ISB | Bharti Institute of Public Policy

PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUES

Bridging Research and Practice

3-6 January 2023, Hyderabad

Session: Inaugural Plenary

Welcome Address
Prof. Ashwini Chhatre, Executive Director-Bharti Institute of Public Policy, ISB

Prof. Chhatre, in his welcome address, set the tone for the event. Public Policy Dialogues, he remarked, is an exchange and an occasion wherein different voices of stakeholders come together, and there will be invigorating discussions taking place in Public Policy Dialogues. He emphasised how the policy world has changed, and there are now a diverse number of stakeholders in public policy. He elaborated upon the role and significance that technology has played in policymaking, with the pandemic coming as an accelerator. He said that while virtual tools have added to our ability to communicate faster, as part of the public policy dialogues, the emphasis will be on in-person, free dialogue. Prof. Chhatre mentioned scanning the horizon and looking beyond it to foresee a better world.

> *"*"The Public Policy Dialogues provided a platform for many different kinds of voices to interact in a flat taxonomy, where everyone is an equal participant," Prof. Ashwini Chhatre, Executive Director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy

Ms Navika Kumar
Group Editor, Times Network & Editor-in-Chief, Times Now Navbharat

Ms Navika Kumar commenced the introductory note by emphasising the topic's significance, i.e., "public policy dialogue". "Dialogue on public policy is crucial as it can lead to great ideas which can take the country forward", she opined. She emphasised tapping the immense demographic dividend of India, with the larger goal of creating India into an economic powerhouse through the right policies.

Ms Kumar said that India is a fountain house of potential, and as we move ahead, choosing the best ideas out of a pool of ideas is essential. She emphasised that. Various sectors, such as the media and the private sector, must walk together as partners in policymaking and communicate with one another. She mentioned that the present leadership was accepting this as the way forward. The larger objective, she believed, was to increase the country's development through an increase in per capita income, for which outward-looking policies are needed.

Session 1: Public Policy Design Implementation & Analysis

Moderator

Dr Aarushi Jain (Moderator) Policy Director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy

Speakers

Mr Amarjeet Sinha (IAS Retd), Former Advisor to the Prime Minister

Mr Jugal Kishore Mohapatra (IAS Retd.) Former Chief Secretary -Government of Odisha

Mr Katikithala Srinivas (IAS) Director - Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA)

The session focused on the perspective of those who have been involved in the process of drafting and implementing public policies. Several aspects pertaining to how policies are designed, reviewed, discussed, and deliberated upon among the various stakeholders and implemented were discussed in the session. The panellists discussed the aspects of Public Policy Design, Implementation and Analysis from a practitioner's perspective. They also focused on public policy implementation and developing capacity for effective implementation, last mile delivery, grassroot level policy interventions and implementation to achieve last mile delivery of public policies for the inclusive development of the nation.

Presentations by the panellists

Mr Jugal Kishore Mohapatra spoke about the importance of public policy design and how to weigh the importance of design and implementation. He mentioned that the design and implementation of public policies often receive unequal weight and that designing public policies is highly complex in India. He opined that policymakers in India must keep research elements in mind while designing policies, consider overlaps, challenges, and the expected outcomes of the policy. He added that the experience drawn from implementing policy in the past provides essential insights into crafting new policies. Sharing an example, he said that if a policy is being drafted, research pertaining to similar policies across different countries and the existence of similar policies in the past, why they failed etc., is essential. Mr Mohapatra

emphasised the significance of evidence in Public Policy. He mentioned the aspect of state divergences in public policy in India, specifying that what has worked in one state may not work in another. He recommended rolling out small pilots as an essential element of the process.

Mr Amarjeet Sinha spoke about the critical factors for the success of any policy and the challenges faced during its implementation. He mentioned the need for a rich tradition of research in the public policy domain in India. He gave the example of NHS policy in the UK, wherein the best universities in the UK have been researching it. Mr Sinha expressed that there needs to be a convergence in evidence-based research and policy design. He spoke about three of his professional experiences, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the PM Awaas Yojana, to describe how policies are formalised. He mentioned how academicians were consulted while designing these policies, and takeaways from the failures of previous policies se were studied. He also highlighted the issue of financial restraint in public policies and how policy implementers need to understand that pragmatism should have a limit.

Mr Katikithala Srinivas touched upon the issue of the effective implementation of policies and the importance of the capacity building. Quoting examples from his field experience in Gujarat, he discussed policy cases, which are now implemented into national-level policies due to their successful implementation. He emphasised the significance of planning implementation when making a policy and identifying the soft spots where policy can make a difference. He discussed three important attributes in designing policy taking Gujarat as an example. First, policymakers need to understand the nature of their citizens during policy design. Second, policy design should be a participatory process with interventions at the grassroots level. Third, policy design is a process of deliberation. Mr K. Srinivas also insisted that policy is not always top-down and the inspiration for policy not only comes from data but also from social movements at times. He discussed Mission Karmayogi and the need for and importance of the capacity building. He highlighted the capacity-building ecosystem in LBSNAA, wherein through phase-based training, officers with 10-12 years of experience are being imparted learning based on their own interests.

Some of the pertinent questions that followed the session included how to deal with unintended consequences or damages in policy implementation? The role of consultants and

think tanks in assisting governments in policy making. How did this change? What is the future direction and evolution? Panellists responded suggesting that the policies must be flexible, adaptable, and nimble. In addition, interventions must be simple and to avoid any unintended consequences, policymakers must spend significant time on design and planning. Quoting Yamini Iyer's article, one of the panellists explained that a consultant-driven government reduces the motivation to build internal capacity. The consequence is that a poorly built government would also not be in a position to recruit wisely. That said, the role of consultants and think tanks is necessary and synergistic. It brings efficiency to the government.

Session 2: Mitigating Policy Friction

Moderator

Dr Mukul Saxena, Professor at Kautilya School of Public Policy

Panellists

Dr Amir Ullah Khan, Professor at MCRHDI, Government of Telangana

Ms. A. Vani Prasad, IAS, Director General EPTRI

Dr E. Venkatesu, Professor, Department of Political Science, Hyderabad Central University

The delivery of public goods with full transparency is a necessity in a democratic country. It is essential as a larger population is deprived of necessities such as food, nutrition, drinking water, electricity, etc. At the union and state levels, there are various policies for the delivery of these goods. Competitiveness existing among many policies leads to friction. Besides the union and state governments, other stakeholders such as the market, civil society organisations, and people are a party in this policy friction. The policy frictions try to impact the interplay and interactions of these four agents and the people as they are the ultimate beneficiaries.

Presentations by the panellists

Dr Mukul Saxena said that the government provides food grains at subsidised prices. During the COVID-19 period, rations were provided for free. Some state governments provide electricity at subsidised prices. There are health insurance schemes and cash transfer programmes at the union and state levels. There are policy frictions at the level of states and political organisations regarding delivering the public good. Some political organisations try to develop a thick line between public goods and freebies. Some of them also termed the freebies as *Revdi* culture. Fiscal prudence or fiscal efficiency is used as a weapon against the delivery of freebies. In this context, policy friction among different stakeholders can be mitigated.

Dr E. Venkatesu said that public policy in India involves the interplay or interaction of three major agents: state, market, civil society or people. These three agents relate to each other via a bond of public policy. He mentioned that the state politics plays a significant role in developing the interaction between these three agents. For instance, during the pre-liberalisation period, primarily during the NTR regime, the then Andhra Pradesh state policies mostly adhered to decentralisation. It believed in the sharing of power of the state with the local governments. During the post-liberalisation period, the government tried to centralise the power with various state taxes such as user charges for irrigation, land use, etc. He also highlighted the nexus between various political organisations that benefitted the people at the bottom. Sharing another example, he said that the Ryutu Bandhu scheme, a direct cash transfer scheme for agriculture farmers, launched in 2018, is a significant government policy shift.

Ms A. Vani Prasad said that the delivery of public goods is a duty of the state and citizens have the right to it and inequality in accessing public goods is a significant policy failure. She added that since a larger section of society is below the poverty line and is cut out of the economic mainstream, it is also challenging to strengthen the delivery system so that public goods can reach every individual. She opined that the development of every citizen of the country should be the main target of every state policy. Even with various policy frictions, if any freebie helps the people at the bottom of the pyramid to access their right to food, education, and health, this policy should be widely accepted. Lack of education at the bureaucratic level is a limiting factor in strengthening the delivery mechanism. Proper education for bureaucrats after resuming office could help strengthen the delivery system and make it more efficient, she averred.

Dr Amir Ullah Khan said that the public goods have been a debatable issue. During COVID-19, it was considerable debate about whether the vaccine is a public good and whether it would be distributed for free assuming it as the right of every citizen. There are frictions in views on the policy of provisioning of COVID-19 vaccine as accessible to the people. The government partly accepted it as a public good; in some parts, it was provided free of cost. The responsibility for the delivery of public goods lies with the state. Freebie is a political debate. Delivery of public goods and keeping an eye on various fiscal parameters would be justice to the people. The incidence of policy friction in the delivery of public goods at various levels,

either union or state, state and market, market or civil society, falls on the people. A smooth functioning of the system needs complementarity in policy at all levels.

Session 3: Towards a Critical View of the Digital Economy

Moderator

Dr Aakansha Natani, Assistant Professor - IIIT, Hyderabad (AN)

Speakers

Dr Anupam Guha Assistant Professor - Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay

Dr Rahul Sapkal Assistant Professor - Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay

Dr Shishir Jha Professor - Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay

The very steep rise and the planetary scale emergence of the "digital economy" are perhaps one of the most unprecedented developments in the history of late capitalism. More recently, the 'digital economy' has inaugurated a new arrangement in the form of digital platforms. From this decisive shift, we would like to ask what has enabled such a rapid rise of such a digital 'platform' economy. Certain explanatory elements do stand out. Ubiquitous access to the internet and the many tethered devices that allow myriad digital transactions at both speed and scale, along with the generation of vast amounts of data, are perhaps most obviously significant. However, the industry-specific circumstances, namely the rapid assembling of technology, both hardware and software, the re-organising of vast labour pools, the accompanying algorithmically influenced working conditions, along with the enormous but under-examined role played by Venture Capitalist (VC) funding have not been, among other things, very closely considered. The panel provided a structural examination of the deeper flows of labour (work) and finance (through VCs) that have begun to shape the digital industry's very contours considerably.

