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Swamitv Yojna- Unlocking the
Potential of Every Village Property

Dr. Sudhir Bisht

Analyzing the Bounce-Back

Pratim Ranjan Bose

National Education Policy

2020: Hierarchy versus

Openness in Higher Education

Dipankar Sengupta

कृषि सुधारों से किसानों की आमदनी

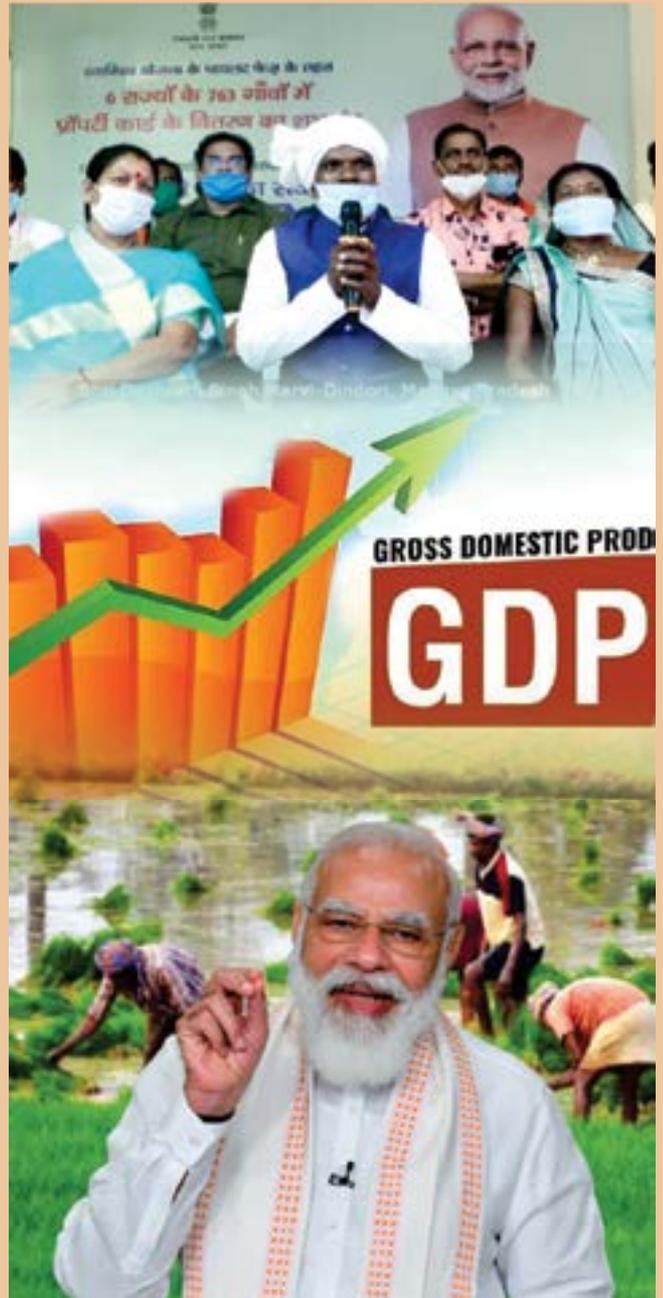
बढ़ाने में जुटी मोदी सरकार

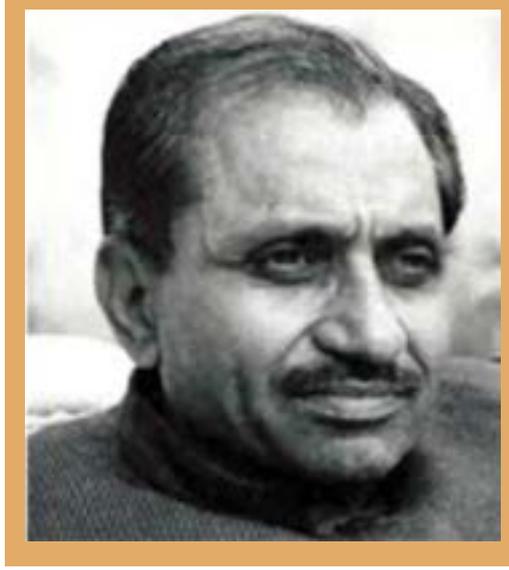
रमेश कुमार दूबे

Covid-19 Outbreak and

Indian Government's Responses

Dr. Subhabrata Dutta





“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,
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Dr. Anirban Ganguly

Towards the Path of Transformation

defined the aspiration and urge for change among the people of the region. The results have indicated how people of Jammu and Kashmir are now on an unalterable path of development and transformation.

The recently concluded local body elections in Jammu and Kashmir are deeply symbolic of the yearning for change and transformation. The smooth conduct of elections and the overwhelming response to it by the people of the region clearly demonstrated that their long suppressed democratic urges, their desire to be part of the electoral mainstream and to direct and define their democratic destiny, had found an outlet and channel. The elections also

The BJP's emergence as the single largest party, its gathering more votes than the ill intentioned Gupkar Alliance, its polling more votes than the PDP, NC and Congress combined, is a resounding indicator of the peoples' affirmative support to Prime Minister Modi's governance vision. Ever since the abrogation of Article 370, the naysayers and the dismember India lobby have been crying hoarse on how the people of Kashmir have been discriminated against and of how the future of the state is imperilled. While these networks were occupied in trying to dish out a deliberately false narrative of Kashmir, Prime Minister Modi and his government have striven, for the last one year, to positively alter the situation on the ground.

Development projects, infrastructural initiatives, laying the foundations of a comprehensive and affordable public

healthcare structure, addressing long pending demands and needs – all of these have been systematically attended to. Such a constructive and affirmative approach gave rise to a greater confidence among people. It firmed up their democratic aspirations and commitment and cemented their faith in the constitutional process and in their own democratic future. This faith and commitment was translated into votes for Prime Minister Modi's governance approach and his vision of a new Jammu and Kashmir. While his detractors attempted to retard the process, PM Modi continued to lay the foundations of that new vision and to win the peoples' confidence and support. In his march towards Jammu and Kashmir the people are equal partners.

The Gupkar Alliance and the Congress party are the biggest losers in the local body polls. The BJP's emergence as the single largest party, its opening account

in the Valley, is in itself a rejection of the politics of separatism and of blackmail. Gupkar politics has come across as dated and putrefying. People of Kashmir do not want to be held hostage by their self-professed leaders anymore; they do not wish to be dictated to or to be controlled for fulfilling a hollow ideological cause, they want greater integration, they aspire to become participants and beneficiaries in the march for a new India, they want to be stakeholders in the reshaping of India's destiny. They realise their mis-utilised potential of the past and want that to be now channelized into ushering a new era for themselves and their state.

An externally controlled and directed politics of fear and pressure has been completely rejected; the people of Jammu and Kashmir have opted for Prime Minister Modi's transformative ways and approach. They realise that their future lies along that way.

PM's address at launching of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT to extend coverage to all residents of Jammu & Kashmir on 26 December 2020

- » आज मुझे जम्मू-कश्मीर के दो लाभार्थियों से आयुष्मान भारत योजना के विषय में उनका अनुभव सुनने का अवसर मिला। मेरे लिए सिर्फ आपके ये अनुभव नहीं हैं।
- » कभी-कभी जब काम करते हैं, निर्णय करते हैं, लेकिन जिनके लिए करते हैं उनसे जब संतोष के शब्द मिलते हैं, वो शब्द मेरे लिए आशीर्वाद बन जाते हैं।
- » मुझे गरीबों के लिए और ज्यादा काम करने के लिए, और मेहनत करने के लिए और दौड़ने के लिए, ये आपके आशीर्वाद बड़ी ताकत देते हैं।
- » इत्तेफाक से देखिए दोनों भाई जम्मू वाले सज्जन भी और श्रीनगर वाले भी, अपना छोटा कारोबार कोई एक ड्राइवरी करता है कोई कुछ, लेकिन मुसीबत के समय में ये योजना उनकी जीवन में कितना बड़ा काम कर रही है।
- » आप की बातें सुनकर के मुझे बहुत अच्छा लगा। विकास की योजनाओं का लाभ आखिरी इंसान तक पहुंचे गरीब से गरीब तक पहुंचे, जमीन के हर कोने तक पहुंचे, सभी तक पहुंचे यह हमारी सरकार का commitment है।
- » आज का दिन जम्मू कश्मीर के लिए बहुत ऐतिहासिक है। आज जम्मू कश्मीर के सभी लोगों को आयुष्मान योजना का लाभ मिलने जा रहा है।
- » सेहत स्कीम- अपने आप में एक बहुत बड़ा कदम है। और जम्मू-कश्मीर को अपने लोगों के विकास के लिए ये कदम उठाता देख, मुझे भी बहुत खुशी हो रही है।
- » श्रीमान मनोज सिन्हा जी और उनकी पूरी टीम को, सरकार के सभी मुलाजिम को, जम्मू-कश्मीर के नागरिकों को मेरी तरफ से बहुत-बहुत बधाई है।
- » वैसे मेरी इच्छा थी कि ये कार्यक्रम कल ही हो, अगर 25 तारीख को अटल जी के जन्मदिन पर ये हो पाता लेकिन मेरी अपनी कुछ व्यस्तताओं के कारण मैं कल इसे नहीं कर पाया इसलिए मुझे आज की date तय करनी पड़ी।
- » अटल जी का जम्मू-कश्मीर से एक विशेष स्नेह था। अटल जी इंसानियत, जम्हूरियत और कश्मीरियत की बात को लेकर के हम सबको आगे के कामों के लिए लगातार दिशानिर्देश देते रहे हैं।
- » इन्हीं तीन मंत्रों को लेकर के आज जम्मू-कश्मीर, इसी भावना को मजबूत करते हुए आगे बढ़ रहा है।
- » साथियों, इस योजना के फायदों पर विस्तार से बात करने से पहले मैं आज, मुझे अवसर मिला है आपके बीच आने का तो मैं कहना चाहूंगा मैं जम्मू-कश्मीर के लोगों को लोकतंत्र को मजबूत करने के लिए अनेक-अनेक-अनेक-अनेक बधाईयाँ देता हूँ।
- » District Development Council के चुनाव ने एक नया अध्याय लिखा है। मैं इन चुनावों के हर Phase में देख रहा था कि कैसे इतनी सदी के बावजूद, कोरोना के बावजूद, नौजवान, बुजुर्ग, महिलाएं बूथ पर पहुंचे हैं।
- » घंटों तक कतार में खड़े रहे हैं। जम्मू कश्मीर के हर वोटर के चेहरे पर मुझे विकास के लिए, डेवलपमेंट के लिए एक उम्मीद नजर आई, उमंग नजर आई।
- » जम्मू कश्मीर के हर वोटर की आंखों में मैंने अतीत को पीछे छोड़ते हुए, बेहतर भविष्य का विश्वास भी देखा है।

PM's address at the disbursement of PM-KISAN installment on 25 December 2020

- » किसानों के जीवन में खुशी, ये हम सभी की खुशी बढ़ा देती है और आज का दिवस तो बहुत ही पावन दिवस भी है।
- » किसानों को आज जो सम्मान निधि मिली है, उसके साथ ही आज का दिन कई अवसरों का संगम बनकर भी आया है।
- » सभी देशवासियों को आज क्रिसमस की भी बहुत-बहुत शुभकामनाएं। मेरी कामना है क्रिसमस का ये त्योहार, विश्व में प्रेम, शांति और सद्भाव का प्रसार करे।
- » साथियों, आज मोक्षदा एकादशी है, गीता जयंति है। आज ही भारत रत्न महामना मदन मोहन मालवीय जी की जयंति भी है।
- » देश के महान कर्मयोगी, हमारे प्रेरणा पुरुष स्वर्गीय अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी की भी आज जन्म जयंती है। उनकी स्मृति में आज देश गुड गवर्नेंस डे भी मना रहा है।
- » साथियों, अटल जी ने गीता के संदेशों के अनुरूप जीवन जीने का लगातार प्रयास किया। गीता में कहा गया है कि स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः संसिद्धिम् लभते नरः।
- » यानि जो अपने स्वाभाविक कर्मों को तत्परता से करता है, उसे सिद्धि मिलती है। अटल जी ने भी अपना पूरा जीवन राष्ट्र के प्रति अपने कर्म को पूरी निष्ठा से निभाने में समर्पित कर दिया।
- » सुशासन को, गुड गवर्नेंस को अटल जी ने भारत के राजनीति और सामाजिक विमर्श का हिस्सा बनाया। गांव और गरीब के विकास को अटल जी ने सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता दी।
- » प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना हो या फिर स्वर्णिम चतुर्भुज योजना हो, अंत्योदय अन्न योजना हो या फिर सर्व शिक्षा अभियान हो, राष्ट्रजीवन में सार्थक बदलाव लाने वाले अनेक कदम अटल जी ने उठाए।
- » आज पूरा देश उनको स्मरण कर रहा है, अटल जी को नमन कर रहा है। आज जिन कृषि सुधारों को देश ने ज़मीन पर उतारा है, उनके सूत्रधार भी एक प्रकार से अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी भी थे।
- » साथियों, अटल जी गरीब के हित में, किसान के हित में बनने वाली सभी योजनाओं में होने वाले भ्रष्टाचार को राष्ट्रीय रोग मानते थे।
- » आप सबको याद होगा, उन्होंने एक बार पहले की सरकारों पर कटाक्ष करते हुए एक पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री की बात याद दिलाई थी।
- » उनको याद दिलाते हुए उन्होंने कहा था- रुपया चलता है तो घिसता है, रुपया घिसता है, हाथ में लगता है और धीरे से जेबों में चला जाता है।
- » मुझे संतोष है कि आज ना रुपया घिसता है और ना ही किसी गलत हाथ में लगता है। दिल्ली से जिस गरीब के लिए रुपया निकलता है वो उसके बैंक खाते में सीधा पहुंचता है।
- » अभी हमारे कृषि मंत्री नरेंद्र जी तोमर ने इसके विषय में विस्तार में हमारे सामने रखा है। पीएम किसान सम्मान निधि इसका ही एक उत्तम उदाहरण है।
- » आज देश के 9 करोड़ से ज्यादा किसान परिवारों के बैंक खाते में सीधे, एक कम्प्यूटर के क्लिक से 18 हजार करोड़ रुपए से भी ज्यादा रकम उनके किसानों के बैंक के खाते में जमा हो गए हैं।
- » जब से ये योजना शुरू हुई है, तब से 1 लाख, 10 हजार करोड़ रुपए से ज्यादा किसानों के खाते में पहुंच चुके हैं और यही तो गुड गवर्नेंस है।
- » यही तो गुड गवर्नेंस टेक्नोलॉजी के द्वारा उपयोग किया गया है। 18 हजार करोड़ से ज्यादा रुपए पल भर में, कुछ ही पल में सीधे किसानों के बैंक खातों में जमा हो गए हैं।

