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Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
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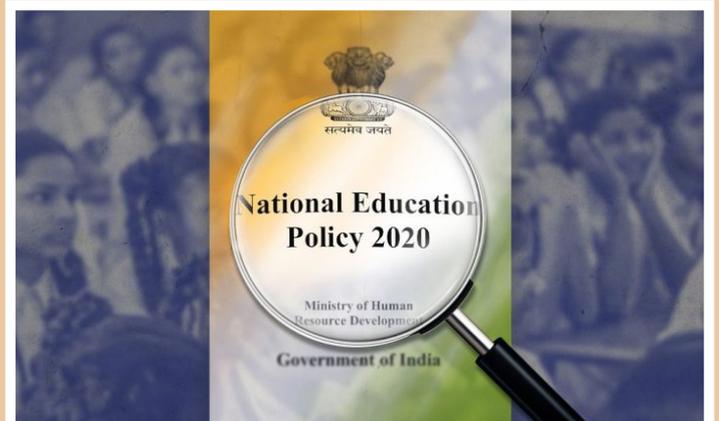
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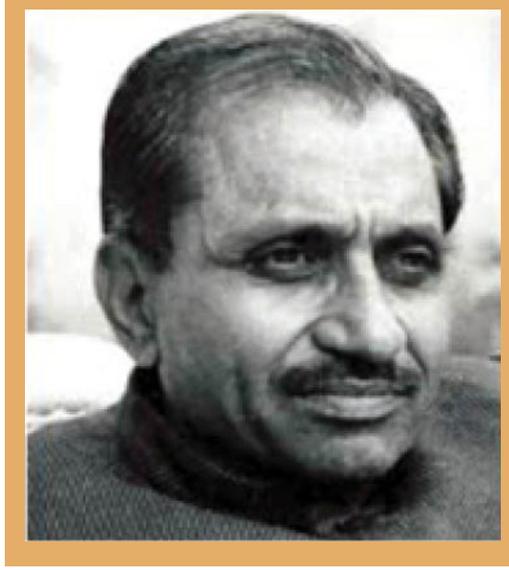
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आत्मनिर्भर भारत का स्वप्न साकार कर
सकेगी, नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020
- प्रो. निरंजन कुमार





“यह भी आवश्यक है कि हम आर्थिक क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भर बनें. यदि हमारे कार्यक्रमों की पूर्ति विदेशी सहायता पर निर्भर रही तो वह अवश्य ही हमारे उपर प्रत्यक्ष- अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से बंधनकारक होगी. हम सहायता देने वाले देशों के आर्थिक प्रभाव में आ जायेंगे. अपनी आर्थिक योजनाओं की सफलपूर्ति में संभव बाधाओं को बचाने की दृष्टि से हमें अनेक स्थानों पर मौन रहना पड़ेगा”

पं दीनदयाल उपाध्याय,
पुस्तक ‘भारतीय अर्थ-नीति विकास की एक दिशा’ से



Editorial Advisors:

Shakti Sinha, IAS (Rtd)

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- Ajit Jha
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- Adarsh Tiwari
- Abhay Singh

Layout

Ajit Kumar Singh

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Dr. Anirban Ganguly

India's Political Opposition is Annihilating Itself - why blame others

except for a blind, personalised, often cheap opposition to Modi who has twice on a row won an overwhelming electoral mandate since 2014.

Not just by participating in Bhumi Pujan in Ayodhya for a new Ram Mandir did PM Modi make history, his speech on the occasion was historic, it was history itself. He looked at the event as a new beginning, a new dawn and awakening, and said that “the construction of Shree Ram Temple is a task to unite the entire nation and that “celebration is an occasion to unite the belief with the reality, man with Supreme God, mankind with conviction, present with past, and self with ethos.” The Bhumi Pujan symbolised the democratic ethos of the majority in India, it symbolised the unity of Indian society at all levels and displayed the robustness of India's constitutional, legal and democratic systems. It has also ensured that India's staggering diversity shall remain intact, since the faith of India's majority is one that is based on a deeper civilizational philosophy and is not an intolerant ideological or political religion.

India's opposition, mainly the Congress and communist parties had no word of solidarity with the majority on this occasion. They either kept silent, or criticised PM Modi, or the legal process, or cast aspersion on the Judiciary. Such an intolerant attitude, full of disregard and disdain for the sentiments and feelings of the vast majority has further marginalised these parties.

PM Narendra Modi also made history, to the chagrin of the opposition, especially the Congress, to become the longest serving non-Congress Prime Minister of India. Yes, it is hoped by millions and millions of Indians that Modi would also surpass Jawaharlal Nehru's uninterrupted tenure of sixteen years in power. This hope

An article with the curious and misleading title, “The Annihilation of India's Political Opposition is Almost Complete” appeared in a newspaper on 16th August. The piece was written by a disconnected Indian origin academic based out of Cambridge, U.K. who displayed a massive ignorance of the realities of present day India. She argued that India's political opposition needed a new idea and indirectly blamed PM Modi and the BJP for decimating the Opposition. But who has annihilated the political opposition in India? It is India's political opposition which has or is annihilating itself. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is making history, India's political opposition continues to remain confused, bitter about electoral defeat and rejection, incapable of reinventing itself, unable to articulate what it stands for

stems not from being fixated in trying to demolish Nehruvianism – which is in any case in its last throes – or in trying to “overturn” Nehru’s “political vision of India”, that vision was resoundingly overturned in the summer of 2014 when India voted Modi, a commoner risen up the ranks. It stems in the majority, from the realisation that PM Modi is one leader, who, in his record of governance, in his attempts at empowering India’s teeming and marginalised millions, has actually delivered on the fundamentals which Nehru’s political vision of India had omitted or forgotten to actualise.

Nehru’s political vision of India gave rise to unbridled cronyism, was obsessed with pitting communities against one another, was fanatical about promoting an irreverent and anti-religious secularism and was driven by a compulsive tendency to go overboard in appeasing a section and allowing the process of national decision making to be driven by that consideration.

Nehru’s political vision spoke of making India independent and self-reliant but kept her fixated on and tied to some power blocs or other. Fanatically secular which meant insensitive to the faith and aspirations of the majority, Nehru also neglected agriculture, infrastructure building, primary education and allowed the Indian entrepreneurial spirit to be subdued and controlled by an elaborate and intricate regime of licenses, permits and quotas.

His “Nehruvian Consensus” was essentially shaped and articulated by the Left which was obsessed in trying to deconstruct India and to turn her essentially into a satellite-state. The Left pushed through Nehru’s persona an outlandish and unsuited mix of economic and

political theories that they wanted imposed on India. In fact Nehru’s Congress soon ceased to be the same party which spearheaded India’s freedom movement, and after 1969 when Nehru’s daughter Indira, split the party, the original Congress disappeared altogether.

Jan Bhagidari and Jan Shakti best describe PM Modi’ style of rule or functioning. Every fundamentally transformative initiative that he has undertaken, Modi has based them on these two driving dimensions. His ruling style is to directly engage with the people – he talks to them and they connect to him. They connect to him, because he has delivered on his promise made to them, his promises of fundamentally transforming their lives, of empowering them and of liberating them from a cycle of dole of and dependence.

Just to take one example, the Prime Minister’s National Mission for Financial Inclusion – Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana – a game-changing public initiative that PM Modi launched in August 2014, has seen an uninterrupted financial outreach at the grassroots in the last six years. It is the “foundation stone for the Modi Government’s people-centric economic initiative’ and has seen more than 40.35 beneficiaries banked under this transformative scheme, since 2014 and amount of 1.31 lakh crore being disbursed. Of the accounts opened 63.6% belong to rural India and 55.2% have been opened by women. When PM Modi talks of inclusive politics, politics of empowerment and of performance, he speaks of empowering and including the marginalised and India’s neglected and near forgotten, when he talks of the politics of development, of performance and of service, he speaks of working for these sections.

One of the most striking features of Indian

politics is that its opposition is leaderless and rudderless, that is, it has been unable to evolve a credible front, has failed to come up with an acceptable political narrative and has not succeeded in reaching out to the people by presenting an alternative to Modi. The last few days have revealed major cracks in the Congress, exposing the acute dissatisfaction and disaffection that is plaguing the party.

The opposition's inability to re-group is not the BJP's or PM Modi's responsibility, it indicates their own ideological bankruptcy and incapacity. In fact, PM Modi's continuing challenge is to undo the mess created by years of cronyism, of governance-lethargy and non-delivery, of the calcification of the system that decades of Congress rule has left behind. Opposition leaders have been unable to subsume their overweening ambitions while trying to take on Modi. The case of Mamata Banerjee is most striking, she spoke of and attempted to form a combined opposition in January 2019, months before the general elections, in order to unseat Narendra Modi, but her attempts collapsed under the weight of her own ambitions of becoming Prime Minister.

The opposition led by the Congress, communist parties and Mamata Banerjee's TMC, tried to organise violent street protest against the constitutionally passed and Parliament legislated Citizenship Amendment Act which facilitated the granting of citizenship to beleaguered and religiously persecuted minorities from India's neighbourhood. But these violent protests received no traction and soon petered out to a few small municipal pockets and localities. Subsequent revelations also exposed that a number of these were engineered from beyond Indian shores with active connivance of separatist elements and

platforms linked with international terror groups inimical to India.

Congress's decade in power is largely remembered for violent terror attacks and serial terror blasts, it is remembered for huge corruption scandals and is also remembered for how its Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was repeatedly overruled or insulted in full public view by members of the party's controlling family. The decade is primarily remembered for the manner in which it had compromised and weakened India's governance, decision-making process and her political and parliamentary and governance structures. The most positive aspect of PM Modi's rule is that those democratic fundamentals have been restored, delivery and accountability is at an all-time high, cronyism, quid pro quoism and political patronage have taken a severe beating and the concept of rule of law and the sense that the Constitution and not a subversive secularism is paramount to national wellbeing is being re-instilled. Indian democracy is passing through one of its most robust phases.

What drives and inspires the majority of Indians, what attaches them to Prime Minister Modi, what they have definitely and intensely understood about him is that he has completely identified with and has internalised their travails and their aspirations, they realise that the manner in which their hopes have touched him, it has touched no other leader, they realise that the aspiration of seeing India new and great is intense in him like it is in no one else. This makes them choose him. Since the political opposition in India fails to understand this it is moving towards self-annihilation. Why fault Prime Minister Narendra Modi or BJP for its denouement.

PM's address at seminar on Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence manufacturing on 27 August 2020



- » My cabinet colleague, Shri Rajnath ji, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat ji, Chiefs of the three wings of the military, all senior officials of Government of India and friends in the industry. Namaskar.
- » I am very happy that all the important stakeholders associated with India's defence production are present here. I congratulate Defence Minister Rajnathji and his entire team for organizing this seminar.
- » The outcome of the brainstorming session will give a fillip to our efforts for self-reliance in the field of defence sector.
- » The suggestions that you have given at this collective brainstorming session will be very useful in the coming days.
- » It also gives me pleasure that Defence Minister Rajnathji is determined on a mission mode. I have full faith that his relentless efforts will lead to very good results.

- » Friends, it is not hidden from anybody that India has been one of the main defence importers in the world for the last several years.
- » When India became independent, it had huge capabilities in defence production. There was a well-established 100-year-old ecosystem in defence production in India.
- » Not many countries had the resources and potential of India. But it is unfortunate that not much attention was paid on this issue for several decades. In a way, it became a routine exercise.
- » No serious attempts were made. And several countries which started much after us have raced ahead of us in the last 50 years. But, the situation is changing now.
- » In the last few years, you must have experienced that we have been making concerted efforts to unshackle all the fetters in this sector.
- » Our aim is to increase manufacturing, development of new technologies in India and the maximum growth of the private sector in this particular field.
- » Therefore, several steps have been taken which include reforms in the licensing procedure, creation of level-playing fields, simplification of export process, reforms in offset provisions, etc.
- » Friends, I believe that of all these steps, what is more important is the new mindset in the country regarding the defence sector. We can feel it, there is birth of a new mindset.
- » The spirit of self-confidence in the defence sector is paramount for making a modern and self-reliant India.
- » For long, the country was debating the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff, but no decision could be taken. This decision is the symbol of the self-confidence of a new India.
- » There was no permission for foreign direct investment in the defence production for a long time. The government of revered Atalji took the first initiative. More reforms were carried out after our government came to power. Doors are being opened for 74 % automatic FDI in this sector for the first time. This is the outcome of the self-confidence of a new India.
- » For decades, Ordnance factories were being run like government departments. Not only the country had to suffer because of the limited vision, the people who were working there, who had talent and commitment, who were hardworking, our hard and experienced labour class, suffered a lot.
- » The ecosystem of the sector, which could create job opportunities for crores of people, remained very limited.
- » Now, we are moving in the direction of corporatization of ordnance factories. Both the workers and the military will get a push. This is the proof of self-confidence of a new India.
- » Friends, our commitment towards self-reliance in defence production is not limited to discussions or on papers. Several concrete steps have been taken for its implementation.

PM's address to the Nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 2020



- » My dear countrymen, Congratulations and many best wishes to all the countrymen on this auspicious occasion of independence.
- » Today, we are able to live in an independent India because of the sacrifices of millions of sons and daughters of Mother India. This is an occasion to pay tribute to the freedom fighters, martyrs and brave souls and their spirit and dedication to free Mother India.
- » The valiant soldiers of our armed forces, our paramilitary forces, our police personnel and our security forces- everyone is engaged in protecting Mother India.
- » They are engaged in safeguarding the common man. Today is the day to remember their sacrifices and penance sincerely and wholeheartedly.
- » There is another name: Aurobindo Ghose. Today is the birth anniversary of Aurobindo Ghose, who tread the path from being a revolutionary to spirituality. Let us seek his blessings so that we can fulfil his as well as our vision.
- » We are passing through an extraordinary situation. Today, children- the bright future of India- are not in front of me. Why?

