

PANJ Newsletter

30 NOV 2024

EDITION #2

PANJ FOUNDATION | WWW.PANJ.ORG.IN



LATEST WRITING

DEBT SHADOWS: PUNJAB'S 'DEMOCRACY BEFORE DEVELOPMENT' PARADOX

by Anmol Rattan Singh

Inspired by the insights of economists like Böhm-Bawerk and von Mises on capital's role at the intersection of economics and finance, a compelling framework for understanding fiscal challenges takes shape. This approach encourages synergies in economic decision-making and accounting practices, while also treating money as a social institution. When applied to Punjab's fiscal crisis (*a whopping Rs 3 lakh crore state debt*), this understanding of public finance is timely and essential. The crisis is a largely undeclared emergency, signalling difficult times ahead for the state's political and executive leaders as they struggle to devise effective solutions.

Much of this turmoil stems from a pattern of misjudged economic costs and a disregard for the opportunity cost theorem. Over time, state agencies have missed opportunities to maximise economic returns and have failed to justify their subjective estimates and idiosyncratic evaluations. This trend has gradually sidelined the crucial role of capital valuation in principal-agent relationships, which remains overlooked in decision-making processes.

The Government of Punjab must recognize that, within its constitutional mandate, it holds the authority to shape and enforce the economic framework within its borders. This role requires more than superficial engagement with the risks it faces, especially when opting for pareto-efficient outcomes—those where no one can be made better off without making someone else worse off. Such precision is especially crucial in areas of social welfare, where success is judged by improvements in welfare after interventions. In terms of capital investments, which disrupt the economy's natural trajectory had they not occurred, a distinct approach is needed. Here, Punjab should pay closer attention to the social rate of time discount alongside cost-benefit analysis, ensuring that total impacts are closely connected to their immediate effects.

Read the complete article [here](http://www.panj.org.in): www.panj.org.in

LATEST OPPORTUNITIES

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIST

Shiv Nadar University Delhi-NCR is inviting applications for the position of Educational Technologist. Apply [here](#)

FULL STACK INTERN

Vriddhi Solutions. Work for home, paid internship opportunity. Requirement for submission: Create a clone of their website (vriddhi.media) and integrate a chatbot that answers user questions about our services. Deploy it on Vercel or Netlify and then submit it. Apply [here](#).

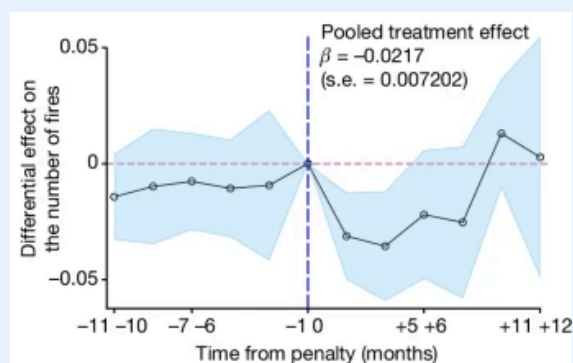
ASSOCIATE OPENING

At Chase India for its digital economy team. An ideal candidate for this role: 1-3 years of prior work experience and has a legal background and/or prior work experience in the space of space of technology, manufacturing, trade and fintech policies. Apply [here](#).

MUST READS ON PUNJAB

The recent resurgence of high levels of smog in Delhi and Punjab has once again brought to the forefront the debate around bureaucratic accountability in implementing public policies and meeting intended developmental challenges. Courts, academicians, and policy professionals have often stated that the growing politician-bureaucrat nexus has marred the state of affairs and disoriented policies. To address bureaucratic inaction, academicians such as *Gemma Dipoppa* and *Saad Gulzar*, in their recently published paper titled “*Bureaucratic Incentives Reduce Crop Burning and Child Mortality in South Asia*”, have analyzed how providing incentives to government officials can lead to more effective and stringent policy implementation.

The authors attempt to gauge bureaucratic responses to the growing menace of air pollution caused by crop burning by modeling satellite and administrative data from both India and Pakistan. They assess bureaucratic responses to rising crop burning by focusing on two main factors; a) whether pollution from crop burning is more likely to affect their own (home) jurisdiction, and b) whether pollution is likely to impact neighboring jurisdictions.



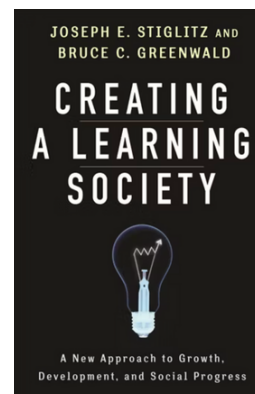
The paper attempts to link the direction of wind, along with crop burning and associated bureaucratic response. As per the findings, bureaucrats have a stronger incentive to curb crop burning when the maximum impact of pollution is in their home district. However, when the direction of the wind is away from their home district and the pollution is likely to impact the neighboring district, the bureaucratic inaction is the highest as is the crop burning.

The authors reveal the choice of the topic primarily due to the limited research that has been done in the role of state administration in controlling crop burning. Through the study the authors also try to explore the question whether the bureaucracy is actually ready to innovate in order to equip state apparatus in dealing with future environmental challenges.