PM chairs high level meeting with CMs to review status and preparedness of COVID-19 response and management on 24 November 2020

- » Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting with Chief Ministers of all States and UTs on 24 November 2020 via video conferencing, to review the status and preparedness of COVID-19 response and management, with special emphasis on eight high focus States. These States were Haryana, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and West Bengal. The modalities of Covid-19 vaccine delivery, distribution and administration were also discussed during the meeting.
- » Ramping up health infrastructure: Prime Minister remarked that the country has faced the pandemic through concerted efforts and in terms of both recovery rate and fatality rate, the situation in India is better than most other countries. He talked about the expansion of the testing and treatment network, and noted that special emphasis of the PM CARES fund has been to make available oxygen. He said that efforts are on to make medical colleges and district hospitals self-sufficient in terms of oxygen generation, and informed that the process for establishing more than 160 new oxygen plants is underway.
- » Four stages of people's response: Stating that it is important to understand how the people have reacted to the pandemic, the



Prime Minister noted that it can be broken down to four stages. The first was of fear, when people reacted in panic. The second stage saw cropping up of doubts about the virus, when several people tried to hide that they had been afflicted by it. The third stage was of acceptance, when people became more serious about the virus and displayed greater alertness. In the fourth stage, with increasing recovery rate, people have developed a false notion of security from the virus, thus leading to rise in instances of negligence. Prime Minister emphasized that it is of utmost importance to increase awareness about the seriousness of the virus in this fourth stage. He noted that the trend of increase in spread of the pandemic in countries where its impact was earlier

lessening, is being seen in some States as well, which necessitates greater alacrity and caution by the administration.

- » Prime Minister noted that it is important to increase RT-PCR tests, ensure better monitoring of patients esp those in home isolation, better equip health centres at village and community level and keep running awareness campaigns for safety from the virus. He said that our target should be to bring down Fatality Rate below 1%.
- » Ensuring Smooth, Systematic and Sustained Vaccination: Prime Minister reassured that the government is keeping a close watch on the development of vaccines and is in contact with Indian developers and manufacturers, along with global regulators, governments of other countries, multilateral institutions and international companies. He added that it will be ensured that the vaccine for citizens will meet all necessary scientific criteria. He underlined that just like the focus in the fight against COVID has been on saving each and every life, the priority will be to ensure that the vaccine reaches everyone. Governments at all levels will have to work together to ensure that the vaccination drive is smooth, systematic and sustained.
- » Prime Minister noted that the priority of vaccination is being decided in consultation with the States. The requirements of additional cold chain storages has also been discussed with the States. He asked the Chief Ministers to ensure regular monitoring of State Level Steering Committee and State & District Level Task Force to ensure better results.
- » Prime Minister forewarned that past experience tells us several myths and rumours are spread around vaccines. Rumours about side effects of the vaccine may be spread. He emphasized that such attempts need to be tackled through spreading greater awareness, by taking all possible help including civil society, students of NCC & NSS and the media.
- » Chief Ministers Speak: The Chief Ministers praised the leadership of the Prime Minister and thanked the Central Government for providing necessary assistance in improving health infrastructure in the States. They provided detailed feedback of the ground situation in their States. They gave an overview of the rise in number of cases, discussed issues like post-COVID complications, measures taken to increase testing, steps initiated like testing being done at State borders, going from home to home to conduct tests, curbs being put to reduce size of public gatherings, imposition of curfews and other crowd restrictive measures, awareness campaigns being run and steps taken to increase usage of masks. They also discussed and gave suggestions about the vaccination drive.
- » Union Health Secretary Shri Rajesh Bhushan gave a presentation on the current COVID situation and shared details about preparedness. He discussed targeted testing, tracing and testing all contacts within 72 hours, increasing RTPCR testing, efforts to improve the health infrastructure and fine tuning of data reported from the States. Dr. VK Paul, Member, NITI Ayog, gave a presentation on delivery, distribution and administration of the vaccine.

PM's address at the Virtual Global Investor Roundtable on 05 November 2020



- » Greetings on the festival season. I am delighted to welcome you. I am happy to see your eagerness to enhance your engagement with us.
- » I hope that our better understanding of each other's perspectives, will result in a better alignment of your plans and our vision.
- » Friends, Through this year, as India bravely fought the global pandemic, the world saw India's national character. The world also saw India's true strengths. It successfully brought out traits that Indians are known for: A sense of responsibility.
- » A spirit of compassion. National unity. The spark of innovation. India has shown remarkable resilience in this pandemic, be it fighting the virus or ensuring economic stability.
- » This resilience is driven by the strength of our systems, support of our people and stability of our policies.
- » It is because of the strength of our systems, that we could provide food-grains to

From fiscal Irresponsibility to fiscal prudence, from High inflation to low inflation, from reckless lending creating Non performing assets to merit based lending, from infrastructure deficit to infrastructure surplus, from mis-managed urban growth to holistic and balanced growth and from physical to digital infrastructure.

around 800 million people, Money to 420 million people, and free cooking gas to around 80 million families.

- » It is because of the support of the people who practice social distancing and wearing of masks that India has given such a strong fight to the virus.
- » It is because of the stability of our policies that India has emerged as one of the world's preferred investment destinations.
- » Friends, We are building a New India which is free of old practices. Today, India is changing and for the better.
- » From fiscal Irresponsibility to fiscal prudence, from High inflation to low inflation, from reckless lending creating Non performing assets to merit based lending, from infrastructure deficit to infrastructure surplus, from mis-managed urban growth to holistic and balanced growth and from physical to digital infrastructure.
- » Friends, India's quest to become aatmnirbhar is not just a vision but a well-planned economic strategy.
- » A strategy that aims to use the capabilities of our businesses and skills of our

A spirit of compassion. National unity. The spark of innovation. India has shown remarkable resilience in this pandemic, be it fighting the virus or ensuring economic stability.

Friends, Through this year, as India bravely fought the global pandemic, the world saw India's national character. The world also saw India's true strengths. It successfully brought out traits that Indians are known for: A sense of responsibility.

workers to make India into a global manufacturing power-house.

- » A strategy that aims to use our strength in technology to become the global centre for innovations.
- » A strategy that aims to contribute to global development using our immense human resources and their talents.
- » Friends, Today, investors are moving towards companies which have a high Environmental, Social and Governance score.
- » India already has systems and companies which rank high on this. India believes in following the path of growth with equal focus on ESG.
- » Friends, India offers you Democracy, Demography, Demand as well as Diversity. Such is our diversity that you get multiple markets within one market.
- » These come with multiple pocket sizes and multiple preferences. These come with multiple weathers and multiple levels of development.
- » This diversity also comes with open minds and open markets, in a democratic, inclusive and law-abiding system.

Svamitva Yojna- Unlocking the Potential of Every Village Property

A Report from Uttarakhand



Dr. Sudhir Bisht

PM Narendra Modi's brainchild, the Svamitva Yojna (scheme), is yet another proof that 'where there is a will, there is away!'

India being a developing country is always in need of investments and the sources of funds seem to be so few and so finite. The governments-Union as well as state governments- always endeavor to make funds available in cash or in kind but in these times of pandemic, the inflow of funds have decelerated. It is in this backdrop that the importance of Svamitva Yojna grows manifold.

The plan is a bold step in the direction of empowering the people of rural India and helping them unlock the potential of their most valuable asset- their own dwellings, big and small.

Ankit Mehta, writing for Business World (Oct 7, 2020) describes it as a scheme that will "not only elevate the economy by unlocking the potential of rural India by formalizing land ownership but also boost the nation's capabilities in hi-tech manufacturing and will lead to exponential growth in job creation."

Background of the scheme:

SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) is the outcome of well-coordinated, synergetic efforts of Survey of India (SO), the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Department and State Revenue Department. Launched as a pilot that will cover nearly one lakh villages in the six states of UP, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, it can become a solid source of collateral for bank funding for the villagers who form nearly 70% of all India population.

The scheme's aim is to provide definitive official documentation in respect of all the dwelling units across 6.5 lakh villages in India, which for now have no official papers to show their legal entity.

The scheme involves mapping of village properties by use of SOI's Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs, commonly called Drones). The drone-based exercise will achieve mapping of settled habitations in villages (abaadi areas). The maps will be further validated with the help of an empowered committee of local revenue officials who will endeavor to ensure that accurate maps are produced for all village properties. After the due process, the villages will get property cards as well as proper legal titles to their lands.

A village house is often the most valuable asset of most villagers and once they get verified property card for their properties, they would be



able to leverage the property to get loans from the banks very easily. A house is after all the most bankable collateral anywhere in the world. The property cards will thus provide the villagers a valuable asset ID that can help them raise funds for small ventures.

Report from Uttarakhand

As per the Census 2011 data, there are about 16,826 villages in the thirteen districts of Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand can be broadly divided in three parts- (1) the Upper hills of Pitharogarh, Bagheshwar, Rudraprayag, Uttarkashi & Chamoli;(2) the Middle hills of Pauri Garhwal, Tehri-Garhwal, Almora and Champawat, the hills of Nainital and Chakrata tehsil in Dehradun; and (3) the remaining areas of Haridwar, Dehradun, Udham Singh Nagar and remaining area of Nainital. Except of the recent reverse migration from cities to the villages, the state of Uttarakhand has seen wholesale migration of people from villages to cities in search of jobs. Villagers not only migrate from upper and middle hills to foothills of Uttarakhand but also to cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Mumbai, even for jobs that require hardly any special skills.

As per the website downtoearth.org the rate of people migrating from Uttarakhand villages to cities is nearly 250 people a day. The main reason for the migration is of course the quest for better job opportunities in cities. Another reason is the lack of bank finances as there are no collateralswith the villagers that can assist them in getting loans from Bank to start small scale ventures. With the introduction of property cards, the villagers will have a property of worth at least a few lakhs that can act as collateral for facilitating bank loans.

In Uttarakhand, Property card distribution event was organized at the Khirsu Block in Pauri district in the second week of October 2020. Khirsu is a mini paradise on earth as it boasts of one of the most beautiful and dense forests in the world

I remember having driven down from Pauri to Khirsu last year with my uncles and cousins. At a place called Dandapani which is just 13 kms from Pauri town, I couldn't resist the temptation to stop and marvel at the sheer majesty of the dense forest that exits on either side of the highway. Pauri town itself is a sleepy but extremely beautiful town that

is home to the ancient Kandoliya temple and Nagdev temples. The football field at Ransi in Pauri is another place where the nature is at its sublime best.

I personally believe that many places like the villages around Pauri and Khirsu can become great tourist destinations. They are as beautiful as Mussoorie minus its crowd and traffic. The village homes can offer homestay facilities to all kind of long stayers, Bag-packers and even for people who just want to break free from the maddening cities for a few weeks.

This is why I felt so positively moved when about 6800 people from nearly 50 villages received property cards in the virtual presence of Prime Minister and Union Panchayati Raj Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. A huge screen was fixed at Khirsu and the PM directly interacted with a few people who were the recipient of property cards. I also spoke, over phone and Google chat, to a few villagers and officials who were present at the event.

Sh. Devendra Singh ji, an 85 year old, former state government employee, was emotional as he said that it was for the first time that a leader as 'big as the Pradhan Mantri' had interacted with the ordinary men and women of Uttarakhand villages. This he says is a recognition of the importance of Uttarakhand where every village sends at least a few sons to the Indian Army.

A serving army personnel who was on his annual leave from his 'paltan' said that he was not surprised that PM Modi connects with the people of India so easily. He says that he had a firsthand experience of that when the PM visited his unit in one of the border areas where he is currently posted.

A Village Development officer told me that it wasn't an easy task to implement the scheme. Day-to-day coordination was needed between

state revenue officials, villagers through the village samitis, Survey of India and the District headquarters to carry out aerial surveys by drones. The property identification was done on the ground by the local village boys and girls who were selected by the village samitis. These boys and girls did physicals marking on the roof tops of the properties. If a property had two or more owners then that demarcation was also done physically by use of limestone powder (choonapathar powder). He said that the planning at micro level needed close monitoring and at the macro level it needed strategic vision and deep thinking. He was all praise for the untiring efforts of all the agencies of the Union government as well as the state machinery at the district, block and village level.

Raghav Bhandari a man in his fifties said that property cards will help in settling property disputes- existing as well as potential disputes. The cards will also act as incentives to those who have left their ancestral properties in dilapidated state. An official property card would mean that the property is worth at least something and this thought would motivate the owners who have left the village to appoint caretakers for their properties.

It would be an understatement to say that the Swamitv plan has been appreciated by the village folks of Uttarakhand. In fact, residents of over sixteen thousand villages are eagerly awaiting their village to be covered under this mega plan.

I am sure that all the stakeholders will work in tandem and ensure that the Swamitv Yojna will see its completion by 2024 and all the 6.5 lakh villages in India will benefit from this novel plan.

(The writer is professor of management at DME Noida and is also a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal)

Analyzing the Bounce-Back



Pratim Ranjan Bose

Bad news sells. But in recent years they probably sell at a premium in India. So, when the Indian economy shrunk by nearly 24 per cent in the June quarter, there was a deluge of commentaries, predicting the doomsday for India.

But the reverse happened. If we combine the GST (Goods and Services Tax) collection figures for October returns and the latest PMI numbers, published by HIS Markit; Indian economy is not only recovering, but is doing better than 2019.

