

# Weekly Livelihoods Update

17 July 2018

- ✚ **Economics of Population:** The 15th Finance Commission has recommended the use of Census 2011 instead of the norm of considering Census 1971, and this change has led to political protests and accusations of bias as many states that have done well in controlling population will end up receiving less money from the Central tax pool. The Finance Commission always makes the states uneasy. For this is the constitutional mechanism to share the Central tax pool with states. But the 15th Finance Commission has let out a paroxysm of political protests, particularly by the southern states, literally dividing the states on north-south line. At the core of this lies a change in the base year for population figure that significantly decides the states' tax revenue share. [For further reading DowtoEarth magazine 1-15 July 2018]
- ✚ **Starvation Deaths:** Over the past year, at least 20 persons have succumbed to starvation across the country: 12 in Jharkhand, three in Karnataka, three in Uttar Pradesh and two in Odisha. The deceased range from 11-year-old Santoshi Kumari to 67-year-old Etwariya Devi. All the victims were either from the Dalit, Adivasi, Other Backward Class (OBC) or Muslim communities. In at least 11 cases, Aadhaar-related failures directly contributed to starvation. In all the cases, the victims' intake of food drastically reduced due to disruptions in access to subsidised foodgrains, and social security pensions. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/28/letters/starvation-deaths.html>]
- ✚ **The start-up strategy:** Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh said at the India Today State of the State Conclave in Raipur on June 29. The chief minister was explaining his model of development that has resulted in a six-time surge in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)-from Rs 47,000 crore to nearly Rs 3 lakh crore-since Chhattisgarh became a state in 2000. The per capita income increased seven-fold, from Rs 12,000 to Rs 92,000. For this turnaround, Singh claims credit for pioneering some landmark schemes that the central and state governments replicated later, be it the right to food security or the right to skill development training. [For further reading visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/state-of-the-states/story/20180716-the-start-up-strategy-1277913-2018-07-08>]
- ✚ **Credible Chhattisgarh:** Chhattisgarh is a poignant paradox, a young state with an ancient, rich historical heritage, bounteous in minerals and a mining and

industrial powerhouse but with a low human development index. While the central plains in the Raipur-Bhilai-Durg belt are industrialised, urbanised and prosperous, the southern tip is mired in penury; while Naya Raipur is an urban marvel, the state altogether has one of the lowest rates of urbanisation; and with almost 45 per cent forest cover, the state has a serene green environment but with threats from a violent red corridor. Standing at the threshold of a structural transformation, Chhattisgarh can become one of India's most developed states provided it balances the pulls from different directions and turns the 'paradox' into an opportunity for growth and equitable development. [For further reading visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/state-of-the-states/story/20180716-credible-chhattisgarh-1277912-2018-07-08>]

✚ **Developmental Rhetoric, Uprooted Lives:** Any developmental activity can be meaningful only when the dispossessed and displaced people are taken care of and adequately rehabilitated. Nevertheless, their basic rights to life and decent rehabilitation are often violated by governments and project authorities. Such violations are particularly evident in the Gundlakamma Reservoir Project in Andhra Pradesh. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/28/commentary/developmental-rhetoric-uprooted-lives.html>]

✚ **Odisha's Fish Pond Scheme:** The Odisha government has launched a state-sponsored scheme called "Fish Pond Yojana" to promote fish farming, especially freshwater aquaculture, and to enhance farmers' incomes in 2017–18. The scheme aims to cover waterbodies of about 2,200 hectares under fish farming with a budgetary provision of ₹96 crore and a subsidy amount of ₹25 lakh from financial year 2018–19. Apparently, the state government has planned to reduce the import of freshwater fish, like the Indian major carp, and boost food and nutritional security in the state. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/28/letters/odishas-fish-pond-scheme.html>]

✚ **MINORITIES IN INDIA - Tools of an ideology:** India has a long tradition of acknowledging and protecting minorities and according special rights to them. Some of these rights are entrenched in the Constitution. However, we have been witnesses to movements, organisations and ideologies that contest and condemn these rights, sometimes even with diabolic social violence. [For further reading visit: <https://www.frontline.in/cover-story/article24201425.ece>]