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TR G.S. Paper II

Opposition slams Centre for 'not responding' to U.S. tariffs

How will govt. tackle the issue, ask Rajya Sabha members; | By reducing customs duty, the govt. is actually

Trump imposes 25% tariff on imported cars; affected allies threaten retaliation

1. ♦ अमेरिका-भारत व्यापार शुल्क विवाद: क्या कहती है सरकार? INUS

Opposition slams Centre for 'not responding' to U.S. tariffs

How will govt. tackle the issue, ask Rajya Sabha members; Cong. MP Chidambaram says govt. should clarify its stand | By reducing customs duty, the govt. is actually helping small and medium industries, says FM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over the "tariff war" looming over the global economy after U.S. President Donald Trump's recent announcements, Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday asked the Centre if it had any specific plans to deal with the issue.

The MPs raised the issue during a discussion on the Appropriation and Finance Bills, Senior Congress MP and former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, who initiated the debate on the Bills, urged the Centre to clarify the country's response to Mr. Trump's statement that he would impose reciprocal tariffs on April 2.

He said the Centre should discuss the issue in Parliament or consult the Opposition parties on the matter. "What is the government's response? What is India's response? There has been no statement of policy, no discussion in Parliament, no consultation with Opposition parties. The government is holding its cards close to its chest, if it has any cards at all," he said.

"Trump effect"
Addressing the members' concerns, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, said, adding that the Centre had used the opportunity to rationalise the tariff structure and address the duty inversion. "Through this, there will be more domestic value addition in industries, it will promote exports, facilitate trade and provide relief for common people," she said.

She maintained that the Finance Bill proposes to remove seven customs tariff rates on industrial goods. "Two tranches of rationalisation of customs rate rationalisation has happened. They have reduced the number of tariff rates from 21 to eight, completely bringing them down. Many Indian exports will now become more competitive as the cost of imported inputs will be completely reduced," the Minister said.

"Consistently, budget after budget, we are coming up with reduction of duties so that India's aspiration to become a manufacturing hub is supported," she said.

"I heard members saying that the tariff war has started and these things are done as a response to the tariff announcements made by President Trump. No. We have been doing this from 2023. It has nothing to do with today's global situations," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Mr. Chidambaram acknowledged that the Finance Minister had made significant reductions in basic duties. "Thank God, at long last, the government is giving up protectionism. We have screamed from the rooftops that protectionism is not the way to protect the economy. They are mixing up protectionism and patriotism," he said.

Both the Bills were returned by the Upper House later on Thursday.

◆ विपक्ष का आरोप:

राज्यसभा में विपक्ष ने केंद्र सरकार पर आरोप लगाया कि अमेरिका द्वारा लगाए गए नए टैरिफ (शुल्क) का कोई ठोस जवाब नहीं दिया गया। उन्होंने सरकार से पूछा कि क्या इस मुद्दे से निपटने की कोई खास योजना है?

🔊 चिदंबरम का सवाल – सरकार की रणनीति क्या है?

◆ पूर्व वित्त मंत्री पी. चिदंबरम ने संसद में पूछा कि भारत सरकार की आधिकारिक नीति क्या है?

◆ उन्होंने कहा कि न तो संसद में कोई चर्चा हुई है, न ही विपक्ष से सलाह-मशविरा।

◆ उन्होंने सरकार पर "ट्रम्प इफ़ेक्ट" से प्रभावित होने का भी आरोप लगाया।

🔊 वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण का जवाब – यह अमेरिका की वजह से नहीं!

💡 उन्होंने स्पष्ट किया कि सरकार ने 2023 से ही आयात शुल्क में कमी लाने की रणनीति अपनाई है और यह अमेरिका के हालिया फैसले की प्रतिक्रिया नहीं है।

✓ आयात शुल्क में कमी से फायदे:

- MSME सेक्टर को राहत – कच्चे माल और मध्यवर्ती उत्पादों के आयात पर कम शुल्क लगेगा।
- एक्सपोर्ट बढ़ेगा – भारत के निर्यात को बढ़ावा मिलेगा और लागत घटेगी।
- मैनुफैक्चरिंग को बढ़ावा – भारत को वैश्विक विनिर्माण केंद्र (Manufacturing Hub) बनाने में मदद मिलेगी।

◆ सरकार बनाम विपक्ष – 'राष्ट्रवाद या संरक्षणवाद?'

🏠 चिदंबरम का तंज: उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार अब 'प्रोटेक्शनिज्म' (संरक्षणवाद) छोड़कर वैश्विक व्यापार को अपना रही है, जिसे कांग्रेस पहले से ही समर्थन देती रही है।

✓ वित्त मंत्री का जवाब: सरकार का मकसद व्यापार को सरल बनाना, निर्यात को बढ़ावा देना और जनता को राहत देना है।

💬 निष्कर्ष – भारत को क्या करना चाहिए?

◆ मजबूत व्यापार नीति बनानी होगी ताकि भारत को नुकसान न हो।

◆ अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार सहयोग को मजबूत करना होगा ताकि भारत को 'निर्माण और निर्यात' में बड़ा खिलाड़ी बनाया जा सके।

◆ घरेलू विनिर्माण और स्टार्टअप्स को और समर्थन देना होगा ताकि हम आयात पर निर्भर न रहें।

🚀 क्या भारत इस व्यापारिक चुनौती को अवसर में बदल पाएगा? 🤖 IN

2. 📢 हरियाणा में अनिवार्य गर्भवस्था पंजीकरण पर विवाद!



Polity + Social Justice G.S. Paper II

Mandatory pregnancy registration sparks privacy concerns in Haryana

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

A recent order by the Haryana Health Department making registration of all pregnant women mandatory during their first trimester has sparked concerns over invasion of privacy and potential conflict with the existing law on termination of pregnancy. It may also have unintended consequences, such as driving women to seek unsafe abortions outside the formal healthcare system.

The two-week-old order by the Director General Health Services (DGHS) aims to achieve 100% registration of pregnant women, an improvement from the current 50-80% registration rates across various districts. The order mandates that ultrasound centres must register pregnant women before conducting examinations, with non-compliance resulting in a notice.

To register on the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal, women must provide personal details, including their name, Aadhaar card number, husband's name, address, and caste. The registration is intended to enable better monitoring and reporting of RMNCH (reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health) programmes, making women eligible for benefits under various schemes.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), Haryana, lauded the initiative to ensure optimal antenatal services as a "great initiative" towards reducing pregnancy loss during the first 12 weeks and combating female foeticide, but also wrote a two-page letter to the DGHS stating that the order contradicts the existing Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act.

Confidentiality issue
Several experts also criticised the order, suggesting that it was "issued in haste" and "without considering its implications and implementation". Ajay Mahajan, former president of IMA, Haryana, expressed concern over the order going against the spirit of the MTP Act, which prohibits disclosing the names and other particulars of women who have undergone termination of pregnancy.

With local auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) the sole authority for registering pregnant women on the RCH portal, it could compromise patient confidentiality, he said. "Letting a local ANM know about an unwanted pregnancy could lead to the identity of the woman being leaked in the neighbourhood. This might deter pregnant women who are unmarried and those seeking an abortion from getting themselves registered."

Dr. Mahajan said such women might be driven to seek unsafe and illegal abortions, leading them to consult unqualified practitioners, posing serious risks to their health and life. "Since the order is primarily aimed at curbing female foeticide, it could be amended to exempt pregnant women from registration for the first 14 weeks as sex determination isn't possible during this period. The government could also allow self-registration or registration through doctors at private and government hospitals," he said.

