

Why are Our Governments *like this only?*



Why Care?

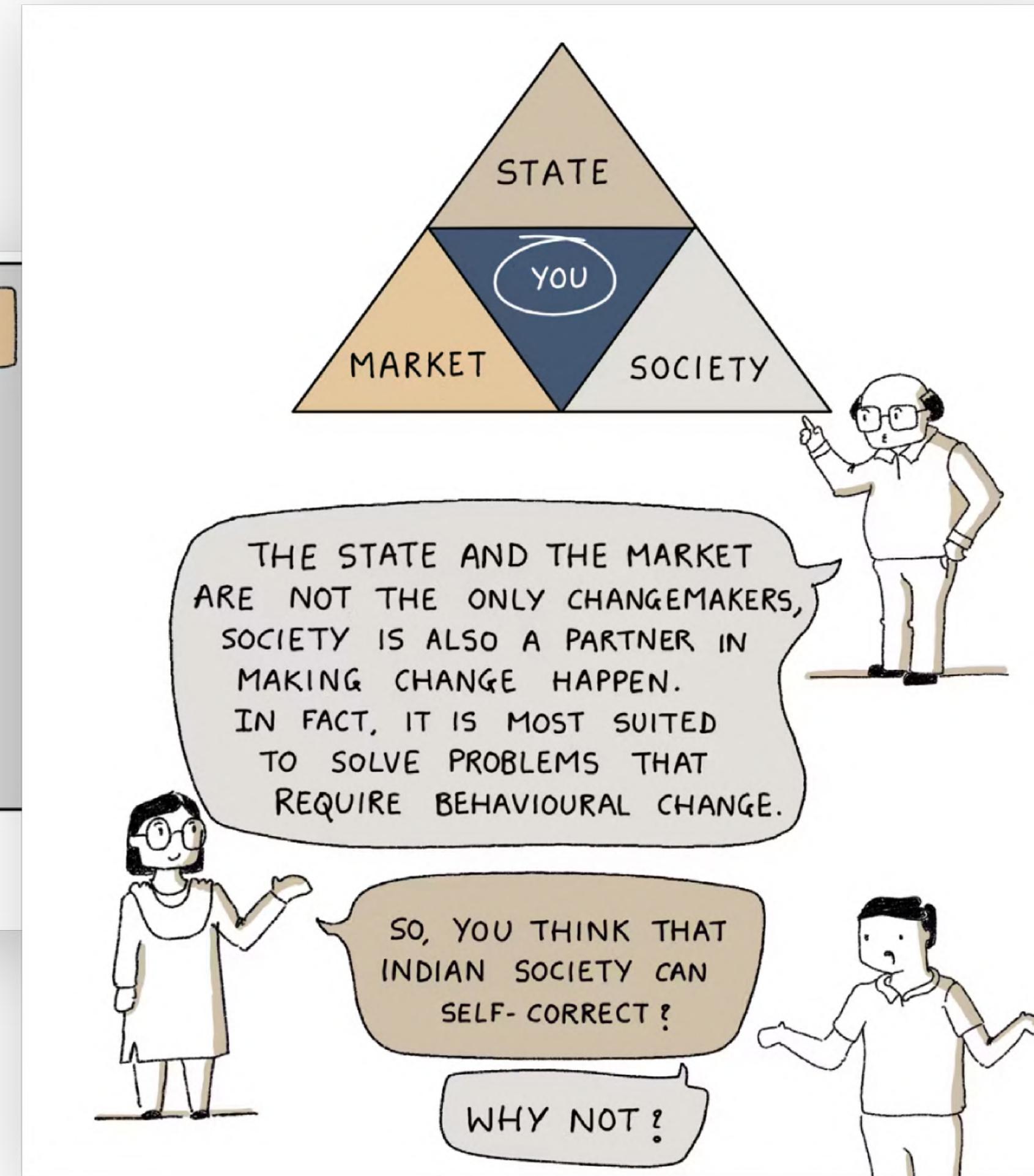
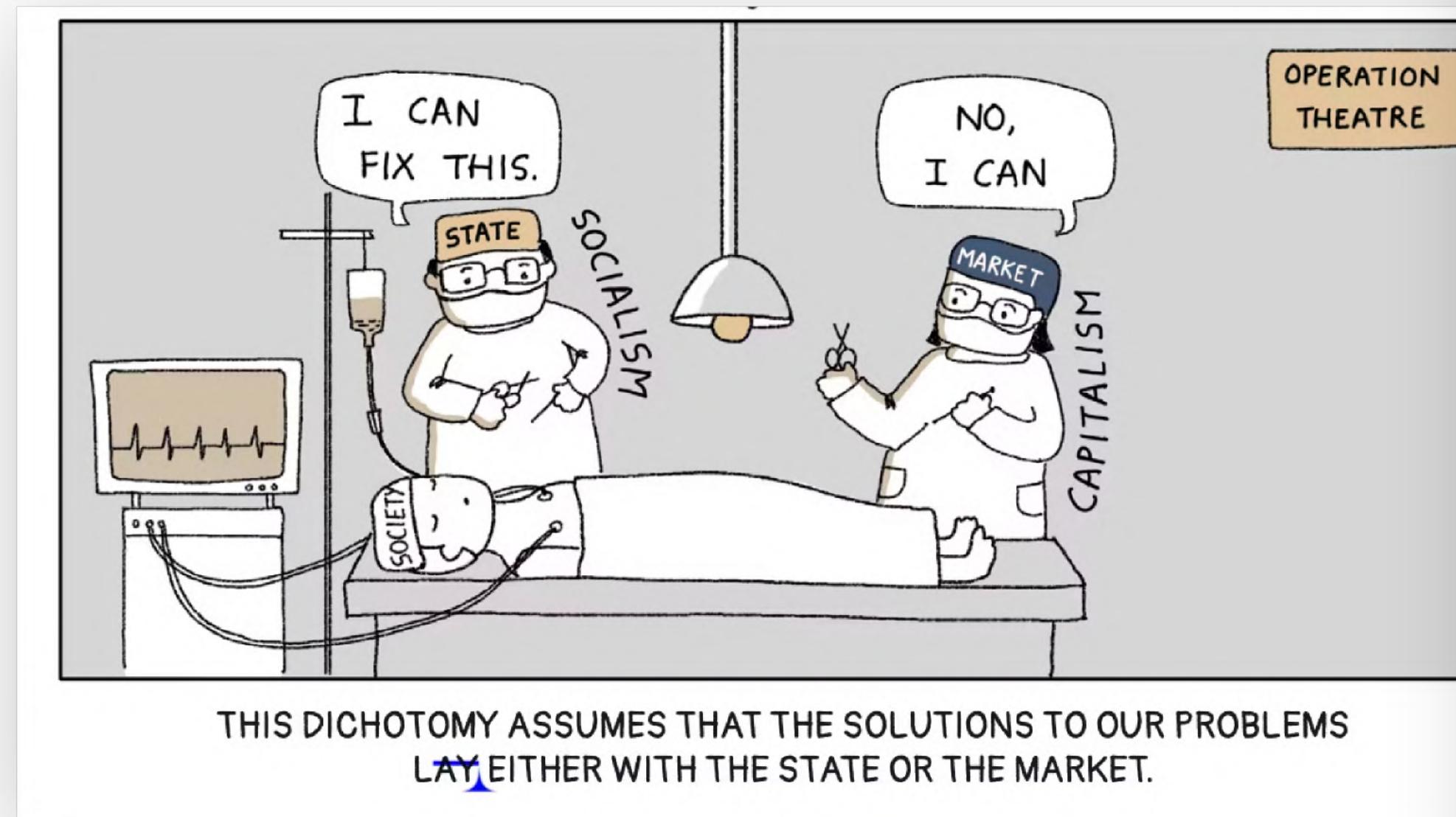
- To hold our governments accountable
- To sharpen our demands
- To increase the level of public discourse