- » It is because Corona has stopped everyone. In this period of corona, I salute millions of corona warriors- doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, ambulance drivers and so on-who all should I count.
 - » I salute all the corona warriors, who for a long time have adhered to the mantra of 'सेवा परमो धर्म' e. service is the best religion and have served the children of Mother India with complete dedication.
 - » In the period of corona, many of our brothers and sisters have been affected by this pandemic; many families have been affected; many have also lost their lives.
 - » I express my condolences to all such families, and I believe the indomitable will power and determination of 130 crore countrymen will make us win over Corona and we shall definitely win.
 - » I know that recently we have been passing through a number of crises. Floods, especially in the north-east, eastern India, south India and some parts of western India; landslides in many areas; people have had to face many problems. Many people have lost their lives. I also express my condolences to those families.
 - » And the nation stands in solidarity with the state governments in these days of crisis. No stone is being left unturned by either the state or central government to provide relief measures to the needy.
 - » My dear Countrymen, Independence Day is a festival to celebrate freedom. It is an occasion to enthuse new energy by remembering our freedom fighters.
 - » This day is a harbinger of new inspirations.
- It reignites new fervour, exuberance and enthusiasm. And in times like now, it becomes even more imperative for us to be determined.
- » It is an auspicious day because when we meet again next year to celebrate, we shall be entering into the 75 years of our free existence. This is a momentous occasion.
 - » Today, all of us 130 crores Indians have to make significant pledges for the coming two years. And when we complete the 75 years of our freedom, we will be able to celebrate the redemption of those pledges.
 - » My dear countrymen, our forefathers fought for this freedom with extreme commitment, utmost integrity, sincere penance, renunciation and sacrifice; we should never forget the way they laid their lives for Mother India.
 - » We should never forget that during this long and dark ages of slavery, not even a moment was lost when they were not moved by the desire for freedom.
 - » There isn't a countryman who did not put his best foot forward aspiring to break free the nation from the shackles of slavery, by waging a war and making any sacrifice possible to bring this day.
 - » Many sacrificed their youth in jails. Many left behind their life's dreams and embraced the gallows. I salute these revered martyrs who offered themselves as an oblation.
 - » Indeed amazing! On the one side, the country witnessed a phase of mass movements and on the other side the resounding voice of armed revolt.

PM's speech at Higher Education Conclave on 07 August 2020

- » नमस्कार! मंत्रिमंडल में मेरे सहयोगी श्रीमान रमेश पोखरियाल निशंक जी, श्रीमान संजय धोत्रे जी, नेशनल एजुकेशन पॉलिसी- राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाने वाले देश के जाने- माने वैज्ञानिक डॉ कस्तूरी रंगन जी और उनकी टीम, इस सम्मलेन में भाग ले रहे वाइस चांसलर्स, अन्य सभी शिक्षाविद, सभी महानुभाव, आप सभी का बहुत-बहुत अभिनंदन.
- » National Education Policy- राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के संदर्भ में आज का ये event बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है. इस कॉन्क्लेव से भारत के Education World को National Education Policy- राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के विभिन्न पहलुओं के बारे में विस्तृत जानकारी मिलेगी.
- » जितनी ज्यादा जानकारी स्पष्ट होगी फिर उतना ही आसान इस राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति का Implementation भी होगा. साथियों, 3-4 साल के व्यापक विचार-विमर्श के बाद, लाखों सुझावों पर लंबे मंथन के बाद राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति को स्वीकृत किया गया है.
- » आज देश-भर में इसकी व्यापक चर्चा हो रही है. अलग-अलग क्षेत्र के लोग, अलग-अलग विचार-धाराओं के लोग, अपने views दे रहे हैं, राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति को Review कर रहे हैं.
- » ये एक Healthy Debate है, ये जितनी ज्यादा होगी, उतना ही लाभ देश की शिक्षा व्यवस्था को मिलेगा. ये भी खुशी की बात है कि राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति आने के बाद देश के किसी भी क्षेत्र से, किसी भी वर्ग से ये बात नहीं उठी कि इसमें किसी तरह का Bias है, या किसी एक ओर झुकी हुई है.
- » वैसे, कुछ लोगों के मन में ये सवाल आना स्वभाविक है कि इतना बड़ा Reform कागजों पर तो कर दिया गया, लेकिन इसे जमीन पर कैसे उतारा जाएगा. यानि अब सब की निगाहें इसके Implementation की तरफ हैं.
- » इस चैलेंज को देखते हुए, व्यवस्थाओं को बनाने में जहां कहीं कुछ सुधार की आवश्यकता है, वो हमें सबको मिलकर ही करना है और करना ही है. आप सभी राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के implementation से सीधे तौर पर जुड़े हैं और इसलिए आपकी भूमिका बहुत ज्यादा अहम है.
- » जहां तक Political Will की बात है, मैं पूरी तरह कमिटेड हूं, मैं पूरी तरह से आपके साथ हूं. साथियों, हर देश, अपनी शिक्षा व्यवस्था को अपनी National Values के साथ जोड़ते हुए, अपने National Goals के अनुसार Reform करते हुए चलता है.
- » मकसद ये होता है कि देश का Education System, अपनी वर्तमान और आने वाली पीढ़ियों को Future Ready रखे, Future Ready करे. भारत की National Educational Policy- राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति का आधार भी यही सोच है.
- » राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 21वीं सदी के भारत की, नए भारत की Foundation तैयार करने वाली है. 21वीं सदी के भारत को, हमारे युवाओं को जिस तरह की Education चाहिए, जैसी Skills चाहिए, राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति उस पर फोकस करती है.
- » भारत को ताकतवर बनाने के लिए, विकास की नई ऊंचाई पर पहुंचाने के लिए, भारत के नागरिकों को और सशक्त करने के लिए, उन्हें ज्यादा से ज्यादा अवसरों के उपयुक्त बनाने के लिए, इस एजुकेशन पॉलिसी में खास जोर दिया गया है.
- » साथियों, आज गुरुवर रबीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर की पुण्यतिथि भी है. वो कहते थे- “उच्चतम शिक्षा वो है जो हमें सिर्फ जानकारी ही नहीं देती बल्कि हमारे जीवन को समस्त अस्तित्व के साथ सद्भाव में लाती है.”
- » निश्चित तौर पर राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति का बृहद लक्ष्य इसी से जुड़ा है. इसके लिए टुकड़ों में सोचने के बजाय एक Holistic Approach की ज़रूरत थी, जिसको सामने रखने में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति सफल रही है.
- » इस चैलेंज को देखते हुए, व्यवस्थाओं को बनाने में जहां

Post 370 Jammu & Kashmir – A new era



R. K. Pachnanda

That has been nearly a year since the red lettered day when the formation of the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, by Prime Minister Modi's Government, took place – the most momentous achievement since independence, to rejuvenate and resurge Indian unity and development in J & K. Prior to that, terrorism had devastated the region leading to untold misery. Union Home Minister Amit Shah made a statement in Parliament in August 2019 that 41,500 people were killed in J & K since 1989. Invisible enemies fighting unholy proxy wars, had attempted to threaten Indian democracy.

Post 370, PM Modi rightly expects Kashmir to lead from the front as it now stands integrated with India in the true sense of the term. The people of J & K have the same rights, benefits and prospects as those in the rest of the country. A historical wrong, perpetrated by successive state governments, has been rectified by the Modi Government and genuine Indian citizens living in the Valley for decades will be granted domicile. Domicile certificate is now the basic eligibility condition for recruitment. Recently thousands of refugees from Pakistan, members belonging to the Valmiki Samaj and Gurkha Jawans, living in J & K since three generations, after getting their domicile certificates, have now got their

citizenship rights.

The Indian Constitution, with all its amendments, is now applicable to J&K. As a result of the application of 170 central laws, a number of progressive laws such as Right to Education, Maintenance & Welfare of Parents & Senior Citizens Act-2001, National Commission for Minority Act, Right to Fair Compensation of land acquired and acts for benefit of women and children have now become fully applicable to J&K. These laws guarantee justice and fairness to the underprivileged such as scheduled castes and tribes, women, children and senior citizens.

People were fed up with family Raj and family politics, which created a mess in the state and made corruption endemic to it. The repudiation of Articles 370 and 35A has heralded a new dawn of empowerment, equity and development. The rights of women marrying outside the union territory now stand fully protected and gender discrimination has ended.

The special status of Article 370 and 35 A had insulated the state from the other parts of India leaving it backward while resources meant for the region's development was being siphoned off into wrong hands and did not reach the ordinary people and the marginalised communities. On Nov 7, 2015, Prime Minister Modi announced a Reconstruction Plan of Rs. 80,068 crores for strengthening socio-economic infrastructure, humanitarian relief, crisis management and development of J&K. Accordingly, Post 370 has witnessed a new sunrise by reinforcing governance, accelerating development, building infrastructure, generating employment,

broadening social inclusion and promoting growth.

Long years of unrest had adversely affected the state's democratic institutions, particularly those at the grassroots level. The absence of elected local bodies not only deprived the people of the power to take their own decisions regarding development and other issues impacting their day to day lives, but also adversely impacted the flow of resources from the central and the state government to rural and urban local self-governing institutions.

Immediately after the formation of the UT of J&K, panchayati raj institutions were established and made functional and Rs. 366 crore was released directly to 4483 panchayats, which was always earlier diverted to vested pockets.

The Modi Government has religiously monitored and ensured progress on all fronts. Work on the 2273 languishing projects was started; 506 projects stand completed while 963 projects are scheduled for completion by March 2021. Some of the major projects completed are IIT Jammu and Srinagar-Leh transmission line while works on mega projects including the Z Morh, Zoji La and New Banihal tunnels and some major roads are being executed on a war footing.

Rs. 881 crores was earmarked for rebuilding health institutions and 60 out of the 144 projects have been completed. There has been a major progress in hydro-power generation and flood management of the river Jhelum. Work has been speeded up in the Jhelum-Tawi Recovery Project, Chenab Bridge (the highest railway bridge in the world), connectivity of Kashmir by rail, mega-multi projects line Ujh and ShahpurKandi as also the 330 MW Kishenganga project.

To promote transparency, Government of India has got instituted a portal namely the J & K Infrastructure Monitoring System (JKIMS) by

Abrogation of Article 370 has led to exasperation in the ranks of the terrorists; local recruitment of terrorists has dwindled. Pakistan is now encountering triple frustration – first, at the abrogation of Article 370; second, at the snub it has faced in all international fora where it has raised the Kashmir issue and, third, at the fact that all its efforts to initiate terrorist acts have only resulted in their constant decimation in every encounter.

which the progress of work on ground is being physically monitored on real-time basis. The system enables real time monitoring and has features like geo-tagging, project completion certificate, image uploading facility of finished projects as well as dashboard for monitoring of progress. A dash board has been created on the portal for public so that the status of project implementation in each district can be accessed by any individual in order to encourage community participation for strengthening grass-root democracy and encourage social audit of the projects by the beneficiaries.

Prime Minister Modi has transformed the 'Tasveer' of J & K and "Taqdeer" of the people by more than fulfilling their aspirations. After the new UT of J& K came into being, there was a creation of 45000 employment opportunities, vigorous road construction works, initiation and acceleration of several power generation and transmission projects, process of setting up of over 330 schools and colleges and a university, improved medical infrastructure including two AIIMS, beginning of a light rail and public transport system, welfare measures for all including housing, disposal of outcome based grievances, implementation of women and child welfare schemes, scholarships for the deserving, support to farmers, orchardists and unorganized

workers, expansion of tourism facilities, sports infrastructure and border area development. To achieve 24 x 7 power for all, 60% of works i.e. (128 out of 213 projects) have been completed. J & K achieved 100% household electrification and, for the first time after Independence, grid power has reached the border areas of Keran and Mundian, located on the LoC. This has rekindled the hope of many who had never seen electricity in their lives. Household water connections have reached 43% of J & K rural households which is double the national average of 21%; a road map has been prepared to ensure 100% coverage of piped water supply to all 18.16 lakh rural households by December 2021.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna, (PMGSY) J & K has embarked on constructing 5300 kms of road by 2020-21. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has attacked the world like a storm, has also presented challenges to the government's development efforts in J&K, which would, otherwise, have seen a great upsurge in the in-flow of investments, increase in industries (including the handicrafts industry), services, tourism and the concomitant employment as also educational and medical facilities.

The Modi government has rationalized reservation rules to give benefit to the marginalised sections who have remained either unrepresented

or under represented. Kashmiri migrants have finally benefited from a series of welfare measures like employment, transit accommodation and monthly financial assistance.

All provisions of the Central RTI Act 2005 have been enforced in J & K. The Anti-Corruption Bureau has been brought in to control corruption. For the speedy resolution of service matters, a Central Administrative Tribunal has been set-up. Finally, terrorism and peoples' miseries will certainly come to an end, despite Pakistan's frustrated efforts to activate its "deep state" again to heat up the environment, even in this state of the COVID pandemic.

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The formation of the Union Territory of J&K has not only witnessed development but also evoked patriotism and restored confidence of the people in the constitution of India and our robust democratic system of a united sovereign India with Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity assuring the dignity of the Indian and unity and integrity of the Nation.

The pro-active measures being taken by a determined government, under PM Modi are ushering in a new era of peace, tranquillity and development - which will soon blossom and finally deliver the long awaited smile on the face of the people of the region.

