

APRIL 2025 ISSUE

# Centre for Development Policy and Practice

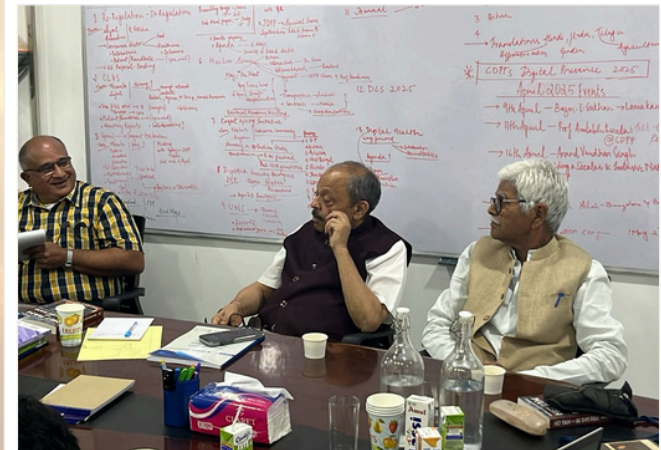
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Contents

Blogs  
Online Articles  
Events  
Working Paper

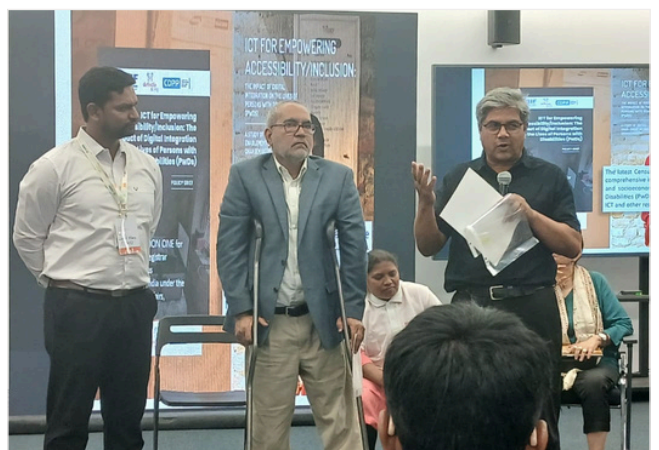


# GLIMPSES OF APRIL





# GLIMPSES OF APRIL





# GLIMPSES OF APRIL





# POLICY TO PRACTICE PODCAST

CDPP's "Policy to Practice" podcast aims to enlighten a diverse audience on global issues, fostering conversations with experts to simplify complex concepts related to social, cultural, economic, and technological development.

## Podcast 12: Featuring Dr. Rajesh Chakrabarti



The Centre for Development Policy and Practice featured Dr. Rajesh Chakrabarti in the latest episode of the Policy to Practice podcast series.

A leading expert on AI policy and governance, Dr. Rajesh Chakrabarti, Dean of the School of Management at Bennett University, delves into the complexities of regulating artificial intelligence. From algorithmic bias to job displacement and sustainability, he explores the challenges policymakers face in balancing innovation with responsibility. He discusses the ethical implications of AI, the need for robust regulatory frameworks, and strategies to ensure AI benefits society as a whole.

Hosted by Ablaz Mohammed Schemnad, this episode provides critical insights into the future of AI regulation and its impact on policy and society.

**Click on the title to listen to the podcast!**



# CDPP BLOG

CDPP disseminated thought-provoking articles. This month's blogs covered diverse perspectives under the theme, "Analysing the Socioeconomic and Environmental Impact of Mahakumbh 2025."

## Managing Millions: Transport, Infrastructure, and Challenges at Maha Kumbh Mela 2025



The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj attracted over 400 million pilgrims, prompting significant advancements in transportation infrastructure. Indian Railways operated more than 1,500 special trains, while air travel to nearby cities surged by 40%, contributing approximately Rs. 5,000 crores to the aviation sector. Ground transportation, including buses and taxis, generated an estimated Rs. 30,000 crores in revenue. Despite these efforts, challenges such as long walking distances, congestion, and a tragic stampede on Mauni Amavasya highlighted gaps in crowd management. The event underscored the need for advanced mobility strategies, including AI-driven traffic management and improved last-mile connectivity, to ensure safer and more efficient large-scale gatherings in the future.

**Click on the title to read the article!**



# CDPP BLOG

CDPP disseminated thought-provoking articles. This month's blogs covered diverse perspectives under the theme, "Analysing the Socioeconomic and Environmental Impact of Mahakumbh 2025."