'Allow exemptions'
Gynaecologist Jyoti Yadav advocated for pregnant women's right to privacy as guaranteed under the MTP Act. She said the law permits termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks, and therefore, the government should exempt registration for this period.

She emphasised the need for the government to regulate the easy availability of MTP kits at chemist shops to curb abortions based on sex determination. She noted that affluent families are willing to travel abroad for sex determination tests and subsequently use readily available drugs to terminate pregnancies. She stressed that this practice must be stopped to improve the State's sex ratio.

Speaking to *The Hindu* over phone, DGHS Manish Bansal said the sole objective of the order is to ensure the registration of all pregnant women during the first trimester for monitoring their health and stressed there is no conflict with the MTP Act. Termination of pregnancies is a separate issue, he said.

'Unfounded concerns'
Seeking the support of the medical fraternity in the implementation of the order, the official said it aims to promote the health of pregnant women and children, prevent illegal abortions by monitoring pregnancies, and address the skewed sex ratio.

He dismissed concerns about invasion of privacy, terming them "unfounded", and assured that all information would be securely stored within the government's system.

Haryana's sex ratio at birth has witnessed a decline, dropping to 910 in 2024, its lowest point in eight years.



Health first: Pregnant women wait for routine check-up at a primary health centre in Daulatabad, Haryana. FILE PHOTO

◆ सरकार का आदेश:

हरियाणा स्वास्थ्य विभाग ने सभी गर्भवती महिलाओं के लिए पहले तिमाही में अनिवार्य पंजीकरण का आदेश दिया है। सरकार का दावा है कि यह कदम बेहतर मातृ एवं शिशु स्वास्थ्य निगरानी और लिंग अनुपात सुधारने के लिए उठाया गया है।

⚠ निजता और कानूनी टकराव पर सवाल 🔍

💡 विवाद का कारण:

🏠 विशेषज्ञों और डॉक्टरों ने कहा कि यह आदेश गर्भपात कानून (MTP Act) के गोपनीयता प्रावधानों का उल्लंघन कर सकता है।

🏠 महिलाओं की निजी जानकारी (नाम, आधार नंबर, पति का नाम, पता, जाति) को गुप्त रखने की गारंटी नहीं दी गई है।

👉 गैर-विवाहित महिलाएं या गर्भपात करवाने की इच्छुक महिलाएं असुरक्षित तरीकों की ओर जा सकती हैं, जिससे उनकी जान को खतरा हो सकता है।

🔍 डॉक्टरों और विशेषज्ञों की राय

✓ IMA (इंडियन मेडिकल एसोसिएशन) हरियाणा ने पहल को सराहा लेकिन कहा कि गर्भावस्था के पहले 14 हफ्तों तक पंजीकरण को वैकल्पिक किया जाना चाहिए, क्योंकि इस दौरान लिंग जांच संभव नहीं होती।

✓ डॉ. ज्योति यादव ने सुझाव दिया कि सरकार को 20 हफ्ते तक की गर्भावस्था के लिए पंजीकरण से छूट देनी चाहिए, ताकि महिलाओं की गोपनीयता सुरक्षित रहे।

✓ उन्होंने कहा कि एमटीपी किट्स की आसान उपलब्धता पर नियंत्रण ज़रूरी है, ताकि लिंग आधारित गर्भपात को रोका जा सके।

🚀 सरकार का जवाब – ‘चिंता बेबुनियाद’

◆ DGHS मनीष बंसल ने स्पष्ट किया कि आदेश का मकसद महिलाओं और शिशुओं के स्वास्थ्य की निगरानी करना है, न कि गर्भपात के अधिकारों पर रोक लगाना।

◆ उन्होंने कहा कि जानकारी सुरक्षित रखी जाएगी और यह गोपनीयता का उल्लंघन नहीं है।

◆ हरियाणा में लिंग अनुपात घटकर 910 (2024) हो गया है, जिसे सुधारने के लिए सरकार यह कदम उठा रही है।

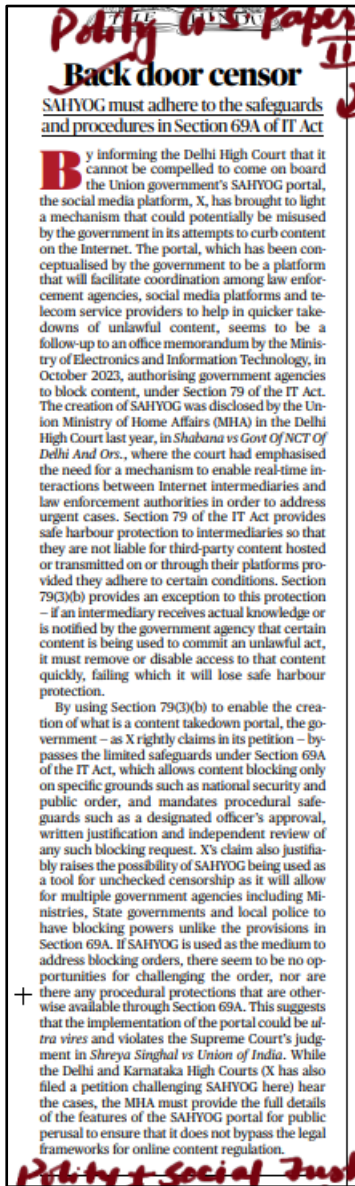
🤖 सवाल बना हुआ है – निजता बनाम जनहित!

💡 क्या यह आदेश महिलाओं के अधिकारों और गोपनीयता का उल्लंघन है?

💡 या फिर यह लिंग अनुपात सुधारने और स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएं बेहतर करने का एक ज़रूरी कदम है?

🗣️ आपका क्या सोचना है? क्या सरकार को इसे संशोधित करना चाहिए? 😊👉

3. 'SAHYOG' पोर्टल पर विवाद – सरकार की 'बैकडोर सेंसरशिप'? 🔍



🖥️ X (ट्विटर) ने दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट में सरकार के SAHYOG पोर्टल पर सवाल उठाए हैं, जिससे इंटरनेट सेंसरशिप पर एक नई बहस छिड़ गई है।

❖ क्या है SAHYOG पोर्टल? 🤖

❖ यह सरकार द्वारा बनाया गया एक डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म है, जो कानून प्रवर्तन एजेंसियों, सोशल मीडिया कंपनियों और टेलीकॉम सेवा प्रदाताओं के बीच तालमेल बढ़ाने के लिए लाया गया है।

❖ इसका मकसद आपत्तिजनक कंटेंट को जल्दी से ब्लॉक करना बताया जा रहा है।

◆ लेकिन X (ट्विटर) का दावा है कि सरकार इस पोर्टल के जरिए "बैकडोर सेंसरशिप" लागू कर रही है।

🔥 X (ट्विटर) का क्या आरोप है?

📖 यह IT एक्ट की धारा 69A को बायपास करता है, जो केवल राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा और सार्वजनिक व्यवस्था के मामलों में कंटेंट ब्लॉक करने की अनुमति देता है।

📖 इस पोर्टल से कई सरकारी एजेंसियां, राज्य सरकारें और पुलिस को कंटेंट ब्लॉक करने की खुली छूट मिल सकती है।

📖 बिना किसी स्पष्ट प्रक्रिया के, सरकार को "अनियंत्रित सेंसरशिप" का अधिकार मिल सकता है।

📖 धारा 79(3)(b) का गलत इस्तेमाल करके सरकार सोशल मीडिया से कंटेंट हटाने का दबाव बना सकती है, जिससे इंटरनेट की स्वतंत्रता को खतरा हो सकता है।

⚠️ क्या SAHYOG संविधान के खिलाफ है?

