



# **HINDU** **EDITORIAL** **WEEKLY**

*5 August TO 9 August*

## Editorial 1

### Psychology of Wealth

The extravagant display of wealth by billionaires, its social implications, and psychological underpinnings.

The ostentatious display of wealth by billionaires and its stark contrast with the widespread poverty and inequality in contemporary society. A study by economists highlights the severe wealth disparity in India, where the top 1% hold 40 times more wealth than the average Indian, while the bottom 50% and middle 40% hold significantly less. The NITI Aayog's report reveals that despite some poverty alleviation, wealth is still concentrated among the upper castes. The editorial references sociologist Thorstein Veblen's "The Theory of the Leisure Class," which critiques the conspicuous consumption of the affluent as a means of gaining social status. Harvard professor Michael J. Sandel's "The Tyranny of Merit" and John Rawls' "egalitarian argument" are discussed to illustrate the ethical and psychological motivations behind wealth accumulation and the neglect of social responsibility. Sandel's ideas on the rights of the underprivileged are also examined, emphasizing that success often stems from unearned advantages rather than merit. The editorial concludes by highlighting the enduring power of wealth in shaping societal perceptions and perpetuating inequality.



## Editorial 2

### Anti-Conversion Law

The amendments to Uttar Pradesh's anti-conversion law intensify its unconstitutional aspects, curtailing fundamental rights and enabling misuse.

The editorial criticizes the recent amendments to the Uttar Pradesh anti-conversion law, making it more stringent and highlighting its misuse. Originally enacted in 2021, the law has resulted in over 400 cases by 2023. The amendments increase jail terms for forced conversions to up to 20 years and impose fines for foreign-funded conversions. The law now includes strict bail requirements, demanding that the public prosecutor be given a chance to oppose bail and ensuring the accused is not guilty and unlikely to repeat the offense. This is similar to bail provisions in the NDPS Act and PMLA. The editorial finds it troubling that the amendments allow anyone to file complaints against forced conversions, which could be exploited by communal organizations. Previously, only the victim or close family could file complaints. This change seems motivated by past bail grants when complainants were not aggrieved parties. The law's effectiveness in curbing "forced conversions" is questionable, as it might criminalize inter-faith marriages by treating "conversion by marriage" as unlawful. The amendments, which mandate prior notification to authorities for those intending to change their religion, are seen as a violation of fundamental rights and a regression from democratic values, showcasing a medieval mindset inappropriate for a modern constitution.

# STOCK MARKET SPECULATION

**The positive impacts of stock market speculation on the economy.**



The misconceptions surrounding stock market speculation, often seen as gambling, and highlights its benefits for the economy. It begins by noting the Indian government's recent decision to raise taxes on capital gains and the securities transaction tax on derivatives, based on the belief that stock market profits are akin to gambling. Contrary to this belief, the editorial explains how capital gains play a crucial role in efficient capital allocation. It argues that when investors buy undervalued stocks and bid up their prices, they help direct resources to promising businesses, thus supporting economic growth.

Moreover, the speculation allows for better risk management and efficient allocation of resources. During crises like pandemics, the availability of capital for essential sectors, such as healthcare and infrastructure, is vital. Speculators, by forecasting future market trends and making informed investment decisions, contribute to this allocation.

The importance of derivatives in managing risks and providing liquidity. Derivatives allow investors to hedge against price fluctuations and ensure market stability. The criticism that trading derivatives is similar to gambling is addressed by clarifying that these financial instruments serve to manage risks, not create them. Lastly, understanding the role of speculators and the benefits of speculation can lead to better public policy and economic outcomes, emphasizing that speculation, when conducted responsibly, is far from mere gambling and significantly benefits the economy.



## Editorial 2

# INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE

The the pervasive issue of institutional violence against women in India, highlighting systemic challenges and proposing solutions for justice and reform.

The deep-rooted issue of institutional violence against women in India, emphasizing the electoral process's failure to prioritize women's safety. It highlights that nearly half of all women face domestic violence, and a significant portion experience sexual violence, yet these issues are not adequately addressed by political agendas or voters' demands.

