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# OPERATIONALIZING A HUMAN RIGHTS ECONOMY IN INDIA: A TRIPARTITE INQUIRY INTO NORMATIVE PRACTICALITIES, INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURES, AND RIGHTS-BASED FRAMEWORKS

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## ABSTRACT

The intensification of global inequality, ecological degradation, and democratic backsliding necessitates a paradigmatic reconstitution of financial architectures, whereby human rights are positioned as foundational normative constraints rather than aspirational addenda. In this context, the development trajectory envisioned by New India in the twenty-first century manifests a holistic vision of inclusive growth, ecological balance, and social justice, manifested through flagship schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Jan Dhan Yojana, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Namami Gange, Skill India, and Digital India. These pragmatic and socially inclusive initiatives vary widely in scope and design, manifesting a unifying philosophical ethos rooted in the philosophies of Integral Humanism and Sarvodaya, which offers a civilizational alternative to neoliberal economic paradigms. The deep-rooted Gandhian and post-Gandhian ideational frameworks prioritise the upliftment of the last person (Antyodaya) through the spiritual and material well-being of all (Sarvodaya) by promoting a balanced harmony between individual, society, and nature. However, despite the ostentatious philosophies, India lacks a legal and institutional structure that operationalises the vision of a rights-based development model. This doctrinal research strives to meet the ethical obligation to operationalize the Human Rights Economy within India through institutional mechanisms, particularly significant in light of the constitutional mandate and the voluntary commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 Agenda.

**Keywords:** Rights-Based Development, Integral Humanism, Sarvodaya, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Contextual Background

The concept of a *Human Rights Economy*, officially launched by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in April 2023, advocates for an equitable conception of integrating human rights principles into economic policymaking, addressing issues such as inequality, poverty, and social justice (OHCHR, 2023).<sup>1</sup> The incorporation of Human Rights Economy (HRE) in India holds significant potential to reshape the economic, legal, and governance structures through a development paradigm where implementation of human dignity, equity, and justice is not merely aspirational but is embedded within the economic system. The HRE vision is in sync with the aboriginal transformational polices, rooted in Indic historical and indigenous models of governance, which, particularly through Gandhian principles of *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all) and the vision of *Integral Humanism* articulated by Deendayal Upadhyaya, have long emphasized the primacy of human well-being over economic profit (Upadhyaya, 1965).<sup>2</sup> The contemporary governance regime under the current dispensation resonates profoundly with the foundational concepts of a Human Rights Economy, making India an ideal case study for operationalizing the human-rights-based agendas on a national scale.

The transformative policy trajectory from 2014 onwards demonstrates a discernible shift toward integrating a socio-economic framework within the broader development agenda. These reforms are not mere technical modifications but are reflective of the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the pledge to "leave no one behind" and the recognition of the indivisibility of human rights and development (United Nations, 2015).<sup>3</sup> The commitment to these principles is evident in a broad range of interventions and policy reforms that underscore a deliberate effort to construct an enabling environment for socio-economic rights, focusing on equity, transparency, and accountability (Sharma, 2022).<sup>4</sup> In this context, the state has moved away from a purely welfare-focused model, espousing an approach where human rights are central to development, with policy orientation towards access to

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2023, April). *The Human Rights Economy: Concept and practical application*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/06/human-rights-economy-concept-practical-application>

<sup>2</sup> Upadhyaya, D. (1965). *Integral Humanism: An Analysis of the Political Ideas of Deendayal Upadhyaya*. Janata Publishing House.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. UN General Assembly.

<sup>4</sup> Sharma, R. (2022). *Legal Empowerment and Human Rights in India*. Cambridge University Press.

resources, services, and opportunities equitably and inclusively (Baviskar, 2021).<sup>5</sup>

The contemporaneous institutional reforms are significant, but numerous structural reforms are required to operationalize the Human Rights Economy in India. Hitherto, the integration of human rights with economic planning in India draws from a long tradition of state interventionism intended at fortifying public welfare. However, the incorporation of current international norms and standards, particularly those embedded in the SDGs, will mark a development trajectory, positioning the country as a potential leader in the global movement toward rights-based economic systems (Sachs, 2015).<sup>6</sup>

In this regard, the diverse experience of the nation advances a unique opportunity to explore how a Human Rights Economy framework can be practically functionalized within a precipitously developing, diverse, and complex nation-state. The indigenous philosophical foundations, coupled with the recent legal and economic reforms, present a compelling case study of how a nation can harmonize human rights with economic development goals. The newfound approach, which prioritizes the realization of human dignity, economic inclusivity, and ecological resilience, offers a persuasive model for other nations grappling with similar challenges. India has the potential to not only contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the SDG 2030 agenda but also provide nuanced practicalities into the tangible implementation of HRE in the 21st century (Sen, 1999; United Nations, 2015).<sup>7</sup> The study is a step forward in the direction towards the adaptation of HRE in India with the objective to position the nation as a global exemplar of a human rights-based economy that seeks to balance economic prowess with the fundamental human rights of the populace, particularly those who have historically been marginalized.

### **Policy Analysis: The Affinity of the Indian Governance Model with the Human Rights Economy**

The developmental discourse under the current leadership in India has witnessed a significant

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<sup>5</sup> Baviskar, A. (2021). *Human Rights and Development in India: Convergence and Tensions*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Sachs, J. (2015). *The Age of Sustainable Development*. Columbia University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. UN General Assembly.

shift in policy-making endeavours, and the governance model has adopted a distinct ideological framework, blending traditional philosophical tenets with contemporary socio-economic imperatives. The synthesis reflects a synergized effort to operationalize the historical and cultural ethos while addressing the mandates of modern governance. The pragmatic vision of modern imperatives is demonstrated in schemes through initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, JAM Trinity, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Namami Gange, PM Gati Shakti, and Bharatmala, advancing human rights principles of inclusion, equity, and sustainability. Similarly, macroeconomic reforms and institutional financial transformation were propelled through FDI liberalization, GST reforms, the IBC, Production Linked Incentive Schemes, and the National Logistics Policy. Correspondingly, initiatives like the *Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana* strive to reverse top-down development models by nurturing localized, demand-driven transformation, stimulating community-centric development (Kumar, 2022).<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously, social welfare expanded via Ayushman Bharat, Ujjwala Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, and Skill India Mission. Further, the International Solar Alliance, Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles in India (FAME), 2015, and the National Hydrology Project (1995, expanded in 2016) targeted sustainable energy and water resource management (Sharma, 2021).<sup>9</sup> Holistically, these reforms represent an all-inclusive socio-economic approach to a self-reliant, comprehensive, and globally competitive India grounded in the ethos of a *post-colonial rights-based approach*.

Nevertheless, remodelling these ideals into an institutionalized appraisal of the Human Rights Economy frameworks remains a multifaceted normative, structural, and legal challenge. The constitutional obligations enshrined under the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) provide a foundational framework for socio-economic rights but are traditionally viewed as non-justiciable (Basu, 2021).<sup>10</sup> These principles are functionally synchronized with the international legal commitments, particularly under Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which mandates the progressive realization of socio-economic rights with international cooperation (United Nations, 1966).<sup>11</sup> Despite the promising moral imperatives embedded within these philosophical foundations, the existing

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<sup>8</sup> Kumar, R. (2022). *Decentralization and Local Governance in India: The Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana*. Sage Publications.

<sup>9</sup> Sharma, A. (2021). *Environmental Sustainability in India: A Strategic Framework*. Sage Publications.

<sup>10</sup> Basu, D. (2021). *Introduction to the Constitution of India*. Prentice Hall.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations. (1966). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*. UN General Assembly.

policy architecture lacks an institutionalized mechanism to monitor the human rights-based approach to development, which results in fragmented implementation, regional disparities, and limited accountability mechanisms (Bhattacharya, 2020).<sup>12</sup> Consequently, there is a compelling need to re-examine whether and how the contemporary governance model can be juridically reimaged to espouse a transformative and legally coherent Human Rights Economy, cohesive with the SDG 2030 framework.

## Literature Review: Crucial Theoretical Perspectives on HRE

### 1. Capabilities Approach and Development as Freedom

The *capabilities approach*, developed primarily by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, has redefined human well-being in economic analysis. In the discourse on the Human Rights Economy (HRE), the Capabilities Approach has transpired as a seminal framework that reorients economic analysis toward a more normative, rights-affirming paradigm. The departure from traditional metrics based on economic realisation, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or aggregate utility, the Capabilities Approach modifies the evaluative space from mere resource availability to the substantive freedoms individuals possess to lead lives they have reason to value. The articulation, particularly in *Development as Freedom*, conceptualises development as the expansion of human capabilities and frames poverty as a deprivation of basic freedoms rather than merely low income (Sen, 1999).<sup>13</sup> The reconceptualization affiliates closely with the foundational principles of international human rights law, notably those enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), including autonomy, equality, and human dignity.

The Capabilities Approach postulates that the effectiveness of economic systems is judged by the ability to enhance individuals' capabilities. The theoretical shift resonates with the normative objectives of the HRE, which seeks to ground economic governance in legally recognised entitlements and institutional duties. The approach also critiques utilitarian and preference-based accounts of welfare that often marginalise structurally disadvantaged populations, reinforcing instead the imperative for distributive justice and inclusive development frameworks.

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<sup>12</sup> Bhattacharya, S. (2020). *Policy Reforms and Human Rights in India: An Analytical Framework*. Springer.

<sup>13</sup> Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.

In institutional practice, the Capabilities Approach has influenced the design of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI), which incorporates dimensions of health, education, and income as proxies for broader well-being. This framework has informed rights-based development models that demand state accountability for the progressive realisation of economic and social rights under Article 2(1) of the ICESCR. However, from the perspective of the Human Rights Economy, the Capabilities Approach thus functions not merely as a theoretical lens but as a foundational principle that outlines the legal regimes and economic policies based on human dignity and institutionalizes the realization of fundamental rights.

## 2. Rights-Based Approaches (RBAs) to Development

From the vantage point of the Human Rights Economy (HRE), *Rights-Based Approaches (RBAs)* to development epitomize an exemplar shift that gained institutional traction in the 1990s, significantly transforming the normative architecture of global development discourse. RBAs depart from the conventional donor-recipient dynamic that dominated international development assistance throughout the 20th century, a model often criticised for the paternalistic and charity-based logic of operation. Instead, RBAs reconfigure development as a legal and ethical obligation grounded in the normative framework of international human rights law, thereby redefining individuals and communities as rights-holders entitled to assert legally enforceable rights, and governments, public institutions, and development actors as duty-bearers duty-bound to respect, protect, and fulfil those rights (OHCHR, 2006; Uvin, 2007).<sup>14</sup>

The core premise of RBAs is the institutionalisation of accountability, participation, non-discrimination, and empowerment within the operational logic of development governance. Unlike traditional needs-based models, which often focus on resource allocation without addressing structural power imbalances, RBAs embed the legal standards of international human rights within national development strategies, legislative frameworks, and administrative policies. The deviation not only enhances transparency and inclusivity in

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<sup>14</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2006). *Frequently asked questions on a human rights-based approach to development cooperation*. United Nations. Uvin, P. (2007). *From the right to development to the rights-based approach: How 'human rights' entered development*. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), 597–606.

policymaking but also mandates that development be assessed through the lens of human dignity, legal entitlements, and the rule of law.

In the context of a Human Rights Economy, RBAs are instrumental in bridging the divide between economic policy and normative human rights obligations. The transformation of the language of development from one of benevolence to one of justice, substantiating that economic systems are not merely efficient or growth-oriented, but are legally and ethically accountable for enabling the enjoyment of fundamental economic, social, and cultural rights. Moreover, RBAs reinforce the legal empowerment of marginalised communities, thereby nurturing redistributive equity and participatory democracy as foundational pillars of economic justice. As such, the integration of RBAs within economic governance frameworks not only reinforces the legitimacy of development interventions but also advances the realisation of a people-centred, rights-affirming economic order (Uvin, 2007; OHCHR, 2006).<sup>15</sup>

### 3. Welfare Economics and Justice

*Welfare economics*, while traditionally fixated on maximizing societal utility, has evolved to consider distributional fairness and ethical constraints. John Rawls' *difference principle* and Sen's critique of utility-based comparisons have enriched the discourse, pushing it closer to the virtuous vision of the HRE (Rawls, 1971; Sen, 1979).<sup>16</sup> Within the framework of the Human Rights Economy (HRE), the evolution of welfare economics exhibits a critical intersection between economic theory and normative considerations of justice, rights, and ethical governance. Conventionally, the basic premise of welfare economics has validated utilitarian notions of aggregating societal utility or efficiency without necessarily accounting for distributive equity or structural inequality. However, the classical approach has been subjected to sustained critique and reform, especially from philosophers and economists concerned with the ethical foundations of economic policy. The intervention of John Rawls, through his seminal work *A Theory of Justice* (1971), introduced the "difference principle," which conceives that socio-economic inequalities are justifiable only if the benefits reach the least advantaged members of society. The reconceptualization marked a normative departure from

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<sup>15</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2006). *Frequently asked questions on a human rights-based approach to development cooperation*. United Nations. Uvin, P. (2007). *From the right to development to the rights-based approach: How 'human rights' entered development*. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), 597–606.

<sup>16</sup> Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press. Sen, A. (1979). *Equality of what?* The Tanner Lecture on Human Values, Stanford University.

entirely consequentialist logic, bringing considerations of fairness, rights, and institutional responsibility to the fore.

Amartya Sen further expanded the critique by challenging the reliance on utility-based comparisons as inadequate measures of human well-being, particularly when inclinations may be shaped by oppression or deprivation. He argued that well-being must be evaluated in terms of capabilities rather than utilities or primary goods, providing a pivotal ethical and operational shift in welfare economics, positioning it more closely with the principles of the HRE. Sen's critique exposed the limitations of informational bases in traditional welfare economics and advocated for a more pluralistic, justice-oriented framework that acknowledges individual agency, dignity, and freedom (Sen, 1979; 1985).<sup>17</sup>

From the perspective of the Human Rights Economy, these theoretical advancements serve as a bridge between economics and international human rights law. The HRE rejects the abstraction of welfare maximisation that disregards substantive entitlements and instead affirms the centrality of legally recognised economic and social rights. The transformation of welfare economics through the incorporation of Rawlsian justice and Sen's capability-oriented analysis underlines the necessity of embedding distributive justice and ethical constraints into economic governance. In doing so, the revised welfare doctrine supports the normative thrust of the HRE, particularly the human rights standards, participatory justice, and the institutional accountability of duty-bearers in the public and private sectors.

#### 4. Institutional Economics and Law

The institutional turn in economic theory is crucial for engagement with the Human Rights Economy (HRE). Fundamental to the HRE initiative is the remarkable contribution of Douglass North, who underscored the centrality of both formal rules and informal institutional norms in constructing economic performance and developmental trajectories (North, 1990).<sup>18</sup> The institutional economics theory comprehends that the structure and fruition of political and legal institutions determine transaction costs, incentive frameworks, and ultimately the efficiency and inclusivity of economic systems. The theory supports the prominence of legal and regulatory reforms as instrumental levers for facilitating the realisation of economic, social,

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<sup>17</sup> Sen, A. (1979). *Equality of what?* The Tanner Lecture on Human Values, Stanford University. Sen, A. (1985). *Commodities and capabilities*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>18</sup> North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press.



and cultural rights, particularly through the regime of accountable governance, the rule of law, and rights-protective economic arrangements (North, 2005).<sup>19</sup>

However, from a critical legal and development perspective, the institutionalist framework warrants further scrutiny as suggested by scholars from the law and development movement. Duncan Kennedy has cautioned against an uncritical implementation of formal institutional reforms without adequately addressing the deeper, systemic structures of inequality, cultural hegemony, and embedded power asymmetries. Kennedy (2002) argues that formal legal reforms, often modelled on Western institutional templates, can galvanise the ideological dimensions of underdevelopment, thereby reinforcing rather than redressing patterns of exclusion and domination (Kennedy, 2002).<sup>20</sup> Such critiques underscore that institutional effectiveness cannot be divorced from the socio-political context in which legal norms function, including informal practices, elite capture, and historical injustices that outline access to resources and decision-making power.

Within the HRE theory, the apprehension necessitates a more nuanced approach to institutional reform, one that calls for integration of human rights principles into the formal legal structures and informal social relations, while simultaneously addressing distributive justice and participatory deficits. Legal frameworks must be institutionalised beyond procedural legitimacy and embed substantive assurances to equality, inclusion, and accountability. The Institutional Economics theory, thus, proposes a valuable analytical foundation for understanding economic governance, and the critical development literature inspires the adoption of HRE to address the complex interplay of law, power, and social justice in the realisation of economic rights.

## 5. Critical and Postcolonial Political Economy

The critical and postcolonial political economy scholarship provides indispensable analytical tools for the rights-based economies while focusing on tackling the historical and structural underpinnings of global inequality and marginalisation. Scholars such as Nancy Fraser and David Harvey have vehemently argued that any rights-based economic framework that fails to grapple with the legacy of colonialism, capitalist accumulation, and systemic exclusion is likely

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<sup>19</sup> North, D. C. (2005). *Understanding the process of economic change*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Kennedy, D. (2002). *The international human rights movement: Part of the problem?* *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 15, 101–125.

to reinforce rather than dismantle existing hierarchies. Fraser's seminal contributions to theories of justice, particularly her dual emphasis on redistribution and recognition, advance a multidimensional model that strives to address both economic deprivation and cultural subordination. According to Fraser, socio-economic injustices are intertwined with institutionalised misrecognition, and a pragmatic and emancipatory economic order must ensure equitable access to material resources and substantiate the affirmation of diverse identities and forms of life (Fraser, 2003).<sup>21</sup>

In this light, the HRE theories are expected to transcend the purely legalistic or technocratic approaches to economic rights by embedding a historically conscious and power-sensitive lens within the normative architecture. Fraser's "perspectival dualism" offers a conceptual association between redistributive justice and recognition-based inclusion. Likewise, David Harvey's critique of neoliberalism and accumulation by dispossession reveals how global economic regimes often operate through mechanisms that expropriate resources, suppress collective agency, and hollow out public institutions, thereby entrenching global asymmetries that legal reforms alone cannot alleviate (Harvey, 2005).<sup>22</sup>

Within the broader paradigm of the Human Rights Economy, such insights reinforce the necessity of a structural, historically grounded approach to economic justice that positions rights within the context of global capitalism, decolonial thought, and social considerations. The concept recommends the redirection of socio-economic rights to challenge entrenched power relations and promote democratic, participatory governance. Intrinsically, the critical and postcolonial political economy scholarship is crucial to strengthen the commitment of HRE to substantive equality, participatory inclusion, and the dismantling of institutionalised injustice.

## 6. Integral Humanism: Indian Alternative to Western Liberalism

Integral Humanism, articulated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya in 1965, transpired as a critique of the cumulative dominance of Western ideologies and the mounting disillusionment with the materialistic conception of development. Upadhyaya propounded a philosophical framework that acknowledged the distinct Indic cultural and historical realities, while

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<sup>21</sup> Fraser, N. (2003). *Social justice in the age of identity politics: Redistribution, recognition, and participation*. In N. Fraser & A. Honneth, *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical exchange* (pp. 7–109). Verso.

<sup>22</sup> Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

providing an antidote to the predominant reductionist views that regarded development solely through the lens of socio-economic progress (Upadhyaya, 1965).<sup>23</sup> The holistic approach to human development transcends material progress, integrating intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions alongside physical well-being rooted in the ancient Indic values of dharma (righteousness) and karma (action).

The philosophy advances a practical blueprint for societal and economic reorganisation, and a decentralised local governance framework to connect the most underprivileged with the mainstream policy initiatives. The eminence of swadeshi, or self-reliance, encourages the growth of indigenous industries and local communities, endorsing a harmonious equilibrium between material and spiritual development (Chaudhuri, 2002; Sharma, 2014).<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the model advocates for decentralised governance, empowering local communities through self-reliance, self-sufficiency (swadeshi) and democratic participation through a synthesis of traditional values and modern requirements, indispensable for circumventing the complexities of post-colonial development (Chaudhuri, 2002).<sup>25</sup> The distinctive, complex socio-political realities of the Indian polity, where the tenets of modernisation are required to affiliate with traditional values, to address the multifaceted inequalities, the insights of Integral Humanism may offer a crucial pathway towards the comprehensive adoption and implementation of the HRE framework towards a sustainable and inclusive future.

## 7. Sarvodaya Perspective on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) and Human Rights Economy

The Gandhian concept of *Sarvodaya* offers for the upliftment of the downtrodden, presenting a compelling ethical and developmental framework that closely parallels the normative aspirations of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS). Central to Gandhian philosophy is the belief in equitable distribution of resources, community-centric governance, non-violence, and dignified life for all citizens, concentrating on ending poverty, ensuring quality education, promoting peaceful societies, reducing inequalities, and fostering

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<sup>23</sup> Upadhyaya, D. (1965). Integral Humanism: A Political Philosophy. Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

<sup>24</sup> Chaudhuri, A. (2002). Integral Humanism and the Indian Perspective. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 30(4), 517-534. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-002-8003-7>

Sharma, D. (2014). The Relevance of Integral Humanism in Contemporary India. *Social Science Review*, 13(2), 33-48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssr.2014.05.003>

<sup>25</sup> Chaudhuri, A. (2002). Integral Humanism and the Indian Perspective. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 30(4), 517-534. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-002-8003-7>

sustainable cities and communities (United Nations, 2015).<sup>26</sup> In particular, *Sarvodaya* unswervingly supports SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Gandhian emphasis on local self-rule (*Swaraj*) and participatory governance further reinforces the imperative of decentralisation and community empowerment, resonating with SDG 11. The Gandhian ideals of participatory development, non-violence, and collective welfare contribute to inclusive and sustainable rural development (Ariyaratne, 1981).<sup>27</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi's critique of Western development models is anchored in his rejection of materialism, unregulated industrialism, and the exploitative tendencies of capitalist accumulation. He argued that Western models, driven by profit and consumption, eroded social cohesion and led to environmental degradation and human alienation. Such models, he believed, prioritised economic growth at the expense of ethical values, intergenerational equity, and distributive justice (Gandhi, 1957).<sup>28</sup> In contrast, *Sarvodaya* advocates for an economy premised on moral accountability, ecological stewardship, and collective well-being. The Gandhian economic vision challenges dominant neoliberal assumptions by asserting that economic systems should serve human welfare, not commodify it. Within the HRE perspective, Gandhi's critique anticipates current concerns regarding the structural violence inherent in global governance systems and bids a transformative alternative that prioritises justice, human dignity, and sustainable livelihoods (Beteille, 2003).<sup>29</sup>

The Gandhian vision of *Village Swaraj* underscores the importance of democratic decentralisation, ecological sustainability, and moral community. Gandhi proposed that the village should serve as the foundational unit of social, economic, and political life, capable of managing its affairs independently while cooperating with others in a federation of self-governing units (Gandhi, 1957).<sup>30</sup> He believed that self-reliance at the village level could counteract the alienation, dependency, and inequality generated by centralised industrial

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. A/RES/70/1. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<sup>27</sup> Ariyaratne, A. T. (1981). *Voluntary Action and Development: The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka*. Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha.

<sup>28</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1957). *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place* (Revised ed.). Navajivan Publishing House.

<sup>29</sup> Beteille, A. (2003). *Equality and Universality: Essays in Social and Political Theory*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>30</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1957). *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place* (Revised ed.). Navajivan Publishing House.

systems. This vision is deeply relevant to the SDG agenda, especially in its focus on community-led development, resilience building, and inclusive governance (Chandra, 2001).<sup>31</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of *Sarvodaya*, rooted in justice, decentralisation, and non-violence, offers a comprehensive alternative to dominant Western models. It challenges the normative foundations of neoliberal economics and provides a morally coherent and practically viable framework for accomplishing the SDGs within a human rights-based approach. The prioritisation of individual dignity, ecological sustainability, and the ethical dimensions of economic life within the Gandhian philosophy anticipates and complements the emerging discourse of the Human Rights Economy. In doing so, it not only critiques the failings of global capitalism but also constructs an affirmative model of development grounded in ethics, equity, and ecological responsibility (Gandhi, 1957; Chandra, 2001; Beteille, 2003).<sup>32</sup>

## 8. Human Rights Economics (HRE)

Human Rights Economics (HRE) has emerged as a transformative framework that strives to reorient economic thinking towards justice, sustainability, and human dignity. It is premised on the view that conventional economic models have historically overlooked the lived realities and systemic exclusions of marginalised groups, thereby reinforcing structural inequalities and environmental degradation. HRE strives for an economic governance system that is not only efficient but fundamentally just, people-centric, and ecologically sustainable (de Schutter & Sepúlveda, 2012).<sup>33</sup> HRE insists that economic policies must be assessed not solely by aggregate gains, but given their compatibility with internationally recognised human rights norms and the impact on vulnerable populations.

The core tenet of HRE is that economics, as traditionally practised, has often been “culture-blind” and blind to power asymmetries, failing to reflect the experiences of those excluded from policymaking processes. The epistemological bias has led to policy bias favouring the privileged actors and entrenching socioeconomic disparities (Balakrishnan, Elson, & Heintz, 2016). HRE theorizes that both public and private economic actors undertake a duty to respect

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<sup>31</sup> Chandra, B. (2001). *India's Struggle for Independence*. Penguin Books India.

<sup>32</sup> Beteille, A. (2003). *Equality and Universality: Essays in Social and Political Theory*. Oxford University Press.

Chandra, B. (2001). *India's Struggle for Independence*. Penguin Books India.

Gandhi, M. K. (1957). *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place* (Revised ed.). Navajivan Publishing House.

<sup>33</sup> de Schutter, O., & Sepúlveda, M. (2012). Underwriting the poor: A global fund for social protection. *ILO Working Paper*.

and protect the rights of people and the ecosystems upon which human survival depends. It explicitly challenges exploitative structures and calls attention to the abuses of economic power, both within national jurisdictions and across borders (CESCR, 2016, General Comment No. 24).<sup>34</sup>

At the heart of HRE lie foundational human rights principles of dignity, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability, embedded in a legal framework encompassing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), among other instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations, 1966a, 1966b, 1979, 1989).<sup>35</sup> These instruments form the normative bedrock of HRE and provide clear obligations on states and non-state actors, articulated and clarified through the jurisprudence of human rights courts and treaty bodies over the years (Skogly, 2006).<sup>36</sup>

Unlike mainstream economics, which often prioritises utility and efficiency, HRE pivots the focus of analysis on human rights fulfilment and distributive justice. It questions aggregate metrics like Gross Domestic Product (GDP), arguing that such indicators obscure intra-societal disparities, disregard ecological costs, and are ethically vacuous (Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009).<sup>37</sup> Instead, HRE insists on disaggregated data, participatory analysis, and context-specific evaluations that manifest the differentiated impact of economic policies across gender, caste, class, ethnicity, geography, and other status markers (OHCHR, 2012).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, in recognising the normative interdependence of human rights, HRE asserts that violations or neglect in one domain, such as health, education, or housing, can undermine the fulfilment of

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<sup>34</sup> CESCR. (2016). *General Comment No. 24: State obligations under the ICESCR in the context of business activities*. UN Doc. E/C.12/GC/24.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations. (1966a). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. UN General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI).

United Nations. (1966b). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. UN General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI).

United Nations. (1979). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*.

United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

<sup>36</sup> Skogly, S. (2006). *Beyond National Borders: States' Human Rights Obligations in International Cooperation*. Intersentia.