Presentations by the panellists

Dr Aakansha Natani started the discussion by raising a question about the importance of public policy around the digital economy. She said that from advertisements on mobile phones

to mobile apps for day-to-day activities, things had changed rapidly. Therefore, the nuances within the public policy must be noticed, and some recommendations must be given to introduce new policies. Dr Akanksha mentioned that we should not forget that we will be the most prominent digital democracy in the world very soon. Therefore, considering the questions of people's rights, liberty, equality and justice within the digital economy is very crucial. She said that the data by the telecom regulatory authority of India suggests that there are 11,140 million mobile users in India, out of which 650 million are internet users, so it provides ample space and scope for public policy intervention.

Dr Shishir Jha expressed his keen interest in examining the structural elements that go into the digital economy from different perspectives, particularly in the Indian context. The four main questions he addressed during the session were (I) What has enabled the historically unprecedented rise of a digital 'platform' economy? (ii) What is the role of Venture Capital in this rapid emergence? (iii) What has been the nature of the industrial bargain between VCs and digital firms? And (iv) what are the kinds of risks being negotiated as the appetite for funds by digital firms. Dr Shishir Jha explained the term 'digital economy' as the effective acquisition, dissemination, use and virtual mobilisation of data to create economic value (search, social media, eCommerce, online finance/banking, etc.). He highlighted how digital technologies, platforms and data play an increasingly significant role in governance by giving an example of the 'Smart Cities' project. Moving on to the topic of Venture Capital (VC), he explained VC as equity-backed funding, investment in a high-risk business that holds a stake in the business (usually). He also mentioned the concerns about the largely agnostic nature of VCs to legal and ethical concerns. The call for action today is the need for a critical and historical analysis of the role of VCs, he averred.

Dr Anupam Guha started his presentation on Taylorism and the nature of platform work in the digital economy and further explained the concepts of scientific management in the workplace. He acknowledged that digital platforms are a dominant force in modern capitalism but questioned the definition behind them. Dr Anupam elaborated that although platforms define themselves as a marketplace, he believed that these are factories. He said that he believed this was the case because, in the industrial era, that was how it was defined; a place where people get together and work. The concept is further solidified by taking the example of Uber, where you survey the person, make mathematical judgments about how they work, and try to modify their behaviour to extract the most value for other platforms. These factories

are only possible with artificial intelligence; every platform can operate at scale with machine learning going through many data to make decisions. He concluded his conversation by referring to Julia Tomassetti's research paper on Uber's agreement, which said that it is not a contract between service providers and customers but is equal to a factory contract or employment contract, which doesn't recognise that it is an employment contract.

Dr Rahul Sapkal began by bringing together all the ideas as discussed by other speakers. He highlighted the importance of contradictions which could emerge in digital workplaces and the importance of public policy perspectives in this discourse. Dr Rahul pointed out that India is ranked 43 out of 180 countries in the technology frontier, supporting the idea that access to technology and technological embeddedness has increased and mostly into retail and that is where the labour market is shaping. Platform workers during COVID-19 were perceived as someone who would increase the spread. These people were traumatised, victimised, and a phobia has been labelled upon them. But at the same time, the Government of India was making them essential service workers, and hence is a kind of a dilemma. The larger question is where these people stand, are they gig workers, partners, or independent contractors, and this, he said, can be answered by policymakers. He believed that technological progress and GDP advancement are happening at the cost of workers who are driving India's economy. He advised young scholars to look into digitally meditated platforms with fundamental questions that would potentially alter the typical employee-employer relationships. Not for political reasons but to bring social harmony.

A question and answers round followed the session wherein experts answered questions about VC's power to influence practices and what can be done to ensure that they keep morals and ethics in place. Panellists answered that there should be sector-driven regulations as one set of regulations cannot work across the board. We need to do more due diligence in terms of governance was the common sentiment of the Q&A round.

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Session 4: Cost Benefit Analysis of India's Regional Groupings

Moderator

Dr Somesh Kumar Mathur, Professor - Department of Economic Sciences, IIT Kanpur

Speakers

Dr Archana Srivastava BITS Pilani, Hyderabad

Dr Ishita Ghosh Professor, Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

Dr Ishita Ghoshal Assistant Professor- Fergusson College (Autonomous), Pune

Mr Mustajab Khatir BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

Dr Savita Gautam Professor, New Delhi Institute of Management

As India is extensively moving towards a free trade regime and increasingly adopting outward-looking policies, India's bilateral and multilateral trade agreements have increased substantially. Due to India's growing regional integration, the evaluation of India's regional groupings has become essential. While free trade agreements can have positive spillovers, such as welfare effects, trade creation effects, trade diversion effects, etc., can vary with respect to each grouping. The panel discussion on Cost Benefit Analysis of India's Regional Groupings revolved around discussing and debating India's foreign alignment policies with major regional groupings, such as the EU 27, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, etc. India's relative costs and benefits of aligning with these trade blocs and with major trading nations were evaluated. Going beyond the traditional trade parameters of trade and tariff reforms, the panel discussion put forward pertinent issues emerging in global trade, such as environment-based non-tariff barriers, integrating SDGs into the trading environment, and factor returns.

Presentations by the panellists

Dr Somesh Kumar Mathur, who also moderated the session, said that the panel discussion was based heavily on the results of the partial and general equilibrium analysis, wherein India's position with major trade blocs was discussed. He mentioned that the discussion would go

beyond the issues of traditional trade policy by covering issues of connecting industrial policy to trade policy, movement of labour, and capital between the counties engaging in free trade agreements. Dr Mathur mentioned that the ideas that the panellists will discuss will be a paradigm change from studies in the past and will be crucial to determining India's future with major trade blocs of the world.

Dr Archana Srivastava focused on GTAP simulation results in the context of the Indo-Pacific alliance. She described that if tariffs are cut within the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, there will be welfare-creating effects. In contrast, simulations based on Non-Tariff Barriers cut would lead to some gains for India. In the context of India not joining the RCEP, the speaker described that India perceived that the RCEP would lead to a massive deficit in trade with India. She discussed the results of partial equilibrium analysis, which used the trade creation and diversion dummies. The results revealed that there would be some gains for India. However, they will be less. Regarding India and ASEAN's partnership, the speaker described that more profound integration policies were required for more gains from trade, such as policies related to labour, liberalisation, and capital flow liberalisation. In this specific instance, the speaker spoke about the use of GTAP and GTAP-E modelling, including variables pertaining to energy/clean energy. With regard to SAARC, she mentioned that there was a need to think beyond tariff liberalisation for trade expansion.

Dr Ishita Ghosh, Professor, spoke about the gravity model of trade. In the model, more and more variables that are very elaborate and help in policy formulation can be added. In the context of using Gravity Models for studying regional and free trade agreements, Dr Ghosh specified a study which noted that India's exports had been far below their potential. She also discussed that the regulatory environment and quality impact India's exports positively. She also found in the analysis that the variable of trade, a core variable of gravity models, has gradually lost its significance, as distance no longer negatively impacts trade flows. Lastly, discussing Intra-Industry Trade, the speaker, in the context of India-China bilateral trade, found that India-China trade will largely depend on the effectiveness of tariff and non-tariff barriers. She also emphasised the significance of cutting down trade costs and other associated costs impeding trade flows.

Dr Ishita Ghoshal began her talk by discussing the major driver of the Indian economy and exports, which she found was the manufacturing sector. She described the mutually beneficial

partnership between India, RCEP nations and ASEAN nations, specifying that India requires capital from RCEP nations and ASEAN, and they, too, require Indian capital. She also mentioned that policies should be described towards reducing the carbon footprint and that there was a need for an energy-efficient trade structure. With the movement towards cleaner energy, returns to factors of production will increase. The speaker examined the relationship between energy consumption and growth and found that there was a negative relationship between per capita energy consumption and growth levels among developing countries. In contrast, in the case of developed nations, there was a positive relationship between them. Lastly, Dr Ghoshal spoke about the impact of monetary tightening, capital account convertibility and currency exchange rates on trade.

Dr Savitha Gautam talked about the recent contribution towards understanding India's standpoint in fisheries exports. India is second to Thailand in fisheries exports, and shrimps and prawns dominate our exports. In this session, Prof. Gautam explained how Non-Trade Barriers (NTB) to their modern counterparts, known as Non-Trade Measures put in place by the importing countries, negatively affect exports from developing countries. The Article 24 of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) allows customs unions and free trade agreements. Therefore, members of WTO can enter into regional groupings for improved trade and welfare. The traditional NTB licensing, quotas and voluntary export restraints are now done away with. At the same time, the new NTB are WTO-compatible barriers. These compatible barriers can serve to be detrimental to the exporters. For instance, WTO allows every country to make laws to protect its domestic population. This would create a system of non-uniform regulations across nations that the same exporter must comply with. These WTO-compatible barriers are also called environmental barriers by some researchers.

