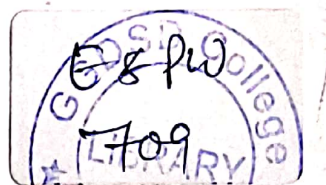


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- Soaring Healthcare Costs
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- Do Producer Companies Make Farmers More Efficient Producers?

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Industrial Training Institutes

The challenge is to ensure that existing ITIs deliver high-quality training, are located where industrial belts actually are, and their intake is not segregated in ways that reproduce the very inequalities the system was meant to address. page 52

Transgender Parenthood

A more robust approach than that adopted by the Kerala High Court in the Zahhad case would treat transgender parenthood not as an administrative anomaly, but as a foreseeable and constitutionally protected part of social life. page 13

VBSA Bill

While centralisation is intrinsic to the conceptualisation of the VBSA, it is difficult to predict how the diversity in a federal set-up with different categories of HEIs will be sustained. page 40

Education Market and Hindutva

The diffusion of Hindu nationalism is taking place in the parental community, the school management committee, and the competitive market that transmits their demands. page 46

Sumit Sarkar (1939–2026)

Sarkar challenged the comforting story of a unified Indian resistance to imperialism and exposed the fault lines, fractures, and power struggles within Indian society that were as important as the anti-colonial struggle. page 26

Expanding the Idea of Marriage

- 10 The Supreme Court's judgment in *Lokesh B H v State of Karnataka* (2026) expands the idea of who is a "husband" for the purposes of Section 498-A IPC. — *Alok Prasanna Kumar*

Recording Transgender Parenthood

- 13 The Kerala High Court's decision in *Zahhad and Ors v State of Kerala and Ors* (2025) shows how judicial reliance on "exceptional remedies" allows hetero- and cis-normative legal frameworks to remain intact. — *Prerna*

From Curiosity to Conformity: The CUET Crisis

- 18 The Common University Entrance Test reflects a philosophy of standardisation and surveillance rather than genuine engagement, risking a culture of conformity. — *Devjani Ray*

Language and Limits of Classroom Inclusion

- 21 A large number of Hindi-, Bengali-, and Tamil-speaking children of migrant workers in many aided schools in Cochin are exposed to socio-spatial exclusion and pedagogical inefficacy, raising questions about the education system and its inclusivity. — *Ashbel Sanesh, Surabhi Jiwrajka Mawandia*

Sumit Sarkar (1939–2026): A Life of the Mind

- 26 Sumit Sarkar's engagement with history was characterised by a frightening honesty which demanded that the "contradictory" and the "complex" be addressed head-on. — *G Arunima*

Tourism, Waste, and Wildlife

- 34 Empirical observations and community-based initiatives in Masinagudi and Coonoor (2024–25) show how unregulated tourist behaviour and weak waste infrastructure create a socio-ecological crisis in the Nilgiris. — *P Jaisridhar, C Cinthia Fernandes, M Ramasubramaniam & S Rajkumar*

A New Era for Indian Higher Education?

- 40 The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, as envisaged, seeks to overhaul the entire regulatory structure in Indian higher education and proposes one single regulatory body to be supported by three councils for regulation, accreditation, and standard-setting while keeping the funding issues out of its purview. — *Saumen Chattopadhyay*

Hindutva by Other Means

- 46 The marketisation of urban Indian schooling has created landscapes in which the cultural-political preferences of dominant consumer groups shape what schools teach, whom they hire, and whom they accommodate—in majoritarian directions, but without state direction. — *Ritika Arora-Kukreja*

India's Industrial Training Institutes

- 52 The post-2005 boom in industrial training institutes coincided with a steady decline in institutional quality, a widening spatial disconnect between ITIs and the manufacturing economy, and a pattern of enrolment that channels historically disadvantaged groups into a training system positioned low in the educational hierarchy. — *Tamoghna Halder, M K Shravan*

Under-five Mortality in India

- 63 Using five consecutive rounds of the National Family Health Survey data, the paper investigates the progress in the under-five mortality rate at the national and sub-national levels in India. Regional and socio-economic disparities remain a significant concern, suggesting the need for more localised policy responses to ensure equitable progress in reducing U5MR. — *Rajesh Raushan*

Do Producer Companies Make Farmers More Efficient Producers?

- 71 Producer companies are being promoted for small producer livelihood improvement in India. This discussion critically examines Diksha Bali, Jyoti Kachroo, and Abdulla (EPW, 10 January 2026) on vegetable production efficiency gains due to Farmer Producer Organisation membership. — *Sukhpal Singh, Naresh Singla*

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