

# Two key tasks for Sitharaman

The IBC needs serious reform; competition law requires a review



## WITHOUT CONTEMPT

SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN

Even as the new minister takes charge at North Block and gets busy with the Union Budget, having charge over both the finance and corporate affairs ministries, there is a bunch of homework to attend to right after. Transition management is as vital in these ministries as it would be for the Congress party if its president walks away having conceded defeat. Of course, the Union Budget speech

too (usually the prospectus of the government in power on the economic front, and not just tax policy) could make mention of some of these. It has forever been tempting to write in small pointers to big reforms in Union Budget speeches. At times, the announcements in these speeches lead to nothing concrete — for example, the focus on creating a corporate bond market. At other times, they lead to glorious reform, even if by stealth. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016, the biggest achievement of the past government found its seed in a tiny paragraph in a Union Budget speech about the need for an insolvency regime that helps small scale industries. Regardless of the speech, two areas stand out for serious attention and intervention. First, the IBC, much-lauded as a “game changer”, needs serious reform. Its crudities and inequities have been declared by the Supreme Court to be tolerable, with its constitutional valid-

ity being upheld. However, inherent in these facts, is a crying need to reform the law and its administration cutting across both ministries. Ballooning bad loans in the financial sector is the finance ministry’s headache while the administration of the IBC is that of the corporate affairs ministry. The amendment to the law to empower the Reserve Bank of India to direct banks on how to use the IBC and to initiate proceedings under the IBC in a blanket manner was inherently problematic. A regulator was made to stop playing referee and instead start participating in the game. Enforcement choices that the regulated banks were to make, could now be directed by the regulator. This in itself is a bad policy choice. Using this power, the RBI took a blanket approach to banks’ enforcement of security interests, without differentiating between factors affecting the industries to which different borrowers belonged. Such a blanket approach, without dealing with the conditions

involved in each industry was held to be arbitrary and constitutionally invalid. The same enforcement action, if it had been initiated on commercial grounds by the banks, would have been totally valid, and would not have had to conform to the state’s standard of decision-making — of being reasonable and non-arbitrary. Banks were perceived to be reluctant to undertake blanket enforcement and the RBI stepped in to decide on their behalf and tripped in the court. A classic example of a crude inequity that would not have been one if it had been merely a case of a bank enforcing against a borrower. The elevation of enforcement decisions to a policy choice was unwise and must be corrected. Second, competition law is being reviewed by multiple working groups and a reform committee. Serious effort is being put in and this needs to be brought to fruition. The introduction of competition law, was in itself, reform by stealth — brought into play in the teeth of serious opposition to regulating the conduct of businesses. While numerous recommendations for changes would come about, what to pick and what to drop would in itself, present a strange problem of plenty. Some vital policy choices would need

to be made here. A number of procedural processes already embedded in subordinate legislation in competition law too would need serious review and reform. It must be remembered that for every business that is affected by a vibrant competition law regime, there can be many other businesses that hurt from the absence of a vibrant competition law regime. Every business competitor is a protectee of the law, and when anti-competitive behaviour is indulged in, the competitors too can hurt, not just the clients in the market. Turf battles between regulators are also hurting competition law — those regulated in a sector develop a natural comfort zone with the sectoral regulator, and a competition regulator asking questions leads to playing the sectoral regulator against the competition regulator. The lack of role coherence can lead to unintended consequences in court and, as a result, any competitor in a business sector that is “regulated” in any remote manner can hope to get some relief or the other against the competition regulator.

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## CHINESE WHISPERS

### Eid bonhomie



SOURCE: TWITTER

Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (pictured with HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Bihar leader Syed Shahnawaz Hussain hosted Eid lunches at their residences in the national capital on Wednesday. Senior BJP leaders and union ministers, among others, attended. Attendance at both their lunches was better than what it was during the Eid festivities last summer. Party sources said BJP Chief Amit Shah's reprimand of Union minister and party leader Giriraj Singh on Tuesday for ridiculing Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and others for attending an 'iftar' in Patna was also a signal to party leaders to attend Naqvi and Hussain's Eid lunches. While Naqvi has found a place in the union cabinet and is a Rajya Sabha member, Hussain is a party spokesperson.

### A window of opportunity

An opportunity has opened up before the Congress party to consolidate its position in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly where it is surviving on a thin majority (with the help of SP-BSP). Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader G S Damor won the Jhabua-Ratlam Lok Sabha seat defeating Kantilal Bhuria of the Congress. He was sitting MLA from Jhabua (he had defeated Bhuria's son Vikrant in the Assembly polls). He has resigned from that seat and if the Congress manages to win the Jhabua by-election, its total strength in the Assembly will increase to 115. The simple majority mark is 116. In the 2018 Assembly election Congress got 114 and the BJP 109 seats. After Damor's resignation, the BJP's strength has reduced to 108. The Congress is hopeful that winning the bypoll will strengthen the Kamal Nath government in the state.

### Akhilesh's experiment

Dumped by Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati after their alliance came a cropper in the national election, Samajwadi Party leader and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh Akhilesh Yadav sought to explain away the failure as just an unsuccessful experiment. "I have been a science student. There are trials and sometimes trials fail," the Samajwadi Party leader told his party colleagues. Underplaying what is largely seen as a failure of the Opposition parties to come together against the Bharatiya Janata Party juggernaut, he said the experiment exposed the weaknesses of such an association, but also offered some valuable lessons. Unlike Mayawati, he was not ready to call time on the *gathbandhan*.

# A new energy problem for India

Natural gas prices are in long-term decline globally but India's pricing formula is not geared to take advantage of the trend

SUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

What would you call the antonym for an oil shock? India is all too familiar with supply disruptions and this may explain why it is taking time to figure out how to deal with a surfeit of advantages in the energy sector. In 2019, despite oil and especially natural gas prices moving more south than north, India has yet to take any key action to build on this advantage.

It is not often that India has surfed on such benign waves in the energy seas. In the domestic economy, there is a government just back in power with a stronger mandate; globally, demand for oil and gas is sputtering as the US-China trade war intensifies; and the emergence of more supplies from more nations have kept the lid on price rise for both fuels, especially natural gas. The odds against oil prices rising steeply in 2020 have been tackled in “How much can oil prices impact India's import bill in a post-sanctions era?” (<https://mybbs.in/2X678Bx>).

One of the first things the new government should do now is revisit the five-year-old formula determining the price of domestic natural gas. It must do so particularly after watching the absurd price movement that is happening now. Where international price of natural gas has slipped close to \$4/mmBtu (metric million British thermal unit) from about \$9, Indian domestic prices, set every six

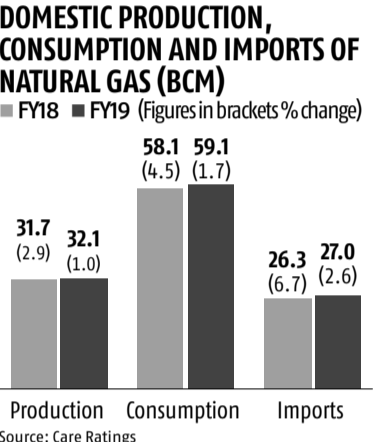
months, has risen to \$3.69/mmBtu, a steep 10 per cent sequential climb. Indian prices are set on the basis of the weighted average of prices at Henry Hub in the USA, the National Pricing Point in the UK, Canada's Alberta Gas and Russian Gas, the leading gas production points. The formula came into being in October 2014, implemented by oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan, on the basis of the C Rangarajan committee. The prices it takes on is the average of those prevailing half a year ago. Gas prices in 2018 were much higher than now based on expectations of a robust GDP growth rate worldwide.

The drop in global prices is long-term, just as in the case of oil. Major supply capacity has been added in new producing centres like Australia and the USA, while supply is expanding fast from traditional hot spots like Qatar, Mozambique and Russia. This is discounting the gas tanks that sanctions-hit Iran is sitting on.

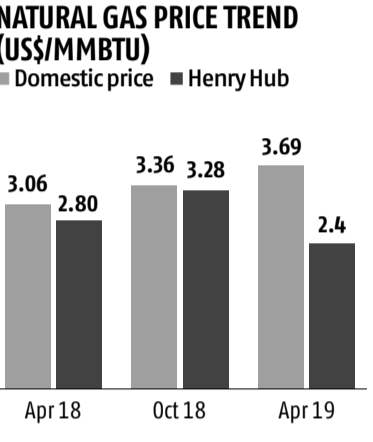
Indian domestic prices have already begun to impact costs. Prices of compressed natural gas (CNG) for vehicles and piped natural gas (PNG) for cooking in cities, have been revised upward by downstream companies by over seven per cent. By April 2019, prices of CNG have been raised six times within one year. These add to inflation pressures in the economy while the RBI would expect energy prices to soften instead, distorting monetary transmissions. Fuel and light



accounts for 6.84 per cent of the weight in the consumer price inflation basket. Beyond the current dissonance, there is the larger issue of signals to the investors. The NDA government, just before it announced elections in March, had given out licences in 100 cities to companies for setting up infrastructure to supply PNG and CNG. This infrastructure will come up over the next 10 years. The investors would look for clarity on the future gas prices and that can only happen if the prices are freed from administrative control so they do not offer absurd signals like now. For instance, should they depend on future domestic supply or bank only on imported gas? These have major price implications for the consumer. There is no reason why like the oil sector where prices for the Indian basket change daily in response to international prices, there should not be market-based pricing for natural gas. In 2014, one of the poll planks for the Narendra Modi-led team was to clean up the pricing mess in the gas sector. That, in turn, was a response to the decade long chaos in the sector



where gas pricing was set on political call than economic sense. The prices in vogue included all sorts of variables including whether it was drawn from a government or a private sector company, the vintage of the well, its location from the shore down to who was it being sold to. The current pricing formula, most experts agree is a far better choice than the earlier mish-mash. As the current trend shows, the jump has to be from here to deregulation to make the gas sector take off in India. The government has made some progress. In early 2016, it announced a Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy which made a switch from production or profit-sharing model to a revenue-sharing model for existing fields. It also offered pricing freedom for gas discovered from new wells in deepwater, ultra deepwater, and high pressure and high temperature regions. Yet, this freedom too was made conditional with a ceiling on prices. It has followed it up two years later with the announcement of the “Exploration and Licensing Policy for Enhancing Exploration and Production of Oil and



Natural Gas”, in February 2019. The catch is that the policy promises pricing freedom for future discoveries but the existing seven producing basins will continue with the current price regime. In other words, a dual pricing regime again. Since domestic gas prices continue to be controlled, the oil minister has not been able to follow through on his promise to set up an exchange for gas in India on the lines of those abroad, though it makes eminent sense to have one. India needs more usage of natural gas as an intermediate step to make the switch from coal to renewables. Power stations built for coal cannot obviously become generators of renewable energy but they can very well become gas-based. Out of India's 350 GW of generation capacity, thermal or coal-based accounts for 223 GW. But those will need fresh investments, which can only be made if the political decisions for the sector, are made now. Of the 100 cities for which Pradhan has handed out licences, the concessionaires are tapping the banks to raise money. An open-ended controlled gas pricing regime will not convince the banks to write those cheques.

## INSIGHT

# Capitalism with Modi characteristics



DHIRAJ NAYYAR

Those who argue that the economic policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi are socialist either do not know what socialism is or do not understand what the policies of Modi are. Government spending on schemes to enhance inclusion, and in social sectors like education and health, is very much a part of many successful capitalist economies (think Scandinavia) just as the presence of state-owned companies is not a guarantor of failure in other capitalist economies (think Singapore and China). Capitalism has several variants that have been successful — Anglo-American, North European, East Asian. Unfortunately, several pundits consider only the Anglo-American model as the poster child of capitalism's success. Modi's model is not Thatcherite or Reaganesque. While it may bear similarity to the East Asian model, it is in fact a new variant — capitalism with Modi characteristics. The three most famous characteristics of the Anglo-American model are large-scale privatisation, light-touch regulation, and a minimal social safety net. The absence of these in the Modi model confuses some free marketers. The East Asian model put growth first with the state focusing on infrastructure (both physical and social). Redistribution came later. The North European model managed to combine growth and equity but with unique social contracts in relatively homoge-

nous societies. For too long India tried to emulate the Soviet Union (which was also the Chinese model pre-1978). And when it liberalised post 1991, it did so by stealth, without any explicit political conviction or strategic long-term path. Narendra Modi's minimum government, maximum governance pledge (widely misunderstood as the Anglo-American model) has a clarity of vision and purpose. Actually, it may have helped if it had been framed as maximum governance, minimum government. It is different from the other variants of capitalism because it puts equity up front, both in political rhetoric and in administrative action. At India's level of per capita income (around \$2,000 only), it would be politically impossible to eschew inclusion as an explicit plank of government policy. Where the Modi model differs from socialism is that he has injected efficiency into the pursuit of equity. He has used the market principles of competition, technological innovation and accountability to deliver, in a targeted manner, public goods and services to the hitherto excluded without leakages and corruption (the most prominent side effects of a statist system). The Modi model also has a definitive view of enterprise and it's connect with the government. As far as government-owned enterprises are concerned those which are profitable are not likely to be privatised as long as they are able to compete. However, on loss-making and struggling public sector units a hard budget constraint will be imposed leading to closure or privatisation. Defining the government's relationship with private enterprise is more complex. Rampant crony capitalism in the decade before Modi first took office threatened the legitimacy of the whole post 1991 order. And yet, without private enterprise, there is no possibility of high growth and job creation. The Modi model is different from, say

China's, because it is explicitly differentiating between crony capitalists and honest capitalists. There is a distinction between who prospers on inherited wealth and networks of privilege those who rise on merit alone. For the latter, a concerted effort is being made to ease the environment of doing business. In a political economy that is still “profit shy”, Modi has fashioned the new capitalists as job creators rather than wealth creators. Of course, while the new generation rises, the crony capitalist order needs to be reined in. It is a tough balancing act to replace the old order with a new one without causing disruption to the economy. The intellectual discourse on whether India's economic policies are capitalist or socialist has unsurprisingly put in front the age-old battle between state and markets. The spectrum from capitalism to communism is defined by the relative dominance of markets and the state. The Modi model has an explicit third dimension, possibly the first dimension in his worldview — citizens. In this model, the focus of economic policy is on bringing about a real change in the “ease of living” of the average citizen rather than a conventional focus on the creation of wealth or GDP or size of industry. The state and market must play their respective roles and constantly deliver quality goods and services (public and private) at competitive prices to the citizens of India. On their part, citizens must perform their duties even as they claim their rights. There are no free lunches except for the minority that faces extreme deprivation. The broad contours of Modi-style capitalism have been drawn out. These will be refined in the next five years. If the “market” principles of efficiency, competition and merit continue to guide public policy, India may finally have its own model of successful capitalism. The author is chief economist, Vedanta

## LETTERS

### Learn Hindi

This refers to David Milton's letter “Language formula” (June 5) calling the proposed three-language policy a cultural invasion. What is the ground reality? I am a senior citizen, living in Chennai for over four decades. A few years ago, I had to go to Noida, to work on a software project. To reach my office, I got into a shared auto and mentioned my destination as Sector 57, which the driver could not understand. With my rudimentary knowledge of Hindi, I explained to him as “*pachas aur saat*” and got dropped at my office. With a basic knowledge of Hindi, one can get along anywhere in India, beyond the south. With assembly elections due in two years, one can understand the hue and cry raised by the Tamil Nadu politicians. But can they assure higher educational and employment opportunities to the youth of the state, within Tamil Nadu? The youth of Tamil Nadu would do well not to play into the hands of their scheming politicians, but learn Hindi, on their own, as it is in their best interests. V Jayaraman Chennai

### Right and wrong

The article by TCA Srinivasa Raghavan “Modi ji abki baar suit boot ki Sarkar” (May 31) is excellent for emphasising two fundamental economic principles that pro-capital does not mean pro-capitalist and also that private capital uses capital more efficiently. He has rightly underlined that “all policies — tax, imports, interest rates and exchange rates — must be made private sector friendly”. However, he has made two conceptual mistakes. First, if all these policies are private sector friendly, they will also be public sector friendly. For instance, if the anti-profit apparatus in the GST law is abolished, which is a must, then both the private sector and the public sector companies will benefit. And the welfare provision in the customs law and the GST law must be thrown into the nearest dustbin. The capitalist principle of making profit by the most efficient must be admitted if the economy has to progress and compete with other capitalist

countries. That will benefit both the private and the public sector. Second, the author has gone completely wrong when he calls the public sector an abhishaap. He says that the public sector must go. This indiscriminate statement suffers from the fallacy of reductio ad absurdum. Even a correct principle when pushed to the extreme becomes absurd. Surely the public sector must be reduced whenever it becomes a fiscal and administrative burden like Air India. But there are very many efficient public sector firms called Navratna and good banks like the State Bank of India that cannot be privatised just for the sake of serving a theory. One has to be discriminate and not indiscriminate. The competition between private and public sector is better than abolishing public sector altogether. The author is therefore both right and wrong. But it is a brilliantly written article that sets us thinking hard. Sukumar Mukhopadhyay via email TCA Srinivasa Raghavan responds: Sir, as you well know, the public sector is a curse not for reasons of economics but because it has become a vehicle for political corruption and fund raising. It must go from everything except the social sector.

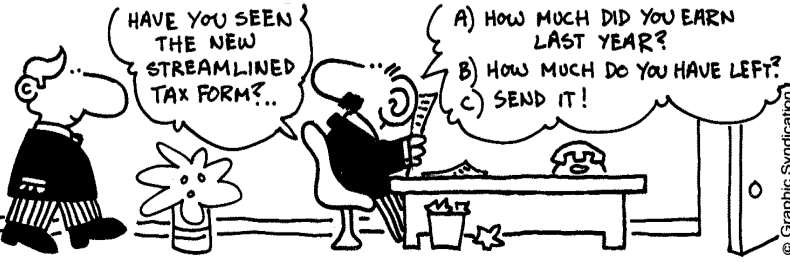
### Risky business

This refers to your article “IL&FS fallout: Lessons for rating agencies” (June 5). Credit rating agencies, in the midst of competition, project contradictory ratings of institutions. Investors thus get misled and incur financial losses. Rating parameters among

various rating agencies should not be too extreme in nature. The agencies ultimately evade accountability and pass on the responsibility to the corporate. The absence of protection for investors in the event of faulty risk projection in an issuer-based ratings is again an escape route for these agencies. They thus require higher levels of functional supervision, both internally and externally, to ensure efficient and diligent functioning. Although the Securities and Exchange Board of India possesses punitive authority to cancel licences, impose fines for fraud and malpractices in credit rating, the same is not strictly exercised on rating agencies. An investor-based model for credit rating, can be more cautious about these. The issuer model will provide more transparent and reliable reports in the absence of payment from the rated corporate to the credit rating agency. Hedging of ratings is akin to gambling where commitments and end results are not firmly indicated. The rotation of credit rating agencies similar to that of auditors under the Companies Act will ensure greater transparency and accuracy and prevent collusion. The lowering of rating standards of rating agencies does not serve the purpose. Instead, credit rating should be handled by professionals with expertise attained through functional exposure to domestic and international markets. C Gopinath Nair Kochi

Letters can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to: The Editor, Business Standard Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi 110 002 Fax: (011) 23720201 • E-mail: letters@bsmail.in All letters must have a postal address and telephone number

## HAMBONE



## Handsome growth

Financial & energy firms shine in Q4, but slowdown hits others

The net profit growth of 2,273 companies in the January-March 2019 quarter was an impressive 39.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY), the best in 13 quarters. This is not in sync with macro-slowdown, reflected in the anaemic gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.8 per cent in the same quarter. Even for the Nifty 50 index constituents, it was a good quarter. Net profit growth for these 50 index companies was around 20 per cent, the highest in at least three years, though revenue growth was at a 10-quarter low. In Q4 FY19, a better show by some of the banks and energy companies aided the overall growth.

However, a closer look at the data reveals that it was largely due to a low base in the March 2018 quarter when banks, especially private corporate and public sector banks, had clocked big losses. If financial and energy companies were to be excluded, the story changes altogether. The bottom line of 1,869 non-financial and non-energy firms declined 0.1 per cent YoY in the fourth quarter of 2018-19, the lowest in six quarters, as the slowdown in consumer demand impacted manufacturing growth, while lower government investment hurt both the economy and industry. Coupled with an uptick in interest and depreciation cost, it was a double whammy.

Another indicator of the demand pressure became evident from the sample of domestic market-focused companies, which saw core operating profit margin — excluding extraordinary profit or loss — drop below the double-digit mark, the first in at least 17 quarters, indicating pressure on the cost front as well. This sample, which largely comprises manufacturing players, excludes metals, information technology and pharmaceuticals as well as financials and energy. The Q4 numbers suggest a slowdown in private consumption demand, which has been the key driver of economic growth and corporate earnings in the last two years. The discretionary demand — automobiles and consumer durables — has, however, taken a bigger knock than non-discretionary consumption such as food and personal care products. The combined net sales of automobile makers excluding Tata Motors, which is largely a global play, was up just 2 per cent YoY during Q4, growing at the slowest pace in at least three years.

Coming to sectors, automakers' core operating margins were down 280 basis points on average compared with Q4 FY18, while their combined earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) was down for the second consecutive quarter. The industry's combined net profit was down 7.4 per cent YoY during the fourth quarter, the worst in at least three years.

Fast moving consumer goods companies did relatively better with a 10.2 per cent YoY growth in net sales but their top line growth was lowest in the last four quarters, and given the cutback in retail spending, this sector would not be able to contribute to India Inc's profits as much as it has in the past. The investment or capex-related sectors such as capital goods, construction and infrastructure reported relatively better growth numbers compared with other companies. The rest of the manufacturer-companies took a knock on their margins and profits, while the telecom sector continued to post massive losses. The stock market has shrugged off weak quarterly numbers for now because of expectations of a rate cut and a stimulus for the economy. Till then, most analysts see a downside risk to the forward earnings estimates for FY20.

## Free rider risks

Delhi's plan for women passengers won't solve anything

There is little debate that the National Capital Region is among the most unsafe urban regions for women worldwide. The public policy response to this demands enlightened education campaigns and a heightened investment on security in vigilance. It is a long, hard slog that usually deters most politicians caught in a five-year electoral cycle — including a woman chief minister who ruled Delhi for 15 years. In that respect, the current Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's proposal to make bus and metro travel free for all women as a means of enhancing their safety reflects an astonishing degree of illogic. It is unclear how a woman travelling in a bus or train will be any safer because she has not paid for her ticket. Just as segregating compartments and seats for women has not made women any safer on public transport, a free ticket is unlikely to enhance their security either.