(The author is former DG ITBP. Views expressed are personal)

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One Year after August 2019

A Vision for Jammu and Kashmir



Dipankar Sengupta

Introduction

When on 5th August 2019, Home Minister Amit Shah rose to table the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act as well as the Parliamentary Resolution that would make Article 370 operative in a manner to ensure that “all provisions of this (Indian) constitution as amended from time to time shall apply to Jammu and Kashmir,” he did so stating certain reasons as to why these steps had become necessary and inevitable. Jammu and Kashmir had been trapped in a vicious cycle by its Valley-centric polity into a morass of insecurity, subversion, corruption and low economic growth with each facet reinforcing the other. It suffered from some unique and perverse paradoxes! While the State Government enjoyed a degree of autonomy, its Panchayats and Municipal Bodies were deprived of power and resources, i.e. communities were dis-empowered; while the State Government received hundreds of thousands of crores as Central assistance, its per capita income remained low. The State Government on paper spent impressive amounts on infrastructure and yet on the ground there was nothing to show! The State Government was autonomous, its people “unfree”! Clearly, by 2018 it became clear

to the Modi Government that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir required serious attention and some strong measures.

What the government did on August 5-6, 2019 went far beyond what many expected. It not only extended the entire Constitution of India to Jammu and Kashmir by reworking the operation of Article 370 to that effect, but also passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019 reorganising the State into two Union Territories. The aim was a branch and root transformation of the entire region by rebooting the entire process of governance and administration with the central government constitutionally taking direct control and therefore responsibility.

A Vision for Jammu and Kashmir

How do we envision the political and economic trajectory of Jammu and Kashmir? A vision for Jammu and Kashmir can be constructed most easily by turning the flaws of the erstwhile State on their head. This means the visualisation of Jammu and Kashmir along with other parts of India commencing on the path to becoming a knowledge society in its broadest sense engaging fruitfully with the process of globalization in all its forms. This knowledge society thus not only has modern technology as one of its components but more importantly is a free, dynamic, cosmopolitan and liberal society aware of the geographical, social and political environment in which it exists and is able to use its knowledge and organizational skills optimally in this milieu and where freedom of the individual is only

limited by the equal rights of others.

Is this realistic? It can be argued that J&K has the necessary natural and human resources to move along this trajectory. What it requires is a re-setting of the manner in which it is governed and organised and in that sense, it can be shown that the developments of August 5-6 2019 were crucial in this regard.

J&K is well endowed with respect to natural resources. Its land-man ratio is lower than the national average, it is well watered by perennial rivers and has enormous hydel potential, it has enormous bio-resources and it is endowed with tremendous natural beauty and thus tremendous tourism potential. It grows a large variety of agricultural products that are much in demand in the rest of the country, it possesses an enormous treasure trove of traditional knowledge that manifests in its cuisine and handicrafts. Indeed, J&K should not be a net recipient of assistance and yet it is.

To make agriculture more dynamic, the State needs to invest in irrigation (especially in Jammu) as well as in technology for this sector so as to increase productivity. That in comparison to its southern neighbour, Punjab it has failed even after decades have elapsed to develop a network of canals to utilise the Ravi waters or India's share of the Chenab waters indicates either deliberate neglect of Jammu or poor governance. Thus it was crucial that the Central Government take charge and remedy affairs. Micro-irrigation projects need to be planned and executed locally and here the role of Panchayati Raj institutions is vital. But Article 370 in its previous avatar was used by the State Government to ensure that the 73rd Amendment was not extended to J&K. This state of affairs no longer exists. Thus governance plus institutional changes made possible by the extension of the Constitution makes possible

great developments in rural J&K. Even where technology is concerned, the Universities of Agricultural Science and Technology of the State have not rendered the kind of service that Panjab Agriculture University did for Punjab while individual scientists from the same institutions have contributed to significant private sector initiatives in Basmati Rice, Organic produce as well as high intensive apple orcharding. Here again governance is the issue which is sought to be tackled with the Central Government taking direct charge for a period that should be more than a short term which J&K's reorganisation affords.

When it comes to industrial growth, J&K especially when compared with neighbouring Himachal Pradesh fares poorly and that is due to a poor business environment, poor infrastructure and the location and the terrain of the UT. The first two are again governance issues which are now being tackled on a war footing. Construction of roads had picked up momentum while power sector reforms too have been kicked off. Ease of doing business parameters too are being tackled. The third factor location and terrain which also affects HP makes J&K a high cost economy. Such economies when successful have generally specialised in those goods where they have an advantage either due to knowhow or due to climatic conditions which give them market power. The UT's handicraft sector is a prime example. This sector has grown from strength to strength without financial assistance while industries that have received financial assistance cannot stay afloat without it which is another case of the J&K's perverse paradoxes. The UT's handicraft sector if modernised and made socially respectable can expand manifold. Agro-industries that add value to fruit that are grown in J&K can be another area. So can value added to medicinal plants. Industries such as

these will be in high value low volume goods where prices received more than compensate for higher costs.

When it comes to tourism, the UT's providential endowments are underutilised. The carrying capacity of the Valley which does receive tourists can easily be increased considerably with proper planning, regulation and infrastructure. This again is being taken up with renewed vigour as the Central Government has taken charge. Participative Urban governance (certainly of Srinagar) which is key to the success of this strategy or indeed any economic strategy given the rapid urbanisation that is taking place was throttled earlier as the 74th Amendment was not extended to the State. After August 5-6, 2019 it now is. In the same vein while the Shrine of Shree Mata Vaishno Devi at Katra draws millions of devotees there has been no concerted effort to ensure that tourists visit other parts of Jammu whose beauty rivals that of the Valley and H.P. If this is done while ensuring the preservation of the fragile environment of this region, tourism can turn out to be a major revenue and employment generator for the UT. Again it must be mentioned that the infrastructure and rules that govern the shrine at Katra which transformed the region completely was put in place under Governor's Rule by Governor Jagmohan. This infrastructure ensures that this spot that is located in the fragile Shiwaliks has the carrying capacity to host millions of pilgrims. Thus if the same exercise is to be repeated for the Hills of Jammu and the Valley, it would be wise to do it now when the Central Government has both the power and responsibility where the UT is concerned. This transformation combined with the UT's traditional skills and knowledge in the culinary arts can make it an attraction for tourists who would be willing to pay a premium for this experience. The addition of adventure

sports, wellness etc. can create a spectrum of niches each with its special clientele.

Similarly given its bio-resources and the research carried out in its Universities on the same bio-resources, the UT can conceivably become the hub for biotechnology start-ups. This requires a change in mind-sets, the entry of venture and angel capital and a host of legal changes concerning acquisition/leasing of immovable property land etc. These are issues of governance as well as laws which prior to the extension of the Constitution to the State was extremely difficult. The extension of the Constitution and its reorganisation affords us the opportunity to make it a reality.

Conclusion

The UT's treasure trove of traditional and local knowledge and its proven ability in modern research (attested by national accreditation agencies), its natural resources, its diverse and polyglot population is a solid base to strive towards a knowledge society. That it has not done so for so many decades is due to sustained misgovernance shielded by a combination of political factors and a provision of the Constitution which shielded it from progressive legislation and accountability. On August 5-6, 2019 this was dealt a serious blow with the Central Government assuming direct control and the UT finally receiving the full bounty of the India's Constitution. Already there is enough evidence on the ground that the sloth that characterised administration has long gone. Now is the time to put the UT of J&K on a trajectory of development which enables to contribute its part to making India a knowledge society.

(The author is Professor of Economics, University of Jammu. Views expressed are his own.)

संवैधानिक बदलाव : जम्मू-कश्मीर में नई शुरुआत



सन्नी कुमार

आज के आधुनिक समय में जब कानूनी मान्यता किसी भी अन्य वैधतामूलक उपकरणों से अधिक शक्तिशाली हो गया है, ऐसे में जम्मू एवं कश्मीर की कानूनी स्थिति में आया परिवर्तन निश्चित ही निर्णायक है। यह परिवर्तन नए किस्म के बदलाव को प्रोत्साहित कर रहा है और विकास के समक्ष आ रही संवैधानिक दुविधाओं को भी दूर कर रहा है। ध्यातव्य है कि 5 अगस्त 2019 को भारतीय संसद द्वारा अनुच्छेद -370 में ऐसे परिवर्तन किए गए, जिनसे जम्मू एवं कश्मीर से संबंधित विशिष्ट प्रावधान समाप्त हो गए और यह भी शेष भारत की तरह समान अवस्था में आ गया। यह एक क्रांतिकारी बदलाव था क्योंकि लंबे समय से इस बात को लेकर कश्मीर की राजनीति उलझी हुई थी। आज जब इस परिवर्तन के एक वर्ष पूरे हो गए तो यह जानना दिलचस्प होगा कि इन बदलावों से कश्मीर में क्या फर्क आया और यह किस तरह से जम्मू-कश्मीर की बेहतरी में सहायक हो रहा है।

अलगाववादी मान्यताओं का अंत

सबसे पहले इस बात को देखते हैं कि वर्तमान संशोधन से पूर्व जम्मू एवं कश्मीर शेष भारत से किस प्रकार अलग संवैधानिक स्थिति में था और यह कैसे राष्ट्रीय एकता और संवैधानिक संघात्मक व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध था। जम्मू एवं कश्मीर को यह विशिष्ट हैसियत अनुच्छेद -370 तथा अनुच्छेद -35A के विभिन्न प्रावधानों से प्राप्त होती थी। यहाँ हम कुछ महत्वपूर्ण प्रावधानों की ही चर्चा करेंगे। हम सब जानते हैं कि भारतीय संविधान एकल नागरिकता की स्थिति को स्वीकार करता है किंतु कश्मीर में न केवल दोहरी नागरिकता का प्रावधान था बल्कि यहाँ के लिए अलग ध्वज और अलग संविधान भी था। जाहिर सी बात है कि ऐसी स्थिति में किसी भी राज्य का शेष राष्ट्र के साथ एकीकरण असंभव है। कश्मीर भी इसका अपवाद

नहीं था। वहाँ, आए दिन अलगाववादी विचार को इन्हीं 'कानूनी प्रावधानों' की आड़ में ठीक ठहराने की कोशिश की जाती थी।

इसी प्रकार हमारे देश का संविधान सभी नागरिकों को यह अधिकार देता है कि वो देश के किसी भी हिस्से में जमीन खरीद सके और वहाँ बस सके। यह एक मौलिक अधिकार है। इस अधिकार के मूल में यह बात है कि सभी नागरिक बराबर हैं तथा उनमें स्थान के आधार पर भेदभाव नहीं किया जा सकता है। किंतु दुर्भाग्य से जम्मू एवं कश्मीर में यह अधिकार लागू ही नहीं होता था। यहाँ दूसरे राज्य के निवासी न तो जमीन खरीद सकते थे, न सरकारी नौकरी पा सकते थे और न ही यहाँ की किसी संस्थान में दाखिला ही ले सकते थे। ऐसी विशिष्टताएं पृथक्तावाद को प्रोत्साहित करती थीं।

इसी निरंतरता में देखें तो भारतीय संसद को संघीय व समवर्ती सूची पर कानून बनाने का अधिकार है और वो सभी राज्यों पर लागू होता है किंतु जम्मू एवं कश्मीर पर लागू नहीं होता था। रक्षा, विदेश मामले तथा संचार के अलावा किसी भी अन्य कानून को लागू करवाने के लिए राज्य सरकार की मंजूरी अनिवार्य होती थी। जाहिर सी बात है कि यह अतिरिक्त शक्ति जम्मू एवं कश्मीर का शेष भारत से एकीकरण को हतोत्साहित करता था। इतना ही नहीं भारतीय दंड संहिता जो पूरे देश में समान कानून की व्यवस्थाकरता है वो भी यहाँ लागू नहीं था। साथ ही सूचना का अधिकार तथा शिक्षा का अधिकार जैसे प्रगतिशील और आम जन मानस को सशक्त करने वाले कानूनों को भी जम्मू एवं कश्मीर में लागू नहीं किया जा सका था। यहाँ तक कि सर्वोच्च न्यायालय भी काफी सीमित शक्ति के साथ ही यहाँ न्यायिक हस्तक्षेप कर सकते थे। इन सब का असर यह होता था कि इस मान्यता को बल मिलता था कि जम्मू एवं कश्मीर एक अलग कानूनी इकाई है।

इसके अलावा जम्मू एवं कश्मीर को जनांकिकी रूप से अलग बनाए रखने के लिए ऐसे कानून बनाए गए थे कि वृहद अर्थों में एकता कभी स्थापित हो ही न पाए। उदाहरण के लिए जम्मू एवं कश्मीर की कोई महिला यदि भारत के किसी अन्य राज्य के व्यक्ति से विवाह करती थी तो उस महिला की जम्मू एवं कश्मीर की नागरिकता खत्म हो जाती थी। यह प्रावधान जम्मू एवं कश्मीर को किसी अलग राष्ट्र की तरह व्यवहार करने के लिए प्रेरित करता था।

जम्मू एवं कश्मीर को जनांकिकी रूप से अलग बनाए रखने के लिए ऐसे कानून बनाए गए थे कि वृहद अर्थों में एकता कभी स्थापित हो ही न पाए. उदाहरण के लिए जम्मू एवं कश्मीर की कोई महिला यदि भारत के किसी अन्य राज्य के व्यक्ति से विवाह करती थी तो उस महिला की जम्मू एवं कश्मीर की नागरिकता खत्म हो जाती थी. यह प्रावधान जम्मू एवं कश्मीर को किसी अलग राष्ट्र की तरह व्यवहार करने के लिए प्रेरित करता था.