India ended 2019-20 with the decade's lowest growth number of 4.2 per cent. Growth particularly suffered in the second and third quarter. As in October 2019, GST collection was barely Rs 95,379 crore.

Things are distinctly better this October. The collection was 10 percent higher, compared to last year, at Rs 1,05,155 crore. Revenues from domestic transactions were up by 11 percent. Collection from imports were up by nine per cent.

The detailed datasheet points at many interesting trends. Except Delhi and four more smaller centres, all major centres reported growth. Some of them like Haryana (19 percent), Tamil Nadu (13 per cent), Punjab (15 percent), West Bengal (15 percent) showing

sharp growth in collection.

Maharashtra, which alone contributes 15 percent of India's GST collection, reported five percent growth. Delhi suffered an eight per cent decline. Both the centres were hard hit by pandemic. Noticeably, excepting West Bengal, the rest are producing States. The GST collection therefore reflects rise in both consumption and production.

The production growth actually returned two months as PMI numbers were ruling above 50. As in September, passenger car and two-wheeler sales were booming.

The trend consolidated in October with PMI reaching a decadal high of 58.9. Largest car maker, Maruti, reported 19.2 percent sales growth. Hyundai reported best monthly sales ever. Two-wheeler maker TVS reported 33 percent growth in exports.

The most heartening news is services that contribute 61.5 percent of Indian GDP is finally growing. The PMI for services reached 54.1 in October, up from 49.8 in September.

During the lockdown in April-May, business activity in cities came to a grinding halt thereby wiping out demand for services and impacting GDP. While the commentators were predicting doomsday, cities reopened and the demand returned.

Not rocket science to understand. But then there are times when people prefer to look for complex answer to simple puzzles.

Trends to consolidate

The indications are clear. Consumption suffered due to COVID-19. As the infection rate

hit a declining rate, Indian economy rebounded. The growth was gradual in proportion to the reduction in the impact of pandemic and unless there is any fresh nationwide lockdown, the trend will consolidate.

There are reasons behind this optimism. Firstly, the finalized GST numbers based on returns filed in October are actually for consumption in September, which was ahead of the peak festive buying season in October and November.

Though malls were allowed to be reopened in most cities beginning September, due to prolonged lockdown and entrenched fear of COVID-19, the consumer was not forthcoming in going out for a buying spree. Also, due to the overall uncertainty, there was an initial inertia in spending money.

With the economy rebounding and concern over income reducing, such fears and perceptions subsided in the subsequent months and people started going out for shopping or dining.

Consumer behaviour is crucial in economic projections and there is no thumb rule for it. People react differently in different conditions. There was no way to draw any projection on consumer behaviour in India during COVID-19 as the pandemic hit after a century.

Having said that the only common factor behind consumption is what economists often refer to as 'feel good'.

It is difficult to make a complete assessment of the rising consumption trend at this juncture. This may be partly due to pent up demand and partly for positive outlook. Also, people might have just wanted to beat the fear and just enjoy life, ignoring risks.

The recent uptick in infection graph after

weeks of declining trend, does indicate that some people did throw caution to the wind and engaged in revelries during the festive season. And, right now that's the only concern for the economy.

Meanwhile, the rating agencies, like Moody's, which were quick to paint a pessimistic picture of Indian economy, started revising their growth estimates upwards.

In September this year, Moody's revised the annual growth estimates (FY21) drastically downwards from (-) four percent to (-)11.5 per cent. It is now clear that the September growth. Most other rating agencies – like Goldman Sachs, Oxford Economics and SBI Research - followed the trend.

The recent consumption and PMI numbers along with other indicators forced them to revise the projections upwards once again. Moody's revised forecast to (-)10.6 percent. Oxford is now settling for (-)9.5 percent and SBI Research revised estimates from (-)12.5 percent to (-)10.7 per cent. Barclays is most optimistic expecting a contraction of only (-)6.4 per cent in 2020-2021.

But this may be just the beginning. If the trends continue, the GDP may enter the growth zone once again in October-December quarter and that will change all calculations.

The clue to the future will be available in July-September numbers. Rest assured the economy will report contraction in the September quarter. The question is about the degree of contraction.

(The author is a well-known public policy expert, with interest in economics, connectivity and infrastructure. He writes extensively on these issues. The views expressed are his own.)

A New Beginning for Ladakh



P P Wangchuk

What was it that led to the surprise victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the recent Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) elections?

But for one opinion poll, all others had given the Congress a marginal lead. And, as a result, it was more or less taken for sure, by most of the pollsters, that the Congress would wrest the Council this time, though with a razor-thin majority.

But, as the results poured in slowly, it became more or less clear that the Congress may not be able to lead the race and the margin between the two was too thin to predict anything. Later in the evening of the counting day, the BJP clearly got an edge with 15 seats, and the Congress 9. A party needs 14 seats of 26 to have a simple majority.

The total strength of the Council is 30, out of which 26 members are elected and the four others are nominated from the minority sections. And, among the elected Councillors, a Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) is elected. Another Councillor is appointed as Deputy CEC, and two others are appointed as Executive Councillors. They represent, normally, the eastern, western and northern regions of the district.

The new CEC, also called Chairman, Tashi Gyalsen, is a young and dynamic leader, formerly the President of the PDP, Leh unit. He had quit the PDP last year to join the BJP. A lawyer by profession, he is the kind of guy they needed, 'able and fit' for the post. His legal background, and his active social work in Ladakh in the last few years seem to have tilted the scale in his favour.

Only three parties were in the fray this time: The BJP, the Congress and the Aam Admi Party (AAP). The AAP's was a debut contest this time, and the party is led by a retired IPS officer, Tsering Phuntsog. As a 'new comer', it contested only for 19 of the 26 seats. As was expected, it could not make an entry into the Council.

What made the difference between the winner and the loser this time is said to be the last-minute intense campaign by the BJP. Many of its Central leaders and ministers had flown into the Leh Valley and, along with the Ladakh MP, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, they campaigned for almost a week in every nook and corner of Leh district. They promised that if the BJP was elected again, Ladakh would get all its demands fulfilled and that it would be on the road to prosperity in the next couple of years. They tried to convince the people that only a

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ruling party at the Centre could help them, and hence it was in their interest that they voted for the BJP.

Such a campaign, had a direct bearing with the way people voted. They were convinced that if not now, they could never hope to realise their long-standing demands. They are thankful for the grant of the UT status for Ladakh.

The energetic and optimistic Ladakh MP, popularly known as JTN, whose maiden speech in Parliament had gone viral, too made a definite difference in the BJP's win. He could win over most fence-sitters, particularly in the Nubra Valley. In fact, just before the elections, he could make hundreds of Congress workers shift ground to the BJP side, in several villages. As a result, all the five seats from Nubra Valley came into the BJP's lap, en bloc. PM Modi's narrative of a new Ladakh, the work on the ground in the past one year, the multidimensional development and infrastructure projects that have taken off on the ground have gone a long way in convincing the people of the sincerity of the Modi government in fulfilling their pledge empowering the people of the region and of freeing them from the cycles of deprivation and neglect.

What made the people think, initially, that the Congress would get to rule the Council this time was because of a 'sudden arising' of what came to be known as Apex Body of apolitical senior leaders, under the leadership of Thiksay Rinpoche, a former RS MP, to give a call to boycott the Council elections. This body had other senior-most and respected leaders like Thubstan Chewang, a former BJP MP, and Tsering Dorje Lakrook, a former Minister in the J&K government.

The Apex Body initiated a movement, over a period of two weeks, just before the

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elections were to be held and they were invited to come to Delhi to hold talks with the Union Home Ministry. The leaders were happy and met Home Minister Amit Shah and his team. The Apex Body leaders were assured that the Ladakhis' demand for protection would be fully accepted in one form or the other, and that the 'boycott poll call' should be withdrawn so that the elections could be held peacefully.

These leaders returned to Leh and assured the people that the Central government had assured them that their demands would be fulfilled after further talks soon after the elections were over. Since these leaders are highly respected by the people in Ladakh, they (people) took it for granted that they would get their dreams fulfilled, and that they would go for the elections.

The Central Government's contention is that the 6th Schedule as such is not what Ladakh really needs. In the north-eastern states where the 6th Schedule is in force, it is not the same in features. Therefore, the Central Government says that Ladakh's culture and land etc. can be and will be protected in other ways, not necessarily under the 6th Schedule. The issue with the Central government is that if the 6th

Schedule were to be applied in Ladakh, then the Constitution has to be amended which will be not only be time consuming but difficult as well because Parliament too has to be involved in the process.

The Union Home Ministry's assertion is that it has "other ways" to safeguard the identity of the Ladakhis and also to protect their land. When and how such a solution can be worked out is yet to be seen because the Apex Body leaders are yet to meet the Home Minister. The invitation for talks is there but, because of Covid-19, the Apex Body leaders have not been able to make it happen as yet. Once they have the talks, only then a clear picture will emerge.

One of the significant things to be noticed this time was the absence of the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democracy Party (PDP) on the political scene of the Leh region. Ever since Ladakh became a Union Territory in August, 2019, these two parties lost their relevance in Ladakh. Therefore, the leaders left their parties and joined either the BJP or the Congress. As a result, both these parties 'disappeared' from the political scene of Leh district. But, in Kargil, the Muslim-majority district, these parties are still there, and have a good foothold in the region. They do have a good number of followers, and the future elections are likely to be fought between them and the rest.

The demand for UT status for Ladakh has been there for the last 70 years. To begin with, the movement for UT status was led by the 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche who dominated Ladakh's political scenario for decades. The Rinpoche's demand, right from the time of the reorganisation of states, was to have Ladakh under the Central government. But the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, did not

accept the idea and made the Rinpoche come around to the idea of merging Ladakh into Jammu and Kashmir. But the Rinpoche never stopped agitating for the grant of UT status until his death on the 4th of November, 2003.

Another interesting development that took place in Ladakh politics recently is the emergence of the so-called Gupkar Alliance, led by Farooq Abdullah. A Gupkar Alliance team, led by Omar Abdullah, former J&K CM, visited Kargil, the twin district of Ladakh. In a day-long campaign, joined by the local parties, they sought to strengthen the Gupkar Alliance and canvassed for a movement for the restoration of Articles 370 and 35A. In what was another surprise, the local unit of the Congress Party took no time in announcing its affiliation with the Gupkar Alliance.

But, surprisingly, it was a 'no surprise' that the team went back to the Valley without visiting Leh district, knowing very well that they can't have a foothold over there. The irony of Ladakh politics is that a section of politicians in Kargil want to be with Kashmir, and not under the Central government, and this 'wishful thinking' has been made known repeatedly by them publicly from various fora.

And to put in the concluding lines, now that there is a new Hill Council in place, under the BJP, in Leh, people are very optimistic about their future. The local MP's repeated assertion that 'Modi Hai To Mumkin Hai' have been well received by most of the people of this far-flung border district of India. And the Central government very well knows that the welfare of the Ladakh region plays a key role in the security of the nation.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based editor-at-large, columnist and professional speaker. The views in this article are his own.)

National Education Policy 2020: Hierarchy versus Openness in Higher Education



Dipankar Sengupta

The National Education Policy Report 2020 approved by the Union Cabinet recently does merit attention and comment on issues that are of greater relevance and importance than the language controversy that followed when the revised report was circulated. After all, the vision that the Report [NEP] lays before us is that of India transforming itself into a knowledge society which could be defined as one where the Human Condition is improved primarily by the application of knowledge as distinguished from societies where such improvement comes mainly from the application of tangible resources such as capital and labour.

Indeed, most economic initiatives from the government too indicate that policymakers want to lay the foundations of a knowledge economy where wealth will be created primarily by the exploitation of knowledge. This too is a vision and an objective that few would argue with. The problem is to understand where and how this knowledge is being created and to look at the NEP 2020 from that perspective.

Increasingly today, the production of knowledge and its dissemination has become decentralised and atomised to a degree that is

unprecedented in the annals of human history. This of course is the result of the spread of education and the revolution in the Information & Communication Technology which has made access to information practically free and production of knowledge less dependent on resources than previously. Also, the willingness of people to donate to voluntary knowledge initiatives possibly less so in India, but whose work then becomes available to all concerned, has also created more players who function outside the formal institutions of knowledge production and dissemination but carry out many similar functions.

For example, those who have followed debates on ancient Indian History especially the debates on the Aryan Invasion Theory the contribution of those who are not part of India's formal knowledge institutions is striking both for the questions they raise as well as their numbers. Similarly, on areas related to the environment

In the same vein therefore, the architecture of India's educational setup too must be "open." Thus, not only must India's formal education architecture be flexible enough to continuously upgradable and scalable, it must allow for the non-traditional creators and disseminators of knowledge to "plug in and play" after ensuring that it fulfills its task of being a guarantor of quality.

Secondly case studies with respect to the environment, governance, traditional knowledge and know-how etc. in many cases will need to be validated by formal researchers before becoming part of what is taught even in an “open architecture.” It is also likely that the researcher, in his role as a teacher, will initiate the teaching of materials sourced from non-formal/traditional sources. A system, where a hierarchy is created between teaching and research leading to different types of institutions, this is not easily done.

and sustainable development, the role of civil society organisations both in terms of advocacy and knowledge creation has been extremely important. So too in matters of governance, think tanks both State-supported and privately supported have rendered yeoman’s service with their research and their attempts to disseminate the same to influence and improve.

This is even more so for cutting edge commercial scientific technology. This knowledge by its very nature is likely to be generated in a firm that uses/produces this technology and in the case of software even individuals or groups of individuals collaborating together. If that technology becomes successful and the need for a large number of people trained in that technology arises, the lack of manpower trained in that technology has the ability to constrain economic growth.

Thus, in a knowledge society, the production of knowledge is and must be participatory. It follows from here that research institutions, alternative

educational institutions supported by citizens’ organisations, business associations as well as social entrepreneurs will cooperate and compete with formal bodies (like State-owned Universities and Research Institutes) that produce knowledge. Accessing their knowledge is generally not a problem but institutional rigidities in formal institutions of learning have tendencies to create several and this is problematic.

