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From ABCs to AI: Why Teacher Preparedness Remains the Real Test for the New AI Curriculum

- Ishani Burande

Introduction

In the current world, where artificial intelligence ("AI") is rapidly being used in every aspect of our lives, from writing reports, diagnosing diseases and even creating music, it seems only natural that the upcoming generation is prepared to not only use, but also have an understanding of these technologies. In line with this, the Ministry of Education's recent decision to implement a curriculum on computational thinking and artificial intelligence for all students starting in Class 3 is a turning point in India's educational history. Children as young as eight will learn about the ethics and reasoning behind these tools starting in the 2026–2027 academic year. It is an ambitious initiative that promises to prepare the nation's future for the rapidly changing technology world, but it also demands careful planning, equitable execution, teacher readiness, and a vision that takes into account what learning means in the AI era.

The Backdrop

The comprehensive curriculum on Artificial Intelligence and Computational Thinking would begin in all schools across the country from Class 3, starting with the beginning of the 2026–27 academic year. The foundation of this initiative is based on the National Education Policy of 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2023, which emphasises the need for skill-based and future-oriented learning in educational institutions. The Ministry has also charted a structured plan that envisions the development of teaching resources and learning materials by the end of this year, which will be followed by extensive educator training to ensure that these new lessons are effectively imparted. Further, the curriculum is designed to weave topics such as environmental studies, mathematics, and language learning under the purview of 'learning with AI', and not treat AI as a standalone subject.

The Shift From Chalk to Chatbots

There are strong reasons to welcome this initiative. It will, if implemented with efficiency, prepare students for the future by inculcating necessary AI skills and ethics in them from a tender age. Besides, it will support education being at par with the global technological advances and instil digital literacy.

Yet alongside these advantages, some challenges still persist. The most important being the rural-urban divide in teacher preparedness and digital infrastructure.

Rural India, housing the majority of the students in the country, lags behind both in qualified teachers and technological facilities. Poor infrastructure, including a lack of reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and access to digital devices, remains a problem. Secondly, there is a severe shortage of qualified teachers in these areas. Many schools barely manage to fill up the vacancies to grapple with the problem of a high student-teacher ratio. Moreover, many teachers in these areas do not have basic training in digital literacy due to a lack of professional development opportunities and resources. Low levels of digital literacy among teachers and students pose a big barrier to AI integration into the classrooms.

To address these challenges that affect the implementation of this policy, the government intends to equip more than 10 million teachers with systematic and grade-specific training programs before the 2026 academic session. The Ministry of Education has already initiated the process of launching pilot projects for equipping teachers with AI knowledge and skills. They are also being trained to use AI-based platforms for various other tasks such as generating lesson plans, designing assignments and tracking student progress. This is to make teachers comfortable with using technology themselves first and then using it to make the classrooms more interesting and interactive.

Furthermore, the Ministry has stated that the National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers' Holistic Advancement ("NISHTHA") teacher training modules with activity-based learning and video-based learning resources will form the backbone of curriculum implementation. NISHTHA focuses on improving teaching competencies by including competency-based learning. By giving continuous feedback before and after these teaching assessments, it helps teachers to move beyond rote learning, and, consequently, promote critical and creative thinking. This is of particular importance in rural areas. It guarantees that educators in places with limited resources have access to high-quality training and digital literacy, which will enable them to establish an interactive and creative learning environment.

Conclusion

In a world that is changing quickly, the decision to start teaching AI in Class 3 is both ambitious and essential. However, inclusive planning, teacher readiness, and equal access for all students will be necessary for its success. With careful implementation, India can turn this policy into a powerful step toward building a generation that can shape technology rather than being shaped by it.

Special Intensive Revision- An Undeclared NRC?

-Sanjushree Sur

Introduction

The deletion of more than 68 lakh names from the electoral roll of Bihar in the first phase of Special Intensive Revision ("SIR") has resulted in nationwide outrage, triggering protests, judicial appeals and a sharp escalation of political tensions across several states. As the second phase begins, the fate of over 51 crore voters hangs by a thread. With growing fear of mass disenfranchisement, major political leaders across the country have criticised the exercise as one that defies the democratic framework.

What is SIR?