उपरोक्त उदाहरणों से इतना तो स्पष्ट है कि जम्मू एवं कश्मीर को प्राप्त ये तमाम विशिष्टताएं उनके विकास में कोई योगदान तो नहीं ही करते थे बल्कि अलगाववादी मानसिकता को खुराक मुहैया कराते थे. इसलिए पिछले वर्ष जब केंद्र सरकार ने अनुच्छेद -370 और अनुच्छेद -35A को निष्प्रभावी बनाया तो इसका पहला बड़ा असर यह हुआ कि अब जम्मू एवं कश्मीर संवैधानिक व कानूनी रूप से शेष भारत की तरह हो गया है. यह एकीकरण की संवैधानिक पुष्टि हुई. यहाँ से एकीकरण की एक नई शुरुआत चिन्हित की जा सकती है.

नए कानूनों का लागू होना

ऊपर के शीर्षक के तहत मूल रूप से संवैधानिक हैसियत की व्याख्या की गई थी कि कैसे वो जम्मू एवं कश्मीर की अलग स्थिति को वैधता प्रदान कर रहा था. इस शीर्षक के तहत हम कुछ ऐसे विशिष्ट कानूनों के लागू होने के प्रभाव देखेंगे जिनसे जम्मू एवं कश्मीर अबतक वंचित रहा था. इसमें सबसे पहले 'सफाई कर्मचारी एक्ट' का उल्लेख करना समीचीन होगा. वस्तुतः, 1950 के दशक में जम्मू एवं कश्मीर ने संकट के समय पंजाब राज्य से अनेक सफाई कर्मियों को अपने यहाँ बुलाया. और एक बार जब संकट समाप्त हो गया तो उन्हें इस आधार पर सुविधाओं और राज्य की नौकरियों से वंचित कर दिया कि वो जम्मू एवं कश्मीर के नागरिक नहीं थे. इससे इनकी स्थिति अत्यंत दयनीय बनी रही. अब केंद्र सरकार ने निर्णय लिया है कि जम्मू एवं कश्मीर में सफाई कर्मचारी एक्ट लागू करके इनकी स्थिति सुधारी जाएगी. साथ ही डीओपीटी मंत्रालय ने जम्मू एवं कश्मीर के लिए शिकायत निवारण, सिटिजन पोर्टल तथा आरटीआई पोर्टल को भी नए सिरे से शुरू कर दिया है. इनका सम्मिलित प्रभाव वहाँ की पारदर्शी शासन व्यवस्था में दिखेगा और अधिक लोकोन्मुखी शासन संभव हो सकेगा.

इसके अतिरिक्त केंद्र सरकार ने जम्मू एवं कश्मीर द्वारा बनाए

गए अलग मानवाधिकार कानून को समाप्त कर दिया है तथा अब वहाँ भी 'राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग' कार्य कर सकेगा. इससे मानवाधिकार को लेकर पूरा देश एक नजरिये से व्यवहार कर सकेगा. साथ ही, मंत्रियों की शपथ और उच्च न्यायालय के न्यायाधीशों के स्थानांतरण के संदर्भ में भी पूरे देश का कानून एक समान हो गया. इसके अतिरिक्त देखें तो विभिन्न अधिकरण जैसे देश की शीर्ष प्रशासनिक अधिकरण 'सीएटी' भी जम्मू एवं कश्मीर में कार्य कर सकेगी. इससे न केवल न्यायालय का भार कम होगा बल्कि प्रशासनिक दुविधा का आसान निपटारा भी संभव हो सकेगा. सरकारी एजेंसी अपना काम पूरी ईमानदारी और दक्षता से करें इसकी निगरानी के लिए 'केंद्रीय सतर्कता आयोग (सीवीसी)' जैसी संस्था है. दुर्भाग्य से यह संस्था अब तक जम्मू एवं कश्मीर के मामले में दखल नहीं दे सकती थी पर अब ये ऐसा कर सकेगी. निश्चित ही इससे भ्रष्टाचार पर प्रभावी अंकुश लग सकेगा.

एक अन्य संदर्भ में देखें तो वहाँ कार्यरत सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए भी अब कई सकारात्मक बदलाव मूर्त रूप ले रहे हैं. जम्मू एवं कश्मीर तथा लद्दाख के लिए 7वें वेतन आयोग के अनुरूप भत्ता जारी कर दिया गया तथा इस प्रकार 4800 करोड़ रुपये जारी किए गए. इसी प्रकार अब वहाँ के कर्मचारियों को पारिवारिक चिकित्सा भत्ता तथा बच्चों की शिक्षा के लिए भत्ता (सीईए) जैसी अनेक सुविधाओं को मुहैया करा दी गई हैं. इसके अतिरिक्त जम्मू एवं कश्मीर राज्य लोक सेवा आयोग को भी पुनर्संरचित किया जा रहा है. साथ ही अनेक अन्य रोजगार संबंधी उपायों को शुरू कर रही है. कुल मिलाकर कहा जा सकता है कि जम्मू एवं कश्मीर में आए संवैधानिक परिवर्तन से वहाँ विकास की नई संभावना बन रही है.

किसी भी संवैधानिक या कानूनी प्रावधानों में बदलाव का प्रभाव तुरंत दिखे ऐसा नहीं होता, लेकिन यह बड़े बदलाव का वाहक बनता है यह निश्चित है. भारतीय संविधान के संदर्भ में भी इसे हम देख सकते हैं. इसके लागू होने के साथ ही भारत ने तरक्की नहीं कर ली बल्कि इससे तरक्की की बुनियाद पड़ी. जम्मू एवं कश्मीर के संबंध में किए गए परिवर्तन को भी इसी संदर्भ में देखना चाहिए. कुछ बदलावों का असर निश्चित रूप से एक साल के भीतर ही देखने को मिल गया, लेकिन इसका असली प्रभाव अगले कुछ वर्षों में दृष्टिगोचर होगा जब सरकारी प्रयास और निजी निवेश के माध्यम से वहाँ विकास के नए प्रयोगों को अपनाया जाएगा. मूल बात यह है कि एक बंद और पृथक क्षेत्र अब खुल गया है. इससे आगे की यात्रा सुगम ही होगी.

(लेखक इतिहास के अध्येता हैं. विभिन्न अखबारों और ऑनलाइन पोर्टल्स के लिए नियमित लेखन करते हैं. यह उनके निजी विचार हैं)

Joyous celebrations in Ladakh as it completes a year as UT



P P Wangchuk

The 5th of August, 2020, saw Ladakh in a highly celebratory mood. Different regions of the twin districts of Leh and Kargil organised cultural functions to celebrate the completion of one year as a Union Territory (UT). Never before such joyous functions were held in every nook and corner of Ladakh.

What was the change that made Ladakh hopeful of a new dawn of freedom from the suppressive and oppressive leadership in Srinagar? For 70 years, funds only trickled, and that was not enough even to carry out the smallest of projects in the backward region of Ladakh. Most of the infrastructure that one can see in Ladakh today have been built mainly by the Army. Soon after Ladakh was given UT status, the Central government announced the setting up of several institutions and grant of funds.

Ladakhis are happy and grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for granting UT status, and also looking towards having the 6th Schedule along with legislature. What is 6th Schedule and what purpose does it serve? In a very simplified way, one can say that the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, under Article 244, gives safeguards for a particular tribal/ethnic area, and

gives protection to its land, jobs, language, culture etc. such as in much of India's northeast.

The Minister of Tribal Affairs, Mr Arjun Munda, had recommended, on Jan.24, 2020, to the Ministry of Home Affairs, that Ladakh be granted 6th Schedule in order to protect its rich legacy. Perhaps the right moment might come when, in the next 2-3 months, Ladakh goes to the polls for its Hill Councils, both in Leh and Kargil.

What is a matter of great joy and satisfaction is that Ladakh as a UT has got its first share of Central funds amounting to Rs 5,958 crore for the year 2020-21. This is a huge jump in contrast to the 'trickling funds' it used to get from the J&K government. As a result, no big project/s could be taken up even if those were crucial for Ladakh's welfare and progress. But with the Central funds pouring in, Ladakhis can now dream of fulfilling their decades-long aspirations of development with absolutely necessary projects, as well as completing many a pending crucial project immediately.

The setting up of Ladakh University has already been completed, and there was, recently, an announcement of a Central University that will, apart from several subjects in art and science, also have a centre for the study of Buddhist philosophy. The idea is to attract students also from the nearby Himalayan states to study and do research work on Buddhism and its relevance in today's competitive and materialistic world.

Another big decision was about the expansion of Leh airport at a cost of Rs 480 crore, and work



on it is on a fast track. The idea is to make it big enough to attract more flights so that airfares don't skyrocket every summer.

Prime Minister Modi, during his visit to Ladakh after it became a UT, had also promised several institutions for Ladakh, including medical and engineering colleges. The Sowa Rigpa (traditional medicinal system) centre in Leh has been accorded a 'national status' for research intraditional medicinal system.

Ladakh has a literacy rate of 77.48%, which is among the highest in the country; and Leh city is also among the fastest-growing cities. There are many reasons for this, but it is mainly because of its Hill Councils and its progressive women who enjoy equal status with men in all spheres of life.

The MP factor: Ladakh has a young, energetic and dynamic Member of Parliament in Mr Jamyang Tsering Namgyal. Popularly known as JTN, he won the Ladakh parliament seat a year ago with a record margin of votes. A fiery speaker, his

first Parliament speech had gone viral. Wherever I go, the first question I am asked, always, is: Do you know your fiery MP? That clearly shows how much he has won the affection of the people of the country.

In the last one year, JTN has worked very hard. He has visited even the remotest nooks and corners of the Ladakh region, particularly those in Changthang, Nubra and Zaskar valleys where free India's 'democratic fruits' are yet to reach. JTN has already redressed some of their decades-long grievances, and has promised them that the rest of their aspirations too would be taken care of in the coming years.

It was mainly because of his efforts that the years-old unfinished crucial road project of Leh-Nimu-Padum was made ready and thrown open to public recently. And that is a huge achievement in addressing the isolated Zaskari's long-time demand. The new 269-km road will reduce the distance between Leh and Padum by at least

200kms, thereby making travel easier and less time-consuming. The existing route via Kargilis 463-km long and is difficult to cover it within a day, mainly because of bad-road conditions at several places. Moreover, this route remains closed for over six months and the Zaskaris are completely 'isolated' from the rest of the world.

This new road is also strategically very important for Ladakh to remain connected with the rest of the world. The highway via Kargil is not without any risk because of the Pakistan border factor. Recall the Kargil war of 1999 when this

the post of gazetted officers. This will come as a big morale booster for the thousands of jobless youths of Ladakh, many of whom have been waiting for jobs for years. Though there is no official figure of jobless youths, 20,000 is a conservative figure one can come out with.

Conclusion: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said from the ramparts of the Red Fort recently, in his Independence Day speech: "Ladakh today, as a UT, is on a progressive path with several big projects to be completed soon" after years of neglect and stagnation. He has vowed to turn



highway and the town came under heavy attack. Therefore, the new road via Nimu to Padum, and to Manali thereafter, gives strategic safety for any kind of Army movement and transportation.

Another big project to be completed recently at a cost of Rs 7.5 crore was the Choklamsar double-lane bridge across the river Sindh, with separate footpaths on either side. This replaces the decades-old bridge, in a shambles for lack of funds.

And, in the coming months, 5,000 jobs will be available in Ladakh, out of which 1,000 jobs are for

Ladakh into a carbon-neutral region, a model in the country.

A grateful Ladakh thanks Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it enters its 2nd year as UT; the hopes of having the 6th Schedule with legislature are there and faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi among the people continue to be strong.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based editor-at-large, columnist and professional speaker. Views expressed are his own)

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प्रो. निरंजन कुमार

भा रतीयता की महान विरासत से युक्त, महात्मा गाँधी के विजन से अनुप्राणित, डॉ. आम्बेडकर के दिए संविधान के प्रति प्रतिबद्ध नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के आत्मनिर्भर भारत के स्वप्न को साकार करने की दिशा में एक ठोस कदम है. देर आयद पर दुरुस्त आयद इस नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (एनईपी) में एक ओर जहाँ शिक्षा व्यवस्था की वर्तमान खामियों को दूर करने के प्रावधान हैं, तो दूसरी ओर 21वीं सदी के बदलते हुए भारत की आंतरिक और वैश्विक चुनौतियों का सामने करने की तैयारी भी.

नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (एनईपी) की एक बड़ी विशेषता है कि यह सच्चे मायने में एक राष्ट्रीय नीति है. दुनिया के इतिहास में शायद पहली बार ऐसा हुआ है कि शिक्षा नीति बनाने के लिए देश की चारों दिशाओं से 2.5 लाख ग्राम पंचायतों और 676 जिलों के शिक्षकों, शिक्षाविदों, जनप्रतिनिधियों, उद्योगपतियों, अभिभावकों और छात्रों से सुझाव और मंथन कर जन आकांक्षाओं के अनुरूप यह एनईपी साकार हुई है. इस रूप में यह एक लोकतांत्रिक रीति से तैयार हुई शिक्षा नीति है.

एक अन्य नया परिवर्तन है कि एनईपी 2020 की घोषणा साथ ही मानव संसाधन प्रबंधन मंत्रालय का नाम बदलकर 'शिक्षा मंत्रालय' कर दिया गया है, जो सर्वथा उचित है. 'मानव संसाधन' से ध्वनित होता है कि मानवीय भावों-संस्कारों से रहित इंसान जैसे एक भौतिक संसाधन मात्र हो, जो पश्चिम के भौतिकवादी चिन्तन से प्रेरित है. जबकि 'शिक्षा' अभिधान मनुष्य के भौतिकवादी पहलु के साथ-साथ सांस्कृतिक, चारित्रिक और मनोवैज्ञानिक सभी पक्षों को समाहित करता है, जो भारतीय चिंतन-पद्धति का प्रतिबिम्बन है.