It follows therefore that administrators of India’s formal educational institutions in consonance with NEP 2020 adopt an “Open Source” strategy, i.e. which simultaneously allows enrolled students to access any course or teaching learning material and those outside to access any course or teaching learning material that the formal institutions produces. Of course, these formal education institutions will coordinate this “peer production/mass collaboration” of knowledge creation. Indeed, as examining bodies the formal institutions have to be the guarantors of quality.

In the same vein therefore, the architecture of India’s educational setup too must be “open.” Thus, not only must India’s formal education architecture be flexible enough to continuously upgradable and scalable, it must allow for the non-traditional creators and disseminators of knowledge to “plug in and play” after ensuring that it fulfills its task of being a guarantor of quality.

There is no other way out. India is being hit by several challenges. There is of course a problem of quality manpower. But there is also a problem of skill sets especially when it comes to cutting edge technology. The most in-demand jobs a few years from now in all likelihood don’t exist today. The education system is tasked with educating students to face issues and problems of tomorrow’s world possibly requiring skills and knowledge that do

not yet exist at least within the formal system. We cannot assume a rigid inflexible architecture/system can tackle this problem when the rate of technological obsolescence is heartlessly swift and the nature of skills that India needs in the coming years itself is unclear.

It is here that the hierarchy of institutions that the Draft report recommends has to be moulded to retain its consonance with its vision of a knowledge society. For example, the report talks about the evolution into three types of higher educational institutions, research universities, teaching universities and colleges. This division is not unreasonable given the problems in the past and today that India has faced with the quality of research and teaching. However, it is not at once clear whether it is always suitable for the task of taking India towards a knowledge society across time and area. Given the rapidly changing skill sets requirement that India will need, this implied separation between research and teaching is not what our formal institutions need to do. For teaching purposes, the NEP very correctly calls for lateral entry of personnel and this is useful for new skills e.g. a new programming language. But researchers too need to know this language so that

it could be improved and built upon. Therefore, for most part, teaching has to be integrated with research.

Secondly case studies with respect to the environment, governance, traditional knowledge and know-how etc. in many cases will need to be validated by formal researchers before becoming part of what is taught even in an “open architecture.” It is also likely that the researcher, in his role as a teacher, will initiate the teaching of materials sourced from non-formal/traditional sources. A system, where a hierarchy is created between teaching and research leading to different types of institutions, this is not easily done.

Therefore, in the absence of advice on “openness” of architecture, individual universities per se will have to take it up on their own if they are to stay relevant as society keeps on transforming and morphing. If their specific visions are in consonance with that stated in the NEP i.e. the local university will contribute to their region’s journey to becoming a knowledge society in its broadest sense, one which not only has modern technology as one 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, then its architecture cannot be “closed.” Mere lateral entry alone will not tackle the problem posed by continuous change. More importantly for that is the requirement that the institutions have to be open to and collaborate with the new players in the field of knowledge creation and production even while keeping check on the quality and veracity of the information/knowledge generated, i.e. they have to be “open.” It is only with this mindset built into our institutions will India ease its transformation into a knowledge society.

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Indeed, most economic initiatives from the government too indicate that policymakers want to lay the foundations of a knowledge economy where wealth will be created primarily by the exploitation of knowledge. This too is a vision and an objective that few would argue with. The problem is to understand where and how this knowledge is being created and to look at the NEP 2020 from that perspective.

कृषि सुधारों से किसानों की आमदनी बढ़ाने में जुटी मोदी सरकार



रमेश कुमार दूबे

आ पूर्ति श्रृंखला की कमजोरी, भंडारण-विपणन में बिचौलियों की भरमार, महंगी दुलाई जैसे कारणों से कभी आलू-प्याज सड़कों पर फेंकने की नौबत आती है तो कभी उनकी महंगाई आसू निकाल देती है। इसका एक खामियाजा यह होता है कि वैश्विक कृषि बाजार में भारत एक विश्वासनीय आपूर्तिकर्ता नहीं बन पाता।

इसका कारण है कि आजादी के बाद कृषि क्षेत्र में सुधारों की रफ्तार बेहद धीमी रही है। उदारीकरण-भूमंडलीकरण के तीस साल बाद भी कृषि उपजों का कारोबार जहां का तहां वाली स्थिति में है। दरअसल देश के कई राज्यों में मौजूद आढ़तियों-बिचौलियों की मजबूत राजनीतिक लॉबी कृषि क्षेत्र में सुधारों की विरोधी है। फिर वोट बैंक की राजनीति के कारण सरकारें प्रगतिशील नीतियां अपनाने से बचती रहती हैं। मोदी सरकार अपने पहले कार्यकाल से ही कृषि सुधार की दिशा में गंभीरतापूर्वक काम कर रही है, लेकिन कांग्रेस पार्टी इन सुधारों के विरोध में खड़ी रहती है।

जो कांग्रेस पार्टी आज मोदी सरकार द्वारा कृषि सुधार की दिशा में लाए गए कानूनों के विरोध में खड़ी है, उसी कांग्रेस पार्टी ने 2019 के लोकसभा चुनाव से पहले जारी घोषणापत्र में कहा था कि कांग्रेस कृषि उपज मंडी समितियों के अधिनियम में संशोधन करेगी जिससे कि कृषि उपज के निर्यात और अंतरराज्यीय व्यापार में लगे सभी प्रतिबंध समाप्त हो जाएंगे। इसके अलावा कांग्रेस ने कहा था कि आवश्यक वस्तु अधिनियम 1955 को बदलकर आज की जरूरतों के हिसाब से नया कानून बनाएंगे।

यह स्थिति तब है जब प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी संसद से लेकर सड़क तक कई बार कह चुके हैं कि समर्थन मूल्य और सरकारी खरीद की व्यवस्था जारी रहेगी। इसके बावजूद कांग्रेस शासित पंजाब राज्य में तो पिछले डेढ़ महीने से राज्य सरकार के समर्थन से किसान संगठन तीनों कृषि कानूनों को रद्द करने की मांग को लेकर आंदोलन कर रहे हैं।

कांग्रेस के विरोध के बावजूद मोदी सरकार द्वारा अंतरराज्यीय कृषि कारोबार को अनुमति देने वाले कानून लागू करने के बाद कृषि उपजों का कारोबार रफ्तार पकड़ रहा है। उत्पादक (किसान) और उपभोक्ता मंडियों के बीच किसान रेल शुरू होने से किसानों को उनकी उपज की वाजिब कीमत मिलने लगी है तो उपभोक्ताओं को महंगाई से राहत।

किसान रेल को मिली कामयाबी को देखते हुए मोदी सरकार मालवाहक विमानों से सब्जियों और फलों की दुलाई की योजना बनाई है। दुलाई की लागत का आधा हिस्सा सरकार वहन करेगी ताकि उपभोक्ताओं तक पहुंचते-पहुंचते उनके भाव बहुत अधिक न बढ़ जाए।

इसके लिए 41 फलों व सब्जियों की सूची जारी की गई है। पहले चरण में इस योजना को पूर्वोत्तर और हिमालय के राज्यों के लिए शुरू किया गया है। आगे चलकर देश के सभी हिस्सों में विमानों के जरिए फलों-सब्जियों की दुलाई होने लगेगी।

मोदी सरकार 2022 तक किसानों की आमदनी दो गुनी करने के लिए बहुआयामी उपाय कर रही है। इसमें सबसे कारगर हथियार हैं बागवानी फसलों। गौरतलब है कि देश के महज 8.5 फीसद क्षेत्र में फलों-सब्जियों की खेती होती है लेकिन इनसे कृषिगत सकल घरेलू उत्पाद का 30 फीसद हिस्सा प्राप्त होता है।

इसी को देखते हुए मोदी सरकार टॉप योजना की खामियों को दूर करते हुए फलों-सब्जियों की खेती को बढ़ावा देने के लिए टॉप टू टोटल योजना शुरू कर रही है। यह योजना टमाटर, प्याज और आलू समेत सभी फल और सब्जियों के लिए है।

इससे न सिर्फ किसानों की आमदनी बढ़ेगी बल्कि महंगाई से भी मुक्ति मिलेगी। फलों-सब्जियों के उत्पादन में सबसे बड़ी समस्या इनका जल्दी खराब होना है। इस समस्या को दूर करने के लिए सरकार ने परिवहन व भंडारण में 50-50 फीसद सब्सिडी देने की घोषणा की है। इससे किसान जल्दी नष्ट हो जाने वाली फसलों को कम मूल्य पर बेचने के नुकसान से बचेंगे और बाद में फसलों को अच्छे दाम पर बेच सकेंगे।

समग्रतः आज खेती-किसानी घाटे का सौदा बनी है तो इसका कारण है कि उदारीकरण का रथ महानगरों और हाईवे से आगे गांव की पगडंडी पर उतरा ही नहीं। अब मोदी सरकार जिस तरह कृषि क्षेत्र में सुधारों की दिशा में काम कर रही है, उससे जल्दी-ही खेती के मुनाफे का सौदा बनने की उम्मीद है।

(लेखक केन्द्रीय सचिवालय में अधिकारी हैं। वरिष्ठ टिप्पणीकार हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार उनके निजी हैं।)

Covid-19 Outbreak and Indian Government's Responses



Dr. Subhabrata Dutta

Covid-19 has now emerged as the worst danger to human health and has emerged as the main cause for most health problems, infections and mortality in India and across the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been described as a “Global Health Emergency” by the World Health Organisation (WHO). At times, it has been termed as a “Global Health Crisis”. China’s Wuhan city has been identified as the epicenter of this disease. The total Corona Virus (positive) figures around the world suggest that the disease has had free run thus far, transcending national boundaries, work settings and occupational groups.

The severity of the disease can be gauged from statistics published by media—both print and electronic. Over several million people have been infected or killed by this disease globally. The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in India in comparison to other parts of the world is very low and the present scenario assumes that there will be a gradual rise in the number of people affected by it. In a space of few months, the galloping spread of Covid has baffled human intelligence, endeavour and calculations. Various studies have established that many

Indians could be infected.

Going by updated statistics, there are over 7.6 million positive cases and, 111,500 deaths so far in India (DainikYugasankha, October 20, 2020). It has also predicted that the number of Covid-19 positive cases in India would eventually be the highest in the world due to the size of the population. India now globally ranks third in terms of confirmed cases and deaths.

The death rate is still on the lower side, but in a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic country like India, which has many social disparities and inequalities, we can predict that this pandemic can acquire alarming proportions. Maharashtra, for instance, has become the state with the highest number of Covid positive cases, roughly 1.6 million. This is growing daily. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have roughly 638K, 766K and 638K Covid positive cases respectively and these numbers are increasing.

West Bengal and Assam are also reported to have a large number of infected persons, approximately 210,000, and that number is swelling every day. It is apprehended that this disease may create health chaos in India. The northeast Indian states are comparatively less affected by the pandemic and the death rate is very low. Statistics reveal that the disease is taking a heavy toll of lives in major states, most notably in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Delhi. Cases of community infection have also reported in most states. A disturbing feature is that Kerala which had succeeded in controlling

the disease is now reporting fresh cases.

Causes for Rapid Spread:

Several factors have been identified as causes for the rapid spread of the disease. First and foremost is the fact that most victims of the pandemic at the beginning of its spread had an international travel history and thus became exposed to symptoms of the virus. By coming into contact with other people/persons, they infected others, especially during the incubation period. This was the first phase of transmission.

Secondly, rural-urban migration was identified as one of the potential routes for rapid transmission of the disease. Assam provides the best illustration. Before the arrival of migrant workers from badly-affected states, the infection was at the lower end of the scale in Assam. With the arrival of migrants, a larger number of people got infected and the graph of infection rose gradually each day. This situation though was not particular to Assam as other northern states faced similar situations.

A third factor was the low level of awareness about the nature of the disease and the mechanism that was required to prevent its spread. The nonchalant attitude of laymen in displaying complete disregard to the advice of the authorities substantially accounted for the surge of cases. The advice to stay home and spend quality time was completely ignored. Very few citizens practiced the habit of wearing face masks or washing their hands, or maintaining social distance, or self quarantine.

Another significant factor was the lack or absence of an appropriate antidote or vaccine against the killer disease. A combination of these factors has worsened the situation, making it most critical and turning the disease into one of the major public health challenges of the 21st century.

Medical Intervention:

The disease has caused a range of serious health problems, some of which have become unmanageable by medical practitioners and health workers, and has caused mortality. So, no single type of treatment or prevention should be viewed as a panacea for this ailment. To tackle this health menace, a wide spectrum of medical intervention strategy, administrative measures and prevention programmes should be developed to suit the needs of different patients and risk groups.

In view of the worsening situation, the Government of India acted well in time, adopting several medical and administrative measures to confront and counter the spread of the disease aggressively at both the national and state level. First of all, many government and private hospitals were converted or designated as Covid-19 hospitals for treating Corona Virus patients. Several makeshift hospitals and government quarantine centres were built to shelter asymptomatic and mildly infected persons. Ample provision was made for sanitising hospitals and affected areas. Sufficient supply of appropriate drugs for systematic treatment and other medical equipments for testing was guaranteed. Safety measures for frontline fighters such as doctors, nurses, health workers and scavengers were taken. All this entailed a huge outlay which the central government rolled out in a timely manner and continues to do so.

Media reports and current data suggest that the Corona Virus disease has still a mortality rate of less than two percent. But the combined burden of some common diseases like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, respiratory ailments etc., has the potential of increasing the intensity of the disease and enhancing the mortality rate.

Another most encouraging feature in this

depressing scenario is the rate of recovery which is currently about 84 percent and rising.

The worrisome factor is that frontline fighters like doctors, nurses and other health workers are reported to have developed various psychological problems due to stress and exhaustion. The proximity to Corona Virus patients tends to affect their mental health and produces serious forms of mental disorder. To tackle this problem, the government has issued precise guidelines; including appointment of social counselors.

The containment of the Corona Virus pandemic is the government's top most priority. Conducting medical research, manufacturing medical and laboratory equipment for testing, developing vaccines, specific corona virus related drugs and antibiotics are in progress.