SIR is an exercise aimed at revising (cleaning and updating) the electoral rolls through a process that goes beyond routine summary revisions. It requires extensive door-to-door verification, enumeration forms, and in some cases, even proof of identity and citizenship. The first phase of this exercise was carried out in Bihar before the 2025 elections, and later, the second phase was announced, covering 12 States and Union Territories, including Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Puducherry, among others.

Why Has It Provoked Controversy?

While officials claim that SIR is not a new concept (the last SIR having been conducted in 2003) but a more structured method to ensure that voter lists reflect the most accurate information, critics argue that it goes far beyond routine revisions to reshape the electoral landscape of India.

The opposition contends that in the past, such revisions have been conducted over a period of three years to allow sufficient time to address objections and prevent eligible voters from wrongful exclusion. However, the unreasonably rushed timeframe for SIR (one month) has increased the likelihood of mistakes and disenfranchisement, making a thorough and fair implementation nearly impossible. As a result, Bihar witnessed the deletion of over 68 lakh voters from the list. In Tamil Nadu, the slow process of distribution, filing, collection and digitising of the enumeration forms risks exclusion of thousands of voters. Across Kerala, the overwhelming workload on booth-level officers (BLOs) has resulted in reports of collapse and even death.

Secondly, the introduction of SIR by the Election Commission of India (ECI) without consultation with state governments has raised claims of federal overreach. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of Tamil Nadu filed a petition in the Supreme Court (SC) of India, challenging the constitutional and legal validity of SIR. In its petition, the DMK has claimed that this unilateral exercise of power by ECI:

- Reduces states to mere implementing agencies;
- Is not rooted in the Representation of the People Act (ROPA) 1951 or the Registration of Electors Rules 1960 and therefore beyond the ECI's statutory authority;
- Does not adhere to due process laid down under the Citizenship Act, while referring cases of suspected foreign nationals to authorities, risking arbitrary disenfranchisement of legitimate voters.

Thirdly, the opposition has raised concerns about SIR transforming voter verification into a de facto test of citizenship. For instance, in Bihar, only a limited set of documents, such as proof of inclusion in the 2003 electoral roll, birth certificate, etc., was accepted, while excluding commonly available documents.

Consequently, state governments have expressed strong opposition, referring to the exercise as a tool for political advantage and electoral manipulation, particularly targeting opposition-ruled states. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has termed it as "Vote Bandhi", equating it with the previously infamous "Note Bandhi"; Rahul Gandhi has described it as a system to institutionalize "Vote Chori"; Uddhav Thackeray has called it an "undeclared NRC"; while Kerala's Assembly warns the revival of agendas relating to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The wider political contexts only fuel such concerns. Since the introduction of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023, questions have been raised with regard to the independent nature of the ECI. Such scepticism, coupled with the lack of willingness of the ECI to work with state governments and the SC's intervention against challenges faced by the SIR, is proof that the issues raised are not political exaggerations but serious constitutional concerns requiring immediate attention.

Way Forward

To restore credibility, transparency, and constitutional fairness to SIR, the ECI should provide adequate training for BLOs, engage a third party to review all deletions made during the exercise, and engage proactively with state governments before implementing any future policy changes. Such measures would help prevent wrongful disenfranchisement and uphold the integrity of while also restoring public trust in India’s electoral democracy.

Why Uttarakhand's UCC is already Being Revamped

-Sidharat Mohanty

Introduction

Passed in January 2025, Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code ("UCC") is already being revamped. Facing High Court petitions, the State is aiming to amend the UCC with respect to two fundamental flaws: a violation of personal privacy and a constitutionally unworkable claim of extra territorial power. This article will analyse this U-turn on the invasive privacy provisions and examine the deeper unresolved flaw of attempting to govern its residents far beyond its borders.

A Forced Retreat

The code's original provisions for live-in relationships created a system of state surveillance into the private lives of many. They mandated a sixteen page form, required Aadhaar authentication and empowered registrars to inform parents of partners under the age of 21. Registrars also held broad powers for "summary inquiries" into these relationships. Most alarmingly, all this private information was forwarded to the local police, and couples even had to disclose any children born during the relationship at its termination.

