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Pavies



**Dr. Marri Channa Reddy
Human Resource Development
Institute of Telangana**

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Dr. Shashank Goel, IAS
Director General,
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From the Director General's Desk...

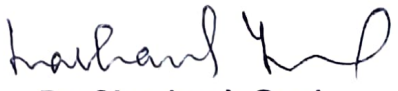
It is with immense pleasure and a deep sense of responsibility, I welcome you to the inaugural issue of our Journal, "SAMRIDDHI", that will serve as a vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge, ideas, and best practices in the ever-evolving fields of administration, governance, polity, law, information technology, economics, management, and various related fields.

Dr. MCR HRD Institute of Telangana has long been recognized as a pioneer in the realm of administrative training and professional development. The launching of "SAMRIDDHI" is an extension of our commitment to the advancement of knowledge in these crucial domains.

This Journal provides an opportunity to the academics, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to exchange insights, explore new frontiers, and suggest practical solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing our world today through research articles, case studies, policy analysis, thought provoking essays, etc.

Keeping in view the multidisciplinary nature of administration, the scope of this Journal has been kept deliberately broad, encompassing a wide array of disciplines and areas of expertise that would facilitate a holistic understanding of various facets of governance and thereby empower the readers to make informed decisions and lead effectively.

Thank you for your valuable support, and I look forward to your insightful contributions that will define "SAMRIDDHI."


Dr. Shashank Goel
22/9/2023.

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From Past Precedents to Future Possibilities

Dr Sanjeev Chopra, IAS (Retd.),
Formerly Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration

You have been selected for the premier service of the country, assuring you of a decent livelihood and security. Remember you are going to occupy important positions in the future. Now it is your duty to serve the people of our country to the best of your ability, Be fair, be polite and firm, prepare yourself well for the job in hand, and complete it successfully.

- Sardar Patel's address to the 1948 batch of the IAS

*The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom corrupt the world.*

- Lord Alfred Tennyson

The Civil Services Examination (CSE) continues to inspire a million aspirants annually and is the toughest public examination in the country. Those who make it to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) rise to the highest echelons in the Union and State Government hierarchy. However, the expectations of the political executive and "we the people" have risen exponentially as India strives to be a five trillion-dollar economy in a democratic polity in which equity and social justice are equal determinants. Two recent interventions in the training of civil servants: Aarambh, which is embedded in the Foundation Course (FC) at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) and Mission Karmayogi (MK) which envisages 'life- long' learning is positioned as game changers in the governance of the country in the Amrit Kal of India's independence. Will the IAS take these in its stride, and ride the crest of the new order, or lose its salience in governance on account of its reluctance to read the writing on the wall?

Keywords: CSE, IAS, LBSNAA, Governance, Amrit Kal, Mission Karmayogi

A Million Aspirants!

For the last three years, over a million aspirants filled the form for Civil Services Examination (CSE) application conducted by Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). About fifty percent of them sat for the Preliminary qualifying exam (prelims). The vast drop

in numbers is on account of the limitation on the number of attempts, and if the preparation for the Prelims is not up to the mark, aspirants avoid taking the exam as it counts as an attempt whereas filling of the form is not. Of these half a million candidates, just about ten thousand qualify for the 'mains' exam. One fourth will make it to the interview stage, and of eight hundred odd candidates who get the offer letter, less than one fourth will be offered a placement in the Indian Administrative Service. Based on their merit and preference, candidates are allotted the All-India Services, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), and sixteen central services including the Indian Foreign service, and five group B civil services. It may be mentioned that the 'mains' for the third All India service, the Indian Forest Service is held separately, and the Railway services will also have a separate examination from 2022. This is a departure from the extant policy of having a common exam for all generalist services. The background to a common exam for all services can be traced both to administrative precedent and convenience. It was firmed up in the meeting of the Premiers of the then eleven provinces of India with Sardar Patel, the Home Minister in the Interim Cabinet in October 1946.

After Independence, Nehru¹ wanted to induct foreign service officers directly but this was opposed by the Home Department, which argued that all top positions on the government, including the superior central services should be filled in through a public examination. For a fledgling nation, it was perhaps the best decision in the context of the times.

A Common Foundation Course (FC)

As training institutions for different services were dispersed, it was not until 1960 that all those selected by the UPSC were brought together for the Foundation Course. As the then Home Minister G B Pant said in his Lok Sabha speech of April 15, 1958 *'we have, since the achievement of Independence, and some of those who were associated with administration even before that, made earnest efforts to bring about a suitable change in the outlook and approach of our services. We propose to set up a National Academy of training so that the services, wherever they may function, whether as Administrative officers, or as Accountants or as Revenue officers, might imbibe the true spirit, and discharge their duties in a manner*

¹ Prime Minister Nehru held the External Affairs portfolio with himself, and personally conducted interviews among the successful candidates for their induction into the Foreign Service. To date, not one has questioned the propriety, or otherwise of a Cabinet Minister interviewing candidates for selection to an organized service.

which will raise their efficiency and establish concord between them and the public completely'. This was a clear departure from the colonial- era practise of training ICS and IP¹ officers in their respective training academies with little or no interaction.

It was felt that an *esprit de corps*² among all services will be the 'sine qua non' of the administrative apparatus of the new India. In addition to all the Group A services selected through the CSE, officers of the Indian Forest service³ and Indian Economic Service were also brought together for the Foundation course held at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA).

The FC: 'Sheelam Param Bhushanam': Character is the Supreme Embellishment

Immediately after their selection, the dominant feeling is that of 'an elation and a celebration': each individual officer trainee has put in several months, (in some cases years) of demanding work. Many become local celebrities as their accomplishment is feted by families, friends, all educational institutions they studied in, and of course the coaching centres⁴. They have achieved a major milestone and their academic merit, rigour and commitment have been certified by the UPSC: but is this an end in itself, or the means to an end? Are they to rest on their laurels, or take it as the stepping stone to a meaningful and productive life in the service of the nation?

This is where the motto of the LBSNAA~ *Sheelam Param Bhushanam: Character is the Supreme Embellishment* drives home an important point. Taken from a *shloka* of the *Bhartrhari Nitisaktam*⁵, the English translation reads 'Affluence is adorned by goodness, valour by not boasting, knowledge by control of the senses, scholarship by modesty, wealth by giving to the deserving, tapas by the absence of anger, power by forgiveness, and Dharma by truth. Character is the Supreme embellishment'.

¹ Prior to Independence, the IP officers were trained in the respective provincial police academies. From 1948, the IPS officers were sent to Mt Abu for their training.

² A feeling of pride and mutual loyalty shared by the members of a group.

³ Although the All-India recruitment for Forest Service was discontinued from 1935 after the GoI Act, it was revived after a gap of three decades in 1966

⁴ <https://theprint.in/opinion/not-just-kota-factories-we-need-to-talk-about-delayed-induction-of-state-officers-to-ias>

⁵ A book on universal values prescribed by Dharma Sastra. Among others, DD Kosambi has also explained the verses of this text

Core values of the Academy

This is emblazoned on the course manual and the writing stationery, besides being emphasized by the ‘course team’ as well as the Director of the Academy in the Inaugural program. Officer Trainees are also apprised of the five core values of the Academy: Serve the Underprivileged, Integrity, Respect, Professionalism, Collaboration. The civil service is not just a job, but a calling: officers are expected a proactive stand in addressing any injustice against the underprivileged. Integrity is much more than financial integrity – it includes courage of conviction and speaking ‘truth to power’. In the context of public service, respect stands for embracing the diversity of lineage, religion, caste, gender, age, region, and socio-economic status. Professionalism is the key element – for unless civil servants master the statute, rules, and procedure, they would cut a sorry figure. The Academy also expects civil servants to seek partnerships and collaborations – for gone are the days when officers thought of themselves as ‘knights in the shining armour’. They must work in partnership with civil society, elected representatives, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), media and academia to ensure not just Ease of Doing Business (EODB), but also Ease of Living for the common citizen – ensuring that the Rights to Work, Food, Education, Information and Services are implemented in letter as well as in spirit.

An extract from the Academy publication, *Karmasu Kuashalam*¹ illustrates the transition ‘the core structure from the initial years is yet relevant, especially the daily physical fitness regime, the much-awaited Winter Study Tour (still fondly referred to as the Bharat Darshan) with its various attachments and the involvement in various activities. However, the subjects, contents and the methods of learning have undergone a tremendous change to become more interactive and inclusive’. The new approach has looked at minimising lectures and incorporating case studies, role play and field visits to enable greater empathy towards prevalent issues. ‘A changing world has necessitated an engagement with issues such as acid attack victims, transgenders, sex workers, victims of forced marriages and child sexual abuse, among others.

Working for a Higher Cause

The message is clear: the individual academic brilliance of the individuals who constitute the civil services is the means to the much larger end of societal development. As such, in

¹ Large format (coffee table) book published by the Academy to mark the sixtieth anniversary of its establishment at Mussoorie

addition to the academic inputs on law, economic policy, management, public administration, IT skills and languages, the major focus is on ‘working together’, ‘solving problems’, ‘lateral thinking’ and looking at issues from multiple perspectives. Thus, economics is not only about world trade and budgets, but also about the impact of food and livelihood security on rural economies. History is not just about achievements of heroes on whom stamps and first day covers have been issued: it is also about ‘sheroes’¹ and the freedom fighters who languished in the Cellular jail. These are collaborative and group learning projects in which officers re – enact episodes, dig out local histories, oral narratives, and curate exhibitions. The emphasis on the development of an ‘*esprit de corps*’ – a lifelong camaraderie- is fostered and strengthened through the Himalayan trek, the Village visit², the celebration of state, zonal and India Days, theatre, and literature festivals.

Embedding ‘Aarambh’ at Statue of Unity (SoU) in the FC

However, from 2019, the highlight of the FC has been the Aarambh program, held at the Statue of Unity (SoU)³ at Kevadia in Gujarat. While reviewing the training of civil servants, the Prime Minister was not entirely pleased to learn that even though LBSNAA was the anchor institution for CSE training, officers were spread across three campuses – the other two being the Dr MC Reddy Human Resource Development Institute (MCRHRDI) at Hyderabad and the RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration at Bhopal. He felt that this ‘approach to training civil servants in three locations was reflective of the silo- based mind set, which must end immediately.’ It was decided that all civil servants of the 2019 batch should be trained together for at least four weeks, at the innovative module ‘Aarambh’ to make civil servants ‘future ready’. From 2020, the FC is being held only at LBSNAA. While Aarambh for the 2020 batch was a virtual event on account of Covid, Aarambh for the 2021 was held at Kevadia on 11th and 12th January.

¹ When the focus is on women in heroic roles and leadership positions

² An exposure visits to officers to remoter villages to study the effectiveness, or otherwise of government programmes and development interventions

³ The Statue of Unity is the world's tallest statue, with a height of 182 metres, located in the state of Gujarat, India. It depicts Indian statesman and independence activist Vallabhbhai Patel, who was the first deputy prime minister and home minister of independent India. He, along with VP Menon are credited for the integration of 562 princely states into India

Anchoring Aarambh at SoU was also symbolic of the connect which Sardar Patel had with the civil services. Often called the ‘Bhishma Pitamah’¹ of the civil services on account of his defence of the civil services and insistence on Article 311, Aarambh is meant to coincide with his official birthday on 31st October², which is also celebrated as the Rashtriya Ekta Divas³ – to mark the integration of all the 562 princely states into India within the first eighteen months of India’s independence. Not only did he get the Rulers of the princely states to sign the Instrument of Accession⁴ (which gave the Union only powers over defence, communications, and foreign affairs), he coaxed, cajoled, and took decisive action when required to get them to sign the Merger agreements⁵ through which the administration of the princely states was taken over in lieu of a privy purse. Thus, the theme of ‘unity and integrity’ of India was an important leitmotif of Aarambh.

Aarambh 2019: From Incremental to Exponential

Aarambh – literally ‘the beginning’ ‘was an event that dismantled the artificial barriers between technology, human resource, and the environment’. It was designed to be sync with a new and resurgent India: an India in which technology was the driving force in all domains – from agriculture to health to school education and urban mobility. Officers interacted with global thought leaders to learn from global best practices and delve into case studies from the leading management institutions and policy think tanks. It was not just about incremental interventions in a particular field – it was to be the exponential game changer.

The Academy worked with the World Bank team to curate a program which brought together the ‘best of the best’, with the World Bank President David Malpass addressing the officers on the need to balance a high growth trajectory with equity. *‘India has been a development success story. This country cut extreme poverty in half within a generation and is transforming itself into one of the world’s fast-growing economies. The goal of becoming a*

¹ Bhishma, also known as Pitamah, the grand patriarch of the Kauravas – the forbear to both the Pandavas and the rival cousins – the Kauravas

² Hindol Sengupta writes that this was not his real date of birth. As he was once asked to fill a form in which the date of birth was mandatory, he wrote 31 October as the date based on his approximate assessment

³ Day of National Unity. From 2019, it is marked with much fanfare, march past and police bands from across the country at SoU

⁴ A standard agreement designed to facilitate the process of integration. Copies of the Accession documents of several states is on display in the Museum

⁵ In lieu of privy purses, the Rulers of states agreed to hand over the administration of the state, including the state armed forces to the Union of India, or a neighbouring state, or Union of states. For details, read Integration of Indian states by VP Menon

\$5 trillion economy by 2025 is both worthy, and achievable with strong economic reforms. to stay in the forefront, India's civil service needs to shift from a focus on enforcing compliance to finding ways to ensure high quality services and regulation.' He went on to add *'you will need skills in communications and negotiations, and to work across units and ministerial boundaries to address the complex challenges that you will face in your careers'*

Civil servants who had distinguished themselves in the United Kingdom (UK) (Suma Chakrabarti)¹ Australia (Peter Varghese)² and South Africa (Ebrahim Rasool)³ discussed how civil servants had to bring their professional expertise to help the political leadership incorporate policy, institutional, technological changes to match the expectations of the stakeholders in this day and age of Information Technology and transparency.

Another highlight of Aarambh -1 were the sessions with the faculty from Singularity University, which believes that 'exponential technology can give anyone, anywhere, the ability to create a positive impact in which people and planet work in harmony rather than at cross purposes. Rather than worry about 'disruption', it advocates looking at the future from the point of view of disruptive technologies, and their impact on products, services, and entrepreneurship.

A Five Trillion Dollar Economy

The second Aarambh focused on the related themes of Ek Bharat – Shresth Bharat: Cultural diversity and synergy in India as an Influencer; Economic diversity and oneness as strength, Atma Nirbhar Bharat: in Energy, Health and building large systems for handling black swan events and Naveen Bharat: Research & Innovation in Education, Industry and Administration. Officer Trainees made presentations on these themes to the Prime Minister. After witnessing these presentations, the Prime Minister urged the probationers to follow Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's dictum: 'serving the citizens of the country is the highest duty of a civil servant'.

'Moving towards a sustainable five trillion-dollar economy' was the theme for the third Aarambh held at SoU on 11th and 12th January. The program had to be rescheduled and curtailed because of Omicron but could be seen as a continuum of the earlier programs. The

¹ Career civil servant in the UK, and later head of the European Development Bank

² Australian diplomat of Indian origin, posted to India as the High Commissioner of Australia

³ South African politician and diplomat, with his family roots in Gujarat, served as the South African Ambassador to the United States from 2010 to 2015, and was elected as a member of the National assembly

keynote address was delivered by the World Bank chief¹ in India. The other themes included drivers and constraints to growth, strengthening the Infrastructure pipeline, scaling up the investment in the private sector, new education policy and skilling and a holistic social protection infrastructure.

In all the three Aarambh programs, the key message was that while it is good to keep the past precedents in mind, it was equally, if not more important to look at the possibilities which the future held. Thus, even as the country celebrates the Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav², the next twenty-five years are envisioned as the Amrit Kal³ – the dawn – for India’s century 2047-2147 which would see the resurrection of India as the knowledge hub and thought leader of the world.

Phase 1: *Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam*⁴: Yoga is Skill in action

This phase marks the beginning of an IAS officers’ professional training in the Service. In addition to the traditional attachments with the armed forces, the public sector, municipal bodies, voluntary agencies, tribal areas, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) officers also see new age infra projects in PPP mode. Thus, even as Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam (YKK) remains the leitmotif – the platforms and agendas are totally different: while at Bengaluru (then Bangalore) the 1985 batch trained with the Hindustan Machine Tools HMT⁵ (which is now moribund), the 2020 batch were attached to the Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) created with L&T, Siemens, Zurich airport and 13% share each of the Union and Karnataka governments to establish a world class airport in the PPP mode.

In this phase, officers are expected to develop actionable skill sets to discharge administrative responsibilities in the first decade of their career. This is usually as field functionaries in the District Administration, or as Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in Zilla Panchayats (ZP) or Municipal corporations. The focus is on partnerships, working with people, non-adversarial communication, and technology driven public systems which offer transactions at near zero costs and a guaranteed time frame.

¹ Junaid Kamal Ahmad, an economist from Bangladesh was the then head of the World Bank, India

² Celebration of seventy-five years of Independence

³ The twenty-five years leading up to hundred years of India’s freedom

⁴ The motto of the IAS. It is taken from the fiftieth verse in the second chapter of the Bhagwad Geeta

⁵ Hindustan Machine Tools. In its heydays, it manufactured a wide spectrum of products – from wrist watches to tractors.

The District Training: Learning by Seeing and Doing

Over the years, district training has become more structured, and while the role of the DM as the mentor to the officer trainee continues as before, institutional training at Administrative Training Institutes (ATI), attachments at the Secretariat and independent charges have ensured that they get a 360-degree view of the district administration. After a series of attachments with the Collectorate, Zila Parishad, Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Tehsildar, Superintendent of Police (SP), District & Session Judge, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Public Works Department (PWD), Municipal Corporation/ Council, Block Development and Panchayat Officer (BDPO), officers are given two to three independent charges, viz. that of BDPO (ranging anywhere between 4 to 8 weeks), Tehsildar (ranging again from 4 to 8 weeks), and in some cases those of Executive Officer in a Municipal Council.

Officers also work on assessing the ground level implementation of programs like Swachh Bharat¹ or Poshan Abhiyan². The 2018 batch studied the status of brick kiln workers³ to understand the gap between the legal norms and entitlements for migrant workers and their children, and the ground reality. From 2019, officers have also been assigned the responsibility of identifying commodities, products and processes which have / can have the Geographical Indication (GI)⁴ tag, document the forward and backward linkages

Phase 2: Public Management Professionals

Having spent a year with an 'ear-to-the-ground', this phase is designed to 'analyse individual and collective experiences of District Training through a process of structured reflection'. They also make a presentation of their action research reports in the district which are evaluated by their peers, internal faculty, and an external domain expert.

An important highlight of this course is the 'effective Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) seminar'. It involves bringing one SDO from all cadres from batches immediately prior to the

¹ Campaign launched by the Prime Minister to ensure cleanliness and sanitation across the country.

³ Now being published as a book 'Breaking the Mould'

⁴ Geographical Indications of Goods are defined as that aspect of industrial property which refer to the geographical indication referring to a country or to a place situated therein as being the country or place of origin of that product. Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the fact of its origin in that defined geographical locality, India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003.

one being trained. They share their experiences and provide a nuanced view of the problems likely to be seen in the field.

Till the outbreak of Covid, Officer Trainees also went on a week-long Foreign Study Tour (FST) to the Civil Services College, UK, and the Korea Institute of International Development (KDI) at South Korea to understand global best practices. On return, they write a group paper highlighting the administrative practices that can be adapted or replicated in the Indian context. The Academy awards a Masters' Degree in Public Management (recognized by the Jawaharlal Nehru University) to Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer Trainees on completion of their two-year long induction training.

Making Sense of the Jigsaw: The Assistant Secretary's Attachment Program (ASAP)

From 2015, the Department of Personnel and Training has been entrusted with ASAP on completion of their phase II Training at LBSNAA, Mussoorie. It must be clarified here that the ASAP – is not training, but an on-the-job assignment. The idea was to expose officers to the actual implementation, monitoring and review of policies and programmes of Government of India implemented at the district and sub- district levels. Officers are assigned important Desks in the Ministries and report to Deputy Secretaries/Directors. For the 2019 ASAP, the then Secretary Drinking Water, Parameswaran Iyer engaged them in the rollout of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) being implemented in all the Water Stressed Districts/Blocks of the country. Officers undertook three field visits during the campaign period to see for themselves the actual roll-out. Their task was to analyse the water use efficiency by farmers and showcase solutions in the scheduled Krishi Vigyan Kendra Melas.

It must also be placed on record that several state governments, including West Bengal, Telangana and Tamil Nadu had expressed initial reservations on this training as they felt that younger officers are best sent to the field after the Mussoorie training.

The Mid Career Trainings (MCTPs)

All officers are expected to participate in three Mid-career Trainings curated specifically to meet their changing functional requirements as they grow in service. These are offered in the seventh to tenth year, sixteenth to eighteenth year and the twenty eighth to the thirtieth year. This brings officers from three batches together, an occasion to share experiences beyond the

batch. These MCTPs also involve an element of the FST at civil service and government training institutions in UK, Singapore, South Korea, and USA.

The first of these is called the Phase Three. For many officers, it is their first visit to the Alma Mater after their induction into the Service. In the first few years, as an SDO, CEO of ZP, and even as a District Magistrate (DM), the officers function as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the government and work hard at implementing programs. There is certainly scope for innovation in the implementation – especially in terms of outreach, resource optimisation, community mobilization and engagement with multiple stakeholders. Officers are now at an inflexion point and ready to make the transition from field administration to higher level responsibilities as Head of Department at the State level and Deputy Secretary / Director in the Government of India.

Training to be Joint Secretaries

By the sixteenth year, officers have reached the mid-point of their careers: they have equal number of years behind as well as ahead of them. Officers are now Joint Secretaries to the Government of India, or secretaries to their state governments. They have helped draft cabinet memorandum, replies to parliamentary /assembly questions, and responded to the queries of the Finance Department for release of funds. They have also fielded questions from Right to Information (RTI) activists and faced a few contempt petitions at the High Court. They have also witnessed how their Secretaries have been grilled by the Parliamentary and Assembly committees. They now need to understand the conceptual framework in which the government operates. Thus, the focus in the fourth phase is on the ‘political economy and institutions in public policy and governance.’ This is also the time when analysis and interrelation of big data equips them to support the policy spectrum.

The pedagogy for this cohort includes a mix of lectures, case studies, discussions, individual assignments, and syndicate work. This phase is driven by the participants rather than the faculty. In that sense, training only nudges the learning process in a more planned and focused direction. The principal objective of the programme is to provide training in a peer-group situation and preparation for the next higher level of responsibilities. Negotiation skills, team building exercises and case studies of recent successes and failures are also imparted in this phase.

The Last Phase of Formal Institutional Training

When officers attend the last ‘formal institutional’ training in Phase V, they are on the verge of becoming Secretaries to Government of India and Additional/ Special Chief Secretaries to the State governments. They are now the ‘strategic’ core of their organizations. While the Minister does provide the political mentorship, the actual task of running the Ministry or the Department falls upon them. They attend inter-ministerial meetings, lead negotiations at bi-lateral and multilateral platforms in their sector, speak at industry forums, press conferences, business meetings and think tanks where they spell out the medium to long term vision of their department. Guest speakers for this phase include the Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Chairman of National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)¹, CEO of National Institution for Transforming India (NITI)², Secretaries to Government of India. Issues covered in the last few training programs included Governance, Political economy, Economic Development, Public Finance, Foreign Policy, Trade, Environment, Energy *etal*.

Participants also submit a Policy Paper/Syndicate Report based on their readings and professional experience. These are then shared with the concerned ministries and become an integral input in the strategic directions of that Ministry. The report ‘Produce in India, Feed the World’ prepared by this author’s group in the course of his Phase V contributed in no small measure to the final report of Doubling farmers Income³. Likewise, recommendations from the report on urban infrastructure are reflected in the Smart City program of the Urban Development Ministry.

Mission Karmayogi

Prior to 1947, the colonial state in India existed to perpetuate its own power and raise resources for the ‘mother country’. As such, all laws were designed to ‘extract the maximum

¹ National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development is the apex financial institution for agriculture finance and rural infrastructure

² The NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog serves as the apex public policy think tank of the Government of India, and the nodal agency tasked with catalysing economic development, and fostering cooperative federalism through the involvement of State Governments of India in the economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach.