✓ 'श्रेया सिंघल बनाम भारत सरकार' केस में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने साफ कहा था कि ऑनलाइन कंटेंट को ब्लॉक करने के लिए उचित प्रक्रिया और न्यायिक समीक्षा होनी चाहिए।

✓ लेकिन X (ट्विटर) का कहना है कि SAHYOG में अपील या समीक्षा का कोई प्रावधान नहीं है, जिससे यह संवैधानिक अधिकारों का उल्लंघन करता है।

✓ दिल्ली और कर्नाटक हाईकोर्ट में मामले की सुनवाई जारी है।

🗣️ सरकार को क्या करना चाहिए?

📖 MHA (गृह मंत्रालय) को SAHYOG पोर्टल की पूरी जानकारी सार्वजनिक करनी चाहिए, ताकि यह स्पष्ट हो कि इसका उपयोग कैसे होगा।

📖 सरकार को यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि यह पोर्टल कानूनी प्रक्रियाओं को दरकिनार न करे और अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता को सुरक्षित रखे।

🤔 सेंसरशिप या साइबर सुरक्षा? आपकी राय?

📢 क्या SAHYOG इंटरनेट पर नियंत्रण का नया तरीका है या यह साइबर सुरक्षा के लिए जरूरी है? क्या यह अभिव्यक्ति की आज़ादी को खतरे में डाल सकता है? कमेंट में अपनी राय बताएं! 🗣️ 📢

4. 🧑‍🚶 महिलाओं की सुरक्षा – कब होगी सच्ची आज़ादी? 🏠

Polity & Social Justice
Women unbound 6-5
Public spaces must be always safe for everyone

Despite stringent laws, women remain far from feeling safe in most public spaces. A spate of incidents in just the first three months of 2025 highlights how vulnerable women are – especially in public transport. A 23-year-old woman sustained severe injuries after jumping off a train to escape an assaulter. In another shocking case, a pregnant woman who was allegedly pushed out of a train following an attempted rape suffered a miscarriage. Harassment is a regular ordeal for women in unreserved train compartments and on government buses. Who is accountable for this grim reality when society claims to champion women's empowerment? In their seminal work, *Why Loiter?*, Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan, and Shilpa Ranade argue that when society says it wants to protect women, it does not strive to make public spaces safer. Instead, it seeks to confine women to homes, schools, or the care of others. Even today, women must constantly consider the time of day they travel, wary of venturing out after dark or before sunrise.

A necessary starting point is affirming that women have the right to live and move freely – without fear. While easier said than done, a recent Delhi High Court ruling has set an example. The court upheld the conviction of a man who sexually harassed a woman on a public bus in 2015, calling it a "deeply concerning reality" that harassment in public spaces persists despite decades of independence and tough laws. The court rightly pointed out that judgments in such cases serve as crucial signals to society. Until a harassment-free environment is created, conversations about women's progress will remain hollow. Equally significant is the Supreme Court of India's decision to stay an Allahabad High Court order that had outrageously ruled inappropriate touching of a minor did not amount to attempted rape. The top court's response sends a clear and much-needed message: such "totally insensitive and inhuman" interpretations of the law are unacceptable. The responsibility does not lie with the judiciary alone. Administrative bodies must ensure that streets are well-lit, police are trained to handle cases of harassment effectively, and all vacancies in law enforcement are promptly filled. Without a coordinated, all-encompassing approach to safety, women will continue to live in fear, denied their rightful access to public life.

CM
YK

🌀 कड़े कानूनों के बावजूद, सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर महिलाएं खुद को सुरक्षित महसूस नहीं कर पातीं। हाल ही में हुए कई घटनाओं ने यह दिखाया है कि महिलाओं की सुरक्षा अब भी एक गंभीर चिंता का विषय है।

◆ हाल की घटनाएँ जो चिंता बढ़ाती हैं 🏠

✧ एक 23 वर्षीय महिला ट्रेन से कूद गई क्योंकि वह एक हमलावर से बचना चाहती थी।

✧ एक गर्भवती महिला को ट्रेन से धक्का दे दिया गया, जिससे उसका गर्भपात हो गया।

✧ सरकारी बसों और अनारक्षित ट्रेन डिब्बों में छेड़छाड़ आम बात हो गई है।

⚠ सवाल उठता है – जब समाज महिला सशक्तिकरण की बात करता है, तो असल में उनकी सुरक्षा की ज़िम्मेदारी कौन लेगा?

◆ क्या 'महिला सुरक्षा' सिर्फ़ एक दिखावा है? 🤔

📖 शिल्पा फडके, समीरा खान और शिल्पा राणाडे की किताब '*Why Loiter?*' बताती है कि जब समाज महिलाओं की सुरक्षा की बात करता है, तो असल में वह उन्हें घरों तक सीमित करना चाहता है, न कि सार्वजनिक स्थानों को सुरक्षित बनाना।

✧ आज भी महिलाएं हर समय यह सोचने को मजबूर हैं कि वे कब और कहां जा सकती हैं, खासकर रात में या तड़के सुबह।

◆ उम्मीद की किरण – अदालतों के सख्त फैसले 🏛️

✅ दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट ने हाल ही में 2015 के एक केस में दोषी को सजा दी, जहां एक महिला से बस में छेड़छाड़ की गई थी। अदालत ने कहा कि "आज़ादी के दशकों बाद भी महिलाओं का असुरक्षित रहना गहरी चिंता का विषय है।"

✅ सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने इलाहाबाद हाईकोर्ट के एक विवादास्पद फैसले पर रोक लगा दी, जिसमें नाबालिग से अनुचित छेड़छाड़ को "दुष्कर्म का प्रयास" नहीं माना गया था।

✧ यह एक स्पष्ट और सख्त संदेश है – महिलाओं के खिलाफ अपराधों को हल्के में नहीं लिया जा सकता।


◆ समाधान क्या है? 🛡️


👮 पुलिस और प्रशासन को ज़िम्मेदारी निभानी होगी –



✅ सड़कों पर पर्याप्त रोशनी होनी चाहिए।

✅ पुलिस को छेड़छाड़ के मामलों को गंभीरता से लेना चाहिए।

✅ कानून प्रवर्तन एजेंसियों में सभी खाली पद तुरंत भरे जाने चाहिए।

 जब तक हर स्तर पर ठोस कदम नहीं उठाए जाते, तब तक 'महिला सशक्तिकरण' की बातें खोखली रहेंगी।

 क्या महिलाएं कभी बिना डर के बाहर निकल सकेंगी? आपकी राय?

 महिला सुरक्षा को लेकर आपकी क्या राय है? क्या सिर्फ कानून बनाना काफी है या समाज को भी बदलना होगा? अपने विचार कमेंट में साझा करें! 

5. न्यायपालिका की मुश्किल घड़ी – दबाव में न्याय का संतुलन

The judiciary's 'between a rock and hard place' moment

The facts in the Justice Yashwant Varma case are indeed disturbing. In an apparent accidental fire in an outhouse on the premises of his official bungalow in New Delhi (while he was not in town), the fire department seemed to have found several sacks of high value currency notes (₹500), which had been burnt, some partially. Someone in the police/fire department recorded a video when the firemen were trying to douse the fire.

The next evening, the Delhi police chief reported the incident to the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, where Justice Varma is a senior judge. This was then conveyed to the Chief Justice of India (CJI), who convened a meeting of the Collegium. A decision was taken to repatriate Justice Varma back to his parent court, the High Court of Allahabad. Justice Varma's response was also sought where he denied that any money had been stored in that room and even suggested that it might be a conspiracy against him.

