

**MARCH
2025**



**Monthly
Newsletter**

CEO's Message

Dear Friends, Member Organizations, Donors & Stakeholders,

Greetings from the Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN)

As we turn another page in our journey, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude to share the remarkable strides Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN) has made in month of March 2025. From expanding our reach to deepening our impact, ISRN continues to evolve as a catalyst for positive social change.



Santosh Gupta

One of our proudest milestones is the inauguration of ISRN's new Regional Office in Hyderabad, Telangana. This strategic expansion will enhance our outreach and engagement in the southern states of India. We are excited about the potential this will bring in building deeper connections with communities and stakeholders across South India.

At ISRN, we consistently strive to create platforms for women to lead, grow, and transform their communities. On International Women's Day, I am happy to share the recognition of our grassroots women empowerment model, as Ms. Babita, Chairperson of the all-women Inwaanyan Nagri Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited, established by ISRN with SFAC support, received well-deserved accolades from the Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh. It stands as a glowing testament of what rural women can achieve with the right support and opportunity.

Education and healthcare remain close to our heart. Our Uttam School model continues to uplift learning environments for underserved children, while our Mobile Health Unit initiative has delivered healthcare services at the doorstep of the beneficiaries. These are not just projects, but lifelines for communities and it will continue. Our team also completed a robust Baseline and Feasibility Study in partnership with Delhi Premier Rotary Service Foundation for sustainable agricultural practices across four states, paving the way for data-driven rural development.

Through our NGO Clinic Podcast, we explored the evolving CSR landscape and their collaboration with NGOs, with thought leader, Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, Chairman & CEO of Paramount Communications Ltd.

Such dialogues are key to building inclusive ecosystems of development and social progress. On the digital front, our Cyberसुरक्षा webinar drew overwhelming participation from across India, reflecting the urgent need for cybersecurity awareness and empowered them with vital digital safety knowledge.

Our international engagements gained further momentum with active participation in the 69th Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations. Representing ISRN among the Indian delegation was an honour, and reaffirmed our resolve to champion gender equality and amplify India's voice on the global stage.

It gives me immense pleasure to share that On World Sparrow Day, stamps and a First Day Cover were released by India Post in the presence of Sparrow Man of India and the respected Governing Board Member of ISRN, Shri Jagat Kinkhabwala, recognizing sparrow conservation efforts and the impact of environmental champions.

A personal moment of pride for me was contributing to the Indian Journal of Democratic Governance by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, where my article, "Public Participation in Governance—How the Modi Government Programs & Policies Symbolize Public Participation", was published. It reflects ISRN's belief in citizen-led change and inclusive development.

Finally, we are humbled by the recognition received at the 3rd SocioFare Awards, acknowledging ISRN's work in nation-building and social responsibility. Such accolades energize us to dream bigger and work harder..

These achievements are not just milestones—they are a reflection of your unwavering support, the resilience of communities we serve, and the dedication of our team.

Thank you for being part of this journey. With your support, we continue to move forward—expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and staying rooted in the values that drive us.

Warm Regards,

Santosh Gupta

Chief Executive Officer

Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN)

Expanding ISRN's Footprints: Welcoming our new regional office in Hyderabad, Telangana

We are pleased to announce that ISRN has expanded its operations by opening a new regional office in Hyderabad, Telangana state of India on 17th March 2025.

The regional office will enable ISRN to connect with more communities and stakeholders, strengthening its impact across the Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka region. This also signifies a growth initiative for ISRN, allowing it to address a wider area and potentially more people in need in South India.

This expansion demonstrates ISRN's commitment to growth and its ability to handle a larger workload and reach to vulnerable and hard to reach populace in the geographies.



Formation & Promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Celebrating Rural Women's Leadership: Inwaanyan Nagri FPO Felicitated by Hon'ble Governor

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2025, the Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Smt. Anandiben Patel, felicitated women achievers from across the state for their outstanding contributions in various fields. Among the awardees was Ms. Babita, Chairperson of Inwaanyan Nagri Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited (FPO), based in Kumbhi Gola Block, Lakhimpur, Uttar Pradesh. What makes Inwaanyan Nagri Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited FPO remarkable is that it is entirely women-led. From its Board of Directors to the day-to-day operations, the enterprise is managed by women who have shown exemplary dedication and resilience. Despite limited resources & financial constraints, the FPO has been producing a variety of popular products including pickles, marmalades & handmade items.



The FPO was established by ISRN with the support of Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC). The success of Inwaanyan Nagri Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited stands as a shining example of how rural women, when empowered & supported, can transform their communities & create sustainable livelihoods through collective effort & entrepreneurial spirit.

