



TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

30th July 2025



TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services



9560300770



www.tathastuics.com



support@tathastuics.com

HEAD OFFICE: 53/1, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, BADA BAZAR ROAD,
OLD RAJINDER NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110060



Topics Covered

- Why the Gini Index is wrong about India
- Bihar's dark side-hub of girl child trafficking
- What did the ICJ say on climate obligations?
- Deaths in school
- Interrupted growth

Why the Gini Index is wrong about India

GS Paper 2: Governance, Social Justice

GS Paper 3: Indian Economy and Inclusive Growth Issues related to inequality, poverty, and informal sector

Why the Gini Index is wrong about India

The Gini Index ranked India among the world's most equal societies, by giving the country a score of 25.5. This places India in a 'moderately low' inequality category. While this may be cause for celebration, the lived reality in India paints a very different picture. Inequalities, lived and those captured in statistics, permeate into everyday life in urban and rural India. The question that therefore arises is, on what basis can India be considered one of the world's most equal societies? While there is sufficient critique on the flawed methodology used in the Gini Index, this article highlights the general state of inequality that plagues India. While gender, economic, health, educational, and social inequalities have always been endemic to India, with technology and a modern ways of life, new forms of inequality such as digital and banking inequality have arisen.

Forms of inequalities

One of the fundamental forms of inequality is wealth inequality. A ride through any busy street in urban India in a luxury car which costs an average of ₹30 lakh, driven by a chauffeur who earns and supports a family on approximately ₹3 lakh per year, will highlight the stark wealth inequality that exists. Statistics also support this reality. According to a study titled 'Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj', in 2022-23, 22.6% of the national income went to just the top 1% of the population. Further, the study mentions that data on wealth inequality is challenging to capture because of the large-scale prevalence of informal employment, low-income levels, and high thresholds for non-taxable incomes, which means that data on tax pertains to less than 10% of the adult population. The reason for the lack of data itself is indicative of inherent wealth inequality, as a



Prachi Dutta

Lawyer qualified to practice law in New York and India. She advises start ups, funds and companies on corporate, investment and regulatory related matters. She is based in New Delhi

India has a lot of groundwork to cover in bridging all forms of divides

large part of the population has to rely on the informal sector for employment, earning significantly less than those employed in the formal sector.

Gender inequality is another fundamental form of inequality in India. Women have historically been marginalised from the workforce and comprise about 35.9% of the worker population ratio. The number is starker at senior and middle management levels where women accounted for only 12.7% leadership roles as of 2024. While India has the third largest startup ecosystem in the world, women-run start-ups stand at only 7.5% of all active startups in the country. Social norms aggravate gender inequality in terms of spending family resources on the girl child, and in matters of inheritance.

With rapid development of technology, access to digital technology is crucial to broadly navigate through modern day life such as easily accessing formal banking channels. While India has made commendable progress in providing access to the Internet to a large part of the population, a careful analysis of the numbers points to a severe digital divide. Lack of access to the Internet and to digital technology exacerbates the digital divide, leading to lack of opportunities for a certain demography.

For instance, only 52.7% schools have functional computers, and Internet is accessible in only 53.9% of schools across India. This contributes to the digital divide because only students from a certain socio-economic background, who have access to schools with functional computers and the Internet, will be adept in the use of technology and computers, a critical skill in today's times.

Access to quality higher education and even basic entry-level jobs are difficult for students left behind. They are then pushed into employment that requires lower skills. This digital divide will continue to

perpetuate the cycle of inequality at the household level.

Other forms of digital technology also contribute towards fuelling educational inequality. For instance, combined access to broadband within households, encompassing both urban and rural areas, stands at 41.8%. This deepens educational inequality because when education becomes virtual, which is a routine occurrence in New Delhi when schools are closed during November and December because of severe air pollution, only those students in households with access to a broadband system and digital technology can continue with their education.

Inequality across realms

Inequality in one realm often permeates into other realms. For instance, digital inequality severely affects the lower income demography. However, overall, digital inequality affects women more than men. For example, only 25% of women in rural India have access to the Internet, compared to 49% of men in rural India. The Internet is a fundamental medium in accessing opportunities and technology such as Internet banking. It guarantees financial freedom and job postings. Lack of access to the Internet disables women from accessing these opportunities that are readily available to male adults, further exacerbating digital and gender inequality.