While Mr Kejriwal alluded to the links between urban mobility and gender equality, he is applying the wrong solution to the problem of women's safety, perhaps with an eye to the Assembly elections in 2020. In fact, it is unclear why he has included the Delhi Metro in this proposal: Any woman will testify to its international standards of security, which tend to be accentuated once she steps out of the station precincts into the street. Had Mr Kejriwal chosen to study the metro system with even cursory attention he would have noticed the heightened security bandobast that was put in place right from the start. Had similar arrangements, such as the suggestion to have marshals on all buses (and perhaps at the more remote bus stands) been instituted for the bus service, the ordeal for women using public transport would have lessened. Besides, asymmetric pricing benefits tend to be socially divisive. Even women who say they appreciate the potential savings of free travel have expressed their apprehensions of a widening gender divide and male resentment this policy is likely to engender. As a means of encouraging Indian men to see women as social equals, free pricing is the solution of last resort.

Set against these arguments is hard economics. The Delhi government has not explained how it will compensate the two services. The only thing that has been speculated upon is that the proposal is expected to cost the Delhi government around ₹700 crore on an annual basis. The Delhi Transport Corporation has seen its working losses rise from ₹942. 89 crore in 2013-14 to ₹1,750 crore in 2018-19. Can it afford free riders? As for the Delhi metro, it raised fares after a long gap of eight years to much controversy. Its operating ratio is in danger of being skewed again if a large segment of its passengers travel free.

Instead of subsidies, Mr Kejriwal would be better off spending taxpayer money on augmenting Delhi's bus service in terms of quantity and security and working with the central government to train the police force in gender sensitivity to make the national capital safer for women in overall terms. But with less than a year to go for the polls, the easier solution will probably prevail, with all its dubious benefits.

## OOKLA 5G MAP

The interactive Ookla 5G Map tracks 5G rollouts across the globe. Updated weekly from verified public sources and Ookla data. You can follow operators' 5G networks on @Ookla5Gmap

Deployment types: ● Commercial availability 279 ● Limited availability 31 ● Pre-release 63



<https://www.speedtest.net/ookla-5g-map>

## 5G aspirations and realities

What the government can do for 5G and Digital India

Ah, 5G! The very thought seems to excite so many. What is it? It is a mix of telecom technologies<sup>1</sup> delivering much higher data speeds on more extensive connectivity, using much lower power, with extended battery life, and emitting less radiation, for ways to connect and operate most of the conveniences people use regularly. From smartphones and computers for communications, study, work, research, entertainment, to other devices and machines, such as for managing utilities (electricity and water) at home and the workplace, refrigerators and cooking devices, industrial equipment, transport, and more, so that daily activities are eased considerably. The catch is that 5G is at an early stage in a long process — perhaps a couple of years to manifest in large trials in India, and several more years to be widely available, needing huge investment (\$100 billion in India).

Yet, there are compelling reasons for developing India's capabilities. There is the sheer necessity for India to partially meet its requirements, instead of relying entirely on imports. The big draw is the size of the Indian market and prospective demand, the global market, and the possibility of innovation at this early stage. Domestic capabilities are a prerequisite to afford deployment at a level that would otherwise exceed petroleum imports, with unsustainable effects on our balance of payments. Without domestic capacity, energy imports would limit electronics imports. (This highlights India's need for solar power development, a separate and equally high priority.)

However, the sobering financial condition of India's communications industry gives pause. Financial capacity — revenue generation and access to capital,

both equity and debt at favourable terms — is required to develop capabilities. After the telecom price wars, even Reliance Jio is reportedly cutting staff. Airtel, meanwhile, having invested heavily in 4G infrastructure, has stated its unwillingness to bid for 5G spectrum unless prices are lower.

The government set up a committee for 5G in September 2017 with a steering group chaired by emeritus professor at Stanford Arogyaswami Paulraj, a pioneer in wireless communications. This committee recommended network deployment as the immediate priority, i.e., rolling out early, efficient and pervasive 5G networks. Technology design and manufacturing capacity were recommended for later phases.

Network deployment needs policy support, especially for a debt-encumbered sector faced with declining revenues per user, and unused, inaccessible spectrum, even as other countries enhance their lead. This is ironic, because India has real strengths in this sector and a large market, with the potential to catapult productivity and prospects. Yet, government policies have not succeeded in coordinating our reservoir of human resources and potential.

India lags in 5G despite the government's stated interest in establishing a lead. Spectrum allocation and large trials were scheduled towards the end of 2019, and auctions in 2020. However, government statements this week target 5G trials by September, and auctions by the end of 2019. As spectrum band choices and allocations for trials have yet to be made, this appears overambitious without radical improvement in resolving many such issues.

Also, India's reserve price for spectrum is seven



SHYAM PONAPPA



POWER POINT

SHYAMAL MAJUMDAR

## Joint audits don't add up

In its final report on statutory audits in April this year, the Competition and Markets Authority of the UK suggested mandatory joint audits to increase choice in the market and thereby drive up audit quality. Though these are just recommendations and are yet to be accepted and legislated, the issue has become a hot topic in the Indian auditing fraternity.

The reasons are obvious. The audit profession is in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons, the latest trigger being the IL&FS fiasco and the alleged involvement of the auditing firms in the scandal. While a detailed investigation into the role of auditors is required, it may not be prudent to accept the suggestion from several quarters that India should take the cue from the UK committee's report and make joint auditing mandatory. Here's why.

France is the only large economy that has mandatory joint audit requirements. Most of the large economies that had such a system, such as Canada, Sweden, Denmark and South Africa, have abolished the law, primarily because of increased cost and no apparent beneficial impact on audit quality. Further, the leading economies of the world such as the US, China and the EU have not mandated joint audit.

There have been several cases where the quality of audit has been questioned even in a joint audit scenario. For example, public sector companies and banks in India are subject to joint audits. But these banks have faced several questions around non-performing assets and some high-profile frauds. Even in countries where joint audits are permissible, companies rarely opt for it, because they increase costs to both compa-

nies and auditors and present challenges in coordinating between two audit firms and between the auditors and the audited entity.

The moot point is that any audit reform should be driven by the objective of enhancing audit quality. There is no basis to believe that joint audits enhance quality. In fact, they create an incentive where managements could try to leverage one firm against another in seeking a preferred outcome.

Several studies have analysed the effect of joint audit regulations on audit quality. Holm and Thinggaard in 2011 examined whether joint audit impacts audit quality. Their sample comprised non-financial companies listed on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange at the time of joint audit abolishment. Their final sample for the audit quality tests included 117 companies. They found insignificant coefficients on their audit quality measures (abnormal accruals), suggesting that joint audits are not better able to constrain earnings management than single audits.

Mandatory joint audits also lead to higher audit fees. According to estimates, joint audits lead to 20 per cent additional cost as compared to the single auditor approach. The implication on effectiveness is also not encouraging. Joint audits may in fact lead to lack of accountability as some issues may fail to be considered by any of the auditors, following the division of the work.

Besides, mandating joint audit in combination with mandatory firm rotation would result in problems particularly in the case of specialised industries since it would be difficult for companies to appoint specialist auditors with sufficient expertise and capability to handle the audit because of their low availability.

times Korea's. As sectoral cash flows are weak, there may be takers only at very low prices unless funding is from external sources as for Reliance. A monopolistic outcome would be undesirable in the public interest. Therefore, shared access with Wireless Resource Virtualisation and Network Function Virtualisation may be a much better solution for network deployment and market development.

Inexplicably, government and the public still view communications as a "government cash-cow" instead of as critical infrastructure, while complaining bitterly about poor delivery from low investment. It is obvious that exorbitant government charges (29-32 per cent of revenues plus corporate tax) crowd out investment. The government can change this, or give up on establishing a lead in communications and 5G. Worse, India will continue to lose out on leveraging communications for development.

### Initiate a breakthrough

The government can catalyse a breakthrough by doing the following:

a) Reduce borrowing costs and taxes for communications as infrastructure. This aim of the National Telecom Policy 2012 (NTP-2012) has been ignored.

b) Provide adequate spectrum aligned with global allocations. Given India's low fibre penetration and need for digital technology, allow shared access to all spectrum and infrastructure, with charges for usage based on revenue sharing.

c) Clear administrative impasses through coordination and due process without delay. For example, allocate spectrum immediately for 12 months for trials.

Many countries have completed 5G spectrum assignments and are already deploying 5G. These include Korea, Switzerland, Finland, UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Japan.<sup>2</sup>

There are nearly 300 5G deployments, as shown on an interactive map on Ookla's site (Chart 1).

In this context, Huawei's role in India is contentious. One issue is of non-discriminatory trading terms, or fairness in competition. If an entity such as Huawei achieves global dominance through government support, it competes on terms that cannot be matched because of cost of funds and scale advantages. Such entities can establish dominance in any country against competitors who do not enjoy similar support. Second, while Huawei may be doing nothing different from Nokia or Ericsson, the fact that it is supported by a neighbour with apparently hegemonic behaviour, China, suggests that dependence or entanglement are inadvisable.

To succeed with Digital India and 5G, government can begin by classifying communications as infrastructure, and adopting the approach taken for 5 GHz Wi-Fi. Take pointers from the US FCC, ETSI, and so on; use spectrum and network sharing to leverage equipment and spectrum fully; support local technology champions such as a fabless chip design unit and a network equipment manufacturer in Bangalore, and a wireless equipment manufacturer in Delhi; and focus only on delivery with sustainable revenue generation.

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1: 5G technologies include Multi-User – MIMO (MU-MIMO) to improve reception, small cells for better performance and reduced radiation, WiGig and other high-speed wireless technologies, Software Defined Networks with Network Function Virtualisation, Wireless Resource Virtualisation, and a fibre backbone.

2: Page 8: <https://img.lightreading.com/5g/downloads/webinar-breaking-the-wireless-barriers-to-mobilize-5g-nr-mmwave.pdf>

There are other reasons, too. In a joint audit scenario, each auditor has joint liabilities. This results in practical challenges in splitting of work evenly, reviewing each other's work papers, joint meetings, resolving disagreements and evaluation of joint auditors' objectivity, competence and independence. Owing to the differences in the audit firms in terms of size, resources, expertise and technology, there are practical challenges in sharing of risks and fees.

Joint audits also lead to an increase in the workload because of duplication of audit work. Many tasks must be performed by each of the joint auditor, such as attending meetings with key members of management, audit procedures on high risk accounts, etc. A significant time of the audit partner and manager is spent in co-ordination (meetings, reviews of working papers, exchange of information etc) in a joint audit scenario. In addition, joint audits may bring additional complexity as the audited entity must choose and must communicate with two auditors instead of one. It is also possible that in the conduct of the joint audit, the work performed by one of the auditors will be subject only to a limited and superficial review by the other joint auditor and would not bring any added value.

Mandatory joint audits also do not enhance independence or objectivity, as both auditors are subject to and must comply with the same independence requirements. They just cannot counter the demand of large, complex global companies for audit firms with extensive geographical coverage and expertise to be able to perform high quality audits

These are the reasons perhaps why an expert group set up by the ministry of corporate affairs under the chairmanship of Ashok Chawla, former finance secretary, considered the issue in 2017 and recommended that there should not be mandatory joint audit and the decision must be left to the companies and their boards.

very widely or remembered.

Chandu Borde was almost made captain in 1961 only to find that Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi had been chosen. The story goes, says Mr Bose, that Patlaudi's mother, the Begum of Bhopal, asked Nehru to make her son the captain who did his bit.

As with all such stories this one, too, has been in the air on and off but never authenticated, not even by Borde who ruefully told Mr Bose that he had borrowed money from Bapu Nadkarni to celebrate. Borde, I learnt for the first time, was Christian, though why that should have been mentioned beats me.

For the rest of the stories, you will have to read the book, which is needlessly expensive.

**THE NINE WAVES: The Extraordinary Story of Indian Cricket**

Mihir Bose  
Aleph, 561 pages, ₹999

## Power play and Indian cricket



### BOOK REVIEW

TCA SRINIVASA RAGHAVAN

India has won the World Cup twice, in 1983 and 2011. It has also won the T20 Championship once in 2007 — after resisting the format for several years rather as a former chairman of the State Bank of India had resisted ATMs in the 1980s. For the last few years, India has been at or near the top of all the cricket charts. Finally, commercially, too, it is to world cricket what

China is to world trade: A very rich bully.

Mihir Bose, a highly respected journalist and author, tries to explain what has brought about this ascendancy *The Nine Waves: The Extraordinary Story of Indian Cricket*. After all, as historian Prashant Kidambi shows in his forthcoming book about the first Indian tour of England in 1911, that team was treated as a bunch of wannabe natives. It lost every match it played, of course.

Mr Bose, who had earlier written *The History of Indian Cricket*, revisits that history and comes up with a new theory: Indian cricket has seen nine waves each taller than the previous one and each scaling a new peak. He doesn't quite tell us what constitutes a "wave" but no matter. The book is so rich in detail that even the

most ardent follower of the game will be left wonderstruck.

So, although normally I give away cricket books after reading them, I am going to keep this one. It's the sort of book you keep dipping into for the anecdotes such as the one about the daughter of the Bombay jeweller who, after he had scored a century in 1932, went to see Lala Amarnath with a bagful of diamonds and asked if he would elope with her. Mr Amarnath declined. He told Mr Bose in an interview that she was not "his type".

### Nehru does his bit

Jawaharlal Nehru was a great man, with a Modi-like eye on symbolism. That's why every year there was his photograph in Indian newspapers in pads for the yearly

Parliamentarian match. Nehru thought cricket was a good idea.

But therein hangs a tale. It seems the Brits — Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee — were keen that India should retain the British king as its constitutional head. Bose says even some sort of ancient Indian title for him was suggested. Sardar Patel, however, didn't want India to be a part of this British club and there was a lot of debate about it in 1948.

Then, typically, for reasons best known to himself, Nehru took a unilateral decision: We are in. Mr Bose suggests that Edwina Mountbatten might have had something to do with it. By all accounts, Nehru seems to have had soft corner for her. The future of Indian cricket, however, must have been the last thing on Nehru's mind.

His decision was momentous as the Imperial Cricket Conference (as the ICC was called then), decided to make India a permanent member, a privilege from which

## Banks can't cut rates till govt drops EPF, etc, interest

Cut in small savings' rates critical for banks to get more deposits; without that, they can't lower interest even if RBI cuts the repo

THE SHARP DECELERATION in growth over the past year, culminating in a jaw-dropping 5.8% year-on-year (y-o-y) in the March quarter, is enough evidence the economy is stalling. Although there is a clamour for a policy rate cut, high interest rates are not the main cause for poor growth though there is doubt that a smaller interest bill does make a big difference to small businesses. But while RBI may cut the repo by 25, or even 35, basis points today, the harder task will be to get banks to lower loan rates. There has been little transmission of the cuts in the repo rate into loan rates over the last several years for various reasons, including the asset quality pains of state-owned lenders and more recently, the moderating pace of growth in deposits. The central bank has tried to tweak the lending method—there was the base rate and now the MCLR—but banks are reluctant to lower rates for fear their margins will shrink. It also wanted to force them to peg loan rates to external benchmarks, but has desisted.

While banks have only themselves to blame for the sorry state of their balance sheets, they must be free to charge whatever rate they feel is needed to cover costs and earn a surplus; they must have the flexibility to decide how to play the competition and remain in business. It is a fact that, over the past year or so, deposits have been hard to come by, whereas the demand for loans has picked up. This has made it difficult for banks to lower the interest rate on deposits since they rightly fear the savings would flow elsewhere. After all, deposits account for the biggest chunk of borrowings for banks, and not borrowings in the wholesale market that are short-term in nature. One way to address the problem is to lower the interest rates on other savings schemes—EPF, PPF, post office schemes—so that the relative attractiveness of bank deposits returns. So far, the government hasn't had the stomach to take on the unions, but if it wants banks to lower loan rates, it must start by bringing down rates on all competing savings products. Again, for loan rates to come down, expenses on overheads too must come down. Many of the the public sector banks have a larger share of the cheaper CASA deposits, but their workforces are large and their employee costs disproportionately high. However, they are nearly bankrupt and have been asked by the central bank to stay out of the loan market. These banks must use technology and digitisation and hire only the kind of talent needed to operate in this new environment.

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan had observed that one reason for the high premium or spread charged by lenders was because of the large number of defaults. Banks need to be far more vigilant, careful and honest while appraising borrowers than they have been in the past. A better credit culture would reduce the need for large spreads. To be sure, these changes will occur only over the longer term. In the near term, lower interest rates on small-savings schemes might make banks less apprehensive of trimming rates on deposits and embolden them to cut interest rates on loans by more than five or ten basis points at a time.

## Fight pollution efficiently

Localised, piecemeal solutions don't work in the long run

THE THEME OF the World Environment Day this year being air pollution shows no amount of attention to the matter can ever prove enough. To illustrate, the climate action consensus achieved at the Paris meeting has been squandered since, given growth in global fossil fuel emissions, after remaining flat in 2015 and 2016, inched up by 1.6% in 2017 and clocked 2.8% in 2018. The US, under climate sceptic Donald Trump, walked out of the Paris Agreement and many other countries have either threatened to follow suit or are reassessing their commitments under the agreement. India, as an analysis by Climate Action Tracker shows, is one of the four countries that have 2°C—compatible national action plans. To be sure, air pollution is still a major headache for India, but the greater thrust on renewable power generation, prodding a shift towards electronic vehicles, improving green cover, linking 8 crore households burning plant and animal waste to LPG, and other such action should go a long way in bringing down emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. On the other hand, the country seems to be failing badly at curbing water pollution and plastic pollution.

There are many climate action/pollution mitigation measures being implemented across the country. There is a Ganga clean-up plan that focuses on action against polluting industries whose effluents flow untreated into the river, building effluent and sewage treatment capacity, solid waste processing plants, etc. On solid waste management and plastic pollution, the Commissionerate of Municipal Administration (CMA) of Tamil worked hard to ensure state-wide progress in compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules 2016—from waste segregation at source to composting of wet waste, the state has made considerable progress in a short span of time. Within corporate India, Infosys has relied on tech/design solutions for its buildings and many other efforts to build a culture of environmental sustainability. The Indian IT giant now has 18.25 million sq ft of the highest-rated green buildings, having overhauled energy and water consumption, and waste management—the company has reduced per capita water consumption by 20.6% and per capita energy consumption by about 5% in 2018 over 2017.

Many such solutions are thriving in India, but are extremely localised or benefit, at best, certain small pockets. Replication of best practices, scaling up from the locality-level to the state or even national level, wider reach of sustainability solutions, etc., are often hobbled for the want of capital, lack of will or vision among policy makers, and, crucially, market interest. If India is to be on the front foot in its fight against pollution, an entirely decentralised approach may not make much sense—quite like how India battling a future that sees a > 2°C rise in global temperature with a handful of other nations is futile. A concerted response to pollution needs a body to link individual, localised solutions to a broader market for these. For instance, why shouldn't other corporates and even public sector buildings make use of technological/design innovations that are helping Infosys reduce its dependence on fossil fuel-power? Getting the market interested in such solutions will require convincing it of the need for these, and if the dire warnings sounded by expert panels on the planet's future because of the unfolding climate crisis can't do the job, there is little else that can.

## FreeRIDE

The Delhi govt's proposal to let women ride on DTC buses/Metro free of charge is more populism than a vision for change

THE DELHI GOVERNMENT'S decision to allow women to ride on DTC/cluster buses and the Metro for free reeks of the most dangerous kind of populism—one that is dressed up as serving a larger public good. The Arvind Kejriwal government reasons that this will boost both women's safety and their likelihood of finding employment and staying employed. To be sure, the ease of commute because of an accessible and wide public transport network is a big factor in boosting women's employment and, to an extent, provides them security. But, is making the commute summarily free, for all economic classes, the best way to achieve these objectives? As far as the burden on the debt-ridden DMRC's revenues is concerned, the Delhi government will bear the cost—around ₹1,600 crore annually.

Census 2011 shows that in tier I, II and III cities, women account for just 22% of total daily passengers; in Delhi, it is a much lower 15%. The Delhi government believes that it subsidising the entire amount charged to women for their travel will bring this number up, with long-term gains for women's participation in the labour force. However, given how the proposal comes just months before Assembly elections in the national capital, it is hard to see this as anything more than a pre-poll sop. Given that a significant proportion of the women who would likely board DTC/cluster buses and the Metro once the "free ride" policy comes into effect can afford to pay the fares even today, the Delhi government absorbing the loss seems like inefficient use of the taxpayers' money. There are a host of other issues that affect women's ease of mobility, for instance, the absolute lack of safe last-mile connectivity from the metro and bus stops. Also, can free-rides for women be assigned a higher priority than, say, adding to the DTC's fleet which suffers from chronic shortage? While the Kejriwal government says the proposal will be implemented after 2-3 months of proper analysis, at the outset, it seems short-sighted.

## TRADE WARS

TRUMP SEEMS UNFAZED BY THE POSSIBLE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF A PROTRACTED TRADE WAR: A DECOUPLING OF THE CHINESE AND AMERICAN ECONOMIES, AND A LOSS OF GAINS FROM TRADE

# The real cost of Trump's tariffs

EARLIER THIS MONTH, US President Donald Trump suddenly revealed that a trade agreement between the United States and

China was not imminent after all. On the contrary, on May 10, the Trump administration raised its previous 10% tariff on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods to 25%, and threatened to apply the same rate to the remaining \$300 billion or so of US imports from China by late June. China then retaliated with reciprocal tariffs on \$60 billion worth of US exports, effective June 1. Surprised stock markets fell in response, with the S&P 500 down 4% over the first week of the renewed trade war.

US trade policy is now a hot mess of conflicting goals. Given the current impasse in talks with China, and Trump's general unpredictability, the inconsistencies of US trade policy—and their costs—are unlikely to go away soon.

For starters, the US officials and some prominent economists defend the high US tariffs as a regrettable but temporary expedient, and a necessary means to a strategic end. On this view, the tariffs are a weapon that will enable Trump, the consummate deal-maker, to force concessions from China and America's other trading partners.

Yet Trump looks and talks like someone who would be perfectly satisfied if the tariffs became permanent. He continues to insist that China is paying the cost of the tariffs, sending money to the US Treasury. Moreover, he seems unfazed by the possible long-term effects of a protracted trade war: a decoupling of the Chinese and American economies, and a loss of gains from trade; includ-



ing a dismantling of the supply chains on which so much industry in both countries depends.

At the same time, the Trump administration is demanding that China make it easier for American companies to set up operations in the country—in particular, by ensuring that US firms are not required to hand over technology or other intellectual property to local partners. But this seems inconsistent with Trump's goal of increasing US net exports to China, which would presumably involve American firms producing at home rather than in China.

The incoherence of Trump's trade policies is even more worrying on closer inspection. If higher tariffs remain indefinitely—as now appears possible—the US and the global economy will be worse off.

Trump's gleeful belief that China is helping to fund the US government via the tariffs is outlandish. A tariff is a tax, and it is US consumers and firms, not China, who are paying it. True, Chinese exporters might in theory have had to lower their prices if US tariffs had led to a sufficiently large drop in demand for their products. But, two new studies by eminent economists using 2018

data find that Chinese exporters have not lowered their prices and that, as a result, the full extent of the price increase has been passed through to US households.

