



नीति आयोग

NITI AAYOG



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AGRICULTURE

1. Profitability, Productivity, and Organisation in West Bengal Agriculture A Long-run Comparative View/Sukanta Bhattacharya And Anirban Mukherjee

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 35, 29 Aug, 2026

West Bengal's agriculture presents a paradox: rice yields have consistently exceeded the national average, yet farming is unprofitable once family labour is valued at market wages, and a large share of the rural population remains attached to the land despite having little productive work to do there. Between 1980 and 2005, rice yields rose faster than the national average, driven by the expansion of Boro—a dry-season-irrigated variety—and reinforced by the productivity gains from Operation Barga. As Boro expansion stalled in the early 2000s, productivity growth could not keep up with the rest of India. A large portion of the agricultural labour became surplus but remained attached to the farm, and farm business income looks positive only because the imputed cost of this surplus family labour is treated as household income rather than cost. The organisational form sustaining this equilibrium is sharecropping, which dominates West Bengal's tenancy structure.

2. Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change: A Plan of Action/Nikhil Desai

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 08 Aug, 2026

Anthropogenic climate change is possibly the most important existential challenge being faced by humanity today. This is a legacy inherited from the onset of the Industrial Revolution, when fossil fuels like coal first came into use. At this critical juncture, the accumulated effect of our past progress is already adversely affecting our present and, more importantly, is likely to negatively affect the well-being of future generations.

3. Enhancing Resilience of Indian Agriculture to Climate Shocks/ Sitikantha Pattanaik, Shrujan Rajendra Rajdeep and Bhakti Dogra

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 15 Aug, 2026

Indian agriculture has exhibited remarkable resilience to climate shocks, as reflected in the trend increase in foodgrain production, horticulture output, crop yields, and agriculture sector gross value added over the years. However, with climate shocks expected to become more frequent and intense, and given the adverse impact of declining annual rainfall and rising temperatures on farm output and yields, strengthening agricultural resilience will become increasingly important. Given limited

resource availability for an accelerated green transition, an incremental approach incorporating multiple resilience-enhancing policy interventions, informed by the environmental Kuznets curve, appears well suited to India.

4. Do Producer Companies Make Farmers More Efficient Producers?/Sukhpal Singh And Naresh Singla

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 15 Aug, 2026

The paper titled “Farmer Producer Organisations and the Technical Efficiency of Vegetables Crops” (EPW, 10 January 2026) by Diksha Bali, Jyoti Kachroo and Abdulla discusses the impact of membership in a farmer producer organisation on the technical efficiency of vegetable crop production. Tomato, onion and potato (TOP) are major vegetable crops of India and, therefore, the role of producer companies or all types of farmer producer organisations (FPOs) in improving their production and efficiency is important as these are high-value crops. The paper covers at least one of these TOP crops, with other study crops being locally relevant for the study region.

ECONOMICS

5. World Development Report on AI

A lot of welcome hope loads of sense, some cant, and significant dissemblance.

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 08 Aug, 2026

The World Bank’s latest World Development Report does a service by stressing the positive potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to accelerate growth and development in developing countries, pointing out the likely negative correlation between the level of economic development and the potential for AI-induced job losses, highlighting the need to create region- and sector-specific AI tools, rather than rely on ready-made models imported from the developed world, and laying special emphasis on the importance of sound governance practices vis-à-vis AI. At the same time, the Report underestimates the pace of technological change and is disingenuously innocent of the sociopolitical prerequisites of adapting to technological change, and of the geopolitical fragmenting of technology.

6. West Bengal's Economy ,Beyond the Narrative of Decline/ Maitreesh Ghatak And Achin Chakraborty

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 29 Aug, 2026

The commonplace narrative on the development trajectory of West Bengal suggests that the state was industrially and socially much ahead of other states at the time of independence, that the post-independence story is largely one of relative decline as a good number of states have since moved ahead, that a large number of new entrants to the labour market are being “forced” by circumstances to look for job opportunities outside the state, and so on. One encounters this narrative in several forms, but they all point in the same direction: decline.

EDUCATION

7. Fast-track Education ReformsRegressive ideology and politics have left the education system in shambles.

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 31, 01 Aug, 2026

The recent youth protests over bungled national-level examinations have led to a fresh debate on education, inside and outside Parliament. Yet another committee has been set up, sidestepping the need to digest and act on the recommendations of numerous past commissions. What is very clear is that, in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), education has to change, from the bottom up. The government's current obsession with foisting skilling as education's goal, justified as necessary to bridge the gap between education and employability, never made much sense and is positively disastrous in the current context. Skills are transient, all the more so as AI takes over repetitive, simple tasks, whether physical or cognitive, either as algorithms/agents or robots. Using formative education to impart skills is disastrous. This is the time to go back to the original goal of education—as preparing the young to discover and hone their innate human potential. Philosophers and educationists have propounded that the foremost goal of education is to shape creative human beings, capable of critical inquiry and curiosity, who can change the world around them. Innate human creativity is what people need to stay economically viable in the age of AI, instead of falling victim to AI's ever-growing capabilities.