Mr Mustajab Khatir, presented his opinion, by saying that the GTAP model is essentially a system of non-linear equations. He created a simulation involving SAARC and ASEAN merging to become a trading block to study its effect on the global economy and economies within these groupings. Both SAARC and ASEAN countries were colonies, and he pointed out evidence in the literature which argues that colonies have relative ease in integrating better. If combined, SAARC and ASEAN will be the 4th significant economic power after USA, EU and China. SAARC has a regional integrational score of 0.37, ASEAN has 0.45, and together they have 0.34 indicating a potential for improvement via trade grouping. He mentioned two specific simulation scenarios: Trade Barriers (TB) and NTB were reduced by a third for the

agricultural sector, two-thirds for manufacturing and entirely for the tertiary sector. The first simulation resulted in a GDP improvement of 2.7%, while the second scenario resulted in a block-level GDP rise of 7%. A reduction of NBT is more beneficial to the economy. Moreover, this would lead to a gain in light and heavy manufacturing.

*Th*e session was followed by a Q&A round. Some of the pertinent questions asked included why to liberalise only with SAARC and not BIMSTEC. The panel answered that by liberalising with BIMSTEC, the trade balance becomes negative, at least with Thailand. India has the highest NTB of 4.9; even if TB and NBT are liberalised, there is no significant effect. Moreover, if BIMSTEC must succeed, the discussion should traverse concepts like common. industrial policy, blue economy, maritime borders etc. Similarly, other south Asian countries have a tariff of 8% on India, and they protect extraction and manufacturing. So, an arbitration to reduce their tariff to help our economy will only be settled if India allows labour from these countries to enter the Indian sub-continent. Another pertinent question was that in light of the recent COVID-19, can China become a manufacturing hub, and how do the regional trade groupings enhance India's position? The panel answered that in the world GDP of 94 trillion, China contributes 18 trillion by focusing on electronics, electrics and engineering processes for the last 3 decades. China's contribution was 2-3% in the '90s and went up to 13%, while output share went up to 11-12%. Similarly, if India focuses on village development, 5Gs, and MSMEs use agricultural resources through biotechnology to convert them to alternative fuel sources like methanol, ethanol and bio-CNG, it can transform.

Session 5: Fiscal Decentralisation and Local Governance

Moderator

Mr Surendra Nath Tripathi (IAS Retd) (Moderator)

Director General - Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)

Speakers

Dr Debarpita Roy, Fellow - Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)

Dr G Narendra Kumar, Director General – National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)

Prof V N Alok, Professor, Urban Finance - Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)

Prof V. Srinivasa Chary., Director - Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI)

The session focused on local governments in the Indian context and funding them for public service delivery. Fiscal decentralisation and the role of local governments play a crucial role in efficient service delivery. The needs and demands of communities can often be missed at the union or state level due to the distance to the local level of governance. Local government can play an essential role in filling this gap. Local finance, in this way, can play a crucial role in securing and adjusting financial resources for administrative services and local public goods to satisfy citizens' needs. However, the promise of local government and public service delivery has not been fulfilled since the local government in rural (Panchayats) and urban (Municipalities) were codified into law in 1993. Several concepts have to be understood to understand public service delivery using the fiscal decentralisation model, such as what functions local governments will undertake, where and how much funding they receive, and capacities that need to be built in local government.

Presentations by the panellists

Prof. V N Alok began by explaining where and how fiscal policy is made: at the union, state and local levels and explained that most fiscal policy is made at the first two levels. He brought the federal perspective to the panel discussion. He spoke in the context of local government

in India. Panchayats form local governments at the district, block, and village levels in rural areas. In urban areas, municipalities form local governments. He discussed how local governments were brought into existence worldwide through constitutions, state laws, or executive orders. The discussion then came to the current issues with local governments in India. He said that panchayats and municipalities have three primary sources of revenue. First is own tax, such as property tax. Second, borrowing from markets and vertical programmes such as MNREGA and SSA. Lastly, a considerable share of the finance to local government is State Finance Commissions. However, the local governments in rural and urban areas must generate their own tax to their full potential. Depending on state governments for finance leads to reduced efficiency in service delivery due to reduced autonomy in decision-making and priorities.

Dr G Narendra Kumar started the discussion on critical issues of fiscal decentralisation in India by saying that the service delivery of local governments in India could be stronger. However, the potential exists to provide efficient service delivery. While reiterating the primary source of revenue for local governments as enumerated by the previous speaker, Dr Kumar stated that revenues are way below the potential. This revenue gap is then filled by central or state government funding which means that the agendas at the higher level are then imposed on the local level to the detriment of local needs. He said that the tendency is for state governments in India to create smaller local governments and in some cases render the local governments unviable for efficient service delivery. The main issue highlighted by him was the process in India, where the devolution of functions has increased at the local government level but is yet to see a corresponding devolution of funds or functionaries (capacities to deliver public service). Using MNREGA as an example, he said that panchayats are tasked with the largest social net programme in the world without the capacities or funding needed to carry it out successfully.

Dr Debarpita Roy initiated her presentation with the reports of the 15th Finance Commission on municipal financing corporations. While agreeing with the previous panellists, she mentioned that the total municipal receipts have been constant for the last two decades at 1% of GDP, compared to Brazil, where almost 7% of Brazil's GDP is the municipal receipts. Dr Roy suggested that the property tax is the 'Holy Grail' for municipal receipts, a primary source of city funding. However, the potential of property tax has yet to be utilised across cities. She also mentioned disparities between cities where the property tax is used optimally, like

Bangalore and Pune, whereas Delhi needs to use it properly. Due to a sharp decline in the collection of taxes by the local bodies, the dependence on the state and union government has increased, which erodes the autonomy of the urban local government. The picture also looks grim, as funds transferred across urban centres in different states differ. Dr Roy also focused on the changes in local taxation with the advent of GST when subsuming the local taxes under GST. Dr Roy opined it had affected the functioning and flow of funds to the local bodies.

Prof. V Srinivasa Chary began his presentation by emphasising the need to discuss urban governance in great detail. Drawing points from his previous speaker, Dr Chary pointed to the fact that although the cities are rich, the city governments in India are underfunded, and therefore, there is a severe lapse between planning and functioning in urban governance, which results in abysmal delivery of services even around the financial hubs of an important city like Hyderabad. With his experience working with the Chief Minister of Telangana, who visualised a Hyderabad 2.0, Dr Chary explicated a blueprint he had created. In his opinion, the governing institutions are in peril more than the fiscal aspect of a city's management. The lack of accountability of the urban bodies has worsened the result, leading to significant failure. In his opinion, a modern city must concentrate more on livability, like access to fresh water and clean air. To exemplify the failure of a city's planning, Dr Chary mentioned the organic, unplanned growth of Hyderabad's peripheries over the decades. As a destination of the top 85 Multinational Corporations, Hyderabad must have a planned urban development.

In conclusion, the panellists opined about the role of planning and the coexistence of different taxation policies for the local bodies to flourish. It was also mentioned that if the local bodies are allowed further autonomy and work at par with the other governing bodies such as the state and the Union, it would benefit the fiscal flow and improve governance. In his concluding remarks, Mr Surendranath Tripathy, who was moderating the session, spoke on India's achievements since its independence, especially over the last few decades, making India the 5th largest economy in the world.

Session 6: Policy and Innovation Plenary

Moderator

Col Anurag Awasthi (Moderator), Vice-President, India Electronics and Semiconductor Association & Interim CEO, Electropreneur Park, Delhi

Speakers

Dr Anamika Dey, CEO, Gujarat Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN)

Dr Sapna Poti, Director, Strategic Alliance Division, Office of Principal Scientific Advisor, Government of India; Dr Vijay Lakshmi Nadendla (IAS), Joint Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, Government of India

Public policy innovations have been critical to the growth and development of the country. In recent times, innovations have taken precedence, and many are taking place in different sectors. This plenary was curated as a special session to bring out these innovations. Moderated by Col Awasthi, the panel discussion focused on semiconductors and chip manufacturing in the country, a recent government initiative having an immense scope. The second aspect of the debate was about strategic initiatives in the country taken up by Dr Sapna Poti, Principal Scientific Advisor, Strategic Alliance Division of the office of the Principal Scientific Advisor, Government of India. This was also supplemented with some e-governance innovations, which have been brought out in the progressive states of the country. The third aspect covered by Dr Nadendla was technology and innovations in the agriculture sector. The last one pertained to grassroots-level innovations specific to rural development and the social sector by Dr Dey of GIAN.

Presentations by the panellists

Col. Anurag Awasthi started the discussions by thanking Bharti Institute for putting together the 'Innovation and Technology' panel. He said that 'Skilling, Policy and Platforms' are the troika which gives rise to scalability and proliferation.

Dr Sapna Poti shared her views during the session and said she was very optimistic about the start-up culture. "The start-up culture in India is a mix of good and bad. Just as there are good and rotten eggs, there is a gamut of start-ups which have come up with unique innovations and are generating thousands of jobs, and at the same time, there are some which are

overnight wonders and disappear once they get funds." She highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, some excellent innovations came from small start-ups that helped everyone sail through difficult times. Amongst the problems she listed was that even though many start-ups have brilliant ideas and are contributing to the ecosystem, there is still a dearth of good incubators to support them. We should provide them with suitable mentors, she added. She said that the government had created 15 centres of excellence like IITs, NITs, and TERI, which support these startups at different stages, tier 1 to tier 3, seed funding stage, pilot stage, and scaling up. She added that focused funding and mentorship are going to make a difference.

Dr Vijay Lakshmi Nadendla said that we all know that agriculture employs 50% of the population. Sharing some of the problems marring this sector, she said there are issues of more people moving to other sectors, and by 2050 it is predicted to decline to 20%. She said - there is a need to intervene to figure out how to manage the declining workforce in agriculture. She mentioned that depleting water is another issue as agriculture relies primarily on water. She questioned that in future, most of the water would be taken up by municipalities and industries, so how do we use water in a much more efficient way? Re-using water for agriculture is the second biggest challenge. The third issue she mentioned was that of enhancing productivity. However, we have improved dramatically in the last decade in rice, wheat, maize, and cereals production but still against the global benchmarks. We are far behind, she averred. The fourth aspect she highlighted was using technology vis-à-vis agricultural waste, with 350 million tonnes of waste produced annually by the agriculture sector alone. The fifth challenge she highlighted was climate change, including unforeseen floods, temperature rise, etc.

