



धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः

GOVERNANCE MIRROR

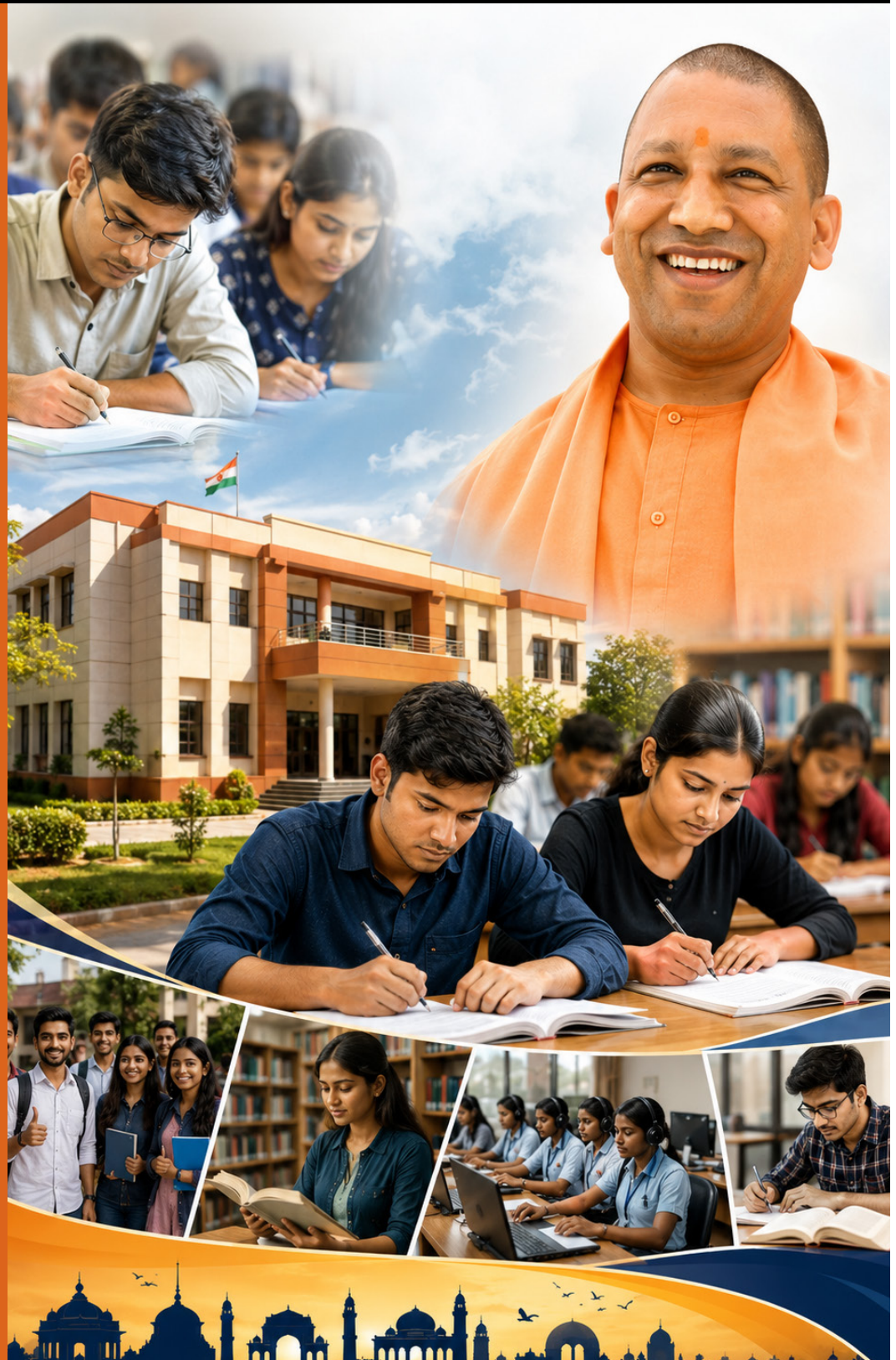
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Stories from Uttar Pradesh

Changing face
of Bureaucratic
leadership

Civil Servants
redefining the
meaning of Public
Administration

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Patron

Mrs. Suman Mishra

Editor-in-Chief

Capt. Prabhanshu Kr Srivastav, IAS (Retd)

Editor

Siddarth Mishra
V/18, Green Park Extn.
LGF, New Delhi 110016
Email: governancecf@gmail.com
Web: www.governancefoundation.org.in
Mob: +91 8447625205, +91-9568822000

Designed by

Mohit Jain
mohit.thedesigner@gmail.com
7838 636 108

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+91 99114 32184

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From the Desk of Editor-in-Chief

The New Grammar of Governance

For decades, India's civil services have carried the burden of public criticism. Bureaucracy was often associated with delay, procedural rigidity, and administrative distance from the people. The officer, in popular perception, became a symbol of a system that governed through files rather than through empathy and imagination.

Yet, across parts of India today—and particularly in Uttar Pradesh—a quiet transformation is reshaping this narrative.

A new generation of civil servants is redefining governance not merely as administration, but as social leadership. Their work in the field of education, reading culture, and youth aspiration reflects an important shift in public administration. Instead of limiting governance to infrastructure and statistics, these officers are attempting to nurture curiosity, confidence, and intellectual growth among children and young citizens. Reading campaigns, school transformation drives, library initiatives, mentorship programmes, and community participation models are emerging as instruments of social change.

More importantly, the public response has been deeply encouraging. Citizens who once viewed government programmes with scepticism are increasingly willing to participate, contribute, and take ownership of educational initiatives.

This transformation marks a movement from governance by authority to governance through participation. The significance of these efforts lies not merely in better

delivery systems, but in the restoration of trust between the state and society. Young officers are increasingly willing to experiment, innovate, and engage directly with communities. They see districts not only as administrative units, but as spaces where aspirations can be shaped and futures can be nurtured.

The evolving story of Uttar Pradesh demonstrates that bureaucracy, when guided by vision and sensitivity, can become a powerful instrument of national renewal. Institutions are ultimately shaped by the imagination of the individuals who lead them.

In nurturing the reading habits, confidence, and dreams of the younger generation, this new administrative leadership is doing far more than implementing policy. It is helping create a more participative, hopeful, and intellectually vibrant society.

Happy reading. Your response/feedback is always welcome.



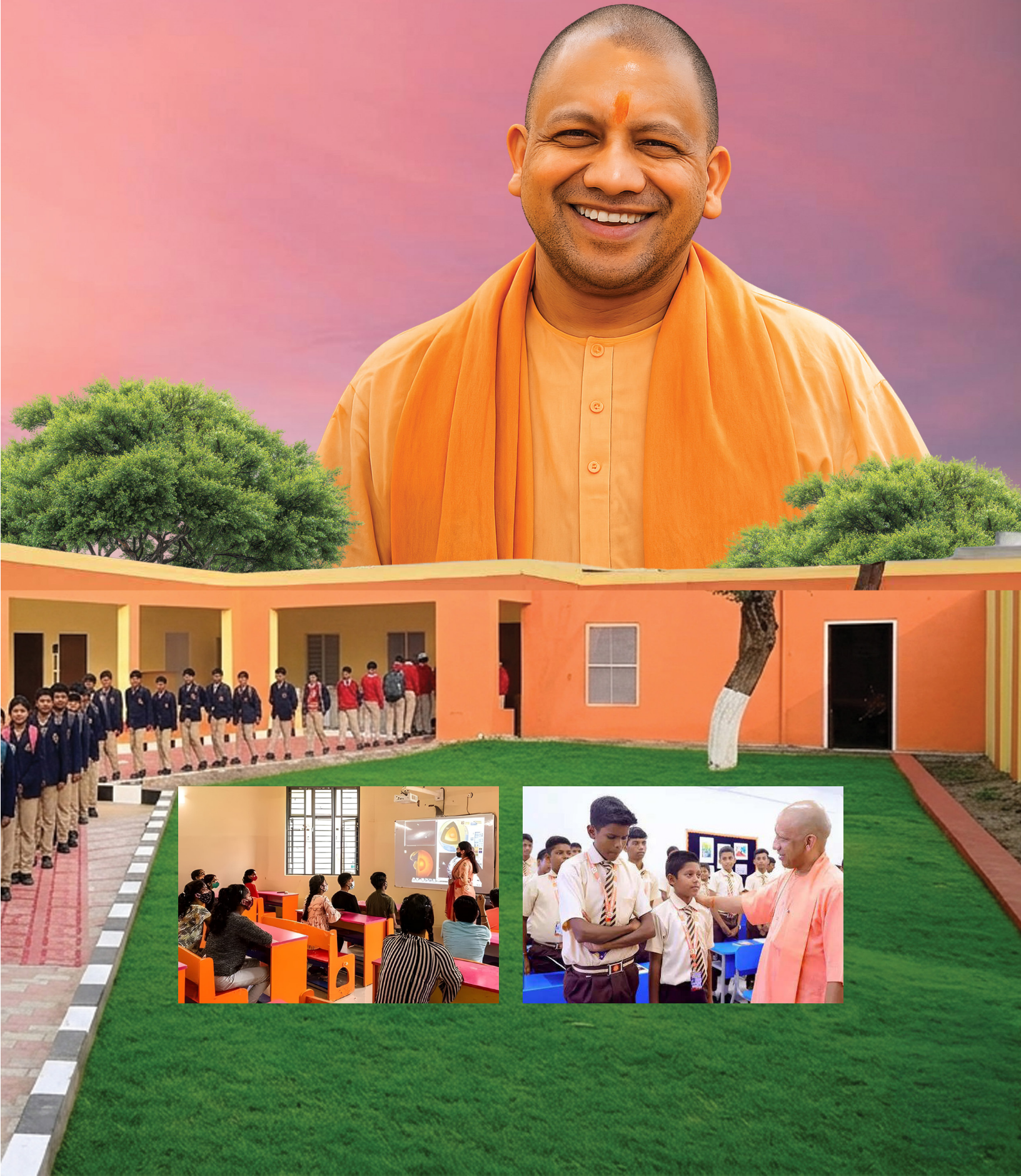
Capt. Prabhanshu Kr Srivastav, IAS (Retd)