However, when the news of the incident spread, it caused such a public furore that the CJI convened other meetings of the Collegium and decided to institute an in-house enquiry conducted by a three-judge committee which included two Chief Justices of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and Haryana, and a lady judge from the Karnataka High Court. The CJI also sought the call records of Justice Varma as well as those of his staff for the last six months. The CJI decided to release all the information related to the incident in the public domain, which included the video of the currency notes being found. These steps were indeed a case of welcome transparency. The CJI thereafter advised the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court not to assign any judicial work to Justice Varma till such time as the inquiry is completed. Though Justice Varma's explanation does not appear to be very credible, one should still await the findings of the inquiry committee. There is no doubt that the report of the committee will shed light on what really happened.

A triggering of the government

The public furore that erupted has enabled the government to fish in the troubled waters of the judiciary, and the government is now using this incident to try and retake control of the power of appointing judges. To this end, the Vice-President of India (and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha) has invited political leaders from the government and the Opposition to discuss why the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, which was struck down by the Supreme Court of India as violative of the basic structure of the Constitution, should not be brought back. The NJAC Act essentially formed an appointment committee comprising the CJI, two senior judges of the Court, the Union Law Minister and two eminent persons to be nominated by a committee



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comprising the CJI, the Prime Minister of India and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. It also placed the secretariat of this commission with the Law Ministry. Seven judges of the Court held the view that this would provide substantial scope to the government to interfere with judicial appointments and that would erode the independence of the judiciary, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Thus, despite the NJAC Act having been brought by way of a constitutional amendment, it was declared invalid by the Court.

Government's game plan

In the recent past, the Narendra Modi government has seriously interfered with the appointment of judges despite the law being that the power of selection is with the Collegium of the Supreme Court and that the government can only return the name of the judges selected by the Collegium once to the Collegium if it is dissatisfied. Thereafter, if the Collegium reiterates its choice, the government is left with no option but to notify the appointment. However, in recent years, the Modi government has stymied the selection of independent judges by the Collegium, by sitting on recommendations, sometimes for years, without any response, and without notifying the appointments. Even when it is forced to respond and it returns the names with objections, and thereafter, even after it is unanimously reiterated by the Collegium, it has still not notified the appointments of many judges who are considered "inconvenient" to the government. At the same time it is quick to notify the appointments of those judges that the government likes.

During these years, on several occasions, the Collegium appears to have bent backwards to appease the government by selecting some judges who are favoured by the government in order to get some of those that it has recommended appointed. This has led to the appointment of many judges who are either committed to the government's Hindutva ideology or who are weak and unable to resist the dictates and wishes of the government. As a result of this, the independence of the judiciary has been substantially eroded in recent years.

Now, using the Justice Varma case, the government is seeking even greater control and say in the matter of appointments of judges. If the government succeeds in this attempt, it will no doubt erode the independence of the judiciary – already in a precarious state – even further. This government has been trampling on the fundamental rights of people, rampantly misusing the enforcement agencies and bulldozing the rule of law by using bulldozers. In these circumstances, it is essential for public opinion and the Opposition to see through the government's game plan and resist such an

attempt. There is no doubt that the collegium system of the appointment of judges is far from perfect and that its lack of transparency and any proper criteria for selecting judges have led to much nepotism and improper appointments through the Collegium as well. However, the solution is not greater government control. The problem with the Collegium is that it comprises sitting judges who are very busy with their judicial work and have little time to devote to this task.

Appointment of judges, issue of corruption

Every year, hundred judges of the High Court and the Supreme Court are to be selected. In any proper selection process, at least a 1,000 candidates have to be examined for their relative merits and demerits. For this, the right criteria and method to judge people on those criteria should be devised. Unfortunately this has not been done. The solution is to have a full-time judicial appointments commission, comprising retired judges and other eminent public men, who are totally independent of the government, and with a secretariat under their control which would select judges in a transparent manner. This would be a much better solution to address the problem of the appointment of judges – and what the Campaign for Judicial Accountability & Judicial Reforms has been advocating for a long time. However, the particular problem highlighted by the Justice Varma case is the problem of corruption in the Indian judiciary, which also needs a solution. The Constitution only provided for impeachment as a method. But this method has not been found to be practical or desirable because it starts with the signatures of 100 Members of Parliament to begin with, and ends with a vote in both Houses of Parliament.

Both are political processes, which often get politicised by political parties. This is why no judge has ever been successfully impeached in the history of the country, despite public knowledge that there is much corruption in the higher judiciary. What we need is a high-powered and full-time judicial complaints commission comprising five men/women who are independent of the government as well the judiciary. This complaints commission can receive complaints against judges of the higher judiciary from people. If they feel that there is a prima facie case, they can have the matter investigated or hold the trial of the judge through another committee, much like the judges inquiry committee.

However, the commission should decide what needs to be done with that judge, and their decision should be final, subject to judicial review only in exceptional circumstances. These matters should not go to Parliament at all. This would address the problem of judicial misconduct and corruption to a substantial degree.

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Solutions to
address the key
issues of
misconduct and
corruption and
appointments
exist, while also
keeping the
independence
of the
judiciary intact

भारतीय न्यायपालिका एक बड़ी चुनौती का सामना कर रही है – एक तरफ़ कानून और संविधान की रक्षा, और दूसरी तरफ़ सरकारी हस्तक्षेप और जनमत का दबाव।

जस्टिस यशवंत वर्मा मामला – एक विवादास्पद घटनाक्रम

क्या हुआ?

दिल्ली में जस्टिस यशवंत वर्मा के आधिकारिक आवास के बाहरी हिस्से में आग लगने से कई बोरों में भरे ₹500 के नोट जल गए।

- ✓ पुलिस ने वीडियो रिकॉर्ड किया और इसे मुख्य न्यायाधीश (CJI) को सौंपा।
- ✓ इस पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने एक जांच कमेटी गठित की, और जस्टिस वर्मा को अस्थायी रूप से न्यायिक कार्य से अलग कर दिया।
- ✓ जस्टिस वर्मा ने इसे साजिश बताया, लेकिन न्यायपालिका ने पारदर्शिता बनाए रखने के लिए जांच जारी रखी।

सरकार का हस्तक्षेप – न्यायपालिका पर नियंत्रण की कोशिश?

- ✓ सरकार ने इस विवाद का फायदा उठाकर न्यायाधीशों की नियुक्ति प्रणाली (NJAC) को फिर से लागू करने की कोशिश शुरू कर दी।
- ✓ NJAC को पहले सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने असंवैधानिक ठहराया था, क्योंकि इससे सरकार को न्यायपालिका की स्वतंत्रता पर नियंत्रण करने का मौका मिलता।
- ✓ लेकिन मोदी सरकार अब जजों की नियुक्तियों में अपनी भूमिका बढ़ाना चाहती है।


न्यायपालिका बनाम सरकार – टकराव जारी!

क्या सरकार न्यायपालिका को कमजोर कर रही है?


- ◆ सरकार उन जजों की नियुक्ति रोक रही है जो उसके पक्ष में नहीं हैं।
- ◆ सरकार जल्दी से उन्हीं जजों की नियुक्ति कर रही है जो हिंदुत्व विचारधारा के समर्थक या सरकार के अनुकूल माने जाते हैं।
- ◆ न्यायपालिका को सरकार के दबाव में फैसले लेने के लिए मजबूर किया जा रहा है।


समाधान – पारदर्शिता और स्वतंत्रता कैसे बनी रहे?