Assumption #1 Winning more
Olympic Medals should be a
responsibility of the Indian
State

OR

Indian languages are being
displaced by English; the
Indian State must protect them.

Societies are themselves a vehicle of change



Assumption #2 India's main problem is its overpopulation.

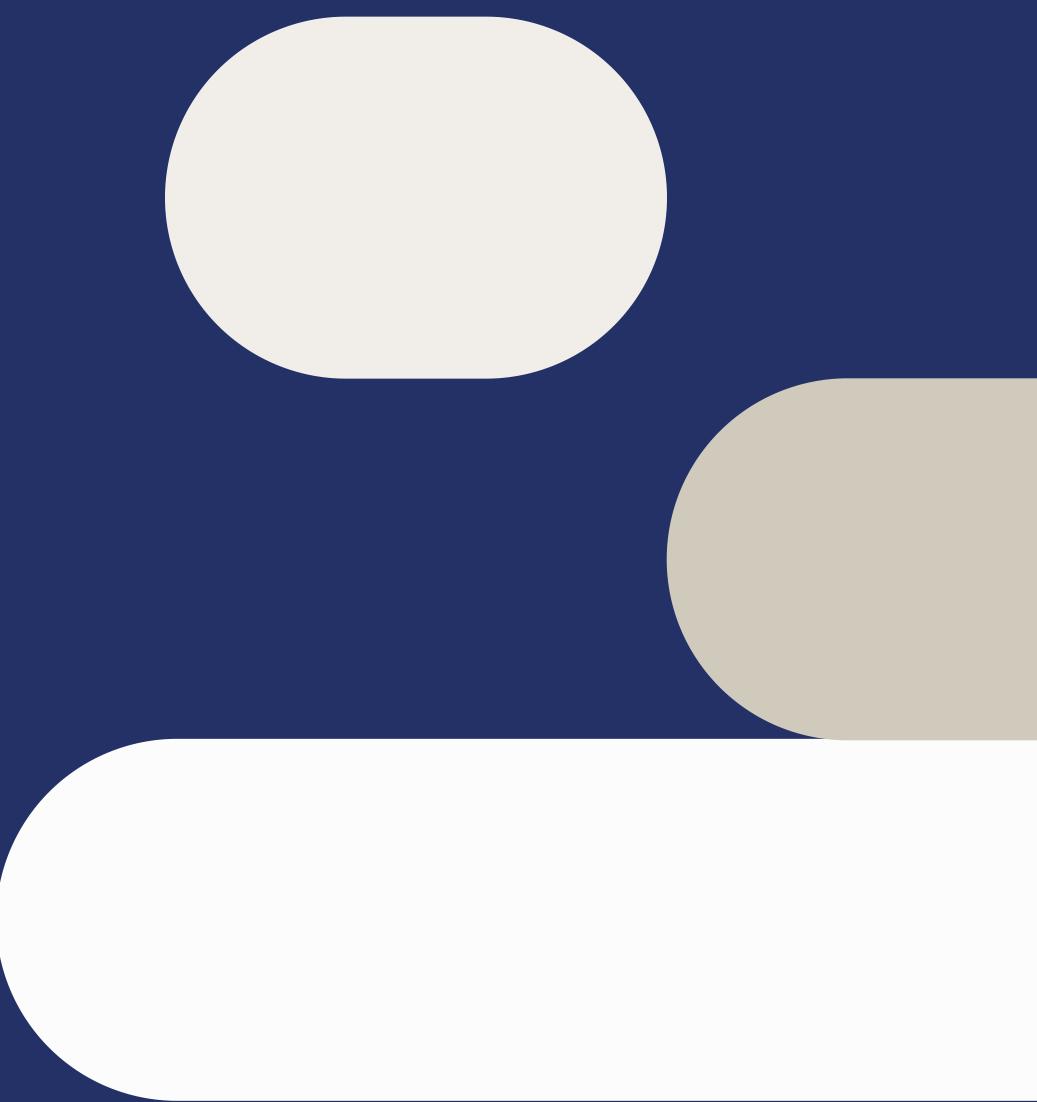
<Every government's favourite>



"Undergovernance, Not Overpopulation"

- Kerala's population density is higher than UP (2011 census)
- Top 10 cities occupy 0.2% of national land mass (Das, 2019)
- "Even if all of India's population had a dwelling of 1000 square feet per family of 4, this requires only 0.76% of India's land area, assuming a low FSI of 1." (Sane and Shah, 2008)

Assumption #3: The Indian State is overstuffed



It's too big and too small

THE POPULAR PERCEPTION IS THAT THE INDIAN STATE IS OVERSTAFFED WITH INEFFICIENT GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.