<sup>37</sup> Stiglitz, J. E., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J. P. (2009). *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*.  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/118025/118123/Fitoussi+Commission+report>

<sup>38</sup> OHCHR. (2012). *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

rights in others, reinforcing the need for policy coherence across sectors (CESCR, 2001, General Comment No. 13).<sup>39</sup>

Human Rights Economics also embraces intricacy and uncertainty in economic analysis, challenging the linear, mechanistic assumptions of the prevalent models. The rights-based approach draws from the underpinnings of feminist economics, ecological economics, and behavioural economics in incorporating care work, intergenerational justice, and social institutions within its scrutiny (Nelson, 1995; Raworth, 2017).<sup>40</sup> For instance, like feminist economists, HRE interrogates the undervaluation of unpaid reproductive labour and critiques the ideal of the “homo economicus” as gendered and unrealistic (Folbre, 2001).<sup>41</sup> Like ecological economics, it underscores the finitude of natural systems and the moral imperative to preserve them for future generations.

Moreover, HRE affiliates with Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach, which moves beyond income or preference satisfaction to assess what individuals can effectively do and become (Sen, 1999).<sup>42</sup> The capability framework emphasises real freedoms and opportunities, and HRE strengthens it by introducing legal enforceability and accountability mechanisms rooted in human rights law. This linking of ethical economics with legal standards provides a unique advantage to HRE, making it conceptually rich and operationally viable.

Another distinguishing feature of HRE is the emphasis on accountability. It critiques the impunity with which economic power is exercised and the lack of redress mechanisms for those adversely affected by economic decision-making. HRE advocates the establishment of institutional feedback loops, judicial recourse, and participatory decision-making frameworks to ensure that economic actors, whether nation-states, corporations, or international financial institutions, are held accountable for human rights impacts (Alston, 2005).<sup>43</sup> The approach also reflects on the paradoxical nature of the State as both a guarantor and potential violator of rights, necessitating robust scrutiny of the economic decision-making through a rights-based

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<sup>39</sup> CESCR. (2001). *General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Article 13 of the ICESCR)*. UN Doc. E/C.12/1999/10.

<sup>40</sup> Nelson, J. A. (1995). Feminism and economics. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 9(2), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.9.2.131>

Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

<sup>41</sup> Folbre, N. (2001). *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*. The New Press.

<sup>42</sup> Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Alfred A. Knopf.

<sup>43</sup> Alston, P. (2005). *Non-state actors and human rights*. Oxford University Press.

lens.

Crucially, HRE expands the sphere of economic responsibility to include extra-territorial obligations. It cultivates upon the interpretation of Article 2(1) of the ICESCR by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which asserts that states must take steps individually and through international assistance and cooperation to realise economic and social rights globally (CESCR, 2000, General Comment No. 14).<sup>44</sup> The understanding embeds solidarity and global justice within the economic framework, requiring countries to assess the cross-border effects of trade, investment, and development policies.

Concerning other schools of thought, HRE resonates with alternative economic discourses such as Doughnut Economics, Rethinking Economics, and the Wellbeing Economy, which challenge the GDP-centric growth models and advocate for values like equity, sustainability, and pluralism (Raworth, 2017; Jackson, 2011).<sup>45</sup> Further, the HRE reframes questions of resource allocation, institutional design, and policy choice as not merely technocratic decisions but moral and legal imperatives.

While Human Rights Economics is in the formative phase and lacks fully formed sub-schools, the normative coherence and analytical depth offer a compelling alternative to mainstream economic theory. Some within the HRE community advocate for it as a guide for progressive economic thought, proclaiming that human rights should serve as the universal normative compass for all economic decision-making (Balakrishnan & Heintz, 2020).<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it is essential to distinguish HRE from instrumental uses of human rights language, such as using conditionalities in development aid or equating property rights with fundamental human rights, which may subvert rather than endorse the ethos of economic justice.

Human Rights Economics represents an interdisciplinary, ethically grounded, and legally anchored approach to economic thinking. It seeks to recast the economy not as an autonomous domain immune from normative critique, but as a site where law, ethics, and power intersect. As such, it provides a valuable intellectual and practical framework for achieving sustainable

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<sup>44</sup> CESCR. (2000). *General Comment No. 14: The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health (Article 12 of the ICESCR)*. UN Doc. E/C.12/2000/4.

<sup>45</sup> Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

Jackson, T. (2011). *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. Earthscan.

<sup>46</sup> Balakrishnan, R., & Heintz, J. (2020). Human rights and the macroeconomy. *Open Global Rights*. <https://www.openglobalrights.org/human-rights-and-the-macroeconomy/>



development, social inclusion, and ecological resilience in line with the rights-based and ethical obligations of states and non-state economic actors.

## 9. Law and Political Economy (LPE)

Over the past four decades, the global governance of economic regimes has been profoundly shaped by a market-centric orthodoxy, whereby the market is construed not merely as a mechanism of resource apportionment but as the principal controlling force of economic, social, and political relations. The ascendance of the neoliberal paradigm has systematically subordinated the humanitarian considerations within the imperatives of growth, efficiency, and profitability. Within this context, a key criticism of the international human rights regime is the ostensible failure to contest, let alone dismantle, such market-driven capitalist hegemony. Critics argue that despite the rhetorical ascendancy of human rights as a universal framework for social justice, the regime has not adequately responded to endemic poverty, escalating economic inequality, or global ecological degradation (Corkery & Isaacs, 2022).<sup>47</sup>

The apparent paradox between the normative foresight of rights-based economy and the limited transformative reach calls for a reconceptualization of the interface between human rights and economic governance. Emergent research has encouraged a cross-disciplinary praxis that integrates human rights and economic justice, coalescing the visions of progressive economists and rights-based scholars into a coherent paradigm of reform (Corkery & Isaacs, 2022; Seymour & Pincus, 2008).<sup>48</sup> Such a synthesis is essential for operationalising a Human Rights Economy (HRE), which anchors economic structures, laws, and policies in the ethical imperatives of equality, participation, and dignity.

The collaborative initiative undertaken by the Institute for Economic Justice, the Centre for Economic and Social Rights, and SECTION27 provides a notable contribution to LPE literature. The research project, situated in the South African context, sought to catalyse a community of practice at the intersection of economic justice and human rights. South Africa,

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<sup>47</sup> Corkery, A., & Isaacs, G. (2022). *Rights and the economy: Building a cross-disciplinary praxis for economic justice*. *Sur International Journal on Human Rights*, 29, 53–71. <https://sur.conectas.org/en/rights-and-the-economy-building-a-cross-disciplinary-praxis-for-economic-justice/>

<sup>48</sup> Corkery, A., & Isaacs, G. (2022). *Rights and the economy: Building a cross-disciplinary praxis for economic justice*. *Sur International Journal on Human Rights*, 29, 53–71. <https://sur.conectas.org/en/rights-and-the-economy-building-a-cross-disciplinary-praxis-for-economic-justice/>  
Seymour, D., & Pincus, J. (2008). *Human rights and economics: The conceptual basis for their complementarity*. *Development Policy Review*, 26(4), 387–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2008.00418.x>

extensively regarded as possessing one of the most progressive constitutions worldwide, offers an instructive case. Notwithstanding robust constitutional guarantees of socio-economic rights and a vibrant civil society, the predominant economic policy architecture remains largely detached from the rights framework, resulting in systemic disparities and deprivation (Corkery & Isaacs, 2022).<sup>49</sup>

The project uncovered persistent barriers to cross-disciplinary engagement. The divergence between economists and human rights stakeholders persists in practice and theory, notwithstanding convergences in the overarching objectives. The siloed approach to engagement confines the community's competence to challenge the structural configurations of neoliberal capitalism, particularly during compounded crises such as the post-2008 recession or the COVID-19 pandemic (Alston, 2005; Kennedy, 2013).<sup>50</sup>

Law and Political Economy (LPE) advances an emergent academic framework for bridging the divide. LPE asserts that law is not a neutral arbiter but a constitutive force in disseminating economic and political power. Rather than cogitating markets as autonomous entities, LPE foregrounds the role of legal rules, particularly those governing property, contracts, and torts, in determining economic struggle (Kennedy, 2013).<sup>51</sup> The approach affiliates with the ethos of the HRE by revealing how legal structures facilitate or hinder the realisation of substantive rights, especially for marginalised communities.

The LPE framework encourages methodological pluralism and critical reflexivity by situating legal norms within political and economic power structures. LPE challenges the technocratic and ostensibly apolitical orientation of the mainstream economic system that situates individuals as utility-maximising agents in decontextualised settings, thereby occluding structural inequalities and ethical deliberations (Sankaran, 2019).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Corkery, A., & Isaacs, G. (2022). *Rights and the economy: Building a cross-disciplinary praxis for economic justice*. *Sur International Journal on Human Rights*, 29, 53–71. <https://sur.conectas.org/en/rights-and-the-economy-building-a-cross-disciplinary-praxis-for-economic-justice/>

<sup>50</sup> Alston, P. (2005). *Ships passing in the night: The current state of the human rights and development debate seen through the lens of the Millennium Development Goals*. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27(3), 755–829. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2005.0037>

Kennedy, D. (2013). *The role of law in economic thought: Essays on the fetishism of commodities*. *Legal Studies Research Paper Series*. Harvard Law School.

<sup>51</sup> Kennedy, D. (2013). *The role of law in economic thought: Essays on the fetishism of commodities*. *Legal Studies Research Paper Series*. Harvard Law School.

<sup>52</sup> Sankaran, K. (2019). *Reclaiming ethics and morality in economic policymaking: A constitutional perspective*. *Indian Journal of Constitutional Law*, 13(1), 45–63.

Progressive economists within the LPE and HRE traditions have increasingly called for a normative shift: one that repositions markets as only one among many social institutions, and subordinates market efficiency to values of equity and participation. The fragmented ethical or normative framework calls for a deliberate adoption of a human rights-based approach that commands a powerful vehicle for infusing economic policy with democratic legitimacy and moral clarity (Corkery & Isaacs, 2022).<sup>53</sup>

From the perspective of human rights practitioners, greater economic literacy is equally indispensable. The full realisation of civil, political, and socioeconomic rights necessitates public investment and redistributive fiscal policy. On the contrary, macroeconomic choices such as taxation, debt, and expenditure shape rights outcomes. The epistemic disjuncture between rights literacy and macroeconomic choices hinders efforts to rebut the technocratic claims of austerity or market discipline, especially during periods of fiscal contraction (Seymour & Pincus, 2008).<sup>54</sup>

The academic literature has long acknowledged the bidirectional relationship between development and rights. Rights have been variously theorised within the development processes, and the statistical studies have attempted to demonstrate the developmental value of rights protection, but have predominantly focused on civil and political rights, thus proved inadequate to address the deep structural underpinnings of poverty and inequality (Alston, 2005; Corkery & Isaacs, 2022).<sup>55</sup> The limited focus reinforces the status quo and diverts attention from systemic reform.

The imperative for a Human Rights Economy becomes particularly salient amidst geopolitical realities of financial, ecological, or epidemiological uncertainties. The contemporary challenges of dwindling growth rates and ‘tariff politics’ lay bare the inadequacies of market

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<sup>53</sup> Corkery, A., & Isaacs, G. (2022). *Rights and the economy: Building a cross-disciplinary praxis for economic justice*. *Sur International Journal on Human Rights*, 29, 53–71. <https://sur.conectas.org/en/rights-and-the-economy-building-a-cross-disciplinary-praxis-for-economic-justice/>

<sup>54</sup> Seymour, D., & Pincus, J. (2008). *Human rights and economics: The conceptual basis for their complementarity*. *Development Policy Review*, 26(4), 387–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2008.00418.x>

<sup>55</sup> Corkery, A., & Isaacs, G. (2022). *Rights and the economy: Building a cross-disciplinary praxis for economic justice*. *Sur International Journal on Human Rights*, 29, 53–71. <https://sur.conectas.org/en/rights-and-the-economy-building-a-cross-disciplinary-praxis-for-economic-justice/>

Alston, P. (2005). *Ships passing in the night: The current state of the human rights and development debate seen through the lens of the Millennium Development Goals*. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27(3), 755–829. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2005.0037>

fundamentalism and underscore the necessity of embedding rights-based frameworks into economic governance.

### **Identifying the Research Gap in the Human Rights Economy (HRE) Literature**

The intersection of economics and human rights in the existing corpus of HRE scholarship incorporates multifaceted perspectives; however, it remains conceptually and methodologically disjointed, leaving a significant lacuna in the enunciation of a coherent and operational Human Rights Economy (HRE). Predominantly, the prevailing literature approaches human rights from a developmentalist perspective, instrumentalising rights-based norms to achieve economic emancipation, or critiques neoliberal economic models without advancing a systemic alternative grounded in the normative architecture of international human rights law. Consequently, there is a conspicuous absence of an integrated theoretical framework that reconceptualises economic institutions, market governance, and public policy architecture through the legal, ethical, and structural imperatives of human rights.

The foundational disjuncture is further compounded by the under-theorisation of how binding human rights obligations can inform macroeconomic policy and regulatory regimes. Notably absent is an institutional mechanism embedded in *principles of non-retrogression*, which addresses the operational modalities through which states and non-state establishments might translate the HRE principles into concrete fiscal, monetary, trade, and labour policies that are legally accountable and normatively just.

Furthermore, the epistemic foundations of the HRE remain principally unexplored in mainstream human rights discourse, particularly the non-Western philosophical traditions. Indigenous Indic paradigms such as Integral Humanism and Sarvodaya offer alternative ontologies of well-being, equity, and socio-economic justice, centred around the ethos of decentralisation, trusteeship, and ecological balance. Nevertheless, alternative viewpoints that challenge anthropocentric and extractivist logics of contemporary regimes are often relegated to the periphery or invoked symbolically without substantive engagement in mainstream development and human rights discourse.

The lacuna in contemporary scholarship underscores the imperative for an interdisciplinary, jurisprudential and normative approach to the transformative potential of a Human Rights Economy. The existing fissure necessitates the development of an alternative theoretical

paradigm that transcends the conventionally entrenched dichotomy between market efficiency and social welfare, instead foregrounding an institutional vision for operationalising, monitoring and scrutinising the matrix of human rights-based socio-economic governance. In doing so, the research strives to reorient the current regime of economic governance, not merely by a technocratic exercise of policy optimisation but by proposing an alternative institutional mechanism to operationalise the wisdom embedded within the HRE framework.

### **Critique of Current HRE Perspectives: Statement of the Problem**

The present inquiry is situated within a profound and obstinately under-theorised context of the Human Rights Economy framework. At the core of the research lies the absence of a coherent, socio-legal mechanism within the governance system that systematically integrates human rights obligations into the systemic design, normative infrastructure, and regulatory praxis of economic governance at both national and sub-national levels. Despite the formal juridification of numerous human rights laws, the substantive integration within the epistemic and institutional logics of economic policymaking remains elusive, subordinated to paradigms that elevate market rationality, technocratic neutrality, and macroeconomic orthodoxy as hegemonic norms.

The structural juridical exclusion of human rights from economic governance is intensified by the absence of institutionalised mechanisms, whether judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative, designed to operationalise, adjudicate, monitor, and execute the economic governance structures against the standards and imperatives of human rights law. This research, therefore, undertakes a crucial reconceptualization of economic governance through the lens of legal normativity and rights-based constitutionalism, theorizing the HRE as a counter-hegemonic paradigm and a normative project that mandates the legal domestication and institutional actualisation of human rights within the foundational architecture of economic life.

The problem manifests across four interrelated dimensions:

1. **Normative Disjuncture:** The predominant macroeconomic models, influenced by neoliberal orthodoxy, prioritize market efficiency, fiscal austerity, and deregulation. The absence of rights-based scrutiny reduces the Human Rights Economy (HRE) to

non-binding ideals or soft-law instruments.

2. **Institutional and Juridical Invisibility:** The architecture of economic governance exhibits a regulatory vacuum. In the absence of adjudicative and enforcement mechanisms, institutional impunity prevails, and systemic human rights violations within the economic framework go unaddressed.
3. **Disciplinary and Epistemic Silos:** A deep intellectual schism persists between the domains of human rights and economics, and this epistemic fragmentation impedes the development of interdisciplinary approaches essential for embedding human rights into the epistemology, methodology, and institutional rationality of economic governance.
4. **Absence of a Constitutional and Operational Framework:** The institutional void and the lack of an evaluative matrix hamper the realisation of a participatory, human rights-based, and ecologically sustainable economic transformation.

## Objective of the Research

The principal objective of this research is to conceptualise, theorise, and operationalise the Human Rights Economy (HRE) as a transformative, legally grounded, normatively coherent, and operationally viable framework that systematically integrates international human rights obligations into the architecture of economic policymaking, governance structures, and institutional design at national and sub-national levels. The study strives to advance a comprehensive, contextually rooted model that bridges the gap between constitutional mandates, international human rights obligations, and sustainable development imperatives.

## Research Question and Hypothesis

**RQ1:** What are the institutional pathways and legal strategies required to harmonise economic policy with human rights commitments at national and sub-national levels?

**Ho:** The operationalisation of HRE will require not policy and legal reform but also a paradigmatic shift in economic thought, planning methodologies, and development ethics.

## Testing the Human Rights Economy Hypothesis

The operationalisation of a Human Rights Economy (HRE) within national governance

frameworks necessitates a fundamental restructuring of the system, surpassing mere legal or policy adjustments. The transformation entails a paradigmatic shift within economic thought, planning methodologies, and development ethics (Sen, 1999; Pogge, 2002).<sup>56</sup> The HRE paradigm, apprised by diverse theoretical traditions, such as natural rights, positivist, liberal, communitarian, capabilities-based, critical, Marxist/materialist, feminist, ecological, and legal realist perspectives, reconstructs the conceptual foundations of economic governance (Donnelly, 2003; Nussbaum, 2011).<sup>57</sup> These frameworks do not simply augment moral authority to existing economic systems but actively destabilize the assumptions underpinning neoliberal and technocratic economic models, thereby stimulating a holistic institutional and philosophical reconfiguration (Harvey, 2005; Fraser, 2008).<sup>58</sup>

The synthesis of jurisprudential critiques with ethical reasoning lays the groundwork for the HRE to challenge the dominance of profit-maximization and market efficiency in public decision-making, advocating within the economic systems. The HRE instead vouches for accountability, equity, and participatory governance as essential to economic policymaking (De Schutter, 2012; Moyn, 2018).<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the assessment of the hypothesis becomes crucial for the application of the HRE within the normative governance architecture.

