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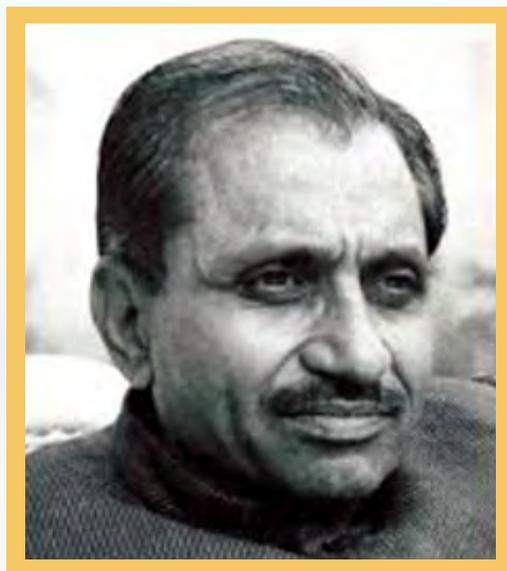


A Tunnel as a Model CBM Development in Kashmir

National Health Policy
2017- a new model for
“Swastha Nagrik Abhiyan”

The Blessed People
of Tawang

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति 2017:
परिवर्तनकारी पहल



“A good party with a set of good candidates must also have a good, realistic programme. It is after all the programme that will require to be implemented.”

-Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya

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Reflections on “A New India”



Dr. Anirban Ganguly

Prime Minister Modi’s “New India” is young, is looking for opportunities, as he said, in his remarkable and fascinating victory speech after the Assembly elections, “A new India where the poor do not want anything by way of charity, but seek opportunity to chart out their own course. I see this change happening.”

The successful articulation of a political and governance narrative is indicative of the positive health of a political party and movement. The BJP, in the last two years or so, is in a constant process of self-renewal – which is multi-directional and ideologically re-invigorating.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s narrative has seen ceaseless reiteration, recalibration and re-statement with the singular objective of re-instating a self-faith in ourselves. What strikes one is his continuous and indefatigable affirmation, his conviction that within us lay the potential and capacity of achieving a civilisational status. It is this which has led to the articulation of the vision of a “New India.”

It is interesting that at a time when most political formations are fumbling and are unable to articulate a credible and futuristic narrative, Prime Minister Modi has come up with his vision of a “New India.” Seven decades after our independence, having experimented with various isms, with a number of models and frameworks; we have before us a new vision that is at once liberating and full of possibilities.

Prime Minister Modi’s “New India” is young, is looking for opportunities, as he said, in his remarkable and fascinating victory speech after the Assembly elections, “A new India where the poor do not want anything by way of charity, but seek opportunity to chart out their own course. I see this change happening.”

For him, India is young, it is this young India which responds and seeks to internalise and actuate that narrative of “New India.” In this “New India”, he perceives a distinct transition away from false narratives. The election in Uttar Pradesh was mainly fought on the development narrative, there were no emotive issues, Modi pointed out, and yet “the huge voter turnout after the campaign” which was fought on the narrative of development showed “the transition that his happening towards [the] creation of a new India.”

The hesitation to address the dimensions of “development” was overcome, and it was progress, opportunities and possibilities, which have driven the election narrative this time round. This, Prime Minister Modi argues, has to become the norm and not the exception, politics of self-alienation has to disappear to give space to this politics of performance and of progress.

The fundamental components of this “New India” is the dream of it, as he has termed it, “Yuva Shakti”. “A new India of the dreams of its Yuva Shakti is taking shape” but it is not limited to that young dimension, “A new India”, for him, is “about giving opportunities to the poor.” The gamut of wider opportunities was “taking shape” through the drive of his governance vision and action.

Prime Minister Modi’s exhortation for self-renewal has a deep ethical dimension to it. He calls for a purification of our national life and one saw how the commoner, the marginalised responded to his appeal. He is unequivocal that the “New India” can only emerge out of a collective “shuddhikaran” (purification), “An India that is driven by innovation, hard work and creativity; an India characterized by peace, unity and brotherhood; and an India free from corruption, terrorism, black money and dirt” can eventually transmute itself into a “New India.”

New India is about a collective penance, a collective struggle, a collective will and determination to dissolve self-serving narratives of the past that have hitherto held back our future.

Salient Points of PM Narendra Modi's address at the inauguration of Chenani - Nashri Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir on 2nd Apr, 2017



- The tunnel inaugurated today is world class and it is matching the best standards
- I am very happy to be in Jammu and Kashmir today
- This tunnel is environment friendly and this tunnel will help in the fight against global warming
- Youth of Jammu & Kashmir worked very hard in the making of the Chenani - Nashri Tunnel. I congratulate them for this
- Some misguided youngsters are pelting stones but see here, youth of Kashmir are using the same stones to build infrastructure
- Another advantage of this tunnel is that tourists will benefit due to this
- Every Indian wants to see Jammu and Kashmir. The beauty of this land can draw so many people. Tourism will also bring economic growth
- Youth of Kashmir have a choice to select one of the two paths- one of tourism the other of terrorism
- The path of bloodshed has not helped any one and will never help anyone
- I want to specially thank CM Mehbooba Mufti. The Centre announced a package for the state and work has begun on the same
- Whenever I come to Jammu and Kashmir, it is natural to remember the vision and work of Atal Ji

Salient Points of PM Narendra Modi's opening remarks to the participants of 'Smart India Hackathon 2017', via video conferencing on 1st Apr, 2017



- India is a youthful nation. The youth of India has come together with enthusiasm for this programme.
- The youth of India is blessed with phenomenal energy and this energy will bring very good results for the nation.
- There is a need to use technology more and innovate more. We live in a technology driven era
- A series of issues have been placed before our youth to work on. The issues are challenging but this is also an opportunity
- The true essence of democracy is 'Jan Bhagidari'
- Together we will solve all the issues that are affecting the nation. This will be done through 'Jan Bhagidari'
- I am confident the outcomes of what my young

friends are doing will lead to very positive results

- Artificial intelligence, 3D technology...see how the world is undergoing changes. This is an era of 'Internet of Things'
- Technology and innovation are powering so many changes. Things like floppies, tape recorders and walkmen are history
- Technology has made things so much simpler
- When you are innovating you may face setbacks but do not let those setbacks lower your morale or dampen your spirits
- When you are innovating remember that quality is key. Good quality products will bring changes in the lives of many people
- People say today's youngsters ask so many questions and I see that as a very good thing
- Youth of India wants to find solutions to the nation's problems. They want results that are quick and credible
- Today, the youngsters of India want to be job creators
- Application and sharpening of knowledge translates into skills. Both skills and knowledge are important

Salient Points of PM Narendra Modi's address at the BJP headquarter in New Delhi on 12th March, 2017



- First and foremost, let me wish you all a very Happy Holi.
- In addition to electing governments, elections are also about Lok Shikshan and to deepen the bond between people and a democracy.
- Election turnout across India is increasing. I see this as a very good sign
- There are many reasons for a win but such an empathetic win after such a record turnout is special & makes everyone think.
- Development is always a central issue during every election. But, earlier parties were scared to fight elections on development
- I am seeing a New India....the India of the dreams of India's Yuva Shakti
- A New India that fulfils the aspirations of our Nari

- Shakti. A New India that is about opportunities for the poor
- The poor are saying- I want to progress and I seek the opportunity from you. This is the foundation of a new India.
- With these wins we have the responsibility of being humble. Power is not about posts. Power is an opportunity to serve
- Generations of individuals have given their lives to build this party. They travelled all over India to make the party strong
- These elections are an emotional issue for us. They come when we mark the centenary celebrations of Pandit Deen Dayal Ji
- Antyodaya is integral to our work. We understand the strength of India's poor

- The burden on the middle class should reduce. This will enable our middle classes to shine
- The strength of the poor and the aspirations of the middle class will take India to new heights.
- Through the membership drive, the BJP has been able to become the largest political party in the world
- We have never got anything for free or easily. And we do not have any regrets. We are ones who have always been working for people
- I am not someone who looks at things only from an election perspective. I see things for the wellbeing of the people
- In 2022 we mark 75 years of independence, which will be a landmark moment for the nation
- I am happy that people ask me- why do you work so much
- Sarkar is made with 'Bahumat' but runs through 'Sarvamat' - ours is a government of everyone



**Dr. Ayjaz
Ahmad Wani**

A Tunnel as a Model CBM: Fulfilling Developmental Aspirations in Kashmir



On April 2, 2017, the Chenani-Nashri tunnel was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and was thrown open for public use. The construction of South-Asia’s longest tunnel (10.89kms) was started on 23 May 2011 with the project cost of Rs. 2519 crore. This tunnel will cut the travel time between the two capital cities of J&K state by more than two hours.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Modi said

that the tunnel was a “long jump” between the two capital cities and is indeed “an engineering marvel” with “world class facilities”. The average speed inside the tunnel is 50km/hour and will save a fuel of about Rs. 27 lakh per day. What is more important, as Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said from the same platform that day, that more than Rs. 7,000 crore will be invested for highway projects of the state in the next two years. He also stated that 13 more tunnels will be constructed to boost transport infrastructure in the state.

Development as opportunity

Such initiatives can transform the socio-economic landscape of the state and bring peace and prosperity to its people. From a conflict zone, Kashmir may well turn into a zone of opportunity. Revolutionising economic, social and cultural linkages will not only restore/reinstate the cross-regional political linkages and strengthen responsive administration in the state.

Projects aimed at developing infrastructure within the state should be given due importance and implemented in a timely manner to win back the hearts and minds of the alienated Kashmiris. It can be a win-win situation for both the people of the state and the government of India. In conflict zones, connectivity is very crucial as roads and highways can be used for the movements of troops and equipment to take on the mischief makers. Deep tunnels and metro-lines can also be used to save people and forces in case of possible nuclear war and can also be used as a runway for fighting jets.

The separatists and political elites in Pakistan -- whether in government or in opposition -- have alleged, over the years, that India is exploiting the resources of Kashmir and adopting a step motherly attitude towards them. However, projects like the Chenani-Nashri tunnel can shut the mouth of these people. Every common Kashmiri can leverage such infrastructure and link up with the world outside. Such commitment by the government of India to bring connectivity to people will enable and empower the common citizen in Kashmir and dispel wrong notions of India propagated by vested interests. This can act as a huge Confidence Building Measure (CBM) in a conflict situation.