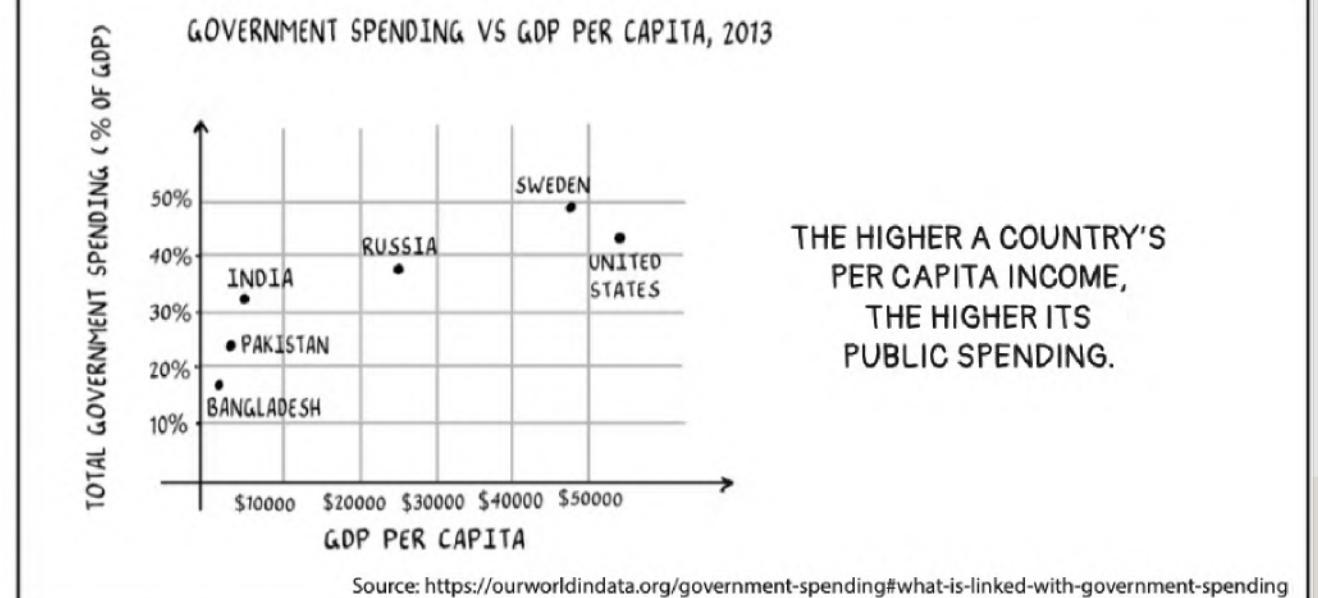
THE REALITY IS THAT KEY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE GROSSLY UNDERSTAFFED.



* Source: As per MHA in Rajyasabha, March 2021.
<https://www.mha.gov.in/MHA1/Par2017/pdfs/par2021-pdfs/rs-24032021/3266.pdf>

WHILE THE UNITED NATIONS RECOMMENDS 222 POLICE PER LAKH PERSONS, INDIA'S ACTUAL POLICE STRENGTH IS JUST 155.78 POLICE PER LAKH PERSONS.*

IT IS ALSO RELATIVELY SMALL WHEN MEASURED BY PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.



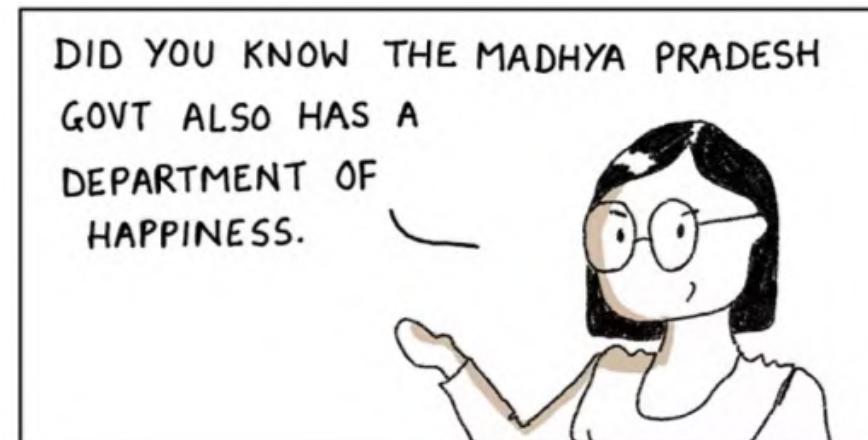
THE HIGHER A COUNTRY'S PER CAPITA INCOME, THE HIGHER ITS PUBLIC SPENDING.



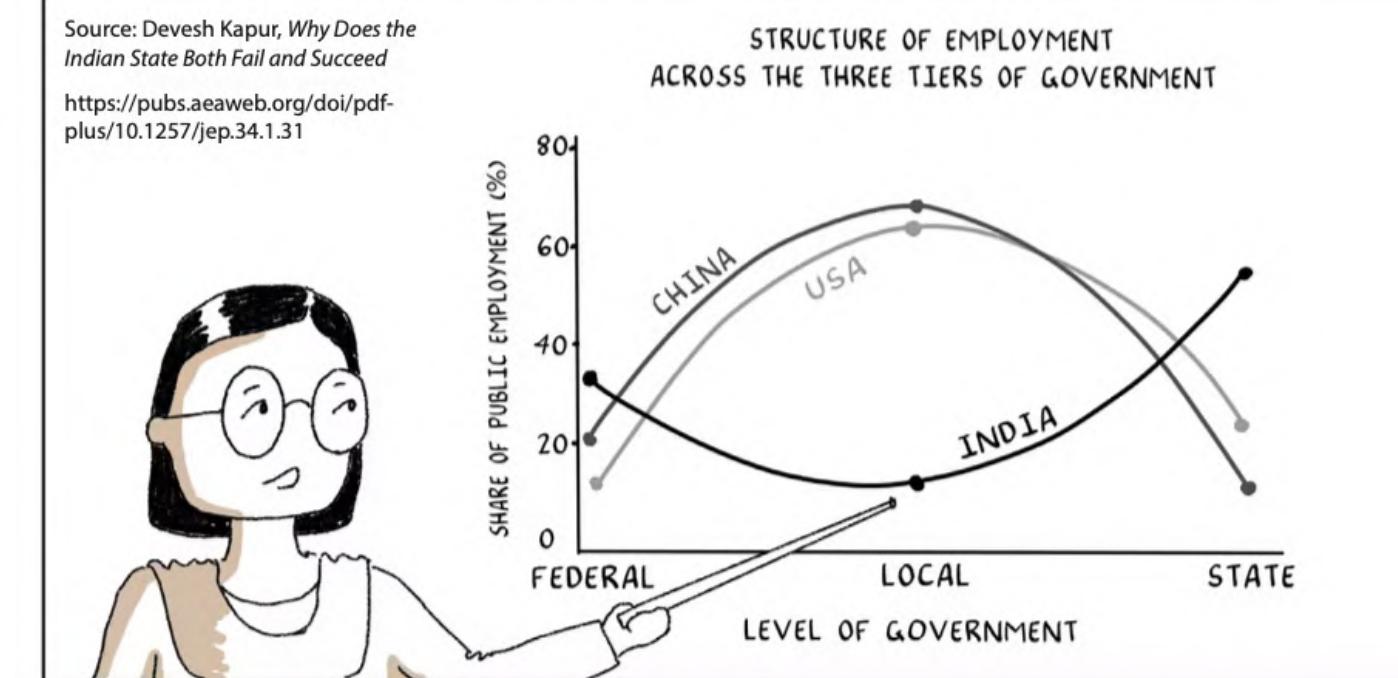
THE STATE IS NOT ABSENT, BUT ACTUALLY PLAYS A BIGGER ROLE IN FEWER AREAS AND DOES THEM WELL.



ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDIAN STATE, WHICH HAS LESSER INCOME AND HENCE LESSER MONEY TO SPEND, IS ALSO THINLY SPREAD OUT ACROSS SUNDRY DEPARTMENTS AND A LONG LIST OF PUBLIC-SECTOR UNITS (PSUs).