Dr Anamika Dey highlighted the need to bridge the linguistic gaps and accessibility of funds between policy implementors and innovators at the grassroots level. She said that in my time, the innovations at the grassroots level do not see the light of the day as there are linguistic barriers, with innovators at the grassroots level often needing to be more educated and having minimum awareness levels. She emphasised the need for policymakers and corporates to bridge this gap and work towards generating awareness amongst the grassroots-level innovators about the funding ecosystem at various stages. She also discussed the need for mechanisms to validate innovations at the grassroots level to increase their acceptability. Another issue she highlighted was that of needing more adequate finances. At the grassroots level, financing is a big challenge, especially for start-ups, as they need more money for pilot testing across multiple locations. Highlighting the areas where corporates can step in, she said that financial assistance is only part of it. CSR could also be in the form of sharing knowledge, expertise, skills, and human resources and mentoring grassroots innovators.

Session Part 2

During the second part of the session, Bharat Lal, Director General National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), shared anecdotes from his journey as a policymaker. He highlighted the importance of the policymaking process and how governance is a crucial cog in the policy implementation process. Adding the word governance to public policy and innovation, he spoke about several examples from across the states of India. Talking about the news story 'A postman killed IIT dream of a tribal boy' from Bhubaneshwar that appeared in The Hindustan Times, he said, "When I read the story, I somehow felt motivated and approached the authorities, and finally, a seat was created for the student." He shared another example from a tribal area, healthcare, where no doctors or paramedics existed. "In 2006, in Gujarat, women in tribal areas were not coming for health check-ups during their pregnancy; thus, multiple health issues were seen in newborns. So, we launched a scheme that any person who brings a woman to a doctor and if she tests positive for pregnancy, then the doctor would give her INR 50 and then the doctor would see her for regular check-ups and help with the delivery. And as

soon as the delivery happened, the doctor would give her INR 1550. So, this was one way to promote healthcare and institutional deliveries in rural areas. So, this is a great example of public policy, innovation, and good governance." Everyone should benefit, and if anyone is not, we should be looking to adjust that public policy.

Session 7: Roundtable discussion Meghalaya Legislative Research Fellowship

Moderator
Mr Aiban Swer, Director of Meghalaya Institute of Governance (MIG)

Speakers
Mr Stephen Anurag AKC, NISG PPC, Government of Meghalaya
Meghalaya Legislative Research Fellows

The MLRF, a brainchild of MIG, Government of Meghalaya, stands as a unique model to help the legislators with updated data and research-based policy information for enriching the debates and presenting the issues of the people inside the assembly. In its one year of existence, the MLRF fellows faced several challenges for its small size of 12 to deal with 60 legislators from diverse backgrounds with various aspirations and, importantly, getting real-time data on demand. The panel also focused on the various challenges and learnings of the MLRF fellows during the first year of their fellowship.

Presentations by the panellists

Mr Aiban Swer laid down the basics about the state of Meghalaya, formed in 1972 after carving out the hill districts from the state of Assam. There were 60 constituencies, which have remained the same till today. He said that over time, it was felt that the debate and discussion in the legislative assembly needed to be made informed and updated. There needed to be more information from within and outside the state boundary. The MLRF was thus formed in 2021 to bridge the information gap and enrich the quality of debate and discussions in the Assembly with more updated data and research-driven policy models. In its one year of existence, the MLRF has come a long way in reaching out to legislators, providing data and research-supported information, and helping them be better prepared for debates and dialogues. However, the journey is not free from challenges. There are twelve MLRF fellows to deliver services to 60 legislators.

Mr Stephen Anurag said that MLRF fellows use various open data sources to collect updated information as the legislators require. Sharing an example, he said that the fellows surveyed a small locality in Shillong to get basic information about people's health issues. He said that

there is a plan to develop a policy paper using survey-based information, and a proposal to develop a policy research manual for the MLRF fellows is also in the works.

The MLRF Fellows believed that it is challenging to stay connected with the legislators and understand their requirements as the legislators from the ruling party could be more responsive in their communication. There is a deficit of trust as the same fellow deals with the legislator from both the ruling parties. The emphasis on the need to know more about the data sources and having access to updated information about the unemployment rate, prices, etc., is necessary.

The session concluded with the fellows agreeing that the journey of MLRF in the past year has been impactful, though filled with several challenges. Regular interaction with legislators is needed to bridge the trust deficit gap. Mr Aiban suggested making sitting arrangements for the legislators inside the assembly premises for everyday interaction. To bridge the information gap, there is a need for an open-source data portal, as suggested by Mr Stephen.

Session 8: Role of Media in Governance & Public Policy

Speaker
Ms Smita Prakash, Editor-in-Chief, Asian News International (ANI)

Ms Smita Prakash highlighted the evolution of data in the internet era and how it was challenging to get hold of information and data before the advent of internet. She lamented that in the past, bureaucrats were mostly hesitant to share information especially with media. She said that once information is in public domain, it is open to media's scrutiny and that is what scares the policymakers the most.She said that the media can be a positive tool in influencing public policy instead of being a silent spectator and can be an active participant in policy making deliberations by bridging the communication gaps between the policy makers, researchers, and citizens. If the administration gets the media on board, it can play a positive, constructive role in policymaking and policy implementation on the ground.

Session 9: Social Policies for Marginalised Communities: Reservations and Beyond

Moderator

Mr G. Kiran Kumar (Moderator), Senior Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad

Speakers

Dr Ajailu Niumai Head - Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion & Inclusive Policy, University of Hyderabad

Dr E Venktatesu Professor -Department of Pol Science, University of Hyderabad

Dr G. Nagaraju Professor - Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad

Indian society is deeply divided on the basis of caste, and there have been many debates on various approaches to address this issue. However, the conversation always remains confined to the reservations for marginalised sections and no other policies meant for their social, educational, and economic development. For having an inclusive society, policies for tackling violence against women, human trafficking, employment, health, sexual and economic exploitation for the marginalised communities are crucial. The panel discussed the contributions of the unsung warriors of the anti-caste movements and gender equality and the policy response to the hurdles created by the caste system.

Presentations by the panellists

Mr G. Kiran Kumar started the session with the introduction by quoting the data from NCRB report (2021) on violence against women, which has seen an increase of 15.6%.

Dr Ajailu Niumai recollected how she encountered a girl being trafficked in 2008 in Manipur and was being taken to Singapore. In 2008, the Special Armed forces Act was implemented in the Northeast, particularly in Manipur and Nagaland and security was very strict at the airports. This encounter started her journey to work on the issues of human trafficking in the tribal communities of India. She said that there were no academic, scholarly articles and books

on human trafficking which were published in the northeast in 2008-09. She talked about her meeting with the former chief minister of Manipur, Devendra Singh, in 2017, where she said, "Every trafficked girl may become the next Mary Kom who will bring laurels to the country, and the tiny state of Manipur will be on the global map". Later on, the Anti-Trafficking Commission was constituted by the then Chief Minister in the state. She discussed the sexual and economic exploitation of the Dalit girl in the Devadasi system in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. She said that viruses like COVID-19 too didn't stop the cases of violence against women. Her hypothesis denoted that the violence is due to the traditional structure of patriarchy, culture of discrimination and mass media. She raised the question about gender equality in India. She said that development is also about correcting gender equality, increasing employment opportunities and having inclusive policies by addressing patriarchy. She proposed six-way forwards, including freeing society from violence against women, girls, and boys, giving value to women's work irrespective of their professional status, having an anti-human trafficking unit across each district and having sessions on sensitising these issues across educational institutions.

Dr E Venkatesu initiated his lecture with scathing remarks on the public perception about the reservation that reservation is against merit and thus downplaying the role it has played historically. He outlined a history of reservation in India starting from the 17th century. He opined that by giving incentives to the Muslim population in India, the British government allowed them to compete with the upper-caste Hindus who dominated higher education till then. Calling out the feudal leadership of the Congress that dominated Indian politics till the 1970s, he mentioned that V.P Singh's policy to introduce some parts of Mandal commission recommendations was a welcoming move. He observed that when a scheme like EWS is launched, there is not much opposition in the country, contrarily to policies providing reservations for the marginalised communities such as SC, ST and OBC. Dr Venkatesu eulogised the role of the Supreme Court in implementing Mandal Commission recommendations.

Dr G Nagaraju began his talk with the very idea of policymaking with reference to education and healthcare from the perspective of the subaltern communities. Dr. Nagaraj believed that without the state's intervention in education and healthcare for the marginalised, the country cannot become a developed nation. He points out that even after 75 years of independence, although we have successfully achieved universal primary education, most children from the marginal sections of society do not complete their secondary education. The Right to Education was not enshrined in the constitution back when the constitutional assembly

debates occurred. In 2009 when the Right to Education Act was passed, it was considered as a tool for individual and social mobility. In his presentation, Dr Nagaraju pointed out the policy lapses in educational programmes. Dr Nagaraju pointed out that the failure to provide social security to marginalised communities also led to high school dropout rates among marginalised communities. When the government made a policy intervention in the name of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya to rectify the lapses, it failed due to structural limitations. Such policies, he opined, are only half-baked, as they do not address the more significant structural problems that led to the ultimate failure of the policy when it is framed. As the marginalised section does not possess much land, they lack social security measures, and as a result, most school dropout children come from this section of society.

In conclusion, the speakers stressed that reservation was not a policy for poverty eradication but was brought in as a social justice mechanism. It was also discussed that the implantation of any policy needs closer monitoring for it to reach the people.