³ The Committee on Doubling Farmers’ Income (DFI) recognizes agriculture as a value led enterprise and has identified seven major sources of growth viz., (i) Increase in crop productivity; (II) Increase in livestock productivity; (III) Resource use efficiency or savings in the cost of production; (IV) Increase in the cropping intensity; (V) Diversification towards high value crops; (VI) improvement in real prices received by farmers; and (VII) Shift from farm to non-farm occupations.

possible surplus’ and run the administration at the ‘least possible cost’. Immediately after independence, the welfare state looked at the citizen as a ‘beneficiary’: but the state thought it knew what was best for the citizen. While the objectives of the welfare state were different, they continued to use the same apparatus to deliver welfare. However, after seventy-five of Independence and in the Amrit Kal, the citizen is now centre -stage, and the defining element of governance is that of Trust: and it is time for the old order to change!

It is, therefore imperative that the civil services transformed themselves to become citizen-centric and entrepreneur friendly to ensure that India achieve its goal of a five trillion-dollar economy. It is true that post liberalization, and especially in the last decade, India has made its mark as an economic power to reckon with. Already by 2021, India was the sixth largest economy in the world, besides being the second largest producer of steel and mobile phones, third in the production of electricity. More significantly, it had improved its ranking in the EODB¹ from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2021 and was striving to improve this position with a slew of investment friendly policies. It had also pipped China in terms of growth. All this called for a new architecture of governance: one in which the civil service reimagined its role as a facilitator and co-creator, rather than as a controller and regulator. The focus had to shift from Rules which were ‘limiting the scope for action’ to Roles which empowered the officer to ensure effective delivery of the tasks at hand.

The transition from ‘Rule to Role’

This marked shift from ‘Rule to Role’ had three direct implications for the IAS. The first was that ‘the context is more important than the text’². The second is that ‘rules’ are not sacrosanct. They can be recast. They are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. Rules are milestones, not goalposts. Thus, attested copies and documents have been replaced by self-certification. This simple intervention has not only saved time and resources, but also given ‘dignity’ to the individual who is now responsible for whatever he affirms. And last, but not the least, if an officer cannot fit into the earmarked role, he can, and will be replaced by one who can, either from within the system, or through a lateral entry³ if a person for this role is not available from within the system.

¹ The Ease of Doing Business (*EoDB*) index is a ranking system established by the World Bank Group.

² Address by cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba to an MCTP program at LBSNAA, March 2020

³ Refers to induction of specialist officers in the Departments and Miniseries of Government of India at the level of Joint Secretaries

This is certainly easier said than done. Under the extant system in which ‘rules’ were treated as commandments, the resistance to change was quite pronounced. This was the context in which the Prime Minister announced the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building - Mission Karamyogi (MK) in August 2020. As the Prime Minister said: Mission Karamyogi is aimed at ‘making the civil servant more creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled’. It was felt that empowered with specific role-competencies, the civil servant will be able to ensure efficient service delivery of the highest quality standards.

Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRAC)

Ever since its announcement, MK has been discussed in almost every newspaper, TV channel, social media as well as in academic journals connected with governance, public administration, and political economy. From the numerous reports, commentaries and editorials available in the public domain, including the websites of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), LBSNAA, Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM) and the World Bank, the following key points emerge: the focus is on ‘How and Now’, Stakeholder engagement, Understanding the Framework of Roles activities and Competencies (FRAC), comprehensive coverage of all employees with committed resources and the establishment of an Integrated government online Training platform (iGOT) linked to the human resource management portal.

Unlike the earlier Administrative Reforms Commissions, which were excellent in intent and purpose, and listed the Do’s and Don’ts, MK gives equal, if not more emphasis on the how, with the caveat that the change must begin now. Clear timelines have been drawn up and displayed on the website of the DoPT so that each stakeholder is aware of what is expected. The six interconnected strands include strengthening existing institutions, refreshing policy, detailing competencies that are required for each role and activity related to each position, and creating a strong push for a culture of life-long learning among civil services.

This is followed by the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which provides a detailed overview starting from Stakeholder identification and their engagement in the project, to identification of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, besides a grievance mechanism to address any issues that may crop up in the process of implementation.

However, the real driving force behind MK is the Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRAC). This involves mapping of three constructs (roles, activities, and competencies, supported by knowledge resources) for each individual position within all government Ministries, Departments and Organisations (MDOs). Before identifying requisite competencies, an organization will also have to question the logic and rationale of its own existence. Why is it doing what it is currently doing? Is there any duplication of effort, or redundancy on account of technology? This Framework is ever evolving, capturing new competency needs as and when they arise. It establishes a clear theory of change by first identifying a core group of ‘reform champions’ who will look at the extant rules and procedures and recast them to meet the challenges. FRAC mentors will also identify world class universities, institutions, and individuals to deliver the skill sets, competencies and knowledge resources to each and every employee in the organization.

Each and every employee under iGOT Karmayogi

The emphasis on *each and every employee* is indeed a salient feature of the MK. Unlike earlier interventions in which only those at the helm were given the best possible training, MK extends to all the 4.6 million employees of the GoI in the first instance, with possibility of extending it to all state government, Zilla panchayats, Municipal and public bodies in the next phase. A transformation at this scale had never been envisaged earlier, and it is the most comprehensive learning experiment for government employees ever. It is also important to note that a sum of Rs 510.86 crore has been committed to MK for the five year 2020-21 to 2024-25. The expenditure is partly funded by multilateral assistance to the tune of \$50 million.

Underpinning all this is the iGOT Karmayogi, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. The SPV will create, own, and operationalise the content, marketplace and manage key business services of iGOT-Karmayogi platform, relating to content creation and validation, independent proctored assessments, and telemetry data. All digital e-learning courses of world-class content will be uploaded on this platform for civil servants and all government employees for each of the roles identified by the MDOs.

This will free the training institutions as well as the civil servants from the necessity of spending time on the ‘information content.’ The LBSNAA has been able to shift a lot of its FC syllabi – to the iGOT- thereby giving more time for Aarambh and other innovative

projects. Likewise, in the MCTPs: the readings and case studies have been moved to electronic platforms thereby encouraging participants to engage with the faculty and each other in sharing perspectives, best practices, and lateral thinking for innovative solutions.

Issues of critical importance

Civil servants will have to take online courses and evaluated on their performances in each course across their service span. Along with the online courses, services like confirmation after probation period, deployment, work assignment and notification of vacancies etc would also be integrated on the platform. In fact, the FRAC will give an officer greater clarity about the role, as well as the resources that are required to ensure effective delivery. Officers will also be able to ensure that those who work with them also receive the required competency sets. Political discretion in postings will be reduced as postings will depend on the performance in both online and offline training programs, officers will also get an opportunity to take up courses in their chosen field of specialization, which will also help them in their professional growth trajectory.

Addressing Key Questions

Before closing, it is important to ask ourselves a few questions. What are the key lessons for India? Is the model replicable in countries which have a similar system of governance? What is the significance of political helmsmanship for reforms in civil services? Do we need the intervention of multilateral agencies like the World Bank to assist the process, or is it better to learn from successful interventions at the grassroots?

There are some clear learnings from the civil service reforms in India. First is that civil servants must understand why expectations are rising, and what can be done to address them. This is driven not just on account of urbanization, but also because citizens are now comparing their transactions with government to those with the corporate sector. Why should a certificate from the government take longer than a typical online transaction? Secondly, citizens are now claiming service from the government to be a matter of right. The Right to Service Act clearly stipulates the timeline for each service – from a driving license to a ration card to the sanction of a building plan. Then there is the social media which highlights citizens' concerns and issues which are unresolved. Last but not the least, if a citizen does not find redress the local level, she escalates the issue to the CM or even the PM portal. Mission

Karmayogi may not be the silver bullet, but it certainly empowers and assists the civil servant to meet the expectations of the people. Because the focus is not just on domain knowledge, but also on attitude and technical ability, there are several examples of successful interventions across the country to make citizen services user friendly – from the access of land records to property documents from a municipal office.

Is the model replicable in countries with a similar model a permanent executive and a political leadership which is elected with regular periodicity?. Yes. And it is a matter of immense satisfaction that at least three neighbouring countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Maldives are regularly sending their officers to train at the LBSNAA and the National Centre of Good Governance on citizen services and public systems. The feedback received from the participants indicates that it is indeed possible to replicate best practices across geographies and national boundaries, especially in South Asia where countries have strong cultural and civilizational links.

The answer to the third question – that of contribution of political helmsman to reform is fairly nuanced. It must be mentioned that many reforms are driven by the professional civil servants as they represent the section of society, which in Arnold Toynbee's classification may be called the 'creative minority'. If this group receives political support, the pace of reforms is accelerated, but if the political leadership is undecided and vacillating, the reform process faces major roadblocks, and can even get stuck.

Then there is the question of whether multilateral agencies should be involved in the process. In the considered view of this essayist, a knowledge exchange and partnership are welcome, but a nation which wants to reform its civil service must be willing to pay for it. Solutions offered by multi-lateral agencies are often non contextual and are driven more by technology aficionados than by practitioners. But having said this, knowledge sharing must be welcomed, but it should be a two-way traffic, for some of the best practices come from innovations undertaken by grassroot level administrators.

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Political, Fiscal and Economic Trends in Telangana

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In this article, an attempt is made to present the Political, Fiscal and Economic History of the present day Telangana Lands and its People for the past two millennia.

Down the ages, the present day Telangana lands and its people have been ruled by fairly stable dynasties. Each one of the dynasties have spanned around a couple of centuries. Even before the commencement of the very first millennium, Mauryans were controlling these lands. Thereafter, the first millennium witnessed the rule of Satavahanas, Vakatakas (also Ikshvakus and Vishnukundis), Badami Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas followed by Kalyana Chalukyas. The second millennium witnessed Kalyana Chalukyas giving way to Kakatiyas. The collapse of Kakatiyas in fourteenth century was followed by Islamic polity which sustained till the middle of twentieth century. From 1950 CE onwards, all these polities were subsumed within the overarching polity of the Indian Union.

Such a vast stretch of historic timeline spanning more than two millennia, if looked from fiscal and economic perspective, had two historic break points. The first was during the fourteenth century and the second was during the eighteenth century. These break points divide the entire historic timeline in three parts. Let us look at each part at some length.

The First Part

That stretched from the year 187 BCE till the year 1323 CE, covering around fifteen centuries. As already alluded, after the collapse of Mauryans, these lands witnessed the rule of Satavahanas, Vakatakas (including Ikshvakus and Vishnukundis), Badami Chalukyas, Rastrakutas and Kalyan Chalukyas followed by Kakatiyas. Dynastic mutations notwithstanding, the fiscal architecture in all the kingdoms was almost the same. Agriculture, the dominant activity was taxed as per Shatabhaga (one sixth of the produce). There were other taxes and duties too, but their overall burden upon the people was rather gentle.

It must be stated categorically that there was no polity known as Telangana during those times. It was a part of the broader polity, which was geographically and economically fully integrated with the wider Indian sub continental economy. Within the Indian land mass, innumerable holy places along rivers and atop hills and mountains were witnessing perennial

flow of preachers, teachers and pilgrims. These highways were also used by raiders and traders. In addition, there was a thriving trade across high seas with lands afar. Therefore, the flow of people, goods, services and ideas was spread far beyond the geographic confines of Telangana.

Economic Prosperity

What about the estimates of GDP, population and per capita income during those times relating to the present-day Telangana State¹ as it stands carved out as the 29th state of the Indian Union from 2nd June 2014 onwards? Presuming the population ratios to have remained the same over time, we can derive comparative population of India and the present-day Telangana lands and its people during those times, as follows:

Population in Lakhs

Year	1000 CE	1300 CE	1500 CE
India	750	960	1100
Telangana	18.75	24.00	27.50

The arrival of Kakatiyas and their rule lasting till 1323 CE gave a certain shape to the Telangana polity because its present-day territories were substantially included in the then Kakatiya dominion. More than three centuries span (1000 CE – 1323 CE) witnessed a certain divide in the Indian sub-continental polity. The areas north of Vindhyan mountains were controlled by the Islamic polity while the areas south of Vindhyan were under the control of Chalukyas, Seunas, Kakatiyas, Gangas, Hoyasalas, Pandyas and Cholas. The overall socio economic and cultural landscape in all these kingdoms were almost similar. The tank was the economic fulcrum of a village, while a nearby temple was its social fulcrum. An international trade in spices, cotton textiles, diamonds, steel and horses were yet another feature of peninsular kingdoms. Mutual conflicts amongst neighbouring kingdoms were no doubt there, but none attempted to subsume thy neighbour's kingdom. As political boundaries, by and large remained intact for more than a couple of centuries, it is quite reasonable to conclude that the economic prosperity of these peninsular kingdoms must have been a notch ahead of their north Indian counterparts by around 1300 CE.

¹ The ten districts from the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh were Adilabad, Karimnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Warangal, Rangareddy, Nalgonda, Mahaboobnagar, Khammam and Hyderabad.

The Per capita income figures for India are estimated as 450 dollars in 1000 CE, 510 dollars in 1300 CE & 550 dollars in 1500 CE. *The corresponding figures for Telangana land & its people must have been a notch ahead of 510 dollars in 1300 CE.*

The Second Part

The period from 1323 CE till 1724 CE, covering a period of four centuries constitutes the second part. After the collapse of Kakatiyas, it witnessed the rule of alien dynasties, be it Bahmanis or Qutb Shahis. All those rulers, their advisors and ministers had their roots in Persian lands. They transformed native kingdoms into a Persianate Shia commonwealth. The fiscal architecture was imposed as per Islamic law. It mandated that each farmer, irrespective of his land holding had to part with half i.e., 50% of his total produce to the state. There was no respite even during famine years which were far too frequent. Non-payment was dealt with severe punishments. There were several other duties too.¹

Per Capita Income (In US Dollars at 1990 Rate)

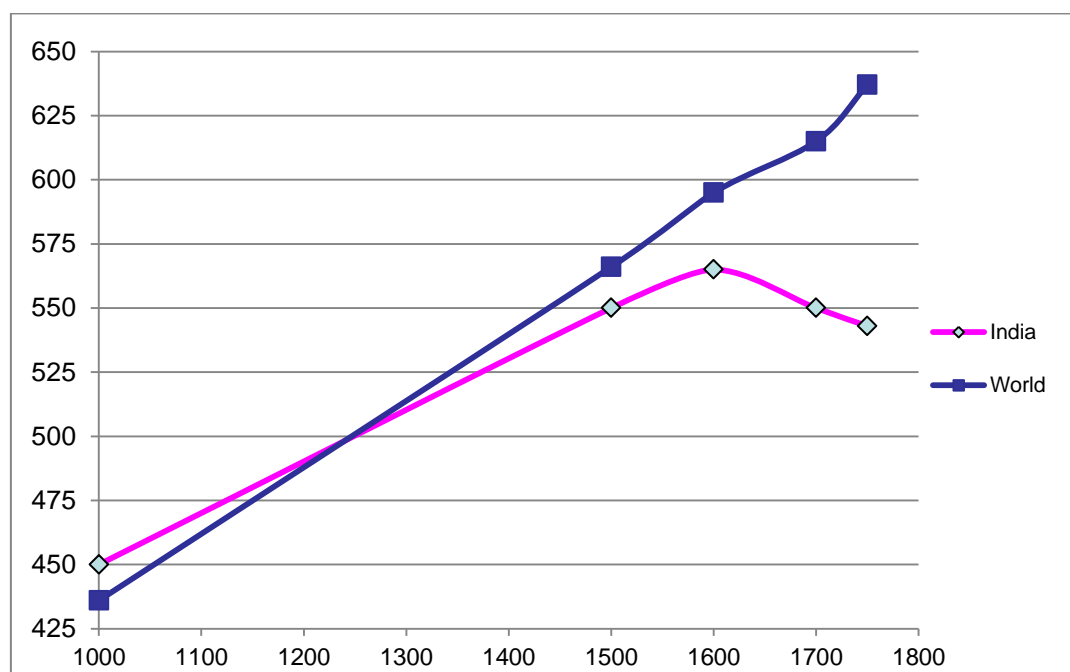
Year	India	World
1300	510	513
1500	550	566
1600	550	595
1700	550	615
1750	543	637

The economic impact of this new fiscal regime was regressive, to say the least. figures say it all. The Indian economy by 1300 CE had a sort of parity in terms of per capita GDP before the entry of Islamic rulers. However, it entered a period of relative decline from 1300 CE onwards and by 1750 CE, the Indian GDP Per capita had fallen distinctly behind the global averages. The Bahmani dominions followed by Qutb Shahi kingdoms, which included the present-day Telangana lands had been politically and economically interconnected, not only within the Indian subcontinent but also with Persian lands across the oceans. The obvious conclusion is that the present-day Telangana lands had entered a period of economic regression from the lapse of the Kakatiya Imperium.

The Economic decline

It is estimated that decline of per capita income, de-urbanisation and decline of real wages for unskilled and skilled workers commenced simultaneously from 1600 CE onwards. The unfolding triple tragedy held disturbing portends for the future. The Indian sub-continent including the Golconda territories, especially to most of the foreign visitors still appeared to be a land dotted with opulence and riches, as viewed from the ruler's court. The overall riches of its people had however shrunken from a high of 29.2% in its global share in 1000 CE to 20.9% in 1750 CE. The graph of Indian prosperity was on a slow yet certain decline. The nadir had not been reached yet, at least by 1750 CE. The 'Battle of Plassey' was still some years away.

Per Capita Income at Constant Prices (From 1000 CE TO 1750 CE)



The worst was yet to come.

The Third Part and Economic collapse

The period from 1724 CE till 1948 CE covering a period of more than two centuries constitute the third part. It witnessed the rule of Asaf Jahis. They were Mughal sunnis who derived their inspiration from Aurangzeb model of governance. The local polity was additionally subjugated by foreign trading companies namely, French and British. Political subjugation caused additional fiscal drain and new trade policies, especially for paddy and cotton caused desiccation of rural economy.

Economic impact of this double whammy was disastrous. In a latest research paper, Mrs.Patnaik has calculated “*Theft of \$45 trillion by EIC & British empire from India between 1765 & 1938*”. It is seventeen times more than the total annual GDP of the United Kingdom today. The Hyderabad state, ensconced in the belly of the subcontinent shared its (mis)fortune in full measure. Homogeneity of the population and integration of Hyderabad economy with India has been forcefully and conclusively brought out in the seminal work of V.P. Menon, as follows.

“Geographically, culturally, economically and politically, Hyderabad had always been an integral part of India. No natural barriers separated the border areas, the population was completely homogeneous with the population of the surrounding Indian provinces, and the State had been entirely dependent upon India for its railways, its postal, telegraphic and telephonic services and its air communications. Economically, the State had never been an independent entity in any sense of the term, but had always been an integral part of India.”² The share of drain from Hyderabad dominion must have been at least 2 trillion dollars during this period.

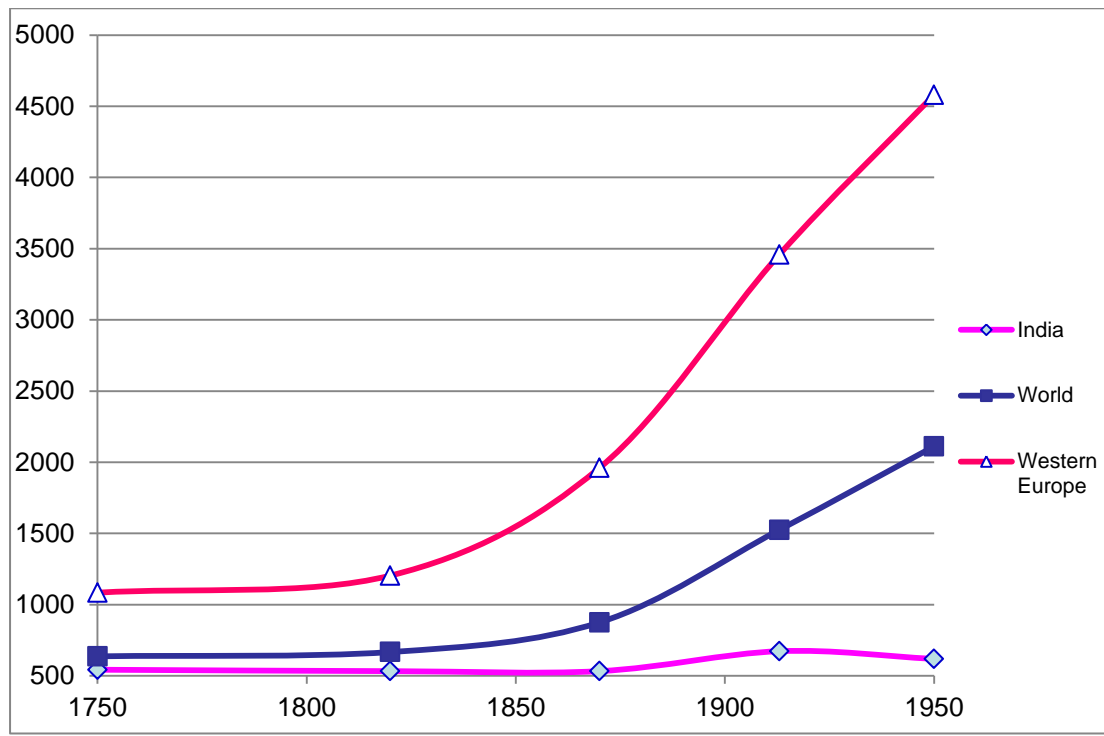
In 1950 CE, literacy in Hyderabad state was less than 8%. Irrigated area in the entire realm was less than 9%, Life expectancy was 32.6 years in 1950. Population was emaciated. Mother and Child mortality was very high.

Population (In Crores)³

Year	India	World
1750 CE	18.3	78.6
1950 CE	35.9	252.4

Per Capita Income (In US Dollars at 1990 Rate)⁴

Year	India	World	Western Europe (Including U.K.)
1750 CE	543	637	1084
1820 CE	533	667	1204
1870 CE	533	875	1960
1913 CE	673	1525	3458
1950 CE	619	2111	4579

Per Capita Income at Constant Prices (From 1750 CE to 1950 CE)

From 1950 CE onwards, the Hyderabad state was merged with the Union of India. The evolution of political, fiscal and economic trends from 1950 CE onwards would be covered subsequently.

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- 4) Ibid, p 642

Child Marriage in India: Its Status, Legal Ramifications, and Prevention Efforts

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Child marriage is a pervasive global issue that transcends geographical, cultural, and societal boundaries, affecting all segments of the population. This practice infringes upon a child's fundamental rights, denying them access to essential healthcare, proper nutrition, and education. Child marriage essentially constitutes an early forced union, as it occurs without the free and full consent of the parties involved, primarily due to their underage status. International agencies have underscored the importance of parties entering marriage freely and with full consent.

Nature of the Issue

Child marriage affects both genders, but its impact is disproportionately severe on girls, who constitute the majority of victims. Girls, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with limited access to education, bear the brunt of this practice. Rural areas in India are particularly vulnerable to child marriage, exacerbating its harmful effects. Child marriage represents a clear violation of children's rights and exerts a detrimental influence on various aspects of their lives, including educational opportunities, physical growth, health, and mental and emotional development. Furthermore, it acts as a significant impediment to empowerment. The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental human right applicable to all, regardless of race or religion, and child marriage blatantly contravenes this standard.

Child marriage constitutes a severe violation of human rights and stands in defiance of international norms and standards. These principles are evident in various international human rights instruments. For instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in Article 16(2), stipulates that "marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses." Additionally, child marriage runs afoul of specific provisions within the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which India has been a

party to since 1992. The CRC, in Article 9(1), expressly forbids the separation of children from their parents against their will. Moreover, Article 24(3) of the CRC mandates that States take effective measures to eradicate traditional practices detrimental to children's health. Furthermore, child marriage also violates specific provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which India has been a party to since 1993. Article 16(2) of the CEDAW declares that the engagement and marriage of a child shall hold no legal validity. Additionally, Article 16(1)(b) of the CEDAW grants women and girls the right to freely select a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent. Child marriage has far-reaching implications, affecting almost every aspect of achieving the Millennium Development Goals¹.

