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BACKWARD CLASSES

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 23, 2015

Mandal vs Mandir

Within the BJP and its mentor, the RSS, the debate on whether or not to oppose V.P. Singh and OBC reservations reached a high pitch.

Inder Malhotra

It was a blunder on V.P. Singh's part to announce his acceptance of the Mandal Commission's report recommending 27 per cent reservations in government jobs for what are called Other Backward Classes but are, in fact, specified castes — economically well-off, politically powerful but socially and educationally backward — in such hot haste. He knew that the issue was highly controversial, deeply emotive and potentially explosive, which it proved to be instantly. But his top priority was to outsmart his former deputy and present adversary, Devi Lal. He even annoyed those whose support "from outside" was sustaining him in power. BJP leaders were peeved that they were informed of what was afoot practically at the last minute in a terse telephone call. What annoyed them even more was that the prime minister's decision would divide Hindu society. The BJP's ranks demanded that the plug be pulled on V.P. Singh but the top leadership advised restraint, because it was also important to keep the Congress out of power. The party leadership was aware of the electoral clout of the OBCs, who added up to 52 per cent of the population.

As for Rajiv Gandhi, he was totally and vehemently opposed to the Mandal Commission and its report. He eloquently condemned V.P. Singh's decision when it was eventually discussed in Parliament. This can be better understood in the perspective of the Mandal Commission's history. Having acquired wealth during the Green Revolution and political power through elections, the OBCs realised that they had little share in the country's administrative apparatus, especially in the higher rungs of the bureaucracy. So they started clamouring for reservations in government jobs. Throughout the Congress rule

until 1977, this demand fell on deaf ears. It was the Janata government, headed by Morarji Desai, that appointed the Mandal Commission in 1978. Ironically, by the time the commission submitted its report, the Janata was history and Indira Gandhi was back in power. She quietly consigned the document to the deep freeze. In Rajiv's time, one of his cabinet ministers, Shiv Shanker, once asked about the Mandal report. Rajiv said nothing but gave him a glance that was silencing. Later, he confided to some of his aides: "The Mandal Commission's report is a can of worms, and I am not going to open it." When V.P.

Singh did take the plunge, Rajiv said to one of his former aides: "V.P. Singh is the most divisive man after Muhammad Ali Jinnah."

While the Congress stand remained consistent, within the BJP and its mentor, the RSS, the debate on whether or not to oppose V.P. Singh and OBC reservations reached a high pitch. One section insisted that both must be opposed without delay. The other argued that it would be impolitic to reject something that was being seen as an extension of affirmative action to backward classes. In the end, it was decided not to take any position but to "shift the terms of political debate from Mandal and caste to religion by resurrecting the old crusade for the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya at the site where still stood the Babri masjid, for this was Lord Ram's birthplace". The BJP's plan this time around was that its president, L. K. Advani, should embark on a rath yatra, or a march from the ancient temple of Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in a Toyota van fitted to look like a chariot of yore. It was also made clear that when the march reached its destination in about five weeks, karsevaks (volunteers) would start building the Ram temple with the consecrated bricks that had already been carried there. The march began on September 25.

V.P. Singh was worried that L.K. Advani's yatra, being very provocative, might lead to communal violence. But he also felt that to stop or arrest the BJP leader would be counterproductive. For his part, Advani, on reaching Delhi, stayed there for several days, daring the prime minister to arrest him. But the challenge was ducked. As the yatra reached the Hindi heartland, tension mounted and sporadic riots started taking place for two reasons: The aggressiveness of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's militants escorting the rath and the tone of Advani's speeches at every halt, in which he accused the government of "appeasing" the Muslim minority and denying the legitimate interests of the Hindu majority. Meanwhile, V.P. Singh's great expectation of a drone of Congress MPs deserting Rajiv and joining his National Front (which many were now calling a "notional front") had wholly collapsed. His euphemism for what he considered unavoidable was "realignment of centrist political forces". Not a single Congress MP had left the party but Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar, together with their followers, had walked out on him.

Advani's march, however, never reached its destination. For what the prime minister could not do, Bihar's OBC chief minister, Lalu Prasad, did. He arrested Advani. This did not prevent angry karsevaks from making forays into UP, where chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, also an OBC, had made sure the security forces kept all unwanted persons at bay. Often, clashes between the two sides resulted in casualties, while injuries were widespread. But the hit-and-run incidents and forays escalated by the day. On October 30, as historian Ramachandra Guha has recorded, a large crowd of karsevaks managed to dodge the BSF and reach the Babri masjid, where it planted a saffron flag on the structure. Some started attacking it with axes and hammers. To prevent a mass invasion of the mosque, volunteers were chased into narrow lanes in the area where the karsevaks, backed by angry residents, resisted the police with stones and sticks. The battle lasted three full days, during which 20 volunteers were killed by police bullets.

The biggest casualty of this bloodshed was V.P. Singh's government. The BJP angrily withdrew support to him and he departed within 11 months flat.

The writer is a Delhi-based political commentator

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 23, 2015

So who needs reservations?

Supreme Court does well to throw up the question. The search for answers need not be caste-centric

Christophe Jaffrelot , Jusmeet Singh Sihra

Last week, the Supreme Court made an important point about positive discrimination in India. Quashing the UPA government's decision to include Jats in the OBC category, Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Rohinton F. Nariman said : "An affirmative action policy that keeps in mind only historical injustice would certainly result in under-protection of the most deserving backward class of citizens, which is constitutionally mandated. It is the identification of these new emerging groups that must engage the attention of the state."

This judgment was well in tune with the Bombay High Court in January, when it directed a stay on reservations for the Maratha community, which, according to the judges, "is not a socially and educationally backward class" (and is certainly not lagging behind the Jats), and at the same time, allowed 5 per cent reservation for Muslims in educational institutions. The court made this decision on the basis of empirical evidence and emphasised this point: "In so far as reservations for specified Muslim communities, is concerned, there exists sufficient material or quantifiable data to sustain their classification as 'special backward class'."

What is this evidence? Primarily the data the judges found in the Mahmood-Ur-Rahman Committee report (2013). According to this, while Muslims constitute 10.6 per cent of Maharashtra's population, their share in public services is only 4.4 per cent and their "representation" among prisoners, 36 per cent (similar to American Blacks, who

constitute 37 per cent of prisoners and are about 14 per cent of the population). But the judges of the Bombay High Court found the figures illustrating the educational backwardness of the state's Muslims even more alarming: whereas 47 per cent of Muslim children go to primary school (against 38 per cent for Hindus), dropout rates are so high that only 11.3 per cent remain in middle school, 4.2 per cent in higher secondary (against 6 per cent for Hindus) and 3.1 per cent at the graduation level and above (against 5.9 per cent for Hindus). This is why, according to the court, the previous state government was justified in exceeding the ceiling limit of 50 per cent to add another 5 per cent of reservations in educational institutions.

Interestingly, these figures are not so different from those used by the Post Sachar Evaluation Committee headed by Amitabh Kundu. In its report submitted to the Union minister of minority affairs, Najma Heptulla, in 2014, the committee highlighted that the literacy rate of Muslims (70 per cent) was below that of Hindu OBCs (74 per cent) and "General Hindus" (86 per cent). It also showed that the percentage of graduates among Muslims (5 per cent) was hardly superior to the proportion of graduates among the SC/STs (4 per cent), and much below the percentages for Hindu OBCs (8 per cent) and "General Hindus" (11 per cent). But the most disturbing point lay elsewhere: while the monthly per capita expenditure of Muslims has increased by 60 per cent between 2004-05 and 2011-12 according to the National Sample Survey Office, it has increased by 69 per cent for Hindu STs, 73 per cent for Hindu SCs, 89 per cent for Hindu OBCs and 122 per cent for "General Hindus". The gap is broadening, especially in urban India, where the proportion below the poverty line is now higher among Muslim OBCs than among Hindu SCs.

This trend matters for policies of positive discrimination intended, as Justices Gogoi and Nariman pointed out, to identify new backward classes that are not necessarily caste

groups. As they said, “Backwardness is a manifestation caused by the presence of several independent circumstances, which may be social, cultural, economic, educational or even political. New practices, methods and yardsticks have to be continuously evolved, moving away from a caste-centric definition of backwardness. This alone can enable recognition of newly emerging groups in society, which would require palliative action.” Muslims are eligible for at least some forms of positive discrimination among “new” backward groups. That is why the previous government of Maharashtra had identified 50 Muslim communities that would qualify for the 5 per cent quota. This is also why the Kundu Committee, considering that the UPA’s 15-point programme for minorities included a limited number of social schemes, recommended its enlargement and that some Muslim groups should benefit more from positive discrimination. According to the committee, Arzals have to be included in the SC category and “artisanal groups (Ajlaf) can be included in the ‘most backward’ sub-category, along with other similarly placed caste groups from other religions”.

None of these recommendations has been to the liking of the BJP governments in the state and at the Centre. Heptulla has spoken against reservations for Muslims. In Maharashtra, the Devendra Fadnavis government, while supporting the 16 per cent quota for Marathas initiated by the Congress/ NCP government, scrapped reservations for Muslims in education, against the interim decision of the Bombay High Court.

These actions (or inactions) stand in stark contrast with the assessment of the situation of Muslims by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In his first speech in Parliament in June 2014, he had declared: “Even the third generation of Muslim brothers, whom I have seen since my young days, are continuing with their cycle-repair job. Why does such misfortune continue? We will have to undertake focused activity to bring about change in their lives. We will have to bring such programmes. I do not view such programmes

within the prism of appeasement. I see them as a way to bring a change in their lives. No body can be called healthy if one of its organs is disabled. All organs of the human body needed to be fit in order for a person to be healthy. Similarly, all sections (organs) of society need to be empowered.”

Indeed, no nation can truly develop with 15 per cent of its population lagging behind. That was precisely the rationale of the positive discrimination programme in favour of SCs. It has helped, to an extent. This policy — which does not need to be caste-centric, as the Supreme Court has said — could be tried in the case of Muslims. Or the 15-point programme, which has made hardly any difference, could be upgraded. But inaction is certainly not an option, especially for a PM projecting the image of a doer. While a politician thinks about the next election, a statesman thinks of the next generation.

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INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 20, 2015

After 15 years, UT clears expansion of OBC list

By: Vivek Gupta

After a gap of nearly 15 years, the Chandigarh Administration has cleared the expansion of its list of OBCs by including Saini, Ramgarhia and Rajbhar communities.

The demand to include these three castes had been pending since 1999 when the Central Government included them in its OBC list notified for Chandigarh.

But in the absence of amendment in the Chandigarh Administration’s own state list, members of these castes remained ineligible for the benefits of the OBC reservation

quota in government service and other welfare schemes in the Union Territory. Only castes which are common in state and Central Government's OBC lists can get these benefits.

V Lalremathanga, Secretary of Social Welfare, informed Newline that UT Administrator Kaptan Singh Solanki on Tuesday has given the final approval to issue fresh notification for incorporating three new castes in UT's state OBC list.

"Director, Social Welfare has already been instructed to get its gazette notification and after this, members of these communities will be eligible for all kind of benefits under OBC category," he said.

The Chandigarh Administration has 27 per cent reservation for OBCs in government jobs besides eligibility in several scholarship schemes at school and college level.

The immediate effect of the inclusion of these castes in the OBC list will be appointment of nearly 1100 regular teachers, the process of which has already begun by Education department.

"The final selection to fill these post is likely to start with in two weeks and at this stage, the department will consult the amended OBC list and give reservation benefit to all those communities, whose name will be common in state and Central Government's OBC," said department official Sunil Bedi.

According to him, these three communities were not entertained for OBC reservation during the appointment of contractual teachers in 2012 but they are eligible now as per the amended list. With this addition, Chandigarh's OBC list will have 65 castes.

Lalremathanga informed that the administration referred to the OBC lists of Punjab and Haryana and found these castes had been included there. Since Chandigarh has similar geographical location and is the joint capital of the two states, administration then decided to extend OBC benefits to these castes.

STATESMAN, MAR 17, 2015

SC quashes Centre's decision to include Jats in OBC quota

The Supreme Court today set aside the notification issued by the erstwhile UPA government to include Jats in the Central list of Other Backward Classes (OBC) for according benefits of reservation to them.

