

Tamilnadu State Finances



(Source- -

https://www.google.co.in/search?q=tamil+nadu&biw=1366&bih=667&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjG0-ZnJvPAhVE9mMKHa70DCYQ_AUICCGD#imgdii=6eRnC0LLJ8Dq5M%3A%3B6eRnC0LLJ8Dq5M%3A%3BPLPcs9HRv3KPoM%3A&imgrc=6eRnC0LLJ8Dq5M%3A)

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Lead Essay

Tamilnadu State Finances

Introduction:

Tamil Nadu is the southernmost state of India sharing its border with the States of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Pondicherry. It has the third largest Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of 5,15,45,756 crores and the eighth largest per-capita income of Rs. 1,28,366 in 2015 (CSO)ⁱ.

In terms of physical and energy infrastructure Tamil Nadu seems to be doing better than most other Indian states. With a road densityⁱⁱ of 1769.98 KM (CSO - infrastructure statistics, 2014) it ranks fourth amongst the large Indian states. It also has the third highest electricity installed capacity of 14,00 (GWh) and a per-capita power consumption of 1276.57 (kWh) which is 44% higher than the national average of 883.63 (kWh) (CSO - infrastructure statistics, 2014).

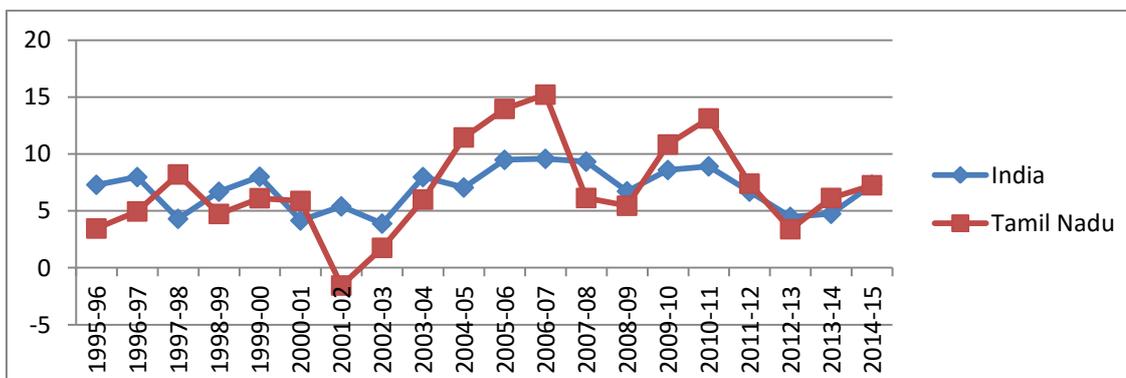
Tamil Nadu remains an economic power house of India contributing 8.16 % of India's GDP. It ranks third in terms of its contribution to India's GDP after Maharashtra (14.42%) and Uttar Pradesh (8.24%). Additionally, despite maintaining a fiscal deficit of less than 3% and an overall debt to GDP ratio of 19.84% (RBI)ⁱⁱⁱ as prescribed in the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM) a closer look at the numbers show that the current status of public finance is about to worsen because of 1) slowing GDP growth rate 2) jittery fiscal indicators and 3) the effect of the GST Act^{iv}

GDP growth in Tamil Nadu: The long term average GDP growth rate of India and Tamil Nadu remains at 6.20% and 6.54% respectively during 1981 – 2015. This is much higher than the average national growth rate of 3.5% during the period 1950-1980. Despite having impressive overall average economic growth from 1980's, the economic growth in the last few years has been sluggish for Tamil Nadu.. From the period 1983 to 1991 the Indian economy and Tamil Nadu's economy grew at almost the same pace of 4.98% and 4.97% (Shanmugam, Prasad & Venkatachalam, 2014).

After enjoying significant economic growth from the 1980's Tamil Nadu's economy have started showing signs of a slowdown in recent years. The average growth rate of Tamil Nadu from 2012 to 2015 has declined to 5.58%. This is well below the economic growth rate of the previous decade of 9.12% and way below the highest growth rate for Tamil Nadu in 2010-11 which is 13.12% This general slowdown in the economy is a cause for serious concern.