Child marriage represents a grave concern in India, which harbors the largest number of child brides globally. This practice is pervasive across the country but is more prevalent in rural areas due to high levels of illiteracy and poverty. The rates of child marriage vary, with higher occurrences in the northern and western regions of India and lower rates in the southern and eastern parts. . As per the findings of the National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5), 23% of females aged 20 to 24 years entered into marriage before reaching the age of 18². Determining the exact prevalence of child marriages is challenging because many of these marriages remain unregistered. This challenge is compounded by the significant number of unregistered births, particularly in impoverished rural areas, making it difficult to ascertain the ages of brides and bridegrooms at the time of marriage.

Underlying Causes of Child Marriage

The issue of child marriage is deeply rooted in a complex web of social, economic, and cultural factors. Several underlying reasons contribute to this phenomenon, including poverty, low levels of education, weak law enforcement, limited educational opportunities, parental insecurity, and a lack of awareness regarding the consequences of early marriage and relevant laws. In many societies, there is a disparity in the value placed on girls compared to boys, with girls often viewed as liabilities with limited economic potential. Women's roles are frequently confined to the household, a contribution that is undervalued. Consequently, marrying off a daughter at a young age is sometimes seen as a means for parents or guardians

¹ UNICEF India on child marriage, < <https://unicef.in/Whatwedo/30/Child-Marriage>>

² National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

to reduce their financial burdens, ensuring they have one less person to provide for in terms of food, clothing, and education. Furthermore, marriage is perceived as a way to secure a girl's future, both socially and economically.

Consequences of Child Marriage

Child marriage has far-reaching consequences, perpetuating gender inequality, poverty, and ill health. It disrupts girls' education, limiting their opportunities for economic improvement and diminishing their decision-making power within their households. Additionally, child marriage places significant family and societal responsibilities on young shoulders, even though it provides a social license, albeit not a legal one, for engaging in sexual activity, a fact acknowledged by the Supreme Court of India in 2017. Moreover, child marriage often leads to early and frequent pregnancies, resulting in higher rates of maternal and infant mortality.

Child Marriage Legislation in India

Child marriage was addressed through legislation during British rule in India, with the enactment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 (CMRA), often referred to as the Sharda Act. This law governed child marriages in India for nearly 80 years until it was superseded by the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006 (PCMA). The CMRA applied to the entire country except for the state of Jammu and Kashmir and was applicable to all Indian citizens, regardless of their religion. Initially, the CMRA set the minimum marriage age at 15 for girls and 18 for boys. However, in 1978, an amendment raised the minimum age to 18 for girls and 21 for boys.

The CMRA was considered to be having many shortcomings and miserably failed to achieve its object of restraining the solemnisation of child marriages. The punishment was considerably light prescribing a maximum simple imprisonment of 15 days to the bridegroom above 18 but below 21¹, and a maximum of 3 months simple imprisonment for a bridegroom above 21². The fine that can be imposed is 1,000 rupees in the first case and in the second case; the maximum fine was not fixed. The punishment for those responsible for the marriage

¹ Section 3 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929

² Section 4 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929

was a maximum three months simple imprisonment or/ and fine¹. However, a woman responsible for the solemnisation of child marriage could not be subjected to imprisonment. There was a provision enabling the court to issue an injunction prohibiting marriage in contravention of this Act²

Recognizing the shortcomings of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, the government introduced a more comprehensive legal framework known as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006 (PCMA), which currently governs this issue. The PCMA applies to all Indian citizens, regardless of their region or religion, aiming to provide a more inclusive and robust approach to combatting child marriage.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), which came into effect on November 1, 2007, criminalizes child marriage, rendering it illegal and subject to penalties. Under the PCMA, a child is defined as a female under the age of 18 and a male under the age of 21. Thus, if either or both parties entering a marriage fall within this age range, the union is considered a child marriage. However, the PCMA acknowledges a child marriage as valid but voidable, giving the minor involved the option to annul the marriage. This recognition of voidability carries the same legal consequences as a valid marriage, including conjugal rights. The PCMA allows the child, who was underage at the time of marriage, to seek annulment through a competent court, but this must be done within 2 years of reaching adulthood³. Consequently, a female victim can annul the marriage before turning 20, while a male victim has until the age of 23 to do so. If a competent court nullifies the marriage, it declares the union null and void, as if it had never existed.

The States and Union Territories are obligated to formulate rules for implementation of the PCMA. Additionally, the 2006 Act requires States and Union Territories to designate Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Act's provisions.

The PMCA aims to deter child marriages by imposing stringent penalties⁴ on both the bridegroom and individuals responsible for organizing or attending such marriage knowing them to be child marriage. The law stipulates that a bridegroom aged eighteen or above is subject to rigorous imprisonment for a maximum of two years and/or a fine of up to one lakh

¹ Sections 5&6 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act,1929

² Section 12 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act,1929

³ Section 3 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁴ Section 9 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

rupees. Importantly, the bride, regardless of her age, is exempt from punishment. However, in certain cases, the bridegroom may himself be underage, falling between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, rendering him both a perpetrator and a victim who can potentially annul the marriage. It is worth noting that the Supreme Court in *Hardev Singh vs Harpreet Kaur*¹ has held that a male aged between 18 and 21 years, who contracts into a marriage with a female adult, cannot be punished under Section 9 of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

Regarding the punishment of individuals responsible for child marriages, the Act distinguishes between those officiating the ceremony and those who support or allow its solemnization. Those who officiate, whether by performing, conducting, directing, or abetting any child marriage, face the penalty of rigorous imprisonment for up to two years and/or a fine of up to one lakh rupees, unless they can prove that they had valid reasons to believe the marriage was not a child marriage². Whereas, promoting or permitting solemnisation though punishable with the same quantum of punishment as provided for solemnisation, the differentiating point is , a woman can be subjected to imprisonment for solemnising but a woman cannot be subjected to imprisonment for promoting or permitting solemnisation though can be fined up to one lakh rupees³. Interestingly, those attending or participating also are covered in the category of promoting or permitting solemnisation.

Moreover, organisations or association of persons who does any act to promote the child marriage or permits it to be solemnised are covered in the category of promoting or permitting solemnisation. The scope for avoiding liability under PMCA by such parent or guardian becomes difficult because of the presumption that the person having charge of such minor child has negligently failed to prevent the marriage from being solemnised. Such a presumption is a rebuttable presumption of law⁴. Moreover, the offences punishable under this Act are cognizable and non-bailable and thus considered as serious offences⁵.

The PMCA allows the separated female after declaring the marriage null, the right to maintenance and residence from her husband if he is above eighteen or from in-laws if the husband is a minor until she is remarried⁶. The order continues to operate till her remarriage. The children born out of an annulled child marriage are considered legitimate and the courts

¹ *Hardev Singh vs Harpreet Kaur* decided on 7 November, 2019

² Section 10 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

³ Section 11 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁴ Section 11 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁵ Section 15 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁶ Section 4 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

while giving parental custody should keep the children's welfare and best interest of the child as the paramount consideration¹. The Act requires the return of valuables, ornaments, money and gifts given by each party to the other after annulment of marriage².

The PCMA makes a provision for issuing an injunction by a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or a Metropolitan Magistrate preventing the solemnising of a child marriage. Such an injunction can also be issued against an organization or association involved in performing a child marriage³. A child marriage in contravention of such an injunction is void *ab initio*⁴.

Though the child marriage is voidable and continues to exist till it is annulled by a competent court, it is void *ab initio*, if the consent is obtained by fraud, deceit or if the child is enticed away from his lawful guardian or if the sole purpose is to use the child for trafficking or other immoral purposes⁵.

The District Magistrates are empowered to stop or prevent solemnisation of child marriages and for this purpose can take all appropriate measures including using force⁶. For the purposes of preventing solemnisation of mass child marriages on certain days such as *Akshaya Trutiya*, the District Magistrate shall be deemed to be the Child Marriage Prohibition Officer with all powers as are conferred on a Child Marriage Prohibition Officer⁷.

The Karnataka Amendment Declaring Child Marriages Null and Void

In a landmark legal development, the High Court of Karnataka, through its judgment in the case of *Ms. Muthamma Devaya vs. Union of India* (2010), directed the State Government to establish a committee dedicated to preventing child marriages. Responding to this directive, the Karnataka State Government formed a committee in 2010, headed by Dr. Shivaraj V Patil, a former Supreme Court Judge. This committee diligently assessed the prevalence of child marriages in the State of Karnataka and submitted its comprehensive report in June 2011. One of the pivotal recommendations in this report was that child marriages should be deemed *void ab initio* rather than merely voidable. Building upon this recommendation, in 2016, the Karnataka government took a bold step by enacting the Prohibition of Child

¹ Section 5 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

² Section 3(4) of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

³ Section 13(1) of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁴ Section 14 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁵ Section 12 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁶ Section 13(5) of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

⁷ Section 13(4) of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

Marriage Act (Karnataka Amendment) of 2016, officially declaring child marriages as null and void from their inception. The commendable changes in the Karnataka Amendment are prescribing minimum punishment of one year and obligating the concerned Police Officer to take cognizance of an offence committed in his jurisdiction *suo motto*¹. The Supreme Court in *Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)*² appreciated PCMA Karnataka amendment and cited it as a model law.

Apex Court's declaration that sex with an under-age wife is rape:

In the case of *Independent Thought v Union of India* in 2017, the Supreme Court made a significant pronouncement, asserting that "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, where the wife is not yet 18 years old, constitutes rape." This landmark decision redefined the legal landscape by deeming sexual activity with a minor wife, even with consent, as rape.

Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code defines rape and addresses the age of consent, which is set at 18. Exception 2 to Section 375 previously allowed husbands to engage in non-consensual sexual intercourse with their wives aged between 15 and 18 years. However, the Supreme Court ruled that this exception, particularly in cases involving girls under 18, was arbitrary, capricious, whimsical, and in violation of the rights of underage girls. Consequently, the Court deemed this exception unconstitutional under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

The Supreme Court emphasized that a girl can only legally consent to sexual activity after she reaches the age of 18, which is also the legal age for marriage. In cases where a girl is married before turning 18, those responsible for arranging or facilitating such child marriages are committing a criminal offense, subject to punishment under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

This judgment effectively narrows the scope of the 'marital rape exemption' in India, underscoring that 18 years is the age of maturity not only for sexual relations and marriage but also for matters involving contract law, property law, and voting rights. It is worth noting that women seldom exercise the option of seeking a nullification decree from the court to invalidate their marriage after it has been consummated.

¹ Section 15A of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006(Karnataka Amendment)

² *Independent thought v. Union of India*, 2017 SCC online SC 1222

Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021

In December 2021, the Lok Sabha introduced the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, commonly known as the Bill, with the aim of amending the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA, 2006). The Bill proposes raising the permissible marriage age for females to 21 years, aligning it with the age set for males. It also seeks to eliminate any room for social and religious practices that promote child marriage, effectively superseding any conflicting provisions in India's personal laws. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports on December 21, 2021.

As mentioned earlier, the NFHS-5 Report from 2021 indicates that approximately 23.3% of women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married before turning 18. This data raises a pertinent question: can increasing the minimum marriage age for women effectively reduce the prevalence of child marriage in the country?

Addressing Child Marriage: A Comprehensive Approach

Addressing child marriage requires a multifaceted approach that targets various facets of the issue. These measures should be aimed at challenging patriarchal norms, increasing awareness of the harmful consequences of child marriage through media campaigns, educating families about sexual and reproductive health, improving access to safe and quality education, empowering adolescent girls with life skills, mobilizing religious and community leaders to support change, and making marriage registration mandatory for all. Effective implementation and enforcement of existing laws are crucial.

Despite child marriage legislation being in place for nearly 90 years and the experience gained from 16 years of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), which significantly increased penalties, the prevalence of child marriages persists. An analysis of the PCMA suggests that the law is not inherently inadequate but could benefit from enhancements, such as making the betrothal of child marriage a cognizable and non-bailable offense. The primary issue lies in the weak enforcement of the law and a lack of trust in the institutions responsible for enforcement.

It is widely recognized that the role of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers has been ineffective. However, the recent Supreme Court judgment criminalizing sex with a minor wife and classifying it as rape has strengthened the position of those involved in eradicating

child marriage. To address this issue, these officers and other relevant authorities should be held accountable for their actions or inaction.

Furthermore, the Union Government should take its "*Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao*" (Educate Daughters, Save Daughters) initiative seriously in the context of child marriages and compel state governments to prioritize this critical problem. Only through a concerted effort involving legal reforms, enforcement, education, and societal awareness can the deeply rooted issue of child marriage be effectively addressed.

SDGs *vis-a-vis* Good Governance Practices: A Thin Line to be Erased

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It looks like the current world is abuzz with two terms – Good Governance and Sustainable Development Goals. Though the two words need no introduction, the need of the hour is definitely to link both the terms in planning our government policies and our schemes. To put it briefly, it is only when our Good Governance practices are aptly aligned with our SDGs does it create powerful synergies, thus making it holistic and truly sustainable. This paper tries to explore the need for such alignment. The paper delves on doing a case study on the good governance practices taken up in two government departments in Telangana viz GHMC and Prohibition and Excise Department, and how such practices resulted in a significant positive change. This paper aims to provide policy makers, civil servants, and academicians an insight into the need for alignment of SDGs with good governance practices and how such a synergy would achieve impactful change in our governments. It goes without saying that conflicting interactions between these two may produce diverging results. Aligning good governance practices with SDGs will help us not just realize our short-term goals, but foster an environment that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

Introduction

“Good Governance” is the buzzword in any government department these days. The World Bank defines the term as "the manner in which public officials and institutions acquire and exercise the authority to shape public policy and provide public goods and services" (World Bank 2007)^a.

Good Governance is quintessential in achieving the ideals of quality public services and stands on the foundation of any healthy democracy. The UNDP (1997: 2-3) defines governance as ‘the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels’, which ‘comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences’

On the other hand, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) called the Global Goals, framed by the United Nations, provide us with a comprehensive roadmap that has set certain goals to nations, countries, communities, and individuals to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. Consisting of 17 interlinked goals, the SDGs offer a holistic approach that encompasses a range of pressing issues, from ending poverty and hunger to promoting quality education, gender equality, and sustainable economic growth. By accepting the SDGs, the member nations accept to dedicate themselves to these goals and strive to achieve them by bringing in whatever policy necessary, by making changes and implementing them.

The SDGs came into force on 01st January 2016 after the historic UN summit held in New York on 25th September 2015. These goals are aimed at transforming the lives and livelihoods of people across the globe. The concept of “Good Governance” was introduced much earlier. The World Bank introduced this concept in its 1992 report titled "Governance and Development". According to this document, good governance is an essential complement to sound economic policies and is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development. Accordingly, 'Good Governance Index' was launched in India in 2019 by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel (DARPG), Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India. It is a uniform tool across states to assess the Status of Governance and the impact of various interventions taken up by the state governments and Union Territories. It looks at providing quantifiable data to compare governance in all states and UTs, by taking into consideration ten sectors viz 1) Agriculture and Allied Sectors, 2) Commerce & Industries, 3) Human Resource Development, 4) Public Health, 5) Public Infrastructure & Utilities, 6) Economic Governance, 7) Social Welfare & Development, 8) Judicial & Public Security, 9) Environment and 10) Citizen-Centric Governance.

Good governance initiatives seem more local, in the sense that they are limited to a certain organization or to a certain community. They seem more short term, without any long-term goal attached. On the other hand, SDGs seem more global, with a tangible objective attached to every goal. For example, when we say SDG1, our goal is to end Poverty - across nations and thereby across the globe. One very creative approach started by the Vietnamese has been using SIPAS (Satisfaction Index of Public Administrative Services) since 2018, to measure people's satisfaction with administrative services.

Objectives

The objective of this paper is to understand and compare initiatives taken by two government departments - the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and the Telangana State Prohibition and Excise Department. We will be looking at the policy decisions that were taken to enable the implementation of good governance practices, their primary objectives and their ultimate impacts. We point towards the seemingly well-thought-out but actually random developmental initiatives undertaken by GHMC and the P&E Department.

We will analyse if the decisions could have been planned better, by making them as pieces of a bigger picture plan instead of random initiatives aimed at achieving short-term or piece-meal goals.

Methodology

This paper adopts a Case Study approach to understand the good governance practices taken up in these two departments viz GHMC and the P&E Department.

Case Study 1: GHMC

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is a municipal governing body responsible for administering and governing the city of Hyderabad, which is the capital of the state of Telangana. GHMC, initially known as Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad, is responsible for the local administration and urban development in Hyderabad. Officially formed on April 16, 2007, GHMC is responsible for handling the development and governance of one of the leading metropolitan cities of India and the world.

GHMC took a major initiative on the 11th of November, 2014 - almost a decade ago - to make all transactions, file movements and citizen-centric activities online and paperless. Since then it has been a major success, with almost 80% of all the interactions, whether with citizenry, intra-department or with other government departments, have become paperless. In the digital era, GHMC's B2B, B2C and B2G communication has more or less become digitalised now.

For instance, the GHMC issues Birth Certificates to the new-borns in the Greater Hyderabad area. This used to be a very laborious and time-consuming process earlier, with the parents having to physically go to one of the GHMC circle offices and apply for the birth certificate. Then the concerned section clerk would start the current file and after approval by

the concerned authority the birth certificate would be issued after approximately 8 working days.

Now with this process being made online, there have been benefits like almost an instant issuing of the certificate within a day and with no running around offices. But the major factor has been the saving of paper. Every physical file used to consume at least 6 papers plus the certificate, which was a huge cost on the environment. With roughly 1.9 lakh births happening in GHMC area last year, there would have been a consumption of close to 15 lakh papers. With these paperless transactions and the resultant saving of paper, countless trees have been saved, and minimised carbon footprint has also been recognised as an important aspect of sustainable good governance.

Case Study 2: Prohibition and Excise Department, Government of Telangana

The Prohibition and Excise Department (P&E) is a uniform department which is under the Revenue department of the Government of Telangana. The department has two major and primary tasks - to enforce the strict implementation of licensed liquor and not allow any Non-Duty Paid Liquor (NDPL) and Gudumba, and to control substances banned under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) act. The department also has a huge role in collecting revenue for the state exchequer in the form of allotting liquor licenses to shops, bars, clubs, and tourism clubs. And also, to collect revenue from distilleries and breweries. For doing these multifaceted operations, the department has about 4000 strong workforce with able women and men performing different roles and responsibilities. As in many organisations, the P&E Department also never laid too much emphasis on gender parity until about a few years ago.

In 2009, the department started to bring in the much-needed thrust on recruiting women in a strong manner. A minimum of one-third ($1/3^{\text{rd}}$) women are to be recruited at all the 3 stages of hierarchy i.e. the Constabulary, Sub Inspector and Assistant Excise Superintendent stages, and that has become a mandatory norm. With these measures, the strength of women in the department before 2009 was less than 700 and it has now shot up to more than 1500.

It is not just about numbers but about the women at different levels who are working in important decision-making posts which gives a whole new level of holistic approach and attitude to the major tasks performed by the department. The department is able to control

crime to a greater extent, and has also resulted in the attainment of the objective of increasing revenue collection year after year.

Findings

Case Study 1:

When we talk of the good governance practices taken up by GHMC, the idea of a paperless office or an e-office is appealing. The objective was to reduce the usage of paper in a phased manner. However, the objective could have had far reaching results had it been linked to the SDGs. The SDG that deals with the said objective precisely is SDG 12^c i.e., Responsible Consumption and Production. It is not just enough to reduce paper usage in the office.

Minimizing electronic waste and energy consumption will not just make the practice holistic but also promote the culture of sustainability. Here comes the core idea of tying together our good governance practices with SDGs. Advancing and advocating the SDG practices through our Good governance practices is what will add a core meaning to our policy changes, which in turn will advance our institutions to be the forerunners on the global map.

Listed below are the SDG sub targets which can be met comfortably, by a more holistic attempt at realizing a truly sustainable paperless office -

Target 12.2 - Sustainable management and use of Natural Resources

Target 12.5 – Substantially reduce waste generation

Target 12.6 - Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and sustainability reporting

Target 12.7 – Promote sustainable public procurement practices

Target 12.8 - Promote universal understanding of sustainable lifestyles

Target 12.9 - Support developing countries' scientific and technological capacity for sustainable consumption and production

Target 12.A - Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable tourism

Target 12.B - Remove market distortions that encourage wasteful consumption

The following practices and their consequences were observed in the working of GHMC as an organisation, and in correlation with other government bodies, as part of this study:

1. Lack of uniformity of measures: Uniformity of measures across the departments will ensure that any sustainable initiative taken up by GHMC is not short lived in reaching

its intended target. For example, acceptance of e-birth certificates across various other government departments is mandatory if the purpose of reducing paper usage is to be attained, which is the goal behind GHMC issuing e-birth certificates. Because, as is the case now, if this does not happen, then one has to again produce a physical copy of the birth certificate which makes the entire effort futile. This will ensure that the progress that happens in one department is not dampened by the slower pace of progress in other departments.

2. Better planning to link the objectives: Many administrative decisions are taken in the GHMC, which, at the outset, are commendably debated and are aimed at solving the immediate problems like reducing paper waste or to arrive at short term targets like having a fully digitised office. But there is still much scope for correlation among the decisions - both at the planning stage and in the implementation stage.
3. Data retrieval system: When aiming to set up an e-office, which is understandably the ultimate target of any office going paperless, the most important and the primary task would be to set up a fool-proof data retrieval system. It includes the systematic storing of voluminous data. As we see, government offices and workers are regularly required to refer to older circulars, older files and older orders. Referring to such content must be made seamless, simple and cost-effective.
4. Training the staff: This comes as the most important step in ensuring that the department is not forced to move back to a normal office. There is still a perceivable gap between the present skill set of the government workers, and the skills that they are expected to have, to become sustainable. Staff at all levels are required to be equipped with skills to use the electronic gadgets newly introduced in the offices, to store and retrieve information and also to provide necessary information to the citizens quickly.
5. Responsible recycling of e-waste: As we move to a paperless office, it is imperative that our dependence on electronics items and electricity would be manifold. The perception has not evolved to the extent that electricity is also generated using non-renewable natural resources. And also about the amount of natural resources that are required in manufacturing a single piece of electronic item and its shelf life and its disposal. If in the veil of going paperless we do not efficiently evaluate all our

alternative resources and their optimal management, then we may not be doing justice by calling the whole thing ‘Sustainable’.

Case study 2:

The good governance practice of deciding to increase the women workforce in the P & E department is a welcome move. The SDG 5 that talks about Gender Equality and the SDG 10 which talks about Reduced Inequalities are the relevant SDGs to this administrative decision. However, mere increase in the number of women in the department will not serve the purpose.

The following mechanisms were observed to have been in practice in the P&E department as part of this study -

1. The share of women recruitees has gone up significantly when compared to the previous proportions, crossing an increase of 100% from 2009. But the recruitment processes, training modules and classes largely remained the same, without giving sufficient focus on the possible changes that may be necessary in the training to ably cater to the skill gaps and the different skillsets of women trainees as compared to the average male trainees from before 2009.
2. There is still a lot of gap that needs to be bridged, in adapting to the necessities that the women staff bring. For example, there is a need for easier facilitation of maternity leaves and a necessity to remove the stigma attached to it, and in providing creche facility for toddlers so that recruitees who are new mothers would not constantly worry about the wellbeing of their children and can give their best when it came to workload.
3. There is still a need for a more holistic and more dynamic Standard Operating Procedures, when it comes to ably addressing the problems that arise at the workplace. For instance, if an employee has any genuine issue with other workers or has a sexual harassment complaint towards a colleague, they will feel more comfortable and empowered to work, if there is a system in place which is sufficiently empathetic towards their grievances.
4. Training and Education: There is a need to provide better training and educational opportunities to empower women with the skills needed for leadership positions,

besides establishing mentorship and sponsorship programs to support women's career development and advancement.