While we have reasons to pat ourselves on our backs for achieving some amount of equality in the last few years, the methodology to adjudge the ranking by Gini Index, seen along with actual and lived realities, makes one wonder as to how we achieved this ranking. It is only when a large part of the population has access to equal opportunities can we truly be among the world's most equal societies. Until then, as a society and a country, we have a lot of groundwork to cover in bridging all forms of divide.





Social Welfare

India's Story on Bridging Inequality

World Bank Places India Among World's Most Equal Societies

Posted On: 05 JUL 2025 10:20AM

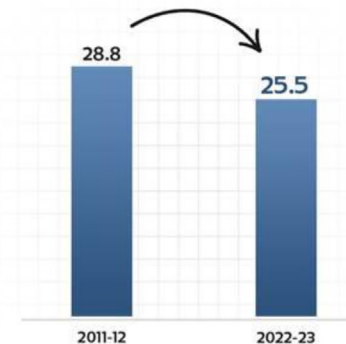
Key Takeaways

India ranks **fourth globally** in income equality with a **Gini score of 25.5**.
Extreme poverty dropped to **2.3% in 2022-23**, says World Bank
171 million Indians moved out of extreme poverty between 2011-23.

India Achieves Greater Income Equality



Consumption-based Gini Index (Lower is More Equal)



Source: World Bank

India is not only the world's fourth largest economy; it is also one of the most equal societies today. According to the World Bank, **India's Gini Index stands at 25.5**, making it the **fourth most equal country** in the world, after the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Belarus. This is a remarkable achievement for a country of its size and diversity. It reflects how India's economic progress is being shared more evenly across its population.

Understanding the Gini Index

The Gini Index (or Gini Coefficient) measures how equally income, wealth, or consumption is distributed among individuals or households in a country.

Scale:

- Ranges from **0 to 100** (or 0 to 1 in some formats).
- 0 = Perfect Equality (everyone has the same income or wealth).
- 100 = Perfect Inequality (one person has everything, and everyone else has nothing).

Interpretation:

- A **higher Gini Index** indicates **greater inequality**.
- A **lower Gini Index** indicates **greater equality**.

Graphical Representation: Lorenz Curve

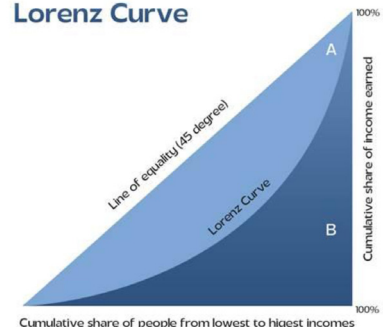
The **Lorenz Curve** plots:

- The **cumulative percentage of income** received (Y-axis)
- Against the **cumulative percentage of households or individuals**, starting from the poorest (X-axis).

Line of Perfect Equality:

- A 45° diagonal line showing equal income distribution (e.g., 10% of people get 10% of income, 50% get 50%, and so on).

A Typical Lorenz Curve



Actual Distribution Curve:

- Lies **below the line of equality**.
- The more it curves away from the diagonal, the more unequal the income distribution.

Gini Index Calculation:

- It measures the **area between the Lorenz Curve and the Line of Equality**.





- Expressed as a **percentage** of the area under the line of equality.
- The **larger the area**, the **higher the inequality**.

Key points from article

Gini Index – The Flawed Metric in India’s Context

India scored **25.5** on the Gini Index – placing it among ‘**moderately low**’ inequality countries.

But the **ground realities reveal deep socioeconomic divides**, contradicting the index.

Wealth Inequality

- The **top 1% in India** received **22.6% of national income (2022–23)** – source: Billionaire Raj study.
- **Less than 10%** of the adult population is reflected in income tax data due to:
 - ♦ High informal employment
 - ♦ Low incomes below taxable threshold
 - ♦ **Visual metaphor:** ₹30 lakh car vs ₹3 lakh annual income of the driver – illustrates real disparity.



Gender Inequality

- **Women comprise only 35.9% of the workforce.**
- **In leadership roles:** only **12.7% women** in 2024.
- **Women-run startups:** just **7.5%** of India’s total.
- Societal norms restrict access to resources, inheritance, and opportunities for women.