A Tunnel of Hope: Whetting Developmental Appetite

The significance of the tunnel now inaugurated cannot be overstated. Earlier, when roads used to get closed due to landslides or snow, there was a tendency to blame it on the Indian state. India was being blamed for not building sufficient alternative roads, bridges and tunnels to ensure round the year smooth traffic. The Chenani-Nashri tunnel is a bright ray of hope for the farmers of the valley, especially the fruit growers, who mostly export their fruits (apples) during the winters

to other parts of country. The tunnel will help as big refrigerated trucks can now export fresh apples without damage to markets readily available outside valley.

As an inhabitant of a village of apple growers, one would aver that it will decrease the freight of single apple box by Rs 20-30 and there will be no dearth of trucks/load careers during the peak of the fruit season.

Kashmiris have huge expectations and stoking developmental aspirations of the people is a good thing in the prevailing circumstances and meeting them in time will certainly restore their confidence in the government. The Centre should take these developmental measures on priority basis and execute them in a time-bound manner and accord priority to infrastructure projects that are pending in Kashmir.

Projects like Chenani-Nashri tunnel will also help hospitality industry in many ways as of now the distance between Jammu railway station and Srinagar can be covered, within six hours and help middle and lower middle class people from the rest of the country to visit the valley for tourism during most part of the year.

Importance of the proposed Zojila Tunnel

Most of the people associated with the tourism industry are optimistic about such projects that will help them economically and will provide employment to the youth in many ways. Besides the new developmental projects as that of Zojila tunnel that is being built between Leh and Kashmir on an estimated cost of Rs 6,000 crore. The tunnel will be the most important infrastructural development not only for Kashmir but also for the entire country. Most of the tourists coming to Ladakh now use the route through Himachal Pradesh and once the tunnel is completed it will boast tourism within the state as tourists will then love to go to Ladakh through the beautiful valleys of Kashmir.

With the Modi government's emphasis on connectivity, the Zojila tunnel can also potentially connect India through its state of Jammu & Kashmir with Central Asia, through Yarkand and Kashgar via Nubra and Shyok valleys in Ladakh division or through the Srinagar-Leh-Yarkand-Kashghar route. Such developmental projects can reduce the importance of the so hyped China Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) as India will be in a better position through this infrastructure developmental projects to have direct access to Central Asia and can become major player in “New Great Game” in the region. This route can provide important economic opportunities to unemployed youth of Kashmir, Ladakh, and above all, it will bring new opportunities for bilateral cooperation between India and China. This is in line with the thinking in Srinagar which is being stressed by academicians from 2005 and more recently by the Chief Minister of the state in many rallies.

Addressing developmental lag can stem alienation

Government of India should also focus on speedy completion of new developmental projects. In 2014-15, the Central government had announced establishment of an All India Institute Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Kashmir and land was allocated for the same in the early months of 2015. The project needs to now take off at a fast pace in order to further cement bonds and arrest negative impressions.

The Central University of Kashmir, is functioning in rented buildings while the land for it was procured in Ganderbal way back in 2010-11. Even after a gap of seven years, the construction work is yet to begin because the land procured by the state government is marshy and has been allegedly bought from influential sections of society for their benefit. Most importantly,

the site for the Central University of Kashmir is very close to the state university (only 15 -20 kms away) and the decision was taken by the state government for its own political gains.

A section of the political elites in the state, both separatists and mainstream ones, use these issues for their narrow ends and spread anti-India sentiments. Every now and then, the separatist leaders compare unfinished developmental projects in the valley with those in other parts (Jammu) to falsely argue of a callous attitude towards the people of the valley.

In short, the completion of Chenani-Nashri tunnel in record time is a ray of hope and a slap on the face of separatists as projects like these in near future can negate their allegations of “step-motherly approach” and “colonial exploitation”. In Kashmir, the main problem is not of assimilation but of speedy and efficient execution of developmental projects which can prove to be a game changer for the state. Prime Minister Modi’s approach seems to focus on that game changing dimension.

**(With inputs from Dr Ashok Behuria, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.
Dr. Wani is a Ph.D. from university of Kashmir.
He is an independent observer of developmental politics in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.)**



अनंत विजय

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति 2017: परिवर्तनकारी पहल

मोदी सरकार की जनसेवा योजनाओं में से एक 'नई स्वास्थ्य नीति' को मीडिया में वह तवज्जुह नहीं मिली, जो मिलनी चाहिए थी. स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में यह एक बड़ा ऐतिहासिक कदम है. देश ने आजादी के बाद नरेन्द्र मोदी की अगुआई में सही मायनों में पहली बार दो बुनियादी चीजों पर खास ध्यान दिया है. शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य! नई स्वास्थ्य नीति न केवल जनोन्मुखी है, बल्कि इसमें दो बातें बेहद खास हैं. एक तो सरकारी अस्पतालों और स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों में सामान्य रोगों के लिए जनसाधारण को कोई खर्च नहीं करना होगा. दूसरा आम जनों को डाकटरी सेवा और दवा मुफ्त मिलेगी.

सरकार का दावा है कि नई स्वास्थ्य नीति का मकसद सभी नागरिकों को सुनिश्चित स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं मुहैया कराना है. इस स्वास्थ्य नीति का प्रारूप पिछले दो साल से सरकार के पास लंबित था. इसको लेकर कुछ हलकों में आलोचना भी हुई थी. लेकिन सरकार इस पर काम कर रही थी, और पूरी तरह से आस्वस्त होने के बाद इसे हरी झंडी दी गई.

नई नीति में प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों का दायरा बढ़ाने पर जोर है. मसलन, अभी तक इन केंद्रों में रोग प्रतिरक्षण, प्रसव पूर्व और कुछ अन्य रोगों की ही जांच होती थी. लेकिन नई नीति के तहत इसमें गैर संक्रामक रोगों की जांच भी शामिल होगी.

ऐसा पहली बार हुआ है कि सरकार के ने उन लोगों को ध्यान में रखकर अपनी योजना बनाई है, जो अपने खून-पसीने से, मजदूरी से खेती से, उत्पाद से देश का निर्माण करते हैं, बुनियाद गढ़ते हैं, संपत्ति पैदा करते हैं, लेकिन उनके पास अपना इलाज करवाने तक के लिए पैसे नहीं होते. दुर्भाग्य से आजादी के बाद से ऐसे लोगों के समुचित स्वास्थ्य के लिए कोई खास सरकारी नीति नहीं थी, और धीरे-धीरे ही सही बढ़ते- बढ़ते ऐसे लोगों की संख्या लगभग 100 करोड़ से ऊपर हो गई.

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति 2017 पर लोकसभा में किए गए संबोधन

में स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्री जगत प्रकाश नड्डा ने कहा था कि राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति बहुत पहले बन जानी चाहिए थी. देश और दुनिया के बदलते सामाजिक, आर्थिक, प्रौद्योगिकी और महामारी विज्ञान के परिदृश्य के मद्देनजर 15 साल के अंतराल के बाद यह नीति बनी है, पर यह स्वास्थ्य सेवा के हलके की मौजूदा और उभरती चुनौतियों से निपटने में सक्षम है.

नड्डा ने कहा कि नई नीति में रोगों की रोकथाम और स्वास्थ्य संवर्धन पर बल देते हुए रूग्णता देखभाल के बजाए आरोग्यता केंद्रित करने पर जोर दिया गया है. मंत्री ने बताया कि इसमें जन्म से संबंधित जीवन प्रत्याशा को 67.5 से बढ़ाकर साल 2025 तक 70 करने, 2022 तक प्रमुख रोगों की व्याप्तता और इसके रूझान को मापने के लिए अशक्तता समायोजित आयु वर्ष सूचकांक की नियमित निगरानी शामिल है.

नड्डा का दावा था कि इस नीति के लागू होने के साथ ही साल 2025 तक पांच साल से कम आयु के बच्चों में मृत्यु दर को कम करके 23 करना, नवजात शिशु मृत्यु दर को घटाकर 16 करना तथा मृत जन्म लेने वाले बच्चे की दर को 2025 तक घटाकर 'एक अंक' में लाना है. साल 2018 तक कुष्ठ रोग, वर्ष 2017 तक कालाजार और वर्ष 2017 तक लिम्फेटिक फाइलेरियासिस का उन्मूलन करने की बात कही गई है.

इसके साथ ही क्षय रोगियों में 85 प्रतिशत से अधिक की इलाज दर प्राप्त करने पर जोर दिया गया है, ताकि वर्ष 2025 तक इसके उन्मूलन की स्थिति को प्राप्त किया जा सके. केंद्रीय मंत्री ने कहा 'नीति में रोकथाम और स्वास्थ्य संवर्धन पर बल देते हुए एक महत्वपूर्ण घटक के रूप में जन स्वास्थ्य व्यय को समयबद्ध ढंग से जीडीपी के 2.5 तक बढ़ाने का प्रस्ताव किया गया है.'

नई स्वास्थ्य नीति की सबसे अच्छी बात यह है कि इसमें एलोपैथी के साथ देश की पारंपरिक चिकित्सा-प्रणालियों पर काफी जोर दिया गया है. इन चिकित्सा-पद्धतियों में नए-नए वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधानों को प्रोत्साहित किए जाने की बात भी कही गई है. आयुर्वेद, योग, यूनानी, होम्योपैथी और प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा पर सरकार विशेष ध्यान दे, तो ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोगों को फायदा होगा और इलाज का खर्च भी घटेगा.

सरकार का कहना है कि इस काम में देश के कुल मद का तकरीबन 2.5 पैसा लगेगा. इसे अगर कुल खर्च में जोड़ें तो यह लगभग तीन लाख करोड़ रुपए बैठता है. यह खर्च अभी सरकारी इलाज पर हो रहे खर्च से डेढ़ से दो गुना है. पर इसका फायदा देश के असली जरूरतमंदों ग्रामीणों, गरीबों और पिछड़ों को मिलेगा.

यदि देश में डाक्टरों की कमी पूरी करनी हो तो मेडिकल की पढ़ाई स्वभाषाओं में तुरंत शुरु की जानी चाहिए. आज देश में एक भी मेडिकल कालेज ऐसा नहीं है, जो हिंदी में पढ़ाता हो. सारी मेडिकल की पढ़ाई और इलाज वगैरह अंग्रेजी माध्यम से होते हैं. यही ठगी और लूटपाट को बढ़ावा देती है. उत्तर प्रदेश कैडर के आईएएस भूपेन्द्र सिंह ने दवाओं के दाम का निर्धारण करने वाले महकमे की कमान संभालने के बाद मोदी जी की नीतियों पर चलते हुए दवा कंपनियों की मुश्कें कसीं और कई जीवनोपयोगी दवाओं के मूल्य में हजार फीसदी तक की कमी करा दी.

