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View-Point
Annu Anand

Interview
Dr. Vasanti Rao

Overview
Suvojit Chattopadhyay

Analysis
Ishita Kaur Mishra

CONTENTS

Climate Change and the Youth of India: A Call to Action
Annu Anand

Decline of Villages in India leads to a decline of India

The gram panchayat's role in sustainable rural development
Suvojit Chattopadhyay

National Youth Policy-Will it help India reap the promised demographic dividend?
Ishita Kaur Mishra

Energy Conservation: Paving the Path to Sustainable Living
Shalini Paul

Meaningful Action for a Sustainable Future through Film festival

Ten Reasons Why The Digital Personal Data Protection Law Doesn't Empower Citizens
Srinivas Kodali

Media Review

New NEP stresses on innovation through education: Union Minister Anurag Thakur

President gives assent to women's reservation Bill

India saw extreme weather events almost every day in first 9 months in 2023: Report

More than 50 percent of primary schools across many states have enrolment less than 60: NITI Aayog report

Row over paid leave for menstruation: How Parliament took up the issue over the years

Editor: Annu Anand

View–Point

Climate Change and the Youth of India: A Call to Action

What are the specific challenges that climate change poses to the youth in India and how the youth can play the crucial role in addressing this global crisis, explains ***Annu Anand***

Climate change is a major concern for the entire planet, and India is no exception. The country's diverse landscape and vibrant population make it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events such as floods and droughts are just a few of the challenges that India faces.

Moreover, India is the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, and the country's rapid economic growth is expected to lead to an increase in emissions in the coming years. It is crucial that India continues to invest in clean energy and takes steps to mitigate the impact of climate change on its people and environment.

India has severe Impact of Climate Change

India has experienced a noticeable increase in average temperatures, leading to more frequent and intense heatwaves. It has already experienced a rise in temperature by 0.7 degrees Celsius in the last century, and it is projected to increase by 1.5-4.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. This rise in temperature is causing heatwaves, droughts, and floods in different parts of the country, which is affecting livelihood, water resources, and health.

Agriculture, that is another crucial sector for many Indian families, is under threat due to unpredictable weather patterns. India's monsoon season is essential for agriculture, as it is the primary source of livelihood for millions of people. The changing rainfall patterns are leading to either too much or too little rainfall, which is causing crop failure, affecting livelihoods and food security. The health implications are significant, with heat-related illnesses on the rise.

Depleting water sources impact not only daily lives but also ability of the youth to pursue education and career opportunities. Frequent and intense cyclones, floods, and droughts disrupt communities and exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities. Moreover, India's rich biodiversity is at risk due to habitat destruction and climate-induced changes. India's coastal regions, which are more vulnerable to sea-level rise, storm surges, and cyclones, are causing damage to infrastructure, homes, and businesses, which is leading to economic losses and displacement of people.

Eco anxiety Impacts Youth

The global survey on climate anxiety among children and people aged 16 to 25 years from 10 countries, including Brazil, India, Nigeria, Philippines and Australia, revealed that youth are extremely worried and feel sad, powerless, helpless and betrayed by their governments.

This survey also revealed that the adverse impacts on daily life from the climate crisis were greater for youth in the Global South. The study found that individuals experiencing eco-anxiety had higher rates of depression, anxiety, stress, lower self-reported mental health and functional impairment. Eco-anxiety was found to have a significant correlation with the rate of exposure to information about the impacts of climate change, the amount of attention paid to climate change information and what is seen as acceptable

by peers. These biases are magnified in a digital landscape where biased social media algorithms often create echo chambers and filter bubbles.

As per the Lancent, Regional health, South Asia, report COVID-19 and the climate crisis have caused unprecedented disruptions across the world. Climate change has affected the mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescent. Young people with a mental illness and without social support are at an increased risk of climate change induced mental ill-health. COVID-19 resulted in a marked increase of psychological distress and increase in depression, anxiety and insomnia have is due to the upheavals that people were experiencing including loss of livelihood and breaking of social bonds.

No doubt, that the issue of climate change is a pressing concern that requires the involvement of people from all walks of life, including the youth. For that matter, it is essential to understand the perspective of the Indian youth on the issue to identify ways to engage them in taking action without robbing them of their youth.

The former United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director Mr. Solheim attributed the vulnerability of climate change in India to the heavy population, loss of nature and destruction of forest during Youth 20 (Y20) talk on climate action.

The survey conducted by the Global Shapers Community in 2017 mentions that 80% of Indian youth believe that climate change is a major threat to India. This awareness is driven by a combination of factors, including increasing exposure to news and social media, educational initiatives on climate change, and direct experiences with the impacts of climate change such as flooding and droughts. Overall, Indian youth are increasingly aware of the challenges posed by climate change and the urgent need for action.

However, the challenges faced by the young generation in addressing the impact of climate change in India are diverse and multifaceted. While the youth are often at the forefront of environmental activism, they encounter several obstacles in their efforts to combat climate change. For example, young people from marginalized communities may be less likely to have access to resources and services that can help them adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Call of Action by Youth

Education plays a critical role in promoting sustainability and climate action among Indian youth. Schools and universities can incorporate environmental education and sustainability principles into their curricula, while media outlets can provide more coverage of environmental issues to raise awareness among the broader public.

Many young people are also advocating for greater action from their governments and are using social media to mobilize support and raise awareness about the issue. To further engage Indian youth in taking climate action, it is important to create opportunities for them to participate in decision-making processes, including policy development and implementation. This can be achieved through youth-led initiatives that involve young people in sustainability projects, or by providing platforms for youth to voice their opinions and ideas to decision-makers. By just expecting social activism from them and converting them into mini environment leaders alone can't solve the problem. They need to be part of the decision makers and work with government and non- government to make policy decisions. For that matter, they need to build their capacity and skill in evidences based advocacy.