### **Theoretical Foundations to Test the Human Rights Economy**

The effective operationalisation of the Human Rights Economy (HRE) requires far more than incremental policy adjustments or legislative codifications, advocating for a structural paradigmatic shift in the way economic systems are conceptualised, structured, and governed. The shift entails rethinking the epistemological and normative foundations of economic thought through the lens of diverse human rights theories. The traditional economic paradigm, grounded in utilitarian rationality and market-centric objective, has consistently failed to account for the lived realities of social exclusion, structural inequality, and systemic

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<sup>56</sup> Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Knopf.

Pogge, T. (2002). *World poverty and human rights: Cosmopolitan responsibilities and reforms*. Polity Press.

<sup>57</sup> Donnelly, J. (2003). *Universal human rights in theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Cornell University Press.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>58</sup> Fraser, N. (2008). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. Polity Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>59</sup> De Schutter, O. (2012). *The transformative potential of the right to food*. Report presented to the UN General Assembly.

Moyn, S. (2018). *Not enough: Human rights in an unequal world*. Harvard University Press.

deprivation (Sen, 1999; Piketty, 2014).<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, the integration of jurisprudential ethos from natural rights, liberal, legal positivist, and legal realist theories provides both moral and institutional grounds for embedding economic, social, and cultural rights into the core architecture of economic governance (Donnelly, 2003; Rawls, 1999).<sup>61</sup> Simultaneously, communitarian, capabilities-based, and feminist approaches enlarge the latitude of rights to include context-sensitive, relational, and care-oriented dimensions, challenging the narrow individualism of classical liberal economics (Fraser, 2008; Nussbaum, 2011).<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, critical, Marxist, and ecological theories expose the structural violence and intergenerational injustices perpetuated by neoliberal regimes, underscoring the need for a rights-based framework that is not only legally enforceable but also ethically grounded and ecologically sustainable (Harvey, 2005; Shiva, 2005).<sup>63</sup> Taken together, these diverse theoretical traditions converge in their demand for a reconstitution of economic rationality that relocates from efficiency to equity, from abstraction to ethics, and from market utility to human dignity. Consequently, approving the standpoint embedded within the hypothesis (Ho) that operationalising the HRE within the economic structure necessitates a paradigmatic transformation for attaining a legally coherent and socially just model of economic governance.

### **Institutional Mechanisms and Legal Strategies for the Harmonisation of Economic Structure with Human Rights Economy**

The synchronization of economic policy with the commitments of the Human Rights Economy at national and sub-national levels necessitates the abrogation of institutional norms that entrench market primacy and marginalise distributive justice. The HRE imperative requires the establishment of legally enforceable obligations and participatory governance frameworks that operationalise human rights as requisite constraints on economic planning, regulatory design,

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<sup>60</sup> Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Harvard University Press.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Knopf.

<sup>61</sup> Donnelly, J. (2003). *Universal human rights in theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Cornell University Press.

Rawls, J. (1999). *A theory of justice* (Rev. ed.). Harvard University Press.

<sup>62</sup> Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press.

Fraser, N. (2008). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. Polity Press.

<sup>63</sup> Shiva, V. (2005). *Earth democracy: Justice, sustainability, and peace*. South End Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.



and fiscal policy to dismantle systemic patterns of exclusion, discrimination, and inequality, perpetuated through ostensibly neutral economic instruments.

### **Description of Human Rights Economy**

Human Rights Economy can be outlined as an economic system that envisions the protection, promotion, and realization of human rights in every aspect of financial decision-making and policy formulation. The conceptualization of economic prowess, development, and resource distribution is grounded in human dignity, equity, and justice, while emphasizing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights for each individual. HRE strives to address systemic inequalities, promote social inclusion, and ensure the fair distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities, while endorsing environmental sustainability.

#### **Functional Definition of Human Rights Economy<sup>64</sup>**

(1) "*Human Rights Economy*" signifies an economic order in which all financial decision-making, policy formulation, institutional governance, and practices shall be conceived, governed, and assessed with the primary object of securing, without discrimination, the full and effective realisation of all internationally recognised human rights.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of sub-section (1), the rights herein referred to shall include the following in all economic endeavours:

- (a) the right to life, liberty, and security of person;
- (b) the right to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;
- (c) the right to be free from slavery, servitude, forced labour, and trafficking in persons;
- (d) the right to legal personality and to equal protection of the law without discrimination;

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<sup>64</sup> Conceptualized by the Author, Shivam Jaiswal, in the current publication.

- (e) the right to privacy, due process of law, fair trial, and access to justice;
- (f) the freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion; opinion and expression; peaceful assembly and association;
- (g) the right to participate in public affairs, to nationality, and to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution;
- (h) the freedom of movement and residence within the territory of a State, and the right to return to one's country;
- (i) the right to work, to just and favourable conditions of work, and protection against arbitrary dismissal;
- (j) the right to social security and protection against unemployment;
- (k) the right to vocational guidance, training, re-skilling, and decent work, including in digital, platform, and emerging economies;
- (l) the right to protection against algorithmic discrimination, digital exploitation, and intrusive surveillance;
- (m) the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation, and rest;
- (n) the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- (o) the right to inclusive, equitable, and accessible education at all levels, and to digital and scientific literacy;
- (p) the right to participate in cultural life and to benefit from scientific advancement and its applications;
- (q) the right to family life, and protection of children, mothers, and caregivers;
- (r) the right to equality and non-discrimination, including for women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, migrants, minorities, and persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities;

- (s) the right to self-determination and local economic sovereignty;
  - (t) the right to development and participation in national, sub-national, and community economic decision-making and governance;
  - (u) the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and climate justice;
  - (v) the right to peace and international solidarity; and
  - (w) the right to benefit equitably from shared natural resources, technological progress, and innovation.
- (3) In every case, the economy shall be directed towards the service of human dignity, social justice, ecological balance, and democratic inclusion, and not towards the mere accumulation of capital or growth as measured by aggregate indicators such as gross domestic product.

The function definition situates the Human Rights Economy as an inherently interdisciplinary and pragmatic framework, linking the domains of law, economics, human rights, and governance, and prefigures an ecosystem where economic activities contribute to the empowerment, well-being, and flourishing of individuals and communities, particularly those historically marginalized or excluded. HRE is rooted in international human rights frameworks and affiliates with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

### **SILENTLIES Model on Human Rights Economy: A Holistic Indo-Western Framework for Operationalizing Rights-Based Governance**

The profit-oriented capitalist economic structure is experiencing a quandary over legitimacy, equity, and sustainability. The dominant traditional system, rooted in constricted metrics such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), has consistently failed to deliver justice, dignity, or ecological balance. In response, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2023) has pledged to a transformative shift toward human rights-based economic models. This paper introduces the *SILENTLIES Model to HRE*<sup>65</sup>, a pioneering rights-based framework, espoused to provide a holistic institutional architecture for operationalising HRE

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<sup>65</sup> Conceptualized by the Author, Shivam Jaiswal, in the current publication.

within the national governance structure, as an alternative to GDP-centric governance.

The SILENTLIES paradigm represents an innovative synthesis of Indic philosophical traditions and Western legal-economic theories, offering a holistic, participatory, and rights-based approach to development. The paradigm positions the economy not as an autonomous market system, but as a legally obligated, democratically governed, and spiritually informed public institution intended to operationalize the pragmatic wisdom of HRE, through the realisation of human rights in toto.

### **Philosophical Nomenclature: SILENTLIES Model on Human Rights Economy**

The SILENTLIES Model on Human Rights Economy proposes an idiosyncratic Indo-Western paradigm underlying rights-based governance that facilitates a holistic functionalization of human rights with the socio-economic imperatives. The doctrinal framework is anchored in the twin constructs of Silent and Lies.

*The word 'Silent' symbolises the voicelessness, structural oppression, and relegation of the marginalised and the disenfranchised section, whose narratives have been historically silenced or distorted. On the other hand, the term 'Lies' illustrates the mendacities and deceptions embedded within the superficial growth indicators and contemporary GDP-focused governance, reflecting the neglect of sensitive issues like inequality, environmental degradation, and social well-being.*

*In hindsight, the Indic analogy represents the radiance of optimism and constructive pragmatism associated with the acronym 'SILENTLIES', resonating with the Indian spiritual thought. Silent, or Mauna, represents inner equilibrium (symbolizing well-being and growth), ethical restraint, and meditative clarity, qualities deemed essential for righteous action (dharma). The term lies, paradoxically, evokes Maya (illusion), referring to the structural falsehoods of market supremacy, growth fundamentalism, and inequality masked as neutrality associated with GDP-oriented models of development; thereby, alluding to the economic structures to break free from the clutches of illusion and move towards Satya (truth), indicative of establishing justice, equality, and sustainability at the centre of economic governance.*

The acronym 'SILENTLIES' not only resonates with Indic philosophical motifs but also postulates a holistic framework for operationalising HRE within the sustainable development

regime, which thereby epitomises the transformative excursion from superficial growth-centric illusion towards human rights-based truth, integrating ethical realism with institutional design.

