

Can the 'Rajasthan Model' outsmart the 'Gujarat Model'?

Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje embarks on a bold course to change archaic laws and establish new ones in industrial and social sectors

As the Rest of India struggles with balancing growth with inclusion, Rajasthan has raced ahead with radical reforms – changing archaic labour laws and launching a new scheme that promises to put money in the hands of women

For long known as an depository of medieval tradition and orthodoxy, Rajasthan seems suddenly to be in a rush to shed its past and go boldly where the Rest of India hasn't ventured. From labour reform to social security initiatives such as the Bhamashah Scheme that goes a step beyond the national Aadhaar plan, Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia is in a hurry to catch up with economic and social priorities.

Late last year, Raje returned to power earlier this year with a stunning 80% majority on the back of electoral promises to create jobs and improve governance. Since then, she has been busy making up for lost time, moving to amend contentious Concurrent laws that were stymying industrial growth. In the process, she has made a clean break from other states, non of which have really challenged the Centre on such laws.

Her Assembly majority also means that she has more bargaining power with unions and, more importantly, the Sangh Parivar, of which her Bharatiya Janata Party is the leading member.

While Raje has been a supporter of the 'Gujarat model' and backed Narendra Modi for Prime Ministership, all eyes are on her if she charts her own course through her 'Rajasthan model'.

This special looks at some of the more notable steps that the Rajasthan government has taken to improve both the business environment in the state as well as social justice delivery systems.