sphere of South Asia, its influence within it is steadily weakened by Chinese economic and military power.

New Delhi’s focus on terrorism has compromised India’s strategic relationship with China.

India’s insufficient commercial integration with Southeast and East Asia.

Gaps between diplomatic efforts and agents of domestic implementation.

Political resistance to engagement with Pakistan.

Relative inexperience with leading on matters of global governance.

Long-term strategic thinking requires intellectual depth and an ability to look beyond the tactical considerations.

There needs to be institutional coordination and follow-up action on the government’s key initiatives.

If there are well-articulated strategic doctrines, institutions will learn to refer to them and adjust their policies accordingly, leading to a lot more coherence in the country’s strategic behaviour.

A national security doctrine would require a great deal of political consultation, careful scenario building, and net assessment by experts.

Strategic thinking can flourish when the political class commits to institutional reform, intellectual investment and consensus building.
The One-China principle faces opposition from supporters of the Taiwan independence movement, which pushes to establish the “Republic of Taiwan” and cultivate a separate identity apart from China called “Taiwanization”.

It has resulted in Taiwan’s diplomatic isolation from the international community.

But even in its isolation Taiwan has not entirely lost out. It maintains vibrant economic and cultural ties with neighbours, and leverages on its emotional relationship with the US to extract concessions.

Trump has questioned the validity of the ‘One China’ policy.

Trump’s phone call with President Tsai Ing-wen was the first such contact with Taiwan by a U.S. president-elect or president since President Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, acknowledging Taiwan as part of “one China.”

This testy exchange sparked off inevitable speculation about the future of the US-China relationship, undoubtedly the most important relationship of the early 21st century.

He said it was not up to Beijing to decide whether he should take a call from Taiwan’s leader.

He also blamed China for devaluing its currency, and not cooperating with Washington on North Korea and the South China Sea.

Trump appears to believe that China has risen in recent times by taking undue advantage of the existing international world order.

Therefore, to “Make America Great Again” he seeks to renegotiate US ties with China, primarily on the economic front.

Some US analysts warned that Trump could provoke a military confrontation if he presses the Taiwan issue too far.

China is more likely to let the whole relationship with the United States deteriorate in order to show its resolve on the Taiwan issue.

India has refused to endorse the “one-China” policy since 2010.

As long as negotiations between the US and China do not see the emergence of a G2, India should probably cautiously welcome it.

It should simultaneously strengthen its ties with all the major global powers, including the US, Russia, China, and Japan.

For India to agree to a one-China policy, China should reaffirm a one-India policy.

How should India respond?

Who are the winners and losers?

The One China policy is the recognition in the US of the long-held position in Beijing that there is only one China, and Taiwan is part of that.

Any country wishing to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing must acknowledge there is only “One China” and sever all formal ties with Taiwan.

As a part of the policy, Washington maintains a robust, non-official relationship with Taiwan, including continued arms sales to the island.

The One China policy is also different from the “One China principle”, which is the principle that insists both Taiwan and mainland China are inalienable parts of a single “China”.

The policy can be traced back to 1949 and the end of the Chinese civil war.

The defeated Nationalists, also known as the Kuomintang, retreated to Taiwan and made it their seat of government while the victorious Communists declared the People’s Republic of China.

Both sides said they represented all of China.

Initially, many governments including the US recognised Taiwan as they shied away from Communist China.

But the diplomatic winds shifted as China and the United States saw a mutual need to develop relations beginning in the 1970s, with countries cutting ties with Taipei in favour of Beijing.

Many however still maintain informal relations with Taiwan through trade offices or cultural institutes, and the US remains Taiwan’s most important security ally.

Beijing has obviously benefited the most from the policy, which has cast Taiwan out into the diplomatic wilderness.

Taiwan is not recognised as an independent country by much of the world nor even the United Nations.

It undergoes extraordinary naming contortions just to participate in events and institutions like the Olympic Games and the World Trade Organization.

The fact that most of the international community follows the US in recognising Beijing means that Taiwan has been left isolated on the global stage.

Washington maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) which serves to assist and protect US interests in Taiwan and the US remains Taiwan’s most important security ally.
Low oil prices owing to Shale gas boom and slower global growth is resulting in job cuts for Indians.

Rising instability due to Shia - Sunni conflicts and radical Islamism is a direct threat to security of Indians.

Fierce competition from skilled labour from Philippines and cheap labour from Nepal.

Regressive and medieval policies like employer seizing the travel documents upon arrival known as Kafila labour system is exploitative.

Discriminative practices owing to a racist, colonial mindset still persists. This makes it difficult to secure jobs and work visas.

stricter H1B visa norms in the US congress

president-elect Donald Trump’s call to channel more jobs to Americans

Revision of visa norms in UK post brexit might hit the Indian Diaspora hard, specially the IT professionals

Disparity in jobs and racial abuse of Sikh and Muslim community due to terrorist branding

Cultural integration due to various eating preferences (beef eating), consumerism and nuclear society

Majority of Indian diaspora want to retain their Indian citizenship along with the citizenship of the country of their residence.

To ensure that Diaspora members feel welcomed on their arrival in India, easier procedures for immigration and customs clearances that are marked by courteous service are essential.

Negotiating a Standard Labour Export Agreements with the host countries

Monitoring and supervision of our overseas workers by our Missions

compulsory insurance schemes covering the risks faced by our overseas workers

PIOs make frequent visits to their home state or to visit their relatives. There should be greater focus on promoting tourism among 2nd generation PIOs.

Welfare of Indian Women married to NRIs/PIOs

Government should also consider setting up Special Economic Zones, exclusively for projects to be set up by NRIs/PIOs.

The Government should consider issuing special infrastructure bonds for attracting NRI/PIO investments on the lines of the Israel Bonds.

Diasporic professionals are working in senior positions in manufacturing industry can be helpful in promoting India as an important destination for out-sourcing.

Government should also consider setting up Special Economic Zones, exclusively for projects to be set up by NRIs/PIOs.

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The challenge before India lies in the way it taps its widespread diaspora’s financial and intellectual capital.

"Diaspora" is an omnibus phrase which brackets people of Indian origin who have emigrated since the 19th century to all corners of the world.

They spread the Indian Culture and traditions abroad benefiting India in general and send back remittances back home helping the foreign exchange reserves in particular.

Over 30 million overseas Indians are living throughout the globe. They are contributing in their countries and also participating in Indian development.

India has the world’s largest diaspora, according to figures from the United Nations.

They serve as an important ‘bridge’ to access knowledge, expertise, resources and markets for the development of the country of origin with the rest of the world.

Indian diaspora is an important part of India’s “soft diplomacy”. For example, Indian diaspora played a critical role in the fracturing of Indo-US Nuclear deal.

They have also contributed to the growth and development of the country of their residence. For example, Silicon Valley represents the success of Indians.

The Indian Diaspora has played an important role in the field of Science & Technology.

They are a significant source of trade and investment in India.

source of large inflows of remittances, which has been helping balance the current account. According to the World Bank, Indian diaspora is going to be the largest earner of remittances in the world in next few years.

The government has started, since 2003, the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community to the development of India.

Merger of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with the Ministry of External Affairs

India also allowed visitors from 43 countries, including the United States, Australia and Fiji, to receive visas upon arrival, replacing the previous process, which took weeks.

The Overseas India Facilitation Centre was set-up by the Government of India in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), to facilitate economic engagement of overseas Indians with India.

The government evacuated Indian Diaspora in Yemen in 2015 through the Operation Rahat and from South Sudan through Operation Sankat Mochan.

The government is emphasising more on youth and has started a scheme “Know your country”.

"Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana" targeting Indian youth seeking overseas employment.

The Indian government is active on the social media and the government provides quick response and solves the problems of Indian Diaspora through the social media.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2017

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a Convention organized to connect the Government of India and State Governments of India to its Overseas Indian Diaspora.

PBD 2017 focused on the theme "Redefining the engagement with the Indian Diaspora" strengthen Diaspora engagement and provide a platform for networking with the Diaspora.

Recognize the Diaspora’s contribution to India and know their expectations and concerns.

Deepen engagement with young Diasporas, to help them know more about their roots.
Benefits of Indian economic growth are concentrated among a few, while a growing proportion of the population has been relegated to living as working poor.

The worrying trend is the increasing rate of informal employment even in the organized sector.

It is regulation that is responsible for the proliferation of unorganized units and informal employment.

Informal sector in India suffers from a low productivity syndrome, compared to the formal sector.

The sector is characterized by excessive seasonality of employment (especially in the farm sector), preponderance of casual and contractual employment.

Absence of social security measures and welfare legislations

Poor human capital base (in terms of education, skill and training) add to the vulnerability and weaken the bargaining strength of workers in the informal sector.

A number of directive principles of state policy relating to aspects of social security were incorporated in the Indian constitution.

Both the central and state governments have formulated certain specific schemes to support unorganized workers

Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and MUDRA Bank

MUDRA Bank will refinance Micro-Finance Institutions through a Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana.

There is a need to make serious efforts at facilitating a widespread environment that will develop a formal culture in India’s labour markets.

Demonetisation has the potential to facilitate an environment that will develop a formal culture in India’s labour markets

The need of the hour is to generate an enabling environment that will develop the urge of “formal” culture in the labour market

Skill development of the labour force would improve the quality of the workforce as well as the status of employment.

Need for access to finance, better infrastructure, market information, government incentives and a platform for formal association

Improvement in skill levels of the workforce that match the requirements of the job market

Nature of Informal Sector

The Indian labour market is characterised by predominance of informal employment with more than 90 per cent of India’s informal workforce working as self-employed and casual workers.

Reports based on the periodic employment and unemployment surveys (EUS) conducted by NSSO suggests that only a small share of employment is in the organised sector.

The contribution of unorganized sector to GDP is about 50%.

Among the unorganized sector, a considerable proportion (about 65%) is engaged in agricultural sector, which indicates the prominence of rural segment in the informal economy.

In 2004-05, the composition of organized vs unorganized was 13:87; while in 2011-12, this had changed to 17:83.

The growth in organized employment was informal in nature. So, even within the organized sector, formal employment declined significantly and informal employment rose with time.

Even in those states of India that achieved a high labour reform index, like Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, the jobs that were created were overwhelmingly informal in nature.

The distribution of informal employment shows that manufacturing, construction and trade, hotel & restaurant are the main employment generating sectors.

There is an overwhelming share of non-agricultural employment in the “informal sector”.

Women are found to be over-represented in the informal sector because the flexibility, especially in home-based work.

lack of labour reforms is the main culprit that has kept employment in India low and informal.

Despite high growth, most sectors chose to employ labour informally because it lowered their overall costs.

labour market rigidities, poor skill levels, increasing competition from imports as the factors inducing creation of informal employment

socio-economic fabric of the society comprising of a large number of poorly educated labour force, traditional occupations, poor financial inclusion, combined with lack of motivation or aspirational skills.

In India the level of education is low and there is lack of vocational skills
Women’s labour force participation and access to decent work are important and necessary elements of an inclusive and sustainable development process. Policy makers in India and throughout the region should take a comprehensive approach to improving labour market outcomes for women.

Improving access to and relevance of education and training programs, skills development, access to child care, maternity protection, and provision of safe and accessible transport would be essential.

Policy-makers should be more concerned about whether women are able to access better jobs or start up a business, and take advantage of new labour market opportunities as a country grows.

A policy framework encouraging and enabling women’s participation should be constructed with active awareness of the “gender-specific” constraints that face most women.

Gender responsive policies need to be contextually developed. The goal is not merely to increase female labour force participation, but to provide opportunities for decent work that will, in turn, contribute to the economic empowerment of women.

Increasing labour market flexibility allowing more women, many of whom are working in the informal sector, to be employed in the formal sector.

Supply-side reforms to improve infrastructure and address other constraints to job creation could also enable more women to enter the labour force.

Higher social spending, including investment in education, can also lead to higher female labour force participation by boosting female stocks of human capital.

Women continue to face many barriers to enter labour market and to access decent work and disproportionately face a range of multiple challenges. These include access to employment, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, wage parity, discrimination, and balancing the competing burdens of work and family responsibilities. Women are heavily represented in the informal economy where their exposure to risk of exploitation is usually greatest and they have the least formal protection.

Dedicated efforts in skilling, re-skilling and improving their educational outcomes through infrastructure development will help. Female teacher availability, incentives along with creating an adequate number of favourable job opportunities are necessary to harness their potential.

Focus on microfinance-supported self-help group-centred activities, which will make them economically active along with handling domestic duties.

This will help to address the need for working finance assistance as expressed by the females willing to accept work. Rural manufacturing should create jobs that can be undertaken by women in their household or as a community.

For females in the 15-24 age group who are about to enter the labour force, vocational and basic skills training need to be provided.

Improving connectivity between the villages and the satellite towns and small cities will also enhance female labour force participation.

Example of rural South Africa, where electrification led to a 9% increase in participation of women in the labour force.

India has already started realizing its demographic dividend and female population which account for nearly 50% of the population is an asset to be utilized carefully if we have to reap this window of opportunity.

Women’s labour force participation

Women’s economic participation is highest in the north-eastern states, where women traditionally enjoy a higher status in society. India has one of the lowest female participation rates in the world, ranking 120 among the 131 countries for which data are available (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2013).

The abysmal women labour force participation rate has been a structural problem in India. Longer term trends suggest that female labour force participation rates in India have been puzzling.

Female participation rates declined from 34.1 per cent in 1999-00 to 27.2 per cent in 2011-12, and wide gender differences in participation rate also persists.

Also there are considerable variations between urban and rural areas.

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Women’s labour force participation

Most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics, and thus women’s work tends to be under-reported.

As the economy grows and develops its non-agrarian sectors, the importance of the agrarian economy diminishes and the demand for women’s labour declines.

Lack of adequate infrastructure in terms of roads and connectivity can also be deterring women from undertaking work in the nearby areas. Practices like sex-selective abortion, is a possible reason for poor participation of women in the workforce.

International Monetary Fund chief says women participation will boost India’s economic output by as much as 27%.

Women’s work is also associated with better development outcomes, including greater investments in children’s education and health.

A person can give his or her family high standard of living as the financial problem does not arise.

Advantages

Better employment opportunities for women can also contribute to increased profitability and productivity.

Companies that invest in women’s employment often find that it benefits their bottom line by improving staff retention, innovation, and access to talent and new markets.

The potential for social and economic change is too good to pass up.

Overall, better jobs for women benefit individuals, families, communities, companies, and economies.
They account for 42 per cent of the total working population.

E-commerce is maturing as an industry with a better understanding of utilisation of costs and resources.

More and more retailers are getting on to e-commerce platforms which will boost need for manpower and skills at the digital end.

South Asia has been the most affected by such volatile conditions.

Growth, and subsequently hiring, will be slow as manufacturing and auto companies are taking a cautious approach post demonetisation.

This leads to slowdown in reducing the incidence of working poverty.

Skill development of the enormous talent pool will act as one of the critical levers of growth.

The challenge for policymakers worldwide is to ensure that incomes do not fall below the levels of basic subsistence as the world marches towards the poverty reduction targets under the 2030 SDGs.

The focus on automation and upskilling may result in the loss of jobs largely related to testing.

India's challenge of providing remunerative employment is also more complex because of its large informal sector.

By 2020, India could be among the top three pharmaceutical markets by incremental growth and the sixth largest globally in absolute size.

Today's inequalities in education will become tomorrow's inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

The government's push to improve affordable healthcare, establish new institutes and medical education will play a pivotal role in the growth of this industry.

High-skilled R&D and innovation professionals would still be a challenge for the Indian market.

India will be the fourth-largest smartphone market by 2020.

Focus upon Incentivising the local businesses like handloom and craft work as India did with schemes like USTAAD.

Digital India initiatives are expected to give a fillip to telecom jobs.

Labour intensive sectors must be promoted. Government should invest in infrastructure projects under Make in India which creates more jobs.

5G technology in India is likely to open up new opportunities.

Foster the entrepreneurship spirit among youth so as to generate more jobs.

The infrastructure sector has also deeply felt the adverse impacts of demonetisation, as capital expenditures and cash flows have been affected.

MSME sector employees one third of labour force and contribute 35% to GDP hence this sector must be focused to create more jobs.

Need to skill the unskilled labourers in this sector, as otherwise automation is likely to eat away at a major chunk of their jobs.

Skill development to make this working age population employable.

Initiatives like Skill India and greater involvement from companies in skilling their workforce will improve the job outlook.

Effective coordination between academia and industry to provide vocational education.

Rapid advances in digital technologies and automation are displacing people from work in all sectors of the economy.

Boosting Tourism industry and making agriculture a profitable venture can provide cushion in this scenario.

Studies in the US and Australia estimate that by 2035, 35% of all work in their economies will be automated.

UNDP says countries such as India could focus on specific industries, particularly in manufacturing, to create jobs.

Lack of requisite skill also contribute to the cause.

Universal registration of workers and effective implementation of existing labour laws.

Large scale migration due to vagaries of weather and conflict at some places which further aggravate the problem of unemployment.

Hence all global institution like world Bank, IMF, AIIB must work with all nations to sideline the vagaries of job market.

Migration of Syrian refugee to Europe, Rohingyas Muslims from Myanmar to neighbouring countries like India and Bangladesh.

Protectionist policies being resorted by nation to boost employment in domestic job market.

Low wages and lack of social security benefits to the contract labourers.
Digital payments can enable greater economic growth, growth in international e-commerce, and aid in social and financial inclusion. One of the most cited examples is the M-PESA payments platform in Kenya. Digital payments can improve the state's ability to curb tax leakages, funding of criminal activities and reduce cash-related costs. Digital payments enable customers to make certain types of transactions that are not viable in cash (such as remote payments). One of the most unique advantages of digital payments is that they are low cost and low priced. Digital payments also have the potential of becoming a gateway to other financial services such as credit facilities for small businesses and low-income households. Lack of easy access to formal credit means merchants fall prey to illegal ponzi schemes, chit funds and exploitative money lenders.

By enabling the creation of robust credit history, digital payments can also enable the provision of micro-credit to low-income households and small businesses, boosting the emerging e-commerce sector in India, and position India as a major e-commerce market. India continues to have one of the lowest use of digital payments globally. India has one of the lowest number of point-of-sale (POS) terminal per million people in the world.

Concerns around consumer protection, competition, safety and convenience will be a roll-out of robust and user-friendly digital payments solutions to un-electrified areas/areas without telecommunications network coverage, remains challenge. Oversight of payment and settlement systems providing consumer protection for users.

Given the low literacy levels in India, ensuring safety and security of electronic transactions is indeed a formidable challenge. There is a need to develop connectivity infrastructure parallel to the cashless push. More open platforms like UPI (Unified Payments Interface) that have an interoperable framework are also important. The direct benefit transfer programmes should also be structured in a way to emphasize not on withdrawal of cash from bank accounts but on cashless transactions. A reduction in import duty to make POS terminals affordable for acquiring banks.

The role of the State should be minimal and be driven towards creating an enabling ecosystem. India needs the combined effort of banks and non-banks to promote digital payments.

The vision of the Committee is to set a roadmap for digital payments to grow substantially over the next three years. The Report recommends inclusion of financially and socially excluded groups and assimilation of emerging technologies in the market safeguarding security of digital transactions and providing level playing to all stakeholders and new players who will enter this new transaction space. What the Watal Panel has recommended:

- The setting up of a separate, more independent payments regulator within the RBI framework.
- Revisiting the Payment and Settlement Act to include clauses on consumer protection, data security and privacy.
- A more prominent role for Aadhaar, including its usage for primary identification.
- Operation of RTGS and NEFT on a 24x7 basis, allowing non-bank payment service providers to directly access the payment systems.
- Interoperability between banks and payment service providers, including mobile numbers and Aadhaar.
- Systematically important payment service providers to be regulated by RBI.
- Creating a fund to promote digital transactions.
- All systemically important payment service providers to be regulated by the RBI. This panel has also suggested that government departments levy a cash-handling charge to discourage cash transactions.

There should be incentives for consumers to make payments by giving a discount or cashback. It had also suggested interoperability between banks and non-bank digital payment gateways/entities as well as within non-banks. RBI has also been asked to upgrade the existing real-time gross settlement system (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) systems so that they operate on a 24/7 basis. Rewards for government departments, state governments, districts and Panchayats for enabling digital payments.

Create a fund proposed as DIPAYAN from savings generated from cash-less transactions to expand digital payments. Today, this is achievable as it is possible to build secure payment solutions suited to ordinary Indians which are as convenient as sending a message.

About sixty-five percent of the population have active mobile telephony. Ninety-nine percent have electronic identity in the form of Aadhaar. India has a unique opportunity to leverage the Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (JAM) trinity to rapidly enable ordinary Indians to participate in digital payments.

Sixty-five percent of our population is below thirty-five years of age. This population could find it easier to adopt to new ways of doing payments.
As per RBI Act, the Central Government may from time to time give such directions to the Bank as it may, after consultation with the Governor of the Bank, consider necessary in the public interest.

The reason behind this clause is so that any major decisions are made by the government which is elected and hence accountable to the people.

The decision to demonetise high-denomination currency was taken by the government in public interest after consultation with the RBI.

The RBI board simply performed its duty by implementing the decision.

The separation of debt management from the RBI is not an assault on the RBI’s independence by the government. Instead, it is to remove the conflict of interest that exists in the RBI’s functions of setting interest rates, and management of the government’s debt.

There has not been any assault on the RBI’s autonomy — in the setting of interest rates or in the regulation of banks or in other operational spheres.

As government is the owner of PSBs, government’s interference is justified in case of disbursement of loans from PSBs.

Consultations between the government and the RBI are undertaken on various matters of public importance wherever such consultation is mandated by law or has evolved as a practice.

Government while demonetising the currency notes was acting within the norms of the law and did not assault the autonomy of the central bank.

In a democracy, the final responsibility of all policy decisions must lie with Government.

Therefore there should be mutual cooperation and coordination between RBI and Government in large at public interests for an efficient and sustainable economy.

Relations between central banks and governments have never been easy anywhere. India is no exception.

The demonetisation decision has led several observers to express concern about the autonomy and institutional integrity of the RBI.

Government directing the RBI on such matters and RBI acting accordingly is being seen as an infringement on its autonomy.

RBI has 3 main roles in which it acts as an autonomous body free from the interference of the government.

Ensure low and stable inflation via the autonomous conduct of monetary policy.

Once the target is laid down by the central government, the central bank must ensure that it meets those targets with complete operational autonomy.

The RBI is the government’s debt manager

This function has been proposed to be hived out to an independent debt management agency but resisted by the central bank.

Regulation of the banking system

Government plays a separate role in the banking sector as the owner of public sector banks which control nearly 70 per cent of all lending.

United Forum of RBI Officers in a letter to RBI Governor had said employees were feeling “humiliated” by events since demonetisation.

They alleged that the government has been impinging on the central bank’s autonomy by appointing an official for currency coordination.

Three former governors -- Manmohan Singh, Bimal Jalan and Y V Reddy -- flagged concerns about the central bank’s functioning.

Former deputy governors, including Usha Thorat and K C Chakrabarty too have voiced their worries.
Data from RBI show that growth in bank credit decelerated to 1.2 per cent in the April 1-December 9, 2016 period, compared with the 6.2 per cent pace witnessed in the comparable period in 2015.

Deposit growth, on the other hand, almost doubled in pace, accelerating from 7.1 per cent in the same period in 2015 to 13.6 per cent in 2016.

Banks liabilities have jumped sharply, while their assets have instead almost stagnated. This has added to their woes at a time when mounting bad loans have pushed most public sector banks to post record quarterly losses.

SBI's decision to cut its MCLR by 90 basis points is a timely nudge to borrowers, especially given the sharp slowdown in credit growth in the current fiscal year.

Other banks have also followed with cuts of 45bp-90bp in their rates.

Cuts in bank lending rates may spur some Indian companies to switch their fund raising back to loans, reversing a recent trend towards the bond market.

Sharp lending rate cuts will slow corporate bonds issues in the near term. Corporate borrowers stand to benefit the most as they will look to refinance their loans at much lower yields than before.

Rate cuts "will make banks competitive against bond markets and aid credit growth."

India Inc said the move will act as a "booster dose" for the economy and propel consumption as lending may pick up significantly.

Industry chamber CII said that the rate cuts will play a key role in the process of economic strengthening in the medium term.

As loans become cheaper, sectors such as consumer durables, automobiles and housing will see a recovery.

Start-ups and SMEs will play a major role in the next growth cycle.

The marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) refers to the minimum interest rate of a bank below which it cannot lend, except in some cases allowed by the RBI.

This new methodology replaces the base rate system.

Based upon MCLR, interest rate for different types of customers will be fixed in accordance with their riskiness.

The interest rate given by a bank for deposits and the repo rate are the decisive factors in the calculation of MCLR.

Banks were slightly slow to change their interest rate in accordance with repo rate change by the RBI.

Rates based on marginal cost of funds are more sensitive to changes in the policy rates.

This is very essential for the effective implementation of monetary policy.

To improve the transmission of policy rates into the lending rates of banks.

To bring transparency in the methodology followed by banks for determining interest rates on advances.

To ensure availability of bank credit at interest rates which are fair to borrowers as well as banks.

To enable banks to become more competitive and enhance their long run value and contribution to economic growth.

MCLR system facilitates monetary transmission because it is mandatory for banks to consider the repo rate while calculating their MCLR.

Repo rate reduction by the RBI will reduce overall interest rate in the economy and thus promoting loans for consumption and investment.

Now with MCLR, banks are obliged to readjust interest rate monthly.

Under the base rate system, banks were changing the base rate, only occasionally.

Banks waited for long time or waited for large repo cuts to bring corresponding reduction in their base rate.

Under base rate, the cost is calculated on an average basis by simply averaging the interest rate incurred for deposits.

The requirement that MCLR should be revised monthly makes the MCLR very dynamic compared to the base rate.

Costs that the bank is incurring to get funds (means deposit) is calculated on a marginal basis.

The marginal costs include Repo rate whereas this was not included under the base rate.

Many other interest rates usually incurred by banks when mobilizing funds also to be carefully considered by banks when calculating the costs.
HIV self-testing is defined as a process in which people can collect their own specimen (saliva or blood), perform a test and interpret the result, often in private or with someone they trust.

Results are ready within 20 minutes or less.

Those with positive results are advised to seek confirmatory tests at health clinics.

WHO recommends they receive information and links to counselling as well as rapid referral to prevention, treatment and care services.

The United Nations has set targets to diagnose 90% of all people with HIV by 2020.

Countries are seeking ways to rapidly increase access to and uptake of HIV testing services.

HIV self-testing has shown potential to reach people at high risk for HIV who may not otherwise test.

Today more countries have begun to introduce or develop national HIV self-testing policies and regulatory frameworks.

Global coverage rates for all HIV testing, prevention, and treatment are lower among men than women.

Twenty-three countries currently have national policies that support HIV self-testing.

There has been a 66% drop in incidence in 2015 in India compared with 2000.

The number of new HIV infections last year was 86,000; children below 15 years of age alone account for 12% of this number.

The government has approved in principle the proposal to take HIV testing closer to those in need by starting community-based testing.

India is also weighing the option of self-testing.

With the World Health Organisation releasing guidelines on HIV self-testing, a major obstacle in improving access to diagnosis has been cleared.

Early diagnosis will help in a prompt start to treatment and enable the infected to live longer and healthier.

HIV self-testing reach more people with undiagnosed HIV and represents a step forward to empower individuals, diagnose people earlier before they become sick.

This will bring services closer to where people live, and create demand for HIV testing.

This is particularly important for those people facing barriers to accessing existing services.

People with HIV are suspected to face discrimination hence self testing ensures privacy & confidentiality.
There have been serious debates about whether the projects targeted by green bond issuers are green enough because the proceeds of green bond were being used to fund a dam project that hurts the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

- Lack of Credit rating or rating guidelines for green projects and bonds
- Lack of historical trends on the bond performance

Green bonds in India have a shorter tenor period of about 10 years in India whereas a typical loan would be for minimum 13 years.

- Buyers of Indian green bonds may not invest in any bonds that are rated lower than the AAA-
- Lack of green bond standards, low credit rating of potential issuers, and higher cost of issuance.
- Limited to large, creditworthy investors

Limited set of green investors, limiting demand for green bonds to infuse new capital to scale the renewable energy market

- There is a need for developing a formal definition of ‘green’ to ensure understanding across sectors.
- Smart cities project may be suitable to attract private investment and may soon culminate into India’s first green municipal bond.

Green bonds act as an effective tool to tap climate funds from developed countries under paris accord

- Collective participation of regulators, policymakers, corporate and financial institutions is going to be crucial in pushing frontiers of green bonds further
- Leverage a wider investor base such as pension funds, sovereign wealth funds and insurance companies

International Solar Alliance could provide needed support mechanisms to grow the green bonds market in India and internationally.

- The Ministry of Finance play an active role in attracting both issuers and investors to green bonds by providing tax-free bonds
- Stimulate demand from institutional and retail investors

Organize workshops, training content, and webinars on green bonds to increase familiarity and bring in new investors

- Simplify issuance and compliance process to increase transparency and reach new investors

### What are its benefits?

- **Green Bonds**
  - Green bonds is a debt instrument with which capital is being raised to fund ‘green’ projects, which typically include those relating to renewable energy, emission reductions and so on.
  - Green bonds are issued by multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, corporations, government agencies and municipalities.
  - Today Green bonds have emerged as one of the key financing mechanisms driving the global economy’s transition to a greener future.
  - With the rapid growth in green bond issuance in India and China, the Asian market has emerged as a frontrunner in the green bonds space.

Green bonds enhance an issuer’s reputation, as it helps in showcasing their commitment towards sustainable development.

- It also provides issuers access to specific set of global investors who invest only in green ventures.
- With an increasing focus of foreign investors towards green investments, it could also help in reducing the cost of capital.
- Green bonds typically carry a lower interest rate than the loans offered by the commercial banks.
- An important feature of green bonds is that the responsibility of repayment is with the issuer and not with the firm that is utilizing the funds in green projects.
- Green bonds expand the quantum of clean energy finance and broaden investor base

**Ability to meet commitments, for signatories to climate agreements and other green commitments.**

- Green bonds could support India aims to install 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022, which will require an estimated Rs264 billion of investments.

A growing number of corporates and financial institutions have leveraged this innovative mechanism to raise capital, attracting foreign investments.

- India also witnessed its award-winning first green masala bond (rupee-denominated bond), with the International Financial Corporation raising an off-shore rupee bond on London Stock Exchange

These green bonds have been crucial in increasing financing to sunrise sectors like renewable energy, thus contributing to India’s sustainable growth.

- Green bond proceeds have also been allocated to low carbon transport sector, low carbon buildings, water management and waste management

Green bonds is a key tool towards financing the nation’s climate change targets.
India in general, and New Delhi in particular, have struggled with air quality issues for some time now. Three years ago, the capital was named as the most polluted city in the world, while Indian cities regularly dominate the top 20. Diwali festival of lights led to elevated levels of pollution across the city for almost two weeks. Statistics showed that concentrations of particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) reached levels of 900 mg/m^3. That’s 15 times the average levels for India and a 36 times the level deemed as “safe” by WHO.

Hundreds of cities in the country are as badly or worse polluted than Delhi. Integrated intelligent transport systems have to be introduced. Public transportation has to improve.

Aggressive campaign needs to be launched to get people away from personal vehicles. Increase the number of garbage pickup trucks, integrate the collection and segregation process. Legalise and provide benefits to ragpickers, and set up a system where every kilogram of waste is picked up. Delhi needs heating solutions.

During winter months the need for heat is the highest among those living in the open, including workers at construction sites, markets, small kiosks, guards and people living in slums. This needs immediate attention.

These industries include food processing, textiles, leather works, wood processing, pharmaceuticals, plastics and paints and metal processing. A campaign to ban the burning of crackers need to happen all year long and needs to be well-planned. Raise awareness about the health impacts of burning crackers. Political will to ban the sale of crackers everywhere in the state and apprehend any illegal importers from other states.

Incentive program for farmers that addresses their concerns and reasons for stubble burning. Incentive program and technical support for the industries that can collect the stubble and burn it in a controlled environment. Address governance issues. Needs parties and governments to work together and is not something that one party, one agency or one civil-society group can achieve in isolation. It has to be a joint effort to improve the life of every person.

For this, we need an independent body with teeth to clamp down on offending actors across states. Opting for alternative or renewable energy sources to produce power presents a practical solution to air pollution. Natural gas, fuel cells, and batteries can as well substitute the use of fossil fuels as cleaner energy sources. Investing more in renewable and sustainable energy sources reduces pollution at the same time protects the future.

We need a proactive policy spanning multiple years, and we need to act fast, local and through multiple agencies across multiple political parties to take the long view on air pollution.
Introduction

- Delhi has registered its worst air quality in recent times.
- Government should take urgent measures to prevent air pollution in order to stem the current impact as well as the future cost of healthcare.

Reason for Delhi Air Pollution

- Paddy stubble burning in neighbouring Haryana and Punjab is a major reason for affecting air quality in Delhi during the onset of winter.
- Burning of coal, wood, dry leaves and of garbage at a waste disposal ground led to pollution in Delhi.
- Burning of crackers can be added to that list as well.
- Sources of pollution such as road dust, vehicular pollution and open burning exhausts from automobiles, industry and thermal power plants.
- Winter is also the time when generally the westerly winds prevail and a giant plume of smoke covers north India.
- Intensive agriculture is also a contributor to greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide causing climate change.
- Only 20 per cent of the pollution in NCR is accounted for outdated farm methods. A whopping 80 per cent of air pollution in the capital is because of sources within the city and NCR.
- Lack of political involvement in solving the pollution crisis and its residents to not compromise on their lifestyle choices.
- The capital has the highest level of high-emission vehicles in the country and it has more cars than it can handle.

Role of Agriculture in Delhi Air Pollution

- A comprehensive restructuring of the agricultural economy is required.
- Government should prioritise public health and take an active interest in improving farm practices across India.
- A new variety of arhar (pigeon pea) has the potential to be grown in the paddy-growing regions of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and eventually in all of India.
- Most important, arhar straw, unlike paddy straw, is green and can be ploughed back into the soil.
- Pulses will use less fertilizer, less water, and fewer emissions, and in addition will replenish the soil with nitrogen unlike paddy which depletes the soil.
- There is also a need to develop rice varieties that are both rich in grain yield and high in straw quality.
- Use of such dual-purpose rice varieties will help to maintain food security, farm income and improve environmental sustainability.
- Major shift in policy that can reduce pollution while also promoting indigenous research and science, incentivising pulses production, and rationalising pricing more broadly.
- Converting crises into opportunities is the hallmark of good public policy.

Reasons for Stubble burning

- Stubble burning is a common practice followed by farmers to prepare the field for sowing of wheat in November as there is little time left between the harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat.
- Burning of wheat residue is not necessary for the farmers because of the availability of technology and its higher economic value as dry fodder.
- Rice straw, however, is not used as fodder as it is found to be non-palatable to animals due to its high silica content.
- Because of its little economic value as animal feed and other general uses, farmers are prompted to burn it on the field instead of incurring a high cost on collecting it.
- Even though farmers are aware that the burning of straw is harmful to health, they do not have alternatives for utilising them effectively.
- The farmers are ill-equipped to deal with waste because they cannot afford the new technology that is available to handle the waste material.

Solution

- Extensive development of irrigation, assured price and secured market has induced farmers to grow paddy and expand the area of cultivation considerably over time.
- Farmers in this traditionally wheat-growing belt started cultivating rice and wheat in rotation year after year.
- Various studies have shown that the rice-wheat rotation has put land and other resources under severe strain, resulting in depletion of soil nutrients, decline in water table, build-up of pests and diseases, and micronutrient deficiency.
- Crop diversification with vegetables and fruits hit a roadblock due to marketing problems.
- Farmers have been lured into cultivating more and more from their fields mainly because of faulty agriculture policies followed for many decades.
- Organic matter is the life blood of any top soil but in regions of north western India organic carbon content is constantly being depleted at a rapid rate.
Very few countries recognise environmentally-displaced persons as a specific group, notable among them being Sweden and Finland. US and the EU have instruments of temporary protection addressing sudden onset natural disasters.

People migrating due to environmental disasters should be accorded 'refugee' status in international law. Recognise the threat posed by climate change to livelihoods and human safety.

Establishment of Climate Change Displacement Coordination Facility to relocate migrants and rehabilitate them in safer regions. Provide technical and capacity building support to national and local initiatives tackling such displacement.

Develop suitable policies to manage loss and damage by addressing climate change-induced displacement. A permanent solution requires an international treaty framework that recognises 'environmental refugees' and the obligations of nation states in accommodating them within their territories.

Expanding the ambit of the existing UN Refugee Convention to include climate migration. Creating an independent treaty framework addressing the challenges of climate change-induced migration comprehensively.

Developed countries should get serious about mitigating carbon emissions and promoting development strategies that help the poor adapt to climate change. New legal instrument, either a protocol under the UNFCCC or a stand-alone convention has to be worked out.

Disaster preparedness and response plans. Disaster preparedness needs to be improved in flood defenses, urban planning to relocate families, more efficient water storage and irrigation schemes, access to improved seeds and fertilizers.

It is important to acknowledge that mitigation and adaptation are keys to a climate resilient future. International community must take responsibility for mitigating climate change as there is a strongly established link between global human activity and greenhouse gas emissions.

The planned resettlement of climate migrants will require considerable financial support from developed nations. It is important that historical GHG emissions are taken into consideration while formulating legal protocols around climate migrants.