India today has become a country with a huge pharmaceutical empire. Confidential testing facilities are being developed and expanded. It is reported that India stands second in terms of testing, tracing and systematic treatment, next to America, while other European and non-European countries are saddled by various disease-linked problems (The Statesman, 17, July 2020).

Administrative Measures:

Different administrative measures are being adopted for containing the disease. A huge force of law enforcing personnel have been deployed to maintain law and order and to keep a check on violations of a strict nation-wide lockdown. The compulsory detention of those with a travel history is a big step forward in containing the rapid spread of the disease, Such forms of mandatory detention are a kind of government support for both families and society. Those quarantined do get free food and accommodation during the incubation period. Due to the timely

medical and administrative intervention, the rate of recovery has become the highest in terms of global recovery rate.

Another important measure by the government is the imposition of a strict lockdown. On March 25, a lockdown was announced by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and was extended from time to time. It is estimated that India lost over Rs 32,000 crores every day during the first 21 days of the lockdown. Over the months, much work has been undertaken to assess and estimate the economic burden arising out of the lockdown. It has been realized that the disease has resulted in a substantial economic burden, which has the potential for increasing. Such adverse economic loss has not been confined to India alone. It is a global phenomenon. The complete lockdown has affected industrial and agricultural productivity and left a number of people jobless.

A panoply of economic and monetary measures, adopted by the government to mitigate the sufferings of people is praiseworthy. On March 26, the Central Government showed its highly responsive attitude by announcing various economic and relief measures amounting to Rs 170,000 crores. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has endeavoured to ensure a smooth and normal functioning of all market segments with adequate liquidity and turnover. The RBI Governor has further assured that "the regulator has enough policy tools and stands ready to take any measures" needed to help the economy tide over the pandemic (The Statesman, dated 08.03.2020, p.8). On March 26, the RBI infused Rs 374,000 crores in the financial system. Furthermore, the RBI provided another Rs 50,000 crores to NABARD, SIDBI and NHB. On May 12, the Modi Government further announced an economic package of Rs 20 lakh crores, calculating it to be 10 percent of

India's GDP with the objective of transforming India into a "Self-Reliant Bharat (India)".

The government's financial support is not limited to this. It showed its human face further by announcing better benefits, both in cash and kind, for the poor and the general population of the country. It provided a free food grain package to each family (five kilograms per head), irrespective of class, creed, social or financial status.

Another important cash benefit was the direct transfer of Rs500 to JanDhan Accounts for three months and grant of full price of three cooking gas cylinders under the "Ujjala Scheme" to beneficiaries. Such a specific funding stream is, of course, a relatively straight forward way of addressing the issue of poverty, hunger and declining purchase power of the country's masses.

Such positive economic measures and relief packages can rescue people suffering from a combination of problems like unemployment, poverty, low income, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.

Additionally, the government has introduced a range of tax and benefit changes.

Many Rating Agencies had predicted a bleak scenario for the Indian economy due to the Corona Virus pandemic. Fitch Rating cut India's growth to 5.1 percent for F.Y. 2020. In its Global Economic Outlook, 2020, Fitch observed that "Supply Chain disruptions are expected to hit both investment and exports. We see GDP growth to remain broadly steady at 5.1 percent in the fiscal year 2020-21" (The Statesman, 21.03.2020, p. 8). Fitch has also projected India's growth to be 6.4 percent for 2021-22.

Another rating agency, Moody, has predicted India's credit rating to the lowest investment

grade level. It was expected that that a developing country like India would suffer a heavy economic toll due to the disease, but not due to the introduction of several positive measures and relief packages, the Indian economy is beginning to grow upward since July and showing signs of recovery. Such a revival in a limited span of time is indicative of India's inherent resilience.

Agriculture:

In the last couple of months, distressed farmers have been demonstrating against the government, raising important issues and placing several demands to improve the agrarian economy.

In the past, agriculture was a highly rewarding occupation and acted as the core of the Indian economy, but in recent times, it has lost its importance and is failing to contribute to the country's GDP. Climate anomalies have created uncertain and non-renumerative situations for the agriculture sector. Frequent flooding, extensive periods of drought, depleting ground water levels, rising costs of production, volatile pricing due to an imbalance between demand and supply and the entry of private money lenders, intermediaries and speculators are some of the factors responsible for the decline in the Indian agriculture sector.

An ailing agriculture sector isn't good for the food security of a country. It also affects rural development, prevents eradication of poverty, hunger and starvation. Farmers' suicides are a recurring tragedy. Several rural youth have migrated to prosperous urban areas or to agriculturally rich regions like Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh in search of jobs and higher incomes.

Over the past few decades, successive governments have adopted policies and energy intensive technologies that have increased

the cost of production even as researchers have focused on how to increase yields. In this process, agriculture has become a costly affair. The use of costly fertilizers, pesticides and commercial seeds has compounded the problem. When a crop fails, there is a huge debt burden to be overcome. Small and marginal farmers do not have sufficient resource bases to absorb such losses.

On June 3, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced some policies to reform the agriculture sector. Areas meriting urgent attention were streamlined and affirmative initiatives were launched to achieve agrarian objectives.

First of all, there was the 'Essential Commodities Act' (Enacted in 1955 & amended in 2020). The aim of the act is to reduce and eventually remove restrictions in the agricultural products business.

The introduction of the "Agricultural Bill 2020" empowers farmers with regard to the business of agro-products and the preservation of perishable commodities. The government also made some policy changes to help the farming community.

It has removed restrictions on storage, sale and movement of foodgrains and other farm products across state boundaries.

The Essential Commodities Act was adversely affecting private investment in cold storage, food processing and warehouses, but with its amendment, the Act now encourages private investors to invest in these sectors.

Public and private investment is crucial for developing Indian agriculture. Laws banning storage of large quantities of agro-commodities, including wheat, onions etc., have been removed. Agricultural markets in India are highly fractured

and are not small and marginal farmers' friendly. Improved market access is essential. This facilitates organised retailers and processors to purchase products directly from farmers groups.

Such improved market access can certainly generate higher income for the farmer. Apart from all these policy changes, wide-ranging monetary benefits have been introduced such as such the "Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana" (PMKSY), "Prime Minister Krishi Prakalpa", pension schemes for farmers, 'Prime Minister Samman Siddha' Yojana (PMKSS) etc. Such direct monetary benefits would definitely minimize farmer distress, especially those who are marginal and small.

The policy message is clear -- total well-being of the Indian farming community. A wide safety net and social assistance to farmers in times of distress is a sustainable way of dealing with challenges of recession, hunger, poverty, rural underdevelopment, chaotic health conditions, stopping violent movements and farmer suicides in the country.

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कोरोना के प्रभाव से उबरकर रफ़्तार पकड़ रही जीडीपी



सतीश सिंह

दे श के कई क्षेत्रों में दूसरी तिमाही के दौरान आर्थिक सुधार के संकेत दिखे हैं, जिसके कारण अनेक रेटिंग एजेंसियों ने दूसरी तिमाही में सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) दर में सुधार आने का अनुमान लगाया है। चालू वित्त वर्ष की दूसरी तिमाही के जीडीपी के आंकड़े 27 नवंबर को पेश किये जा सकते हैं। केंद्रीय सांख्यिकी कार्यालय (सीएसओ) द्वारा जीडीपी के आंकड़े जारी करने के बाद देश में विकास की वास्तविक तस्वीर सामने आयेगी।

चालू वित्त वर्ष की दूसरी तिमाही में आर्थिक गतिविधियों में तेजी आने की पुष्टि विविध रेटिंग एजेंसियों ने भी की है। तालाबंदी को अनलॉक करने की प्रक्रिया के खत्म होने के बाद देशभर में आर्थिक गतिविधियाँ शुरू हो गई हैं और धीरे-धीरे इसमें तेजी आ रही है।

विकास की दर को बेहतर करने के लिये सरकार लगातार कोशिश कर रही है। उसने आर्थिक गतिविधियों में तेजी लाने के लिये कई पैकेजों का भी ऐलान किया है। दी गई रियायतों से फिर से कारोबार ने रफ़्तार पकड़ना शुरू कर दिया है।

कोरोना महामारी के कारण चालू वित्त वर्ष की पहली तिमाही में जीडीपी दर प्रभावित हुई थी, लेकिन दूसरी तिमाही में निर्माण और विनिर्माण क्षेत्र में उम्मीद से ज्यादा बेहतरी आई है। इससे इंडस्ट्रियल ग्रॉस वैल्यू एडेड (जीवीए) में भी सुधार आने की संभावना बढ़ी है।

सरकार की प्रभावी नीतियों की गतिशीलता के लगातार कायम रहने पर यह एजेंसी इसमें और भी सुधार कर सकती है। रेटिंग एजेंसी का मानना है कि अगले वित्त वर्ष में भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था दुनिया में सबसे तेजी से आगे बढ़ेगी।

जीवीए विकास का मानक है। इसमें बेहतरी आने का मतलब विकास दर में बढ़ोत्तरी हो रही है।

इन्वेस्टमेंट बैंक बार्केलेज के अनुसार चालू वित्त वर्ष की दूसरी तिमाही में जीडीपी वृद्धि दर में गिरावट आने के पूर्वानुमान में सकारात्मक बदलाव आया है। बैंक ने पहले जीडीपी दर में 2.1 प्रतिशत की दर से वृद्धि होने का अनुमान लगाया था। अब बैंक का मानना है कि वित्त वर्ष 2021-22 में भारत की जीडीपी 8.5 प्रतिशत की दर से आगे बढ़ सकती है। बैंक ने यह भी कहा कि विनिर्माण क्षेत्र में वृद्धि दर ने कोरोना महामारी के पहले के स्तर को पार कर लिया है।

मूडीज इनवेस्टर सर्विस ने भी अपने पहले के अनुमान में संशोधन किया है, जो पहले से बेहतर है। इसने भारत की जीडीपी वृद्धि दर के 8.9 प्रतिशत रहने का अनुमान लगाया है। रेटिंग एजेंसी गोल्डमैन सैश ने भी वित्त वर्ष 2020-21 के लिए भारत की जीडीपी अनुमान में सुधार किया है। गोल्डमैन सैश ने कोरोना वायरस के वैक्सीन के जल्द आने की संभावना के आलोक में भारत के जीडीपी अनुमान में सुधार किया है।

सरकार की प्रभावी नीतियों की गतिशीलता के लगातार कायम रहने पर यह एजेंसी इसमें और भी सुधार कर सकती है। रेटिंग एजेंसी का मानना है कि अगले वित्त वर्ष में भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था दुनिया में सबसे तेजी से आगे बढ़ेगी।

इससे पहले रेटिंग एजेंसी मूडीज ने भी वित्त वर्ष 2020-21 के लिए जीडीपी वृद्धि दर के अनुमान में सुधार किया था। मूडीज की ताजा रिपोर्ट में इमर्जिंग मार्केट में आर्थिक गतिविधियों में सुधार आने की बात कही गई है, जिसमें भारत, अर्जेंटीना, ब्राजील, मैक्सिको, इंडोनेशिया, टर्की और दक्षिण अफ्रीका शामिल हैं।

आर्थिक गतिविधियों में तेजी लाने के लिये सरकार ने वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी), दिवाला और शोधन अक्षमता कोड यानी दिवालिया कानून (आईबीसी) और मौद्रिक नीति समिति के गठन सहित अनेक सुधार किए हैं, जिसका सकारात्मक असर विकास दर पर परिलक्षित हो रहा है।

(लेखक भारतीय स्टेट बैंक के कॉरपोरेट केंद्र मुंबई के आर्थिक अनुसंधान विभाग में कार्यरत हैं। आर्थिक मामलों के जानकार हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार उनके निजी हैं।)

The Farm Bills 2020: An Opportunity for Women Empowerment

Dr Molly Ghosh

Introduction

The Government of India has passed three bills, popularly called the Farm Bills 2020. These three legislations – The Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Production and Facilitation) Bill 2020, The Farmers’ (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement & Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020 – are slated to be landmark laws that will usher a new beginning for India’s agricultural sector.

These legislations have immense potential not only for the agricultural sector, but also for other sectors. They are to be analysed and implemented in tandem with several other policies of the government. A policy never operates in vacuum. It becomes increasingly successful when viewed holistically and in congruence with several other existing or forthcoming policies and legislations.

The government’s farm policies, as reflected through these legislations, has real potential to achieve a greater degree of gender equity in the agriculture sector, making women empowered, productive and visible. If opportunities are provided and availed of properly, rural womenfolk can benefit immensely.

The New India envisioned through the farm laws, can be a country where women stand as equals to men in the agricultural sector. The objective of the present paper is to

explore how farm legislations propose to make the agricultural sector more productive for women.

The State and Empowerment of Women

Gender equity is recognised by the United Nations as not only a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. It is about giving fair treatment to men and women according to their respective needs. It can be best achieved when women get empowered and the state provides them with ample opportunities in terms of rights and benefits. The Constitution of India ensures gender equality through its Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State Policy. India is also a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1980 and ratified it in 1993, through which the state pledges to remove measures that are gender discriminatory. So far as policies related to women are concerned, in the post-independence period initially there was focus on welfare of women and not empowerment. Policies were designed under the aegis of Five-Year Plans for the welfare of women. Women were viewed as recipients of welfare schemes and not agents for change. Gradually the focus shifted from welfare to empowerment.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) was the first plan that gave a commitment to empower women. Instead of allotting funds for welfare, measures were specifically proposed

to empower them. To promote gender equity the state needs a concrete policy to empower women. To fulfill this objective, the Government of India first framed the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (NPEW) in 2001. Till date, this is the only policy on empowerment of women. The then National Democratic Alliance government framed this policy with the vision of establishing a 'society in which women would attain their full potential, participate as equal partners in all spheres of life and influence the process of social change. The NPEW specially recognised the role of women in agriculture and its allied sectors. The policy document specifically mentions the need to make serious efforts to ensure that the benefits of training, extension and various other programmes reach women adequately. It emphasizes on training women in various occupations allied to agriculture, like horticulture, soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development, and livestock and so on. Its objective is to create an effective framework that will enable the process of developing policies, programmes and practices, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women in family, community, workplace and in governance. This particular objective of empowering women can be best fulfilled if the opportunities offered by changes in the agricultural sector are relatable to the NPEW and the National Policy for Women.