Gendered Digital Divide

- **In rural India:**
- Only 25% of women have Internet access vs 49% of men
- **Internet enables:**
 - ♦ Access to **job opportunities, banking, and financial independence**
- Lack of access **excludes women** from digital empowerment.
- **Interconnected Inequalities**
- Inequality in one domain (e.g., digital access) **intensifies others**(e.g., gender, economic).
- Reinforces a **cyclical trap** of exclusion and poverty.

Critique of Gini Index Methodology

Gini uses **limited income data**, ignoring:

- Informal sector
- Digital divide
- Social and gender-based disparities

A low Gini score may **mask structural inequalities**.

Way Forward

- **Revise inequality measurement frameworks:**
 - ♦ Complement Gini with **multi-dimensional poverty indices** and **gender digital access indicators**.





- **Bridge the digital divide:**
 - ◆ Invest in **digital infrastructure** in rural schools and households.
 - ◆ Promote **women's access to mobile and Internet services** through targeted schemes.
- **Formalize the informal economy:**
 - ◆ Provide **identity-linked social security, tax incentives, and skilling programs** for informal workers.
- **Promote gender equity:**
 - ◆ Ensure **equal access to education, inheritance rights, credit, and leadership opportunities.**
- **Data transparency and inclusion:**
 - ◆ Develop **better databases** on income, gender, education, and digital access to inform policymaking.

Bihar's dark side-hub of girl child trafficking

GS Paper 2: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations Essay Paper:
Topics related to **child rights, governance failures, poverty and trafficking**

Bihar's dark side — the hub of girl child trafficking

She left Chhattisgarh with a small bag and a dream. A man had convinced her family that she would be trained as a dancer, earn well and support them. Her parents, who were desperate and worn down by years of poverty, let her go. By the time she was found in Bihar, she was not the same girl. She had been broken by control, violence and rape. She was 14. Her story is not rare.

Until June this year, the Bihar police rescued 271 girls in the State — 153 of them trafficked into orchestras, the remaining 118 forced into the flesh trade. In Saran district, the number of girls rescued from these 'dance troupes' since January is 162. Between March and June this year, the Just Rights for Children (JRC) partners, working alongside district police forces, rescued 116 girls from orchestra groups.

The conditions in which these girls, stripped of dignity and brutalised into submission, were found were appalling — overcrowded, unhygienic rooms. They were presented on stage as performers, but in reality, they were victims of trafficking and sexual abuse.

Human trafficking is among the largest organised crimes globally. It inflicts severe physical, psychological and economic harm on individuals of all ages, but women and children are the most vulnerable. Once they are pulled in, getting out is almost impossible. Nearly 138 million children were engaged in child labour in 2024, including around 54 million in hazardous work, according to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF.

Bihar as a trafficking destination
Bihar's emergence as one of India's most active destinations for trafficking is not incidental. At the heart of this crisis lies a complete absence of regulatory oversight and social acceptance for girls being commodified. Geography and poverty deepen this vulnerability. The State's porous border with Nepal and seamless railway connectivity to trafficking-prone States such as West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Assam and Uttar Pradesh facilitate trafficking flows through Bihar.

In States such as West Bengal, where music and dance are integral to cultural identity, parents encourage their daughters to pursue the arts. These aspirations are preyed upon by traffickers who promise good money and even stardom. False promises of love, marriage or employment are also used to lure girls. In districts such as Saran, Gopalganj, Muzaffarpur, Rohtas and West Champaran — the 'orchestra belt' — girls, some as young as 12, are being sold to orchestras for as little as ₹10,000. They are forced to wear inappropriate clothing and dance to vulgar songs before inebriated men. The



Bhuwan Ribhu
is a child rights activist and the Founder of Just Rights for Children

The State must act against the system of 'dance troupes' and 'orchestras' that fuel trafficking, which is also made worse by an absence of regulatory oversight, geography and poverty

girls are punished if they refuse and raped if they resist.

How the system fails children

According to the National Crime Records Bureau data, 2,878 children were trafficked in 2022, including 1,059 girls. This is a figure that barely scratches the surface. Many cases never reach a police station because families are either complicit or fear to speak. The laws are not inadequate, but in fact, comprehensive. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, the Juvenile Justice Act, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, and provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita criminalise child labour, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

But conviction rates remain abysmal. Most cases are filed as kidnappings or missing person reports. Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) are under-resourced. Investigations that concern multiple States often collapse due to jurisdictional confusion and bureaucratic delay. When girls are rescued, many are sent right back to the same families that sold them.