OPERATION KAYAKALP

Reimagining Public Education in Uttar Pradesh







by Capt Prabhanshu Kr Srivastav, IAS (Retd)

In the history of educational reforms in India, few state-led initiatives have altered the physical and psychological landscape of public schooling as dramatically as Operation Kayakalp in Uttar Pradesh. Conceived as a comprehensive school transformation movement, the programme sought not merely to renovate school buildings but to restore public confidence in government education itself.

Launched under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath after 2017, Operation Kayakalp emerged from the realization that the condition of school infrastructure was directly linked to educational outcomes, enrolment, dignity of children, and social trust in governance. The programme aimed to bridge the gap between elite private schools and rural government schools by ensuring universal access to essential educational infrastructure.

The initiative represents a convergence of political will, administrative innovation, financial prioritization, and grassroots implementation. It also reflects the role played by senior IAS officers including Nitish Kumar and Vijay Kiran Anand, whose policy conceptualization, monitoring mechanisms, and field execution contributed significantly to the programme's success.

The Educational Context Before Kayakalp

Before 2017, large segments of government schools in Uttar Pradesh suffered from severe infrastructural deficiencies. Thousands of schools lacked:

- **Functional toilets**
- **Drinking water facilities**
- **Boundary walls**
- **Electricity**
- **Furniture**
- **Libraries**
- **Proper classrooms**
- **Digital learning facilities**

Many schools operated in dilapidated buildings with poor sanitation and unsafe environments. Dropout rates were high, especially among girls, while parents increasingly shifted children to low-cost private schools despite financial hardship.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath repeatedly emphasized that education is the foundation of social transformation and that government schools must become centres of dignity rather than symbols of neglect.

Vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

The philosophical core of Operation Kayakalp was rooted in the governance vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath: "quality education with dignity for every child."

His administration viewed educational infrastructure not merely as construction activity but as a social justice intervention. The programme aligned with broader state objectives:

- **Human capital development**
- **Rural upliftment**
- **Women's empowerment**
- **Digital inclusion**
- **Reduction in educational inequality**
- **Restoration of public trust in state institutions**

Under his leadership, education was treated as a priority sector alongside law and order, infrastructure, healthcare, and investment promotion.

The Chief Minister personally reviewed school infrastructure progress in periodic meetings and emphasized measurable outcomes. According to government assessments, the percentage of schools possessing core infrastructure facilities rose dramatically after the implementation of Kayakalp.

The programme reflected several hallmarks of Yogi Adityanath's governance model:

- **Mission-mode implementation**
- **District-level accountability**
- **Direct monitoring by top leadership**
- **Convergence of departments and funds**
- **Outcome-based governance**
- **Public visibility of reforms**
- **Policy Conceptualization and Administrative Leadership**

Role of IAS Officer Nitish Kumar

Nitish Kumar played a key role in policy structuring and institutional planning related to educational transformation initiatives. The emphasis on measurable infrastructure indicators, district monitoring systems, and inter-departmental coordination reflected a modern governance approach rooted in administrative scalability.



The programme's design incorporated:

- **Standardized infrastructure benchmarks**
- **Data-based monitoring**
- **Gram Panchayat participation**
- **Fund convergence mechanisms**
- **Timelines linked to measurable targets**

Such a structured approach helped convert a broad political vision into an executable governance framework.

Role of IAS Officer Vijay Kiran Anand

Vijay Kiran Anand became widely associated with the implementation architecture of the programme. His administrative leadership helped operationalize the initiative across districts and institutionalize field-level execution systems.



Key implementation features included:

- **Intensive district reviews**
- **Real-time monitoring**
- **School mapping**
- **Infrastructure verification**
- **Public reporting mechanisms**

Coordination with district magistrates and education officers

The execution model emphasized both speed and accountability, enabling rapid transformation across thousands of schools simultaneously.

The programme demonstrated how committed civil servants can translate political intent into measurable public outcomes.

Structure of Operation Kayakalp

Operation Kayakalp focused on upgrading schools across multiple infrastructure parameters. These included:

- **Functional toilets for boys and girls**
- **Clean drinking water**
- **Electrification**
- **Boundary walls and gates**
- **Classroom repair**
- **Furniture for students**
- **Kitchens for mid-day meals**
- **Libraries**
- **Smart classrooms**
- **Ramps for differently-abled students**
- **Handwashing facilities**
- **Sports infrastructure**
- **Digital learning spaces**

The programme reportedly covered more than 1.3 lakh government schools across Uttar Pradesh.

Government data and media reports indicate that infrastructure coverage improved from roughly one-third of schools before 2017 to above 90 percent in several key indicators after implementation.

Governance Innovation and Monitoring Mechanism

One of the defining features of Operation Kayakalp was its monitoring architecture.

The programme adopted:

- **District-level ranking systems**
- **Periodic inspections**
- **Geo-tagged documentation**
- **Administrative reviews**
- **Multi-source funding convergence**
- **Panchayat participation**

The Chief Minister regularly reviewed progress with district magistrates and education officials, ensuring that implementation remained visible at the highest level of government.

The reform also aligned with:

- **School Chalo Abhiyan**

- **NIPUN Bharat Mission**
- **PM SHRI Schools**
- **Digital learning initiatives**
- **Teacher training reforms**

This integrated governance approach ensured that infrastructure improvements translated into educational participation and improved learning environments.

Social Impact of Operation Kayakalp

1. Restoration of Dignity in Public Education

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Kayakalp has been psychological transformation. Rural families increasingly began to perceive government schools as respectable educational spaces rather than institutions of compulsion.

Improved infrastructure enhanced:

- **Student morale**
- **Attendance**
- **Parent confidence**
- **Teacher motivation**

2. Increased Girl Child Participation

The construction of separate toilets and safer campuses significantly improved educational access for girls, especially in rural regions.

Safe sanitation infrastructure is globally recognized as a major factor influencing female school retention. Kayakalp addressed this structural issue at scale.

3. Rise in Enrolment

Government reports indicate increased enrolment and reduced dropout rates after implementation of school modernization initiatives.

Parents who had earlier preferred private schools began reconsidering government institutions due to improved facilities.

4. Digital Inclusion

Smart classrooms, ICT labs, and digital libraries helped bridge the digital divide between urban and rural learners.

The programme thus contributed not only to infrastructure

creation but also to long-term educational modernization.

5. Community Participation

Kayakalp also created local ownership of schools. Gram Panchayats, teachers, district administrations, and local communities became stakeholders in school development.

This community participation enhanced sustainability and accountability.

National Recognition and Governance Significance

Operation Kayakalp has increasingly been cited as a governance model for large-scale public infrastructure transformation in the education sector. Several reports noted that the initiative gained recognition for improving school infrastructure and modernizing educational delivery systems.

Its importance lies in demonstrating that:

- **Large states can execute mission-mode reforms**
- **Educational infrastructure can be transformed rapidly**
- **Political leadership and bureaucracy can work cohesively**
- **Rural public institutions can regain public trust**

The initiative also showed how educational reform can become a visible instrument of state legitimacy and social transformation.