Session 10: Addressing Cognitive & Emotional Intelligence through a Police Centre of Excellence

Moderator

Mr Stephen Anurag AKC (Moderator) NiSG PPC - Government of Meghalaya

Speakers

Mr Mayur Dayananda, Aspiring Junior - UC San Diego, Cognitive Science &Neuroscience, California

Ms Nalini Raghuraman Political Economy Advisor - British Dy High Commission Hyderabad

Mr Shaun Dsouza Poll Analyst & Member - The Centre for Future of Democracy, Hyderabad

Dr Vasuprada Kartic, Consultant Anthroposophical Psychotherapist, Hyderabad

In the world we live in, there is a growing gap between the urban and rural populations, and between the rural and tribal populations, in the context of digital space. A recent study by NSO (2020) found that in India, only 4% of the rural households and 23% of the urban households have access to the internet, while less than 30% of the rural population and 67% of the urban population have internet penetration or access to mobile data. This is evident in understanding rural students' challenges in accessing online lectures and coursework during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus leading to an academic gap and leading to the rising unemployment rate. Also, given the increasing ambiguity of cyber threats and crimes on the one hand, and the digital divide on the other, there is a need to transform law enforcement services into a research and analytics-driven law enforcement agency.

Presentations by the panellists

Mr Stephen Anurag, who moderated the session, said that in the last couple of years, after the advent of COVID-19, the adoption and usage of technology has increased substantially. With the increasing use of technology, the concepts of intelligence, including cognitive, artificial, and emotional intelligence, are being greatly emphasised.

Dr Vasuprada Kartic spoke about the digital divide in the context of psychology and mental health. According to her, the pandemic has shown the glaring digital divide amongst the population. In the online world, mental health professionals could only treat people who had access to the internet and digital platforms. People in remote areas or rural areas needed more access to the internet. Due to this, a large section of the population must be included in terms of access to mental health. In addition, due to school education turning online, education was severely impacted, thus increasing the digital divide even further. Students enrolled in far-flung schools who did not even have access to a mobile phone were the ones most affected. Such a digital divide impacted the students and people's mental health and emotional well-being. She elaborated that the concept of law enforcement has changed in people's minds because people started thinking that enforcement naturally has force in it. She believed that this should change. Friendliness among police and people brings crime and the divide down; she believed this could be achieved through proper training. She highlighted that the media also needs to play its role in portraying police as approachable people rather than someone to be frightened of.

Mr Mayur Dayananda spoke from the perspective of cognitive science vis-à-vis digital technologies. He said that the human mind could absorb the tools it uses, and the human mind makes technology-based tools a part of its processing system. In the case of populations with little or no access to such technologies, they are inherently incapable of facing a new set of challenges, which another section of society is better suited to meet due to technology adoption. He also discussed redefining what we consider human intelligence, as the lines are blurring between human intelligence and technology. He said that in India, there aren't any large-scale experiments concerning policing, whereas, in the United States, one would discover police experiments as extensive as involving a whole city. In India, people tend to stick to tried and tested methods which didn't rely much on technology or have a bias in cognitive science theories.

Ms Nalini Raghuraman started the discussion with how economies worldwide came to a halt when strict lockdowns forced countries and governments to look at alternative methods to reach out. With this, digital solutions gained significance, and government departments, businesses, and academic institutions enabled digital outreach models. However, this digital model made the digital divide more pronounced and highlighted. Expressly in India, wherein a sizeable population had been digitally excluded, this led to more outstanding access issues. Although such digital exclusion existed previously as well, it was, however, the pandemic that made it much more evident and pronounced. She also highlighted the issue of gender-based digital exclusion, as women in India comprise the most digitally excluded section. Due to this, women are entirely excluded from most of the intended benefits aimed towards them. She also highlighted the global North-South divide regarding digital infrastructure and how the

South was slowly catching up. She emphasised the pressing need to address the digital divide within the country and globally.

Mr Shaun Dsouza spoke about how the youth and NGOs had been a pillar in the success of policies. He deliberated upon how the flow of information can be increased through youth and NGOs and can play an influential part in making an approach successful. He also spoke about the role and significance of sensitisation and creating awareness through the Centres of Excellence.

Session 11: Round Table Discussion- Open Data Ecosystem in India

Sub-theme I: Challenges in Open Data

Moderator
Prof. Ashwini Chhatre (Moderator), Executive Director, BIPP-ISB

Speakers
Dr Avik Sarkar, Visiting Faculty, IIDS, ISB Senior Policy Associate - Digital India Foundation
Mr Aakash Guglani, Senior Policy Associate - Digital India Foundation
Mr Arun Jadhav, Manager – Digital Development, CABI
Mr John Samuel Raja, Co-Founder - How India Lives
Mr Nikhil Pahwa, Founder, MediaNama
Mr Naveen Francis, Founding Member – OpenDataKerala
Mr Pratap Vardhan, Founder, StatsofIndia
Mr Rakesh Dubbudu, Founder, Factly
Mr Srinivasan Ramani, Deputy National Editor, The Hindu
Mr Shreevyas, Project Director, Center for e-Governance, DPAR, Govt. of Karnataka
Mr Varun Sen Bahl, Manager -Public Policy, NASSCOM
Ms Vrunda Bansode, Partner - Sattva Consulting

In this digital age, transformations are taking place faster than ever. Evolution and revolution are reshaping a new order in the world like never before. And mapping these changes and moulding the trajectory of development for the desired results is a way of life. And to achieve the desired goals, data is the base. Technology and data are becoming new weapons. The data generated is growing exponentially, and so are the advancements in data processing and visualisation. In the present scenario, what data is worth extracting and what is not has become crucial since so much is being produced. Many initiatives are being taken up in the form of open data portals to meet this demand for data. The government is also taking steps in this direction, and Open Government Data is another platform. The roundtable broadly discusses the challenges in the Open Data Process and ways to resolve these challenges collectively.

Presentations by the panellists

Prof. Ashwini Chhatre, opening the session, said that the COVID-19 pandemic did two things. First, it inadvertently showed the power of collaborative data that is usable and useful. Second, it resulted in a break-in conversation in the context of data. The pandemic restricted physical interactions, and most conversations around open data in the pre-pandemic era depended on physical presence. In some cases, it also involves data transfers in physical form. We are in a post-COVID age; there are two essential insights to draw. The first concerns the power of collaborative work to make data useful and usable. Second, it brought out the significance of bringing stakeholders together to discuss the nuances of open data. While we have achieved important milestones over the last ten years, many challenges remain. Prof. Ashwini proposed that the first round of discussions include the introduction of the participants in the context of the work on open data and the challenges. He highlighted that his effort to bring all publicly available data in a usable format is piloted on India Data Portal (IDP). The challenge being addressed with this effort is to make different datasets interoperable. By trying to put different datasets in one interoperable platform, it becomes easy for people to find information that will make a difference in real time.

Naveen Francis said he started his work on Wikipedia and Wikidata, then as an Open Street Maps contributor and further with data meet. He explained that in Kerala, no data or information is available at the grass root level, thus leading to panchayats being unable to make informed decisions. This led him to build a linked data portal in partnership with IIT Palakkad and create an application at the panchayat level.

Arun Jadhav highlighted that donor organisations need more visibility on investment returns because organisations working with donors like BMGF have several data-sharing constraints. However, BMGF is unable to mandate the data-sharing initiative. He highlighted how CABI is focused on developing pathways to ensure that data sharing is fair and easy to understand and to increase accountability between stakeholders.

Nikhil Pahwa expressed his views that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has allegedly sold the *Vaahan* Dataset to large banks and automotive companies for a considerable sum of INR68 crores until now, establishing his opinion on the sale of non-anonymised data. He said there should be a discussion on what data should be sold. He also expressed his views on non-personal data and privately collected data. He thought that privately collected data could be an individual's intellectual property. He stated that it is yet to happen despite the government's announcement to make responses to the RTIs public. Data is being made public to reduce the number of RTIs required to be filed. He also suggested adding a layer of AI to make data interoperability easier.

Vrunda Bansude shared her experiences with Sattva Consultancy and their open portal India data insights. She said that the state of NGOs is such that they need more data expertise and capacity to use the data even if provided with data. She pointed out that CSR spending in the country is INR 1.2 lakh crores and must be addressed as small.

Avik Sarkar spoke about his work experience discussing the national data portal with many experts and then working on the India Data Portal. He said there is a need to discuss "data for governance or policy" and "data for AI". He said there is some data behind the paywalls that should be open, and there is data that should not be open, which is currently open. He also suggested tapping into new data sources like All India Radio News, which delivered the same news in multiple languages to be used as Indian Languages Databases.

Aakash Guglani spoke about the humungous quantity of data transactions in the digital economy space and their interoperability, extending the feasibility even further. He spoke about regulating the data and its malicious usage in AI. He expressed his interest in the debate on pricing the data and API usage pricing in the case of Open Data.

Srinivasan Ramani mentioned that data journalism makes newspapers relevant in the current world of digital media to some extent. He also said that data availability has increased over time and helped them build stories based on data. He lauded the collaborative efforts of the COVID-19 dashboard, which gave much depth to news reporting during peak pandemic times. As challenges, he stated that the government has gone on a 'dashboardisation' spree, and information is better consumed if complete data is present, as in the case of COVID-19. He suggested that the open data ecosystem should remind the government to periodically release the data it collects. He also stated an incessant need for robust data protection bills.

Pratap Vradhan shared that he once asked the EC Commission Officer if their department is still releasing the data in PDF formats. He said that data availability equipped him to look up facts himself. He believed there are many alternative ways to consume information than in a tabular form. He pointed out that many in the room are aware of few facts about the country, but from his work, people still need to find the information from the 2011 census as new. He suggested that there should be more presentation layers for the end user to consume, such as videos, visuals, and infographics. He said visuals could convey more information in less time because the average attention span keeps reducing. He emphasised collaborating and not rebuilding the wheel every single time.