Despite rescue after rescue, orchestras in Bihar continue to operate with impunity. Just Rights for Children, a network of over 250 NGOs working to end violence against children, approached the Patna High Court seeking urgent prohibitory orders against orchestras. The petition calls for an immediate ban on the employment of minors in orchestras.

In response, the High Court directed the Bihar government to act without delay, recognising the trafficking and exploitation of children in orchestras to be a "serious issue". Such an acknowledgement must translate into protection at every stage of the trafficking chain.

Prevention must begin where trafficking begins. Schools must monitor attendance. When a child goes missing for weeks, it must trigger alerts and reports. Panchayats must maintain migratory registers. When children disappear, someone in the village always knows and that someone must be required to act. Parents should be made aware of what might happen to their daughters.

Transport vigilance must be ramped up. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been monitoring vulnerable corridors and conducting awareness drives at railway stations. This model must extend to inter-State bus routes, local terminals and private carriers. Transport departments must train their staff to identify signs of trafficking.

AHTUs need full-time officers trained to coordinate measures across borders, track

networks and follow a case from rescue to prosecution. They should be held accountable.

There should be an immediate and absolute prohibition on the employment of minors in orchestras. These groups must be identified, mapped and regulated. Premises where girls are confined must be sealed. Owners, landlords and organisers must be prosecuted and their assets must be attached. The Labour Department must be mandated to inspect, report and act. Prosecution must be time-bound and rehabilitation must be long-term and state-supervised. Children must not be sent back to the environments that enabled their exploitation. Victim compensation schemes must be enforced rigorously.

Prevention is protection. Prosecution is protection. Prosecution is prevention. Trafficking is not the failure of a few systems. It is the collapse of many. Laws and enforcement are only one part of the solution. Ending exploitation is possible through prosecution.

The Centre for Legal Action and Behaviour Change (C-Lab) recently released a report, 'Building the Case for Zero: How Prosecution Acts as the Tipping Point to End Child Labour - The Case from India', that drew data from 24 States. It showed that prosecution is key to securing justice. Along with law enforcement, the NGO network rescued 53,651 children from trafficking and kidnapping (in 27,320 raids), pursuing legal action in every case. Nearly 90% of these children were trapped in the worst forms of child labour.

A strategy rooted in prevention

To succeed, we need a strategy rooted in prevention, and we need to call it PICKET. First, it begins with 'Policy' — strong and clear policies that prohibit child labour and exploitation. Second, 'Institutions' must be required to monitor, prosecute and rehabilitate. Third, the 'Convergence' of agencies, digital infrastructure and survivor-centred response is essential to combat trafficking. Fourth, 'Knowledge' is key where community awareness and intelligence gathering are crucial. The insights of survivors are among the most powerful tools we have to dismantle trafficking networks. Fifth, 'Economically', trafficking must be made unviable. And, sixth, 'Technology' must be used to track traffickers, build databases, generate heat maps and predict movement patterns. None of this will work unless States share data, digitise case records and cooperate.

Justice is not punishment, but it is prevention before harm. The only way to prevent the next girl from being trafficked is to dismantle the system that allows it. We have the tools. We have the laws. All that remains is the will. The longer we wait, the more we lose.





Key points from article

The Incident: A 14-year-old girl from Chhattisgarh was trafficked under the pretext of becoming a dancer, only to face violence and exploitation in Bihar. Her case reflects a systemic and widespread problem.

Trafficking in Bihar (Data till June 2025):

- **271 girls rescued** – 153 from orchestras, 118 from the sex trade.
- **Saran district alone:** 162 girls rescued from dance troupes since January.
- **JRC + Police (March–June 2025):** Rescued 116 girls from orchestra groups.
- Girls as young as 12 are sold for as little as **₹10,000**.

Conditions of Victims:

Overcrowded, unhygienic living quarters.

Forced to wear vulgar outfits and dance before drunk audiences.

Face rape and violence upon refusal.