The NPEW was framed in 2001 but after that for a long time no other concrete policy was evolved on women empowerment. The NPEW is presently regarded as an umbrella policy under the aegis of which several empowerment schemes are designed by different ministries. Since 2001, there have been several changes in the social, political and economic spheres and an upgradation of policy is need of the time. The present government is on the way to framing

a National Policy for Women and the draft policy is already available on the website of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and termed as the National Policy for Women (Draft), 2016.

This national policy with a holistic approach on women empowerment, will address several emerging areas of concern in changing times. The National Policy for Women (Draft) has been framed to ensure gender equity. It has been designed to guide various sectors to issue more detailed policy documents that are more sector specific. And, if the agricultural sector, enriched by the new changes, can generate such opportunities in the future, that complement the provisions of NPEW and the Draft National Policy on Women, it can contribute to gender equity.

The National Policy on Women (Draft) recognises agriculture as an area of priority where the role and power of women can be enhanced. Let us highlight some basic points of the policy related to women working in the agricultural sector:

- It recognises the increasing feminisation of agriculture in India and proposes to recognise women as farmers in agriculture and allied sectors and related value chain development.
- It aims to make efforts to support women farmers in their livelihoods, their visibility and identity, secure their rights over resources, ensure entitlements over agricultural services and provide them with social protection cover.
- It aims to expand the scope of schemes/ programmes that train women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development, horticulture, organic farming, and livestock, and benefit women working in

the agricultural sector.

- It proposes to utilise the skills and capacities of successful women farmers as extension workers and trainers or 'Krishi Sakhis'
- Women have access to bodies of traditional knowledge for conservation of genetic diversity and the policy proposes to encourage and utilise all such forms of knowledge and skill of sustainable agricultural practices.
- Women collectives like cooperatives and SHGs will be encouraged and incentivised in any type of sustainable agricultural practices.
- Agriculture for nutrition will be encouraged and women will have benefit from that as procurement of such crops will be prioritised in use for Anganwadis.
- The policy proposes to make efforts to prioritise women in land redistribution, land purchase and land lease schemes to enable women to own and control land.
- Women's sole ownership of land or joint ownership with spouse will be encouraged by allowing concessions in registration fees or stamp duties. Transfer of land ownership to women will be incentivised using different measures.
- Women farmers' collective farming enterprise will be incentivised by providing support for post-harvest storage, processing and marketing facilities.
- Institutional and funding support is proposed to be provided for formation of women producers' associations and existing women's collectives so that they can process, store, transport and market the produce.
- Women farmers will be involved in on-farm participatory research on women-friendly

agricultural technologies and a database of all such women-friendly technologies will be maintained.

The Farm Laws and Opportunities for Women

In the above section, we have studied, in brief, the provisions of the Draft National Policy for Women for those working in the agricultural sector. It is evident that this policy has a pinpointed focus on two issues. First, prioritisation and incentivisation of land ownership or lease deeds in the name of women, ensuring they have control over the land on which they work as well as enhancing their decision-making powers. The state is supposed to be proactive here as concessions in fees or duties are supposed to be provided by the state.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Production and Facilitation) Act 2020 is going to expand opportunities through which farmers can sell their produce to anyone they want to, corporate or the existing Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC), in accordance with the bargains they receive. Just like any other sector of the liberalised economy, agriculture will be restriction free to trade or with more freedom to trade. This opportunity of free trade is to be viewed in congruence with the state commitment of ensuring and prioritising the land ownership rights of women. If land ownership is incentivised by the government, women will be no longer just be agricultural labourer on farm land or working on farm land owned by male members of the family, but will have the opportunity to own a piece of family land where they were working earlier sans ownership. This ownership will enable them to have a say in the way farm produce is marketed and how they will benefit from that. Whatever opportunity freedom in trading of agricultural

produce will offer, women will also have a fair share in it.

The farm legislations make it evident that the formation of farmers' collectives or cooperatives will become very crucial in the future if farmers want to develop a system of effective bargaining to market their product or go for contract-farming. The market economy is making its extended entry in the agricultural sector and farmers need to be in collective to derive the right bargain and use the opportunity to its fullest.

At this point, there is the second issue that the Draft National Policy on Women has highlighted which has relevance for farm laws.

This issue focuses on support for women's collectives and cooperatives. When we are approaching a time where farmers' cooperatives are going to play a crucial role, support and encouragement of women's cooperatives or Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the field of agriculture will enable women to avail the best opportunity.

The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) of the Ministry of Rural Development reports that there are presently 62,56,244 SHGs working under the NRLM and their total membership count is 6,86,76,728. The figure is significant and if we consider that SHGs are not under the NRLM, then the figure crosses one crore. The SHGs, if backed by adequate multi-sectoral policies, can best make use of the present situation.

Women farmers, through forming new SHGs or through the existent SHGs, can work for storage as well as marketing of agricultural produce and in other allied agricultural services like horticulture, food processing and livestock.

Government-induced facilities of soft loans for SHGs of women farmers, supported by

incentives to land ownership of women, can bring in more women in the agricultural sector. In 2020, the Ministry of Finance has doubled the collateral free loans to Women SHGs from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. If the commitment of the Draft National Policy of Women is taken into consideration, it can be expected that this sort of financial assistance may be enhanced further in the future. The history of SHGs in India has shown that women have strong organising and bargaining capabilities. Empowered by these capabilities, they can make justified use of the new opportunities and ensure their visibility in the agricultural sector. How women can make the best and judicious use of any situation and turn it into an advantage for society is best exemplified from the role women-led SHGs have played recently in coping with the Covid-19 pandemic and made optimum use of the business opportunities under the new normal.

The Economic Times reports that according to Ministry of Rural Development statistics, more than 132 lakh masks were produced by 14,522 SHGs involving 65,396 members spread across 24 states within fifteen days in the month of March. The decentralised mode of operation of SHGs makes them market their produce and products fast and with lesser complications of transportation. Women-led SHGs can be agents of change that will lead to a New India with a strong rural and agricultural backdrop and an empowered and self-reliant women workforce.

The government is serious about expanding the scope of SHGs and that is evident from its initiative to digitise SHGs. The Government of India has undertaken a project to digitise SHG accounts and bring all SHGs under financial inclusion. This digitisation can also help to create a database that can be of further use for any other scheme. E-shakti, the digitisation of SHGs, is an

initiative of the Micro Credit and Innovations Department of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). This digitisation initiative is in congruence with Government of India's Digital India Mission. The government has taken the policy of transforming India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

NABARD launched the project of E-shakti in collaboration with the Mahashakti Foundation with the objective of digitising all SHGs. When implemented fully, one can access all data on a SHG with a single click. It is supposed to help banks and financial institutions to have data on SHGs and facilitate their financial inclusion. The E-shakti project is presently launched in 100 districts of India and will be expanded further. Extended financial inclusion of rural women can better equip them with all the support they need to reap the benefits from a changed agricultural scenario.

Organic food is the emergent sector worldwide and India has immense potential to be the global leader in organic farming and a major supplier

of organic food. There is wide scope for foreign direct investment in this sector too. India has a rich body of traditional knowledge on organic farming. Women have large access to this traditional knowledge and the Draft National Policy for Women emphasizes promotion of this knowledge. Organic farming and the use of this traditional body of farming knowledge can be well-marketed and showcased.

The Draft National Policy for Women proposes training women in organic farming and maintaining a repository of traditional knowledge owned by women. And, if we analyse the opportunities that organic farming is going to have in the future along with the provisions that government will make for training women in organic farming techniques, using their knowledge and providing support to women cooperatives, then it becomes easy to realise how it will empower women and expand their agency. Women have prospects in bio-fertiliser manufacturing and marketing, and here again SHGs and their decentralised mode of functioning can be highly beneficial.

In 2017, the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) scheme was introduced for the promotion of organic farming. Under the scheme, the government has issued guidelines for formation of organic clusters and model organic farms. The PKVY has been framed as a comprehensive scheme under National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture to promote organic farming through a cluster approach. Women have the potential to use the facilities offered under this scheme also and get involved in different stages of organic farming. Even in this cluster approach, women farmers' collectives have the opportunity to play a crucial role.

'Agriculture for Nutrition' is another area of priority mentioned in the Draft National

The Economic Times reports that according to Ministry of Rural Development statistics, more than 132 lakh masks were produced by 14,522 SHGs involving 65,396 members spread across 24 states within fifteen days in the month of March. The decentralised mode of operation of SHGs makes them market their produce and products fast and with lesser complications of transportation. Women-led SHGs can be agents of change that will lead to a New India with a strong rural and agricultural backdrop and an empowered and self-reliant women workforce.

Policy for Women as well as an area which holds prospect for women farmers. The market of 'agriculture for nutrition' is another booming market and the Indian state a crucial procurer of the produce of this sector for the public distribution system and other welfare schemes. Produce from this sector can be useful for state procurement as well as for the larger market. The government proposes to support women-led 'Agriculture for Nutrition' and procure the produce of this nutrition-oriented agriculture to use it in mid-day meals of the Anganwadi scheme. If this linkage is executed successfully, on one hand, it will empower women working in the agricultural sector, while on the other; it will ensure the Right to Health and the Right to Food and Nutrition for rural women.

The National Policy of Education 2020 calls for strengthening Anganwadis and under the new educational scenario, Anganwadis will play a much more expanded and active role. If women-led 'Agriculture for Nutrition' is linked up with this expanding Anganwadi scheme, it can build an effective ecosystem that ensures the holistic development of rural women and children.

Concluding Remarks

In the above section, we have made a brief discussion in which we have highlighted certain areas where the new farm legislations coupled with a commitment to the forthcoming National Policy for Women can lead to an ecosystem in which women can have the scope of bringing productive changes in their lives and in society. Any policy always needs to be analysed and understood holistically. If a policy is not related with other relevant policies, citizens will miss the opportunities it offers. So far as gender equity is concerned, it is impossible without women empowerment. And, for women empowerment, we need supportive state and smart citizens. The

state can provide us with some opportunities through different policies and schemes, and as citizens, it is our responsibility to have a holistic perspective and make a smart and judicious use of any opportunity that comes our way. Through finalising its proposed National Policy for Women, the state will be offering a supporting role and then it depends how women are able to make the best from the opportunities that all these policies and laws offer.

The New India may be an India where not only rural women, but also urban women can strive to make agriculture their career choice. If the opportunities offered by the policies and laws discussed above are dealt with efficiency, India can truly be a nation of self-reliant and empowered women.

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(The Writer is Associate Professor in Political Science. Views are personal.)

मोदी सरकार के प्रयासों से तेजी से हो रहा रोजगार सृजन



प्रहलाद सबनानी

को

रोना महामारी के दौरान छोटे छोटे उद्योगों को दिवालिया होने से बचाने का एक बेहद महत्वपूर्ण विषय केंद्र सरकार के सामने था। उद्योगों को दिवालिया होने से बचाने के लिए तो तरलता सम्बंधी एक विशेष पैकेज प्रदान किया गया, जिसका बहुत ही सकारात्मक प्रभाव दिखाई दिया एवं लघु एवं मध्यम उद्योग तो पुनः प्रारम्भ हो गए।

केंद्र सरकार के प्रयासों से शहरों से ग्रामों की ओर हुए मजदूरों की पलायन सम्बन्धी समस्या को भी बहुत ही सफल तरीके से हल कर लिया गया। महात्मा गांधी राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना के अंतर्गत केंद्र सरकार ने राशि का आवंटन बढ़ाकर ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रोजगार के कई अवसर निर्मित किए। गरीब वर्ग को खाने पीने एवं मूलभूत आवश्यकताओं की वस्तुएं उपलब्ध कराने के कई गम्भीर प्रयास किए गए एवं इन प्रयासों में केंद्र सरकार को सफलता भी मिली।

वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 के द्वितीय तिमाही (जुलाई-सितम्बर) में केंद्र सरकार ने कई वित्तीय उपायों की घोषणा की थी ताकि विनिर्माण क्षेत्र, खनन क्षेत्र, ढाँचागत निर्माण क्षेत्र, आदि जो अप्रैल-जून 2020 के दौरान एकदम बंद हो गए थे, उन्हें पुनः प्रारम्भ किया जा सके।

गृह निर्माण उद्योग अकुशल श्रमिकों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर उत्पन्न करता है। अतः प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना के अंतर्गत 18000 करोड़ रुपए का अतिरिक्त आवंटन किया गया है, ताकि शहरी क्षेत्रों में अधिक से अधिक मकान इस योजना के अंतर्गत बनाए जा सकें एवं रोजगार के अवसर निर्मित हो सकें।

किसानों को खाद हेतु सब्सिडी प्रदान करने के लिए 65,000 करोड़ रुपए की अतिरिक्त व्यवस्था केंद्र सरकार द्वारा की जा रही है। यह खाद सब्सिडी देश में 14 करोड़ किसानों को उपलब्ध करायी जाएगी। देश में बुनियादी ढांचा विकसित करने के उद्देश्य से आधारभूत निवेश फंड को 6,000 करोड़ रुपए केंद्र सरकार द्वारा प्रदान किए जा रहे हैं ताकि बुनियादी ढांचा विकसित करने हेतु नए उद्यमों को वित्त उपलब्ध कराया जा सके।

इन वित्तीय उपायों का भी बहुत सफल प्रभाव रहा एवं इन क्षेत्रों में औद्योगिक इकाईयों में उत्पादन पुनः प्रारम्भ हो गया। अब वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 के तृतीय तिमाही (अक्टूबर-दिसम्बर) में सेवा क्षेत्र की इकाईयों एवं गृह निर्माण क्षेत्र पर विशेष ध्यान दिया जा रहा है ताकि इन क्षेत्रों में आर्थिक गतिविधियों में तेजी लायी जा सके। इन क्षेत्रों में रोजगार के अधिक अवसर निर्मित किए जा सकते हैं।