According to one estimate, if Trump goes ahead with his threat to extend the 25% tariff to all imports from China, the cost for a typical US household will be \$300-\$800 per year; another puts the additional costs as high as \$2,200 per year. Moreover, this does not count the cost to US firms, workers, and farmers from lost exports—the result of Chinese retaliation and other effects, including appreciation of the dollar against the renminbi.

An extended tariff war would also result in a loss of gains from US-China trade. Economists have long said that the public can't be expected to understand the principle of gains from trade without having been taught British economist David Ricardo's principle of comparative advantage. This idea—which states that trade between two countries can be mutually beneficial, even when one country can produce everything more cheaply than the other—was

Trump's gleeful belief that China is helping to fund the US government via the tariffs is outlandish. A tariff is a tax, and it is US consumers and firms, not China, who are paying it

## The govt should adopt XBRL

The big value of the adoption of XBRL in India will stem from plugging the leakages in government spending

SWAMINATHAN

CEO of IRIS Business Services Ltd.  
Views are personal



TO THE MODI government 2.0: As you embark on the preparation of your maiden budget, this is an idea I hope you will consider.

XBRL is an open source information reporting standard through the adoption of which you can cut government flab and more significantly, ensure the effectiveness of government spending.

In Australia they saved as much as A\$400 million in 2014/15 and followed up with a saving of A\$1.1 billion in 2015/16. Encouraged by the huge savings reaped by Australia and the Netherlands which had a similar experience to report, several other countries like Turkey, Canada and Finland are adopting a similar approach. I am convinced that in India, we will save a great deal more every year. Allow me to explain how.

Most of the savings in Australia came from the elimination of red tape. Businesses saved money through a reduction in regulatory burden, while the government saved money by de-layering the bureaucracy engaged in regulatory oversight.

While both of these will certainly apply in the Indian case too, the much larger benefit will come from elsewhere. One may recall how the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi famously pointed out that only 15 paise of every rupee spent by the government reached the intended beneficiary. The big value of the adoption of XBRL in India will stem from plugging the leakages in government spending. The 15 paise can easily double within a year and can be much closer to the total outlay; net of legitimate administrative costs by the time the term of this government gets over. Just imagine the impact on the

economy if most of that money reached the intended beneficiary. India will suddenly look so different, wouldn't it? With XBRL that can happen. I will use an example to illustrate.

The Ministry of Rural Development had a total budget outlay of ₹1,14,915 crore for 2018/19. This money is spent on the government machinery set up to administer various programmes, and also on several lakh NGOs who help with the imple-

ment of various programmes. It has come to light, in the course of a case which is now being heard in the supreme Court, that only 2,90,787 NGOs out of a total of 29,99,623 registered under the Societies Registration Act, and even file annual financial statements. And the government is generally unaware if even those that are filing their annual financial statements are using the funds properly.

It is humanly impossible to verify the financial statement of each of the NGOs to determine everything is kosher. And it certainly does not help if they file their statements in hard copy or even pdf. By moving from document based submission to data filings, which is what XBRL will entail, the government will simply tighten oversight. This makes it possible for the government to act speedily and expeditiously against those that are not spending the funds right.

In India, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the RBI have both adopted XBRL, though it is the RBI that has benefited the most. Even so, the MCA

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the RBI have both adopted XBRL, though it is the RBI that has benefited the most

is not unaware of the possibilities of XBRL, as their website reveals: "XBRL offers major benefits at all stages of business reporting and analysis. The benefits are seen in automation, cost saving, faster, more reliable and more accurate handling of data, improved analysis and in better quality of information and decision-making. All types of organisations can use XBRL to save costs and improve efficiency in handling business and financial information. Because XBRL is extensible and flexible, it can be adapted to a wide variety of different requirements."

Over at the Reserve Bank of India, they will admit that the reason why bank NPAs have been the subject of drawing room discussions across the country is because the use of XBRL has made it expensive for banks to hide their NPAs. Without

a doubt, the oversight of banks by the RBI has been greatly strengthened by the adoption of XBRL.

The time has come to consider mainstreaming XBRL across the entire government, across all departments, and across all ministries. If the government through the use of XBRL for reporting manages to tighten oversight, it stands to reason that even with a lower outlay, an outcome superior to what is realised now can be achieved.

Over the decades of budget making in a leaking system, outlays mattered. But now, outcomes will begin to matter. And nobody can have any objection to getting a bigger bang for the buck, surely.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Retaliation to the Hindi imposition

Following the emergence of vociferous protest and strident criticism from states, like Tamilnadu and West Bengal against three language formula recommended by draft new education policy authored by Kasturirangan committee, the draft was revised finally to assuage the apprehensions about the imposition of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states. India is known for its diversity, any effort by the centre to impose language of Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states needs to be decried. Language learning at best be left to the discretion of learners and imposition or thrust of language like Hindi on states like Tamilnadu militates against the very spirit of Federalism. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

### No negative impact of GSP withdrawal

It is commendable that US implemented and maintained GSP status very sophisticatedly till date. It helped a lot of Indian companies to enter and get tariff-free access in the US market. Now the withdrawal of GSP has been taking place, as now the US considers India, neither still a developing country nor a country which requires assistance from other nations. To this withdrawal Indian government is not only not responding much, but also not retaliating/imposing taxes. This is majorly because of two reasons, firstly GSP wasn't a compulsion, it was an obligation, and secondly, future prospects are kept in mind as the reports of Indo-American Chamber of Commerce states that Indo-American trade would increase to \$500 billion by 2023-24 from \$142 billion at present. — Mayank Khatri, Ujjain

● Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com



ILLUSTRATION: ROHINIT PHORE

TV MOHANDAS PAI & NISHA HOLLA

Pai is chairman, Aarin Capital Partners, and Holla is an entrepreneur & independent researcher

### ● EDUCATING WOMEN

# Holding up half the sky

Improving women's higher education is key to India becoming a \$10 -trillion economy

**T**HE NATIONAL FERTILITY and Health Survey-4 shows India's fertility rates have dramatically dropped to 2.18, below replacement rate, as analysed in our previous article (bit.ly/2JM6u4f). Demographics are changing across the socio-religious spectrum and are strongly correlated with women's education and literacy, as discussed in another article (bit.ly/2MtXsLY). We look at women's progress in higher education to further understand this change.

Higher education statistics published by AISHE, MHRD from 2011-12 to 2017-18 show an increasing trend. Total number of males enrolled increased by 30.3 lakhs, 18.7%, in 6 years, while the

number of women enrolled increased by 44.3 lakhs, a whopping 34% rise. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for total enrollment is 3.87%, with males at 2.9% and females at 5%. The percentage of enrolled women rose from 44.6% in 2011-12 to 47.6% in 2017-18. More women are pursuing higher education now than ever before.

Extrapolating the data out to 2030 indicates the number of women pursuing higher education might soon exceed that of men; 2024-25 could see a normalisation between genders, and 2029-30 could see as much as 53% enrollment of women, a dramatic shift. Many countries around the world have undergone this. In the United States, according to official statistics, 56% of undergraduates

are women. India is following this trend.

The total Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in the 18-23 years age group is steadily increasing from 20.8 in 2011-12 to 25.8 in 2017-18. Male enrollment increased from GER of 22.1 to 26.3, a 19% increase. Female enrollment rose even faster, with a GER under 20 to 25.4, a significant jump of 30%. The GER between genders is normalising, again indicating that more women are turning towards higher education to improve their livelihood.

These trends show a silent revolution over the last decade, with significant implications for fertility rates and the economy. It would seem that as more women are turning towards higher education and correspondingly better employment opportunities, they are delaying childbirth and having fewer children. Higher education is one of the contributors to the levelling off of population growth.

With India's 29 states having diverse economic conditions, variance in state-wise GER is huge. The accompanying graphic contains GER of representative states in North and South India for 2011-12 and 2017-18. On average, North Indian states have much lower GER compared to South, and the divergence is increasing. GER also correlates with development—Bihar's GER moved nominally by 0.5 points in six years and also trails in development metrics.

The population-weighted averages of representative North and South Indian states are computed in the accompanying graphic. Significant observations are:

■ Both the North and South GER have progressed significantly in the last decade. North Indian states have progressed by 4.88 points and South Indian states by 6.33 points from 2011-12 to 2017-18.

■ The difference between the North-

ern and Southern states of India is striking. On average, the GER of South Indian states is ahead of the North Indian states by 13.37 points in 2017-18.

■ Women are progressing faster than men. In North India, the average female GER jumped 5.91 points from 2011-12 to 2017-18, whereas the male GER moved 4.03 points. In South India, the female GER jumped 6.67 points whereas the male GER moved 4.49 points.

The status of women has dramatically increased in India. At the time of Independence, policymakers did not focus on educating women. As a result, household income and India's GDP did not grow as much as it could have. Contrast this with China—with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, chairman Mao Tse Tung famously said, "Women hold up half the sky," and instituted strict policies to educate women. The result is evident today in women's workforce participation, and contribution to China's GDP and outstanding rise as a Top-2 economy. With India's women pursuing higher education in larger numbers, they must be empowered to contribute to the nation's growth. It is opportune for India to leverage this economic multiplier to its GDP as it sets course for the USD 10 trillion mark.

The need of the hour is to provide the educated population with quality employment prospects. These must include incentives for the participation and traction of women in the workforce. Many women in India are primary caregivers for their children and other family members. Employment policies must take these constraints into account so women can have the flexibility to work around their schedules. Otherwise, well-educated women will have no option but to drop out of the workforce, which is a loss for everyone—from the individual to her family to the nation.

Fertility survey data indicates there will be fewer young people twenty years from now. This will result in India's workforce shrinking rapidly while supporting an ageing population. Instead, if more women are incentivised to work, they will contribute to society and the GDP for a long time, especially given that Indian lifespans and general well-being are also increasing.

Policy can also examine which fields women are pursuing more and focus on retention there. AISHE data shows that for the first time in 2017-18, enrollment in MBBS had more women, 50.3%, than men. If workforce participation for women doctors is improved through policy, this could transform India's healthcare system.

The next pertinent question is 'are women in India overtaking men?' and how to deal with this. In South India, educational institutions are resorting to interesting ways of handling the inversion. For example, some pre-university colleges in Bangalore are applying a higher cut-off percentage for women applicants. While this might not be the fairest way, we certainly see a possibility of a ceiling—say 60%—imposed on women enrollment.

The data from the AISHE and NFHS surveys indicate that the best investment India can make towards economic prosperity and societal progress is in higher education and employment prospects of women.

### ● AUTOMATION & JOBS

# The risks women face

McKinsey Global Institute says 20% of the working women could lose their jobs by 2030 because of automation

**T**HE INEVITABILITY OF automation in the workplace has long triggered fears of human redundancy. In its third report on automation and the future of work, McKinsey Global Institute analyses how the march of artificial intelligence and machine learning impacts women's employment.

Its findings, from studying a mix of ten mature and emerging economies, including India, are rather bleak. The report estimates that an average of 20% of working women in these countries (a total of 107 million) and 21% of working men (163 million) will lose their jobs to automation by 2030. Jobs in certain sectors, such as client support and manufacturing, face a higher risk than others that involve greater complexity of cognitive, social and emotional skills.

For India, this gives reason for pause. Already, the rate of female participation in the workforce was a mere 22.05% in 2018, compared with the South Asian average of 24.1% and a global average of 39%. Moreover, the majority of working women in India are employed in the agricultural and services sectors, as well as in industries, all of which have immense potential for automation. Losses in agriculture due to automation, for instance, could account for 28% of the jobs lost by women, as per the report.

While the report speaks of a global trend of women facing a slightly lower risk of losing their jobs than men due to the latter's employment in the roles requiring physical labour that are easily automated, India presents as a bit of a corner case. For instance, only 16% of job losses for men are expected to stem from the automation of agriculture. Further, unlike the other countries studied, in India, health-care—a sector likely to be less impacted by automation—is not dominated by women.

The report also states that women could gain 20% more jobs in the wake of technology-driven growth, outperforming men by 1%. This gain, however, is dependent on women's ability to maintain their current share of employment. Since women work in lower-paid jobs than men, and demand is expected to grow in medium- and high-wage jobs, women's access to the approximately 150 million net jobs that could be created is subject to their ability to make the transitions required into available jobs. Given how the burden of unpaid house/care work falls almost entirely on women's shoulders, and there are lingering concerns over women's physical safety and their lack of access to technology, obtaining the necessary training to make such a transition poses a unique problem. Policy makers must intervene to overcome these barriers to ensure growth, both for women and the economy.

#### To capture job opportunities, millions of women will need to make major work transitions by 2030

Many women will need higher education attainment or reskilling to stay employed

Navigating the transitions holds the promise of higher wages for women

Avg. decline Avg. rise

**Mature markets**

College/advanced degree

● More

Associate

● Less

Secondary education

● Significantly less

Lower than secondary education

● Less

College/advanced degree

● More

Associate

● Less

Secondary education

● Significantly more

Lower than secondary education

● Flat/similar

**Emerging markets**

College/advanced degree

● More

Associate

● Less

Secondary education

● Significantly more

Lower than secondary education

● Flat/similar

**Gender concentration index (based on occupation)**

Female labor-force participation rate, %

65

60

55

50

45

40

35

30

25

20

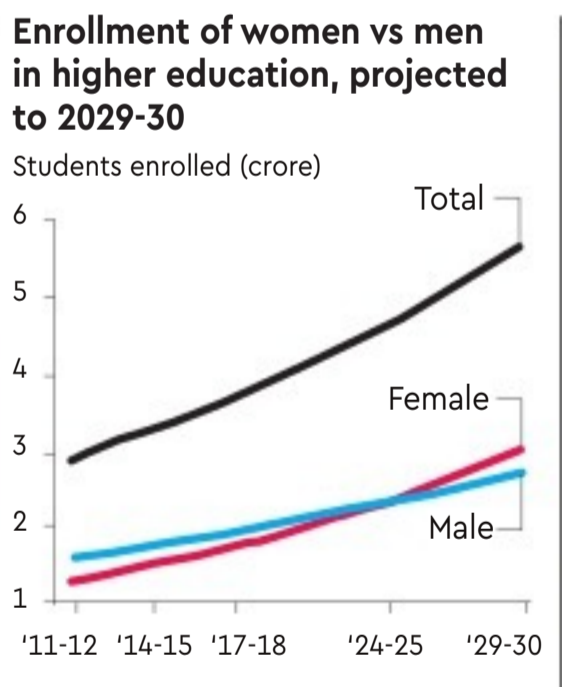
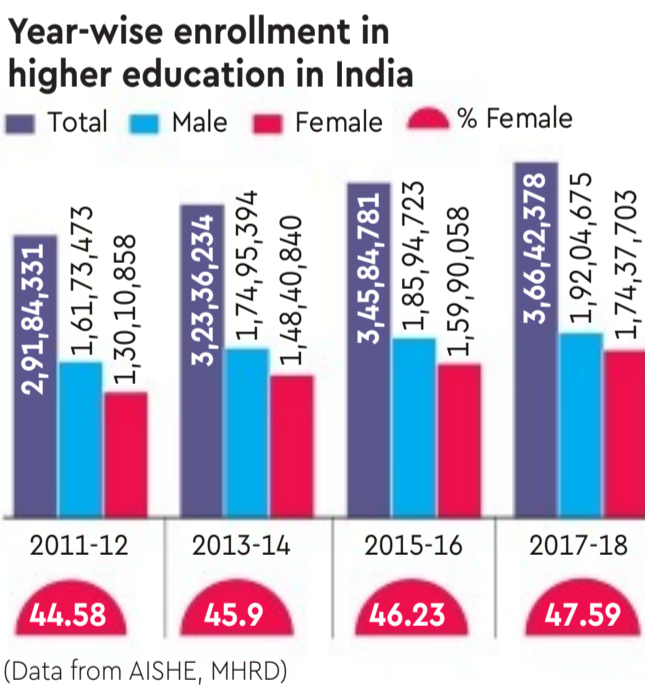
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Source: McKinsey Global Institute



Gross enrollment ratio GER) in higher education in India					
	'11-12	'13-14	'15-16	'17-18	
All Categories	20.8	23	24.5	26.3	
Male	22.1	23.9	25.4	26.3	
Female	19.4	22	23.5	25.4	

Population-weighted averages in the North and South			
	Male	Female	Total GER
North India	17.64	14.56	16.20
2017-18	21.67	20.47	21.08
South India	30.72	27.02	28.12
2017-18	35.21	33.69	34.45

State-wise GER of representative states					
	2011-12		2017-18		
States	Male GER	Female GER	Total GER	Male GER	Female GER
Bihar	14	10.8	12.5	14.5	11.5
Rajasthan	20.6	15.5	18.2	22.7	20.6
UP	17.5	17.2	17.4	25.2	26.7
MP	22	14.6	18.5	21.8	20.5
W Bengal	15.4	11.8	13.6	19.9	17.6
Gujarat	18.1	14.7	16.5	21.9	18.2
Karnataka	24.9	22.7	23.8	27.2	28.5
Maharashtra	28.1	24.3	23.8	32.6	29.5
Tamil Nadu	43.2	36.8	40	49.1	48.2
Andhra	33.3	26.4	29.9	34.7	27.1
Telangana	-	-	-	37.1	34.2
Kerala	17.8	25.6	21.8	32	40.4

## EDUCATION REFORMS

**T**HE GOVERNMENT HAS RELEASED a draft of the much-awaited New Education Policy (NEP) for comments. This policy, like many before it, provides a macro overview of a host of things the government wants to accomplish. In a sense, it is a list of 'what' the government wants to do, but missing in the NEP, as with much policy thinking, is the critical 'how'. Only when a policy appreciates or addresses the complexity of the 'how' can it have a clear and focused view of the 'what'. Just as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RTE Act were targeted measures to address the issue of access to elementary education, the government needs a similar approach to improve the quality of education.

A systemic approach to transforming school education can substantially alter the education ecosystem for the better. Such an approach entails both academic and governance reforms. The problems plaguing the system range from those related to pedagogy, such as inordinate focus on syllabus completion rather than grade-competency, poorly-designed assessments, cascaded teacher training mechanisms, and administrative issues such as inefficient review and monitoring mechanisms, inefficient mechanism for scheme delivery, and lack of data availability for right decision making.

**Systemic approach:** At the core of this is improving learning outcomes. First,

# Towards real learning in schools

The new government must prioritise implementation as much, if not more, as developing new policies

ANKUR BANSAL

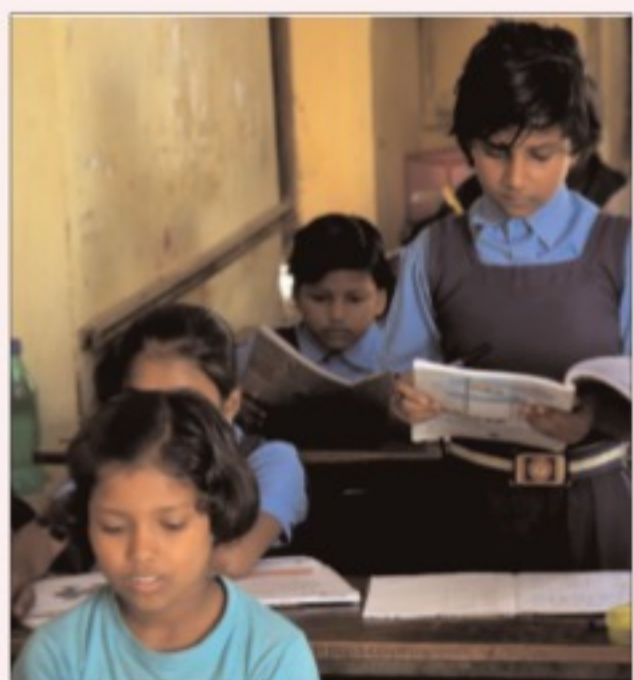
Co-founder, Samagra Transforming Governance



shift focus from syllabus completion to making students grade-competent, i.e. ensuring they can comprehend learning material appropriate to their grade. Second, ensure that regular, standardised assessments are administered across all schools in a state which test students on these competencies. Performance data from these assessments should be available in an easy-to-comprehend manner for all stakeholders. This is critical to benchmark performance and allow teachers to take corrective action. Third, to address the issue of thousands of children not being grade-competent, state-wide, structured remedial or practice workbook programmes are necessary. Critical to the implementation of

these academic reforms is strengthening human capital and administrative systems. The former entails ensuring that adequate number of teachers are available in classrooms as well as providing them with the tools necessary to teach better, including timely, need-based training. The latter includes consolidating unviable, small schools into larger schools for efficient utilisation of resources (human and physical), and using technology and data to increase administrative efficiency.

Effective implementation of these reforms rests on driving accountability, not just among teachers but the entire administrative machinery that constitutes the education system. Finally, the



kind of reforms that are needed to overhaul the education system cannot happen without the political and bureaucratic leadership of states pushing for these changes from the top.

**Implementing systemic reforms:** The framework described above is not meant to be theory. It has been developed based on the experience of states such as Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh that have adopted a systemic approach to transforming education. To get a better sense of how the systemic approach works, let's look at the reforms these states have undertaken.

All 8,556 primary government schools in Haryana conduct remedial classes for 10 lakh students during the

first 45 minutes of the school day, with the schedule of lessons aligned to the content taught in the classroom. To fix accountability, Haryana has developed an Academic Monitoring System that keeps a check on all stakeholders (teachers, block and state officials). Monitoring officials regularly visit schools to observe classroom transactions, teaching methods, assess student performance and implementation of the remedial programme. Their insights are recorded on an Academic Monitoring Dashboard that is used during review meetings. The Saksham Ghoshna campaign puts the onus of achieving a specific target (in terms of a benchmark for grade-competence) on blocks, and devolves ownership and accountability from the state to teachers, district and block officials. Through third-party assessment, blocks are declared 'Saksham' if more than 80% students are grade-competent.

In 2016, Himachal became the first state to ensure delivery of textbooks to 6 lakh students in 15,000 schools before the start of the academic year. Overcoming constraints of weather and terrain, the state's Department of Elementary Education worked with the Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education to streamline the supply chain of textbook delivery by using technological solutions to introduce speed, efficiency and transparency. Since 2016, the state has ensured timely delivery of textbooks every year. Himachal

has also been at the forefront of adopting technology to improve the quality of training provided to teachers. In-person teacher training is an annual exercise in all states. While useful, this training is not sufficient. To address this, Himachal Pradesh collaborated with a firm that provides training content for teachers through a mobile app.

Andhra has set up a central assessment cell that designs and administers standardised assessments across the state to 25 lakh students. The results of these assessments are uploaded on an assessment dashboard, integrated with the CM's dashboard, within 10-12 days. This ensures timely availability of critical information on student performance to all stakeholders. Gnaara, a summer residential remedial programme in Andhra, is organised for students of classes 6 and 10 in government schools.

**Way forward:** The new government must prioritise implementation as much as, if not more than, developing new policies. It should encourage states to constitute an outcome-focused programme management to learn from the systemic approach taken by some states. The HRD ministry can then encourage more states to embark on their own journey of systemic education transformation. A targeted strategy, rather than piecemeal interventions, can go a long way in sustainably improving learning levels of students.