"We set aside the notification to implement Jats in the Central list of Other Backward Classes (OBC)," a bench of Justice Tarun Gogoi and Justice R F Nariman said.

The bench also found fault with the Centre's decision to overlook the findings of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) stating that Jats do not deserve to be included in the Central list of OBC as they don't form socio-economic backward class. "Caste, though a prominent factor, cannot be the sole factor of determining the backwardness of a class," the bench said, while referring to the historic judgement rendered by a larger bench on the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations on OBC reservations.

The bench also said the "possible wrong inclusion of a class in the past cannot be a basis for the further wrong inclusion."

It also said that the inclusion of politically organised class like Jat would adversely impact the welfare of the other backward classes.

The bench said though the Union of India is empowered under the constitutional scheme to provide reservation to a particular class but it cannot be permitted to do so on the basis of a decade-old-finding about the backwardness of a caste.

The decision came on a PIL filed by the OBC Reservation Raksha Samiti - an organisation of members of communities that are included in the Central List of Backward Classes.

The PIL had alleged that the March 4 notification was issued by the then central government a day before the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the Lok Sabha elections came into force to help the ruling party garner votes.

On April 1, the apex court had asked the Centre why it allegedly ignored the advice of the NCBC to keep the Jat community away from reservation benefits.

The court had also said that the matter was "serious" and had directed the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to place before it all the material, records and files pertaining to the decision, to see "whether there was application of mind or not" while issuing the March 4 notification.

The current NDA government had in August last year supported before the apex court the UPA regime's decision to include the Jat community in the Central OBC list.

It had said that the Cabinet took into account the findings of the report of an expert committee constituted by the Indian Council for Social Science and Research (ICSSR) before taking the decision.

It had said that the government rejected the view of the National Commission for Backward Classes and took the decision on the basis of findings of the expert committee.

The affidavit was filed in compliance with apex court's order, issuing notice to the Centre on the PIL.

Besides the organisation, three other individuals from Delhi - Ram Singh, Ashok Kumar and Ashok Yadav - belonging to OBC category have also challenged the Centre's notification.

They submitted that members of Jat community have performed much better than those of other castes.

They have sought a direction holding that Jat community is not a backward class and is not entitled to be included in the list of OBC, and annexed findings of the NCBC, which in its February 26, 2014 report had rejected the Centre's request for recommending inclusion of Jat community in the central list of backward classes.

HINDU, MAR 19, 2015

Determining backwardness

Sometimes political mobilisation and not socio-educational backwardness decides the distribution of the benefits of reservation for specific communities in education and jobs. While striking down the inclusion of Jats in the Central list of Other Backward Classes (OBC), the Supreme Court voiced its opposition to the State's tendency to go by the "perception of the self-proclaimed socially backward class" in deciding the beneficiaries of reservation quotas. The Jats spread across nine States are relatively more prosperous than many other communities in northern India but they used their numerical superiority to influence and pressure the government into including them in the OBC quota. The state should not be influenced by political considerations and it must exercise great care in identifying emerging forms of backwardness. Past mistakes or "wrong inclusions" in the reservation list, according to the judgment, could not be the basis for further additions. However, the court was careful not to dismiss any change to the list of OBCs. On the contrary, Justice Ranjan Gogoi who wrote the judgment directed the government to recognise emerging socially and educationally backward groups such as transgenders, who are among the most distressed, for the grant of reservation benefits. The judgment is thus important not only for its articulation of the rationale for identifying the groups that need to be kept out of the reservation system — politically dominant and economically prosperous caste groups — but also for its support for the inclusion of heavily disadvantaged groups such as transgenders, who cannot ordinarily be classified as a social class.

Closely linked to the setting of norms for identifying new groups for reservation benefits is the court's downplaying of the importance of caste in deciding reservation benefits. While caste was indeed a prominent reason for historical injustice in the country, it could not be the sole decider of backwardness of a class. Instead, new practices, methods and yardsticks would have to be continuously evolved moving away from the caste-centric definition of backwardness, the court ruled. Surely, the fact that the previous United Progressive Alliance government notified the reservation for Jats despite advice to the contrary from the National Commission for Backward Classes played no small part in counter-posing historical injustice to emerging forms of backwardness in a changing society. But the question that arises is about the exclusion of castes and social groups already in the reservation list in a continuously evolving society. The court might have left a small opening for revisiting the whole list of reservation beneficiaries in the light of new socio-economic realities.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

STATESMAN, MAR 18, 2015

Free speech and religion

Amitabha Bagchi

Charlie Hebdo is a strikingly -- one might say stridently -- French phenomenon. The irreverent, in-your-face, bawdy humour; the insistence to shock; the near juvenile obsession with flouting all kinds of authority: they all add up to a quintessentially French concept of the freedom of speech. Small wonder that France -- or most of it, at any rate -- reacted with horror, indignation and sorrow when two Islamist terrorists gunned down 11 people in and around the office of the satirical magazine last January. Je suis Charlie became their defiant cry, drowning out the Islamists' rage and call for revenge at Charlie for publishing cartoons depicting the Prophet's image. The defiance culminated in a huge rally in Paris, attended by over forty world leaders, which reaffirmed and celebrated the French right to free expression -- to critique anything and even to blaspheme. The magazine itself came out with a post-massacre issue with a cover that showed Mohammad holding a sign saying Jesus Charlie and forgiving everything (Tout Est Pardonné).

Not all world leaders, however, attended the Paris rally. President Obama, who did not march in Paris with the other Western leaders, had to endure sharp criticism at home for skipping the rally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India was another world leader who did not join in the march, but there was no criticism back home for his decision. That is because India, France and the United States, liberal democracies all, have sharply different views on the meaning and limitation of freedom of speech. History and demographics have led to clearly divergent perspectives on a very basic question.

Take the case of India first. It is a vast country of competing religions, language groups and ethnicities. Its long history of often violent inter-communal strife has led its people to coalesce around a politically correct quietism whereby free speech is willingly circumscribed for the sake of peace and communal harmony. Partition of British India on the basis of religion remains a searing memory. Sensitivities remain raw and can be easily excited. As Sunil Gangopadhyay was wont to narrate, there was once a mini-riot in Kerala based on the rumour of someone publishing a story where a donkey was named after a religious leader. So newspapers, when reporting on riots and even petty crimes, practise self-censorship and shy away from mentioning the religion and (occasionally) ethnicity of miscreants.

There is very little protest when books (or movies) are proscribed (or censored) for allegedly insulting one religion or another -- for example, Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* or Wendy Doniger's *Hinduism: An Alternative History*. Fellow writers were indifferent at best when the organizers of the 2012 Jaipur Literary Festival were essentially prevented by the Rajasthan government from letting Salman Rushdie address the meeting even on a video hook-up. So while Indians enjoy remarkable freedom when it comes to political press and the right to vote, their freedom of expression is rather circumscribed by libel laws, government action and generally accepted practice.

The case of France is quite different, and the difference largely stems from its history of relative homogeneity in terms of ethnicity and religion (Catholicism). The French Enlightenment (1650-1800) incubated rebellion against not only secular authority (Ancien Regime) but also its ecclesiastic counterpart. Challenging church's dogmas, and in effect to blaspheme, became an integral part of the French concept of freedom of expression.

The ethnic homogeneity, however, has been muddled in recent years with a large influx of minority population from France's erstwhile colonies in north and central Africa. The growing minority population brought with it a different religion (Islam) and associated cultural perspective.

Not all minorities have been fully assimilated into French society nor adopted the ethos of French "oneness." So while Charlie Hebdo felt free (and justified) to extend its mockery of religion from Catholicism to Islam, as in drawing cartoons showing the Prophet's face, it ran into the buzz saw of Islam's violent and murderous opposition to blasphemy. France's minority population is yet to agree with Voltaire to defend to death the right of others to express viewpoints entirely antithetical to their own.

The United States lies, demographically and spiritually, somewhere between India and France. It is a country of immigrants, whose population began with relative homogeneity (North European White Protestants) but changed with successive waves of immigration from other parts of the world -- Europe (Italian and Irish Catholics, Central European Jews, Greek and Russian Orthodox), Asia (Japan, China) and more recently South and South-east Asia. It remains a predominantly Christian (or Judeo-Christian) country, but now has a sizable population of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and others. This emerging and evolving heterogeneity is reflected in the country's nuanced reaction to the Charlie Hebdo tragedy. On the one hand, ordinary people put up signs proclaiming *Nous sommes Charlie* next to the French Embassy and Consulates; on the other hand, major newspapers

like the New York Times refrained from printing the cover of the post-massacre issue of the magazine. This was the balancing act a l’Americaine between freedom of expression and a nod to religious sensitivity.

CIVIL SERVICE

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAR 20, 2015

Share your experiences: Govt tells retiring employees

All central government employees retiring within next six months have been asked to share experiences and good work done by them during their tenure.

The Ministry of Personnel has launched an online platform 'Anubhav' for the retiring central government employees to showcase "commendable" work done by them during their service.

"Officers retiring within six months are requested to submit a write up of not more than 5,000 words along with appropriate attachments where needed, on the online portal," an official order issued today, said.

All ministries may request Central Secretariat Service (CSS) and Central Secretariat Stenographers Service (CSSS) officers retiring within six months to submit the write up providing details of their work that has contributed to the efficiency, economy and effectiveness in government functioning or any innovation which led to improved work culture or any other contribution considered significant by them, it said.

A total of 437 officials are retiring in the next six months.

It is envisaged that sharing 'anubhav' (experience) would provide satisfaction to the retiring employee and also act as a motivator for serving employees.

"This would also be a wonderful opportunity to garner the resource of retiring employees for voluntary contribution to nation building post-retirement," the Personnel Ministry said.

DECCAN HERALD, MAR 17, 2015

State showers sops on ex-IAS officers

Asha Krishnaswamy

The government seems to be brimming with ideas when it comes to sops for bureaucrats, even if they are retired.

In a first-of-its-kind move, the State government through an executive order has decided to provide retired chief secretaries (CS) and additional chief secretaries (ACS) servant allowance of Rs 6,000, telephone charges of Rs 1,000 and medical reimbursement, as per the All India Services (medical attendance) Rules, 1954, with effect from April 1.

This is on a par with the facilities provided to retired high court judges. This provision, however, is not applicable for IPS or IFS officers.

A government order (GO) dated March 4 has said the Finance Department has given its concurrence. A proposal to this effect was made by the Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms (DPAR) to the finance department on March 18, 2013.

Former bureaucrats across the country are entitled to only retirement benefits, mainly pension. Officers in the DPAR said they were not aware whether any other state is offering such post-retirement facility.

The GO stated: "The State government is pleased to sanction the following allowances and facilities to retired chief secretaries, retired cabinet secretaries and retired secretaries to the government of India."

There are about 75 retired bureaucrats of the rank of CS and ACS in the State. On an average, about seven to eight IAS officers retire a month, and with the new provision, the burden on the State's exchequer will only grow.

A retired bureaucrat said when an officer of principal secretary-rank goes on Central deputation, he or she ends up as secretary. Naturally, such officers miss out on certain benefits given by the State to a principal secretary, and therefore, a provision has been made to bridge this gap.

One of the major benefits available for retired IAS officers is that their medical bills are fully reimbursed.

Under the Central Government Health Scheme, the employees have to contribute a marginal amount to avail this facility.

Asked whether there was any need for providing such a facility, retired additional chief secretary V. Balasubramanian replied in the negative. "As a retired IAS officer I get Rs 82,000 as pension. This is more than sufficient. Medical bills for me and my wife are getting reimbursed. An agricultural labourer gets wages only when he works. Why should a retired officer get paid even after retirement? As far as I know, no state is offering such allowances and facilities to retired officers," he said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, MAR 18, 2015

Increase in induction age in IAS, IPS, IFS for state cadre officers

The DoPT has also asked the states not to recommend names of officers for selection who are over 56 years of age.

NEW DELHI: In a good news for state cadre officers, age limit for induction in all-India services like the IAS and IPS has been increased from 54 to 56.

