



नीति आयोग NITI AAYOG



DOCPLAN-JUNE 2025

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ECONOMICS

01. Soumyadip Chattopadhyay and Arjun Kumar

[Union Budget 2025–26 and India’s Quest for Inclusive Cities](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 24, 14 June, 2025](#)

While the increased allocation for urban transformation appears promising, this article critically examines its effectiveness in building inclusive cities. The analysis argues for rethinking urban policymaking based on the empowerment of city governments, strengthening municipal capacities, and integrating the urban poor’s needs into urban planning mechanisms.

02. Priyanjali Mitra

[Women in Informal Economy and Social Reproduction](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025](#)

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in an urban village of Gurugram (Haryana), this paper explores the relational dynamics of social reproduction and care work within the informal urban economy. Focusing on women’s dual roles in waged work and unpaid labour, it examines how care is distributed and contested within families. Through sustained engagement with workers’ everyday practices, the paper highlights the entanglements of labour and kinship, foregrounding care as relational, processual and central to working-class survival.

03. Lalita Gauri Kulkarni and Anjali Radkar

[Navigating Cash Transfer Schemes](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 24, 14 June 2025](#)

The Maharashtra government’s Ladki Bahan scheme is a recent addition to India’s cash transfer initiatives. Despite its goals, the scheme has faced criticism for offering only temporary relief, neglecting structural challenges, and being fiscally unsustainable. This article addresses these critiques by capturing the perspectives of recipient women, often overlooked in broader debates on cash transfers versus in-kind subsidies.

04. Aniruddh Sheth, Mayank Kohli, Jayashree Ratnam, Vasant Saberwal and Mahesh Sankaran

[An Overview of Pastoral Economics, Policies and Ecologies in India](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 24, 14 June, 2025](#)

The ecological, economic, and policy challenges facing pastoralism and grassland ecosystems in India, particularly in the context of climate change and evolving land-use pressures are critically examined. Drawing upon a global literature, the paper contextualises Indian pastoralism and its grassland dynamics, highlighting the ecological factors shaping pastoralism across the country. It describes the pastoral economy, drawing attention to the often-underestimated size and scale of this enterprise. It then documents the historical mischaracterisation of rangelands as wastelands and argues that these ecosystems are vital for pastoral livelihoods and have unique biodiversity characteristics.

05. Priyanka Muchahary and Manish Kumar Sharma

[Relationship between Income Inequality and Economic Growth](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 25, 21 June, 2025

Examining the relationship between income inequality and economic growth across different countries from 1991 to 2022, it is found that a positive and significant relationship between income inequality and growth exists overall. However, an opposite relationship is observed for high- and low-middle-income countries. This suggests that studying the levels of inequality within countries in aggregate tends to overpower the negative impact overall. They should be studied separately based on the level of income. The findings further revealed the vital role of education in economic growth

06. Priyanjali Mitra

[Women in Informal Economy and Social Reproduction](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in an urban village of Gurugram (Haryana), this paper explores the relational dynamics of social reproduction and care work within the informal urban economy. Focusing on women's dual roles in waged work and unpaid labour, it examines how care is distributed and contested within families. Through sustained engagement with workers' everyday practices, the paper highlights the entanglements of labour and kinship, foregrounding care as relational, processual and central to working-class survival.

07. Christopher T. Stanton and Catherine Thomas

[Who Benefits from Online Gig Economy Platforms?](#)

[American Economic Review, Vol. 115, No. 6, June 2025](#)

Online labor platforms for short-term remote work have many more job seekers than available jobs. Despite their relative abundance, workers capture a substantial share of the surplus from transactions. We draw this conclusion from demand estimates that imply workers' wages include significant markups over costs and a survey that validates our surplus estimates. Workers retain a significant share of the surplus because demand-side search frictions and worker differentiation reduce direct competition. Finally, we show that applying traditional employment regulations to online gig economy platforms would lower job posting and hiring rates, reducing aggregate surplus for all market participants, including workers.