Challenges and the Road Ahead

Despite its achievements, the next phase of reform requires focus on:

- **Learning outcomes**
- **Teacher quality**
- **Foundational literacy and numeracy**
- **Technology integration**
- **School maintenance systems**
- **Secondary and senior secondary expansion**
- **Educational equity in remote regions**

Infrastructure transformation must now evolve into a deeper pedagogical transformation.





by Capt Prabhanshu Kr Srivastav, IAS (Retd)
with inputs from Shri Partha Sarthi Sensharma.

Reading Revolution in Uttar Pradesh:



The Initiative of Shri Partha Sarthi Sensharma IAS (Additional Chief Secretary, Basic and Secondary Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh) to Cultivate Reading Habits in Schools

In an era dominated by digital distraction, declining attention spans, and excessive dependence on mobile devices, the initiative led by Shri Parth Sarathi Sen Sharma to institutionalize reading habits in schools across Uttar Pradesh represents a transformative educational intervention. The programme seeks not merely to improve literacy, but to reshape the intellectual culture of schools by making reading a daily civic and academic practice. Through structured newspaper reading, library engagement, book campaigns, vocabulary exercises, and student-led literary activities, the initiative attempts to restore reading as the foundation of learning, critical thinking, citizenship, and personality development.

The crisis of reading habits among school students has emerged as one of the defining educational concerns of the 21st century. Across India, children increasingly consume fragmented digital content through short videos, social media snippets, and algorithm-driven entertainment. While technology has democratized access to information, it has simultaneously weakened deep reading, reflection, concentration, and analytical comprehension. Against this backdrop, the Government of Uttar Pradesh introduced a statewide reading campaign under the leadership of Shri Partha Sarthi Sensharma. The initiative mandated

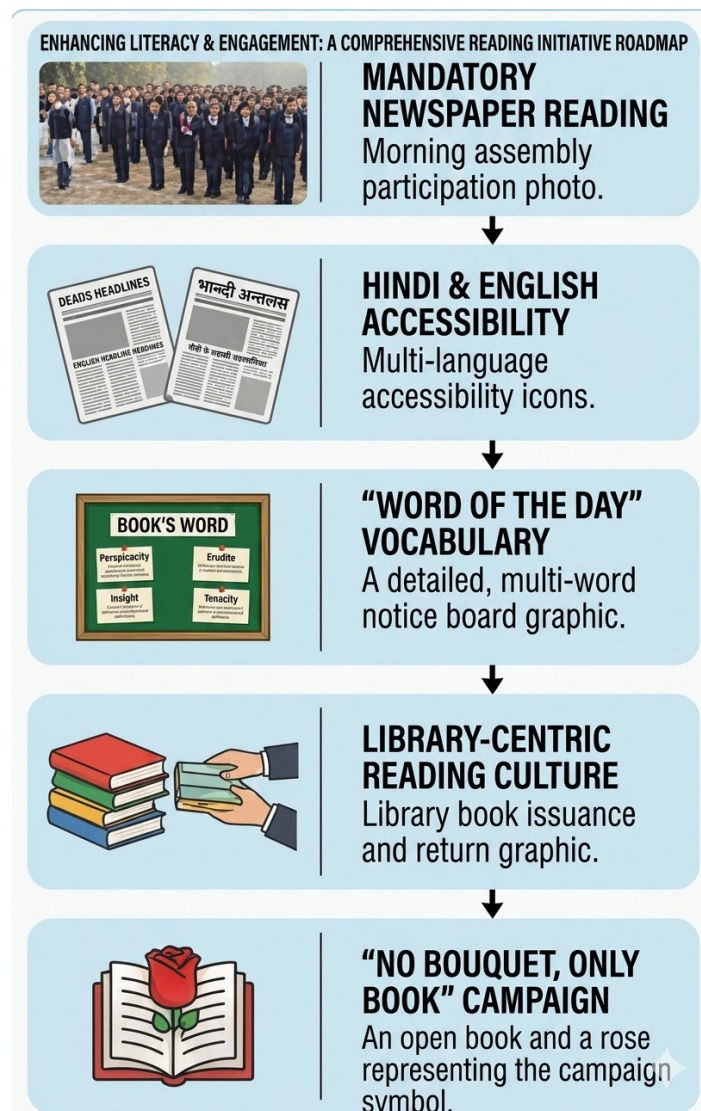
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The Core Features of the Initiative

The programme introduced several interconnected reforms:

1. **Mandatory Newspaper Reading:** Schools were instructed to dedicate at least ten minutes daily during morning assemblies for newspaper reading. Students read editorials, national and international news, sports updates, and important developments on a rotational basis. This transformed current affairs from a peripheral activity into a daily pedagogic exercise.



2. **Availability of Hindi and English Newspapers:** The initiative ensured the availability of both Hindi and English newspapers in school libraries. This dual-language approach was particularly important in Uttar Pradesh because it simultaneously strengthened regional language comprehension, English vocabulary, bilingual confidence, and competitive examination readiness.
3. **“Word of the Day” Vocabulary Programme:** Schools were directed to identify difficult words from newspapers and display them on notice boards daily. Vocabulary acquisition through contextual reading is globally acknowledged as one of the most effective methods of language development.
4. **Library-Centric Reading Culture:** The campaign

emphasized the weekly issuance of non-syllabus books, the use of district libraries, student book reviews, reading summaries during assemblies, and interaction with writers and literary personalities. This expanded education beyond textbooks and examinations.

5. “No Bouquet, Only Book” Campaign: Books were promoted as gifts and awards in schools instead of ceremonial mementos. Symbolically, this initiative attempted to reposition books as objects of aspiration and prestige.

Why Such an Initiative Was Necessary

- **The Crisis of Screen Dependency:** Modern students spend unprecedented amounts of time on mobile devices. Excessive screen exposure affects concentration, sleep cycles, reading stamina, comprehension ability, and emotional stability. The Uttar Pradesh initiative directly acknowledged this challenge and sought to shift students “from screens to pages.” This is not merely a pedagogical correction but a civilizational necessity.
- **Declining Reading Comprehension:** Many students today can decode text mechanically but struggle with interpretation, inference, sustained comprehension, and analytical reflection. Newspaper and book reading develop cognitive endurance — the ability to engage deeply with ideas over time.
- **Weak General Awareness Among Students:** Traditional classroom systems often produce examination-oriented learners with limited understanding of governance, the economy, the environment, science, international affairs, and social realities. Daily newspaper engagement creates informed citizenship.
- **Need for Critical Thinking:** In the digital age, misinformation spreads rapidly. The initiative specifically aimed to improve media literacy and awareness against fake news. Students exposed to editorials and comparative viewpoints learn evidence-based reasoning, opinion formation, and intellectual skepticism. These are foundational democratic skills.

Educational Benefits of the Initiative

- **Improved Language Skills:** Reading regularly improves grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, and expressive ability. Students exposed to quality language naturally become better writers and speakers.
- **Better Academic Performance:** Reading habits positively influence nearly every academic discipline: history through comprehension, science through analytical reading, mathematics through logical sequencing, and social sciences through interpretation. A reading child becomes a self-learning child.
- **Enhanced Competitive Examination Readiness:** Civil services, defence services, banking, law, and management examinations all require comprehension, general awareness, vocabulary, and analytical writing. The initiative therefore creates long-term human capital for the state.
- **Development of Emotional Intelligence:** Books expose children to diverse lives, moral dilemmas, historical struggles, and human emotions. Reading literature develops empathy, patience, and imagination.
- **Improved Communication Skills:** The programme’s emphasis on reading aloud, discussions, summaries, and editorial reviews strengthens public speaking, articulation, confidence, and leadership ability.

Social and Civilizational Impact

- **Democratization of Knowledge:** For economically weaker students, school libraries may be the only access point to quality reading material. The initiative therefore acts as an equalizer.
- **Revitalization of Public Libraries:** The policy reconnects schools with district libraries and community reading spaces. This has the potential to revive a fading public intellectual culture.
- **Strengthening Democratic Citizenship:** A society that reads newspapers critically becomes more informed, more participatory, and less vulnerable to manipulation. Reading habits are ultimately linked to democratic maturity.

- **Building Intellectual Confidence in Government Schools:** Historically, reading culture has often been associated with elite private institutions. By institutionalizing literary habits in government schools, Uttar Pradesh attempts to democratize intellectual development itself.