Additionally, policies and programs that support sustainable development and encourage environmental stewardship need to be implemented at the community and national level. With continued efforts and support from the government, educational institutions, and civil society organizations, the youth of India can play a critical role in addressing these global challenges.

Interview

Decline of villages in India leads to a decline of India

Villages play a crucial role in the development of our Republic, as they represent the backbone of our nation. However, over time, the village structure has been weakened, and this has had a negative impact on the overall development of the country. What went wrong is that many of our villages have been neglected and left behind in terms of development. What are the ways and means to rejuvenate our little republics explains ***Dr N. Bhaskara Rao****, the author of several books, scholar, social scientist who has been studying various social and development issues including governance, electoral process; in conversation with* ***Dr. Vasanti Rao***

Question: Can you explain to us what is this concept of the 'Little Republic of India' why is it important when we talk about new India?

Answer - I am happy that the little republic of India is being remembered and discussed in this conversation. India used to be known for its villages around 75 years ago, and it's noteworthy how these villages played a crucial role in sustaining India's growth model. India's village culture and the self-sustaining process of its villages have indeed been a unique model in the world's governance pattern.

Back then people used to talk about little republics not because there were 5.60 lakh villages in India but they were little republics within the larger republic of India and played a crucial role in sustaining India's growth model.

These characteristics distinguished India very uniquely. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, and Raja Ram Mohan Roy all early Pioneers who devised or who pursued Modern India, thought about India from a village perspective in terms of how they are administered and how they can become productive. From the process of governance to agriculture and self-sustaining, India's villages had it all.

Dr. Rao in discussion with Dr. Vasanti Rao

Not only this whenever any international dignity visited India, these villages were shown to them as unique models of Indian democratic system. When Eisenhower, (an American military officer and statesman who served as the 34th president of the United States from 1953 to 1961) came to India in 1951 we took pride in taking him to the village and showing him how great our villages are and when 10 years later in 1961 Mr. John Kennedy came to India he also visited a few villages, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev from the Soviet Union was also shown that how the Indian rural community was unique as compared to Soviet Union models.

The decline of rural India is a serious issue that requires immediate attention. The decline of villages in India leads to a decline of India, the republic. We need to introspect and take corrective measures to rejuvenate these little republics of India. By nurturing and watching rural areas carefully, we can rectify our lapses and ensure that our republic India survives even after 2050. We have still 25 years to rectify our lapses that are responsible for deteriorating the condition of our villages.

Question: We don't talk much about our villages nowadays, we talk about rural India, however rural India over the years in our 75 years of Independence has been getting lots of importance in terms lots of schemes and programs, especially about farmers and many more programs for rural India how still villages are neglected?

Answer - I am looking into these issues especially in past 2 years more deeply and in focused manner. I was known as a village boy in my college and when it comes to a village, I see a village as a viable community. After India became Republic the first National Credit Survey was conducted to find out how to sustain village communities and it was found out that credit to farmers, and weavers of India are the main factors for the survival and sustainability of India. This set the momentum for the sustainability of our villages.

In 1956, Balwant Rai Mehta committee was formed and his committee recommended 3 tire systems of governance in India and rural India was divided into three levels: Village, Mandal and district level. It is necessary for India to strengthen local governance for its development. Bottom to up approach was required to have overall development in the country. I spent last two years in the village, and found that how the image of a village in the minds of people in the cities are totally different.

I wrote 3 books in Telugu in last one year that explains about the subject like 'Why we should take pride in our villages' second one focused on women empowerment and the third book talks about the needs of the children of the villages that focuses in terms of education, mental faculties and upbringing of children of villages.

In the first 25 years of the Republic, many well-educated people from India went abroad and proved themselves by becoming global leaders in different fields. However, it is disheartening to see that the villages, which form the backbone of our country, are languishing. Unfortunately, today's political parties are not very concerned about the cognizance of the process of declining of the most micro unit that is the village in our country.

The decline is happening in the structure of the village community, local resources, and the core value of the family as a unit and culture of the village. Most of the villages aren't as self-reliant as they used to be. Now they started depending upon the doles from the government and political parties.

Nobody is bothered about preserving the diversity and environment of the Indian villages. Trees are being cut, lakes are converted into ponds. The administration of villages is now in multiple hands whereas in the olden days only 3 people used to run the governance now, 33 persons are running it. Local resources haven't been fully utilised.

Dr. Rao

Instead of realizing and regaining the uniqueness of villages, they are imitating urban India. Instead of decentralising we are heading towards centralising the power and the governance.

If we want our little republics to revive and the Republic of India to strive we need to make such efforts that people start going back to villages.

The Indian government is making efforts for villages but those policies are not making any difference because there is a huge rate of migration from rural to urban India, and it concerns so many farmers are now practising labour work or other related works after migrating in the cities.

Question- Share your experiences of staying in the villages and according to your view what could you do to revive the Little Republic of India?

Answer - The village government has changed a lot. In the initial days, Panchayat was supposed to be the smallest unit to govern the village but now political parties are entering villages who have created caste and class based system by distracting from main problems. We need to have party less governance at village level that can bring back the harmony among different communities that is virtue of the village. Therefore, it is imperative that we take steps to revive the villages of India. This includes improving agriculture practices, providing better infrastructure, and creating job opportunities.

The concept of the little republic is an altogether different pride that need to revive and rejuvenate then only our Republic of India will thrive and strive what our constitution wanted to achieve. We must take steps to revive the villages and ensure their sustainable development for the overall progress of our nation.