## Devotion and Dispossession: Caste, Labour, and the Mahakumbh Mela 2025



This article critically examines the intersection of faith, caste, and labour during the 2025 Mahakumbh Mela in Prayagraj. While the event attracted approximately 650 million pilgrims over 45 days, highlighting its spiritual and economic significance, it also underscored persistent caste-based disparities. Dalit sanitation workers were pivotal in maintaining the festival's cleanliness, yet their contributions remained undervalued due to entrenched social hierarchies. Despite political narratives promoting inclusivity, the roles of marginalised communities were largely confined to menial tasks, reflecting systemic exclusion. The article emphasises the paradox wherein millions seek spiritual purification in the sacred waters, yet societal structures continue to marginalise those ensuring the sanctity of the event. This analysis calls for a reevaluation of the societal dynamics that perpetuate inequality, even within spaces of collective devotion.

**Click on the title to read the article!**



# ONLINE ARTICLES

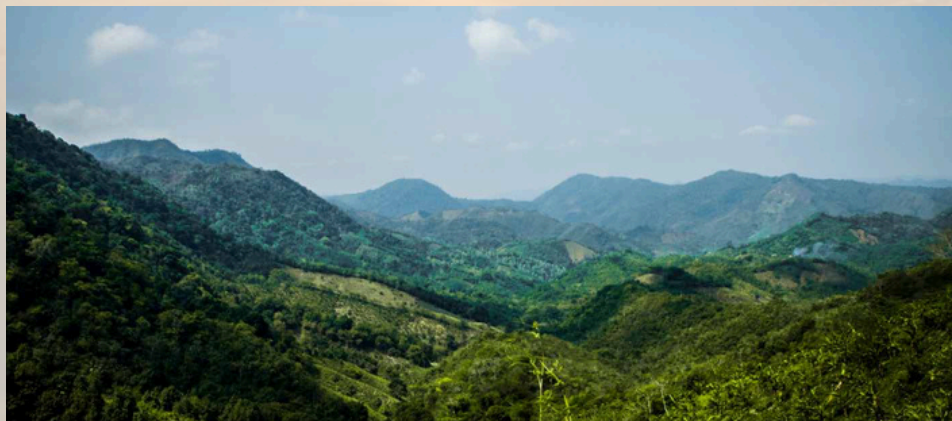
CDPP disseminated thought-provoking articles for the Siasat Daily e-paper. This month's articles covered themes on Health, Education, Climate Change, etc.

## **The Other Side of Digital India: Exclusion, Inequality and Politics of Access**



The Digital India initiative promises to bridge divides and enhance governance, but in reality, it has deepened existing inequalities, especially for marginalised communities. At the Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP) conference in Hyderabad on March 28, Osama Manzar of the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) highlighted the exclusionary effects of digital transitions. Many in rural India, lacking digital literacy, struggle to access basic services. While smartphone usage is widespread, digital access remains inequitable, with women, Dalits, Adivasis, and people with disabilities disproportionately excluded. The push for digital infrastructure overlooks human costs, creating systems that are inaccessible and dehumanising. The digital divide is compounded by social and political factors like caste, gender, and geography. This paper advocates for a digital policy that treats digital rights as human rights, ensures last-mile connectivity, and prioritises dignity, justice, and inclusivity—moving India from a digitally divided to a digitally inclusive nation.

## **Development or Prosperity? Hyderabad's Forests Ask a Bigger Question**



The felling of nearly 400 acres of forest near the University of Hyderabad has ignited a citywide reckoning on the meaning of development and who bears its cost. Despite court orders, bulldozers razed a thriving biodiversity corridor—rich in native flora, fauna, and vital groundwater zones—forcing students and citizens into resistance. Though the Telangana government has now proposed a biodiversity park on the same land, this reactive move raises questions about institutional autonomy and ecological foresight. Why was a living forest disrupted to create what already existed? The episode exposes gaps in Hyderabad's urban planning—marked by a lack of transparent land-use data, environmental impact assessments, and public consultation. It highlights a model of development that sacrifices ecological health for infrastructure. If cities like Singapore and Bogotá can plan sustainably, why can't Hyderabad? Judicial intervention provided temporary relief, but real accountability lies in embracing transparent, ecologically responsible governance for truly sustainable urban futures.

