



CUTS INTERNATIONAL NATIONAL AFFAIRS



Monthly Brief #17, September 2025

Why Indian CSR Must Back Think Tanks to Realise *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*

Since its inception in 2013, India's CSR regime has mobilised over ₹34,900 crore annually, largely benefitting education, health, and rural development. Yet, an overlooked gap persists: minimal funding for policy research. In FY 2023–24, allocations to "technology incubators" were just ₹1.91 crore—an insignificant share of the CSR pool.

India's aspiration of becoming truly Aatmanirbhar requires not only schools and hospitals but also robust research, analysis, and evidence to shape resilient policies, competitive industries, and innovation. With GERD stuck at 0.64 percent of GDP—well below China, the U.S., and South Korea—India suffers a deep research deficit. Think tanks, critical to bridging government priorities and private innovation, remain underfunded, especially as international funding shrinks following FCRA restrictions.

The Companies Act already permits CSR contributions to R&D, incubators, and recognised institutions. What is lacking is corporate imagination. Even diverting 5–10 percent of CSR funds could create a ₹1,700–3,500 crore research corpus—far exceeding past foreign inflows.

Safeguards such as transparent processes, peer review, and oversight mechanisms can mitigate reputational risks. To truly achieve Aatmanirbhar Bharat, India must invest not just in factories but also in ideas, policies, and knowledge—CSR can be the catalyst.

Pradeep S Mehta
Editor

*Abridged from an article appeared in The Economic Times, on September 14, 2025.
The same can be accessed*

at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/why-indian-csr-must-back-think-tanks-to-realise-aatmanirbhar-bharat/articleshow/123883054.cms?from=mdr>

Message for our Readers

The seventeenth edition of the National Affairs Monthly Brief contains selected published news or comments on trade, regulatory, and governance issues.

This newsletter contains copyrighted material whose use has not been authorised by the copyright owners. CUTS is making these articles available in our efforts to advance understanding of trade, regulatory and governance issues. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of the copyrighted material as provided for in Article 10 of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Paris Text 1971) and Section 107 of the US Copyright Law. If anybody wishes to use materials from this publication for purposes beyond 'fair use', s/he must obtain permission from the copyright owner. CUTS will not draw any profit from this publication since it is solely for informative and educational purposes.

Readers are encouraged to send their views and suggestions at cuts1@cuts.org



India Slams Trump's H-1B Fee Hike

India criticised Donald Trump's move to impose a US\$100,000 fee on H-1B visas, warning of "humanitarian consequences" and alleging fear of Indian talent. The visas, vital for skilled roles in IT, healthcare, and engineering, allow six-year stays. India, the largest beneficiary, received 71 percent of approved H-1B visas in 2024.



60% of India's FDI Flows to Tax Havens



Indian firms are increasingly routing foreign investments through low-tax jurisdictions to expand globally, experts and data reveal. RBI figures analysed by *The Hindu* show nearly 56 percent of overseas investments in 2024-25 flowed to hubs like Singapore, Mauritius, UAE, the Netherlands, UK, and Switzerland, underscoring India Inc.'s reliance on tax-friendly destinations.

- [Rethinking India's Quality Standards](#)
Business Standard, September 26, 2025
 - [BIMSTEC Boosts Trade, Indo-Pacific Security](#)
Dhaka Tribune, September 21, 2025
 - [Critical Minerals: India Eyes 'Kabaad' Over China](#)
Aakash Sinha, MSN, September 03, 2025
 - [India-EFTA Trade Pact with Sustainability Clause from October](#) 1
The Economic Times, September 03, 2025
-



Panel Seeks MCA Report on CCI's Digital Role

The Parliamentary Finance Panel has sought an action-taken report from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on its recommendations regarding Competition Commission of India's (CCI) role in the digital sector. It highlighted *dex-ante* regulation, coordination with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and other regulators, and addressing self-preferencing and predatory pricing. CCI confirmed collaboration to enhance trust, innovation, and resilience in India's digital economy.



Private FM Radios May Air 10 Minutes of News



The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended allowing private FM radio operators to broadcast up to 10 minutes of news and current affairs per hour, following the central government's programme code. It also proposed simultaneous online streaming without user-controlled features. The recommendations were part of TRAI's report on reserve prices for FM channel auctions.

- [Niti Aayog Report Spotlights India's Innovation Journey](#)
The Tribune, September 23, 2025
 - [NCPI Hikes Daily UPI Limits in Effect](#)
Jocelyn Fernandes, Mint, September 15, 2025
 - [Judge Orders Google Search Probe, Excludes Chrome Deals](#)
The Hindu, September 03, 2025
 - [Big Deals Drive India's M&A Surge](#)
Baiju Kalesh and Manuel Baigorri, The Economic Times, September 03, 2025
-



‘Karmachari’ to ‘Karmayogi’: PM Modi’s Governance Roadmap

India’s Mission Karmayogi is reshaping public administration, redefining why and how civil servants serve. Championed by PM Modi, it reflects his system-oriented approach and reformist vision. Far beyond a cosmetic HR update, the programme is a values-driven transformation, emphasizing performance, citizen-first governance, and building a capable, future-ready civil service for a Viksit Bharat.



Govt Sets Norms for Pothole-Free Roads, Covered Drains



In a move to enhance urban infrastructure and improve public safety, the government announced a comprehensive set of guidelines aimed at developing and maintaining pothole-free roads and covered drains in urban areas. The guidelines, issued by the Housing and Urban Development Department aim to improve urban infrastructure and ensure safer, more liveable cities.

- [Lucknow DC to Boost Rural Healthcare](#)
Times of India, September 21, 2025
- [India Empowers Women Farmers with Small Tools](#)
Vijay C Roy, Mint, September 19, 2025
- [5 Million Farmers Gain Stake in 10,000 FPOs](#)
Sandip Das, Financial Express, September 14, 2025
- [Rajasthan Sets Up Institute of Medical Science](#)
The Economic Times, September 09, 2025

Articles

- [How India was lost: A colossal White House blunder](#)
By Amit Dasgupta and Pradeep S Mehta
The Economic Times, September 23, 2025
- [Is GST 2.0 Back to Its Core Principles: Focus on Simplicity, Fairness, Efficiency?](#)
By Pradeep S Mehta and Tasmita Sengupta
The Asian Age, September 10, 2025