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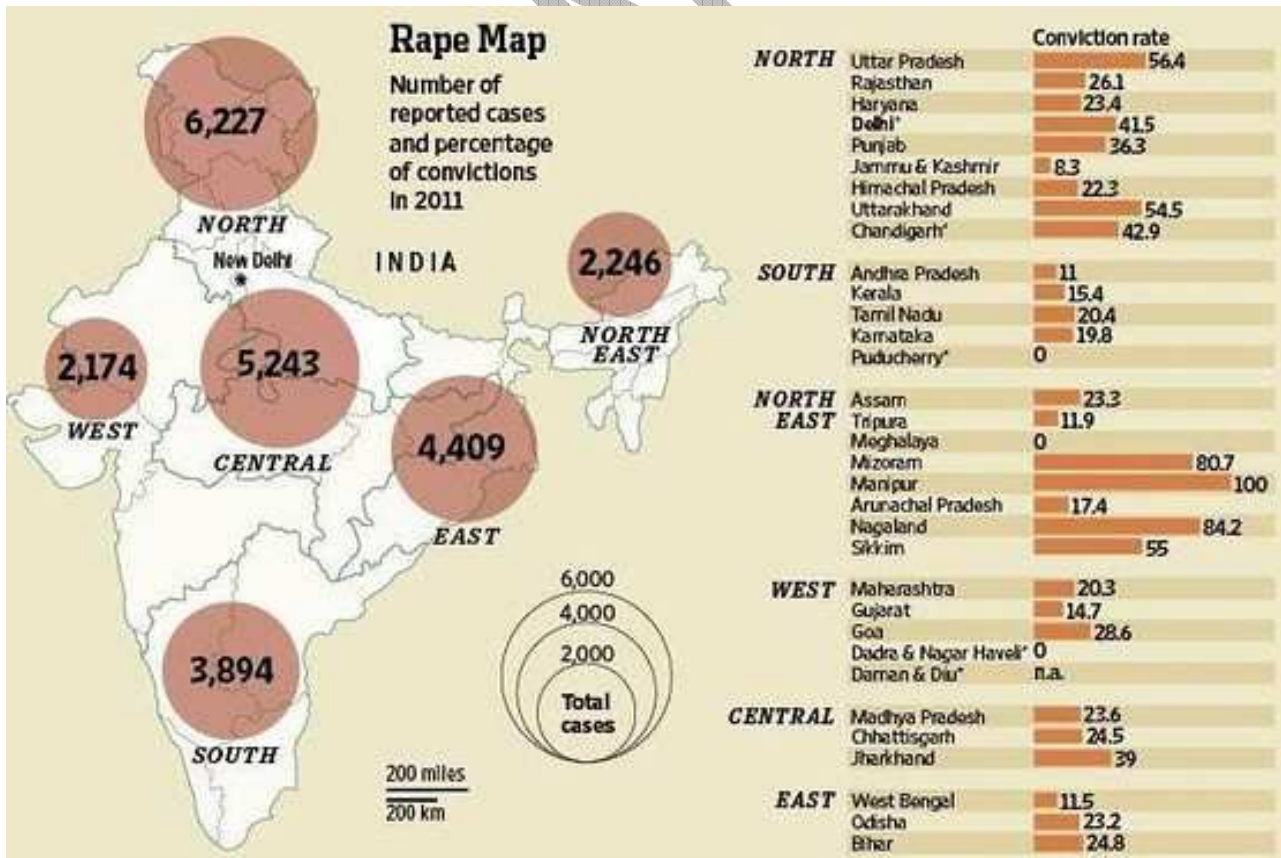- UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

Why was it in news recently?

On 16 December 2012 a female physiotherapy intern was beaten and gang raped in Delhi. After the attack, she was taken to Safdarjang Hospital, received multiple surgeries, and was placed on mechanical ventilation. On 26 December, she was moved to Singapore for further treatment, where she died on 29 December. The incident has generated international coverage and was condemned by every section of the society. Public protests took place in Delhi, where thousands of protesters clashed with security forces.

Rape: Statistics at a glance

The total number of rape case reported last year has been 23582. Of the total number of cases that made to court, the overall rate of convictions stands at 26.4% or 4,072 convictions while 11,351 acquittals were recorded.

		Conviction rate
NORTH	Uttar Pradesh	56.4
	Rajasthan	26.1
	Haryana	23.4
	Delhi*	41.5
	Punjab	36.3
	Jammu & Kashmir	8.3
	Himachal Pradesh	22.3
	Uttarakhand	54.5
	Chandigarh*	42.9
SOUTH	Andhra Pradesh	11
	Kerala	15.4
	Tamil Nadu	20.4
	Karnataka	19.8
	Puducherry*	0
NORTH EAST	Assam	23.3
	Tripura	11.9
	Meghalaya	0
	Mizoram	80.7
	Manipur	100
	Arunachal Pradesh	17.4
	Nagaland	84.2
	Sikkim	55
WEST	Maharashtra	20.3
	Gujarat	14.7
	Goa	28.6
	Dadra & Nagar Haveli*	0
	Daman & Diu*	n.a.
CENTRAL	Madhya Pradesh	23.6
	Chhattisgarh	24.5
	Jharkhand	39
EAST	West Bengal	11.5
	Odisha	23.2
	Bihar	24.8

Rape Map — Number of reported cases and percentage of convictions in 2011

- NORTH: 6,227
- NORTH EAST: 2,246
- WEST: 2,174
- CENTRAL: 5,243
- EAST: 4,409
- SOUTH: 3,894

200 miles / 200 km

Reasons of increasing crime against women

1. Discrimination/bias interwoven in Patriarchal Mindset

The woman's brutal rape and murder provides the spark to bring the *culture of destructive masculinity*, and the pervasiveness of rape and sexual violence in our society to the front and centre of the political agenda.

We need to push back to a place and a point where sexual violence against anyone — sexual or religious minorities, boys, girls and women – appals us. The question is how we get to this point.

In a country which mostly follows a patrilineal system, the *seeds of discrimination* are sown at the lowest social tier itself. Discrimination between sexes in the allocation of scarce resources in various fields such as nutrition, medical care and education is directly related to the greater desirability of the son and the transferability of the daughter. In most families, girls are taught to see brothers get more and better food. This attitude is internalized by girls often without being conscious of it; but a conscious effort is also made so that the girls inculcate the cultural norms which legitimize a differential treatment between girls and boys.

Our legal institutions just as frequently bring to bear *masculine bias* when dealing with gender-sensitive issues. It is not unusual, therefore, that while judges may express revulsion towards rape crimes, they may also say something like *"what was this young woman doing at an ice-cream parlour at that time of the night?"* The idea that women frequently contribute to their own ill-treatment through behaving in an "inappropriate" manner is part of the set of masculine attitudes that characterise a great deal of thinking on gender.

Schools are another site where masculine cultures are both produced and refined. Many of us too frequently make the simplistic assumption that there is a direct connection between girls' education and women's empowerment. The truth of the matter is that girls' education continues to seen through a masculinity lens: that educated girls will make better mothers, rather than that they might be able to exercise individual autonomy. If on the one hand, schooling can reinforce dominant notions regarding "appropriate" male and female behaviour, we need also to realise that formal education is an inadequate measure of women's autonomy. We need to move away from masculine notions of the significance of educated women as good wives and mothers.

