

NICKELED & DIMED



THIS MONTHS ISSUE :

FORCED EVICTIONS

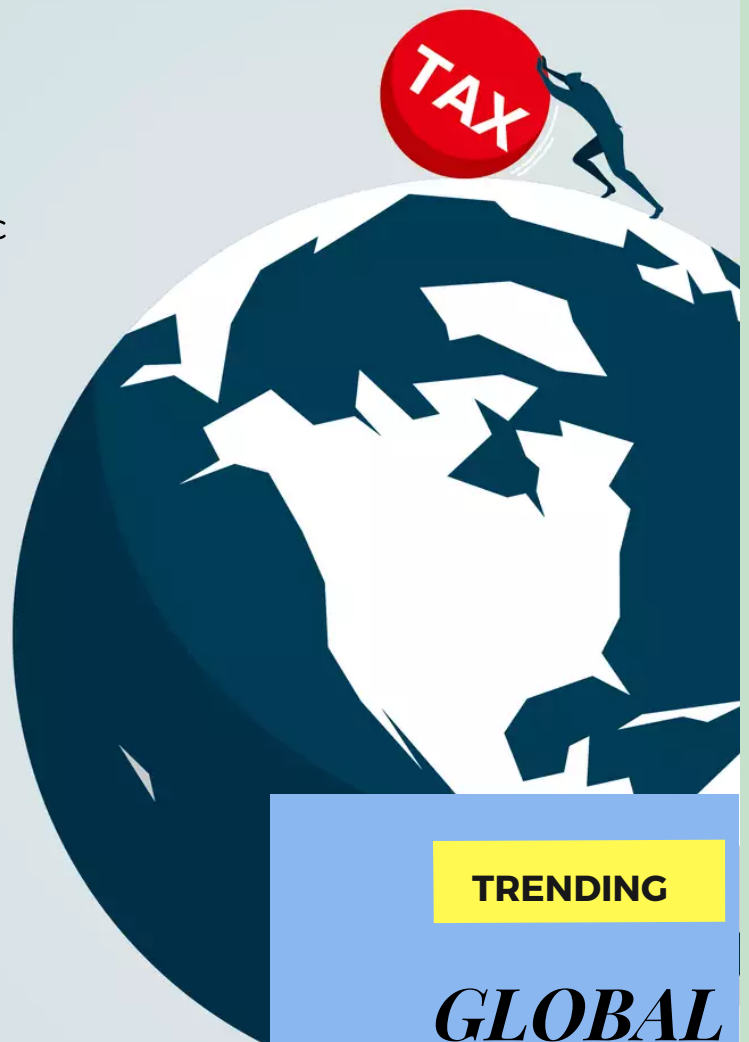
An analysis of the impact of Public Interest Litigations on forced evictions.

TAIWAN, U.S. AND CHINA

The geostrategic, economic and democratic importance of Taiwan

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

The importance and viability of providing an education to ST's in their mother tongue



TRENDING

**GLOBAL
MINIMUM
CORPORATE
TAX**

THE GLOBAL MINIMUM CORPORATE TAX & INDIA



BY GARIMA AGARWAL



GLOBAL TAX

The Group of Seven (G7) countries issued a joint communiqué after their meeting in the first week of June supporting the Global Minimum Corporate Tax (“GMCT”). The GMCT seeks to impose a minimum corporate tax on companies globally to curb the shifting of profits to low tax jurisdictions and prevent evasion of tax.

THE CONTEXT BEHIND GMCT

Countries have been competing against each other to provide lower corporate taxes to attract corporations, foreign investment and growth. When one country lowers its corporate tax, other countries follow the lead. Owing to what we call the “race to the bottom”, the global average corporate tax rate has fallen from 49 percent to 24 percent. For the past decades, Corporates have been targeting the low tax-jurisdictions of Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Singapore and Switzerland to channel their profits through these countries through complex tax avoidance schemes. Even if they don’t carry out their day-to-day business operations in the country they are in, they just move their company headquarters to the low tax jurisdictions to evade tax. Consequently, the global annual tax loss is estimated to be \$245 billion annually to tax havens.

WHAT IS GMCT?

The G7 summit has proposed a 15% global minimum corporate tax rate on large corporations. Under this proposal, the companies will have to pay taxes where they operate and not where they are headquartered and subsequently companies will then have to not only pay to their source countries but also their home countries.

