

# Topics - MINDS MAPS included (Daily current affairs )-- 31st October 2024



- Rohini Godbole & elementary particle
- -Space Rivalry Between the West and China
- Tragic Impact of Work Culture in Multinational Corporations
- Judicial System Challenges and Reforms.
- Political and Social Implications of Public Statistics
- US Electoral college system
- Mains



By saurabh Pandey



THE HINDU

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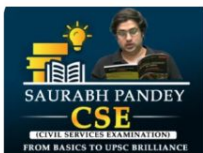
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# Rohini Godbole: indomitable passion for high-energy physics, gender equity

Prof. Godbole was a role model for young researchers, particularly women scientists struggling against gender bias and negative attitudes

Sunil Mukhi

**C**ollider physics studies the outcome of high-energy collisions between microscopic particles such as protons or electrons to learn about the fundamental constituents of our universe. If one mentions this subject in the context of India, the name of Rohini Godbole will be among the first to come up. Prof. Godbole passed away on October 25 after a brief illness. She was 71.

Born into a middle-class Pune family committed to education and learning, she became an internationally renowned theoretical physicist. Her parents supported her career choice, but she faced condescension and gender bias from professional colleagues at crucial stages of her career. Yet it was not in her nature to be discouraged. She got through the difficult times with energy and determination, with a passion for research and an ability to inspire students. In time, she won global recognition as an accomplished researcher, educator, policymaker, and administrator of science.

## Paving the way

A graduate of S.P. College in Pune, Prof. Godbole got a master's degree at IIT Bombay and went on to do a PhD at the State University of New York at Stony Brook (now Stony Brook University) in the U.S. During the 1970s, the physics department, under the leadership of Chinese-American Nobel laureate C.N. Yang, had developed a top-class doctoral programme. Unlike by League colleges that could be prejudiced against students from India in those days, Stony Brook quickly became enthusiastic about Indian students, largely due to the success of early recruits such as Prof. Godbole.

This she helped pave the way for many others (including myself) to study at the same institution, which I joined a few years later. Our small contingent, newly arrived from India and quite nervous, was fortunate to encounter her as we entered the department on our first day. Her warm welcome contrasted sharply with the standoffish attitude of some other Indian seniors. In the subsequent years, she continued to offer us advice and encouragement with a characteristic generosity of spirit.

Prof. Godbole was popular with both faculty members and students at Stony Brook and was perceived as one of their most talented students. Yet, when she completed her doctorate in 1979, she declined postdoctoral offers from the U.S. and Europe and returned to work at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai. I remember the day her first publication from India reached us in Stony Brook. That she could continue to carry out high-quality research convinced many of us to eventually head back ourselves.

## Tough time

Her early days in India were not easy. Despite excellent work, she was told she lacked the talent to become a high-quality independent researcher. She joined Bombay University, where she had a heavy teaching load even as the system was indifferent to her research, although she acknowledged the support and mentorship of some senior colleagues.

After a heavy day of teaching, she still had the energy to commute across town to TIFR and carry on joint research with



**Role model:** Rohini Godbole spoke openly of the hurdles she had faced in the past but was never embittered by the experience – nor did she ever gloat after achieving worldwide success. FILE PHOTO

at the faculty there. Without even a small desk at which to work, she remained focused on research and did not complain about what the rest of us saw as gender-based discrimination. In 1995 she was offered a faculty position at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, where her life as a researcher became less stressful and she could recruit and guide doctoral students. At this stage, her career soared, and she soon became a celebrity.

## A cut above the rest

Rohini Godbole was a classic "elementary particle phenomenologist" – a scientist who studies phenomena that are observed at particle colliders. Her research papers offered interpretations of experimental signatures for theoretical models that are used to test their validity. She co-authored a textbook on supersymmetric models of particle physics, for which evidence is currently being sought at colliders.

She was often invited to sit on panels and working groups. For example, in 2012 she was the seniormost among only four Indians in a study group commissioned by CERN that produced a 400-page report on the feasibility of upgrading the Large Hadron Collider to include electron beams.

By this time she was personally known to all the leading particle physicists around the world and was frequently invited as a keynote speaker at international conferences on high-energy physics. She became a fellow of the national academies and received

**Rohini Godbole was a classic 'elementary particle phenomenologist'. Her papers offered interpretations of experimental observations at laboratories like Fermilab and CERN and proposed experimental signatures for theoretical models that are used to test their validity**

numerous recognitions, including awards from the governments of India and France. As a visiting professor at European universities, she taught graduate courses on the themes of her research.

At some point it became evident she had outperformed other Indian colleagues in her field, including those who had discouraged her decades earlier. She spoke openly of the hurdles she had faced in the past but was never embittered by the experience – nor did she ever gloat after achieving worldwide success.

## Always with a smile

Prof. Godbole was by this time well placed to be a role model for young researchers, particularly women scientists struggling – as she once had – against gender bias and negative attitudes. She cheerfully took on this responsibility and became an advocate for women in science. While continuing to do high-quality research, she founded the "Women in Science Panel" of the Indian Academy of Sciences and became its first Chair. She was a plenary speaker at the first International Conference on Women in Physics in Pune in 2001. In a

short autobiographical note, she wrote about the experience:

"I was invited to speak about my experience as a woman physicist in India who had achieved some measure of success, and it resonated with the audience. Women from Ghana, Mauritius, and Egypt came to me and said, when Western women talk, we feel that they are from a different culture, but when we listen to you, we feel – if she can do it, we can do it too!"

This experience led her to co-edit a now famous compilation of career profiles of nearly a hundred Indian women scientists, "Alla's Daughters", and she gave numerous talks and wrote articles on gender-related issues in science. On a few occasions I had the opportunity to sit in committee meetings with her and observe her remarkable style of functioning.

Despite being a talkative person in public spaces, she was an alert listener at meetings and would only express her opinions after carefully absorbing the facts.

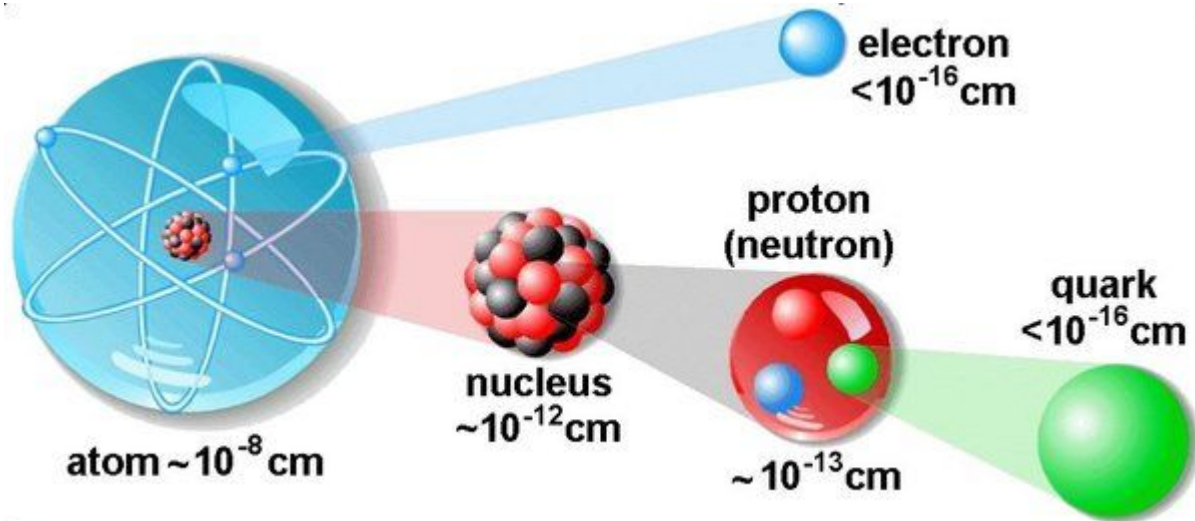
Her remarks were direct and pointed, and she fought vigorously for what she believed to be right, but always in constructive language and with a smile.

