



Shattered Dreams

With empty pockets and shattered dreams, many people are currently leaving the cities to return to their home town. This illustrates the disturbing levels of vulnerability of hundreds of million Indians, who grow up with higher expectations and better education, but remain at the merci of others.

Equipped with new skills and experiences, many returnees choose to remain in the village after Covid-19. They begin to embrace emerging opportunities in the rural area and are more connected than ever through digital services.



Universal Basic Income

Simply paying everyone regularly a decent amount of money is a revolution in the way we define social welfare and can lead the way towards a new level in human development. This powerful idea is quickly gaining political momentum in India.

Covid-19 will push it further. By replacing myriads of costly and messy welfare schemes with a lean and radically transparent UBI, hunger and poverty could become a problem of the past.

UBI will create heated controversies and may have profound impacts on the way many CSOs work.

FUTURE OF
CIVIL SOCIETY

INDIA



DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Accelerated by Covid-19 ...

How civil society may change in the 2020's ...

And how might we embrace emerging opportunities for a better world?

Total Traceability

End to end traceability of goods is changing the way we consume.

Tomato or Tshirt: We know who produced it, how much they earn and what quality standards are followed. For everything and always. However, total traceability has a dark side. States and companies are using cameras, face recognition, apps and artificial intelligence to trace and often control citizens. China is leading here, but 1984 is looming over India too.

Covid-19 has accelerate these trends. For the good, or against the bad, amplifying citizen voices and promoting alternative approaches may prove critical to remain on a democratic and rights-based trajectory.



Strong 'I'-dentification

India's young population is independent and self-reliant. They make own decisions and are determined to pursue their personal goals and dreams. Through mobile internet and social media, they publicly express their "I" when and wherever they are. They hold strong view points toward many aspects of life, from consumerism, LGBTQ, to climate change.

With this changing mindset and accelerated by Covid-19, a new era of young leaders is emerging ready to reshape social change in India.



Toxic Narratives

Populism, hate speech, fake news, conspiracy theories, social bots and echo chambers, now everyday language, instrumentalize and amplify toxic narratives. This can cost lives in the real world, for instance for Indian Muslims. The battle for narratives is taking over more and more space, and nobody really has the option to disengage any more, particularly not civil society.

Covid-19 pushes the boundaries further! Who controls the narrative?



Virtual Civil Society

Hyper-connectivity provides radically new opportunities for the "voiceless" to learn, to connect and to influence democracies in the global south. Covid currently accelerates this driver.

In the 2020's, the movers and shakers are lean organizations with sound social values, a large outreach and great virtual platforms. They use participatory media and artificial intelligence to engage citizens that are hungry for change.

The Oxfams and World Visions better watch out: just like Amazon in retail, tech-driven social organisations and businesses may become the rising stars in Civil Society.



Localized Economies

Urbanization is an overwhelming trend in India, but rural areas are progressing too, though often unnoticed. Many Indian villages are now connected to the internet, have gas, electricity, piped water and TV. Better roads mean that nearby cities are mostly within a reach of less than 2 hours.

Covid-19 accelerates the connectivity between such rural towns and villages like never before. Increasingly, goods and services are sourced locally, even through digital platforms. More investments and new enterprises, developed by returnees from the cities, may well see "Ruralization" a likely development in India.