EDUCATION

08. Anjali Chauhan

[Teaching Democracy in Times of Distress](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 25, 21 June 2025](#)

Scrolling through my social media sometime back, I encountered a cascade of tragedies: a 26-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh immolates himself near Parliament, leaving behind the haunting words, “No one listens to the poor, lower caste,” as he succumbs to 90% burns. Elsewhere, a minor boy takes his life after enduring relentless caste-based harassment in his village. Digital notes of solidarity appear for grieving families in Gaza, Sudan, Congo, and beyond. The Third Eye portal reports on the horrifying persistence of witch-hunting in villages across Bihar, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. A reel by Palestinian journalist Bisan Owda pierces through the noise: “201 journalists were killed to tell you the truth. Are you doing anything?” And then, a photograph—a Christmas tree in St George’s Church, Dardghiya, Lebanon, adorned with remnants of shattered ornaments after airstrikes reduced the sanctuary to ruins.

09. Peggy Mohan

[Building Bridges through Bilingual Textbooks in India](#)

Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025

A Suggestion for the Schooling System and Higher Education

Indian education has been plagued by the binary of teaching in English medium or local languages. Bilingual textbooks would leave teachers and students free to choose the mix that suits them, going at their own pace and concentrating on understanding the lessons. Training a cadre of efficient translators and utilising machine translation shall help this effort.

ENVIRONMENT& ECOLOGY

10. Prasanta Moharaj

[Navigating India's Maritime Challenges in the Era of Climate Change](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 25, 21 June , 2025

The impacts of climate change on India's maritime industries include significant disruptions in fisheries, especially in the north-west zone, which has the highest volatility in fish production growth rates compared to the other three coastal zones. The shipping industry, encompassing port operations and services, is significantly affected by extreme weather events, including cyclonic storms and rising sea surface temperatures. Additionally, maritime infrastructure, including both onshore (coastal) and offshore facilities along with coastal cities, is increasingly vulnerable to sea-level rise, storm surges, and coastal erosions. There is an urgent need for integrated climate adaptation and mitigation strategies to safeguard India's coastal communities and its maritime economy.

FINANCE/BANKING

11. Pareswar Sahu

[Horizontal Distribution of Federal Transfers](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 25, 21 June, 2025

Horizontal fiscal imbalance across the states in India persists due to differences in resource endowments, population composition, geographical and climatic conditions, tax effort, level of development and the policy paradox. Investigating the nature of the population criterion used by successive finance commissions, this article argues that the assignment of equal weightage to active and inactive populations in a state increases horizontal fiscal imbalance. The population

composition criterion, which assigns significant weight to inactive population, with minor weight to active population, ensures due share to each state and may be a better choice for addressing imbalance.

12. Diana Bonfim, Miguel A. Ferreira, Francisco Queiró and Sujiao (Emma) Zhao

[Fiscal Policy and Credit Supply in a Crisis](#)

American Economic Review, Vol. 115, No. 6, June 2025

We measure how cuts to public procurement propagate through the banking system in a financial crisis. During the European sovereign debt crisis, the Portuguese government cut procurement spending by 4.3 percent of GDP. We find that this cut saddled banks with nonperforming loans from government contractors, which led to a persistent reduction in credit supply to other firms. We estimate a bank-level elasticity of credit supply with respect to procurement demand of 2.5. In a general equilibrium model, our findings point to large effects of fiscal policy on credit supply and output in a crisis.

13. Johannes Haushofer, Paul Niehaus, Carlos Paramo, Edward Miguel and Michael Walker

[Targeting Impact versus Deprivation](#)

American Economic Review, Vol. 115, No. 6, June 2025

A large literature has examined how best to target antipoverty programs to those most deprived in some sense (e.g., consumption). We examine the potential trade-off between this objective and targeting those most impacted by such programs. We work in the context of an NGO cash transfer program in Kenya, employing recent advances in machine learning methods and dynamic outcome data to learn proxy means tests that jointly target both objectives. Targeting solely on the basis of deprivation is not attractive in this setting under standard social welfare criteria unless the planner's preferences are extremely redistributive.