Despite the overall economic slump a closer look at the sectoral performance of the Tamil Nadu shows how economic slowdown is affecting the different sectors and the population employed in it.

Chart 1: Economic growth rates of India and Tamil Nadu from 1995 – 2015 (% per year)



Source: Central Statistical Organisation(CSO)

During the period 2005-2015 the share of agriculture as a percentage of the state's GSDP has declined from 12% to 7%, the share of manufacturing as a percentage of GDP has reduced from 32% to 28%, but the share of services has increased from 56% to 65%.

Lead Essay

Table 1: Sectoral contribution to Tamil Nadu's GDP

Share of sector as a percentage of GDP			
Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services
2005-06	12%	32%	56%
2014-15	7%	28%	65%

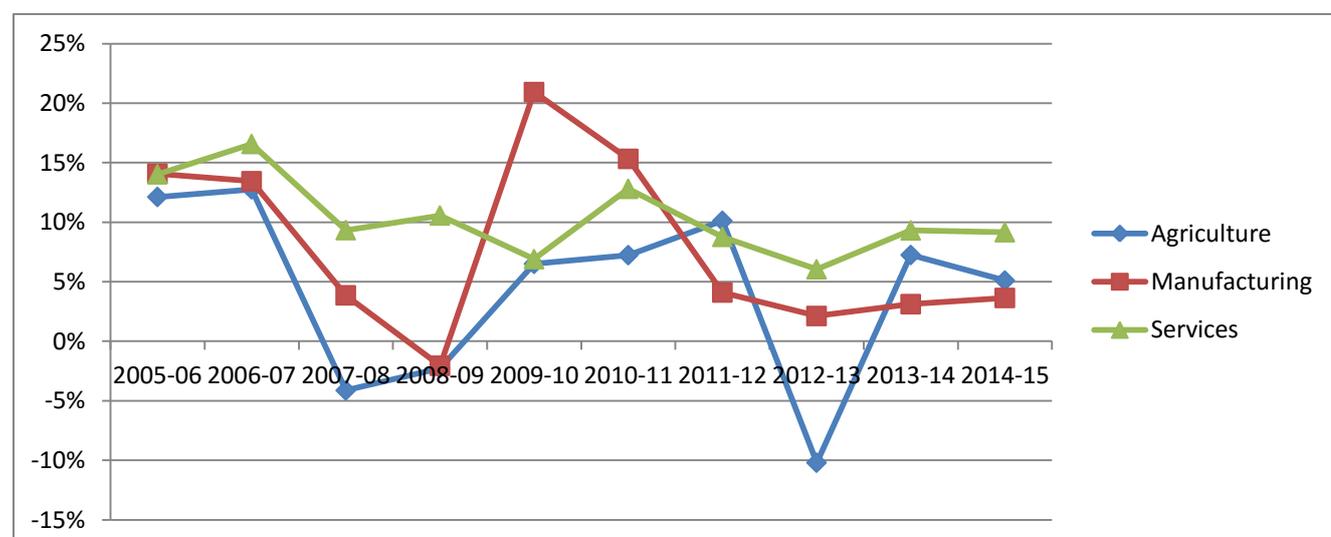
Source: CSO

Among the three sectors, the economic growth rate of the agriculture has been the most erratic. The growth rate of the manufacturing sector has also varied from a high of 21% in 2009-10 to a low of 2% in 2012-13. The services sector also has seen its fair share of ups and downs in the last decade by reaching its high of 17% in 2006-07 to recording its lowest ever growth rate of 6% in 2012-13.

The important thing to note is that the economic performance of all three sectors was the lowest in the year 2012-13, owing to a deficit monsoon. Though the manufacturing and services sector contribute together 93% of Tamil Nadu's GDP, a closer look at the labor employed in the various sectors show that the agricultural sector is highly important in terms of labor absorption (66th round NSS survey).

The percentage share of population that is employed in the various sectors is 45% in agriculture 27% in manufacturing and 28% in services (66th round NSS survey). Hence, in years of poor agricultural output, the aggregate demand for goods and services may reduce significantly due to the fall in demand from agricultural workers. This signifies the importance of maintaining a healthy growth rate in the agricultural sector and the necessity to invest in creating a robust irrigation infrastructure in the state.