Shreevyas from DAPR, Karnataka, spoke about different initiatives his department is undertaking concerning data. Mahiti Kanaja is a single-window unified web portal that

empowers citizens to know how public funds are spent for the overall development of the State and its people. They framed the Open Data Policy in 2021. They needed help bringing information from all the departments under one roof because many vendors used the portal for their agendas. He stated they are working on data sharing and bringing in the consent framework (e-sahmati).

John Samuel Raja said that observing the incessant need for the data at the granular level, they worked on creating "Gram", a tool that enables data at the village level with their shapefiles. He expressed his opinion on data being in silos and not interoperable. Sharing an example, he said that tracing the continuous change in the number of districts makes it all the more difficult to create links to the previously available data and is substantial manual labour. He expressed his interest in using private companies' data to know the situation at the grass root level.

Rakesh Dubbudu said that even though having granular data is very important, it must be addressed that there are certain areas where there is no higher-level data. He has given the examples like PFMS, where funds are transferred to 1200 different heads in a state. Even though we could use RTI to get information, they have caveats and concerns, like time of reply and not sharing data. He also stated that 80 NSS Reports are available in multiple places. He said there needs to be more information about where they can find how much money the state receives from GST. He spoke about discrepancies in the available data and multiple definitions of a parameter like "death by heat wave" and how various sources provide varied information. He stated that along with other datasets, concentrates on those datasets that are not very famous and have to be attained through RTI and other complex mechanisms.

Varun Sen Bahl, part of public policy at NASSCOM, spoke about the role of the private sector in the spectrum of data. He also said that data sharing could pose a threat to intellectual property. He also spoke about personal data protection and anonymisation of data which is both a legal and technical job.

Round 2 of Discussion

Prof. Ashwini Chhatre offered to create a problem/solution inventory. He said that we are all tackling problems and finding solutions. But for all the people who are yet to begin or are external to this roundtable and are trying to solve similar issues, the inventory will serve as a guiding platform by enabling a system of learning from past efforts to solve problems.

Naveen Francis proposed supporting communities to develop an ecosystem that includes the new generation. He also suggested a coordination mechanism between the players in this domain to make datasets available on the OSM platform.

Aakash Guglani suggested multi-stakeholder collaboration for a common language and protocol.

Rakesh reinforced Ashwini's suggestion of organising quarterly open data roundtables involving the collective (at the PPD roundtable). He also suggested that BIPP act as the central platform to enable this process and bring together the wide networks and repositories to which all participants are connected.

Srinivasan Ramani proposed that the collective work on creating a comparative checklist of different states on the status of data sharing and how the data is hosted, among others. He insisted that such a checklist becomes essential for the newspersons to build pressure on the state governments.

Varun Sen Bahl proposed to initiate conversations on incentives for the private sector to share data and the challenges of the private sector in providing this data. He suggested that the reason may be benign and can be solved through dialogue. Second, to generate potential use cases based on the pressing problems that need attention and the high-value datasets the government does not own.

Vrunda Bansode spoke explicitly in the context of NGOs and data sharing. She expressed that developing a data-sharing network, even among NGOs, is a challenging task as the scale of data collection is different. In addition, NGOs need more resources to collect data at periodic intervals.

Nikhil Pahwa suggested using reverse engineering in the context of TRAI. He recommended what data should be released and why—second, creating an open data ranking system between states to make it competitive. Third, creating a showcase of all the stakeholders working on available data initiatives and building a network. And finally, creating an environment of trust regarding open data among the private sector players through policy recommendations.

Prof. Ashwini Chhatre concluded the session by stating that ISB will develop a concrete proposal to continue these conversations that would enable participants (of the roundtable) to benefit from each other's efforts on open data to foster collaborations and complement activities across organisations.

Session 12: Clearing the Air-Policy Considerations for Low-Emission Development

Moderator

Dr Sugato Dutt (Retd IFS) &Former CEO – Compensatory Afforestation Authority, Government of Tamil Nadu

Speakers

Mr Rajesh Gupta, Promoter & Director - Lloyds Metals and Energy Ltd, Chairman & Managing Director - Shree Global Trade Fin Ltd

Mr Rajnish Jayaswal, Vice President - Corporate Affairs (Petchem), Reliance Industries Limited

Ms Shipra Dawar, Co-founder and Director, Bharat Bhagya Vidhata Forum & CEO, IWill

India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution to Climate Change (INDCC), per the 2015 Paris Agreement, pledges to "reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030 from 2005 level." India also commits to "Expansion of Energy Capacity not coming from fossil fuels to 500 GW"; "Drawing half of its energy requirements from renewable sources"; "Cutting one billion tons of GHG emissions–all by the year 2030." As India embarks on this low-emission development pathway, its large population of 1.4 billion also transitions from a predominantly agrarian to an industrialised urban economy replete with clean water supplies, improved sewerage and storm drain facilities, and efficient transportation infrastructure. Clean development in India, therefore, is fraught with several challenges. It will witness a massive expansion of its Tier I and Tier II cities as the rural hinterland integrates with the urban. In this massive economic growth spurt, it must sustain its natural resource base to maximise carbon sequestration. Clean air and water will be the end goal targeted by such sustainable development. Many experts foresee a three- to five-fold increase in CO2 emissions from transportation in Asian countries by 2030 compared with emissions in 2000 if no changes are made to investment strategies and policies.

Presentations by the panellists

Dr Sugato Dutt, who moderated the session, highlighted how climate change and its effects, such as flooding and average temperature rise, were globally contentious issues. And India has set ambitious targets for the energy transition in the context of being a developing country.

He posed the question to the panellist: Can we map the challenges confronting policymakers in the context of the National Action Plan on Climate Change?

Mr Rajnish Jayaswal led the discussion by saying that even though India's per capita energy consumption is small compared to the west, India's development needs will be heavy over the next 25 years. Green Hydrogen, he believes, has much potential. He said that in the past, the dangerous nature of the elements meant that the cost-benefit analysis did not favour hydrogen-based energy. At the same time, alternatives such as coal and nuclear proved much cheaper. He added that the current scenario is very different, as new technology has caught up to make hydrogen tamable for consumption. However, despite the latest technology and impetus, the new energy sources have limitations which will need innovation to solve these issues. He shared the example of LED proliferation to show how new technologies can be quickly and successfully adopted to make energy or energy consumption more efficient.

Mr Rajesh Gupta cited the issues with taming hydrogen as the reason for an alternate. He argued that solar is the energy source of the future even with issues such as heavy land use compared to traditional thermal power. Solar energy would also need frequent policy tweaking to keep pace with newer tech and business models. He also pointed out that the major problem with solar power is that the grid doesn't operate with uncertainty in power supply. Solar, with its eight hours of power production, can be an issue to resolve. Policies change frequently, and different states have different policies. What is required, he said, is a National Green Policy for consistency across states. Lastly, solar cells have an average life of around 25 years – this short lifespan is a negative along with spin-off issues such as accumulation in landfills.

Ms Shipra Dawar acknowledged that hydrogen and solar have potential as new energy sources, and nuclear fusion is also promising. India was part of the seven-nation team that made a breakthrough in nuclear fusion. While briefly explaining how nuclear fusion works, the speaker explained that for the first time, the energy used in igniting a nuclear fusion reaction was surpassed by the energy output from the response. Ms Shipra pointed out that energy storage systems can solve many of the problems that solar energy projects face today. Secondly, new tech to recycle and reuse old solar cells can solve the short life span of solar cells. And as for raw materials such as Cobalt, we need stable pricing mechanisms, which could otherwise affect margins.

The panel concluded the session by discussing green technology and green financing. The speakers hoped India would take solutions for green energy in India, make them economical, and then export them to the rest of the world in the context of the G20 leadership (which India currently holds). Leadership by example should be the path for India, speakers concurred.

Session 13: India's Energy Transition Roadmap: Role of Green Hydrogen & Other Alternate Fuels

Moderator

Mr Ramanuj Kumar Partner Project Finance, Infrastructure Projects and Electricity Regulation, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas

Speakers

Mr Bose Verghese Sr. Director-ESG, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas

Mr Kapil Maheswari, President, Renewable Energy and Green Hydrogen Development, Reliance Industries Limited

Mr Raghav Handa, Director, Strategic Business Development, Government Affairs and Sustainability, HSBC India

Ms Ulka Kelkar, Director – Climate Change, World Resources Institute

Presentations by the panellists

Mr Kapil Maheswari said that 8 to 10% of the global hydrogen market is present in India, albeit they are grey hydrogen. In his opinion, when refineries and fertiliser companies were using grey hydrogen, the importance of the transition from grey to green hydrogen should have been discussed. According to him, India is poised better compared to other countries in the world. He enumerated the reasons behind India's advantageous position in the Hydrogen market, the first being that the central aspect of green hydrogen comes with the lowest cost of renewable power. Availability of land is another primary reason India finds itself in an advantageous position over other countries like Japan, which may need more suitable land available for this purpose. The third most important aspect is the availability of workforce, which makes the ecosystem for Green Hydrogen readily available in the country. Maheswari said that all these bequeath India with the opportunity to lead the world.

