

STALIN IAS ACADEMY - BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI

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Listen to the people, not the numbers

The Indian economy has an incomes problem, not a growth problem. Incomes are not growing sufficiently or sustainably for very large numbers of people. Even though overall GDP growth is good, there is increasing pressure for reservations of jobs for all "economically weaker" sections regardless of caste or religion.

Economists on both sides, for the government and those against it, are debating whether the economy is creating enough jobs and are questioning the veracity of the government's data. Those against the government also want to show that the problem of growth with insufficient jobs has been created by the policies of the present government and not the previous one. They are like Sheikh Chilli, who was looking for his lost keys under the lamp, rather than in the darkness where he lost them. The data is what they can see, but it cannot explain the problem, and will not point to the right solutions.

The U.S. economy

The U.S. economy seems to be doing well according to its headline economic numbers. Growth is good and employment numbers have been improving. Yet, polls show that a large majority of U.S. citizens are dissatisfied with the state of their economy. This has become a major issue before the presidential elections, scheduled for next November. The U.S. President even walked with striking autoworkers demanding a fair deal from their employers. U.S. statistics of growth and employment, whose veracity no one doubts, are not measuring what really matters to common citizens. Workers want a fair deal and adequate and secure incomes to cope with



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inflation. The President agreed with the workers that CEOs of auto companies were paying themselves far too much while asking workers to tighten their belts to improve the competitiveness of U.S. companies.

Jobs that are not 'good'

The overall problem of incomes in India, according to economists, is that insufficient numbers have moved out of agriculture into manufacturing. This has been the historical pattern for sustainable growth in all countries, including the U.S. a hundred years ago, and China more recently. India's policymakers thought they had found a short-cut in the 1990s, directly from agriculture to services, with the boost in the growth of exportable Information Technology services. The short-cut has ended in a cul-de-sac. There is very little room in high-end services to absorb the large numbers of young Indians in need of jobs. Moreover, these jobs require levels of education that people in rural areas do not have. Therefore, when they move out of agriculture, they need work that fits their present abilities, and puts them onto a ladder that they can climb. They need jobs where they can learn higher skills and earn more. Labour-intensive manufacturing, services, and construction provide them the first step. The millions of Indians who have moved out of agriculture in the last three decades moved into such jobs.

The problem is that the jobs they have, irrespective of the sector, are not "good" jobs: they do not pay enough, they are temporary or on short contracts, and they do not provide social security or assistance to develop further skills. In fact, even in large, modern, manufacturing enterprises, workers are employed through contractors to provide employers with "flexibility" to reduce costs. Contract workers are paid much less than regular workers. They have insecure employment and are not assisted to develop higher skills.

The world is at a turning point. New ideas of economics are required to create a more environmentally sustainable and socially harmonious future before it is too late. Statistics of growth and employment measure what we used to think should be measured. New concepts of "work" are required; also new designs of enterprises in which the work is done; as well as new evaluations of the social and economic relationships between participants in these enterprises. The drive for green, organic, and "local" to reduce carbon emissions and improve care of the environment will make small

enterprises beautiful again. "Economies of scope" will determine the viability of enterprises rather than "economies of scale". Denser, local, economic webs will develop, rather than long, global supply chains through which specialised products made on scale in different parts of the world are connecting producers with consumers in other distant parts.

The economic value in caregiving

Attention will shift towards creating genuine "social" enterprises, rather than enterprises for creating economic efficiencies and surpluses which corporate enterprises are designed for. Those who provide care, and their work of caregiving, must be valued more than economists value them today. In the present paradigm of economic growth, caregivers, traditionally women, are plucked out of families – which are a natural social enterprise – to work in factories, offices, and retail, in enterprises designed to produce monetary economic value. When economists measure women's participation in the labour force, they value only what women do in formal enterprises for money. They seem to assign no value to the "informal" work they do outside their homes to earn money, whether as domestic caregivers in others' homes or on family farms. Moreover, they are unable to see any economic value in the caregiving they provide without monetary compensation in their families and communities.