The [Department of Personnel and Training](#) (DoPT) has notified new rules for three all-India services -- [Indian Administrative Service](#) (IAS), [Indian Police Service](#) (IPS) and [Indian Forest Service](#) (IFS) -- in this regard.

As per rules, a Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) committee is responsible for making selection to IAS, IPS and IFS from state services.

"The Committee shall not consider the cases of the members of the state [civil service](#), who have attained the age of fifty-six years on the first day of January of the year for which the select list is prepared," as per the notified rules for the three services.

Same amendment has been made for selection in IPS and IFS from state police and forest services respectively, as per the DoPT notification.

Earlier, the maximum age limit for consideration of officers from states services into IAS, IPS and IFS was 54 years, as on January 1 of the year for which the select list is prepared.

As per the new rules, a member of the state civil, police and forest services who has attained the age of 56 years on the first day of January of the year for which the select list is prepared shall be considered for induction, if he could not be considered earlier as no meeting of the committee could be held.

The DoPT has also asked the states not to recommend names of officers for selection who are over 56 years of age.

The move to increase the age limit had come following representation from some state services officers to [Supreme Court](#) challenging the maximum age bar of 54 years. They had contended that the maximum age bar should be increased as retirement age in the central government was increased from 58 years to 60 years.

Following which the Centre had sought views from state governments, cadre controlling authorities i.e. Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of [Environment](#), Forests and Climate, state civil service, non-state civil service, state police and forests services officers and their associations on the issue.

The increase in age limit is likely to help Centre filling the vacancies in the three all-India services, DoPT officials said.

There are 4,619 IAS, 3,798 IPS and 2,668 IFS officers working against the sanctioned strength of 6,270, 4,728 and 3,131, as per the latest government data.

TRIBUNE, MAR 18, 2015

IAS officer's death sparks protests in Karnataka

Had 'annoyed' powerful lobbies

DK Ravi, a 1979-born IAS officer posted as Additional Commissioner of Commercial Taxes (Enforcement), was said to be looking into tax evasion by realtors

This had annoyed powerful lobbies. He had allegedly received threatening calls from underworld dons

The Opposition BJP and the JD(S) have demanded a CBI enquiry

Shubhadeep Choudhury

The death of a young IAS officer DK Ravi, reputed to be "honest and upright", triggered angry protests on the streets of Karnataka, especially at Kolar district where the deceased was posted as Deputy Commissioner. There was also ruckus in the state Assembly and council, which was in session, over the death. The issue was raised in the Lok Sabha by Karnataka BJP president Pralhad Joshi.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in the Assembly that as per police account it was prima facie a case of suicide. He, however, added that the government would investigate the incident thoroughly and unravel the mystery behind the officer's death. "Is it a suicide or a murder or has he died of some other reasons - we want to know the truth. People should also know it", asserted Siddaramaiah.

Home Minister K J George said the preliminary investigation report would be placed before the House in the next 15 days. George's statement that there could be some personal reasons for the suicide evoked protests from the Opposition.

Ravi had allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in the bedroom of his official flat here yesterday after abruptly returning home from his office in the morning. He, however, did not leave any suicide note. His wife, who was at her father's place, came looking for him as he was not responding to phone calls.

Ravi and his wife were married for four years but they did not have any children. The Opposition BJP and the JD (S) have demanded a CBI enquiry into the incident. The 1979-born IAS officer was posted as Additional Commissioner of Commercial Taxes (Enforcement). He was said to be looking into tax evasion by realtors and had annoyed powerful lobbies as a consequence. He had allegedly received threatening calls.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced that the case would be handed over to the CID. During his stint as Deputy Commissioner of Kolar, Ravi had taken some bold steps against the sand mafia and other anti-social elements. This had endeared him to the people of Kolar. The protests sweeping across the state were strongest at Kolar where a 'bandh' was called in the wake of Ravi's death.

DEFENCE, NATIONAL

TRIBUNE, MAR 18, 2015

BONANZA FOR RETIRED ARMED FORCES' PERSONNEL

SC: Pension can't be less than 50% of pay

R Sedhuraman

In a bonanza to retired employees of the armed forces, the Supreme Court today directed the Centre to pay at least 50 per cent of the pay as pension to all of them as recommended by the 6th Central Pay Commission (CPC).

A Bench headed by Justice TS Thakur passed the order while dismissing about 50 appeals filed by the Centre challenging the rulings of various high courts and armed forces tribunals (AFTs). The HCs and AFTs had struck down the office memorandums (OMs) assessing the pension amount at less than 50 per cent for some categories of pensioners.

Appearing for the Centre, Additional Solicitor General Pinky Anand had pleaded that payment of pension at 50 per cent or more would place an additional burden of Rs 1,500 crore. But the Bench said the pensioners were entitled to the CPC recommendations which had been accepted by the government.

They could not be denied of their dues just because some officials, who did not even have the authority to issue the OMs, had misinterpreted the recommendations, the Bench explained.

“We have already affirmed the orders of the HCs and AFTs” in a couple of cases earlier and there was no need for the Centre to come to the SC in each and every such case, the Bench said.

Today's order should be implemented within four months extending the benefit to all those who were entitled to pension, irrespective of the fact whether they had gone to the AFT/court or not, the Bench clarified.

In one such case, the Delhi High Court had delivered its verdict on April 29, 2013, directing the Centre to ensure that pension was re-fixed at not lower than 50 per cent of the minimum of the pay in the band and the grade pay thereon. Arrears should be paid within two months and any delay would entail 9 per cent interest, it had ruled while

dismissing a batch of Centre's petitions. The HC had said it was in complete agreement with the reasoning of the Punjab and Haryana HC in similar cases.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS LINE, MAR 16, 2015

A 'Bharatiya' approach to development

PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY

India is too diverse and unique a society for Western models to be effective. The MUDRA initiative takes this into account

“ The institution must adhere to the tenet that while incorporating positive influences from the world, no single model can be transplanted from outside into the Indian scenario. The new institution has to zero in on what will work in and for India. It will be a Bharatiya approach to development .”

This excerpt from the Union Cabinet resolution for setting up the NITI Aayog on January 1, 2015, is perhaps as significant as the dismantling of the Planning Commission.

After nearly seven decades of experimenting with developmental ideologies, veering from the 'Soviet model' to the 'Washington model', India aspires to develop her own indigenous model for economic growth — the 'Bharatiya model'.

World Bank and IMF economist John Williamson codified the 'Washington consensus' in 1990, prescribing ten commandments of economic reform for emerging economies.

In this context, India's economic reforms in 1991 through de-regulation of industry and unlocking India's economic borders was lauded for its conformity to the IMF prescriptions for economic growth.

Nearly 25 years later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet have urged restraint against a temptation to foist such external models of growth on India.

Is this disillusionment with global economic growth model justified? And what constitutes a 'Bharatiya' model?

The Chinese example

According to World Bank poverty data, China uplifted more than 700 million citizens from poverty between 1990 and 2013 (\$2/day poverty line). China flouts at least six of the 10 commandments of the Washington Consensus – market determined interest rates, free floating exchange rates, privatisation of state enterprises, import liberalisation, economic de-regulation and private property rights. China's spectacular economic success should rightfully trigger awe and envy among policymakers in other developing nations.

The fallibility of a one-size-fits-all Washington Consensus type economic model has been highlighted by many, including Princeton economist Dani Rodrik in his 2006

paper, *Goodbye Washington Consensus, Hello Washington Confusion* . Rodrik not only endorses the China counterfactual example but also elucidates the damage inflicted on many Latin American and sub-Saharan African countries from blindly adhering to such economic policy prescriptions.

So, what works?

It's all very well to know what does not work, but far more important to know what does. India's complex and myriad community networking system is often cited as the single most distinguishing feature of Indian society. If one size cannot fit all countries across the globe, can one size fit all of diverse India?

In a provocative paper entitled *Community Networks and the Process of Development* , Cambridge University professor of economics, Kaivan Munshi, provides an example of what can form the contours of a 'Bharatiya' model.

He argues that the caste system with 4,635 distinct genetic groups is an integral aspect of Hindu society and any development model for India must embrace this inconvenient truth.

He illustrates how these communities perform the role of labour, skill, capital and social insurance markets within their networks.

For example, during contingencies, 25 per cent of all rural households borrow amounts equivalent to 20-40 per cent of their annual income from their caste networks.

Such loans are the dominant source of credit for most rural households and usually carry easier terms than other formal credit sources. In the absence of neoclassical micro-foundations of perfect markets, community networks in India can play a pivotal role in ensuring upward mobility and hence must be nurtured, argues Munshi.

The ramifications of this idea of India's deeply enmeshed diverse community networks on public policy choices of social infrastructure, financial markets, labour markets, employment generation is unclear but can potentially be significant.

The proposal to set up the Micro Units and Development Refinance Agency (MUDRA) is perhaps a first step, expanding on the idea of last mile financing through established social networks in rural towns and villages.

The writer is a director/advisor in the TVS group of companies

TELEGRAPH, MAR 17, 2015

The state of the economy

Why the *Economic Survey* should not be ignored

Writing on the wall: Ashok V. Desai

The *Economic Survey* is presented the day before the budget; and the budget has to be assessed as soon as it is presented. So it is impossible to write immediately about the Survey. But this year saw the arrival of a new Chief Economic Advisor from Washington, who put much effort into the *Survey*. More important, there is a disconnect between the Survey and the budget. The *Survey* reflects the high spirits with which the government came to power - the Prime Minister's ambition to Make in India and turn India into an economic superpower. The exuberance was missing from the budget; it was such an insipid, plodding, boring affair. The Survey must have gone to the finance minister some weeks before the budget; but he did not seem to have opened it, or at any rate to have got its message. It is difficult to believe that the CEA was not part of the team that made the budget, or that he did not articulate to the budget team the message of his *Survey*. So I have to conclude that the finance minister has been selectively hard of hearing. But whatever his choice, the rest of us should not ignore the Survey. It is written in good English and a cheerful style; the CEA quotes various eminences such as Jorge Agustín Nicolás Ruiz de Santayana y Borrás and Karl Emil Maximilian Max Weber. Even laymen would enjoy reading it.

Arvind Subramanian began with his reading of the CSO's figures of GDP growth; I was reassured that he was as mystified by them as I was. But he had to make some sense of them; he decided that they suggested a recovering, rather than a surging, economy. To me, they convey nothing; they are a complete mess. Manufacturing growth in the CSO's new figures is 5 per cent higher in 2012-13 and 6 per cent higher in 2013-14 than in the old figures. The only difference between the old and the new figures is a change in weights; such rebasing simply cannot change figures so substantially. If I were CEA, I would call in the CSO statisticians and ask them to explain this absurdity. Maybe he did, and they went away in a funk; for I tried to consult the national accounts division of the CSO on the web, and got the message: "404 - File or directory not found. The resource you are looking for might have been removed, had its name changed, or is temporarily unavailable."

Undaunted by his experience with GDP figures, the CEA went ahead and attacked employment figures; he compared figures from the census, *National Sample Survey*, *Labour Bureau*, the Economic Census, and *Annual Survey of Industries*. His reading is that the census and the economic census show a fall in employment growth from 2 per cent in the 1990s to 1.4-1.8 per cent in the next decade, whereas the ASI shows a massive rise in employment growth from 0.6 to 5.1 per cent. He refuses to believe these last figures, and infers that employment growth slowed down in the 2000s, and was lower than population growth in both decades. Thence he concludes: "Creating more rapid employment opportunities is clearly a major policy challenge."

I am afraid he needs to think again. In a country without social insurance, everyone who can work has to work; so total employment will grow about as much as the labour force, which will grow as much as the sum of adult men and women weighted by their work participation rates. If the census shows a slower rise in employment than in population, it can be due to a change in the proportion of the young, the old, and women in the labour force. It tells us nothing about the employment situation.