Mr Raghav Handa said India must meet its revised NDC targets requiring approximately $173 billion annually. For the last three years, the average credit support to the sector (from all banks) was $19.3 billion. This gap of nearly $154 billion per annum is the real financial challenge the Renewable sector faces. Out of the $19.3 billion dedicated to the sector, a sizable portion is consumed by traditional power sectors like solar and onshore wind. HSBC co-chaired the climate finance leadership initiative (CFI) India chapter and, through internal public policy advocacy, has developed two essential policy interventions that will help mobilise capital to the sustainability sector. First, get a priority sector lending status (PSL) for sustainability or renewable energy as a sector. As per the current priority sector lending norms, sustainability is recognised as a priority sector with an upper threshold of just INR30 crores which is insufficient to meet a renewable energy firm's requirement. The second intervention involves the Ministry of Finance stepping up the participation of multilateral lending institutions and foreign direct investments (FDI). They have now expanded to non-sovereign projects (private sector projects). Their risk participation can be improved from 30-40% to 80-90%; traditional banks would be better placed to embark on non-sovereign projects with long gestation periods. This is a Co-Participation model with multilateral institutions. Moreover, it adds a certain level of confidence to banks to take on new sustainability-related projects which embark on new technology as long as the sovereign shares a specific part of the risk. In the future, banks supporting sustainable energy products must ensure that the power source is green rather than just the end product.

Ms Ulka Kelkar said that India, as a developing country, always emphasises the win-win aspects of sustainability or climate policy. But there is indeed a trade-off, and to address these trade-offs, you need dialogue between stakeholders and actors. World Resource Institute (WRI) India does system dynamics modelling to observe multiple policies and sectors and their feedback. This analysis shows that the Green Hydrogen (GH) Mission which the government of India just announced, sets a target of five million metric tons by 2030, but to be impactful for 2070 at zero targets, the real change will happen post-2030, and that target will have to be 20 million tons so in fact when we start thinking about the effects on land and water by renewable energy, we see only the beginning. If we put the right policies, processes and dialogues in place now, when the impacts start scaling up, we will have a robust process for selecting suitable sites for GH production.

Mr Bose Varghese said that the Indian corporates are keen on Green Hydrogen and expect the sector to flourish. The private industry waits for the earliest opportunities to plug the players into the ecosystem and is committed already. While agreeing with his co-panellist, Mr Kapil, he also spoke about the government's mandates, including the amendment of the energy conservation act. With obligations, he opined, the government must mandate specified industries to purchase a particular portion of their energy requirement through green hydrogen. He opined that the domestic demand and export would form key considerations for India, anticipating specific challenges.

Session 14: The Crying Need for Predictive Analytics to Address the Mental Health Crisis in India

Moderator
Mr Siddhartha Ghosh, Consulting Strategist

Speakers
Mr Praveen Dwivedi, Principal, Public Policy Affairs, Wheebox
Ms Shipra Dawar, Founder - IWill, ePsyclinic
Ms Suprabha Karanth, ex-Director, AON

An estimated 10% of India's 1.4 billion population has suffered from mental health problems. The economic loss from mental health conditions between 2012-2030 is estimated at USD 1.03 trillion. WHO estimates that the burden of mental health problems in India is 2443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 10000 population; the age-adjusted suicide rate per 100000 population is 21.1. However, poor awareness of mental health symptoms, social stigma, and the lack of adequate resources and facilities stop people from getting the help they need. While the still-continuing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the merit of quick detection and control over cure in a clearly inadequate curative ecosystem, there are only 5,000 psychiatrists in India, or 0.3 for every 100,000 persons, and less than 2,000 clinical psychologists (0.07 per 100,000) in the country. In contrast, developed countries have 6.6 psychiatrists per 100,000 persons. The panellists discussed their observations regarding the diverse factors leading to unhealthy minds, such as heightened expectations, a sense of inadequacy when these expectations are not met, loneliness, domestic discord, etc. The panel also discussed how Ethnographic Studies and Predictive Modelling could combine to play a vital role, from mapping different manifestations of mental unhealthiness, creating linkages between human behaviours and their motivations, quantifying the incidence to developing a model for prediction and creating a simple, early warning system across the nation and quarterly updates and review.

Presentations by the panellists

Mr Siddhartha Ghosh opened the discussion by reviewing some pertinent facts concerning mental health issues, particularly in India. He argued that while there is a lot of written work around topics such as substance abuse, there is very little understanding of mental health. He

mentioned that there is always a quantitative side associated with implementing any initiative with mismatches between demand-supply, policy level–ground level, etc. He points out that while inadequacies must be addressed, things have started with many industries set up to combat mental health issues. There are lessons to be learnt from the past. Talking about creating a model for predictive mental health, he stressed the importance of the model being scientific and easily actionable given the scale of India. The model should be able to read the early signs, engage, explore, and escalate them as and when required.

Ms Suprabha Karanth highlighted two important, rather difficult aspects of identifying mental health issues: proof of health and nature's invisible nature. They deter the population with mental health issues from getting the help they need. She also discussed the large-scale impacts of the pandemic, which completely changed how we work and interact. This resulted in social isolation, loneliness, and a looming fear of unemployment. She mentioned that these circumstances surrounding the pandemic ultimately set the stage for a large scale of reported cases of mental health, depression, and anxiety. She said that COVID-19 has also brought in new initiatives in the corporate sector, such as fitness and meditation apps, HR chat boxes, 24/7 counselling services, mental health certification programs, leave policies etc.

Ms Shipra Dawar pointed out that the crux of the issue lies within the stigmatisation of mental health issues and felt that the solution lies in the normalising and acknowledging the problem. She lauded the Indian government, stating that India is at the helm of policy, highlighting that mental health policy and Act 2017 has been a landmark in the mental health sector. She further highlighted the government's multiple initiatives like telemedicine, training Asha workers as first responders, allied health professional courses, etc. She said that even though the policy is solid on paper, we lack the supportive infrastructure to execute it. She reasoned that every person has their triggers for mental health illness. For example, A farmer can commit suicide for many reasons, such as crop failure, loan default, financial issues, etc. This information could help prevent similar cases from happening in the future by their first clinical signs. She also noted the dearth of physicians and welcomed the assistance of advanced technologies like AI/ML to identify mental health issues. She stressed the importance of having local data to build a predictive model for mental health as the problems faced in developed counties like the USA vastly vary from our issues, making their data irrelevant.

Mr Praveen Dwivedi highlighted that society can combat any illness if we work together. In this regard, he pointed out the government's support during the pandemic noting that India was one of the few countries with a vaccination website and COVID-19 dashboard up and running. He also stressed the importance of talking openly about mental health issues. He suggested that policymakers need to have some mechanism of understanding, implementing,

and learning from past experiences. He also advocated using technology to scale up and reach the masses.

The participants also expressed concerns regarding organisations taking the first step in dealing with mental health issues by having their HR leaders or managers double as counsellors/ first responders. They were skeptical about how reasonable it is to expect the same people who are in charge of the deliverables and can judge you at the end of a quarter /year. They argued that since they are ultimately implementing policy at ground level, having people not adequately equipped to treat mental illness can collapse the system. The speakers asserted the importance of having a trained mental wellness expert on the ground and that they have recommended the same to the government in terms of policy implementation. A question was asked about the mantra to overcome mental illness. The panellists answered that we must first talk about it with friends, peers, and colleagues. Acknowledging that the problem exists is the first piece of the puzzle. It also helps to talk to a therapist to shed light on the issue from different perspectives, trained in assisting and observing the situation and be objective about it.

Day 3 – January 6, 2023

Session 15: Data & Privacy Plenary

Sub-theme I: Data Protection Bill, January 2023.

Moderator
Mr Kazim Rizvi (Moderator), Founder, The Dialogue.

Speakers
Ms Anushka Jain – Policy Counsel – Internet Freedom Foundation
Mr Aashish Agarwal – VP & Head Public Policy – NASSCOM
Mr Nikhil Pawa – Founder, MediaNama

The Puttuswamy Judgement in 2017 shook the nation by stating that the Right to privacy is a fundamental right, which has led to a more significant discussion of Data Protection in the country. As a country, we have discussed data protection's nuances and caveats by referencing the Global Data Protection Rights and similar laws established in other countries. Four drafts of the Data Protection Bill and many civil society, industry, and public consultations before it became the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill (DPDP) were released in November 2022. The objective of this panel was to discuss the current and existing DPDP Bill, its drawbacks, advantages, and features. How would this bill affect the people, children, and organisations concerning their data?

Presentations by the panellists

Mr Kazim Rizvi opened the panel discussion with the existing draft version of the Data Protection Bill draft that exists now. He proposed the debate around the current aspects and future of the existing bill and its implications on the new business models, web 3.0 and emerging technologies. What does it mean for the Indian ecosystem?

The panel elucidated the nuances and implications of such Data Protection Bills and discussed their shortcomings with several examples. At the same time, a section of experts opined that there should be optimism that having effective and regular amendments to the current bill will make it a law that safeguards and protects the data rights of users/citizens of the country. The opposing side expressed their views and said that this bill does not do much to protect the citizens' right to privacy, and the data can/will be exploited by the government in the name of "Deemed Consent" by the citizens. A detailed discussion on the consent framework deemed consent and children's protection made it clear that many aspects of the bill need much more

detail and depth. It was expressed that, to simplify it, the current bill lacks the motivation to protect citizens' right to privacy. An expert from the panel stated that this bill would make it very easy for the government to utilise people's data for surveillance and allow third-party organisations to conduct real-time surveillance of everyone using this bill. There was an emphasis on how this bill has no regulations related to the data scattered across different countries from which our start-ups avail services. Allowing all the nations to allow them to store our data is farfetched, and all the countries will be blacklisted in the beginning. Another argument was that the grounds and purpose of the data collection should take care of the possible misuse of personal data. An interesting discussion on the policy's children's data protection aspect led to a further discussion on the scenarios in the UK and how it is over-protecting the children in our existing draft of the DPDR Bill. There were comments that in the bill neither there was a mention of privacy nor a framework for the regulatory authority. Speakers expressed their views on the principle of proportionality that the personal data collected in a restaurant is being collated by third-party vendors and later used to create a user profile for eating habits and being sold at various places, even though there is no consent for the same. One of the speakers said that there is substantial legal vacuum in many areas and that amendments in IPC and CrPC laws only prove a legal vacuum in the country.