**Functional Nomenclature: SILENTLIES Model on Human Rights Economy**

The SILENTLIES Model on HRE and the Human Rights Economy Index (HREI) aspires to chivalrously recalibrate the metrics of economic development with the lived realities and aspirations of diverse rights-holders, particularly those at the margins of socio-economic power. The pragmatic framework challenges the prevailing developmental regime and articulates a new social contract, in which the economy becomes a domain of justice, not a site of exclusion.

The SILENTLIES Model ascends as a legal-ethical approach that reconceptualises the economy as a human-rights obligated public institution. The multidimensional, inclusive, and participatory paradigm embedded in HRE defines development in terms of human dignity, not market efficiency. Within the Model, each letter of the acronym is not merely symbolic, but embodies a distinct aspect of the rights-based framework. The framework advances discrete statutory mechanisms for effective implementation of the HRE wisdom by proposing provisions like Rights-Based Budgeting (RBB), Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA), and the Human Rights Economy Index (HREI), discarding the GDP Metrix as the normative index of societal success and economic prowess. The framework encompasses diverse parameters for the governance framework encoded within the name.

<b>S</b> – Spiritual, Religious, Psychological, and Physical Wellbeing (SRPPW)
<b>I</b> – International Cooperation and Global Governance (ICGG)
<b>L</b> – Legal, Quasi-Judicial, Judicial, and Constitutional Institutions (LQJCI)
<b>E</b> – Equity and Social Justice (ESJ)
<b>N</b> – New Administrative Wing for Human Rights and Development (NAWHRD)
<b>T</b> – Technology, Innovation, and Digital Inclusion (TIDI)
<b>L</b> – Linguistic and Cultural Integration (LCI)

I – Inclusion of Marginalised Groups (IMG)
E – Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development (EJSD)
S – System for Economic Justice Planning and Monitoring (SEJPM)Each pillar is not merely symbolic, but backed by statutory mechanisms under the HRE, including Rights-Based Budgeting (RBB), Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA), and the Human Rights Economy Index (HREI).

The SILENTLIES Model proposes a transformative institutional infrastructure for embedding the Human Rights Economy (HRE) within the legal, administrative, and normative formulation of the national and regional establishment. The model conceptualises the institutional inevitability of enacting a comprehensive Human Rights Economy Act (HREA), rather than advocating incremental reform within the existing macroeconomic governance theory. Foundational legislative intervention that reorients economic policy towards rights-based obligations and systemic equity is a crucial aspect of the SILENTLIES Model. The Model incorporates ten interdependent pillars that institutionalise the principles of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights across all levels of governance. The first aspect converges on the centrality of Spiritual, Religious, Psychological, and Physical Wellbeing (SRPPW) as a foundational right, foregrounding holistic human flourishing. The next aspect focuses on International Cooperation and Global Governance (ICGG), actualised through a dedicated vertical of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, operationalising the extraterritorial obligations under Global Economic Rights Solidarity (GERS) and Fair Globalisation Policies (FGP).

Next, the model proposes Legal, Quasi-Judicial, Judicial, and Constitutional Institutions (LQJCI) within the national setup to uphold Economic Justice Jurisprudence (EJJ), ensuring enforceability through courts, commissions, and rights-based regulatory systems. Further, the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) mechanism seeks to fortify the grounds of economic policy in Social Justice Constitutionalism (SJC), advancing redistributive mechanisms and affirmative action. The next aspect calls for the establishment of a New Administrative Wing for Human Rights and Development (NAWHRD) that enables horizontal coordination, Rights-Based Budgeting (RBB), and cross-ministerial coherence. In tandem, Technology, Innovation, and Digital Inclusion (TIDI) integrates Algorithmic Justice Frameworks (AJF) and ethical AI governance within the economic governance. Furthermore, the Linguistic and Cultural

Integration (LCI) affirms Cultural Rights Justice (CRJ) through indigenous knowledge and multilingual regional policy integration, endorsing the community and self-reliance exemplars of regional development and employment protocols.

Furthermore, the legal recognition of Inclusion of Marginalised Groups (IMG) mandates disaggregated protection mechanisms and monitoring protocols for customarily excluded communities such as SC/ST/OBCs, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, persons with disabilities, children, the elderly, migrants, and minorities. Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development (EJSD) implants ecological accountability through Planetary Boundaries Metrics (PBM) and Ecological Rights Realisation (ERR). Finally, the System for Economic Justice Planning and Monitoring (SEJPM) institutionalises a sophisticated accountability infrastructure through the Human Rights Economy Index (HREI), a composite system comprising four key instruments: Core Rights Domains (CRDs) covering work, education, health, housing, food, environment, culture, and digital access; Marginalisation Disaggregation Metrics (MDMs) to assess inequality across identity axes; Public Participation and Voice Indices (PPVIs) that measure participatory governance and civic engagement; and Ecological and Planetary Boundaries Metrics (EPBMs) for environmental thresholds. These indicators are compiled through Annual Rights Economy Audits (AREA) and are directly conjoined to legislative planning and fiscal cycles via RBB and Sectoral Human Rights Economy Integration Protocols (SHREIPs).

Additionally, the model incorporates the provision for capacity building and the judicial education framework to establish necessary grounds for operationalising the HRE framework at the national and regional levels. The Model advocates for robust and multilayered enforcement mechanisms for legal accountability to human rights standards. Central to the enforcement architecture is the recognition of Statutory Writ Jurisdiction (SWJ), which enables individuals and marginalized communities to seek direct judicial remedies through constitutional courts for violations of economic and social rights enshrined under the proposed Human Rights Economy Act. Complementing judicial recourse is the establishment of the Human Rights Economy Ombudsperson (HREO), an independent institutional authority empowered to receive complaints, conduct inquiries, and issue binding directives in cases of economic rights violations. The model also institutionalises Public Interest Economic Litigation (PIEL), facilitating structural interventions by civil society actors and legal advocates to challenge policies, programmes, and systemic exclusions, undermining rights-

based economic governance. Further, to reinforce compliance, the framework provides for Sanctions and Compliance Orders (SCOs), a regime of penalties and corrective mandates applicable to public and private economic actors who contravene the obligations laid out in the proposed HRE Act. Together, these mechanisms constitute a comprehensive legal enforcement regime, capable of bridging the normative-legal gap in economic policy and ensuring that rights are not relegated to symbolic ideals but are realised through concrete, justiciable, and participatory processes.

Consequently, the SILENTLIES Model is not merely a policy toolkit but a paradigmatic shift, reconstructing economic governance on the foundation of accountability, enforceable public responsibility, and transformative justice through the operational logic of the statutory protection, effective implementation mechanism, monitoring protocols, penalty provisions, and a well-established judicial and administrative architecture of HRE within the socio-economic system, traversing beyond the outdated schism of GDP-based economic metrics.

### **Redundant GDP: Efficacious template for Human Rights Economy Index (HREI)**

The SILENTLIES Model proposes a normative replacement for the redundant and outmoded GDP-based matrices. The HREI strives to operationalise the wisdom of the Human Rights Economy through the adoption of a comprehensive Composite Rights Indicator System (CRIS) based on:

1. Core Rights Domains (CRDs),
2. Marginalisation Disaggregation Metrics (MDMs),
3. Public Participation and Voice Indices (PPVIs), and
4. Ecological and Planetary Boundaries Metrics (EPBMs).

The Human Rights Economy framework advances an alternative model of measuring economic development through the *Human Rights Economy Index (HREI)*, a normative and operational replacement for the GDP framework that centres the fulfilment of human dignity, equity, and ecological sustainability. At the core, the HREI is structured through a Composite Rights Indicator System (CRIS), which redefines progress not by aggregate output or market efficiency, but by the protocol quantifying the realisation of substantive rights across all

