

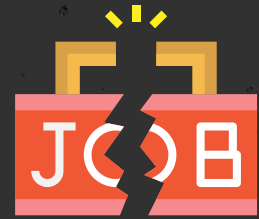
Black Paper on THE MODI YEARS

*What the Finance Minister presented as the “White Paper” on Indian economy was more like an effort to **White Wash** a decade of its failure. Just a scratch on the surface peels off the layers of lies, media hyperboles and gimmicks. What remains is the reality which is stark, alarming and dark. A reality they wish to hide behind its divisive politics of hate. Here we attempt to peek into a few crucial aspects of Indian economy.*

Financial Accountability Network India - FAN India



EMPLOYMENT



Claims:



BJP government had promised 2 crore new jobs each year if they came to power in 2014. If realised, by March 2024, 20 crore new jobs should have materialised.



The BJP govt's promise on assuming power was: increasing the share of employment in manufacturing by 100 million and a rise in share of its contribution to GDP from 17% to 25%.



The country has been dragged through 10 years of Jobless Growth by the Congress-led UPA Government. Under the broader economic revival, BJP will accord high priority to job creation and opportunities for entrepreneurship.



Nirmala Sitharaman said after her interim budget in 2024 that "Now, since post-Covid, many of those who had been in the urban areas and acquired some kind of skills..are saying that the rural areas are giving them [similar] opportunities to utilise and monetise their skills. Many of them have not even returned [to urban centres]."



This significant jump in the female labour force participation rate is an outcome of the decisive agenda set by the Government for ensuring women's empowerment through policy initiatives aimed at their long term socio-economic and political development.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said his government has given **1.5 times more jobs in its 10 years** than the previous dispensation did in the same duration.



Reality:



According to the CMIE India's workforce has remained virtually stagnant at a little over 400 million over the last 5 years, which means that employment has not increased at all. CMIE, which started an employment survey back in March 2016, shows that the unemployment rate in India was 6.64% of the labour force in December 2018. It was 5.27% in 2019 rose to 8% in 2020, and remained at 5.98% and 7.33%, respectively, in the next 2 years; and it has gone up still further in 2023 (around 8.1%).



The stock of unemployed in 2023 October is 42 million, at 10% of the workforce. A stock to which a regular flow of at least 80 lakh young people who are looking for work are added (and it continues to grow each year), as the share of the working-age population rises at an accelerating pace.



Manufacturing began shrinking from 2016 onwards, falling to a time low of 13% of GDP in the next four years. It has also only just climbed back up to pre-Covid levels (17%).



Employment in manufacturing fell as a share of total employment, from 12.8% in 2012 to 11.5% in 2018 (which is way below that of Bangladesh's 16%). It has finally managed to catch up to the 2012 level by 2022. This is what is being called the lost decade.



After the stringent and abrupt Covid19 lockdowns were imposed in India, millions of workers were forced to migrate back adding a whopping 6 crore workers to agriculture between April 2020 and June 2023 as determined by an Oxford study.



Under-employed workers in agriculture in 2023 constituted 46% of the workforce and contributed only 15% of India's GDP. The FM's claim of they utilizing and monetizing their skills seems rather wishful.

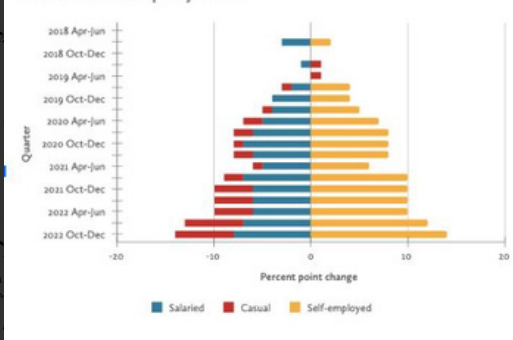


While the wages of construction workers and agricultural workers have increased by only 10.5% and 12% respectively in rural India from April 2021 to March 2023, the cost of cereals has increased by a whopping 22%.



After falling for years, women's Workforce Participation Rate is rising, but not for the right reasons. It has risen since 2019 due to a distress-led increase in self-employment. Before Covid, 50% of women were self-employed. After Covid, this rose to 60%. Also, earnings from self-employment declined in real terms over this period. Economists at the Conference on Finance and Economy in India discussed how more than 50% of women are self-employed, of whom half are employed in unpaid family work or working on family farms. Most of is distress distress-driven unpaid jobs that do not build empowerment.