Administrative Vision Behind the Initiative

The initiative demonstrates several notable features of administrative leadership by Shri Parth Sarathi Sen Sharma:

1. **Recognition of Root Causes:** Instead of focusing exclusively on examinations and infrastructure, the initiative addresses the foundational habit underlying all learning: reading.
2. **Low-Cost, High-Impact Reform:** Unlike expensive infrastructure projects, reading campaigns require modest financial investment but can produce transformational long-term outcomes. This reflects administrative efficiency and strategic policy thinking.
3. **Integration Rather Than Fragmentation:** The programme integrates assemblies, libraries, classroom discussions, competitions, language development, and extracurricular activities. It therefore becomes a holistic educational ecosystem rather than an isolated scheme.

Uttar Pradesh in the Context of Educational Improvement

Recent educational discussions around Uttar Pradesh indicate significant improvements in foundational learning outcomes over the past several years. Public discourse referencing ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) findings has highlighted gains in reading and arithmetic performance among government school students. The reading initiative aligns perfectly with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, foundational literacy goals, experiential learning, and competency-based education. The campaign can therefore be viewed as part of a broader educational transformation underway in the state.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite its promise, several challenges remain to be addressed:

- **Uneven School Infrastructure:** Some schools still lack functional libraries or adequate reading material.
- **Teacher Training:** Teachers must be trained to facilitate reading discussions rather than treating reading as a ritualistic exercise.
- **Monitoring and Sustainability:** Sustained implementation across a state as large as Uttar Pradesh requires strong monitoring systems.
- **Language Diversity:** Reading material must be culturally relevant and age-appropriate across different districts and social backgrounds.

Long-Term Impact Potential

If implemented consistently over a decade, the initiative could produce:

- A generation of better readers
- Stronger civil service aspirants
- Improved employability
- More informed citizens
- Reduced digital dependency
- Greater social awareness

Most importantly, it can restore intellectual curiosity among children.

THEME / AREA	DETAILS
 GLOBAL SHIFT TOWARDS READING	❖ Efforts are now being undertaken even in Nordic countries (usually top performers in HDI) to return to pen-and-paper practices, highlighting the renewed importance of traditional reading and writing habits.
 BOOK PROCUREMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH	❖ The Government of Uttar Pradesh has procured a large number of books for schools as well as district libraries to strengthen reading culture and educational resources.
 BOOKS AS SYMBOLIC GIFTS	❖ In various government programmes, departments now present books to the Honourable Chief Minister and other ministers or dignitaries, a practice that is being widely appreciated.
 FOCUS BEYOND READING	❖ Beyond reading, the education department is now placing emphasis on independent writing, encouraging creativity, expression, and intellectual development among students.



by Sanjay R Bhoosreddy is 1989 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh Cadre and presently serving as Chairman RERA Uttar Pradesh

Housing has been a basic human need since the dawn of civilization. From primitive shelters to planned urban habitats, the quest for a secure dwelling has shaped societies and cultures. However, in contemporary times, the real estate sector has evolved far beyond fulfilling an individual household requirement. It has emerged as a central pillar of socio-economic development, influencing the national economic ethos in profound ways.

The modern real estate sector, comprising primarily residential and commercial segments, drives a multitude of allied industries. Cement and steel manufacturing, banking and financial services, logistics and warehousing, consumer goods and home appliances, hospitality and

retail, all depend directly or indirectly upon the health of this sector. Every residential complex and commercial tower stimulates demand across supply chains, generating employment and expanding economic opportunity. In that sense, real estate is not an isolated industry; it is an ecosystem that sustains growth.

Today, the real estate sector stands as the second largest contributor to GDP and employment both in the State of Uttar Pradesh and in the country. If India is to achieve its vision of becoming a \$5 trillion economy within a targeted timeframe, sectors beyond agriculture must accelerate their growth. Real estate is uniquely positioned to catalyse this acceleration.

In the financial year 2024–25, the sector contributed 7.5 percent to the national GDP. Projections indicate that by 2030, it could grow into a \$1 trillion industry, contributing approximately 13 to 15 percent of GDP. By 2047, when India celebrates a century of independence, the sector is expected to reach nearly \$5.8 trillion in value, contributing around 15.5 percent to the national economy. These figures are not aspirational rhetoric; they reflect the sector's inherent multiplier effect and its capacity to absorb labour, capital and technology at scale.

In Uttar Pradesh, the contribution of real estate to the State GDP is even more pronounced. In 2025, the sector accounted for 12.76 percent of the state's GDP, compared to 7.5 percent nationally. The year 2025 witnessed a phenomenal 53 percent rise in investment in the real estate sector over 2024. This surge did not emerge suddenly; it has been building steadily since 2023 and has gathered momentum at a pace that few would have anticipated before that year. The figures speak clearly: the sector is on an upward trajectory.

A central pillar behind this transformation is the regulatory framework established under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act. In Uttar Pradesh, the Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority has functioned not merely as a regulator, but as a balancer and dispenser of justice. RERA's mandate is to foster a healthy, accountable, transparent and vibrant real estate sector while safeguarding the interests of all stakeholders.

The impact of RERA in Uttar Pradesh has been both measurable and transformative. Project registrations have increased steadily, and so have the number of saleable units and total investments. The disposal of complaints has been nothing short of remarkable. There was a time when nearly forty percent of all RERA complaints in the country were from Uttar Pradesh, with as many as 30 to 35 complaints being filed daily. That number has now reduced to approximately 9 to 10 per day. If legacy projects are excluded, the complaint ratio per new project is minimal.

Time-bound completion of projects is becoming the norm rather than the exception. Promoters are securing Occupancy Certificates and Completion Certificates in a structured and transparent manner. Consumers are

receiving possession and, in case of grievances, have access to speedy redressal through RERA. Financial institutions increasingly rely on RERA registrations before sanctioning project finance. Their recoveries have improved and non-performing assets have declined in projects operating within the RERA framework.

RERA has standardized processes and documentation, ensured the maintenance of project-specific accounts and introduced clear guidelines regarding extension and withdrawal of registrations. The real estate agent certification programme is nurturing trained and ethical intermediaries who serve consumers responsibly. Those who err know that regulatory oversight is vigilant; those who suffer from unfair practices, know that protection is assured.

Equally significant is the role played by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in building the infrastructure backbone that supports real estate development. The development of the Noida International Airport in Gautam Buddha Nagar represents a transformative milestone. This ambitious project is poised to redefine regional connectivity and catalyse commercial, residential and logistics development across western Uttar Pradesh.

The state's vast network of expressways, including the Purvanchal Expressway, the Bundelkhand Expressway and the Ganga Expressway, has significantly enhanced intercity connectivity. Metro rail expansions in major cities and the revitalization of religious and cultural hubs have further stimulated real estate growth.

As a result, real estate development is no longer confined to the NCR belt. Cities such as Varanasi, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur, Jhansi, Mathura and Bareilly are witnessing accelerated project registrations. Lucknow today records project numbers comparable to Gautam Buddha Nagar, reflecting balanced and widespread growth.

For developers, RERA has created a level playing field. It ensures that only those willing to adhere to the rulebook, accept accountability and deliver on commitments can thrive. Developers are required to ensure clear land titles, obtain requisite approvals, establish RERA-compliant banking arrangements and disclose financial details transparently. Planning must precede execution. The

Authority provides comprehensive user manuals and handholding during registration, ensuring approvals within stipulated timelines. The forthcoming RERA Portal 2.0 will further digitize and streamline compliance processes.

Consumer trust forms the bedrock of this revival. Prior to RERA, large-scale fund diversions and stalled projects had severely eroded confidence. Prominent projects remained incomplete despite substantial collections from buyers. Today, transparency through online disclosures and prompt grievance redressal has restored faith. Consumer confidence itself has become a driver of demand. Buyers are willing to invest at higher values because they believe that regulatory safeguards exist and that RERA stands as a sentinel of their rights.

Financial institutions have also benefited from this ecosystem. Although real estate projects are primarily financed by consumers, structured project finance and home loans are critical for timely completion. RERA compliance simplifies due diligence for banks. The first document scrutinized during loan processing is often the RERA registration. Institutions such as SWAMIH Investment Fund I are financing stressed projects within the RERA framework, aiding rehabilitation and safeguarding homebuyers.

Yet challenges remain. It is a matter of concern that 58 companies promoting 268 projects in Uttar Pradesh are undergoing Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process. Such developments jeopardize thousands of homebuyers and substantial investments. Often, the triggers for insolvency are avoidable. Delays in project execution, imprudent borrowing, failure to adhere to repayment schedules and poor financial management can push companies into distress.