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TELLING NUMBERS

## NEET 2019: 14 lakh candidates in 154 cities tested in 11 languages; nearly 8 lakh candidates qualified

DELHI HAS the best strike rate of candidates qualifying in the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2019, the results of which were declared Wednesday. Of the 30,215 candidates who appeared for the test, 22,638 qualified, a strike rate of 74.92%.

Delhi was followed closely by Haryana (73.41%) and Chandigarh (73.24%), the results showed. However, just a little more than 1,500 candidates took the test in Chandigarh, a small fraction of the numbers in most states. States/UTs that had the best strike rates in this

year's test were almost exactly the same as in last year's test.

NEET is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to MBBS and BDS courses in medical and dental colleges approved by the Medical Council of India and the Dental Council of India. The test was given throughout the country in May; of the 15.19 lakh candidates who registered, 14.10 lakh appeared, and 7.97 lakh were declared qualified. The number of registrations for the exam in 2019 was 14.52% higher than last year, NTA said in a press release.

### MOST SUCCESSFUL STATES/UNION TERRITORIES

State/UT	Appeared	Qualified	% qualified
1 Delhi	30,215	22,638	74.92 (73.73/2)*
2 Haryana	30,649	22,499	73.41 (72.59/3)
3 Chandigarh	1,562	1,144	73.24 (71.81/5)
4 Andhra Pradesh	55,200	39,039	70.72 (72.55/4)
5 Rajasthan	93,149	64,890	69.66 (74.30/1)
6 Punjab	13,783	9,456	68.61 (65.93/8)
7 Telangana	48,996	33,044	67.44 (68.88/6)
8 Kerala	1,10,206	73,385	66.59 (66.74/7)
9 Manipur	5,794	3,672	63.38 (63.17/10)
10 Himachal Pradesh	12,646	8,003	63.28 (61.23/-)

\*Figures in parentheses are strike rates in NEET-2018 in per cent, and the position of the state/UT in the country in 2018. Himachal Pradesh was not in the top 10 in 2018; Karnataka, with a strike rate of 63.51%, was the ninth best last year. Number under the category 'Other' not considered.

### 5 STATES WHERE MOST CANDIDATES APPEARED

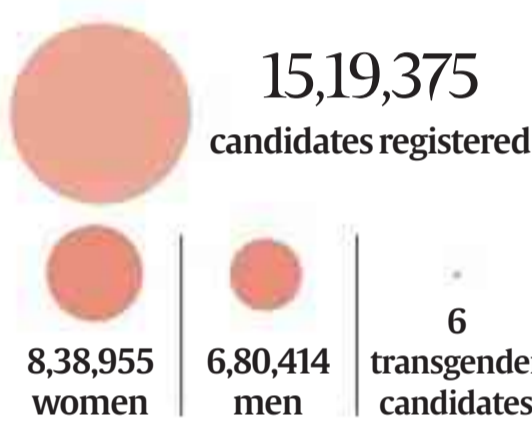
1 lakh-plus states made up 49% of total candidates

Maharashtra	2,06,745
Uttar Pradesh	1,44,993
Tamil Nadu	1,23,078
Kerala	1,10,206
Karnataka	1,02,735

### ENGLISH, HINDI MOST PREFERRED LANGUAGES

Language	Registered candidates	%age of total
English	12,04,968	79.31
Hindi	1,79,857	11.84
Gujarati	59,395	3.91
Bengali	31,490	2.07
Tamil	31,239	2.06

### EXAMINATION NUMBERS



GILLES VERNIERS, SURYA RAO SANGEM & GOWD KIRAN KUMAR

THE CONSOLIDATION of the BJP's 2014 performance has been the result of its ability to retain its position in the Hindi belt and to expand into new areas in the east and the south of the country. In the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, regional parties have resisted the BJP's mobilisation efforts to varying degrees.

In Andhra Pradesh, where the state election took place alongside the Lok Sabha election, the YSRCP improved upon its 2014 performance by bagging 22 seats and 49.2% of the vote. That left only three seats for the TDP — despite an over 39% vote share — and none for the Congress and the BJP, who got 1.3% and less than 1% of the vote respectively.

#### Jagan's caste calculus

The YSRCP's strategy bore a striking resemblance to the BJP's: the projection, exclusively, of the party's leader, Y S Jaganmohan Reddy, a formidable ground campaign backed by ample resources, a strong social media presence, and a caste-based strategy that combined favouring a local dominant caste while providing token representation to a large number of groups who were not affiliated with other parties.

The YSRCP distributed a quarter of its tickets to Reddy candidates, and an equal number of tickets (one) to eight different OBC groups — Boya, Gavara, Kalinga, Kurba, Padmasali (weavers), Setti Balija, Turpu Kapu and Yadav. It also distributed most of its SC tickets to Malas, and gave one ticket to a Madiga candidate.

The TDP, by contrast, banked mostly on Reddy and Kamma candidates, as well as on Rajus (OBC). Other forward or backward groups were hardly represented. This enabled the YSRCP to articulate a discourse of inclusion that played in its favour. It would seem that the YSRCP succeeded in consolidating support among Reddys as well as among varied OBC groups, many of whom used to support the TDP against the Congress earlier.

Jagan Reddy also announced various schemes favourable to OBCs, notably a Rs 15,000 crore BC subplan, and the "YSR cheyuta", a monetary grant of Rs 45,000 for BC women.

#### Organisation, campaign

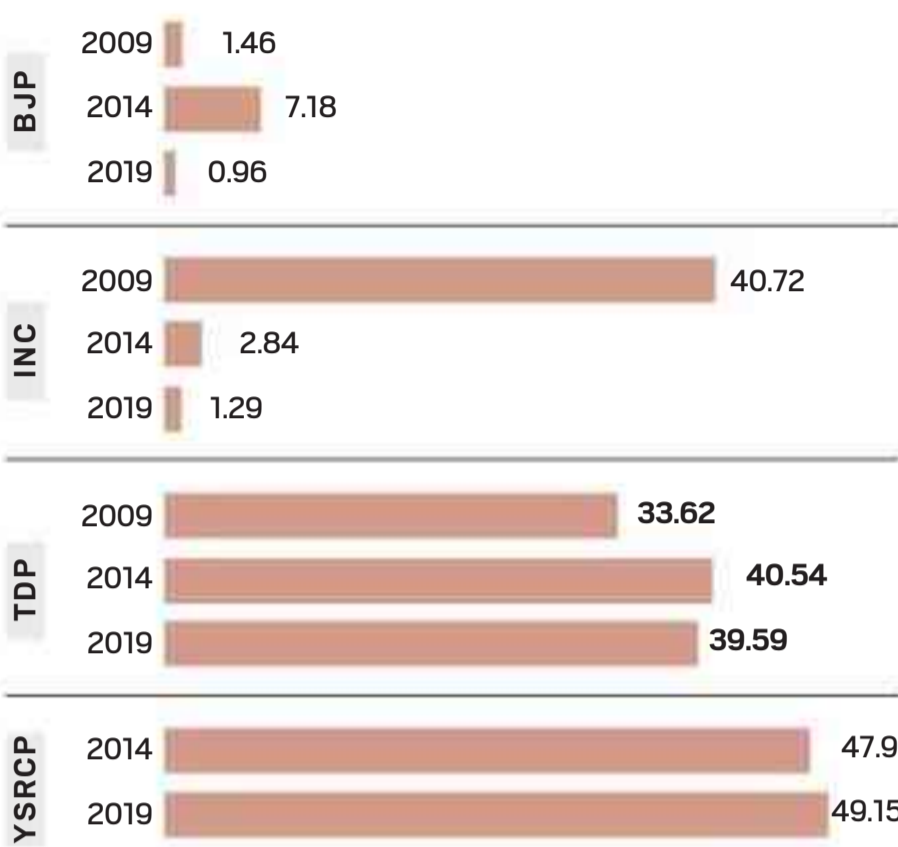
But the success of Yeduguri Sandinti Jaganmohan Reddy, known as Jagan Anna in Andhra Pradesh politics, can't be explained only by savvy caste arithmetic. Within five years, he has succeeded in

EXPERTS EXPLAIN

# Two states, two election stories

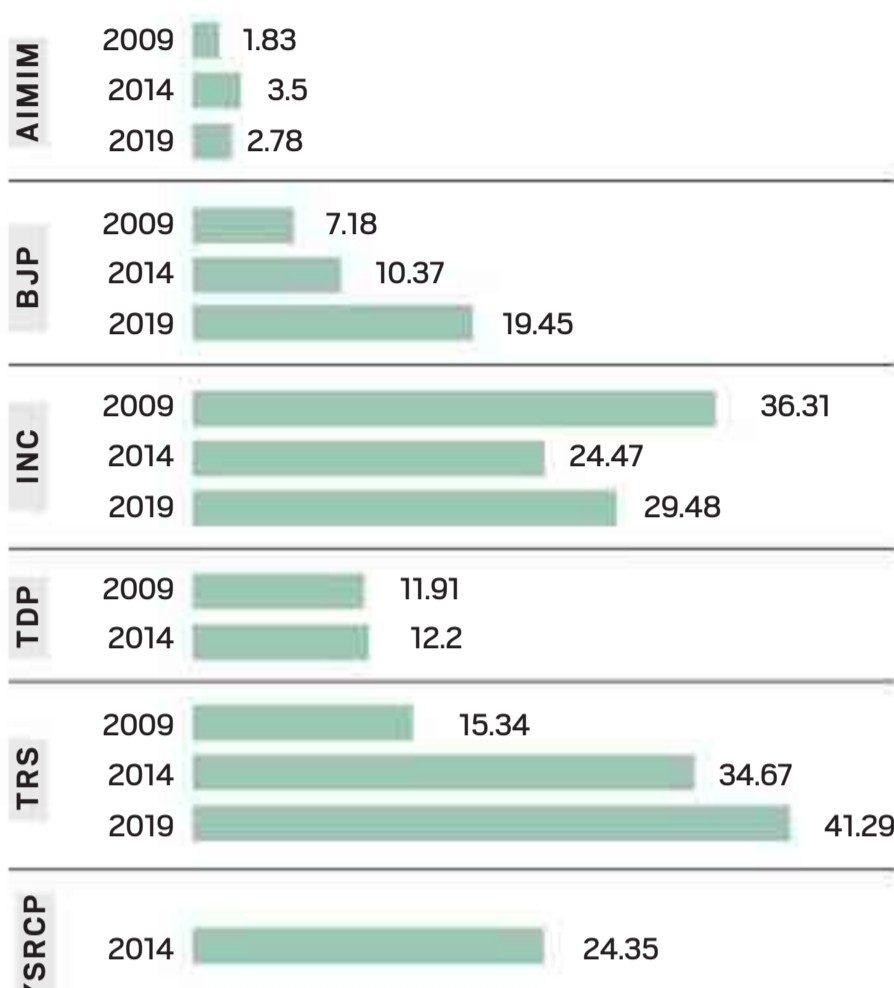
The results of the Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have shown both the strengths and weaknesses of regional parties. The elections have also demonstrated that the BJP can continue to expect to expand wherever the Congress remains the main opposition party

### MAIN PARTIES' VOTE SHARE IN ANDHRA PRADESH, LS ELECTIONS, 2009-2019



Vote shares show the dramatic fall in the popularity of the Congress in Andhra Pradesh after the bifurcation of the state. It did much better in Telangana by comparison.

### MAIN PARTIES' VOTE SHARE IN TELANGANA, LOK SABHA ELECTIONS, 2009-2019



building an alternative to both the Congress and TDP from the ashes of the Congress state unit. While he did succeed in capturing the legacy of his father, Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, in terms of image, he did not inherit his organisation. He had to build it from the ground, through hard work and intense mobilisation, while facing various judicial challenges.

After his father's death in September 2009, Jagan converted his Odarapu Yatra (condolence tour) into a direct political tool, after the Congress high command refused him the Chief Ministership. After his resignation from the Congress, he founded the Yuva Jana Sramika Raithu Congress (Youth, Labour, and Farmers' Congress), an acronym that evoked YSR's name. He built from this episode a taste and talent for ground mobilisation. Ahead of the election, he led a 3,648-km *padayatra*, covering most constituencies over 341 days.

Jagan's campaign was backed by Prashant Kishor's I-PAC, which provided strategic support to several parties that were either BJP allies or were potential BJP partners. I-PAC designed an aggressive social media campaign, targeting students, farmers, and employees along with other groups loyal to YSRCP. It is no coincidence perhaps, that Jagan's campaign resembled Modi's.

The campaign of Chandrababu Naidu, who was trounced in both the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, on the other hand, lacked the cohesiveness and sense of purpose displayed by his opponent. Naidu's attention was divided between the state and the national stage, and many of his incumbent candidates suffered from a bad local reputation. He had backtracked on various promises made to OBC groups — notably the promise to grant a specific reservation status to Kapus.

#### BJP in Telangana

The Telangana scenario was different —

a three-corner fight between the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), the Congress, and the BJP which, unlike in Andhra Pradesh, led an aggressive grassroots campaign against both the other parties. Other parties like the TDP, the communists, the Jana Sena, and YSRCP were not in the race. AIMIM ran with an arrangement with the TRS.

Here, the disaffection for the Congress translated into votes for the BJP, which succeeded in wresting four seats: Adilabad, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Secunderabad, all located in Northern Telangana. The BJP also finished second in Hyderabad and Mahbubnagar.

Few had anticipated this performance by the BJP, which can be explained by two main factors. First, a strong, cohesive booth-level campaign led by Manthri Srinivas, the BJP's organising state secretary.

And second, the BJP fielded strong candidates at several seats.

■ Soyam Babu Rao in Adilabad is a figure of the Gond tribal movement. He initially sought a Congress ticket, but joined the BJP ahead of the election.

■ Bandi Sanjay Kumar (Karimnagar), who is considered an aggressive Hindutva face in Northern Telangana, had lost the Assembly election last December by a thin margin.

■ Dharmapuri Aravind (Nizamabad) is the son of D Srinivas, a former Congress minister who is currently a Rajya Sabha MP from the TRS. Aravind defeated Kalvakuntla Kavitha, daughter of TRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), in what should have been a safe seat for the party. The fact that 179 farmers filed their nominations in Nizamabad, which topped the election in terms of number of candidates (185) did not help the TRS candidate either.

■ G Kishan Reddy won the Secunderabad seat after having lost in the last state elections. He has also been growing rapidly within the party.

■ In Mahbubnagar, the BJP fielded Aruna D K, a former TDP Minister who switched to the BJP before the election. She finished second.

Interestingly, the BJP won seats in subregions where ST and OBC votes matter the most. By gaining ground at the local level, the BJP has reiterated what it has done in many states since 2014: replace the Congress as the main opposition to a regional champion, by building ground-up organisation, and by poaching prominent faces from other parties.

#### The big picture

This result has come as a shock to the TRS, which had expected to sweep the state the way it did last December. Instead, it got 'only' eight seats, although with 41.3% vote share, significantly more than in 2014.

Not only did the BJP succeed in making inroads, it also conquered TRS strongholds like Nizamabad and Karimnagar. Reports from the ground suggest that many Reddy voters did not support KCR, despite the fact that the TRS distributed a third of its tickets to that dominant group.

Two broad lessons can be drawn from the results in these two states.

The first is that regional parties cannot take their dominance for granted; the second is that the BJP can expect to expand wherever the Congress remains the main opposition party.

Gilles Verniers is Assistant Professor of political science, Ashoka University, and Co-Director of the Trivedi Centre for Political Data. Surya Rao Sangem is founder, MBC Times, and a Hyderabad-based political analyst. Gowd Kiran Kumar is a Research Scholar in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hyderabad. The caste data for both states was collected by Surya Rao Sangem and Gowd Kiran Kumar. Views are personal.

# Why the US wants social media details of most visa applicants

KARISHMA MEHROTRA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

THE UNITED States government on Friday updated visa application forms to require nearly all applicants to provide their social media usernames, email addresses, and phone numbers for the past five years. The requirement to provide the additional information is in line with the Donald Trump administration's decision to ensure more stringent screening of potential immigrants and visitors to the United States.

#### Who is impacted

The new policy will affect roughly 15 million US visa applicants around the world every year. More than a million non-immigrant and immigrant US visas are given to Indians every year. Government officials and diplomats are exempt from providing the additional information.

In 2018, 28,073 Indians were issued American immigrant visas, the vast majority of which passed through the "family preference" process. Since 2009, the biggest jump in the number of Indian immigrants to the US — almost 20% — was seen during 2014-2015. But after reaching a peak of 31,360 in 2016, the numbers of immigrant visas issued to Indians dropped in 2017.

In 2018, the US issued 10,06,802 non-immigrant visas to Indians, the third largest national group behind the Chinese and Mexicans, and amounting to a little over 11% of total nonimmigrant visa issuances.

#### How it will work

The change affects the nonimmigrant visa online application form (DS-160), the

paper back-up nonimmigrant visa application (DS-156), and the online immigrant visa application form (DS-260).

In the drop-down menu on the Consular Electronic Application Center (CEAC) site, applicants will be expected to choose from 20 online platforms, including Facebook, Flickr, Google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Myspace, Pinterest, Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter, Vine and YouTube, and provide their usernames on the platforms. Among the social media platforms based outside the United States on the list are Tencent Weibo, Twoo, and Youku.

#### Why the change

"National security is our top priority when adjudicating visa applications, and every prospective traveler and immigrant to the United States undergoes extensive security screening," the State Department said in a statement. "We are constantly working to find mechanisms to improve our screening processes to protect US citizens, while supporting legitimate travel to the United States."

The statement clarified that "consular officers will not request user passwords", and that "the information will be used, as all information provided during a visa interview and on the visa application, to determine if the applicant is eligible for a visa under existing US law".

"Collecting this additional information from visa applicants will strengthen our process for vetting applicants and confirming their identity," the State Department said.

#### Policy under Obama

The new requirement marks a shift away from the voluntary disclosure of social media profile information under the Barack Obama



Nearly all applicants for a visa to enter the United States — an estimated 15 million people a year — will be asked to submit their social media usernames for the past five years, the State Department has said. Vincent Tullio/The New York Times

administration. The new mandatory policy announced by the Trump administration also monitors those already in the US, such as green card holders.

In early 2014, the Obama administration had prohibited social media profile evaluations during visa application processes. Later that year, the policy was loosened, but social

media checks were not standard practice until a shooting in California in 2015.

The San Bernardino shooting — in which 14 people were killed and 22 others were seriously wounded in a terror attack in California — involved attackers who had undergone visa screening. News reports at the time said that the shooter, Rizwan Farook,

#### WHY SOME ARE CONCERNED

**SOCIAL MEDIA** is an intricate map of its users' contacts, associations, habits and preferences. Full information on accounts will give the US government access to a visa applicant's pictures, locations, birthdays, anniversaries, friendships, relationships, and a whole trove of personal data that is commonly shared on social media, but which many may not like to share with agencies of state.

**CRITICS SAY** the sweeping surveillance potential of the new regulations could discourage a wide range of visa applicants. "Research shows that this kind of monitoring has chilling effects, meaning that people are less likely to speak freely and connect with each other in online communities that are now essential to modern life," Hina Shamsi, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project, was quoted as saying in a report in *The New York Times*.

had been posting violent messages under a pseudonym online.

In the aftermath of the shooting, many Democrats also voiced approval of social media surveillance methods. President Obama too called upon technology companies to combat terrorist activities.

By the end of 2015, the Department of

Homeland Security began analysing social media accounts during immigration applications regularly.

#### Changes under Trump

In a series of executive orders and memos that began a week after his inauguration, President Trump called for "enhanced vetting protocols and procedures of visas and other immigration benefits" to mitigate against terror threats. In October 2017, the Department of Homeland Security expanded its immigration records to include "social media handles and aliases, associated identifiable information, and search results" on the same day that the controversial travel ban on citizens of seven countries went into effect.

According to the memo, "publicly available information obtained from the Internet, public records, public institutions, interviewees, commercial data providers" would provide the information at the time.

The State Department first announced the mandatory collection of social media accounts in March 2018. It stated this week that this change was a result of a Presidential memo from 2017 directing the State Department and other agencies to improve screening and vetting.

#### Elsewhere in the world

In 2015, Indians faced further scrutiny in Schengen visas, after it was made mandatory to provide biometric data through fingerprints and a digital photo. That requirement was already in place in the US and Britain. Currently, the UK and Canada — popular destinations for Indian visitors and immigrants — do not have any policy of collecting social media information from visa applicants.

WORDLY WISE

ROOSTERS CROW AT THE BREAK OF DAWN, LOOK OUT YOUR WINDOW AND I’LL BE GONE.

— BOB DYLAN

The IndianEXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

The constitutional citizen



UPENDRA BAXI

Constitution contains a kindred concept of justice, asks a citizen to be responsive to sufferings of co-citizens

UP SHOWS THE WAY?

Maybe the break-up and soul-searching by SP and BSP will help them and others in Opposition to go back to the drawing board

JUST TWO WEEKS after the election results were announced, BSP chief Mayawati has admitted that her party's gathbandhan with the SP did not work on the ground. On Tuesday, she declared that the BSP will fight the upcoming 11 bypolls in UP on its own. Though Mayawati did not rule out the possibility of the two parties working together in the future, she has claimed that the SP, in the present state, is incapable of holding to its core vote or transferring it to its ally. In short, Mayawati has said that caste arithmetic need not always add up and triumph over political chemistry to produce a winner in an election.

The BSP supremo's candid admission that her tactic for the election was not successful and hence she is moving on, is in sharp contrast to other opposition parties that have refused to reconcile with defeat. The Congress, for instance, has yet to recover from the shock of the drubbing it received. Rahul Gandhi, who led the Congress campaign, has withdrawn into a shell while the rest of the leadership is busy blaming each other for the debacle. As in 2014, the party is in a state of denial and has refused to introspect on its failures, including in states where it had won assembly elections less than six months before. The gathbandhan constituents in Bihar — Lalu Prasad's RJD and the Congress among others — have been silent since their wipe-out. As much as the absence of a strong Opposition is worrying, the refusal of parties to debate the causes of their defeat too is disturbing. It, of course, allows the ruling party to set its own course and narrative and avoid scrutiny of its actions at any *fora*. The unravelling of gathbandhan in UP is hence refreshing for it may trigger new conversations within, and among, opposition parties. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, who without rancour accepted the BSP decision to quit the alliance and announced that his party will rethink its priorities, and Mayawati may have unwittingly initiated a debate about the nature and course of opposition politics, especially the viability of electoral alliances of convenience. The BSP-SP split also brings into sharp relief the future of social justice politics and its overt reliance on caste alliances: The UP results challenge the notion that caste groups constitute a monolithic transferable vote bank and are immune to the influence of broader narratives based on faith, nationalism and even welfare.

The SP-BSP gathbandhan was the big idea that the Opposition said will influence the electoral tide. Its spectacular collapse should resonate across India, where similar alliances came about ahead of the elections, and encourage political parties to reflect on their agendas and tactics. That would be a promising beginning towards building a strong Opposition.