Let me conclude with a quote from an email circulated at CERN just hours after she passed away in Pune. "It is with profound sadness that we have learnt about the passing of Rohini Godbole. A brilliant phenomenologist and a visionary leader, Rohini has inspired students and researchers across the world."

Sunil Mukhi is a theoretical physicist at IISER Pune who carries out research in quantum field theory and string theory. sunil.mukhi@iiserpune.ac.in

## Topic - Rohini Godbole & elementary particle

Rohini Godbole was a classic “elementary particle phenomenologist” — a scientist who studies phenomena that are observed at particle colliders.





# Standard Model of Elementary Particles

		three generations of matter (elementary fermions)			three generations of antimatter (elementary antifermions)			interactions / force carriers (elementary bosons)	
		I	II	III	I	II	III		
mass		$\approx 2.2 \text{ MeV}/c^2$	$\approx 1.28 \text{ GeV}/c^2$	$\approx 173.1 \text{ GeV}/c^2$	$\approx 2.2 \text{ MeV}/c^2$	$\approx 1.28 \text{ GeV}/c^2$	$\approx 173.1 \text{ GeV}/c^2$	0	$\approx 124.97 \text{ GeV}/c^2$
charge		$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{2}{3}$	$-\frac{2}{3}$	$-\frac{2}{3}$	$-\frac{2}{3}$	0	0
spin		$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	0
		<b>u</b> up	<b>c</b> charm	<b>t</b> top	<b><math>\bar{u}</math></b> antiup	<b><math>\bar{c}</math></b> anticharm	<b><math>\bar{t}</math></b> antitop	<b>g</b> gluon	<b>H</b> higgs
	<b>QUARKS</b>	<b>d</b> down	<b>s</b> strange	<b>b</b> bottom	<b><math>\bar{d}</math></b> antidown	<b><math>\bar{s}</math></b> antistrange	<b><math>\bar{b}</math></b> antibottom	<b><math>\gamma</math></b> photon	<b>GAUGE BOSONS VECTOR BOSONS</b>
		$\approx 4.7 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ $-\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 96 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ $-\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 4.18 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ $-\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 4.7 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 96 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 4.18 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 1	
		$\approx 0.511 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ -1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 105.66 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ -1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 1.7768 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ -1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 0.511 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 105.66 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 1.7768 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 91.19 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ 0 1	<b>SCALAR BOSONS</b>
	<b>LEPTONS</b>	<b>e</b> electron	<b><math>\mu</math></b> muon	<b><math>\tau</math></b> tau	<b><math>e^+</math></b> positron	<b><math>\bar{\mu}</math></b> antimuon	<b><math>\bar{\tau}</math></b> antitau	<b>Z</b> $Z^0$ boson	
		$< 2.2 \text{ eV}/c^2$ 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$< 0.17 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$< 18.2 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$< 2.2 \text{ eV}/c^2$ 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$< 0.17 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$< 18.2 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\approx 80.39 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ 1 1	$\approx 80.39 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ -1 1
		<b><math>\nu_e</math></b> electron neutrino	<b><math>\nu_\mu</math></b> muon neutrino	<b><math>\nu_\tau</math></b> tau neutrino	<b><math>\bar{\nu}_e</math></b> electron antineutrino	<b><math>\bar{\nu}_\mu</math></b> muon antineutrino	<b><math>\bar{\nu}_\tau</math></b> tau antineutrino	<b><math>W^+</math></b> $W^+$ boson	<b><math>W^-</math></b> $W^-$ boson



Chinese astronauts from left, Wang Yaping, Song Lingdong, and Cai Xuzhe before launch at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China, early on Wednesday.

## China sends new crew to its Tiangong space station

Associated Press

A Chinese spaceship carrying a three-person crew docked with its orbiting space station Tuesday as the country seeks to expand its exploration of outer space in competition with the U.S., even as it looks for cooperation from other nations.

The team of two men and one woman will replace astronauts who have lived on the Tiangong space station for the last six months, conducting a variety of experiments and maintaining the structure.

They are expected to stay until April or May of next year. The new mission commander, Cai Xuzhe, went to space in the Shenhou 14 mission in 2022, while the other two, Song Lingdong and Wang Yaping, are first-time space travellers. Mr. Song and Ms. Wang were born in the 1990s and are graduates of the third wave of Chinese astronaut recruitment, having undergone a rigorous testing and training process taking years.

Early Wednesday morning, China declared the launch and entry into outer space a "complete success."

The Shenhou 19 spaceship carrying the trio blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China at 27 am local time atop a Long March 2F rocket, the backbone of China's crewed space missions.

China built its own space station after

**The two men and one woman will replace astronauts who have lived on the space station for six months, conducting experiments and maintaining the structure.**

being excluded from the International Space Station, mainly because of U.S. concerns over the control of the People's Liberation Army over the space programme. China's moon programme is part of a growing rivalry with the U.S. and others, including Japan and India.

Mr. Song was an air force pilot, and Ms. Wang was an engineer with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. She will be the crew's payload specialist and the third Chinese woman aboard a crewed mission.

Besides putting a space station into orbit, the Chinese space agency has landed an explorer on Mars. It aims to put a person on the moon before 2030, which would make China the second nation after the U.S. to do so. It also plans to build a research station on the moon and has already transferred rock and soil samples from the moon in a first for any nation in decades and placed a rover on the little-explored far side of the moon in a global first.

The U.S. still leads in space exploration and plans to land astronauts on the moon for the first time in more than 50 years, though NASA pushed the target date back to 2026 earlier this year.

The new Chinese crew will perform spacewalks and install new equipment to protect the station from space debris.

According to NASA, large pieces of debris have been created by "satellite explosions and collisions." China's firing of a rocket to destroy a redundant weather satellite in 2007 and the "accidental" collision of American and Russian communications satellites in 2009 greatly increased the amount of large debris in orbit, it said.

# Topic --Space Rivalry Between the West and China

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## Overview

The ongoing competition in space exploration and technology

Key players: United States, China, and other nations

Motivations: National security, technological advancement, and resource acquisition.