These provisions were immediately challenged before the Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court, with petitioners arguing that the legal regime was an unconstitutional intrusion into the personal sphere with surveillance and policing.

Faced with these challenges, the state government capitulated to the demands. Its affidavit to the court scraps the mandatory Aadhaar rule, removes the Registrar's power to inform parents, severely dilutes the power for summary inquiries, and axes the mandate on disclosing children. This rapid rollback confirms the initial provisions were a massive unconstitutional overreach that prioritized state surveillance over the fundamental right to privacy as upheld in *Puttuswamy*.

"Quasi State Citizenship"

While all this grabs headlines, it makes a deeper, unresolved constitutional flaw that strikes at the very heart of this legislation, Article 245 of the Constitution limits a state legislature to making laws for its own territory. A state law can only affect matters outside its borders if a "Territorial Nexus" exists. This connection, as the Supreme Court has held, must be "real and not illusory."

For a tax law, this nexus is clear. A state can tax a lottery company based in another state if it sells tickets and collects money from within its borders, as held in *State of Bombay v. RMDC*. There is a clear, real, and economic connection.

Uttarakhand's UCC, however, claims jurisdiction over all its "residents" even those living outside the state. Section 1(3) creates a portable state specific personal law that follows individuals across India based purely on their status as a 'resident'. This nexus is illusory. A personal relationship, like a marriage or live-in relationship, contracted in Mumbai between two Uttarakhand "residents" has no real connection or effect inside Uttarakhand.

This is precisely the point Justice M.C. Chagla made in *the State of Bombay v. Narayandas Mangilal Dayame*. He emphasized that the mere "fact that a person is permanently resident" in a state cannot "enlarge the jurisdiction" of the state legislature, especially for social legislation.

By hinging legislative power on 'residency' rather than territory, the Act attempts a "back door entry to dualist citizenship," a concept that is contrary to constitutional principles, which recognizes only one citizenship, one domicile.

This extra territorial claim becomes even more problematic with penal provisions. The UCC criminalizes the failure to register a live-in relationship, even one that exists entirely outside Uttarakhand. This violates the settled legal principle that "crime is local". The mere fact that the offender is a 'resident' is not a sufficient nexus. This provision wrongly elevates the State Legislature to the same stature as the Parliament, which alone possesses extra territorial powers, making it *ultra vires*.

The Unresolved and The Unaddressed

The recent affidavit on privacy provisions does not fix the entire Act. In August 2025, amendments actually increased penalties. A married person entering a live-in relationship can post-amendment face a jail term up to 7 years. A new Section 390A gives the Registrar General the sweeping power to cancel any registration, be it for marriage, divorce, or a live-in relationship.

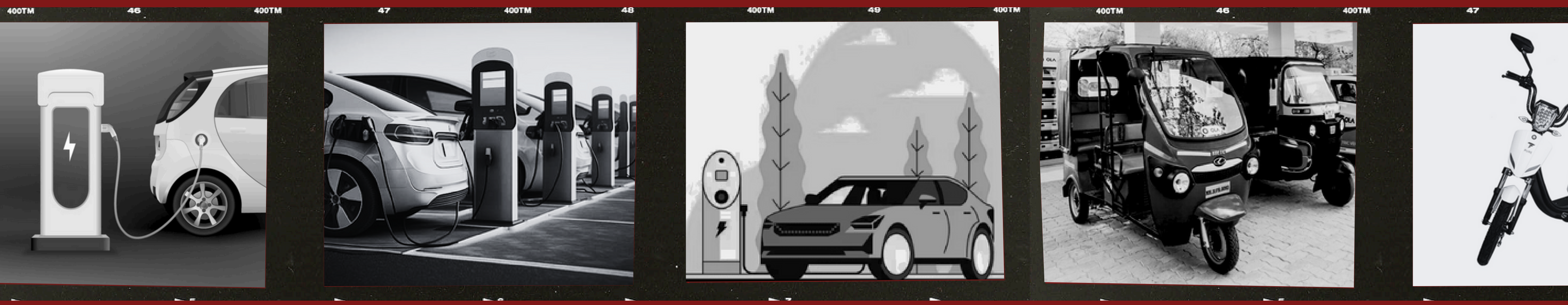
Furthermore, the code is far from “uniform”. It explicitly excludes LGBT persons, applying only to heterosexual relationships. It also carves out an exemption for all Scheduled Tribes. While abolishing the Hindu coparcenary system and granting equal inheritance are significant, the Act missed the opportunity to introduce progressive reforms documented well by the Supreme Court, such as "irretrievable breakdown of marriage" as a ground for divorce.