GOING DIGITAL

Nilekani committee bats for lower costs, incentives and greater role for non-banks to boost digital transactions

THE PAYMENTS ECOSYSTEM in India has seen a flurry of activity in the recent past. Post demonetisation, the shift towards digital payments has been particularly striking. Yet, acceptance, from an infrastructure perspective, continues to be low. For instance, while debit card issuance has touched a billion, there are only about 3.5 million POS devices and two lakh ATMs that accept cards. Against this backdrop, a committee headed by Nandan Nilekani has recommended several suggestions to broaden the acceptance infrastructure and deepen digital financial inclusion.

On the issue of acceptance, the committee notes that “high cost structures, including merchant fees, as well as limited financial service offering impede merchants from accepting digital payments”. To address this, it has recommended reducing the interchange on card payments by 15 basis points hoping this will “increase the incentive for acquirers to sign-up merchants”. Then there's also the suggestion of setting up of a committee to review merchant discount rate and interchange on a regular basis. Now, merchant acquisition is central to expanding the payment ecosystem. But, rather than focusing more on the card-based ecosystem, perhaps greater emphasis could have been placed on the Aadhaar-enabled payment systems, which is likely to have greater appeal, especially in the rural hinterland. There are also suggestions which call for ensuring no user charges for digital payments, and providing businesses tax incentives “calibrated on the proportion of digital payments in their receipts”. These are eminently sensible recommendations. But implementation is likely to prove challenging. Take, for instance, the government's decision to waive of fees on transactions less than Rs 2,000. Theoretically, a sound proportion. But, the roll-out was not as smooth as was expected.

The committee has also suggested that non-banks be encouraged to participate in payment systems. But, this is where questions over the existing payments architecture crop up. As the inter-ministerial committee had pointed out earlier, there is need to distinguish between the RBI's role “as an infrastructure institution providing settlement function from its role as regulator of the payments system”. As the panel has said, the role of the regulator needs to evolve from being “largely bank centric”. Non-banks are at an inherent disadvantage in the current payment ecosystem. Perhaps, as the Nilekani committee notes, bringing in “non-banks as associate members to build acceptance infrastructure”, and allowing them access to settlement systems, might help create a level-playing field.

FRENCH PHILISTINES

For the last time, France says, cock-crow is part of the rural experience, predating the visitors who seek it out

THE GAULS HAVE a long history of suppressing rural talent, dating back to Cacophonix the Bard, who was physically retrained from performing at banquets in the time of Julius Caesar. The latest victim of this culture of draconian censorship is Maurice, who performs morning airs on the Atlantic resort of Île d'Oléron. But there is an essential difference between these two artistic martyrs. Cacophonix followed his calling, while Maurice is following the order of nature. He has no choice in the matter.

Maurice is a cockerel on an island which has become a tourist resort, and his crowing is keeping a visiting neighbour awake. His owner, herself a singer, argues that his species has been crowing from remote antiquity. Indeed, it's in cold print — their cousin in the Holy Land ticked off Peter for denying the son of god thrice. The problem is the visitors who come to the island in search of tranquillity, not the domestic fowl who predate them. It is rare for birds to become involved in cases of man-animal conflict — such prowess is generally reserved for creatures red in tooth and claw — but Maurice is a marked chicken.

The second French fowl thus threatened, he faces the legal charge of being a health hazard, a ground that an increasingly hypochondriac human race takes very seriously. It is clearly absurd, since the neighbour would be far healthier being awakened by a living alarm clock, in good time for a morning constitutional. But the cockerel is fortunate enough to have other neighbours on his side, who have rallied behind a petition. And the mayor agrees that suppressing a cockerel's song is an unnatural act against the order of nature. If only Cacophonix had enjoyed such local support, he could have been recognised today as the father of death metal.

THE TRIUMPHAL MOMENT of Modi 2.0 has led to sincere felicitations by all citizens, but the insidious phrase “left liberals” has resurfaced and pleas have been already aired for a “re-invention of liberalism”. What matters for political and civic discourse is not name-calling but rather the tolerance of the intolerable — disrespect for dissent, encouragement for practices of ethnic violence, caste or community-based lynching, and production of social indifference towards states of injustice and human rightlessness. It does not matter for those murdered, and the survivors, whether all this is produced or reproduced by left, right, or centre; all that they insist on is strict scrutiny now and prevention of re-occurrence, regardless of the political labels we choose to affix on the opponents. All political cadres and leaders must encourage and practice the vital difference on which a democratic order is premised — the difference between the “adversary” and “enemy”.

To avoid “the necrology of the meaningless discourses” (as Paul Ricoeur describes it), one has to internalise what democratic belonging to a political community may mean. Good old Aristotle distinguished the two aspects of citizenship: A citizen is a being that knows how to rule and how to be ruled. A democracy views political belonging in terms of a congregation of co-citizens. That is the very meaning of what the constitutional Preamble means when it refers to the value of “fraternity”. Fellow-feeling means that everyone must learn to be a co-citizen first, and then a ruler or a ruled. It is certainly not being anti-national to take the Constitution seriously as providing the means and ends of good constitutional governance and conscientious resistance (peaceful dissent).

If so, one must follow the conception of being a constitutionally sincere co-citizen — a conception outlined by the Indian Constitution itself in the Preamble, Part III (fundamental human rights), IV (the directive principles of state policy), IV-A (fundamental duties of co-citizens), and the oath of office that certain political co-citizens and justices take under the Third Schedule. How far

The Constitution contains a kindred concept of justice. Read as a whole, it says in one sentence that only that development is just which disproportionately benefits the worst-off, or the constitutional have-nots.



ALOK BANSAL

ONE OF THE biggest achievements of the 2019 election was that the common man in India clearly showed that he is willing to rise above caste barriers for the national interest. The caste system is arguably the biggest bane of Indian society, and has adversely affected India's growth, development and security over centuries. Primarily a Hindu concept, this malady has transcended religious frontiers and affected every religion in India.

Many apologists for the caste system tend to justify it by stating that caste-based identities are not bad, only the discrimination based on caste is bad. However, this is nothing but indirect support to an extremely divisive and repugnant social practice. One needs to understand that in an extremely hierarchical system, discrimination will exist as long as caste-based identities remain. Many Hindu sages and social reformers have criticised caste-based divisions based on birth. Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, had criticised the hereditary caste system and had asserted that such a system never existed in Vedic times. His namesake and founder-convenor of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, stated that “Birth-based discrimination and cruel treatment of individuals and families which developed in Hindu society over time as socially sanctioned practices are in gross violation of ancient Hindu teachings and philosophy. Many people that revere and owe allegiance to our ancient Dharmic teachings and philosophy have suffered over the years as a result of

ATTACK THE SYSTEM

Policy must deal not only with caste-based discrimination, but identity itself

Regrettably, in the last seven decades, no significant step has been taken to eradicate or dilute the caste system, although actions have been initiated (both effective and superficial) to curb caste-based discrimination. On the other hand, numerous steps have been taken by governments, regrettably, to perpetuate this social anachronism.

such discriminatory practices. Such suffering continues even today, despite the law of the land and enlightened social and religious leaders having continued to make, over the centuries, major and effective contributions to diminish the depth and extent of these discriminatory practices, which have nothing to do with Hindu Dharma.”

The most serious indictment of the caste system came from Balasaheb Deoras, former RSS Sarsanghachalak, who stated that “just because something is old, it need not necessarily be good and valid for all time. Neither should we think that since we have been living all these years on the basis of old principles, we need not even think on new lines... Science has progressed, new inventions have been made. Therefore, it is inconsistent with the demands of modern times to insist on the hereditary varna and caste system... What exists now is not system... Hence we should all put our heads together and think how to guide it — a system which has to die and is already dying must finally end and have a natural death.”

The Constitution does not recognise caste and guarantees all citizens equality of status and opportunity and recognises the principle of fraternity. However, many politicians have nurtured caste-based identities to consolidate their vote banks. The founders of the Constitution had sincerely hoped that caste-based discrimination will disappear soon. Consequently, reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes in Parliament and state assemblies (reservation in jobs isn't mentioned

in the Constitution) was for a limited period

Regrettably, in the last seven decades, no significant step has been taken to eradicate or dilute the caste system, although actions have been initiated (both effective and superficial) to curb caste-based discrimination. On the other hand, numerous steps have been taken by the government, regrettably, to perpetuate this social anachronism. The caste-based census and need to mention one's caste in numerous government forms defeats the very purpose of diluting caste-based identities. A large number of youth in urban India do not identify themselves with any caste, but are often forced to mention one in official documents.

It is essential that the government create a category of people with “no caste” for all those who do not wish to subscribe to their caste identity. Children of inter-caste marriages must necessarily belong to this category. A social movement may be started for people to relinquish their caste and caste-based surnames. There may be a need to incentivise inter-caste marriages. Eventually, asking of an individual's caste could be made a cognisable offence and all caste-based organisations must be banned. All mention of caste, except where required for reasons of affirmative action, must be eliminated.

Division of labour — or the rationale behind the Varna Vyavastha — does not exist today and the country certainly needs to get rid of its vestiges.

Bansal is director, India Foundation. Views are personal

JUNE 6, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

POLICE REFORM STATE CHIEF MINISTERS will meet in New Delhi on June 6 to evolve a basis for agreed decisions on specific grievances of agitating policemen. Six major problems which have upset the policemen relate to formation and recognition of associations, interference from outside, pay and status of the constabulary, working conditions, misuse of orderlies and housing facilities. Union Home Minister H M Patel, who will preside over the one-day meeting, will spell out the Centre's approach to various issues which will come up for review. According to Home Ministry sources, the Centre feels that a restructuring of the police set-up will help in redressing their

grievances. In this respect, a beginning can be made only at the level of the constabulary which constitute the base of the system.

AFRICA WITH EGYPT EGYPT HAS RECEIVED considerable support from black African countries in its effort to thwart a radical Arab bid to have the question of the Sadat regime's suspension from the non-aligned movement inserted in the agenda to be considered by the conference of foreign ministers of the co-ordinating bureau of non-aligned countries, beginning in Colombo on June 6. The African argument, first articulated by Gabon on June 4, is that Egypt is a member of the Organisation of

African Unity as well. One of the conditions for OAU membership is that member countries must be non-aligned. Moreover, the proper forum to discuss Egyptian action in signing the peace treaty with Israel was either the Arab League or the OAU.

DELHI BANDH THE SECOND DELHI Bandh by traders within a week completely paralysed the wholesale trade despite the UP traders having called off their agitation and withdrawn their call for Bharat Bandh. Some retail shops were, however, open for most part of the day. The traders' organisations had a hard time persuading traders that the Delhi Bandh was on.



# 13 THE IDEAS PAGE

## An invitation to the liberal arts

Education in the liberal arts and humanities are important in themselves. And they can enrich the understanding, empathy of our doctors, engineers and techno-managers

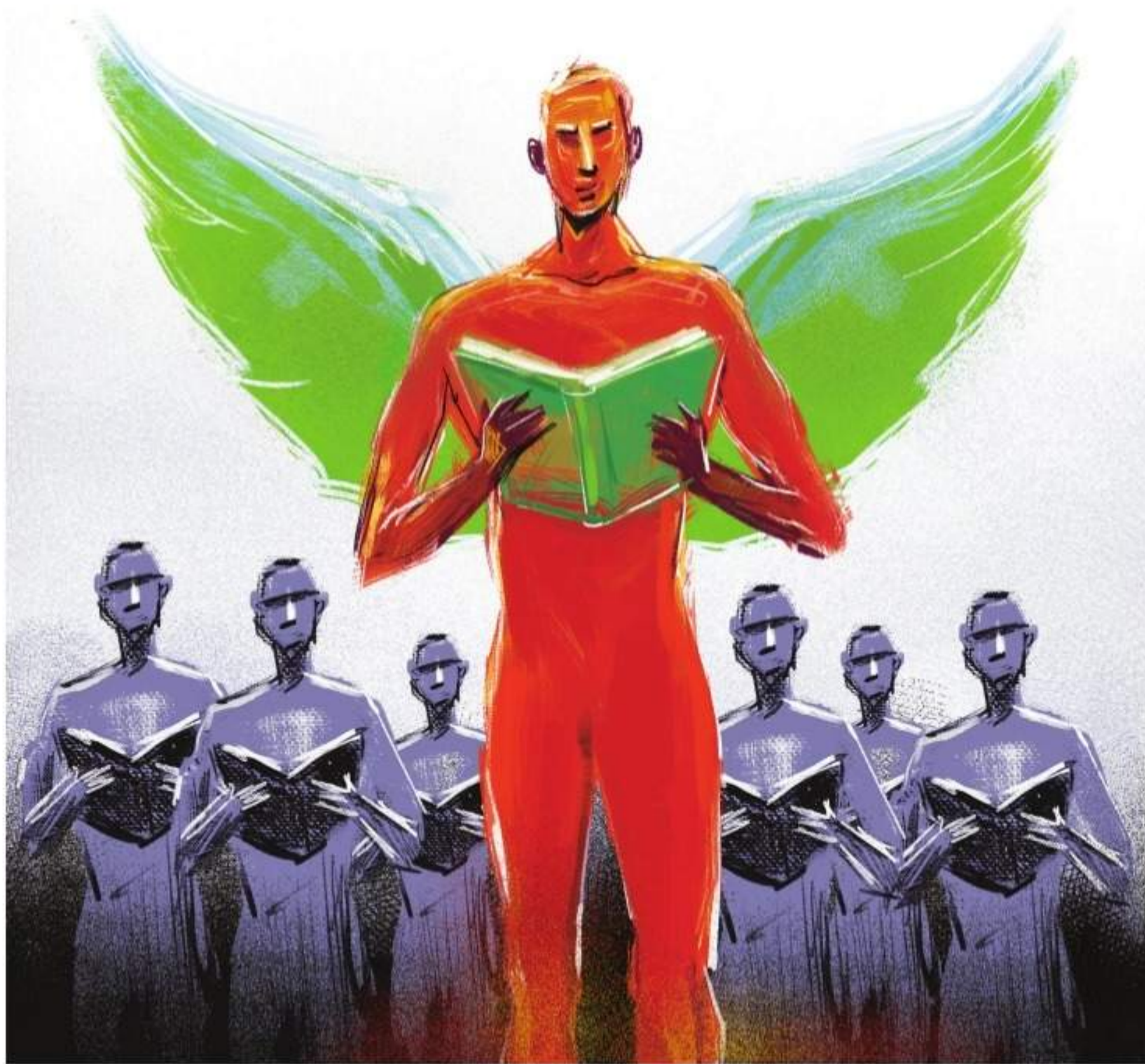


AVIJIT PATHAK

IN THESE “PRAGMATIC” times, it is not easy to plead for liberal education. Yet, as a teacher, I want the new generation who have just cleared the board examinations and are willing to enter the domain of higher learning, to realise that education is not merely “skill learning” or a means to inculcate the market-driven technocratic rationality. Education is also about deep awareness of culture and politics, art and history, and literature and philosophy. In fact, a society that discourages its young minds to reflect on the interplay of the “self” and the “world”, and restricts their horizon in the name of job-oriented technical education, begins to decay. Such a society eventually prepares the ground for a potentially one-dimensional/consumerist culture that negates critical thinking and emancipatory quest.

Before I put forward my arguments for liberal education, I need to raise three concerns. First, as the economic doctrine of neo-liberalism has become triumphant, a mix of “positivistic objectivity”, scientism and technocratic rationality seems to have become the dominant ideology of education. Knowledge becomes instrumental and technical; “professionalism” demands dissociation of “skills” from the politico-ethical; and moral questions and the contents of the curriculum are required to be evaluated in terms of measurable “outcomes”. No wonder, such a discourse refuses to see much meaning in, say, a serious enquiry into T S Eliot’s *The Hollow Men*, or a reflection on “soul force” as articulated by MK Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj*, or a Freudian interpretation of Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*. Neither the techno-managers nor the market find any value in these “subjective”/“non-productive” pursuits. When they do speak of literature or sociology, they kill its spirit, and reduce it into a set of modules with concrete “outcomes” — measured in terms of “life skills”, “communication skills” and “personality development” skills. It is like destroying the soul of education through the fancy management discourse.

Second, school education continues to reproduce this hierarchy in knowledge traditions. Whereas science or commerce is projected as “high status” knowledge, not much cognitive prestige is attached to humanities and liberal arts. In a way, this is like demotivating young minds and discouraging them from taking an active interest in history, literature, philosophy and political studies. Possibly, the standardised “ambition” that schools and anxiety-ridden parents cultivate among the teenagers makes it difficult for them to accept that it is possible to imagine yet another world beyond the “secure” career options in medical science, engineering and commerce. Certainly, it is not the sign of a healthy society if what is popularly known as PCM (physics-chemistry-mathematics), or IIT JEE, becomes the national obsession, and all youngsters flock to a town like Kota in Rajasthan, known for



Suvajit Dey

the notorious chain of coaching centres selling the dreams of “success”, and simultaneously causing mental agony, psychic disorder and chronic fear of failure.

Third, the state of liberal education in an average college/university in India, I must admit, is pathetic. With demotivated students, teachers who do not have any passion, empty classrooms, routine examinations and the widespread circulation of “notes” and “guide books”, everything loses its meaning. History is a set of facts to be memorised, sociology is just common sense or a bit of jargon for describing the dynamics of family/marriage/caste/kinship, literature is time pass and political science is television news. Even though the state of science education is not very good, the trivialisation of liberal arts is truly shocking.

The challenges and obstacles are enormous. Yet, I would insist on the need for liberal education — good, meaningful and life-affirming education. As teachers, we have to play our roles. Unless we feel confident in our mission, give our best, and invite the youngsters to the fascinating world of poetry, philosophy, anthropology or art history, there is not much hope. We must tell them that there is yet another domain of knowledge, beyond “objectivity”, “measurement” and “technical control”. This domain is about the interpretative art of understanding the symbolic domain of culture, it is about reflexivity and imagination and it is about the critical fac-

A doctor, I believe, ought to converse with a philosopher who speaks of the Tibetan Buddhist book on living and dying and a techno-manager ought to engage with a cultural anthropologist in order to know what ‘development’ means to local people and appreciate their understanding of the ecosystem and livelihoods. In the absence of adequate liberal education, we have begun to produce technically-skilled but culturally-impo-

verished professionals. Furthermore, I would argue that even our doctors and techno-managers need a fair degree of liberal/humanistic education. A doctor, I believe, ought to converse with a philosopher who speaks of the Tibetan Buddhist book on living and dying and a techno-manager ought to engage with a cultural anthropologist in order to know what “development” means to local people and appreciate their understanding of the ecosystem and livelihoods. In the absence of adequate liberal education, we have begun to produce technically-skilled but culturally-impo-

verished professionals. Techniques have triumphed and wisdom has disappeared. We seem to be producing well-fed, well-paid and well-clothed slaves. This is dangerous.

Have, therefore, no hesitation in becoming somewhat “impractical”, and inviting fresh/young minds — somehow perplexed and thrilled by their “successes” in board examinations — to the domain of liberal education.

*The writer is professor of sociology at JNU*



NILIMA SINHA

## Khan Market blues

It is unfair to call the citizens that frequent the area a gang

NO, NOT another article on Khan Market! The response, in the form of numerous articles in newspapers, is not surprising, considering the number of supposedly elite men and women simmering over the tag so derisively conferred on them by no less a person than the highly popular prime minister himself. The “Khan Market Gang” — as if it is a group of gangsters living (and shopping) there by virtue of the wealth acquired through questionable means, not unlike the robber barons of the US.

This is so far from the truth that those bestowed this title cannot but shake with indignance. As a person who has lived my whole life in the area, from before Independence, who has seen this part of Delhi grow from a remote jungle into the posh, central part of the city that it has now become, I feel I must join issue.

No doubt I am one of those privileged to have grown up in Lutyens Delhi. This was not because I belonged to a rich and wealthy family. It was only because my father, a government servant who, by dint of his hard work and merit, had been able to enter the coveted Indian Civil Service and had got posted to Delhi early in his career. He was the son of a commoner — a teacher in Nagpur — but had studied hard, in a foreign language, and successfully competed against the privileged Britishers in Britain. It was his reward for the struggle he had gone through to reach this position.

The young ICS officer happened to be

posted in the relief and rehabilitation ministry during Partition. The huge compound of our government accommodation at 6, Ashoka Road had turned into a shelter home for refugees. My mother looked after them and even opened a training centre for the women to teach them hosiery-making. Several centres were opened by the rehabilitation ministry to provide skills and training to those who had fled Pakistan, leaving behind all their belongings. The refugees were eager to earn their own living. Their hard work and efforts to stand on their own feet earned everybody’s admiration. I remember how Connaught Place had become crowded with small shopkeepers squatting in the corridors, a variety of objects spread out on sheets before them, trying to earn some money.

It was the task of the rehabilitation ministry to settle the refugees and my father was one of those given that onerous responsibility. That is how the Khan Market came into being. It was meant to give the refugees a place where they could earn a living instead of depending on others or on the government.

As mentioned in earlier articles, the market was named after the North West Frontier leader Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother, who had helped the Hindu refugees to flee safely from that region. Two other markets in the region, Khanna and Mehar Chand markets were named after the minister heading the relief and rehabilitation min-

istry, Mehar Chand Khanna.

The area around was developed into colonies where junior government servants could stay. Bharti Nagar, Rabindra Nagar, Lodhi Colony, and several other housing colonies came up in the vicinity. Khan Market flourished as its shops catered to the residents. Of course there was the more affluent class too, in Jor Bagh, for instance, and in Lodhi Estate and Prithviraj Road. My father stayed in both these areas later as the years passed and he acquired seniority. In fact, my mother became so familiar to the shopkeepers that one day, when she left her grandson, a toddler, behind at a shop by mistake, the shopkeeper was able to inform the policeman about where to take the lost child. It was such a relief for us and the modest Khan Market shopkeeper was thanked profusely.

Later, as the wife of someone who had also made it from an underprivileged background in Bihar to a prestigious government job in Delhi, Khan Market became my haunt too. We walked there almost daily from Rabindra Nagar and later Shahjahan Road. Coming down to the next generation, our daughter, too, married to a government servant, continued to frequent Khan Market. Not only this, she became an officer in the Bank of India and was posted at the Khan Market branch for several years. The shops there were a steady attraction for us whether for their books, fashion garments or food items, and the shopowners were always welcom-

ing and friendly.

As the city expanded outwards, Khan Market developed into one of the most popular shopping areas in the capital. And today, frequented by foreigners from the diplomatic colonies, too, it has acquired greater sophistication resulting in prices soaring.

To call the government servants residing around Khan Market, whether senior or junior, a “gang” of elites is to be unfair to many. Indeed, they have struggled hard to reach there. Many have risen from poor homes in villages and small towns. Sheer hard work and dedication to studies has made them conquer the disadvantages of poverty and surmount the lack of an English education, finally letting them achieve their aim of serving the country through jobs in the government.