The Global minimum tax rate would require countries with tax rates lower than the threshold to increase their rates through domestic legislation. GMCT is to majorly prevent the corporations from escaping to these tax haven countries. Under this deal, the subsidiaries of the companies that go untaxed, the global 15% tax would ensure that companies in countries with below the 15% tax rate would have to pay the additional tax in order to bring it to the threshold. This would reduce the profit shifting by the companies as they would be taxed at home anyway.

A global minimum tax is required to prevent huge tax leakages and to move towards a more equitable tax regime which can also help to reverse direct tax cuts in India. GMCT’s primary agenda shall be to target corporations like Facebook and Alphabet which have been earning huge profits through their online business without paying much in taxes to the countries where they are generating profits.

HOW DOES GMCT BENEFIT INDIA?

India currently stands at an advantageous position as far as this policy lies. First, the domestic corporate tax rate in India is above the global minimum 15% threshold; second, owing to its tax rates, India is also in a fair position to provide concessions to big companies while still conforming to the international tax rates. Though the 15% tax regime doesn’t affect the current investments, what remains a challenge is to set up more Special Economic Zones (SEZ) or giving additional incentives to the company to bring them to India since they cannot go lower than the 15% rate. On a positive side, owing to India’s large internal market, quality labour at competitive rates, strategic location for exports, and a thriving private sector, the minimum threshold should not possess a great difficulty.

CONCLUSION

The proposal framework is yet to be finalised and is aimed to reach a consensus by October 2023. While one may argue that India should adopt a fair and flexible tax system in order to cater to the long term needs of its countrymen and preserving the interests of the exchequer, we cannot overlook the amount of tax loss that India has to bear annually by way of transfer-pricing, debt-financing and restructuring of intellectual property rights. A global minimum tax will prevent the creative and complex tax-avoidance schemes by the corporations and can bring positive changes to India in terms of bringing equality, attracting investments and making a more equitable tax regime without the fear of competing with tax havens.

A CASE STUDY OF FORCED EVICTIONS IN NEW DELHI

BY SUSHMITA SOLANKI



India's housing crisis was aggravated during the pandemic last year as many marginalized, low-income families were forcefully evicted and their homes were demolished without any recourse to resettlement. Many low-income groups have been evicted for reasons such as widening of roads, infrastructure projects, conservation programs and disaster management. There are different settings in which evictions take place such as when the government acquires land for development purposes. Over 5.68 lakh people were forcibly evicted from their homes in India from 2017 to 2019, and from March to July 2020 approximately 20,000 people were evicted (HRLN, 2020). Between 2000 and 2010, bastis like Pustha, Nangla Maachi, Himmatpuri, Trilokpuri, Banuwal Nagar, Sanjaycamp, Sanjay Basti and Ambedkar Colony were demolished which scarred the landscape of millennial Delhi.

Evictions of varying degree and kind continue to progress at low-income settlements such as JJ (Jugi Jhopris) clusters which have been considered illegal, informal, unplanned and illegitimate by various master plans & municipal laws which implies that they possess no legal claim to tenure. There exist other forms of settlements also known as bastis – Slum designated Areas (notified slums) and resettlement colonies. Both of these have some degree of legality and legitimacy when faced with the threat of eviction. The fear of eviction and the trauma of resettlement curtails the choices for the poor.

EVICTIONS AND THE POLITICS OF GOVERNANCE IN CONTEMPORARY DELHI

These evictions are not coming from the 'Sarkar' (executive), but are coming from the court orders. Each of these cases have one thing in common: Public Interest Litigation (PIL). The evictions were carried out in public interest. This raises a series of questions relating to equitable access to residential land, tenure rights, democratic ideals, and notions of citizenship.

This shift marked the rise in evictions defined by entrenched inequalities- the PIL. Industries Case 1996 marked the beginning of the new phase of PILs (a paradigm shift). The court had ordered the hazardous industries to relocate to the outskirts of the city. The drive against 'polluting industries,' and the drive against the poor had become synonymous. This judgement furthered the journey of evictions in the city.