IT IS ALSO VERY TOP-HEAVY. IT HAS MORE EMPLOYEES AT THE CENTRE AND THE STATE LEVELS, BUT IS GROSSLY UNDERSTAFFED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.



THIS ABSENCE OF STATE CAPACITY AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL IS ALL TOO APPARENT TO US.



The Indian State is Omniabsent

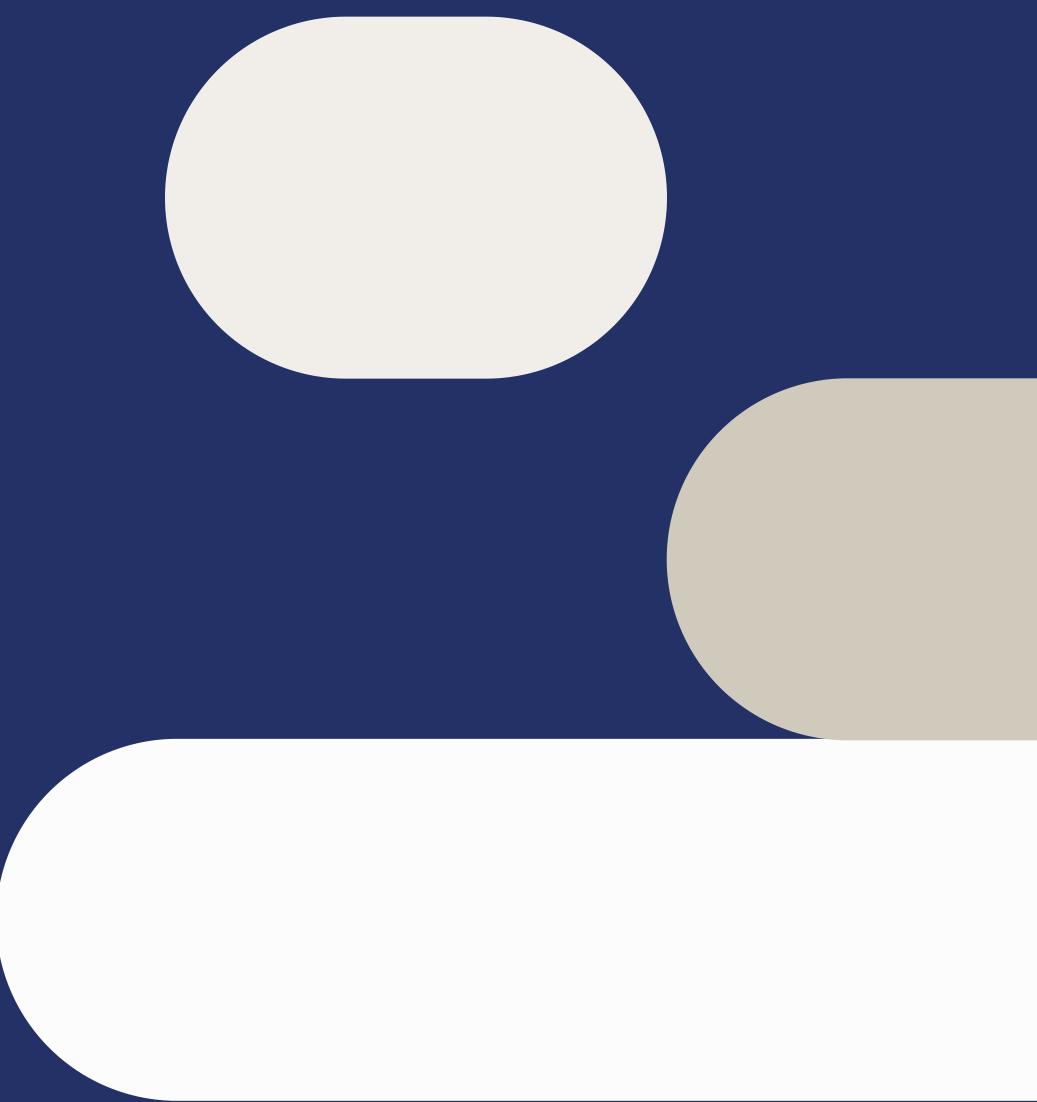
Small in terms of expenditure (comparatively)

Small in terms of capacity

Small in terms of the number of people

Big in terms of its ambition and the load on it

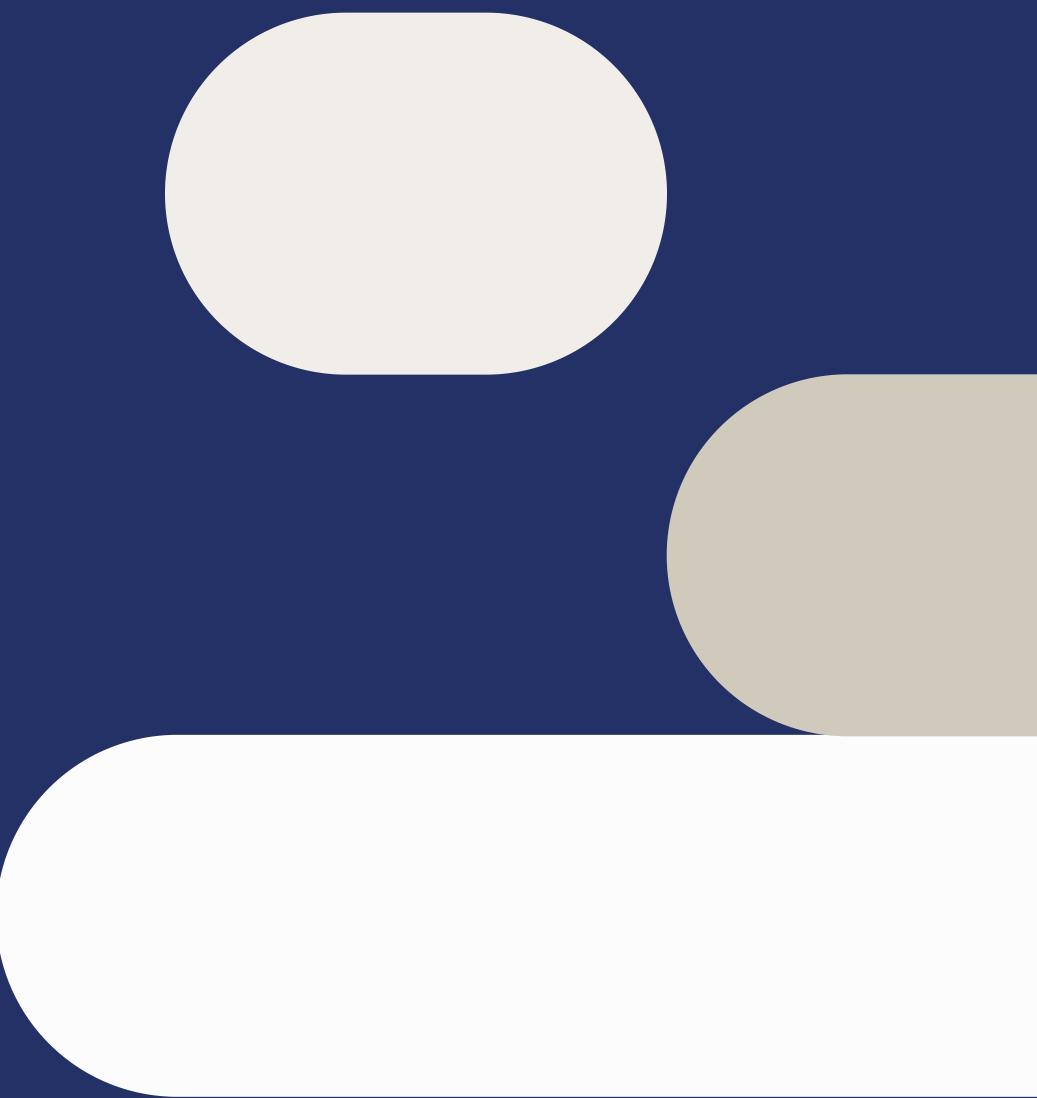
Assumption #3a: India is more decentralised than China



India is not competing with China, but with its 300+ cities

- Bureaucratic decentralisation
- Subsidiarity (expenditure 51% vs 3%)
- Competition

Assumption #4: When the
prices of goods increase too
much, the government should
intervene!



Price controls do not work

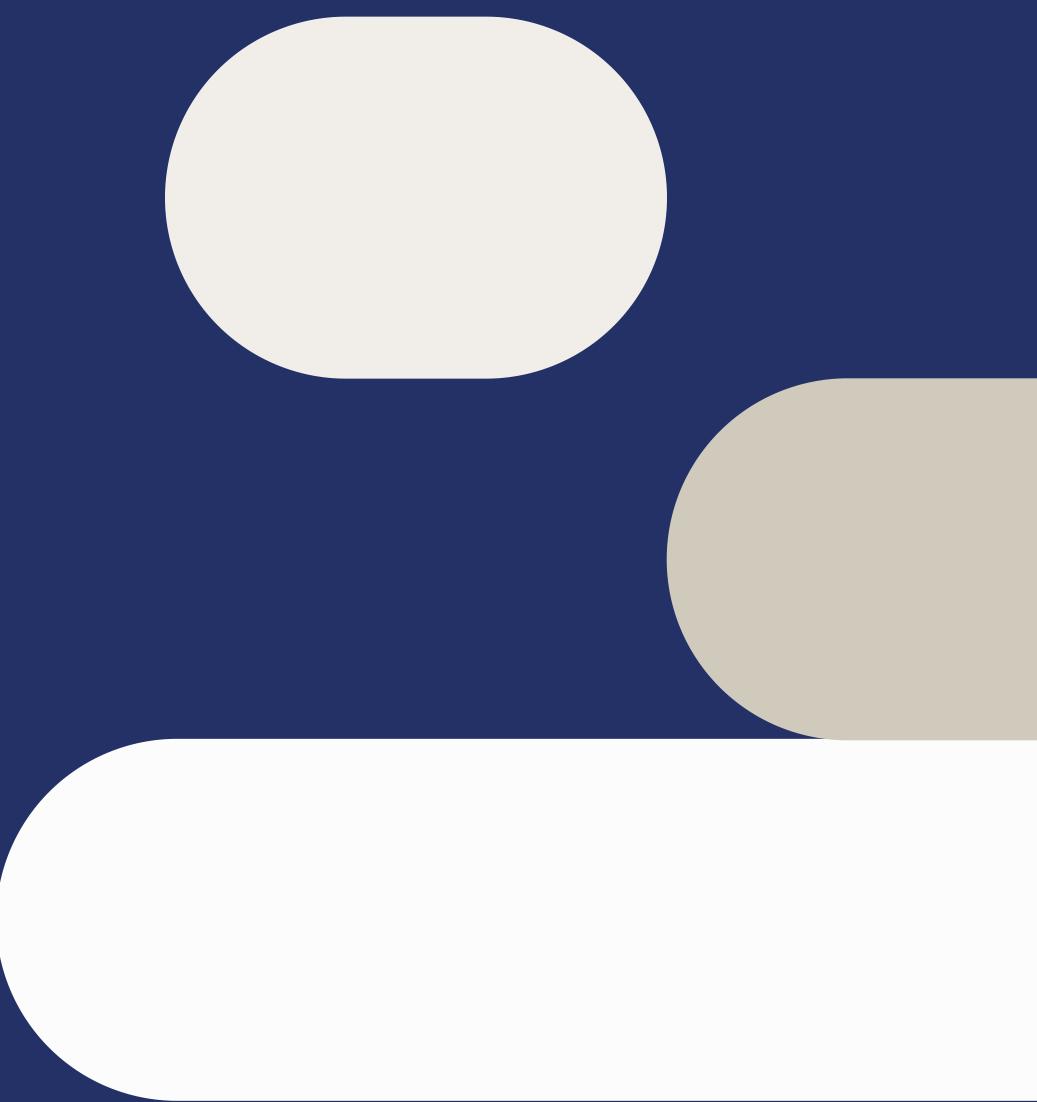


Price Fixing has long-lasting and harmful unintended consequences

... or why the MSP is related to the Delhi Smog

... or why *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho* (1984) got the lesson wrong

Assumption #5: Equality of
incomes rather than economic
growth should come first



Economic Growth and GDP Matter a Lot

"National development is empirically necessary and sufficient for high levels of human wellbeing. Measures of three elements of national development: productive economy, capable administration, and responsive state, explain (essentially) all of the cross-national variation in the Social Progress Index (SPI), an omnibus indicator built from 58 non-economic indicators of human wellbeing. —

National development delivers: And how! And how? (Lant Pritchett)

Most of the world's inequality is between countries, not within countries (Max Roser). So inequality reduction is overwhelmingly a national task. And you cannot do redistribution if your income levels are low as the size of the economic pie is too small.

Assumption #6: Is India a democracy or an electocracy?



Democracy is all about the process, but democracy alone is not enough..

A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS MEANS THAT EVERYONE INVOLVED HAS AGREED TO A PROCEDURE AND THE PROCEDURE HAS BEEN FOLLOWED IN THE DECISION-MAKING.



DEMOCRACY ALLOWS THE PEOPLE TO HAVE A SAY IN THE DECISION-MAKING.
BUT, DEMOCRACY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH.

It's the Republic that needs strengthening

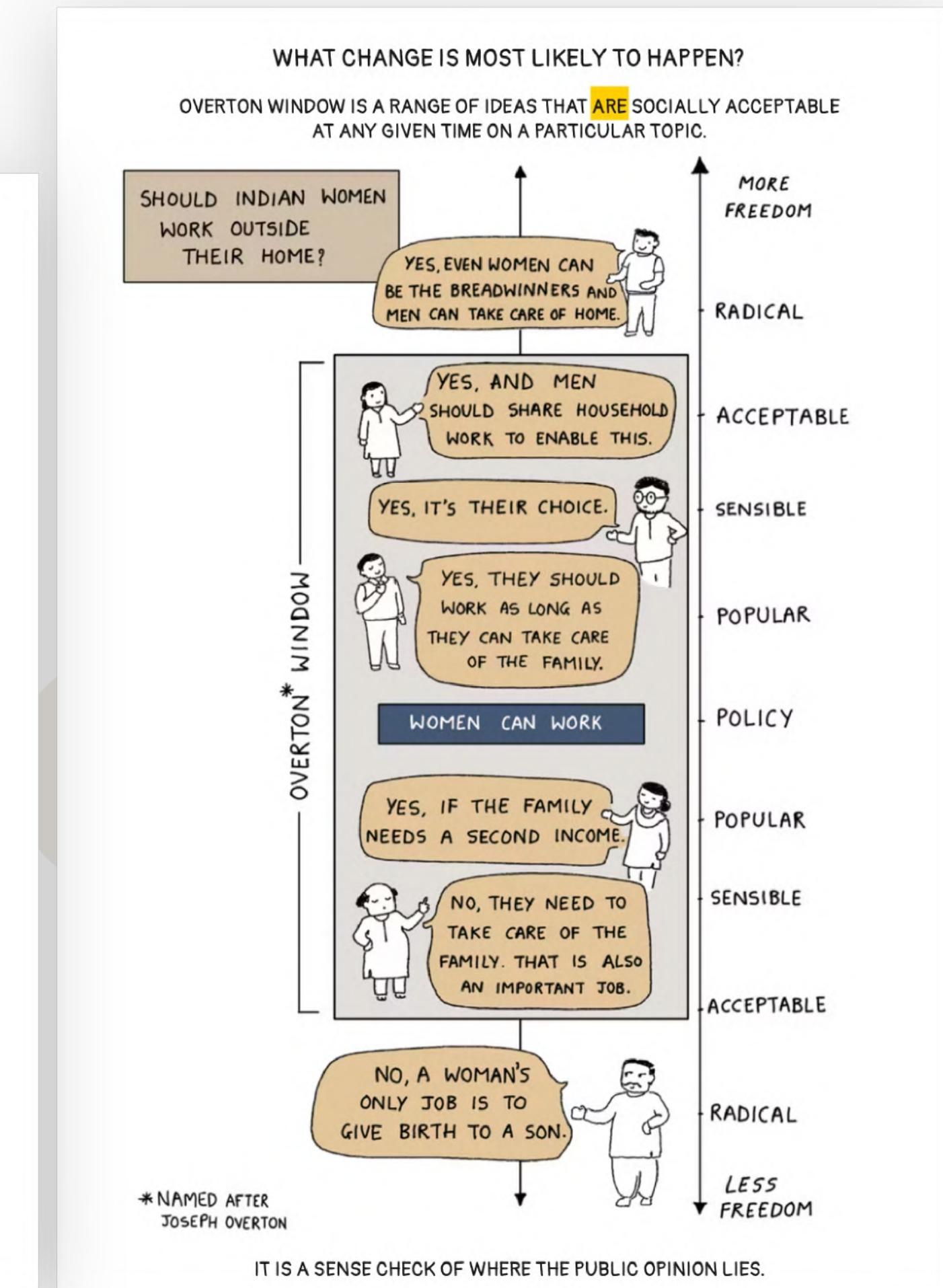
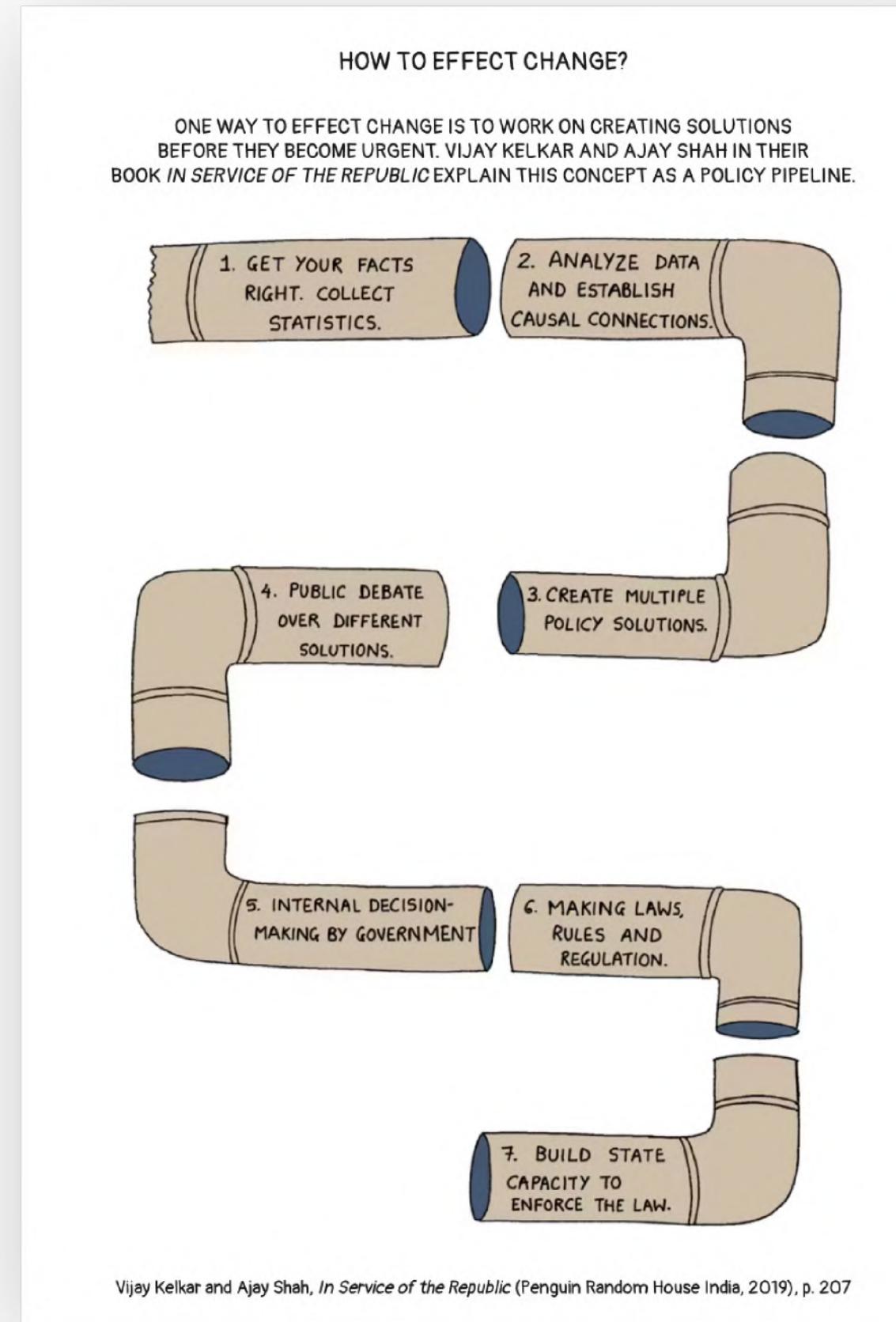
IN MODERN CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLICS, THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC, THROUGH A CONSTITUTION, GIVE THEMSELVES THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS THAT PROTECT THEM AND PLACE RESTRICTIONS ON THE POWER OF THE STATE.