कुल मिलाकर यह कहा जा सकता है कि केंद्र सरकार बहुत ही बारीकी से यह देख रही है कि किस क्षेत्र को कब कब क्या आवश्यकता है एवं अर्थव्यवस्था के कौन से क्षेत्र शीघ्र पुनर्जीवित हो रहे हैं एवं कौन से क्षेत्र पुनर्जीवित होने में समय ले रहे हैं। इन क्षेत्रों को किस प्रकार की परेशानियों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है एवं इन परेशानियों को किस प्रकार दूर किया जा सकता है। इस सम्बंध में उचित समय पर सही उपाय भी हो रहे हैं। केंद्र सरकार द्वारा बहुत ही व्यवस्थित तरीके से कार्य किया जा रहा है।

हाल ही में वित्त मंत्री श्रीमती निर्मला सीतारमण ने कई महत्वपूर्ण घोषणाएं की हैं। देश में रोजगार एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र है जिस पर अब फोकस किया जा रहा है। लॉकडाउन की अवधि के दौरान देश में कई उद्योगों पर विपरीत असर पड़ा था एवं रोजगार के लाखों अवसरों का नुकसान हुआ था। अतः सबसे बड़ी घोषणा रोजगार को पुनर्जीवित करने के सम्बंध में हैं।

मार्च से सितम्बर 2020 की अवधि के दौरान जिन लोगों के रोजगार चले गए थे अथवा जिनके रोजगार में दिक्कत आई थी, अब अगर नियोजित उनको दुबारा से रोजगार देता है तो केंद्र सरकार

ईपीएफ में 24 प्रतिशत अंशदान (12 प्रतिशत नियोक्ता का हिस्सा और 12 प्रतिशत कर्मचारी का हिस्सा) अपनी ओर से प्रदान करेगी।

जिन नियोक्ताओं के पास 50 से कम कर्मचारी कार्यरत हैं उन्हें कम से कम दो कर्मचारियों की नियुक्ति करनी होगी एवं जिन नियोक्ताओं के पास 50 से ज्यादा कर्मचारी कार्यरत हैं उन्हें कम से कम 5 कर्मचारियों की नियुक्ति करनी होगी, तभी वे इस योजना का लाभ लेने के लिए पात्र हो सकेंगे।

जिन उद्यमों में 1000 से कम कर्मचारी कार्यरत हैं उन्हें 24 प्रतिशत की राशि का पूरा लाभ मिलेगा एवं जिन उद्यमों में 1000 से अधिक कर्मचारी कार्यरत हैं उन्हें केवल कर्मचारी के 12 प्रतिशत हिस्से की राशि का लाभ मिलेगा। निजी क्षेत्र को यह बहुत बड़ा लाभ प्रदान किया जा रहा है।

कर्मचारी के आधार कार्ड का उपयोग करके हितग्राही के खाते में सीधे ही राशि जमा की जाएगी। रोजगार के अवसरों को पुनर्जीवित करने के लिए यह एक बहुत बड़ा उपाय माना जा रहा है।

गृह निर्माण उद्योग अकुशल श्रमिकों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर उत्पन्न करता है। अतः प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना के अंतर्गत 18000 करोड़ रुपए का अतिरिक्त आबंटन किया गया है, ताकि शहरी क्षेत्रों में अधिक से अधिक मकान इस योजना के अंतर्गत बनाए जा सकें एवं रोजगार के अवसर निर्मित हो सकें।

साथ ही, अभी लागू नियमों के अनुसार, दो करोड़ रुपए तक के मकान बेचने पर यदि सर्कल दर एवं अनुबंध दर में 10 प्रतिशत से अधिक का अंतर है तो मकान/फ्लैट क्रेता एवं विक्रेता दोनों को ही आय कर नियमानुसार देना होता है, परंतु इस नियम को शिथिल कर 20 प्रतिशत तक के अंतर तक छूट प्रदान की जा रही है।

उत्पादन आधारित प्रोत्साहन योजना का दायरा भी बढ़ाया जा रहा है। पहले इस योजना के अंतर्गत केवल 3 उद्योगों को शामिल किया गया था, परंतु अब 10 और उद्योगों को भी इस योजना में

केंद्र सरकार के प्रयासों से शहरों से ग्रामों की ओर हुए मजदूरों की पलायन सम्बन्धी समस्या को भी बहुत ही सफल तरीके से हल कर लिया गया। महात्मा गांधी राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना के अंतर्गत केंद्र सरकार ने राशि का आबंटन बढ़ाकर ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रोजगार के कई अवसर निर्मित किए। गरीब वर्ग को खाने पीने एवं मूलभूत आवश्यकताओं की वस्तुएं उपलब्ध कराने के कई गम्भीर प्रयास किए गए एवं इन प्रयासों में केंद्र सरकार को सफलता भी मिली।

हाल ही में वित्त मंत्री श्रीमती निर्मलासीतारमण ने कई महत्वपूर्ण घोषणाएं की हैं। देश में रोजगार एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र है जिस पर अब फोकस किया जा रहा है। लॉकडाउन की अवधि के दौरान देश में कई उद्योगों पर विपरीत असर पड़ा था एवं रोजगार के लाखों अवसरों का नुकसान हुआ था। अतः सबसे बड़ी घोषणा रोजगार को पुनर्जीवित करने के सम्बंध में हैं।

शामिल कर लिया गया है जिन्हें 146,000 करोड़ रुपए की राशि का प्रोत्साहन दिया जायेगा। इस प्रोत्साहन योजना के लागू किए जाने से इन उद्योगों में विकास की रफ्तार बढ़ेगी एवं रोजगार के नए अवसरों का सृजन होगा।

कुल मिलाकर सरकार अब प्रयास कर रही है कि औपचारिक क्षेत्रों में रोजगार के अधिक से अधिक अवसर निर्मित हों। आज देश में 83 प्रतिशतरोजगारअनौपचारिक क्षेत्रों में निर्मित होते हैं।

किसानों को खाद हेतु सब्सिडी प्रदान करने के लिए 65,000 करोड़ रुपए की अतिरिक्त व्यवस्था केंद्र सरकार द्वारा की जा रही है। यह खाद सब्सिडी देश में 14 करोड़ किसानों को उपलब्ध करायी जाएगी। देश में बुनियादी ढांचा विकसित करने के उद्देश्य से आधारभूत निवेश फंड को 6,000 करोड़ रुपए केंद्र सरकार द्वारा प्रदान किए जा रहे हैं ताकि बुनियादी ढांचा विकसित करने हेतु नए उद्यमों को वित्त उपलब्ध कराया जा सके।

विश्व में कई विकसित देशों ने तो बहुत बड़ी राशियों के आर्थिक पैकेज की घोषणाएं की थीं परंतु विकासशील देशों के पास पूंजी का अभाव है अतः उपलब्ध राशि का सही तरीके से इस्तेमाल हो इसका ध्यान रखना बहुत ही आवश्यक है ताकि राजस्व घाटे से सम्बंधित नियमों का पालन भी किया जा सके। इसलिए भारत सरकार भी सोच समझकर सही समय पर ही आर्थिक घोषणाएं कर रही है। अभी तक 29.88 लाख करोड़ रुपए के आर्थिक पैकेज की घोषणा समय समय पर की जा चुकी है जो देश के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद का 15 प्रतिशत है।

आज बेरोजगारी की दर गिरकर 8 प्रतिशत से भी नीचे आ गई है। अब तो उक्त वर्णित की गई कई नई घोषणाओं के बाद यह दर और भी नीचे आएगी, क्योंकि उक्त वर्णित आर्थिक उपायों की घोषणा के बाद ऐसी उम्मीद की जा रही है कि औपचारिक क्षेत्र में रोजगार के 50-60 लाख नए अवसर निर्मित होंगे।

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

एक अनुकरणीय केस स्टडी है मोदी का कोविड मॉडल



डॉ अजय खेमरिया

वैश्विक महामारी कोरोना से निपटने में भारत का मॉडल पूरी दुनिया के लिए महत्वपूर्ण बन गया। स्वतंत्र भारत में पहली बार किसी संकट से निबटने में 'टीम इंडिया' के तौर पर यह पहला राष्ट्रव्यापी अभियान भी निरूपित किया जा सकता है। सितंबर में इस महामारी के चरम दौर (एक दिन में 97894 केस) गुजरने के बाद आज हमारी रिकवरी रेट 95 प्रतिशत से अधिक है जो पूरे विश्व में सर्वाधिक है। 14 दिसम्बर के दिन तक कुल चिन्हित 94,22,636 मरीजों में से केवल 3,39,820 एक्टिव केस का डाटा इस बात का संकेत है कि भारत ने सुनियोजित तरीके से इस खतरनाक महामारी पर काबू पा लिया है। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के सशक्त और दूरदर्शिता से परिपूर्ण नेतृत्व से यह सब संभव हो सका।

आज विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन से लेकर सभी प्रमुख राष्ट्रों ने कोरोना संकट से निबटने के मामले में न केवल भारत के घरेलू मॉडल को सराहा है बल्कि वैश्विक योगदान को भी अधिमान्यता प्रदान की है। 12 नवम्बर को डब्ल्यूएचओ प्रमुख टैड्रोस ऐडरेनॉम गैबरेयेसस ने प्रधानमंत्री मोदी को सार्वजनिक रूप से भारतीय योगदान के लिए धन्यवाद दिया।

तथ्य यह है कि भारत जैसे विशाल और विविधताओं से भरे राष्ट्र में इस महामारी पर जिस प्रभावी और प्रमाणिक तरीके से काबू पाने का प्रयास किया गया है वह बहुआयामी महत्व की केस स्टडी भी है। जटिल प्रशासनिक ढांचे और पारस्परिक रूप से गुंथी हुई लोक आर्थिकी के चलते लॉक डाउन जैसे अनुप्रयोग बहुत दीर्घजीवी नहीं हो सकते थे, इसके बावजूद अगर धरती की 17 फीसदी आबादी समेटे भारत आज पूरी दुनिया के लिए मॉडल बनकर खड़ा है तो इसके पीछे टीम इंडिया की भावना ही मुख्य कारक है।

इस भावना को प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने हर मोर्चे पर कायम रखा है। न केवल प्रशासनिक निर्णय बल्कि एक टीम लीडर के रूप में भी मोदी ने भारतीय जनमन को सीधे जोड़ कर रखा। एक तरफ जहां अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति कोरोना का मजाक उड़ाते रहे, मास्क को लेकर उपहासपूर्ण टिप्पणियां करते रहे, इस बीच भारत के प्रधानमंत्री 6 बार राष्ट्र को संबोधित करने आये। हर बार उन्होंने नागरिकों से कोरोना गाइडलाइंस के अनुपालन और सरकारी एडवाइजरी को मानने की अपील की। सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग को लेकर प्रधानमंत्री ने खुद एक प्रभावी ब्रांड एंबेसडर के रूप में काम किया।

प्रधानमंत्री ने अपनी लोक स्वीकार्यता का प्रयोग एक स्टेट्समैन की तरह, इस महामारी से निबटने के लिए तथा व्यापक जनभागीदारी खड़ी करने के लिए किया। खतरनाक स्तर का भय लेकर आई इस महामारी से निबटने में सलंगन वारियर्स के मनोबल को ऊंचा रखने के लिए प्रधानमंत्री ने दीप प्रज्वलन, घण्टी नाद, पुष्पवर्षा जैसे राष्ट्रीय आह्वान संस्थित किये ताकि पीड़ितों की सेवा और उपचार में लगे मानव संसाधन में ऊर्जा और उत्साह का संचार अनवरत रहे। इन आह्वानों का कतिपय विध्वन संतोषियों ने माखौल भी उड़ाया

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तथ्य यह है कि भारत जैसे विशाल और विविधताओं से भरे राष्ट्र में इस महामारी पर जिस प्रभावी और प्रमाणिक तरीके से काबू पाने का प्रयास किया गया है वह बहुआयामी महत्व की केस स्टडी भी है। जटिल प्रशासनिक ढांचे और पारस्परिक रूप से गुंथी हुई लोक आर्थिकी के चलते लॉक डाउन जैसे अनुप्रयोग बहुत दीर्घजीवी नहीं हो सकते थे, इसके बावजूद अगर धरती की 17 फीसदी आबादी समेटे भारत आज पूरी दुनिया के लिए मॉडल बनकर खड़ा है तो इसके पीछे टीम इंडिया की भावना ही मुख्य कारक है।

लेकिन इसका दूरगामी महत्व आज पूरी दुनिया मान रही है। जब ब्रिटेन, अमेरिका जैसे विकसित राष्ट्र फिर से लॉकडाउन के लिए मजबूर हो रहे हैं वहीं भारत में कोरोना की लहर कमजोर पड़ चुकी है। यह हमारे सतत प्रयासों का प्रतिफल है। आंकड़े भी इस समेकित सफलता को बयान करते हैं। हर दस लाख की आबादी पर भारत में मृतकों की संख्या 83 रही है तो अमेरिका में 665, ब्रिटेन में 644, ब्राजील में 725, स्पेन में 727।

अमेरिका में दुनिया की केवल 4 फीसदी आबादी रहती है लेकिन कोरोना से दुनिया में मरने वाली कुल संख्या का 20 फीसदी तो अकेले अमेरिकन है। भारत जहां दुनिया की 17 फीसदी आबादी है वहां यह आंकड़ा मात्र 10 फीसदी है। प्रति दस लाख में संक्रमित की संख्या भारत में 5500 रही वहीं अमेरिका, ब्राजील जैसे देशों में यह 2500 थी। इसके बाद मौतों का यह आंकड़ा हमारे प्रयासों की सामूहिक संकल्प शक्ति और समावेशी नेतृत्व अपील को साबित करता है।

वह भी तब जबकि हमारी आबादी का घनत्व अमेरिका की 35 की तुलना में 400 से ज्यादा है। निःसन्देह हर नागरिक की कोरोना से होने वाली मौत हमारे लिए दुःखद है इसके बावजूद हमारे सम्मिलित प्रयासों ने इस महामारी की त्रासदी से हमें तुलनात्मक रूप से कैसे बचाया है? इसके लिए हमें पीएम की टीम इंडिया स्पिरिट और त्वरित निर्णयन को रेखांकित करना ही होगा।