- In *Almitra Patel vs the Union of India* (2002), the court remarked that Delhi should be the 'showpiece of the country'. The slum dweller was named an 'encroacher' 'rewarding an encroacher on public land with an alternative free site is like giving a reward to a pickpocket for stealing'.
- *Hemraj vs the Commissioner of Police & Ors: Nangla Maachi* housed 15000 people, its residents were mainly service providers such as domestic workers, recyclers, ragpickers, trade owners, construction workers etc. The Delhi High Court was furious that 'illegal encroachment (unauthorized occupants) was being allowed for commercial benefits' which had led to some sort of anarchy and therefore the court ordered its demolition in 2006.
- In *Okhla Factory Owners vs Government of the NCT of Delhi*, the court said that the state was obliged to provide shelter to the poor but in case of failing to do so it was not its duty to provide alternative sites to encroachers on public land. Here, the court didn't acknowledge the state failure. Beginning in the 2000s the court refused to hold the executive accountable for its failure to provide low-income housing, eroding the right to settlement.

The city is created by the courts as the scale at which the public's urgent & pressing concerns are addressed & defined. At the same time the scale of interventions, judgements & solutions must be devised and put into action. In all these cases the Delhi High court and The Supreme Court employed techniques of Rescaling & Reframing for this production.

CONCLUSION

We have to work with the city the way our city is, not the way we wish it was. The courts need to broaden their social understanding, realising that the workers who have built the city have a right to the city and that this right has to be protected and strengthened.

G20 COAL PHASE-OUT PLAN: THE CASE OF INDIA AND CHINA



BY ASHIKA THOMAS



As the most recent G20 summit to discuss climate change ended inconclusively, energy consumption, more specifically coal consumption, has captured the current discourse. Since China and India have declined a coal phase-out in the G20 meet, we need to understand the reason why it is almost impossible for India and China to do so at a short notice, especially relative to developed countries of the G20.

An important aspect of energy use is what kind of energy the country uses. Energy consumption often includes electricity, transport, and heating and a person may have access to one, all or none of these resources. In the case of China, in 2016, around 561.67 million people only had access to solid fuel which includes coal and wood sources. This value was approximately 780.73 million people in India. This problem, however, is visibly non-existent in countries such as the UK, US and Canada ever since the 2000s. Clean fuel such as natural gas, ethanol or electric technologies is widely accessible in the latter countries but in India and China, the scarcity of clean fuels is still disproportionately high. Solid fuel is cheap and accessible to the poor in these countries and is therefore consumed on a daily basis. It is also such fuel which has increased the access to electricity in China and India.

China, India and other developing countries are not just expected to close the gap in economic development but also switch over to an uncertain and relatively more expensive system for their larger populations. India and China are working towards the energy availability and consumption of the developed countries in the 1970s. One look at the per capita energy consumption chart will show that while the UK and US have peaked in per capita consumption, India and China have not even come remotely close to achieving that level 50 years later.

HURDLES FOR A COAL PHASE-OUT:

1. In India, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana make up 85% of the coal production of the country and have hired around 744,984 workers. While in China, 9 provinces produce 90% of the coal, with a workforce of 61 lakh miners. A phase-out would mean a loss of employment with no way to transition over to other means of livelihood. Moreover, coal is the main source of fuel for low income communities in both the countries and such communities will be negatively affected unless the replaced source of energy is equally cheap and widely available.
2. Since coal mines are concentrated only in a few regions, a shift to a new energy source (unless its solar energy for India) also means a shift to a new region which translates to job loss (for both direct and indirect jobs) for specific areas.
3. A total phase-out also translates to these states and provinces losing revenue. In the case of India, "almost six percent of the total state revenues (came) from coal mining royalties". For solar or wind energy, the energy plant will have to be shifted to other states like Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan. "In Shanxi, one of the largest coal producers in China, coal-related industries contributed 29% of its GDP and 46% of its tax revenues in 2018".

As of late, the Indian government has put up almost 70% of coal mines for auction to private entities in an attempt to improve the technology and efficiency of production. This can be understood as India wanting to move away as a major importer of coal, to be self-sufficient in its largest energy source. Contrary to phasing out, India's recent policies seem to want to improve coal as a source of fuel. The private entities who now own the coal mines could extract coal with no restrictions on how much they could extract and for what purpose they could extract.

Shutting down old coal plants along with encouraging developed countries to financially support developing countries' efforts in mitigating climate change seems to be viable solutions. On the whole, while it is a necessity for India and China to move away from coal as a fuel source, a sudden transition seems to be impossible.

TAIWAN: A FLASHPOINT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CHINA

BY PRATUL CHATURVEDI



Taiwan is both a sacred territory and a valuable strategic asset for both the US and China. This has resulted in both the US and China giving stern warnings to each other to prevent a change in the status quo. This makes a military conflict quite likely between the two sides. Through this paper, I will analyze some of the reasons behind Taiwan becoming a flashpoint between the US and China. How Taiwan Became Important for the US and China

For China, Taiwan represents something beyond territory. After Kuomintang nationalists were defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), they fled to Taiwan in 1949, and asserted that the Republic of China (aka Taiwan), under Chiang Kai-Shek is the lawful government of all China. Thus, the CCP view Taiwan as the final stage of the civil war and consider reunification of the renegade province as vital for the regime's legitimacy.

Chiang Kai-Shek symbolized the culmination dreams of the US, to remodel China in the Western image. Thus, the defeat of the Kuomintang nationalists in mainland was looked upon as a failure. This led to Taiwan becoming a vital cog of the West's containment policy against international communism in Southeast Asia, especially during the cold war era, and has continued to remain so. However, the geopolitical realities convinced former US President Richard Nixon the necessity to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China. This began with the PRC being recognized as a permanent member of the UNSC in 1971, and then was followed by Nixon's trip to the mainland in 1972. But the US recognized that it could not entirely abandon Taiwan. Though the establishment of official ties between the US and PRC led to an end of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan and termination of US military presence on the island, the US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act on April 10, 1979, establishing a quasi-formal defense commitment to Taiwan.

WHY IS TAIWAN A FLASHPOINT?

Geostrategic Importance

For China, the reunification of Taiwan to the mainland is to make sure that no rival great power dominates their region. Moreover, Taiwan would enhance China's ability to project military power into the western Pacific Ocean. To prevent the shifting of the balance of power in Asia even further in China's direction, the US needs Taiwan's assets on its side. Secondly, America's commitment to Taiwan is inextricably bound up with U.S. credibility in the region, which matters greatly to policymakers in Washington.

Economy

Taiwanese MNCs such as TSMC and Foxconn control the largest manufacturing supply chain of semiconductors, which is an essential component for the manufacture of computer and telecommunication technology. Over time, several automobile companies had their manufacturing centers set up in Taiwan. To check Taiwan's growing economic relations with the West, China is trying to integrate Taiwan's economy with its own. Thus, The US would prevent any such move as it would mean being entirely dependent on China for crucial economic supplies.

Democracy

Where the CCP has strengthened its grip over mainland China, a participatory society has developed in Taiwan that makes the relations between two adversaries more incomprehensible. With the China's 2049 reunification plan put into motion, the Chinese are more determined to uphold the one-China principle and look at most of the citizens identify themselves as Taiwanese rather than Chinese as something unacceptable. On the other hand, the development of multiparty democracy and open society in Taiwan stands for the symbolic success of the long project undertaken by the US to westernize China. Thus, the US will make every attempt to salvage democracy in Taiwan despite facing opposition from China.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Taiwan represents an area of emotional attachment and strategic importance for both the United States and the People's Republic of China, due to the reasons highlighted above. They make Taiwan the most sensitive issue in US-China relations and likely will remain so for many years to come which may likely lead to a war between two global superpowers.

LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND THE SCHEDULED TRIBES



BY ARJUN VARMA



The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population has been a very integral part of India's demography as they account for 8.2% of the Indian Population (2011 Census). The educational policies for minority groups such as the ST, have neither been effective in improving the literacy rate nor successful in increasing accessibility to education. The average literacy rate of STs is 58.96% (2011 Census) in India and has fallen behind that of the national average (72.99%) and is even lesser than the literacy rate of the Scheduled Castes (66.07%). Decreasing enrolment rates and high dropout rates throw light on the poor impact education has had on Scheduled Tribes in India. Article 350 (A) of the Indian Constitution provides for education to students in the primary level in their respective mother tongue for linguistic minority groups. However, the predominant medium of language at the primary level remains one of the languages listed in the eighth schedule. Thus, students from tribal communities are forced to engage in a medium of instruction that is foreign to them right from the primary level.

LANGUAGE INACCESSIBILITY

The Indian constitution has recognized the various tribal populations under ST and protects their rights and autonomy." Regardless of such emphasis in the constitution on the medium of instruction, tribal students are deprived of intellectual accessibility to education because of the medium of instruction. Formalizing languages or dialects used by tribal communities is a difficult task as most of the tribal languages do not have a formal script and are expressed phonetically. A system in which academic disciplines are conveyed in their language improves the chances of preserving and evolving the language for future generations.

THE DIFFICULT ROAD

The task of creating a centralized system that could guide education to be provided in languages followed by tribal populations would be a hefty process. The STs speak close to 400 mother tongues. Out of these, 25 languages have speakers of more than 50,000. Santali, Bhili, Gondi, and Khuruk/Oraon are languages spoken by more than ten lakh people. This highlights that only some languages are dominant (spoken by a large group of people) within the category of languages spoken by Scheduled Tribes. The dominant languages in the category of languages followed by the linguistic minorities have not been given proper infrastructure to develop their respective language into a medium of instruction that can be followed in school.

WHY MOTHER TONGUE MATTERS

In a study by Vic Edwards proposed that dismissing a language followed by the child would not "enhance the feeling of self-worth." Mother tongues were actively discouraged by the school system, and efforts were made to make the students learn one of the dominant languages, as noted by Robert Jeffcoate. The over-emphasis on using the dominant languages could be seen as crucial for the cultural assimilation of minorities into mainstream society. The ease of understanding and following lessons would be better if the medium of instruction was their respective tribal dialect. The Kothari Commission suggested that the "medium of instruction" for the first two years be in their respective tribal language. Multiple states in India have implemented policies for providing education in the language followed by the tribe. However, this is primarily provided in early schooling, mainly in Anganwadis and lower primary schools in Tribal Areas.

IS PROVISION OF MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION POSSIBLE?

Odisha has been ahead of the curve in providing multilingual education up to class 5. Academy of Tribal Language and Culture, in collaboration with Scheduled Castes (SCs) and STs Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), has prepared supplementary reading material up to class 3 for 21 languages Santhali, a widely spoken tribal language in Odisha, which is used as the medium of instruction in more than five hundred primary schools. Chhattisgarh and Kerala have implemented this in Anganwadis in tribal areas. Efforts for implementing the constitutional direction for imparting education in one's respective mother tongue is being carried out in the mentioned states; however, this initiative is not seen across all states that inhabit tribal populations that do not speak or follow the popular or official language of the state.

A TALE OF COMMITMENT AND STRUGGLE: THE ASHAS



BY BEHIND THE SCENES NGO

Clad in a pink sari, unflinching in their approach, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers have been turning the mammoth task of vaccinating about 900 million people in the rural areas into a reality. With the raging waves of COVID-19 engulfing the country, India needs these front-line workers more than ever. This massive need has served as a timely and crucial reminder to the problems faced by the ASHA workers: subordination of profession, ignorance of safety, and pay disparity.

Working for long hours, sometimes 7 days a week, an ASHA worker performs a variety of tasks including preparing and conducting surveys, ensuring door-to-door visits, helping with contact tracing, making arrangements for quarantining the returning migrants, arranging for relief measures, spreading awareness during the pandemic. In both urban and rural areas, the efforts of ASHA workers have controlled the spread of COVID and ensured adequate treatment to those affected. However, accompanying this long list of responsibilities is a striking reality: the extent of their overwork. One ASHA worker serves about 1000 people in rural areas, and over 15000 people in urban areas. Alongside this, while the pandemic has exponentially increased their responsibility, it is accompanied by little to no protective and transportation facilities. With PPE kits and gloves being a distant dream for the ASHAs, a 200ml bottle of sanitizer and a 6 hour disposal mask, or sometimes maybe a dupatta or the corners of their saris was what kept them going. Moreover, there has been a pressing absence of specialized safety training for treating COVID among the ASHA workers. Further, with the imposition of strict lockdowns in many parts of the country and the associated disruption of transportation services coupled with the absence of adequate measures by the government, it is very difficult for the ASHAs to reach the ground. Thus, the threat to their safety is also accompanied by infrastructural desertion by the authorities.

Further, these front-line workers are also subjected to the hostility of the community. Fearing that the ASHAs may forcefully quarantine them in government facilities, or infect them, in certain regions, the communities fail to honor their efforts. This hostility translated into violence in certain parts of the country. Suksham Makane, an ASHA, while documenting the region of Latur in Maharashtra was left injured by the natives. Thus, physical safety too continues to be an emerging concern for the ASHAs.

Another crucial feature impinging on the ASHAs' hardships is the gap in payment. The ASHA workers are paid an honorarium per month instead of monthly salaries. This is primarily because they are viewed as activists or volunteers and not full-time government employees. The Government of India recently accounted for a minimum package of rupees 2000 per month for the ASHAs. Further, during the pandemic, the ASHA workers were provisioned to receive rupees 1000 extra per month to compensate for the increased work that they were subjected to. However, in reality, hardly any of the ASHAs actually received this amount. Further, a 50 lakh health insurance was also announced for the health workers as a remedial step for their safety. While this is undoubtedly a crucial step, it fails to materialize into their actual immediate demand of an increased pay. Wrong perceptions about the nature of their work creates problems for them for a number of reasons. Firstly, being tagged as "honorary" workers despite the number of tasks performed by them leaves the ASHA workers out of the protection of the labour laws or the Minimum Wage Act. Secondly, their critically low-level of income fails to reflect their self-worth and contribution to the community. This situation is exacerbated by delays in payment, lack of infrastructural facilities, and transportation. Thus, despite being overworked, ASHA workers are mostly underpaid.

The ASHA's long-drawn struggle to obtain the much-deserved status as government employees rendering services critical to the communities needs adequate recognition. An increment in pay tends to lend impetus to the circular flow of income, thereby providing health-care services to a larger audience in the longer run. Further, this tends to transform the currently constricted employment scenario for the educated rural women, strengthening their social and financial standing and eventually opening up further employment avenues. Thus, honouring the demands of the ASHAs translates into a well-functioning rural economy, while promoting the crucial pillars of women empowerment and community development. Needless to say, dignity of labour, an ideal that keeps Behind the Scenes going, is a right that each worker needs to be given the environment to exercise.





THE EDITORIAL TEAM

TEJASWINI VONDIVILLU
RESEARCH ANALYST

DEEPANSHU SINGAL
RESEARCH ANALYST

WYNNONA FERNANDES
RESEARCH ANALYST

HIMA TRISHA
RESEARCH ANALYST

ADVAITA SINGH
SENIOR RESEARCH
ANALYST

TANYA RANA
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

SIDDHARTH G
RESEARCH ANALYST

KRISHANU KASHYAP
RESEARCH ANALYST

FEATURING

GARIMA AGARWAL
COLUMNIST

SUSHMITA SOLANKI
COLUMNIST

PRATUL CHATURVEDI
COLUMNIST

ARJUN VARMA
COLUMNIST

ASHIKA THOMAS
RESEARCH ANALYST

BEHIND THE SCENES NGO

NICKELED & DIMED

A space for young scholars to put forth their work in the form of well researched articles on issues relating to politics, law, IR, foreign policy, economics, finance and a lot more. The forum provides a wide range of perspectives which are often overlooked by mainstream media. If you wish to submit any articles, refer to the author guidelines on <https://nickeledanddimed.com> and email your article to cnes.jgu@gmail.com

OTHER INITIATIVES BY THE CENTRE FOR NEW ECONOMICS STUDIES

SAMVAAD: A student run discussion forum initiated by the Centre for New Economics Studies. The forum seeks to promote active public engagement by distinguished scholars who have expertise in areas of law, economics and other social studies, present an interdisciplinary perspective.

CONVERSATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES: The student-run publication is an in house, peer review journal of OP Jindal Global University which aims to promote a variety of perspectives from different scholars over a stated theme.

INFOSPHERE: Being the centre's latest research platform, InfoSphere offers a space for a fact-based, objective analysis on some of the most contemporary issues of economic and social policy concern in South Asia

INTERLINKED: Interlinked is a podcast series which focuses on topics relating to globalisation. It provides valuable insights on global issues that help understand India better in its socio-political climate

AZAAD AWAAZ: This monthly magazine (Patrika) aims to focus on the marginalized sections whose voices are often muted in the cacophony of flashy mainstream media discourse.

SWABHIMAAN: The premise of Swabhimaan is based on the themes of Gender and Entrepreneurship but not limited to the conventional meanings they are commonly perceived as.

VISUAL STORY BOARD : Visual Storyboards are an experimental method for visually archiving our research team's fieldwork, with a more exclusive focus on studying the lives and livelihoods of unsecured workers and communities across India.