## Key Themes:



Technological Competition



Military Aspects

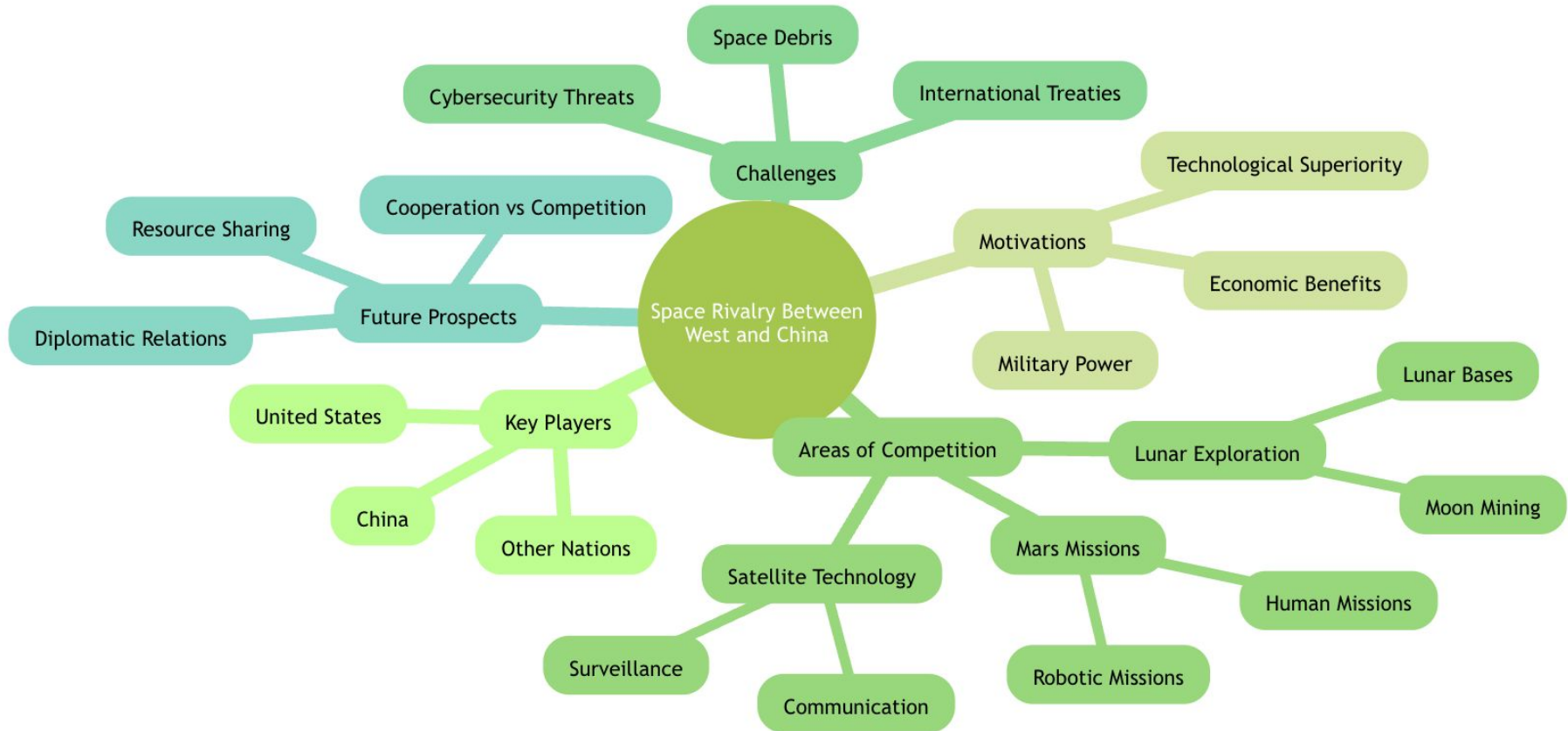


Resource Exploration



International Cooperation vs. Rivalry

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# Importing a toxic work culture into India



An Indian woman in her twenties, working in Pune for a major consultancy firm, died one day after returning home from work. Her mother believes that this had resulted from exhaustion due to overwork at the office.

While the deeper cause would be difficult to ascertain, her parents have spoken publicly about their daughter informing them about the long hours she faced at work and the stress she endured from unreasonably close deadlines for reports.

Moreover, soon after the news of her death broke, at least one former employee has written or spoken in the public domain regarding the work culture that they experienced at the same company, which led him to leave. Ironically, on the website of the firm's 'India Office' the first entry is a banner declaring that the company's purpose is "building a better working world"

## An American imprint

The firm concerned is a so-called multinational. This term is somewhat of an oxymoron, reflected in the reality that every multinational company has a distinct national affiliation, and national governments avidly work to further the prospects of their own multinationals (MNCs). Thus, when United States President Bill Clinton visited India in 2000, where he was mobbed by our parliamentarians in the Lok Sabha, he had come with a posse of American CEOs seeking opportunities. Most of the world's multinationals are American. This explains their work culture, the essential part of which is an emphasis on long hours apart from the relentless pressure to fulfil stringent targets, whether of sales or, in the case of accounting/consultancy firms, commissioned reports for clients ranging from for-profit firms to governments.

It is useful to understand the provenance of the work culture found in multinationals. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. came to have an outsized influence on global affairs, and its economic architecture, including the work culture, came to be seen as the gold standard. From accounting practices to what is considered normal when it comes to hours of work, 'the American way' became the norm. Now, the culture of the multinationals came to possess the cachet of being of American origin even if the company itself may not be. This culture has a history.

The German sociologist, Max Weber, showed how the reformation of Christianity in northern Europe altered the view of work. Protestantism, especially Calvinism, doctrinally supported worldly activities dedicated to economic gain, seeing them as endowed with a moral and



**Pulapre Balakrishnan**

Honorary Visiting Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

spiritual significance that was equal to working for the Church, which Catholicism had privileged. Weber identified the protestant ethic as a driver of early capitalism. As America was founded by northern Europeans intent on establishing a community based on Protestant beliefs, it is not difficult to see where the glorification of work that came to define the American way of life came from. Weber relies on the writings of the American thinker, Benjamin Franklin, to make his case. The point of all this is to see that the work culture at MNCs is not based on ergonomics or organisational psychology but is actually of religious extraction.

## A country comparison of work, productivity

For the economist, it remains pertinent to ask where the American obsession with work has got Americans. I shall base my investigation on data issued by the International Labour Organisation. If we were to make a global comparison of national per capita incomes, a standard measure of the standard of living of a population, we would find that hard work has got the U.S. quite far for sure but not as far as others without the same approach to work. In 2023, the U.S. was the 12th globally in terms of GNP per capita. If we take Guyana out of this list – it was only barely ahead – 10 countries were ahead of the U.S. These were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland. Note that apart from a tiny Asian country, the rest of the list is exclusively of western European countries.

There is, though, an aspect of the comparison just made that needs mentioning. As productivity measures are based on value, the country that makes more valuable goods would tend to rank higher even if its physical productivity is not higher across all goods. So as to avoid relying on a comparison of value-based productivity levels alone, we may compare how the value-based productivity measure grows over time across countries. When we do this for the period of half a century from 1970, we find that U.S. GNP per capita has grown faster than only Switzerland's, and that too marginally (paucity of data meant that Austria and Singapore had to be excluded from the exercise). So, we find that neither is the population of the U.S. the richest in the world nor is its productivity growth faster. A further assessment of the economic value of hard work is conveyed by the following indicator.

In the above sample, except for Singapore, the average hours worked per person in a year were lower than that in the U.S. in every other country listed above. So, we can see that it is possible to get richer than the U.S. even when working less. There appears to be a difference between

working, a creative mental and physical engagement, and just labouring, as defined by hours worked.

However, talk of national cultures glorifying work can go only this far in accounting for the long hours allegedly worked by employees of multinationals, such as the employee who died. As observed by Karl Marx a 150 years ago, the length of the working day is a factor determining profits under capitalism. When only a part of a day's labour by the worker is needed to pay for their maintenance by way of the wage, the rest accrues to the capitalist as profit. As competition among capitalists lowers the rate of profit, capitalists strive to recoup profits by increasing the length of the working day or getting workers to do more and more faster. For consulting firms such as the one in question, the latter would mean producing more reports in less and less time.

## An add-on to foreign investment

It is useful to remember that the work culture allegedly existing at the firm was not always present in India. It came along with the foreign investment that was courted as part of the liberalising reforms of 1991. Foreign investment was seen as a route to raising capital formation and bringing along global best practices in management. As for the promised global best practices, the incident involving the Pune firm is at least one data point by which to gauge outcomes. Whatever may be the actual benefits for India of having kept an open house for them, the multinationals seem to have done quite well for themselves since.

It has been reported that during 2017-22, the "Big Four" among the global consulting firms bagged 305 assignments from the Government of India. The same source reports a figure so large for the revenue that accrued to them from India that I thought it wise to ascertain it before citing it. But in all these cases, it would be of interest to know if expertise as good was not available in India. There is also a record of the governments of some southern States favouring external consultants over local experts who are far more knowledgeable on economic matters.

An upshot of the incident at Pune is that the working hours and practices in the multinationals working in India must be regulated by the government. So should the working hours at the Indian companies directly serving offshore entities, where stress-induced suicides have been reported recently. That these companies, which serve a global clientele, would require them to run shifts that cater to different time zones to ply their business is well understood, but they would have to adhere to Indian norms.


The practices, including working hours, in multinationals functioning in India must be regulated





# \_\_Topic → Tragic Impact of Work Culture in Multinational Corporations





## Overview


 An Indian woman in her twenties tragically passed away after returning home from her job at a major consultancy firm in Pune. Her mother attributed her death to exhaustion from overwork.