This interview can be viewed on following link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cu1nQDkw254

This interview is the first part of the series on Rejuvenating the Republic of India: Mision 2050

Overview

The gram panchayat's role in sustainable rural development

Suvojit Chattopadhyay

The potential of local governance in India remains largely untapped. Here's how capacity building and reforms can help strengthen gram panchayats.

It has been three decades since the 73rd and 74th amendments to India's Constitution that promised to usher in a new era of decentralised governance. The constitutional amendments formally introduced a third tier of government—the local government—to add to the existing structure of state and central governments. Today, we have more than 3 million local people's representatives, approximately 50 percent of whom are women. This in itself is a significant achievement.

Beyond the numbers of elected representatives, decentralised governance is one of the indicators of commitment to deepening democracy, by taking governments closer to people and opening up formal spaces for citizen engagement in governance. Yet, local governments continue to languish. Unless concrete steps are taken to build the capacity of local governments, their promise will not be realised. This needs urgent attention because when local governments don't function as designed, it both leads to poor development outcomes as well as erodes the trust people have in governments.

Gram panchayats as a central but constrained actor

The central figure in this context is the gram panchayat (GP), which is typically a village council. However, GPs present both opportunities and constraints. The opportunities stem from the fact that the representatives at the GP level (the elected committee comprising the pradhan/sarpanch and the ward members) are elected by voters. One could thus argue that the people's will and aspirations are legitimately represented within the institution. GPs have a firm basis (both in law and in popular perception) that enables them to play a leading role in prioritising the needs of communities and planning and implementing key government schemes related to housing, livelihoods, water, energy access, etc.

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Beyond the numbers of elected representatives, decentralised governance is one of the indicators of commitment to deepening democracy, by taking governments closer to people and opening up formal spaces for citizen engagement in governance. Yet, local governments continue to languish. Unless concrete steps are taken to build the capacity of local governments, their promise will not be realised. This needs urgent attention because when local governments don't function as designed, it both leads to poor development outcomes as well as erodes the trust people have in governments.

However, the institutional constraints that GPs face are equally daunting. Local planning processes, although mandated by law, are not translated into practice. Often where they are carried out, local plans do not reflect in budgeted interventions, as they are undermined by weak

institutional infrastructure or an apathetic higher level of government. For example, a report by the Standing Committee on Rural Development in 2018 observed a persistent and severe shortage of manpower in GPs. This inhibits their ability to deliver services and has a knock-on effect as funds from the central government are not released to GPs, partly because of their limited implementation capacity. The deficiencies in planning and budgeting processes, in the knowledge of rules and procedures around the flow of funds, and in staff with secretarial and technical or financial management skills mean that GPs can hardly function as representative spaces for democracy at the local level or as effective providers of public services.

This has huge implications, both in terms of the quality of services delivered to citizens as well as the faith citizens put in the processes of local governance.

A conversation in Odisha

A recent conversation in Odisha on sustainable development brought home the importance of effective GPs.1 Rural communities in Odisha rely on a mix of land- and forest-based livelihood activities and labour migration. Over the last two decades, there has been visible improvement in the state of infrastructure such as roads, communication services, and schools and hospitals. However, economic opportunities are limited and nearly every household has to supplement its income from agriculture or local market activities with income from labour migration to southern and western India. While labour migration can be a reliable source of household income, it is still considered an undesirable (if inevitable) choice, given the health risks and the social challenges of integrating with local communities in other parts of the country, and the separation from one's own family. The question then arose: Would young men (who made up a bulk of the migrants) not migrate if there were better economic opportunities for them back home? The response to this question, when posed to the people I spoke with, was overwhelmingly positive.

Further, one of the clear strands that emerged was that the quality of natural resources and the availability of water in habitations are a key determinant of the standard of their lives. In rural Odisha, water and natural resource security is both a means and an end. The set of individual and collective actions required to achieve this goal are a way of encouraging greater civic participation and local self-governance. At the same time, year-round availability of water for drinking, other household uses, and agriculture and other livelihood activities would lead to a better quality of life.

In remote rural parts of the country, local governments have a significant role in helping achieve water security and managing natural resources effectively and equitably. GPs should organise gram sabhas (village assemblies) to involve citizens in regular needs assessment and planning processes, and be able to aggregate these plans and submit them to the respective agencies upstream. This will require coordination and technical inputs from ground-level officials of line departments. They should be able to then map out and utilise available government programmes, such as the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), or other projects on irrigation or watershed development effectively to design and implement land and water management activities at scale. GPs should support the emergence of local user groups and resource management committees.

They should also coordinate with one another to access funds for agricultural support and market-linkage interventions. In this way, they will be playing a central role in the lives of communities in their jurisdiction. However, the weaknesses that I describe above—the lack of skilled resources, being underfunded and undermined by higher levels of government, etc.—take away from the GPs' ability to play their role.

A paper on Jharkhand provides one such example, where GP staff can play an active role in improving the effectiveness of social programmes, and, needless to say, the technical and secretarial staff of GPs have to be managed by the elected representatives at the local level.

Unlocking the potential of gram panchayats

Reforms in local government should be aimed at enabling GPs to develop further as self-governed spaces. This requires a sustained effort that combines capacity-building support to local government institutions on the ground along with advocacy efforts with the state government to expand their mandate.

Notwithstanding the differences in their development histories, GPs in Kerala provide an important model that other states could attempt to emulate. GPs in Kerala played an important role in the management of COVID-19 at the height of the pandemic in India. They led from the front in spreading awareness, identifying cases, and taking local containment measures and stayed in touch with individuals and families who had to be isolated. Drawing on the success of local governments in Kerala, here are three areas of support that should be taken up urgently:

1. Establish gram sabhas as a forum for debate and discussion

This would help formalise people's participation and joint planning. In order to do this, it is important to concurrently enhance awareness and build faith among people about the GP as an effective government that would be of use to them. Further, GPs should conduct needs assessment exercises at the gram sabhas, develop plans and projects that can be aggregated at the district level, and provide inputs to the state's annual budgeting process. Technical and line department staff participating in gram sabhas should reinforce the primacy of these assemblies, confirming that gram sabha decisions cannot be simply overruled by higher levels of government.