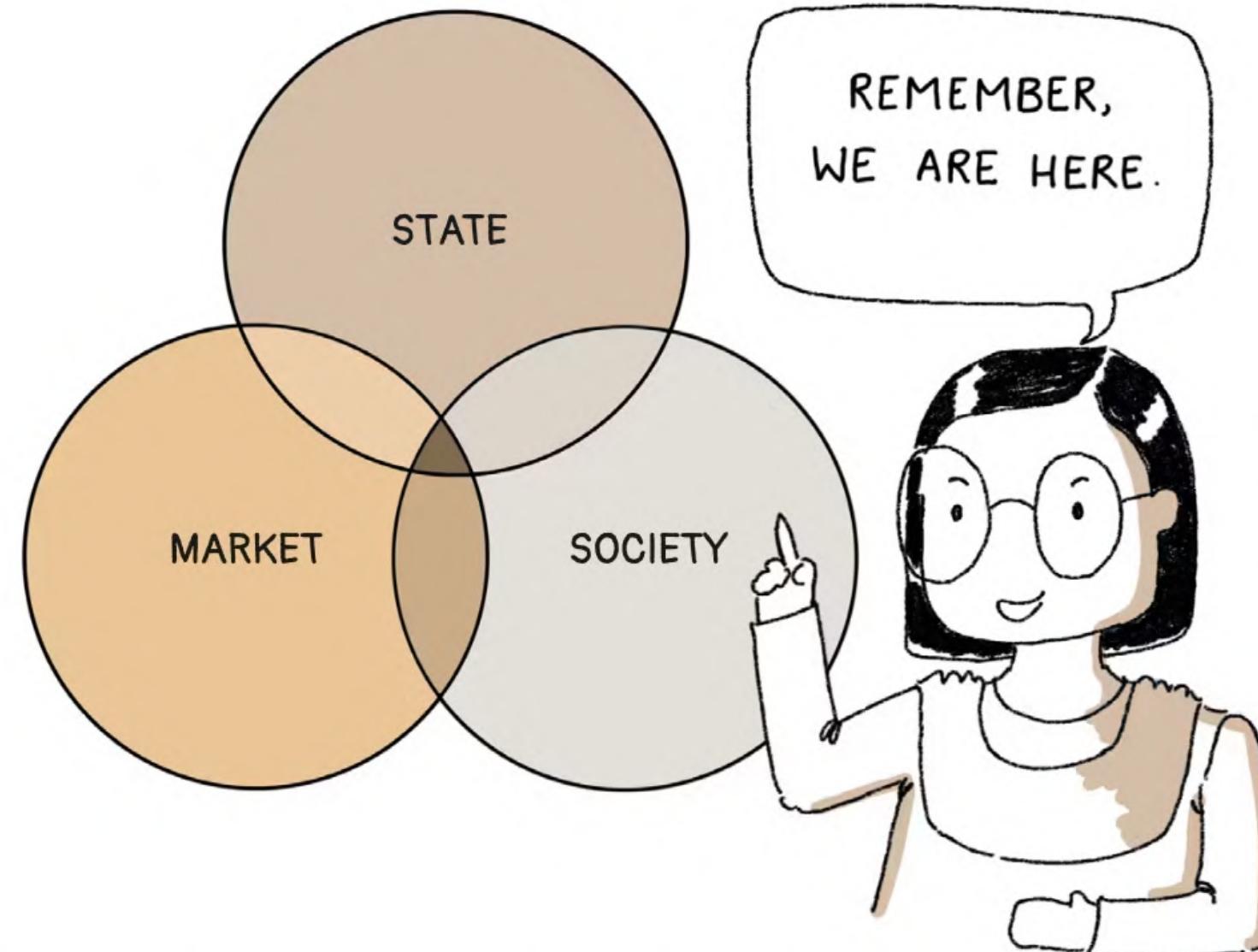
Assumption #7: Nothing will Change *Kuch Nahi Hoga*