भारतीय भाषाओं पर जोर एनईपी की एक बड़ी विशेषता है. स्कूली शिक्षा से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा तक में 'भारतीय भाषाओं' के

अध्यापन'के साथ- साथ 'भारतीय भाषाओं' में अध्यापन'पर बल दिया गया है. एक महत्वपूर्ण अनुशंसा है कि मातृभाषा या क्षेत्रीय भाषा में पाँचवीं ग्रेड तक की पढ़ाई होगी, जिसे आठवीं तक भी बढ़ाया जा सकता है. अंग्रेजी होगी अब भी, लेकिन अब सिर्फ एक विषय के रूप में पढ़ाई जाएगी. यूनेस्को रिपोर्ट अथवा शैक्षणिक मनोविज्ञान के अनुसार मातृभाषा में सीखना आसान होता है क्योंकि इसमें सम्प्रेषण व संज्ञान सहज व शीघ्र होता है. मातृभाषा या स्थानीय भाषा में बच्चा समझता है जबकि इतर भाषाओं में उसे रटना पड़ता है. यह अनायास नहीं कि संसार के हर विकसित देश में स्कूली शिक्षा मातृभाषा या स्थानीय भाषा में ही होती है. यहाँ तक की उच्च शिक्षा का माध्यम भी सामान्यतया उनके देश की भाषा होती है. एनईपी का यह बिंदु भारतीय भाषाओं और संस्कृति दोनों ही की मजबूती की दिशा में मील का पत्थर साबित होगा.

एनईपी का एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण बिंदु है 'सबका साथ, सबका विकास' को साकार करने के लिए 'सबको शिक्षा' देने

वर्तमान के मैकाले मॉडल पर आधारित शिक्षा किताबी ज्ञान व शैक्षणिक पाठ्यक्रम पर जोर देती है, जो पढ़ाई के बाद नौकरी ढूँढने वाले बेरोजगारों की बड़ी खेप तैयार कर रही है. लेकिन एनईपी पाठ्येतर क्रियाकलापों और वोकेशनल शिक्षा पर भी बल देती है. महात्मा गांधी के श्रम-सिद्धांत के अनुरूप छठी क्लास से ही वोकेशनल कोर्स शुरू किए जाएंगे, जिसमें 'कोडिंग' जैसे आधुनिकतम वोकेशनल प्रशिक्षण भी शामिल होंगे. अच्छी बात यह है कि कॉलेज स्तर पर भी वोकेशनल प्रशिक्षण के विभिन्न कोर्सेस उपलब्ध होंगे. अमेरिकी विश्वविद्यालयों में अध्यापन के दौरान मैंने देखा कि उनके करिकुलम में वोकेशनल शिक्षा का घटक जरूर होता है. नए मॉडल में रोजगार मांगने वालों की जगह रोजगार देने वालों और स्वरोजगार को बढ़ावा मिलेगा.

की महत्वकांक्षी योजना. इसमें 'राइट टू एजुकेशन' को 14 साल से आगे बढ़ाकर 100% जीईआर के साथ माध्यमिक स्तर तक 'एजुकेशन फ़ॉर ऑल' का लक्ष्य रखा गया है. सन 2030 तक 18 वर्ष के सभी बच्चों के लिए स्कूली शिक्षा अनिवार्य और निशुल्क होगी. यही नहीं हमारे युवाओं की ऊर्जा का उचित उपयोग हो, इसके लिए उच्च शिक्षा में 2035 तक 3.5 करोड़ नई सीटें जोड़ी जाएंगी. यही नहीं, उन्हें गुणवत्तापूर्ण उच्च शिक्षा के लिए इधर-उधर भटकना न पड़े इसके लिए 2030 तक लगभग हर जिले में कम से कम एक बहुविषयक वृहत उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान होगा. सामाजिक व आर्थिक रूपसे पिछड़े- वंचित तबकों के लिए भी एनईपी सजग है. एससी-एसटी, ओबीसी, दिव्यांगों और गरीब वर्ग के मेधावी छात्रों के लिए विशेष प्रावधान किए जाएंगे. महत्वपूर्ण बिंदु यह है कि सार्वजनिक के अलावा निजी क्षेत्रों के उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों में भी इनके लिए निशुल्क शिक्षाया छात्रवृति के लिए प्रयास किए जाएंगे. निजी संस्थानों की मनमानी फीस पर लगाम लगाने के लिए एक कैपिंग (capping) भी होगी. निजी एचईआई द्वारा निर्धारित सभी शुल्क पारदर्शी होंगे. सार्वजनिक या निजी सभी शिक्षा संस्थानों को ऑडिट और प्रकटीकरण के समान मानकों निर्धारित किए जाएंगे.

वर्तमान के मैकाले मॉडल पर आधारित शिक्षा किताबी ज्ञान व शैक्षणिक पाठ्यक्रम पर जोर देती है, जो पढ़ाई के बाद नौकरी ढूँढने वाले बेरोजगारों की बड़ी खेप तैयार कर रही है. लेकिन एनईपी पाठ्येतर क्रियाकलापों और वोकेशनल शिक्षा पर भी बल देती है. महात्मा गांधी के श्रम-सिद्धांत के अनुरूप छठी क्लास से ही वोकेशनल कोर्स शुरू किए जाएंगे, जिसमें 'कोडिंग' जैसे आधुनिकतम वोकेशनल प्रशिक्षण भी शामिल होंगे. अच्छी बात यह है कि कॉलेज स्तर पर भी वोकेशनल प्रशिक्षण के विभिन्न कोर्सेस उपलब्ध होंगे. अमेरिकी विश्वविद्यालयों में अध्यापन के दौरान मैंने देखा कि उनके करिकुलम में वोकेशनल शिक्षा का घटक जरूर होता है. नए मॉडल में रोजगार मांगने वालों की जगह रोजगार देने वालों और स्वरोजगार को बढ़ावा मिलेगा.

एनईपीकी एक अन्य विशेषता है कि शिक्षा में स्ट्रीम की खांचेबंदी नहीं होगी. अब साइंस या कॉमर्स का छात्र आर्ट्स और सोशल साइंस के विषय भी पढ़ सकेगा. महत्वपूर्ण है कि यह लचीलापन माध्यमिक स्कूल से लेकर ग्रेजुएशन में भी होगा. यूरोप-अमेरिका आदि में बहुत पहले से मौजूद यह पैटर्न एक अंतर्विषयक दृष्टि पैदा करेगी, जो मल्टी-टास्किंग और भावी इंटीग्रेटेड रिसर्च के लिए उपयोगी होगा. मल्टी-एंट्री और मल्टी-एग्जिट ग्रेजुएशन प्रोग्राम की एक नई विशेषता होगी. अभी तीन वर्षीय ग्रेजुएशन में यदि छात्र को किसी कारणवश बीच में ही पढ़ाई छोड़ना पड़े तो सारा परिश्रम, धन तथा समय बेकार चला जाता है. अब एक साल अथवादो साल में भी पढ़ाई छोड़ने पर उसे सर्टिफिकेट या डिप्लोमा

नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (एनईपी) की एक बड़ी विशेषता है कि यह सच्चे मायने में एक राष्ट्रीय नीति है. दुनिया के इतिहास में शायद पहली बार ऐसा हुआ है कि शिक्षा नीति बनाने के लिए देश की चारों दिशाओं से 2.5 लाख ग्राम पंचायतों और 676 जिलों के शिक्षकों, शिक्षाविदों, जनप्रतिनिधियों, उद्योगपतियों, अभिभावकों और छात्रों से सुझाव और मंथन कर जन आकांक्षाओं के अनुरूप यह एनईपी साकार हुई है. इस रूप में यह एक लोकतांत्रिक रीति से तैयार हुई शिक्षा नीति है.

जरूर मिलेगा. बल्कि एक तय सीमा में वापस आकर वह अपनी बची पढ़ाई पूरा कर सकता है. 'एकेडेमिक बैंक ऑफ क्रेडिट्स' एनईपी का एक अन्य क्रांतिकारी प्रावधान है. यह एक डिजिटल क्रेडिट बैंक होगा, जिसके द्वारा किसी एक संस्थान या प्रोग्राम में प्राप्त क्रेडिट को दूसरी जगह ट्रांसफर किया जाएगा. किन्हीं मजबूरी में संस्थान या शहर बदलने वाले विद्यार्थियों के लिए यह बहुत आश्वस्तकारी है.

यह सर्वविदित है कि किसी राष्ट्र की प्रगति में शोध-अनुसंधान की बड़ी भूमिका होती है. इसीलिए मोदी सरकार, अटल सरकार के 'जय विज्ञान' से आगे जाकर 'जय अनुसंधान' को एनईपी में बढ़ावा देने के लिए कटिबद्ध दिखती है. देश में एक मजबूत शोध-अनुसंधान संस्कृति तथा क्षमता विकसित हो, इसके लिए एक शीर्ष निकाय के रूप में नेशनल रिसर्च फ़ाउंडेशन (एनआरएफ़) की स्थापना का प्रावधान है. उच्च शिक्षा में एकीकृत एवं समन्वित नीति व लक्ष्य निर्धारण हेतु विभिन्न निकायों का विलय करके एक सिंगल रेगुलेटर 'भारत उच्च शिक्षा आयोग' (एचईसीआई) का गठन एनईपी का एक अन्य अहम बिंदु है.

समग्रता में देखें तो लोकल से लेकर ग्लोबल, भारत केंद्रितकता से लेकर वैश्विकता, रोजगार से लेकर अनुसंधान और चरित्र निर्माण से लेकर भौतिक उपलब्धि-- सभी दृष्टियों से उच्च लक्ष्यों वाली एनईपी 21वीं सदी में भारत की जरूरतों-चुनौतियों को पूरा करने की दिशा में एक दूरदर्शी विजन डॉक्यूमेंट है. इसका क्रियान्वयन एक चुनौती जरूर होगी, लेकिन अगर योग्य लोगों को इसमें शामिल किया जाए तो इसे हासिल करना कठिन नहीं होगा.

(लेखक दिल्ली विवि के हिन्दी विभाग में प्रोफेसर हैं, और पूर्व में कई अमेरिकी विश्वविद्यालयों में पढ़ा चुके हैं. यह उनके निजी विचार हैं)

Unleashing India's Educational Potential: Understanding the NEP 2020 in 20 Points



Dr Avishek A

One might have to look back 34 years. It was 1986, not long after Ms. P. T. Usharan in the Los Angeles Olympics that India's Education Ministry was renamed as the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD). It was also the year when India saw her last national education policy. And that's that. Since then, we have had a few eras pass by, we have seen 'progressive' and 'revolutionary' thinkers leading the nation, yet, there was no revision, no progress, no revolution in our education policy until recently.

The BharatiyaJanata Party's Manifesto for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections was the first one to promise a new education policy. In January 2015, a committee under former Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian started the consultation process for the New Education Policy. Based on the committee's report, in June 2017, the draft NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K. Kasturirangan. The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019, was later released by Ministry of Human Resource Development, and was followed by a number of public consultations. The Draft NEP, a four hundred and eighty four pages document placed in the MHRD portal for next one year. During this period, the Ministry

undertook a rigorous consultation process in formulating the draft policy. It considered, "Over two lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakh gram panchayats, 6,600 blocks, 6,000 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and 676 districts" and held wide and intense consultations with various stakeholders, experts and practitioners in the field of education, including lawmakers. On 29th July 2020, the Union Cabinet approved the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

The last few weeks has seen a wide debate across the spectrum on NEP 2020. With many questioning the policy and many others welcoming it as heralding a new educational era for India: The question is however what the highlights of NEP 2020 are:

1. First of all it announces a paradigm shift in school education. The traditional 10+2 system is now going to be changed to the 5+3+3+4 system. Well, it is a restructuring, from where have these extra three years come? Yes, it is those three years of pre-primary, the nursery classes. Not uncommon for our fast-paced metro toddlers whose education start from the age of three. But, for our village children, whose education mainly rely on public schools usually starts from 6-7 years. This means general education system in village area were lagging almost 3 years as compared to its counterparts in cities. New Education Policy is successfully removing this imbalance making everyone at par from the very beginning.
2. The New Education Policy has a very positive

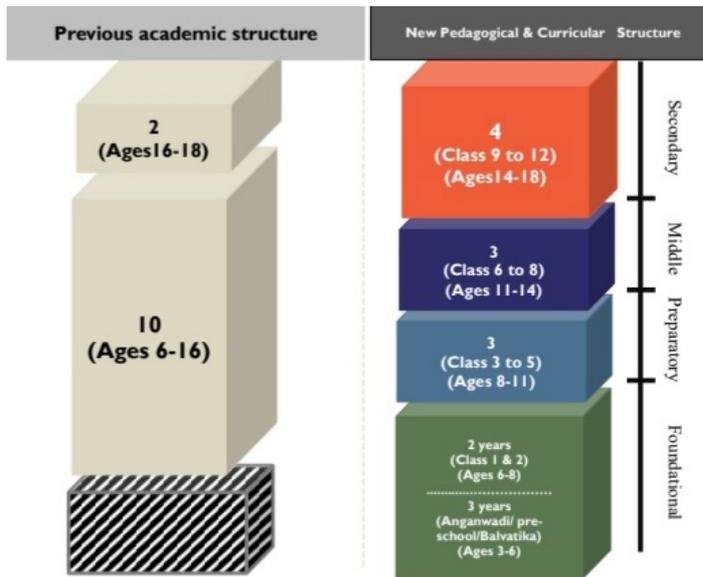
implication. Hitherto Right to Education in the Indian Constitution (Art. 21A) covered children aged 6 years to 14 years, i.e., from class 1 to 8. The protection exists for a period of 8 years only. It seems that the new policy aims at extending it upto 18 years of age (i.e., class 12) from the tender age of 3. Thus not only pre-school students, till now excluded from the formal education system, would now be included, the very crucial four years for stepping into the roads of higher education (age 14 to 18) would also be covered benefitting thousands of poor students and leading to a reduction in the number of dropouts. This is revolutionary and thus seeks to provide quality education as a right to all the citizens for a period of total 15 years. (3 years to 18 years of age). We may well imagine how much the marginal people will be benefited from it