5. **Anti-Discrimination Policies:** Anti-discrimination policies can be enforced better, and further training ought to be provided to raise awareness about biases and harassment in the workplace.
6. **Awareness Campaigns:** Awareness campaigns should be held within the organization to educate employees about the importance of gender equality and the benefits it brings to everyone. Care should also be taken to provide an open and accessible platform to discuss gender related issues.
7. There is still a necessity to offer more flexible work hours and remote work options to accommodate employees' needs - particularly to women with caregiving responsibilities.
8. Since it is a uniform service, women joining back work after maternity leave may often feel overwhelmed to come back to work in uniforms. There are unexpressed apprehensions about fitness and most importantly about the mindset. Not every woman may be equally equipped to take up the job with the same flair again. Awareness and motivation campaigns or consults maybe initiated to boost the morale of such employees, thus increasing their productivity.

Conclusion

SDGs are still looked at like they're elite concepts, attaining which is falsely thought to require a complete overhaul of the standard operating procedures. But, the enumeration and sub categorisation of SDGs is done to the tiniest detail which enable us to understand the minutiae of the goals' operation. Even a small new sustainable administrative measure that a department undertakes can help us progress further along the path of realising any of the SDG goals or sub target. It is in this context that a systemic intertwining of Good Governance practices and SDGs is timely, as Telangana establishes itself as a leading state in India despite being only a decade in existence.

Aligning good governance practices with the SDGs fosters an environment where development is not only about achieving immediate outcomes but also about creating sustainable, equitable, and enduring improvements that benefit current and future

generations. It ensures that development efforts are transparent, accountable, participatory, and inclusive, thereby maximizing their impact and creating a better world for all.

An inalienable part of Good Governance is the active role of people by themselves or via various civil society organisations. This role should be made more informed and interactive, by educating the citizen stakeholders about SDGs and their targets. This can lead to a healthy mutualism and symbiosis between the two seemingly unrelated paths of Good Governance and SDGs.

Telangana Government has done departmental mapping of SDG goals as far back as in 2017. The Planning Department in the state government is the nodal agency for ensuring implementation of the SDGs in the State and coordinating on SDGs. All line Departments are made responsible for implementing the programmes as mapped with the SDGs^d. Overall connectivity across departments may be ensured which will help make even small administrative decisions synchronous with the state government's Departmental mapping of SDGs. This can be made possible by appointing full-time liaisons in each department, whose job would be to fine-tune even the small administrative measures taken, so that all the Good Governance decisions actually contribute to the bigger goal of attaining SDGs. These liaisons may be domain experts who are well-versed with SDGs and the multifaceted nuances therein. Constant and consistent supervision of all government departments by a singular department, like the Planning Department, helps achieve uniformity of progress across the horizontal landscape of the government. So that the good or the progress that happens in one department will not need to be undone by the slower pace of progress in other departments.

An inadvertent consequence of technological advancement is the digitalisation of documents and paper trails which were hitherto manual. This necessitates the possession of sufficient digital infrastructure to ensure the safe storage of valuable and often sensitive government paperwork. By making this infrastructure as simple to use as we possibly can, we can arrive at a smoother and a more sustainable transition to digital workspaces in the government.

Upskilling sessions and capacity building workshops should be periodically conducted for all the government personnel, to train them and educate them about the changes that are intended by the government through any new administrative decisions taken. This will help them get accustomed with the changing expectations in the work culture in the

offices, thereby making sure that the employees wouldn't feel the need to resort to the earlier, less sustainable way of working which they're more accustomed to.

Any attempt by the government to willingly change the demographic configuration of the workforce in the government, to ensure adequate representation of historically or socially disadvantaged groups like women, should be followed by mandatory skill training sessions. This measure will help bridge the skill gap that this group of workers may unavoidably have, owing to their social position.

Being open and adaptive to the changing necessities that the increased role and proportion of women in government workspaces bring is of paramount importance to ensure a sustainable transition. Dynamic and evolving Human Resource practices like maternity leaves and period leaves, and installing creche facilities at offices should be adopted to make the workspaces equitably accessible to all.

Grievance Redressal Mechanisms in place should be further strengthened, and should be empowered to take periodic feedback from the employees and to undertake dynamic redressal of issues or complaints. For instance, in the event of a possible Sexual Harassment complaint in any department, the complainant should be aware of and be confident in the systemic procedure that they should follow to lodge their complaint. This will give all the employees the necessary confidence that in case of any future grievance, the system has in place a standard medium of grievance redressal.

All the aforementioned measures are necessary to actually realise the goal of women empowerment, which was the reason to increase the role of women in the P&E department in particular and in all government departments in general, through the horizontal reservation. Without such systemic changes, the increased recruitment of women into the government will just be a symbolic gesture or token measure.

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Public Private Partnership (PPP) as a Catalyst for Infrastructure Development and Growth

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In its 75th year of independence, India has become the world's fifth largest economy, with a nominal GDP of approximately US\$ 3.5 trillion and is now rapidly advancing towards realising the vision of reaching the milestone of US\$ 5 trillion GDP by 2025. In the Budget 2023-24, the Government emphasized the need for increased spending in the infrastructure sector with an investment outlay of Rs 10 lakh crores, at 3.3% of GDP. This ramping up of public investment in infrastructure will have a multiplier effect across sectors such as steel, cement, auto and real estate among others. Studies by the Reserve Bank of India and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy estimate that for every rupee spent on infrastructure, there is a 2.5 to 3.5 rupee gain in GDP. However, unlike other emerging markets, India relied primarily on the Government budget for financing infrastructure projects, with nearly 70 per cent of funds coming from the budget. The Government stepped up budgetary allocation to fund infrastructure investment, through the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), with a projected investment of around Rs 111 lakh crores for FY20-25. This was further strengthened with the setting up of two institutional structures - National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development for long term funding; and the National Monetisation Pipeline for monetising unused and underutilized public assets. The Government has also announced the establishment of an Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) to create urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities with an outlay of INR 10,000 crores per annum.

The Government has also been encouraging the private investor to invest in infrastructure by creating a pipeline of bankable projects. It is observed that in India, like most countries, transportation projects such as roads, bridges, railways, ports, and airports, have attracted private investment. The evolution and growth of the public digital infrastructure was mainly due to the regulatory framework which incentivised the private sector to innovate and invest. The key principles on which policies were formulated were -

adopting trust-based governance, partnering with the private sector for development and creating public services.

Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

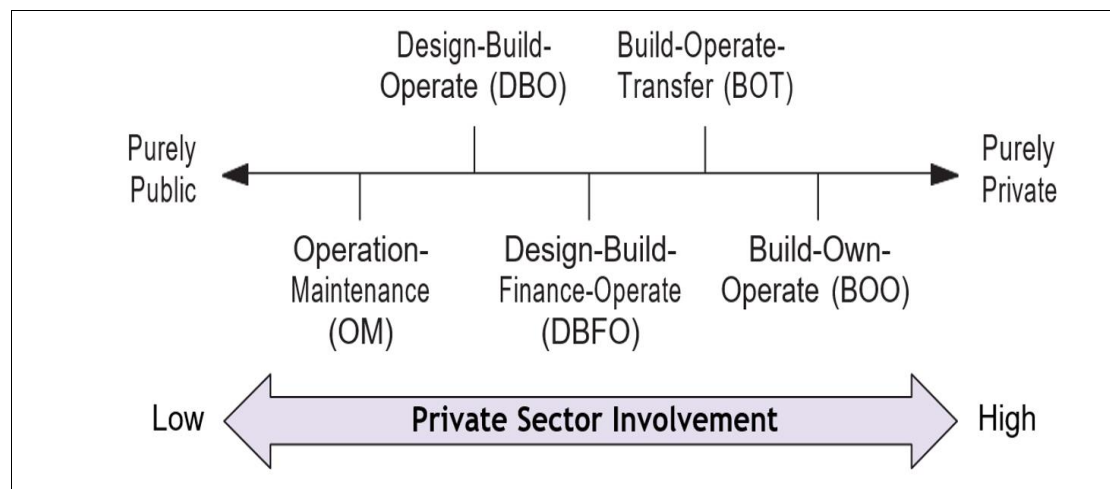
The public private partnership (PPP) has emerged as an important strategy, in many countries, to attract private investment in infrastructure. A purely public approach to fund infrastructure is characterized by slow and ineffective decision-making, inefficient institutional framework and lack of competition which are collectively known as government failure. As against this, a purely private approach could result in inequalities in the access to infrastructure services, which is known as market failure. The Public-Private Partnership emerged as a solution to overcoming both government and market failures by combining the strengths of both the public and private sector, resulting in a win-win situation.

Although the term “PPP” has several definitions, that have been used by different Governments, institutions and international organisations, the most comprehensive definition is given by World Bank as follows:

The term “public-private partnerships” has taken on a very broad meaning. The key elements, however, are the existence of a “partnership” style approach to the provision of infrastructure as opposed to an arm’s-length “supplier” relationship...Either each party takes responsibilities for an element of the total enterprise and they work together, or both parties take joint responsibility for each element...A PPP involves a sharing of risk, responsibility, and reward, and it is undertaken in those circumstances when there is a value-for-money benefit to the taxpayers.

Types of PPPs

Various types of partnerships have been implemented, worldwide, to reflect different project objectives and requirements. These PPPs vary in terms of the degrees of private involvement, and in terms of financing and ownership of assets. At one extreme is the public provision, where the public sector is fully responsible for delivering public services; while at the other extreme is the private provision, where the private sector assumes all these responsibilities. As the PPP move from the end of the purely public provision to the other, the degree of private involvement increases. A continuum that reflects the degree of private involvement in PPPs is shown in Figure 1, below.

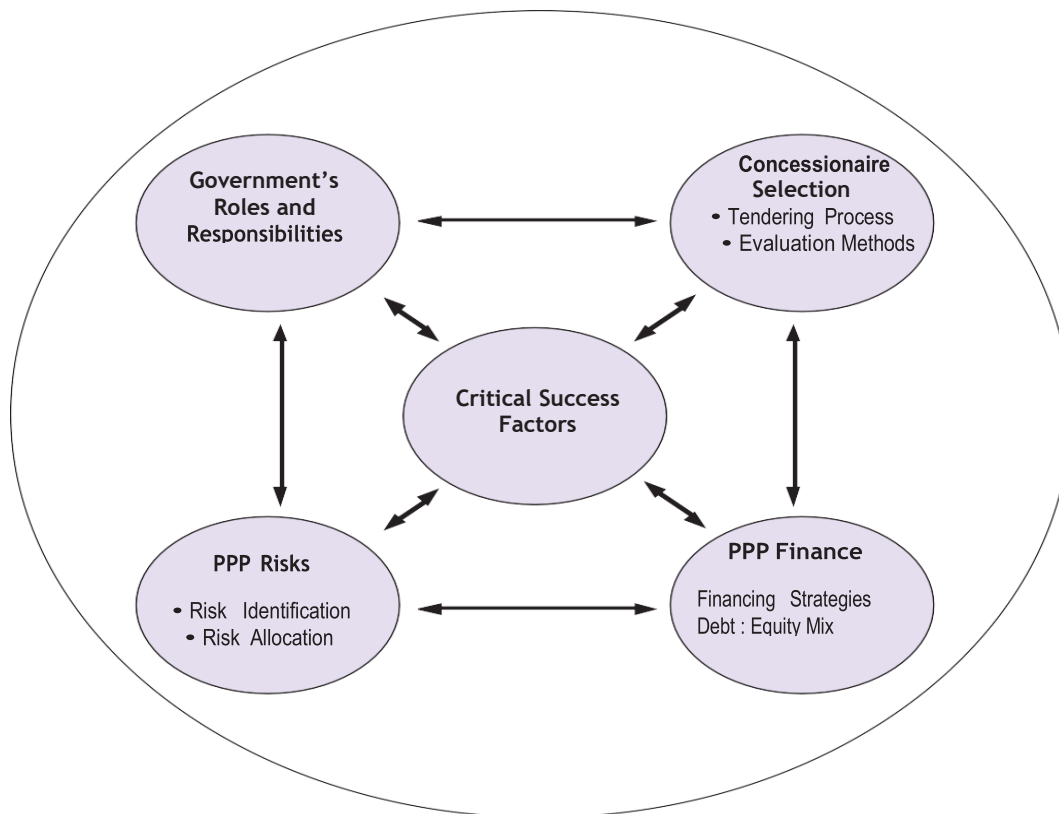
Figure 1

In India the most prevalent type of PPP is the concession-type PPP, where a consortium, known as concessionaire is formed for the PPP project, and its responsibilities include the financing, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the infrastructure assets. At the end of the concession period, the assets are transferred to the Government in operational condition. The concession agreement is signed between the concessionaire and the Government and according to the World Bank, a concession agreement is defined as “*an arrangement whereby a private party leases assets for service provision from a public authority for an extended period and has responsibility for financing specified new fixed projects during the period. The new assets revert to the public sector at expiration of the contract.*”

Based on the above, a PPP project requires a well-structured tendering process, a transparent and fair method of concessionaire evaluation, and a set of quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria. Since the concessionaire takes on the responsibility of funding the project, the uncertainties and risks associated with the PPP need to be identified and appropriate risk allocation among the participants is necessary.

Design of a PPP

There are five main aspects of PPPs, as given in the figure 2 below: the Government’s roles and responsibilities; the concessionaire selection; PPP risks; PPP finance; and the critical success factors and/or barriers for PPP projects.

Figure 2

Benefits of PPPs

International experience has shown that the PPP, if properly structured, can provide multiple benefits to the Government and other stakeholders. Further, it is observed that in most countries, PPP projects are concentrated in transportation projects such as roads, ports and airports. In India also, the Government has prioritised transport infrastructure in its overall spending. The Budget allocation for Ministry of Transport and Highways was increased by 36% over the previous year to develop new expressways such as Delhi Mumbai expressway, Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway and Agra-Lucknow expressway. However, the use of PPPs is now being slowly expanded across other sectors such as education, healthcare and agriculture.

The major advantages of PPP are:

- Providing more-efficient, lower-cost, and reliable public services, thereby increasing the “value for money” spent on infrastructure services;

- Reduction in up-front capital costs for the Govt;
- Project life-cycle costs and project delivery time are better managed;
- Facilitates innovation in infrastructure services delivery; and
- Improved risk allocation between Govt and private sector, with risks related to construction, finance and operation of projects being transferred to the private sector;

Critical Success Factors (CSFs) in PPPs

Critical success factors are defined as *“the limited number of areas, the result of which, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organization. They are the few key areas where ‘things must go right’ for the business to flourish.”*

The identification of such factors has been viewed as the first important step in the development of a successful PPP. Based on research studies it can be concluded that the success or failure of a PPP project is dependent on: the competence of the Government; the selection of an appropriate concessionaire; appropriate risk allocation between the Government and private sector. Accordingly, the critical success factors for PPPs are: continuity in leadership; independent project team and project leader, with reporting relationship to a steering committee consisting of representatives from both the public and private sectors; periodic progress monitoring during implementation; clarity in responsibilities and well drafted agreements. The factors that contribute to the achievement of best results are detailed risk analysis and appropriate risk allocation. It is observed that the problems in PPPs, such as project delays, inability to recover user charges and frequent changes in top management, often arise in the initial stages itself.

Government Role – from provider to purchaser of services

The government plays a pivotal role in the development and management of a PPP project. The role of the government has been identified as follows:

- ***Establishing a conducive Legal/Regulatory Framework*** - It has been emphasized that the establishment of a sound regulatory

framework is a pre-requisite for the success of a PPP. A well-structured and balanced regulatory framework can not only increase the willingness of the private sector to participate in infrastructure development, but also increase benefits to the Government by ensuring that the projects operate efficiently.

- ***Developing a fair and transparent Concessionaire Selection Process*** - The Government should establish a fair and transparent concessionaire selection process, which includes well-defined scope of work, fair treatment of all bidders, transparency, and financial evaluation of the project.
- ***Continuous Monitoring of Project during Life-Cycle*** - Although the concessionaire is the principal participant that is responsible for the implementation of a PPP project, the Government needs to be actively involved in the project life-cycle phases to ensure that the project meets its quality and delivery objectives. This involvement can be achieved through the establishment of an interdisciplinary team that continuously monitors project progress, and implements quality control and quality assurance measures.

Risk Identification and Classification

The identification of risks is the first step to managing them appropriately. The risks in a PPP project originate from a number of factors, such as the scale of the project, the geographical location and the type of PPP being implemented. A striking characteristic of the PPP is its high level of risks, mainly due to the long concession period and the diversity of stakeholders involved in the partnership. The various types of risk are enumerated in the table below:

Type of Risk	Risk Factors
Political Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expropriation, reliability and creditworthiness of the Government • Change in Government policies • Political opposition

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in approvals
Financial Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of return restrictions • Inability to service debt • Fluctuations in the inflation rate, interest rate, foreign currency exchange rate
Construction Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition and compensation • Project cost and time overrun • Material/labor unavailability • Project site conditions • Contractor's failure
Operation and Maintenance Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation and maintenance cost inefficiencies • Low operating productivity • Unavailability of material/skilled labor
Market and Revenue Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic/Revenue Risk • Government restrictions on profit and tariff • Inaccurate pricing and demand estimate
Legal Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-compliance in contracts • Unanticipated changes in the concessionaire scheme • Early termination

Risk Allocation Strategies

The guiding principle in risk allocation is to allocate risks to the entity with the best financial and technical capabilities to manage them. In general, risks that are related to the environment within which the project is implemented should be retained by the Government, while the risks that are directly related to the project are mostly allocated to the private sector. Some risks that are beyond the control of both the public and private sectors should be shared by both. On the basis of this principle, political risks should be retained by the Government, while the risks of legislative changes and force majeure risks should be shared by both the public and private sectors. The majority of the remaining project-related risks, risks that are directly associated with the project itself, should be assumed by the private sector.

Most operation-related risks should be retained by the private sector (e.g., technical and management risks) or in some cases shared by the public and the private sector (e.g., demand and supply risks).

PPP Finance

The funding plan for a PPP should have an appropriate mix of equity and debt and a financing strategy that is based on the considerations of project risks, project conditions, and financing sources. Financing strategies for PPP projects that are characterized as being capital-intensive with long gestation periods, require innovative financial engineering techniques. Project financing is a technique where a project is considered as a distinct legal entity and the equity and debt is serviced from the cash flows generated by the project.

PPP projects are generally funded with both equity and debt, however, the strategy is to utilize as much debt as the project cash flows can service so as to generate an attractive return for equity shareholders. Consequently, the capital structures in most PPP projects are highly leveraged, with equity financing covering only 10-30% of total project costs and the remaining 70-90%, from debt financing. Although the higher debt would generate higher rate of return to equity investors, it would also increase the financial risk of the project, therefore an appropriate mix of equity and debt is used. In addition, project risks, project conditions, and financing sources need to be taken into account when selecting an appropriate financing strategy for a PPP project.

Risk Conditions	Financing Strategies
Low Risk	• High debt-to-equity ratio to maximise return on equity
	• Raise debt from capital market to reduce interest costs
High Political Risk	• Procure insurance from Government organizations such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation
High Financial	• Obtain loans from international lending institutions
	• Fixed-rate or standardized-rate debt financing

Risk Conditions	Financing Strategies
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure debt financing in the same currencies as anticipated revenues
High Market Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance early phases with equity and short term loans and refinance during the operation phase with low cost long-term debt
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure the debt repayment schedule to synchronise with the project cash flows
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate contract terms that allow increases in user fees
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure debt, if necessary, to solve cash flow problems during the concession period

Government Support

The financial viability of a PPP project is affected by a number of factors such as market demand, tariff structure, concession period, credibility of the project sponsors and force majeure events. Govt of India provides viability gap funding to improve the financial viability and/or to enhance the attractiveness of a PPP project. For instance, the 22.5 km long Trans-Harbor Bridge for Mumbai, costing over \$1 billion is not feasible without at least 30 percent viability gap funding.

- **Minimum Guaranteed Revenue** – Demand risk can be mitigated by providing a minimum guaranteed revenue from the Government.
- **Flexibility in Tariff Structure** - The tariff structure and its adjustment have significant impact on the project cash flows. Hence, some flexibility in tariff structure may be required to enhance the financial viability of a PPP project.
- **Financial Support** - Different types of financial support, both directly and indirectly, can be used to increase the rate of return of the project, and thereby enhance the attractiveness of a PPP project. Direct financial support could be through grants or loans or tax incentives.

Limitations of PPPs

Despite the benefits and increasing usage in infrastructure development, PPPs have

certain limitations, which are:

- Limited competition in PPP projects due to the high tendering costs;
- Delays in land acquisition, public opposition and time consuming negotiation processes;
- Cost of financing is higher since the borrowing cost of the private sector is always more than the sovereign borrowing cost;
- Limited access to public services as the user charges may not be affordable.

Recommendations – Way Forward

Going forward, closing the infrastructure financing gap by attracting private sector investment will depend upon the capacity of Central and State Governments to ensure a pipeline of commercially viable and environmentally sustainable projects that deliver commensurate returns to investors. Governments can support the creation of inclusive and quality infrastructure by providing an enabling environment, capacity building and appropriate risk allocation.

Sustainable and resilient infrastructure investment is required to address multiple economic, social and environmental objectives beyond a narrow definition of user needs. Hence the Govt should ensure that infrastructure long-term planning takes into account environmental and climate considerations also. The appraisal of infrastructure project investments should include evaluation of environmental and climate factors also. The Govt should undertake independent assessments of infrastructure projects and initiatives against criteria that include environmental value. Developing innovative financing instruments, such as green and sustainable bonds, will be necessary to support the successful rollout of environmentally sustainable project pipeline.

The possibility of establishing a 100% Government-owned special purpose vehicle (SPV) for promoting PPPs, can be considered. The SPV would be mandated to secure permissions, land acquisitions, and all other sovereign functions. The shares can subsequently be sold to the highest bidder who will be responsible for the future functions such as construction, etc. This can be considered for large infrastructure projects such as power plants, airports and roads. This will not only help to mitigate risk and uncertainty associated with the project but would also help avoid project delays and cost overruns.

In conclusion, the Govt needs to operationalize its objectives into project prioritisation and appraisal criteria, and to ensure that key capacities are in place across the Govt hierarchy for effective decision making and to ensure a pipeline of bankable quality infrastructure projects.

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Competency - Driven Civil Service: A Catalyst for Responsive Governance

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Introduction

In the pursuit of effective governance and improved service delivery, the need for competent civil service has become increasingly evident. Traditional Human Resource Management practices rooted in meritocracy have long been the cornerstone of civil service. However, in the dynamic and complex landscape of the 21st century, there is a growing realization that merit alone may not suffice in ensuring optimal performance and efficient administration. It is imperative to explore innovative approaches that utilize competency-based civil service to meet the emerging demands of governance.

Traditional management practices that evolved in the late 19th century emphasized academic achievements. While this system addressed academic achievements, it falls short in assessing the fit of the candidate for the job and ensuring service orientation. Competency-based management aimed at ensuring better service delivery and fostering good governance practices is a human resource management tool that we cannot afford to ignore.

By prioritizing the identification and selection of candidates based on their demonstrated skills, knowledge and abilities relevant to the respective job cadre, a highly competent and performance-driven civil service could be developed.

This study aims to delve into the need for competency-based management practices in civil service for responsive governance. It explores the limitations of traditional HRM practices, highlights the changing landscape of governance and advocates a paradigm shift toward competency-based approaches. By examining successful international models and drawing upon the evolving global best practices, this study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations. Through this transformative approach in governance, public service delivery could be improved and thereby serve as a role model for citizen-centric governance.

Context

This study addresses the need for implementing competency framework for Human Resource Management to address grievances regarding Public Service Delivery. Despite the introduction of the Right to Service Act, a significant gap exists between citizens' expectations and the actual delivery of services. The expectations from civil society have soared beyond conventional administrative tasks to encompass diverse, challenges and professional roles such as policy formulation, program management and public engagement.

The success of Competency-based management in developed Countries in the West, various European and Scandinavian countries have significantly influenced the public's consciousness as the above. The dynamic and vibrant Indian Diaspora having experienced superior service standards draw comparisons and expect similar service levels in their homeland. Subsequently, there is a demand to enhance government service delivery and efficiency to meet the expectations of the public.