**Click on the titles to read the articles!**



# ONLINE ARTICLES

## **Beyond GDP: Building an Inclusive India**



India's position as the world's 5th largest economy hides stark inequalities. With only 2.2% of the population paying income tax, fiscal consolidation has come through spending cuts, not fair taxation. Wealthy corporations often enjoy lower tax rates than smaller firms, and exemptions widen the gap. States bear the burden of public spending—especially in education—while the Centre retains non-shareable cess collections. Over-reliance on liquor taxes reflects state complacency, with little effort to tap progressive sources like real estate or electricity taxes. As highlighted at CDPP's 2025 conference, India needs smarter taxation, better fund sharing, and stronger Centre-state cooperation for true inclusive growth.

## **The invisible subjects of justice**



India's criminal justice system, founded on the principles of liberty, equality, and dignity, often fails to uphold these ideals for marginalised communities. Regulatory gaps, inaccessible legal aid, and systemic inefficiencies disproportionately affect the poor, criminalising poverty and creating a cycle of exclusion. With over 75% of prisoners being undertrials, access to justice becomes contingent on privilege. The judiciary, overwhelmed by backlogs and systemic hesitation, struggles to protect individual rights. This article calls for comprehensive reforms, including accessible legal aid, systemic transparency, and a shift from punitive measures to restorative justice, ensuring that the invisible and marginalised are central to the system.

**Click on the titles to read the articles!**



# ONLINE ARTICLES

## **India's Healthcare Scenario—Challenges, Innovations and Journey Ahead**



India's healthcare system reflects both progress and persistent disparities. While life expectancy has improved and maternal mortality declined, access to quality care remains uneven, especially in rural areas. The rise of digital health initiatives and disease eradication efforts mark key milestones, yet challenges like affordability, infrastructure gaps, and intergovernmental coordination persist. Public-private partnerships and technology-driven reforms show promise, but issues of equity, awareness, and implementation remain central. This article reflects on these issues as discussed at CDPP's 2025 healthcare conference in Hyderabad.

## **Trade, Geopolitics and Climate Change—Balancing Global Commitments with Domestic Equity**



India stands at a pivotal moment with the world's largest youth population and expanding digital connectivity. Yet, systemic flaws—poor learning outcomes, outdated curricula, and inequitable access—persist. Despite increased enrollment, foundational literacy remains low, and degrees fail to ensure employment. Digital tools remain underutilised for learning. True reform demands a shift from access to quality, equity, and relevance in education. Rooted in discussions from CDPP's March 2025 conference, this article urges systemic changes to bridge educational, digital, and social divides in India.

**Click on the titles to read the articles!**



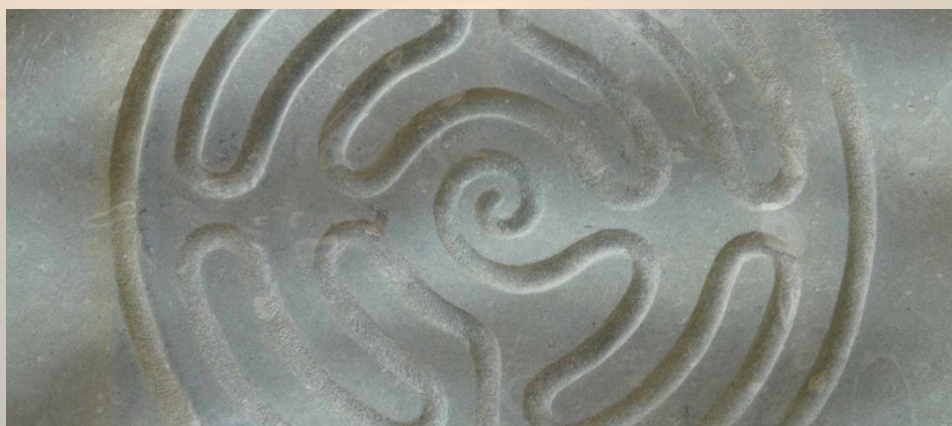
# ONLINE ARTICLES

## **Degrees without Direction: Reforming Education to Empower and Employ**



This article examines the disconnect between India's expanding educational access and the persistent challenges in achieving meaningful learning outcomes and employment. Despite increased enrollment and digital connectivity, over 50% of Indian youth were unemployed in 2022, highlighting the inadequacy of current educational structures. Foundational literacy and numeracy remain unmet goals, with only 30% of Grade 3 students reading at grade level. The article emphasises the need for systemic reforms, including updating curricula, enhancing teaching methodologies, and ensuring equitable access, particularly for marginalised groups. It also underscores the importance of transforming digital access into digital literacy to truly empower the youth.

