

Weekly Livelihoods Update


12th March 2019

✚ **Agriculture policy: Need of genuine efforts to resolves the complexities:** The Indian farmers got stuck in to the vicious circle of loss at each and every step, like, when monsoon fails farmers have to face 'sunk cost' and after good monsoon and bountiful crops, again farmer has to suffer because of price fluctuation. The PDS, introduction of MSP and Land Reforms/ceiling were introduced to alleviate poverty & hunger, to protect the farmers and to ensure social justice respectively. These three solutions have adversely affected one another and over the years, a combination of these three solutions, in today's market economy, have created a disaster for the farmer. While these previous policies did help the nation in their time, a fresh and stronger policy is the need of the hour. There is a dire need to reinvent, relook and revamp the farm policy. Today farmers are more dependent on politicians and their schemes which are not designed to make farmer a self-sufficient but more focused on instant gratification. There is need of genuine/true future thinking policymaker who genuinely respects the farmer will look to strengthen him and enhance his independence, his income earning capacity through a stronger ecosystem. [For further reading: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/spotlight/agriculture-policy-increasing-msp-may-not-be-the-solution/>]

✚ **Iron Lady who broke The Circle of Poverty:** Breaking the vicious cycle of poverty: 300% rate of interest was common in Pullucheri - a village in the deep dense forests of Tamilnadu. After having married at the early age of 12, Chinna Pillai didn't want to accept ruthless poverty and exorbitant interest rates and exploitation in name of fate. She stood up tall and dared the system in a dignified manner. Forming self-help group started lending money to the needy at 60% interest rate which was much cheaper than exorbitant 300% rate of interest. In a span of twenty years she made over 1.2 million families self-sufficient with her leadership and ideas, which even brought her Stree Shakti Puraskar in 1999 and recently Padmashri Award. Owing to her efforts, after 29 years, Kalanjiam Community banking has spread across 63 districts at 250 blocks in 13 states covering 60000 SHGs encompassing 1.2 million families in its fold. [For further reading: <https://www.thebetterindia.com/174635/tamil-nadu-padma-shri-woman-iron-lady-madurai/>]

✚ **Plugging the loophole:** A Good policy strengthened for boosting domestic plastic waste recycling by MoEFCC: India consumes 13 million tonnes of plastic while it recycles on 4 million tonnes of what it consumes. To incentivise domestic plastic recycling units, the Government had banned the import of plastic waste, especially PET bottles, in 2015. But in 2016, it amended the bill and allowed imports as long as they were carried out by agencies situated in SEZs. This amendment done in 2016 is scrapped now in view of a plastic dump being imported into India with this loophole in the law. Indian firms are importing plastic scraps from China, Italy, Malawai and Japan for recycling and the scrap being imported has increased from 12000 tonnes in FY 16-17 to 48000 tonnes in FY 17-18. With this recent amendment, Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones and by Export Oriented Units. [For further reading: <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/environment-ministry-plugs-loophole-that-allowed-plastic-waste-import/article26449791.ece>]

✚ **Who Is the Encroacher of Tribal Lands?** : The Supreme Court's order directing states to evict tribes and other traditional forest dwellers whose claims for recognition of their rights have been rejected. The order is going to affect over 10 lakh families across 16 states, and may cover a much larger number considering that there are other states that are yet to make submissions to the apex court. This is not the first time that the apex court has ordered the eviction of tribes from their traditional and ancestral land. In similar petition which has resulted in countrywide evictions between 2002 and 2004. This process was marred by violence, deaths, protests, and uprooting of around 3 lakh households. This time the petitioners blame the tribes for deforestation and encroachment on forestlands, including protected areas, and thereby posing a threat to wildlife. Isn't this is contradictory to the reality?, since independence, tribal areas have been exploited for mining of minerals and setting up of industries and other infrastructure development projects, such as power, dams, roads, and defence establishments, which have not only led to massive deforestation, but also the eviction of tribes and other forest dwellers from their habitats. The provisions provided in the Constitution treat tribes in a special way. It is important that judiciary get familiarise themselves with the provisions, laws and the spirit in which the framers of the Constitution viewed the tribal populations. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/9/editorials/who-encroacher-tribal-lands.html>]

 **Breathing clean:** The IQ AirVisual 2018 World Air Quality Report published in collaboration with Greenpeace emphasize that Delhi remains an extremely hazardous city to live in. Delhi exposes people to air containing annual average fine particulate matter (PM2.5) of 113.5 micrograms per cubic metre, when it should be no more than 10 micrograms as per WHO guidelines. Government has taken initiatives which are not giving any dramatic reduction in near term pollution. The Delhi government, which has done well to decide on inducting 1,000 electric buses, should speed up the plan and turn its entire fleet green. A transition to electric vehicles for all commercial applications, with funding from the Centre's programme for adoption of EVs, should be a priority in cities. [For further reading: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/breathing-clean/article26460219.ece>]