Conclusion

The chaotic, real time revamp of the Uttarakhand UCC reveals the fundamental flaw in state-level attempts at uniformity. By claiming power over its residents nationwide, the state not only violates the constitutional boundaries but creates an unworkable system of competing laws.

EV Policy 2025 Rollout: Are States Ready for Mass Electrification?

-Tanishta Mittal



Introduction

India is undergoing a huge shift in how people move. Electric vehicles are not just a niche idea anymore. They are becoming a serious part of the country's transport story. The central government has made significant strides in the past few years to push things along, from big manufacturing incentives to schemes that help build chargers and make cleaner batteries. However, the real test is the ground reality inside each state.

Some states are racing ahead with charging stations and smoother approvals. Others are still figuring out the basics. Hence, the big question for EV Policy 2025 is quite simple. Are India's states actually ready for a full-scale electric transition, or are we still at the starting line?

EV Policy 2025: The National Framework Driving the Transition

When we talk about EV Policy 2025, one of the main pillars is FAME-II (Faster Adoption & Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles, Phase II), run by the Ministry of Heavy Industries. Launched in April 2019, it supports e-2-wheelers, e-3-wheelers, e-buses and even some four-wheelers with advanced-chemistry batteries. It aims to support more than 15 lakh electric two-wheelers, a large number of three- and four-wheelers, and many buses.

Additionally, there is PM E-DRIVE, which was launched on 1 October 2024. It aims to speed up adoption across two-wheelers, three-wheelers, buses, ambulances and light commercial EVs.
On the regulatory side, the Battery Waste Management Rules (2025) are a big step. These Rules make manufacturers, importers, assemblers and recyclers accountable for a battery's entire lifecycle, with a target of 90% recovery rate for used batteries by FY 2026–27, and an online Battery Waste Management Rules (2025) to track this.

Supporting all of this is the work by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, which issues guidelines for charging standards, load management, and installation norms so states aren't operating in isolation. Manufacturing is another national priority. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for advanced chemistry cells aims to build a domestic battery ecosystem so India isn't dependent on imports as EV numbers grow.

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State Readiness: Progress, Gaps, and Ground Realities

The state-level data reveals that India's EV transition is not happening evenly. Some states are way ahead; others are still scrambling to catch up.

Karnataka sits at the top with more than 6,000 public chargers as of 2025. Its plans under PM E-DRIVE and its work with BESCOM look promising, but the state recently discovered the limits of ambition. It floated PPP tenders for 2,500 new chargers and got no bidders, a clear sign that the business case is not strong everywhere.

Maharashtra is another leader with about 3,746 public chargers. Delhi benefits from urban density. ORF analysis shows that it is one of the few regions where charger rollout actually matches demand. Outside these hubs, the picture is weaker. Several states in the northeast, Odisha, and large rural belts have very few chargers. Five states — Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu — hold around 60 percent of all public chargers. Tamil Nadu is thinking ahead with its push for high-speed chargers on highways for buses and trucks, but these plans are still in early stages and will test whether states can support heavy-duty EV needs.

A major challenge behind this unevenness is infrastructure concentration. Most public chargers are clustered in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Pune, leaving vast parts of rural and tier-2 India under-served.

Land and approvals create another major bottleneck. Setting up a charger requires permissions for land use, electricity, safety, and municipal clearances. Karnataka's failed tender being a prime example.

Grid capacity adds another layer of difficulty. High-load stations can strain local networks if upgrades aren't planned properly. Distribution companies, many of which are financially stressed, struggle to take on these additional investments. While the Bureau of Energy Efficiency has guidelines for EV load management, adoption varies widely across states. Cost barriers persist too. EVs are cheaper to operate but more expensive upfront. The end of FAME-II made certain segments—especially two-wheelers—costlier. States now have to decide whether they want to step in with their own subsidies or let prices rise.