The prevalent paradigm of economic theory is distorting social organisations, which families are, to suit the requirements of corporations, which are formal economic organisations. Thus, the money-measured economy (GDP) grows, while the care that humans can and should give each other reduces. Measurements of economic growth and employment must not be mired any longer in 20th-century concepts of economic growth. They must be reformed to reflect forms of work and enterprises we want more of in the future.

For this paradigm shift, the process of policymaking must begin with listening to those who have not been given much value in the present economic paradigm: to workers, small-holding farmers, small entrepreneurs, and women. Presently, their views are over-ruled by those who have power in the present paradigm: experts in economics, large financial institutions, and large business corporations. The lesson for policymakers is this. Don't count on historical statistics to guide good policy for the future: listen to the people and what matters to them.



A.P.P.

EVA STAR

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Reporting animal cruelty makes children safer

Child abuse is grave and rampant in India. In 2007, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development published the largest empirical study about the incidence of child abuse in India. The study specifically examined the prevalence of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and girl child neglect in India. It found that two out of every three children were physically abused, over half the children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse, and every second child reported facing emotional abuse. Despite these troubling statistics, the factors contributing to child abuse remain unaddressed.

Child abuse in India has been attributed to the structure and size of the family, lack of effective implementation of law, poverty, illiteracy, and even cultural factors. However, one crucial element that has been missing from the discourse on child protection in India is the link between victims of child abuse and animal cruelty, which we discuss here.

Animal cruelty and child abuse

The link between animal cruelty and human violence first came to light in 1751 with William Hogarth's Four Stages of Cruelty. Since then, there have been a plethora of studies highlighting this undeniable link. A 1980 pilot study conducted in England found evidence that suggested that children are at risk of abuse or neglect in households that abuse their family pet. According to the study, out of the 23 families that had a history of animal abuse, 83% had been



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Both human
and animal
victims of crime
are prone to
victimisation by
the same
perpetrator

identified by human social service agencies as having children at risk of abuse or neglect. A different study of 53 families in which child abuse had occurred, carried out in New Jersey (U.S.), in 1983, found that animal abuse and child abuse co-occurred in 88% of the cases.

In a 2019 study on homes with interpersonal violence in the U.S., it was found that in 12.3% of the cases, threats and violence towards animals are used as a means to coerce children into compliance so that they do not report the abuser. As per the study, since animals are threatened to result in compliance of the child, some of this violence is done without the knowledge of other caregivers, and children are reluctant to discuss the animal abuse for fear of what might happen to the animal or themselves.

Easier to detect

Further, in many cases, animal abuse is easier to detect than child abuse and is also usually easier for victims of domestic violence (including children) to report. Early identifications of homes with animal abuse may save other human victims encountering abuse. This can also serve as circumstantial evidence in custody and child abuse hearings as it is difficult for children to provide detailed accounts of their own abuse.

There is a strong link between animal cruelty and child abuse and there is an urgent need to investigate it further in the Indian context. Even though law enforcement agencies in other countries have devoted resources to studying the co-occurrence of animal cruelty with other forms

of violent crimes, especially crimes against children, there is no study that empirically assesses this link in India.

Enforcing anti-cruelty laws

In fact, the National Crime Records Bureau does not even collect data on offences registered and prosecuted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. As studies in other countries have shown, the collection and aggregation of this data can prove to be a significant tool for law enforcement agencies to understand how different crimes overlap, and prevent the occurrence of these crimes.

Poor enforcement of anti-cruelty laws therefore not only harms animals, but also human victims of violence. Reporting animal abuse and consistently enforcing anti-cruelty laws can act as a deterrent for further acts of violence against not only animals but also humans. It is therefore imperative to report, register and prosecute cases involving animal cruelty.

The link shows us that both human and animal victims of crime are prone to victimisation by the same perpetrator. There is an opportunity for stakeholders in the child protection and animal protection movements to collaborate to meet their collective objective of reducing abuse.

Reporting and prosecuting animal abuse is not just about saving animals; it is about protecting our children from violence and securing a brighter future for them. Understanding this important link can stop the cycle of violence at its source and help make our children safer.

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