The enduring colonial legacy of the existing administrative apparatus poses a major challenge to the realization of competency-based management. Despite the introduction of e-Governance and other modern practices, the potential of these cannot be leveraged to its fullest potential to satisfy the citizens' expectations. The non-availability of specified duties and responsibilities for job cadres, lack of prescribed competencies, non – availability of service standards and benchmarks limit the ability to provide effective and efficient public service delivery.

Constraints of the Current HRM Practices

Narrow focus towards academic achievements: The current Human Resource Management practice heavily emphasises academic qualifications and examination scores as the criteria for selection. This narrow focus fails to capture the full range of competencies required for effective performance in civil service roles.

Lack of emphasis on practical application: The practical application of knowledge and skills is crucial for civil servants to navigate the complexities of governance and effectively address real-world challenges. The current system does not value candidates who possess practical experience.

Limited diversity and inclusivity: By primarily valuing academic qualifications, it may disadvantage candidates from marginalized communities or those with different educational backgrounds.

Inability to assess soft skills and adaptability: Soft skills, such as communication, leadership, teamwork, adaptability etc. play a crucial role in effective public service. However, the present HRM practices do not adequately assess or prioritize these skills.

Insufficient focus on performance and results: The lack of emphasis on performance and outcomes may undermine the motivation and accountability of civil servants, as their selection is primarily based on past achievements rather than their ability to deliver tangible results.

Significance of the Study

Right Person for the Right Job: The concept of the right person for the right job is significant as it aligns with the core principles of competency-based management. By emphasizing the need to match individual competencies with job requirements, this approach ensures optimal utilization of human resources, leading to improved performance, job satisfaction and organizational success.

Enhanced Service Delivery: Competency-based management ensures that civil servants possess the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to effectively perform their roles and develop a workforce capable of delivering high-quality services to the citizens.

Performance-driven Approach: By focusing on demonstrated abilities and practical skills, competency management promotes a shift away from solely relying on academic qualifications. This approach fosters a culture of accountability, and continuous improvement within the civil service, leading to more efficient and effective governance outcomes.

Adaptability to Changing Demands: The 21st century governance landscape is marked by rapid transformations, emerging challenges and evolving citizen expectations. Competency-based management enables the identification and selection of civil servants who possess the flexibility, problem-solving abilities and adaptability required to navigate these complex dynamics.

Evidence-based Policy Recommendations: Through a comprehensive analysis of the experiences and outcomes of competency-based management in developed European and Scandinavian countries provide evidence-based insights and recommendations.

Diversity and inclusivity: By broadening the assessment criteria beyond academic qualifications, this approach considers a wider range of candidates, including those from diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, leading to a more representative civil service.

Benefits of Competency-based Management

For the Departments: Competency-based management enhances performance by ensuring employees have the necessary skills for their roles, leading to increased productivity. It also allows departments to align their workforce capabilities with organizational goals, enabling a focus on key priorities and driving overall success. Additionally, competency-based management aids in succession planning for critical positions, ensuring a smooth transition and continuity of operations.

For the Government: Competency-based management improves service delivery by ensuring employees have the necessary skills, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. It also promotes accountability by clearly defining expected competencies and measuring performance. It also enables governments to have a flexible and adaptable workforce capable of addressing changing circumstances and driving continuous improvement through problem-solving and innovation.

For the Public: Competency-based management improves service quality by ensuring that employees have the necessary competencies to meet public needs. This leads to tailored and personalized service delivery, addressing the diverse needs of the public and increasing satisfaction and trust in the government.

For Employees: Competency-based management promotes professional growth by providing targeted training and development opportunities for employees. It also ensures a fair and transparent evaluation process. Moreover, it increases job satisfaction and motivation by aligning employee competencies with job requirements, allowing them to work in roles that capitalize on their strengths and skills. This engagement contributes to the achievement of departmental and organizational goals.

Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study was qualitative in nature. The primary reference document for the study was the Competency Framework developed by Institute of

Management in Government for Select Departments of the Government of Kerala – Scheduled Tribes, Local Self Government, Police and the Social Justice Department (bifurcated into Social Justice & Women and Child Development). The study encompassed a comprehensive examination of the department's vision, mission, objectives and functions, along with an in-depth analysis of duties and responsibilities and the enabling competencies required to perform such duties. Additionally, a critical review of the existing administrative machinery and recruitment practices were conducted. The current state of the workforce, competency gaps and the practical applicability of the Competency Framework was explored.

The compilation of data from multiple sources enhanced the reliability and validity of the study's findings, providing with a comprehensive understanding and the need for a competency framework for HRM in civil service.

Competency Framework Development in Selected Departments of the Government of Kerala

The development of a competency framework piloted by the Institute of Management in Government (IMG) for four departments under the Government of Kerala marks a significant milestone in good governance. It stands as the first of its kind initiative aimed at identifying the necessary competencies for personnel at the Cutting-Edge Level within these departments. The framework encompasses six cadres in the Police Department, Eight cadres in the Scheduled Tribes Department, 18 cadres in the Local Self Government Department and 20 cadres in the Social Justice Department. It is to be noted that the Social Justice Department was bifurcated into Social Justice and Women and Child Development Department in the year 2017.

This rigorous process of competency identification sets a strong foundation for competency-based management practices within these departments. By defining the required competencies, the framework established clear expectations for recruitment, development and performance management. It provides a framework for aligning talent with the specific demands of each role, promoting professionalism and enhancing service delivery.

Import of the Study

The import of the study on developing a competency-based framework for selected departments of the Government of Kerala has significant implications for enhancing service

delivery, professionalizing services and improving overall governance practices. These departments, which have extensive public interaction, play a crucial role in delivering essential services to citizens. The significant import was that by adopting competency-based management, these departments can achieve several positive outcomes which foster good governance.

Firstly, the identified competencies address the specific needs and challenges faced by personnel in these departments. The competency-based framework ensures that employees should possess the necessary skills, knowledge and behavioral attributes to effectively interact with the public, understand their needs and deliver high-quality services. This targeted approach aligns personnel capabilities with the requirements of their roles, ultimately enhancing service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Secondly, competency-based management contributes to professionalizing services within these departments. By emphasizing core competencies and professional development, the framework supports a culture of continuous learning and growth. Personnel are encouraged to enhance their skills, stay updated with emerging trends and adhere to ethical conduct. This professionalization raises the standard of services provided, strengthens the department's credibility and instils public trust.

Additionally, competency-based management fosters a results-oriented approach. By assessing personnel based on demonstrated competencies, it ensures that personnel are selected on the basis of their ability to achieve desired outcomes. This approach promotes a focus on performance, accountability and continuous improvement. Employees are empowered to make informed decisions, solve problems and drive innovation, leading to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

Overall, the findings of the study emphasize the transformative potential of competency-based management. Adoption of this approach has the capacity to enhance service delivery, professionalize services, promote a results-oriented culture and foster continuous improvement. By aligning personnel capabilities with the demands of their roles, the competency-based framework ensures that these departments can better meet the needs of the public, contribute to good governance practices and ultimately improve the overall well-being of the citizens.

Recommendations

I. Establishing a Comprehensive Competency Framework for the Civil Service:

- a. Stakeholder Engagement:* Engage key stakeholders including political leadership, bureaucrats, subject matter experts and civil service professionals, in the adoption of the competency-based management.
- b. Job Analysis and Mapping:* Conduct a thorough job analysis to identify the core competencies required for each role. Map these competencies to specific job positions, ensuring relevance and accuracy.
- c. Continuous Review and Iteration:* Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of identified competencies in light of changing demands, technological advancements, and evolving governance priorities.

II. Integrating Competency-Based Practices into Recruitment Processes:

- a. Revamping the existing recruitment system:* By incorporating competency assessments and criteria into the recruitment process, departments can identify and select candidates with the right skills and abilities, ensuring a more effective and responsive workforce.
- b. Job Notifications and Descriptions:* Modify job notifications and descriptions to clearly communicate the required competencies for each position.
- c. Competency-Based Interviews:* Incorporate competency-based interviews as a key component of the selection process. Structured interviews around behavioral-based questions that assess candidates' past experiences and demonstrate their competency in specific areas may be incorporated.

III. Training and Development Programs to Support Competency-Based Approaches

- a. Assessor Training:* Provide comprehensive training on competency-based recruitment methodologies and techniques.
- b. Competency-Based Training and Mentoring:* Provide training and mentoring programs to support employees in developing and enhancing their competencies. This helps bridge such gaps and ensures a continuous focus on competency development throughout employees' careers.
- c. Continuous Learning Opportunities:* Establish a culture of continuous learning by providing access to training programs, workshops and online resources that focus on developing specific competencies identified as critical for the civil service.

Challenges

Resistance to Change: Introducing a competency-based management system may face resistance from various stakeholders, including civil servants, administrators and policymakers. Some individuals may be accustomed to traditional systems and may be hesitant to embrace a new approach.

Revamping Existing Staff Patterns: Implementing competency-based management poses challenges in reworking the existing staff patterns within departments and developing an appropriate bureaucratic architecture to meet the demands of the present era. As part of this transformation, irrelevant posts may need to be eliminated to optimize efficiency and ensure that the civil service remains responsive and agile in the ever-changing landscape.

Developing Competency Frameworks for each Department: Developing comprehensive competency frameworks that align with the unique requirements of civil service roles is essential. This involves identifying the specific competencies necessary for different positions and considering their diverse functions and responsibilities.

Aligning Competencies with Departmental Needs: Conducting a thorough analysis of the duties, responsibilities and strategic objectives of each department can help identify the core competencies required for successful performance. Flexibility should be built into the competency-based system to allow customization based on departmental variations.

Ensuring Fairness and Transparency: Competency-based management must be fair, transparent and free from bias and ensure that all officers have equal opportunities.

Training and Development Programs: Implementing competency-based management requires adequate training and development programs to ensure that assessors and recruiters are well-equipped to evaluate candidates based on competencies. Building capacity within the civil service for effectively assessing competencies, conducting competency-based interviews and interpreting assessment results is essential. This may involve providing training to assessors, creating guidelines and resources and establishing a robust feedback mechanism to continuously improve the assessment process.

Integration with Existing Recruitment Processes: Integrating competency-based management with existing recruitment processes can be a complex task. This includes reviving the present system and process for recruitment to ensure that they align with the competencies identified for each role.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Competency-based management should be subject to regular evaluation and continuous improvement. Monitoring the effectiveness of the system, collecting feedback from stakeholders, and conducting periodic reviews are essential to identify areas for improvement and make necessary improvements. This evaluation process should be supported by data collection and analysis to ensure evidence-based decision-making for further enhancements.

Conclusion

In short, Competency-based framework for HRM supports a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability. This framework acknowledges the importance of staying abreast of evolving technologies, changing societal dynamics and emerging needs. By identifying competencies such as technological proficiency, cultural sensitivity, adaptability, etc. the framework enables personnel to respond proactively to challenges and effectively serve a diverse and dynamic population.

The necessity for a competency framework in HRM was endorsed by the Fourth Administrative Reforms Commission of Kerala. The Commission's findings emphasized the interconnection between performance appraisal and training needs analysis based on the competency framework, leading to their recommendation of establishing competency frameworks for each department in the state. This strategic initiative would provide valuable insights for professional development and succession planning while facilitating the identification of competency gaps.

By adopting competency framework for HRM, civil service can be revitalized and building an accountable workforce that is skilled, adaptable and dedicated to serving the citizens, with integrity and excellence. The potential for unleashing responsible governance starts with competency-based management and this is one innovation that the society can ill afford to miss.

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BRICS Expansion and Implication on Emerging International Relations

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The article primarily talks about BRICS's role in emerging international relations. It explores how the BRICS expansion is taking place. The research article expounds on the impact of the BRICS expansion on global politics. Further, the article explores the BRICS's strength in terms of global trade, economy, and geopolitics due to the inclusion of the various other countries in the BRICS. Finally, the article explains the feasibility of the de-dollarization of the global economy and the BRICS role in this process. However, the article concluded with a note that the de-dollarization is not that easy due to the internal conflicts of the BRICS countries.

Keywords: BRICS, International relations, Expansion and De-dollarization

Introduction

The leaders of the key rising market nations from several continents were linked by the BRIC group, which consists of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. The BRIC group held its first summit in Russia in 2009. Their leaders pledged to create an open and democratic economic system and to aid the work of the International financial institutions to be reformed by the Group of Twenty (G20) to spur growth. In order to further advance intra-group cooperation for emerging markets and emerging nations, initiated as a forum for discussion and policy cooperation, BRICS has developed into a transregional governance framework with South Africa joining in 2010, with political, security, economic, and social goals that are all-encompassing. The BRIC nations—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—are growing quickly, and many analysts predict that these nations will have the world's most powerful economy in the ensuing decades. In 2001, when the term "BRIC" was first used by economist Jim O'Neill, those nations produced 8% of the world's GDP. He anticipated that by 2011, this would rise to 14%. According to Liu and Li (2012), the BRICs made up nearly 20% of global GDP in 2012. The BRICs are considered as being at the vanguard of a significant change in

global power away from North America and western Europe, according to Fareed Zakaria and others. According to logic, academic influence will increase in tandem with political and economic growth. These four nations' higher education systems have experienced tremendous growth and are expected to continue growing and progressing throughout the ensuing decades. However, there is no guarantee that the BRICs will acquire the academic importance that is probably present in the political or economic arenas. Each has substantial obstacles to overcome.

Based on geographic proximity and shared interests or challenges to tackle, several international and regional organizations are developed or launched in various parts of the world in today's global politics. All states—developed, developing, or least developed—have arrived, must comprehend the significance of showcasing their glaring commonalities to form regional partnerships and similar objectives with other countries. When these connections spread from one area to independent nations from various regions joined forces to communicate and collaborate with one another. Inter-regionalism is a novel category of larger association that they jointly established.

Due to globalization or the lack of vocal opposition from some, numerous types of regional organizations emerge. Additionally, coalitions in contemporary international politics are vital for supporting one's overseas interests. Furthermore, in modern international politics, coalitions are essential for bolstering one foreign policy and fighting any governments that go against the interests of other nations. National security was one of every state's most vital national interests during the Cold War.

BRICS has grown into a significant sub-regional international organization, and its member countries are actively seeking to widen their networks of partners and collaboration. BRICS has attracted a tremendous amount of attention as a direct result of the 14th Summit of the BRICS, which China effectively hosted, and the choices made by the member countries to expand BRICS in international politics. The conflict in Ukraine has an impact on world politics and has resulted in both NATO and the European Union having proposed expansions (Katoch 2022). The result is the BRICS' policy of expansion, which might be seen as a response to the western blocs' by increasing the size of their blocs and their efforts to integrate with their European and Asian partners. The BRICS alliance's three most powerful nations, China, India, and Russia, encounter enormous obstacles in both domestic and foreign relations. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, territorial issues in the South China Sea,

the Indo-Pacific region's problems, and China's one-nation policies are among the issues now affecting world politics.

In contrast, India and China have been involved in a protracted dispute over their shared border for a significant amount of time. A fascinating and interesting research topic in international politics is the rivalry between the two countries and the inconsistency of their policies in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Indo-Pacific region. But Russia serves as the link that brings China and India together. Because the operation of the organization depends on the relationships between the three most powerful states, the future of BRICS is unpredictable, and it is interesting to watch how they will expand members and what method.

Several countries from the Middle East, Latin America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia have also indicated an interest in joining BRICS; however, the collaboration of the existing members is crucial for the integration of new members into the organization.

This paper examines the historical background, BRICS expansion policy from Fourteenth Summit and how the outreach and conference fostered the idea and steps of growth in its inception. In addition it examines the theoretical underpinning and its large scale implications on International Relations as the subject of this study.

Background

Many BRICS member states consider the group as a method to increase their influence globally and regard it as a reform to the conventional Western-led existing global order. However, many of the countries disagree on key issues like transparency and a fair strategy, which could impede the group's expansion.

The BRICS convention serves as the yearly gathering of the informal group of countries, when members and heads of state work to advance international economic cooperation. A member country's head of state rotates as the group's chairman once a year. Although the organization has been meeting informally since 2006, its first official gathering took place in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on June 16, 2009. According to BRICS, over 40 countries want to join the organization because of the nations' strong economies and desire to somewhat affect ties with the West. At their summit in 2023, the BRICs made an announcement inviting more nations to join the organization. On January 1, 2024, Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates will all be given full membership.

Some other key developments:

1. Establishing the New Development Bank. The organization was founded in 2015 to provide finance for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in developing and emerging economies.
2. The creation of the BRICS Parliamentary Forum, a forum whose goal is to ‘strengthen and promote contacts at the leadership level of chambers, committees, and groups of parliamentarians.’ This group oversees creating innovative methods for inter-parliamentary collaboration as well as inter-parliamentary dialogues and exchanges.

The founding of BRICS can be attributed to Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs; after naming the first four of these important rising economies BRIC in 2001, their combined growth soared. It also emphasized the development of emerging economic powers like Brazil, Russia, China, and India. The founding of BRICS began in Cancun, Mexico, at the September 2003 saw the Doha Round. The US and the EU had jointly scheduled a meeting two weeks prior to develop a draft proposal for negotiations that they intended to submit to the World Trade Organization. However, the developing economies of the Doha Round, including Brazil, India, and South Africa, rejected this proposal. On the other hand, the BRICS interregional organization's foundation might be traced back to the first summit of the BRIC leaders, which included Brazil, Russia, India, and China. During the G8 Outreach Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, in July 2006, it was able to observe how BRICS simultaneously developed. The first BRIC is back after a lengthy break. September 2006 saw the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New York City, which was conducted in conjunction with the General Discussion of UN Assembly. In addition, several important seminars preceded the first BRIC summit, which took place in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on June 16, 2009, and BRIC became a crucial organization internationally. Since the organization's foundation in 2009, analysts believe that its establishment was influenced by the global financial crisis of 2008 and the shift away from Western dominance in the control of the global monetary system, particularly institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Sarkar 2014). Consequently, South Africa was granted full membership in the organization during the BRIC Foreign Ministers meeting in New York in 2010, leading to a change in the organization's name from BRIC to BRICS.

However, when the global financial crisis struck the US economy in 2008, it created a window of opportunity for reevaluating changes to the framework of international

governance. The impact of the crisis on the unstable political and economic situations around the world, particularly in developing nations, led to the emergence of numerous regional power confederacies. As a result, the BRICS countries have grown in importance within the framework of world governance (Kipgen, K Thangjalén, and Sukalpa Chakrabarti 2022). One of the most important things to keep in mind is that the rise of the BRICS as a group of large and powerful 'new powers' is met with both skepticism and hope. Due to the increasing interdependence of all nations, it represents a danger to US-led Western hegemony in international affairs and a rapid change in the balance of power. Even Hu Jintao, the previous head of the People's Republic of China, has commended the BRICS countries as a force for world peace and as protectors and supporters of developing nations. One of the key goals of the BRICS meetings is to challenge US hegemony.

Furthermore, the BRICS should represent and defend the interests of the developing world. Whether one likes it or not, the BRICS are now a prominent factor in global geopolitics. When the group achieved its goals, it had the potential to have a structural impact on the global system of five members after South Africa's inclusion. The effect on the identity or future of a state configuration influences the structure. It is a member of an interregional organization. Countries from various places where Eurasia, Asia, Latin America, and Africa converge develop their own "region." Additionally, it might be emphasized as a mixed interregional grouping from the Third World. It goes beyond the boundaries of conventional definitions of interregionalism, including bi-interregionalism, mega-interregionalism, and trans-regionalism.

Theoretical Analysis

In this intrinsic phase of international relations, the role of the BRICS group is very crucial as they are the real replacing and contending powers to establish a new international order. Then, the question arises how would these countries cooperate in this complex global affair? Most of the realist theorists say the political and military power strength of the states define the prominent role in deciding global governance or global order. The rising of many powers in world affairs could lead to anarchy, which says the spread of powers to all sides of the globe can cause a lack of order in international relations (Morgenthau 1948). Russia, China, and India have increased their military and defense expenditures in recent years. The functionalist approach to international relations says establishing regions with economic and

cultural intentions then needs to focus on other defining things of the global order. If this is the case, what are these country's areas to cooperate? Liberalists argue that the world order can be brought about with human reason and rationality. If they can bring back the rule of law in the international system, it would lead to subjugating anarchy to bring back order. This is the modern trend of international relations to solve disputes between the states. Economic interdependence and global trade have played a significant role in transforming the world into a global village. Consequently, it becomes crucial to establish common legal norms within global institutions. Finally, it should establish common legal norms in global institutions.

Hence, dialogues play a crucial role in maintaining relations of world affairs (Moravcsik 1993). That is what is happening around the BRICS group countries. BRICS from the beginning have been claiming that they have collaborated to reform the existing global institutional structure. The BRICS believe that the existing global order is not democratic, and they want more voice for the global south countries. The BRICS aimed at reforming the UNSC, UNGA, IMF, WTO, and World Bank to represent the voice of the global south. That is why BRICS is systematically implementing its programme to bring sustainable changes to the global order. Seeing the growth of the BRICS, various like-minded nations are applying for BRICS membership. The recent South African BRICS indicated it.

Therefore, BRICS is not a revisionist, rather it is a democrat as is indicated so far. However, the important question is how the BRICS countries cooperate. The BRICS is comprised of complex nature of foreign policy countries who have contradictory approaches towards the reforming institutional structure of international relations. These are the critical questions to answer for these countries in upcoming international relations.

BRICS expansion

Recently, during the 15th BRICS summit held in Johannesburg, it was announced that the existing five-member BRICS grouping, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, had taken a significant step by inviting six new countries to join. These new invitees are Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from West Asia; Egypt and Ethiopia from Africa; and Argentina from Latin America. BRICS is shaping the future of international relations by advocating for multipolarity, asserting strategic autonomy, and fostering economic cooperation among its diverse members. Amidst criticism from Western

commentators, BRICS is carving out a unique path in global politics, making its recent summit a pivotal moment in modern history.

The authors were aware that the main topic of discussion at this 15th BRICS summit in South Africa would be the growth of the organization. Because they are already members, we had assumed that the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, and Bangladesh would be invited to join; they were already part of the New Development Bank of the BRICS. In the end, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Argentina, and Ethiopia were also invited to join in addition to the UAE and Egypt. Saudi Arabia has shocked everyone the most. Although there had been rumors that Saudi Arabia wished to join the organization, the geopolitical environment, given its hostile relations with the West, cast doubt on whether the kingdom would formally establish political and economic connections with the BRICS.

The inclusion of Saudi Arabia in the BRICS grouping, along with fellow oil and gas exporters Iran and the UAE, will unavoidably focus discussion on the usage of non-dollar currencies in trade. In a side note, Brazil suggested to Argentina at the conference that Brazil would ensure that Argentina would pay for Brazilian goods in renminbi. This may be a reflection of Argentina's capacity to access renminbi swap lines and highlight the dollar's dearth. Additionally, Argentina continues to be in serious financial trouble as it attempts to find hard currency to pay off debt that is primarily denominated in dollars.

Will BRICS expansion accelerate de-Dollarisation?

Based on the current scenario it is observed that many nations would join BRICS and look at all the current evidence of de-dollarization. It is concluded that de-dollarization had been extremely sluggish and that the Chinese RMB had largely taken the market share that the dollar had lost in Asia. News of this rapid increase, particularly among the oil exporters, undoubtedly gives the de-dollarization discussion some additional traction. However, the authors would like to underline that just 15% of global trade is related to the energy sector and that Saudi Arabian oil shipments to China and India at non-dollar prices do not herald the end of the dollar as the preferred global reserve currency.

The liability function of a global currency is fundamental, as we suggested. The transition to a multi-polar world, in which the dollar, the euro, and the renminbi may become the dominant currencies in the Americas, Europe, and Asia respectively, is likely to take a

decade until international issuers and investors are willing to issue and hold international debt in non-dollar currencies.

BRICS expansion in the context of Global Trade

When the proposed BRICS expansion is considered in its larger global perspective, it seems that the additional invitees can have little influence on how trade is structured.

The core BRICS nations currently control about 23% of world exports and 19% of global imports. The new members would increase those percentages by 3.7% and 3.0%, respectively, with Saudi Arabia being the largest new member in terms of exports and the UAE being the largest new importer. The new members would increase the BRICS' overall weight in world trade by almost 16% and 3.7% of world exports come from the new BRICS invitees.

Recent new members have become more and more interested in commerce with BRICS. Their admission appears to represent the expanding trade relations with the founding BRICS countries while considering the additional members' international trade structures. Core BRICS imports from the new invitees surged from 23% to 30% during the past few years, displacing imports from the euro region, the USA, and other developed nations. From 25% to 28%, the core BRICS' share of exports from the additional members increased as well, albeit more subtly. There seems to be some basic premise for political statements being provided by the expanding trade interdependence.

What are the Regional Developments Shaping BRICS Membership Expansion?

1) Independent Foreign Policy:

Since 2020, specifically, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have both been known to pursue autonomous foreign policies. This suggests that instead of being highly influenced by outside powers like the United States, they have chosen to establish their sovereignty and make judgments about their foreign policy that are in line with their national interests.

2) Ending the Qatar Blockade:

Saudi Arabia's decision to lift the embargo on Qatar in January 2021 is regarded as a key step in this direction. The Gulf region underwent a tremendous transition as a result, as it showed a desire to settle local conflicts and enhance ties with the nations around it.

3) *Iran-UAE Relations:*

UAE wants to increase its marine presence in the Gulf, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and Horn of Africa. It has normalized relations with Iran. The entry of Iran into BRICS presents chances for regional economic growth collaboration and the resumption of connection initiatives through India's Chabahar port.

BRICS expansion and implications

The recently concluded summit of the BRICS group consisting of five countries was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, President of China, Xi Jinping, President of Brazil Lula da Silva, and President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa participated in person at the conference. In addition, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov represented Russia and Russian President Vladimir Putin participated in the conference through video conferencing. The special thing about this conference was that now six more countries are in BRICS; it was also decided to include Argentina, UAE, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt.

Although creating coalitions of nations to foster cooperation is a widespread practice worldwide, BRICS is more than just a collection of nations. This is a collection of those nations that have been challenging America and the Western nations' economic clout, which until recently dominated the global system. Whether it be mutual conflict or collaboration between different countries, it is conveyed very diplomatically from a diplomatic standpoint.

It is important to note that the GDPs of the five BRICS nations have been increasing quickly recently. In general, these nations have experienced very rapid growth, while developed nations have seen growth that is essentially at a stop. This is the reason why the five BRICS nations' share in the world economy, which was only 20.51 percent in 2011, will rise to 26.62 percent by 2023. Interestingly, there was scarcely any effective global forum to advance the voice of the developing world before the founding of BRICS. The concerns of poor countries began to be heard after the foundation of BRICS. Perhaps this explains why a growing number of emerging nations are eager to join BRICS. It is important to comprehend the consequences of this conference, where it was resolved to expand BRICS to include six more nations. With the addition of six nations, the enlarged group will account for 46% of the world's population and 29.6% of the world's GDP.

Organizations like BRICS work to defend the interests of developing nations. It is significant because now, developed nations like the USA and Europe attempt to impose their standards on developing nations. However, developing nations are also working to address their problems at the same time. Following the start of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Europe and the United States recently put sanctions on Russia, preventing it from receiving payments from nations with which it has commercial links. They will essentially be shut out of the 'SWIFT' system when it enters Europe's sphere of influence. The release of Russian funds to Russia stored at their central banks and other banks was prohibited at the same time by Europe and the USA. Considering this, the majority of emerging nations are currently wary of the United States and Europe. The developing nations are looking for measures to lessen the influence and hegemony of the wealthy countries as they work tirelessly to end their poverty and progress toward development.

How BRICS and its expanded form will satisfy the needs of the developing world is an intriguing question. Significantly, all other nations—aside from China and Russia—have been experiencing a trade imbalance, which has led to ongoing currency devaluations. Furthermore, these nations have frequently experienced payment issues when dealing with trade and payment imbalances. By settling international trade in local currencies, this balance of payments issue can be partially resolved. With banks from 19 different nations creating Vostro accounts to accept rupee payments, India has made great headway toward the settlement of international trade in rupees. However, when it comes to making foreign payments in local currencies, poor countries have often had little success. In the BRICS, discussions on making international payments in local currencies have been ongoing for a while. Not only that but the BRICS nations are also engaged in efforts to launch a new reserve currency under the BRICS moniker. The benefit of this new BRICS currency is that it will boost trade between BRICS nations while also avoiding the expensive exchange rate of dollars. However, choosing a currency for the BRICS would not be simple. However, the BRICS nations are first demonstrating a strong desire to trade among themselves in their national currencies. There are rumors that the BRICS nations would finally opt to settle international economic transactions in their home currencies at this summit. Particularly Brazil, South Africa, and India have begun to engage in domestic currency trading. Although India has also started making some Rupee-based trade payments to Russia.

The growth of BRICS will encourage the use of domestic currencies for payments in international trade. This will aid in breaking up the dollar's monopoly. Additionally, given many of the BRICS nations are dealing with balance of payments issues, this can greatly assist them in doing away with the need for dollars and their associated issues. Not only this, but an increase in commerce between BRICS nations may also help these nations' economies thrive. It can be very beneficial in fostering closer ties and more collaboration between developing nations.

The globe used to be bipolar at one point. America and the Soviet Union are on opposite sides. There were two such camps in the world: those who supported the US and those who supported the USSR. India was one of many nations that did not adhere to these alliances and was referred to as a non-aligned country. The world became unipolar after the fall of the Soviet Union. However, a multi-polar world is currently evolving because of the USA's declining dominance and India, China, and other developing nations' growing influence. However, some nations can still be seen supporting some powerful nations. Although the BRICS group seems to be growing stronger and free of European and American influence, some of the six BRICS countries were previously under US influence. However, some countries were previously under American influence, but they are no longer under American influence because of these countries' shifting allegiances in the changing times. On the other side, China's power has grown around the world, and certain nations are now clearly coming under its grip. Concerns are also being expressed regarding the BRICS grouping's ability to function cohesively given that the members come from disparate allegiances, with India and China in particular having tense relations.

Conclusion

Every international organization has an objective that it seeks to achieve or pursue, and this objective should be consistent with the national interests of all its members.

Similar to this, BRICS is a grouping of developing nations that are unified in their opposition to the West's hegemonic dominance in international organizations and in their support of reforms that are undertaken on their behalf. The five nation's union reveals its ambition for a more prominent role in world affairs and access to decision-making authority, even though the organization's original goals and focal area are economic cooperation and serving as the voice of the global south countries. The BRICS countries now account for a

larger proportion of the global nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Due to its membership in the two superpowers of the globe as well as the nations with the largest populations, it has also developed into an organization that is impossible to ignore.

The BRICS is a crucial player in global politics because of the members' strategic placement. The nations' contributions to international trade and security are crucial. In addition, the participants decided to increase the BRICS membership at the 14th summit, held in Beijing, China, in 2022. Argentina and Iran have consequently submitted their petitions to join the BRICS. Argentina and Iran are two nations that are poised to rise to prominence economically, possess large reserves of natural gas, and are big players in the world market for food supplies. There is a fair likelihood that some of the emerging economies in Southeast Asia and the Middle East will be intrigued by the BRICS as well. If BRICS can encourage new rising or developing nations to join the group, it will increase its global strength and influence. However, the process and steps have not been made official, and the BRICS organization does not yet have a charter or a suitable legal foundation for the admission of new members. There are doubts among the participants when it comes to promoting or giving full support to any state's application to join the BRICS.

Therefore, a charter must be in place as soon as possible for BRICS to expand, and new growing economic nations must be included to give them a stronger voice in the global organization. Additionally, there are areas of conflict or divergent policies pursued by China and India concerning the issues of the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific, all of which have the potential to obstruct the development of the BRICS. The fact that China and India, the two most powerful participants or members of the BRICS, are at odds with one another can make it difficult to develop and implement any strategy inside the group. To create a BRICS strategy and policy, Beijing and New Delhi must work together and put aside their animosity and mistrust for one another to attain the organization's objectives and growth.

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Emerging Technologies – Leading the way to India @100

‘Reach the Unreached’, ‘Serve the Unserved’, ‘Cover the Uncovered’

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Today, India stands as the embodiment of aspiration, positioned at the cusp of a remarkable 25-year journey that will culminate in the celebration of 100 years of independence – the ‘Amritkaal’. India's journey embraces the growth mindset to evolve into a developed nation, even in the face of the recent global pandemic.

What adds an intriguing dimension to this momentous period is the unprecedented evolution of technology. It is driving a revolution that challenges status-quo, prompting a reset towards novel approaches in serving stakeholders and facilitating comprehensive engagement across all facets, be it policy formulation, program execution, or service delivery. These are not mere changes but rather transformative shifts, altering the landscape in disruptive yet highly impactful ways.

This potent synergy between India's aspirational journey and the technological revolution is becoming the new norm, the mantra that guides our path forward. India is on the path to be among the top 3 economies of the World by 2030 from the current position of top 5 global economies. Emerging Technologies has a key role-play in achieving, sustaining, and further growth through its natural characteristics.

Context Setting

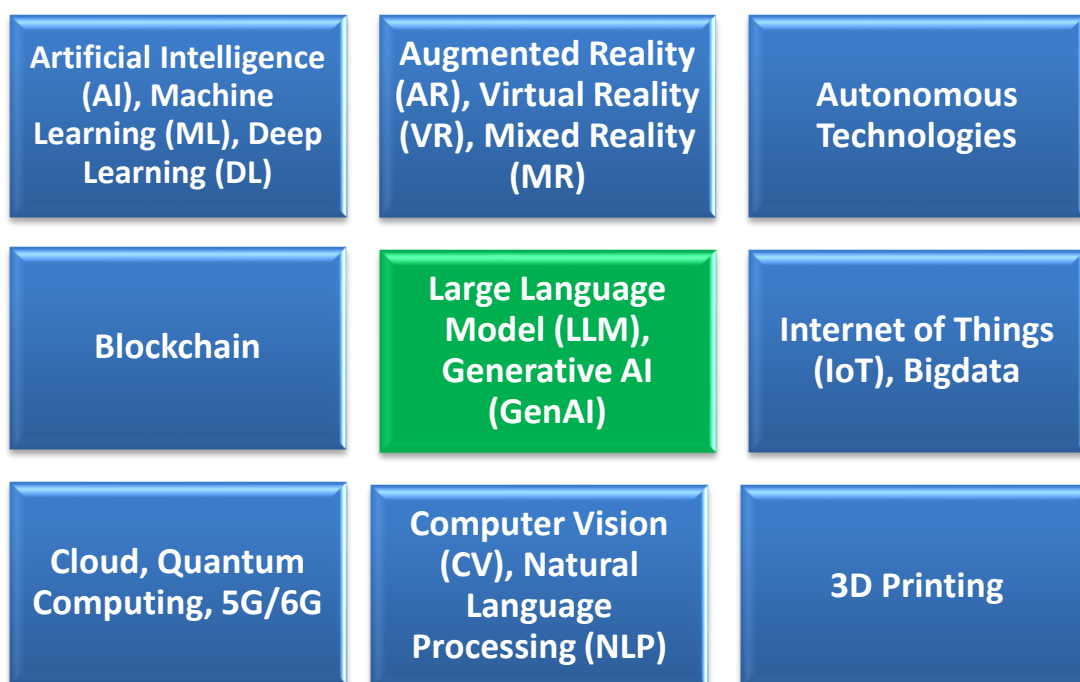
Emerging Technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Autonomous Technologies, Massive Compute-Storage-Communication-Network infrastructure, Low Code – No Code’ and other similar technologies and tools are offering new scale, new thinking-dimensions-perspectives, new ability-capability-capacity at a pace as never before.

With the ever-changing and ever-evolving stakeholder’s requirements-aspirations-perspective and unimaginable power of these emerging technologies, the focus is shifting from “Input & output based to Outcome based”.

It would be fair to say, today’s change in governance is primarily happening beyond what just government wants. It is led by global competitive, inter-State and inter-Agencies competition, stakeholder’s imaginations captured-understood-actioned by political system,

and Nation's mood in overall context. The transformational transformation is inevitable, unstoppable, and there is no way for U-turn.

It is best understood, if any such a conversation is built like storytelling with some of the real-life use cases with impact on the ground and learning. At the same time, it would be equally important to get familiaris with some of the fundamentals of the driving factors like what are these technologies, what sectors does it impact, how the impact is created, who can benefit most, and other similar aspects.



What Does Emerging Technologies mean to Society!

In the context of India, the emerging technologies have very specific relevance and context considering India's socio-economic-geo-political system. India is a vast Country with more than 60% population still living in rural areas with relatively low educational level. The per capita income of people living in urban is more than double the per capita income of people living in rural areas. In summary, the rural-urban gap remains quite high, and it is critical to understand, how and where these emerging technologies can help bridge the gap.

Until recently, emerging technologies were seen as exclusive, available to and used by a select few for very limited purposes. They were accessible only to highly skilled and specialised few, applied in very limited scenarios, and often came with costly proposition.

However, with the advent of newer technologies, the democratisation of these innovative experiments and solutions is witnessed for the greater good of the society with

focus on marginalised and people living at the last mile (bottom of the pyramid). The transformation shift is making these technologies not only affordable but also accessible to a much broader range of people, potentially benefitting everyone, and doing so in record time. Some of the key factors for restricted availability, access, and usage of these emerging technologies till recently can be attributed to limited and expensive compute power, no or low availability of tools, Data availability and quality of Data, and other similar factors.

The modern-day's tools & technologies and availability of affordable infrastructure have ensured the commoditisation of emerging technologies to the lay person and made it available for one and all.



What change is happening!



Application of Emerging Technologies in Government Sectors!

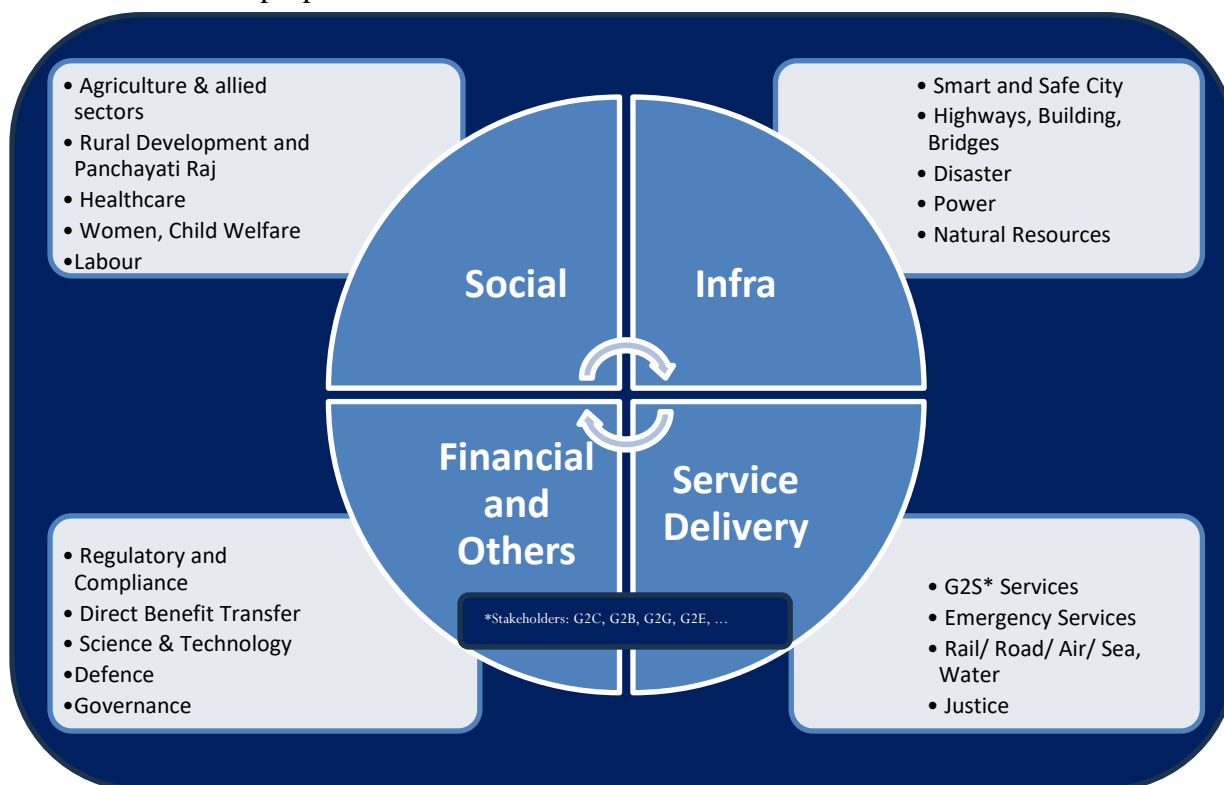
There are three case studies from Indian Startups having deployed their emerging technology-based solutions in India are shared as Annexure 1, 2, and 3.

SN	Annexure	Name of the Case Study
1	1	BharatGPT
2	2	Savemom
3	3	Drones Leading the Next Generation Governance'

Emerging Technologies offers the new world of opportunities. In the government context, name any sector and set of emerging technologies have direct relevance to transform the sector. The relevance and impact could be in terms of:

- transformation in policy regime,
- service delivery,

- create new avenues to relook at the policy-regime and service delivery to its stakeholders,
- inclusivity,
- conceptualisation-building-implementation-monitor-manage various programs and scheme,
- bridge urban-rural gap,
- education and healthcare availability to all – to mention in specific, and
- other similar purposes.



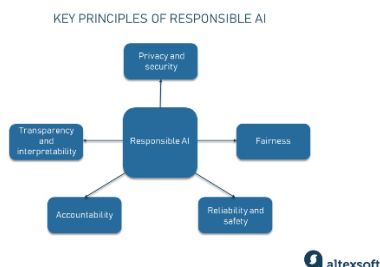
This is a broad depiction of various sectors in government, pretty much every activity in the government would fall under above-mentioned.

It is understood, different ministries and departments would have different programs and schemes at different level of implementation and maturity, each of them would have their unique characteristics and challenges, hence the adoption of emerging technologies shall be undertaken appropriately with care. Change Management and Capacity Building across people-process-technology are among the critical success factors in such initiatives.

Some of the concerns and areas of attention

Artificial intelligence (AI) family of technologies are all about algorithms built with data. Beyond typical challenges of data, the variety and volume of data plays an important role in building the AI-based algorithms. The data can lead the bias. In one of the cases in India, AI-

based loan processing engine rejected most of the women's loan application, as traditionally the loans were applied and processed for men.



Responsible AI describes the design and deployment of AI systems that adhere to ethical and social standards. Responsible AI systems are

One of the key challenges of AI/ ML/ DL is effective social management, encompassing ethical, legal, and societal aspects. This involves addressing concerns related to privacy, bias, transparency, and accountability in AI systems, while fostering responsible AI development and usage to ensure these technologies benefit society while minimising potential harms.



Privacy and ethical challenges in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL) arise from collection and analysis of vast amounts of personal data, often without individual's informed consent. The technologies can lead to issues such as data breaches, algorithm bias, and the potential for decisions with significant societal impact to be made without transparency or accountability. Striking a balance between harnessing the power of AI/ ML/ DL for innovation while safeguarding privacy and ensuring fairness remains a critical challenge in today's digital age.

In summary, while it is not definitive conclusion, it's clear that the Data Economy combined with Emerging Technologies will be the driving force behind a significant disruptive and transformational transformation. The transformation is both inevitable and cannot be negotiated. However, the democratic values and moderate approach, led by responsible

governance, will play a crucial role in ensuring there are checks and balances during this change-journey. Addressing the challenges and concerns that arise will involve the continuous evolution of regulatory frameworks, responsible adoption of these technologies, self-compliance by industry players and ecosystem, policy interventions, feedback from stakeholders, and other similar factors. Start-ups will play a key role in the evolution process. Certainly, all this cannot be imagined even theoretically without leveraging the data through emerging technologies interventions. Capacity building and change management will be among the critical success factors. There will be enhanced focus on learn-unlearn-relearn than ever for one and all.



Annexure 1: Case Study – 1 BharatGPT

Title: BharatGPT, a revolutionary innovation by CoRover.ai, the Conversational AI Platform, is India's answer to existing Generative AI/ Large Language

"Transforming Virtual Assistant Creation: From Days to just few Minutes with BharatGPT": CoRover.ai is Elevating Enterprises with Generative AI-Powered Human-Centric Conversational AI Platform, Impacting one Billion+ Lives

CoRover.ai, the world's first human-centric conversational AI platform being used by 130 crore users, is now launching BharatGPT which is the only Indian Indigenous Generative AI platform available across channels in 12+ Indian languages, in Video, Voice & Text.

Highlights:

India is launching its own Generative AI (Large Language Model) platform in 12+ Indian languages, with generative text, voice and video:

1. Data remains in India.

2. Fine-tuned as per Indian users.
3. In-line with current government vision of “Make AI in India, Make AI work for India”.
4. Option to add custom knowledge base.
5. Option to integrate with any ERP/CRM system and APIs.
6. Inbuilt payment gateway for real-time transactions.
7. Dialogue/conversational management.
8. Omni-channel, multi-lingual (120+ languages), multi-format (text, voice, video).
9. Generative AI Video, interactive digital twin.
10. Currently available for organizations.

CoRover has launched its own Indigenous Large Language Model (LLM), BharatGPT. BharatGPT is available in more than 12 Indian languages, in partnership with BHASHINI, a National Language Translation Mission (NLTM) under The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). CoRover, the world’s first and the highest ROI-delivering human-centric conversational AI platform, also has Generative AI capabilities. It provides all the required features needed to build and manage Chabot’s across communication channels like dialogue/conversation management tool.

CoRover is presently offering AI Virtual Assistants (ChatBots, VoiceBots, VideoBots) to hundreds of organizations, that includes IRCTC, LIC, IGL, KSRTC, Indian Navy (GRSE), Max Life Insurance, NPCI, BHIM-UPI, Mahindra, Government of India, and many more. Most of these existing Virtual Assistants by CoRover.ai, having a user base of 1 Billion+, would be using BharatGPT.

CoRover has partnered with Google to scale BharatGPT, BharatGPT is hosted in Google CloudPlatform (GCP) to ensure data sovereignty, privacy, and security. Additionally, Vertex AI is integrated with CoRover's Conversational AI platform, allowing organizations to utilize Google's AI services.

Using CoRover’s BharatGPT developers and business users can create text and voice enabled multi-lingual Virtual Assistant in a few seconds by just adding the content/documents specific to their business and/or use case(s). Additional Benefits of CoRover Conversational AI platform is the data remains in India. It also has an option to add custom knowledge base and can be integrated with any Enterprise Resource Planning

(ERP)/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for real-time transactions.

CoRover also has the capability of integrating payment gateway and Aadhar-based authentication for KYC. Furthermore, CoRover has many components, viz., Dialogue/Conversational Management, Real Time Analytics, Speech to Text (STT)/Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), Text to Speech (TTS), Speech to Speech (STS), Video to Text, Documents-to-Text (fine-tuned AI-based OCR, hand-written documents are also supported),Text-to-Q&A (Q&A Generator), Text-to-Voice (voice cloning), Text-to-Video (Video Cloning),Sentiment Analysis and many more.

On the other hand, the existing platforms having LLM(s) are not capable enough, to create Enterprise Virtual Assistants (ChatBots, VoiceBots, VideoBots). A Conversational AI platform also requires other components, such as user interface; a dialogue management system; integration with other systems and data sources; voice and video capabilities, to create Virtual Assistants. Bharat GPT has many additional features and should be considered as EnterpriseGPT. Idea is to implement a responsible AI with generative capabilities, with better Governance and Safety Net, along with informational and end-to-end transactional capabilities, for various organizations.

Some of the examples of BharatGPT implementations are: IncomeTaxGPT, GSTGPT, HealthGPT, MediaGPT, TourismGPT, RailGPT, AirGPT, BusGPT, ShipGPT, TelecomGPT, ExternalAffairsGPT, EducationGPT, SkillGPT, KarmaYogiGPT, ECIGPT, LegalGPT, JusticeGPT, DARPGPT, GeMGPT, SpaceGPT, EnergyGPT, ComsumerGPT, BFSIGPT, and more. Even for each state, like: KarnatakaGPT, GujaratGPT, J&KGPT, and more.

Eventually, there will be consumer (B2C) ChatBots powered by BharatGPT like: BankGPT, InsureGPT, InvestGPT, PayGPT, EatGPT, LearnGPT, TravelGPT, EntertainGPT, PlayGPT, RetailGPT, AstroGPT, GovGPT, NatureGPT, KisanGPT, and more. Eventually, SovereignGPT for other countries as well, like NipponGPT, BritGPT, AfricaGPT, and more.

Moreover, BharatGPT, integrated with CoRover's Conversational AI platform, needs relatively lesser compute and memory as we adopt a multi-layered approach of NLP (NLU & NLG) addressing user queries, with separate layers responsible for different tasks such as Deep Learning with Generative AI (unsupervised); supervised learning; AIML (Artificial Intelligence Markup Language); and the context based auto-suggestion (in the reverse order).

This implies that the burden on the GPUs can be reduced and the whole system can be more resource efficient, as we don't always generate answers with Gen AI for the frequent intents, as they may be answered from other layers.

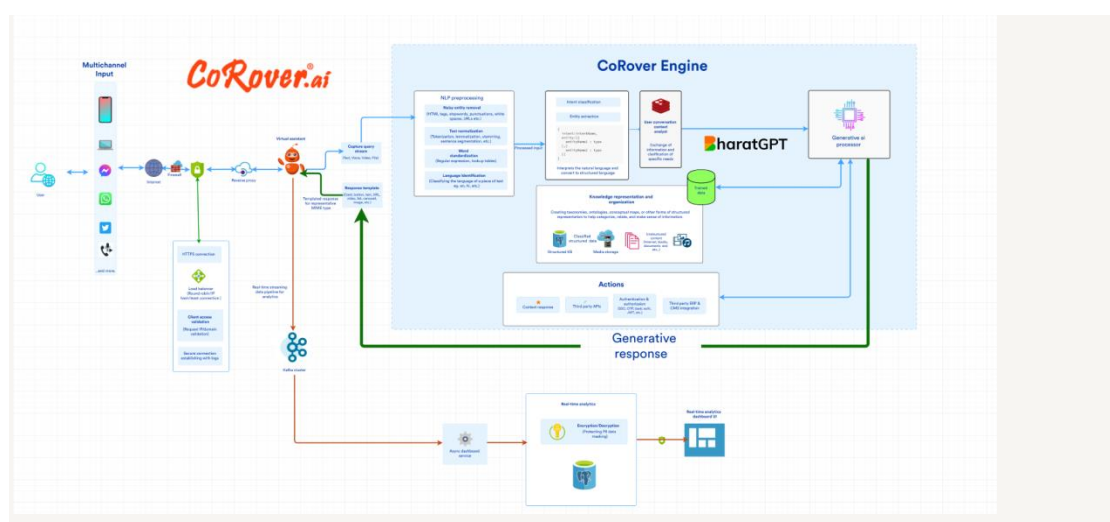
And, in BharatGPT we do efficient word embeddings i.e., mapping of a discrete — categorical — variable to a vector of continuous numbers. In the context of neural networks, embeddings are low-dimensional, learned continuous vector representations of discrete variables. This makes machine learning faster in the case of generative AI and much lesser memory and compute intensive.

Now CoRover.ai with BharatGPT becomes a human-centric conversational AI platform with contextual Generative AI (LLM) and faster Machine Learning, which takes substantially less compute and memory.

It is aimed to build BharatGPT as a Sovereign Gen AI platform, that is accurate, grounded, and reliable with a better Governance and Safety Net.

Explainer Video:	
English	https://youtu.be/1UgDMJdzoYo
Hindi	https://youtu.be/G_ISuOkAIO4

Architecture:




CoRover's value proposition:

- Human-Centric Conversational AI Platform: 10X Faster Implementation with Responsible, Grounded and Accurate Generative AI.

- Enterprise-Grade Virtual Assistants: Trusted by 1 Billion+ Users Across 100+ Languages and 20+ Channels - Including ChatBot, VoiceBot, VideoBot, IVR Bot and WhatsApp Bot.
- Conversational (Video - Voice) Commerce: Enhancing Customer Experience, Operational Efficiency, and Revenue Growth by 10X.

CoRover Deck: https://CoRover.ai/deck	Demo Videos: https://CoRover.ai/videos	Brochure: https://CoRover.ai/brochure
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Annexure 2: Case Study - 2 SaveMom – Revolutionizing Maternal Healthcare



The Problem Statement

- According to the National Health Mission, out of 25 million babies, approximately 30% of pregnancies belong to the high-risk category. The rate of premature baby born in Urban India increased to 28.3%.
- Conventional maternal care methods rely on identifying high-risk pregnancies during the 3rd trimester, typically ~8 months of gestation.
- Many expectant mothers enter the labour ward classified as 'high-risk' – resulting in potentially severe pregnancy outcomes, affecting maternal or infant mortality.

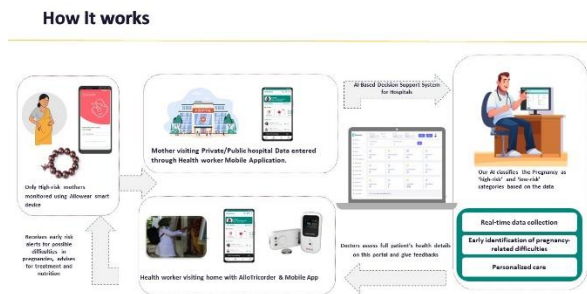
In response to the global goal of reducing maternal mortality, SaveMom emerged as a groundbreaking solution. Maternal mortality was a pressing issue, particularly in low and lower-middle-income countries like India, where over 90% of maternal deaths occurred. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed same time to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio (MMR), and India had made progress, but regional disparities persisted.

SaveMom's inception stemmed from a personal story in 2015 when Senthil discovered his sister, Manimala, was missing her antenatal checkups due to the inconvenience of traveling to a health center. Recognizing the importance of these checkups, he embarked on a mission to improve maternal healthcare. He devised a smartwatch prototype that monitored vital signs and connected to doctors, revolutionizing antenatal care.

SaveMom was born when Senthil expanded his vision to rural India, where access to healthcare was limited, awareness was low, and maternal mortality was high. His team immersed themselves in these communities, earning their trust through education and community engagement.

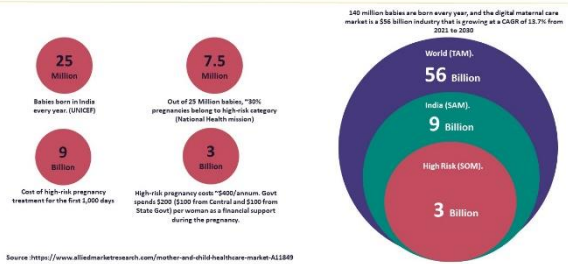
To tackle data inaccuracies caused by dishonest healthcare workers, the team introduced Allowear, a smart wearable device. It ensured the right patient data was captured

and transmitted accurately to doctors. However, there were challenges, such as husbands wearing the device, which led to further innovation, resulting in a necklace-like design that women preferred.



Despite initial success, doctors faced an overwhelming influx of data, hindering their ability to provide timely care. This bottleneck called for a solution to streamline data management for healthcare providers.

The Challenge and Opportunity



Our Traction



SaveMom's journey exemplified the significance of merging technology with cultural understanding and community involvement. By addressing the complexities of rural healthcare, it aimed to fulfill the SDGs' mission of reducing maternal mortality.

SAVEMOM is an AI and IoT-based virtual maternal care platform that provides pregnant women and children access to continuous monitoring and personalized care for the first 1000 days. The platform uses wearable devices and AI software to collect data on the woman's symptoms, vital signs, activity levels, blood, urine, and ultrasound reports. AI algorithms then analyze this data to identify potential high-risk mothers in the early stages of pregnancy – as early as the 2nd trimester. If a problem is identified, the platform will alert the woman's healthcare provider so that they can intervene promptly. The platform also provides the woman with personalized nutrition information and resources on pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting. After monitoring the mother's vitals for the first year, the platform continues to monitor the baby's health for the first 2 years of life, offering comprehensive care for both mother and child during the critical first 1,000 days.

Annexure 3: Case Study – 3 'Drones Leading the Next Generation Governance'

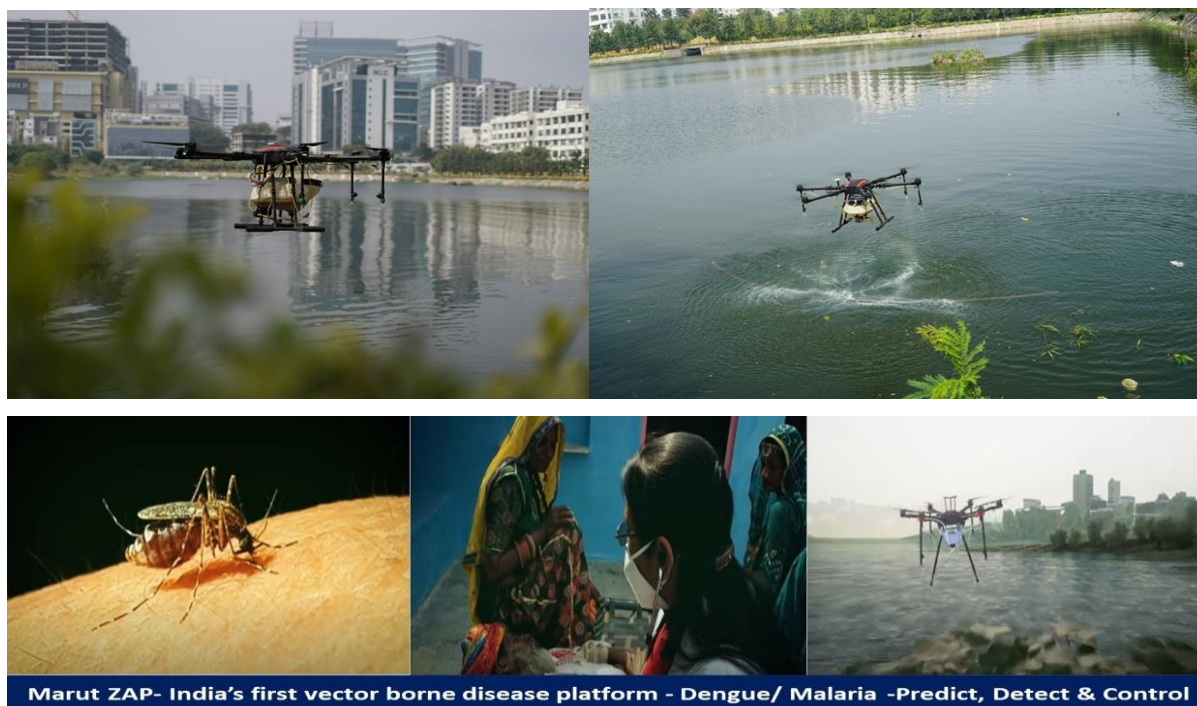
by Marut Drones



Mosquito eradication and scientific disease prediction of Malaria & Dengue

Started with brand name as ZAP with focus on mosquito eradication and scientific disease prediction of Malaria & Dengue, Marut has solved the ever-deepening problem of mosquito menace using drones by spraying larvicide on lakes and eradicating mosquitoes at early stage only. In last 3 years, Marut have extensively operated on more than 1,10,000 acres and impacted the lives of millions of people for a healthy living.

Please watch <https://youtu.be/E7GmHtQMutc>



Agriculture Intelligence and Automation

In agriculture, Marut has evolved the nascent drone technology to create drone based agri-intelligence and agri-automation solutions for early detection of crop disease and precision agriculture to ensure increased farm productivity, sustainable environment and raise in farmer income. Further, it has developed the agriculture-specific multiutility drone which can perform multiple activities in agriculture - Direct Seeding, Spraying, Pollination, Input fertilizers, Thermal fogging, crop monitoring and inputs delivery etc to solve the problem of labor shortages, minimize crop losses and ensure productivity.

Please watch product video https://youtu.be/sPD7RtWJIo8?si=ny1IHZ10TYfsK7_g

HARA BAHARA, Forest - planting 1 Billion seedballs by 2030

Coming to afforestation, Marut has developed Seedcopter to identify thinly forested region and plant seedballs using drones at massive scale. It has also initiated India's first rapid afforestation campaign "HARA BAHARA" driven by drones, data and technology to transform the Indian ecosystem by massively planting 1 Billion seedballs by 2030.



Using the same technology. It has also planted 1 Crore trees in 7 States Impacting 250 forests, empowering 15,000 women from 200 communities in 2022 with Rana Daggubati, Jadev Payeng, known as the Forest Man of India, and environmentalist Daripalli Ramaiah as brand ambassadors.

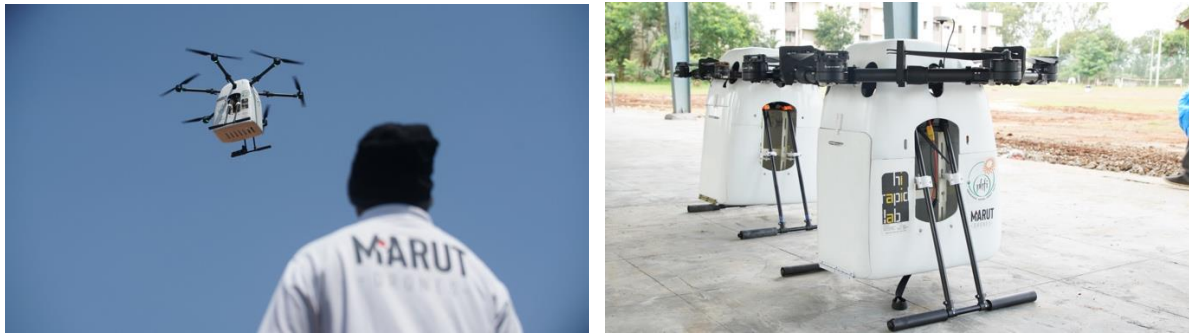
Please watch https://youtu.be/y9wx9PHT2_Q



Vaccine Deliveries through Medical Delivery Drones

Marut worked on covid vaccine deliveries in unreachable terrains using its medical delivery drone solution Hecicopter. India's first ever BVLOS(Beyond Visual Line of Sight) Vaccine Delivery - Heavy Payload & Recorded longest delivery in India of 42Kms on Sept 2021 in India launched in Vikarabad, Telangana by Honourable Civil Aviation Minister - Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia in Sept 2021 with Heavy Payload (carried 20Kgs) Medical Delivery with multiple temperature control boxes with Blood, Vaccines, Diagnostic medical samples and Long tail medicine in High Altitude Operations and Long Range (45Kms) exclusively for autonomous BVLOS operations in India. On a single flight, this drone delivered 3,000 doses of vaccines. Till now 1000+ flights across 4 states. This is just the beginning of the future of medical logistics and vision is to ensure healthcare equity for rural areas.

Please watch the trails video <https://youtu.be/jnmgV-G DO4>



Hepicopter | India's first BVLOS Vaccine Drone Delivery | Heavy Payload & Long Range in India

Marut Drones has been a pioneer in providing drone and emerging technology-based solutions to the most challenging social problems in India. The startup runs on the conviction of making the world a better place by providing comprehensive solutions such as scalable reforestation, last mile medical deliveries, sustainable agriculture and eradication of vector-borne diseases with the help of Marut's ZAP, Seedcopter, Agricopter & Hepicopter, Surveillance Drones, RPTOs respectively- their proud ventures.

Women-led Development Succeeds Alleviation of Time Poverty

Srinivas Madhav

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(Opinions are personal)

G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, a great diplomatic achievement by India as G20 President,¹ recognises women-led development as crucial for gender equality and global GDP growth. The *Declaration* commits to achieving the Brisbane Goal to reduce the gap in labour force participation and implementing the G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Goal '25 by 25'. The *Declaration* agrees to create a new Working Group on Empowerment of Women to support the G20 Women's Ministerial.²

"Creation of a base of two crore *lakhpati didis* (millionaire sisters) in the villages is my dream", announced the Prime Minister from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 77th Independence Day.³ Economists agree that India can become a high-income country by 2047 and one key factor is increase in female labour force participation.⁴

However, India is ranked 127 out of 146 countries in the *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*.⁵ In the category for economic participation and opportunity category for women,

¹ UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has praised India's Presidency of the G20 Summit and underlined that New Delhi did its best to have the voice of the Global South represented in the Summit.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/un-chief-antonio-guterres-praises-indias-presidency-of-g20-summit-narendra-modi-leadership-2435375-2023-09-13> Accessed on 09.09.2023.

² https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf Accessed on 10.09.2023

³ Shri Narendra Modi's address from the ramparts of Red Fort on the occasion of 77th Independence Day, 15 August 2023 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1948808> Accessed on 09.09.2023

⁴ Martin Raiser, World Bank's VP for South Asia, shared four key factors for India to become a high-income country by 2047:

- Continue investment in Human Capital
- Increase Female Labour Force participation
- Improve business climate to attract more private investment, including FDI
- Accelerate climate action initiatives to build resilience & advance India's economic growth & development

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2023/05/11/talk-by-martin-raiser-on-india-s-position-in-a-changing-global-economy-at-srcc> Accessed on 09.09.2023.

⁵ The Global Gender Gap Index annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment). It is the longest-standing index tracking the progress of numerous countries' efforts towards closing these gaps over time since its inception in 2006.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2023. World Economic Forum 2023. <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023> Accessed on 09.09.2023.

Indian women's Labour-force participation rate (labour force as a percentage of the working-age population) is just 28.26%.¹

Time poverty

Time poverty is one key concern that pulls back women from pursuing active careers. Indian women have to spend 13.2 hours a week on cooking, whereas South Korean women spend just 3.7 hours per week.²

India's first *Time Use Survey* reveals more distressing statistics: 81% of women devote 5 hours per day in unpaid domestic services for household members. To be precise, 75% of women (of the age 6 years above) devote 204 minutes per day for food and meals management and preparation.³

ILO estimates that if unpaid care work were to be valued on the basis of minimum wage, they would amount to 9% of global GDP (or US\$11 trillion (PPP 2011)).⁴

As per UN Women's *Gender Snapshot 2022* report, women's exclusion from the digital world alone has shaved \$1 trillion from the GDP of low- and middle-income countries in the last decade.

This burden of unpaid work creates "time poverty", which inhibits women's ability to dedicate time to paid work and acquire the skills necessary to seek better job opportunities. Community Kitchens can address the challenge of time poverty.

Unclean fuels

49% rural families are not able to access clean source of energy for cooking food.⁵ Per capita consumption of successful Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana beneficiaries (9.58 crore households) was 3.68 refills per year in 2021-22.

Unclean fuels for household cooking, primary sources of emissions of Particulate Matters (PM) 2.5, contribute nearly 19% of the total emissions in some states; disease burden of this pollution on women and children is a cause of concern.

¹ Women's Labour-force participation rate for the top four economies: US-56%, China- 63%, Japan-54%, Germany-55%.

² GfK survey among 27,000+ consumers (ages 15+) in 22 countries, 2015

³ *Time Use Survey*, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2019

⁴ *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work* / International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2018.

⁵ *National Sample Survey Office, Multiple Indicator Survey, 78th round, 2023*, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)

Community Kitchens

A Community Kitchen can be a group of people who meet on a regular basis to plan, cook and share healthy, affordable meals.

Community Kitchens adapt an empowerment and capacity building model, rather than a welfare model. Financial contribution is shared by all group members; Food prepared is for consumption by participants and their family members only. It is participant driven, and all participants are actively involved in the planning, preparation, cooking of food and cleaning processes. Australia tried this self-sustainable model in a small way.

Community Kitchens are initiated by community facilitators and are planned to be self-sustaining after an initial period of support. Economy of scale associated with bulk food purchasing and preparation is an added advantage in savings.

Training is to be provided to groups on food safety, kitchen safety and budgeting principles. A few group leaders can be formed into a cooperative society which can access finance from banks, if required.

Community Kitchen is an effective strategy to improve nutritional intake and promote social inclusion and community strength. Studies reported improvements in social interactions, cooking skills, food budgeting skills, shopping skills, confidence and enjoyment in cooking; By sharing expenses, Community Kitchens have shown to improve participants' dignity and enable women to devote their time for further studies and employment.

Community Kitchens may also employ a few local men and women; capacity building of Community Kitchens can be done with focus on themes like promotion of millets in a big way and combating malnutrition effectively.

India, aiming to achieve economic growth cannot afford women staying out of the workforce. So far 9 Crore women from Rural Households have been mobilized into 82.61 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM). “*Sangathan Se Samridhhi*– Leaving no Rural Woman Behind”, a national campaign is aimed at mobilizing one crore women from eligible rural households.¹ Community Kitchens can facilitate such mobilisation quickly in a massive scale.

¹ “Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission launches National Campaign “Sangathan se Samridhhi” to mobilize 10 Crore Rural Women into Self Help Groups”, Ministry of Rural Development, 18 APR 2023. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1917633> Accessed on 09.09.2023

Further, *Palna* scheme (National Creche Scheme) for providing day-care facilities for children (6 months to 6 years) of working mothers at existing Aanganwadi Centers, needs to be implemented with adequate budget allocations and infrastructure development.¹

Gram Sabhas for Women led development

Women empowerment is a corollary of women's active participation in Gram Sabhas.

Gram Sabhas, more specifically Mahila Gram Sabhas (where majority of the members present are women), need to be strengthened to function effectively, as the basic forum of people's participation, transparency and accountability for promoting a culture of participatory governance, openness and trust.

Gram Sabha, village-level assembly of the registered voters, identifies gaps in service delivery and creates pressure on public authorities for compliance. Though State Panchayati Raj Acts mandate conduction of Gram Sabhas, participation in such Gram Sabhas is not satisfactory. Non-participation of women is a more serious cause of concern. There is a need to build the capacity of officials as well as civil society to strengthen functioning of Gram Sabhas in India.

Interestingly, Telangana Panchayat Raj Act, 2018, Section 6 (6) provides that at least two (out of six) Gram Sabhas, each year, shall be conducted with a focus on women. Section 33 provides that Sarpanch shall be deemed to have been removed from the office as such if they fail to convene the meetings of the Gram Sabha.²

When Gram Sabha is strengthened, members collectively demand information during the meetings, if not individually. For example, Gram Sabha shall have the right to know about the budgetary provisions, the details of plan outlay, item wise allocation of funds and details of the estimates and cost of materials of works within the Gram Panchayat. This facilitates social audit of all the welfare schemes.

Constitution of India, Clause (3) of Article 243D ensures participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions by mandating not less than one- third reservation for women out of total number of seats to be filled by direct election and number of offices of chairpersons

¹ Under Mission Shakti, the National Creche Scheme has been revised and subsumed as Palna scheme.

² The Telangana Panchayat Raj Act, 2018

<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/8492/1/Act%20of%202018.pdf> Accessed on 09.09.2023

of Panchayats. Over 20 States have made provisions of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts.¹

It is often alleged that male relatives of these women representatives actually take key decisions on behalf of women. However, in practice, women representatives are found to be taking active role in Panchayat administration, motivated by presence of women in successful Mahila Gram Sabhas.

Community Kitchens as self-sustainable initiative can be a revolutionary concept that can bring positive change in the lives of women in India. On the other hand, effective Mahila Gram Sabha has the potential to promote Gender equality and contain crimes against women and children that leads to overall development and empowerment of villages.

India needs to take strong initiatives to facilitate women to contribute to the Nation's development. As the Prime Minister remarked at the G20 Summit Session 2: Women-led development will be a significant driver of change in the 21st century.²

¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1658145> Accessed on 09.09.2023

² Prime Minister's remarks at the G20 Summit Session on 10.09.2023
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1956012> Accessed on 10.09.2023

Redefining Governance in the Digital Age: Harnessing Emerging Technologies for Public Policy, Public Administration, and Good Governance

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Emerging technologies are rapidly transforming the way we live, work, and interact with the world around us. These technologies are also having a significant impact on governance, public policy, public administration, good governance, and e-governance. The use of emerging technologies in governance offers many potential benefits, but it is important to be aware of the challenges as well. Governments that are able to effectively manage these challenges will be well-positioned to reap the benefits of these technologies. In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, emerging technologies are shaping the landscape of governance, public policy, public administration, good governance, and eGovernance. This provides an overview of key emerging technologies that hold significant promise for the next generation of governance practices. The integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics, and machine learning has the potential to revolutionize decision-making processes, enhance public service delivery, and foster transparency and efficiency in governance. Leveraging these technologies can lead to smarter policy formulation, citizen-centric governance, improved public service accessibility, and streamlined administrative operations. However, challenges such as data privacy, security, equitable access, and digital literacy need to be addressed for successful integration and realization of the transformative potential of these technologies in the governance domain. The importance of embracing and strategically deploying emerging technologies to build a more inclusive, efficient, and responsive governance framework for the benefit of society at large.