The gender-based violence is often presumed to be isolated incidents within households, but institutional violence extends beyond this, being prolonged and exacerbated by systemic issues. Studies reveal that many officers dismiss complaints as baseless, perpetuating a cycle of violence. The lack of proper judicial responses and the burden placed on survivors to seek justice further aggravate the problem.

In rural areas, additional barriers, such as male-dominated panchayats and societal pressures, make it even harder for women to report and seek justice. The backlog of court cases and systemic inequities compound these challenges, leaving many women without recourse.

The national reformation of justice institutions, incorporating trauma-informed practices and leveraging insights from social impact organizations. It stresses the need for better data collection to understand the extent of institutional violence and advocates for strong laws with effective implementation. Recent updates to criminal law, focusing on digital access and timely procedures, are seen as steps in the right direction but require further support through gender-sensitive training and monitoring.

By emphasizing the role of voters and politicians in addressing and combating institutional violence, suggesting that societal change can be driven by widespread awareness and proactive measures.

# INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

*India's rapid economic growth needs strategic policies and inclusive development to achieve a \$30 trillion economy by 2047.*

India's remarkable economic growth, with a 7%+ GDP growth rate positioning it as the world's fastest-growing major economy. Despite this, the goal of achieving a \$30 trillion economy by 2047 requires inclusive growth policies to avoid past pitfalls experienced by other countries. India must focus on leveraging its large working-age population, which has the potential to drive significant economic growth if employed productively. The editorial highlights the necessity for rapid economic growth while addressing income inequality, and stresses the importance of manufacturing and industrial development, drawing lessons from successful East Asian economies.

Policies must emphasize high employment, low-skilled manufacturing, and robust exports. To avoid the middle-income trap, India needs to integrate into global supply chains, invest in quality education, healthcare, and infrastructure, and ensure ease of doing business. Additionally, India must focus on creating a skilled labor force and developing a cluster-led industrial model to attract investments and drive economic diversification. These steps are essential for sustainable economic growth and achieving the ambitious \$30 trillion economy target.



## Editorial 2

### Nutritional Deficiency in India

The NSSO's recent report highlights the nutritional deficiencies among the poor in India, emphasizing the need for targeted nutritional programs.

The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) recently published a detailed report based on the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) for 2022-23. The report provides unit-level data on household consumption, focusing on food and non-food items. This data helps convert quantities of consumed food into their calorific values and estimate the per capita calorie intake of household members across various expenditure classes.

The analysis addresses two key issues: defining the 'poor' and measuring their nutritional levels. Different committees, such as the Lakdawala, Tendulkar, and Rangarajan Committees, have established the poverty line (PL) and the poverty line basket (PLB) based on monetary equivalence for food and non-food expenditure. The Lakdawala Committee defined the PL based on 2,400 kcal per capita per day for rural areas and 2,100 kcal for urban areas. The Tendulkar Committee did not anchor the PL to a calorific norm, while the Rangarajan Committee used a different normative value for calorific intake.

The per capita calorie requirement (PCCR) for a healthy life is derived from the 2020 report of the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition, which estimates the average energy requirements for various age and sex categories. The HCES 2022-23 report estimates that the average MPCE for food is 2,272 kcal in rural areas and 2,135 kcal in urban areas, falling short of the normative PCCR. The proportion of 'poor' is estimated at 17.1% for rural and 14% for urban areas.

Targeted nutritional programs for the poorest are essential to improve their nutritional health and raise their level of nourishment, thus addressing these deficiencies.

## Editorial 1

# STRENGTHENING COUNTER TERROR GRID

*The measures being taken to enhance counter-terrorism efforts in Jammu and Kashmir by inducting additional troops and leveraging local support.*

The challenges faced by security forces in Jammu and Kashmir due to weakened counter-terrorism grid caused by the redeployment of troops after the Galwan incident in June 2020. To address this, approximately 3,000 Army troops and 500 special forces have been inducted into the region. Additionally, Assam Rifles troops have been deployed to strengthen operations, emphasizing the seriousness of the deteriorating security scenario. The key focus is on integrating these troops with the local population to gain support and enhance operational effectiveness. This involves sub-units engaging in psychological operations and gaining the confidence of the locals. The outlines the classical teaching of counter-insurgency, dividing the local population into sub-sets, with success depending on sustaining minority support and winning over the majority. Historical context is provided by referencing the Operation Dudhi in 1991, underscoring the importance of experienced commanders. The piece concludes that while newly-inducted troops face challenges, their deployment must be strategic and integrated to ensure long-term success and stability in the region.