Women largely entered self-employment and moved away from wage work, reducing earnings from self-employment



Sources and notes: PLFS, various rounds. These are Figures 2.6 and 2.8 in the report.

Unemployment is concentrated among educated youth

	Less than 25 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40 years and above
Graduate & above	42.3	22.8	9.8	4.5	1.6
Higher secondary	21.4	10.6	5.0	3.1	2.1
Secondary	18.1	7.5	4.6	2.4	1.7
Primary or middle	15.0	5.4	3.0	2.4	2.2
Literate but below primary	10.6	3.3	1.5	2.4	2.2
Illiterate	13.5	4.3	4.0	3.4	2.4

Sources and notes: PLFS 2021-22. This is Figure 2.3 in the report.



The State of Work in India 2023 finds that even in the smallest firm sizes, SC and ST owners are under-represented compared to their share in the overall workforce. They are barely represented among firms employing more than 20 workers and upper caste overrepresentation increases with firm size.



The total strength of the employees in Central Public Sector Enterprises has fallen from 17.3 lakh in March 2013 to 14.6 lakh in March 2022. This marks a reduction of about 2.7 lakh employment in the decade in the Modi govt. The total number of employees under the contractual category has increased to 42.5 % in 2022 from 19% in 2013. And contractualization takes away reservation.



Vanishing Vacancies: There has been a drastic fall in employment opportunities during the last decade in major job vacancies in the country. Total Job vacancies under the staff selection commission have drastically fallen from 80,650 in 2014 to 36,348 in 2023.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



AGRICULTURE



Claims:



On February 28, 2016, on the eve of the Union Budget, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a promise to 'doubling farmers' income' (DFI) by 2022, as India completes 75 years of independence. The Ashok Dalwai Committee on DFI was set up on April 13, 2016, and spoke of increasing farmers' income from 8,058 per month to 22,610 per month. Achieving this target, the Committee pointed out in its report, required a farm income growth rate of 10.4% per annum



In his poll campaign in 2014, Modi said, "Our farmers must not be pushed to take the noose, our farmers should not have to take heavy loans, they should not be forced to knock on the doors of the sahuakar. Isn't it the responsibility of the government and the banks that they give credit to the farmers? And if the conditions of the farmers improve it doesn't only improve for them, it gives employment to many who work the fields." In terms of indebtedness, the government claims that the percentage of indebted farmers reduced from 52% in 2013 to 50.2% in 2019.



In the election manifesto of 2014 BJP spoke of Radically transforming the Food Corporation of India, Leverage technology to disseminate real-time data to farmers, setting up a price stabilisation fund, taking steps to enhance the profitability of agriculture and implementing a farm insurance scheme to take care of crop loss due to unforeseen natural calamities.



Reality:



The Dalwai Committee did not provide a coherent strategy for providing technological or economic support to farmers that would help raise yields and incomes. The 77th round of the Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households released in 2021 shows that the estimated monthly income of farm households in 2018-19 was merely Rs 10,218 per month in nominal terms. This is nowhere close to the supposed target of Rs 22,610 per month.



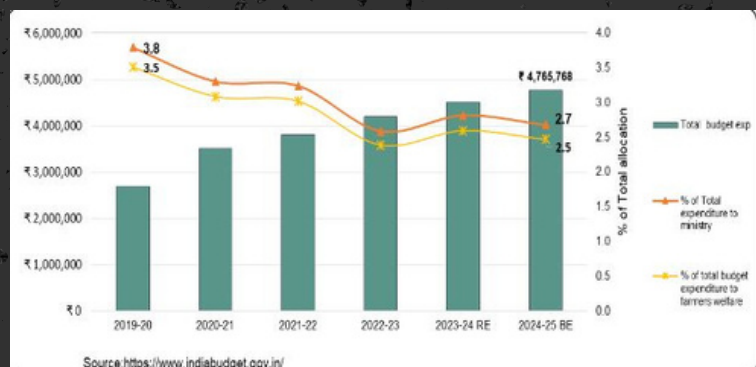
In the Narendra Modi years from 2014 to 2022, 1,00,474 farmers committed suicide, as per the recently released National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report. This amounts to nearly 30 suicides per day in these nine years. In the 2nd term of the Modi govt, the total farmer suicides increased in absolute numbers from 10,281 to 11,290. Within this, the rise in the number of suicides among agricultural workers seems to be much sharper, from 4,324 to 6,083 i.e. 41%. Maharashtra, with the ill-fated regions of Vidharbha and Marathwada, yet again witnessed the worst situation. Empty rhetoric, failing schemes and inadequate allocations are pushing the "annadatas" of our country into deep despair.