Keywords: Emerging Technologies, eGovernance, PFMS

Introduction:

The landscape of governance, public policy, public administration, good governance, and eGovernance is undergoing a profound transformation, primarily propelled by rapid advancements in technology. The advent of emerging technologies is reshaping traditional governance paradigms and offering unprecedented opportunities to enhance the effectiveness, inclusivity, and efficiency of public service delivery. This introduction provides an overview of the pivotal role that emerging technologies play in shaping the next generation of governance practices and its impact on public policy, administration, good governance, and eGovernance.

Governments and public institutions are recognizing the transformative potential of technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics, machine learning, and automation. These technologies have the ability to redefine decision-making processes, optimize resource allocation, streamline bureaucratic operations, and foster citizen engagement. Moreover, they facilitate the development of data-driven policies, enable evidence-based decision-making, and enhance the overall responsiveness and transparency of government operations.

Incorporating emerging technologies in governance allows for a more citizen-centric approach, ensuring that policies and services are tailored to the needs and expectations of the population. Furthermore, eGovernance initiatives, driven by these technologies, facilitate seamless digital interactions between citizens and government entities, empowering individuals with greater access to information and services.

However, this integration of technology into governance is not without its challenges. Concerns related to data privacy, cybersecurity, ethical use of technologies, equitable access, and the digital divide need to be addressed to ensure that the benefits of these advancements are widespread and inclusive. Striking the right balance between leveraging technological innovation and safeguarding public interests is a critical endeavor for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders involved in shaping the future of governance.

This paper explores the multifaceted implications of integrating emerging technologies into governance, providing insights into the potential benefits, challenges, and considerations in leveraging these technologies for the betterment of society. By delving into the dynamics of technology-enabled governance, this study aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape and the opportunities it presents for

the next generation of governance, public policy, public administration, good governance, and e-Governance.

Centre of Excellence in e-Governance:

Building a Center of Excellence (CoE) in e-Governance involves establishing a dedicated unit or team within an organization, typically a government agency, to promote best practices, innovation, and expertise in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for improving public services and governance. Building a Center of Excellence in e-Governance is an on-going process that requires dedication, flexibility, and a commitment to improving public services through technology. It should be aligned with the broader goals of good governance and public administration.

PFMS, which stands for Public Financial Management System, is an initiative by the Government of India to track and manage financial flows across various schemes and programs of the government. Research papers related to PFMS and its integration with emerging technologies can provide valuable insights into how technology is being leveraged to enhance public financial management.

Governance:

Governance refers to the process and system by which organizations, institutions, or governments make and implement decisions to manage resources and achieve their goals. It encompasses the structures, processes, and mechanisms through which authority and power are exercised and decisions are made. Key components of governance include transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law.

Public Policy:

Public policy involves the government's actions and decisions to address societal issues and achieve specific goals. Research articles in this area often analyze the development, implementation, and impact of public policies on various sectors such as healthcare, education, environment, and more. Public policy research often involves evaluating the effectiveness of policies and making recommendations for improvement.

Public Administration:

Public administration focuses on the management and operation of public organizations and government agencies. This paper on public administration may explore topics like organizational behavior, public personnel management, budgeting, and administrative decision-making. This field also examines how public administrators can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

Good Governance:

Good governance is a concept that emphasizes the qualities and principles necessary for effective and responsible governance. It includes factors like transparency, accountability, participation, fairness, and the rule of law. Research articles on good governance often assess the performance of governments and organizations in adhering to these principles.

e-Governance:

e-Governance, or electronic governance, refers to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the delivery of government services and the management of government processes. Research articles in this area examine the adoption and impact of eGovernance initiatives, including e-government services, digital transformation, and cybersecurity in the public sector.

Literature Review:

"The Role of Digital Technologies in Promoting Good Governance" by Anupama Roy (2023) discusses the potential of digital technologies to promote good governance. The article argues that digital technologies can help to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in government. "Good Governance and the COVID-19 Pandemic" by Arunabha Ghosh (2022) examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on good governance. The article argues that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of good governance in responding to crises.

"The Future of Public Administration in the Digital Age" by Mark Turner (2021) explores the challenges and opportunities of the digital age for public administration. The article argues that public administration needs to embrace digital technologies in order to be effective. "e-Governance and the Sustainable Development Goals" by Sheila C. Smith (2020) discusses the potential of e-governance to contribute to the achievement of the

Sustainable Development Goals. The article argues that e-governance can help to improve the lives of people around the world.

"Governance and Public Policy in the Age of Inequality" by David Hulme (2019) examines the challenges of governing in an unequal world. The article argues that good governance is essential for addressing inequality. "The Impact of Good Governance on Economic Growth" by Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi (2009) examines the impact of good governance on economic growth. The article finds that good governance is associated with higher economic growth.

"The Political Economy of Good Governance" by Guillermo O'Donnell (1993) discusses the political economy of good governance. The article argues that good governance is the product of political competition and cooperation. "The Role of the Media in Promoting Good Governance" by Marina Ottaway (2003) explores the role of the media in promoting good governance. The article argues that the media can help to hold governments accountable and to promote transparency.

"The Challenges of Measuring Good Governance" by Michael Johnston (2005) discusses the challenges of measuring good governance. The article argues that there is no single, universally accepted definition of good governance. "Good Governance in the Digital Age" by Janette Hiebert (2011) examines the challenges and opportunities of good governance in the digital age. The article argues that digital technologies can be used to promote good governance, but they can also be used to undermine it.

PFMS Case Study:

A case study on the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) in the context of technology and eGovernance could provide insights into how technology is used to enhance financial management and governance in a government setting. The Government of India introduced the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) as a cornerstone of its eGovernance initiative to enhance financial transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public financial management. This case study aims to examine the implementation and impact of PFMS on government financial processes, service delivery, and governance.

Technologies for PFMS:

The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) in India utilizes a variety of technologies to streamline and improve financial management processes at the government level. These technologies are crucial in enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accountability in public financial management.



Some of the key technologies used for PFMS include:

1. **Web-Based Portal:** PFMS operates through a web-based portal accessible to authorized government users. This portal serves as the primary interface for financial transactions, reporting, and monitoring.
2. **Database Management System:** A robust database management system is used to store and manage financial data securely. This system ensures data integrity and facilitates efficient retrieval of financial information.
3. **Payment Gateway:** PFMS integrates with secure payment gateways to facilitate electronic fund transfers, both for disbursements to beneficiaries and collections from various sources.
4. **Data Analytics and Reporting Tools:** Advanced data analytics and reporting tools are employed to generate real-time financial reports, dashboards, and insights. These tools help in decision-making, financial planning, and performance monitoring.
5. **Biometric Authentication:** For Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) programs and other welfare schemes, biometric authentication technologies such as Aadhaar are integrated to verify the identity of beneficiaries and ensure targeted fund delivery.
6. **Mobile Applications:** Mobile applications are developed to allow government officials to access PFMS functionalities while on the field. This is particularly important for disbursing payments and verifying beneficiaries.
7. **Encryption and Security Measures:** Stringent encryption and security protocols are implemented to protect sensitive financial data and ensure compliance with data privacy regulations.

8. Interoperability Standards: PFMS adheres to interoperability standards to facilitate integration with other government systems, such as tax and revenue management systems, to ensure seamless financial operations.

9. Cloud Computing: Cloud computing infrastructure may be used to store and process large volumes of financial data, enabling scalability and reducing infrastructure costs.

10. Blockchain Technology: In some instances, blockchain technology may be explored to enhance the transparency and traceability of financial transactions and disbursements.

11. Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI): Machine learning and AI algorithms may be employed for fraud detection, anomaly detection, and predictive analytics to improve financial management.

12. Data Warehousing: A data warehousing system is used to consolidate and store historical financial data for analysis and reporting purposes.

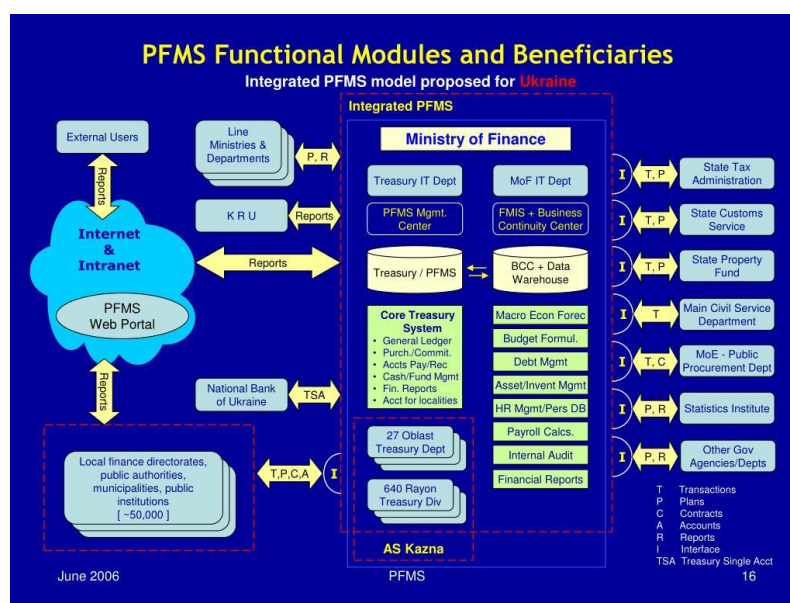
13. Digital Signatures: Digital signatures are used to authenticate financial transactions and ensure their validity.

14. SMS and Email Notifications: Automated SMS and email notifications are sent to beneficiaries and government officials to provide updates on fund disbursements and transactions.

15. Geographic Information System (GIS): GIS technology may be used to map the geographical distribution of beneficiaries and analyze the impact of financial programs in different regions.

16. Multi-Layer Authentication: Multi-layer authentication mechanisms are implemented to ensure that only authorized personnel can access sensitive financial data and perform transactions.

The use of these technologies in PFMS helps modernize financial management practices in government, reducing manual processes, improving transparency, and ensuring



that financial resources are efficiently allocated and utilized. It also enables real-time tracking and monitoring of financial transactions and contributes to good governance.

PFMS Stakeholders:

The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) in India involves various stakeholders who play crucial roles in its implementation, operation, and oversight. These stakeholders include:

1. **Government Ministries and Departments:** Various government ministries and departments are the primary users of PFMS for managing and disbursing funds related to their respective programs and schemes.
2. **Finance Ministry:** The Ministry of Finance oversees the implementation of PFMS at the national level and provides strategic direction for its operation.
3. **Controller General of Accounts (CGA):** CGA is responsible for maintaining the accounts of the government and ensures that financial transactions are recorded accurately in PFMS.
4. **State Governments:** State governments and their departments use PFMS for managing and monitoring funds allocated to state-level programs and initiatives.
5. **Union Territories:** Union territories also utilize PFMS to manage their finances and monitor expenditures.
6. **Local Governments :** Local government bodies, such as municipalities and panchayats, use PFMS to manage funds allocated to them and implement various development projects.
7. **Central and State Audit Authorities :** Audit authorities at both the central and state levels use PFMS data for financial audits and compliance checks.
8. **Beneficiaries and Citizens :** Beneficiaries of government programs, such as pensioners, scholarship recipients, and subsidy beneficiaries, interact with PFMS when they receive funds through direct benefit transfer (DBT) schemes.
9. **Banks and Financial Institutions :** Banks and financial institutions are key stakeholders in PFMS as they facilitate fund transfers, including the disbursement of subsidies and payments to beneficiaries.
10. **Information Technology (IT) Service Providers :** IT service providers play a vital role in the development, maintenance, and technical support of the PFMS platform and related systems.

11. **E-Governance Authorities** : Authorities responsible for e-governance initiatives at the national and state levels collaborate with PFMS to ensure the integration of financial processes into broader e-governance frameworks.
12. **Consultants and Advisors** : External consultants and advisors may be engaged to provide expertise in the implementation and enhancement of PFMS.
13. **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** : RBI plays a regulatory role in overseeing financial transactions and ensuring compliance with banking regulations and monetary policies.
14. **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** : CSOs often monitor government spending and advocate for transparency and accountability in public financial management, making them indirect stakeholders in PFMS.
15. **Parliamentary Committees** : Parliamentary committees on finance and public accounts may review PFMS operations and make recommendations to improve financial management.
16. **Academic and Research Institutions** : Academic and research institutions may study PFMS for research purposes and offer insights and recommendations for improvement.
17. **International Donor Agencies** : In cases where international funding is involved, donor agencies may closely monitor the utilization of funds through PFMS to ensure they are used for the intended purposes.

Each of these stakeholders plays a specific role in the functioning of PFMS, contributing to the system's objectives of improving financial transparency, efficiency, and accountability in government financial management. Effective coordination and collaboration among these stakeholders are essential for the successful implementation and operation of PFMS.

Emerging Technologies:

The emerging technologies that are having the most impact on governance include:

Artificial intelligence (AI): AI is being used to automate tasks, improve decision-making, and provide new insights into data. For example, AI is being used to detect fraud in government programs, to predict crime, and to allocate resources more efficiently.

Blockchain: Blockchain is a secure and transparent way to record transactions. It is being used to create tamper-proof records of government contracts, to track the movement of food and other commodities, and to improve the efficiency of elections.

Big data: Big data is the collection of large and complex datasets. It is being used to understand the needs of citizens, to improve service delivery, and to make better decisions. For example, big data is being used to predict traffic patterns, to target social programs, and to improve the performance of government agencies.

Cloud computing: Cloud computing is the delivery of computing services over the internet. It is being used to reduce costs, improve scalability, and increase flexibility. For example, cloud computing is being used to store government data, to run government applications, and to provide disaster recovery services.

Social media: Social media is a platform for communication and collaboration. It is being used to engage citizens, to improve transparency, and to build relationships. For example, social media is being used to communicate with citizens about government services, to solicit feedback on policy proposals, and to track public opinion.

These are just a few of the emerging technologies that are having an impact on governance. As these technologies continue to develop, they will have an even greater impact on the way we govern ourselves.

The use of emerging technologies in governance can offer many benefits, such as:

Increased efficiency and effectiveness: Emerging technologies can help governments to automate tasks, improve decision-making, and deliver services more efficiently.

Improved transparency and accountability: Emerging technologies can help to make governments more transparent and accountable by providing citizens with greater access to information.

Enhanced participation and collaboration: Emerging technologies can help to enhance citizen participation and collaboration by providing new channels for communication and engagement.

Increased resilience and adaptability: Emerging technologies can help governments to be more resilient and adaptable to change by providing new tools for managing risk and uncertainty.

However, there are also some challenges associated with the use of emerging technologies in governance, such as:

Data privacy and security: The use of emerging technologies often involves the collection and use of large amounts of data. This raises concerns about data privacy and security.

Digital divide: The use of emerging technologies can exacerbate the digital divide, as those who do not have access to these technologies may be excluded from participation in government.

Technological disruption: The rapid pace of technological change can make it difficult for governments to keep up, which can lead to technological disruption.

PFMS Cyber Security:

Cybersecurity is a critical concern for the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) in India, as it deals with sensitive financial data and transactions. Protecting this data from cyber threats and ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of financial transactions are of paramount importance. Here are some key aspects of cybersecurity in PFMS:

1. **Access Control and Authentication** : Implement strong access controls and user authentication mechanisms to ensure that only authorized personnel can access the PFMS system. Use multi-factor authentication (MFA) for secure user logins.
2. **Data Encryption** : Encrypt data both in transit and at rest to protect it from interception or unauthorized access. Use secure protocols such as HTTPS for data transmission.
3. **Firewalls and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS)** : Deploy firewalls to monitor and filter network traffic, allowing only legitimate traffic to pass through. Implement IDS to detect and respond to suspicious activities or intrusion attempts.
4. **Regular Software Updates and Patch Management** : Keep all software components of PFMS up to date with security patches to address known vulnerabilities.
5. **Security Audits and Penetration Testing** : Conduct regular security audits and penetration testing to identify vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the system. Remediate any identified security issues promptly.
6. **Data Backup and Recovery** : Establish robust data backup and recovery procedures to ensure data availability in case of data loss or system compromise.
7. **Security Training and Awareness** : Train employees and stakeholders on cybersecurity best practices, including phishing awareness and safe handling of sensitive information.
8. **Incident Response Plan** : Develop an incident response plan to address cybersecurity incidents effectively. This plan should include procedures for reporting, investigating, and mitigating security breaches.

9. User Permissions and Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) : Implement RBAC to assign specific access rights and permissions based on job roles and responsibilities. Regularly review and update user permissions to ensure they align with changing organizational needs.
10. Vendor and Third-Party Security : If third-party vendors are involved in managing or providing services for PFMS, ensure that they adhere to robust cybersecurity practices. Conduct security assessments of third-party systems and applications that interface with PFMS.
11. Security Monitoring and Logging : Implement comprehensive monitoring of system activities and logs to detect and respond to security incidents in real time.
12. Secure APIs and Data Interfaces : If PFMS interfaces with other systems or offers APIs for data exchange, ensure that these interfaces are secure and follow best practices for API security.
13. Data Privacy and Compliance : Comply with data privacy regulations and standards to protect the personal and financial data of citizens and government employees.
14. Regular Security Training and Awareness : Train personnel on cybersecurity best practices and conduct awareness campaigns to keep all stakeholders informed about potential threats.
15. Regular Security Audits and Assessments : Conduct periodic security audits and vulnerability assessments to identify and address potential weaknesses in the system.
16. Cybersecurity Policies and Procedures : Establish and enforce cybersecurity policies and procedures that cover all aspects of PFMS security.

Cybersecurity is an ongoing process, and staying vigilant and proactive is essential to protect PFMS and the sensitive financial data it manages. Regularly updating security measures and conducting risk assessments are critical components of a robust cybersecurity strategy for PFMS.

Results and Findings:

PFMS transactional data statistics:

As of March 2023, PFMS has processed over 1.5 billion transactions worth over Rs.10 trillion. The average number of transactions processed per day is over 4 million. The most active schemes in PFMS are the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).

The top five states in terms of the number of transactions processed in PFMS are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. The top five banks in terms of the number of transactions processed in PFMS are State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank, and Union Bank of India.

These are just a few of the PFMS transactional data statistics. The data can be used to track the performance of government schemes, to identify areas where there is room for improvement, and to make better decisions about the allocation of resources.

The benefits of using PFMS transactional data:

It can be used to track the performance of government schemes. This information can be used to identify areas where there is room for improvement, such as schemes that are not reaching their target beneficiaries or schemes that are not being implemented efficiently.

It can be used to identify fraud and corruption. By analyzing the transactional data, it is possible to identify patterns that may indicate fraud or corruption. It can be used to make better decisions about the allocation of resources. By understanding how funds are being used, it is possible to make better decisions about where to allocate resources in the future.

It can be used to improve transparency and accountability. By making the transactional data publicly available, it is possible to increase transparency and accountability in government spending. The use of PFMS transactional data is a powerful tool that can be used to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of government spending.

Cost Savings: PFMS implementation has resulted in significant cost savings by reducing manual processes, paperwork, and inefficiencies.

Reduced Corruption: Transparency and accountability measures in PFMS have reduced instances of corruption in financial transactions.

Citizen-Centric: The system has made government financial information accessible to citizens, promoting citizen engagement and trust in government.

Scaling Up: Successful implementation of PFMS at the central and state levels has paved the way for its expansion to additional government programs and schemes.

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

Data Security: Address challenges related to data security and privacy in a system handling sensitive financial data.

Capacity Building: Highlight the importance of ongoing training and capacity building for government staff to effectively use PFMS.

Interoperability: Discuss the need for interoperability with other eGovernance systems and platforms.

Conclusion:

Impact on Governance: PFMS has emerged as a pivotal tool in improving governance by enhancing financial management, transparency, and accountability.

Recommendations: Suggest policy recommendations for the further enhancement and sustainability of PFMS in India's eGovernance landscape.

The technology can be used to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of PFMS. The paper also discusses the challenges of implementing technology in PFMS, such as the need for adequate training and resources. The case study describes how a state government used technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its PFMS. The paper also discusses the challenges that the state government faced in implementing the technology, and how they were overcome. technology has a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of PFMS. The paper also found that the impact of technology is greater in larger organizations. Technology will continue to play an increasingly important role in PFMS, and that organizations need to be prepared for this change.

The paper also discusses some of the challenges that organizations will face in implementing new technologies in PFMS, a framework for the evaluation of technology in PFMS. The framework is based on the following four dimensions: efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability. The paper also discusses how the framework can be used to evaluate the impact of technology on PFMS. It is found that there is a significant variation in the level of adoption of technology across countries. The paper also discusses some of the factors that influence the adoption of technology in PFMS.

The case study outlines how PFMS, as an example of technology-driven financial management, can significantly impact eGovernance by improving financial transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Actual case studies would provide specific data and evidence to support these findings and offer valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners in the field of eGovernance and public financial management.

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About Dr. MCR HRD Institute of Telangana

Dr. MCR HRD Institute of Telangana, premier Administrative Training Institute (ATI) of Government of Telangana, founded in 1976, has been supporting the Government's initiatives in capacity building for reforms, good governance, change management, and revamping delivery systems.

The Institute has a sprawling 33 acre campus in the heart of Hyderabad. It is a lush green area which is fully WiFi enabled and buildings with rooftop solar panels. It has well-furnished classrooms, auditoria, indoor and outdoor sports facilities including swimming pool, gymnasium and hostel blocks with capacity to accommodate 900 persons. In addition, the Institute established a network of Regional Centres for Training to provide training to field level functionaries.

The Institute's mandate is carried out through the following Centres:

- i. Centre for Information Technology (CIT)
- ii. Centre for Law & Public Administration (CLP)
- iii. Centre for Telangana Studies (CTS)
- iv. Centre for Management & Behavioural Studies (CMB)
- v. Centre for Disaster Management & Sustainable Development (CDS)
- vi. Centre for Finance and Economics (CFE)
- vii. Centre for International Relations & Security (CIS)

In addition to training programs for Government employees from Telangana State and from across the country, the Institute has been offering Foundation Courses for All India Services Officers & Central Civil Services Officers, Military Engineer Services Probationers, etc. The Institute conducted a training program for Civil Servants from ASEAN countries in 2019.

As a part of "Training for All" program, sponsored by DoPT, Govt. of India, the Institute has successfully trained 6,495 personnel of Tribal Welfare Department.

Under the second "Training for All" program, the Institute is in the process of conducting training for 6,864 employees of Women Development & Child Welfare Department. Under the project, entire workforce - from Anganwadi Teachers to District Welfare Officers, are

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The Institute has also been conducting training programs on a massive level, for Trainers, PIOs, APIOs, First Appellate Authorities and other officers on the Right to Information (RTI) Act since 2005. The Institute conducts Workshops on different aspects of the RTI Act by involving Civil Society apart from officials across various departments, including Indian Air Force, Geological Survey of India and so forth. The Institute has conducted Orientation Programmes to the Information Commissioners of Telangana State Information Commission.

The Institute has published the following books on various concepts of the Right to Information law to facilitate understanding the intricacies of the legislation:

1. *Exemption from Disclosure of Information under the RTI Act: An Introduction.* Hyderabad: Dr. MCR HRD Institute, 2021.
2. *The Right to Information Act: A Handbook for Public Authorities.* Hyderabad: Dr. MCR HRD Institute, 2022.
3. *Proactive Disclosure of Information under the Right to Information Act: A Guide* Hyderabad: Dr. MCR HRD Institute, 2021.

The publications are available on our website at:

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Dr. Marri Channa Reddy
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