Chart 2: Sectoral performance of Tamil Nadu's Economy from 2005 – 2015 (% per year)



Source: CSO

Lead Essay

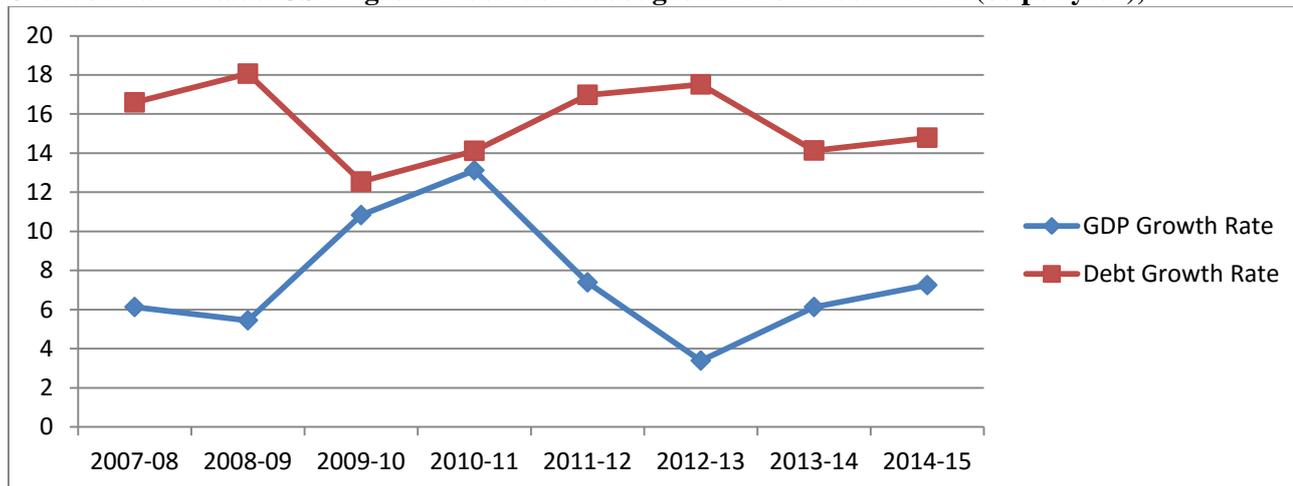
Fiscal indicators in Tamil Nadu: From a precarious fiscal situation in the 1990's Tamil Nadu government has come a long way in becoming a fiscally prudent state in India. After enacting the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act 2003 (FRBMA) the state's fiscal deficit has never crossed 3% of its GDP, the level approved under the FRBMA. However, the economic slowdown coupled with a stagnant tax base has led to the worsening of state finances in recent times.

According to the revised state budget estimates for the fiscal year 2015-16 show that the state has reached a fiscal deficit ratio of 2.96% of the state's GSDP. And, the budget estimates for the year 2016-17 also show that the fiscal deficit might reach 3.34% of the GSDP for 2017-18. A matter of concern is that while the revenue expenditure is increasing, the capital expenditure shows a declining trend.^v This is an area of concern since this is occurring in the backdrop of reduced economic growth.

The speed at which the revenue deficit is increasing is also quite alarming; especially from a revenue deficit of INR 1788 crores in 2013-14 and (-)INR 3537 crores in 2014-15 it has increased to 9154.78 crores for the year 2015-16.^{vi} Therefore, the government should either reduce its unnecessary revenue expenditure or find new avenues to increase its tax revenue. If left unchecked, a rising revenue deficit and fiscal deficit could seriously hamper the state's future economic growth prospects.

Debt by itself is not a bad until the economy grows to sustain the level of debt. But, during the last seven years, when the average economy has been growing at and yearly growth rate of 7% the public debt of the state has risen from 83,662 crore in 2008-09 to 2,11,483 crore in 2015-16, an average yearly growth rate of 21.82%.^{vii} Though, the debt to GDP ratio is under control at 19.84% of the state's GSDP (FRBM limit 25% of GSDP, 13th finance commission 25.2%). The very fact that Tamil Nadu ranks first amongst the Indian states in terms of quickest annual pace of public debt at 92% raises concerns about the serviceability of the public debt in the future.