Systemic Failures:

- Only **2,878 children** trafficked officially reported in 2022 (1,059 girls) – likely underreported.
- Laws exist: **POCSO Act, JJ Act, Bonded Labour Abolition Act, Child Labour Act, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, ITPA**, but:
 - ♦ **Low conviction rate**
 - ♦ Cases wrongly registered as missing/kidnapping
 - ♦ **AHTUs are understaffed, lack coordination**
 - ♦ Rescued girls often sent back to exploitative families.

Recent Legal Action:

- **Just Rights for Children (JRC)** filed petition in Patna HC.
- HC recognized trafficking via orchestras as a **“serious issue”** and directed urgent action.

ILO-UNICEF Global Data (2024):

- **138 million children** in labour globally.
- **54 million** in hazardous conditions.



Reasons for Bihar being a trafficking hub

Geography

Porous border with Nepal facilitates trafficking.



Cultural vulnerability

Artistic aspirations are manipulated by traffickers.



Connectivity

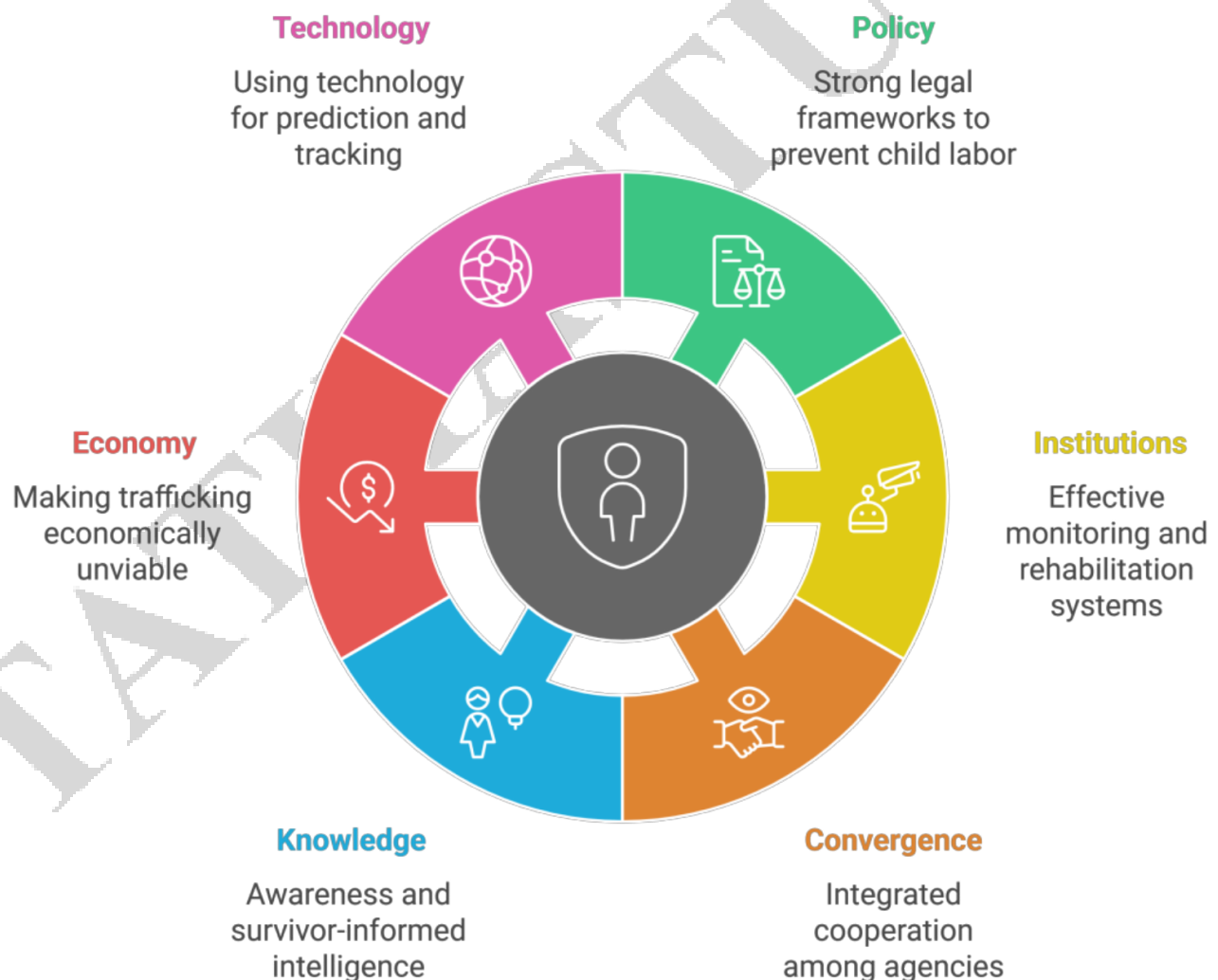
Well-linked by rail to trafficking-prone States.