14. David Argente, Doireann Fitzgerald, Anthony Priolo and Sara Moreira

[How Do Entrants Build Market Share? The Role of Demand Frictions](#)[American Economic Review: Insights](#)

[American Economic Review: Insights, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2025](#)

We construct a new dataset to show that successful entrants in the consumer food sector build market share by adding new customers. Entrants reach new customers by entering more geographical markets, placing their product in more stores in these markets, and, for a positively selected subset of firms, advertising directly to customers. These activities are costly and are associated with persistent increases in quantities, but there are no differences in markups between new and mature markets. This confirms a central role for marketing and advertising in overcoming demand-side frictions that slow firm growth.

15. Tristany Armangué-Jubert Nezh Guner and Alessandro Ruggieri

[Labor Market Power and Development](#)

[American Economic Review: Insights, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2025](#)

Imperfect competition in labor markets can lead to efficiency losses and lower aggregate output. This paper examines how variations in labor market competitiveness may account for differences in GDP per capita among countries. By structurally estimating an oligopsony model with free entry across different development stages, we find that labor market power increases with GDP per capita. Wage markdowns vary from 54 percent in low-income countries to around 24 percent in the richest ones. If labor markets in poorer countries were as competitive as in more developed ones, their output per capita could rise by up to 44 percent.

HEALTH

16. Deeptha Chopra and S Reshma Sekhar

[Invisible Work, Visible Malnutrition](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 Jun & 05 Jul, 2025](#)

By theorizing the interlinkages between care work and nutrition, this paper constructs a framework for how care-ful social protection measures can address this nexus. It argues that the unequal distribution of care work, rooted in entrenched social norms that further invisibilize care, constitutes a significant barrier to effective social protection interventions that address malnutrition. Adopting

a feminist analytical framework, the paper highlights the paradoxical neglect of caregivers' own nutritional needs and mandates the incorporation of a gendered and care-sensitive lens to address the multifaceted problems of nutrition and care.

17. Om Prakash Mathur

[India's Municipal Finance System at a Crossroads](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025](#)

A Role for the Sixteenth Finance Commission?

Article 280(3)(c) is an important constitutional provision that requires the finance commissions to recommend measures for augmenting the Consolidated Fund of the state to supplement the resources of the municipalities. Finance commissions have made use of this provision to recommend grants-in-aid for municipalities to take on functions that far exceed their statutorily defined responsibilities, undertake systemic reforms, and establish protocols for ensuring compliance with the recommendations. This article explores these features of Article 280(3)(c) and takes a close look at the consequential changes in the finances and finance systems of municipalities.

INDUSTRY

18. Mustajab Khatir and Archana Srivastava

[Deeper Trade Integration among South Asian and Southeast Asian Regions](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 24, 14 June, 2025](#)

The possibility of deeper trade integration among South Asian and Southeast Asian nations is examined using a general equilibrium analysis. By relaxing the full employment assumption in the standard Global Trade Analysis Project model, the possibility of meaningful regional welfare gains through trade integration is explored. Two simulation scenarios indicate promising positive welfare effects and improved terms of trade, particularly benefiting the manufacturing sector in South Asia and the extraction and processed food sector in SEA. This provides solutions to the long-held issues of a relatively stagnant manufacturing sector. The welfare decomposition of the simulations indicates that the gains to the endowments are more significant than the gains in allocative efficiency, suggesting that the natural resources are utilised more efficiently for regional integration.

19. Shamim Ara and Puneet Kumar Shrivastav

[Decoding Rising Female Labour Force Participation in India](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025](#)

The female labour force participation rate in India is still half of the LFPR of men and far below the global average of female LFPR of 47.2%. However, recent rounds of the Periodic Labour Force Survey reveal that there has been a significant uptick in the FLFPR, especially in the post COVID-19 pandemic period. This paper tries to analyse whether this surge in the LFPR of women is driven by the improvement in labour market opportunities or by the distress situation induced by the pandemic. The findings suggest that an increase in the FLFPR in India is largely driven by the female work participation in rural areas and in own-account and unpaid work category of self-employment activities in agriculture and the unorganised sector. There has been a significant reduction in the share of women workers in regular salaried jobs, the organised sector and the industry and services sector over the last few years. Besides these, the quality of jobs available to women workers has somewhat improved, but still, more than half of the regular salaried women workers did not have written job contracts and were not entitled to paid leave or eligible for any kind of social security benefits in 2023.