It is because of the earlier struggles of its members that the clan is now in a prestigious position; not because they were born with silver spoons. Along the way, the members also acquired the liberal attitude that came with education, the secular outlook and the respect for others’ freedom that is the hallmark of democracy.

In short, the Khan Market “gang” deserves to be appreciated and respected, rather than be treated with disdain. Needless to say, this includes the hard-working journalists who also live in that area.

*Sinha is an author of mystery-adventure and other fiction for children*

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The US has stepped up its attacks on China on human rights issues simply because Washington’s trade war with China is proving to be invalid.”

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

## Bolster the first line of defence

Any effort to strengthen national security without reforming, reorganising or restructuring the police would be an exercise in futility.



PRAKASH SINGH

THE COUNTRY’S internal security architecture continues to be fragile. In the wake of the 26/11 terrorist attack in 2008, a slew of measures were taken to strengthen the police forces, reinforce coastal security and decentralise the deployment of National Security Guard. However, after that, a complacency of sorts seems to have set in, mainly because there has been no major terrorist attack since then. Whatever upgradation of police has happened during the intervening period has essentially been of a cosmetic nature.

Meanwhile, terror clouds are gathering on the horizon and could burst upon the Subcontinent any time. The ISIS, which is committed to spreading “volcanoes of jihad” everywhere, recently perpetrated a horrific attack in Sri Lanka. The organisation has made significant inroads in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and has sympathisers in other areas of the country. It recently announced a separate branch, Wilayah-e-Hind, to focus on the Subcontinent. In the neighborhood, the ISIS has support bases in Bangladesh and Maldives. The government has been playing down the ISIS’s threat. It has been arguing that considering the huge Muslim population of the country, a very small percentage has been drawn to or got involved in the ISIS’s activities. That may be true, but a small percentage of a huge population works out to a significant number and it would be naive to ignore the threat.

Pakistan has taken some half-hearted measures against terrorist formations in the country, which are euphemistically called non-state actors — largely due to pressure from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF.) These measures are more for show than substance. Besides, the ISI has been, for years, making well-orchestrated attempts to revive militancy in Punjab and trying to disrupt our economy by flooding the country with counterfeit currency.

It is necessary, therefore, that the country’s internal security is beefed up. The first responders to a terrorist attack or a law and order problem is the police and, unfortunately, it is in a shambles. Police infrastructure — its manpower, transport, communications and forensic resources — require substantial augmentation. The directions given by the Supreme Court in 2006 appear to have created a fierce reaction in the establishment and led to a consolidation of, to use Marxist jargon, counterrevolutionary forces. The government must appreciate that any effort to strengthen national security without reforming, reorganising or restructuring the police would be an exercise in futility.

The police in every major state should have a force on the pattern of Greyhounds to deal with any terrorist attack. The country must also have a law on the lines of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes

Act (MCOCA) to deal with organised crimes. Investigation of cyber-crime would require specialist staff. Training the constables and darogas for the job will not take us far. The police must draw recruits from the IITs for the purpose.

The National Counter-Terrorism Centre must be set up with such modifications as may be necessary to meet the legitimate objections of the states. The law to deal with terror — the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act — needs more teeth. Successive governments have only fiddled with the law. We have had the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), followed by the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) followed by the present UAPA.

It is also high time that the government thinks of bringing police in the Concurrent List. Police problems were simpler and of a local nature when the Constitution was framed. Since then, the pattern of crime and the dimensions of law and order problems have undergone a sea change. Drugs trafficked from the Myanmar border traverse the Subcontinent and find their way to Europe or even the US. Arms are smuggled from China to India’s Northeast via Thailand and Bangladesh. They are then distributed to insurgent groups in different parts of the country.

States today are incapable of managing the slightest disruption in law and order. Central forces are deployed to assist the states round the year. Bringing police in the Concurrent List would only amount to giving de jure status to what prevails on the ground.

The CBI’s image needs to be refurbished. It is time that an Act was legislated to define the charter and regulate the functioning of the premier investigating agency. It is ridiculous that the CBI draws its mandate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946 and that the organisation was created through a resolution passed more than 50 years ago.

The Central Armed Police Forces are not in the best of health. It would be desirable that a high-level commission is appointed to go into their problems of deployment, utilisation, discipline, morale and promotional opportunities.

The major internal security threats today are in J&K, in the Northeast and from Maoists in Central India. These would need to be dealt with in a manner which — while addressing legitimate demands and removing genuine grievances — ensures that the intransigent elements are isolated and effectively dealt with. The Hurriyat leaders must be cut down to size and the cases against them pursued to their logical conclusion. The framework agreement with the Naga rebels must be finalised and the NSCN (IM) should be firmly told that the government can go thus far and no further.

The Maoists need to be dealt with in a more sensitive manner. Now that government has got the upper hand, it should seriously consider holding out the olive branch, inviting them for peace talks while taking precaution at the same time that the insurgents do not utilise the peace period as a breather to augment their strength.

*The writer was Director General of Border Security Force*

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### HIGHS AND LOWS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Fatal ascents’ (IE, June 5). In recent times, mountaineers, including experienced trekkers, have lost their lives in their attempt to scale different peaks in the Himalaya. Various factors are responsible for this. The Himalayan countries such as Nepal are issuing a large number of expedition permits without caring about the hosting capacity of the ranges. Lack of proper guidance and training have contributed to the growing list of casualties. Himalayan countries need to come up with a common policy on mountain expeditions.

**Sukhpreet Singh, Gurdaspur**

#### FREEBIES GALORE

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Free metro for women: For public feedback, Sisodia hops on the bus’ (IE, June 5). Providing freebies is a new trend: This includes free rides to women in the Delhi metro and DTC buses and writing off farmers’ loans. There is also a longstanding policy of giving cheap loans to sick industries. This is vote-bank politics and generates the habit of looking for freebies.

**A L Agarwal, Delhi**

#### VALUE OF ENGLISH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Tongue twisted’ (IE, June 4). English has played an important role in globalisation. The exhortation to promote languages

#### LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to [editpage@expressindia.com](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

other than English at the work place is regressive. The government should understand that English is also a skill to keep people and firms afloat in the global market. In India most quality science books and newspapers are available in English. Attempts to devalue English language in India could disconnect the country’s youth from the rest of the world.

**Amiayvrat Kumar, Navi Mumbai**



## The healing touch

Sri Lankan leaders must move to end the demonising of Muslims

The mass resignation of two Muslim governors and nine Ministers in Sri Lanka deepens a new fault line that has emerged in the island nation after the Easter Sunday blasts perpetrated by a fanatical Islamist group. Sinhala Buddhist hardliners had demanded that the Governors, Azath Salley and M.L.A.M. Hizbullah, and Cabinet Minister Rishad Bathiudeen, be removed for allegedly backing the terrorist group and interfering with the investigation. Stung by the aggressive demand at a time when investigators had not found any evidence implicating the three, all Muslim Ministers resigned in an act of solidarity. The campaign intensified mainly because of an indefinite fast by Athureliye Rathana Thero, a Buddhist monk, in Kandy. Thousands marched in his support. It is clear that the upheaval caused by the blasts, in which more than 250 people were killed in churches and luxury hotels, has caused widespread fear and mistrust across ethnicities. In a development that seemed too organised to be a spontaneous, emotional backlash, a campaign of violence and intimidation was launched against the Muslim community. This despite the fact that the National Thowheed Jamaat, the group behind the blasts, which included suicide bombers and was led by the radical preacher Zahran Hashim, has been dismantled. Hundreds have been arrested and the plot possibly inspired by Islamic State propaganda has been unravelled. It is intriguing that the government is not made accountable for the failure to act on advance intelligence on the attacks, but the community is being targeted.

Ever in need of new enemies and a blameworthy 'outsider', the majoritarian impulse in any society is likely to be awakened by an event as catastrophic as a religiously motivated attack. However, it is Sri Lanka's misfortune that anger against the perpetrators has been turned by some influential sections into fear and hatred towards Muslims. The President and the Prime Minister, who belong to the two main national parties, have not taken a firm stand against the disproportionate influence some Buddhist monks have on the political situation. Not many have called out the campaign of hatred. Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera has decried the allegation that one of his ministerial colleagues is in league with terrorists, and has boldly challenged "politicians, religious leaders and media moguls trying to incite racial and religious hatred". Last month, a wave of violence swept through some Muslim habitations. A concerted campaign is now on to demonise the community, and one extreme example is the allegation that Muslim doctors were surreptitiously rendering Sinhala women infertile. Having emerged from a destructive civil war, Sri Lanka needs to focus on rebuilding inter-ethnic trust and ushering in a new egalitarian order. It will be ill-served by a conflict between communities.

## Caught napping

Kerala makes up for lost focus by acting quickly on the Nipah outbreak

A year after Kerala's prompt action quickly brought the deadly Nipah virus infection outbreak under check in two districts (Kozhikode and Malappuram), the State has once again shown alacrity in dealing with a reported case. A 23-year-old student admitted to a private hospital in Ernakulam on May 30 tested positive for the virus on June 4. But even as the government was awaiting confirmation from the National Institute of Virology, Pune, steps had been taken to prevent the spread of the disease by tracing the contacts, setting up isolation wards and public engagement. Two health-care workers who had come into contact with the patient exhibited some symptoms and are being treated. While 311 people who had come in close contact with the student are kept in isolation to prevent the spread of the disease, the numbers might be more – the student had reportedly travelled to four districts (Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kollam, and Idukki) recently. Containing the spread of the Nipah virus is important as the mortality rate was 89% last year, according to a paper in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. The source of infection in the index case (student) remains unknown. However, transmission to 18 contacts last year and the two health-care workers this year has been only through the human-to-human route.

If Kerala was taken by surprise by the first outbreak last year, its recurrence strongly suggests that the virus is in circulation in fruit bats. After all, the virus isolated from four people and three fruit bats (*Pteropus medius*) last year from Kerala clearly indicated that the carrier of the Nipah virus which caused the outbreak was the fruit bat, according to the paper in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. Analysing the evolutionary relationships, the study found 99.7-100% similarity between the virus in humans and bats. The confirmation of the source and the recurrence mean that Kerala must be alert to the possibility of frequent outbreaks. Even in the absence of hard evidence of the source of the virus till a few days ago, fruit bats were widely believed to be the likely candidates. That being so and considering the very high mortality rate when infected with the virus, it is shocking that Kerala had not undertaken continuous monitoring and surveillance for the virus in fruit bats. One reason for the failure could be the absence of a public health protection agency, which the government has been in the process of formulating for over five years, to track such infective agents before they strike. Not only should Kerala get this agency up and running soon, it should also equip the Institute of Advanced Virology in Thiruvananthapuram to undertake testing of dangerous pathogens. Known for high health indicators, Kerala cannot lag behind on the infectious diseases front.

# Hindi or English, comparing apples and oranges

The project to remove English from India remains misplaced and dangerous to development and integration



D. SHYAM BABU

True to their well-earned reputation, the people of Tamil Nadu have once again stood up against attempts to 'promote' Hindi in non-Hindi States. It would be a pity if we dismissed the protests as regionalism or separatism. The three-language formula (TLF) under the draft National Education Policy (NEP), now modified, stipulated mother tongue and English compulsory everywhere till class X, and Hindi in non-Hindi States and non-Hindi languages in Hindi States to be taught. The proposal was rightly seen as a Trojan horse to smuggle Hindi into non-Hindi States. History vindicates the fear.

The old TLF under the Official Language Resolution of Parliament in 1968 was never implemented either in letter or in spirit. While Hindi-speaking States never bothered to promote non-Hindi and "preferably one of the Southern languages", non-Hindi states continue to teach Hindi (Tamil Nadu obtained an exception to this irrational policy).

Is it such a crime that one part of the bargain has not been honoured? One might as well argue that the Hindi States deprived their students of learning an additional language, while non-Hindi States are better off with a third language in the toolkit of their students. But the irony of the TLF is that to be an Indian one must have fluency in two Indian languages, in addition to English which we originally wanted to disappear from the land.

By dropping the clause for com-

pulsory teaching of Hindi, the government has merely averted the backlash from several non-Hindi States, but it is persisting with the TLF. Unless the government amends Part XVII of the Constitution (which deals with the language policy) to be in sync with the global trend of mother tongue plus English, we are bound to witness many an avoidable controversy.

### Absurd policy

Our language policy is based on a honourable objective: decolonising all walks of our national life. Therefore, progressive replacement of English with Hindi was thought to be a sound beginning. But things didn't work out the way we hoped in 1950.

One, the project to remove English has become redundant. From being a language of colonialism, English transformed itself into a global language of culture, science and technology, and world politics. Its universalist claims are also backed by its capacity to absorb words from other languages.

Two, the intent to replace English with Hindi is based on an erroneous understanding that all languages are similar. All Indian languages are languages of identity and cultural expression whereas English is a language of mobility and empowerment. There is no point in comparing apples and oranges.

However, history also teaches us that primacy of a language is rather transient. There was a time the English (and even Germans) were communicating in French. One cannot now rule out the possibility of Mandarin replacing English as the global language in future.

Three, though Tamil Nadu's position is seen as 'anti-Hindi', it contains an implicit question: why on earth should students learn a third



GETTY IMAGES

language which they, after they leave high school, are unlikely to use? There was a time Bihar opted for Telugu as the third language, just as Andhra Pradesh chose Hindi. But Bihar reneged on the TLF and Andhra Pradesh persisted with the same. How would Bihar students have benefited from Telugu being a third language on their school-leaving certificate? How are students in non-Hindi states benefiting from Hindi as a third language? Wouldn't it be sensible if the policy replaced the third language and allowed students to choose a subject or a skill?

Four, the TLF in any form is unconstitutional. A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court ruled in 2014 (in *Karnataka v. Recognised-Unaided Schools*) that imposition of even the mother tongue as the medium of instruction is violative of one's fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression [Article 19(1)(a)]. If the government cannot even force students to learn in their own mother tongue, where does it obtain the right to make language(s) teaching compulsory?

Reflecting the 'condition' that Article 344(3) imposes on the language policy that it must "have due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India," the Bench advanced the rationale for English: "For example, prescribing English as a medium of instruction in subjects of higher education for which only English books are available and which can

only be properly taught in English may have a direct bearing and impact on the determination of standards of education."

Five, the TLF is not only irrational but impractical as well. Consider a scenario even under the revised NEP: every State is required to teach one modern Indian language, in addition to mother tongue and English. Bihar, say, re-opts for Telugu but it has hardly any teachers proficient in that language. Should it import Telugu teachers? Create an academy? How long does the venture take and how much will it cost?

Six, a case can be made that India ought to introduce English throughout school and college education so that all Indians will be conversant in their mother tongue and English. Such a policy will be beneficial to the Hindi States. Consider the demographic trends: by 2060, non-Hindi States, especially in the south, are projected to experience demographic decline and attendant labour shortage. The situation in the north will be the opposite. Embracing English as the second language will promote mobility and economic development, especially in the north, and make India a more legible place to its citizens.

### The Macaulay test

The common thread that runs through issues such as language in administration, medium of instruction and inclusion of a third language in curriculum is the project to remove English. Until the project is dismantled, the forces it unleashed through Part XVII will continue to wreak havoc with the country. The draft NEP recommends English throughout school education but it is, strictly speaking, counter to the spirit of Part XVII.

Several States have already made their respective languages

the sole language of administration. As if to hurt the prospects of students from poorer sections, States stipulate mother-tongue instruction being mandatory only in government and aided schools. The well-off are free to access English medium education in private schools.

While English stands dismantled as a second/link language in administration, Hindi remains unacceptable to non-Hindi States. So, an educated person from a non-Hindi State will be clueless in a Hindi State and vice-versa. It does not matter whether he is transacting some business or attending an official meeting. Therefore, instead of promoting national integration, the official language policy has accomplished the opposite.

While firing the opening salvos in India's language war, Lord Macaulay suggested a simple test of asking people on what language they prefer. The least a government in a democracy can do is to fathom the people's will and act accordingly.

### Unpack what is at stake

The non-Hindi States habitually join Tamil Nadu against any attempts to impose Hindi but they never bother to unpack what is at stake. Is it merely their cultural pride that cannot reconcile to Hindi? Sub-national aspiration can go only thus far. Instead of merely opposing Hindi imposition, they can build a better case for English as the second language throughout the country. That process will also expose their own hypocrisy. For starters, why don't they formally align their positions with Tamil Nadu and demand similar exemption that the former enjoys from the three-language formula?

D. Shyam Babu is Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal

# Making sense of Hindutva

The present political moment requires a renewed look at nationalism, communalism and majoritarianism



AJAY GUDAVORTHY

We are witnessing epoch-making changes to how democracy is working itself in India. It is often lamented as the new rise of cultural nationalism, majoritarianism and communalism. Earlier, historians had differed on how nationalism relates to communalism. Some felt nationalism itself was the product of colonialism and thereby the source of narrow identities. Therefore, one could not productively make a distinction between communalism and 'ethno-nationalism'. Others argued that nationalism was different from communalism: the first was about the 'making of a nation' and inclusive, while the second was divisive and caste-Hindu in its character.

### Pointer to deeper changes

Today, for all effective purposes, this distinction has collapsed with the emergence and consolidation of majoritarianism. However, the framing of the recent changes and electoral outcomes cannot be fully captured through these categories as they now refer to a new sociological reality.

The unprecedented rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh (BJP-RSS) combine since the 1990s, and the simultaneous and gradual decline of the Congress cannot be understood merely as the rise of communalism or majoritarianism; even as it carries these tendencies, it has become a viable project and a part of popular politics because of deeper changes in questions of identity, emotions and representation. A relevant question to ask is whether the majoritarian-Hindutva politics is also essentially about cultural subalterns who include both traditionally dominant castes as well as the subordinate castes, and classes. Would it not be right to argue that the upsurge of Hindu nationalism has paved the way for the mainstreaming of a 'way of life' and modes of thinking that lay at the margins of liberal democracy?

The complexity of the current moment in Indian politics is precisely this overlap between marginalised cultural groups that are asserting their identity but through conservative social ideology. The BJP-RSS combine, especially after the neoliberal reforms, has succeeded in combining aggressive pragmatism with regressive idealism. It is simultaneously inclusive and polarised; it provides mobility yet reinstates traditional hierarchies. Unless we unpack the irony of how contradictory processes are getting combined into a seamless process, a mere moral critique of the process would be inadequate, if not irrelevant. Unpacking



RITUAL KUNWAR

is a possible way to avoid the elitism of the liberal-secular critique of the current upsurge of cultural nationalism. The secular-liberal critique, in fact, further justifies the cultural nationalist project, enabling it to take on more majoritarian proportions.

In one sense, the political project of the Right, has subverted the binary distinction B.R. Ambedkar made between revolution and counter-revolution. He had observed that in Indian history, Buddhism was a revolution that privileged the shudras and provided them with dignity and equality, while a counter-revolution was forged by Brahminism and Vedic Hindu rituals to subjugate and marginalise the Shudras. What we are witnessing today is a counter-revolution that has the promise of being a revolution. It has managed to bring under-privileged castes and social groups to challenge the hegemony of caste Hindus/liberal elites over liberal, democratic institutions.

### Inclusion of the marginalised

The wide gap that was created between tiny liberal elites and

swathes of cultural subalterns due to the failure of the developmental state is being short-changed and subverted by muscular inclusion of the groups that lay at the margins. The resurgence of the 'Hindu' identity is not merely about communalism or majoritarianism but also about identities that had little hope of moving up the ladder within the limits of constitutionalism.

The BJP-RSS in this sense represent the cultural subalterns that cut across caste and class hierarchies. They are bringing with them social groups that suffered from routine inferiority and lack of mobility. The moral legitimacy of Hindutva lies in this silent change or subversion they are bringing about.

It needs to be added that this change cannot but be illiberal and is not necessarily anti-democratic as it might hold the promise of representing the majority. This change therefore cannot be captured in traditional or conventional caste and class categories; it goes beyond and cuts across the categories creating new divisions and social constituencies.

While communalism offers a sense of inclusion, majoritarianism offers a sense of mobility and the muscularity necessary to wedge open opportunities that otherwise looked closed; nationalism then offers a necessary moral antidote to exclusion and violence that are ingrained in the processes of communalism and majoritar-

ianism. Nationalism is therefore not merely about an exalted sense of the nation, it also plays a significant and a deeper role of providing moral-emotional succour to the narrow-violent sensibility that is understood to be indispensable to set right 'historical injury'/communalism (against Muslims) and achieve mobility/majoritarianism (against the traditional elites). Violence (found in mob lynching), mediocrity (in seeking quick mobility – for instance as found in the recent recruitments to universities), and even crime and criminality (for instance, alleged accusations against Pragya Thakur) can compromise the moral legitimacy of the project.

Moral legitimacy of any political project is to be found in notions of justice and universality, and nationalism works as a conduit that precisely fills this space. Nationalism allows the self-belief that Hindutva is not about narrow interests, or not just about 'Hindus' but about restoring the glory of a 'lost civilization'. It includes everyone who resides in 'Bharat'. This higher purpose offsets guilt and inconvenient pressures of conscience. Nationalism serves the purpose of providing 'mobility with dignity'.

Unless one makes sense of the 'positive' and affirming aspect of right-wing politics, one cannot get a full sense of the surge in cultural nationalist politics.

Ajay Gudavorthy is Associate Professor, Centre for Political Studies, JNU

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Sorting out Chagos

The UN General Assembly vote and the ruling by the International Court of Justice against the United Kingdom do not mean anything if status quo on the U.S. military base is going to be maintained. The decision on whether or not to allow the base should be left to the people of Mauritius. If India voted for Mauritian claims of sovereignty, then it cannot mediate for the right of that sovereignty to be curtailed to serve the interests of colonial ambitions and military powers. India will do well to uphold its stature with the former colonies by taking a clear stand against the militarisation of the Indian Ocean and a complete decolonisation of remnants of colonial

occupation (Editorial page, "The immediate neighbourhood", June 5).  
FIROZ AHMAD,  
New Delhi

### Cracks in the Congress

It is unfortunate that the Grand Old Party, the Indian National Congress, is facing bad days after the results of the 2019 general election ("Desertion, discord rattle Cong. ahead of revamp", June 5). Cracks in party units in Congress-ruled States such as Rajasthan, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh should not be allowed to widen. The leaders of the party need to discuss the issues in a frank manner. The party needs to be in tune with people's aspirations, or vanish soon.  
SHARADCHANDRAN S.,  
New Delhi

### Space for cycling

Cycling as a replacement for motoring, more so in cities, is a sound option as far as its impact on an individual's health and the environment are concerned. The recent move by the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Harsh Vardhan, to ride to work is profound, especially in terms of the ministry he heads. Officials can encourage cycling in the metro cities if, for instance, they ensure that there is extra space on buses or trains (as an extra coach). Cycle lanes in select areas could help. However, cyclists' concerns about traffic hazards and accidents must be addressed. Two days in a week should focus on cyclists and commuters

using public transport.