Developers must maintain sound managerial and financial health. Timely adherence to construction schedules and repayment commitments is essential. Liabilities toward consumers should be discharged promptly. Litigation should never be used as a strategy to defeat consumer protection. Compliance with RERA provisions is not merely a statutory requirement; it is a shield against corporate decline.

The path to a \$5 trillion India runs through disciplined growth, institutional trust and collaborative governance. Real estate, with its vast linkages and employment potential, stands at the centre of this journey. In Uttar Pradesh, robust infrastructure, proactive governance, regulatory transparency and rising consumer confidence have created a conducive environment for sustained expansion.

The transformation witnessed over the past seven years demonstrates that reform, when implemented with commitment and fairness, can restore credibility to an entire sector. Real estate is no longer defined by opacity and speculation. It is increasingly defined by professionalism, accountability and structured growth.

As we move forward, the collective responsibility of regulators, government authorities, developers, financial institutions and consumers is clear. Together, we must ensure that growth remains inclusive, ethical and sustainable. If we succeed in maintaining this equilibrium, the real estate sector will not only contribute significantly to India's \$5 trillion aspiration but will stand as one of the strongest pillars supporting the nation's economic future.

How Individual Effort Created a Model Anganwadi Centre in Sonbhadra District

By Danish Iqbal

(Courtesy: GaonConnection)

Ved Prakash Ojha took it upon himself to revamp a dysfunctional Anganwadi centre in his village, Kon, located in the Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh. Before his intervention, the centre lacked basic infrastructure and had no facilities to make the attending children feel comfortable or cared for.

Sonbhadra is one of the 115 districts in the country that falls under the Union government's Aspirational District Programme, which aims to develop India's least developed areas.

The Decision to Adopt In January, the state government announced that dysfunctional Anganwadi centres could be adopted by private individuals. Spotting an opportunity to make a difference, Ojha stepped forward in February.

"The condition of this Anganwadi Kendra was not good. Children sat on the floor and there was nothing to entertain them or keep them engaged. The sole Anganwadi worker was mostly occupied with administrative duties and paperwork. I decided to adopt the Anganwadi at my village. The government has now declared the centre as a 'Model Anganwadi'," Ojha told Gaon Connection.

The Transformation and Financial Investment Ojha has invested both time and personal funds to completely overhaul the facility. The revenue to maintain and run the centre comes from a digital Common Service Centre (CSC) that he owns in the village.

His expenditures include:



- Benches for children: ₹36,000
- Infrastructure Revamp (Painting, posters, and colorful graffiti): ₹14,000
- Monthly Maintenance: Approximately ₹12,000 per month
- Additional Staff Salary: ₹7,000 per month

Impact and Daily Operations

Today, the centre features benches, a smart television, audio-visual aids, and a nutritional breakfast for the kids. Thanks to these upgrades, enrollment has tripled, growing to 60 children who now visit the centre to learn and play.

To assist the overwhelmed primary Anganwadi worker, Ojha recruited Neha Patel, a college graduate. She manages the children daily from 8:00 AM to noon (excluding Sundays).

"Children learn very quickly from the digital aids like the smart TV and the Alexa speakers. I am confident that they are the sharpest kids in the entire Sonbhadra district," Patel told Gaon Connection with a beaming smile.

Official Recognition

Recognizing the massive turnaround driven by individual initiative, Rajeev Singh, the District Programme Officer of the state government's Bal Vikas Seva Evam Pustahar Vibhag, officially inaugurated the newly transformed model Anganwadi centre on July 10.

THE ECO-SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE



Ending Rural Land Gridlock

A young district collector's systematic reforms turn a backlog of land disputes into a case study in efficient, people-centric governance

by Anil Swarup an author and a former civil servant

Land disputes lead to a variety of problems. In rural areas, they get compounded because of illiteracy, lack of awareness, and inadequate knowledge about laws. There is a huge cost of these delays in terms of time and money, but it all goes unnoticed and unattended. These delays have other implications as well. A large number of crimes committed can be traced back to land disputes.

Unlike other civil and criminal disputes, those relating to land in rural areas are handled by the district administration in the form of revenue cases. Hence, the role of the district administration becomes extremely critical in settling/deciding upon these disputes. This was true of the Basti district as well in Uttar Pradesh.

In September 2023, a young IAS officer, Vamsi Andra, was appointed as the District Collector of Basti district. Most of the denizens of this district are largely employed in agriculture and agro-based small-scale industries.



The Problem

Soon after taking over as Collector, Vamsi Andra found out that, of the long list of cases in the district, most were related to mutation, correction of records, title declaration, measurement and demarcation of land, removal of encroachment upon government lands, consolidation, revenue collections in terms of stamp duty, cases under the Gangster Act, validation of pattas (land deeds), and correction of maps. He soon came

to the conclusion that, in an agrarian structure, the major economic activities of most residents are tied to farming, where field issues related to land paymaish (measurements), medh (farm boundaries), nali (drainage), kharanja (pavement), and batwara (fund allocation) were very prominent. These were petty disputes where people wasted their time unnecessarily.

The Philosophy: Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

Vamsi felt that when two people fight, there would be disputes, and if petty issues linger, the dispute would become complicated. Such circumstances also promote animosities among them, at times leading to criminal activities. So, justice should be delivered on time, as justice delayed is justice denied. He worked on this mantra. He was clear in his mind: a person should not have to visit the court for long periods repeatedly. The priority was to resolve these cases as soon as possible.

The Strategy: Systematic Monitoring

A strategy of systematic monitoring was worked out. A summary of long-standing cases was prepared. A systematic, daily status monitoring report of each and every case was put in place. The number of new filings and the number of old filings between one year and five years was finalised. The reasons for delays in settling these disputes were analysed and discussed with the presiding officers. The officers themselves came up with very useful suggestions. More often than not, advocates sought postponement of hearings on account of frivolous reasons, and their requests were granted as a matter of routine. One of the suggestions was to seek written arguments from the counsels if they were not in a position to attend the court personally. The idea was not to keep postponing dates because the counsels could not attend on account of some reason or the other. On many occasions, the officers themselves were ostensibly tied up with more pressing engagements. The importance of attending courts was conveyed to the officers, and their attendance was closely monitored. This helped enormously, as the presiding officers now appreciated the importance of attending the court regularly.

Officers were given daily targets. If the counsel was not present, the presiding officers were authorised to go to the field and dispose of issues based on the written statements given by the plaintiff as well as the complainant.

Impact

Narrating the woes that were brought to the family because of the year-long pending case, Laxmi tells The Better India, "We had married off our daughter and have also been

bearing medical expenses of Rs 20,000 a month. To manage these expenses, we took a loan worth Rs 5 lakh. To repay the loan amounts, we needed to sell the land. So, we brought our case to the notice of the concerned officers, but nobody listened to us."

This January, her case was resolved. She profusely thanked the administration for resolving the issue in just a couple of hearings. She got permission to sell her land. "There were people in our village whose cases were pending for as long as five years; their cases were resolved too," adds the farmer, who lives in Palha village in Basti.

What is mentioned above is just anecdotal evidence. However, even the empirical data reveal a drastic reduction in the number of pending cases. There were 50,473 cases pending on 1 October 2023. 38,286 fresh cases were filed between 1 October 2023 and 1 June 2024. Thus, the total number of cases pending was 89,029. As a consequence of the system put in place, as many as 69,898 cases were disposed of. The pendency came down to 19,131. What is even more remarkable is the reduction in cases that were pending for years.

Growing Trust and Teamwork

The impact of this initiative has been quite impressive. More and more litigants are coming forward for dispute resolution. While old cases are being resolved, a record number of new cases have been filed during the last four months. It is an indication of the trust of the people in the new regime.

Vamsi credits his entire team for this feat. "It was a collective effort. I want to thank all the members, from data entry operators to additional collectors." He is humble enough not to take the credit himself. For him, it is a standard routine affair for any district collector.

The model put in place in Basti is a wonderful example of a "Nexus of Good", as it can, and hopefully will, be replicated in other districts of the country. This will take care of a major issue of delays that besets our governance.



by Dr Heera Lal is 2009 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh Cadre and presently serving as Secretary, U.P. National Integration Deptt., Govt. of U.P.

Green Elections: From Local Experiment to Global Blueprint The story of Green Elections did not begin with a mandate — it began with a mission, born in the heart of rural India.

In 2019 Parliamentary election, Dr Heera Lal was District Magistrate, District Election Officer and Returning officer of 48- Banda Parliament constituency. During this tenure, Dr. Heera Lal launched a deeply participatory and inclusive electoral campaign. With a sharp focus on voter education, community mobilization, and accessible polling, his team achieved what was previously considered difficult in a low-turnout district — a historic 10.5% increase in voter turnout during the Lok Sabha elections, purely through grassroots innovation and civic engagement.