3. In this new education policy, special importance has been given to our mother tongues. Trying to make the mother tongue / local language as the medium of instruction for both private and public schools, is the main focus area of this policy. The policy says that wherever possible, the mother tongue will be the medium at least up to the second grade (i.e. pre-primary 3 years plus primary 5 years), and is preferable even after that.
4. Learning English is also clearly emphasized besides mother tongue. The Modi Government is bringing new tri-language policy. English is given importance next to mother tongue or local language. Students must be able to read, write and communicate on any topic in English by the final stage of fourth grade, as opined by the policy.
5. Debunking all rumors and speculations, the Union Government has clearly indicated

Special focus will be given to engage students in 'extra-curricular activities' like drawing, crafting, playing and writing poems. Local prodigies in several such fields will be invited and attached to schools to nurture our young generations. Students will also be introduced to our heritage and culture via summer trips to different locations in India.

that Hindi will not be mandatory as the third language. Rather the NEP-2020 proposes to promote Sanskrit as third language. Several centres of excellence will be established to teach, learn, practice and research Sanskrit. To facilitate the learning of Sanskrit learning opportunities at higher level, Sanskrit Universities will collaborate with other Higher Educational Institutes. More to this, other national and international classical languages and literatures can also be learned as third language.

6. Massive structural changes are about to come in learning and teaching. Students will be imparted and encouraged to undertake vocational training from 6th standard. Although, educated unemployment has been a center point concern for many, yet, no visionary measures have ever been taken to encourage skills enhancement or professional education to generate employment opportunity. It has been already proved that 6-9 months of vocational training after 11-12th standard is not at all beneficial. On the other side, education limited to academics, ignoring the development of skills, marginalizing the need for vocational training cannot be a holistic education. This has been emphasized by our thinkers, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma



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Gandhi and many others have referred to this imbalance and called for its rectification and have demonstrated it in their respective educational frameworks and experiments. In the Indic systems of knowledge, young people used to learn about their ancestral profession from their parents from an early age. Independent India's educational policies have often ignored this aspect. Denying our own heritage and blindly following the foreign notions of development has only led to this crisis. The NEP 2020 addressed this omission of the past and aims to encourage the growth of skillful self-reliant citizens, not merely educated job seeker.

7. To ensure that Indian languages flourish and learners attain greater proficiency in it, not only text books but various instruction manual of appliances and machines, workbook, apps, magazines, and plays will be written in Indian languages. For better accessibility, e-versions and videos will also be prepared. To modernize languages, more colloquial terms will be amalgamated, vocabulary will be updated and Dictionaries in Indian languages will be revised by continuous

practice.

8. Special focus will be given to engage students in 'extra-curricular activities' like drawing, crafting, playing and writing poems. Local prodigies in several such fields will be invited and attached to schools to nurture our young generations. Students will also be introduced to our heritage and culture via summer trips to different locations in India.

9. A new organization namely National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) will be formed to monitor improvements of all children up to 8 years of age. This is going to be revolutionary step, a path directly leading us from a 'developing nation' to the 'developed' one. The country is now taking full responsibility of its own future.

10. A complete makeover of the evaluation system has also been proposed. A novel 360° holistic evaluation will be introduced instead of the number based examination. Not only languages, science or arts but vocational training, skills, passions, attitudes and conducts of students will also be considered at the time of evaluation. In short, there will be no compartmentalization in curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities. The evaluation will not be one dimensional either, rather students will do self-evaluation/appraisal, they will express their choices, likes and dislikes. Teachers-trainer-supervisors' feedback will also be taken into account. A central A.I system will do the evaluation based on these two dimensional

inputs. Yes, the final exam standard 10 will not exist anymore.

11. Major-minor concepts will be introduced in place of science, commerce, and arts. There will be no stream division in colleges and high schools. Just imagine the impact of this one decision. The day when there will be no “my son is studying in the science stream”, will be the day when Ram Shankar Nikunj will no longer be for an Ishan Awasthi! Your child can study physics with fashion designing, chemistry with cooking. I would surely opt for a combination of chemistry, history, literature, physics, statistics and drawing.
12. NEP proposes to bring in revolutionary changes in higher studies as well. In 2014 the gross enrolment ratio was 24% which rose to 26% in the next 4 years. The Modi Government is aiming at making this 50% by the year 2035. It is trying to ensure that half of the total students become graduates by the year 2035 and for this purpose 1.5 crore new seats will be generated in higher studies.
13. Not only this, a centralized entrance system will be there for all colleges and universities and this will be conducted in as many local languages as possible unlike previous the policy where only English and Hindi were medium for this kind of exam.
14. Even after this, if anyone has any doubt regarding language imposition, for them, the NEP aims to build more than a thousand translation centres which will be devoted for all Indian languages including Sanskrit, so that, anyone can go for any level of higher studies in their preferred language. Besides these centers will also work for restoring and preserving the science, arts, literature and philosophical works that were once written in our classical languages and shall make them widely available.
15. There will be only one regulatory body for Higher Education Institute (HEI). Multiple parallel regulatory bodies not only slow down the development but also induce corruption. NEP 2020 took a hard decision on this and brings every HEI except law and medical colleges, under one umbrella.
16. The concept of major minor shall also be introduced in the higher education too and also with more versatility. All engineering institutes including IITs and NITs have been instructed to include literatures, languages and liberal arts; at the same time traditional non-engineering universities like JNU shall also include various curriculum on science and engineering. Everything will be interdisciplinary, there will be special interdisciplinary institutes as well. The exchange of students and faculty members in two different genres of colleges will be promoted. History students will be able to take computer coding as a minor subject. From now onwards the subject of history will not be merely remembering the tax policy of Raja Todarmal, it will also include reinventing our past – structures, cities, architectural wonders that once existed – using satellite images and data analytics.
17. A very important aspect of NEP 2020 is the separation of language from literature. Many don't speak good English because we were not taught English language in the right manner. We were often taught only English literature. Learning language is a necessity for all, but studying literature is not. Unfortunately, such a simple thing was beyond the comprehension of Macaulay followers and later Nehruvian educationists.

- So there were times when we saw a surge in spoken English classes which has now converted to an outbreak of English medium schools everywhere. NEP will teach English language to everyone. After that it will solely be their choice if they want to study English literature.
18. Another great aspect of NEP 2020 is the multiple entry exit system that it proposes. There are many occasions when we have to leave our study in between, with no scope of returning. We lose many a potential researcher and inventor in this way. But when the competing neighbour is a techno super power, we too also need to give full scope to develop the full potential of each of our aspiring researchers. Keeping that in mind NEP 2020 offers a great scope of a Multiple Entry –Exit System. One need not complete at a time all 3 or four years of courses. The learner shall be eligible to receive a certificate after one year, a diploma after two, a degree after three and degree with research after four. But on top of that the learner will be able to hold her/his study at any point of time and again come back and join later. The student need not start afresh, she/he will just resume her/his study.
 19. But how will that be possible? For that the NEP 2020 proposes to bring in a Central Credit Bank system. Whenever you study a subject at any level, a credit will be deposited to this bank and this credit shall remain there till you earn the degree certificate. If you match the total credit necessary for obtaining degree certificate, then it will be given to you. You will study the subjects of your choice at your free will and a time preferable to you. If you are a keen learner, you must know that the new education system is going to support you in every manner.
 20. And to implement these visionary policies, 6% of total GDP will be allocated for education. For years it was only 2%. Not only that the policy says that within next 10 years the Government of India and all State Governments are also instructed to use their 20% of public expenditure for education. Yes, a similar demand has been made from the early years of independence, however, it is only the Modi Government which hugely focused on education and has conferred on it great priority. A true and visionary education policy is what removes poverty and creates a strong nation, a convoluted and ill-conceived, irrational policy like NYAY can never be a substitute for a comprehensive, far-seeing and visionary educational policy.
- A true nation never emerges from blood-soaked revolutions. Education without a vision is only a tool for making cadres clamouring for lockouts and chaos. The NEP 2020 directly has overturned an outdated education system and understanding of education. Yes, it will require time to implement this comprehensive and path-breaking policy, but at least the NEP 2020 can now enable the common Indian to think of and envisage an India of twenty first century, a true super power in techno-innovation and entrepreneurship. The common Indian can aspire to be an active part and stakeholder in the creation of that twenty first century India. It has unleashed India's educational potential, it has introduced a new energy and dynamism in the education sector. It is an important driver for a "New India" as envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

(The author is an Assistant Professor and Reseracher in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)Bhilai. Views expressed are his own.)

It is imperative that India wins the 'Aatmanirbhar' challenge



Pratim Ranjan Bose

In a market economy, perceptions matter. In economic terms this is called 'rational expectations' and are linked to the past performances. Highlighted by Keynes, in the 1930's, barely a decade after the last pandemic, the medicine found ample use worldwide to survive odds, maintain order and ensure growth.

Over the last few decades, China used this tool most efficiently to be perceived as the 'growth engine' of the world. In comparison, the perception about India suffered, arguably due to the wide gap between promises and action. India was referred to as a 'nation that talks'.

Creating fresh expectations

Over the last six years, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid maximum attention to bridge this gap.

From implementing long pending reforms like Goods and Services Tax (GST) or Bankruptcy Code to Balakot airstrike and abrogation of Article 370 from Kashmir – he was consistent in challenging the status quo.

His attempts were relentless and there is little doubt that the government has been highly successful in creating an air of positivity about

India - both domestically and internationally. It is no longer taken as a benign force.

In the face of unprecedented disruption caused by COVID; this 'waves of optimism', as Keynes had put it, was India's biggest bet not only to survive the pandemic but also to make it an opportunity to take the country to the next level of competition.

The Prime Minister did just that in his Independence Day speech.

From reference of sanitary pads to mocking the prevailing pattern of exporting raw materials and importing finished goods, and warning silos within the administration – he upped the ante against status quo with a clear goal to make a far stronger and confident India.

Managing expectations

Realizing this dream will not be easy. If the share of manufacturing is as low as 23 percent (CIA Factbook) in India as against 40 percent in China, there must be wider reasons behind it.

MSMEs attracted maximum attention as the Centre offered guaranteed loan finance even to the sick. If we combine the two, the government is forcing a complete shift from the closed economy principles where the government went for micro planning and ended up creating silos of inefficiency.

If we haven't built adequate roads connecting ports, neglected creation of strategic infrastructure on the Northern border, delayed rail connectivity to North East India and kept Arunachal Pradesh outside the civil aviation map for so long; it must not be an omission.

But, if it were an easy task, who needed Modi? His historic win in 2014 reflected the strong dissent of the Indian electorate against the status quo. His re-election in 2019 by a wider margin indicated, Mr Modi didn't fail them.

Looking back, it is unbelievable that in merely six years, coal mining was denationalized; the endless debates on GST, that required change in federal structure, was put to rest; public sector banks, which were experts in hiding bad assets by evergreening, were sent to the cleaners.

The scale and speed of change is mind blowing. Most Indians families now have cooking gas and electricity. Social benefits are transferred directly to bank accounts. Digital transactions are not a luxury. Even roadside 'panipuri' sellers accept 'google pay'. E-commerce is booming.

It is not easy to match expectations of common Indians as well as the international community. The Modi government did it with ease.

Dirt-cheap life (PMJJBY) and medical insurance (Ayushman Bharat) for the underprivileged; and 'Housing for all' (PMAY

for the poor and sharp cut in home loans for the middle class) benefitted millions.

Global investors were convinced by futuristic steps like fast expansion in digital and renewable space, big bang reforms and rapid improvement in ease-of-doing-business and logistics efficiency. FDI inflow peaked.

Military logistics deal with the US and aggressive push in neighbourhood connectivity projects consolidated Indian position in the region. Regional trade grew at a fast pace. Relationship with the Islamic power centre, Saudi Arabia is at a historic high.

Fighting from the front

The world is not run on static principles. Opportunities come and go. Global growth was suffering in the post-2008 (meltdown) period. COVID had shaken up the global economy right from its root. Everyone is suffering. As fear grips the human mind, all theories are failing.

Despite giving huge cash handouts, unemployment is at record high in the US, as businesses are increasing automation. Huge State-sponsored construction activities failed to stop closure of steel plants in China. Beijing restricted withdrawals to prevent bank runs. The UK's economy shrunk by 20 percent in the June quarter.

The mayhem has gripped Indian economy as well. With services contributing 60 percent of GDP, India is in a particularly weak spot. Because all studies indicate the services sector will take too long a time to recover.

The fear of infection impacted consumer behaviour. Hair clippers are selling like hotcakes. Barber Shops will not find as many customers again. Opportunities may shrink even for domestic helps as robot house cleaners started arriving in the marketplace.

From implementing long pending reforms like Goods and Services Tax (GST) or Bankruptcy Code to Balakot airstrike and abrogation of Article 370 from Kashmir – he was consistent in challenging the status quo.