## Editorial 2

### **Recruitment Scandal**

*The fraudulent activities of Puja Khedkar, questioning the integrity of the civil service recruitment process.*

The egregious case of Puja Khedkar, whose fraudulent entry into the civil service has cast doubt on the entire recruitment process. Khedkar manipulated the system by falsely claiming mental illness, visual impairment, and using a community certificate to secure a rank she otherwise wouldn't have achieved. A hospital in Pune, which issued her a disability certificate, revealed it only certified a 7% locomotor disability—insufficient for the concessions she received. Her actions have exposed the vulnerabilities within the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) infrastructure, raising concerns about the fairness and equality of the process. Khedkar's misuse of her father's position in civil services to gain undue advantages and her multiple identities for test-taking further underline the systemic flaws. Additionally, her improper use of an official sticker on her private vehicle has led to the cancellation of her candidature.

The editorial also notes that 2024 has been a troubled year for qualification exams in India, with controversies surrounding NEET UG, NEET PG, and CUET for central university admissions. The UPSC's failure to detect such frauds points to the need for a thorough overhaul of the competitive examination system. The government must ensure that the examination process is robust and secure, preventing such abuses of the system and ensuring that genuinely deserving candidates are fairly assessed and selected.

# JUST TRANSITION LITIGATION

*The potential of just transition litigation in India, particularly in the context of the Supreme Court's handling of climate and biodiversity issues.*



The editorial examines the Supreme Court of India's April 2024 decision in *M.K. Ranjini and Others vs Union of India*, which addresses the adverse impacts of climate change. While the decision has sparked debate, especially regarding its approach to biodiversity protection, the article emphasizes the importance of framing the core issue—climate action—within the concept of just transition.

Just transition, though traditionally focused on protecting workers affected by environmental regulations, is now expanding to include equitable climate action. The editorial argues that framing the Supreme Court's decision in this context will facilitate fair and inclusive climate action, recognizing the interconnectedness of human and non-human environments. This approach could prevent the adversarial framing of biodiversity protection and decarbonization, allowing courts to balance competing interests without sacrificing one for the other.

Moreover, the editorial suggests that this case is an opportunity for the Court to apply the just transition concept more broadly, particularly in renewable energy projects and other areas impacting biodiversity. If successful, just transition litigation could guide future legal developments and research, potentially influencing climate litigation in India and internationally. As the country moves towards net-zero, the need for a fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of decarbonization will only grow, making just transition an increasingly relevant legal framework.



## Editorial 2

# CHALLENGES IN BANGLADESH

*The potential of just transition litigation in India, particularly in the context of the Supreme Court's handling of climate and biodiversity issues.*

The current political unrest in Bangladesh, drawing parallels to the 2009 mutiny of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the crisis it caused for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina shortly after she took office. The recent elections in 2024, marked by the opposition's boycott, declining democratic space, and rising unrest among students and youth, indicate a significant erosion of political stability. This unrest has escalated following protests led by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, raising concerns about the government's ability to maintain control.

The situation is further complicated by the potential rise of General Muhammad Yunus, who has gained popularity as an interim leader capable of unifying the army and government. His leadership could either stabilize the country or exacerbate tensions depending on how the army responds. India's concern is evident, given the possibility of a weakened government in Bangladesh, which could empower anti-India forces and destabilize the region.

The comparisons to the situations in Myanmar and the Maldives, where India has managed its relationships carefully. India's strong development partnership with Bangladesh has historically been a stabilizing factor, and the current unrest underscores the need for India to continue its engagement with Dhaka while navigating the challenges posed by rising authoritarianism and regional instability. India's strategy must balance supporting democratic aspirations in Bangladesh with ensuring regional security and countering any potential threats to its interests.