 The woman had informed her parents about the long hours and stress due to tight deadlines at her workplace.

 A former employee criticized the company's work culture, claiming it contributed to his decision to leave.

 The firm is a multinational corporation (MNC) with a work culture influenced by American standards, emphasizing long hours and high-pressure targets.


-  The American work culture, seen as a global standard, is rooted in Protestant ethics that glorify hard work and economic gain, as analyzed by sociologist Max Weber.

 Since the end of the Cold War, American multinationals have significantly influenced global work culture, shaping norms around work hours and expectations.

 The work culture in MNCs is suggested to be more about historical and religious influences rather than modern organizational psychology

## **U.S. Economic and Work Culture Analysis**


### **Global GNP Per Capita Ranking**

 The U.S. ranks 12th globally in GNP per capita as of 2023, trailing behind primarily Western European countries.


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## Work and Living Standards

 Hard work in the U.S. does not guarantee the highest standard of living; some countries achieve greater wealth with fewer working hours.


## GNP Growth and Productivity

 U.S. GNP per capita growth from 1970 to 2023 was only marginally faster than Switzerland's, indicating limited productivity growth.


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## Misleading Productivity Measures


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 Productivity measures can be misleading; value-based productivity does not always reflect actual physical productivity across countries.

### **Work Hours and Economic Performance**

 The average hours worked per person in the U.S. are higher than in economically outperforming countries, suggesting efficiency over sheer hours worked.

### **Work Hours and Profit Relationship**

 The relationship between work hours and profits is influenced by capitalist competition, leading to longer working days to maintain profit margins.

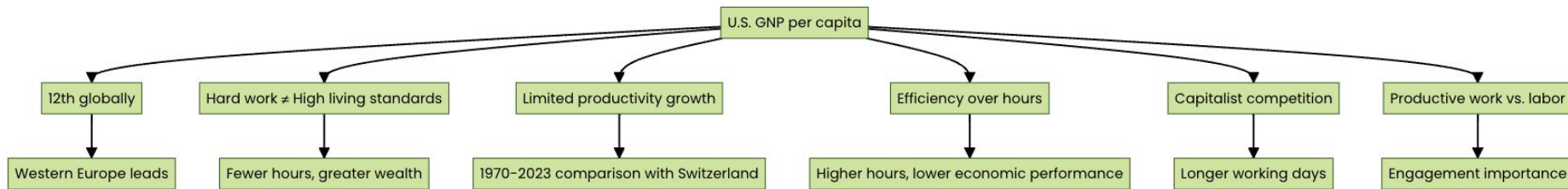
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# Productive Work vs. Mere Labor

🧠 There is a distinction between productive work and mere labor, emphasizing the importance of engagement over hours logged.


Summary: The U.S. ranks 12th in GNP per capita, showing that hard work does not always equate to higher living standards, as other countries achieve greater wealth with fewer hours worked.


## Economic and Work Culture Analysis:







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 **Foreign Investment Impact:** The work culture in India has evolved due to foreign investment, particularly since the liberalization reforms of 1991.


 **Capital Formation:** Foreign investment was aimed at increasing capital formation and introducing global best practices in management.


 **Consulting Assignments:** From 2017 to 2022, the 'Big Four' consulting firms secured 305 assignments from the Government of India.

 **Revenue Concerns:** The revenue generated by these consulting firms from India is significant, raising questions about the availability of local expertise.

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—  Preference for External Consultants: Some southern Indian states have shown a preference for hiring external consultants over local experts, despite the latter's superior knowledge.

 Regulation of Working Hours: There is a need for government regulation of working hours in multinationals and Indian companies serving offshore clients, especially due to reports of stress-induced suicides.

 Global Clientele Challenges: Companies serving global clients must balance operational demands with adherence to Indian labor norms.

Summary: The evolution of work culture in India due to foreign investment has raised concerns about local expertise, the regulation of working hours, and the impact of global business practices.

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# Tackle the issue of adjournments, case pendency



The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, recently said that the culture of judicial adjournments should go. She highlighted this while speaking at the valedictory session of the two-day National Conference of District Judiciary, organised by the Supreme Court of India, in New Delhi in September. She further said that the poor and the rural population suffer injustice silently rather than going to the courts out of a fear of the delay in getting the cases resolved.

The concern raised by the President is genuine. And it needs to be addressed at the earliest with a viable solution.

Under British rule and after Independence, civil courts dealt with all kinds of civil issues by following the Code of Civil Procedure. Another is criminal courts to deal with criminal cases under the Criminal Procedure Code. Besides them, the Supreme Court and High Courts deal with constitutional cases by issuing writs under the Constitution and Appellate powers. These courts are still functioning.

## Reasons for the lag

With an aim to reduce the burden of pendency on civil courts, the tribunal system was introduced through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 to deal with specialised subjects. Likewise, special laws were enacted with specialised forums or courts. Most of these statutes prescribe a time-line for adjudication of the cases. Sometimes, to end the public outcry – as it happened during the distressing case of a rape and murder of a woman doctor in Kolkata – provision is made to decide a case in a fixed and time-bound manner. But hardly any of the cases meet the time-line fixed by the statute. The major reasons include the judge-population ratio. As in 2024, in the Law Minister's reply in the Lok Sabha, there are 21 judges per million population



**Baglekar Akash Kumar**

an advocate in the High Court of Telangana

The concern that the President of India expressed on the subject is valid, but there are major reasons for the rise

against the recommendations of the 120th report of the Law Commission of India of having 50 judges per million population. The second is because of not filling vacant posts of judges in a time-bound manner. The third is about giving one judge the additional charge of two or more courts, even in the so-called specialised courts that are created in haste in order to control public outcry. The fourth is in enacting pieces of legislation without prior judicial-impact assessment, and the fifth is the inordinate delay in bringing witnesses to courts.

## Judge numbers

On the issue of pendency in High Courts, against the sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges (as on December 31, 2023), which itself is much less when compared to the population and number of cases being filed, the present strength of judges is 770 (as on October 30, 2024), or 30% of vacancies. Besides dealing with writ matters, as prescribed by the Constitution, almost every piece of legislation confers appeal, revision, transfer, quash, bail, contempt and other miscellaneous powers upon High Courts. In 2021, six specialised tribunals were abolished and their functions conferred on High Courts. Thus, all this is resulting in a huge backlog of cases in High Courts. On an average, it takes between six to seven years for a case to be decided in a High Court.

So far as the Supreme Court is concerned, though it is functioning with almost a full sanctioned strength of 34 judges, there are nearly two dozen statutes which provide for direct appeal to the Supreme Court, besides it exercising writ and appeal powers. Almost every decision, mostly against orders of the High Courts in north India, is challenged before the Supreme Court, under Article 136, resulting in huge case pendency.

All judges, right from the district judiciary to the Supreme Court, are working overtime to meet the huge pendency demand. For example, a magistrate in a criminal court has to do regular call work, take cognisance of fresh cases, conduct a trial, pass judgments, deal with arrests (remand), private complaints, bails, also record dying declarations, and carry out other miscellaneous works. If he is given additional charge of another court, there is the work of that court to be done as well. Thus, dealing with so much varied work and with almost 100 cases in a day may cause great mental stress to the judge. Thus he may not be able to concentrate while writing judgments, which will lead to errors. This could be a reason for further challenge and delay.

## Some suggestions

“Mediation” is seen as an alternative mechanism, where both parties have to give their consent to resolve disputes amicably, but given the mindset of even one party to the dispute to fight a court battle, it is high time that the recommendation of the Justice M. Jagannadha Rao Committee, which proposed “judicial impact assessment” of every legislation, is implemented. The committee had suggested that every Bill should estimate the expenses of additional cases that may arise out of a new Bill and mention the number of civil and criminal cases likely to arise out of the new Bill, the number of courts, judges and staff that are necessary, and the infrastructure. The committee's report was commended even by the Supreme Court in *Salem Advocate Bar Association (II) vs Union of India* (2005). Besides that, the High Court and State government concerned should collaborate to start the process of filling up the proposed vacancy in the district judiciary, six months in advance. Also, no additional charge should be conferred on a judge, thereby allowing him to concentrate on the cases in his own court.