Chargers need to feel equally accessible for EV adoption to feel safe and routine.

The EV Paradox

EV Policy 2025 is meant to give states a clearer roadmap and reduce the confusion that has slowed rollout so far. One place it can help is standardisation. Charging formats, safety rules, and grid-integration norms vary across states, which makes it harder for companies to operate nationwide. The policy leans on the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's push for uniform guidelines, giving private players more predictability. It also promotes cluster-based planning instead of scattering chargers randomly. The policy encourages better coordination with DISCOMs, so grid upgrades and charger installation can move together. This could reduce the delays many states face when stations are ready but local networks aren't.

On the financial side, the policy gives states room to craft their own incentives. Maharashtra's toll exemption on the Samruddhi Expressway is one example. This flexibility matters now that FAME-II has ended.

But there are limits. Policies cannot instantly fix range anxiety, consumer hesitation, or the pace of municipal approvals. They can guide, but they cannot substitute execution. States with stronger finances and political backing will move faster. Others will still lag, even with a national framework.

Conclusion

India's EV push is no longer a distant vision. The policies, money, and intent are all in place. What's missing is consistency on the ground. EV Policy 2025 gives states a clearer playbook, but the pace of adoption will still depend on how quickly each state can sort out its own bottlenecks like land access, grid upgrades, investor confidence, and day-to-day coordination with local bodies.

Some states are already proving what's possible when planning and execution line up. Others will need more time and support. The next few years will show whether India can turn scattered progress into a truly national transition. If states follow through, EVs won't stay an ambitious goal. They will become the default way India moves.

India's 2025 Green Rules: A Climate Milestone or a License to Pollute?

-Vigaas Singh

Introduction

On October 8, 2025, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change ("MoEFCC") issued a gazette notification that fundamentally alters how Indian industry interacts with the climate crisis. The introduction of the Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target Rules, 2025 ("GEI Target Rules"), under the Energy Conservation Act of 2001, marks India's transition from voluntary energy saving mechanisms to a mandatory, market-based carbon compliance regime. While the government frames this as a decisive step towards the nation's Net Zero 2070 goal, the fine print has sparked an intense debate among environmental economists and policy experts regarding its efficacy, structural integrity, and potential to actually lower absolute emissions.

The Background: From Energy Savings to Carbon Trading

To understand the gravity of these new rules, one must look at the architecture they replace and expand upon. For over a decade, India relied on the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) scheme, which focused solely on energy efficiency. The new 2025 Rules constitute the operational backbone of the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS).

The GEI Target Rules operationalize India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) established in 2023, which itself was enabled by the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022. This legislative progression demonstrates India's systematic approach to building a robust climate governance architecture. The rules are strategically aligned with India's Paris Agreement commitments, particularly its pledge to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels and achieve net zero emissions by 2070..

This new framework builds upon the foundation of the Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme, initiated in 2012. While PAT focused on energy efficiency improvements, it lacked direct carbon emission targets and a functional carbon market. The GEI Rules address this gap by shifting the focus from energy consumption to carbon emissions, creating economic incentives for decarbonization through a market-based mechanism. The policy also prepares Indian exporters for emerging international mechanisms like the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which taxes carbon-intensive imports such as cement and aluminium.

The primary objective here is to establish a domestic carbon market. By virtue of these rules, the central government has identified "obligated entities" who are the major industrial players in sectors like pulp and paper, steel, and cement and has assigned them specific greenhouse gas (GHG) emission intensity targets. This is a compliance market, meaning participation is not optional. It represents a shift from simply trying to use less electricity to a broader mandate of reducing the carbon footprint per unit of production. The rules invoke Section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act, empowering the Bureau of Energy Efficiency ("BEE") to act as the administrator, while a steering committee oversees the technical trajectory of the carbon market.

Deep Dive: The Mechanics of the Mandate

The operational framework of the 2025 Rules is complex. While a "cap-and-trade" system establishes an overall hard limit on pollution in the European Union, India has chosen to use an "intensity-based" model. This means entities are judged not on their absolute emissions, but by the tCO_2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted) that they emit per ton of product.

