



नीति आयोग
NITI AAYOG



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AGRICULTURE

1. [Role of Artificial Intelligence of Things in Agricultural Sustainability in India](#)

Prasanta Moharaj and Susanta Kumar Sethy

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 18, 02 May, 2026

The transformative role of the artificial intelligence of things in the Indian agricultural sector is explored, highlighting its significant implications for agricultural sustainability. AIoT's contribution to agricultural efficiency and sustainability in Indian agriculture is highlighted. AIoT not only bolsters sustainable farming practices but also positively influences the economic conditions of farmers, marking a notable progression towards a modernised, efficient, and sustainable agricultural future in India.

2. [Climate-smart Agriculture in Arunachal Pradesh](#)

Bondita Saikia

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 22, 30 May, 2026

Through a primary survey, the adoption, impact, and barriers to climate-smart agriculture among tribal hill communities in Arunachal Pradesh are examined. Findings indicate that factors such as education level, credit access, and climate risk perceptions significantly influence adoption decisions. CSA practices contribute positively to household income and vegetation health. Nevertheless, persistent constraints that include insecure land tenure, limited training opportunities, and sociocultural barriers impede broader adoption. Training initiatives, enhanced credit access, and land reform would support CSA and enhance sustainable agricultural development among tribal communities.

3. [Catching Up](#)

Rushikesh Gawade

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026

The agrarian change in Maharashtra reshapes the livelihood of the Dhangar community, a semi-nomadic shepherd caste. This article explores this rural transformation, through the experiences of the community, based on two-month field work in a village in Ahmednagar district. Expansion of

agriculture, especially after a 1970s canal project, reduced their access to pastureland, leading many to abandon shepherding for marginal farming. Others continue under difficult conditions, relying on private lands for grazing. Limited access to forests and scarce employment opportunities constrain mobility, making their integration into village society uneven and marked by persistent challenges.

ECONOMICS

4. [When Proximity Is Not Enough](#)

[Sarafaraj Ahmed](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026](#)

India's efforts to maintain its primacy and remain a sole Vijigishu (a central power) in the South Asian Mandala, through its "Neighbourhood First Policy," have come under unprecedented strain as China's economic, strategic, and diplomatic influence increasingly permeates the region, eroding New Delhi's traditional advantages of proximity, historical and cultural ties. To reverse this trend, India must reimagine its regional strategy—delivering more competitive economic projects, pursuing respectful, egalitarian diplomacy, and revitalising its pluralistic soft power.

5. [What Does Labour Gain with Integration in the Global Value Chain?](#)

[Sagar Roy](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026](#)

The Indian IT sector, since the neo-liberal reforms, has emerged as a key driver of economic growth. While the mainstream narratives suggest that the Indian IT sector's success is a result of laissez-faire policies, this paper argues that state intervention played a critical role in shaping its trajectory. Furthermore, with empirical analysis, this paper highlights how the Indian state facilitated growth at the cost of labour protection by deregulating labour markets, suppressing unionization, and promoting a flexible workforce. Finally, the paper assesses whether labour has meaningfully benefited from integration in global value chains or if it still remains constrained by the industry's political economy.

6. [Do Fiscal Rules Promote Fiscal Performance and Economic Growth?](#)

Irsad, Mohd Yousuf Malik and Syed Hasan Jafar

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 20, 16 May, 2026

The relationship between fiscal rules, fiscal performance, and economic growth in India and its sub-national economies from 1991 to 2022 is examined. Over the period observed, the fiscal performance index increased from 50.5 to 60.5, while state-level fiscal performance remained stable, deteriorating during the COVID-19 recession, and improving thereafter. The findings reveal that economic growth contributes more significantly to fiscal performance at the national level than at the state level. Fiscal rule has a positive impact on fiscal discipline for India; however, at the state level, it has a negative coefficient, suggesting that stricter rules might constrain flexibility, leading to adverse effects on fiscal performance as well as economic growth.

7. [US–Iran War: Strategic Wins and Geoeconomic Compulsions](#)

Anuradha Chenoy

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 19, 09 May, 2026

Asymmetrical power does not necessarily mean strategic or economic defeat for the lesser power. President Donald Trump declared that “Project Freedom,” by which the United States (US) Navy would “guide” ships through the Strait of Hormuz, is paused to give negotiations a chance. This US de-escalation signifies a strategic win for Iran in these battles, though the war is not over till peace is signed. The balance of power in West Asia has shifted. American global primacy is questioned. A changed global order is visible where smaller states can show agency and strategic choice if they have spine and resilience, as displayed by Iran.

EDUCATION

8. [Competitive Individualism](#)

Jandhyala B G Tilak and Amruth G Kumar

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 22, 30 May, 2026

Private coaching at the school level in India is examined, using evidence from the National Sample Survey Office’s Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education, 2025. Analysing the prevalence of private coaching and household expenditure on private coaching and on total education, it is

observed that private coaching has grown and become widespread, producing certain ill effects on school education. This has important policy implications for school education.

8. [**The Segregative Effects of Charter Schools**](#)

[Angela Crema](#)

[American Economic Journal: Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2026](#)

I study the effects of charters on student racial segregation, identifying a novel mechanism: the assignment of White and non-White students to regular classrooms within their school-grade. Exploiting almost 100 entries of elementary charters in North Carolina from 1997 to 2015, I show that the announcement of an opening significantly increases classroom segregation within public schools nearby, relative to schools farther away, especially within non-majority-White schools and for charter openings that enroll a relatively large share of White students. Accounting for classrooms is unlikely to reverse the literature's conclusion that the charter effects on student segregation are modest in magnitude.

9. [**Short- and Long-Term Effects of Universal Preschool: Evidence from the Arab Population in Israel**](#)

[Elad DeMalach and Analia Schlosser](#)

[American Economic Journal: Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2026](#)

We estimate the causal impacts of universal preschool by leveraging a quasi-experimental design based on Israel's implementation of free public preschool for children ages 3 and 4 beginning in September 1999. We focus on the Arab population, who were the main beneficiaries of the first phase of the law's implementation. Using a difference-in-differences (DID) research design, we find that universal preschool enhanced individuals' academic performance from elementary school through high school, improved the learning environment, and increased postsecondary enrollment. Additional benefits include reduced juvenile delinquency among males and decreased early marriage among females.

ENVIRONMENT& ECOLOGY

10. [From Implicit Goals in Transfers to Explicit Outcomes](#)

Amitabh Kundu, Madhu Verma and Shweta Bhagwat

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 19, 09 May, 2026

Ecological fiscal transfers are one of the few scalable instruments to address underinvestment in India's forests and ecosystems, where ecology expenditures are largely public. Their share in finance commission transfers has risen significantly. Yet, transfers remain untied, dissolving into general revenues with a small and declining share of forestry in state expenditure. Budget tagging, transparency mechanisms, and outcome dashboards are essential for a due share of ecology at the state level.

11. [Balancing ESG Accountability and Business Flexibility](#)

Abhijit Biswas

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 22, 30 May, 2026

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has introduced a landmark update to India's environmental, social, and governance reporting reform, offering listed entities the flexibility to undertake either a third-party assessment or assurance for Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting Core disclosures. It also introduces voluntary green credit disclosures and defers the ESG obligations for value chain partners.

FINANCE/BANKING

12. [Private Remittance Inflows and Economic Growth of India: Does Financial Sector Development Play Any Role](#)

Javed Ahmad Bhat

Foreign Trade Review, first published online May 29, 2026

In a logistic smooth transition framework, this study examines the impact of remittance inflow on India's economic growth, conditioned on the level of financial sector development. Results document regime dependence, and the estimated coefficients vary across the low- and high-

financial-development regimes in both the short and long run. The complementary role of financial development in the remittance–growth nexus is reported during periods of low financial development. In contrast, during the period of high financial development, the impact of remittance inflow either weakens or turns negative. The results are robust to alternative models and additional proxy measures. Channelling of remittances to productive uses through enhanced financial inclusion and prevention of misallocation into speculative investments is recommended.

13. [Strengthening Urban Governance](#)

Manish Gupta

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 19, 09 May, 2026

Like the earlier finance commissions, the Sixteenth Finance Commission also recommended grants for local bodies. It proposed a substantial increase in local body grants, both in absolute and per capita terms over its predecessor. It recommended a grant of ₹7,91,493 crore for its award period 2026–31, which is about 116% higher than that recommended by the Fifteenth Finance Commission. The commission allocated ₹3,56,257 crore for urban local bodies, reflecting an increased urban share of 45% to address rapid urbanisation and rising service delivery costs. The paper examines the local grants, focusing on grants for ULBs, the conditionalities associated with these grants and highlights issues related to some of the recommendations of the commission.

14. [Implications of the Sixteenth Finance Commission on State Finances](#)

Kamble Pradeep

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 19, 09 May, 2026

The fiscal implications of the Sixteenth Finance Commission’s transfers on state governments are examined. The Sixteenth Finance Commission introduces significant changes in the inter se distribution among the states compared to the Fifteenth Finance Commission. The paper analyses the implications of these changes for states’ revenue deficits, their ability to meet the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act targets, and capital expenditure. It also assesses the extent of fiscal adjustment in states, the fiscal behaviour required to sustain adequate capital expenditure and the feasibility of such adjustments. The analysis suggests that, owing to enhanced transfers recommended by the Sixteenth Finance Commission, a few high-income states are likely

to generate substantial revenue surpluses, whereas many middle-income and north-eastern and hilly states may experience revenue deficits. Consequently, middle-income and NEH states

15. [The Sixteenth Finance Commission and the Third Tier](#)

M A Oommen

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 19, 09 May, 2026

How does the Sixteenth Finance Commission fare in taking forward the broader process of decentralisation? With cardinal issues remaining unaddressed, local governments are at risk of being reduced to mere delivery agents of union and state schemes. Structural reforms, including an amendment of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, may be required to strengthen India's fiscal federalism.

HEALTH

16. [Cooking, Health, and Daily Exposure to Pollution Spikes](#)

Susanna B, Berkouwer and Joshua T. Dean

American Economic Journal: Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2026

Many routine daily activities—such as cooking and commuting—because large recurring pollution spikes that may impact health without significantly affecting average exposure. We study pollution spikes by combining experimental variation in cooking technology with high-frequency data on individual pollution exposure and time-use in Kenya. Improved cookstoves reduce PM_{2.5} spikes while cooking by 51.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (41 percent) and cause a 0.24 standard deviation reduction in self-reported respiratory symptoms. However, even after more than three years of daily use, we find no clinical health improvements, possibly because we detect no impact on average exposure. Clinical health improvements may require reductions in ambient concentrations.

17. [Kerala's Health at a Crossroads](#)

B Ekbal

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026

Kerala's health system now confronts a paradox. Low mortality and increased longevity coexist with rising morbidity across age groups and genders, growing mental health burdens, rapid population ageing, and sharply increasing health expenditure, including high out-of-pocket costs

for households. These trends have exposed the limitations of a health strategy centred on curative, hospital-based care. Kerala's current health crisis is not one of declining indicators but of an incomplete transition—from reducing deaths to reducing disease, disability, and financial vulnerability.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

18. [Medical Technology and Life Expectancy: Evidence from the Antitoxin Treatment of Diphtheria](#)

Philipp Ager, Casper W. Hansen and Peter Z. Lin

American Economic Journal: Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2026

We examine the impact of the free supply of diphtheria antitoxin, the first effective medical treatment for an infectious disease, on the historical health transition in Massachusetts. Using newly collected municipality-level data on the distribution of antitoxin and information from over 1.5 million death certificates from 1880 to 1914, we find that the rapid availability of antitoxin treatment significantly increased life expectancy at young ages. Our findings suggest that medicine, combined with an effective public health policy, played a more important role in improving life expectancy in the early twentieth century than previously thought.

19. [India's Services Exports](#)

Deeparghya Mukherjee

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 22, 30 May, 2026

India's services exports have shown phenomenal growth, surpassing India's merchandise exports in recent past. New global developments, including the usage of artificial intelligence, information technology, rising digital restrictiveness and standards, may slow down its growth in the absence of appropriate digital policies and commitments. The article analyses India's mode-wise services exports, identifying major markets and compares it with the trends in the rest of the world. Inferring mode 1 as the dominant channel for India's IT-enabled services exports, it is observed that digital commitments and openness through free trade agreements are increasingly driving IT-based services trade in higher value added segments.

LAW AND SOCIETY

20. [State Recreational Cannabis Laws and Racial Disparities in the Criminal Legal System](#)

Angélica Meinhofer, Adrian Rubli and Jamein P. Cunningham

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2026

We estimate the direct and spillover effects of cannabis legalization on longstanding racial disparities in criminal justice outcomes. We find that legalization reduces cannabis possession and sales arrests for White and Black populations, narrowing but not eliminating disparities. We also find spillover increases in hospitalizations involving cannabis and other illegal drugs. However, spillovers on arrests, incarcerations, and crimes involving serious violent or property offenses are insignificant or even decrease. Other illegal drug sales arrests decrease across populations, while illegal drug incarcerations decrease only among White populations. Spillovers on other low-level offenses are insignificant for White but mixed for Black populations.

21. [Sabarimala: Verdict and Protest](#)

O B Roopesh

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026

Keralam witnessed massive protests after the 2018 verdict of the Supreme Court of India that permitted women to enter the Sabarimala temple during their menstruating age. The ban on women's entry was upheld by the High Court of Kerala in 1991. The dispute and protest became synonymous and a classic case of the conflict between religion and the secular state/judiciary. Following the verdict, many scholarly and popular articles began to polemically discuss "religious freedom" and women's equal right to worship. Scholars approached the issue from various angles.¹ Deepa Das Acevedo's monograph, *The Battle for Sabarimala, Religion, Law and Gender in Contemporary India*, is one of the recent attempts in this regard.

22. [The 'Misuse' of Domestic Violence Law](#)

Madhulika Rathore and Prasenjeet Tribhuvan

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026

In recent years, a few cases of domestic violence in India have drawn the media's attention to the alleged misuse of these laws by women. Specifically, these incidents that involved suicides by husbands attributed harassment by wives and their families by weaponising the anti-domestic violence laws (Pandey 2024; TOI 2025a, 2025b). Every such incident is followed by a keen interest and action from actors of the legal fraternity, news media, anti-feminist movement crusaders and men's rights activists. The ecosystem spawned by these movements has generated, with some success, a discourse that demonises both the feminist movement and the laws that protect women from domestic violence.

23. [Labour, Rights and Constitutional Imagination](#)

Madhulika T and Babu Mathew

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 19, 09 May, 2026

Over the past several decades, the Indian legal academy has been prodigious in its work on the Constitution of India (the Constitution). In matters of free speech, LGBTQIA rights, the interests of religious minorities, and many other contemporary issues, the Constitution has often served either as the central subject of inquiry or as the guiding framework of analysis. Yet, one subject of immense importance that has received little sustained attention in the domain of constitutional scholarship is labour. A quick survey of academic publications reveals not only a striking absence of constitutional engagement with labour law, but also a general paucity of serious writing on labour law and its implications.

RURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

24. [Exploring the Power of Agency in Women's Non-farm Business Participation](#)

Ipsita Sarkar and Divya Pradeep

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 21, 23 May, 2026

The relationship between rural women's agency and their non-farm self-employment is explored. Using a sequential explanatory design and nationally representative India Human Development Survey data, it is shown that agency outcomes, such as household decision-making, freedom of movement and group memberships, are crucial for women's participation and their roles in non-farm businesses. Additionally, personal in-depth interviews with self-employed women in rural

West Bengal and Karnataka reveal how they navigate and negotiate within business environments despite existing constraints