Chart 3: Tamil Nadu GSDP growth Vs Public debt growth from 2007 – 2015 (% per year),



Source: RBI

The portfolio of debt is well diversified in terms of composition. But, the year wise maturity of these loans is an area of concern. The dependence of the state government on market borrowings which stands at 53.25% is generally higher than the rest of India at 41.2%. However, according to the 2013 CAG report on Tamil Nadu's state finances has raised concerns about the maturity of these market borrowings. According to the report 82% of the market borrowings reach their maturity from 2018-2023. This would add additional strains on the state's finance and could give rise to the risk of rollover to additional borrowings to meet the huge repayments for those years.

Lead Essay

Implication of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for Tamil Nadu State Finances: In the recently ended monsoon session of the parliament the Goods & Services Tax (GST) bill was passed. Tamil Nadu was a lone state that opposed this long pending legislation till its very end. Though Tamil Nadu did not have the sufficient number of MP's (members of parliament) to stop this bill from passing the parliamentary debates show how vehemently Tamil Nadu was opposed to the GST Act.

GST by nature is consumption tax. This will adversely affect a manufacturing state like Tamil Nadu. The timing of the passage of the bill also could not have come at a worse time than this as the government is already reeling under high levels of debt and sluggish economic growth. According to Mr. K.R Shanmugam, director Madras School of Economics, Tamil Nadu is set to lose Rs. 9,270 crore upon implementing the GST act. But, the empowered group of finance ministers who over saw the implementation of the GST Act have pegged the loss of Tamil Nadu's at 2000 crore1.

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ⁱ Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), all data relating to growth rates and GDP have been accessed from the CSO website

ⁱⁱ Road density is the ratio of the length of the country's total road network to the country's land area.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reserve Bank of India, all data regarding public finance has been accessed from the RBI's website

^{iv} Goods and services Act, 2016.

^v "Report of the CAG of India on State Finances for the year ended March 2013, Government of Tamil Nadu.

^{vi} Government Budget Documents of Tamil Nadu, 2016-17

^{vii} TamilNadu Government Budget Documents, 2016-17.

¹ <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/here-is-why-tamil-nadu-cm-jayalithaa-does-not-want-gst/articleshow/52774195.cms>, accessed on 19 September 2016.

Headlines

Govt. panel fails to define ‘poverty line’, says form another group to do the job

(Moushumi Das Gupta, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Sep 12, 2016)

Governments set a poverty line to fix a threshold income to get a headcount of poor people in the country. People earning below the threshold, or the poverty line, are considered poor.

But defining poverty has been a controversial exercise in India with successive governments mothballing past recommendations by experts – largely because a lower poverty threshold could leave out genuinely needy people and a higher one could make the poverty number look bad for a government and require more subsidy spending.

Experts questioned the Panagariya panel’s indecisiveness.

“The expert group should have taken a view. It can’t just say that there is a lack of consensus. It’s ridiculous,” Abhijit Sen, eminent economist and former Planning Commission member, told Hindustan Times.

“The problem is no one wants to bell the cat when it comes to giving the figures on total number of people who are poor in the country.” Sen blamed politics behind entitlements for the poor for the Panagariya panel’s indecisiveness. Panagariya did not respond to calls and mobile text messages from HT.

Read more: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/a-govt-panel-on-poverty-doesn-t-know-what-it-is/story-bsPvj90skcTbKJRFdxtAsM.html> Date Accessed: 19/09/2016

Economy

SBI diktat to affect credit to small, medium-sized firms

(Oommen A. Ninan, *The Hindu*, September 17, 2016)

Industry sources said that most MSME units, enjoying credit limit of Rs.10 crore and above, either do not have an external credit rating or have managed to get only a rating that is below investment grade. Investment grade rating would typically mean a rating of 'BBB' or higher by RBI-approved credit rating agencies such as CRISIL, ICRA and CARE.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/sbi-diktat-to-affect-credit-to-small-mediumsized-firms/article9119174.ece>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

The problem with exports

(Manas Chakravarty, *The Live Mint*, September 19, 2016)

India's merchandise exports contracted by 0.3% last month from a year ago, compared to a 6.86% contraction in July. The smaller contraction is no cause for celebration as it's only because of a base effect. Exports contracted by 6.86% in July on top of a 9.7% contraction in July 2015, while they fell 0.3% in August on top of a 20.6% fall in August 2015.