B.N. GANGADHAR,  
Bengaluru

### Water security

Chennai is perhaps facing its worst water crisis in recent times. It was not so long ago that large parts of the city were under water but residents need to acknowledge the fact that most water sources are almost bone dry. Could there have been a better way to manage all this? Possibly yes. There should have been stringent measures to reduce wastage with no efforts being spared to communicate this at regular intervals to citizens and users. Chennai cannot depend on rainwater any more. Desalination plants must

supplement the needs of the city, rain or shine. There have to be curbs on reducing groundwater extraction. Boring deeper may have other environmental consequences. Recycling and treating grey water at a central source must be thought of. Finally, the city may not be able to handle further growth and

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A clarification on the story headlined "Scientists edit chicken genes to make them resistant to bird flu" (some editions, June 4, 2019): The penultimate paragraph had referred to a 2009 pandemic caused by H1N1. That entire paragraph on H1N1 should not have been mentioned as the story is related to bird flu (H5N1).

With reference to the "Between Wickets" column titled "India have the team to win the World Cup, so do at least three others" (May 22, 2019), a reader has pointed out that for the record, England reached only one final (1979) when they hosted the event (from 1975, 1979, 1983 and 1999) and not two as the column said. On two other occasions England made it to the title clash: in 1987 (Kolkata) and in 1992 (Melbourne). The reader is right.

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# Needed: a solar manufacturing strategy

Despite making significant progress in solar power generation, India still relies on China for equipment



SANTOSH MEHROTRA

India has made significant progress in creating capacity for solar energy generation in the last few years. The Prime Minister's emphasis since 2014 has given a new fillip to solar power installation. The unit costs of solar power have fallen, and solar energy has become increasingly competitive with alternative sources of energy. India expanded its solar generation capacity eight times from 2,650 MW on May 26, 2014 to over 20 GW on January 31, 2018, and 28.18 GW on March 31, 2019. The government had an initial target of 20 GW of solar capacity by 2022, which was achieved four years ahead of schedule. In 2015, the target was raised to 100 GW of solar capacity by 2022.

### Relying on imports

This rapid progress should have been made earlier, however. India is energy deficient, yet blessed with plenty of sunlight for most of the year. It should have taken a lead in solar panel manufacture to generate solar energy long ago. Despite the new policy focus on solar plant installation, India is still not a solar panel manufacturer. Just as India has had no overall industrial policy since economic reforms began, there is no real plan in place to ensure solar panel manufacture. The share of all manufacturing in GDP was 16% in 1991; it remained the same in 2017. The solar power potential offers a manufacturing opportunity. The government is a near monopsonistic buyer. India is regarded by the global solar industry as one of the most promising markets, but low-cost Chinese imports have undercut its ambitions to develop its own solar technology suppliers. Imports, mostly from China, accounted for 90% of 2017 sales, up from 86% in 2014.

Substituting for imports requires human capabilities, technological capabilities and capital in the form of finance. On the first two capabilities, the supply chain of solar photovoltaic panel manufacturing is as follows: silicon production from sili-



"Low-cost Chinese imports have undercut India's ambitions to develop its own solar technology suppliers." A solar panel being installed on the rooftop of a house in Nada, a village near Mangaluru. ■ AP

cates (sand); production of solar grade silicon ingots; solar wafer manufacturing; and PV module assembly. The capital expenditure and technical know-how needed for these processes decreases from the first item to the last, i.e. silicon production is more capital-intensive than module assembly. Most Indian companies are engaged in only module assembly or wafer manufacturing and module assembly. No Indian company is involved in silicon production, although a few are making strides towards it. According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (2018), India has an annual solar cell manufacturing capacity of about 3 GW while the average annual demand is 20 GW. The shortfall is met by imports of solar panels.

So we may not see domestic players, in the short term at least, replacing imported ones. While the safeguard duty now puts locally made panels on par with imported ones in terms of cost, the domestic sector needs to do a lot more to be effective. For instance, it will have to go down the supply chain and make the input components locally instead of importing them and putting the modules together here. Public procurement is the way forward. The government is still free to call out bids for solar power plants with the requirement that these be made fully in India. This will not violate any World Trade Organization commitment. However, no bids will be received as manufacturing facilities for these do not exist in the country. But

as Ajay Shankar, former Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, argues, if the bids were large enough with supplies spread over years, which gives enough time for a green field investment to be made for manufacturing in India, then bidders will emerge and local manufacturing can begin.

### Lessons from China

China's cost advantage derives from capabilities on three fronts. The first is core competence. The six largest Chinese manufacturers had core technical competence in semiconductors before they turned to manufacturing solar cells at the turn of the century. It takes time for companies to learn and put in action new technologies. When the solar industry in China began to grow, Chinese companies already possessed the know-how. Experts suggest that the human and technical learning curve could be five to 10 years. Indian companies had no learning background in semiconductors when the solar industry in India began to grow from 2011. State governments need to support semiconductor production as part of a determined industrial policy to develop this capacity for the future.

The second source of cost advantage for China comes from government policy. The Chinese government has subsidised land acquisition, raw material, labour and export, among others. None of this is matched by the Indian government. Perhaps even more important is commitment by the government to

procure over the long run – without that the investment in building up the design and manufacturing for each of the four stages of production of solar power equipment would come to nought.

The third is the cost of capital. The cost of debt in India (11%) is highest in the Asia-Pacific region, while in China it is about 5%.

Fifteen years ago, the Chinese could also have remained dependent upon imports from Korea or Germany; they did not. Remaining dependent on imports only leads to short-term benefits for India. A continuation of the current approach means India's energy sector will be in the same condition as its defence industry, where enormous amounts of money have been spent procuring weaponry – so much so that India has been the world's second largest importer of defence equipment for years.

In the solar panel manufacturing sector, the Indian government allows 100% foreign investment as equity and it qualifies for automatic approval – so much so that India has been the world's second largest importer of defence equipment for years. The government is also encouraging foreign investors to set up renewable energy-based power generation projects on build-own-operate basis. But the Chinese government is clearly adopting an aggressive stance while the demand for solar power in India continues to grow, as does the government's commitment to renewables. In 2018, China cut financial support to developers and halted approval for new solar projects. As a result, Chinese producers will cut prices to sustain their manufacturing plant capacity utilisation by sustaining exports to India. In other words, the Chinese strategy is to undercut any planned effort by India to develop the entire supply chain capacity within India so that dependence on imports from China continues. As a counter, India needs a solar manufacturing strategy, perhaps like the Automotive Mission Plan (2006-2016), which is credited with making India one of the largest manufacturers of two-wheelers, three-wheelers, four-wheelers and lorries in the world. This would also be a jobs-generating strategy for an increasingly better educated youth, both rural and urban.

Santosh Mehrotra is Professor of Economics, JNU, New Delhi

# Helping strangers

Only by cultivating a strong sense of citizenship and respect for the rights of all can philanthropy in India grow



RAJNI BAKSHI

After the din of a bitterly contested election, it is easy to forget that society is the foundation on which political parties and the entire edifice of democracy actually stand.

One indicator of the vibrancy of Indian society is the 'Everyday Giving in India Report 2019' which shows that Indians, some of them not even in the middle class, donate a total of about ₹34,000 crore every year to help others, mostly strangers. And according to the World Giving Index of 2018, by the U.K.-based Charities Aid Foundation, India tops the list of countries in the number of people donating money (although it ranks only 89th for participation rates when calculated as a proportion of the population). India is followed by the U.S. and China. However, it is significant to note that 90% of India's 'everyday giving' is to religion and community; only 10% goes to social purpose organisations.

### Increase in everyday giving

The good news of the 'Everyday Giving in India Report 2019', conducted by the Bengaluru-based Sattva, is that over the last 10 years there has been a significant increase in citizen engagement and volunteering – not just the act of giving money. Present-day 'everyday giving' is largely a continuation of a long-standing Indian tradition of citizens giving money to religious and caste-based organisations. India's freedom struggle inaugurated the practice of donating in cash or kind for larger social causes and for the welfare of underprivileged communities without religious or caste considerations. This kind of donation saw some decline immediately after Independence, but has re-emerged over the last few decades. One of the most famous examples of this is Child Rights and You (CRY), an organisation founded in the 1979 by Rippan Kapur, an airline purser who in his spare time sold greeting cards to raise money for disadvantaged children. Over 40 years, CRY has benefited millions of children of all religions, castes and regions, by raising small donations from lakhs of supporters.

With the earning capacity of both Indian residents and the Indian diaspora rising, India's 'everyday giving' has the potential to grow four times in the next 3-5 years, accord-

ing to Sattva.

What drives people to donate? About 74% of respondents in the Sattva survey said they are moved to support a cause that needs urgent attention. Some givers said they felt a sense of affiliation to a cause, whether related to health, environment or education. Half of those surveyed said they went by the recommendations of friends and family.

Among the most common ways of collecting donations are door-to-door collections, telemarketing, payroll giving, crowdfunding, and e-commerce-based giving. All of these are projected to grow strongly.

However, many of the people surveyed said their willingness to engage with social causes was impeded by lack of information on reliable organisations. More significantly, the report says few civil society organisations make citizen engagement the core of their mission; they instead prefer to reach out to large donors (high-net-worth individuals) or international funding agencies.

There is indeed a big role to be played by large-scale philanthropy by the rich.

For instance, the rich can help to plug a part of India's ₹533 lakh crore funding shortfall to meet the targets set by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. But as Chairman of the Mahindra Group, Anand Mahindra, says in this report, the Indian context needs "a billion givers rather than a billion dollars by a single giver".

### Supporting good ideas

This potential of a billion givers can only fully be realised if the giving is connected to cultivating a strong sense of citizenship and respect for the rights of all. At present, NGOs which foster this commitment to citizenship receive a small fraction of everyday giving. Secularised organisations need to reach out much more to engage the everyday giver. At the same time, religious and community-based institutions that are recipients of large-scale everyday giving need to expand beyond welfare programmes directed at their 'own' congregations to include work that cultivates respect for constitutional guarantees – most importantly, the right to dignity for all.

This report is of interest because it highlights the importance of making it easy for large numbers of people to support good ideas, good individuals and good institutions. In a society that appears to be bitterly polarised today, this is important.

Rajni Bakshi is a Mumbai-based writer

## SINGLE FILE

# Language discrimination

It is incredible that India should think of privileging the language of the most recent migrants

PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN



The first draft of the National Education Policy gathered controversy. This is no disqualification of course, as we should expect some disagreement on how to structure education in so large and diverse a country. Anyhow, the original draft had proposed that school-children learn three languages, namely their mother tongue, English and Hindi when Hindi is not their mother tongue and Hindi, English and a 'modern Indian language' in case their mother tongue is Hindi. This met with opposition from south India's politicians who see in mandatory Hindi a discrimination vis-à-vis the southern States. They are entirely right to protest.

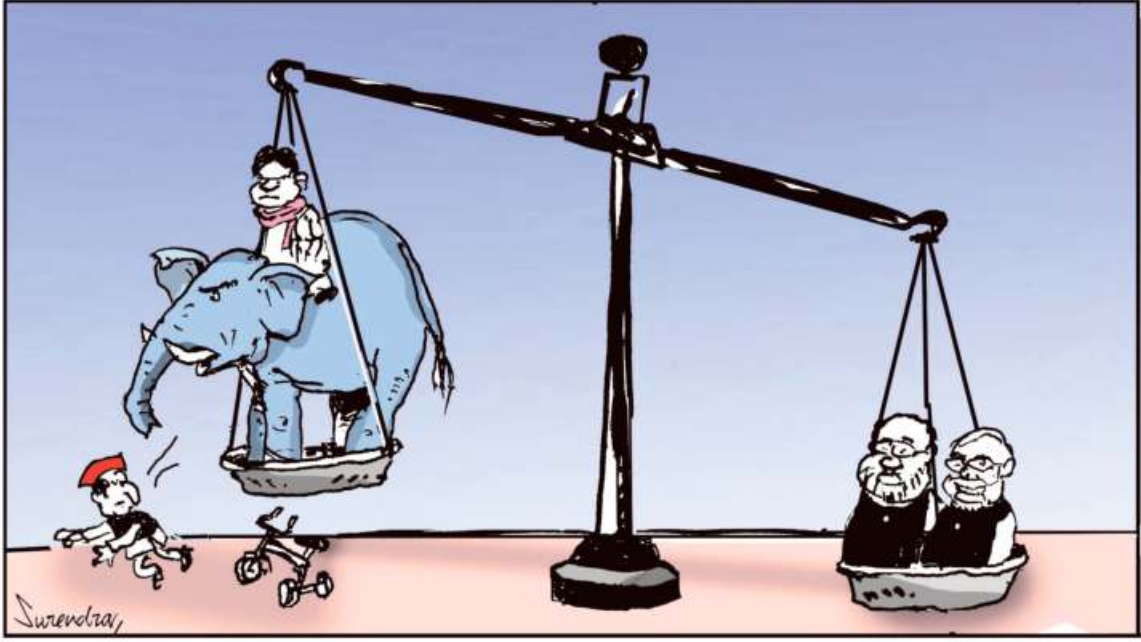
There is no credible basis on which to insist that south Indians learn to speak Hindi while north Indians are exempted from learning a language spoken in the south. The original draft policy had stated that Hindi speakers could study any modern Indian language as their third language, and not necessarily one spoken in south India. It is not difficult to see that this is discriminatory. But to see why it is not credible either we would need to travel further.

Hindi belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. It is only one of the several spoken in India even in this group. Indians also speak languages that belong to the Dravidian family. There are also groups, patronisingly termed 'tribal', which speak languages belonging to neither family, but they are so marginalised that they have little hope of having their voice heard. The contention is thus between those privileging Hindi through its imposition and promotion by the Indian state and speakers of Dravidian languages.

How incredible is this insistence on Hindi may be seen through the light of recent scientific advances. Population genetics combined with DNA evidence points to the role of migration in constituting the Indian stock. The findings from this exercise have been gathered by Tony Joseph in his recent book *Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From*. In chronological order, these migrations may be termed Out of Africa, West Asian including Dravidian, East Asian, and Aryan. 'Aryan' is the self-description of speakers of Indo-European languages.

So, we are all immigrants here, with the Aryans being the most recent. It is incredible that India should even suggest a language policy that privileges the language of the most recent migrant. Unless we believe that majoritarianism would be kosher in a democracy, that is. Had he been alive, an ancestor who had cooled his heels in Vellore Jail during the Quit India Movement is sure to have murmured, "This is not what I had meant at all."

Pulapre Balakrishnan is Professor of Ashoka University, Sonapat and Senior Fellow of IIM Kozhikode



## DATA POINT

# Fallen forts, safe havens

The BJP wave in the 2019 Lok Sabha election breached the "safe seats" of many parties. As many as five seats won by the Congress in the past four elections (1999 to 2014) were won by the BJP in 2019. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) also lost four such seats – two of them to the BJP and the other two to the Congress. However, several other bastions weathered the BJP storm. **By Sumant Sen**

**YET TO CRACK** The table lists the seats which have been won by the same party for the past five elections (1999 to 2019)

Constituency	Party	2019 winner	Constituency	Party	2019 winner
Hyderabad	AIMIM	Asaduddin Owaisi	Satara	NCP	Udayan Bhonsle
Rae Bareilly	INC	Sonia Gandhi	Ponnani	IUML	E.T. Mohammed Basheer
Kaliabor	INC	Gaurav Gogoi	Kendrapada	BJD	Anubhav Mohanty
Aska	BJD	Pramila Bisoyi	Jajpur	BJD	Sarmistha Sethi
Mainpuri	SP	Mulayam Singh Yadav	Cuttack	BJD	Bhartruhari Mahtab
Shillong	INC	Vincent Pala	Puri	BJD	Pinaki Misra
Baramati	NCP	Supriya Sule	Chhindwara	INC	Nakul Nath
Nalanda	JD(U)	Kaushlendra Kumar			

■ Nakul Nath bagged the lone win (Chhindwara) for the Congress in M.P. His father Kamal Nath had represented the constituency for nine terms

■ AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi won Hyderabad for the fourth consecutive term. Prior to 2004, his father Salahuddin Owaisi won every term since 1984

Constituency	1999 to 2014	2019	2019 loser	2019 winner
Amethi	INC	BJP	Rahul Gandhi	Smriti Irani
Chikkballapur	INC	BJP	M. Veerappa Moily	B.N. Bache Gowda
Kolar	INC	BJP	K.H. Muniyappa	S. Muniswamy
Tripura East	CPI(M)	BJP	Jitendra Chaudhary	Rebati Tripura
Tripura West	CPI(M)	BJP	Sankar Prasad Datta	Pratima Bhoomik
Kasaragod	CPI(M)	INC	K.P. Sathishchandran	Rajmohan Unnithan
Palakkad	CPI(M)	INC	M.B. Rajesh	V.K. Sreekandan
Kannauj	SP	BJP	Dimple Yadav	Subrat Pathak
Bastar	BJP	INC	Baidu Ram Kashyap	Deepak Baij
Guna	INC	BJP	Jyotiraditya Scindia	Krishna Pat Singh Yadav
Bhubaneswar	BJD	BJP	Arup Patnaik	Aparajith Sarangi
Gulbarga	INC	BJP	Mallikarjun Kharge	Dr. Umesh Jadhav
Nowgong	BJP	INC	Rupak Sharma	Pradyut Bordoloi

The table above lists seats which changed hands to either the BJP or the Congress in the 2019 election  
Source: ECI, Trivedi Centre for Political Data, Election Atlas of India

## FROM The Hindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 6, 1969

### PM's poignant meeting with Ghaffar Khan

The Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi received an unprecedentedly warm welcome from the Afghan Government and people on her arrival here [Kabul] to-day [June 5] on a five-day visit to this country with which India has had the closest ties from the days of the Rig Veda, Buddhist philosophy and the early Islamic influence. Immediately on her arrival here, Mrs. Gandhi called on Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Tens of thousands of students and common people lined the 12 kilometre route from the airport to the Royal guest house cheering her all the way and showering her with rose petals at important road junctions. Even the striking students of the Kabul colleges and schools took some time off from their demonstrations to welcome her as the motorcade passed through the crowded city.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 6, 1919.

### Mysore and War.

The Mysore Blue Book Journal, in giving a record of the part played by Mysore State towards winning the War, refers to the work of the Imperial Service Lancers in Suez Canal zone and in Palestine and to the work of Mysore transport corps, at Sanjay and that trained horses were supplied to the Imperial Government and the state had recruited 5000 men by the time the armistice was signed. As regards money contributions, the total amount contributed or made available by the Mysore State and the people amounted to over two crores. Among other work, some 19,000 army blankets were supplied up to the 30th September. Special investigations were made by the state mines department in regard to the supply or increase in the output of particular minerals required in the munition making. 150,000 cubic feet of rosewood were supplied by the State to the Gun Carriage factory at Jubbulpore and 30,000 teak metre gauge sleepers for railway construction in Mesopotamia.

## CONCEPTUAL

# Social jet lag

SOCIOLOGY

This refers to the difference in the sleep patterns of people between weekends and weekdays. Social jet lag is seen by many as caused by the modern lifestyle which requires that people operate within a strict time schedule on weekdays unlike on weekends. On weekends, people are generally free to sleep longer and in sync with their body's natural sleep cycle. This frequent change in sleep pattern is considered to be similar to the change in sleep pattern witnessed when people travel across time zones. Researchers believe that such a disrupted sleep pattern can have harmful effects on health.

## MORE ON THE WEB

Rivers in India: A reality check

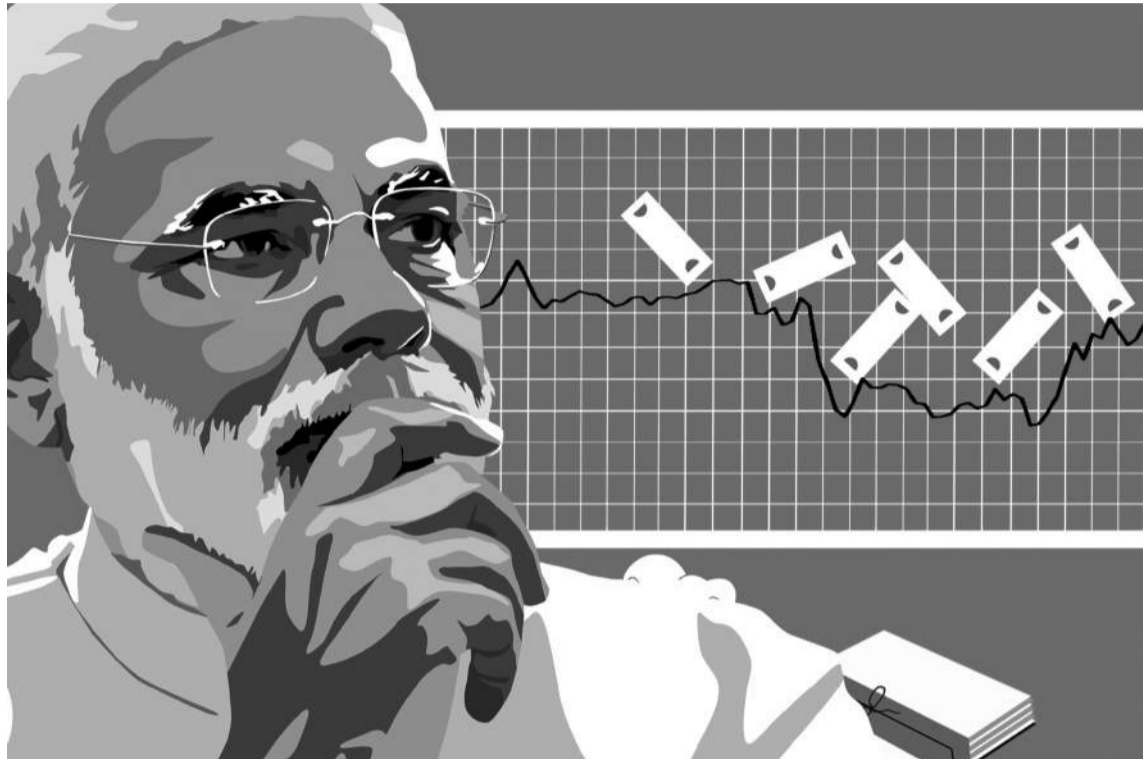
<http://bit.ly/RiversIndia>

## बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 94

## मंदी की ओर

**जनवरी**–मार्च 2019 तिमाही में कॉर्पोरेट आय में वृद्धि का न होना कतई चौंकाने वाला नहीं है क्योंकि इस तिमाही में सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) की वृद्धि दर भी केवल 5.8 फीसदी रही है। उपभोक्ता मांग में कमी ने विनिर्माण वृद्धि को प्रभावित किया है जबकि कम सरकारी निवेश ने अर्थव्यवस्था और उद्योग जगत दोनों को



विलय सिन्हा

# मोदी की दूसरी पारी में अहम ‘एक चीज’

नरेंद्र मोदी जैसा दिग्गज राजनीतिक नेता अपने कार्यकाल को असाधारण आर्थिक सफलता दिलाने के लिए क्या कदम उठा सकता है ? मौजूद विकल्पों पर रोशनी डाल रहे हैं देवाशिष बसु