2. Build the capacity and skills of GP staff

A close second would be to revisit the functions and powers of GPs and push for them to have the kind of technical and support staff required for them to fulfil their mandate. The 11th schedule in India's Constitution has 29 subjects (specifying powers and functions) that are to be devolved to local governments. A paper on Jharkhand provides one such example, where GP staff can play an active role in improving the effectiveness of social programmes, and, needless to say, the technical and secretarial staff of GPs have to be managed by the elected representatives at the local level. In general, GPs should be able to exert control over their staff and their service rules.

3. Leverage alternate local sources of revenue

The third priority is to work on own-source revenue for GPs, such as local taxes and levies, as well as with market actors to identify and develop enterprises at the local level that may be based on the basic services that GPs are expected to perform—such as water supply, solid waste management, and roads. Own-source funds are in addition to the funds that GPs receive from the Union Government's Finance Commission and the State Finance Commission. While it is relatively easy to track fiscal transfers that flow from the state or the Centre, it is much harder to do so for data on own-source revenues due to poor accounting and record-keeping practices, which is a result of lack of skilled staff—this, therefore, could be the first port of call within this area.

Source: IDR

Analysis

National Youth Policy-Will it help India reap the promised demographic dividend?

Ishita Kaur Mishra

Youth are vital for the progress and success of a nation. Most of the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on the youth, identifying them as a critical national demographic and highlighting the need for investing in them. With 66 percent of its population (808 million) below the age of 35, India has the world's largest youth population. Despite the estimated decline in the numbers, India will still remain a relatively 'young' country in 2030, with 24 percent of its population (365 million) in the 15-29 age group. At a time when several countries across Europe, the United States and even China are grappling with the twin problems of an ageing population and declining youth, how India nurtures its youth population will determine its future growth trajector

With 66 percent of its population (808 million) below the age of 35, India has the world's largest youth population.

To maximise the potential gains from this "most dynamic and vibrant segment" of the population, the Government of India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports drafted the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2021, envisaging a 10-year vision for youth development by 2030. The draft followed a comprehensive review of the existing NYP 2014.

NYP through the years

India's first NYP was drafted in 1988 and subsequently updated in 2003, 2014 and 2021. With each iteration, the government's policy priorities have developed in more innovative and sustainable directions—advancing from ideals to more concrete outcomes for tangible youth empowerment and participation in shaping the fundamental aspects of India's growth in the 21st century. For example, NYP 2003 primarily aimed to instil a sense of patriotism and morality-oriented values in the youth. It focused on respect for all religious faiths, beliefs and socio-cultural values to promote national unity and integrity. The policy also mentioned gender justice, acknowledging that gender bias was "the main factor" responsible for the poor health and socio-economic well-being of women. However, NYP 2003's gender justice vision was not backed by any specific programmes or action plans.

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In comparison, NYP 2014 was considerably better composed. Revising the youth age group from NYP 2003's 13-35 to 15-29 to "provide a more focused approach" to youth development and empowerment," it identified five objectives and 11 priority action areas, including mental health and substance abuse, to achieve those objectives. NYP 2014 also emphasised equal access to education, life-long learning, vocational education, and skill development of the youth. Despite its forward-looking stance, the policy draft attracted criticism for its lack of elaboration for specific action plans and its "disconnect" with ground realities.

> Despite the estimated decline in the numbers, India will still remain a relatively 'young' country in 2030, with 24 percent of its population (365 million) in the 15-29 age group.

> The National Youth Policy overlooks the considerable diversity within India's young population, where only a tiny proportion of the youth capitalise on their social, cultural and economic standing to actualise aspirations and access better occupational opportunities and mobility.

On the other hand, NYP 2021 primarily focuses on holistic development and sustainability. The policy is aligned with the UN SDGs, mainly encompassing quality education, reduced inequalities, decent work and economic growth. From encouraging participation in sports and creating a more modern and holistic school curriculum to financial, legal, and digital literacy to plans to provide mental health assistance and include the youth in policy and decision-making—NYP 2021's scope is more comprehensive than the earlier policy iterations. It encompasses all the critical aspects of health and wellbeing, education and society, and the importance of the youth in the workforce for India's holistic growth and advancement. Still, it lacks a clear-cut roadmap for implementation through the diverse state mechanisms.

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Challenges to NYP 2021

Expansive in its coverage, NYP 2021's focus on the reintegration of NEET youth (youth not in education, employment, or training) is of critical significance. It recommends creating plans and initiatives to help reintegrate such youth but without any specific timelines or schemes delineating a pathway. However, such reintegration of NEET youth will only yield results if India can generate equal job opportunities. This target looks difficult, given that India's unemployment rate stood at 23.2 percent in 2022. Perhaps, a way to provide employment would be by absorbing much of the trained NEET youth into government programmes sourcing the educators required domestically, and providing employment opportunities to a considerable portion of such youth. Still, NYP 2021 doesn't specify any pathways.

NYP 2021's other shortcoming is its unstated assumption that all of India's youth have equal access to education, skilling, and employment. The National Youth Policy overlooks the considerable diversity within India's young population, where only a tiny proportion of the youth capitalise on their social, cultural and economic standing to actualise aspirations and access better occupational opportunities and mobility. In contrast, a vast majority of the youth population represents the socially and economically disadvantaged sections and encounters enormous challenges to achieving sustainable livelihoods. These diversities increase manifold for urban youth migrants. Given that 5.6 million students dropped out from secondary schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic years in 2020-21 and that 30 percent of the youth between the ages of 15-29 were 'NEET' in 2019—57 percent of which were women—such an assumption of 'equal access' could dilute the essence of the policy.