Read More: <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/9zj8By2XdmYYhrNCIzs3sN/The-problem-with-exports.html>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

SEBI's Flawed Attempt at Setting the Frequencies Right

(Kanad Bagchi, *The wire*, September 15, 2016)

High frequency traders have often received an anxious and sometimes hostile demeanour from regulators and market participants alike. Popular perceptions with respect to these traders' supposedly predatory and unfair strategies have been captured with imaginative narrative in several books, including Michel Lewis's *Flash Boys*. While such bestsellers provide a fascinating read of this particular market segment, creeping popular perceptions into expert regulatory strides are both worrisome and often amount to squandering.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/66124/sebis-flawed-attempt-setting-frequencies-right/>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Will the World's Largest Single Market Transform Africa's Fortunes?

(Busani Bafana, *The wire*, September 13, 2016)

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe: Getting just a sliver of the global trade in goods and services worth more than 70 trillion dollars, Africans have every excuse to decide to trade among themselves. Many argue that it is the only way to leverage trade to secure a better life for the continent's more than a billion people who need food and jobs. The Africa rising narrative might be getting the much needed validation to tackle widening inequality, joblessness, generalised poverty, food and nutritional insecurity that eclipse successes in meeting some of the development targets included in the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/65506/will-the-worlds-largest-single-market-transform-africa-fortunes/>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Governance & Development

SECURITY

Uri Attack: There Are No Military Options That Will Give India the Outcome It Wants (Manoj Joshi, *The Wire*, September 19, 2016)

For a government which came to power promising a change in the allegedly weak-kneed policies of the past, there are powerful psychological and political compulsions at play here. The BJP-led regime demonstrated what it meant by undertaking a campaign of disproportionate bombardment of the international border in Jammu in early 2014. After the Pathankot attack, it took on a high-decibel diplomatic campaign to isolate and sanction Islamabad and then, it threatened Pakistan that it would expand its political support to separatists in Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/66874/uri-india-military-options-terror-pakistan/>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

HEALTH

Chikungunya, dengue outbreak in Delhi: How MCDs have failed in keeping the city clean

(Debobrat Ghose, *Firstpost*, September 17, 2016)

According to a recent study report prepared by 'Centre for Civil Society', Municipal Corporations in Delhi were unable to utilise funds allocated under the Centre's Swachh Bharat Mission with the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) "failing" to spend a single penny out of the Rs 46.28 crore allocated to it.

Firstpost visited different localities of north, south and east Delhi and found dumped garbage and filth in residential and commercial areas that's best described in pictures. The apathy of Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs) was glaring.

Read More: <http://www.firstpost.com/india/chikungunya-dengue-outbreak-in-delhi-how-mclds-have-failed-in-keeping-the-city-clean-3008104.html>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Beyond surrogacy: The stigma of infertility drives an assisted reproduction industry rife with risk

(Sandhya Srinivasan, *Scroll*, August 31, 2016)

Thirty-eight years since the first IVF birth in India, the industry remains unregulated. According to the Indian Society for Assisted Reproduction, the ART industry in India was worth Rs 3,000 crore in 2014 and is set to go up to Rs 20,000 crore by 2018, though such numbers are only speculative. Still, there are 887 ART clinics listed in the National Registry of ART Clinics and Banks as of October 2015; the actual number is likely to be much larger as registration is not compulsory. The ISAR believes that India has great untapped potential for ART use. This is not a medical service so much as an industry.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/pulse/815240/beyond-surrogacy-the-stigma-of-infertility-drives-an-assisted-reproduction-industry-rife-with-risk>

Date of Access: 19.9.2016

Governance & Development

ENERGY

India wastes 15-20% of its renewable energy due to lack of storage: Panasonic Energy head

(TCA Sharad Raghvan, *The Hindu*, September 14, 2016)

Storage technology can ensure that no matter the wind or solar generation, what you get out of the generation-cum-storage unit is a uniform output, “which is great for the grid”, according to Mr Arya.

As far as battery technology goes, lithium-ion batteries—the kind used in cellphones—have emerged as the technology of choice since they outperform all the other competing technologies in terms of size, capacity, efficiency, and environmental impact. “Lithium-ion does not seem to be going anywhere in the next decade,” Mr Arya said. “And if you include the fact that even electric cars use that battery, then you can expect greater R&D and investment in this technology in the future.”

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/india-wastes-1520-of-its-renewable-energy-due-to-lack-of-storage-panasonic-energy-head/article9108086.ece>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Bengaluru wastes nearly 50% of the water it gets from Cauvery

(Alison Saldanha, *Moneylife*, September 16, 2016)

As Karnataka continues its legal battle over the Cauvery, the states capital -- almost entirely dependent on the river -- wastes half the water it receives, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of water-use data.

The only Indian city that wastes water at a greater rate is Kolkata. And the situation in Bengaluru will only worsen.

Every Bangalorean -- 8.5 million people live in India's third-most populous city -- should get 150 litres of water per day. But what she gets is 65 litres, the equivalent of four flushes of a toilet. Water is supplied, on average, thrice a week

Read More: <http://www.moneylife.in/article/bengaluru-wastes-nearly-50-percentage-of-the-water-it-gets-from-cauvery/48181.html>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Politicians aren't only messing with Tamil Nadu's water – they're making Rs 20,000 crore from sand

(M. Rajasekar, *Moneylife*, September 16, 2016)

Stepping onto the bank, the first thing that's visible is a ten-wheeled tipper.

It grinds to a halt at the end of a queue of similar trucks. Beyond it stretches a vast riverbed. That is the Thenpennaiyar, one of the larger rivers in central Tamil Nadu.

It is summer and there isn't a drop of water in the river. The riverbed, with its carpet of sand, is warming under the sun. It looks like it has been ploughed by a giant tractor. Long trenches are separated by ridges that are wide enough to serve as roads for the tippers.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/article/815138/tamil-nadus-political-parties-are-making-money-from-sand-worth-a-whopping-rs-20000-crore-a-year>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

ENVIRONMENT

Soon, We May Not Have a Cauvery River to Fight Over

(Nityanand Jayaraman, *The Wire*, 18 September, 2016)

Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu view the river as a mechanistic producer of water, not as a dynamic life-giving system that is responsive to local and global triggers of use and abuse. The possibilities of a de-escalation of conflicts over Cauvery's water are remote given that two principal stakeholders – the River Cauvery and future generations – are not represented in all the negotiations in the tribunal and the Supreme Court. What is being referred to as a water-sharing formula is little more than a loot-sharing formula for divvying up the booty.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/66739/cauvery-bengaluru-mettur-krishnarajasagar/>

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Governance & Development

AGRICULTURE

Coorg farmers are now growing coffee that is helping the environment

(Gopikrishna Warriar, *The Tribune*, September 17, 2016)

The concept of eco-certified coffee, whose certification process ensures that coffee is grown under mixed-species trees, has gained popularity in the district in the past five years. Close to 900 coffee farmers have converted to eco-certified coffee. Even with a conservative estimate of 10 acre per farmer, this means nearly 10,000 acres of eco-certified coffee. In addition, with Tata Coffee getting all of its 13 estates eco-certified, Kodagu district has at least 20,000 acres under coffee cultivation that aims to minimise damage to the environment.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/article/816322/coorg-farmers-are-now-growing-coffee-that-is-helping-the-environment>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

LAW AND JUSTICE

India is enrolling infants and children in Aadhaar – but what about their consent?

(Kritika Bhardwaj, *Scroll*, September 19, 2016)

Within minutes of birth, children are being signed up for the contentious identification programme. On September 7, Seema (name changed) became the youngest person in India to get an Aadhaar number, after she was enrolled within five minutes of her birth in Khajuwala, Rajasthan. The government's biometric-based identification system, which assigns each citizen a unique number, covers 98% of India's adult population, according to the latest figures. The coverage among children, however, is far less, and when taken into account, brings total enrolment to 82%. To plug this gap, the government has proposed to link five child-specific schemes to Aadhaar. The inclusion of the mid-day meal scheme among others in this list means that for children in government schools, even getting a hot cooked lunch would be contingent on their biometrics.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/article/816815/india-is-enrolling-infants-and-children-in-aadhaar-but-what-about-their-consent>.

Date of Access: 19.9.2016

Government to Oppose Triple Talaq in SC

(*The Tribune*, September 18, 2016)

The Centre will be opposing in the Supreme Court the triple talaq practice on the grounds of women's rights, terming it as "inalienable" and asserting that the issue should not be seen from the prism of uniform civil code, a government functionary said today. "We shouldn't approach it from (the prism of) uniform civil code. We need to talk in terms of rights of women. Our reply is going to be only on rights. A woman's rights are inalienable and according to the Constitution she has to have the same rights as men. Every court decision has slowly been taking us to these uniform rights. The practice of triple talaq doesn't exist even in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Only we have it," the senior functionary said.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/govt-to-oppose-triple-talaq-in-sc/297445.html>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

NCRB Data Shows Rise in Repeat Criminal Offenders

(*The Newlaundry*, September 15, 2016)

Data from the recently released National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) showed that of all criminals arrested in India in 2015, 8.1 per cent were repeat offenders. The corresponding figure in 2014 was 7.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent in 2013. As a percentage, it seems small but to put things in perspective, about 2.5 lakh people arrested in 2015 had been convicted in the past. As many as 37,649 had been incarcerated twice before, and 14,143 arrests were of those who had gone to prison thrice or more. This is just the tip of the iceberg of Indian criminality. The NCRB statistics don't account for those who have slipped under law enforcement's radar, like Pallavi Purkayastha's murderer who jumped parole.

Read more: <http://www.newslandry.com/2016/09/15/ncrb-data-shows-rise-in-repeat-criminal-offenders/>

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Governance & Development

SC's Schizophrenic Approach to Land Acquisition

(Alok Prasanna Kumar, *The Economic and Political Weekly*, September 17, 2016)

The Centre will be opposing in the Supreme Court the triple talaq practice on the grounds of women's rights, terming it as "inalienable" and asserting that the issue should not be seen from the prism of uniform civil code, a government functionary said today. "We shouldn't approach it from (the prism of) uniform civil code. We need to talk in terms of rights of women. Our reply is going to be only on rights. A woman's rights are inalienable and according to the Constitution she has to have the same rights as men. Every court decision has slowly been taking us to these uniform rights. The practice of triple talaq doesn't exist even in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Only we have it," the senior functionary said.

Read more: <http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/38/law-and-society/supreme-courts-schizophrenic-approach-land-acquisition.html>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Society

GENDER

Twenty Years Too Long: Women's Reservation Bill Continues to Languish in Lok Sabha

(Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty, *The Wire*, September 16, 2016)

The bill's journey began on September 12, 1996, when it was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the United Front government of H.D. Deve Gowda. The bill called for reserving 33% of the seats in the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies for women. As per the draft, the seats were to be reserved for women on a rotation basis and would be determined by draw of lots, in such a way that a seat would be reserved only once in three consecutive general elections. It said reservation of seats for women would cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of the amendment Act.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/66260/womens-reservation-bill-in-lok-sabha/>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Supreme Court orders ban on mass sterilisation

(Kundan Pandey, *Down to Earth*, September 16, 2016)

The SC judgment noted that this was not an isolated incident. During the course of the hearings, evidence of poor quality of care during sterilisation camps emerged from other states including Chhattisgarh (where 13 women died as a result of botched sterilisation operations in November 2014), Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the Court said. The judgment directs the central and state governments to stop all camp-based sterilisations within three years and instead strengthen health facilities so that they are able to provide this facility. The judgment also directs governments to not set even informal targets, compelling health workers to undertake "what would amount to a forced or non-consensual sterilisation".

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/supreme-court-orders-ban-on-mass-sterilisation-55715>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

India and World

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Vladimir Putin-led United Russia wins country's parliament election

(Scroll, September 19, 2016)

The ruling party had an easy victory, winning more than 53% of the total vote. Vladimir Putin-led United Russia won the parliament election in the country on Monday, AFP reported. Voters cast their ballot for 450 seats in the country's State Duma, which will hold power in the country for five years. The ruling party had an easy victory, winning more than 53% of the total vote. After 60% of votes were counted, opposition parties the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the Left had only 13.9% and 13.7% of the vote.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/latest/816891/vladimir-putin-led-united-russia-wins-countrys-parliament-election>.

Date of Access: 19.9.2016

Opinions/ Books

OPINIONS

Don't Let Whatsapp Nudge you to Share Data with Facebook

(John Naughtan, *The Guardian*, September 18, 2016)

Seasoned observers of the computer industry will recognise this for what it is: just another illustration of the power of the default setting. In marketing-speak, it's how to "Nudge Your Customers Toward Better Choices" – an implementation of the philosophy set out by Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler in their book *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*. Of course, it's true – as Sunstein and Thaler argue – that defaults can sometimes be used to ensure that people do things that are good for *them*, like ensuring that they enrol in a pension scheme. But in the computer industry, defaults are often deployed purely in the interests of corporations.

Read more: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/18/whatsapp-nudge-to-share-data-with-facebook>

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Next door Nepal: Mending fences

(Yubaraj Ghimire, *The Indian Express*, September 19, 2016)

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's India visit will reverberate in Nepal's political discourse for a while. India has been suspicious that Nepal's rulers always play the "China card" against India: Dahal's predecessor, K.P. Oli, played it to the hilt. Dahal, who has travelled to Delhi in less than a month of his succeeding Oli as the prime minister, risks giving credence to the Indian perception with his claims to promote "balanced" relations with Nepal's two neighbours.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/pushpa-kamal-dahal-k-p-oli-next-door-nepal-mending-fences-3037986/>

Date Accessed: 19.9.2016

Globalization's failures: the age of discontent

(Shyam Sharan, *The Live Mint*, September 19, 2016)

Countries across the world, big and small, developed and developing, democratic and authoritarian, are in the throes of powerful new trends which governments, societies and institutions seem unable to cope with. Among these are the rising tide of anti-globalization sentiment, the anger over growing inequality of income and wealth both between and within countries and, most importantly, the pervasive decline of public trust in governments, institutions, media and business. This is happening precisely at a time when the world is confronted with major cross-cutting challenges such as international terrorism, ecological degradation and climate change, pervasive economic uncertainty and market volatility and structural and persistently high unemployment. These require collaborative national and global responses but competitive patterns of behaviour remain deeply entrenched.

Read More: <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/dBc78R03s5zVILeqQkpE5L/Globalizations-failures-the-age-of-discontent.html>

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The greatest enemy of India's judiciary isn't the government but its own secretive system

(Gyanant Kumar Singh, *The Scroll*, September 18, 2016)

The real challenge facing the Indian judiciary in its attempt to salvage the Collegium system – which ensures its independence by giving it primacy in appointment of judges – is not its conflict with executive but its resistance to change. While the Collegium survived the executive-judiciary conflict with the Supreme Court quashing the law constituting the National Judicial Appointments Commission, the judiciary is yet to deal with the criticism over lack of transparency and accountability which had shaken the confidence of people in the judge-led system of appointment of judges.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/article/816765/the-greatest-enemy-of-indias-judiciary-isnt-the-government-but-its-own-secretive-system>

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Opinions/ Books

Gandhi Was Perfectly Sensible to Call Industrial Civilisation a ‘Nine Day Wonder’

(Sajai Jose, The Wire, 19 September, 2016)

Ecological economist Mark Lindley says Gandhi’s ideas about economics are unpopular in India because its middle class is more eager to jump on the affluence bandwagon than take stock of the looming environmental crisis.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/66777/gandhi-was-perfectly-sensible-to-call-industrial-civilisation-a-nine-days-wonder-mark-lindley/>.

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