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को सरकार ने स्थिति को समझते हुए एन 95 और पीपीई किट के निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया। यह सब करवाई 30 जनवरी को भारत में पहला कोरोना केस सामने आने से पूर्व की जा चुकी थी। 31 जनवरी को सरकार ने 6 क्वारन्टीन सेंटर्स स्थापित कर दिए। 3 फरवरी को सरकार ने मंत्री समूह बनाकर मामलों पर निगरानी का निर्णय लिया।

26 फरवरी तक चीन, सिंगापुर, वियतनाम, मलेशिया, इंडोनेशिया, साउथ कोरिया, ईरान, इटली से आने वाले भारतीय नागरिकों को लेकर एडवाइजरी जारी हो चुकी थी। 3 मार्च को 06 कोरोना केस सामने आते ही सरकार ने सभी राष्ट्रों से आने वालों की स्क्रीनिंग शुरू कर दी गई।

04 मार्च को पीएम ने ट्वीट कर देशवासियों से होली पर्व पर सोशल गेदरिंग नहीं करने का आह्वान किया और 7 मार्च को उन्होंने स्थिति की खुद अधतन समीक्षा की। 14 मार्च तक देश में एक साथ 52 प्रयोगशालाएं बनकर तैयार हो चुकी थी। 19 मार्च को प्रधानमंत्री ने मात्र 200 पॉजिटिव केस होने पर देश को संबोधित किया और जनता कर्फ्यू का आह्वान किया। 22 मार्च से देश में सभी अंतर्राष्ट्रीय उड़ानों पर रोक लगा दी गई। 24 मार्च को पीएम ने 21 दिन का लॉक डाउन घोषित कर दिया। भारतीय लोकजीवन की कमजोर आर्थिक कड़ियों के मद्देनजर सरकार ने गरीब कल्याण पैकेज की घोषणा कर करीब 67 करोड़ नागरिकों को एक वैकल्पिक आर्थिक सुरक्षा कवच देने का काम भी किया।

दूसरी तरफ ढांचागत स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं को जुटाने में पूरा पराक्रम झोंका गया। जिस समय कोरोना को वैश्विक महामारी घोषित किया गया भारत में टेस्टिंग की चुनिंदा सरकारी लैब स्थित थी लेकिन इनकी संख्या बढ़ाकर 6 मार्च को 31 कर दी गई। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन ने दस लाख की आबादी पर 140 टेस्ट की सिफारिश की थी लेकिन भारत में चरणबद्ध तरीके से टेस्टिंग को बढ़ाया गया। दस लाख पर हमारे यहां 828 कोरोना सैंपल लिए गए जो वैश्विक मानक से छह गुना अधिक है।

भारत ने कोरोना की इस असमय चुनौती का जिस सुनियोजित और त्वरित गति से मुकाबला किया है वह अपने आप में एक केस स्टडी इसलिए भी है क्योंकि शुरुआती चरण में विशेषज्ञ यही दावा कर रहे थे कि कोरोना से लड़ने में भारत का बुनियादी स्वास्थ्य ढांचा बिल्कुल भी सक्षम नहीं है। एन 95 मास्क और पीपीई किट के लिए दूसरे देशों पर निर्भर भारत के प्रति ये आशंकाएं निर्मूल भी नहीं थी लेकिन नए भारत में बदली हुई शासन की संस्कृति समस्याओं के टालने नहीं उनका सामना करने में भरोसा करती है।

नतीजतन हर दिन भारत ने तीन लाख पीपीई किट्स और 4 लाख से अधिक एन 95 फाइव मास्क का निर्माण कर चीन के

एकाधिकार खत्म किया। वेंटीलेटो की उपलब्धता को लेकर व्यक्त की गई आशंकाए भी गलत साबित हुई क्योंकि रिकार्ड समय में हमने स्वदेशी चिकित्सा उपकरणों की सहायता से दस लाख आइसोलेशन बेड विभिन्न स्तर पर खड़े कर लिए। प्रधानमंत्री ने लॉक डाउन के साथ ही रोजाना 17 से 18 घण्टे प्रतिदिन काम किया।

11 विषय विशेषज्ञों की कोर टीम के साथ उनकी प्राय प्रतिदिन बैठकें होती थी। इस जंग में सामाजिक भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए भी प्रधानमंत्री ने कोई कोर कसर नहीं छोड़ी उन्होंने वीडियो कांफ्रेंसिंग एवं अन्य ई प्लेटफॉर्म के जरिये समाज के सभी वर्गों से सीधा संवाद स्थापित कर आम जनजीवन में एक आत्मविश्वास बनाए रखा। प्रधानमंत्री की यह भूमिका किसी चिंतित अभिभावक की तरह रेखांकित की जा सकती है। उनकी अपील पर न केवल भारतीय जनता पार्टी का पूरा संगठन बल्कि भारत की सक्षम सज्जन शक्ति भी अपने जरूरतमंद भाई बहनों की यथासंभव मदद के लिए उठ खड़ी हुई।

पूरी दुनिया ने भारतीयों के इस चरित्र को देखा। पीएम केयर्स फंड में एकत्रित हुआ धन भी इस संकट से निबटने का बेहतरीन उपकरण साबित हुआ। यह फंड भारतीय जनमानस में पीएम की विश्वसनीयता को भी प्रमाणित करने वाला साबित हुआ। कोरोना संकट ने प्रधानमंत्री की शख्सियत को एक सशक्त और दृढ़ इच्छाशक्ति वाले ग्लोबल लीडर के रूप में भी स्थापित किया है। इस संकटकाल में जहां भारत ने अपनी आत्मनिर्भरता की संभावनाओं को मजबूती से पहचाना है वहीं अपने स्वास्थ्य ढांचे को भी एक नया आधार दिया है। आने वाले समय में हमारी एकीकृत स्वास्थ्य नीति जनआरोग्य और कोरोना जैसी महामारियों के मामले में एक वैश्विक मिसाल बन सकती है। इस संकट में भारत ने अपने विश्व बंधुत्व के मूल दर्शन को भी प्रमाणित करके दिखाया है।

अमेरिका में दुनिया की केवल 4 फीसदी आबादी रहती है लेकिन कोरोना से दुनिया में मरने वाली कुल संख्या का 20 फीसदी तो अकेले अमेरिकन है। भारत जहां दुनिया की 17 फीसदी आबादी है वहां यह आंकड़ा मात्र 10 फीसदी है। प्रति दस लाख में संक्रमित की संख्या भारत में 5500 रही वहीं अमेरिका, ब्राजील जैसे देशों में यह 2500 थी। इसके बाद मौतों का यह आंकड़ा हमारे प्रयासों की सामूहिक संकल्प शक्ति और समावेशी नेतृत्व अपील को साबित करता है।

दुनिया के 150 देशों को भारत ने इस दौरान चिकित्सा उपकरणों, दवाओं, पीपीई किट्स और मास्क की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित कर यह संदेश दिया कि विश्व व्यवस्था में अब उसकी अनदेखी संभव नहीं है। कोविड संकट में हमारी वैश्विक हैसियत को न केवल गरीब बल्कि धनीमानी राष्ट्रों ने भी स्वीकार किया है। चीनी वायरस से कराहती मानवता के लिए भारत ने सेवा, परोपकार और सहअस्तित्व के अपने बुनियादी आचरण से एक नई मिसाल पेश की।

ब्राजील की धरती पर जब हमारे कार्गो विमान दवा और अन्य चिकित्सकीय सामग्री लेकर उतरे तो वहां के पीएम ने इसे “हनुमान की संजीवनी” का नाम दिया। अमेरिका जैसे ताकतवर और सम्पन्न राष्ट्र को भी हमने हाइड्रोक्सीक्लोरोक्वीन दवा उपलब्ध कराई।

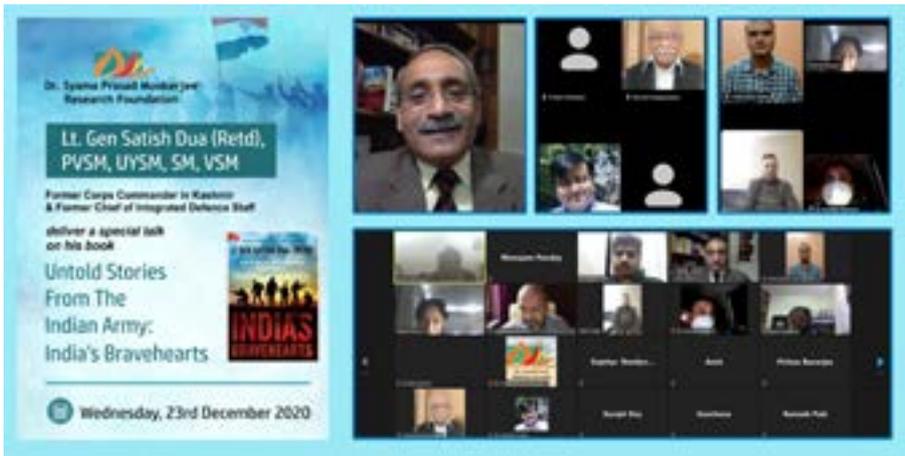
स्पष्ट है कि भारत ने कोरोना की इस आपदा को एक अवसर में परिवर्तित कर पूरी दुनियां को एक राह दिखाई है। न केवल कोरोना से निबटने बल्कि इसके वैक्सीन निर्माण में आज भारत पूरी मानवता के लिए एक आशा केन्द्र के रूप में खड़ा है। यह प्रधानमंत्री के आह्वान और भरोसे का ही नतीजा है। यह नए भारत के लिए गौरवपूर्ण उपलब्धि ही है कि 190 देशों ने भारत में निर्मित होने वाली वैक्सीन में रुचि दिखाई है। हकीकत यह है कि कोई राष्ट्र वैक्सीन बनाएं लेकिन उसे पूरी दुनियां में पहुंचाने के लिए भारत की निर्माण कम्पनियों की सहायता ही लेनी होगी क्योंकि भारत ही इस समय सबसे बड़ा वैक्सीन निर्माता राष्ट्र है।

सच्चाई यह है कि भारत ने इस मामले में चीन को पीछे कर दिया है और आज विश्व व्यवस्था में कोरोना डिप्लोमेसी का अहम हिस्सा बन गया है। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने इसे लगता है समय रहते ही पकड़ लिया था। इसीलिए घनघोर कोरोना लहर में भारत ने 150 देशों को कोरोना मदद सुनिश्चित की। नतीजतन सीरम इंस्टीट्यूट की तरफ आज अमेरिका से लेकर अफ्रीका के सभी गरीब राष्ट्रों की भी नजर टिकी हुई है जहां कोविशील्ड वैक्सीन लगभग तैयार है।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने हाल ही में स्पष्ट किया है कि भारत के अंतिम छोर के नागरिक को भी वैक्सीन कवर उपलब्ध कराया जाएगा। साथ ही अफ्रीकन राष्ट्रों के लिए हम सबसे सस्ते वैक्सीन देने के संकल्प को भी पूरा करने की स्थिति में है। सच्चे अर्थों में पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय के अंत्योदय का मंत्र ही मोदी सरकार की अभिप्रेरणा है जो अंततः अंतिम छोर के मानव कल्याण की बात करता है। नए भारत का यह वैशिष्ट्य वाकई हमें गौरवभाव से भर रहा है।

(लेखक लोकनीति विश्लेषक हैं. लेख में व्यक्त उनके विचार निजी हैं.)

23rd December 2020



17th December 2020

Discussion on “#SonarBangla – vision & sankalpa & the present situation in #WestBengal” at Habra (North 24 Parganas), West Bengal



17th December 2020

Discussion on “#SonarBangla – vision & sankalpa & the present situation in #WestBengal” at Ashok Nagar, West Bengal on



17th December 2020

Release of Report on “Analysing the Anti CAA Violence in West Bengal” & “Booklet on CAA” at Barasat, West Bengal



16th December 2020

Discussion on “Dreams & Possibilities to make Golden Bengal and Rise of New India” at Gangasagar, West Bengal



15th December 2020



15th December 2020



12th December 2020



29th November 2020

Discussion on “WHY MARICHJHANPI SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN?” at Gosaba/Marichjhanpi

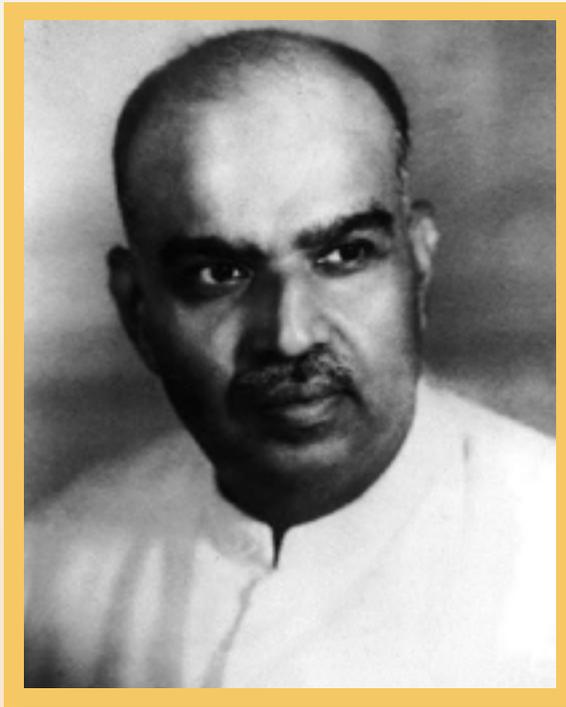


28th November 2020



28th November 2020





“As a university you have a great role to play in reshaping the destinies of the people of your country. We must bear in mind the cardinal principle that we want to see developed and trained through education the whole nature of our alumni, intellectual, moral and physical, not merely for the purpose of qualifying for any special calling but to bring up good citizens, useful members of society, men, true and fearless capable of bearing their part with credit in public and private life...”

-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Banaras Hindu University,
1 December 1940

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