A Q&A session followed the round. Answering a question about the existing dichotomy of whether the industry wants a data protection bill, Mr Ashish Agarwal of NASSCOM, responded by saying that the industry wants a data protection bill which can significantly improve the trust and abundance of data thereby, improving the business ecosystem. The industry wishes to provide feedback to the government and ensure that the law is implemented at scale, avoiding or minimising ambiguity, which can remove many interpretation issues and obligations that do not meet the objectives or are not too honourous, are completed.

Session 16: Telecom Subscription Frauds: Global Policy Trends, Challenges and Risks

Moderator

Dr Shruti Mantri (Moderator) Associate Director, IIDS - ISB

Speakers

Dr Archana Gulati Former Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy, Google

Mr Kanishk Gaur Founder and CEO India Future Foundation

Mr Piyush Barnawal, Cyber Security Leader, Indian Navy

Ms Shikha Goel, IPS Director, Anti-Corruption Bureau, Telangana

Subscription fraud involves obtaining customer KYC details needed for signing for new SIM cards or services with valid authorisation but using the SIM cards for fraudulent activities. The effects of the damage done can be catastrophic in terms of financial fraud, poor customer experience, and brand damage. Telecom service providers face a massive challenge; they must overcome fraud while staying compliant with Department of Telecommunication regulations (DOT). The anonymity of fraudsters in the subscription fraud acts as an obstacle for law enforcement officials to curtail the attacks. Most telecom service providers are currently using standard customer identity validation and verification techniques, which are ineffective in detecting and controlling subscription fraud. Effective identity verification solutions are the key to tackling telecommunication SIM card subscription frauds. The panel discussed the different factors resulting in subscription frauds, and challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and telecom service providers and aims to propose a framework for verification of proof-of identity to curtail telecom subscription frauds.

Presentations by the panellists

Dr Shruti Mantri began the discussion by specifying that telephone subscriptions have increased exponentially, especially in India. She set the tone for the debate by giving a brief introduction about the increase in cyber-attacks. She also specified the role of identity verification in telecom subscription frauds and how significant these were. She mentioned that making identity verification mandatory was pertinent if frauds related to telecom were to be curbed.

Ms Shikha Goel mentioned the increase in the number of Indians who are now using the internet, informing that almost 50% of Indians are now using the internet regularly. According to her, criminals were evolving rapidly due to the increasing usage of the internet and mobile phone. She mentioned that crimes such as financial fraud, hacking of bank accounts, and sextortion were happening mainly through mobile phones. Thus, the mobile phone played an active role in the increasing number of cyber-attacks in India.

Dr Archana Gulati spoke about the issues of fraud via spam calls and other methods and mentioned that mobile phone in India is a lifeline. Especially after the pandemic, even children have started using it increasingly. She mentioned that people's time span on mobile phones has increased by almost 80% during the pandemic. She said that spam calls were one of the most important unsolicited communication prevalent today, which is a serious issue.

Mr Piyush Barnawal mentioned that cybercrime is a severe and pervasive issue in India. He specified that cyber criminals were exploiting the vulnerabilities of people. According to him, damages due to cyber-crime were very serious, and they were presently costing the world economy about six billion U.S. dollars. Discussing the nature of cyber-cybercrime, he said that cyber-crime is now a huge business involving all kinds of illegal activities. He also expressed concern regarding issues of fraud analytics and data privacy. Mentioning the telecom sector, he also put forward a pertinent question that even today, the citizens need to learn how telecom companies are storing their data. Due to the ever-increasing issue of selling personal data, people are more vulnerable to cyber-crimes, and their private data is being invaded.

Mr Kanishk Gaur spoke about the new paradigms of cyber-crimes: crypto-related frauds, sextortion, and others. He mentioned that organised syndicates and criminals are now operating in this field. Such scams are now pervasive, as they impact not only ordinary citizens but also people in power, such as ministers, thus leading to national security risks. He also mentioned random calls are being made to people, and they are then being threatened and blackmailed. He said that telecoms must do verification of identity while sim cards are being sold. He also mentioned how apps on play stores were being used to monitor data. The advertisements on websites were also posing a significant threat by stealing people's data, thus making them vulnerable to cyber fraud.

Dr Archana Gulati said that the rural internet penetration in India was low. After the pandemic, children, youth, and the elderly have increasingly been using online services. However, more awareness is needed among this section of the population. With the new ways of fraud emerging, this section of the population was the most vulnerable. According to her, all stakeholders need to meet halfway and come together to curb these issues.

A Q&A round followed the panel discussion. Ms Shikha said that despite all the talk and awareness about cybercrimes, they are still increasing. As a law enforcement agency, they have reached 30 lakh school students in their awareness programme. She acknowledged that there is much scope in creating awareness but felt that more systems and protocols should be implemented. Sharing knowledge on how to prevent being a victim of cybercrime, one of the experts suggested checking the website with HTTP instead of HTTPS. Experts advised the gathering not to take video calls from unknown numbers. If children are using the devices, check what additional applications they have installed. Always remember not to share OTPs. Verify the person who is coming in from KYC verification. And lastly, only let people take a copy of your Aadhar card with proper reason.

Session 17: Human Learning Systems as an Approach for Improved Public Service Experience

Moderator

Prof. Naresh Singh (Moderator) Vice Dean, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy, O.P. Jindal Global University

Speakers

Prof. R Sudarshan Dean - Jindal School of Government and Public Policy, O.P. Jindal Global University

Ms Smita Jha, Director, Centre for Public Impact (CPI) India

Ms Sumalatha, K.C. Trainee, GIZ Chennai

A significant part of the problems experienced and observed in organising the work of public services is how public management is conceived and done. The current dominant paradigm, New Public Management (NPM), created in the 1980s and referred to as the 3Ms – Markets, Managers, and Metrics, has not been free of challenges and increasing opposition to its inherent problems. The widely evident issues with NPM are so fundamental that this does not just require making tweaks in practice but points towards the need for a paradigm shift. The panel discussed one alternative paradigm to public management, i.e., Human Learning Systems (HLS), which emerged from the instructive practices collectively by public service workers, managers, leaders, practitioners, and supporting organisations.

Presentations by the panellists

Prof. Naresh Singh, who moderated the session, began the discussion by mentioning that public policy should improve citizens' lives. He noted that the concept which was being discussed was relatively new. He said that, in general, our democracies do not deliver to people as promised, and citizens have been converted into consumers or customers. He mentioned that citizens who should be in charge of public policy are not in control of it; instead, it is the public servants who are in order of the public policies today. In India, he said that public servants govern public service delivery, and when public policies are being evaluated, it is again the public servants considering their performances. He spoke about how the human learning system was a complex adaptive system with different feedback systems

and feedback loops. If we were to do things differently, public servants should be learning and adapting, and adaptive capacity should be built into them, he added. Humans, according to him, are varied in their needs for public service delivery. He mentioned that there should be ways in which academic and research work should work with public policy. He said that rather than "minimum government, maximum governance", the policy should be of "effective government and effective governance".

Ms Smita Jha mentioned that changing people's lives was highly complex. She highlighted how often the word complex was used over the 2.5 days of the event. That word defines the challenges of democracies, more so in developing economies. She mentioned the vision of CPI –to support the government and changemakers directly and be effective in the work that the government is doing to improve citizens' lives. It is a learning partner – co-building of sorts and not a consulting avatar that comes out with a solution because this is not a sector where one solution could be offered to reimagine how public services can be provided, with targeted outcomes to improve everyone's lives.

Ms Sumalatha shared a study discussing an alternative paradigm to new public management that puts the public at the centre of public administration. It tried to identify how HLS can be incorporated into the Indian public service and management system and what difference it can make. This included a sample size of 30 live interviews with government officials. They were asked to share their experiences on what changes may be required in delivering public services or the Indian system of public services and management. She spoke about the positive and open responses from many officials and their views on the impact of public service delivery for the general public. All interviewees believed that civil society organisations take the front seat in providing rural services and felt the govt. took a front seat in delivering services in the social sector - housing, health, education etc.

Prof. R Sudarshan spoke about participatory action and learning methods and informed that people would be trained in these methods. Speaking about the more significant impact, he said there was a need to engage with the government if large-scale implications were to be made. He said that in India, many of the colonial practices which are now redundant are still being followed, and these should be reconsidered. He also mentioned that when it comes to the human learning approach, the goals to be set for achievement must be humble and achievable. He said that systems are rigid in general and take time to change.

A Q&A round followed the session. One of the panellists was asked a question on proactive disclosure of information, a guide to finding problems among citizens. The panellists said that there is no concept of best practice or recipe in the social impact sector as there are both good practices and good initiatives that work in a country or a certain situation – which may not

necessarily work everywhere. Every situation needs to be approached differently. On what the government should be on the front of disclosures: e.g., in DBT – the focus of government should be on whether we have been able to improve outcomes – not the value or number of the transfer but how it enhances the quality of life for the person.

Closing Session

Speaker
Prof. Ashwini Chhatre, Executive Director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy

In his closing remarks, Prof. Ashwini Chhatre, Executive Director of Bharti Institute of Public Policy, said, "The Public Policy Dialogues provided a platform for many different kinds of voices to interact in a flat taxonomy, where everyone was an equal participant. We believe that such a space didn't exist as a permanent fixture. It was occasionally created almost randomly, by chance. We want to create something that remains permanent".

Building on the motivation of the first Public Policy Dialogues, he announced that this would be an annual event. "We have created a space where experts could come and talk to each other instead of being talked to from the stage. We tried to create opportunities where participants from different walks of life could find each other as professional soulmates and forge collaborations so that when they come back next year and have even more to report,

there will be other kindred souls that they will be able to connect to."