स्वास्थ्य मंत्री जेपी नड्डा की यह पहल प्रशंसनीय है कि उन्होंने कुछ बहुत मंहगी दवाओं के दाम बांध दिए हैं और 'स्टेम' भी सस्ते करवा दिए हैं. प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को एक काम और करना चाहिए. जिस तरह स्वच्छ भारत अभियान और आदर्श गांव लेकर उन्होंने जनप्रतिनिधियों

को बांधा उसी तरह, उन्हें चाहिए कि जनता के सभी चुने हुए प्रतिनिधियों, सरकारी कर्मचारियों और उनके परिजनों के लिए यह अनिवार्य करवा दें कि उनका इलाज सरकारी अस्पतालों में ही होगा. तय है कि नई सरकारी नीति के बाद वीआईपी लोगों की पहुंच से साल भर के भीतर ही ये अस्पताल निजी अस्पतालों से बेहतर सेवाएं देने लगेंगे.

नई नीति की खास बात यह भी है कि इसमें जिला अस्पतालों के पुनरुद्धार पर भी विशेष जोर दिया गया है. यह एक महत्वपूर्ण बदलाव है. यह जाहिर तथ्य है कि सरकारी अस्पतालों ने स्वास्थ्य देखरेख के क्षेत्र में अपना महत्व खो दिया है. अगर व्यक्ति जरा भी सक्षम है तो इलाज और सेहत निजी अस्पताल में करवाता है.

निजी अस्पताल, निजी स्कूलों ही नहीं पांच सितारा होटलों की तर्ज पर काम करते हैं. जो पैसा तो लेते हैं, पर अपने ग्राहक को बेहतर सुविधाओं के साथ अच्छा इलाज भी करते हैं. अच्छी मशीनें, साफ-सफाई, उम्दा डॉक्टर और चौबीसों घंटे देखरेख की सुविधा के चलते वे बेहद लोकप्रिय हैं, पर उनका खर्च उठाना हर एक के वश की बात नहीं. इसके चलते जहां स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं गरीबों से दूर हुई हैं, वहीं दूसरी तरफ उपचार संबंधी कई बुराईयां भी उभरी हैं. स्वास्थ्य का हलका 'सेवा' की जगह अब व्यवसाय बन गया. बड़े नामी गिरामी प्राइवेट अस्पतालों सहित छोटे-छोटे क्लीनिकों में भी मरीजों की गैर-जरूरी जांच तथा अनावश्यक दवाएं देने की शिकायतें बढ़ती जा रही हैं.

ऐसे में अगर नई स्वास्थ्य नीति के बाद सरकारी इलाज बेहतर होगा तो राष्ट्रहित में इससे बेहतर बात क्या होगी? याद रहे कि स्वास्थ्य राज्य सूची का विषय है. सो अब यह राज्य सरकारों पर निर्भर है कि वे इस नई नीति को कितनी गंभीरता से लेती हैं. केंद्र के सामने अब बड़ी चुनौति राज्यों से मिलकर स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को प्राथमिकता देने और प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र तथा जिला अस्पतालों को स्वास्थ्य देखभाल में केंद्रीय स्थान देने की ठोस रणनीति बनाने की होगी. अच्छा है कि यूपी और उत्तराखंड में स्वास्थ्य महकमों में लूट मचाने वाले हार चुके हैं, और यहां की नई जनसेवक सरकार केंद्र की नीतियों पर अमल करने को आतुर हैं. संभवतः इन राज्यों में केंद्र-राज्य का तालमेल दूसरों के लिए भी मिसाल बनेगा.

(लेखक वरिष्ठ पत्रकार एवं स्तंभकार हैं। ये उनके निजी विचार हैं।)



Dr. Ananya Awasthi

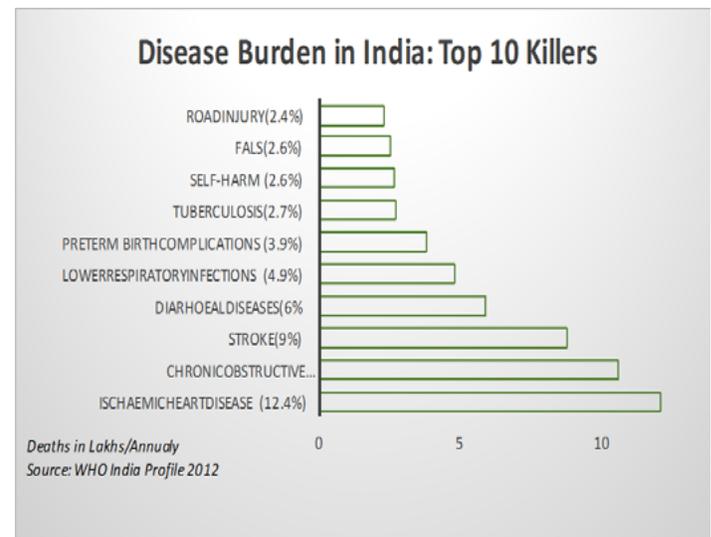
National Health Policy 2017- a new model for “Swastha Nagrik Abhiyan”

Government of India recently announced the new **National Health Policy 2017**. This new policy marks a watershed in the history of healthcare policy making in India. As healthcare seeking citizens, let us go through the main highlights of the policy to better understand how it affects our lives and health. Once we equip ourselves with the latest trends and research on health care needs in India and what this policy has to offer, we can surely make our own *informed judgements* on whether or not it marks a watershed.

Shift of Focus from Communicable to Non-Communicable Diseases and Lifestyle disorders

Classically, India has been perceived as a hub for infectious diseases, maternal and new-born mortality and life-threatening epidemics. What you would be surprised to know is that as of today, the three top killers in India are not Tuberculosis and maternal deaths but are heart disease (12 lakh deaths annually), lung disease (10 lakh deaths annually) and stroke (9 lakh deaths). What is rather odd is that the past healthcare policies have nearly ignored the rising epidemic of Lifestyle Disorders and *Non-Communicable Diseases*. This is when WHO estimates that *Non-Communicable diseases (with mostly preventable risk factors) account for 60% of all deaths and significant morbidity in India*¹. Instead recurring investments in pet areas like Maternal &

Child Health & HIV have diverted a major portion of public investments to a handful of vertical programs. For example, if we analyze the approved outlay for National Health Mission 2015-16, nearly 4,568 crore were allotted for Reproductive & Child Health whereas the National Program for Prevention and control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and stroke (NPCDCS) managed to receive a meagre 235 crore!² While we cannot be complacent about the need to focus on these areas as well, the new health policy rightfully signifies a shift in the public discourse to address the dominant burden of NCDs & lifestyle disorders.



¹World Health Organization, Non-Communicable Diseases (Ncd) Country Profiles 2014. Pg.91

²Outcome Budget 2015-16 For Department Of Health And Family Welfare

Reducing financial burden due to out of pocket expenditures on health

In the previous healthcare policies, there has been an obvious disconnect between the understanding of health & healthcare financing. What is most intriguing is the little focus that household spending on health and catastrophic expenditures have received. After all *healthcare to a lay Wo(Man) boils down to how much s(he) pays for health?* Though this might be the result of a false sense of assurance that we have been given by a statist model of public health care delivery.

Data from NSSO, Ministry of Statistics show that out of every 100 INR spent on health by each one of us today, nearly 67 INR are paid out of our own pockets and *less than 30 INR are taken care of by the so-called socialist public systems*³. Further, research shows that each year nearly 6 crore people are pushed to below the poverty line due to catastrophic healthcare expenditures despite the tall claims of state led healthcare delivery.⁴ The new national health policy, timely takes account the “inability to cover the entire spectrum of health care needs, through increased public investment [that] has led to a rise in the out of pocket expenditure and consequent impoverishment”. And as an answer to this scenario, it calls for progressive Universal Health Coverage through Financial Protection. This also aligns with the *WHO model which sees financial protection from catastrophic healthcare expenditure as one of the most important pillars for Universal Health Coverage*. Moreover, the government commits itself to increasing the investment in the healthcare sector from a current *1.15% of the GDP to 2.5% of the GDP by 2025*, thus increasing the bandwidth for spending on healthcare.

Universal Health Coverage & Health Insurance

Relying solely on public delivery of services and ignoring the case of collaborating with the not for profit/private health care providers has created a situation

where as high as 86% of rural population and 82% of urban population are not currently covered under any scheme of health expenditure support.⁵ As a result of which poor households especially those belonging to the *SC,ST and backward communities have to rely on their life long savings and borrowings to finance the healthcare costs, in the absence of any social safety net or nationwide insurance models*. Moreover, quite contrary to the perception that private healthcare options are not available to the poor or in rural areas, national survey shows that more than 70% (72% in rural and 79% in urban) spells of ailment are indeed being treated by the private sector.⁶

Hence the new policy positions the government as a “strategic purchaser” of healthcare where improved access and affordability, of “quality” secondary and tertiary care services is provided through a “combination of public hospitals and well measured strategic purchasing of services in health care deficit areas, from private care providers, especially the not-for profit provider”. Instead of the commonly cried rhetoric of “privatization of health care”, the New Health Policy in fact seeks to purchase these services on behalf of its citizens, thereby ensuring equity in access to quality care for all irrespective of their social backgrounds and ability to pay.