There is nothing incredible about the 5.1 per cent annual rise in *ASI* employment figures. GDP growth registered the highest rates in India's recorded history - over 9 per cent every year - between 2005-06 and 2007-08; GDP doubled in the decade between 2002-03 and 2012-13. Industrial production rose 8.3 per annum; 5.1 per cent growth in employment is quite consistent with it. And the coverage of the *ASI* is less than 100 per cent; the rapid rise in employment may only reflect a rise in coverage

To sum up, the 2000s saw an unprecedented boom led by industry; the boom required workers. India is closed to labour migration, except for Bangladeshi workers who manage to slip past lazy or corrupt border security forces. So the workers required by booming industry and complementary services had to come from agriculture. According to the *NSS*, the share of workers in the primary sector amongst rural workers came down from 70 per cent in 2003 to 59 per cent in 2011-12. This is the fall in villages; if migration of workers from villages to towns were taken into account, the fall in the share of primary workers would be even sharper. The corresponding rise was in workers in industry and services.

This is reflected in the course of wages. According to Ministry of Agriculture, the growth in daily wages between 2001-02 and 2010-11 was 6.3 per cent amongst workers covered by the *ASI*, 8.5 per cent amongst ploughmen, and 9 per cent amongst harvest workers. Hence in my view, the *CEA*'s conclusion, "Creating more rapid employment opportunities is clearly a major policy challenge," is mistaken. There is little involuntary unemployment; workers have been moving away from low-paid agriculture into better paid occupations.

Will that continue? It would depend on whether the unprecedented boom of the 2000s can return and continue. Industrial growth, which spurred that boom, has collapsed; it is close to zero. Can it be revived? Maybe, but it would require a policy stimulus. If there is one, should it concentrate on industry, or should it try to stimulate overall growth? There is nothing economically desirable about industry *per se*; the government should promote growth without worrying about its structure. There can be non-economic reasons for favouring industry. For instance, wars require lots of hardware - guns, tanks, helmets, bullets etc - so a government that wants to prepare for a war may decide to promote particular industries. But that is political strategy, not economic policy.

There can be a less aggressive form of industrial promotion, which I have written earlier about: India should seek to become a maritime power. It should seek to stimulate marine trade and movement; with that object in view, it should build ships, ports, warehouses and logistics connecting the ports with their hinterland. That is my idea. There may be other strategies. But they must be spelt out and debated.

For the moment, the government is sold on making things in India, but has no idea what to make and why. There is a lot of exuberance, but no sense of direction. India has done extremely well in the past decade, and the momentum could carry it far. But unless the government chooses the direction wisely, it could easily waste this opportunity. It will

help if the CEA thinks more deeply. But that would not be enough; the rulers themselves have to be more sensible.

STATESMAN, MAR 17, 2015

The Modi effect on India's economy

Andrew Sheng

The three population giants in Asia – China, India and Indonesia – have now in place three leaders who are deeply committed to reforms – namely Xi Jinping, Narendra Modi and Jokowi. What is remarkable is that all three leaders share a common background and experience in governing cities or provinces away from the central government. They represent a new generation of leaders who understand the importance of bottom-up and decentralized development.

Large countries like China, India and Indonesia all face the common problems of large population and dispersed geography, with different parts of the country at different stages of development, diverse cultures, languages/dialects and historical outlook. Hence, centralization may add to national cohesion, but may also slow down the ability of different regions and cities to experiment and innovate to become new growth poles and agents of change.

All three countries have histories of strong central governments, but the Chinese experience has shown that competition between provinces and cities have helped the growth process, but also created new problems. Both China and India since 1949 and 1947 respectively have very strong planning background, but one of the first acts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to dismantle the Indian Planning Commission (established since 1950). In its place, Modi set up the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), which will include chief ministers from the various states to reflect the shifting power balance between the Centre and the states.

China coordinates national development through a powerful National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), which ensures that the five year plans (and annual budgets) at every level of government, from county to province, are consistent with its Five Year Plans. Both China and India are in their current 12th Five Year Plan (2011-2015 and 2012-2017 respectively). China's 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) will put in place many parts of President Xi's fulfilment of the China Dream.

Although India's GDP and per capita income, at US\$1.9 trillion and US\$1,499 respectively, are roughly one quarter that of China, the speed of Indian GDP growth has

been rising, whereas that of China is slowing. With much more favourable demographics and benefiting from abundant cheap labour and opening up, some analysts think that India's growth rate will exceed that of China some time before 2020.

Modi clearly has a vision and mission for India to catch up with China in almost every aspect of economic development.

Much will depend on his leadership to drive through reforms that were previously stalled for various reasons, one being the formidable Indian bureaucracy – what some pundits call “the licence Raj”. The Indian bureaucracy is so famous for licensing everything that one cynic suggested that the IT industry could not have succeeded if the civil servants had understood what it was all about.

At the heart of the centralization-decentralization debate is the extent to which local governments have revenues and powers to decide on their own where and how to deploy resources to best “fit” their own development targets.

The Indian government inherited its civil service structure from the British after 89 years of colonial rule, but some interesting institutional innovations deserve closer examination for adaptation in other developing countries facing similar problems of fiscal management. One such institutional innovation is the Finance Commission, an independent Commission of experts to advise the government (including the provincial governments) on how to raise revenue and share that revenue. The Commission's term of office is five years, chaired by an acknowledged authoritative Chairman.

It may be serendipity, but clearly the stars are aligned for Indian development, because the 14th Finance Commission (2011-2014) was chaired by Dr. Venu Reddy, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, who not only had the reputation of helping India avoid the global financial crisis of 2007-2009, but also vast experience of having been top civil servant at the Ministry of Finance, and also at the provincial level.

His report coincided with Modi's vision of developing India from the bottom-up. Because India had low tax revenues owing to low tax rates, India's ability to spend on development and infrastructure is currently less than one third that of China.

The 14th Finance Commission recommended new ways to raise state and local government revenue, either through municipal bonds, increasing tax rates (on professions, property and mining), and/or imposing tax on new sectors (vacant land, betterment and entertainment).

The new Indian 2015-2016 budget adopted many of the Commission's recommendations, aiming to increase government revenue and infrastructure expenditure. For example, like Singapore, India will also impose an additional 2 per cent surcharge on the ultra rich. Furthermore, more taxes will be imposed on the mining sector and public utilities. China's mining tax on iron ore was 80 per cent (2012), while India's was a mere 10 per cent (2009).

In a sweeping move to improve the efficiency of public utilities, it was proposed to meter 100 per cent of all water and electricity usage, to cut down subsidies and recover full costs of public utilities.

Furthermore, in a break with the Finance Commission's past inclinations that favored central government control of revenue, the 14th Commission recommended that the states should have 42 per cent share of central government tax. Previously, the states only had 30 per cent share or less, until it was increased to 32 per cent by the 13th Finance Commission.

As an institutional innovation, the Finance Commission model has four clear advantages for the management of large government bureaucracies. First, it is professional and meritocratic. Even though political views and opinions of the members cannot be avoided, by and large the Chairman and members are professional experts well known for their expertise and independent approach.

Second, the workings of the Commission are transparent. By consulting different levels of government, academics, think-tank experts, civil society and even students, whose views are on record and published, the Commission is able to improve the social debate on some complicated and controversial issues that deserve more open discussion, without the debate being politicized. Such transparency improves the quality of discourse and academic standards, because the university and professional communities are able to access more information and knowledge about how the government works and provide good feedback on the complex issues involved.

Third, the process of the Commission's work improves accountability and the rule of law in due process. The government (and the politicians) know that they will get the best professional and scientific advice they can get, properly consulted with good feedback on the different options available, including valuable domestic and international experience. It helps the rule of law, because when future tax or policies are implemented and

disputed, the courts will have public records of the policy debate and the thinking behind such tax rules or regulations.

Fourth and perhaps from the political process the most valuable option, there is deniability. The government does not have to accept all the recommendations of the Commission. It has the option of choosing what it feels is politically acceptable and implementable. All it has to do is to explain why it made a particular choice of policy direction.

A relatively closed-door debate over the various issues means that if the policies turn out to be faulty, the government cannot deny that it alone made the decision. Whereas if the policy was a recommendation from a Commission of independent experts, the government can say that it was done with the best available advice and information.

There is no doubt that the competition for growth and development between China, India and Indonesia will drive innovation and new avenues of change to Asia. The Asian region has much to learn from each other's strengths, experience and also mistakes. Asian institutional innovation, many of which were borrowed from elsewhere, has helped innovation and growth across the board, to the benefit of all.

-- The writer, a former central banker, focuses on global issues from Asian perspectives.

TELEGRAPH, MAR 16, 2015

Extreme states of living

India's gross national mood

Ashok sekhar ganguly

The concept of Gross National Happiness or GNH, as expounded in Bhutan, is a novel and attractive measure, and that it has not been adapted more widely is surprising. In India, people grow up in the background of *dharma* and karma. If one inherits wealth or becomes wealthy in one's lifetime, it is generally considered as being destined. If, on the other hand, one is born in poverty and deprivation, such a person may live in the hope of better times, following death and rebirth. Without wishing to give the impression of being an expert, it would be fair to say that these beliefs are also prevalent in some neighbouring Asian nations as well.

The traditional distinction between countries is made by classifying them, either as 'developed', 'developing' or as a 'third world' nation, in that order, as measured in terms of per capita gross domestic product, and some other parameters such as quality of living, education, public health, longevity and so on. These factors are broadly defined as 'quality of life.' In this traditional classification, countries in South Asia are 'third world'.

Bhutan was the first nation in this region to break out of the confines of these classifications by measuring the state of its people, not by the generally accepted GDP indices, but by a novel measure, which Bhutan termed Gross National Happiness. In other words, Bhutan measures itself by a 'happiness' index, made up of the sum of its citizens' state of happiness, their sense of satisfaction and so on. That GNH does not bear any relationship to Bhutan's GDP turned out to be a novel and refreshing break from the generally accepted classifications, and is widely acknowledged as being unique. That a somewhat qualitative measure of happiness is not a Bhutan-specific measure has since been more widely acknowledged.

However, the concept, which makes a lot of sense for Bhutan, has not been used more widely. Nevertheless, it makes a lot of sense that the collective mood of a nation is a balance of both a sense of well-being and happiness, as well as that of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The measure of the mood of people and of nations, in this age of globalization, is of growing relevance.

The total wealth in the world has kept on growing. The bulk of this wealth is reported to be owned by one per cent of the already rich, with a diminishing proportion spread amongst the rest of the 99 per cent. Even if wealth is considered as one of the surrogates of happiness, it would be a fallacy to presume that only one per cent of people in the world are the ones who are genuinely happy. However, the one *versus* 99 argument is subjective. Like most other measures, there exists a wealth distribution pyramid, in which different sections of such a pyramid represent different levels of wealth amongst a particular section of the population, while the tip of the pyramid represents the one per cent. Sadly, I have not come across a comparable 'happiness' analysis or pyramid in which various sections of the population in a country could provide a surrogate measure of happiness, or the lack of it. Such a measure would then be a surrogate of a Gross National Mood.

From time to time, data is published of surveys of the degrees of satisfaction, or the lack of it, in sections of our population in response to specific questions. The "Occupy Wall Street or St Paul's Square" were prominent protests following the 2008 financial turmoil and fairly widespread unhappiness. For example, in India, the widespread and frequent incidents of farmer's suicides during severe droughts and other natural calamities, have neither been analysed in depth nor measured to assess the prevalent mood of the affected farming communities. Similarly, one may recall the fairly widespread unhappiness a few years ago owing to an abnormal rise in onion prices, which had some significant political fall-out.

In 1947, India was already a very poor country and the one *versus* 99 per cent rule may have been close to reality. While on the one hand, there were the maharajas, *zamindars* and business tycoons, as well as a small portion of the population which comprised the educated middle class, the majority of Indians were poor to very poor and their numbers further swelled with the arrival of dispossessed refugees from Pakistan.

During the past 68 years, India's economic transformation has indeed been impressive. From being a third-world country, India is now being classified as an emerging economy. In the post-Independence years of growth and development, many amongst India's succeeding generations have pushed their way up from the bottom of the wealth pyramid to the higher levels. This has enhanced the mood and sense of confidence amongst reasonably large sections of our people. However, no serious effort has been devoted to measure the changes of the people's mood, which continues to be described in qualitative and subjective terms. There is no data to assess whether the overall mood of the earlier generations of Indians was less happy or less satisfied compared to the present time.

