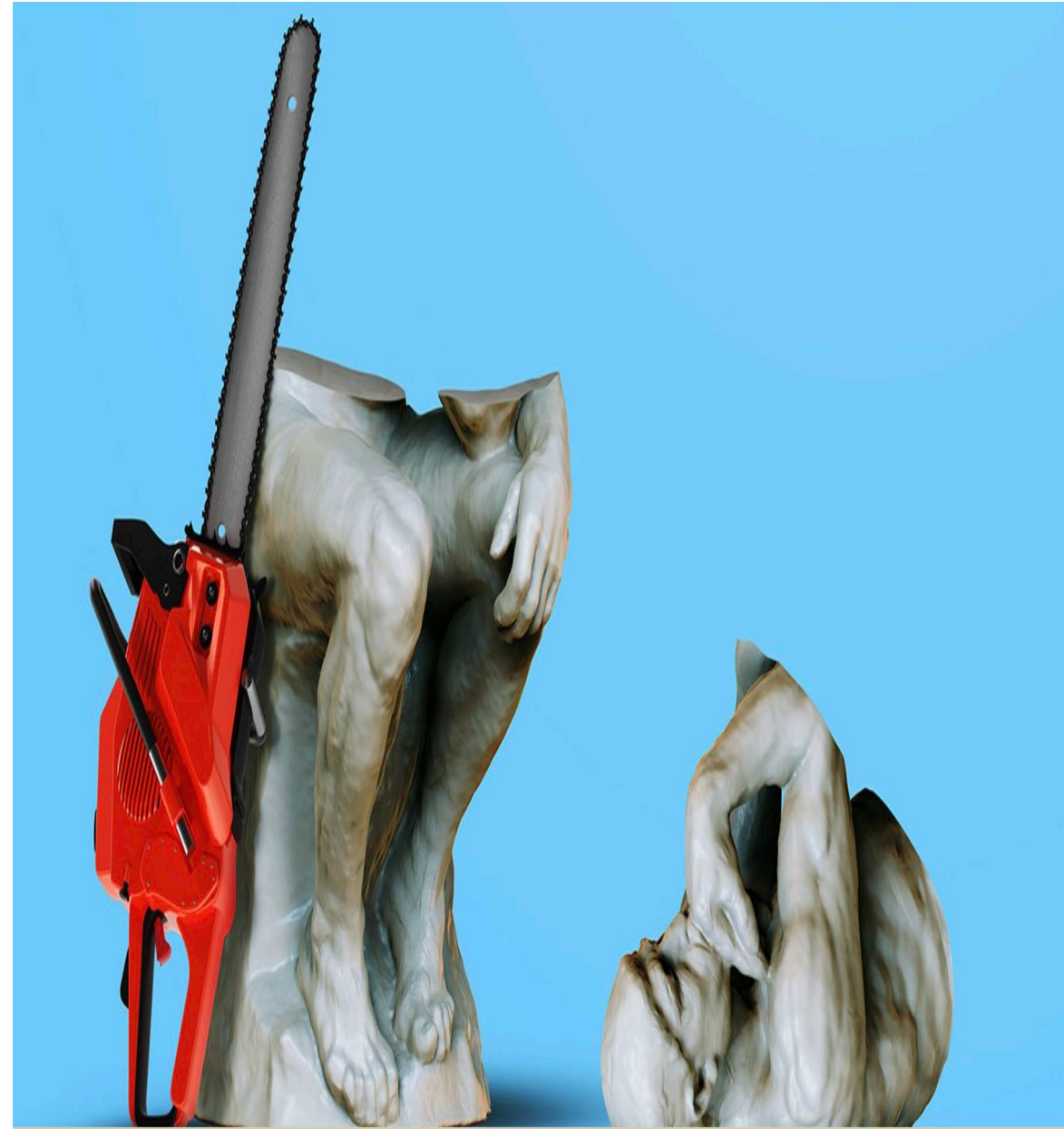# The Efficiency Trap

ON STATE CAPACITY & TECHNOLOGY IN THE ERA OF DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN INDIA

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LESSONS IN STATE CAPACITY
FROM DELHI'S SCHOOLS

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INDIA GROWS AT NIGHT, WHILE THE STATE SLEEPS

A functional democracy that delivers poor quality governance (Kohli, 2012)

Episodic success vs Routinised everyday governance (Kapur, 2020)

A Flailing State (Pritchett 2009)

A sound functional head not connected to its own limbs

Techno-managerial State Building

The Technocratic Imaginary

➢ Nehruvian High Modernist State Building project (centralized planning, statistical systems)

➢ Disciplining/ Plumbing ("Thinking Like an Economist)

➢ DigiState consensus

Majority of IAS recruits are STEM Graduates

● STEM ○ NON-STEM

STEM **80%**

18%

Allotment Year

@statsofindia.in
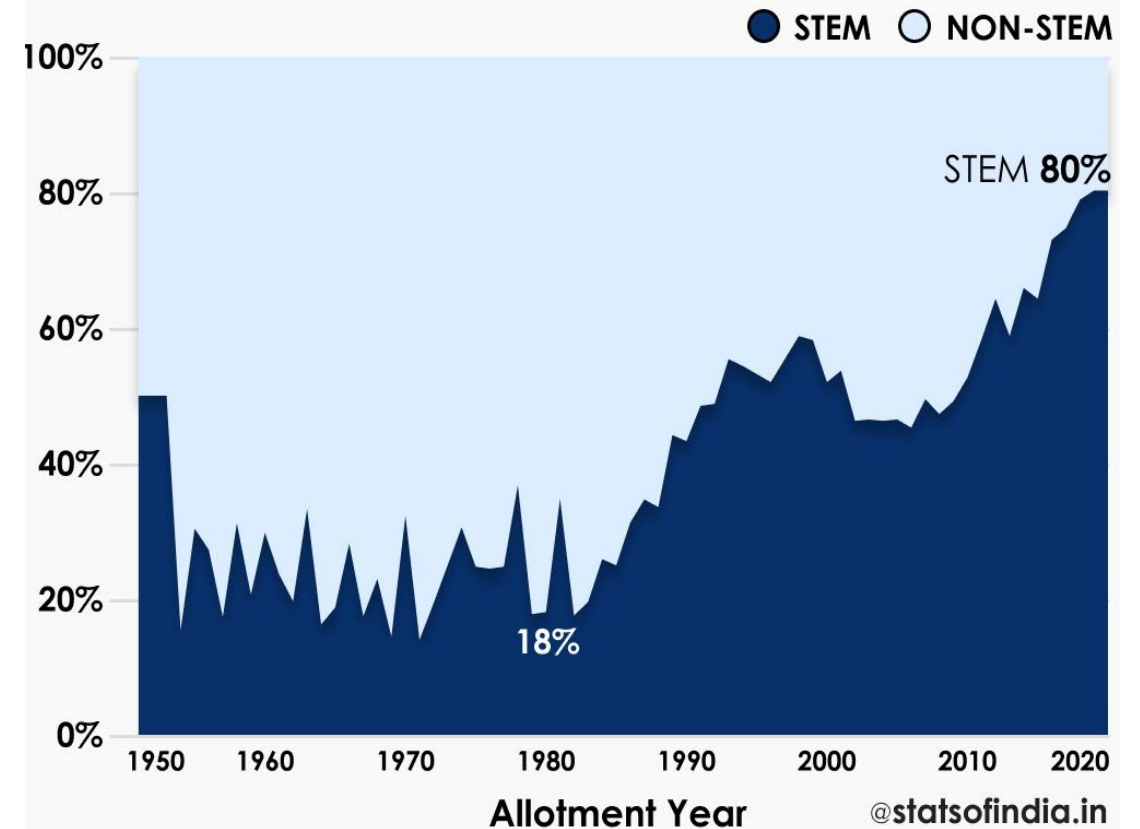
Source: TCPD-IAS
STEM degrees are Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics programs.
This data considers IAS officers from direct recruitment only. Not all officers have education history.

Disciplining/ Plumbing framework

Plumbing failure

➢ Getting the incentives right via pvt sector mgt principles

➢ Disciplining to de-politicise frontline

➢ Plugging leaks incrementally via data/ monitoring through technology

Governance

Command and Control Centre (CCC) for Schools

Online Attendance System

School Monitoring Application

Divyaan Application

GIS Mapping of Schools

## COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTRE (CCC) FOR SCHOOLS

Brief description :

Samagra Shiksha (SS), Education Department, Gujarat State has set-up CCC for Schools for State level monitoring and tracking field level academic and non-academic activities and to monitor and improve the performance and the accountabilities of field level academic & non-academic staff by implementing following innovative steps:

› Integrated Dashboard application by integrating APIs from existing applications like Online Attendance, Assessment test results, Vehicle tracking system, etc. & integrating tour diary for field visits of CRCs/BRCs.

› Comprehensive school monitoring application with Geofencing & geotagging for field level academic & non-academic staff for providing information about schools, real time data gathering and evaluation of school eco-system. This app is being accessed by CRCs/BRCs through GPS enabled tablets during their field visits. Thereby tracking the physical presence of field staff at the respective location.

› Generation of campaign wise questions to seek information from the field level staff based on their scheduled visits to schools & monitoring of filed level implementation of initiatives. This helps in Real – time data gathering, analysis and evaluation to identify improvement areas, and planning of new initiatives

› Reports generated by CCC will be monitor and analysed for the betterment of the education and to take effective actions on field.

Objectives :

› To set up centralized monitoring mechanism at State level for monitoring the activities of field level staff & other filed level implementation of projects / initiatives

A "Capable", "High Capacity" State
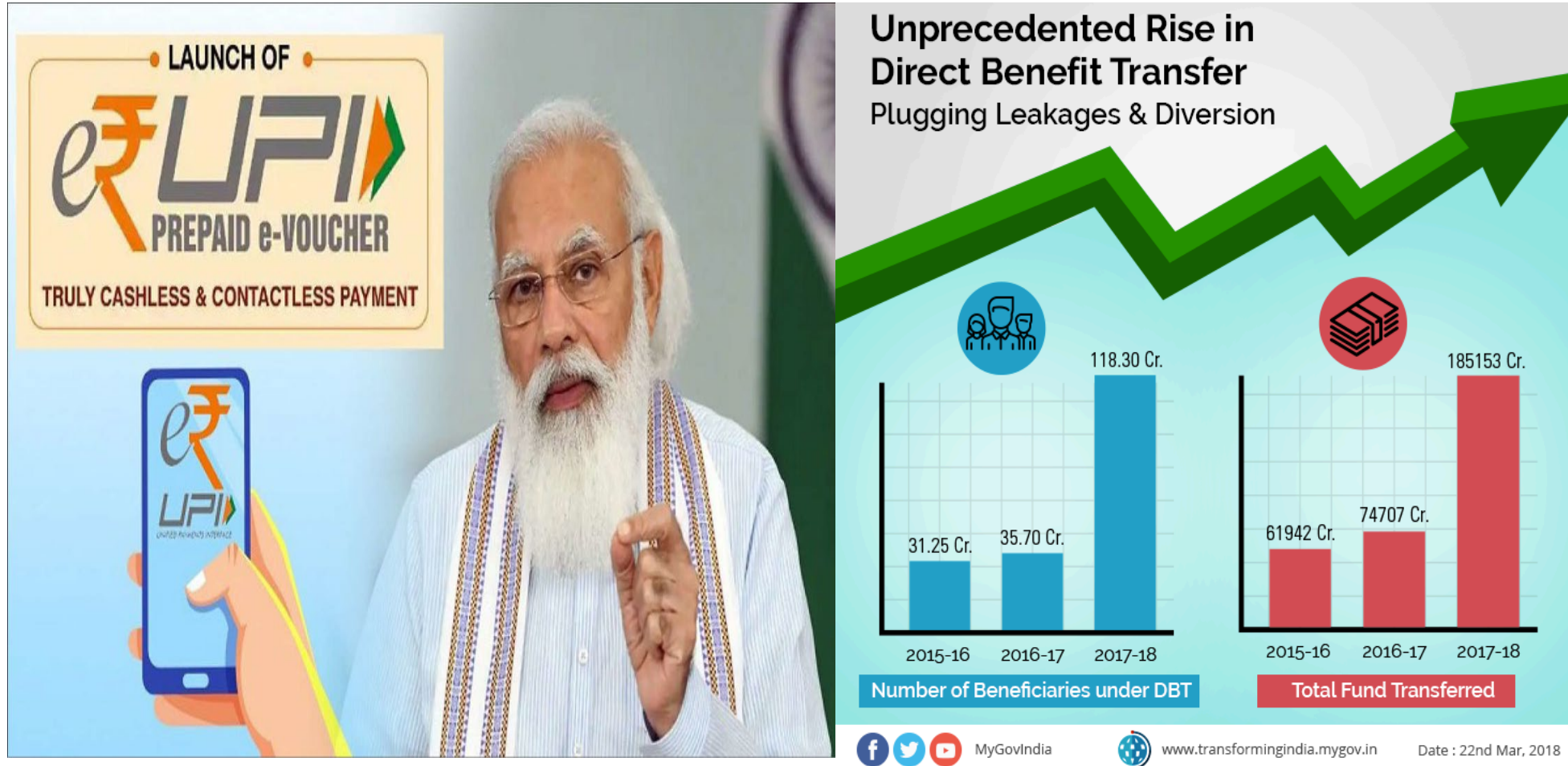
2.1 trillion INR to 1 billion recipients. Over 500 schemes registered in DBT Portal

Everyday Encounter's at the Frontline (Delhi)

Tyranny of the Circular

- 8000 + circulars over 3 years

- 70% use negative language (threats/ orders/ demands)

*"Heads of the schools have not even bothered to try to resubmit students' enrolment data of their school till today. Thus, this showed **negligence in discharging their duties**. Now, all the HOSs (as per list annexed), are hereby directed to explain their position for non submission of students' enrolment in time, within 2 (two) working days failing which **action as deemed** fit will be initiated against them as per CCS Rules."*

Shaping the Frontline Worker

- *"We are just post officers."*

- *"What suggestions can I give? My first priority is to implement orders."*

- *"Sarkar Chahti hai to bahut kuch kar sakti hai" (If the State wants, it can do a lot)*

Shaping the Frontline Worker
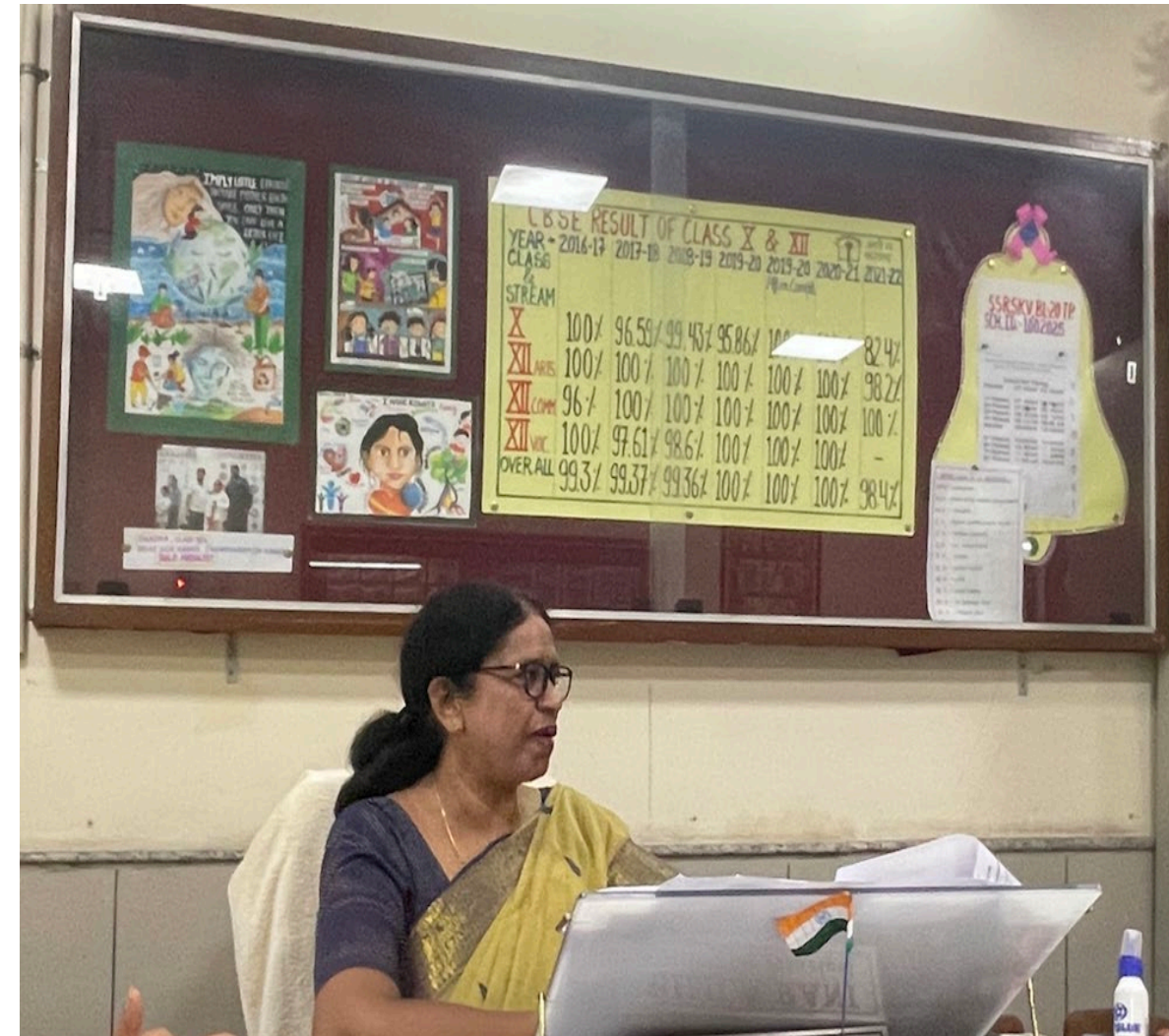
Professional identity

"Frankly, I have lost my identity as a teacher...we are more into clerical jobs"

"Our job is to teach...not to be a division clerk"

Bureaucratic self image

"As long as you move data, you have done your job"

"Complete Rest in Comfortable Conditions"

The classroom consensus:
What technology can't fix

Teachers cast themselves as 'victims' thus legitimizing their "apathy"

...........As teachers, we are supposed to teach not for syllabus but for life. But we don't do that

............Forget understanding, just apply rote learning and pass the examination, I will be very happy

The efficient State

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today chaired the 31st interaction through PRAGATI — the ICT based multi-mod Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.

In the previous PRAGATI meetings, a total of 265 projects with a total investment of Rs. 12.15 lakh crore, 47 progra and grievances related to 17 sectors (22 subjects) had been reviewed.

The PRAGATI meeting today witnessed review of 9 projects worth over Rs. 61,000 crore related to 16 states and the of Jammu & Kashmir. Grievances of Indian citizens working abroad along with subjects like National Agricultu Aspirational District Programme were also discussed.