It is particularly aimed at reducing inequities in access to quality of care wherein members of the SC, ST, Tribal community and poor households are provided with a “choice” to access high quality care both from the public & private facilities. This in turn is expected to have a domino effect on the public facilities which are incentivized to improve their “efficiency” and “quality” in light of increased “competition”. Another expected outcome of this policy is to retain the central role that public health systems play in delivering primary health services while in areas where district hospitals are not equipped to provide specialized care, inclusive

³National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India Health, NSS 71st round (Jan-Jun 2014)

⁴Berman.P et.al, The Impoverishing Effect of Health Care Payments in India, Economic & Political Weekly (EPW), Vol XLV, No. 16, 2010. Pg. 65

⁵National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India Health, NSS 71st round (Jan-Jun 2014)

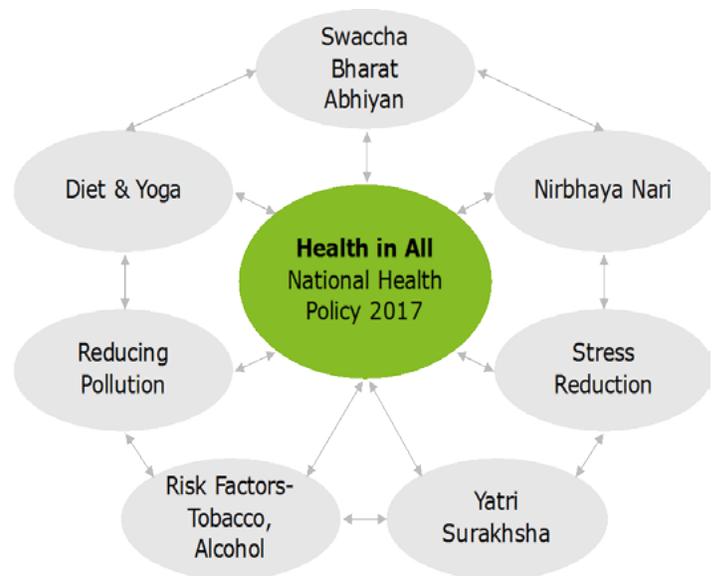
⁶National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India Health, NSS 71st round (Jan-Jun 2014)

partnerships with the private/not for profit sector are forged to provide high quality, secondary & tertiary care.

Focus on Social Determinants of Health & Multi-sectoral Action

A medical approach to health as adopted by previous health policies, has invariably restricted the scope of healthcare policy making to the ministries of health. Research from all over the world is increasingly highlighting the big role that a multitude of other factors like public health & sanitation, poverty reduction, gender empowerment, health diets & yoga, risk factors like Tobacco, Obesity, Diabetes & the subsequent behavioral choices play in determining our final health outcomes. This has even led the WHO to adopt the model of “Social Determinants of Health” as a guiding framework for policy implementation worldwide. Hence the new health policy seeks to drive a *multi-sectoral approach for health care where “Health for All” is complimented by “Health in All”* policy framework.⁷ This will translate to the much-needed cross coordination between each of the 7 listed verticals and various ministries/sectors of Public Health; all culminating to a *Swasth Nagrik Abhiyan* – a social movement for health.

Thus, a finer reading of the health policy will make it clear that the National Health Policy 2017, justifiably reflects the change in disease trends, prioritizes financial security against healthcare expenditures, signals the coming of an insurance era and prepares us for a nationwide program on progressive Universal Health Coverage. Conversely, instead of taking a short cut and declaring health as a justiciable right without



even having the capacity to deliver services, this health policy actually lays out a realistic road map for the strategy to be followed to realize the *inclusive dream of “health assurance”* for each and every citizen of India.

(The author is an expert in public policy and health and has been working and writing on these issues)



Claude Arpi

The Blessed People of Tawang

According to an article in *The China Daily* published at the end of the Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang: "Under India's illegal rule, the residents of Southern Tibet live difficult lives, face various kinds of discrimination, and look forward to returning to China."

The mouthpiece of the Communist Party says, the Dalai Lama "can't wait to give away Tawang district ...in exchange for India's support for the survival of his separatist group."

Calling the Dalai Lama a 'troublemaker', the daily further affirms: "Depending on India for a living, the Dalai Lama's eagerness to please his master is understandable, but he is going too far by selling Southern Tibet in exchange for his master's favour." Well this does not tally with the facts.

Not only did the entire local Monpa population (some 35,000 to 40,000 according to sources) throng to have a glimpse of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, but large flocks of Bhutanese too, who trekked from the neighbouring districts of Tashigang and Tashiyangtse, as well as Buddhist pilgrims from the remotest villages of Upper Subansiri, West Siang or Upper Siang districts, who travelled for days to have a once-in-a life-time *darshan*. I doubts that a single one of these devotees dreamed to 'return' one day to the present-day Tibet.

One could however ask why the visit of the Dalai Lama to Tawang triggered so much violence from the Chinese propaganda machinery? First and foremost, by allowing the Tibetan leader to visit Tawang, Delhi has reasserted that the Land of Mon, as Tawang is known, is an integral part of India, whether China agrees or disagrees. This does not please Beijing which lately has started adding Tawang to its 'occupied territories'.

The Chinese response is also a reaction to the Dalai Lama's immense popularity in India's border areas. Despite the noise in the Chinese media (and the protest by the Chinese spokesperson), the Modi Sarkar saw no reason to not go ahead with the visit of the most honoured guest of India, the Dalai Lama. Retrospectively, it was the right decision. Located south of the McMahon Line, Tawang is

today one of the most strategic districts in the country; it should be noted that before October 1962, no Chinese had ever set foot in the area.

The Historical Issue

It appears that China still grudges the fact that in March 1959, India offered asylum to the Tibetan leader. Beijing tries to use the fact that the 6th Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, is born in a village south of Tawang to prove that the area belongs to China; but then the fact that Shiva resides on the Kailash would make the area around the sacred mountain part of India? Moreover, suppose the 15th Dalai Lama is reborn in Ladakh or Kinnaur, would it make J&K or Himachal part of the Middle Kingdom?

During the Simla Conference in 1914, Henry McMahon, India's Foreign Secretary sat for several months on equal footing with Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan delegate and Ivan Chen, the Chinese representative. On their first day in Simla, the three plenipotentiaries had verified their respective credentials whose *bona fide* was accepted by all. Today, China denies this, but it is a historically recorded fact.

The Convention signed by India and Tibet (and only initialed by China) did not solve the tricky Tibet-China frontier issue, but the border between India and Tibet was fixed in the form of a thick red line on a double-page map; that was the McMahon Line.

India becomes Independent, Tibet is Invaded

Life continued for a few decades, India became Independent, the tri-colour flag continued to float over Deyki Linka, the Indian Mission in Lhasa, but soon clouds started accumulating in the Roof of the World's blue sky.

Without warning, in October 1950, Communist China invaded Tibet. A dying Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel got the ball rolling to protect India's borders; he took the initiative to set up a North and North-East Border Defence Committee under Maj Gen Himatsinghji, the then Deputy

Defence Minister. The Committee's first decision was to take over the administration of all Indian territories south of the McMahon Line. The experience of Kashmir, where India reacted too late, was not to be repeated.

The Assam Governor Jairamdas Daulatram (NEFA was then part of Assam) ordered a young, but highly decorated Naga officer, Maj Bob Khathing to march to Tawang. On January 17, 1951, Bob, accompanied by 200 troops of Assam Rifles and 600 porters, left the foothills for his historic mission. During the following weeks, the young officer showed his toughness, but also diplomatic skills. In the process, the Monpas were delighted to get, for the first time, a proper administration.

The Dalai Lama takes refuge

Eight years later, Tawang made the news, when a fleeing Dalai Lama crossed the border at Khenzimane, north of Tawang and took refuge in India. A few days earlier, the young Lama had sent a telegram from Lhuntse Dzong in Southern Tibet to Jawaharlal Nehru: "Ever since Tibet went under the control of Red China and the Tibetan Government lost its powers in 1951 ... the Chinese Government has been gradually subduing the Tibetan Government." He asked the Prime Minister: "I hope that you will please make necessary arrangements for us in the Indian territory."

On March 31, 1959, the Dalai Lama and his party reached Khenzimane: "His Holiness was riding a yak and was received by the Assistant Political Officer, Tawang. They proceeded to the checkpost without halting at the frontier," wrote the Political Officer.

On April 3, 1959, Nehru answered the Dalai Lama: "We shall be happy to afford the necessary facilities for you, your family and entourage to reside in India. The people of India who hold you in great veneration will no doubt accord their traditional respect to your person."

After resting a few days first in Tawang and then in Bomdila, on April 17, the Dalai Lama reached Tezpur in Assam from where he issued a statement denouncing China's occupation of Tibet.

Numerous visits to the State

Since then, the Dalai Lama visited Arunachal Pradesh six times between 1983 and 2009. The Tibetan leader's first trip was in 1983, when he toured some of the Tibetan settlements in the State, as well as Bomdila, Tawang and Dirang. In December 1996, he came back to Itanagar and in October the next year, he was again in Tawang.

In May 2003, the spiritual leader travelled to Tawang before visiting Itanagar in December. The last trip before the

present one was in November 2009 when he was received in Tawang by the late Chief Minister (and father of the present CM) Dorjee Khandu. Each time, China protested, but not as vociferously as during the present trip. Why is China so furious this time?

Probably, China has today become 'bigger'; it dislikes to be contradicted by 'smaller' nations. Beijing also knows that the visit of the Dalai Lama to Tawang means a reassertion of India's border in the area.

Despite using batteries of 'experts', including a wanted ULFA dissident, Beijing has been unable to project its case and ended by resorting to insulting the revered Buddhist teacher.

Winning the Hearts

Another issue is that Beijing has not been able to win the hearts of the Tibetans, more than 60 years after their so-called liberation. In these circumstances, how could the Communist leadership convince the population of Arunachal Pradesh to join the authoritarian regime?

Beijing should take note of the Dalai Lama's immense popularity in Arunachal. Despite the short notice, tens of thousands came to get the Lama's blessings.

The entire State and District administrations, as well as local lamas and politicians were seen around as the Dalai Lama arrived in Bomdila. His massive popularity deeply irritates Beijing whose propaganda is unable to win the 'masses', whether on the Tibetan side of the border or in the Indian Himalaya.

Beijing does not know how to react to such popularity and reverence for the Tibetan leader; moreover if China is under the impression that Delhi's policy is going to change, it is mistaken; Beijing has to reconcile and live with it.

As a test, Beijing should allow the Dalai Lama to travel to Tsona, north of Tawang in Tibet. Perhaps the inhabitants of Tsona would ask for the County's reattachment to India? After all, in Tibet religious freedom exists only in propaganda statements, while South of the McMahon Line, it is an actual fact.

(The author is a well known columnist, author and China and Tibet expert. He has been living in India for over decades.)



Smridhi Khanna

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi's fight against Gender Imbalance

Two key indicators of emerging markets are economic growth and social prosperity. Though India has fared well in terms of economic progress in the past few years, social indicators such as the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) seem to show a different story.