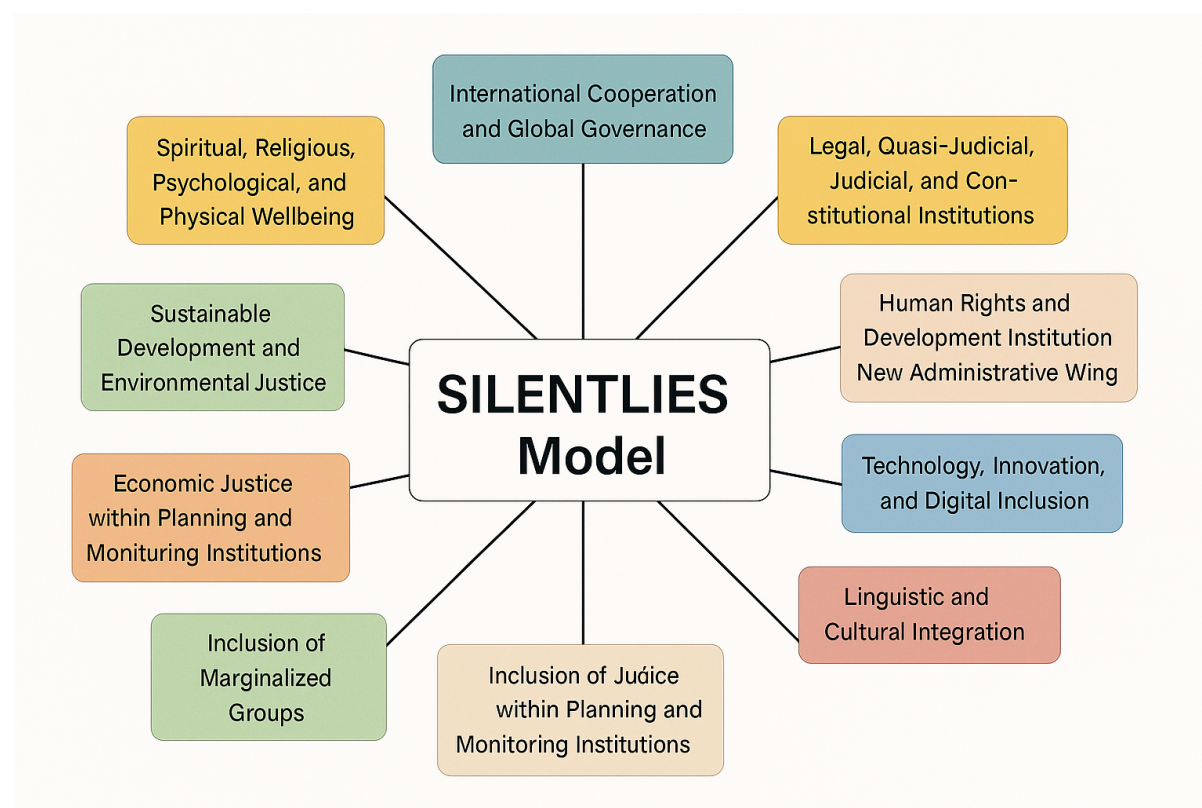


dimensions of socio-economic life. The proposed *CRIS Matrices* envisage a quantitative framework that enables transparent, participatory, and legally accountable development planning through the *Annual Rights Economy Audits (AREA)*.

The first component, *Core Rights Domains (CRDs)*, seeks to calculate the extent to which individuals and groups enjoy access to fundamental economic, social, cultural, and digital freedoms while exercising the right to work, education, health, housing, and fooding while interacting with state and non-state actors within the economic structure. The CRDs Indicator is grounded in international human rights obligations and reflects the indivisibility and interdependence of rights within the socio-economic system. Second, *Marginalisation Disaggregation Metrics (MDMs)* are envisioned to measure disparities in realisation of employment, incubation, start-ups, and business-related opportunities across the socially excluded and structurally marginalised groups, on the grounds of caste, class, gender, disability, ethnicity, age, language, or domicile status. The MDMs' metrics will institutionalise the intersectionality in data collection and policy evaluation, ensuring that no individual is discriminated against or left behind within the socio-economic system. Third, *Public Participation and Voice Indices (PPVIs)* will strive to measure the quality, frequency, and inclusivity of participatory processes in economic planning, budgeting, and implementation, recognising democratic engagement as both a right and a method of accountability. Finally, *Ecological and Planetary Boundaries Metrics (EPBMs)* will capture the impact of environmental sustainability within the economic planning, decision-making, and implementation process, incorporating climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and intergenerational justice into the developmental calculus.

Collectively, these metrics constitute the backbone of the Human Rights Economy Index (HREI) that will evaluate the inclusivity and impact of rights-based pragmatism within the socio-economic systems of the nation-state. Further, the HREI will be crucial for carrying out the Annual Rights Economy Audits (AREA), a comprehensive, publicly accessible, and legally mandated review mechanism that integrates rights data into fiscal planning, sectoral coordination, and legislative cycles. Consequently, the *Human Rights Economy Index (HREI)*, within the SILENTLIES Model, will be central to the operationalisation and implementation of the human-rights centric approach at the national and sub-national levels, replacing the reductive logic of the GDP framework with the holistic, multidimensional, and legally

grounded HREI indicator, that will serve the aspirations of humanitarian, and planetary wellbeing rather than constricting to extractive productivity as a vehicle for the economy.



*SILENTLIES Model by Shivam Jaiswal*

The SILENTLIES Model represents a normative and institutional revolution in the theory and practice of economic governance, providing concrete institutional pathways and legal strategies required to harmonise economic policy with human rights commitments at national and sub-national levels. Consequently, by implanting legally enforceable rights, inclusive governance mechanisms, and transformative planning methodologies into the architecture of economic decision-making, the model challenges the structural asymmetries of neoliberal policy frameworks and reorients public institutions toward the consciousness of social justice, substantive equality, and ecological sustainability.

The model reframes the economy as a juridical, ethical, and legislative domain that serves people-centric rights. The proposal to institutionalize socio-cultural specificity with universal rights, economic justice, and statutory accountability within the regulatory sphere marks an idiosyncratic theoretical and practical churning in the governance regime, advancing an optimistic roadmap for a just, human rights-based future. The model evolves as a critique of

neoliberal orthodoxy and offers a compelling blueprint for global adoption that affirms that true economic prowess lies not in what the economy produces but in how it empowers the populace to live with dignity, freedom, and harmony with the planet.

### **Conclusion: Heading towards Institutionalising a Just Economic Future through HRE**

The operationalisation of a Human Rights Economy (HRE) within national governance systems marks not merely a policy correction but a paradigmatic departure from the utilitarian logic of conventional economic models that have entrenched inequality, marginalisation, and ecological degradation. The current research has demonstrated that the incorporation, framing, and implementation of the HRE paradigm necessitates a comprehensive restructuring of the legal, institutional, and fiscal architecture of the State. The proposed SILENTLIES Model presents a normative, institutional, and epistemological framework that facilitates this transformation by synthesising international human rights obligations with the socio-economic imperatives of national and sub-national governance.

Distinctively grounded in an idiosyncratic Indo-Western tradition of legal pluralism, distributive justice, and ecological ethics, the SILENTLIES Model forges a holistic path for the functionalization of rights within the economic sphere. It foregrounds State accountability, intersectional equality, and legally obligatory redistributive measures as core pillars of financial governance. The approach not only affiliates with the speech of Nada Al-Nashif, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, who articulated a compelling call to centre economic policy around human rights norms but also responds substantively to the broader imperative voiced by global civil society and scholars such as Sarah Saadoun, Olivier de Schutter, and Surya Deva for dismantling the hegemony of GDP-focused development and replacing it with equity- and rights-based metrics of wellbeing and sustainability.

As global crises, vacillating from wealth concentration and ecological breakdown to democratic erosion, continue to deepen, this research affirms that the move toward a Human Rights Economy is no longer aspirational, but exigent. The SILENTLIES Model operationalises this urgency through institutional pathways that mandate participatory governance, enforce fiscal justice, and embed socio-economic rights into national development planning. By institutionalising budget transparency, rights-based taxation, inclusive social protection systems, and mechanisms for ecological transition, the model responds directly to

calls for reforming the global economic architecture, as highlighted in United Nations forums and intergovernmental dialogues.

### **Human Rights Economy: Implications and Future Research**

The findings and theoretical contributions presented in this research carry wide-ranging implications for economic jurisprudence, development policy, and the future of institutional design in both the Global South and North. The SILENTLIES Model, as a structured, legally coherent, and ethically grounded framework, provides a comprehensive normative architecture for reimagining economic governance through the lens of human rights. The Indo-Western hybridity, drawing from constitutional traditions and international legal obligations, renders it adaptable to diverse socio-political contexts. The model offers a functional paradigm for embedding economic, social, and cultural rights, environmental justice, and participatory democracy within financial institutions and policy regimes.

From a policy perspective, the research advocates for the enactment of national Human Rights Economy Acts with the national framework, which would codify the HRE paradigm into enforceable domestic law. Such legislation should incorporate fiscal justice provisions, participatory budget mechanisms, intersectional equality frameworks, and just transition strategies for climate resilience. Internationally, the SILENTLIES Model affiliates with ongoing UN-led efforts to reform the international financial architecture by integrating human rights assessments into macroeconomic and monetary policy conditionalities, particularly in engagements with international financial institutions.

From a governance standpoint, the implications are profound: adopting the HRE paradigm entails recalibrating budgetary frameworks, tax systems, regulatory design, and development financing to conform with States' immediate and progressive obligations under international human rights law. This necessitates institutional transformations at multiple levels, constitutional, legislative, administrative, and judicial, and the reorientation of economic expertise around interdisciplinary knowledge, including development ethics, feminist economics, ecological law, and socio-legal theory.

Theoretically, the research contributes to the consolidation of a pluralist and transformative jurisprudence that contests the structural violence embedded in neoliberal economic rationality. It demonstrates that economic law and policy are not ideologically neutral but are political sites

of contestation and human rights realisation. This insight necessitates further scholarship that bridges normative legal theory with macroeconomic governance, particularly in areas such as sovereign debt restructuring, fiscal federalism, and climate finance.

Future research should explore the transposability of the SILENTLIES Model to other national jurisdictions, particularly through comparative legal studies and participatory action research. Moreover, the development of empirical tools, such as a Human Rights Economy Index (HREI), can enable States and civil society actors to evaluate the rights-compliance of economic policies in real time. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies must be employed to measure policy impacts on marginalised communities, ecological integrity, and intergenerational equity. Additionally, there is a persistent need for interdisciplinary engagement between legal scholars, economists, political theorists, and indigenous knowledge holders to further theorise the contours of a decolonial and rights-based economic order.

In sum, the roadmap ahead must prioritise legal institutionalisation, policy integration, and epistemic plurality. The momentum for change, as affirmed by United Nations actors and civil society coalitions, must now be translated into systemic action. The Human Rights Economy is not a theoretical possibility but a normative necessity, and the SILENTLIES Model advances the pathway towards that transformative horizon.