Public expenditure on agriculture in relation to total budget expenditure has been falling consistently in the Modi 2.0 years. As has the share allocated for farmers' welfare. Looking at the growth rate of real wages between 2014-15 and 2021-22 which has been below 1% per year across the board, including for agricultural labour. The impact is clear in alarmingly low rural demand, which constitutes nearly 36% of FMCG sales.



A one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable for the diverse agricultural landscape in India, as shown in the NCRB report where the number of deaths of landless agricultural labour has increased since 2019. While the PM Kisan Samman scheme that the Finance Minister speaks of in her budget speech overlooks the needs of the landless agricultural workers, even for those it is supposed to benefit, the allocation seems to have stagnated. Allocation towards it has not seen any change since the Budget and Revised Estimates for 2023-24 and also in the estimates for 2024-25.





The historic farmers' agitation against the farm Bills pushed by the Modi government, in fact, was a desperate fight back against what was being touted as Indian farming's "1991 moment". The Bills would have made farmers directly negotiate with private corporations instead of the mediation of a state-regulated market place. It took about 750 deaths and a year-long militant agitation for the government to finally retreat.



While the PM sold the dream of using drones for farming, today we are seeing drones being deployed to drop tear gas shells on protesting farmers marching towards the capital.



[Photo: Rohit Lohia/Al Jazeera]

TAXATION



Claims:



BJP manifesto promises Income tax relief for the middle class.



GST would lead to an increase in tax collection which would keep the black economy in check.



BJP's 2019 election manifesto promised Tax benefits to ensure more cash and greater purchasing power in the hands of our middle-income families.



In October 2013, in his meeting with the 14th Finance Commission, the then Gujarat chief minister Modi demanded that the Central government should provide 50% of its tax revenues to the states.



Reality:



Direct taxes decreased (only in the pre-election years 2018-19 & and 2023-24) and wealth tax was abolished, so the emphasis fell on indirect taxes. Hurting the consumption of the poorer sections.



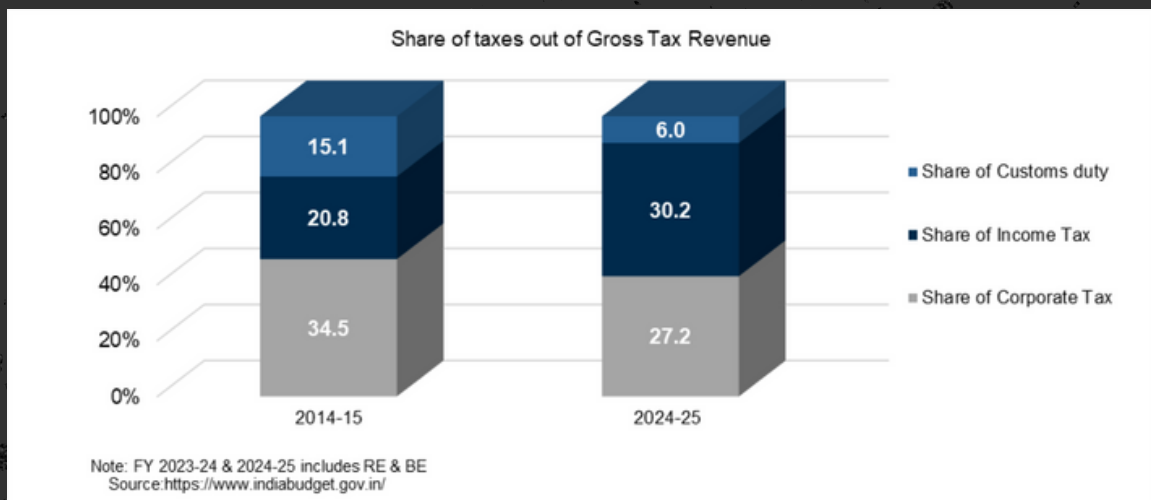
Govt is losing revenue under the GST regime - the estimated average tax rate was designed to be 17%, but the actual and effective rate was only 11.4%. In conclusion, despite the promises of GST, tax collection has not increased as estimated, prices have risen instead of falling, the economy has slowed down and real growth has not been as promised, and tax evasion continues.



However, the Modi Govt is financing large corporations by transferring the resources to them from the poorer sections. It also encourages tax avoidance by large businesses and puts middle-income households at a massive disadvantage, adversely affecting their purchasing power. This has burdened the hard-working class people of the country. Recent estimates of the Budget show that the share of Corporate tax in Gross tax revenue has decreased from 34.5% in 2014-15 to 27.2 % in 2024-25, on the other hand, the share of Income tax has increased from 20.8% to 30.2%. The share of custom duty has also shrunk to 6 % from 15.1 %.

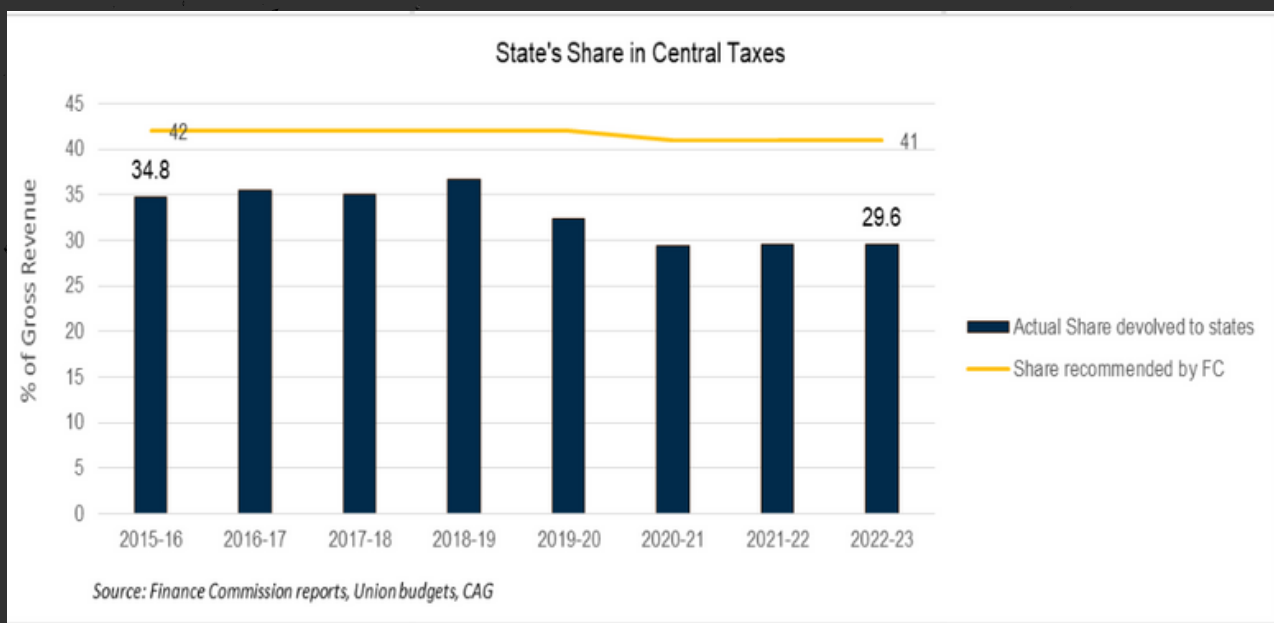


This shift can be seen in the income inequality data of OXFAM which shows that the top 10% of India holds 77% of total national wealth. Many Ordinary Indians are pushed into poverty because of increasing health costs every year combined with different direct and indirect taxes that they need to pay.





Modi as the Gujarat CM before 2014 has been most vocal about a fair devolution of taxes by the centre and frequently attacked the UPA Govt for denying the state's fiscal rights. However, during BJP years, the gap between the state's share of taxes has been widened. The state's share has declined from 34.8% in 2015-16 to 29.6% in 2022-23 where the recommended share was around 41-42%. And recently PM Modi equated the protests in Kerala & Karnataka to an attempt to break the country who are standing for their fiscal rights.



The average annual tax burden on fuel in the difficult years of 2020-21 to 2022-23 was Rs 4.07 lakh crore. If the govt was to be mindful of the enormous burden this is adding to the common people's woes and had revised its tax rates to the pre-pandemic (2019-20) level, then the estimated loss of revenue would have been Rs 1.19 lakh crore. Just a flat wealth tax rate of 2% imposed on just the wealthiest 1,007 families could have raised Rs 1.84 lakh crore in just a year.



CREDITS



Claims:

- ❏ BJP spokespersons have often claimed that they will take a strict stance on improper lending practices, especially NPAs.
- ❏ The BJP government passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in 2016, claiming that it will be a landmark reform in resolving insolvencies and recovering bad loans.
- ❏ The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 will enable those who have absconded to foreign countries without paying back their loans will be brought to justice, claimed Modi and promised to bring back those who have fled abroad with taxpayers' money.
- ❏ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi said that Kisan Credit Card is making life easier for our hardworking farmers and that is its main purpose as well.
- ❏ PM Modi said about the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs that "When the biggest crisis came, we decided to save our small enterprises and give them new strength."



Reality:

- Loans to large corporates without rigorous background checks have led to the accumulation of non-performing assets (NPAs) that have strained the banking sector, especially public sector banks. RBI data shows there has been a 1.6 times increase in the accumulation of Gross NPA across Public sector Banks at the 2014-15 level which sums to 54 lakhs cr during the 1st & 2nd terms of the Modi Govt.
- As per the CRISIL's rating, there has been a decline in recoveries and resolution time getting prolonged through the IBC channel. The rating agency said the recovery rate have fallen to 32% in Sept 2023 from 43% in March 2019. At the same time average resolution time has increased from 324 days to 653 days, versus the stipulated 330 days.
- Since 2018, 10 people including Vijay Mallaya, and Nirav Modi have been declared fugitive economic offenders. The total amount involved in these cases is more than 40,000 cr, Out of which the total assets confiscated is less than 40% of the amount involved. Since 2014 only 4 offenders have been extradited back to India by ED. It seems that the present government is not in the mood to bring other offenders back.
- It has been difficult for farmers to access loans with the Kisan Credit Card , because of stringent eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and the farmers' inability to provide collateral, making it challenging for the most marginalised farmers to benefit. The tenant farmers and agricultural labourers do not have access to credit at all.

Lending to Corporates vs Lending to farmers during Modi years

- Loans to farmers require rigorous background checks, whereas to corporates the lending norms are relaxed.
- Corporate borrowers have lower rates of interest than farmers. The interest rates for corporate borrowers, especially large ones, range from 7.5% - 8.5%. On the other hand, for small farmers, the interest rates on all agricultural loans usually fall between 8%-14%.



- ❏ The govt has not provided any interest free loans up to 1 lakh rupees to farmers as promised in the 2019 BJP manifesto.
- ❏ Loans are recovered from small and marginal farmers by force. Their property and collateral are attached by banks even if they are unable to repay loans due to crop failure or natural disasters. - On the other hand, big corporate defaulters do not have to face any punishment. They can also now get away scot-free by paying back only a small percentage of their debt under the IBC.
- ❏ As of Aug 2023, credit growth to agriculture increased by 16.6% while it increased by 20.7% for the services sector when compared to the same period of the last year.

Deeper look into MSME lending

- ❏ Despite all the tall claims, only 15% of the addressable credit needs of the MSME segment are being met by the formal lending sector. India is home to around 6.34 crores of MSMEs out of which micro-enterprises account for more than 99% of them. And it is the Micro and Small enterprises who are the worst sufferers as they account for around 95% of the overall credit gap.
- ❏ Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), one of the largest post-Covid credit schemes by the government for MSMEs to recover from COVID, was not easy to be availed. 57% of borrowers said it wasn't easy to avail the credit facility. And bigger entities found it easier to avail ECLGS vis-a-vis very small businesses.



MONETISATION



Claims:



National Monetisation Pipeline 2021: Claims that Rs. 6 lakh crore will be raised in the period of 2022-25 by monetising public assets



The revenue raised from NMP will lead to infrastructure development and will be used to fund new infrastructure projects.



It is not privatization, it is just giving assets on lease.



Only loss-making assets or assets that have not yielded appropriate returns will be monetised.



Reality:



A 25-year transfer of the asset is as good as fully selling the asset. Profit-motivated private corporations would not be interested in just leasing public assets and then handing them back to the government in the future. The assets that have been monetised have long-term contracts that are renewable after the expiry at their discretion, essentially transferring control of the asset to private corporations for an indefinite amount of time.



While the government committed to monetising only loss-making entities, the reality is far from true. Assets of SAIL, GAIL, ONGC, Railways and many other profit-making PSUs have been earmarked for monetisation. The net profit of profit-making CPSEs stood at 2.64 lakh crore in the FY 2021-2022.



Selling public assets to private profit-making entities means a hike in user charges for the public. In the most infamous case of public infrastructure monetization in Bolivia, the privatization of water led to a hike in the price of water by up to eight times. The failure of the privatization of rail transport in Singapore ultimately leading to a government takeover clearly shows that public interest will be forsaken for the interest of an ultra-privileged few by monetization.



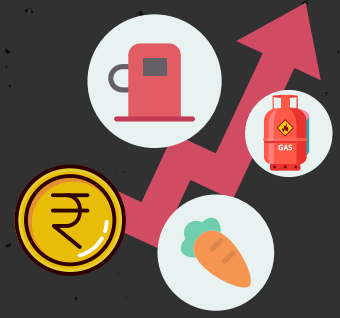
There is the danger of immense undervaluation in such monetisation schemes. For instance, the 26,700 km of national highway roads (22% of total NHAI roads) are going to be monetised. The government estimates that it would earn Rs 1.6 lakh crore from it. This is immensely undervaluing the asset. Based on the estimate made by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in 2019, the construction cost of 26,700 km of four-lane national highways is more than Rs 8 lakh crore.



Questions are being raised as to whether reservation would be implemented in monetized industries and enterprises by profit-motivated private players. Tens of thousands of workers from historically oppressed communities will lose their right to access work. The biggest bloc (52%) earmarked for monetization are railways (25%) and roads (27%). While it is riddled with discrimination, the railways nonetheless is the largest public sector where Dalits, Muslims and Adivasis have over the decades gotten significant representation as stakeholders, writes Tamoghna Halder. 2020 data suggest that about 25% of the employees in railways come from SC/ST backgrounds.



INFLATION



Claims:



"No person should go to bed hungry, "We have promised to control inflation. We are determined to achieve this target," said PM Modi in 2014. "We will do this (control inflation) not only because it is our election promise but we want every poor to have access to food", he said. In its election manifesto, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had promised that it would rein in prices if it came to power.



The 2014 Election Manifesto of the BJP said "Runaway food inflation has crippled household budgets and contributed to the overall inflationary trend under the Congress-led UPA's watch. Even worse, the food and nutritional security of millions is threatened. However, the Congress-led UPA government has remained insensitive and indifferent to the plight of the people; tying itself into knots with short-term, misdirected steps. The BJP-led NDA Government's record of holding the prices is a demonstration of our commitment to break the vicious cycle of high inflation and high-interest rates. Our immediate task will be to rein in inflation."



"50 rupee hike in LPG!!!! and they call themselves Aam Aadmi ki Sarkar. What a shame!", tweeted Smriti Irani in 2011.



Reality:



Globally Food Inflation on the FAO index has been negative since november 2022. However, it's been the opposite in India with persistent and elevated inflation at 9.5% in December 2023, as against -10.1% of the Global Food Price index.



Interestingly the 2019 Manifesto of the BJP did not have the word "inflation" mentioned even once!



The Price of Non-subsidised LPG gas cylinders in Delhi has increased by 22% from Rs 905 in June 2014 to Rs 1,103 in March 2023. Smriti Irani has not much to say about that though.