It was not in vain that Louis Althusser proclaimed *family* to be one of the most prominent Ideological State Apparatuses. The family is able to adapt to society by ensuring that the functions necessary for maintaining societal power structures are performed within it. Families do not socialise people into normative roles of man/woman, rather into gender specific roles. The terms of relationships in a family are taken for granted and the rigidly defined gender roles assigned within a family are hardly refuted.

Thus, families become repositories of exercising the functions of society and sustaining the power relations endorsed by it. The toys that girls are given, the way girls are encouraged to dress up and be like their mothers, the way they are told to be docile and submissive are all part of this socialisation. And hence, differentiation of gender also becomes differentiation of power and the principle of stratification and

SEX DISCRIMINATION? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

hierarchy in our society continues. It is this that lies at the heart of male violence towards women.

With this theory of socialisation at the back of one's mind, the import of what Ram Singh, driver of the bus aboard which the December 16, 2012 gang rape took place, said about the incident is easily understandable. He categorically mentioned that _it was the defiance of the victim that angered him the most. How dare she fight back, speak back and stand up to them_? The deeply ingrained patriarchal mindset would automatically switch on the punishment button. And what is the biggest punishment for the females of our species? It is to shame her through sexual violation.

Violence against women surges whenever the _patriarchal status quo or the traditional mode is challenged._ It strikes with a severe backlash to kick women back in the space ordained by patriarchy for her. That is why it is important to understand that there is clear-cut power dynamics related with the very concept of rape.

A lot of debate ensued whether the rapists are perverted, mentally sick individuals or it is about proving who the boss is. The important factor in the crime of rape is that it is all-pervasive, and is done across class, caste, region, religion, cultures and countries_. It is not just the sexual desire or lust but the will to subjugate and dominate the victim that leads to rape._ It is an explicit manifestation of the power relations entrenched in our social fabric.

So our society is basically responsible for such crimes. Politicians who encourage a culture of violence by permitting candidates with criminal records to run for and become Members of Parliament, the judges who allow rape cases to either drag on or accept bribes in exchange for acquittals; parents who encourage and at times even applaud the display of aggressive masculinity amongst sons or abort female foetuses; husbands who abuse their wives and teach their sons and daughters that men are entitled to treat women as objects to be possessed as property instead of persons deserving of respect and recognition of their humanity, are all implicated in this culture of violence.

2. Police is the problem!

On Dec. 26, an 18-year-old Punjabi woman committed suicide after police officers refused for five weeks to arrest the men who were suspected of gang raping her and instead pressed her to marry one of the men.

In another case, not long after telling the police that she had been raped, a woman from South Delhi looked out her apartment window and saw the man who had attacked her laughing with an officer who had given him a ride back from the police station.

Even as India grapples with the polarizing issue, a powerful force stands in the way of any fundamental change: a police force that is corrupt, easily susceptible to political interference, heavily male and woefully understaffed.

According to complaints registered by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), at least 45 custodial rapes took place between 2002 and 2010.

In many rape cases, the police spend more time seeking reconciliation between the attacker and the victim than investigating the facts. Over all, experts say, the police are poorly organized to deal with serious crimes, particularly those against women. India has just 1,585,117 officers to protect 1.2 billion

people, or about 130 officers per 100,000 people, the second lowest among 50 countries ranked by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Only Uganda fared worse; many nations have more than twice India's ratio of police officers to population. More than 80 percent of India's police officers are constables who cannot investigate crimes or issue fines; most are assigned to paramilitary forces that do little traditional police work. Just 5 percent of police officers are women, though the government recently announced it would hire more female officers in Delhi.

An impermeable police hierarchy is another problem. Top leaders are taken from the Indian Police Service, an elite core of bureaucrats who never serve in front-line positions. It is all but impossible for a beat cop to rise to the top, making for a wide disconnect between police officers and their leaders. Salaries are abysmal, about $100 per month for constables. Police stations often lack toilets and heat. Many low-level officers pay recruitment bribes of a year's salary to get their jobs, so demanding payments on everything from routine traffic violations to major crimes becomes a way of life. Such behavior saps public trust, worsening security.

Another important reason for that lack of trust is frequent political interference. Officers have few civil service protections, and politicians can transfer or punish police leaders at will. Conspiracies between the police and politicians are common.

In the latest official move to deter further such attacks, the Delhi police announced late last week that constables would be stationed nightly at 300 bus stops around the city. The problem with this plan is that many women say the presence of police officers makes them feel less safe, not more.

The treatment of women by the police is such a concern that laws now forbid officers to arrest or even bring women in for questioning during night hours. In case after case, the police have used their powers to deliver abused women into the hands of their abusers.

Police reforms have been proposed for decades, but few have been put in place, because many of them involve making officers less susceptible to political meddling — something politicians have little incentive to seek.

3. Alcohol

Alcohol use by the victim or perpetrator is frequently associated with acquaintance rape. Men expect to feel more powerful, sexual and aggressive after drinking alcohol. Expectancies have power of their own, independent of any genuine physiological processes. When people expect a certain outcome, they tend to act in ways that enhance the likelihood that the outcome will occur. For example, if a man feels powerful and strong after drinking alcohol, then he is more likely to assert his viewpoints forcefully and to end up in a verbal or physical argument. Studies show that men who think they have been drinking alcohol (whether or not they really have) are more responsive to rape scenarios.

4. Absence of stringent legal framework

Punishment for rape in most countries today is imprisonment, but until the late twentieth century, some states of the U.S., for instance, could apply the death penalty in cases of aggravated rape indicating the severity with which the crime was viewed. Castration is sometimes a punishment for rape and,

controversially, some U.S. jurisdictions allow shorter sentences for sex criminals who agree to voluntary chemical castration.

However, the *punishment in rape cases in India* is life imprisonment or 7 years in jail (in which the convict may be released after 14 years at government's discretion). The absence of a legal frame work, the lack of political will and the lack of commitment on the part of law-enforcement officials to implement the laws as well as the judgments rendered by the subordinate courts are the main causes for such heinous crimes.

What should be done: Some Suggestions?

1. Severe punishments like *death penalty and chemical castration* for sexual offenders through amendments in Central Acts.

2. Set up *fast track Mahila courts* in each district to deal with sexual crimes against women, appoint women investigating officers and prosecutors to make the police probe and trial more gender-sensitive

3. Sexual offences against women should be considered grave crimes henceforth; investigation should be supervised by deputy superintendents of police. Women inspectors, or in their absence, women sub-inspectors should assist the enquiry.

4. Superintendents of police and Deputy Inspectors General should conduct a monthly review of such cases.

5. An integrated women's helpline should be in place with the help of service-minded individuals, activists working for welfare of women and involving trained professionals capable of handling women in distress.

6. Efforts should be taken to install CCTV cameras in all public buildings to easily identify those involved in crime against women.

7. Plainclothes policemen should also be deployed at sensitive installations like malls and women's colleges to monitor the movement of those who harass women.

8. Gender sensitisation modules should be introduced in the curricular areas

9. Various groups have also asked for amendments in the Juvenile Justice Act, to lower the age of Juvenile from 18 to 16.

10. Value education should be an integral part of socialisation.

Immediate actions taken by government

1. On 22 December 2012, a judicial committee headed by J. S. Verma, a former Chief Justice of India, was appointed by the Central government to submit a report, within 30 days, to suggest amendments to criminal law to sternly deal with sexual assault cases.

2. On 26 December 2012, a one-person commission of inquiry headed by a former Delhi High Court judge, Usha Mehra, was set up to identify lapses and determine responsibility in relation to the incident. It will also suggest measures to make Delhi and the wider National Capital Region safer for women. The report is to be submitted within three months and will be tabled in Parliament along with action taken by the government.