This powerful result in Banda served as the conceptual and emotional foundation for what would later become the Green Election model — proving that elections could be more than an administrative exercise. They could be a platform for behavioral change, social participation, and environmental transformation.

A Journey Across Diverse Landscapes

From this rural experiment, the model evolved into a scalable campaign, refined and tested across four highly distinct electoral geographies:

- Anandpur Sahib (PC-06), Rupnagar, Punjab (2024): A semi-urban/rural parliamentary constituency where the full-scale Green Election model debuted.
- Anushakti Nagar (AC-172) & Chembur (AC-173), Mumbai, Maharashtra (2024): High-density urban assembly constituencies where the concept adapted to metro voters.
- Visavadar Assembly (AC-87), Junagadh, Gujarat (2025): A tribal-forest rural by election where the model was executed under tight timelines and logistical constraints.
- Kurhani Assembly (AC-93), Muzaffarpur, Bihar (2025): A Semi urban and rural constituency where Green Election was conducted amidst intense scrutiny by media and political parties coming out of the shadows of political issues.



- Dharmapuri & Pappireddipatti Assembly Constituencies, Tamil Nadu (2026): A agrarian and semi-urban/rural region where Green Election 5.0 was implemented as a full-scale eco-democratic model. The initiative included 76 Green Polling Booths, 100-metre plastic-free zones around 960 booths, distribution of 8,560 saplings, 2,930 seed balls, 5,375 seed pens/seed pencils, Green Selfie Points, and SVEEP-led voter engagement, while the district recorded 90.13% polling up to 6 PM.

These five success stories have proven that the Green Elections model is:

- Geography-agnostic
- Culturally adaptable
- Low-cost, high-impact, and ready for nationwide and global adoption

The Hidden Environmental Cost of Democracy

Across the globe, elections are held daily — municipal, state, national. Yet we remain largely unaware of the carbon footprint they generate. From single-use plastic, energy guzzling rallies, excessive printing, and logistical waste, every poll adds to a growing environmental debt.

The Green Election model directly responds to this blind spot, by embedding sustainability into every layer of the electoral experience — without compromising integrity, inclusiveness, or efficiency.

Awakening Voters, Inspiring Leadership

- This model doesn't stop at green booths or tree



plantations. It works because it:

- Sensitizes top leadership and election administrators to climate-responsible governance
- Awakens voters to the moral and environmental weight of their participation
- Engages citizens in a vision where democracy protects both people and the planet

Ready for the World

This is no longer a pilot. The Green Election campaign has:

- Proven its effectiveness across rural, urban, and tribal settings
- Increased turnout, engagement, and cross-party support
- Generated positive media, academic, and institutional attention
- Aligned itself naturally with SDGs, SVEEP goals, and global sustainability missions

It is now a global-ready, policy-ready model — designed to make elections more meaningful, inclusive, and environmentally conscious.

From Banda to Punjab, from Maharashtra to Gujarat to Bihar to Tamilnadu — Green Election is not just an idea. It is India's contribution to building a climate-resilient democracy for the world.

Green Election is not just a campaign. It is a movement.

A way to make every vote count — not just for democracy, but for the Earth.



Balrampur gave them roots, the Himalayas gave them wings: Three girls conquer Everest Base Camp.



by Vipin Kumar Jain
is 2016 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh Cadre and presently serving as District Magistrate Balrampur



by Himanshu Gupta
is 2021 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh Cadre and presently serving as Chief Development Officer Balrampur

BALRAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH — In a historic feat that has redefined the boundaries of human grit, youth potential, and women's empowerment, three 13-year-old girls from the small, aspirational district of Balrampur have successfully conquered the grueling trek to Mount Everest Base Camp. Standing at a daunting altitude of 5,364 meters amidst the frozen, wind-swept peaks of the Himalayas, the young trio did far more than just complete a geographic milestone; they shattered the glass ceiling of socio-economic limitations.

This extraordinary achievement marks the first time in the history of India that a district administration has entirely envisioned, curated, and sponsored a high-altitude adventure initiative for young schoolgirls from humble rural backgrounds, setting a glowing precedent for grassroots state support.

Profiles in Resilience: Meet the Trailblazers
The young mountaineers did not come from a background of privilege, nor did they have early access to professional training facilities; instead, their lives were forged in the crucible of daily hard work and small-town resilience.

Nilanshu (13 years old): Hailing from the remote Pachperwa block of Balrampur, Nilanshu belongs to the indigenous Tharu tribe. A student at the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, her upbringing was grounded in simplicity and perseverance. Her father works tirelessly as a daily-wage laborer, and her mother serves the community on the frontlines as an ASHA worker.

Priyanka Prajapati (13 years old): A brilliant student from the Composite School in Ramanagara, Priyanka is the daughter of a local farmer. She is a natural athlete who

recently won the coveted “Man of the Series” title in cricket during the Balika Premier League—a flagship tournament previously organized by the district administration to encourage female participation in sports.

Priyanka Upadhaya (13 years old): A student of the DAV Inter College School, she also comes from a modest agricultural household. Gifted with incredible physical endurance and exceptional spatial awareness, Priyanka had already brought laurels to Balrampur as a state-level handball player.

Together, these three girls represented the hidden athletic goldmine that thrives within rural India, waiting only for the right catalyst to shine on a global stage.

The Catalyst: Visionary Grassroots Governance
The catalyst came in the form of a visionary leap by the Balrampur district administration, which chose to move past conventional, textbook methods of women’s empowerment. Operating under the understanding that giving young girls from marginalized backgrounds massive global exposure could permanently alter the socio-cultural fabric of the region, the administration organized a rigorous, school-wise sports competition to identify girls who excelled in physical endurance. Rather than letting financial constraints hold back these raw talents, the administration completely funded and sponsored the entire 17-day expedition.

Confronting the Gauntlet of Rock and Ice
The 17-day journey to Everest Base Camp is universally acknowledged as a brutal test of human endurance, presenting a gauntlet of physiological hazards that test even seasoned adult climbers. For three young girls accustomed to the warm, flat plains of Uttar Pradesh, transitioning to a vertical world of ice and rock was a profound shock to the system.

As the team trekked higher into the Himalayas, they faced the terrifying reality of oxygen deprivation. Past the 4,000-meter mark, the atmospheric pressure drops significantly, leaving only a fraction of the oxygen available at sea level. Every single step required deliberate, heavy breathing, forcing the girls to battle dizziness, headaches, and extreme physical fatigue while navigating steep moraines and unstable suspension bridges swinging over

deep mountain chasms.

BEYOND THE ALTITUDE: A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE
Before leaving for Nepal, the girls’ lives were largely confined to the boundaries of their respective villages and schools. On the Everest trail, they interacted with international travelers, encountered diverse global cultures, and witnessed the professional world of mountaineering firsthand.

This exposure expanded their horizons exponentially, replacing traditional societal expectations with grander, limitless ambitions. They returned to India not as children defined by poverty, but as global achievers who know they can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with anyone in the world.

A Thunderous Message to the Nation
The triumphant return of these three 13-year-old daughters of laborers and farmers has sparked unprecedented celebrations across the entire aspirational district of Balrampur. Villages have erupted in joy, and schools are honoring them as living icons of what can be achieved when raw potential meets administrative will.

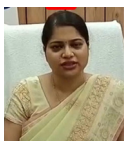
By successfully completing the treacherous 17-day trek to Everest Base Camp, Nilanshu, Priyanka, and Priyanka have sent an inspiring, thunderous message across the nation: opportunity, not origin, defines a child’s ultimate height. The historic initiative by the Balrampur district administration has set a magnificent new benchmark for grassroots governance, proving that when a society dares to fully back its daughters, they can truly conquer the base of the world.





Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana

“Talents of ‘Abhyudaya’ shining through administrative experience”



by Ms Esha Priya is 2016 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh Cadre and presently serving as District Magistrate Ambedkarnagar.

Under the Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana, the Department of Social Welfare in the Ambedkar Nagar district is running free coaching classes at B.N.K.B. P.G. College, Akbarpur, to help local youth prepare for the Civil Services Examination. Alongside traditional offline classes, the Abhyudaya Centre provides online classes via Google Meet, allowing students to interact directly with faculty members to clear their doubts. Additionally, curated study materials and daily e-papers, such as The Hindu and The Indian Express, are shared directly in the Abhyudaya UPSC WhatsApp group.

Having already completed the 2025–26 academic syllabus in April, the centre is currently running free extra classes taught by its faculty members for the upcoming examinations. The Abhyudaya Centre campus also provides dedicated library facilities to its students.