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Societal barriers

Economic migration, discrimination, early marriages and other societal barriers are identified as the symptoms causing dropouts. However, the exclusive

> NYP 2021 presents a promising and forward-looking vision for the empowerment of India's youth constituency that will propel India's domestic growth and enhance its international clout in the 21st century.

engagement of NEP 2021 with these symptomatic problems treats dropouts as a personal problem that could be solved by "school-community-parents partnerships", "counselling", and "merit-based bank loans", while overlooking the inherent structural barriers in the education system. Additionally, 60 percent of students without internet access will likely derail the policy's recommendation to rethink "the traditional modes of teaching" by leveraging technology to "enhance access to education for those physically unable to attend schools or colleges due to distance or disability."

The policy also assumes an ideal scenario with an optimum synergy of centre-state relations and a high level of coordination between the various ministries and government departments. Besides the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, its scope concerns the ministries of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Rural Development; Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; Finance, Health and Family Welfare; Education; Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; Science and Technology; Social Justice and Empowerment, among others, and a plethora of departments under each of them. Moreover, policy implementation will also need active coordination with and support from non-state stakeholders, NGOs, youth organisations and most importantly, the private sector. Put through a reality check, NYP 2021's implementation might prove to be its biggest challenge.

NYP 2021 presents a promising and forward-looking vision for the empowerment of India's youth constituency that will propel India's domestic growth and enhance its international clout in the 21st century. However, in the absence of a clear implementation strategy and detailed action plan, the future of the policy looks complicated. Losing this opportunity to mainstream India's 'Amrit Peedhi' in the 'Amrit Kaal' is something that India can ill-afford.

Observer Research Foundation
(https://www.orfonline.org/)

Australian Parliamentary Delegation visited the CMS office on Oct 12th, 2023, and had a round table discussion on Sustainable Development.

Energy Conservation: Paving the Path to Sustainable Living

Shalini Paul

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements, burgeoning industrialization, and an ever-increasing global population, there has been an unprecedented surge in the consumption of energy resources. Energy, which is the lifeblood of modern civilization, fuels our homes, industries, and transportation systems. However, this upsurge in energy demand, influenced by economic development and population expansion, has precipitated considerable challenges, emphasizing the pressing need for a sustainable approach to energy utilization.

According to Ritchie (2023), global energy consumption has seen a steady rise, averaging between 1% to 2% annually. This trend stems from economic development and technological progress, resulting in substantial energy demand spikes in major economies like the USA, China, and India. (World Energy Consumption Statistics | Enerdata, n.d.-b). Nonetheless, this amplified consumption carries substantial costs. Greenhouse gas emissions, climate change repercussions, and environmental degradation are direct consequences of this heightened energy consumption. (Climate Change Impacts on Energy | US EPA, 2023)

Despite the rapid growth of renewable energy sources like solar and wind, their share in total primary energy consumption remains re-latively small compared to fossil fuels (Rapier, 2023b). Fossil fuels, recognized as non-renewable energy sources, persist as the primary back-bone of the world's energy supply, underscoring the necessity for sustainable energy practices. Re-newable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal energy, and biomass, are naturally replenished and generally have a lower environmental impact. Contrary to this, non-renewable energy sources are finite and include fossil fuels formed over millions of years from organic matter, which cannot be easily replaced once depleted.

Fossil fuels, despite their historical extensive usage due to high energy density and accessibility, pose significant environmental challenges. Their combustion releases substantial greenhouse gases, leading to climate change and environmental degradation. The continuing reliance on these non-renewable resources emphasizes the pressing need for sustainable energy practices.

Energy conservation, a critical solution, involves efficiently utilizing energy resources to minimize waste while meeting present and future needs. This concept plays a pivotal role in mitigating climate change impacts, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguarding ecosystems. Given the predominance of fossil fuels in the global energy supply, energy conservation becomes imperative. Efforts towards energy conservation encompass public awareness and education, promotion of efficient technologies and practices, and necessitate a concerted commitment from individuals, institutions, and policies.

- **Public Awareness and Education:** Public awareness and education are instrumental in empowering people to make informed choices in reducing energy consumption. The knowledge

imparted through awareness campaigns and educational programs enables people to understand the impact of their energy usage on the environment.

- **Technological Innovation:** Technological advancements play a crucial role in fostering energy conservation. From energy-efficient technologies and smart grid systems to sustainable transportation solutions, these innovations can contribute to reducing energy waste.
- **Policy and Regulation:** The government and other regulatory bodies play an important role in incentivizing energy conservation through policies that promote renewable energy adoption, enforce energy efficiency standards, and offer incentives for sustainable practices. By enforcing such measures, the regulatory bodies can significantly impact the energy consumption patterns of individuals and businesses, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable future.
- **Individual Responsibility:** Individuals have a significant responsibility in energy conservation through small lifestyle changes. Every individual's conscious efforts, such as using energy-efficient appliances; unplugging electronic devices when not in use; and optimizing heating and cooling systems, can contribute to energy conservation.

A Collective Responsibility for a Sustainable Future

In conclusion, embracing energy conservation transcends being a mere choice; it embodies a collective responsibility imperative for steering humanity toward a sustainable future. It necessitates the concerted and conscious endeavors of each individual, complemented by the proactive initiatives of institutions and the implementation of supportive policies. This united front against wasteful energy practices and the proactive adoption of sustainable alternatives will indisputably lay the groundwork for fostering an environment that is both ecologically sustainable and energy-efficient for generations to come.