- **Strengthen AHTUs with dedicated officers** and digital tools for interstate coordination, investigations, and prosecutions.
- **Mandatory prohibition and regulation** of orchestras employing minors, with strict penalties, sealing of premises, and asset seizures.
- **Transport and border vigilance** through trained staff, RPF monitoring, and expansion to bus terminals and private carriers.
- **Community-based prevention:** Panchayats must maintain migration registers; schools must trigger alerts for prolonged absenteeism.
- **Time-bound prosecution and long-term statesupervised rehabilitation**, avoiding reintegration into exploitative families.

Strategies to Combat Child Trafficking





What did the ICJ say on climate obligations?

GS Paper 3: Environment

GS Paper 4: Ethics in International Affairs

Equity, justice, and responsibility in international climate commitments

What did the ICJ say on climate obligations?

How has the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice reiterated the fundamental principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? What does the opinion state about Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities? Does it introduce any new obligations?

EXPLAINER

T. Jayaraman
Tejal Kanitkar

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the obligations of countries to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and the legal consequences of the harm occasioned by their failure to meet these obligations, on July 23 has been the subject of much discussion. While it is a welcome affirmation of the multilateral climate regime at a time when the U.S. appears to have damaged it through its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, it also raises questions on, inter alia, its interpretation of the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement and its occlusion of the development imperatives of the global South.

How has it upheld the case for the global South?

The ICJ's opinion has several elements that the global South, including India, should be able to welcome. First, the Court has emphasised the significance of the totality of the climate regime, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. This is in sharp contrast to the view of developed countries that have argued for sidelining the Convention and dismissing the Protocol, stating that the Paris Agreement had become the sole binding instrument of the multilateral climate regime. Across several paragraphs in its opinion, the Court has set out how the obligations of countries, especially those of developed nations, flow from various articles of the UNFCCC, particularly the provision of extending climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building to developing countries by developed nations. In underlining the foundational role of the UNFCCC, the Court has also reiterated the significance of the Convention's Annex-I and Annex-II, noting that the developed countries listed therein will continue to have additional obligations compared to the rest of the world. This is a firm rebuttal, not only to the governments of the global North, but also to a vocal section of climate academia, that had proclaimed the end of Annex-based differentiation since the Paris accord was signed.

In yet another affirmation of the global South's perspective, the ICJ opinion identifies the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR&RC), drawing on Article 3 of the Convention, as the "core guiding principle for determining the implementation of the climate change treaties". Further in para 152, it affirms universality to the CBDR&RC principle, noting that it "guides the interpretation of obligations under international environmental law beyond its express articulation in different treaties", opening up the possibility for extending the principle to arenas like biodiversity.

Additionally, the ICJ's opinion notes the qualification to differentiation between developed and developing nations introduced by the Paris Agreement with the addition of the phrase, "and in the light of national circumstances" to the term CBDR&RC. The Court views the qualification as a nuance which points out that what constitutes a 'developed' or 'developing' nations is not static. This will undoubtedly be a bone of contention in further interpretations of this opinion.



Climate action now: Villagers gather around a well to draw water in Telamwadi, northeast of Mumbai, India, on May 6, 2023. AP

What about the temperature goal?

While these reaffirmations of the fundamental principles and values of the climate regime are noteworthy there is also much in the opinion that conforms to the narrative that developed countries, allied with some of the small island states and a range of vulnerable developing countries, have attempted to build over the years in interpreting the Paris Agreement.

The opinion insists that the temperature target for limiting global warming as in Article 2.1 (a) of the Paris Agreement, no longer holds in defining the obligation of states. Article 2.1 clearly designates "well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels" as the primary goal, while "pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C."