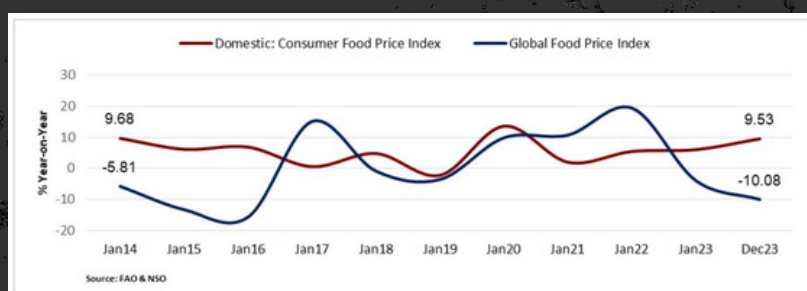
While inflation has not been a novel phenomenon, many believe that it is the alarming stagnancy of wages of the vast masses of Indians in recent years that is making the cost of living crisis a heavier burden. While the wages of construction workers and agricultural workers have increased by only 10.5% and 12% respectively in rural India from April 2021 to March 2023, the cost of cereals has increased by a whopping 22%. The fuel segment of the index has increased by 16% and the cost of milk and milk products increased by 14%.



Impoverished sections who don't have enough resources to consume even a single meal a day are hardest hit by the persistent food inflation leading to malnutrition and the country's poor standing in the World Hunger Index. India's rank in the Index slipped from 107 in 2022 to 111 in 2023 with a score of 28.7 which is under the serious category as per the World Hunger Index report. The percentage of the total population in India who are undernourished has increased from 14 % in 2015 to 16.6 % in 2023.



Some economists including a former RBI deputy governor (Viral Acharya) have argued that the five biggest private business groups in India are contributing to persistently high core inflation. They feel with the concentration of market power in fewer hands they also now have increasing pricing power. The triple blow of notebandi, GST and lockdown has crippled small businesses and the unorganised sector. The result is increased pricing power in the hands of a few while the sufferers are the poor and the middle classes.



NPAs & Write Offs



Claims:

- ❗ "NPAs have increased sharply over the past few years and the trend continues. BJP will take necessary steps to reduce NPAs in Banking sector" - BJP's 2014 Election Manifesto.
- ❗ Public sector banks were earlier known for losses running into thousands of crores of rupees and non-performing assets (NPAs), but now they are known for record profits, the prime minister said addressing Rozgar Mela.
- ❗ In an interview seven years ago, PM Modi said that he would give a taste of the law to wilful loan defaulters who, having defaulted on huge corporate loans, escape to foreign countries. "The public is sure that if anyone can do this, it is Narendra Modi," he said. "And I would certainly do it."
- ❗ PM Modi in a Rozgar Mela recently said, "UPA alliance government destroyed the banking sector with scams, while my government has restored its financial health... Phone banking where loans are disbursed on the phone calls from powerful men has stopped"



Reality:

- 🏦 The numbers reveal, there is a 1.6 times increase in the accumulation of Gross NPA across Public sector Banks at the 2014-15 level which sums to 5.40 lakhs cr during the 1st & 2nd terms of the Modi Government.
- 🏦 The RBI has recently even allowed "compromise settlements" or "technical write-offs" for those categorized as wilful defaulters or fraud without prejudice to the criminal proceedings underway against such debtors. Yearly write-offs amount by public sector banks have increased 17 times by 2023 from what it was in 2013. From 7,187 crores to 1.27 lakh crore. Total amount written off by all banks between 2014 and 2023 is 15.23 lakh crore!
- 🏦 Through the National Monetisation Pipeline, the government plans to lease out Rs. 6 lakh crore worth of physical assets to private entities, essentially an outright sale disguised as a lease.
- 🏦 Top 50 wilful defaulters owe around 87 thousand crore of rupees including Mehul Choksi, Rishi Agarwal and others.
- 🏦 The average recovery through the NCLT process is just about 20%



Revdís for corporates

Claims:



Incentives or “revdís” for corporates will spur economic growth and foster investment, aligning with the government's objectives.



Modi proudly declared in 2018 that his administration hadn't approved any loans to parties that subsequently defaulted on repayments. He emphasized the commitment to recover all loans disbursed, underscoring the government's firm stance on financial accountability.