India's CSR reduced from 927 females per thousand males in 2001 to 919 females per thousand males in 2011. The decline can be attributed to the strong preference for a boy child in Indian families forcing mothers to illegally abort the girl fetus. While there is no logical explanation for this preference, here are a few bizarre reasons that families use to rationalize/justify their behaviour:

- **The economic side:** Sons are assets who have the ability to earn money and add to the wealth of the family. Due to the same reason, they are often pushed more toward education than their sisters. Daughters on the other hand are born to be wives/mothers and hence are liabilities. Their birth has a single implication for the family: to start the practice of saving money for their wedding/dowry. In other words, daughters drain the wealth of the family.
- **The social side:** Sons complete the family as they



carry the family name with them and perform the last rites of the parents. Secondly, it's much easier to raise them without having the fear of 'something happening' to them. Daughters on the other hand are considered fragile and so require constant security and protection.

Though many governments have tried to fight this cause, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** initiative takes a holistic approach in addressing the issue. Launched on 22nd January, 2015 in Panipat, Haryana, the program aims to save and empower the girl child by the following two ways:

1. Creating awareness about the issue and using education as a solution for it
2. Incentivizing families for bringing up the girl child

Creating awareness about the issue and using education as a solution for it

As step one, the NDA government did a detailed study of the current situation of gender imbalance in our society. The study indicated that regions with the most skewed gender ratios such as Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and Bihar lacked awareness of the changing role of the girl child. And the only way to change the mindset of people is through educating the girl child and empowering her. As a result, the Modi government took the following few steps:

- Allocated a budget of Rs. 100 crore for the scheme in 2015. This amount was increased to Rs. 200 crore for the year 2016-17.
- Enforced the implementation of Right to Education Act, 2010. Under this, the Modi government pushed district-level education officials to take accountability in ensuring that the benefit of free elementary education reaches all the girls in their areas. The school management committees that are successful in achieving 100% transition of girl students at various educational levels are awarded under the BBBP scheme.
- Conducted awareness and advocacy campaigns in the 100 districts with the lowest CSR. These campaigns focused on shifting the mindsets of the people through training, radio advertisements, sensitization speeches, and community mobilization activities. Madhuri Dixit, the famous Bollywood actress, was selected as the brand ambassador to advocate the changing role of girls in society. A string of jingles and advertisements on radio and TVs respectively were played to urge families to send their girls to schools.

- The Sarpanch of a number of districts in Haryana were roped in for Prime Minister Modi's #SelfieWithDaughter campaign. The campaign pushes Sarpanchs to post selfies with their daughters to advocate gender equality. In addition, National Service Scheme (NSS) cadets were pulled in to make demonstrations, give presentations, and to perform street plays etc. in areas that are affected by low CSR.

- Lastly, to close the loop and combat female feticide, district authorities were required to effectively monitor and ensure that the use of sex-determination tools by families and doctors lead to stringent action under law. Several CCTV cameras were put up in healthcare centres in Haryana and Rajasthan.

Incentivizing families for bringing up the girl child

To ensure that families drop their conventional and orthodox preference for a boy child, the government also decided to give them financial benefits to save and bring up the girl child. These include:

- A saving scheme called the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana that gives exclusive financial incentives to parents of a girl child (up to the age of 21 years). As a part of this scheme, parents or the legal guardian can open a Sukanya Samridhi account with any bank or post office to save money for the daughter's education and marriage. But rather than earning a mere 6 % p.a. (current FD rate), this account provides a saving rate as high as 8.6 % p.a.

A maximum of 1.5 lakh rupees can be deposited during the financial year with a minimum deposit of Rs. 1000. The interest and amount when withdrawn is tax-free and so is one of the best investment option.

- To make the initiative flexible and pro-investors, the scheme provides an option for partial withdrawal of 50% of the balance amount for higher education expenses.

Success of BBBP scheme

- The child sex ratio in Rajasthan had dipped to 888 in the 2011 Census from 909 in 2001. This ratio improved to 925 in the year 2015 due to the efforts of

the Rajasthan Chief Minister and the BBBP scheme. Along with awareness campaigns driven by the central government, the state government promised money transfers to the girl child's parents at different phases of her life: Rs. 2500 on birth, Rs. 14000 for enrolling in Class 1, Rs. 25000 for passing class 12 etc.

■ In Haryana, more than 200 people were arrested in 300 cases under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 for female foeticide. In addition, the sex ratio has improved from 800 to 900 girls per 1000 boys due to the awareness campaigns of the NDA government.

■ Over 76 lakh Sukanya accounts were opened amounting to Rs 3,000 crores within the first one year of the BBBP initiative.

Hence, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative deals with the problem of gender imbalance in a holistic manner. Not only has the CSRs for various districts improved but there is also substantial increase in the number of accounts opened in the girl child's name.

(Writer is a Policy Researcher based in New Delhi)



**Devyani
Bhushan**

Digital India Internet Connectivity to 2.50 lakh Villages by, 2018

The National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) was started as an ambitious pan-India programme, to trigger a broadband revolution in rural areas, and augment network infrastructure across the country. Like all such programmes, initiated with much fan-fare, during United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government, this programme also started to meander after its launch. The pace of implementation of the programme slowed down and original objectives appeared to have been lost sight of.

In 2011, the Government of India approved creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN). This SPV - Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) was created to implement and coordinate the NOFN project. The pilot phase of the project was expected to be completed in 3 Blocks and 59 Gram Panchayats by October, 2012. This deadline was completely missed. The first phase of NOFN project, covering 1 lakh Gram Panchayats was scheduled to be completed by 31st March, 2014. Again this deadline was also missed. The project was expected to finally conclude by providing network connectivity to all 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats by September, 2015. Needless to say, even this milestone remained a distant dream.



With the coming to power of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government, PM Modi initiated the flagship programme “Digital India”. One of the mandates of Digital India programme was to connect every village with internet and provide them community level access to video, voice, data and content services in the sphere of e-governance, education, health and utility services. With this objective in mind, the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) was completely revamped and put on fast track to ensure that all 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats in the country are provided 2 Mbps to 100 Mbps connectivity within a defined timeframe. Based on NOFN experiences, a newer, updated and upgraded version – Bharat Net was conceived as a nation-wide Bharat Broadband Network. The vision of Bharat Net is to be a project of

national importance and to establish by 2017, a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis. Such a network infrastructure will provide affordable broadband connectivity to rural India and would realize the PM's vision of Digital India in partnership with States and the private sector.

The entire project is being funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which was set up for improving telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country. The present Government has substantially accelerated the speed of execution of Bharat Net. This is reflected in the fact that on December, 2015, 76,624 kms of optical fibre was laid and only 32,272 Gram Panchayats were provided connectivity. By February, 2017, optical fibre has been laid in 1,55,000 kms., which is an increase of 102% and 80,000 Gram Panchayats have been provided with optical fibre network, which is an increase of 147%.

Reiterating the Central Government's resolve in this regard, the Union Finance Minister in his Budget Speech on 1st February, 2017 said - "Under the Bharat Net Project, OFC has been laid in 1,55,000 kms. I have stepped up the allocation for Bharat Net Project to Rs.10,000 crores in 2017-18. By the end of 2017-18, high speed broadband connectivity on optical fibre will be available in more than 1,50,000 Gram Panchayats, with wi-fi hot spots and access to digital services at low tariffs. A DigiGaon initiative will be launched to provide tele-medicine, education and skills through digital technology"

Replying to a question in Rajya Sabha, Telecom Minister, Manoj Sinha told the House that the Government accords top most priority to the completion of Bharat Net project within the prescribed time period. He also underlined the Government's mandate to connect all 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats through optical fibre network by December, 2018. Under Phase-I, the Government would successfully provide optical fibre network to 1 lakh Gram Panchayats by March, 2017. The actual achievement against this target has been 90,027 Gram Panchayats (90% of March 2017 target), till 31st March 2017.

The second phase will provide internet connectivity to all 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats in the country by December 2018. The second phase will also use optical fibre over existing power lines (electricity poles). This would have several advantages such as economical construction, quicker implementation, easy maintenance and utilization of existing power line infrastructure. The Union Government is proactively seeking the cooperation of State Governments and private sector for speedier execution. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has recommended public private partnership (PPP) mode for parts of the project. This can be done, if the Government is able to provide to the private promoters the right-of-way (RoW), free from all encumbrances and also provide adequate financial incentives.

As a result of such extensive network coming into operation, the next financial year, 2017-18, would see delivery of e-governance, e-education, e-health, e-banking, internet and other internet based services to a large part of rural India through the 1 lakh Gram Panchayats provided with optical fibre network. Last mile connectivity to rural citizens is proposed to be provided using wi-fi hotspots in Gram Panchayats. Each Gram Panchayat would have about 2 such hotspots. The long term benefits of Bharat Net would be bridging of the "Digital Divide" between Urban and Rural India by provision of expanded internet connectivity, simple, responsive and transparent e-governance as well as quick service delivery and grievance redressal, a boost to e-commerce and e-banking as well as IT enabled education and healthcare delivery to India's vast rural areas.

(The author is a research scholar working in the area of public policy and is associated with a number of think tanks)



**Tanmoy
Chakraborty**

Break-through by Disruptive Governance

Democracy has its own language. She speaks unilaterally in-times of crisis. She manages to cater the regime and norms; indifferent to what few sections of the civic society member say.

Democracy is a subtle form of collective thoughts; thoughts which are guided by the vision of the Constitution of the land. Any hindrance to her path will lead to arguments of Change; which stays till the change is brought.

As Nelson Mandela said, “The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear” – This quote best states the spirit of Doers. It always takes courage to bring a change – change comes with foresight, able to dream the path, facing the challenges and ultimately submitting oneself to the highest level. Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, are few of those who lived to make a difference in their respective fields. They have brought a disruption in the market and in the minds of the people. They showed that for every better there is a best way available.

In India’s present political scenario one witnesses a similar phenomenon. A phenomenon of reviving democracy, eradicating poverty, nurturing talent and above all making a country of our dreams. Yes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the person of the moment whom the country needs. With his Government’s strong policy, backed by a strong and farsighted team – our country’s dream of becoming the best finally comes within the reach and belief of common man.

Early Days:

16th May 2014, will be remembered as a historic day for the electorate in India, where the traditional political arguments were overshadowed by the agenda of development and growth giving a mandate which came without discriminating between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the marginalised.

A new era of Governance was born with government which had actual ideas of governance, a Government for all sects of people, a Government for whom the Constitution is the sacred Book.

In the last 2 and a half years the entire nation has seen how Prime Minister Narendra Modi has striven to take Governance to the next level - a new idea is evolving every day, and the citizen eagerly awaiting a change, tried to debate and delve into his ideas. Mr. Modi has clearly demonstrated himself as towering visionary-administrator; the man who walks the talk.

The recently concluded Elections also reflected the same as the mandate of the people were strong and clear.

New Era of Governance:

It is always efficient to run any organization when its systems are in order; for these policies and governance needs to be well understood as well as well implemented.

The present Government’s aim to bring a strong Governance parameter and bench marking each activity will help establish a well ordered system for the

bureaucracy to function.

Who would have imagined that with a message via tweet, the Indian Embassy will provide instant help to Indian citizens abroad or the Railway Minister would direct his team to assist a lady who needs security while being harassed in a train.

The pace of development that the present Government has followed has often astounded the international observer. Prime Ministers and head of states of different country have appreciated the work of Prime Minister Modi; what is interesting is, how, many countries are trying to adopt dimensions from the governance approach of PM Modi.

Present day politics has to be administered by performance rather than arguments. Eventually citizens want progress infused with clean governance.

Prime Minister Modi, with his dynamism and clean governance is doing the same – the fragments of the whole are being accumulated, he brought politics out from intellectual bankruptcy and advocated a greater need for harmony for the development of the Nation.

(The author is an executive, an observer of Indian politics and a policy enthusiast. Views are his own.)



Guriya

The Union Budget 2017 - a perspective

Budget



The Union Budget 2017 was presented by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on February 1, 2017. The budget entails economic significance on the citizens of the nation unlike this budget which is of historical significance for the nation. Looking at the history of Union Budget in India, the first budget was introduced on 7 April 1860 by the East-India Company to the British Crown finance minister, James Wilson.

The first Finance Minister of Independent

India, Shanmukham Chetty, presented the budget in November 1947. He presented the analysis of the economic scenario of Independent India just 95 days before the budget presentation in 1948. It was proposed in the backdrop of the independent and partitioned India.

Independent India witnessed several policy initiatives by different finance ministers that changed the economic positioning of the country. For instance,

the 1987 budget presented by Rajiv Gandhi when he introduced the corporate tax; the 1991 budget presented by Manmohan Singh when he introduced the concept of service tax, and foreign investment proposals and reduction of peak import duty from 300 percent to 50 percent. The budget has constantly been defined and redefined to stabilise and strengthen the economy. Furthermore, the history of the budget encompasses the time and day of its announcement. The budget was announced on the last working day of the month of February at 5 pm, the following was inherited from the colonial era, when the itinerary would be that the British Parliament would pass its budget by noon followed by India in the evening of the day. The following was practised until 2000, after which Mr. Yashwant Sinha, the then Finance Minister of India in the NDA government (led by BJP) of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, changed the ritual by announcing the 2001 Union Budget at 11 am. The 2017 Budget ended the colonial practice entirely by deciding to announce the budget on February 1, 2017. This marks another change in the historical practice related to the announcement of the Union Budget in India.

The country witnessed a change in the 92-year-old practice of having a distinct Union and Railway Budget. The two were amalgamated and presented. This tradition has a historical baggage attached to it as well. Railways took up 85 percent of the yearly budget during the British rule in India while now it accounts for 15 percent of the yearly budget, a separate budget demanded additional expenditure that could be cut down upon by amalgamating the same with the Union Budget. The following would lead to less wastage of time of parliament when a new policy is to be implemented or initiated. The solutions to the financial issues faced by the sector could be dealt more judiciously since the allocation of funds would be done under a single regime. Initially, the railways were required to pay an annual dividend to render its budgetary support to the government. A unified budget would relieve it from the same fund that could be better allocated. Thus, the 2017 Budget structurally changed the historical practices.

The budget was proposed post the government's

announcement of demonetisation on 8 November 2017. The government was under severe scrutiny as the citizens expected them to compensate post their struggle to stand in queue to withdraw cash. The finance minister in his Budget speech stated, "Demonetisation was a bold and decisive strike in a series of measures to arrive at a new normal of bigger, cleaner and real GDP...Any adverse impacts of demonetisation on the informal sector would be offset by a surge in the formal sector, higher tax collection translating into higher government spending."

The recast of the direct taxes focusing on both corporate tax and personal income tax would speed up the corporate tax rate to 25%, offer substantial relief to the small taxpayers, and address the immediate anxiety among the citizens post demonetisation. Talking about taxes, one of the tax initiatives taken by the government is the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST). This will change the historical tax division between the direct and indirect tax policies of India and most of the taxes would be merged under an umbrella. The following reduces the chances of tax evasion and hence emphasis was laid on the following in the budget. The GST will also be a boon for customers in reducing their expenditure on certain commodities and will increase the disposable income of the economy. Thus under the purview of the biggest tax and financial reform, the budget 2017 was one of the most challenging budget in the history.

The government's "Digital India" initiative is an attempt to create efficient digital infrastructure in the country and the 2017 budget was a way to move forward. Thus, the budget 2017 challenged certain historical practices while constructing historical policies that would be benchmark for the Union Budget in the future.

(The author is a Young India Fellow (YIF) at the Ashoka University)



**Vaibhav
Chadha**

Affordable and Quality Healthcare for all: Government reduces the prices of Coronary Stent by upto 85%



With a mission to provide Affordable and Quality Healthcare for all, the Modi Government on 14th February, 2017 fixed the ceiling prices of coronary stents in India. This move is likely to bring down the cost of coronary stents by up to 85 percent. While announcing the decision, Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary

Affairs, Shri Ananth Kumar stated that the cost of coronary stents were currently hiked by about 380% and further also clarified that the new prices are applicable with immediate effect.

The ceiling prices notified are applicable to manufacturers and distributors of stents and also hospitals billing patients for stents. The Government

has also asked for the prices of all stocked stents to be revised according to the new ceiling price. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has made it mandatory for hospitals, nursing homes and clinics performing cardiac procedures using stents to disclose separately the cost of the stent while billing a patient.

A coronary stent is basically a tube-shaped device that is placed in the coronary arteries supplying blood to the heart for keeping the arteries open for treatment of the coronary heart disease. Earlier, the average maximum retail price for Bare Metal Stent (BMS) was Rs 45,000 and for Drug Eluting Stent (DES) was Rs 1.21 lakh. The ceiling price of BMS and DES, exclusive of any VAT and other local taxes, has been capped at Rs. 7,260 and Rs. 29,600 respectively. Most states in India generally have 5% VAT on stents, thus, making the MRP of BMS Rs.7623 and DES Rs. 31,080 inclusive of the taxes.

In India, BMS have 10% market share while DES have 90% market share. As per the Government estimates, due to price reduction, heart patients are likely to get a benefit of Rs 80-90 thousand per stent eventually resulting gross relief of Rs. 4450 crores annually.

Coronary Stents were included in the National List of Essential Medicines, 2015 (NLEM, 2015) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on 19th July 2016 and in Schedule I of the Drug Prices Control Order (DPCO), 2013 of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers on 21st December 2016.

The Union Minister, Shri Ananth Kumar also stated “manufacturing cost of imported BMS is Rs. 5415 and for DES is Rs. 16,918, hence the ceiling prices have been set taking into account the ethical profit margins and R&D costs of each member of the supply chain of coronary stents.” He further said that the step will help in curbing ‘unethical margins’ charged at each stage in the supply chain of coronary stents. Government has already started two mobile

apps, namely Pharma Jan Samadhan and Pharma Sahi Daam, on which the public can register complaints. In case of violations of the ceiling prices, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) can recover the overcharged amount along with 15% interest. The move will also promote ‘Make In India’ initiative of Central Government as now the foreign firms in order to reduce their cost of production may look for options of setting up their production units in India.

As per the PIB notification of 14th Feb 2017, “Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD) are major cause of death in India, about 25% of total deaths. Out of these, 90-95% CVD deaths happen due to coronary artery diseases. As per the report of National Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, prevalence of CAD in India is about 61.5 million as per 2015 report. As per Health Ministry report, more than 3.5 lakh procedures were done in 2015 which used 4.73 lakh stents. In 2016, the figure of cardiac stent must have been above 5 lakhs.”

This bold decision by the Modi Government to fix the prices of coronary stent is another pro –poor step after the Government had earlier launched AMRIT outlets where 202 cancer drugs, 186 cardio-vascular drugs and 148 types of cardiac implants are being sold at 50 to 60 percent cheaper prices than the open market to bring such life saving drugs in the reach of poor. The latest move is likely to help millions of Indians suffering from cardiovascular diseases to get coronary stent treatment at a very low cost. With such pro-poor decisions in the health sector the Government seems to have reiterated its stand of *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*.

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शिवानन्द द्विवेदी

भाजपा: स्थापना के 37 वर्ष और वर्तमान का मोदी युग

भारत की राजनीति में दलीय व्यवस्था का उभार कालांतर में बेहद रोचक ढंग से हुआ है। स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात कांग्रेस का पूरे देश में एकछत्र राज्य हुआ करता था और विपक्ष के तौर पर राजगोपाल चारी की स्वतंत्र पार्टी, भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी सहित बहुत छोटे स्तर पर जनसंघ के गिने-चुने लोग होते थे। उस दौरान भारतीय राजनीति में एकदलीय व्यवस्था के लक्षण दिख रहे थे। सैकड़ों वर्षों की गुलामी के बाद आजाद हुए मुल्क को पंडित नेहरू के रूप में जो पहला प्रधानमंत्री मिला उसमें जनता अपने मसीहा की छवि देखने लगी थी। नेहरू ने भी समाजवाद को प्रश्रय देकर खुद को जनता के करीब ले जाने की कोई कोशिश नहीं छोड़ी थी। लेकिन नेहरू की यह आभा अनुमान से कम से समय में फीकी पड़ने लगी थी। खैर, यह वैश्विक स्तर पर एवं भारत की राजनीति में भी सोशलिज्म और कम्युनिज्म के विमर्श का दौर था। सोवियत के कम्युनिज्म और स्टालिन की आभा से भारत का कम्युनिज्म प्रभावित था तो वहीं नेहरू इन दो विचारों के बीच का रास्ता तलाश रहे थे जो उन्हें भारतीय जनमानस के अनुकूल बना सके। खैर,

कम्युनिज्म और सोशलिज्म के इस विमर्श में राजनीतिक रूप से राष्ट्रवाद अर्थात् नेशनलिज्म का विमर्श उतना मजबूत नहीं हो पाया था लेकिन छोटे स्तर पर ही सही कश्मीर के बहाने यह मुद्दा जनसंघ के नेता डॉक्टर श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी मजबूती से उठाने लगे थे। यही वह दौर था जब कश्मीर के भविष्य का निर्णय होना था। एकबार सदन में तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री नेहरू इतने गुस्से में आ गए कि डॉक्टर श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी की तरफ इंगित करते

हुए कह दिया, 'आई विल क्रश जनसंघ'। इसपर डॉक्टर मुखर्जी उठे और बोले, 'आई विल क्रश दिस क्रशिंग मेंटैलिटी'। खैर, उस समय के राजनीतिक पंडितों अर्थात् बुद्धिजीवियों को शायद इसबात का अनुमान भी नहीं होगा कि इस देश का भविष्य कांग्रेस के एकदलीय व्यवस्था की बजाय बहुदलीय व्यवस्था की तरफ तेजी से एवं नैसर्गिक रूप से बढ़ेगा। लेकिन हुआ यही, साठ के दशक के उत्तरार्ध तक राज्यों में गैर-कांग्रेसी सरकारें बनने लगी थीं और इंदिरा गांधी को कम्युनिस्टों से सहयोग लेकर सरकार चलाने की नौबत आ चुकी थी। जनसंघ भी 3 से 14 सीट तक पहुँच चुका था। धीरे-धीरे समाजवादी ताकतें कांग्रेस के बजाय जनसंघ के करीब आने लगी थीं। भारतीय राजनीति के सबसे बड़े समाजवादी डॉक्टर लोहिया गैर-कांग्रेसवाद का बिगुल हर स्तर पर फूँक चुके थे। लोहिया ने कहा था कि कांग्रेस को हराने के लिए अगर शैतान से भी हाथ मिलाना पड़े तो मिला लो। लोकनायक जयप्रकाश नारायण राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक के प्रति आकर्षित होने लगे थे। जिस संघ को कांग्रेस ने अपने खिलाफ उठे जनक्रोश को भटकाने के लिए फासीवादी कहा था उसी संघ के एक शिविर में जेपी 1959 में जा चुके थे। उन्होंने संघ को अछूत नहीं माना। आपातकाल के बाद जब जेपी जेल से छूटे तो उन्होंने मुंबई में एक सभा को संबोधित करते हुए कहा था, 'मैं आत्मसाक्ष्य के साथ कह सकता हूँ कि संघ और जनसंघ वालों के बारे में यह कहना कि वह फासिस्ट लोग हैं, सांप्रदायिक हैं, ऐसे सारे आरोप बेबुनियाद हैं।' तीन नवंबर 1977 को पटना में संघ के लिए जेपी ने कहा था कि नए भारत के निर्माण की चुनौती को स्वीकार किए हुए इस संगठन से मुझे बहुत कुछ आशा है। आपमें ऊर्जा है,

आपमें निष्ठा है और आप राष्ट्र के प्रति समर्पित हैं। दरअसल यह वो दौर था जब देश का आम जनमानस कांग्रेस के एकदलीय व्यवस्था की उभार से मुक्ति पाना चाहता था एवं कम्युनिस्टों की विचारधारा देश को भारतीयता के अनुरूप नहीं लग रही थी। लिहाजा उस दौर में गैर-कांग्रेसवाद के खिलाफ उठे हर आन्दोलन को विपक्ष के उभार एवं स्थापना के आन्दोलन कहा जा सकता है। आमजन के मन में मजबूत विपक्ष के उभार की इच्छा थी और लोकतंत्र के नाम पर एकदलीय तानाशाही को देश की जनता स्वीकार नहीं कर पा रही थी। परिणामतः आपातकाल के बाद इस देश में तमाम राजनीतिक विकल्प उभरकर आए जो तब कांग्रेस के खिलाफ थे। चूँकि कांग्रेस और कम्युनिस्ट दोनों के राजनीतिक धरातल को वह आन्दोलन नुकसान पहुंचा रहा था लिहाजा भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी भी तब इंदिरा गांधी के आपातकाल का समर्थन कर रही थी। लेकिन 1977 में इस देश की राजनीति में पहली बार केंद्र में गैर-कांग्रेसी सरकार बनी और विपक्ष के अस्तित्व की संभावना अंकुरित हुई और एकदलीय से बहुदलीय लोकतंत्र का बीज अंकुरित हुआ। लांकि यह सरकार अधिक दिनों तक नहीं चली लेकिन इसने इस देश में बहुदलीय व्यवस्था की जमीन जरूर तैयार कर दी थी। इस पूरे आंदोलन में राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के प्रयासों के राष्ट्रवाद अवधारणा को स्वीकृति मिलने लगी थी। इसी क्रम में 6 अप्रैल 1980 को भारतीय जनता पार्टी की स्थापना हुई और अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी इसके संस्थापक अध्यक्ष बने। इसके बाद बीजेपी ने राजनीतिक संघर्षों के अच्छे और बुरे दोनों दौर देखे। लेकिन इंदिरा गांधी की हत्या के बाद प्रधानमंत्री राजीव गांधी ने शाहबानो मामले में जिस ढंग से तुष्टीकरण की राजनीति का प्रयास किया उसने एकबार फिर देश की जनता के मानस में कांग्रेस के लिए नकारात्मकता का भाव भर दिया।

एक तरफ राजीव गांधी तुष्टीकरण की राजनीति कर रहे थे, वहीं बोफोर्स का जिन्न उन्हें छोड़ नहीं रहा था। ऐसे माहौल में देश के बड़े हिस्सों को बीजेपी विकल्प के तौर पर दिखा और बीजेपी के समर्थन से वीपी सिंह की सरकार बनी। बीजेपी समर्थित इस सरकार ने वह कर दिखाया जो कांग्रेस में इंदिरा गांधी और राजीव गांधी दोनों न कर पाए थे। 1980 से ही मंडल कमीशन की सिफारिशें लंबित थीं, उसे लागू किया गया बीजेपी के समर्थन से चल रही एक सरकार के कार्यकाल में। जब मंडल लागू हुआ तो देश में विभाजन और द्वेष की

ऐसी लकीर खिंचनी शुरू हो गई थी जिसके परिणाम बहुत घातक थे। मंडल लागू होने की वजह से हिंदू समुदाय दो फाड़ होने लगा था लिहाजा हिन्दू एकजुटता के लिए बीजेपी ने मंदिर आन्दोलन के माध्यम से हिन्दुओं को एकजुट करने का प्रयास किया। लेकिन मंडल के मुद्दे बीजेपी का समर्थन पा चुके वीपी सिंह ने मंदिर के मुद्दे पर साथ नहीं दिया और बीजेपी नेता लालकृष्ण अडवाणी को गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया। अपने शीर्ष नेता की हुई गिरफ्तारी के बाद बीजेपी ने समर्थन वापस ले लिया।

इसमें कोई शक नहीं कि मंदिर आंदोलन ने मंडल के बाद हिंदू समुदाय के बीच होने वाले एक द्वेषपूर्ण हिंसा को रोकने का कार्य किया था जिसपर बहुत कम बहस की गई है। कांग्रेस के समक्ष उभरे तमाम दलों के बीच आज अगर बीजेपी ही सबसे बड़ी पार्टी बनी है तो यह किसी और करिश्मा की वजह से नहीं बल्कि अपनी वैचारिक प्रतिबद्धता की वजह से बनी है। नब्बे का दशक जाते-जाते देश को पांच साल तक काम करने वाली पहली गैर-कांग्रेसी सरकार दे गया।

बीजेपी के संस्थापक अध्यक्ष अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी अलग-अलग कार्यकाल के लिए तीन बार देश के प्रधानमंत्री बने। आज 2017 में बीजेपी की स्थापना के 37 साल पूरे हो गए हैं। आज भाजपा की सरकार का नेतृत्व भारत के सर्वाधिक लोकप्रिय नेता के रूप में स्थापित हो चुके नरेंद्र मोदी के हाथों में है तो वहीं पार्टी की कमान अमित शाह लेकर आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। इन दोनों नेताओं की जोड़ी के नेतृत्व में आज भाजपा सबसे बड़ी पार्टी बन चुकी है। 37 साल पहले दीनदयाल उपाध्याय के वैचारिक दर्शन और डॉक्टर श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी द्वारा दिए गए बलिदान से प्रेरित होकर जिस पार्टी की बुनियाद रखी गई वह आज आधिकारिक रूप से दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी राजनीतिक पार्टी है।

(लेखक डॉ श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी रिसर्च फाउंडेशन में रिसर्च फेलो हैं एवं नेशनलिस्ट ऑनलाइन डॉट कॉम के संपादक हैं।)



**Gautam
Mukherjee**

Weak Opposition Will Turbo-charge New India

The BJP/NDA, rather than the Congress/UPA, at this time, may be in for a long stint in power.

This is already, and more so as the time goes on, will result in a happy elimination of the distortions caused by the overt use of “secularism” and “socialism”. A usage designed to hold back, and ignore, the interests of a majority of Indians.

It is this outrage after all, that has consolidated the voters, and propelled the BJP into power. One, with an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, for the first time in 30 years.

We are also in the process of witnessing a cautious rebooting of the political narrative, in the face of much cacophony from the Opposition, to remove the obstacles to a level playing field for all citizens.

Of course, this happy day did not come upon us all of a sudden, but has been working its salience ever since the era of coalitions began in earnest in the 1990s.

But, even ruling at the head of a coalition did not convince an imperial Congress to broad-base its electoral politics to accommodate and include.

The NDA’s former stint in power, at the apex of an unwieldy 40 plus party coalition, helmed by statesman AB Vajpayee, saw the only manifestation of a multi-party democracy in this country.

But that lasted only for a little over 5 years. That is, unless you count the short-lived Janata Party Government, and others, that ruled for mere months, valiantly trying to be even-handed, if not cohesive.

But, in hindsight, the era of coalitions also brought to the fore the difficulties posed by opposition, backed by leverage.

Small coalition partners held the sword of Damocles over the survival of the central government, and swayed its policies.

Later, even sizeable, largely single party opposition, as in the decade of UPA rule between 2004-14, failed to usher in much constructive cooperation.