Amongst the poor and middle class, the country's transition from India's dependence for survival on imported foodgrains to the era of food self-sufficiency should have significantly raised the levels of overall self-confidence; notwithstanding the fact that more than a third of India's population still remains below the line of poverty, while another third can be classified as living below subsistence levels. These states of poverty are best defined by the Hindi terms '*gareeb*' and '*ati-gareeb*'. Sadly, there is no data in the public domain of the mood and aspirations of these very large sections of our population.

In Mumbai, the bulk of the labourers in the textile industry used to be migrants from the Konkan region of Maharashtra. The massive *chawls* in Worli, Parel and Lalbaug provided housing and civic amenities for the textile workers and their families; and the municipal schools provided education for their children. The demise of the textile industry during the 1980s coincided with the arrival of growing numbers of rural migrants from other parts of India and this gradually led to the outstripping of available living space and civic amenities. As Mumbai grew from a city of five million to 20 million residents, for those who could afford new homes, construction of new apartment buildings became a major industry, while many new townships have also come up along the South of Greater Mumbai. However, these new houses and townships were unable to provide affordable homes for a growing number of poor migrants coming in search of livelihood into the city. This phenomenon is more or less similar in all metropolitan cities and medium and small towns across India. The absolute growth of India's population, and families from rural India moving in very large numbers into cities and towns in search of livelihood have led to the unprecedented proliferation of huge clusters of unorganized urban shanties and slums devoid of basic civic amenities and sanitation.

The other stark change is the increase in numbers of not only the rich and the very rich amongst Indians but also the numbers moving upwards from the middle classes as well. One of the visible displays of wealth is the growth of gated high-rise apartment blocks clearing away large tracts of old dwellings and communities. The visible consumption and display by wealthy Indians is now so stark that the disparity between the well-to-do and those not so stands out in glaring contrast.

There are several other examples of the visibly increasing gap between India's growing numbers of the rich and the rest. As a matter of fact, the short-statured and malnourished immigrant youth are now visibly distinguishable amongst urban city crowds. There are many places in rural India where, because of extreme deprivation and persistent

malnourishment, large numbers in perpetually poverty-stricken communities exhibit signs of premature ageing and extreme physical decay. A survey of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act programme has revealed that the scheme has instilled, among its beneficiaries, a sense of optimism and confidence, and the signs of relief are palpable.

This brings us back to the theme regarding the 'mood' of the people in our country. Although Indian cities are bursting at their seams owing to overcrowding, the incidents of lawlessness, public protests and severe crimes have remained more or less static. There has not yet been any large-scale outburst of disaffection at the growing disparity between the visibly wealthy classes and the struggling masses. There is, of course, no way of anticipating whether there is a certain tipping point in a nation's overall tolerance regarding such growing and visible wealth disparity. However, India can ill-afford to ignore the mood of its very large numbers of poor and very poor, the squeezed and harassed urban underclass and assume that they will continue to remain mute witnesses to the growing and visible deprivation in their lives. For example, super multi-storey and very high-end gated housing sit cheek by jowl with dilapidated *chawls* and roadside slums, which spring up overnight almost every day, relentlessly, in Mumbai. How long will such visible disparity be tolerated by the poor who live surrounded by such stark contrasts?

The challenge is to distinguish the early signals of the tipping point between the mood of acceptance and severe mass dissatisfaction. However, though the dissatisfaction may be difficult to detect, it does find expression during elections or, say, by the growing incidents of very serious crimes against women, protests during periods of high food prices, communal trouble and so on. This is not to suggest that India should not be proud of its great achievements, but we cannot ignore the challenges to sustain higher rates of economic growth and wider access to opportunities and resources for every section of our society. India's highest priority must be its economic and social investment in poverty alleviation for the more than 600 million Indians who remain poor. It would be naïve and dangerous to assume that our country's social and civil equilibrium can be sustained indefinitely on an even keel.

The belief in *karma*, dharma and so on still remains deep-rooted in large sections of our society. This is evident in the growing numbers of marketing and advertising campaigns of India's numerous *gurus* and swamis with their millions of devotees. Nevertheless, the majority of the civil society in India may be assumed to be in a state of silent and unhappy turmoil. The happy, smiling, image of a third-world Indian is being rapidly replaced by the demand of the dignity of living. India needs a determined thrust to seriously assess the mood of its villages, as well as its teeming poor in towns and cities. While the growth of wealth may reflect the satisfied mood of those who achieve and rise, the bulk of Indians remain poor to very poor and it is they who determine and reflect the overall state of the country's Gross National Mood.

India faces a fairly difficult and multi-dimensional development challenge. The generation of and access to economic growth is only one such challenge. The quality of

existence and the visible disparity in quality of life and access to opportunities are equally important and need a far greater and determined attention on the part of the State. There are several countries which have descended into chaos and disorder when they failed to recognize and deal with the decline in their nation's Gross National Mood. Moderate mood swings are a natural human trait. It is extremes that can have unpredictable outcomes. Growth without equity is not sustainable.

EDUCATION

ASIAN AGE, MAR 16, 2015

Teaching of Bhagavad Gita to be introduced in schools: Haryana Chief Minister

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar (centre) at the Press Club premises (Photo: PTI)

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on Sunday that the government will introduce teaching of Bhagavad Gita in schools across the state from coming academic session.

"Students in schools will be taught shlokas of Bhagavad Gita from the new academic session," he said.

The chief minister said that the government will also introduce a bill with "stringent punishment for cow slaughtering in the on-going budget session of the assembly." The BJP Government in Haryana will bring a new law against cow slaughter, he said.

In the proposed 'Govansh Sanrakashan and Gau Samvardhan (Cow Protection and Cow Conservation and Development) Bill' provisions of tough law on cow slaughter and for conservation and better care of indigenous cattle will be made, he said.

He said that the government has taken steps to ban sale of beef in the state with immediate effect.

Haryana Government on Saturday imposed a complete ban on the sale of beef in any form and proposed to provide for 10 years rigorous imprisonment for cow slaughter.

Mr Khattar, a first time MLA and the only chief minister of first ever BJP government in Haryana, said that the priority of his government was to end corruption from the system. Noting that corruption is a "main problem" in the state, Mr Khattar said that the government would take several steps, including introduction of technical system like IT, to eradicate the menace from the society.

"To end corruption one of the major things is to culminate discretionary powers," he said. The chief minister said that since the formation of the BJP government in the state the vigilance bureau had caught more number of government officials for indulging in corruption than the total cases in the last 10 years.

"Whosoever is found involved in corruption at any level will not be spared," he said.

FORESTS

HINDU, MAR 19, 2015

No tree felling for linear projects without State order: Green Tribunal

Akanksha Jain

Says orders should be put in public domain as per norms

Even as the Centre made environmental clearance for linear projects simpler by allowing non-forest activities like felling of trees right after in-principle approval, the National Green Tribunal has ordered that no non-forest activity be carried out in a forest area unless a final order has been passed by the State government.

It issued the direction that such orders be put in the public domain as per the Forest Conservation Act. It also decided that such orders passed will be appealable.

“No non-forest activity in the Forest Area that is covered under Section 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, will be permitted and carried on in any manner whatsoever, unless an order has been passed by the competent authority of that State government and put in the public domain by putting it on its website and complying with the other requirements in accordance with law,” said a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar.

“As the law has already been stated by the Tribunal, that it is only an order passed under Section 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, that is appealable under Section 16 of the NGT Act, we direct that appeals will lie against such orders to avoid difficulty to any litigant/ aggrieved person from approaching the Tribunal in accordance with law,” it said.

The Bench was hearing a petition filed by wildlife biologist Milind Pariwakam, who had challenged the validity of two communications dated August 8, 2014, and January 15, 2015, by the Centre. The communications relaxed forest clearance for felling of trees for linear projects like highways, allowing felling and commencement of work right after in-principle clearance.

This is in contrast to the guidelines issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, as per which forestry clearance will be given in two stages. In the first stage, the proposal shall be agreed to in-principle. At this stage, usually the conditions related to transfer and mutation of equivalent non-forest land for compensatory afforestation and realisation of funds are stipulated. The second stage concerns issuing of formal approval after receipt of compliance report from the State government.

The Centre has been claiming that relaxation in norms for linear projects will bring in expeditious implementation and execution of projects of public utility like roads, railways lines, transmission lines and pipelines.

Mr. Pariwakam had said that the Centre's communications are in violation of the scheme of the Forest Conservation Act and adversely affect the right of appeal of an aggrieved person, as contemplated under the NGT Act.

While passing the order, the Tribunal noted: "The legal position undisputed before us is that permitting use of the forest area for non-forest activity can only be permitted under Section 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, by the State Government in whose jurisdiction the forest falls. It is also undisputed before us that MoEF has intended to provide guidelines for expeditious granting of consent to the linear projects which are amongst others of national importance and necessary for the development of the country."

JUDICIARY

HINDU, MAR 16, 2015

Judges, castes and social justice

K. CHANDRU

The agitation in Tamil Nadu for greater representation for backward communities in the judiciary is not backed by facts relating to appointments in the State's subordinate judiciary

MAKING THE GRADE					
Category	Caste	No. of candidates selected			
Open category	Brahmin	1			
	Chettiyar	1			
BC	Nadar	1			
	Kallar	1			
	Kalkolar	1			
	Yadhava	2			
	BC (Western)	Pallan (put Christian)		1	2
		Kandar		1	1
	MBC & DC	Vannaan (Dhobi)		1	1
		Kurumba		1	1
		Vanniar		1	1
		Pallan		1	2
		Christian Nadar		1	1
	SC	Kongu Velalar	1	1	
Badaga		1	1		
	Arunthathiyar	1	1		
	Kuravan	1	1		

Mark Twain said “a lie can travel halfway around the world, while the truth is putting on its shoes.” What has been happening in the High Court of Madras in the recent past is ample proof of this.

After several days of agitation, boycott of courts, and shouting of slogans both in the corridors and inside the court halls, the representatives of some associations of lawyers and a group of men who were actually leading them summarised in two simple sentences to the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court what actually was their demand.

These two sentences were: (a) that in the list of names that could be recommended henceforth for appointment to the post of High Court Judges, there shall be no one from the Brahmin, Mudaliar, Gounder and Pillai communities; and (b) that persons belonging to communities hitherto unrepresented should alone be recommended hereafter for appointment to the post of High Court Judges.

The position taken by a section of the Bar, however minuscule it is, implies that the concept of social justice and affirmative action enshrined in the Constitution is anathema to the powers that be in the High Court and that the posts in the higher judiciary are virtually cornered by a few communities, devaluing the concept of social justice. It is high time society was made aware of the actual facts, so that no debate is based upon what a group of people propagate.

At present there are 42 Judges in the Madras High Court, including two who have come from other High Courts, namely the Chief Justice and the senior-most puisne Judge. There are four Judges of the Madras High Court functioning in other High Courts. Therefore, the working strength of Judges appointed to the Madras High Court, serving here and elsewhere, is 44. Of these, 28 belong to the Backward Classes, one belongs to the Most Backward Classes, nine belong to the Scheduled Castes, and the remaining six to the forward communities. In other words, less than 15 per cent of the total number of Judges appointed to the High Court belong to the forward communities. Even in respect of posts for which the rule of reservation at 69 per cent is applicable, the occupation of 15 per cent of posts by the forward communities cannot be said to be unconstitutional.

What the numbers reveal

The subordinate judiciary comprises (i) District Judges; (ii) Senior Civil Judges; and (iii) Civil Judges. The number of judges of the subordinate judiciary, category wise (both men and women) is as follows: There are currently 209 District Judges (147 men and 62 women) working in the State. Of them, only 17 (11 men and six women) belong to the unreserved categories. As many as 109 (74 men and 35 women) belong to the Backward Classes, 48 (35 men and 13 women) to the Most Backward Classes, 34 (27 men and seven women) to the Scheduled Castes, and one belongs to the Scheduled Tribes.

In the category of Senior Civil Judges, there are 194 persons (136 men and 58 women) working currently. Of them, only seven (five men and two women) belong to the unreserved category. As many as 103 (68 men and 35 women) belong to the Backward Classes, 51 persons (38 men and 13 women) to the Most Backward Classes, and 33 (25 men and eight women) to the Scheduled Castes.