- ✓ एक स्वतंत्र न्यायिक नियुक्ति आयोग बने, जिसमें सेवानिवृत्त जज और निष्पक्ष व्यक्ति शामिल हों।
 - ✓ न्यायाधीशों के भ्रष्टाचार की जांच के लिए एक स्वतंत्र न्यायिक शिकायत आयोग बनाया जाए।
 - ✓ सरकार को न्यायपालिका की स्वतंत्रता में हस्तक्षेप से रोका जाए।
-

 निष्कर्ष – न्यायपालिका के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण मोड़!

अगर सरकार जजों की नियुक्ति पर पूरी तरह नियंत्रण पा लेती है, तो न्यायपालिका की स्वतंत्रता खतरे में पड़ सकती है।

 न्यायपालिका को अपनी साख बचाने के लिए पारदर्शिता और निष्पक्षता बनाए रखनी होगी।

 जनता और विपक्ष को इस मुद्दे पर सतर्क रहकर सरकार की मंशा पर सवाल उठाने होंगे।

6. अमेरिका के साथ रक्षा सहयोग: भारत को सतर्क रहने की आवश्यकता

U.S. defence ties — India needs to keep its eyes open

It is no state secret that the defence public sector undertakings have the Indian armed forces as their captive customers. In fact, with the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign, this dependence has only increased and has added to the stress of planners in the Indian Air Force (IAF) as they juggle with a depleting squadron strength in the IAF due to a poor production rate by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. After the IAF chief made his angst clear at the Aero India-2025 show in Bengaluru in February, there has been a flurry of media statements about how a reinvigorated environment is now geared up to supply Tejas Mk1A Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) jets. This month, the handing over event of the first rear fuselage for the Tejas, made by a private manufacturer – with the Defence Minister and the IAF chief present – has also been highlighted in the media.

Even as the report of the Ministry of Defence committee looking into the IAF's needs (including imports) is being evaluated, there are three facts that should help keep us grounded.

SIPRI report and U.S. policy

First, the latest Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report for 2020-24 shows that India is still the second highest arms importer in the world. However, the fact that India's imports have reduced by 9.3% from 2015-19 is good news, but with a rider – expensive weapon systems such as aircraft, tanks, top end radars, and specialised armament, would continue to be imported for many more years and contribute to the import bill.

Second, the IAF has thrown its full weight behind indigenous fighter aircraft – LCA Tejas Mk1A, Tejas Mk2 and the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), all of which are planned with American engines. The IAF's kinetic operational potential would, thus, become a function of America's calculations of India's worth in its strategic calculus. Would India be weaned away from its heavy dependence on



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New Delhi needs to avoid a dependency that affects its strategic autonomy

Russia, which contributes to 36% of its arms imports? The IAF's inventory of 270 Sukhoi Su-30 fighters, S-400 missile systems and similar big-ticket items for the Indian Army and the Indian Navy stand out against a positive affirmation.

Third, the frequent coinage of fancy-sounding new policies in India-U.S. relations in the past two decades should keep India on its toes vis-à-vis their demonstrated short shelf life. Whatever became of the 'Defence Technology and Trade Initiative' of 2012 which was much tom-tommed, and also said to bring in niche cutting-edge technology and usher in a new paradigm in defence cooperation? Are we sure that the end result of the recently announced framework for the 'U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership in the 21st Century' would be any different considering the tempestuous churn in American foreign policy with a transactional new U.S. administration under President Donald Trump?

'Partnership' is the key word

There is historical reality to back this negative appreciation. The joint statement, after U.S. Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter's visit to India in April 2016, said that [a] "defence relationship is a key component of the strategic partnership between India and the U.S." Similar sentiments have been expressed recently after the Trump-Modi talks.

The key word is 'partnership'. But the million-dollar question is whether two nations that are culturally, financially and with differing world outlooks, be true partners. An article by Anna Simons, Professor of Defence Analysis, in the Winter 2013-14 issue of the U.S. Army War College magazine, *Parameters*, says that "...a partnership can succeed only if it is grounded in mutual indispensability", since "...anything less creates a dependency, and a dependency by definition is not partnership." This raises the question whether India and the U.S. are indispensable to each other. And if they are not,

then can Washington and New Delhi be true partners?

The indispensability factor can be tested by seeking answers to three pointers. First, are both parties equals, interchangeable and can blend seamlessly? Second, is a division of tasks possible for joint programmes? Third, can the expertise possessed by each nation complement and fill the gaps that exist in the other's capabilities? A truthful analysis of their respective defence research and development and manufacturing sectors shows that there is great asymmetry in the capabilities, and the follow up can only result in India's stifling dependency on the U.S.

But the same questions can be asked about the other relationships of India too, say with Russia, Israel or France. The answer lies in whether India has a political indispensability quotient in such strategic relationships or whether it is like the U.S.-Pakistan 'partnership' that broke when Islamabad outlived Washington's geo-political interests and was dumped like a fly in a tea cup. Or, even the recent unravelling of the U.S.'s decades long and iron-clad trans-Atlantic partnership with Europe, leading to questions being asked about the reliability of the Trumpian friendship.

Looking ahead

This brings us back to the theme of this article. Are we heading the correct way as we look to the U.S. for our strategic armament needs? The answer, surprisingly, actually lies with Washington on whether the U.S. wants a 'true partnership', in which case it has to make India politically indispensable to itself (the U.S.) by imbuing a special friendly slant in our relations. On India's part, New Delhi must ensure that its decisions 'insure' its interests against any U.S. policy reversal in the geopolitical environment that it is placed in. Even as India imports vitally needed aircraft and other equipment, its eyes need to be wide open to avoid a dependency that would negatively affect its strategic autonomy.

आत्मनिर्भर भारत और रक्षा उत्पादन

भारत में रक्षा क्षेत्र के सार्वजनिक उपक्रम लंबे समय से सशस्त्र बलों के प्रमुख आपूर्तिकर्ता रहे हैं। 'आत्मनिर्भर भारत' अभियान के तहत यह निर्भरता और बढ़ी है। भारतीय वायुसेना (IAF) तेजी से घटते स्क्वाड्रन की संख्या और हिंदुस्तान एयरोनॉटिक्स लिमिटेड (HAL) की धीमी उत्पादन दर को लेकर चिंतित है। हालांकि, हाल ही में तेजस एमके-1ए लड़ाकू विमान की आपूर्ति को लेकर सरकार और निजी कंपनियां सक्रिय दिख रही हैं।

SIPRI रिपोर्ट और अमेरिकी नीतियां

1. **भारत के हथियार आयात में गिरावट** – स्टॉकहोम इंटरनेशनल पीस रिसर्च इंस्टीट्यूट (SIPRI) की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, 2020-24 में भारत दुनिया में दूसरा सबसे बड़ा हथियार आयातक बना रहा। हालांकि, 2015-19 की तुलना में इसमें 9.3% की गिरावट आई है। लेकिन उन्नत हथियार प्रणाली, लड़ाकू विमान और टैंकों के आयात की आवश्यकता बनी रहेगी।

2. **अमेरिकी इंजनों पर निर्भरता** – भारतीय वायुसेना के भविष्य के स्वदेशी लड़ाकू विमान (तेजस एमके-1ए, तेजस एमके-2, और AMCA) मुख्य रूप से अमेरिकी इंजनों पर निर्भर हैं। इससे भारत की सैन्य शक्ति अमेरिका के रणनीतिक हितों पर निर्भर हो सकती है।
3. **अमेरिका की अल्पकालिक रक्षा नीतियां** – अमेरिका-भारत रक्षा संबंधों में कई नई नीतियों को बढ़ावा दिया गया, लेकिन वे ज्यादा समय तक नहीं टिकीं। 2012 की 'Defence Technology and Trade Initiative' हो या हाल ही में घोषित 'U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership' – इनका प्रभाव सीमित रहा है।

भारत-अमेरिका रक्षा साझेदारी: सच्चाई या भ्रम?