3. A 13-member special task force headed by Union Home Secretary was constituted on 1 January 2013 to look into safety issues of women in Delhi and review the functioning of the city police on a fortnightly basis.

4. Women help desks have been installed at the police stations in the Delhi

5. Lines of police helpline have been increased to '100' from 60

6. Women will not be made waiting to register a complaint and their complaints should be recorded verbatim and a copy of that should be given to them. There should be no tutoring.

7. All district heads will be on patrolling till midnight and make sure that local police and PCR vans are deployed adequately to man the streets.

8. A dedicated round-the-clock woman in distress helpline with the number 181 has been made functional in Delhi.

9. Delhi Government was also pitching for 33 per cent reservation for women in the police.

10. On the insistence of the Delhi Government, the High Court has decided to commission five fast-track courts in the city to ensure speedy justice to the victims.

11. The police have also recommended that all Delhi Transport Corporation and cluster buses should install GPS and for the crew to display photo identity cards for better security in public vehicles.

12. CBSE has decided to introduce 'human rights and gender studies' for students from the coming academic session.

Recommendations of Justice Verma Committee

Justice Verma Committee constituted to suggest amendments in laws for sexual crimes submitted its report to the Ministry of Home Affairs on 23rd January, 2012.

The important recommendations are as follows:

1. Retained the existing punishment for rape of 7 years to life imprisonment

2. Suggested 20years of imprisonment to life time for aggravated forms of sexual assault: rape causing death or persistent vegetative state, gang rape, repeat offenders of rape, rape of an underage person followed by death or coma, trafficking by a public servant or of a minor.

3. The Committee has not suggested death penalty for rapist because there was overwhelming suggestions from the women organisations against it. The Committee did not recommend death penalty for rape because it was a "regressive step" and it "may not have a deterrent effect".

4. The Committee rejected the suggestion of chemical castration of rapists as it considered handing down such a punishment would violate human rights and that mutilation of the body is not permitted under the Constitution.

5. In another innovation, the committee has proposed that for several sexual offences, besides being awarded imprisonment, the convict should be rendered "liable to pay compensation to the victim, adequate to meet at least the medical expenses incurred by the victim".

6. The committee has also attacked some of the patriarchal features of the existing statute. It has suggested, what is effectively introduction of marital rape in India. For, the existing law

penalizes marital rape only if the wife is below 15 years of age. The committee has enlarged this provision to all women.

7. It debunked the government's approach of replacing rape with the generic, gender-neutral crime of 'sexual assault'. The committee feared that in the current context such a change might "signal a dilution of the political and social commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting women's right to integrity, agency and autonomy." Arguing for the retention of rape as a distinct offence, the committee said, "This is a widely understood term which also expresses society's strong moral condemnation."

8. The committee rejected the popular demand for lowering the cut off age for juveniles from 18 years to 16 years.

9. The committee suggested that the Chief Justice of the High Court of every state should device appropriate machinery for administration and supervision of these juvenile homes in consultation with experts in the field.

10. The committee has also introduced a heinous offence of "trafficking of a person", punishable with Imprisonment ranging from seven years to life sentence, depending on the gravity of the crime.If a public servant is involved in the trafficking offence, the punishment shall be imprisonment for the rest of that person's natural life.

11. The offences introduced by the committee include voyeurism, stalking, acid attack and, most significantly, "breach of command responsibility", which makes senior officers of the police and security forces accountable for the sexual crimes committed by their subordinates.

12. The committee also introduced the heinous offence of acid attack. If it causes grievous hurt, the punishment shall range from 10 years to life sentence. If the victim escapes without serious damage, the imprisonment for the offender shall range from five years to seven years. The victim of an acid attack would be entitled to the right of private defence to the point of causing death.

13. Existing provisions of molestation and sexual harassment (eve-teasing) have been brought under the offence of "sexual assault". Under it, the punishment for "intentional touching" has been increased from two years to five years while the maximum sentence for other forms of sexual harassment ("using words, acts or gestures") would remain one year.

14. If a woman is assaulted with intent to disrobe her or compel her to be naked in a public place, the imprisonment shall be three years to seven years.

15. The report also introduces the offence of voyeurism, which punishes a "peeping Tom" with imprisonment from one to three years. The range of punishment for a repeat offender would be three to seven years.

16. It also introduces the offence of 'stalking' in any form with the penalty ranging from one to three years.

17. The committee asked MPs and MLAs having heinous cases pending against them to voluntarily quit their seats as a mark of respect to Parliament, legislatures and the Constitution.

18. In its recommendations, the panel dealt with reforms in respect of political establishment and pitched for amendments in Representation of People Act, 1951 to deal with criminalisation of politics.

19. The committee suggested medical examination of victims of sexual assault which were prepared on the basis of the best practices advised by global experts in the field of gynaecology and psychology.

20. Suggesting amendments in the controversial AFSPA, the Committee has recommended that armed forces and police personnel should not be given protection under the law if these men in uniform commit sexual offences against women.

21. It has also recommended forming a new constitutional authority like the CAG for dealing with issues related to education and non-discrimination of women and children.

Conclusion

It is time, time for us not only to be deeply dismayed by the horrific violence that this young Delhi woman and many others have experienced, but to view it as a moment for transformation. We must no longer be content with fatuous remarks that there are some women who are more deserving of protection than others, some who are less rapeable than others. We need to target sexism, not sex, to guarantee equality in the workplace as well as in the home. We can no longer accept a situation where consensual homosexual sex is criminalised, while heterosexual marital rape is condoned. These inequities do not stand up to any measure of human rights scrutiny and can no longer be cloaked under the ruse of "legitimate rape" or the bogey of "Indian cultural values."

If gender justice ever breaks free of the shackles of being a fragile myth and if equality of women ever becomes an achievable goal, then home should be the starting point. Everything can't be left to the state. After all, the ideal situation would not be when every girl/woman is accompanied/watched/protected by a police officer. The ideal society would be the one in which even without the fear of an administrative watchdog, men wholeheartedly want women to live and move around with as much freedom and liberty without unsolicited invasion on their integrity as they themselves do.

Such a change cannot be ordered through statutory laws; it has to evolve from the social fabric, from families, from individuals. We have to stop believing that this deplorable social condition, this family set-up is deterministic and inevitable.

Only when parents make their sons realise the importance of respecting the other sex and treating it on a par, when society stands up to support rape victims and ostracise the assaulters, when the social order, stratified by gender roles, stops seeing women as belonging only to the domestic realm, when men willingly share with women the public domain where one gets remuneration, property, power and control, will this battle be holistically won.

57TH MEETING OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Why was it in news recently?

The 57th meeting of NDC was held in Delhi on Dec 27, 2012.

What is NDC?

- The National Development Council (NDC) or the Rashtriya Vikas Parishad is the apex body for decision making and deliberations on development matters in India, presided over by the Prime Minister.

- It was set up on August 6, 1952 to strengthen and mobilize the effort and resources of the nation in support of the Plan, to promote common economic policies in all vital spheres, and to ensure the balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country.

- It is an extra-constitutional and non-statutory body. Its status is advisory to planning commission but not binding.

Objectives of NDC

It has been set up with three objectives

- to strengthen and mobilize the effort and resources of the nation in support of the Plan

- to promote common economic policies in all vital spheres and

- to ensure the balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country.

Functions

The functions of the Council are

- to prescribe guidelines for the formulation of the National Plan, including the assessment of resources for the Plan;

- to consider the National Plan as formulated by the Planning Commission;

- to consider important questions of social and economic policy affecting national development; and

- to review the working of the Plan from time to time and to recommend such measures as are necessary for achieving the aims and targets set out in the National Plan.