In view of the upcoming Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination 2026 organized by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), a special 7-day mock test series commenced from May 9, 2026, to May 15, 2026, at the B.N.K.B. P.G. College centre. This intensive drive was specifically conducted for the Abhyudaya coaching students scheduled to appear for the upcoming prelims. The seven-day drive aimed to provide rural and local aspirants with a real-time exam environment alongside firsthand insights from serving administrative officers.

Administrative Stalwarts Lead the Mentorship Drive
The defining feature of this 7-day program was the direct involvement of the district’s I.A.S. and P.C.S. officers, who stepped forward to personally mentor, counsel, and inspire the aspirants through structured sessions:



Session One (May 9, 2026): At the launch of the test series, Trainee IAS Officer Mr. Thanigai Arasan (I.A.S., 2025 Batch) shared practical techniques with students to better decode and navigate the changing examination patterns of the prelims.

Session Two (May 10, 2026): Joint Magistrate / SDM Akbarpur, Mrs. Pratiksha Singh (I.A.S., 2023 Batch), discussed cognitive mapping techniques on how to remember multiple interconnected points under any given topic and differentiate them effectively.

Session Three (May 11, 2026): Continuing her mentorship, Mrs. Pratiksha Singh (I.A.S., 2023 Batch) engaged with students to outline integrated preparation strategies for both Prelims and Mains. She focused heavily on “what not to do” (avoiding OMR errors and negative marking) and emphasized the critical role of rigorous post-test analysis.

Session Four (May 12, 2026): District Social Welfare Officer Mr. Vikram Kaushal (Batch of 2022) discussed high-yield themes across Polity, Ancient History, Environment, and Science & Technology, helping students tackle the UPSC’s most favorable core topics.

Session Five (May 13, 2026): In a follow-up session, Mr. Vikram Kaushal focused on the art of compiling concise short notes and incorporating value-added information from mock tests. He also trained students in elimination techniques to handle tricky questions when baseline knowledge of a specific topic is limited.

Session Six (May 14, 2026): Deputy Collector Mr. Vishal Saraswat (P.C.S. 2019 Batch & I.D.E.S. Batch



2020) conducted an extensive career counseling session. Highlighting a crucial but overlooked aspect of competitive exams, he noted that maintaining mental well-being and a healthy lifestyle is vital during this long journey, advising students to integrate creative activities into their daily routines.

Session Seven (May 15, 2026): District Magistrate Mrs. Eesha Priya (I.A.S., Batch 2016) engaged with the students on the final day of the drive. Aspirants raised concerns regarding end-moment mental pressure, excessive screen time, and exam anxiety. Counseling the students with a parental touch, she advised them not to treat the exam as an overwhelming hurdle, providing practical tips on time management and positive thinking to effectively mitigate stress.

Empowering the Future of Public Service
This 7-day mock test initiative in Ambedkar Nagar, guided actively by administrative officials under the Chief Minister Abhyudaya Yojana, provides rural aspirants with essential mentorship, practical examination tools, and critical psychological support.

Recognizing the impact of the drive, the District Administration has decided to conduct similar mock tests on a monthly basis throughout the upcoming academic year 2026–27. By directly engaging aspirants, this proactive initiative successfully transforms traditional, isolated exam preparation into a structured, well-guided ecosystem—fostering a resilient generation of future administrators equipped to excel in the upcoming UPSC examinations.



by Col. Dev Anand Lohamaror (Retd.)
The Writer is a Veteran and Defence Expert

If the current turmoil in the Middle East has to be captured in a single line, it is this: the conflict is no longer merely about bombs and missiles—it has evolved into a multi-layered contest of economics, diplomacy, and psychological pressure. What began as “Epic Fury,” marked by the overt use of military might, has now transitioned into “Economic Fury”—a phase designed to choke Iran’s economic lifelines and force strategic submission without necessarily escalating into a full-scale conventional war.

At the heart of this new doctrine lies maritime containment—particularly around the Strait of Hormuz, the artery through which a significant portion of the world’s energy supply flows. By effectively restricting or controlling Iran’s access routes through this chokepoint, the United States has signaled that this is not symbolic pressure but a calibrated move toward economic blockade. The deployment of a significant U.S. naval presence in the region underscores the seriousness of this posture.

The objective is clear: sever Iran’s revenue streams. The first wave targeted ports, followed by systematic pressure on the banking infrastructure, and now the focus has shifted to freezing individual accounts and dismantling shell company networks. Officials and affiliates linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) are at the center of this campaign. Leveraging artificial intelligence to trace proxy ownerships and financial footprints, the strategy aims to neutralize hidden assets and cut off funding channels with precision.

The architectural core of this ‘Economic Fury’ is no longer confined to ledger books; it has expanded into the digital nervous system of the state. While AI is being deployed to map the IRGC’s global shadow networks, targeted cyber offensives have become the silent partner to maritime containment. By destabilizing Iran’s domestic clearing systems and digital export and payment interfaces, Washington appears to be demonstrating

that the “blockade” is as much about code as it is about cruisers. This “Grey Zone” warfare ensures that even if a vessel slips through the Strait of Hormuz, the financial and digital infrastructure required to monetize its cargo remains paralyzed.

Internally, Iran faces a compounding crisis. Its economic structure, already strained under sanctions, is now under acute stress. If the state apparatus reaches a point where it struggles to meet basic obligations—such as paying salaries within weeks—the fallout will not be merely economic but deeply political. This is precisely where the pressure is designed to translate into public discontent, potentially pushing citizens toward the streets and widening the gap between the state and society.

On the military front, Iran’s conventional army plays a limited role, while real operational control rests with the IRGC and its network of proxies. However, this very structure is beginning to show signs of strain. Reports of internal factionalism, leadership fragmentation, and competing power centers reveal that the pressure is not only external but also eroding cohesion from within.

A crucial dimension of this strategy is signaling toward China. Donald Trump has adopted a dual-track approach—offering economic space while simultaneously issuing strategic warnings. Xi Jinping’s assertion that China is not supplying weapons to Iran reflects, at least in part, the effectiveness of this pressure. Trump’s blunt messaging—that if conflict becomes inevitable, the United States will dominate—serves as both deterrence and declaration.

However, the effectiveness of this strategic encirclement faces a critical stress test in the evolving multipolar order. Iran’s formal integration into BRICS and its deepening partnerships suggest a deliberate attempt to build a “sanction-proof” economic corridor. Tehran is increasingly looking to Moscow as a blueprint for authoritarian resilience, attempting to bypass the dollar-denominated system through alternative payment settlements.

While U.S. signaling to China has seen some success, the deepening “Axis of Resilience” suggests that “Economic Fury” may not result in total isolation, but rather a gradual but deeper tethering of Iran to an Eastern economic orbit.

Meanwhile, regional actors have attempted to carve out diplomatic relevance. Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia have all signaled interest in mediation roles, while Qatar—often associated with financing various Islamist networks—has seen its influence curtailed in this phase. The broader message is unmistakable: Washington intends to retain central control over the trajectory of this crisis.

In this context, Pakistan emerges as a critical intermediary. The involvement of its military leadership, particularly Asim Munir, reflects a calculated application of the “iron cuts iron” doctrine—using an Islamic military interlocutor to engage directly with the IRGC. This channel aims to bypass Iran’s fragmented political leadership and engage the actual centers of power.

Simultaneously, developments in Lebanon indicate a potential strategic shift. Hezbollah, long considered Iran’s most potent proxy, is facing growing internal and political pressure. If a formal cessation of hostilities or a diplomatic breakthrough between Lebanon and Israel materializes, it could represent the most significant geopolitical shift since the Camp David Accords.

Such an outcome would secure Israel’s northern front and significantly diminish Iran’s regional leverage. In essence, this conflict has morphed into a form of “total war” where economic warfare, diplomatic maneuvering, and internal destabilization have become more decisive than conventional military engagements. “Economic Fury” is not merely a rebranding—it is a doctrinal shift aimed at dismantling an adversary’s economic resilience, societal cohesion, and political stability simultaneously.

At this juncture, Iran stands at a narrowing crossroads. Its options are increasingly constrained: either absorb the pressure and move toward negotiation, or brace for a prolonged and exhausting confrontation where victory will not depend on firepower alone, but on economic endurance and internal unity.