The introduction of the PLI scheme aimed to bolster corporate profits by offering subsidies, with the ultimate goal of boosting tax revenues. Amitabh Kant in fact argued in favour of supporting a few “champions” to become really big instead of supporting small players. He said these “champions” will in turn lift the MSMEs.



Reality:



The government implemented a reduction in corporate tax rates in 2019, lowering them from 30% to 22%. Furthermore, newly-formed domestic companies benefited from an even lower rate of 15%. In the first two years following the tax cut, the country suffered a significant revenue loss of Rs 1.84 lakh crore. This did not lead to increased tax revenues or substantial economic growth.



Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) wrote off nearly Rs 12 lakh crore in the last five years, with a significant portion attributed to large industrial houses. Additionally, banks have recovered only a small fraction of written-off loans, indicating a failure to enforce loan recovery effectively. This while the majority are force to go to money shops called NBFCs for credit at high interest rates!



India's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, initiated with great anticipation in 2020, aimed to offer a subsidy totalling Rs 1.9 lakh crore over a span of six years. However, by March 2023, only Rs 3,400 crore in claims had been submitted, with Rs 2,900 crore disbursed. The PLI scheme, which primarily targets providing subsidies to chosen large and medium-scale industries, is deemed a suboptimal policy. Despite the promise of bolstering profits, it has failed to gain momentum primarily due to a shortage of demand.



Frustrated with the reluctance of India Inc. to invest despite all her freebies, the Finance Minister in fact told off the Indian industrialists: "Is it like Hanuman? You don't believe in your own capacity". Sadly when ordinary Indians do not have enough money in their pockets to spend, there is no incentive for India Inc to invest.



Minorities, Dalits, Women



Claims:



There has been a concerted effort from the BJP to claim that Muslims have been a major beneficiary of the government's welfare schemes as the government has not discriminated among its labharthis. In her budget speech, Sitharaman calls this "secularism in action".



"Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" (collective efforts, inclusive growth, with everyone's trust).



'Beti Bachao, beti Padhao' Save the girl child and ensure her safety with a view to strengthen and create a better India.



Reality:



Instead of justice, Muslims got "Bulldozer Justice" with their homes, businesses and religious places facing demolitions, allegedly through misuse of laws.



A Hindustan Times' analysis of the All India Debt and Investment Survey (AIDIS) and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) shows how Muslims in India "have the lowest asset and consumption levels among major religious groups... they are the poorest religious group in the country [and] over-populate the ranks of the poor in India."



Indiaspend's database shows that 97% (64 of 66) of bovine-related incidents with violent targeting of Muslims were reported after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government came to power in May 2014. More than half or 53% of the cow-related violence—35 of 66 cases—were from states governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), when the attacks were reported,



India stands at the 140th position among 156 countries in the Gender Development Index or GDI. The GDI measures gender inequalities in the achievement of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education, and command over economic resources. India's GDI stands at 0.849, well below the world average of 0.958.



India has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCEB), in 2021, a total of 4,05,861 cases of crimes against women were reported in India, of which 32,033 cases were of rape. 2021 saw a rise of 26.35% over six years – from 338,954 cases in 2016.



A recent rise in women's participation in India's labour force was led by self-employment, likely driven by distress more than economic growth, as per "State of Working India Report 2023" by Azim Premji University.



Only one of the 89 secretaries posted at the Centre belonged to the Scheduled Castes (SC), while three belonged to the Scheduled Tribes, the latest government data tabled in Parliament in 2019 showed.



As per the data of the National Coalition for Strengthening SCs and STs, "The report revealed that atrocities or crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs) have increased by 1.2% in 2021 with Uttar Pradesh reporting the highest number of cases of atrocities against SCs accounting for 25.82% followed by Rajasthan with 14.7% and Madhya Pradesh with 14.1% during 2021."



Almost 100 million Dalits in India – or one-third of their total number – continue to live in multidimensional poverty, as per the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

Reality:



While all caste groups lost jobs in the first two months of the COVID lockdown, the loss was the lowest for non-SC-ST-OBC individuals (13 percentage points). The stigmatized social groups —SC and ST—and the relatively more marginalized groups contained within OBCs—all lost significantly more compared to the non-SC-ST-OBCs (9.6 and 18 percentage points, respectively, more).





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