Composition

The National Development Council is presided over by the Prime Minister of India and includes all Union Ministers, Chief Ministers of all the States and Administrators of Union Territories and Members of the Planning Commission. Ministers of State with independent charge are also invited to the deliberations of the Council.

1. National Development Council (NDC) approved the 12th Plan Document after scaling down the average annual growth target to 8 per cent for the five-year period. At the end of the day, the meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister, endorsed the Plan Document with a lower growth target at 8 per cent, against 8.2 per cent proposed earlier.

2. Initiating the discussions, the Prime Minister made out a strong case for a phased increase in the prices of energy — petroleum products, coal and power — as they were "underpriced" and warned the States that failure in controlling subsidies would lead to a cut in Plan expenditure, and thereby development.

3. Finance Minister P. Chidambaram pointed to the imperative need to contain the fiscal deficit. He said some measures may have caused "immediate pain," but they were essential to bring down the deficit to 3 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product) in the next three years.

4. Harping on need to control subsidies, Dr. Singh noted that while some of them were a "normal part of any socially just" system, they should be well-designed and effectively targeted and the total bill must be kept within the limits of fiscal sustainability. "Failure to control subsidies within these limits only means that other Plan expenditure have to be cut or the fiscal deficit target exceeded," he said.

5. To address the States' complaints on fuel shortages for power plants, Dr. Singh also asked the Planning Commission to make a quick review of the situation and submit a report in three weeks to resolve the urgent problem.

6. The 12th Plan Document seeks to reduce poverty by 10 percentage points in the five-year period and also generate 50 million jobs in the non-farm sector. It aims to raise the farm sector growth rate to 4 per cent and achieve a growth rate of 10 per cent in the manufacturing sector. By the end of the Plan period (2012-17), the document aims at increasing investment in infrastructure to 9 per cent of the GDP.

Main Points of Discussion

1. States recognised that the global slowdown, combined with some domestic constraints, has meant that our growth has also slowed down.

2. States mentioned that the most immediate problems to tackle are the implementation problems affecting large projects, including particularly power projects, which are stuck because of delays in getting clearances and fuel supply agreements.

3. States also discussed the need to pay special attention to disparities between socio-economic groups such as SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities. These groups lag behind the rest of the population in key socio-economic indicators. Fortunately, the gaps are closing but the pace at which this is happening is not satisfactory and certainly does not match expectations.

4. Gender inequality was another important aspect which received special attention. Women and girls represent half the population and our society has not been fair to this half. Their socio-economic status is improving, but gaps persist. The emergence of women in public spaces,

which is an absolutely essential part of social emancipation, is accompanied by growing threats to their safety and security.

5. Agriculture was also an area of critical concern. Although the share of agriculture in GDP has fallen to only 15%, about half of the population still relies on agriculture as its principal income source. What happens in agriculture is therefore critical for the success of inclusiveness.

6. Growth in manufacturing should be at double digit levels, but this has yet to take place. Both the Centre and the States must give priority attention to creating an eco-system in which these industries can grow and flourish.

7. Better infrastructure is the best guarantee for rapid growth of the economy. Infrastructure development is heavily capital intensive and both the Centre and the States are severely constrained by resource availability. The central government, and many state governments, have been successful in promoting infrastructure development through PPPs. India has the second largest number of PPP projects in infrastructure in the world. It will be necessary to continue this thrust in the Twelfth Five Year Plan.

8. The management of our water resources poses severe challenges. We are rapidly approaching the position where the total demand for water in the country simply cannot be met by available supply. As with energy, we have to respond by increasing water use efficiency and also by expanding supply in a sustainable manner.

9. Several Chief Ministers emphasized the importance of sectors such as Agriculture, Power, Other Infrastructure, Health, Education and Skill development.

10. Several CMs also focused on the need for special consideration for backward States, and also for backward areas within States.

11. Several Chief Ministers drew attention to the problem of fuel availability affecting power plants. PM requested the Planning Commission to make a quick review of the situation and submit a report within three weeks.

12. Odhisa, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Bihar CMs asked for special status for their states.

Criticism

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa walked out of the 57th meeting of the National Development Council (NDC), accusing the Centre of "stifling the voice of Chief Ministers," "treating shabbily a constitutional authority" and "humiliating" them by ringing a bell during her speech.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa criticised the Central government for seeking to reduce States into the status of *"glorified municipal corporations."* She said that the NDC was a forum to consult with State Chief Ministers, as equal partners in the process of development, on issues of concern to the nation. "I am not sure that the Government of India recognises the States as partners, leave alone equal partners, and respects their viewpoints. These meetings at best are ritualistic and are exercises in futility."

The Chief Minister slammed the Centre for making attempts to "weaken the States with too much interference, reducing them to the status of glorified municipal corporations." The Union government was continuously proving that "it is completely out of sync with ground realities and is far removed from the man on the street."

Ms Jayalalithaa accused the Union government of appearing to be "hell-bent on penalising non-Congress governments." Despite repeated requests for special assistance, funds were not provided to Tamil Nadu while a special package was given to West Bengal for the only reason that the present ruling party in West Bengal was an ally of the ruling party at the Centre. "This only indicates that step-motherly treatment is given to non-Congress governments."

Way Ahead

In the current phase of development, the co-operation of both centre and state is needed to reach the goal of inclusive growth. This is the reason why the current phase of federalism has been termed as "Co-operative Federalism". The centre should try to address the issues raised at NDC meeting in an unbiased manner and should aim at bridging the trust deficit that has emerged between centre and some states.

ITU SUMMIT AT DUBAI

Why was it in news recently?

ITU convened the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) in Dubai, **United Arab Emirates, from 3-14 December 2012**. This landmark conference reviewed the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs), which serve as the binding global treaty designed to facilitate international interconnection and interoperability of information and communication services, as well as ensuring their efficiency and widespread public usefulness and availability.

What is ITU?

- The International Telecommunication Union, originally founded as the International Telegraph Union, is a specialized agency of the United Nations which is responsible for information and communication technologies.
- The ITU coordinates the shared global use of the radio spectrum, promotes international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, works to improve telecommunication infrastructure in the developing world, and assists in the development and coordination of worldwide technical standards.
- ITU also organizes worldwide and regional exhibitions and forums, such as ITU TELECOM WORLD, bringing together representatives of government and the telecommunications and ICT industry to exchange ideas, knowledge and technology.
- The ITU is active in areas including broadband Internet, latest-generation wireless technologies, aeronautical and maritime navigation, radio astronomy, satellite-based meteorology, convergence in fixed-mobile phone, Internet access, data, voice, TV broadcasting, and next-generation networks.
- ITU is based in Geneva, Switzerland, is a member of the United Nations Development Group .

ITU sectors

The ITU comprises three sectors, each managing a different aspect of the matters handled by the Union, as well as ITU Telecom:

- **Radiocommunication (ITU-R)-** Managing the international radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbit resources is at the heart of the work of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R).
- **Standardization (ITU-T)-**ITU's standards-making efforts are its best-known — and oldest — activity; known prior to 1992 as the International Telephone and Telegraph Consultative Committee
- **Development (ITU-D)-**Established to help spread equitable, sustainable and affordable access to information and communication technologies (ICT).