It was useless trying to protect the prevailing model of the economy, from this mayhem. No amount of money will take people back to brick and mortar shops now. India needed to shift gear to tap future value addition opportunities.

The Prime Minister is leading the country in that direction through his call for Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Towards a more competitive economy

Beginning with schemes or programmes rolled out since March, India has clearly taken a protective stance with regard to rural economy.

The reasons are simple. Rising automation will reduce the need for unskilled or semi-skilled labour in cities. A healthy rural economy including both farm and non-farm opportunities can offer the perfect income cushion, as people will go back to their villages.

However, to translate that into better living and higher demand for industrial goods, the rural economy must be unleashed. Farm practices should be more productive and output should get the best price. A series of reform measures are trying to reach that goal.

On the industrial and services segment, the government rightly denied to give sector-wise assistance. It focused on removing the regulatory obstacles and ensured availability of finance. The rest is left to market innovation.

MSMEs attracted maximum attention as the Centre offered guaranteed loan finance even to the sick. If we combine the two, the government is forcing a complete shift from the closed economy principles where the government went for micro planning and ended up creating silos of inefficiency.

As the final push, the government wants to ensure play of capital by reducing the role of the public sector to bare minimum. The BPCL

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privatization marks the beginning of the end of politics-PSU nexus. India is now inviting the private sector to take companies to global scale.

The aim is clear, the government wants competition to intensify in Indian manufacturing. There is no protection, excepting the restrictions imposed on unfair State-backed competition from China. The impact will be felt on every sphere of economy and policy making.

United we stand

COVID forced a shift from the usual practices to the entire world. The Modi government is aligning India to the new realities. It decided to face short term problems so as to optimize the country's long-term gains of the country and its people.

The question is no more if they will be successful. In a democracy, it is people who chose their leader. The success of the leader is the success of the nation. India gained immensely from PV Narasimha Rao's liberalization programme in 1991.

It is imperative that India should win the unprecedented challenge thrown in by COVID.

(The writer is an independent columnist and researcher and a public policy expert. Views expressed are his own)

केंद्र सरकार द्वारा किए जा रहे उपायों से भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था का बदलता स्वरूप



प्रह्लाद सबनानी

को रोगा वायरस महामारी के बाद भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था का स्वरूप कुछ बदलने की राह पर जाता दिखाई दे रहा है। अभी तक भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था में कृषि का योगदान काफी कम रहता आया है एवं सेवा क्षेत्र का योगदान सबसे अधिक रहता है। परंतु बदली हुई परिस्थितियों में कृषि का योगदान कुछ बढ़ता नज़र आ रहा है एवं सेवा क्षेत्र का योगदान कम हो सकता है, क्योंकि पर्यटन एवं होटल उद्योग कोरोना वायरस महामारी में सबसे ज्यादा प्रभावित हुए हैं और ये दोनों उद्योग सेवा क्षेत्र के अंतर्गत आते हैं।

भारत में कुल आबादी का लगभग 60 प्रतिशत से अधिक हिस्सा ग्रामीण इलाकों में रहता है एवं अपने रोजगार के लिए मुख्यतः कृषि क्षेत्र पर ही निर्भर हैं। इस प्रकार भारत में कृषि का क्षेत्र एक सिल्वर लाइनिंग के तौर पर देखा जा रहा है। भारत में आम तौर पर हम लोग कृषि क्षेत्र में चावल, दाल, गेहूँ, तेल-वनस्पति, आदि कुछ चीजों के उत्पादन पर ही अपना ध्यान केंद्रित करते हैं। परंतु, देश में एक और महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र है, जो कृषि क्षेत्र के अंतर्गत आता है और जो बड़ी तेजी से विकसित हो रहा है। वह क्षेत्र है बागवानी (हॉर्टिकल्चर) का।

बागवानी क्षेत्र पर पहले तो हमारे किसानों का कम ध्यान रहता था परंतु अब इस ओर देश के किसानों का ध्यान गया है और हाल ही के समय में इसकी पैदावार में काफी इज़ाफ़ा होते देखा जा रहा है। कृषि वर्ष 2019-20, जो जुलाई-जून की अवधि के दौरान रहता है, में यदि अनाजों के पैदावार की बात करें तो लगभग 30 करोड़ टन की उपज का अनुमान लगाया गया है, वहीं बागवानी के क्षेत्र में 32 करोड़ टन की उपज होने का अनुमान है।

अभी हाल ही में केंद्र सरकार द्वारा कृषि क्षेत्र से सम्बंधित तीन अति महत्वपूर्ण निर्णय (अगले पैराग्राफों में वर्णित) लिए गए हैं, जिसके परिणाम भी परिलक्षित होने लगे हैं। जून 2020 को समाप्त

तिमाही में, जब कोरोना वायरस महामारी के चलते पूरे देश में आर्थिक गतिविधियाँ लगभग बंद थीं, ऐसे में कृषि क्षेत्र से निर्यात 23.24 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि दर्ज करते हुए 25,552.7 करोड़ रुपए पर पहुँच गए हैं। भारत को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने में कृषि क्षेत्र का आत्मनिर्भर होना भी बहुत ज़रूरी है। दूसरे, कृषि क्षेत्र से निर्यात में वृद्धि का सीधा लाभ किसानों की आय में वृद्धि के रूप में होता है।

कृषि क्षेत्र में आज समस्या उत्पादन की नहीं बल्कि विपणन की अधिक है। देश में अभी तक प्रचलित नियमों के अनुसार किसान अपने कृषि उत्पाद को केवल कृषि उत्पाद विपणन समिति के माध्यम से ही बेच सकता था। शायद कृषि उत्पाद ही देश में एक ऐसा उत्पाद है जिसे बेचने की क्रीमत उत्पादक तय नहीं कर पाता था बल्कि इस समिति के सदस्य इसकी क्रीमत तय करते थे।

इसके कारण कई बार तो किसान अपने उत्पाद की उत्पादन लागत भी वसूल नहीं कर पाता था। परंतु, अब इस क़ानून के नियमों को शिथिल बना दिया गया है जिसके कारण अब किसान अपनी उपज को सीधे ही प्रसंस्करण इकाइयों को, निर्यातकों को एवं इन वस्तुओं में व्यापार कर रही संस्थाओं को बेच पा रहे हैं एवं उस उत्पाद की क्रीमत भी किसान एवं ये संस्थान आपस में मिलकर तय कर रहे हैं।

नियमों में किए गए इन बदलावों से कृषि उत्पाद विपणन समितियों को अब प्रतिस्पर्धा का सामना करना पड़ रहा है एवं ये समितियाँ भी अब कृषि उत्पादों की क्रीमतें बाज़ार की क्रीमतों के आधार पर तय करने को बाध्य हो रही हैं क्योंकि इन समितियों का एकाधिकार अब समाप्त हो गया है एवं इससे अंततः किसानों को ही लाभ हो रहा है।

लघु एवं सीमांत किसान भी अब आपस में मिलकर किसान उत्पाद संस्थान का निर्माण कर सकते हैं एवं इस किसान उत्पाद संस्थान के माध्यम से अपने कृषि उत्पादों को सीधे ही उक्त वर्णित संस्थाओं को बेच सकते हैं। अतः इनकी निर्भरता अब कृषि उत्पाद विपणन समितियों पर कम हो रही है।

देश में 10,000 किसान उत्पाद संस्थानों का निर्माण, गुजरात में स्थापित की गई अमूल दुग्ध उत्पाद संस्थान की तर्ज़ पर, किया जा सकता है। कृषि उत्पादों के मार्केटिंग के क्षेत्र में किए गए उक्त परिवर्तन के कारण किसानों को उनकी उपज का वाजिब दाम अब बाज़ार में मिलने लगा है एवं अब उनका शोषण नहीं किया जा सकेगा।

इसी प्रकार, देश में लागू आवश्यक वस्तु अधिनियम के अंतर्गत सरकारों को यह अधिकार था कि वे किसी भी कृषि उत्पाद के भंडारण की सीमा निर्धारित कर सकती थीं। कोई भी व्यापारी इस निर्धारित सीमा से अधिक भंडारण नहीं कर सकता था। इस नियम के कारण कोल्ड स्टोरेज के निर्माण हेतु निजी निवेशक आगे नहीं आ पा रहे थे। क्योंकि, पता नहीं कब भंडारण की सीमा सम्बंधी नियमों को लागू कर दिया जाय।

दरअसल आवश्यक वस्तु अधिनियम कानून की जड़ें वर्ष 1943 तक पीछे चली जाती हैं जब देश में अकाल पड़ता था एवं कृषि उत्पादों का उत्पादन सीमित मात्रा में होता था। तब व्यापारियों पर कृषि उत्पादों के भंडारण हेतु सीमा लागू की जाती थी ताकि व्यापारी जमाखोरी नहीं कर सकें। परंतु आज तो परिस्थितियाँ ही भिन्न हैं। देश में अनाज का पर्याप्त भंडार मौजूद है तब आज इस प्रकार के नियमों की आवश्यकता ही क्यों है। अतः अब केंद्र सरकार द्वारा इस आवश्यक वस्तु अधिनियम को हटा दिया गया है।

अभी तक किसान, सामान्यतः अगले वर्ष किस कृषि उत्पाद की फ़सल पैदा करना है इस सम्बन्ध में निर्णय, इस वर्ष उस उत्पाद की बाज़ार क्रीमत को आधार मानकर, लेता था। उदाहरण के तौर पर यदि इस वर्ष प्याज़ के बाज़ार दाम अधिक थे तो अधिक से अधिक किसान प्याज़ की पैदावार करने का प्रयास करते थे। अगले वर्ष फ़सल की मात्रा अधिक होने के कारण बाज़ार में प्याज़ के दाम कम हो जाते थे, जिसके चलते किसानों को भारी मात्रा में नुक़सान झेलना पड़ता था।

किसानों की इस परेशानी को दूर करने के उद्देश्य से अब अनुबंध खेती प्रणाली को प्रारम्भ किया गया है। जिसके अंतर्गत किसान, अपनी सोसायटी के माध्यम से, भविष्य में उसके उत्पाद की क्रीमत आज ही तय कर लेता है एवं जिस भी संस्थान को उसे अपनी फ़सल बेचना है उससे अगले वर्ष होने वाली फ़सल की क्रीमत आज ही तय कर उस संस्थान से अनुबंध कर लेता है और उसी उत्पाद की खेती कर सकता है। हाँ, उस उत्पाद की गुणवत्ता का ध्यान ज़रूर उसे रखना होता है। इस प्रकार के नियम से देश में किसानों को उसकी उपज का उचित बाज़ार मूल्य प्राप्त होने लगेगा।

कोरोना वायरस महामारी में कृषि क्षेत्र के बाद ग्लोबल सप्लाइ चैन एक ऐसा दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र है, जिसमें भारत आगे बढ़ने का प्रयास कर रहा है। क्योंकि अब यह देखा जा रहा है कि एशिया के कुछ दूसरे देशों में विनिर्माण क्षेत्र में गतिविधियाँ बढ़ती दिखाई दे रही हैं एवं इनके बीच में ग्लोबल सप्लाइ चैन की गतिविधियाँ आपस में समेकित पाई जा रही हैं।

उदाहरण के तौर पर चार पहिया वाहनों के लिए उसके एक अंग का निर्माण एक देश में हो रहा है तो किसी दूसरे अंग का निर्माण किसी अन्य देश में हो रहा है। परंतु आपस में इन्होंने एक समेकित

सप्लाइ चैन बनाई हुई है। अतः अब भारत द्वारा ग्लोबल सप्लाइ चैन में अपनी हिस्सेदारी बढ़ाने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है। इसके लिए देश में आधारभूत सुविधाओं का विकास करने की दिशा में काम जारी है।

तटवर्तीय इलाकों में सड़क मार्गों का निर्माण किया जा रहा है। पूरे देश को मल्टी मॉडल कनेक्टिविटी इंफ़्रास्ट्रक्चर से जोड़ने की एक बहुत बड़ी योजना तैयार की गई है। इस योजना के अंतर्गत समुद्रीय बंदरगाहों को रेल मार्ग से जोड़ा जाएगा। रेल मार्ग को रोड मार्ग से काफ़ी बड़ी हद तक जोड़ा जा चुका है।

इससे देश में यातायात की सुविधा में और अधिक सुधार देखने को मिलेगा। मल्टी मोडल कनेक्टिविटी इंफ़्रास्ट्रक्चर सिस्टम यदि देश में उपलब्ध होगा तो देशी एवं विदेशी निवेशक इन क्षेत्रों में अपना निवेश करने को आकर्षित होंगे।

देश के बंदरगाहों में वस्तुओं के आयात एवं निर्यात के लिए टर्न-अराउंड टाइम कम किए जाने के भरसक प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं। अतः ग्लोबल सप्लाइ चैन का विकास भी एक नई गतिविधि के तौर पर देखने को मिलेगा।

भारतीय उद्योग संघ की सालाना बैठक को सम्बोधित करते हुए भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक के गवर्नर शक्ति कांत दास ने भी कहा है कि देश में बदलती परिस्थितियाँ भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के पक्ष में हैं एवं आने वाले समय में भारत को ग्लोबल वैल्यू/सप्लाइ चैन का हिस्सा बनने की दिशा में तेज़ी से आगे बढ़ने की आवश्यकता है।