20. David Arnold, Will Dobbie and Peter Hull

[Building Nondiscriminatory Algorithms in Selected Data](#)

[American Economic Review: Insights, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2025](#)

We develop new quasi-experimental tools to understand algorithmic discrimination and build nondiscriminatory algorithms when the outcome of interest is only selectively observed. We first show that algorithmic discrimination arises when the available algorithmic inputs are systematically different for individuals with the same objective potential outcomes. We then show how algorithmic discrimination can be eliminated by measuring and purging these conditional disparities. Leveraging the quasi-random assignment of bail judges in New York City, we find that our new algorithms not only eliminate algorithmic discrimination but also generate more accurate predictions by correcting for the selective observability of misconduct outcomes.

LAW AND SOCIETY

21. Alok Prasanna Kumar

[The Possibilities of the Caste Census](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 25, 21 June, 2025

Discussion around the nationwide caste census in 2026 has focused largely on its potential impact on the reservation of government jobs and education. However, a caste census could have other ramifications from a constitutional perspective that have not yet been fully explored or understood—ranging from a change in the very conception of what the meaning of the phrase “socially and educationally backward” is to political representation among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

22. Aishwarya Singh and Harikartik Ramesh

[The Law’s Caring Wives and Working Husbands](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025

Family law scholarship has not given much attention to the use of restitution of conjugal rights in the context of care work. The paper examines cases involving employed women living apart from their spouses leading to husbands filing petitions for RCR. Such petitions demand that the wives give up their current employment and take up residence with the husband. The paper argues that the jurisprudence of the Indian courts on this issue has reinforced the sexual division of labour and the extraction of unpaid care work from wives. It also highlights the influence of caste and class on the adjudication of such cases.

23. Rajesh Joseph, Balmurli Natrajan and Balmurli Natrajan

[The Structural Conditions for the Success of the Domestic Workers’ Union](#)

EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 26 & 27, 28 June & 05 July, 2025

A version of this paper was presented at the XIIIth International Conference on Labour History. Research for this paper was supported by the Azim Premji Foundation Research grant. The authors would like to thank all NGO leaders, domestic workers, animators and union leadership who participated in their study. All the views and opinions expressed here are of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the institutions they represent.

In Bengaluru, domestic workers have organised with many organisations that are broadly of two forms—DW unions and labour non-governmental organisations—with discrete yet intertwined histories. The paper looks at the trajectory of these organisations from the perspective of the struggles and visions of the leadership of these organisations. The degree of “organicity” of a DW union (namely the participative and leadership capacities of DWs) is deeply shaped by the co-dependence between labour NGOs and DW unions. This, in turn, is a direct result of the precarity and conditions of work in the informal sector.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

24. **Sunil Mani**

[Patent Policies, R&D Incentives, and Human Resource Development](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 23, 07 June, 2025](#)

Evolving Strategies in India’s Technological Self-reliance

India’s drive for technological self-reliance has shaped its development since the five-year plans began. This paper examines the evolution of this agenda through three key policy areas: patent policy, R&D tax incentives, and human resource development in science and technology. Early efforts focused on building domestic capabilities in sectors like agriculture, defence, and space by establishing public research institutions, encouraging corporate R&D, and creating public enterprises. Initially supported by regulated foreign technology transfers, India’s approach has since evolved, reflecting changing global and domestic innovation dynamics.

25. **Dev Nathan and Rahul S**

[Technological Competition and the World Order](#)

[EPW, Vol. 60, Issue No. 25, 21 June, 2025](#)

The role of competition and technological domination in changing the world order is analysed. There are constraints in major Asian economies which could hamper their ambitions of building technological dominance. Acknowledging that competition and monopolisation dominate the history of technological development in global capitalist history, the necessity of cooperation in meeting contemporary global challenges and staving off new forms of devastating warfare are underscored.