# Topic → Judicial System Challenges and Reforms

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## Overview of the Tribunal System



Introduction: The tribunal system was established in 1976 via the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act to address the backlog in civil courts.



Specialized Forums: Created to handle specific subjects with set timelines for case resolution.



Systemic Delays: Despite timelines, most cases do not meet statutory deadlines due to systemic issues.

## Current Judicial Challenges



Judge Shortage: As of 2024, there are only 21 judges per million people, far below the recommended 50.



Vacancies: Judicial positions remain unfilled, exacerbating delays.



Additional Responsibilities: Judges often manage duties across multiple courts, adding strain to the system.

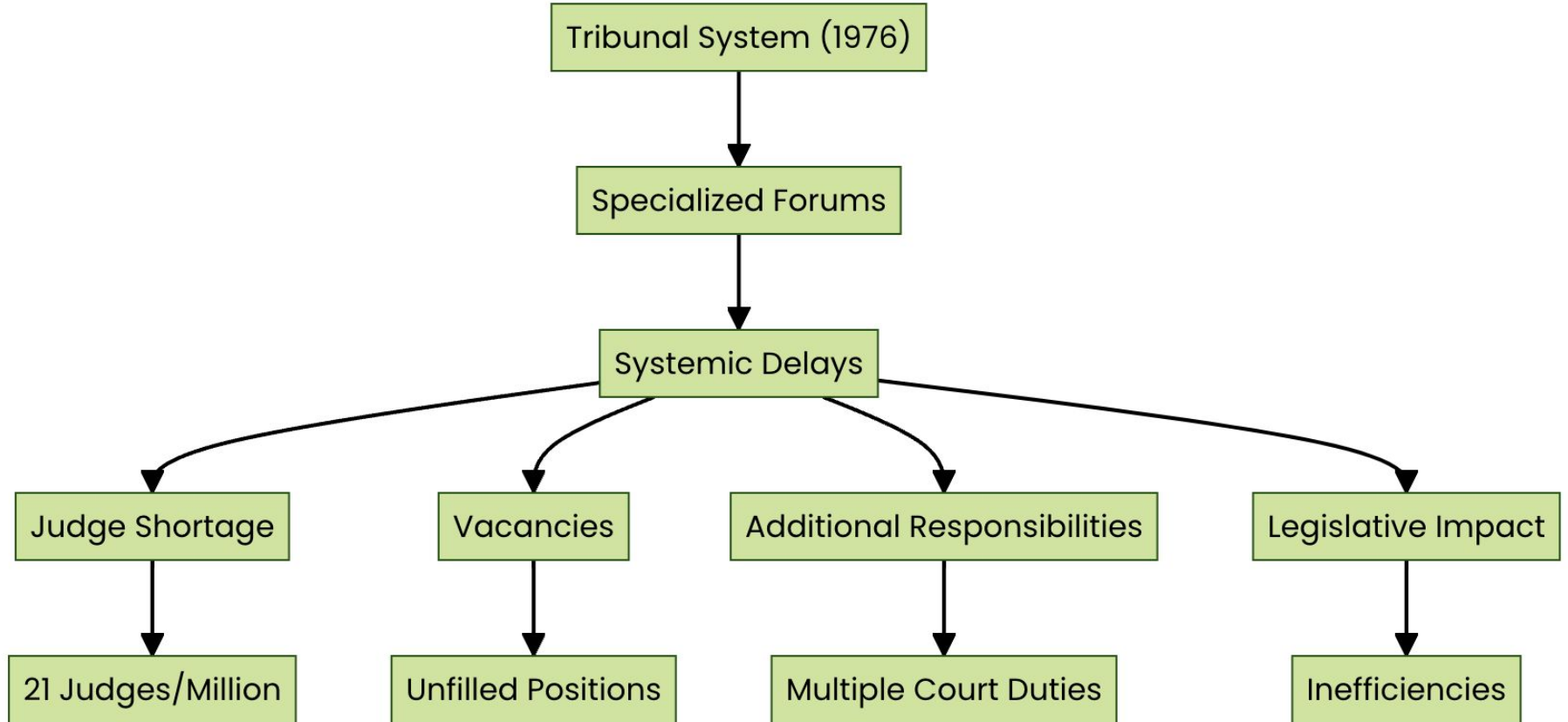


Legislative Impact: New laws are enacted without assessing their impact on the judiciary, causing inefficiencies.

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## Judicial System Challenges:





# Judicial System Challenges



## Current Judicial Landscape



**Judicial Vacancy:** As of October 30, 2024, there are 770 judges in High Courts, which is only 30% of the sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges.



**High Court Responsibilities:** High Courts handle a wide range of powers including appeals, revisions, and writ matters, leading to increased case loads.

## Case Management Challenges



**Case Backlog:** The average time for a case to be resolved in a High Court is between six to seven years, contributing to significant case pendency.




**Supreme Court Appeals:** The Supreme Court operates with a full strength of 34 judges but faces a high volume of direct appeals from various statutes, particularly from High Court decisions.


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## Judicial Workload and Stress


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 **Judicial Workload:** Judges, from district courts to the Supreme Court, are working overtime to manage the heavy caseload, which can lead to mental stress and potential errors in judgment writing.

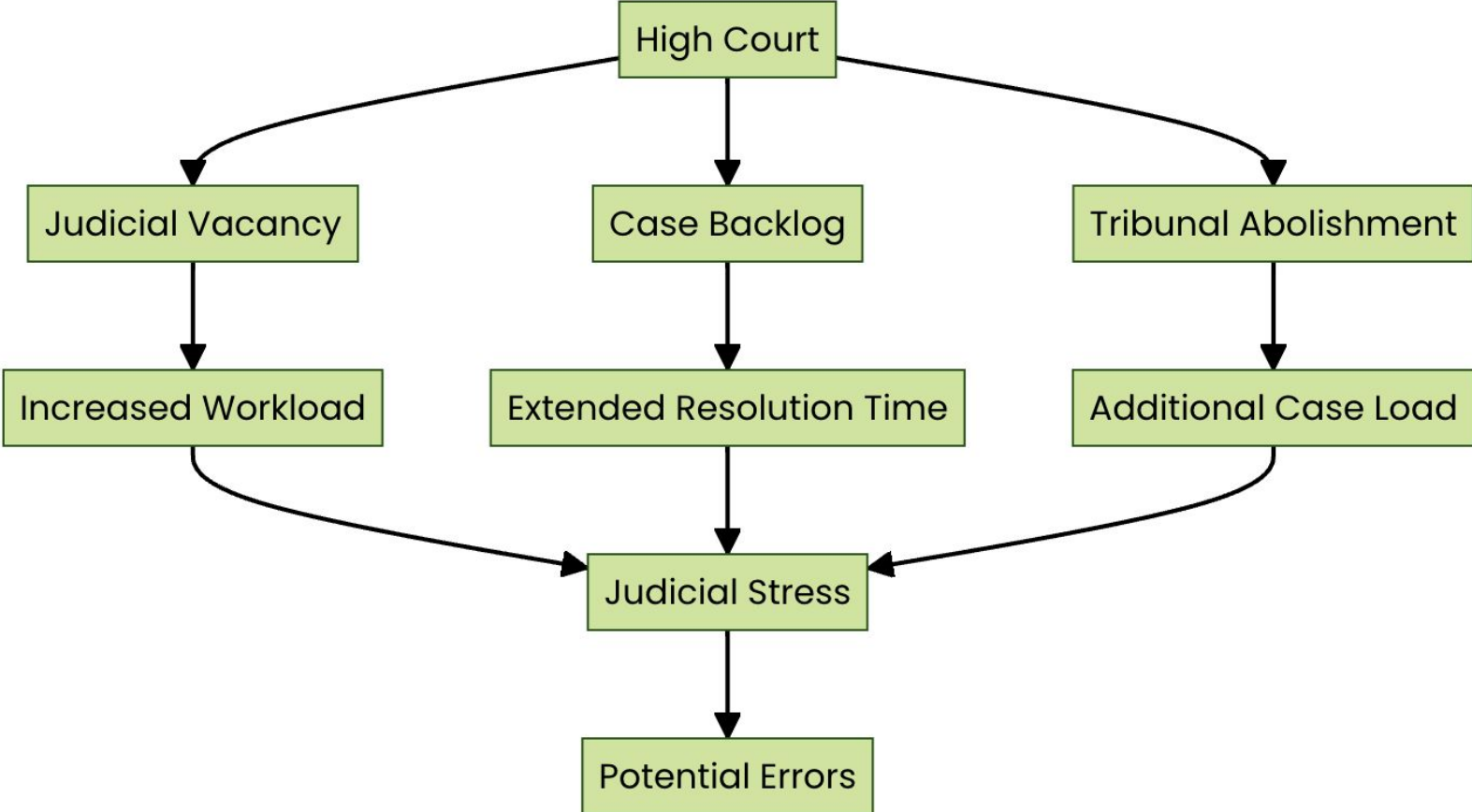
 **Impact of Stress:** The overwhelming workload and stress on judges may result in mistakes in judgments, further complicating the judicial process and causing delays.