In the category of Civil Judges, there are 468 persons (324 men and 144 women) working currently. Of them, only 12 (10 men and 2 women) belong to unreserved categories. As many as 231 (148 men and 83 women) belong to the Backward Classes, 120 (93 men and 27 women) to the Most Backward Classes, 101 (69 men and 32 women) to the Scheduled Castes, and four (all men) belong to the Scheduled Tribes.

As for minorities, of the 864 judicial officers working in the Tamil Nadu subordinate judiciary, 45 persons belong to the Christian, and 42 to the Muslim, communities. In other words, nearly 10 per cent of judicial officers working in the State belong to the

minority communities, and this number is higher than the number of judicial officers belonging to the forward communities.

Recruitment in 2012

Whenever a drive for recruitment is undertaken by the High Court of Judicature at Madras, a particular pattern emerges which belies any accusation that social justice is being denied. The post of Civil Judges, known in common parlance as District Munsifs and Judicial Magistrates, is to be filled up only through direct recruitment. The post of District Judges (Entry Level) can be filled up as follows: (i) up to 25 per cent by way of direct recruitment; (ii) up to 10 per cent by way of limited departmental competitive examinations; and (iii) up to 65 per cent by way of promotion on the basis of seniority-cum-merit.

Normally, direct recruitment to the category of Civil Judges (District Munsifs and Judicial Magistrates) is undertaken by the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission while direct recruitment of District Judges (Entry Level) is done by the High Court itself. Since all posts in the subordinate judiciary fall within the Tamil Nadu State Judicial Service, any direct recruitment to these posts should follow the rule of reservation prescribed in Rule 22 of the Tamil Nadu State and Subordinate Services Rules and the 200-point roster prescribed in Schedule III to these Rules.

In 2012, when the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission ran into rough weather, the High Court took upon itself the entire task of direct recruitment of about 185 Civil Judges (District Munsifs and Judicial Magistrates). In response to a notification issued in January 2012 by the High Court for direct recruitment, 10,443 candidates applied. The applications of some were rejected and 8,998 candidates were issued hall tickets. Under the Recruitment Rules, all the applicants were required to write examinations in four papers. The Rules stipulate that to qualify for viva voce, candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should secure 30 per cent marks in each of the four papers; those belonging to the Backward Classes and the Most Backward Classes 35 per cent; and candidates belonging to the General Category (unreserved category) 40 per cent.

Of the 8,998 candidates who were issued hall tickets, only 6,702 took the exams in all the four papers. Of these, only 157 belonged to the unreserved General Category. There were 228 Muslims (who had an internal reservation among the Backward Classes), 3096 candidates belonging to Backward Classes (Non-Muslims), 1838 to the Most Backward Classes, 42 to the Scheduled Tribes, and 1341 to the Scheduled Castes.

After the valuation of the answer papers, it was found that 111 Scheduled Caste candidates and five Scheduled Tribe candidates had secured a minimum of 30 per cent marks in each of the four papers and qualified for interview. Similarly, 220 candidates

belonging to Backward Classes (other than Muslims), 24 candidates to Backward Muslims, and 95 candidates belonging to Most Backward Classes qualified for interview. Only five candidates belonging to the unreserved category were found to have secured 40 per cent and above in each of the four papers. All the above 460 candidates were called for viva voce. Of these, a total of 174 were ultimately selected and appointed as District Munsifs and Judicial Magistrates in 2012. Out of these 174, 75 belonged to the Backward Classes (Non-Muslims), 12 to the Backward Classes (Muslims), 43 to the Most Backward Classes, 36 to Scheduled Castes, three to the Scheduled Caste (Arunthathiyar), and four to Scheduled Tribes. There was only one appointment from the forward communities.

Recruitment of District Judges

In 2013, the High Court undertook the exercise of direct recruitment of 23 District Judges (Entry Level). These 23 vacancies were relatable to roster point Nos.18 to 40 of the III Schedule to the General Rules for Tamil Nadu State and Subordinate Services. Therefore, one out of those 23 vacancies was reserved for Scheduled Caste (Arunthathiyar), three for the Scheduled Castes (two men and one woman), four for the Most Backward Classes (three men and one woman), one for Backward Class Muslims (woman), six for the Backward Classes (other than Muslims – four men and two women), and the remaining eight for the General Turn (four men and four women).

A total of 3273 candidates applied for these 23 posts of District Judges. After the rejection of 34 applications, hall tickets were issued to 3239 candidates and 2688 of them wrote the examinations in both papers. Of these, only 165 candidates secured a minimum of 35 per cent in the aggregate: 16 (10 men and six women) under the unreserved categories, 97 (78 men and 19 women) belonging to the Backward Classes; six (three men and three women) to Backward Class Muslims; 34 (30 men and four women) to the Most Backward Classes; and 12 (11 men and one woman) to the Scheduled Castes. All 165 candidates were called for interview and 23 of them were selected for appointment. Although eight vacancies fell under the open category, only two candidates belonging to forward communities were selected (*See table: "Making the grade"*). From this, it is clear that in the race for posts in Tamil Nadu's subordinate judiciary, the forward communities are not in the picture to a great extent. The number of posts occupied by them in the Madras High Court is less than 15 per cent, which is permitted even statutorily in case the rule of reservation at 69 per cent is applied. But unfortunately, a section of the bar either feigns ignorance of these facts or suffers from selective amnesia.

The agitation in Tamil Nadu for greater representation for backward communities in the judiciary is not backed by facts relating to appointments in the State's subordinate judiciary

In the race for posts, the forward communities are not in the picture to a great extent

MINORITY GROUPS

PIONEER, MAR 17, 2015

SAD STATE OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

Jaya Shroff Bhalla

Despite vociferous demands for minority welfare from across the political spectrum, several States have not utilised as much as Rs1,863.20 crore in this head till the fag end of the 12th five-year plan.

As against Rs2,357.79 crore released by the Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) to States and Union Territories for minority welfare since 2011-12 till the end of 2014, some States have reported an expenditure of only Rs494.58 crore.

An RTI query filed by The Pioneer shows that Assam, Manipur, Haryana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, J&K, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have not reported any expenditure to the Union Ministry in the last 3.5 years, despite the fact that these States were allotted Rs248 crore during the five-year-period.

The progress report also shows that West Bengal, which was allotted Rs933.22 crore, spent barely Rs295.97 crore, while Uttar Pradesh which received the second highest allocation of Rs623.20 crore, submitted a utilisation certificate of Rs123.99 crore. Bihar received close to Rs234.83 crores, of which it spent Rs14.31 crore.

“We have not been receiving new project proposals and utilisation certificates (UCs) from the States and Union Territories. Unless the erring States send us utilisation certificates, we cannot get the actual estimate of the expense so far,” said an official from MoMA.

“We have sent several queries to the States but we are yet to get a response. We have also held several rounds of meetings with principal secretaries and secretaries of States and UTs for reviews of implementation of Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) and submission of utilisation certificates, but to no avail,” he said.

The actual expenditure incurred by MoMA under MsDP during the last three financial years (2011-12 to 2013-14) was Rs779.9 crore, Rs641.2 crore and Rs952.8 crore respectively, as against the budgetary allocations of Rs1,136 crore, Rs649.5 crore and Rs958.53 crore respectively. Utilisation certificates from States and UTs under MsDP show that that Rs1,493.5 crore lay idle from 2011-2014. The expenditure during the first half of the current financial year (2014-15) was Rs659 crore as against the allocation of Rs1,352 crore. “Due to poor response from States on fund utilisation, we are unsure about the progress of important schemes like the MsDP, contribution to equity of National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) and Maulana Azad National Fellowship for Minority Students,” said the official.

The financial progress report for the 11th Five-Year Plan shows that the States failed to spend Rs576 crore, while total allocation was Rs2,935.30 crore.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 20, 2015

Pakistan fired 'unreliable' staff to keep nukes safe

The West fears Pakistan's nuclear arsenal could be vulnerable to penetration by militant groups.

Pakistan has sacked some people with "negative tendencies", who were working with the country's sensitive nuclear programme, according to a media report.

"We filtered out people having negative tendencies that could have affected national security," said Brig (retd) Tahir Raza Naqvi, who works for Strategic Plans Division, the administering body for the nuclear programme.

Those sacked were the "incurrable" ones, he said, and quickly added: "Our checks are very solid."

The sacked employees could not clear the Personnel Reliability Programme that was started in mid-2003/04 to screen those working on the sensitive programme, Naqvi was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper.

He was addressing a seminar Wednesday on 'Future Security Outlook of South Asia: Trends and Challenges' organised by Centre for International Strategic Studies, an Islamabad-based thinktank, and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung of Germany.

Naqvi said all employees of the nuclear programme are periodically checked for family background, education, political affiliation and religious inclinations. He would not say how many were sacked over the years or why they failed to clear the screening.

At least 12 people linked to disgraced nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan were removed when the proliferation scandal surfaced in 2003. But those firings took place before Personnel Reliability Programme was instituted.

Prof Siegfried Hecker of Stanford University said Pakistan had real security concerns and its perceived need for a robust strategic deterrent was now recognised by the West.

However, he said that concerns remained about the increase in fissile material production and development of diverse delivery systems (missiles).

He said Pakistan must keep its nuclear weapons, material and know-how under strict government control.

“Safety and security is paramount to manage nuclear enterprise,” he said, adding that those two factors were not the “destination, but a journey and the first line against nuclear terrorism”.

Pakistan is believed to be sitting on around 120 nuclear warheads and has recently brought into play two new heavy water plants that will enable them to produce about 24 nuclear warheads a year.

The West fears Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal could be vulnerable to penetration by militant groups.

PARAMILITARY FORCES

HINDU, MAR 23, 2015

Paramilitary forces to have 33 p.c. women'

Thirty-three per cent posts in Central paramilitary forces will be reserved for women, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday.

“We have decided to increase the strength of women in paramilitary forces to 33 per cent,” Mr. Singh said at a function organised by the Border Security Forces (BSF) here.

At present, the total strength of women personnel in the paramilitary forces is less than five per cent.

There are seven paramilitary forces, also called the Central armed police forces, in the country.

The CRPF, the BSF, the CISF, the ITBP, the SSB and the NSG have women armed contingents while the Assam Rifles does not have women in combat duties.

The total strength of all paramilitary forces is around 8 lakh.

All these forces report to the Home Ministry.

Last week, the government decided to increase the strength of women in police forces in Union Territories, including Delhi to 33 per cent. — PTI

POLICE

STATESMAN, MAR 20, 2015

Time stands still

Sankar Sen

Public distrust of the police in India remains ever so pronounced. During British rule, the law-enforcement authorities were rightly regarded as the agent and instrument of imperial power. But even after independence, there was no improvement in the image of the force. The first Police Commission, set up by Lord Curzon in 1902, described the Indian police as a “bugbear, a strong arm of the state that harasses and seldom helps the public”.

In the 1960s, when we joined the Indian Police Service, the public perception of the force was poor, if not hostile. Many of my friends and relations cautioned me against joining the service and turning into a “sadistic bully”. Stories, some of them purely apocryphal, of violence and brutality were generally accepted as true. The image of the force was that of a despised bogey. That impression has not changed even six decades after independence. Unfortunately, the force remains alienated from the public and viewed with distrust and hostility.

In his seminal work on the Indian police, Dr David Bayley has said that in India and other South Asian countries, that were once under colonial rule, the people tend to avoid the police; this “avoidance-syndrome” is more pronounced in North India than in the South. There is an adage in Bengali folklore that any contact with the police entails more trouble than encountering a tiger, and hence one should remain miles away from the force.

The police has also reconciled itself to the fact that the public will never understand the problems and dilemmas of the force and will remain consistently critical. During training at the National Police Academy (where IPS officers are sent during probation) and the State Police Training Institutions, the officers are given lectures on police-public cooperation for efficient functioning. Without public cooperation, the difficult and hazardous occupation of policing becomes more complex. But after they leave the portals of the training establishments for field postings, they are advised by their seniors to quickly forget and bury -- five fathoms deep -- what they have been taught in the training institutes.