विशेषज्ञों का मानना है कि सच्ची साझेदारी तभी संभव होती है जब दोनों पक्ष एक-दूसरे के लिए अपरिहार्य हों। भारत और अमेरिका के बीच कई असमानताएं हैं:

- **तकनीकी व औद्योगिक असमानता** – अमेरिका की रक्षा क्षमताएं अत्यधिक विकसित हैं, जबकि भारत अभी आत्मनिर्भर बनने की प्रक्रिया में है।
- **रणनीतिक अनिवार्यता** – अमेरिका ने अतीत में अपने सहयोगियों (जैसे पाकिस्तान) को केवल अपने हितों के अनुसार प्राथमिकता दी है और जरूरत खत्म होते ही दूर कर दिया है।

क्या भारत सही दिशा में बढ़ रहा है?

भारत को यह सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि वह अमेरिका पर अत्यधिक निर्भर न हो और अपनी रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता बनाए रखे। अमेरिका के साथ रक्षा सहयोग बढ़ाना आवश्यक है, लेकिन इसे सतर्कता और राष्ट्रीय हितों की स्पष्ट समझ के साथ करना चाहिए।

निष्कर्ष

भारत को अपने रक्षा सौदों में विविधता बनाए रखनी चाहिए और स्वदेशी रक्षा उत्पादन को बढ़ावा देना चाहिए। साथ ही, किसी भी देश पर अत्यधिक निर्भरता से बचते हुए, अपनी रक्षा नीति को संतुलित रखना जरूरी है ताकि भविष्य में कोई भी भू-राजनीतिक परिवर्तन भारत के राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा हितों को प्रभावित न कर सके।

7. भारत-म्यांमार मुक्त आवाजाही व्यवस्था: जारी रहे या खत्म हो?

Paper II

Should the free movement regime between India and Myanmar remain?

PARLEY

Henry Zodinlana Pachau
Professor of Social Work, Mizoram University

Likhasang Sangtam
Associate Professor, Political Science, Nagaland University

Indian Army personnel keep vigil along the India-Myanmar international border. RTU/BAU KHOWAI

has been imposed upon them. The Chins across the border have close ties with us, the Mizos. This is same for communities in Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. We share the same ancestors. There are also fears that ancestral lands could be taken away because of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, which says the government can use forest area within 100 km of the international boundary for strategic projects of national importance. I think fencing is a coercive decision.

LS: If the Government of India is not tactful on this issue, there is a high possibility that the people's demand for a common homeland will be reignited. In Nagaland in particular, the border is along the eastern region, where there is a demand for the creation of Frontier Nagaland. The people in this region are quite neglected, and the unemployment rate is high. A good number of educated youth from this region have not been absorbed into the system. So, when such decisions are taken without the consent of the people, this may work against the country or the government.

So, do you think the FMR should stay? If not, what can be a win-win alternative?

HZP: The FMR is a good way of trying to monitor what is taking place but the ground reality is different and I am not sure fencing will help. The border areas need to be monitored properly to serve India's economic purposes better. We need to check the smuggling of drugs such as heroin, gold, and other items and ensure that certain commodities traded for the benefit of a few families are not dumped on everyone. India's Act East policy is a good strategy but people are aware of the militarisation that came in with the BAPF. Restrictions should ease, but there should be proper monitoring so that there is adherence to rules. India should legalise the trade of most goods as people are trading them anyway.

LS: Erecting a fence along the entire stretch is going to be a daunting task, and it's going to be a big challenge for the government to implement it, especially if the people are not taken into account. There will be a lot of resistance as there are many communities every 5-6 km. Handling them will not be easy.

Will a barrier stoke the old demand for a unified homeland as many communities are divided by a border that they did not opt for?

HZP: Definitely, as people think the boundary

How has the FMR impacted the lives of communities along the 1,653-km-long India-Myanmar border?

Henry Zodinlana Pachau: There were transactions and there was movement of people even before the FMR was put in place and before rules and policies were implemented. I remember as children we would have access to items from across the border. It is natural for Mizoram, which has international borders. The communities along the border have developed because of this ongoing trade. The FMR did not make much of a difference because there has been no check on people moving beyond the 16 km specified.

Likhasang Sangtam: I come from one of the districts bordering Myanmar. The FMR is quite unknown to the communities living on the border. It has become an issue only because of the problem in Manipur. This border was drawn without the consent of the people, and they were quite ignorant about it. But the people in the region did not get affected by the FMR at all because the two countries did not impose any restrictions on their movement.

How justified is the Centre's security concern? The Centre believes that scrapping the FMR will help stop migration and cross-border crimes.

HZP: After the Border Area Development Programme (BAPF, 1980s), the presence of the armed forces increased, but a lot of contraband goods continue to be smuggled into India. Mizoram, as reported in your newspaper, has been a route for drugs, area mums, and gold – all of which is brought in illegally. So I don't think scrapping the FMR will make any difference to cross-border crimes.

LS: That the government wants to scrap the FMR or fence the India-Myanmar border is understandable from a security perspective. The government is worried and is keen to do something sooner rather than later. If the government ignores the problems along the border, that could become an even bigger problem for it.

However, since the people were not taken into account when the FMR was put in place, building a fence could lead to protests. If not handled properly, this could become a bigger problem for the country. The Government of India has to consider many factors – the instability in Myanmar, the presence of armed groups, the drugs that are coming in from the Golden Triangle further away (a region where the jungle borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet and which is one of the world's main illicit drug production and trafficking areas), and the Chinese influence in Myanmar. Then it must take the people into confidence and take a decision.

How practical is the Centre's plan to fence the border?

HZP: Our Chief Minister (Lakshumba) said he did not like the idea of building fences but we understand borders are sensitive in terms of national security. There is a paradox: a border is a place where people and cultures meet yet it defines territories, boundaries, and sovereignty. The Centre has a rationale behind the decision and the former Manipur Chief Minister's complaints that "infiltrators" from Myanmar played a role in the ethnic violence in Manipur played a part. As in Manipur, many people who have been displaced by Myanmar's civil war are in Mizoram too, and the community is taking care of them on humanitarian grounds. The situation is affecting the business of the local communities which are dependent on each other and has led to a lot of social problems.

I don't know what the government intends to do, but fencing has not worked even in advanced countries such as the United States. This may be a copy of the Donald Trump administration's strategy, but it is very impractical when you consider the terrain and the length of the border, which is almost 1,700 km. It is better to have customs and other departments positioned along the border, which will engage in regular dialogue with their counterparts on the other side. Putting up a fence has never worked and never will work.