Countries with the highest per capita emission levels should pledge their financial support for the cause at the earliest.

An increasing number of people globally are facing displacement due to droughts, famines, rising sea levels and other natural disasters caused by climate change. This class of migrants has been labelled as "environmental refugees".

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, an estimated 24 million people are being displaced annually by natural disasters since 2008. This crisis will make almost half a billion people worldwide "environmental refugees" by the end of the century.

Climate change can also cause an escalation in political unrest and push people to migrate in search of a more peaceful country. Millions of people displaced by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, and agricultural disruption.

The Syrian refugee crisis is an example of this phenomenon. Syria was plagued by a severe drought between 2007-2010, which resulted in the migration of more than a million people from rural to urban areas and triggered a social unrest that contributed to the popular uprising in 2011. Slowly unfolding disasters, including desertification and water shortages, will harm economic development and force people out of climate-sensitive livelihoods.

Mediterranean nations are already witnessing a large influx of African migrants who are fleeing their countries from natural disasters and conflict. A study tied the risk of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa to climate change.

As Climate Change Worsens, India Must Consider a Policy on Environmental Migration.

India, as the largest country in the subcontinent, is the destination to move to for those displaced by these disasters. Floods, storm surges, saltwater intrusions and cyclones have pushed millions of people from rural Bangladesh into India. Earthquakes and water-induced disasters in Nepal, droughts in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the rise in sea levels around the Maldives are also likely to cause large-scale migration into India in the future.

A regional framework or bilateral agreement would be the most viable alternative for South Asia. It would be in India's interest to drive such an initiative. It would also allow for good practice to be developed and exchanged within the region.

India, the U.S., and China are predicted to suffer tremendously from climate change - induced migration, resulting in large-scale displacement of their own populations. Neither the climate pact nor the recently concluded United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants addressed the direct human cost of climate change.

There are also economic, social and cultural fallouts from such disasters, and these also drive migration, making it difficult to distinguish between environmental and economic migrants.
Frequent data breaches will steadily erode the confidence of Internet users and deter them from using digital gateways.

If the country's digital assets are today vulnerable to espionage and disruptive attacks, there are institutional, economic and social factors fuelling their neglect.

The National Informatics Centre (NIC), which hosts the government's mail servers, has been compromised several times in the past. Appointment of National Cyber Security Coordinator in 2014 has not been supplemented by creating liaison officers in the States.

The Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is woefully understaffed. The private sector fail to report and respond to breaches in digital networks.

Most Indian applications available on Android and iOS stores allow for automatic updates or patches, increasing the likelihood that an exploit or malware can be introduced without the user's knowledge.

Most Indian companies that rely on Gmail for official communication also do not make two-factor authentication (2FA) mandatory for its employees.

Post-demonetisation, the Centre has pushed the citizenry to go 'cashless', without building capacity and awareness on the security of devices or transactions.

Seamless integration of agencies involved in the area of cyber security.

Creating Centres of Excellence for research in identified areas of advanced security.

Setting up a mechanism to certify IT products to provide security assurance.

Establishing Security Information Sharing and Analysis Centres (ISACs) across the regions and sectors for government-to-private and private-to-private information sharing.

Establishing Sectoral CERTs.

Strengthening National Cyber Alert System for rapid identification and response to security incidents and information exchange.

Setting up Cyber Security Help Desks at regional levels for general users to provide first level of guidance and support.

Establishing Cyber Security Training Labs/facilities across the country in collaboration with State Governments and Private Sector

Setting up of think tanks in Public-Private mode to identify gaps in the existing policy and frameworks and take action to address them.

Launching formal Security Education, Skill Building and Awareness Programmes.

The cyber security threats emanate from a wide variety of sources and manifest themselves in disruptive activities that target individuals, businesses, national infrastructure and Governments alike.

Their effects carry significant risk for public safety, security of nation and the stability of the globally linked economy as a whole.

cyber security threats pose one of the most serious economic and national security challenges.

The initiatives taken by the Government have focused on threats to critical information infrastructure and national security, adoption of relevant security technologies, Information Security awareness, training and research.

Due to the dynamic nature of cyber threat scenario, these actions need to be continued, refined and strengthened from time to time.

Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 has been enacted to cater to the needs of National Cyber Security.

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has been operational as a national agency for cyber security incident response.

Growth and application of digital signature certificates in a number of areas.

National Crisis Management Plan for countering cyber attacks and cyber terrorism has been prepared and is being updated annually.

Security Auditors have been empanelled for conducting security audits.

R&D activities have been supported through premier Academic and R&D Institutions.

Nation-wide Information Security Education and Awareness Programme have been in progress to create necessary cyber security awareness.

As banking sector plays a crucial role in a country like India, a strong cyber security framework is necessary.

Threats like Phishing, Denial of cards, Credit card Frauds causes thousands and lakhs of money every day which causes huge financial risks and effects Indian economy.

RBI aim of cashless transactions will be delayed and this goal can't be reached if such attacks keeps repeating.

Banks should immediately put in place a cyber-security policy to reduce threats.

Sharing of cyber knowledge between IT industries and banking sector about emerging risks and creating awareness among staff and top employees about malware.

Strengthening CERT-In and penalizing banks if not informed immediately after cyber attacks.

Increasing security by recruiting special Cyber Investigation cell at police stations Eg: Cyberdome, Kerala and strict punishments on hacking.

Creating awareness among public about phishing, spam mails, wrong call from unknown users and online transactions services.