However, the Court argues that two paras from decisions of the 26th and 28th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, in which Parties have expressed agreement with the need to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, constitute an agreement among Parties to rewrite the temperature goal and not the range provided in the Agreement. This is a strange conclusion considering that the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold is likely to be passed in a very few years. Nor does the opinion engage itself with the consequences of the breach of the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal. Even to lay opinion, it appears very odd that decisions taken in implementing an agreement should be interpreted as modifying the terms of the agreement itself.

Much of the Court's enthusiasm for the 1.5 degrees Celsius target appears to stem from uncritical cherry-picking of a few headline statements from the Sixth Assessment Cycle reports (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Court has not considered it necessary that the IPCC reports themselves should be subject to scrutiny through the lens of equity. This is evident when it uncritically cites the IPCC's global target of GHG emissions reduction of 43% below 2020 levels by 2030 and 65% by 2035 for limiting

temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The recently concluded annual climate meeting of the UNFCCC held at Bonn, Germany, itself has now acknowledged the lack of equity and CBDR&RC in such projections.

Has the Court broken new ground on enforcing obligations?

Despite the extensive discussion on the obligations of states, in the context of climate laws and more generally in international law, the opinion does not articulate a more stringent framework of enforcement. In direct continuity with the established interpretation of the Paris Agreement by the global North, it holds that the provision of means of implementation as well as domestic mitigation action are only obligations of conduct (this means a duty which is to be performed towards achieving an outcome rather than guaranteeing the outcome itself). Only procedural aspects of the Paris Agreement, such as the timely and periodic submission of Nationally Determined Contributions are held to constitute stronger obligations of result. The opinion argues that even as obligations of conduct, the requirements on countries to meet their commitments can be sufficiently stringent. However, it depends on suitable courts with the requisite jurisdiction to enforce them and is contingent on the circumstances of every individual case.

At best, the Court's opinion may be welcomed for reiterating the original intent of the Paris Agreement, in the face of the growing reluctance of developed nations to meet their obligations, but it breaks no significant new ground in this regard. Given the lack of appetite for climate action in the global North, and their opposition to even these weak obligations, the reiteration by the Court is undoubtedly of some value.

What are some of the gaps in the opinion?

The most striking lacuna in the opinion is its near-total sidelining of the twin challenge that global warming poses to the development of the global South, that is extensively discussed even in the IPCC. On the one hand southern nations will be increasingly unable to meet their energy needs for rapid poverty eradication and

sustainable growth in the absence of adequate carbon space, while on the other hand low-carbon development requires finance and technology on a scale that remains out of reach.

As Judge Xue Hanqin notes, in concluding her separate opinion, "the Advisory Opinion fails to point out that, for peoples and individuals of the present and future generations affected by the adverse effects of climate change, the ultimate solution to guarantee them a clean, healthy and sustainable climate lies in a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all states based on international co-operation between developed and developing states."

With the opinion falling short on these two key issues for the global South, its qualification that equity and CBDR&RC would introduce no new obligations but only guide the interpretation and implementation of climate treaties, should be a matter of concern for developing countries. Much of the enthusiasm in global civil society for the opinion, stems from the prospect of further litigation at the national or regional level, with the opinion allowing the possibility that affected countries such as small island states could claim reparation or compensation. However, the opinion also makes clear that these would require independently establishing attribution, "wrongfulness" and causation regarding the actions of Parties held responsible for harm, though it opens the door to their more expansive interpretation.

On the issue of concerted global climate action though, and at the climate negotiations, it is unlikely that the advisory opinion would substantially move the needle, reproducing existing fault lines rather than overcoming them. As several of the separate opinions from various judges themselves indicate, the opinion may represent a missed opportunity rather than a game-changing intervention in the global climate discourse.

T. Jayaraman is at the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai. Tejal Kanitkar is at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

▼ The ICJ opinion identifies the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR&RC), drawing on Article 3 of the Convention, as the "core guiding principle for determining the implementation of the climate change treaties".

▼ The opinion insists that the temperature target for limiting global warming as in Article 2.1 (a) of the Paris Agreement, no longer holds in defining the obligation of states.