WOMEN AT THE WATER'S EDGE



Clearing Paths, Shaping Futures



In the national conversation, the Nari Vandan Bill has emerged as a defining moment—an institutional acknowledgment of women's role in governance and public life. Yet beyond legislative frameworks, the lived reality of women's work continues to shape ecosystems, economies, and communities in ways both visible and understated.

by Sangeeta Singh IAS Commissioner, Aligarh

At Bharatpur's wetlands, women labourers engage in the physically demanding task of removing water hyacinth—an invasive species that chokes aquatic systems, depletes oxygen, and threatens biodiversity. Their work is not merely maintenance; it is ecological restoration. By clearing the surface, they allow sunlight to penetrate, oxygen to circulate, and life—avian, aquatic, and vegetal—to re-emerge and thrive.

This act holds a quiet but powerful symbolism.

Water hyacinth, in its unchecked spread, represents stagnation—an accumulation that obstructs flow and diminishes vitality. The labour of these women becomes an

intervention against such stagnation. Their effort restores balance, reopens channels, and reclaims space for life. In a broader social context, this mirrors the transformative role women play in dismantling barriers—whether in households, workplaces, or public institutions.

Equally evocative is the imagery of movement—from shadow into light. Women walking along a shaded path toward an illuminated clearing evoke transition: from invisibility to recognition, from marginalization to participation. The light ahead is not incidental; it is the outcome of collective movement and sustained effort.

The relevance of this imagery to the discourse around the

Nari Vandan Bill is striking. Representation in legislative bodies is not simply a matter of numbers; it is about enabling voices that have long worked at the grassroots to influence decision-making at the highest levels. Just as clearing water hyacinth restores ecological health, increasing women's representation has the potential to clear systemic inefficiencies, introduce inclusive perspectives, and foster more responsive governance. Empirical studies across sectors consistently highlight that women's participation improves outcomes—whether in environmental conservation, community health, education, or local governance. Women-led initiatives often prioritize sustainability, equity, and long-term resilience. Their engagement is not additive; it is transformative.

However, recognition must extend beyond symbolic gestures. The women engaged in such essential ecological work often operate within precarious economic conditions, with limited access to social security, healthcare, and upward mobility. Any meaningful discourse on women's empowerment must therefore integrate dignity of labour, fair compensation, and institutional support.

The clearing of water hyacinth thus becomes more than a task; it becomes a metaphor for a broader societal process. It speaks of removing the accumulated barriers that restrict flow—be they cultural, economic, or political. It underscores the need to create spaces where potential can surface, where contributions are visible, and where participation is substantive.

In this light, the Nari Vandan Bill represents not an endpoint but a beginning—a structural opening that must be accompanied by continuous effort. Much like the wetlands require regular clearing to remain vibrant, societal systems require sustained inclusion to remain just and dynamic.

The women at Bharatpur, working quietly at the water's edge, exemplify this principle. Their labour restores ecosystems; their presence signals resilience; their movement toward light reflects an ongoing journey toward recognition and equality.



GOVERNANCE FOUNDATION

OUR VISION

The Foundation envisions to become an exemplar having highest standards of Governance and its proponent for citizens, societies, and institutions globally. The Foundation aims to facilitate and empower peoples by working on governance issues thereby making the world a better place for our future generations.

FOCUS AREAS

People Governance in any society is a reflection of strengths & beliefs in core values of its legal residents including both citizens and institutions. The Foundation believes that people of any country comprising its citizens, communities and corporate institutions (link to the sections below) will be as strong as the system of governance that they are part of. Any nation which chooses to ignore or allows erosion of ethical or moral values of its citizens/institutions will ultimately bear the brunt of its actions or inactions. The Foundation works towards identifying governance issues and addressing them by conducting in-house research, advocacy on policies/programs, spreading awareness and conducting capacity enhancement sessions.

Media The evolution of media remains a fascinating journey and serves a vital role in dissemination of information. The Foundation strongly believes that two key components of governance are freedom of communication and public access to information and any movement or revolution for equity and social justice necessarily requires a free press for it to work. The role of the media has become extremely critical for smooth functioning of democracy, good governance, and awareness, especially for broadcasting public opinion as a measure of protecting the citizens.

Technology Governance and technology are intertwined, reshaping the dynamics of societal control, policy implementation, and public engagement. In this digital era, governments leverage cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and big data analytics to enhance efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness. This fusion offers immense possibilities, such as streamlining bureaucratic processes, combating corruption through greater transparency, and fostering inclusive citizen participation via e-governance platforms. However, it also presents challenges including privacy concerns, the digital divide, and the potential for surveillance and control.

Environment A natural ecosystem is a biological environment consisting of a community of living organisms (plants, animals, and microbes) in conjunction with the nonliving components of their environment (like air, water, and mineral soil), interacting as a system. These biotic and abiotic components are linked together through nutrient cycles and energy flows. Ecosystems provide a variety of services that are crucial to the well-being of the planet and all organisms living on it.

The governance of natural ecosystems involves processes by which public and private actors address societal challenges and manage the interaction between human social systems and natural systems.

State A “state” typically refers to a political entity or a defined geographical region with a government that exercises authority and control over its territory and population. The state is characterized by a set of institutions and structures responsible for making and enforcing laws, maintaining order, providing public services, and representing the interests of its citizens on the international stage.

The connection between the “state” and “governance” is that governance refers to the processes and mechanisms through which the state exercises its authority and manages the affairs of the society. Governance encompasses the decision-making procedures, policies, and practices that guide how a state functions. It involves not only the formal institutions of government (e.g., the executive, legislative, and judicial branches) but also the interactions between these institutions, as well as the engagement of civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process.

In the context of state and its governance, political governance becomes an intrinsic connection between the two. Political Governance is the exercise of political and administrative authority at all levels to govern the affairs of a country. It comprises the institutions, procedures, and mechanisms that enable people to express their opinions, assert their legal rights, fulfill their obligations, and resolve conflicts. Further, democratic governance is specifically stated as “a process of building and preserving an environment for inclusive and responsive political processes and solutions.” How well public policies and objectives are implemented, particularly in the provision of services, is determined by institutional and human capacities for governance.

OUR SERVICES

INNOVATION & RESEARCH

Conducting in-house research in the field of governance, developing new citizen-centric and inclusive models of governance.

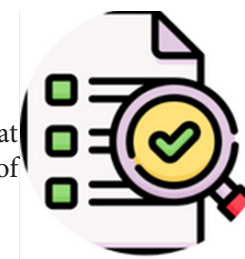


AWARENESS & CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

Conducting training programs on state-of-the-art governance models, spreading awareness by identifying governance issues and ways of combating them

GOVERNANCE AUDIT

Performing governance audit at regular intervals to assess impact of welfare schemes and policies



ADVISORY SERVICES

Advisory to organizations on governance models suited to their unique requirements.

ADVOCACY ON POLICY & PROGRAMS

Advocating importance of human rights, rule of law and advisory to organizations on governance models suited to their unique requirements through e-newsletters / articles / concept notes, social & digital media.



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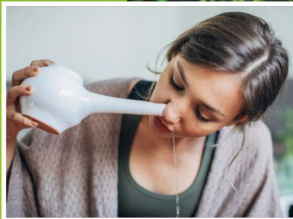
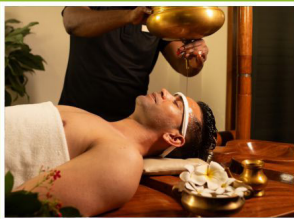
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सेवा समिति

वृंदावन | ऋषिकेश



प्राकृतिक जीवन शैली

जीवन जीने की कला

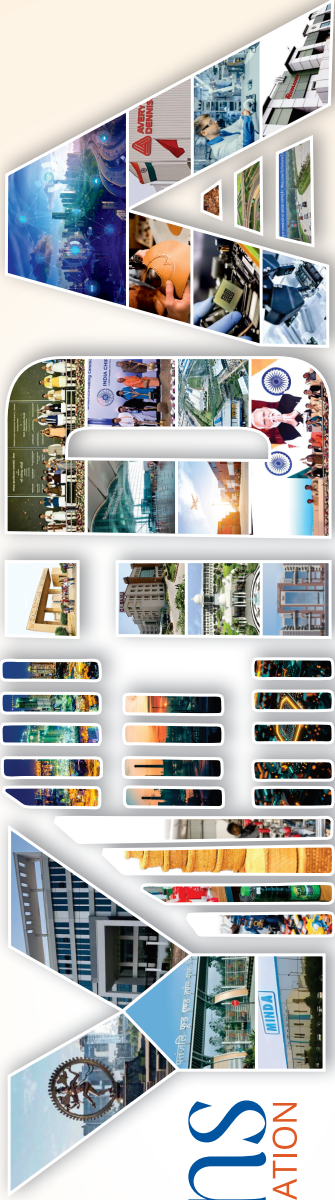


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