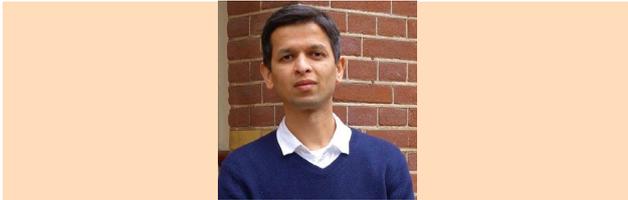
किसी ज़माने में देश में यह सोचा जाता था कि एक राज्य की राजधानी को दूसरे राज्य की राजधानी से जोड़ना है अथवा एक बड़े शहर को दूसरे बड़े शहर से जोड़ना है। यह कार्य चूँकि देश में लगभग सम्पन्न हो चुका है, अतः अभी हाल ही में इस सोच में स्पष्ट तौर पर बदलाव आया है। अब सोचा जा रहा है कि किस प्रकार ब्रॉड बैंड की कनेक्टिविटी को गावों तक पहुँचाएँ।

इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी को गावों तक प्रदान करें ताकि इन गावों की विशेषताओं का उपयोग देश के हित में किया जा सके। ग्रामीण पर्यटन की ओर भी अब फ़ोकस किया जा रहा है। भारत में इस क्षेत्र में विकास की अपार सम्भावनाएँ हैं। इसमें कम पूँजी निवेश से रोज़गार के अधिक से अधिक अवसर निर्मित होते हैं। इस क्षेत्र में कार्य करने वाले लोगों में अधिक स्किलिंग की भी ज़रूरत नहीं होती है।

जाहिर है, केंद्र के प्रयासों से भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के स्वरूप में कई परिवर्तन आ रहे हैं और ये परिवर्तन निश्चित रूप से अर्थव्यवस्था को मजबूती देने वाले तथा आगे ले जाने वाले हैं।

(लेखक बैंकिंग क्षेत्र से सेवानिवृत्त हैं। आर्थिक विषयों के जानकार हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार उनके निजी हैं।)

Sacred Geography of Mathura, Ayodhya, and Varanasi



Mahesh Gogate

Renowned scholar, Narayan Bhatta composed his treatise titled “Tristhalisetu” in the mid-16th century. In the chapter dedicated to Varanasi, Bhatta discusses the continuous demolition of the Vishwanath temple of Varanasi. Bhatta mentions that if invaders have razed the temple, then the vacant place should be properly worshipped. Bhatta highlights that demolition of the temple shall not distract and reduce the relevance and sanctity of the place. His work reiterates that the sanctity of a sacred site ‘tirtha’ remains eternal despite the external intrusions and destruction of the physical structures and forms. Thus, the sanctity is inherent to the sacred territory.

In her incredible scholarly work titled “Flight of Deities and Rebirth of Temples” (2019), historian scholar Meenakshi Jain has meticulously recorded how ordinary devotees sheltered and carried the images of deities enshrined in the numerous temples throughout the subcontinent; how several destroyed temples were reconstructed time and time again by unnamed patrons, and finally how the devotion and affection for the deities were well preserved through bhajan, kirtan and katha. The age-old pilgrimage practices to these sacred sites have also kept numerous sacred places thriving during a

troubled time.

Nearly two centuries ago, Varanasi witnessed the reclaiming of several sacred temple sites aided and expedited prominently by Peshwa-s and other Marathas. Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore rebuilt the Kashi Vishwanath Temple at its present location in 1775-1777. In the early 1950s, president Dr Rajendra Prasad was invited to perform the reinstallation ceremony of Somnath temple. In his speech, Dr Rajendra Prasad invoked the notions of faith and devotion. He asserted that the demolition of our temples was an assault on the external icons of nations faith; however, it did not shake the fountainhead of our eternal faith. The Krishna temple at Mathura was completed shortly after that, in 1956.

Since then, after six decades, on 8 March 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation

The peninsular landscape is the most common geographical feature noticeable in these three sacred cities. The presence of pure running water in various forms allowed the traditions and rituals to survive and also reveals the spatial dynamics of the sacred sites. The Yamuna river flows down from north to south and has a meandering course at Mathura which is located on the eastern bank. The Braja mandala pilgrimage covers groves, hills, rivers, lakes, and water tanks.



Details: Satellite imagery of Mathura, Ayodhya and Varanasi.
(Source: Zoom Earth, Esri, Maxar Microsoft satellite images)

stone of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Dham (Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor Project) in Varanasi. In less than a year and a half, Narendra Modi visited the sacred city of Ayodhya to perform the Bhoomi-Poojan of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir.

These two historical events mark a significant departure from the sluggish response and impudent approach in perceiving the sacred sites and temples that have endured the series of despotism and destruction by the invaders. In his address at the gathering in Varanasi, Prime Minister Modi touched on a few landmark historical events and stressed on the need of reclaiming and restoring the Kashi Vishwanath temple which was continuously under attack by foreign invaders. In one of the finest addresses at the Bhoomi Pujan in Ayodhya, Prime Minister cited the numerous sacred sites spread across this sacred landscape of India encompassed by the pure devotion to Sri Ram. The five-century old struggle filled with sacrifices and immense devotion of countless Kar Sevaks and devotees concluded with the reclaiming and construction of a grand temple at one of the prominent sacred sites for Hindus across the world.

As a research student studying the ancient city, Varanasi, Ayodhya and Mathura are not distant places. Therefore, when Prime Minister invoked various prominent and revered geographical sites not only from the city of Ayodhya but from the different parts of the subcontinent, I thought, let us revisit Mathura, Ayodhya and Varanasi to understand another dimension of a unique and familiar topography that has sustained the sanctity of these prominent sites.

Unique geographical features of three sacred cities

Kashi Khanda of Skanda Purana narrates the story that while answering questions of his wife Lopamudra Sage Agastya describes to her about various sacred tirtha-s for getting the ultimate liberation, i.e. moksha. Sage Agastya first mentions about the city of Prayag, located on the confluence of three rivers and then refers to the seven sacred cities called as 'Saptapuri': Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kanchi (Kanchipuram), Avantika (Ujjain), Kashi (Varanasi) and Dvaravati (Dwarka) that bestow ultimate liberation and called as Mokshadayini.

Mathura is the birthplace of Krishna; Rama, an

epitome of a virtuous king born in Ayodhya, and Varanasi is renowned as a place never forsaken by Siva, are from the state of Uttar Pradesh. These three cities were heavily suffered iconoclastic wrath of foreign invaders. The prominent temples were targeted and ravaged. However, with the resilience of deep devotion, footprints of pilgrims and seekers, and also the unique landscape full of groves, hills, rivers, streams, water pools, and temple tanks preserved the sanctity of these ancient sites.

Mathura is located on river Yamuna and Ayodhya located on Sarayu (Ghaghra) river are significant tributaries of river Ganga. Varanasi is situated on the concave bank of river Ganga and almost in the centre of the Ganga valley.

The peninsular landscape is the most common geographical feature noticeable in these three sacred cities. The presence of pure running water in various forms allowed the traditions and rituals to survive and also reveals the spatial dynamics of the sacred sites. The Yamuna river flows down from north to south and has a meandering course at Mathura which is located on the eastern bank. The Braja mandala pilgrimage covers groves, hills, rivers, lakes, and water tanks.

The peninsular landscape is the most common geographical feature noticeable in these three sacred cities. The presence of pure running water in various forms allowed the traditions and rituals to survive and also reveals the spatial dynamics of the sacred sites. The Yamuna river flows down from north to south and has a meandering course at Mathura which is located on the eastern bank. The Braja mandala pilgrimage covers groves, hills, rivers, lakes, and water tanks.

Lakshmidhara Bhatta, who was the royal counsellor in the court of king Govindacandra (1114-1154) of Gahadavala dynasty composed the remarkable volume entitled "Tirtha Vivechana Kanda". The scholarly work of Lakshmidhara eulogises the sacred sites of Vrindavan and Mathura in the ninth chapter titled Mathura Mahatmya. Lakshmidhara mentions Mathura as a renowned site for ultimate liberation. He describes the detailed landscape and of the sacred site and mentions the water pools. British district officer Growse in his memoir on Mathura district mentions about the plenty masonry water tanks with stunning architecture work. The riverfront of Mathura, Ayodhya, and Varanasi has a number of magnificently built masonry steps on the riverbank called ghataare associated with temples of various deities. Like Mathura and Varanasi, Ayodhya also had numerous water pools and tanks associated with Ramayana such as Rama kunda, Sitakunda and Agni kunda. Along with the celestial rivers and other streams, these three cities have sacred water pools that are deeply interwoven with the historical past of the sacred sites and frequently appear in the various texts.

The spatial texts like Purana-s and Tirtha Mahatmya have subtly recorded the geography, its distinct features and the symbiosis of nature and the culture of devotion. I have briefly discussed the sacred landscape of Mathura, Ayodhya and Varanasi as a part of a larger pilgrimage network that are deeply rooted with India's geography. The process of reclaiming and restoring of temples will markedly celebrate the notions of preserving and valuing the nature and divinity.

(The Writer is PhD/JSPS Research Fellow at Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan. Views are Personal)

23rd August 2020

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Jana Adhikar Mancha

Discussion on
Aatmanirbhar Bharat: The Vision of the Future in Shri Narendra Modi's Independence Day Speech 2020

Speakers
Prof. Bimal Shankar Nanda, Shri Pathikrit Pyne
Smt Parul Mandat (Singh), Shri Pradip Roy

Special Remarks
Dr. Anirban Ganguly

Date: Sunday, 23rd August 2020

21st August 2020

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation

Talk by
Dr Parth Shah
President Centre for Civil Society (CCS) & eminent public policy expert

Special Remarks by
Shri Shakti Sinha
Director, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research & International Studies, Gujarat

on
Understanding National Education Policy 2020

Date: Friday, 21st August 2020

20th August 2020

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Intellectual Outreach Programme, Kolkata Zone, West Bengal

Discussion on
National Education Policy 2020: In The Light of New India

Speakers
Dr. Jisnu Basu, Dr. Anirban Ganguly
Dr. Pankaj Kumar Roy, Dr. Nisith Kumar Das

Date: Thursday, 20th August 2020

14th August 2020

#AatmanirbharBharat

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation

Special Talk on
National Education Policy 2020: New Education Vision for New India

by
Prof. M.K. Sridhar
Member, National Education Policy Draft Committee & Former Dean, Department of Management Studies at Bangalore University

Date: Friday, 14th August 2020

13th August 2020

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Jana Adhikar Mancha

Discussion on
Aatmanirbhar Bharat & National Education Policy 2020: Dream of a New India

Speakers
Dr. Anirban Ganguly, Shri Pathikrit Pyne
Dr. Avishkek Adhikary, Shri Jaidipta Biswas

Date: Thursday, 13th August 2020

12th August 2020

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Intellectual Outreach Committee, East Bardhaman, West Bengal

Discussion on
New Education Policy: Changes & Challenges

Speakers
Dr. Anirban Ganguly, Dr. Debasish Biswas
Dr. Arijit Bhattacharya, Mr. Shyam Sundar Coudhury

Date: Wednesday, 12th August 2020

10th August 2020

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Jana Adhikar Mancha

Discussion on
Contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the Resurgence of West Bengal

Speakers
Shri Shantanu Thakur, Prof. Bimal Shankar Nanda
Dr. Anirban Ganguly

02nd August 2020

SUNDAY TIMES RAM MANDIR

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Jana Adhikar Mancha

Discussion on
Contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the Resurgence of West Bengal

Speakers
Shri Shantanu Thakur, Prof. Bimal Shankar Nanda
Dr. Anirban Ganguly

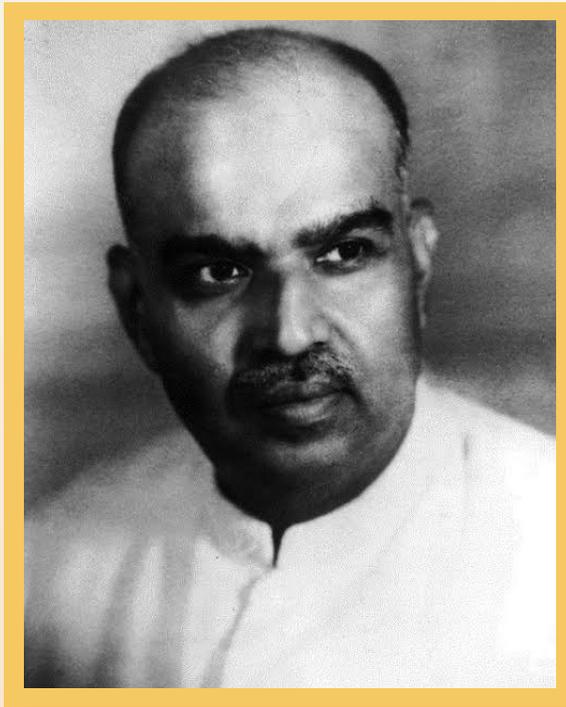
1st August 2020

SHIRDI MANDIR

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation & Jana Adhikar Mancha

Discussion on
Contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the Resurgence of West Bengal

Speakers
Shri Shantanu Thakur, Prof. Bimal Shankar Nanda
Dr. Anirban Ganguly



“Let us not forget that the Hindus of East Bengal are entitled to the protection of India, not on humanitarian consideration alone, but by virtue of their sufferings and sacrifices, made cheerfully for generations, not for advancing their own parochial interests, but for laying the foundations of India’s political freedom and intellectual progress. It is the united voice of the leaders that are dead and of the youth that smilingly walked upto the gallows for India’s cause that calls for justice and fairplay at the hands of Free India of today.”

-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
in Parliament on his resignation as Minister of Industry and Supply,
19th April, 1950

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Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation

9, Ashoka Road New Delhi - 110001

E-mail: office@spmrf.org, Phone: 011-23005850