The calculation methodology is based on a rolling cycle. In line with the schedule annexed to the rules, targets are specified for base years that are 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27, based on previous performance. For example, under the rules, specific corporate entities like ITC Limited or Shreyans Industries are listed, with identified emission intensity in exact figures (e.g., 2.1231 tCO_2e/tonne of product).

It is a market mechanism that basically incentivizes over-performance. If the obligated entity emits less than its assigned target, it earns Carbon Credit Certificates ("CCCs"). An entity, on the other hand, that fails to meet its target has two choices: buy CCCs from the market to offset its excess emissions or pay a penalty. Verification is stringent on paper: it requires accredited carbon verification agencies, which audit the data before any credits are issued or liabilities calculated.

Second, the regulations bring in a very straightforward chain of accountability. While the BEE will calculate the targets, compliance is very rigid. The GHG parameters are to be monitored on a daily basis and annual reports submitted. The integration of these rules suggests a vision where carbon becomes a commodity on the balance sheet, treated with the same seriousness as raw material costs or labor wages.

Critique: Structural Flaws and Market Realities

Despite all this bureaucratic robustness, a critical look into the text reveals deep fissures in how the 2025 Rules have been broached. The most blatant manifestation is an over-reliance on the principle of “emission intensity” instead of “absolute caps.”

By pegging targets to production efficiency rather than to total pollution has allowed the growth of the overall carbon footprint of industry, so long as production expands. A steel plant doubles its production and improves efficiency by 1 percent to meet the intensity target but pumps nearly twice the amount of carbon into the atmosphere. In the context of a climate emergency that requires absolute reductions, such an approach will amount to negligible change. The targets set for the first compliance cycle would yield only 2-7 percent reduction in the emission intensities across the concerned sectors, an analysis by Climate Risk Horizons said. Most of these marginal improvements can likely be achieved with incremental process tweaks rather than through the fundamental technological transformation required for deep decarbonization. The current framework risks allowing industries to fine-tune their operations rather than transform them.

Furthermore, the penalty structure and the cost of pollution remain points of contention. As pointed out by those critics who were able to review the precursor drafts, if the price of carbon credits is too low, it becomes cheaper for industries to simply buy their way out of compliance rather than investing in expensive green technologies. The previous PAT scheme suffered from this very problem, where an oversupply of energy saving certificates crashed the price, rendering the financial incentive to decarbonize negligible. There is little in the 2025 Rules that would guarantee the BEE can enforce a high enough floor price to drive genuine technological transformation.

Transparency and verification pose another potential nightmare. The Rules lean heavily on third-party verifiers that are paid by the very industries they audit, a conflict of interest that has bedeviled global carbon markets from Verra to the Clean Development Mechanism. Without state-funded, independent auditing, there is a great risk of manipulation in underreporting emissions to meet targets.

Finally, the “obligated entities” scope also has equity implications. The current rollout covers a few heavy industries but leaves large areas of the economy that are contributing to emissions. As policy narrows its focus, it runs the risks of creating a fragmented market where only a few sectors will bear the compliance burden, potentially leading to carbon leakage, as investment shifts to unregulated sectors or to smaller, non-obligated units.

This needs India to implement a carbon price floor or stability reserve safeguards, already effectively deployed by Canada and Korea. Both the IMF and the OECD have argued that these are the only mechanisms protecting the market from volatility. Without a guaranteed minimum price, investors will not have confidence in funding low-carbon projects, and financial pressure to decarbonize simply evaporates.

Conclusion

The Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target Rules, 2025, are a long overdue upgrade to India's environmental policy, marking the recognition that the era of voluntary climate action is finally over. Putting in place a domestic carbon market is an administrative ambition that marks India's entry into a select league of economies. However, the current draft runs the risk of being a paper tiger. By opting for intensity rather than absolute reduction and leaving the door open to low-cost compliance via cheap credits, the rules may serve to create a thriving market for certificates without actually reducing atmospheric carbon. Unless the government sets tighter targets and imposes a high cost on pollution, this overhaul may be remembered for its bureaucracy, not as a climate solution.

EDITORS

Aryan Chowdhury
(Editor-in-Chief)
Manasvi Singh
Adrija Dey
Shreya Mathur

DESIGN

Ishani Garg
Ishani Burande

Connect with us: