EDITORIALS - 22ND JUL 2026

1. BUILDING AN ATMANIRBHAR PHILANTHROPY ECOSYSTEM

(GS Paper II Governance, GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'Building an Atmanirbhar philanthropy ecosystem' was published in The Hindu on 22nd Jul 2026, highlights the need for proportionate regulation and broad-based domestic giving to build a self-reliant philanthropic ecosystem.

Changing Landscape and FCRA Context

- Domestic philanthropy now exceeds foreign inflows, driven by family giving, CSR, entrepreneurs and digitally enabled individual donors.
- Sovereign regulation of foreign capital is legitimate, but FCRA regulation must remain proportionate, predictable and administratively efficient.
- NGO Darpan lists nearly six lakh voluntary organisations, while only about 14,500 possess active FCRA registration.
- Despite tighter rules, foreign contributions doubled from about ₹10,000 crore to ₹22,000 crore during the past decade.
- The regulatory transition disrupted some organisations through delayed renewals and cancellations, while also exposing governance and documentation weaknesses.
- Domestic private giving exceeds ₹1.18 lakh crore annually, over five times foreign inflows, according to the Bain-Dasra India Philanthropy Report 2026.

Better Regulation and Domestic Capital

- Better regulation, through deficiency notices, correction windows, clarifications and independent appeals, can protect legal integrity without paralysing genuine organisations.
- The FCRA 2.0 platform offers an opportunity to simplify compliance and introduce risk-based supervision.

- Indian philanthropy has progressed from foreign funding to CSR, which now channels over ₹40,000 crore annually, and must next mobilise citizens and families.
- High-net-worth giving has lagged wealth creation, leaving substantial domestic philanthropic capital untapped.
- Raising Section 80G deductions from 50% to 100% and the income ceiling to 25% could encourage larger donations at limited fiscal cost.
- Allowing donations of appreciated listed shares, with safeguards and time-bound disposal, could unlock entrepreneurs' equity-based wealth for social purposes.

Democratising Philanthropic Participation

- India's 220 million demat accounts, expanding SIP culture and widespread UPI use provide infrastructure for recurring small donations.
- A credible Social Stock Exchange could connect citizens with verified organisations through transparent disclosures and measurable social impact.
- Domestic philanthropy creates ownership, strengthening governance, volunteering, accountability and the broader social contract alongside financial support.
- Foreign philanthropy will remain valuable for research, innovation and knowledge exchange, but should complement rather than shape India's development.

Beyond Editorial

Risks of Philanthropic Power

- Agenda distortion: WHO received 87% of voluntary contributions as earmarked funds in 2022–23, allowing donors to influence programme priorities.
- Elite influence: Mark Zuckerberg's $100 million Newark donation demonstrated how individual donors can influence public education priorities.

- Regional concentration: Maharashtra received ₹6,065.95 crore in CSR funding during 2023–24, reflecting its concentration in industrialised States.
- Accountability gap: American donor-advised funds provide immediate tax benefits without compulsory annual payouts, permitting delayed transfers to operating charities.
- Tax expenditure: Section 80G deductions cost the exchequer ₹852.65 crore in corporate revenue during 2023–24.
- State withdrawal: Britain's Big Society expanded charitable delivery of public services, prompting parliamentary concerns over accountability and expenditure oversight.
- Project sustainability: The Avahan HIV programme required phased transfer from the Gates Foundation to the government for institutional continuity.

2. WHAT INDIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT FAMILIES

(GS Paper II Governance, GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'What India's young people are saying about families' was published in The Hindu on 22nd Jul 2026, highlights that young Indians still desire families but face economic, gender, employment and climate-related barriers.

Demographic Transition and Family Aspirations

- The UNFPA Demographic Futures Survey covered over 1.08 lakh adults across 73 countries, examining barriers to desired families.
- India's total fertility rate has reached 2.0, below the 2.1 replacement level, following sustained social-sector investments.
- Investments in girls' education, maternal healthcare and contraceptive choice reduced marriages before 18 from 23.3% to 20.1%.
- Around four in ten women and one-third of men consider two children ideal, reflecting continued commitment to family life.

Barriers Facing Young Indians

- Nearly four in ten respondents cited financial constraints, followed by inadequate housing, insecure employment and childcare concerns.
- Young women perform over five hours of unpaid care work daily, compared with only half an hour among men.
- Only 15% of young women undertake paid work, against 55% of young men, forcing difficult career-family choices.
- Nearly all respondents reported climate change affecting their lives, safety or mental peace, while almost half feared overlapping economic, environmental and conflict risks.
- Family postponement reflects demand for economic stability and secure living conditions, rather than rejection of parenthood.

Regional Differences and Policy Response

- State fertility rates vary sharply from Bihar’s 2.7 to Sikkim’s 1.0, demonstrating uneven demographic transition.
- Kerala, Delhi and Tamil Nadu remain below replacement fertility, while Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand continue catching up.
- Such disparities require State-specific policies, since a uniform national approach cannot address differing demographic realities.
- Public support should prioritise affordable childcare, shared caregiving, dignified employment and youth mental health, including climate anxiety.
- Private employers can provide parental leave, flexible work and family-friendly workplaces to reconcile employment with caregiving.
- India’s 255 million people aged 15–24 represent a major demographic dividend, but this opportunity remains time-bound.

Beyond Editorial

Consequences of Sustained Low Fertility

- Population ageing: Japan's population aged 65 or above reached 29.3% in 2024, increasing demand for pensions, healthcare and long-term care.
- Workforce contraction: South Korea's working-age population share is projected to decline from 72.1% in 2020 to 48.9% by 2060.
- Dependency burden: Across OECD countries, elderly persons per 100 working-age people could increase from 30 in 2020 to 59 by 2060.
- Care deficit: In India, 22% of older adults lived alone or only with spouses in 2021, compared with 9% in 1992.
- Regional divergence: The Economic Survey recorded rising migration towards Tamil Nadu and Kerala alongside increasing out-migration from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- Political tensions: Southern States' opposition to population-based delimitation shows how successful fertility reduction can become a dispute over parliamentary representation.
- Policy dilemma: South Korea's fertility rate remained 0.72 in 2023 despite extensive subsidies, highlighting the need for housing, childcare and workplace reforms.

3. FROM 1991, THREE FOREIGN POLICY LESSONS FOR MANAGING DISRUPTION OF CERTAINTIES

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'From 1991, three foreign policy lessons for managing disruption of certainties' was published in The Indian Express on 22nd Jul 2026, highlights how adaptable diplomacy, strategic debate and domestic reform can help India navigate geopolitical shocks.

Parallels Between 1991 and Present Disruptions

- Iraq's 1990 Kuwait invasion raised oil prices, disrupted remittances and intensified India's balance-of-payments crisis.

- The subsequent Soviet collapse removed India's principal strategic partner, forcing economic reforms and diversification of international partnerships.
- Today, conflict involving Iran threatens energy supplies and Strait of Hormuz navigation, exposing India's continuing Middle Eastern dependence.
- The prolonged Ukraine war is generating uncertainty over Russia's domestic stability, global position and future relations with major powers.
- India now possesses greater economic and diplomatic capacity than in 1991, but deeper global integration has increased its external vulnerabilities.
- Proposed American punitive tariffs against Russian oil importers, potentially extended to Iran, could severely strain India's energy diplomacy.
- India's government has shown diplomatic flexibility, but rigid domestic debates risk constraining policy choices as they did during the 1991 crises.

Three Foreign Policy Lessons

- Strategic certainties are temporary; India must treat unpredictability as a permanent feature and prepare equally for continuity and disruption.
- Rigid consensus is strategically costly, as earlier sentimental support for Saddam Hussein and the Soviet Union obscured inconvenient political realities.
- Contemporary debates similarly personalise Russia around Putin and view Iran mainly through anti-Americanism, neglecting their internal strains and changing relationships.
- Strategic expertise requires deeper knowledge of Russia, Iran, Central Asia and West Asia through languages, history, regional studies and competing scenario-building.
- External shocks cannot be managed through diplomacy alone; as after 1991, domestic reforms must strengthen India's capacity to adapt.

Beyond Editorial

Instruments of Strategic Resilience

- Energy diversification: India now sources crude from 40 countries, while nearly 70% of imports avoid the Strait of Hormuz.
- Strategic reserves: ISPRL maintains 5.33 million tonnes of crude storage across Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru and Padur for emergency supply disruptions.
- Route redundancy: India's ten-year Chabahar Port contract strengthens alternative connectivity with Afghanistan, Central Asia and the International North-South Transport Corridor.
- Payment resilience: The India-UAE settlement system permits trade in rupees and dirhams, reducing dollar dependence and cross-border transaction costs.
- Supply-chain security: India's ₹76,000-crore Semiconductor Mission and Quad contingency network combine domestic manufacturing with trusted-partner coordination during chip disruptions.
- Diaspora protection: Operation Ganga evacuated around 22,500 Indians from Ukraine through 90 flights coordinated with neighbouring countries.
- Minilateral engagement: The Quad's IPMDA shares maritime information for combating illegal fishing, monitoring regional waters and coordinating disaster responses.