The work is tough and very often cruel methods have to be adopted to deal with criminals and law-breakers. In the task of law-enforcement, the end justifies the means and extra-legal methods and short cuts are unavoidable. During my practical training as the Assistant Superintendent of Police in Cuttack district of Odisha, the Superintendent of Police, a competent, no-nonsense officer, had told me that abstract and humane principles

of policing, that are taught in the classrooms, are of no relevance in the face of tough realities. This is the persistent and overwhelming dilemma of policing.

Political masters also expect the police to adopt shortcuts, and what in police terminology are called third-degree methods, to contain the depredations of hardened criminals. The same politicians condemn the police if things go awry and there is a public outcry against police high-handedness. This is a slippery slope and once the law-enforcers turn into law-breakers, the task of policing will suffer considerably. A former Chief Justice of Odisha High Court once remarked that the police must remember that order has to be maintained through the law. Otherwise, dacoits can maintain better order than the police.

During British times, the police loyally served the interests of the colonial masters. Though there were many competent officers who efficiently maintained law and order and earned people's respect, the police, by and large, were ruthless in dealing with freedom-fighters. They remained the rulers' police and not the people's police. Today, the force follows the same tradition and remains totally beholden to the politicians of the ruling party. This has further alienated the force from the public.

The old order instead of disappearing with the departure of the British has continued under the new dispensation. Efforts to insulate the police from extraneous pressures and influence, despite directives of the Supreme Court, have not attained fruition because of the opposition of the political masters who are against police reforms. Though the British had unabashedly used and misused the police to further their imperial interests, it enacted laws to prevent misuse of police powers against common people. The Indian Evidence Act lays down (Section 25) that the confession before the police is inadmissible in evidence and statements before the police during investigation are not to be signed by the witnesses (Section 162 of the Criminal Procedure Code). These provisions based on distrust of the police are also mentioned in statutes and recommendations by jurists. Regretfully, they are generally ignored. One could mention the report of the Malimath Commission and that of the 14th Law Commission headed by Setelvad.

The popular perception of the modus operandi has not changed; hence trust cannot be reposed in the force.

The outcome is that the police adopt dubious methods to circumvent the law. During British rule, the police were discouraged to develop closer relationship with the public. There was an underlying fear that this would affect strict law enforcement and

hobble the functioning of the police. The Police Act of 1861 fails to mention the important duty of obtaining public support and cooperation. In independent India, the hiatus between the police and the public continues. Community policing experiments have not been successful because the police have not given the public a meaningful role in planning and supervision of operations.

The criticism that the police are engaged in a public relations gimmick and are not really interested in true community policing is seemingly valid. Previously, constables, who constitute 70 per cent of the force, were treated as errand boys, not to be given duties that require application of mind. The Police Commission of 1902 states that responsible police work need not be delegated to them. The position of the constabulary remains much the same. They have not been empowered and continue to function as “spear carriers” in the background. After 30 to 45 years of service, many of them retire in the same rank they had joined.

Today many bright and highly qualified men and women are joining the IPS. Quite a few of them are from IITs and IIMs but they have failed to change the structure and soul of the Indian police. The old order continues and few signs of change are visible.

The writer is Senior Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences; former Director-General, National Human Rights Commission; former Director, National Police Academy, Hyderabad

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

INDIAN EXPRESS, MAR 17, 2015

Delhi secretarial support

A parliamentary secretary often has the rank of a minister and may get charge of one or more departments if the chief minister so desires.

Delhi has appointed 21 parliamentary secretaries for 'smooth functioning' of the government. Who are parliamentary secretaries, and what do they do?

Who are parliamentary secretaries? How are they appointed? Several states have created posts of 'parliamentary secretary' or 'chief parliamentary secretary' to 'accommodate' MLAs who could not become ministers. Appointments are at the discretion of the chief minister; the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, for example, has no provision for appointment of parliamentary secretaries. A parliamentary secretary often has the rank of a minister and may get charge of one or more departments if the chief minister so desires.

What perks does a parliamentary secretary enjoy?

Almost the same as ministers, including a substantial salary and allowances (which add up in Punjab, for example, to Rs 1.35 lakh per month and may, in Telangana, soon reach Rs 3 lakh per month), official accommodation, official vehicle, office space, secretarial staff and, in some states like Punjab, police protection. The Kejriwal government, however, has said Delhi's parliamentary secretaries will get office space and official transport, but no remuneration or other perks.

Related

How many parliamentary secretaries can a state have?

There is no fixed number. Delhi has 21; Punjab had the same number when the government took charge in 2012, but has 19 now. Telangana has 6. Gujarat, which has a tradition of parliamentary secretaries, has 5 now. However, UP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and J&K have no parliamentary secretaries. Orissa last had one over half a century ago.

Why do states feel the need to appoint parliamentary secretaries?

Essentially for political reasons. The Constitution puts a ceiling on the number of ministers in a government, and CMs hand out these posts as favours to caste or other groups whom they fail to accommodate, or to placate those leaders who might otherwise create trouble for the government. In Delhi, AAP has 67 of 70 MLAs in the assembly, but can have only seven ministers.

Is doing so constitutional?

Public interest lawsuits have been filed in several High Courts saying that the practice of appointing parliamentary secretaries is against the 91st Amendment to the constitution, 2003, which introduced Article 164(1A), saying “the total number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Council of Ministers in a State shall not exceed fifteen per cent of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly of that State”. (In the case of Delhi, Article 239AA, introduced by the 69th Amendment, 1991, applies, which says “there shall be a Council of Ministers consisting of not more than ten per cent of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly”.) Some cases are ongoing, while in some, courts have quashed the posts.

RAILWAYS

TIMES OF INDIA, MAR 18, 2015

Now railway platform ticket to cost Rs 10

Vijay Pinjarkar

NAGPUR: Call it an attempt by the cash-strapped Indian Railways to mop up revenue or reduce rush inside the stations, the platform tickets will cost Rs10 from April 1.

Till 2012, those entering railway platforms had to pay Rs3 but in 2012 railway budget, the then railway minister Dinesh Trivedi hiked platform ticket rate to Rs5 and now it has been doubled.

Railway sources said the railways have given instructions to all zonal railways to print revised tickets on top priority and ensure supply to all stations well in time.

Till that time, old stock of tickets may be used with rate corrected with stamp. The railways have also given instructions for modification in software for issuing platform ticket with new rate through ticket vending machines at stations.

Interestingly, the divisional railway managers (DRMs) have been delegated powers to increase the rate of platform tickets beyond Rs10 to regulate rush of passengers during specific requirements like melas and rallies under intimation to the Railway Board.

ATVMs: In another development, the Railway Board has asked railway officials to make concerted efforts to proliferate automatic ticket vending machines (ATVMs) and to educate passengers about the features of ATVMs.

Video showing the demo of passengers using ATVMs should also be shown on the CCTVs installed on the platform so as to educate passengers on this aspect.

"No serving employees should be allowed to act as facilitator and services of any such facilitators should be discontinued with immediate effect," said a circular issued on Tuesday.

CRIS will take necessary steps to examine the feasibility of making ATVMs more user-friendly so as to encourage the passengers to buy tickets by themselves.

The issue regarding extension of the scheme of facilitators has been examined in

consultation with finance directorate of ministry of railways and it has been decided to continue with the scheme of facilitators up to March 31, 2016.

HINDU, MAR 19, 2015

Now, pay Rs. 5,000 for littering platforms, tracks

Akanksha Jain

The habit of littering, defecation or spitting on and along railway tracks and platforms will now cost Rs. 5,000 under the Polluter Pays principle. The National Green Tribunal on Wednesday passed a string of directions to clear the Railways of the filth which has earned it the tag of being the “biggest open toilet”.

The Tribunal empowered the Railways to impose a fine of Rs. 5,000 on anyone found littering or defecating on tracks or platforms. Those residing along the tracks and disposing waste on railway property would also be fined.

That is not all. If the waste is found lying in front of any house adjoining the tracks, the fine would be recovered from the occupants of the property.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Swatanter Kumar also directed the three municipal corporations to place dustbins in the 46 slum clusters along the railway property.

BUSINESS STANDARD, MAR 17, 2015

A new challenge for railways

Costlier capital means bar for efficiency raised

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu's ambitious plan for the railways to invest Rs 8.5 lakh crore in five years has taken a step forward with the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) for it to invest Rs 1.5 lakh crore in the railways over the same period. One traditional route is for the insurance behemoth to buy bonds issued by the [Indian Railway Finance Corporation](#) (IRFC) which usually bears [AAA](#) or [AA](#) rating, thus making everybody happy in the process. But it is also important to understand what this means for the Indian Railways. It raises the bar for desired efficiency. This is costly funding and it is imperative for the railways to execute the projects in which the funding is deployed more efficiently and effectively than has been the case so far. Otherwise the returns from operations will not rise to keep pace with the higher cost of funds.

Typically, [IRFC](#) passes on what it borrows from the market to the railways by keeping a margin of 0.5 percentage point. In 2013-14 it accessed funds at 7.9 per cent and the railways got those funds at 8.4 per cent. On the other hand, during the 2009-13 period,

the rate at which the railways paid dividends to the government for the capital at charge has come down from six per cent to four per cent. Even if that rate goes up again to six per cent or more, it will have to pay IRFC around two percentage points more for the funds it provides. So, as the funding of the railways through IRFC goes up, the railways will have to improve its operating efficiency to be able to pay for the use of this more expensive capital.

In the coming year (2015-16) the [Indian Railways](#) has given itself a highly ambitious annual plan of Rs 1 lakh crore, which is 52 per cent more than the plan for the current year. It has also provided for a near-doubling (46 per cent) of traditional market borrowing in 2015-16 over the current year, at Rs 17,655 crore. This is not all. It has created a new line of financing called extra-budgetary resources (institutional finance) under which it proposes to raise an additional Rs 17,163 crore. This also will need to be serviced. It is not as if the railways is not aware of the tasks it has set for itself. It has sought to increase the internal resources generated in 2015-16 by 16 per cent. Additionally, the Budget has proposed to generate Rs 5,781 through public-private partnerships. These resources too will have to be serviced. Mr Prabhu has set the railways on a course of investing big and sharply increasing internal resource generation. All this will hinge on how much more efficiently the Indian Railways is operated.

TRAINING

HINDU, MAR 23, 2015

The nuts and bolts of skill development

KUMAR VIVEK

RADHIKA KAPOOR

WARP AND WEFT: “For any skill development effort to work, employers need to be put in the driving seat, with the government acting as a regulator and not the implementer.” A weaver couple displaying their skills at Dilli Hatt in New Delhi.

For any skill development effort to succeed, markets and industry need to play a large role in determining courses, curriculum and relevance

The Union Budget 2015 paved way for the launch of a much-awaited [National Skills Mission](#) to complement Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘Skill India’ and ‘Make in India’ exhortations. However, much work needs to be done on the ground for the government to prove that this step is a departure from rhetoric lip service.

The magnitude of the problem has been analysed by numerous experts: for a country that adds 12 million people to its workforce every year, less than 4 per cent have ever received any formal training. Our workforce readiness is one of the lowest in the world and a large chunk of existing training infrastructure is irrelevant to industry needs.

This is not as much due to lack of monetary investment as it is a predicament about grossly inefficient execution. The government already spends several thousand crores every year on skill development schemes through over 18 different Central government Ministries and State governments. The need of the hour is to improve resource utilisation and find solutions that can address the systemic and institutional bottlenecks constraining the sector.

Keeping in mind the revised National Skill Development Policy due to be announced in a few months that will also outline the contours of the National Skills Mission, we present an analysis of three priority areas that the government needs to address.

Coordination of skilling efforts

Currently, there are at least 20 different government bodies in India running skill development programmes with no synergies and considerable duplication of work. For instance, both the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) created their own sector skill councils last year

to identify skill development needs in the country, even as the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has been setting up Sector Skill Councils since 2011. A Labour Market Information System (LMIS) that should have been one centralised resource has been developed in different forms by at least five government agencies.