Part of the reason is that, as parliamentary democracy has evolved in India, the concept of a “constructive opposition” has been upstaged by partisanship - an attitude also very visible in America, much longer at the practice of democracy than ourselves.

Is this then the essential flaw in democratic practice, that electoral dominance can subdue, but never eliminate?

The present Indian Opposition is finding that its concerns, the highlights of its era in power, may truly have passed.

Its best initiatives have been taken over by the Government, and all it is left with are its failures, contradictions, and legacies of corruption.

At first, if Congress and its allies thought they could bounce back in 2019, they probably do not think so any more - threats of a supple enough mahagatbandhan notwithstanding.

The ruling combine, aware and not smug,

clearly has its finger on the pulse of the electorate and its aspirations.

The BJP is, under the charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the electoral engineering of Party President Amit Shah, mopping up everything from grassroots elected local governments, to state after state in assembly elections.

Coincidentally, the situation is turning grim in many of the competing political parties including a clutch of regional ones.

They are facing existential crises, and lack of traction. As they lose power around the country, except in some stubborn pockets, their ability to influence the national narrative is reducing dramatically.

While this may be bad news for the dwindling Opposition, it is good news for the progress of the country.

Session after parliamentary session has been washed out because of disruption and obtuse partisanship, particularly in the upper house where the present government does not yet have a majority.

This has not only stopped or delayed vital legislation, with disgraceful demonstrations as opposed to reasoned debate, but wasted a great deal of the taxpayer's money as well.

After the recent victories in four assembly elections, particularly the overwhelming victory in Uttar Pradesh, the NDA is within sight of a simple majority in the Rajya Sabha as well.

In short order, this will help the NDA Government considerably in the forthcoming elections for the new President and Vice President, in order to appoint persons of its choice.

But, with more expected assembly election wins in late 2017 and 2018, the NDA will be well poised to not only control both houses, but also clinch the general elections in 2019, probably with enhanced strength.

This, in turn will enable it to proceed with much greater boldness on pending and enabling legislation.

It will occasion a smoother interaction with the judiciary with the ability to overrule any continued

obstructionism from it.

The Government will be able to push reforms to provide a great boost to the economy and sharply reduce the travails of the poor.

Departing then, from the much bandied conventional wisdom that a "strong opposition" is good, even essential, for democracy, the opposite can be argued for quite convincingly.

In emerging economies like ours, rising up from a colonial past, with newly minted and grafted political systems, and universal suffrage imposed suddenly, democratic opposition often proves to be an irritant.

It is, in India, just about 70 years old, and more generally, it is democracy itself that results in full-fledged obstruction.

Our long-winded but hybridised political system (Constitution), was cobbled together mainly using the British and American systems as role models. It was done by a painstaking constituent assembly led by a somewhat misunderstood Dr.B.Ambedkar.

So much so, that the original work, dedicated to the nation in 1950, has been twisted, confused, subverted, and modified multiple times. And most notoriously, via the 42nd amendment, of 1975.

The 42nd Amendment, forced upon the nation during the Emergency by Indira Gandhi, introduced 59 separate modifications. Some of these were subsequently reversed by the Janata Government that followed.

But, it also sought to redirect its essential nature, and did untold damage by inserting "secular" and "socialist" to the "sovereign republic" descriptor in the preamble section.

There was probably little realised about its pernicious effects on "vote bank" politics at first. And it began to dawn on the nation only when the Congress Party stopped receiving majority verdicts in elections.

This first period nevertheless lasted some 60 years, since 1947 - from Nehru's rule of a fledgling nation to the exit of Rajiv Gandhi, delivering, effectively, a one party rule.

Though this was not so in a formal sense, it was, nevertheless a de facto reality.

It also afforded great ability to renege on solemn promises. It was once thought that treaties entered into by Britain, the suzerain power, with the Princely States, could never be thrown over till the sun and moon travelled the heavens. But the British simply left, and threw the princes to the wolves.

Likewise, that the Privy Purses would never be revoked by an independent India as they were the price of accession. And, alongside, that the act of nationalising all the private banks at one fell swoop was quite unthinkable!

And yet, all this was accomplished by mere executive action!

Now that the BJP with its “sabkasaath, sabkavikaas” philosophy, is on the threshold of

mirroring those first unfettered 60 years with untrammelled “single party” powers – it too, will, inevitably, dismantle some of the shibboleths of those years.

This, even as the country forges ahead to meet its matured “tryst with destiny” - to become, not merely independent, but a developed nation.

One capable of meeting the aspirations of its largely young population, of over 1.25 billion people.

(The author is a senior columnist & political commentator. This article was written on February 23rd just after the Maharashtra municipal polls. The views expressed are his own)

भारतीय जनता पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष श्री अमित शाह द्वारा नई दिल्ली के रामलीला मैदान में पंच परमेश्वर बूथ सम्मेलन में दिए गए उद्बोधन के मुख्य बिंदु



■ कई राजनीतिक विश्लेषक और पत्रकार पूछते हैं कि पांच राज्यों के विधान सभा चुनाव में इतनी बड़ी जीत का रहस्य क्या है? उन्होंने कहा कि इस ऐतिहासिक जनादेश के पीछे कई कारण हैं - प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में केंद्र की भारतीय जनता पार्टी सरकार का कामकाज है, श्री मोदी जी का स्वयं का व्यक्तित्व है, उनकी लोकप्रियता है, उनकी गरीब कल्याण की नीतियाँ भी है और प्रदेश की जनता का उनके प्रति प्यार भी है लेकिन चुनाव जीतने का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण कारण बूथ पर लड़ता हुआ भारतीय जनता पार्टी का हमारा कार्यकर्ता है। उन्होंने कहा कि पाँचों राज्यों में चुनाव प्रचार की शुरुआत हमने ऐसे ही बूथ सम्मेलनों से की थी और वहां कार्यकर्ताओं ने संकल्प लिया कि इस बार विजय प्राप्त करके ही रहना है और उसी का नतीजा है इन पांच राज्यों में से चार में भारतीय जनता पार्टी की सरकार बनी है।

■ पांच राज्यों के चुनाव में हमारी ऐतिहासिक जीत के प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी की लोकप्रियता एवं केंद्र सरकार के विकास कार्यों के अलावे और कई कारण हैं जिनमें से एक महत्वपूर्ण कारण बूथ पर लड़ता हुआ भारतीय जनता पार्टी का हमारा कार्यकर्ता भी है।

■ प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के नेतृत्व में पूरे देश के अंदर विकास का एक यज्ञ चल रहा है, बहुत जरूरी है कि विकास का यह यज्ञ दिल्ली में भी चले और यह तभी हो सकता है जब दिल्ली में एक अच्छी सरकार और अच्छी एमसीडी हो।

■ एमसीडी का चुनाव केवल एमसीडी जीतने भर का चुनाव नहीं है, बल्कि अगली विधानसभा चुनाव में आम आदमी पार्टी को उखाड़ कर फेंक देने के लिए नींव डालने का चुनाव है।

■ सभी कार्यकर्ता इस पंच परमेश्वर बूथ सम्मेलन से संकल्प लेकर जाएँ कि जो कमी दिल्ली विधानसभा चुनावों में रह गई थी, उसे एमसीडी चुनाव में जीत हासिल करके पूरा करना है और दिल्ली में भारतीय जनता पार्टी का परचम लहराना है।

■ भारतीय जनता पार्टी का हर कार्यकर्ता आम आदमी पार्टी सरकार के घोटालों को दिल्ली के जन-जन तक पहुंचाने का काम करे और दिल्ली की जनता के सामने आम आदमी पार्टी को बेनकाब करे।

Discussion on “Must Bengal Waste?”

by

Dr. Swapan Dasgupta

(MP, Rajya Sabha),

Shri Surajit Dasgupta

(Founder & Editor-in-Chief Sirfnews.com)

&

Shri Jaideep Mazumdaar

(Associate Editor, Swarajya Magazine)

on 16th March at India International Centre, New Delhi



SPMRF hosted Regional Writer's Meet, Chennai Chapter at Tamil Nadu on 9th April, 2017

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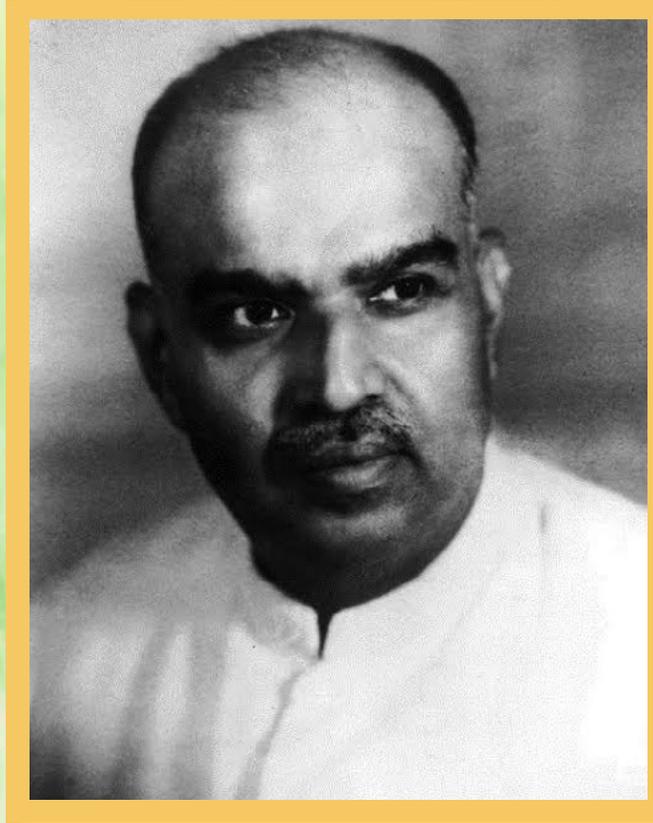
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Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation



SPMRF hosted Regional Writer's Meet, Chennai Chapter at Tamil Nadu on 9th April, 2017





“The gignatic task of reconstruction, cultural, social, economic and political can be rendered possible thought coordinated efforts of bands of trained and disciplined efforts of bands of trained and disciplined Indians. Armed with the knowledge of Indian’s past glory and greatness, her strength and weakness, it is they who can place before their country a programme of work, which while loyal to the fundamental traditions of India civilisation will be adapted to the changing conditions of the modern world.”

-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
*Convocation Address delivered at Gurukul Kangri
Viswavidyalaya, Haridwar, 1943*

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