### **Structural Changes**

 **Tribunal Abolishment:** The abolition of six specialized tribunals in 2021 has shifted their functions to High Courts, exacerbating the backlog of cases.


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Judicial System Overview:




## Steps Needed


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 Mediation as an Alternative: Mediation is proposed as a consensual method for resolving disputes amicably, but challenges arise when one party prefers litigation.


 Judicial Impact Assessment: The Justice M. Jagannadha Rao Committee recommended implementing a "judicial impact assessment" for all new legislation to evaluate potential legal consequences.

 Cost Estimation: The committee suggested that every Bill should include an estimate of additional legal expenses and the expected number of civil and criminal cases that may arise.

---

—  **Resource Requirements:** It was recommended that new legislation should specify the necessary number of courts, judges, staff, and infrastructure to handle the anticipated cases.

 **Commendation by Supreme Court:** The committee's report received praise from the Supreme Court in the case of Salem Advocate Bar Association (II) vs Union of India (2005).

 **Judiciary Staffing:** Collaboration between the High Court and State government is essential to fill vacancies in the district judiciary proactively, ideally six months in advance.

 **Judicial Focus:** Judges should not be assigned additional charges to ensure they can focus on the cases in their own courts effectively.

**Summary:** The text discusses the need for mediation in dispute resolution, the implementation of judicial impact assessments for new legislation, and the importance of adequate judicial resources and staffing

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# The politics of data-based policymaking



SAUBHAVI PANDEY  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
CSE  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**H**ow should India approach data collection and statistics for the next five years? Measures and datasets tell the stories of a country's growth and are important to citizens, policymakers, and the international audience. In the last few years, the accuracy and quality of India's statistical systems have been questioned. Economists and policymakers have lamented the "decade without data" since the Census has not been conducted and the release of National Sample Survey (NSS) data faced delays. They have advocated for more independence and neutrality in data collection, interpretation, and release.

## Are numbers objective?

However, simply championing values like independence and neutrality overlooks the contextual and political nature of statistics. We need to recognise that the construction of public statistics is informed by political commitments that must be aired and critiqued for good policymaking. Unless the politics are transparent, the statistics will not be as useful as they could be.

Statistics, first and foremost, are attempts at numerical representations of complex social experiences. Choices about what to count are simultaneously choices about what not to count. Consider welfare policies such as the financial inclusion scheme, Jan Dhan Yojana. India broke the Guinness World Record in 2014 for opening the maximum number of bank accounts in a week. At what cost was such speed achieved? A leader of an activist group based in Hyderabad explained that a bank had set up camps in Adivasi villages of Andhra Pradesh, hastily opened accounts for citizens, and left. "Accounts were opened but people did not know details about their accounts, and were never given passbooks," he said. Although direct benefits transfers were being sent to those accounts, they were inaccessible. Cases of



**Pariroo Rattan**

PhD candidate at Harvard University and a Non-Resident Research Associate at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress. Views expressed are personal

Simply championing values like independence and neutrality overlooks the contextual and political nature of statistics

the poor being unable to access their bank accounts and welfare subsidies due to illiteracy, documentation issues, and harassment are plentiful despite the statistical narrative that numbers of bank accounts are rising. In another example, the kilogrammes of foodgrains distributed under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana are widely shown across billboards. The Global Hunger Report of 2023 records that India's ranking had slipped from 55th in 2014 to 111th in 2023. Fixating on the number of bank accounts and kilogrammes of foodgrains distributed as metrics of state success can conceal the darker story of limited banking access and poor nutrition.

Second, meeting statistical targets should not be confused with the achievement of development objectives. This is an issue across multilateral institutions, but India must take a more nuanced approach. Consider the eShram unorganised workers' database, set up by the Ministry of Labour and Employment after the COVID-19 pandemic to collect data on migrant workers. A Common Service Centre operative in Gurugram explained how the database relies on self-declaration, and that many who were not eligible for the workers' database, such as housewives, teachers, and farmers, had signed up in the hope of future benefits. While eShram has rapidly met enrolment targets and been extolled as successful, the emphasis on data obscures whether eShram is reaching its target population. Documenting anecdotes, conducting audits, and collecting citizens' experiential feedback is crucial to making good development policy.

Third, scrutinising data is tougher with the digitisation of governance. For most of the 20th century, socioeconomic data-gathering in India was the work of public institutions including the National Sample Survey Organisation and the Central Statistical Office, which

had robust details on research methods. With Aadhaar, the state has more data on citizens than ever before. Despite the possibility of anonymizing and aggregating for privacy protection, it has become more difficult for citizens and researchers to access this data. Most eGovernance data is stored in State Data Centres accessed by government divisions and their private partners, and data is irregularly published online. On the flipside, data collected through payment apps such as Google Pay and PhonePe are used by FinTech start-ups to create financial products to sell to citizens. Data collected on citizens is not available to citizens or journalists to hold institutions accountable; only government and private actors have access.

## Strengthening data systems

What are the implications of this politics of data, and how can we strengthen our data systems? Without denigrating quantification, we can create data systems to be more citizen-serving. A first step involves changing our orientation from asking whether we have the "right" data or technical methods to asking what kind of data are most useful for citizens' well-being. For instance, while the statistics on the number of newly opened bank accounts are likely to be correct, it may be useful to measure the proportion of poor who access their bank accounts.

Second, digitally collected data should not exclusively be designed for the use of the government and start-ups. It is vital to set up porous institutional structures that give civil society a voice in designing data infrastructure.

Third, policymakers need to expand their views of data collection from a mere technical exercise to a social and political undertaking that would benefit from the inputs of social scientists, citizens and activists. Ultimately, statistics ought to serve citizens; citizens should not serve the achievement of statistical targets.



## **Political Context of Statistics**



Influence of Political Commitments: Public statistics are shaped by political agendas, necessitating transparency for effective policymaking.

## **Complex Social Experiences**




Representation of Social Realities: Statistics often simplify complex social issues, potentially obscuring critical aspects like welfare accessibility

## **Welfare Policy Critique**




Jan Dhan Yojana Analysis: Highlights the disparity between statistical achievements (e.g., number of bank accounts) and real accessibility for marginalized groups.


---

 Disconnect in Metrics: Despite food distribution efforts, India's worsening Global Hunger Report ranking shows a gap between metrics and actual outcomes


## Data vs. Development Objectives

 Statistical Targets vs. Development Goals: Achieving statistical targets, like those from the eShram database, doesn't always align with development objectives, as many eligible individuals may be missed.