## **Regulatory Maze: Reform or Redesign?**



Regulation in India is often narrowly seen as a safeguard against market failures, yet its scope spans ethical governance, economic efficiency, and public welfare. This article highlights critical challenges to regulatory excellence, including lack of domain expertise, regulatory capture, and judicial delays. It advocates for systemic reforms—recruiting technologists and legal experts, enhancing transparency, and creating specialised tribunals. The discussion, rooted in CDPP's 2025 Hyderabad conference, emphasises the need for context-sensitive regulations that prioritise consumer protection and technological evolution. India's path forward lies in building a resilient, transparent, and future-ready regulatory ecosystem anchored in local realities.

**Click on the titles to read the articles!**



# EVENTS

**CDPP** CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

## Rebuilding a Secular and Inclusive Nation

**Time and Date:** 4:00 p.m | Wednesday, April 16, 2025  
**Venue:** CDPP Office, 3rd Floor, Serene Heights Building, Masab Tank, Hyderabad, Telangana, Pin: 500028

**Speaker:**

**Anand Vardhan Singh**  
Anand Vardhan Singh is an author, senior journalist, and political analyst. He is the founding editor of *The Public India* and the former editor of *Lokmat*.

CDPP Location

## Rebuilding a Secular and Inclusive Nation

Anand Vardhan Singh is an author, senior journalist, and political analyst. He is the founding Editor of *The Public India* and a former editor of *Lokmat*. With decades of experience in media and political commentary, he is known for his incisive analysis of Indian politics and governance. His work focuses on social concerns, policy matters, and public discourse.

He spoke on “Rebuilding a Secular and Inclusive Nation” on April 16 at 4 p.m. at the CDPP office.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## BAZM - E - SUKHAN

BAZM - E - SUKHAN  
CDPP

یوسفی کی تحریروں میں غالب کے اشعار  
"YOUSUFI KI TAHREERON MEI  
GHALIB KE ASHAR"

14 May, 2025 (Wednesday) | 6:00 pm  
at **Lamakaan**, Near GVK One, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad

**Dr. Bibi Raza Khatoon**  
Associate Professor of Urdu  
Department of Urdu, MANUU

Will speak on Ghalib's Verses in Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi's Writings

— DINNER FOLLOWS —

Presided over by **Smt. Lakshmi Devi Raj & Prof. Ashraf Rafi**

Supported by

### Yousufi Ki Tahreeron Mei Ghalib Ke Ashar

The Centre for Development Policy and Practice, in collaboration with the Digital Empowerment Foundation and A-CODE, is delighted to invite you to another compelling edition of Bazm-e-Sukhan.

Join us on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at Lamakaan, Hyderabad, for an insightful Urdu literary evening "Yousufi ki Tahreeron Mein Ghalib ke Ashaar," featuring Dr.. Bibi Raza Khatoon, Associate Professor of Urdu at MANUU.


Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Time: 6: 00 p.m.


Venue: Lamakaan, near GVK One, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad



# UPCOMING EVENTS



CENTRE FOR  
DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY AND  
PRACTICE



IMRC  
INDIAN MUSLIM RELIEF & CHARITIES



**Dr. Ali Mehdi, Speaker**

## Muslim Women and Children in India

The Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP) is pleased to host a special talk on “Muslim Women and Children in India,” featuring global health expert Dr. Ali Mehdi.

Dr. Ali Mehdi leads UHC360, an initiative focused on analysing and accelerating universal health coverage in low- and middle-income countries. With two decades of global health experience across Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America, his research—backed by governments, international agencies, civil society, and industry—has earned him honours such as the UK's Global Talent award (2021) and South Korea's Next Generation Leader award (2008).

Date & Time: Thursday, May 08, 2025, 7:30 p.m. IST (7:00 a.m. PDT; 10:00 a.m. EST)



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Menstruation Dialogue 2025

The Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP), in collaboration with Goonj and National Foundation for India (NFI), is pleased to co-host Menstruation Dialogue 2025. This day-long event will mark Menstrual Hygiene Day by advancing inclusive discourse on menstrual health, particularly in times of crisis and climate emergencies. Bringing together over 100 participants from CSR, academia, grassroots movements, and policy, the Dialogue will feature specially curated panel discussions, cultural performances, and regional voices. With a strong focus on intersectionality, data-driven policy, and community-led solutions, this platform will spotlight underrepresented perspectives and advocate for dignified, equitable menstrual wellbeing.

Date: May 31, 2025

Venue: India Habitat Centre (Jacaranda Hall), New Delhi

For more updates, stay connected with us as we gear up for this critical conversation.





Click on the social media platform icons to connect!