परिचय

भारत-म्यांमार सीमा पर मुक्त आवाजाही व्यवस्था (FMR) वर्षों से लागू है, जिससे सीमावर्ती समुदायों को 16 किमी तक बिना वीजा आने-जाने की सुविधा मिलती है। लेकिन, गृह मंत्री अमित शाह ने 2024 में इसे खत्म करने की घोषणा की, हालांकि अब तक कोई आधिकारिक अधिसूचना नहीं आई है।

समर्थन में तर्क

- ✓ **सांस्कृतिक और पारिवारिक संबंध:** मिजोरम, नागालैंड, मणिपुर और अरुणाचल प्रदेश में रहने वाले लोग म्यांमार की कई जनजातियों से सांस्कृतिक और पारिवारिक रूप से जुड़े हैं।
- ✓ **स्थानीय व्यापार और अर्थव्यवस्था:** पारंपरिक व्यापार और वस्तु विनिमय इस क्षेत्र के आर्थिक तंत्र का हिस्सा हैं।
- ✓ **मानवीय आधार:** म्यांमार में जारी संघर्ष के कारण बड़ी संख्या में शरणार्थी भारत आए हैं, जिनका स्थानीय लोग समर्थन कर रहे हैं।

⚠ विरोध में तर्क

✗ **राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा पर खतरा:** सरकार का मानना है कि यह व्यवस्था अवैध घुसपैठ, मादक पदार्थों की तस्करी, सोना और अन्य प्रतिबंधित वस्तुओं के व्यापार को बढ़ावा दे रही है।

✗ **मणिपुर हिंसा से जुड़ाव:** मणिपुर के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि म्यांमार से आए अवैध प्रवासियों ने वहां की जातीय हिंसा को बढ़ावा दिया।

✗ **सीमा पर अस्थिरता:** म्यांमार की अराजक स्थिति, विद्रोही गुटों की सक्रियता और चीन के प्रभाव के कारण भारत के लिए यह एक चुनौती बन गया है।

🏠 सीमा पर बाड़ लगाने का मुद्दा

👉 **तकनीकी कठिनाइयाँ:** भारत-म्यांमार सीमा लगभग 1,700 किमी लंबी है, और इसे ऊबड़-खाबड़ पहाड़ी इलाकों में घेरना मुश्किल होगा।

👉 **स्थानीय विरोध:** सीमावर्ती समुदायों को बिना भरोसे में लिए यह कदम उठाना मुश्किल होगा और इससे असंतोष और अलगाववादी आंदोलन को बढ़ावा मिल सकता है।

👉 **प्रभावी समाधान:** कड़ी निगरानी, कानूनी व्यापार को बढ़ावा देना और स्थानीय समुदायों को सीमा प्रबंधन में भागीदार बनाना एक बेहतर रणनीति हो सकती है।

🤝 निष्कर्ष

क्या FMR को जारी रखना चाहिए? इसका कोई सीधा उत्तर नहीं है। जबकि राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा को ध्यान में रखना जरूरी है, लेकिन सीमा के लोगों की ऐतिहासिक और सामाजिक वास्तविकताओं को भी अनदेखा नहीं किया जा सकता। सरकार को चाहिए कि वह बिना जल्दबाजी के, सभी हितधारकों से चर्चा कर संतुलित समाधान निकाले।

🏠 **सीमा पर बाड़ ही एकमात्र उपाय नहीं है, बल्कि सहयोग, निगरानी और समझदारी से समस्या का हल संभव है!** 🏠 🌐

8. ✨ तीसरी भाषा की बाध्यता: शिक्षा नीति की त्रुटि?

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+ Polity G.S. Pops II

The flawed push for a third language

While students can study multiple languages privately, it's not cost-effective to fund the teaching of more than two languages in public schools. When India's schools struggle with basic proficiency in two languages, enforcing a third without any clear benefits is deeply flawed

Full Content

By Ashish Vardhan Sharma

Evidence-based policymaking relies on data, research, and statistical analysis – not ideology, untested assumptions or political convenience. It ensures that policies address real needs, maximize effectiveness, and avoid unnecessary burdens. By this standard, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's push for a third language in schools fails to meet the mark.

What do surveys say?

Any discussion on teaching a third language must begin with an honest evaluation of India's school system and its capacity to teach subjects effectively. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a global test which evaluates reading, math, and science skills of 15-year-olds, conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, highlights India's struggle. In 2009, India ranked 73 out of the 74 participating countries, ahead of only 10. Since then, India has withdrawn from PISA. In contrast, countries like Singapore, China, South Korea, Estonia and Finland have consistently ranked near the top, reflecting the strength of their school education systems.

Domestic surveys paint an equally dismal picture. The National Achievement Survey (NAS), conducted every three years since 2008, assesses learning outcomes in Classes 3, 5, 8, and 10. NAS 2017 found that only 40% of Class 8 students could read a simple paragraph in their regional language or Hindi; only 47% could write as easy a letter, and just 42% had a good grasp of grammar. NAS 2020 showed slight improvements of 56%, 49%, and 44%, respectively. NAS 2018 found that English proficiency, tested only at the Class 10 level, was equally poor.

Nasally, NAS does not test a third language proficiency, raising concerns about policymakers' reluctance to scrutinize effectiveness.

The Annual State of Education Report (ASER), conducted by the NGO Pratham, assesses school enrollment and learning outcomes in rural India. ASER 2018 found that 27% of Class 8 students couldn't read even a Class 2 level text properly in their regional language or Hindi. This worsened to 30.4% in 2022. In 2006, the percentage of Class 8 students who could not read even simple sentences in English was 73.0%; in 2022, it was still a staggering 53.7%. Like NAS, ASER does not evaluate third language proficiency.

Many of India's school students are struggling with even their mother tongue and barely managing English, which raises the question: isn't it better to teach two languages well rather than three poorly? The absence of credible data on third language proficiency invalidates the policy from scrutiny. Even NEP 2020 fails to address the data gap.

Therefore, wouldn't it be wiser to allocate scarce resources toward strengthening core subjects like math and science, and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI)? China is already playing AI in 184 schools, including for six-year-olds. Estonia, Canada, South Korea, and the U.K. are integrating AI into secondary education.

What does research say?

NEP 2020's trilingual policy oversimplifies a complex issue, offering a



Standing strong: NEP 2020's trilingual policy is the focus of a protest in Parliament on March 11.

single-sentence endorsement without references to global best practices.

The Cambridge Handbook of Third Language Acquisition highlights that cognitive benefits occur when learners are challenged but not overwhelmed. Learning a third language (L3) increases cognitive load. If students are still struggling with their first (L1) and second (L2) languages, learning L3 may exceed their cognitive capacity, causing mental fatigue and disrupted learning efficiency. It also reduces practice time for L1 and L2, reducing their retention, with L2 being more vulnerable. Cross-linguistic interference can cause pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary mix-ups.

Achieving equal fluency in three languages is rare; one typically dominates while the others weaken. Research also shows that language similarity impacts learning ease. Speakers of Marathi, Punjabi, and Odia (Indo-Aryan languages) rarely experience facilitative transfer when learning Hindi as L3 due to shared grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics. In contrast, Tamil (Sino-Tibetan), Sanskrit (Indo-European), and Min (Sino-Tibetan) speakers face non-facilitative transfer, making L3 acquisition much harder and creating an asymmetric learning burden.

NEP 2020's rigid trilingual mandate overlooks these complexities.

Implementation challenges

While students can study multiple languages privately, it's not cost-effective to fund the teaching of more than two languages in public schools. Adding a third language requires significant investments in teacher recruitment, training, textbooks, and technology – a major challenge for rural schools and budget-constrained States.

NEP 2020 claims that no language will be forced on States, and students are free to choose any three languages, provided that at least two are native to India. However, the "Choice" is illusory. Imagine a school in Tamil Nadu where 30% of students want to learn Telugu, 20% Malayalam, 20% Kannada, 10% Hindi, and 10% Sanskrit as their third language. Such varied preferences make it impractical to have enough qualified teachers for each language. There is a hidden push here for Hindi or Sanskrit in non-Hindi-speaking States because cost and supply constraints will compel schools to offer one or both as the third language.

NEP 2020's three-language policy ignores these real-world challenges, preventing

THE GIST

✶ The Cambridge Handbook of Third Language Acquisition highlights that cognitive benefits occur when learners are challenged but not overwhelmed. Learning a third language (L3) increases cognitive load.

✶ NEP 2020 vaguely mentions using technology for language learning but overlooks the game-changing potential of AI-powered translator tools.

✶ The 2011 Census states that 43.62% of Indians speak Hindi. However, some scholars like G.N. Devy, in India's Linguistic Civilization, reveal this figure is inflated by including 53 other languages as "dialects" of Hindi. Several of these languages like Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili, and Rajasthani, are completely independent languages, much older than Hindi. Excluding these, true Hindi speakers account for just 25% of the population.

✶ Moreover, the 2011 Census highlights that 63.46% of Indians have never left their home States and use only their languages, the push for Hindi as a national lingua franca, whether direct or indirect, is completely misguided.

✶ The idea that a single language is essential for national unity is a European import. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Romania and several other European countries embraced linguistic nationalism. But applying this model to India – one of the world's most linguistically diverse civilisations – is deeply flawed. It is like replacing a vibrant, biodiverse forest with a sterile monoculture. Historian John R. Heilbrunn's Decentralism, credits India's linguistic flexibility for its unity, unlike Pakistan, which used linguistic Urdu as the sole national language, alienating Bengalis and leading to Bangladesh's creation. India recognised 22 languages in the Constitution's Eighth Schedule, reorganised States linguistically, and retained English as an official language – defining tensions, preserving unity, and strengthening federalism.

Evidence over ideology

The NEP 2020's mandatory three-language policy is a textbook example of ideology trumping evidence. When India's schools struggle with basic proficiency in two languages, enforcing a third without any clear benefits or consideration for cognitive strain, funding and implementation is deeply flawed.

One reason non-Hindi speaking southern States, particularly Tamil Nadu, outperform the Hindi heartland economically is because of their greater embrace of English. Tamil Nadu's successful two-language policy, in place since 1968, proves that linguistic pragmatism fuels progress. Yet, NEP 2020 disregards both internal successes and global best practices, pushing a rigid trilingual mandate.

India should learn from Singapore and adopt a pragmatic two-language policy, emphasising English for global competitiveness and regional languages for cultural preservation. Linguistic nationalists must give way to policies that empower students.

Writer is a retired IAS officer and former VC of Indian Maritime University, Chennai.

भारत की नई शिक्षा नीति (NEP) 2020 स्कूलों में तीसरी भाषा लागू करने पर जोर देती है। लेकिन क्या यह व्यावहारिक और लाभकारी है? आइए आंकड़ों और शोध के आधार पर इसकी समीक्षा करें।

📊 भारत की शिक्षा व्यवस्था की हकीकत


❖ **PISA टेस्ट (2009):** भारत 73वें स्थान पर, केवल किर्गिस्तान से बेहतर। बाद में भारत ने PISA से ही हटने का फैसला किया।

❖ **राष्ट्रीय उपलब्धि सर्वेक्षण (NAS):**

- 2017: केवल 48% छात्र कक्षा 8 तक अपनी मातृभाषा या हिंदी में एक पैराग्राफ पढ़ सकते थे।
- 2021: सुधार हुआ, लेकिन फिर भी 56% छात्र ही सही से पढ़ पाए।

◆ ASER रिपोर्ट:

- 2022 में 30.4% छात्र कक्षा 2 के स्तर की किताब भी नहीं पढ़ पा रहे थे।
- अंग्रेजी पढ़ने में 53.3% छात्र असफल रहे।

 जब छात्र अपनी पहली (L1) और दूसरी भाषा (L2) भी सही से नहीं सीख पा रहे, तो तीसरी (L3) भाषा जोड़ना कितना उचित है?

वैज्ञानिक अध्ययन क्या कहते हैं?


☐ "कैम्ब्रिज हैंडबुक ऑफ़ थर्ड लैंग्वेज एक्विजिशन" बताता है कि:

☒ तीसरी भाषा सीखना तभी फायदेमंद है जब पहली दो भाषाओं पर मजबूत पकड़ हो।

☒ L1 और L2 कमजोर होने पर L3 सीखने से दिमाग पर अतिरिक्त बोझ पड़ता है, जिससे सीखने की क्षमता घट जाती है।

☒ भाषाओं के आपसी प्रभाव से उच्चारण, व्याकरण और शब्दावली में गड़बड़ियां होती हैं।

☒ सभी भाषाओं में समान दक्षता संभव नहीं होती – एक भाषा हावी रहती है, जबकि बाकी कमजोर पड़ती हैं।

 तो क्या यह नीति व्यावहारिक है?

तीसरी भाषा लागू करने की कठिनाइयाँ

1 अतिरिक्त शिक्षकों की जरूरत:

- कई सरकारी स्कूलों में पहली दो भाषाओं के भी पर्याप्त शिक्षक नहीं हैं।
- विभिन्न राज्यों में अलग-अलग भाषाओं की मांग होने से प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों की कमी होगी।


2 छात्रों की पसंद की बाधयता:

- तमिलनाडु के किसी स्कूल में अलग-अलग छात्रों की तीसरी भाषा की अलग-अलग पसंद होगी (जैसे: तमिल, तेलुगु, कन्नड़, हिंदी, संस्कृत)।
- क्या हर स्कूल इतने शिक्षकों को रख पाएगा? ☒ असंभव!


3 आधुनिक तकनीक को नज़रअंदाज़ करना:

- AI अनुवाद टूल्स अब सीखने की प्रक्रिया को आसान बना रहे हैं।
- बजाय कि छात्रों पर तीसरी भाषा थोपी जाए, उन्हें तकनीक की मदद से सीखने का विकल्प दिया जाए।


सिंगापुर से सीखने योग्य सबक

- ✓ ली कुआन यू ने सिंगापुर के बहुभाषी समाज में व्यावहारिक दृष्टिकोण अपनाया।
 - ✓ उन्होंने अंग्रेजी को मुख्य भाषा और मातृभाषा को दूसरी भाषा रखा।
 - ✓ इससे अर्थव्यवस्था मजबूत हुई, सामाजिक समरसता बनी रही और सिंगापुर शिक्षा में आगे बढ़ा।
-  भारत को भी यही नीति अपनानी चाहिए – मातृभाषा + अंग्रेजी!

हिंदी को अनिवार्य बनाने की समस्या

- ◆ भारत में सिर्फ 25% लोग ही शुद्ध हिंदी बोलते हैं, जबकि संविधान में 22 भाषाओं को मान्यता प्राप्त है।
 - ◆ अधिकांश भारतीय अपने ही राज्यों में रहते हैं, और दूसरे राज्यों की भाषा सीखने की जरूरत नहीं पड़ती।
 - ◆ यूरोपीय देशों ने "एक राष्ट्र, एक भाषा" नीति अपनाई, लेकिन भारत की विविधता को देखते हुए यह असंगत है।
-  भारत को लचीला भाषा दृष्टिकोण अपनाना चाहिए, न कि जबरन हिंदी थोपनी चाहिए।

निष्कर्ष: व्यावहारिक नीति की जरूरत

- ✗ NEP 2020 की तीन-भाषा नीति तर्कसंगत नहीं है।
 - ✓ अंग्रेजी + मातृभाषा ही सबसे बेहतर विकल्प है।
 - ✓ तकनीक के उपयोग से छात्रों को अधिक भाषाएँ सीखने के विकल्प दिए जाएँ, लेकिन मजबूर न किया जाए।
-  भारत को भाषा नीति में लचीलेपन की जरूरत है, न कि किसी एक भाषा को थोपने की!