## Challenges of Digitization

 Complications in Data Scrutiny: Digitization increases state control over data, complicating citizen and researcher efforts to hold institutions accountable.

## Data Accessibility Issues

 Limited Access: While the state collects extensive data, access is restricted to government and private entities, limiting citizen and journalist oversight

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## Steps



Shift in Data Orientation: Emphasize the importance of focusing on data that enhances citizens' well-being rather than just the accuracy of data collection methods.



Access Measurement: Highlight the need to measure the accessibility of services, such as the proportion of the poor accessing their bank accounts, rather than just the number of services provided.



Inclusive Data Design: Advocate for the involvement of civil society in the design of data systems, ensuring that digitally collected data serves a broader audience beyond just government and startups.



Collaborative Approach: Encourage policymakers to view data collection as a social and political process, integrating insights from social scientists, citizens, and activists.

---



**Citizen-Centric Statistics:** Reinforce the idea that statistics should prioritize serving citizens' needs rather than merely fulfilling statistical targets.



**Porous Institutional Structures:** Stress the importance of creating flexible institutional frameworks that allow for citizen input in data infrastructure development.



**Empowerment through Data:** Recognize that empowering citizens through data systems can lead to better societal outcomes and improved governance.

**Summary:** The text emphasizes the need for data systems to prioritize citizen well-being, involve civil society in their design, and view data collection as a collaborative social process.

---

# How does the U.S. electoral college system work?

How is an electoral college formed? What is its role in the U.S. presidential election? Who are 'faithless' electors? Which is the state with the largest number of electoral votes?

## Adithya Narayan

### The story so far:

U.S. citizens will cast their ballots on November 5, to choose largely between Republican candidate and former President Donald Trump and Vice-President and Democrat Kamala Harris as their 47th President in the 60th quadrennial elections. The U.S. Constitution mandates that instead of securing the popular vote, the winner is the candidate who clinches the maximum number of electoral college votes. Apart from three instances in the 1800s, results in the recent past such as George Bush Jr.'s victory over Al Gore in 2000 and Mr. Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton (2016) came about in this manner.

### What is the electoral college?

The electoral college is an intermediary body or process that chooses the U.S. President. In this system, voters of each

State cast their ballots to choose members (or electors) of the electoral college who then vote to select the President.

The number of electors accorded to each State is in proportion to its population and mirrors its number of members in Congress – both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The system, whose origins can be traced back to the days of slavery, was put in place to ensure States got equal representation in the election process.

### What is the process?

In the months leading up to the election, different parties nominate their slate of would-be electors in each State. The slate of the party that wins the popular vote in a State goes on to become electors from that State in the electoral college.

Conventionally, these electors meet in December and go by the will of their citizens to vote for the candidate who won the popular vote in their State. If an

elector votes against the citizens' choice, they are called faithless electors, and some States have provisions to prosecute them. In the presidential elections of 2016, there were seven 'faithless' electors though their votes made no difference to the result. California, with 54 electoral votes, has the maximum number of seats in the electoral college, followed by Texas with 40 and Florida with 30 while States such as North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, and Vermont have the minimum number of 3. Other than two States (Maine and Nebraska), the winner of the popular vote gets all electoral votes of that State (and the District of Columbia); in other words, "Winner takes all". There are 538 electoral votes in the college and a candidate must secure at least 270 votes to become President.

### What happens if there is a tie?

According to the U.S. government's website, the situation has transpired only

twice – in 1800 and 1824. On both occasions, the House of Representatives spawned a solution by electing Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams respectively as President.

Given the current composition of States and their voters, such a situation is highly unlikely. However, if a situation were to arise, Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution and the 12th Amendment mandate that the election moves to the House of Representatives where the newly elected 435 members are sworn in and vote on who becomes President.

Notwithstanding the number of representatives accorded to States in the House, each State gets one vote. The winning party in the State gets to poll that vote and the candidate that garners 26 votes is declared President.

The Congress is scheduled to meet in early January to count the votes, and the new President is set to take charge on January 20, 2025, for a term of four years. If the House is unable to come up with a result by then, the Vice-President becomes Acting President, and the House continues to vote until it arrives at a result. Meanwhile, the election for the Vice-President happens in the Senate. In the 100-member strong Senate, each member gets one vote and the majority mark of 51 is desired for a candidate to claim victory. By virtue of being separate elections, this can lead to a situation where the President and Vice-President are from different political parties.

## THE GIST

▼  
The electoral college is an intermediary body or process that chooses the U.S. President.

▼  
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▼  
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## Topic --US Electoral college system

### US Constitution's Requirements for a Presidential Candidate



Natural born  
✔ **Citizen**



Minimum Age  
✔ **35 years**

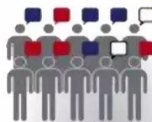


U.S. Resident  
✔ **14 years**



## STEP 1

# PRIMARIES & CAUCUSES



There are many people who want to be President, each with their own ideas about how Government should work



People with similar ideas belong to the same political party, this is where Primaries and Caucuses come in



Candidates from each political party campaign throughout the country to win the favor of their party members



### IN A CAUCUS

Party members select the best candidate through a series of discussions and votes



### IN A PRIMARY

Party members vote for the best candidate that will represent them in the general election

## STEP 2

# NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Each party holds a national convention to select a final Presidential nominee



At each convention, the Presidential candidate chooses a running mate (Vice Presidential Candidate)



...AND I APPROVE THIS MESSAGE

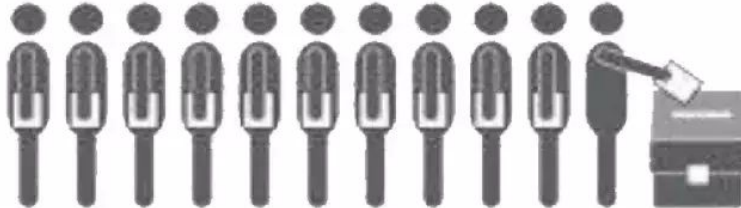
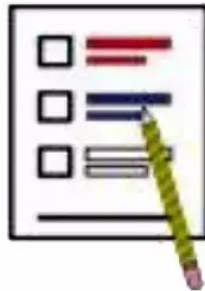


The Presidential candidates campaign throughout the country to win the support of the general population

## STEP 3

# GENERAL ELECTION

- People in every state across the country vote for one President and Vice President
- When people cast their vote, they are actually voting for a group of people known as Electors.