ENVIRONMENT& ECOLOGY

8. [Sustainable Banking in India Navigating the Path to Environmentally Friendly Finance/ Abhijit Biawas And Arindam Bandyopadhyay](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 01 Aug, 2026

The evolution and current state of sustainable banking in India are examined, with a focus on the integration of environmental, social, and governance criteria into banking practices. Examining data from 27 Indian commercial banks from 2013 to 2022, the impact of ESG scores, both composite and component-wise, on banks' return on assets is assessed after controlling for size, capital adequacy ratio, and gross non-performing assets ratio. Banks with robust ESG frameworks are found to achieve better financial performance, with diminishing returns to ESG engagement.

9. [Circular Finance and the Future of Climate Action Rethinking PPPs in Emerging Markets/Arvind Mayaram](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 01 Aug, 2026

Emerging markets must mobilise trillions of dollars for climate infrastructure despite high public debt, constrained fiscal space, and fragmented capital markets. This article argues that circular finance, first articulated by Arvind Mayaram, offers a new financing paradigm by continuously recycling capital across public and private sources, debt and equity, and successive project stages. Drawing on India's InvITs, NIIF, and hybrid annuity PPPs, alongside international experience, it demonstrates how circular PPPs can unlock private investment, improve financial efficiency, and accelerate climate action despite sovereign debt constraints.

10. [Human Development Achievements and Challenges in West Bengal/Achin Chakraborty And Dibyendu Biswas](#)

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 08 Aug, 2026

The growth of International Baccalaureate schools in India is often attributed to educational globalisation and rising urban demand. IB schools are overwhelmingly concentrated in the Mumbai–Pune metropolitan core, with only sparse and selective presence elsewhere. Rather than broad-based middle-class expansion, this geography reflects differentiated processes of elite formation: metropolitan consolidation, selective conversion of locally accumulated capital into globally legible educational infrastructure, and enclave-like elite projects in unevenly developed regions.

FINANCE/BANKING

11. [The Rupee, Rates and the RBI: Achieving Internal and External Balance/Sajjid Z Chinoy And Anusha Mital](#)

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 31, 01 Aug, 2026

The rupee has been India's most visible pressure point in recent years. But unlike previous episodes, contemporary pressures are being driven by the capital, rather than the current account and compounded by the higher crude prices emanating from the conflict in West Asia. How did policymakers respond? The inflation-targeting framework of the Reserve Bank of India has established a principle of separability, wherein rates and liquidity focus on domestic growth inflation dynamics whereas the rupee becomes the shock absorber to equilibrate external pressures. The rupee was therefore used as the first line of defence, but the pace of depreciation created a self-fulfilling spiral that threatened to take the rupee away from its fundamentals. In response, the RBI invoked exceptional measures to act as a circuit breaker. How successful could they be and what trade-offs will they create?

12. [India's Economy in the Last DecadeA View through Flow of Funds//Puneet Bhasin And Arjun Jayadev](#)

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 31, 01 Aug, 2026

Using the Reserve Bank of India's Flow of Funds data, this paper examines changes in India's sectoral balance sheets between 2011–12 and 2023–24. It confirms two long-standing features: households remain the dominant creditor, and government, the dominant borrower. There is a break in the historical stability of household asset portfolios, with savings increasingly moving into mutual funds, insurance, and pension products, though deposits remain the largest asset class. Four macroeconomic insights emerge: personal consumption appears increasingly supported by credit; private investment remains tepid on weak demand, despite repaired balance sheets; non-banking intermediation has deepened capital markets while raising exposure to market and regulatory dynamics; and persistent current account deficits leave India's growth dependent on mobile foreign capital.

13. [Sustainable Banking in India: Navigating the Path to Environmentally Friendly Finance/ Abhijit Biswas And Arindam Bandyopadhyay](#)
EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 31, 01 Aug, 2026

The evolution and current state of sustainable banking in India are examined, with a focus on the integration of environmental, social, and governance criteria into banking practices. Examining data from 27 Indian commercial banks from 2013 to 2022, the impact of ESG scores, both composite and component-wise, on banks' return on assets is assessed after controlling for size, capital adequacy ratio, and gross non-performing assets ratio. Banks with robust ESG frameworks are found to achieve better financial performance, with diminishing returns to ESG engagement.

HEALTH

14. [From 50 Years Ago: Health, Medicine and Underdevelopment/Lesley Doyal & Imogen Pennell](#)
EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 01 Aug, 2026

Western capitalism has developed within the context of a particular set of economic and social relationships with the third world. Three aspects of this development will be examined here with regard to their significance for health and medical policy. First, it will be argued that the processes of colonialism and imperialism have produced widespread changes in both the social structures and the material environments of the satellite countries, with obvious implications for the patterns of death and disease in those countries.

15. [Manufacturing Choice Advertising and Politics of Knowledge in India's Health Landscap./ Satyanarayan Kumbhakar And Malu Mohan](#)
EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 01 Aug, 2026

Advertising is widely recognised as a driver of consumption, yet its influence extends beyond individual behaviour. The article argues that advertising functions as a commercial determinant of health by producing knowledge environments that shape individual choices. Drawing on epistemic justice, the article examines how commercially driven narratives deepen information asymmetries, normalise unhealthy consumption, and shift responsibility onto individuals navigating unequal informational environments.

16. [Education, Fertility, and Child Health Trends in West Bengal by Religion and Social Group/Pushkar Maitra](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 29 Aug, 2026

Three rounds of the National Family Health Survey (2005–06, 2015–16, and 2019–21) are analysed to answer whether institutional and political conditions that reduce intergroup conflict in West Bengal also translate into more equitable human development outcomes. Trends in education, fertility, and child health by religion and social group in West Bengal, relative to the rest of India, reflect the differing sensitivity of these outcomes to public health infrastructure and accumulated schooling versus current household economic resources, with implications for targeting future policy interventions.

LAW

17. [Witnessing Justice/Gunjan Shekhawat](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 01 Aug, 2026

The article by Madhulika Rathore and Prasenjeet Tribhuvan (“The ‘Misuse’ of Domestic Violence Law: A Court Ethnography,” EPW, 23 May 2026) arrives at a moment when the public discourse on gender and law in India is being shaped less by evidence and more by outrage. Rather than entering the debate on its own terms, the authors do something far more subversive. They go to the courthouse and watch what actually happens. This is the quiet strength of legal ethnography, and this article demonstrates it beautifully.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

18. [Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change: A Plan of Action/Nikhil Desai](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 32, 08 Aug, 2026

Anthropogenic climate change is possibly the most important existential challenge being faced by humanity today. This is a legacy inherited from the onset of the Industrial Revolution, when fossil fuels like coal first came into use. At this critical juncture, the accumulated effect of our past progress is already adversely affecting our present and, more importantly, is likely to negatively affect the well-being of future generations.

19. [Catching Up on Research and Development](#)

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Two Department of Science and Technology publications—Research and Development Statistics at a Glance 2025–26 and S&T Indicators Tables: Research and Development Statistics 2025–26—reveal a dismal state of Indian research and development (R&D), despite recent improvements. Given the simultaneous challenges of impediments to globalized growth, the green transition in energy, and the arrival of the disruptive general-purpose technology, artificial intelligence (AI), vastly enhancing R&D in quantity and quality, is now an imperative for maintaining strategic autonomy and economic competitiveness. DEVELOPMENT

20. [Beyond RuptureIndian Emergency and Ambivalences of Constitutional Democracy/Tarif Sohail](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 33, 15 Aug, 2026

Marking 50 years since the proclamation of the Internal Emergency on 25 June 1975, *50 Years of the Indian Emergency: Lessons for Democracy*, edited by Peter Ronald deSouza and Harsh Sethi, revisits one of the most contested episodes in India's democratic history. Rather than treating the Emergency as a closed aberration or an isolated descent into authoritarianism, the volume approaches it as a prism through which the vulnerabilities of constitutional democracy can be more sharply discerned. This framing is particularly timely in a global political moment marked by the normalisation of extraordinary legal powers, the routinisation of surveillance, and the steady erosion of deliberative institutions—even in states that project themselves as long-standing democratic exemplars. The book's relevance thus extends beyond historical recovery; it speaks to contemporary anxieties about constitutional authoritarianism, state excess, and the uneasy coexistence of legality and repression.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

21. [Human Development Achievements and Challenges in West Bengal/ Achin Chakraborty& Dibyendu Biswa](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 35, 29 Aug, 2026

The human development achievements and challenges in West Bengal in recent decades are charted out, focusing mainly on health and school education, using various government reports and secondary data available from different sources. For a long while, the state's health outcome indicators have been significantly above the all-India average, whereas its educational attainment indicators have not only been below average but have also improved slowly. An attempt has been made to relate the observations to the literature that sees sub-national development issues in India through a political economy lens.

WATER RESOURCES

22. [**Water ATMs Solution or a Problem?/ Kusum Lata, Judith Anne Lal, Aneesh K A, Ankur Bisen, Sanya Bisht, Mohit Purohit, Vaishnavi Tyagi**](#)

EPW: Vol. 61, Issue No. 33, 15 Aug, 2026

While providing temporary relief from inadequate piped supply, water ATMs commodify water, deepen inequalities, mask failures in urban water governance, and intensify health, environmental, and groundwater sustainability concerns, underscoring the need for systemic public reforms. “Do you face any challenges in accessing potable water?” This was the question posed during a field survey conducted in October 2024 among 260 (an indicative sample size) residents of two informal settlements in Ghaziabad—Nai Basti and Bombay Colony.