The paper discusses how penalising a few farmers has played a successful role in deterring others from practicing crop burning, resulting in a 9-13% decrease in areas that are a source of pollution and a home district of a bureaucrat. The authors have also modelled the impact of crop burning on in utero pollution and child mortality by understanding the concentration of PM 2.5 particles during 9 months of pregnancy and analyzing the direct impact of upwind on crop burning. The findings present an increase in the relative risk of infant mortality by 64.3% to 69.8%, and an increase in the relative risk of child mortality by 74.2% to 86.2%. The authors base their analysis on the opinion that instances of crop burning can be significantly reduced when there is a behavioural shift in how bureaucrats perceive crop burning. They suggest that bureaucrats should view incentives for reducing pollutants more favourably and treat neighbouring areas as if they were their own home districts.

[Read the complete publication here](#)

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



Creating a Learning Society by Joseph E. Stiglitz and Bruce C. Greenwald is published by Columbia University Press 2014



Principles of Agricultural Economics (4th Edition) by Andrew Barkley and Paul W. Barkley is published by Routledge 2023

STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PUNJAB

'FIVE QUESTIONS' WITH DR. JAGWANT SINGH

GENERAL SECRETARY, PUNJAB FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS (PFUCTO). FORMER FELLOW, PANJAB UNIVERSITY.



Q1. How would you characterise the current model of higher education in Punjab? In your view, what specific indicators should the government prioritise to foster improvement? How do you assess the system's overall performance?

Ans: The current model which has served the state very well since Independence is facing a grim future due to reduced funding of public funded universities and colleges. These universities, government colleges and aided colleges are unable to discharge their duties in maintaining even the minimum standards of higher education prescribed by the UGC. In the absence of public funding, the higher educational institutions are being starved of all resources, their infrastructure is crumbling, their student and staff strength rapidly declining, and in this scenario it is the private universities which are only after making money, that are prospering.

Q2. Much attention is often placed on the student-institution relationship in higher education. Could you shed light on the dynamics of the teacher-institution relationship? How are employment conditions for educators influenced by Punjab's current higher education policies?

Ans: The dynamics of teacher institution relationship have completely undergone a change. Teachers are always looking for better opportunities and are unable to build meaningful and long lasting relationships. Truly speaking the employment conditions for educators have worsened to the extent that I keep on pursuing young aspiring teachers to think of choosing a different career. The majority of those who entered the profession of teaching in higher educational institutions are working on subsistence salaries and in completely uncertain conditions. In Govt. Colleges teachers having full workload are termed as Guest Faculty and are being paid Rs. 33000 consolidated, whereas as per UGC norms they should be paid around 80000 pm. The condition is far worse in other institutions.

Q3. There is a notable absence of a robust research culture at the college level in Punjab. What strategies could be employed to cultivate research within these institutions, and should colleges be encouraged to serve as active research centres to enhance educational outcomes and student development?

Ans: Primarily, as of now the role assigned to colleges is of dissemination of knowledge and not its creation. Moreover, colleges are constrained by the lack of resources. While UGC recommends and encourages universities to undertake research in colleges, the universities are extremely reluctant and at times even create hurdles in the path of college teachers who are interested in doing research. Things can improve when colleges introduce under graduate degree programs with research.

'FIVE QUESTIONS' WITH DR. JAGWANT SINGH

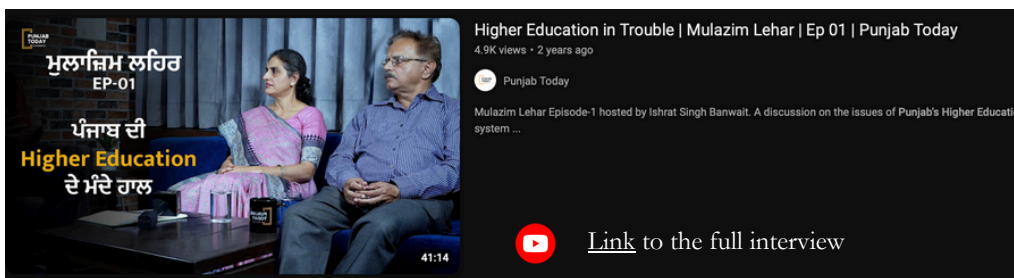
GENERAL SECRETARY, PUNJAB FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS (PFUCTO). FORMER FELLOW, PANJAB UNIVERSITY.

Q4. What do you consider the main challenges in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) in Punjab, particularly in relation to the state's socio-economic context?

Ans: NEP implementation should not create loss of jobs. In itself, implementing NEP is a challenge in many ways, especially in the rural and semi-urban areas and institutions there are finding it extremely difficult to make adjustments due to low enrolment. And when Universities put the burden of conducting some of the exams on colleges, there are bound to be questions raised on the credentials of the grades as well as degrees.

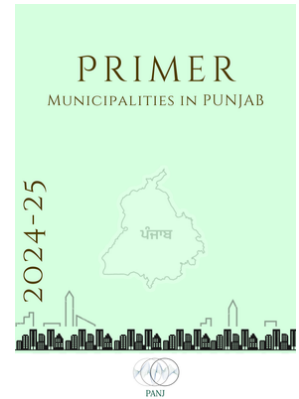
Q5. In your opinion, what should guide the future growth of higher education in Punjab? Do you believe an emphasis on institutional framework or a performance-based approach would be more beneficial for sustainable progress?

Ans: It should be a combination of both, and in the absence of good institutional framework, good performances will be difficult. Punjab will do well if it can ensure that all institutions meet at least the minimum norms for maintenance of standards in higher education prescribed by the UGC in all respects.



Contact: jagwant2008@gmail.com | +91-9815947500

READ OUR LATEST PRIMER



This edition talks about existing setup, presents comparison of different states on performance and spend of municipalities, and urbanisation in Punjab. Read [here](#).

Read our previous editions [here](#).



info@panj.org.in | panjfoundation | PANJ Foundation