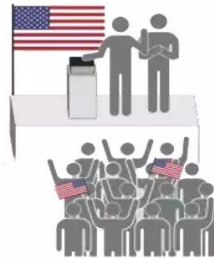


## STEP 4 ELECTORAL COLLEGE

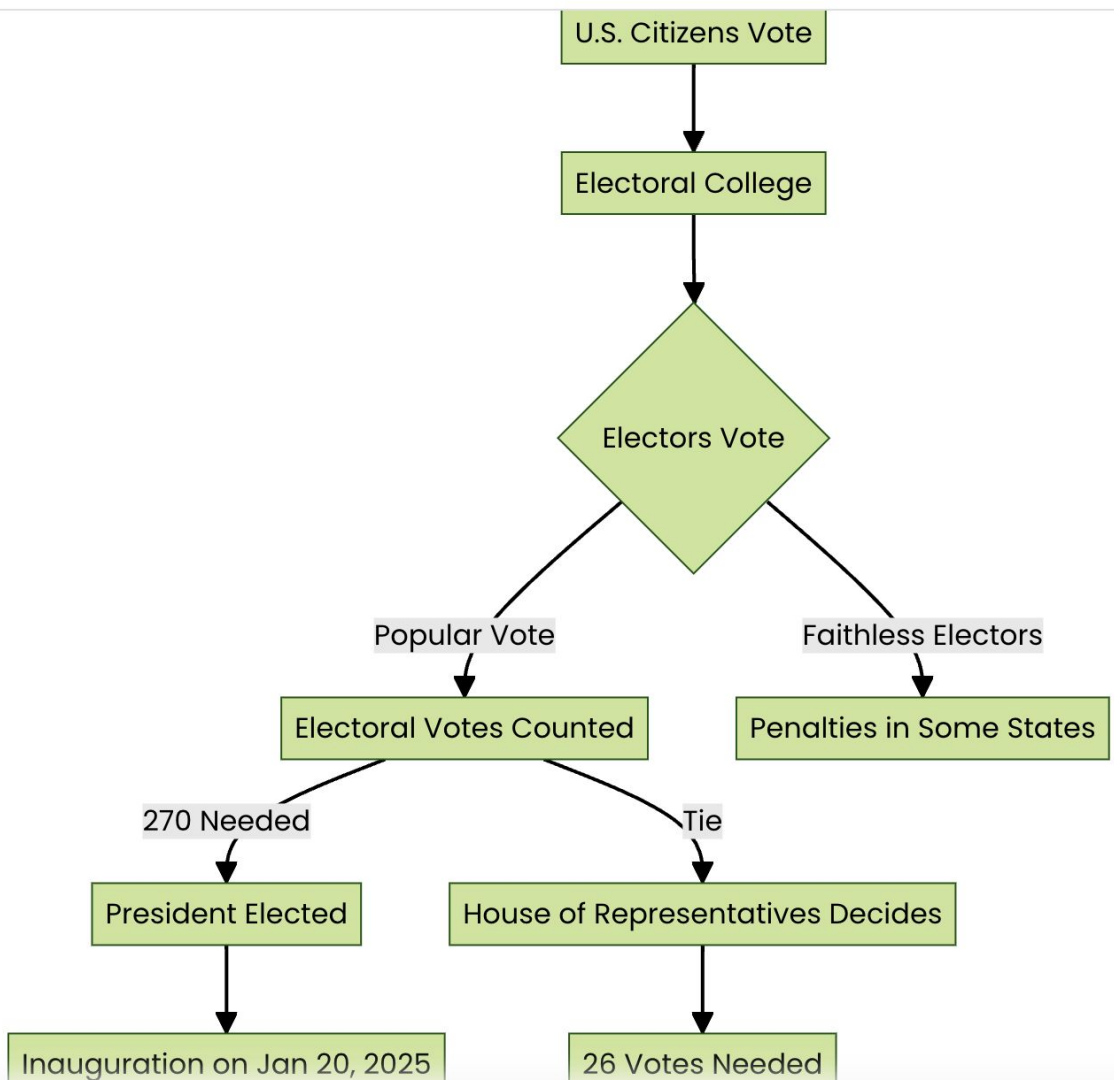
- In the electoral college system, each state gets a certain number of electors based on its representation in Congress





- Each elector casts one vote following the general election, and the candidate who gets more than half (270) wins.





The newly elected President and Vice President are inaugurated in January



—  Faithless Electors: Electors who do not vote according to their state's popular vote are known as "faithless electors," and some states impose penalties for this.

 Tie Resolution: In the event of a tie, the House of Representatives elects the President, with each state casting one vote until a candidate secures 26 votes.

 Inauguration: The new President will assume office on January 20, 2025, with Congress counting the electoral votes in early January.

 Separate Elections: The Vice-President is elected separately in the Senate, which can lead to a President and Vice-President from different parties.

---





Electoral College System: A U.S. President can win the election without winning the popular vote due to the Electoral College system.

---



2016 Election Example: Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by nearly 3 million votes, but Donald Trump won the presidency by securing 57% of the electoral votes.



2000 Election Example: Al Gore won the popular vote, yet George W. Bush won the election by receiving more electoral votes.



Impact of Electoral Distribution: The distribution of electoral votes across states can lead to outcomes where the Electoral College results differ from the national popular vote.

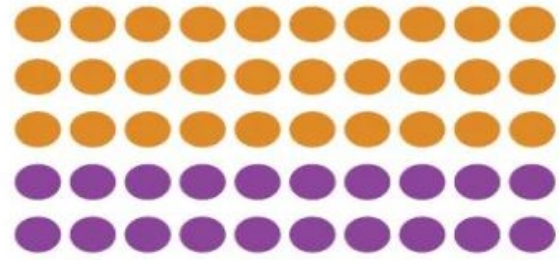


Notable Instances: The text highlights notable instances (2000 and 2016) where the Electoral College produced a different outcome than the popular vote.

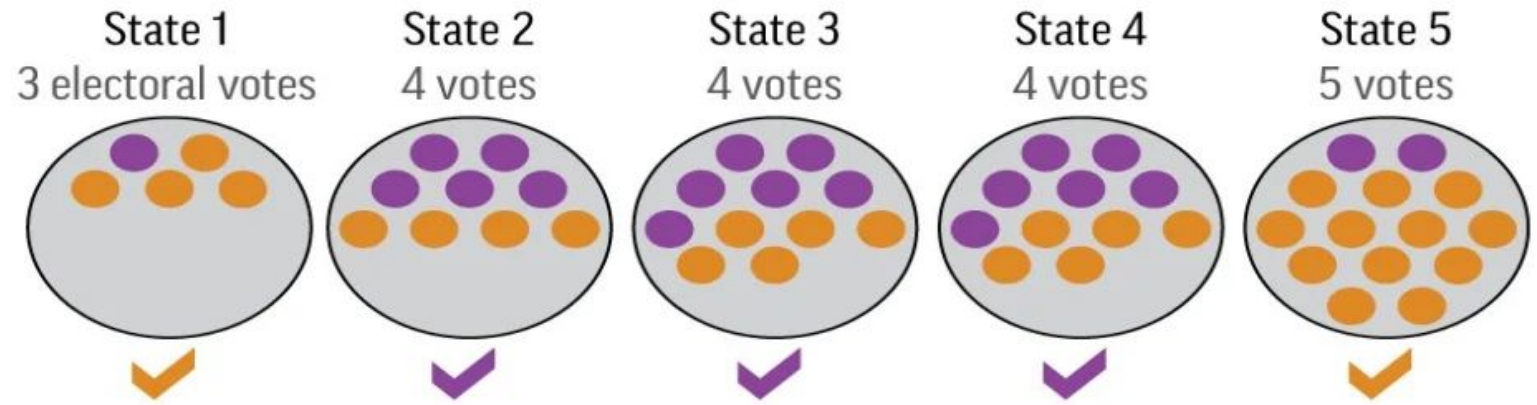
Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution and the 12th Amendment mandate that the election moves to the House of Representatives where the newly elected 435 members are sworn in and vote on who becomes President.

---

— In this simple example, more voters choose the orange candidate over the purple candidate, giving orange a clear majority.



But through the Electoral College system, if the purple voters are distributed so that purple wins by slim margins in enough states, while orange wins in more heavily orange states, purple can engineer an electoral victory:



Electoral vote: **Purple** wins with 12 of 20 votes

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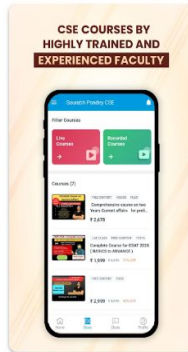
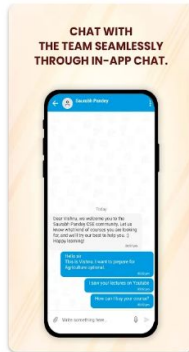
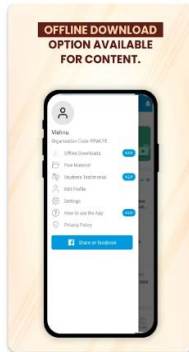
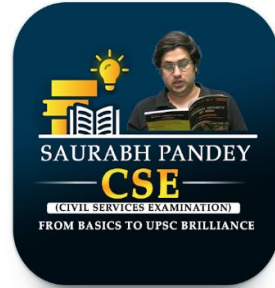
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