Supplementary Information:

- **Primary Energy**: These sources are directly extracted from nature and have not been converted into other forms. Examples include coal, crude oil (petroleum), natural gas, sunlight, wind, and water. These raw forms of energy are extracted and used directly or converted into secondary forms of energy for various purposes.
- **Secondary Energy:** This refers to energy forms derived from primary sources through a conversion process. For instance, electricity is a secondary energy form derived from primary sources such as coal, natural gas, or solar energy. Secondary energy forms are usually more convenient for use, transportation, and storage.
- **Commercial Energy:** This refers to energy available in markets for sale and consumption, typically for monetary exchange. Examples include electricity, refined fuels like gasoline and diesel, and natural gas supplied through utility companies or sold in markets.
- **Non-commercial Energy:** This type of energy is not exchanged or traded in markets; it is typically not sold for profit but is often utilized directly by individuals or communities. For instance, rural households might rely on non-commercial energy sources like firewood, agricultural waste, or small-scale hydropower for their energy needs. These resources aren't part of the formal market system and are often utilized locally without commercial transactions.

Research Scholar in Dept of Journalism and Mass Communication, HPU.

Meaningful Action for a Sustainable Future through Film festival

With support from the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai, the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) is conducting the 'Green Frames: VATAVARAN Short Film Competition and Festival 2023.' Focused on **"Environmental Preservation and Climate Advocacy,"** the competition seeks to emphasize the criticality of biodiversity conservation and climate action. It aims to showcase the impact of lifestyle choices on the environment and spotlight positive stories of individuals, companies, and communities actively addressing environmental and climate challenges. The goal is to promote best practices and inspire meaningful action for a sustainable future.

GreenFrames - Social Impact Filmmaking Workshop: Goa, Raipur, Nagpur

The workshop emphasizes the critical need for Environmental and Biodiversity Conservation, showcasing the impact of lifestyle choices on the environment. It seeks to promote best practices and illustrate how adopting sustainable lifestyles can drive meaningful progress in environmental conservation and climate action. The filmmaking workshop is offered free of charge, with participants required to submit a short film (3 to 5 minutes) on provided topics within 45 days of completing the workshop.

Panaji Goa | September 5th & 6th

We saw more than 50 participants with maximum women participation showcasing the rising interest among women in impact filmmaking. The session was adorned by distinguished guests: Dr

Pradip Sarmokadam, Member Secretary of the Goa State Biodiversity Board and Ms Jessica Mayberry, Founder Director, Video Volunteers. Their insights and presence added gravitas to the event, emphasizing the workshop's importance.

Amity University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh | October 11th & 12th

This workshop was attended by 77 enthusiastic individuals such including youth, mass media students & civil society members. This workshop provided a platform to craft impactful environmental narratives and actively participate in the conservation dialogue. It left an impression on the participants that each film has the potential to be a catalyst for environmental advocacy and inspire audiences to take action.

RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur | October 27th & 28th

This workshop had incredible 65 participants who learned the significance of collaboration in creating impactful narratives for environmental storytelling and change. They submitted 12 phenomenal short films at the end.

Ten Reasons Why The Digital Personal Data Protection Law Doesn't Empower Citizens

Srinivas Kodali

The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2023 has been passed today in the Lok Sabha. After years of exhaustive public consultations and multiple drafts, this seemingly final version of the Bill is being termed the simplest of all drafts.

There are many concerns around how the Bill continues to ignore purpose limitation and push for further data collection through duties on data principals. But will this Bill really empower us?

'Data empowerment' has been the magic term that has been used to push various centralised databases onto the citizens of India. We were told we can become rich by exchanging our personal data.

But so far, the problems in Digital India's software designs have resulted in people being exploited and harmed by loan apps and social engineering fraud. Neither of these will stop with the passage of the Bill as long as the data proliferation continues, and this Bill won't stop that either.

Here is a long list of issues the Bill doesn't address and which will be litigated further in the courts, with the fundamental right to privacy recognised as part of Puttaswamy vs Union of India. This should help us understand who the Bill is empowering.

1. The practice of mandating people to link their Aadhaar will continue and expand to create 360-degree profile databases, as the Rajya Sabha is expected to pass the Registration of Births and Deaths Bill. Indians will be forced to part with their personal information from birth to death. The Bill ignores purpose limitation entirely and says that any data collected can be used for other purposes by the government.

2. All personal data collected by the government will be shared with surveillance institutions, with no mention of restrictions on surveillance in the Bill. The ten agencies authorised under the Information Technology Act and various policing departments will continue to collect personal data without any restrictions. A blanket exception has been made for the police to use 360-degree profile databases like NATGRID for surveillance.

3. The Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax authorities' raids on the Opposition and tax surveillance of every resident in India will go unchecked. A weapon in the arsenal of the government to suppress any form of dissent, there is nothing that stops these institutions to raid even media houses and to clone their mobile phones and laptops.

4. Facial recognition and other biometric technologies will continue to flourish, for tasks ranging from basic attendance usage to surveillance. The government could grant exemptions to companies involved in facial recognition to collect this data in order to build surveillance systems. Projects like Digi Yatra, facial recognition for de-duplication for KYC, access management, monitoring of work, and surveillance will thrive.

> The problems in Digital India's software designs have resulted in people being exploited and harmed by loan apps and social engineering fraud. Neither of these will stop with the passage of the Bill as long as the data proliferation continues, and this Bill won't stop that either.

5. This Bill doesn't stop the government from forcing you to submit your health data and use it as they want during and after health emergencies. From Aarogya Setu to Co-WIN, there are blanket exemptions on how much personal data can be collected and how they use them.

There is no provision in the Bill to demand deletions of personal data. Even after the COVID-19 vaccination drive is over, we are still not allowed to delete Co-WIN and any other health data the government collected.