PM Modi's closing remarks at interaction with DMs across India

A "Capable", "High Capacity" State?
State capacity in times of democratic erosion
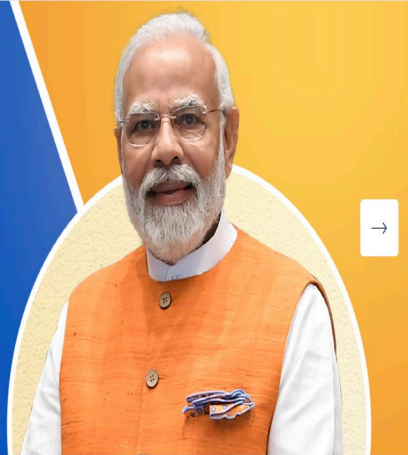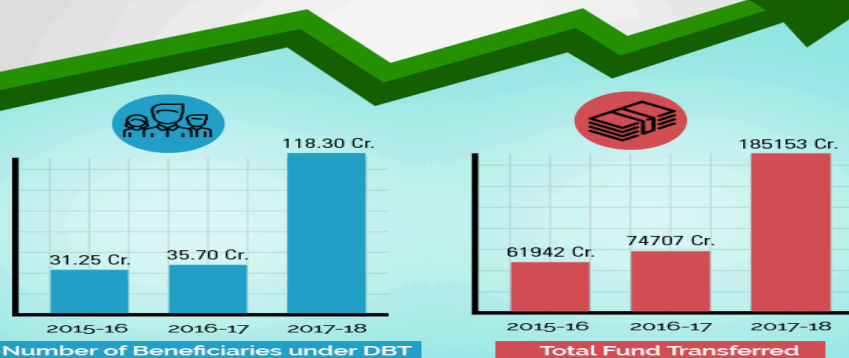
Techno Patrimonial Welfarism

- Patrimonialism: Universal welfare but submitting to personal authority of the leader

- Technological disintermediation: Personalizing and centralizing political authority, through welfare (guarantees and gifts)

Political Attribution

Who is most responsible for delivering welfare benefits to you?

	Percentage
Prime Minister	49.3
Chief Minister	30.9
Government Officials	7.9
MLA/MP	5.6
Party Workers	4.1
Others	2.2

Why has corruption decreased in the last 10 years?

	Percentage
Digitization/Online Application	58.5
Stronger Monitoring by Modi	41.0
Stronger Monitoring by CM	28.8
Greater Awareness about Schemes	25.1
Stronger Monitory by the Panchayat/Municipality	12.2

Political Attribution

	Prime Minister	Chief Minister	Government Officials	MLA/MP	Party Workers	Others
Andhra Pradesh	27.3	42.4	13.6	10	3.8	2.8
Kerala	27.9	27.1	16.5	11.8	10.2	6.4
Madhya Pradesh	63.4	24	4.6	2.7	3.8	1.5
Rajasthan	53.8	36.8	1.7	0.8	3.8	3.1
Tamil Nadu	14.6	54.9	12.3	7.8	8.2	2.1
Uttar Pradesh	76.3	11.5	5.2	2.3	1.7	3
West Bengal	28.2	57.4	6.9	1.7	4.9	0.8

In conclusion

- Efficiency frameworks often result in pushing democratic trade offs

- Transactional citizen vs rights bearing

- Shifting accountability and remaking citizenship

- The State is not **amazon.com**

What State Capacity is: Interstitial spaces

- Nurturing interstitial spaces to create norm based narrative shifts – building relational capacity

Levers of change

- Investing in relationship building – regular, repeated communication (leadership presence)
- Nurturing disruptive, principled change agents (mentor teachers)
- Missions and pilots (building system readiness)

- Deliberative management practices

Engaging and investing rather than dismissing frontline state