Leadership

The ITU is headed by a Secretary-General, who is elected to a four-year term by the member states at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. At the 17th ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (2006) in Antalya, Turkey,

the ITU's member states elected *Dr Hamadoun Touré* of Mali as Secretary-General of the Union. He was re-elected for a second four-year term at the 18th ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (2010) in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Membership

- Membership of ITU is open to governments, which may join the Union as Member States, as well as to private organizations like carriers, equipment manufacturers, funding bodies, research and development organizations and international and regional telecommunication organizations, which can join ITU as non-voting Sector Members
- Member states of the ITU are 192 UN member states (all except Palau) and the Vatican City. The most recent member to join the ITU is South Sudan, which became a member on 14 July 2011.
- The Republic of China (Taiwan) was blocked from membership by thePeople's Republic of China, but was given a country code while being listed as "Taiwan, China". Other states with limited recognition, along with Cook Islands and Niue, are also not members of the ITU. The Palestinian territories were admitted as observers in 2010.

What are International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs)?

Signed by 178 countries, ITRs are a global treaty applied around the world, which:

- Establish general principles relating to the provision and operation of international telecoms;
- Facilitate global interconnection and interoperability;
- Underpin harmonious development and efficient operation of technical facilities;
- Promote efficiency, usefulness, and availability of international telecommunication services, and
- Treaty-level provisions are required with respect to international telecommunication networks and services.

Key outcomes of World Conference on International Telecommunications 2012 (WCIT-12)

1. Changes to International Telecommunication Regulations

ITRs were changed considering the context of 21st Century. The current regulatory structure was based on voice telecommunications, when the Internet was still in its infancy. In 1988, telecommunications operated under regulated monopolies in most countries.

The final document, entitled "Final Acts: World Conference on International Telecommunications (DUBAI, 2012)" contains 10 articles addressing specific substantive issues, 2 appendices (relating to accounting and maritime communications) and 5 non-binding resolutions:

1. The first resolution includes a proposal containing special measures for developing countries that are landlocked or are small islands, to ensure their access to international optical fibre networks and infrastructure.

2. The second recommends that a group study the feasibility of a single, globally harmonized--and recognized--3 digit number for access to emergency services (North Americans use 911, EU countries use 112).

3. The third resolution provides for the creation of an international policy centre where delegates from member countries can actively participate not only in the discussion, but in policy evolution as well, and where the ITU's Secretary General enables the organization to play an "active and constructive role in the development of broadband."

4. The fourth resolution contains language proposing a periodic review of International Telecommunication Regulations be conducted more frequently than the 24-year span between the last ITU conference and this most recent one.

5. Finally, the last resolution encourages collaboration in resolving both termination and exchange of international telecommunications traffic.

On 14 December 2012, an amended version of the Regulations was signed by 89 of the 152 countries. Countries that did not sign included the United States, Japan, Canada, Germany, India and the United Kingdom.

2. Proposed Treaty

A proposed global telecoms treaty that would give national governments control of the internet was blocked by the US and key western and African nations. The proposals, coming after two weeks of complex negotiation, would have given individual governments greater powers to control international phone calls and data traffic.

Proposals under consideration would establish regulatory oversight by the U.N. over security, fraud, traffic accounting as well as traffic flow, management of Internet Domain Names and IP addresses, and other aspects of the Internet that are currently governed either by community-based approaches such as Regional Internet Registries, ICANN, or largely national regulatory frameworks.

Resistance/Criticism of the proposed Treaty

The move by the ITU and some countries has alarmed many within the United States and within the Internet community.

The WCIT-12 activity has been attacked by Google, which has characterized it as a *threat to the "free and open internet".*

On 22 November 2012, the European Parliament passed a resolution urging member states to prevent ITU WCIT-12 activity that would "negatively impact the internet, its architecture, operations, content and security, business relations, internet governance and the free flow of information online". The resolution asserted that "the ITU is not the appropriate body to assert regulatory authority over the internet".

On 5 December 2012, the lower chamber of the United States Congress passed a resolution opposing U.N. governance of the Internet by a rare unanimous 397-0 vote. The resolution warned that "... proposals have been put forward for consideration at the [WCIT-12] that would fundamentally alter the

governance and operation of the Internet ... [and] would attempt to justify increased government control over the Internet ...", and stated that the policy of the United States is "... to promote a global Internet free from government control and preserve and advance the successful *Multistakeholder Model* that governs the Internet today." The same resolution had previously been passed unanimously by the upper chamber of the Congress in September.

Apart from the issue of freedom of speech, *another major issue was of "spam"*. The definition of spam created a huge amount of discord and debate because, as one unnamed commentator quoted by the Washington Post put it, "one man's spam is another man's political speech." The concern was that by regulating spam, the ITU was creating some very significant issues of censorship, and conceivably allowing the ITU to enforce--or attempt to define and enforce--rules regarding content. And this, among other factors, was among the most critical dealbreakers for the U.S., Canada, the UK and many others.

The U.S. also objected to any attempt to *expand the treaty's scope* from the currently addressed public telecommunications networks to any other network, public or private, including ISPs and government systems.

The west, including the corporate world and open internet advocates, claim the *"sender pays" model* (which would require sources of Internet traffic to pay destinations, similar to the way funds are transferred between countries using the telephone) would benefit larger corporations, but penalise individuals and less wealthy businesses who can't afford the bills.

Another argument was that the internet has given the world unimaginable economic and social benefit during these past 24 years without UN regulation. So, now what's the need for UN regulation?

The US and Europe have indicated that they instead want private companies to drive internet standards.

In the defence of proposed treaty

Speaking ahead of WCIT, ITU secretary general Dr Hamadoun Touré said: "It is important to remember that when you talk of internet freedom, most people in the world cannot even *access the internet*. The internet is the rich world's privilege and ITU wants to change that."It is our global objective to assure that every citizen is connected no matter what their circumstance, and we need to reach a consensus no matter what the ideological view on member."

Blocked by Russia, with China and the United Arab Emirates – where the conference is being held – said the internet should be part of the treaties because *it travels over telecoms networks*.

The failure to reach accord could mean that there will be *regional differences in internet efficacy*. "Maybe in the future we could come to a fragmented internet," Andrey Mukhanov, of Russia's Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications, told. "That would be negative for all, and I hope our American and European colleagues come to a constructive position."

The paradigmatic issue here is whether the Internet, as the centrepiece of the new global communication realm, should be regulated at all. *Freedom of expression is just one side of the story. The other, rather well disguised side is about the political economy of the global communication realm*. It is

about the division of resources within the communication realm, and, even more importantly, the larger global and sub-global division of resources — economic, social, and political — which is fundamentally impacted by the nature of regimes that govern the global communication realm.

The communication realm — or more descriptively, the information and communication realm, and its technologies — have always been closely regulated in public interest. It is generally understood that it is of vital and extraordinary public interest, and cannot just be subject only to normal commercial regulation, that for instance governs trade in white goods. Every telephone company is obliged to carry the traffic from every other company in a non-discriminatory manner, which is called the common carriage rule. One can well imagine what it would be like if this rule is not enforced. Long back, there was a time when there was no such rule. The telephony revolution was made possible because regulators forced common carriage regulation on big companies in the U.S. and other places. Similarly, the IT revolution began when regulators in the U.S. forced software to be unbundled from hardware, whereby an independent software industry could develop.

There are universal service obligations in the telecom sector whereby every telecom provider must service every person/ household, etc., whether it serves its business model or not. And then there are regulations on tariffs, quality of service and so on. Telecom providers are forced to comply with disability friendly features, and they also contribute to Universal Service Funds that are used to universalise communication services. All of this and much more, will disappear in an unregulated communication system. In taking a collective political decision on whether the Internet is at all to be regulated or not, we need to understand that we are taking decisions on all these issues, and not just on freedom of expression.

In order to understand the real stakes in the 'regulation or not' debate regarding the Internet, it is best to look at what is happening in the U.S. right now. The U.S. telecom market is dominated by two players, Verizon and AT&T. Verizon has challenged the Federal Communication Commission's authority to enforce net neutrality (the Internet equivalent of the 'common carriage' rule), arguing that the Internet is not telecom and thus outside the FCC's mandate. AT&T went a step further. It claimed that since even traditional telecom services, like telephony, increasingly work on Internet Protocols (IP), the FCC's remit should not cover even telephony. In essence, more or less, the claim is that no regulation of the communication systems is needed at all. The FCC can close down! Markets have taken over, and are their own arbitrators!

California recently became the latest of many States in the U.S., mostly Republican-ruled, which have deregulated Voice-over-Internet-Protocol, effectively removing regulatory control over telephony service, disregarding the concerns expressed by many public interest groups. There are many deep implications of such changeovers. To give just one illustration, unlike traditional telephony systems that are obliged to have their own power-supply to account for emergency situations, the new IP based systems do not have such obligations. When most 'new systems' failed recently in the aftermath of Storm Sandy, unlike earlier times, the FCC found itself unable to question the disaster preparedness of the companies providing much of the communication infrastructure in the U.S. today.

What happened at the ITU, in good measure, was this game of freeing our communication realm from all public interest regulation. As mentioned, it is about a new paradigm of 'complete non-regulation.' And once the victory is achieved at the ITU, whereby the Internet and other IP networks, which would soon be the basis of all communication infrastructure, are considered out of any kind of regulatory oversight, the game will then be replayed at the national level, citing 'global norms.' In fact, during an on-the-side chat at a recent Internet governance meeting in New Delhi, a telecom company representative made a significant give-away remark. He said to an official of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), 'but isn't net neutrality about the Internet, and therefore TRAI should have nothing to do about it.'

So, freedom of expression is not the only issue that is involved here. There are so many other issues, involving significant economic, social and cultural considerations that are at stake with regard to regulation of the Internet. It may not be wise to throw out the baby with the bath water.

India's stand on proposed treaty

India did not sign the proposed treaty. Members of the Indian delegation in Dubai strategically distanced itself from the proposal. This was consistent with India's earlier stand that it did not want ITU to enter into areas of "Internet governance including traffic and content."

Way Ahead

The most potentially positive outcome of the summit was the fact that the group will work to make more frequent attempts to assemble and discuss--if not address--telecommunications, Internet and network security issues and strategies in the coming year. It's unlikely that the amount of change in global internetworking will be as great in the next 24 years as it has been in the last, but maintaining a regular and sustainable forum for such discussion is, to all, a step in the right direction.

CYBERSECURITY

The computer is the instrument of our age; cyberspace is the oxygen of the internet. So much in our interconnected, globalised, and technologically advancing world depends on cyberspace. From our mundane emails to social networking to high priority banking services, government systems, communications, transport, and perhaps most important, our military organisations, all increasingly place reliance on the World Wide Web and everything connected to it.

Cyber warfare has become the *5th domain of warfare after land, sea, air and space*. To a layman, cyber security means simple things: a password that is not stolen, a message that remains confidential, a child that is not exposed to a stalker or paedophile online. When they type in a web address, that is where they should go and not to a spam site. When they click a link that looks genuine, they should not be cheated by a plausible fraud. Their work online should not be tampered with, and so on.

Four threats

But cyber security ranges across wider terrain. The international relations theorist Joseph Nye has discerned four different types of threats to cyberspace.

1. The most dramatic is *Cyber War* — the unauthorised invasion by a government into the systems or networks of another, aiming to disrupt those systems, to damage them partially, or to destroy them entirely. A specific target is to slow down if not curtail the military systems of the target state: there is no point having excellent missiles and weapons if the delivery systems can be paralysed. And as our military establishments become more and more dependent on sophisticated technologies, the risk of equally sophisticated attacks on them grows.

2. Nye's second threat is *Cyber Espionage*. Governments can invade the systems of their rivals to steal sensitive information that would be useful for their own purposes. These attacks are usually hard to discover and the case of Operation Shady RAT, the world's biggest hacking ever, is rather phenomenal. For five whole years hackers had access to 70 government and private agencies around the world as they secreted away gigabytes of confidential information, unbeknownst to those at the receiving end. By the time Shady RAT was spotted, 49 networks had been infected in the United States alone along with several others in India, South Korea, Taiwan and elsewhere.

3. *Cyber Crime* is the third kind of threat, and the most familiar. While this also has military and political implications, it affects the lives of ordinary Internet users more closely. Just the other day, for instance, a domestic aide of mine, recently introduced to the world of email, came up to me looking rather dazed. He had, he said, just received an email that some lady in Kenya had left him a substantial amount of money. In order to access that money he needed to deposit a relatively small but still significant sum (Rs.40,000 to be exact) at a local bank account here, so that the transfer could be facilitated. Such messages come in daily and there are many who fall

prey to them. Cyber Crime also includes pornography, Internet stalking, and personality imitation.

4. Finally there is _Cyber Terrorism_. This includes websites spreading extremist propaganda, recruiting terrorists, planning attacks, and otherwise promoting terrorists' political and social objectives. It also involves the use of hackers by terrorists to debilitate states and governments, much like in Cyber War, with the only difference that this involves a non-State actor. Cyberspace offers a great advantage for the shrouded business of terrorists, making their work murkier than ever to those outside. The recent revelations of Pakistan-based websites unleashing doctored pictures of alleged atrocities against Muslims in order to inflame passions in India is the example.

As weapon

Cyber attacks are already happening daily, and as we grow more and more 'connected', the threats also become more complex. Symantec, a leading international cyber security company, recorded that in 2010 alone there were three billion malware attacks. Of these one stands out especially, pointing to the possible use by legitimate governments of cyber weapons. This was the case of Stuxnet, which attacked five Iranian organisations, all reportedly connected with their uranium enrichment and nuclear programmes. By early 2011 _The New York Times_ revealed, very plausibly, _that Stuxnet_ was the single biggest weapon used in an attempt to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions, and the most sophisticated instrument ever used in cyber space. There is, in a sense, a war constantly on in cyber space, one that is invisible and to which we are all, in the end, inevitably connected.

Earlier this year, a similar highly complicated attack _called Flame_ was discovered in Russia, Hungary, and Iran. Flame had been copying documents, recording audio (including keystrokes!), network traffic, Skype calls, as well as taking screenshots from infected computers. And it was passing all this information collected to the computers controlling it. No security alarm went off on any of the infected computers, which raises the question: are any of our systems really safe? Conventional security measures are all outdated and by the look of it, even the 'latest' protections are rendered obsolete sooner than we would collectively desire.

In those cases, the United States is the likely suspect, but though nothing can be conclusively established, China has consistently topped the list of official suspects in the world of cyber attacks. The attacks coming from there do not usually aim to destroy or even debilitate as much as to steal information. The Titan Rain attack, for instance, targeted the U.S. military, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the World Bank. Sensitive information stolen was not only related to military matters but also to markets, trade, and business activities. Similarly GhostNet infiltrated Indian government systems and accessed classified information of our security agencies, embassies, and the office of the Dalai Lama, doing the same with hundreds of government establishments elsewhere in the world.

Social networking websites are also increasingly becoming targets, not only because of the massive databases they provide, but also in order to spread malware that infect computers. On Facebook there are 50 million Indian users and even if a small fraction of them click unsuspectingly on a malevolent but seemingly ordinary link, you have that many computers opened up to risk and infection. Cyber attacks, to state the obvious, can be very personal.

Another use of social networks, seen recently in India, is to spread inflammatory material with a motivated agenda, such as the doctored pictures of alleged atrocities against Muslims in Assam and Myanmar that incited violence in Mumbai and threats of retaliation elsewhere. Though this does not constitute cyber terrorism in itself, it constitutes a new security threat that cannot be ignored.

Initiatives taken by other countries

US was the first country to formally classify the use of cyberspace as a "force", a euphemism for offensive capability. The Chinese adopted the concept of "informationalisation" in the mid-1990s and have relentlessly built up structures and operations in this domain. Consequent to the raising of the US Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), South Korea followed with the creation of a Cyber Warfare Command in December 2009. This was also in response to North Korea's creation of cyber warfare units. The British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has begun preparing a cyber force, as also France. The Russians have actively been pursuing cyber warfare. In 2010 China overtly introduced its first department dedicated to defensive cyber warfare and information security in response to the creation of USCYBERCOM. The race is thus on.

International laws/convention

- There is no international legislation to curb the ever-increasing threat posed to the world at large by cyberterrorists.
- The two important conventions in this area are the Council of Europe Convention on Cyber crime at an international level and LOAC i.e Law on Armed Conflict.
- The International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber Threats (IMPACT) is the world's largest United Nations - backed cybersecurity alliance. Since 2011, IMPACT functions as the cybersecurity executing arm of the United Nations' (UN) specialised agency for ICTs - the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Being the first comprehensive public-private partnership against cyber threats, IMPACT is the international platform which brings together governments of the world, industry and academia to enhance the global community's capabilities in dealing with cyber threats.

India's response system

India's own style of dealing with cyber threats leaves much to be desired. It is relatively chaotic and there is a constant insecurity that our cyber-defences are insufficient.

There are some 12 stakeholders in protecting the cyber defences of India, including the Home Affairs Ministry, the National Disaster Management Authority, National Information Board and a motley crew of others. They are together responsible for the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team, which is the principal national agency. Such a large number of bosses, is not conducive to efficiency.

Recent Initiative taken by India

- The central government has decided to establish five-year project for strengthening the overall cyber security structure of critical sectors of India. *Critical infrastructure protection* (CIP) is a concept that relates to the preparedness and response to serious incidents that involve the critical infrastructure of a region or nation.
- This move has come following increase in the number of incidents of cyber attacks as well as security threats. In 2011, India faced around 13000 cyber incidents.
- It will be realized by National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIPC). NCIPC functions under the guidance of National Technical Research Organization (NTRO). NCIPC is the nodal agency which coordinates the cyber security operations related to critical infrastructures in India.
- NCIPC will set up sectoral Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and will also install sensors on critical systems for getting real-time information regarding cyber attack of any kind for preparing a quick response.

Suggestions to improve the cyber security

- A Cyber Coordination Centre should be established at the operational level, staffed by personnel from the relevant operational agencies. This centre would serve as a clearing-house, assessing information arriving in real time and assigning responsibilities to the agencies concerned, as and when required.
- MHA should be the nodal agency for handling cyberterrorism
- Raise a Cyber Command and build up offensive capabilities.
- Create a pool of trained people such as Cyber TA Battalions who can provide "surge capacity" to bolster the country's resources during critical periods or in the event of hostilities
- Government should promote R&D in private industry through active government support for industry-led research projects in the areas of security.
- Awareness with regard to the threat to ICT infrastructure needs to be created and the necessary legal provisions to ensure cyber safety must be developed.
- Substantive laws dealing with illegal access, illegal interception, data interference, misuse of devices, computer-related forgery, child pornography, etc. must be implemented.
- Government must put in place necessary amendments in existing laws or enact a new legislation like a Data Protection/Privacy Act so as to safeguard against the misuse of personal information by various government agencies and protect individual privacy.

- Make it a mandatory requirement for all government organisations and private enterprises to have a designated Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) who would be responsible for cyber security.
- Establish an online mechanism for cyber crime-related complaints to be recorded

Conclusion

It is time that the countries of the world, including India, realise that a well-protected cyberspace would only be an asset to developing and developed nations alike. With regard to the present legal situation in India, certain commendable advances have taken place that has placed India in a relatively strong position. However, there are still gaping loopholes not only in legislation but also investigation and enforcement that have allowed India to become prey to cyber crime.
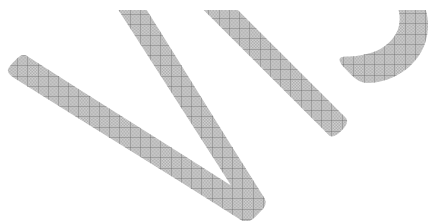
UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as it is conceptualised today, ensures promotive, preventive, diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative health services without financial hardship. According to the International Labour Organisation, nearly 50 countries have attained universal or near universal coverage. Conspicuous gaps still exist, however, particularly in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

India has made considerable progress in public health since independence. Recent reforms and innovations under the National Rural Health Mission have resulted in many States reporting significant improvements in key health indicators. However, the country's health system continues to faces many challenges, with several planned health goals failing to keep pace with rapid economic growth.

Definition of UHC

Ensuring equitable access for all Indian citizens, resident in any part of the country, regardless of income level, social status, gender, caste or religion, to affordable, accountable, appropriate health services of assured quality (promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative) as well as public health services addressing the wider determinants of health delivered to individuals and populations, with the government being the guarantor and enabler, although not necessarily the only provider, of health and related services.

UHC BY 2022 : VISION

ENTITLEMENT
- Universal Health entitlement to every citizen

NATIONAL HEALTH PACKAGE
- Guaranteed access to essential health package

CHOICE OF FACILITIES
- Between public sector facilities and Contracted-in-private providers

Operationalising UHC

Health care services to all citizens covered under UHC will be made available through the public sector and contracted-in private facilities (including NGOs and non-profits).

Two different options could be:

1. In the first option, private providers opting for inclusion in the UHC system would have to ensure that at least 75 per cent of out-patient care and 50 per cent of in-patient services are offered to citizens under the NHP. For these services, they would be reimbursed at standard rates as per levels of services offered, and their activities would be appropriately regulated and monitored to ensure that services guaranteed under the NHP are delivered cashless with equity and quality. For the remainder of the out-patient (up to 25%) and in-patient (up to 50%) coverage, service providers would be permitted to offer additional non-NHP services over and beyond the NHP package, for which they could accept additional payments from individuals or through privately purchased insurance policies.

2. The second alternative entails that institutions participating in UHC would commit to provide only the cashless services related to the NHP and not provide any other services which would require private insurance coverage or out of pocket payment.

Central and State governments may examine these options and choose, based on their assessment of how best the access and equity objectives of UHC can be served. If the former option is chosen, a strong regulatory and monitoring mechanism must be established to ensure appropriate care for UHC beneficiaries even in institutions that provide mixed services.

Even with the two options, there will be some or several private hospitals which may not get themselves accredited under the UHC system given the conditionalities. Citizens are free to supplement free-of-cost services (both in-patient and out-patient care) offered under the UHC system by paying outof- pocket or directly purchasing additional private voluntary medical insurance from regulated insurance companies.

Every citizen will be issued an IT-enabled National Health Entitlement Card (NHEC) that will ensure cashless transactions, allow for mobility across the country and contain personal health information. Such a card will also help the State to track patterns of disease burdens across the country and plan better for the public provision of health care.

Expected Outcomes from UHC
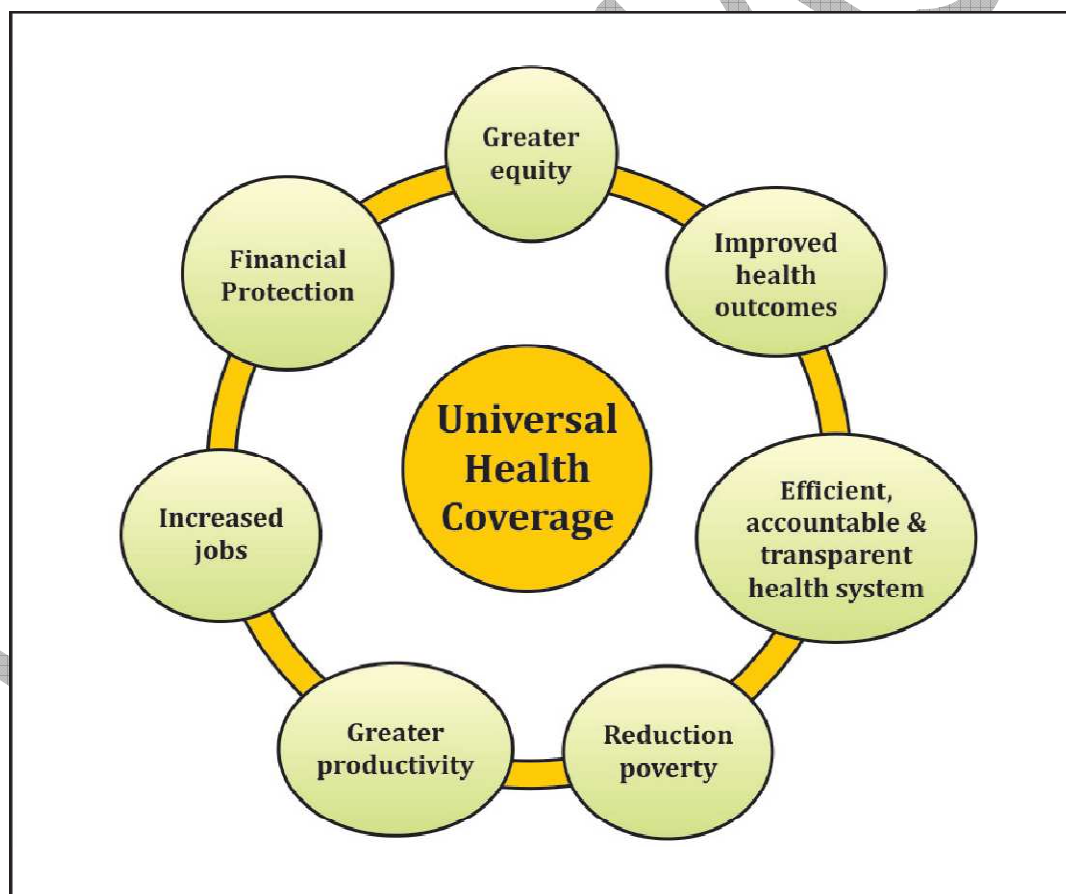
Critical Areas and Recommendations

The six critical areas that are essential to augment the capacity of India's health system to fulfil the vision of UHC are:

1. Health Financing and Financial Protection
2. Health Service Norms
3. Human Resources for Health

4. Community Participation and Citizen Engagement

5. Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Technology

6. Management and Institutional Reforms

A. Health Financing and Financial Protection

1. Government (Central government and states combined) should increase public expenditures on health from the current level of 1.2% of GDP to at least 2.5% by the end of the 12th plan, and to at least 3% of GDP by 2022.

2. Ensure availability of free essential medicines by increasing public spending on drug procurement.

3. Use general taxation as the principal source of health care financing – complemented by additional mandatory deductions for health care from salaried individuals and tax payers, either as a proportion of taxable income or as a proportion of salary

4. Do not levy sector specific taxes for financing

5. Accept flexible and differential norms for allocating finances so that states can respond better to the physical, sociocultural and other differentials and diversities across districts.

6. Expenditures on primary health care should account for at least 70% of all health care expenditures.

7. All government funded insurance schemes should, over time, be integrated with the UHC system.

B. Health Service Norms

1. Develop a National Health Package that offers, as part of the entitlement of every citizen, essential health services at different levels of the health care delivery system.

2. Develop effective contracting-in guidelines with adequate checks and balances for the provision of health care by the formal private sector.

3. Reorient health care provision to focus significantly on primary health care.

4. Strengthen District Hospitals.

5. Ensure adherence to quality assurance standards in the provision of health care at all levels of service delivery.

C. Human Resources for Health

1. Ensure adequate numbers of trained health care providers and technical health care workers at different levels

2. Enhance the quality of HRH education and training by introducing competency-based, health system-connected curricula and continuous education.

3. Invest in additional educational institutions to produce and train the requisite health workforce.

4. Establish a dedicated training system for Community Health Workers

5. Establish the National Council for Human Resources in Health (NCHRH)

D. Community Participation and Citizen Engagement

1. Transform existing Village Health Committees (or Health & Sanitation Committees) into participatory Health Councils
2. Organise regular Health Assemblies
3. Enhance the role of elected representatives as well as Panchayati Raj institutions (in rural areas) and local bodies (in urban areas)
4. Strengthen the role of civil society and non-governmental organisations.
5. Institute a formal grievance redressal mechanism at the block level.

E. **Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Technology**
1. Enforce price controls and price regulation especially on essential drugs.
2. Strengthen the public sector to protect the capacity of domestic drug and vaccines industry to meet national needs.
3. Protect the safeguards provided by the Indian patents law and the TRIPS Agreement against the country's ability to produce essential drugs.
4. Empower the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to strengthen the drug regulatory system.

F. **Management and Institutional Reforms**
1. Introduce All India and state level Public Health Service Cadres and a specialized state level Health Systems Management Cadre in order to give greater attention to public health and also strengthen the management of the UHC system.
2. Adopt better human resource practices to improve recruitment, retention motivation and performance; rationalize pay and incentives; and assure career tracks for competency-based professional advancement.
3. Develop a national health information technology network based on uniform standards to ensure inter-operability between all health care stakeholders.
4. Ensure strong linkages and synergies between management and regulatory reforms and ensure accountability to patients and communities.
5. Following agencies should be established:
   a. National Health Regulatory and Development Authority (NHRDA)
   b. National Drug Regulatory Authority (NDRDA)
   c. National Health Promotion and Protection Trust (NHPPT)

Conclusion

Constitutionally, the Indian state is committed to improving the state of public health of the population (Directive principles section 47), and several Supreme Court judgements in India have established the Right to Health as an extension of the fundamental Right to Life. The Government of India is signatory to various international conventions that obligate it to ensure the Right to Health.

Further, considering the current lack of access to quality, rational and affordable health care for the majority of the Indian population - the rural and urban poor and unorganised sector workers, as well as organised sector workers and sections of middle class - organising and operationalising Universal Health Coverage in India is an urgent necessity.

The transformation of India's health system to become an effective platform for UHC is an evolutionary

process that will span several years. The architecture of the existing health system has to be accommodated in some parts and altered in others, as we advance UHC from an aspirational goal to an operational reality. The design and delivery of the UHC system requires the active engagement of multiple stakeholders and calls for constructive contributions from diverse sectors.