6. All employers are exempt to collect the personal data of their employees as they see fit. Every company from Uber, Ola and Swiggy to Urban Company can continue to collect the personal information of their employees - including facial biometrics - and even use it to fire them or stop them from working for their platforms.

The surveillance of employees' devices - from phones to work machines - will continue to go unchecked. Government employees have no option but to share their facial biometrics for attendance, and surveillance of their work through cameras. With the push for real-time work, anganwadi and sanitation workers will continuously be monitored by various apps.

7. Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, Apple and other Big Tech companies can continue to use your personal information that you publicly share. This Bill doesn't stop any personal data collection by these Big Tech companies and is unlikely to result in any major changes in how the entire IT industry operates.

The duties in the Bill force us to not to supply any false information to these or any other companies, killing anonymity. The government can demand all of this data from these companies with no oversight. This Bill at best forces these companies to allow you to delete your personal data, if you choose to exit these platforms.

8. The Bill weakens the RTI Act by making it hard for us to access any personal information, including the names of the bureaucrats that are signing key government files. This will create an information asymmetry between the state and citizenry, where the state knows everything about the citizenry but citizens know nothing about the state.

9. A key feature of Digital India and surveillance capitalism is the use of personal data for financial services, from loan apps to insurance. The Bill provides these companies exemptions to process the personal data of any loan defaulter.

This means that private companies are allowed to collect personal data from anyone who takes loans. That data will be deleted once the loan is paid, but it can be processed in any way the company wants until it recovers the loan amount.

This will lead to the creation of loan defaulter databases that will be used for the further economic exclusion of marginalised people in India.

10. The Data Protection Board that the Bill sanctions will be set up by the government, making it less independent, and prone to acting at the whims of the powerful bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians of India. Even if there is a data breach, the data protection board will act partially, with no clear independence.

This is not a privacy Bill, but a mere data processing Bill that doesn't address the issues of the common citizen. This Bill is just a rubber stamp at the end of India's digitisation process that doesn't empower any citizens, but only businesses and government institutions.

It is a travesty that a powerful judgement like Puttaswamy vs Union of India has been reduced to this unjust form which will continue to be contested in the courts. There may not be any relief from these mandatory data collections by Digital India anytime soon.

Srinivas Kodali is a researcher on digitisation and a hacktivist.

Source: The Wire, AUG 7, 2023

New NEP stresses on innovation through education: Union Minister Anurag Thakur

Union Minister Anurag Thakur states that the recently introduced national education policy underscores the importance of innovation in education, aligning with the government's commitment to nurturing a dynamic learning environment for the youth.

Union Minister Anurag Thakur has emphasised that the recently introduced National Education Policy places a strong emphasis on promoting innovation in education. This aligns with the government's dedication to cultivating a vibrant learning environment for the youth. During the convocation ceremony of GD Goenka University, the minister highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to addressing exam-related stress and preparing the youth for a prosperous future through impactful initiatives like 'Pariksha Pe Charcha.'

In his address, Thakur congratulated the university, expressing commendation for the remarkable success of the 9th convocation ceremony. "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the new national education policy brought after almost four decades emphasises innovation through education, aligning with the government's commitment to fostering a dynamic learning environment for Bhartiya youth," says the Union minister.

As we commemorate this significant milestone, Thakur emphasised that it reiterates the government's commitment to empowering the youth. The aim is to propel India towards development, with a vision to attain a developed nation, Viksit Bharat, by the year 2047.

India Today

President gives assent to women's reservation Bill

It seeks to provide 33% reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the women's reservation Bill which seeks to provide 33% reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, the Law Ministry said in a notification on September 29.

Though it was introduced as the Constitution (128th) Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha, now it will be known as the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act as some proposed constitutional amendments are yet to passed by Parliament.

Special session

During the special session of Parliament earlier this month, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi had described the law as "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam".

The Constitution amendment Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha with near-unanimity, with only two members opposing it and was unanimously passed by the Rajya Sabha.

The law, however, will be implemented after the next census and the subsequent delimitation exercise — redrawing of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies — will determine the particular seats that are to be reserved for women. The quota for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies will continue for 15 years and Parliament can later extend the benefit period.

While there is quota within quota for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women, the Opposition had demanded that the benefit be extended to Other Backward Classes (OBC).

First introduced in 1996, the Bill has seen several twists and turns, including its passage in the Rajya Sabha in March 2010 but the Congress-led UPA did not bring the Bill in the Lok Sabha for the lack of consensus and inadequate numbers to push it through.

Data show that women MPs account for nearly 15% of the Lok Sabha strength while their representation is below 10% in many State Assemblies.

The Hindu.com

India saw extreme weather events almost every day in first 9 months in 2023: Report

Punjab recorded the highest number of animal deaths while Himachal Pradesh reported the most damaged houses due to extreme weather events.

India experienced extreme weather events almost every day in the first nine months of year 2023 which led to nearly 3,000 deaths, according to a report released on recently.

Published by the independent think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the report said the climate-vulnerable country had extreme weather on 86 per cent of days from January to September 2023.

The CSE said 2,923 people died, almost two million hectares of crops were ruined, 80,000 homes were destroyed and more than 92,000 animals were killed. But these numbers might be even higher because not all the data is collected, it said.

"India 2023: An assessment of extreme weather events' attempts to build an evidence base on the frequency and expanding geography of extreme weather events in the country. As this assessment clearly shows, what the country has witnessed so far in 2023 is the new 'abnormal' in a warming world," said the CSE director general Sunita Narain.

Madhya Pradesh reported the highest number of extreme weather events at 138. However, the largest number of deaths occurred in Bihar (642), followed by Himachal Pradesh (365) and Uttar Pradesh (341).