Making Change Happen



The trifecta: Samaaj, Sarkaar & Bazaar

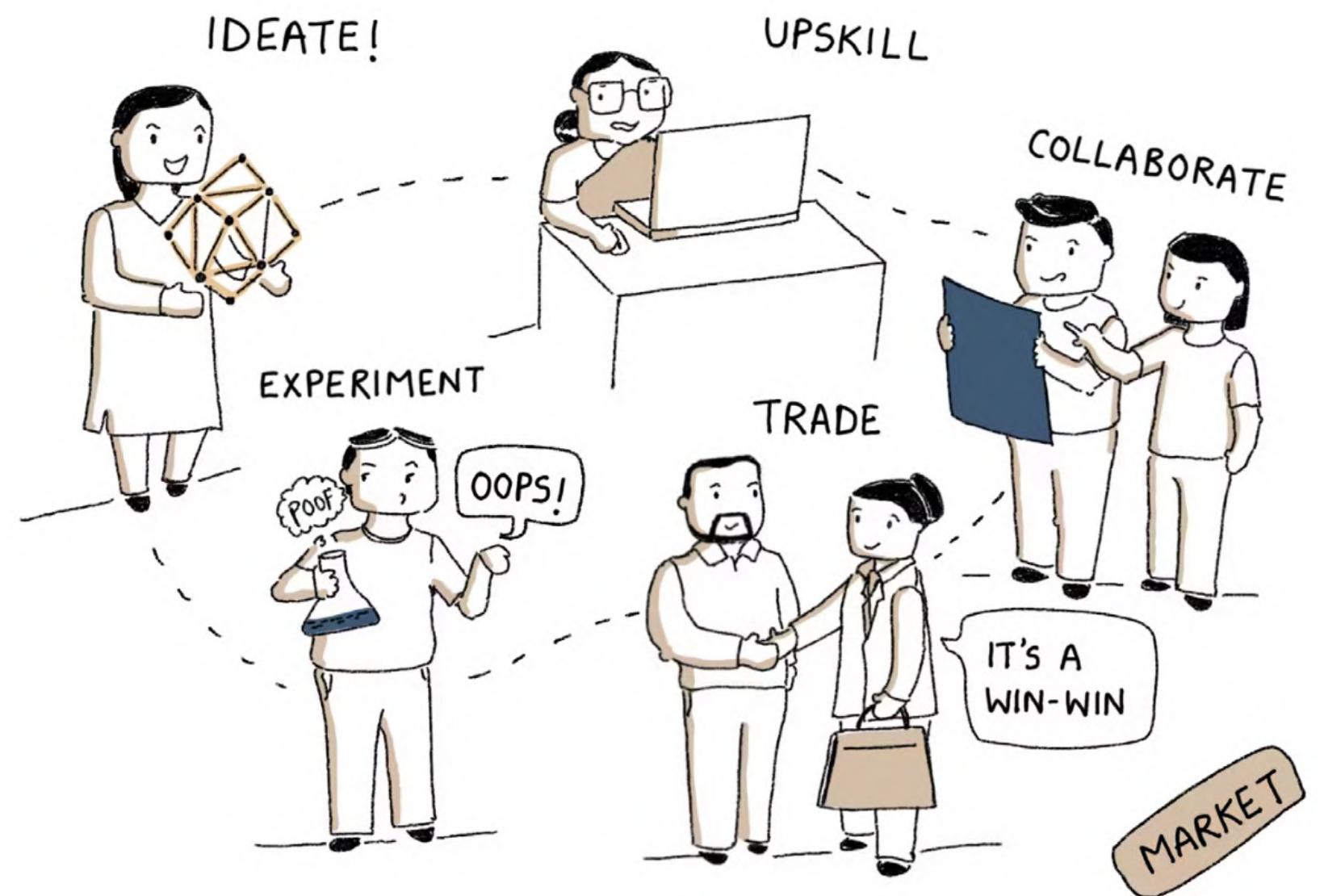


WE LIVE AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE STATE, MARKET AND SOCIETY.
SO, WE MUST ENGAGE WITH ALL THREE OF THEM.

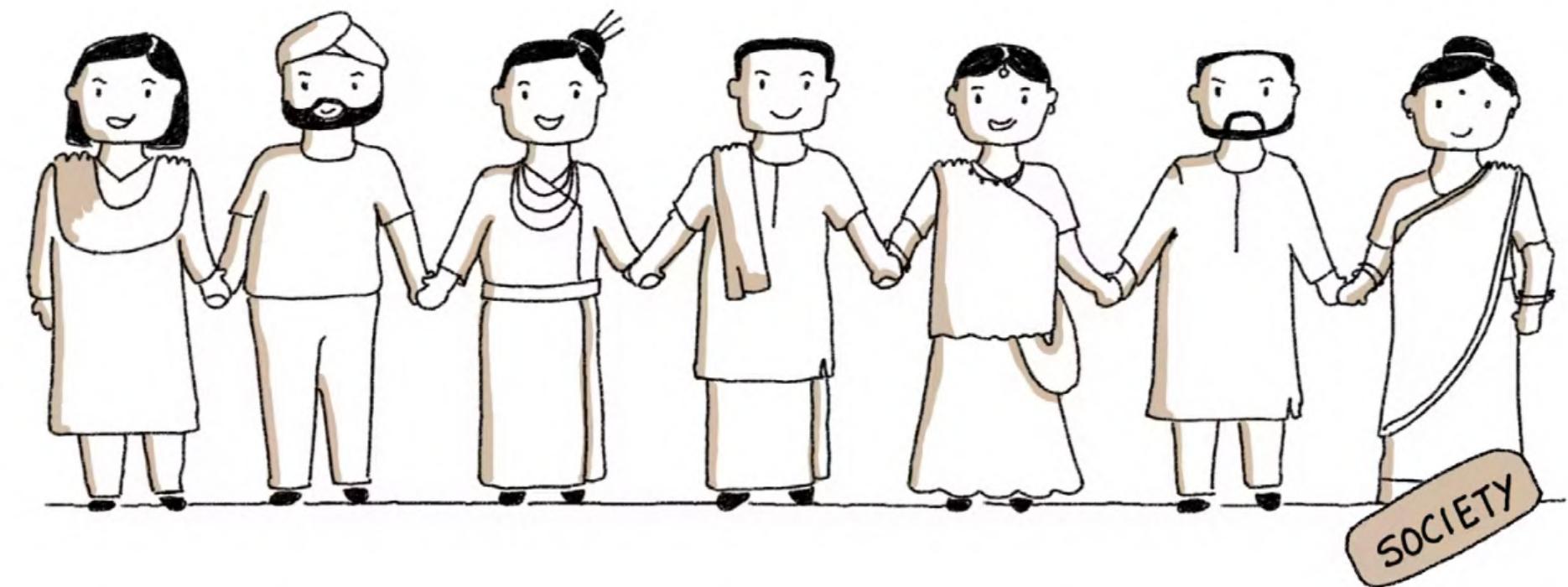
FIRSTLY, WE MUST DEMAND THAT THE STATE DELIVERS IN AREAS WHERE IT IS UNSUBSTITUTABLE SUCH AS PROVIDING SECURITY, PROTECTING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND UPHOLDING THE RULE OF LAW.



SECONDLY, AS INDIVIDUALS, WE MUST COLLABORATE AND PARTICIPATE WITH ALL OUR ENERGY IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.



THIRDLY, WE MUST STEP OUT OF OUR IMMEDIATE SILOS AND BUILD COMMUNITIES THAT BRING TOGETHER PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.



IF WE WANT TO CREATE A MORE EQUAL, FREE AND PROSPEROUS INDIA, THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO RUNNING THIS SISYPHEAN MARATHON.

An eightfold path to transforming India ([source: Nitin Pai](#))

1. Find the Right Balance between your self-interest and public interest, between selfishness and altruism, between thinking for yourself, your family and for the nation.
2. Have the Right Faith, in the moral legitimacy of the Indian Republic. It is the Republic that guarantees our Liberty, that upholds our Pluralism and that protects our Democracy. It is not perfect, but it is better than other options. It is up to each generation to strengthen and improve the working of the Republic.
3. Learn the Right Ideas. Take the effort to understand and promote good ideas. Good ideas in public affairs come from the scientific method, from economic reasoning and from open-mindedness.
4. Do the Right Politics. Politics is not a bad word in itself. It is Bad People who make Bad Politics. Good people can do Good politics. When Good people do Good politics, Politics becomes Better. Join political parties. But don't give up your Goodness.
5. Right Organisation. You cannot achieve public outcomes alone, by being a Lone Wolf. Gather the right team. Form the Right Organisation. Create and join the Right Networks.
6. Right Contribution. Some people have knowledge, others have money, yet others have time. Contribute what you can. Stand for election. Join political campaigns. Donate money to political parties. Join NGOs that work to improve politics.
7. Right Voting. Vote in Every Election. Every Time.
8. Right Engagement. Keep in touch with your MP, MLA, Municipal Councillor or Gram Panchayat Member. Keep reminding them about the issues you care about. Use online methods, write letters and go and meet them.

Our Books