Uttam School



“Uttam School” is a model conceptualized by Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN) to improve the quality of learning of the school children in rural India and underserved communities. The model focuses on various aspects of a school viz. physical infrastructure, sanitation and hygiene, clean energy and clean drinking water. The project envisages at contributing towards enhancing the quality of the teaching-learning process of the schools in the different parts of India by adopting schools and catering to the children of underserved population of the community. Adhering to the existing curriculum in these schools, it brings infrastructural changes in terms of introducing student friendly learning tools and imparting training to teachers on how to teach with this technology. The overall emphasis is on improving the quality of learning of school through various interactive methods of instruction and behavior of the students towards health and hygiene. The project not only focuses on using technology in the education system but also emphasizes on inculcating healthy behavior among the students and also among the other teaching and non-teaching staffs.



The project has already transformed 53 schools and 1 college, across Haryana, Delhi-NCR, MP, UK, HP, providing the students and teachers the means to build a healthy environment for students to learn and grow.

ISRN is glad to announce the signing of MOU with the leading Public Sector Undertaking, for transforming 1 government school into Uttam School, in Ballia District of Uttar Pradesh State.



Mobile Health Unit Project (MHU)



With an aim of bringing healthcare services to the mass community, ISRN has facilitated implementation of the Healthcare initiative through Medical Mobile Health Units. Healthcare services including OPD services, free diagnostic tests, screening of suspected TB patients and further referral to government health facilities for treatment, medicine distribution at the doorstep in the targeted communities were provided through MHU. Monthly multispecialty health camps with a team of 5-6 specialized health care doctors and services in the targeted communities were conducted. Community meetings on various communicable and non-communicable diseases were also done. Till date, through MHU initiative, ISRN has provided health services to more than 60,000 beneficiaries from 28 locations of Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, along with the training of 200 stakeholders.

ISRN is glad to announce the signing of MOU with the leading public sector undertaking, for providing primary healthcare services through Mobile Health Unit in Ballia District of Uttar Pradesh.

Baseline and Feasibility Study for Enhancing Agricultural Productivity & Sustainability



REPORT

**Baseline & Feasibility Assessment for Enhancing
Agriculture Productivity and Sustainability in 5 Districts
of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh,
Rajasthan and Maharashtra**

**Submitted by:
Indian Social Responsibility Network
A-85, Ground Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065**

The final report of Baseline and Feasibility Assessment Study, conducted by ISRN in collaboration with Delhi Premier Rotary Service Foundation (DPRSF) under the PWABHI initiative, presents an in-depth analysis of agricultural practices, water resource management, and socio-economic conditions across five districts in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The study highlights critical challenges, benchmarks current practices, and provides evidence-based recommendations for sustainable agricultural development.

ISRN's NGO Clinic Podcast Episode 14



ISRN'S NGO CLINIC

PODCAST  **EPISODE 14**

"SHAPING SOCIAL CHANGE: CORPORATE INSIGHTS ON CSR COLLABORATION WITH NGO"

Releases on
WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH 2025


**Sanjay Aggarwal, Chairman & CEO,
Paramount Communication Ltd.**


**Santosh Gupta
CEO, ISRN**

How can businesses go beyond just funding and create real, measurable change? What challenges do grassroots NGOs face in securing corporate support, and how can these gaps be bridged? How is technology shaping the future of CSR, and driving transparency?

In ISRN's NGO Clinic Podcast, **Episode 14**, we deep dived into **Shaping Social Change: Corporate Insights on CSR Collaboration with NGOs**, that featured Mr. Santosh Gupta, CEO - ISRN, and **Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, Chairman & CEO, Paramount Communication Ltd.** This insightful conversation explored the evolving role of CSR, strategic partnerships, how businesses and NGOs can unite for lasting social impact, corporate policies shaping the future of CSR, strategies to maximize CSR effectiveness & impactful corporate initiatives that transform communities.

[Watch the full episode here!](#)

Webinar on CYBERसुरक्षा

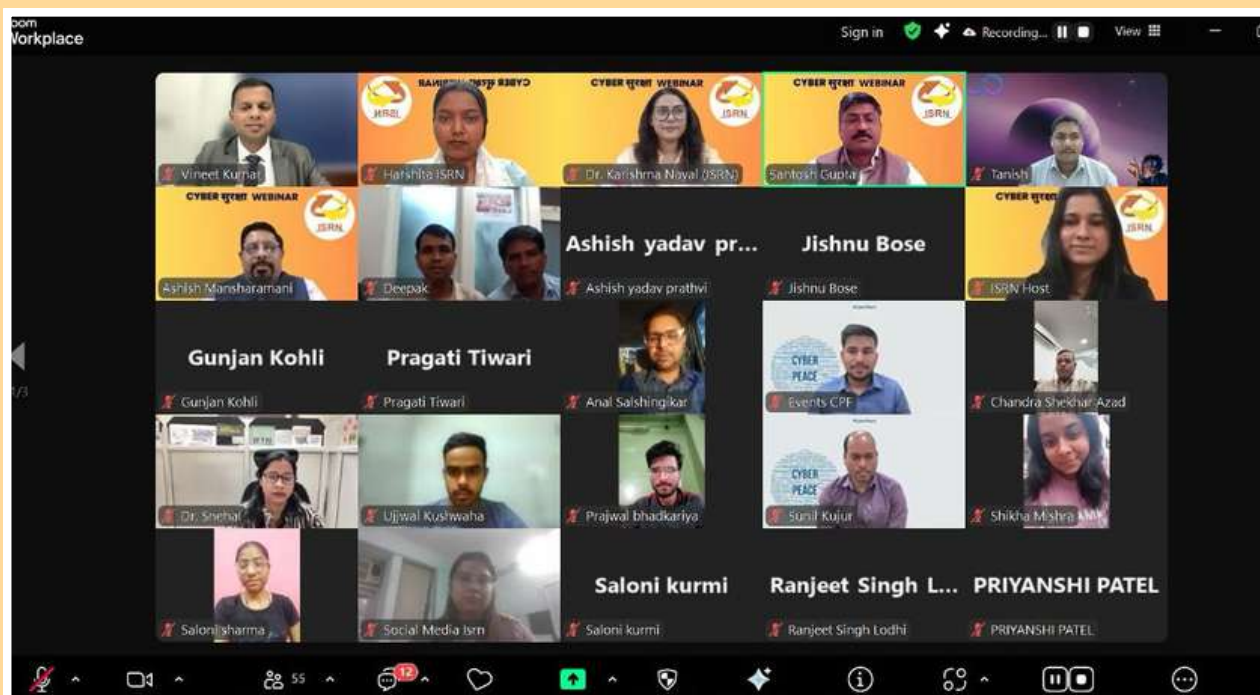
Cyberसुरक्षा Webinar – A Resounding Success!



On March 19th, 2025, ISRN successfully hosted its much-anticipated Cyberसुरक्षा Webinar, bringing together a stellar lineup of cybersecurity experts and thought leaders. The webinar focused on creating awareness around cyber threats, the legal landscape, and digital safety practices in today's fast-evolving digital world.

With **over 200 participants** registered from across the country, and many more joining through live streams on YouTube and Facebook, the event turned into a truly national knowledge-sharing experience.

The session featured insightful talks from three distinguished speakers. Major Vineet Kumar, Founder and Global President-CyberPeace Foundation, opened the session with a powerful talk on the growing menace of cyber warfare, AI-based video cloning, instant loan scams, and gaming frauds. He emphasized the urgency of proactive cybersecurity measures and capacity building to protect individuals and institutions against emerging digital threats.



Following him, Er. Anal Prasanna Salshingikar, a seasoned Cybersecurity Expert and Lecturer at the National Forensics Sciences University, provided practical tips on cyber hygiene, phishing prevention, malware protection, and safe digital practices for both individuals and workplaces. His session was especially appreciated for covering daily digital interactions—like secure banking transactions, mobile security, and email safety—making it relevant and relatable for all participants. Mr. Tanish Rai, Co-founder of CyberInfoga, provided a comprehensive overview of Indian cyber laws, constitutional provisions, and the legal process for reporting cyber crimes—clarifying common doubts and raising awareness of citizen rights and responsibilities in the digital space.

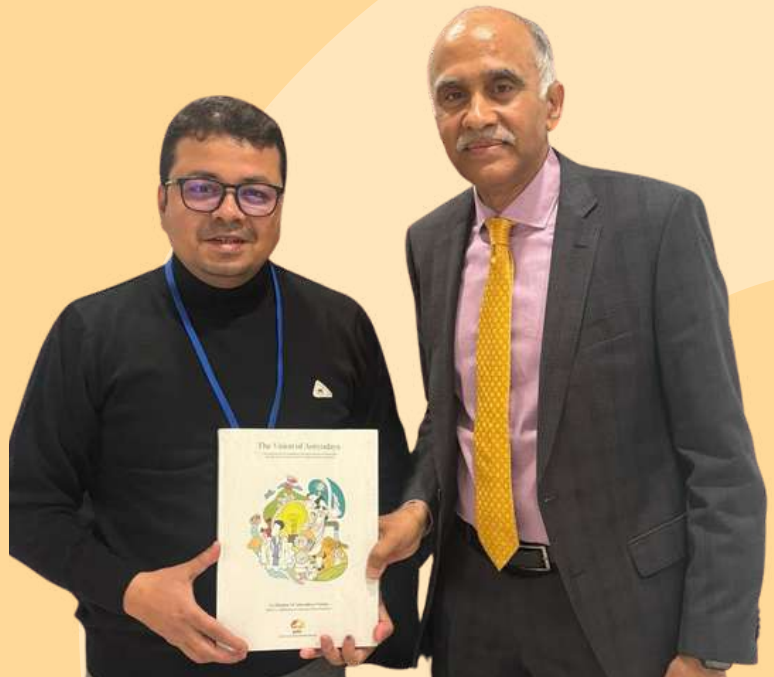
The session was expertly moderated by Mr. Santosh Gupta, CEO of ISRN, who ensured smooth transitions, active audience participation & meaningful engagement throughout. The interactive Q&A session allowed participants to clarify doubts, and walk away with practical takeaways to stay safe online. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Think Before You Click and stay vigilant in this ever-evolving cyber landscape

ISRN @ UNCSW 69: Advancing Women's Empowerment Globally

ISRN proudly marked its second consecutive year of participation at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA. Representing ISRN as part of the Indian Delegation of CSOs, Mr. Samudra Naskar, General Manager-ISRN, actively engaged in discussions on gender equality and women's empowerment.

A key highlight was a special reception hosted by Ambassador, Shri Harish Parvathaneni, Permanent Representative of India to the UN, in honour of Smt. Annapurna Devi, Hon'ble Minister of Women & Child Development, Govt. of India. Mr. Samudra Naskar shared ISRN's ongoing efforts towards the welfare and development of underprivileged women and, as a mark of our commitment, presented the book 'The Vision of Antyodaya' to the Ambassador of India to the UN.





Addressing the 69th UNCSW, the Women and Child Development Minister underlined the government's resolve to ensure that every woman and girl has access to their rights and entitlements. "Welfare of women and children is at the core of our nation's progress. Through a multi-pronged approach, we are working towards a future where every woman is empowered and every child is nurtured in a safe and supportive environment," the minister said. It is an honour and a privilege to represent India at the 69th UNCSW. My journey from Jharkhand to this global platform strengthens my commitment to women and child welfare, echoing India's vision on the world stage."



ISRN GM meets UN CoNGO President on the sidelines of the UNCSW 69



During the event, Mr. Samudra Naskar also had the privilege of meeting Dr. Liberato C. Bautista, President of UN CoNGO—The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. Dr. Bautista appreciated ISRN's contributions to social development and gladly accepted our invitation to deliver a lecture at our upcoming NGO Clinic Webinar in May 2025. We look forward to his valuable insights and guidance.

ISRN represents Indian CSO's at the UN Secretary General's Townhall

Continuing its engagement at UNCSW 69, ISRN actively participated in various side events hosted by the Indian High Commission and other global delegations. A major milestone was attending the high-profile Townhall at the UN General Assembly Hall, led by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, celebrating 30 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and 25 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.

In his address, the UN Secretary-General reaffirmed the global commitment to gender equality, stating, "In the thirty years since Beijing, we have seen advances in maternal health, girls' education, and more. Last year, countries agreed to the Pact for the Future, reaffirming the commitment to achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls as essential to progress across the Sustainable Development Goals."

At the conclusion of the 69th session of UNCSW69 in March 2025, global leaders reaffirmed their dedication to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls worldwide. This commitment was encapsulated in the Political Declaration adopted during the session.



Key highlights from the UNCSW 69 Political Declaration

- **Reaffirmation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:** Recognizing its continued relevance, leaders pledged to accelerate efforts to dismantle barriers hindering women's empowerment.
- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence:** A global commitment was made to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls through legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and strengthened support systems for survivors.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Emphasis was placed on eradicating poverty and promoting women's economic empowerment by ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, and social protection systems.
- **Bridging the Digital Gender Divide:** The declaration called for increased investment in STEM education to bridge the digital divide and empower women through technology.
- **Women in Leadership:** Member States were encouraged to nominate women for UN leadership positions to ensure increased representation in global decision-making.

Additionally, the declaration acknowledged the pivotal role of civil society in advancing gender equality and called for sustained support & collaboration with organizations like UN Women. While the declaration maintained critical language on gender equality, it faced challenges, notably the omission of explicit references to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) due to political negotiations.

The UNCSW 69 also included the clarion call by the Secretary General in his 8th March International Women's Day Speech, "Today, as part of the UN System-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, I am proud to announce our commitment to the Gender Equality Clarion Call".

A bold, urgent pledge to defend and advance the rights of all women and girls.

The Clarion Call sets out four priorities:

Unified leadership: All UN leaders must champion and defend women's rights in every decision and in every forum.

Action against pushbacks: We must actively confront backlash, prevent rollbacks, and create spaces where women's rights can thrive.

Coordinated impact: Working across sectors and all levels to dismantle systemic inequalities and protecting women human rights defenders – we will defend and amplify the voices of women on the frontlines, standing firm against those who seek to silence them.

Protecting women human rights defenders – we will defend and amplify the voices of women on the frontlines, standing firm against those who seek to silence them.

This Clarion Call and the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan must drive real political change in all that we do.

Overall, the UNCSW 69 Political Declaration represents a renewed global commitment to advancing gender equality, with specific strategies and actions outlined to address ongoing challenges faced by women and girls worldwide.

Way Forward

Taking inspiration from these global commitments, ISRN remains steadfast in its mission to break gender barriers, advocate for women's empowerment, good health & well-being, and advance SDG 5-Gender Equality. As we return from UNCSW 69, we renew our pledge to create an inclusive civic space for women in India, ensuring they have equal opportunities to lead and thrive.

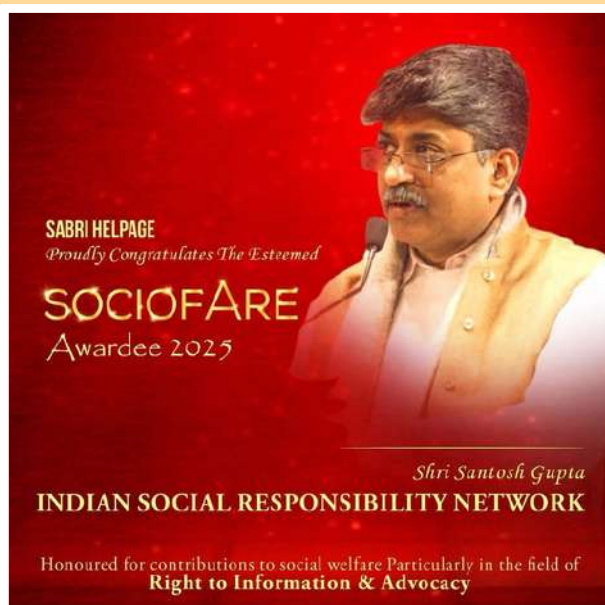


ISRN Honored at The 3rd SocioFare Awards 2025!

We are delighted to share that Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN) has been **honored at the 3rd Edition of The SocioFare Awards!**

Our CEO, Shri Santosh Gupta, received this prestigious The SocioFare award from Sabri Helpage at ICCR, Kolkata, recognizing our commitment to social responsibility towards the nation building.

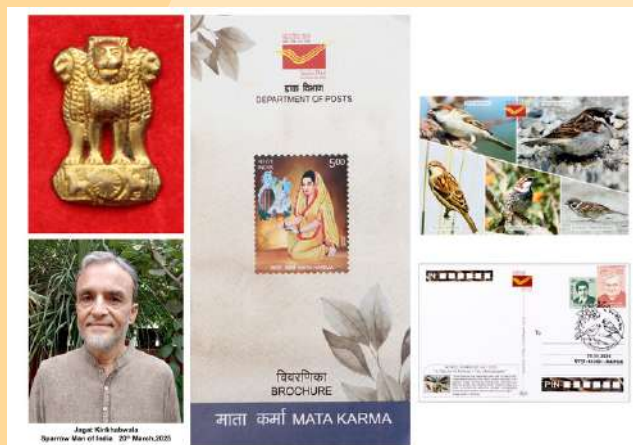
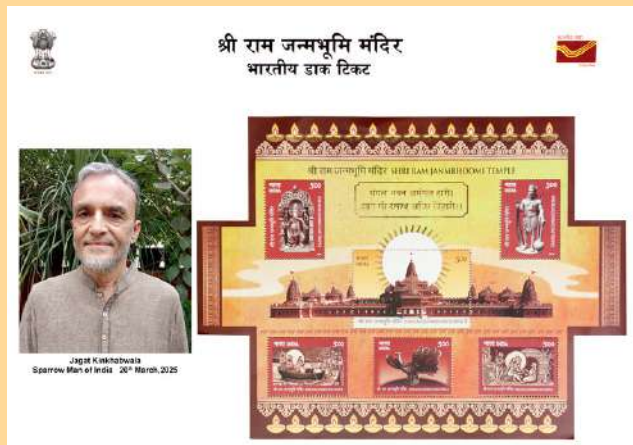
A big thank you to everyone who has supported us on this journey!



Wings of Hope: Commemorating World Sparrow Day with a Special Stamp Release

On March 20, 2025, in the presence of the Sparrow Man of India, Shri Jagat Kinkhabwala, environmental conservationist, nature specialist and respected Governing Board Member of ISRN, the Indian Postal Service issued stamps and a First Day Cover commemorating World Sparrow Day, inaugurating the stamps released, highlighting the significance of sparrow conservation and the success of revival efforts. Following the session, the nests were distributed amongst all present.

This recognition underscores the impact of conservation initiatives and the dedication of individuals like environmentalist, Shri Jagat Kinkhabwala, who drive change for the climate and environment protection.



Public Participation in Governance- How the Modi Government Programs & Policies Symbolize Public Participation

-An insightful contribution by our CEO, published in the Indian Journal of Democratic Governance, a peer reviewed Journal by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini

Abstract

Good governance serves as the cornerstone for effective policymaking and societal development. Government plays a huge role in the effective functioning of policies and ensuring societal development. This paper therefore examines how the Modi government's policies reflect public participation in governance. It is done through analysing the Modi Government's policies and how they have played their role in societal change.

Keywords: *Antyodaya, Pragati 2.0, Man Ki Baat, Jan Bhagidari*

Introduction

Good governance is essential to ensure that public policies achieve their intended outcomes by fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. Recently, governance has become a focal point for researchers, policymakers, and the international development community, emphasizing the importance of democratic participation, transparency, and efficiency.

Effective Management is crucial for tackling corruption and enhancing representation, making it a critical component of development strategies worldwide.

Good Governance in India: Change and Continuity

In India, good governance embodies eight vital attributes: participation, consensus building, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and inclusivity, all guided by the rule of law. This holistic approach aims to tackle corruption, consider minority perspectives, and empower marginalized voices in decision-making. Rooted in ancient principles like "Rajadharma," good governance blends tradition with modernity to create a participatory government focused on improving citizens' lives. This balance of historical wisdom and contemporary practices ensures governance that meets the dynamic needs of India's diverse population. It is important to highlight the Good Governance Day which is observed annually on December 25 to commemorate the birth anniversary of the late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This underscores the importance of accountability in governance. This day highlights the need for economic, political, and social justice, ensuring fairness, transparency, and equity in governance.

Towards last-mile governance: Modi's embrace of antyodaya principles

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governance ethos is deeply rooted in the principle of "Antyodaya" advocated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. This principle, along with a commitment to probity in governance, forms the bedrock of ethical practices and fosters inclusive development. Upholding the ideals of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas" Modi emphasizes the integral role of inclusivity in achieving sustainable development. In his vision, Indian democracy stands as a mature entity, with a concerted effort to center development around citizens. Through initiatives like "Jan Bhagidari," Modi underscores the importance of considering every individual, particularly at the last mile. This citizen-centric approach views citizens as active participants in decision-making processes, encompassing co-management, community governance, and self-governance. Through platforms like MyGov.in, citizens worldwide can directly engage with policymakers, enabling them to contribute ideas and suggestions for various policies and plans. Such digital platforms underscore the government's commitment to transparency and citizen participation. Additionally, the governments focus on enhancing the capacity of service personnel, transitioning them from "karmacharis" to "karmayogis," further emphasizes the importance of citizen-centric governance. This transformative approach extends to personnel across various ministries, immersing them in private sector ecosystems to better understand citizen perspectives and enhance service delivery, ultimately improving the ease of living and doing business from a citizen's perspective

Multiple stakeholders in Good Governance

Good governance doesn't solely demand governance; it necessitates the integration of multiple governance approaches.

The State: Including various governmental organs like the Legislature, Judiciary, and Executive, along with political executives and bureaucracy.

The Market: Encompassing both organized and unorganized corporate sectors, from large corporations to small-scale businesses.

Civil Society: Including NGOs, pressure groups, trade associations, and media associations.

Policy Paradigms: Modi Government's Commitment To Public Participation

PRAGATI 2.0

Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation Launched on March 25, 2015, PRAGATI is a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform part of the Digital India program. It aims to bring

Pe-transparency and e-accountability with real-time presence and exchange among key stakeholders. PRAGATI has proven effective in addressing and resolving issues by reducing inter-departmental communication gaps, thus minimizing the time taken for implementing projects and schemes.

The policy's success in reducing implementation time for projects and schemes indicates its effectiveness in streamlining bureaucratic processes and improving service delivery.

PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) is a governance platform that operates on a three-tier system involving the Prime Minister's Office, Union government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of states.

Every fourth Wednesday, designated as PRAGATI Day, the Prime Minister leads a monthly review at 3:30 PM to address issues related to ongoing programs and public grievances. Data for the portal is sourced from the Project Monitoring Group (PMG), Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI), and the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS).

Issues for review are uploaded seven days before PRAGATI Day and are accessible to relevant government officials via secured login credentials. Updates on flagged issues must be submitted within three days, with the Prime Minister's Office reviewing these inputs the day before the meeting. This structured approach ensures efficient and transparent governance, facilitating timely resolution of critical issues.

MANN KI BAAT

Mann Ki Baat is a radio program hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing Indians on All India Radio, DD National, and DD News.

Since its first show on October 3, 2014, Mann Ki Baat has served as a platform for the Prime Minister to establish a dialogue with citizens on issues of day-to-day governance. This program emphasizes public participation by inviting suggestions and feedback from citizens, ensuring that their voices are heard at the highest level of governance. I personally feel that this approach is innovative in its large-scale reach and dialogue implementation. Till date 110 episodes have been organised.

COMMITMENT TO FOOD SECURITY

The Prime Minister's emphasis on the motto of 'India First' was evident when India expressed reservations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), citing concerns over food security. India's firm stand on public stockholding of food grains gathered international support, ensuring no compromise on food security for the poor. This move highlighted the government's commitment to protecting the interests of its most vulnerable citizens while engaging in global dialogues.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAI), launched on September 23, 2018, by the Government of India, is the world's largest health assurance scheme. It provides

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAI), launched on September 23, 2018, by the Government of India, is the world's largest health assurance scheme. It provides free health coverage of up to Rs. 5 lakhs per family annually for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization, targeting over 12 crore poor and vulnerable families, roughly 55 crore beneficiaries, constituting the bottom 40% of the Indian population.

By November 15, 2023, 27.16 crore beneficiaries had received Ayushman Cards, and 5.9 crore free hospital admissions were authorized under the scheme.

PM-JAY aims to alleviate the financial burden of medical expenses, enhancing access to quality healthcare services for millions of underprivileged Indians.

PRADHAN MANTRI UJIWALA YOJANA

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, initiated the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in 2016. Its primary goal is to offer free LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to women from low-income households.

The program aims to empower women, lessen indoor air pollution, and advocate for the use of clean cooking fuel. PMUY has significantly expanded access to clean energy for millions of households, with approximately 9.6 crore LPG connections distributed thus far. Recently, the initiative was expanded to benefit an additional 75 lakh households, and PMUY beneficiaries are now eligible for a 300 subsidy on LPG refills, demonstrating the government's dedication to broadening access to clean energy and enhancing the well-being of India's underserved communities. India has undertaken several other initiatives to transform its governance landscape:

1. Centre for Good Governance (CGG): Collaborates with the government to drive reform agendas, promote people-centric governance, and enhance service delivery through professional advice and change management programs.
2. Right to Information (RTI): India's commitment to the RTI Act, 2005, fosters transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement by granting greater access to government information.
3. Aadhaar is a 12-digit unique identity number that can be obtained voluntarily by all residents of India, based on their biometrics and demographic data.

Beyond these highlighted policies, India boasts a diverse array of initiatives spanning various sectors, collectively illustrating the nation's comprehensive commitment to effective governance and inclusive development, reflecting a multifaceted approach to addressing societal needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for public participation in governance resonates deeply with the principles of good governance and citizen-centric democracy. His

emphasis on transparency, accountability, and inclusivity has ushered in a new era of grassroots democracy in India. By blending traditional wisdom with modern governance approaches and initiatives like the Right to Information Act, the government has demonstrated a strong commitment to empowering local communities and putting citizens first. The transformative initiatives such as PRAGATI 2.0, Mann Ki Baat, and the commitment to food security underscore the government's dedication to inclusive and efficient governance.

As we commemorate the birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a stalwart in the realm of good governance, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a stronger, more prosperous India, where every citizen's voice is heard and valued. Through collaborative efforts and a relentless pursuit of excellence in governance, we can pave the way for a brighter future for generations to come. As Prime Minister Modi aptly stated, "When we talk about development, it should be all inclusive, it should touch all, it should be comprehensive; development with all, development for all, it should be linked with the formula of involvement of all, it should be done while keeping the future in mind."

Let us continue this journey towards inclusive and participatory governance, guided by the principles of good governance and the spirit of Antyodaya.

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Women in Leadership Roles & Overcoming Gender Bias in the workplace

–Article by Dr. Reeta Rana, Ms. Nandita Nambiar, Ms. Vaidrumi Tripathy



ISRN along with a team of representatives from 15 noted Indian CSOs has been engaged in in-depth discussions and effective evaluation of various facets related to women in today's changing world.

In today's dynamic and ever-evolving professional landscape, gender diversity and inclusion are not merely buzzwords; they are essential components for organizational success and innovation.

As proud working women and staunch advocates for gender equality, we have witnessed firsthand the challenges and triumphs that women encounter in their professional journeys. This article delves into the dual themes of breaking the glass ceiling and overcoming gender bias in the workplace, highlighting the intertwined nature of these issues and proposing actionable strategies for creating a more equitable environment for all.

The term "glass ceiling" refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from ascending to the highest levels of leadership within organizations. Despite significant strides in gender equality over the past few decades, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions across various industries. This disparity is not due to a lack of talent or ambition among women but rather systemic biases and institutional barriers that hinder their progress.

Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership

1. Stereotypes and Gender Bias: Women often face deeply ingrained stereotypes that question their capabilities and suitability for leadership roles. These biases manifest in various forms, from subtle microaggressions to overt discrimination, creating a hostile environment for aspiring female leaders.

2. Work-Life Balance: The societal expectation that women should prioritize family responsibilities over their careers further complicates their professional advancement. Women are often penalized for taking time off for maternity leave or for seeking flexible work arrangements, perpetuating the myth that they are less committed to their careers.

3. Lack of Mentorship and Sponsorship: Access to mentors and sponsors is crucial for career advancement. However, women often find it challenging to secure these relationships due to the predominance of male networks in senior leadership circles. This lack of support can stifle their professional growth and limit their opportunities for advancement.

4. Pay Inequality: The gender pay gap remains a persistent issue, with women earning less than their male counterparts for the same roles. This disparity not only affects their immediate financial well-being but also has long-term implications for their career progression and retirement security.

India's path towards greater gender equity

Despite these challenges, numerous women have shattered the glass ceiling and achieved remarkable success in leadership roles. Their stories serve as powerful testimonies to the resilience, determination, and capability of women leaders. Women had a higher turnout than men in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, with 65.8% participating compared to men's 65.6%. Additionally, the total number of women contesting general elections in India has increased from 3% in 1957 to 10% in 2024. From women scientists contributing to space missions like Chandrayaan-3, to champions in sports earning global acclaim, to women leaders making it to the list of the richest and most influential in the corporate world – the transformation is both real and inspiring. In India, several women have emerged as trailblazers, breaking barriers and setting new benchmarks for success.



Smt. Droupadi Murmu, the Hon'ble President of India, stands as a symbol of resilience and perseverance. Coming from a humble background, her journey to the highest constitutional office in India is a testament to her dedication and hard work. She has become an inspiration for countless women, especially those from marginalized communities.

Smt. Nayna Sahasrabuddhe, a renowned social worker and advocate for women's rights, has made significant contributions to the field of gender equality in India. Through her tireless efforts, she has helped empower women and promote gender-sensitive policies.



Dr. Anjali Deshpande, from Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra, has been a leading figure in the academic study of women's issues. Her research and advocacy have provided valuable insights into women's challenges and the structural changes needed to address these issues.

Overcoming Gender Bias and Stereotypes in the Workplace

Addressing gender bias and stereotypes is essential for creating an inclusive workplace where women can thrive and achieve their full potential. These biases are often deeply rooted in societal norms and cultural expectations, making them challenging to eradicate. However, with concerted effort and commitment, organizations can make significant strides towards gender equality.



Recognizing and Addressing Gender Bias

1. Awareness and Education: The first step in overcoming gender bias is recognizing its existence. Organizations should invest in training programs that educate employees about unconscious biases and their impact on decision-making processes. These programs can help individuals identify and challenge their biases, fostering a more inclusive work environment.

2. Inclusive Recruitment Practices: Organizations should implement recruitment practices that promote gender diversity. This includes using gender-neutral language in job descriptions, ensuring diverse interview panels, and actively seeking out female candidates for leadership positions.

3. Flexible Work Policies: To support work-life balance, organizations should offer flexible work arrangements such as remote work options, flexible hours, and parental leave policies. These policies enable women to balance their professional and personal responsibilities without compromising their career advancement.

4. Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs: Establishing formal mentorship and sponsorship programs can provide women with the guidance and support they need to advance in their careers. Mentors can offer valuable advice and insights, while sponsors can advocate for their protégés and open doors to new opportunities.

Conclusion

Breaking the glass ceiling and overcoming gender bias are two sides of the same coin in the pursuit of gender equality in the workplace. While significant progress has been made, much work remains to be done to create an environment where women can thrive and reach their full potential. By recognizing and addressing the challenges women face, implementing inclusive policies, and promoting a culture of fairness and equality, organizations can pave the way for more women to ascend to leadership roles. As we continue to champion gender diversity and inclusion, let us celebrate the achievements of women leaders like Smt. Droupadi Murmu, Smt. Nayna Sahasrabuddhe and Dr. Anjali Deshpande, and commit to dismantling the barriers that still stand in their way.

Together, we can do More

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