Punjab recorded the highest number of animal deaths while Himachal Pradesh reported the most damaged houses due to extreme weather events.

In the southern region, Kerala saw the highest count of extreme weather days (67) and deaths (60). Telangana suffered maximum effect on crop area (over 62,000 hectares). The State also witnessed high animal casualties (645). Karnataka faced severe destruction, with over 11,000 houses demolished.

In northwest India, Uttar Pradesh had the most extreme weather days at 113. Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan were also significantly affected. In the eastern and northeastern regions, Assam registered maximum extreme weather events (102), with the State losing 159 livestock and over 48,000 hectares of crops devastated.

Nagaland saw over 1,900 houses destroyed.

The CSE said January was slightly warmer than average, while February broke records, becoming the warmest in 122 years. India had its sixth driest February and the driest August in 122 years.

It said lightning and storms were the most common disasters, occurring on 176 out of 273 days and claiming 711 lives. Most of these deaths occurred in Bihar. However, the most significant devastation came from heavy rains, floods, and landslides, causing over 1,900 casualties.

According to research conducted by a different think tank, more than 80% of Indians live in districts vulnerable to climate risks.

PTI

More than 50 percent of primary schools across many states have enrolment less than 60: NITI Aayog report

The NITI Aayog report pointed out 6 issues that need to be addressed in order to implement a large-scale transformation in providing quality education.

The Sustainable Action for Transforming Human capital - Education (Project SATH-E) initiated by the NITI Aayog in 2017 aims at making a wide transformation with a focus on improving quality education. Of the 16 states that showed interest in the proposal made by NITI Aayog, 3 were selected for the project - Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

The recent report by NITI Aayog titled 'Learnings for Large–scale Transformation in School Education' mentions the various structural, academic and governance reforms that were taken as a part of the project. The report also emphasised the need for school consolidation, teacher rationalisation and various professional "The Project enables a system-wide governance transformation in school education. The objective is to ensure that quality is not diluted even when we operate on a larger scale," the report quoted B V R Subrahmanyam, CEO, NITI Aayog.

The report analyses the implementation of Project SATH-E in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha under 9 intervention categories namely school consolidation, remedial learning interventions, assessments, teacher recruitment and rationalisation, teacher capacity building, management information systems and academic monitoring systems, governance and accountability, organisation strengthening and leader schools.

The NITI Aayog report pointed out 6 issues that need to be addressed in order to implement a large-scale transformation in providing quality education. That includes:

1. **Addressing the issue of sub-scale, inadequately resourced schools head-on with strong political support**
2. **Solving large-scale teacher vacancies issues**
3. **Improving teacher quality and pedagogy**
4. **Enforcing accountability towards learning outcomes**
5. **Focus on Early Childhood Education (ECE) and contextualised Mother tongue-based Multilingual Education (MLE)**
6. **Strengthening the governance structures in education departments**

According to the report, India has 5 times the number of schools than China does for the same enrolment of students. It was also mentioned that more than 50% of primary schools across many states in our country have an enrolment of less than 60 students. NITI Aayog puts forward the idea of merging schools as a plan to mitigate the cost of such sub-scale schools.

School merging was executed in the project and the report presented favourable results from the action plan. The report states that third-party studies in SATH-E have also demonstrated that when executed rigorously the benefits of mergers are largely positive and can lead to improved learning outcomes.

Drawing an example from the project being implemented in Madhya Pradesh, the report stated that 35,000 schools were merged into 16,000 same-campus schools with an aim to improve the quality of education. The merged large schools had adequate teachers and resources and 55 percent of the schools now had a principal when compared to 20 percent before the merger. Similarly, in Jharkhand 4380 schools and in Odisha 2000 small-scale and same-campus schools were merged.

In order to address the issue of the unequal distribution and shortage of teachers in the education sector, the report suggested the need to take up teacher rationalisation and structured policies to be implemented. Aligning with the National Education Policy 2020, NITI Aayog also emphasised the need to priortise Early Childhood Education (ECE) to improve the school readiness of the students.

States have been asked to reconsider the decentralisation of powers to principals, district and block officers by the policy think tank. This step according to the report will give them more financial power and autonomy to take decisions in line with local needs.

Gadgets Now (TOI)

Row over paid leave for menstruation: How Parliament took up the issue over the years

Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani has triggered a debate on paid menstrual leave at workplaces by opposing it, saying menstruation is not a "handicap".

On December 13, 2023, Irani told the Rajya Sabha that menstrual leave could lead to discrimination against women in the workforce.

She was responding to a supplementary query by RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha on whether the government was looking into providing a law for menstrual leave. "We should not propose issues where women are in some way denied an equal opportunity just because somebody who does not menstruate has a particular viewpoint towards menstruation," Irani said.

She said that as a menstruating woman herself, "menstruating and menstrual cycle is not a handicap" and that it is "a natural part of a woman's life journey".

In a written reply to an unstarred question by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor in the Lok Sabha on the same issue on December 8, 2023, Irani said, "Menstruation is a physiological phenomenon among women and only a small proportion of women/ girls suffer from severe dysmenorrhea or similar complaints", adding "most of these cases are manageable by medication".

She also said, "At present, there is no proposal under consideration of the government to make provision for paid menstrual leave mandatory for all workplaces."

In the Lok Sabha, at least three attempts were made in recent years to bring in private member Bills to propose menstrual leave.

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#GREEN FRAMES vatavaran

Short Film Competition & Festival 2023

3 to 7 minutes long films are invited on the theme of **'Environmental Preservation & Climate Advocacy'**

Calling

Amateur and Professional Filmmakers, Civil Society Activists, School/ College Students, Film Studios to submit entries

Please refer to the rules of the competition here

7 Awards in **3 categories** | **A commendation** and a **non-monetary award** upto **INR 50,000/-**

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