▼ The Court's opinion may be welcomed for reiterating the original intent of the Paris Agreement, in the face of the growing reluctance of developed nations to meet their obligations, but it breaks no significant new ground in this regard



Deaths in school

GS 2 :Social Justice

GS 3 :Economy

Deaths in school

Infrastructure of government schools
needs urgent attention

In July 25, tragedy awaited students of Classes 6 and 7 at the Piplodi Government School in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district as they assembled for prayer. A part of their school building gave way leading to the deaths of seven and injuries to several others. Most of the students were from tribal communities. The school is in the southeastern part of the State bordering Madhya Pradesh. There was a similar incident the next day in Nagaur district but the school was closed being a holiday. There has been much public anger in the State over the incidents which, quite rightly, have thrown the spotlight on the state of government schools. As in UDISE 2023-24 data, there are more than 70,000 government schools in Rajasthan serving nearly 84 lakh students, especially from the poorer and marginalised sections. Of these, some 8,000 schools have been estimated by the Education Department to be in a poor condition. The Jhalawar school was not among the schools identified as being in a poor state, indicating the extent of the problems. Some ₹650 crore had been allocated in the past two State budgets for boosting the infrastructure but inefficiencies in government have ensured that the measures did not make much difference. Fixing the infrastructure of government schools should be a priority for the State's Bharatiya Janata Party government.

The tragedy in Rajasthan should serve as a wake-up call across India, given the current policy defocus on government-owned education institutions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 had called for an immediate increase in spending on education, from some 4.6% of GDP to 6%, identifying one-time spends on infrastructure as the lead priority besides identifying other sectors for a boost in support. Five years into the NEP, there is little to suggest that this has been a focus area for governments, Union or State. Policy thrusts have been more towards reducing government support, self-financing, and encouraging private sector contribution. While these may be applicable to higher education, basic school education is a primary duty of the government – as it is across the world including in the most developed nations. Setting up model schools and funding them to serve as exemplars cannot be at the cost of mass school education. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy has been identified as a critical area for boosting workforce productivity and reaping the demographic dividend that will soon run its course as India's population ages. But the discourse on pathways towards achieving them is more on pedagogy, non-formal teaching and so on than the essentials – an infrastructure boost and teacher recruitment and training.





Interrupted growth

**GS 3 : Economy,
Environment & Ecology**

Interrupted growth

Industrial growth is still tied to
government spends on infrastructure

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP), the nation's monthly barometer of goods output, revealed a 10-month low growth rate in June, at 1.5%, largely due to the sharp contraction in mining activity, by -8.7% (10.3% in June 2024), and electricity output, by -2.6% (8.6% in June 2024). The early onset of the southwest monsoon, with its erratic and uneven distribution, led to water logging in large parts of the mining belts in Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal, hampering a key economic activity. Ranchi's regional meteorological office has said that Jharkhand recorded 504.8 mm (against a normal of 307 mm) between June 1 and July 12 – but five districts were categorised as rain deficient. The resultant damage to the power distribution infrastructure and disruptions to supply chains may have contributed to the sluggish growth in industrial output at 3.9% in June, up from 3.5% a year ago. This in turn, is likely to have led to subdued power demand. While mining and power production collectively make up for almost a quarter (22.3%) of the IIP's weightage, the rest is apportioned for manufacturing activities. The robust growth in capital (3.5%), intermediate (5.5%) and infrastructure (7.2%) goods output, indicates that much of industrial growth continues to hinge on the government's infrastructure spends.

There has been a general reluctance, both institutionally and in public economic discourse in India, to explicitly correlate disruptions in economic activity with climate-related events, especially in official narratives such as the IIP or GDP data releases. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) tend to frame industrial and economic under-performance in terms of 'high base effects; supply chain bottlenecks; input cost fluctuations; global demand softening; and domestic consumption contraction'. Climate-related disruptions, such as in mining belts, are rarely mentioned in IIP or national accounts commentary. Economic data agencies in India have been slow to integrate climate risk frameworks into routine macroeconomic reporting, unlike institutions such as the European Central Bank or the Bank of England which have begun mapping climate risk to output and financial stability. True, climate attribution is complex: linking a specific event such as waterlogging in a coal mine to broader climate change involves scientific rigour and probabilistic modelling. Policymakers often avoid this due to fear of politicising economic data. Indeed, the RBI's Financial Stability Reports now include climate-related risks. But this has not yet filtered into production-side metrics such as the IIP. The time has come for India to make a systemic shift to integrate climate attribution to economic activity.