The presence of multiple stakeholders coupled with a lack of coordinated policies has resulted in no standardisation of procedures or outcomes. The government today does not even have a unified definition of “skill.” A 2013 paper of the Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR) questioned the basis of government’s target of skilling 500 million people by 2022 without this definition. Skill development efforts today cover everything from personality development, 40-hour long “outreach and awareness programmes” conducted for farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture, 3-6 month courses encouraged by the NSDC and the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), as well as two-year programmes in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) was created as the aggregator in the sector, but the duplication of roles and policy confusion has persisted. Tasks allocated to MSDE in the official gazette notification, such as “frame policies for soft skills”, “computer education”, and “work relating to Industrial Training Institutes” are ambiguously crafted, and have large overlaps with the work allocation of existing Central ministries.

It is imperative that MSDE performs the difficult role of “coordination relating to skill development” assigned to it. To begin with, the delivery of at least 70 per cent of the total skill development targets should rest solely with the MSDE. Large scale training delivery systems, such as the Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T) of MoLE should be integrated with MSDE, while ministries working on skills in specific sectors (such as Textiles and Tourism) should closely coordinate with it. In addition, overarching roles such as apprenticeship system, LMIS implementation, private sector coordination, etc., should be housed exclusively within one agency to reduce policy confusion. Finally, the MSDE must explicitly be made responsible for coordination with the States and their Skill Development Missions.

Scientific approach to policies

Skill development is a tricky field for the government to channel resources into. To justify investments, policies must be grounded in hard data. Scheme design parameters, such as sector and beneficiary targeting, curriculum, delivery methods, etc., need to incorporate authentic market signals. Existing skill gap studies fail to provide agile, actionable data and are rarely used in scheme designs. A good first step will be the development of a fully functional LMIS that can provide an accurate statistical base for formulating and monitoring vocational training policies and programmes.

Technology can also play a great role in ensuring quality of delivery at scale. Business processes associated with planning and delivery can be managed better with the use of technology, as the experience of MIS portals developed by several ministries show. In addition, scientific monitoring and evaluation methods need to be incorporated in every programme to ensure just utilisation of resources.

Engaging the private sector

While the government itself is a large employer, the primary focus of skill development is essentially towards private sector employment and entrepreneurship. So far, private sector itself has not geared up for the challenge. The World Bank Enterprise Surveys 2014 reveal that the percentage of firms offering formal training programmes for its permanent, full-time employees in India is just 35.9, compared to China's 79.2. S. Ramadorai, Chairman of NSDA and NSDC, describes the situation as a "market failure" where the employers are not investing to skill employees, and employees do not have the ability and willingness to pay for skilling.

It is necessary to catalyse investments from the industry and support candidates in raising resources for training. This would need a functioning credit market with collateral guarantees for students, as well as planned coordination with the private sector.

For any skill development effort to succeed, markets and industry need to play a large role in determining courses, curriculum and relevance. For this, employers need to be put in the driving seat, with the government acting as a regulator and not the implementer.

The government has its task cut out. What is needed is a willingness to act, and to take the difficult decisions that can help realise the 'Skill India' dream.

(Kumar Vivek and Radhika Kapoor are development sector professionals who worked with the erstwhile Office of Advisor to the Prime Minister on Skill Development. The views expressed are personal.)

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ASIAN AGE, MAR 16, 2015

Capital was named New Delhi only on December 31, 1926

December 31, 1926. That is the day when “New Delhi” as we know the capital city was named as such.

When British monarch King George V and his consort Queen Mary held one of the grandest darbars on December 12, 1911, where he assumed the crown of India and announced the shifting of the imperial capital from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Delhi, the new capital had remained unchristened.

On December 15, the King and the Queen, the first monarchs to attend their Coronation Darbar in India, laid two plain foundation stones of the new city, bearing just the date “December 15, 1911” engraved on it.

It was only 15 years after his coronation as the “King- Emperor of India” that King George V named the city “New Delhi”. Until then, the city had in common parlance been referred to just as the “new capital” or “new imperial capital” or “imperial city”.

According to archival documents of the period at the National Archives of India (NAI) here, it was on “December 31, 1926” that King George V officially named the new capital as “New Delhi”.

“It is hereby notified for general information that his majesty the King-Emperor has signified his approval to the new capital being named ‘New Delhi’. This name will be brought into use forthwith,” says the 1926 public notification in this regard by the home department.

The grand city of “New Delhi”, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker, after its completion, was officially inaugurated in February 1931 by the then Viceroy Lord Irwin amid much pomp and fanfare.

The historic capital city-naming notification, among other rare records of the colonial and post-Independence era, are on display at an ongoing month-long exhibition at the NAI Museum here as part of the 125th year celebrations of the institute.

A rare colour-coded 1912 map of Delhi, depicting land acquisition proposals for the creation of the “new imperial capital” is also on display at the exhibition entitled, “Treasures of National Archives”.

Titled “Delhi & Vicinity”, the map in multiple hues displays the regions acquired under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, for planning the new capital city, the cantonment, civil

lines, development and firm areas. Even here, the new city is mentioned as the “imperial city” only.

Another rare exhibit is an old volume showing the seating plans for the darbar amphitheatres, shown in three colours, corresponding to the three historic Delhi Darbars, held in 1877, 1903 and 1911 respectively.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, MAR 18, 2015

Shendra smart city mentioned in budget set to get finance secretary’s nod

Timsy Jaipuria

Shendra Bidkin, the smart city that found mention in the Union Budget speech, is likely to get the finance ministry's nod on Thursday to initiate tenders to the tune of Rs 1,500 crore towards infrastructure and development.

The smart city is set to come up in Aurangabad as part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC).

Once the finance secretary Rajiv Mehrishi-headed DMIC Trust approves tenders for design, construction, roads, landscaping and district administration buildings, the city would be launched by the DMIC Development Corporation (DMICDC), following the pattern set by Dholera smart city in Gujarat, said an official.

This would be the third city for which DMICDC will moot proposals to begin tendering - the first being the Integrated Industrial Township Vikram Udyogpuri in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, followed by the Activation Area of Dholera Special Investment Region.

According to the official, this will be followed up with the tendering for an Integrated Industrial Township in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, and Global City in Gurgaon, Haryana.

Talleen Kumar, CEO and managing director, DMICDC, confirmed the development and said, "The planning of smart cities under the DMIC project is already complete. Now we will roll out tenders for design-build packages for four smart cities, shortly followed by tender roll out for the Global City in Gurgaon, later this year."

The official said the government would invite EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) tenders worth about Rs 300 crore for the Ujjain smart city, Rs 2,500 crore for Dholera, Rs 1,500 crore for Shendra and Rs 450 crore for Greater Noida.

DMICDC will invite international competitive bidding for developing trunk infrastructure, including roads and utilities, sewage treatment and collection, water treatment, as well as potable and industrial water supply among others.

The Centre will provide funds through the DMIC Trust, which has a corpus of Rs 17,500 crore

to be utilised over a period of five years.

Cities such as Dholera and Shendra Bidkin will be carved out with an overall investment of \$12 billion to \$15 billion (Rs 75,000 crore-Rs 94,000 crore), which will be a mix of government and private investments, to be leveraged from the DMIC Trust's trunk infrastructure investment pool.

"These cities hold a huge potential of having upsides as a result of initial investments into trunk infrastructure, which will again be ploughed back to fund other trunk infrastructure projects under the corridor development plan," the official said.

WILD ANIMALS

DECCAN HERALD, MAR 17, 2015

Stringent cow protection law passed in Haryana

For "protection and upkeep" of cows, Haryana Assembly tonight passed a Bill which clamps a complete ban on cow slaughter in the state and provides for a rigorous imprisonment ranging from three years to ten years for killing the animal.

After discussing the Haryana 'Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan' Bill, 2015, which also provides for a fine ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs one lakh, for about an hour, the House passed it with voice vote.

As the Bill was passed, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar thanked the members while former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda got up and said the BJP government deserves to be patted for this law.

The new law, which drew support from main opposition INLD, and the Congress, while banning the cow slaughter in the state, provides for prison term not less than three years for the offence and may extend to ten years.

In case of default in payment of the fine the convict would have to undergo another one year jail term.

The Bill was moved by State Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development Minister, O P Dhankar, who at the outset said that it was his "good fortune" to present such a Bill.

He said the state had brought "country's stringent law" against cow slaughter and also which would ensure protection and upkeep of the animal, which has great reverence in the country since ages.

No person shall export or cause to be exported cow for the purpose of slaughter either directly or through his agent or servant or any other person acting on his behalf in contravention of the provisions of the Bill or with the knowledge that it shall be or is likely to be slaughtered, the Bill says.

"Anyone who contravenes this provision shall be guilty of an offence punishable with RI for a term not to be less than three years and may extend to seven years.

"And fine which shall not be less than Rs 30,000 and may extend to Rs 70,000. In case of default of payment of fine, additional imprisonment which may extend to one year may be imposed in lieu of fine," the Minister said.

On March 14, Haryana government had imposed a complete ban on the sale of beef in any form in the state.

"The ban covers canned beef also," he said.

The Bill provides that no person shall offer for sale or cause to be sold beef or beef products except for such medicinal purposes and in such form as may be prescribed.

"Whoever contravenes this provision shall be guilty of an offence punishable with RI for a term not less than three years and may extend to five years which shall not be less than Rs 30,000 and may extend to Rs 50,000....," he said.

No permit for export of cows shall be issued for a state where cow slaughter is not banned by law, Dhankar told the House.

However, the Government shall have power to issue special permits for export of cow in case where it is of the opinion that it shall be in the "public interest" to do so.

Whenever an offence punishable under this Act has been committed, any vehicle used in the commission of such offence shall be liable to be confiscated by a police officer not below the rank of Sub Inspector or any person authorised by the Government on this behalf.

Speaking on the Bill, Dhankar said that Haryana was promulgating the toughest law against cow slaughter in the country.

"The law has been framed after studying the laws in place in different states," he said. The purpose of the new law is to prohibit the slaughter of cow on one hand and develop indigenous breeds of cows and to establish institutions to keep, maintain and care the infirm, injured, stray and uneconomic cows.

The government shall provide adequate financial and technical support to such institution.

"The state government is committed to strengthen the prohibition of cow slaughter in the state and make schemes, projects and programmes for conservation and development of indigenous breeds of cows," he said.

The Bill provides that the state government shall establish laboratories for differentiating of beef from that of the meat of other species of animals, testing and identification of various constituents of milk and milk products.

Earlier, the Punjab Prohibition of Cow Slaughter Act, 1955, applicable in Haryana as

amended from time to time, was in force, but according to the new Bill passed today, the previous Act in its present form had proved to be "ineffective as conviction rate is quite low".

Hence, a comprehensive Bill encompassing protection and upkeep of cows was brought, which entails repealing the existing Act, providing for stricter penalties for various offences.

Dhankar said that it is for numerous reasons that a cow in our country is referred to as "Gaumata (holy)".

He said that there were a total 18 lakh cows in Haryana, with 400 Gaushalas. Out of total cows, 1.17 lakh cows were of "Rani breed".

Congress MLA Karan Dalal mooted having tag system for cows as people leave many cows to stray on roads after they are no longer productive for them.

WOMEN

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, MAR 17, 2015

Women And Work

Tapping India's demographic dividend is contingent upon improving the country's female labour force participation rate (the number of women seeking employment or employed as a portion of the total population of working-age women). Therefore, the findings of a new IMF working paper, *Women Workers in India: Why So Few Among So Many?*—that India has one of the lowest female labour force participation (FLFP) rates among developing and emerging economies (33% in 2012) and that its FLFP has been declining since the mid-2000s—should raise concerns.

The study also finds that education and female labour participation exhibit a U-shaped relationship. At low (or nil) education levels, FLFP is high, with this employment being limited almost entirely to the informal sector. With increasing education, participation falls, only to pick up at the higher education (university) levels, given the pull factor of higher wages of white-collar jobs. The IMF research, read together with a recent OECD report—the latter found that significantly lesser numbers of women enter STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) degree programmes, thereby limiting women's participation in these fields that create some of the largest number of white-collar jobs—highlights how the gender gap in education could be an important driver of low FLFP. At the same time, the report says, the Indian labour market needs to be more flexible to create formal sector jobs for the “missing middle” (the women with middle-level education). One of the ways to do this could be to have skills training built on these women's existing education levels, making them eligible for jobs that require greater competencies. At any rate, given how economic growth is strongly positively correlated with FLFP, India needs to move fast to address this aspect of gender inequality.