गत 23 मई की दोपहर में ही यह साफ हो गया था कि नरेंद्र मोदी की भारतीय जनता पार्टी (भाजपा) एक बड़ी चुनावी जीत की ओर अग्रसर है। उसके बाद से ही पत्रकारों और संपादकों के ईमेल बॉक्स में उद्योगपतियों, उद्योग संगठनों एवं वित्तीय विशेषज्ञों के संदेशों की भरमार हो गई है। सरकार की तरफ से तत्काल उठाए जाने वाले इन कदमों की सूची काफी लंबी है। पिछले कई दशकों में कई समस्याएं खड़ी हो चुकी हैं। भाजपा को मिले जबरदस्त जनादेश के बाद उसे मत देने वाले व्यक्ति से लेकर आर्थिक टिप्पणीकार भी आगे किए जाने वाले कार्यों की सूची दे रहे हैं।

हालांकि इन सूचियों का कोई मतलब नहीं है। मोदी शायद उन्हें पढ़ते नहीं हैं, उन्हें किसी की सूची काफी जरूरत भी नहीं है, मेरे जैसे स्तंभ लेखकों की तो कतई नहीं। अच्छा हो या बुरा, सही हो या गलत, वह अपने फैसले खुद करते हैं और उन पर डटे रहते हैं। लेकिन उनकी राजनीतिक जीतें जहां अपने-आप में पूर्ण रही हैं, वहीं आर्थिक मोर्चे पर उनकी जीतों को लेकर बहस हो सकती है, खासकर यह देखते हुए कि सरकार ने अपने प्रदर्शन को बेहतर

दिखाने के लिए लगातार आंकड़ों में फेरबदल किए हैं। हो सकता है कि भाजपा कार्यकर्ताओं के भारी शोरशराबे और आम नागरिक के अंध आशावाद के मौजूदा परिवेश में इसे कुछ समय के लिए भुला दिया जाए।

मोदी जैसा दिग्गज नेता अपने शासनकाल में असाधारण आर्थिक कामयाबी हासिल करने के लिए क्या कदम उठा सकता है ? गैरी डब्ल्यू केलर और जेय पपासन की चर्चित किताब ‘दी वन थिंग: द सरप्राइजिंगली सिंपल ट्रुथ बिहाइंड एक्सट्राऑर्डिनरी रिजल्ट्स’ में इस सवाल का जवाब मिल सकता है। लेखक-द्वय यह सरल सवाल पूछने की सलाह देते हैं कि ‘वह कौन सी एक चीज है जिसे अंजाम देने के बाद बाकी कुछ भी करना अधिक आसान हो जाता है?’ अगर भारत को अपने करोड़ों नागरिकों को गरीबी से बाहर निकालने का मुख्य लक्ष्य तेजी से हासिल करना है तो वह कम मात्रा में मौजूद पूंजी को व्यर्थ नहीं गंवा सकता है। भारत को पूंजी के कारगर आवंटन की जरूरत है जो कि अर्थव्यवस्था की जीवनशक्ति होती है।

मोटे तौर पर भारत में तीन तरह की इकाइयां पूंजी का इस्तेमाल करती हैं।

फीसदी की मुनाफा वृद्धि मजबूत लग सकती है लेकिन ऐसा इसलिए हुआ क्योंकि मार्च 2018 में बैंकों, खासकर निजी कॉर्पोरेट और सरकारी बैंकों के भारी घाटे की वजह से आधार कमजोर था। वित्त वर्ष 2019 की चौथी तिमाही में इनमें से कुछ बैंकों के बेहतर प्रदर्शन ने इस वृद्धि में सहायता की।

मांग पर दबाव का एक और संकेतक घरेलू बाजार केंद्रित कंपनियों से नजर आता है। अप्रत्याशित लाभ या हानि को छोड़ दें तो इन कंपनियों का मूल परिचालन मुनाफा मार्जिन दो अंकों से नीचे आ गया। 17 तिमाहियों में पहली बार ऐसा हुआ। इससे पता चलता है कि लागत पर भी दबाव है। यह प्रादर्श मोटेतौर पर विनिर्माण कंपनियों पर आधारित है।

इनमें धातु, सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी, औषधि, वित्तीय और ऊर्जा क्षेत्र शामिल नहीं हैं। चौथी तिमाही के आंकड़े निजी खपत की मांग में गिरावट का भी संकेत देते हैं। यह बीते दो वर्ष में आर्थिक वृद्धि और कॉर्पोरेट आय का प्रमुख वाहक था। हालांकि वाहन और टिकाऊ उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं की मांग खाद्य एवं प्रसाधन वस्तुओं की मांग की तुलना में ज्यादा कम हुई है। वैश्विक कारोबारी होने के नाते टाटा मोटर्स को छोड़ दिया जाए तो शेष वाहन क्षेत्र की बिक्री चौथी तिमाही में सालाना आधार पर केवल 2 फीसदी बढ़ी। यह बीते तीन वर्ष की सबसे धीमी वृद्धि दर है।

निफ्टी 50 सूचकांक के लिए यह तिमाही अवश्य बेहतर रही। इन 50 कंपनियों के

सांसद क्षेत्र विकास निधि के तहत हरेक साल अरबों रुपये आवंटित किए जाते हैं। सांसद इस राशि का थोड़ा सा हिस्सा ही खर्च करते हैं और उन्हें बची हुई राशि अगले साल ले जाने की भी अनुमति होती है। लेकिन जेडबीबी में अपनी राशि खर्च नहीं करने वाले सांसदों को रकम नहीं आवंटित की जाएगी और अधिक कारगर ढंग से या अधिक जरूरत वाले क्षेत्रों में वह राशि खर्च की जाएगी। जब सैंकड़ों अरब रुपये इकट्ठा हो जाएंगे तो कहीं अधिक फायदे उठाए जा सकेंगे। तमाम विभागों के बीच फालतू खर्चों और नदारद कर्मचारियों के बारे में भी पता कर सकते हैं।

पूंजी बरबाद करने वालों में दूसरा स्थान सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रमों (पीएसयू) का है। हमें नहीं मालूम है कि मोदी इनके बारे में क्या करना चाहते हैं क्योंकि उनके कार्यकाल में पीएसयू वे तमाम काम कर रहे हैं जिन्हें निजी क्षेत्र की कंपनियां बेहतर ढंग से अंजाम दे रही हैं। यहां तक कि वित्तीय एवं डिजिटल ढांचे जैसे तेजी से बढ़ते क्षेत्रों में भी यह हो रहा है। इसके अलावा होटल, एयरलाइन, टेलीफोन, इस्पात, खाद, इंजीनियरिंग और फोटो फिल्म तक में पीएसयू की खराब हालत को दुरुस्त करने की कोई कोशिश हुई है। राज्यों में भी सक्रिय सैंकड़ों पीएसयू की हालत ऐसी ही है। पूंजी आवंटनकर्ता होने के नाते सरकार और पीएसयू दोनों को ही पैसे की बरबादी रोकने के लिए कोई प्रोत्साहन नहीं होता है। अगर इसे अलग तरीके से देखें तो इसमें उनका कुछ भी दांव पर नहीं होता है। उन्हें इस खेल से बाहर करने की जरूरत है क्योंकि वे अरबों रुपये बरबाद कर रहे हैं जिसे उपभोक्ताओं और कारोबारों को मिलना चाहिए।

इसके विपरीत, पूंजी आवंटनकर्ताओं की तीसरी किस्म निजी क्षेत्र की उन कंपनियों की होती है जिनका इस खेल में बहुत कुछ दांव पर माना जाता है। चाहे वह टाटा जैसी विशाल कंपनी हो या कोई छोटी कंपनी। अगर उनका इस खेल में दांव नहीं लगा होता है तो इसकी वजह यह है कि राज्य या उसके तमाम अंग (नेता, बाबू और सार्वजनिक बैंक) उन्हें पीएसयू की ही तरह गैरजिम्मेदाराना ढंग से काम करने देते हैं जिसे दोस्ताना पूंजीवाद के रूप में पेश किया जाता है। अगर निजी क्षेत्र को निष्पक्ष ढंग से प्रतिस्पर्द्धा करने की आजादी दी जाती है तो वह पहले दो पूंजी आवंटनकर्ताओं की तुलना में कहीं बेहतर साबित होंगे।

अगर एक सरकार कारगर ढंग से पूंजी आवंटन प्रार्थमिकता तय करती है तो उसका मतलब होगा एक छोटा राज्य, करों में कमी, खर्च योग्य आय में बढ़त और वस्तुओं एवं सेवाओं का सस्ता होना। फिर राज्य अपनी पूंजी को उन इलाकों में आवंटित कर सकता है जो इस संरचनात्मक बदलाव में मदद करते हैं। जीत का जश्न खत्म होने के बाद क्या भाजपा अपने राजनीतिक जनादेश को प्रभावी संरचनात्मक बदलाव लाने वाले जनादेश में बदलेगी ? यह ‘एक चीज’ बाकी प्रयासों को काफी हद तक गैरजरूरी बना देगी।

*(लेखक वेबसाइट मनीलाइफ डॉट इन के संपादक हैं)*

लिए शुद्ध मुनाफा वृद्धि करीब 20 फीसदी रही जो तीन वर्ष में सर्वाधिक है। हालांकि इनकी राजस्व वृद्धि 10 तिमाहियों में न्यूनतम रही। क्षेत्रवार बात करें तो वाहन निर्माता कंपनियों का परिचालन मार्जिन 2018 की चौथी तिमाही के औसत की तुलना में 280 आधार अंक गिरा। जबकि व्याज, कर, अवमूल्यन और परिशोधन पूर्व समेकित आय लगातार दूसरी तिमाही में गिरी। चौथी तिमाही में उद्योग जगत का शुद्ध मुनाफा सालाना आधार पर 7.4 फीसदी गिरा। यह तीन वर्षों का न्यूनतम स्तर है।

दैनिक उपयोग की उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं की कंपनियों का प्रदर्शन अपेक्षाकृत बेहतर रहा और उनकी शुद्ध बिक्री सालाना आधार पर 10.2 फीसदी बढ़ी। परंतु उनकी मुनाफा

वृद्धि चार तिमाहियों में न्यूनतम रही। खुदरा व्यय में कमी के कारण यह क्षेत्र भी आने वाले दिनों में उद्योग जगत के मुनाफे में पहले जैसा योगदान नहीं कर पाएगा। निवेश या पूंजीगत व्यय संबंध क्षेत्र जैसे पूंजीगत वस्तु, विनिर्माण और बुनियादी ढांचा आदि की वृद्धि के आंकड़े अन्य कंपनियों से बेहतर रहे। शेष विनिर्माण कंपनियों के मार्जिन और मुनाफे को नुकसान पहुंचा। जबकि दूरसंचार क्षेत्र लगातार भारी नुकसान में बना रहा। शेयर बाजार अब तक कमजोर तिमाही आंकड़ों से बचा है क्योंकि दरों में कटौती और अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए प्रोत्साहन का असमान है। तब तक अधिकांश विश्लेषक आगामी वित्त वर्ष में आय के गिरावट का जोखिम ही देख रहे हैं।

# समावेशी और बहुलवादी बना रहेगा हमारा भारत



जिंदगीनामा

कनिका दत्ता

स्वास्थ्य के मुद्दे पर लड़ा गया, बिहार और ओडिशा में विकास के मुद्दे पर, पश्चिम बंगाल में भूमि अधिकारों की रक्षा के लिए (बाद में ममता बनर्जी ने सांप्रदायिक तुष्टीकरण को राह अपनाई) और राजस्थान में किसानों के असंतोह के मुद्दे पर।

मोदी को 2014 में मिला बहुमत जातीय राजनीति से परे रोजगार और विकास के मुद्दे पर था। उन्होंने बहुत ऊर्जा के साथ प्रचार किया था। वह लालफीताशाही और भ्रष्टाचार मुक्त भारत की बात करते, सक्षम प्रशासन, तेज अर्थव्यवस्था और ढेरों रोजगार की बात किया करते थे।ये सारी बातें तत्कालीन सरकार के प्रदर्शन से उलट थीं। इन बातों ने कई मतदाताओं को भाजपा को वोट देने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया।

विकास का ऊर्जावान, विश्वसनीय और प्रतिस्पर्धी दृष्टि जो अनिवार्य तौर पर धर्म और राष्ट्रवाद पर आधारित न हो, उसका मतदाताओं को आकर्षित करना स्वाभाविक था।

अब यह भुलाना आसान है कि सन 2019 के आरंभ में आर्थिक मोर्चे पर मोदी के कमजोर प्रदर्शन के कारण लगने लगा था कि वह सत्ता में वापसी तो करेंगे लेकिन निहायत घटी हुई सीटों के साथ। कांग्रेस मतदाताओं को देशव्यापी स्तर पर बेहतर विकल्प देने में नाकाम रही तो इसके लिए उसके प्रचार अभियान की कमजोरी भी वजह रही जो अमित शाह और नरेंद्र मोदी की तरह स्पष्ट संदेश देने में नाकाम रही।

आम आदमी की सोच प्रक्रिया से राहुल गांधी की दूरी के कारण वह ऐसे मसलों पर केंद्रित रहे जो व्यापक तौर पर बेमानी साबित हुए। मोदी ने राफेल सौदे में पैसे बनाए या नहीं यह बात उस समय बेमानी है जबकि लोग आजीविका

के लिए परेशान हैं। भाजपा के घृणा अभियान के उलट राहुल गांधी ने प्रेम का जो संदेश प्रसारित किया वह योजना बहुत ढेर से आई और इसका ठीक से प्रचार नहीं हो सका। विडंबना यह है कि कांग्रेस के पास जमीनी संगठन और राज्यों में सक्षम क्षत्रप भी हैं लेकिन राहुल गांधी ने उनको उचित छूट नहीं दी।

इसके विपरीत, उग्र में राहुल गांधी से दो दशक बढ़ मोदी और शाह ने वह किया जो गांधी नहीं कर सके। उन्होंने लोगों को जोड़ा और एक ऐसी दलील तैयार की जो बुरे दौर में उनकी पार्टी के काम आई। उन्होंने पाकिस्तान, इस्लामिक आतंकवादियों आदि का भय उत्पन्न किया। जम्मू कश्मीर में एक दशक की अपेक्षाकृत शांति के बाद ये सारे मुद्दे पुनर्जीवित हो चुके हैं। जाहिर है जिस समय अर्थव्यवस्था ठहरी हुई और विदेशी निवेशक अन्य ठिकाने खोज रहे हों तो ये मुद्दे काम आएंगे। मोदी की आलोचना करने वाले उनकी तुलना इंदिरा गांधी से करते हुए कहते हैं कि वह अभिन्यायकवादी हैं और संस्थानों और संवैधानिक मूल्यों की इज्जत नहीं करते। पश्चिम बंगाल में नाकारा साबित हुए वाम मोर्चे की सरकार के साथ भी मोदी सरकार की समानताएं चौंकाने वाली हैं। जिस तरह जमीन के पुनर्वितरण ने वाम मोर्चे को तीन दशक तक सत्ता में बनाए रखा, उसी तरह मोदी की शुरुआती सफलताओं मसलन जन धन और उज्ज्वला योजना ने गुजरवाती सफलताओं मसलन जन धन और

उज्ज्वला योजना ने गुजरवाती सफलताओं मसलन जन धन और उज्ज्वला योजना को मोदी की क्षमताओं से वाकिफ कराया। वाम मोर्चे की औद्योगिक नीतियों की नाकामी ने वाम मोर्चे को काडर उपलब्ध कराया था, बेरोजगारी ने मोदी को बड़ी तादाद में राजनैतिक सिपाही मुहैया कराए। हमेशा प्रचार के मिजाज में रहने वाले मोदी 2020 के विभिन्न चुनावों के लिए नीतियां बना रहे हैं। उनके धर्मनिरपेक्ष विरोधियों के लिए जल्द से जल्द एकजुट होने का वक्त आ चुका है।

### कानाफूसी

संकट को न्योता?

क्या छत्तीसगढ़ की कांग्रेस सरकार खुद ही अपने आप को अस्थिर कर रही है ? कुछ दिन पहले प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री भूपेश बघेल ने घोषणा की कि उन्होंने राज्य के महाधिवक्ता कनक तिवारी का इस्तीफा स्वीकार कर लिया है। दिलचस्प यह है कि उन्होंने बिना समय गंवाए सतीश चंद्र मिश्रा को नया महाधिवक्ता भी नियुक्त कर दिया। उधर तिवारी ने आरोप लगाया कि राज्य सरकार ने उन्हें इसलिए पद से हटा दिया क्योंकि वह मंत्रियों के कामकाज के तरीके पर आपत्ति जताते थे। उन्होंने राज्य सरकार को यह चुनौती भी दी कि अगर उन्होंने इस्तीफा दिया है तो सरकार उनका त्यागपत्र सार्वजनिक करे। उधर विपक्षी दल भारतीय जनता पार्टी और जनता कांग्रेस छत्तीसगढ़ भी इस मौके को गंवाना नहीं चाह रहे। उन्होंने सरकार पर आरोप लगाया है कि वह संवैधानिक संकट उत्पन्न कर रही है।

जागरुक मंत्री

मंगलवार को स्वास्थ्य राज्य मंत्री अश्विनी चौबे ने अपने घर से उद्योग भवन तक की यात्रा दिल्ली मेट्रो में बैठ कर की। मेट्रो स्टेशन से अपने कार्यालय तक वह पैदल गए। इतना ही नहीं मंत्रालय भवन के बाहर उन्होंने कुछ पौधे भी लगाए। इससे एक दिन पहले चिकित्सा के क्षेत्र से राजनीति में आए भाजपा के ही एक अन्य मंत्री हर्षवर्धन ने कार्यालय आने के लिए साइकिल का इस्तेमाल किया था। बतौर केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्री पहले ही दिन साइकिल से पहुंचे हर्षवर्धन ने कहा कि आयुष्मान भारत–प्रधानमंत्री जन आरोग्य योजना का क्रियाव्ययन करना उनकी प्राथमिकता होगी।



जल संकट और पर्यावरण दिवस

पर्यावरण से जुड़े खतरों के प्रति सचेत करने, पर्यावरण की रक्षा करने एवं उसे बचाने के उद्देश्य से हर वर्ष 5 जून को विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस मनाया जाता है। विभिन्न सरकारों एवं लोगों ने पर्यावरण को बचाने के लिए कई तरीके अपनाए हैं। लेकिन कुछ खतरे ऐसे हैं जिनसे बचने की संभावना जटिल बताई जा रही है। इसमें प्रमुख समस्या जल प्रदूषण एवं पीने के स्वच्छ जल की निरंतर घटती मात्रा है। पृथ्वी पर जीवन के लिए जल सबसे जरूरी चीज है। जल प्रदूषण एवं पीने लायक जल की घटती मात्रा दुनिया के समक्ष एक बड़ी चुनौती बन चुकी है। बढ़ती जनसंख्या के कारण औद्योगीकरण और शहरीकरण बढ़ रहा है जो बड़े और छोटे पानी के स्रोतों में ढेर सारा कचरा छोड़ रहे हैं। इससे पानी दूषित हो रहा है। पशु और पौधों की बहुत सारी प्रजातियां जल प्रदूषण के कारण खत्म हो चुकी हैं। जल प्रदूषण एक वैश्विक समस्या बन



गई है। यह विकसित और विकासशील देशों को प्रभावित कर रही है। राष्ट्रीय पर्यावरण अभियांत्रिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान के अनुसार नदी का 70 प्रतिशत जल प्रदूषित हो गया है। भारत की मुख्य नदियां जैसे गंगा, ब्रह्मपुत्र, सिंधु और यमुना प्रभावित हो चुकी हैं। भारत का भविष्य कई रूपों में इन नदियों से जुड़ा हुआ है। सरकार की तमाम

पर्यावरण को बचाने के लिए 5 जून को विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस मनाया जाता है

कोशिशों के बावजूद शहर के दूषित जल का केवल 10 प्रतिशत पानी ही शोधित हो पा रहा है। जल प्रदूषण से मानव के साथ जलीय जीव जंतु और पशु-पक्षी भी इस समस्या से

जूझ रहे हैं। मुंबई जैसे शहर में प्रतिदिन 210 करोड़ लीटर गंदा पानी निकलता है। फिलहाल अधिकांश पानी समुद्र में जाता है। लेकिन अगर इसे शोधित करके हजारों हेक्टेयर खेतों की सिंचाई हो सकती है। कुछ साल पहले सिंगापुर पानी को पीते हुए यह दिखाया कि वह पानी कितना शुद्ध है। भारत में अब भी पर्याप्त पीने का पानी है अगर हम संसाधनों का इस्तेमाल विवेकपूर्वक करें।

*दुर्गेश शर्मा, गोरखपुर*

अमेरिका द्वारा जीएसपी हटाना

अमेरिका ने भारत के निर्यात में कुछ विशेष वस्तुओं पर व्यापारिक प्रशुल्क में छूट के जीएसपी दर्जे को खत्म कर दिया है। जीएसपी

अमेरिका द्वारा विकासशील देशों के व्यापारिक प्रशुल्क में छूट देने के लिए प्राथमिकताओं की सामान्यीकृत प्रणाली है। इसके तहत अमेरिका विकासशील देशों की आर्थिक तत्क्की के लिए नि:शुल्क वस्तुओं का आयात करता है। जीएसपी के तहत भारत अमेरिका को 5.6 अरब डॉलर अर्थात करीब चालीस हजार करोड़ रुपये का सालाना निर्यात करता है। अमेरिका ने व्यापार अधिनियम 1974 के तहत एक जनवरी 1976 को जीएसपी का गठन किया था। भारतीय अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापारिक वार्ताओं की असफलता के पीछे एक स्वतंत्र व्यापार वार्ता एजेंसी का ना होना है। अमेरिकी एजेंसी यूएसटीआर व्यापार वार्ताओं के संदर्भ में स्वतंत्र रूप से कार्य करती है, लेकिन भारत में केवल वाणिज्य मंत्रालय है। इसलिए समय आ गया है कि अब भारत सरकार को भी एक ऐसी एजेंसी का गठन करना चाहिए जो अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार वार्ताओं में भूमिका निभा सके।

*अश्विनी शर्मा, वाराणसी*



## हार का ठीकरा

आम चुनाव के नतीजे आने के बाद से हार के कारणों को लेकर कांग्रेस के भीतर लगातार मंथन और आरोप-प्रत्यारोप का दौर चल रहा है। कांग्रेस को सकते में डालने वाली बड़ी बात यह रही कि राजस्थान, मध्यप्रदेश और छत्तीसगढ़ जैसे राज्यों में चार महीने पहले ही उसने सत्ता में वापसी की थी, वहां लोकसभा चुनाव में उसका सफाया हो गया। पंजाब को छोड़ कर दूसरे राज्यों में पार्टी को जीत की वैसी उम्मीद नहीं रही होगी जो अपने शासन वाले राज्यों में थी। इसलिए अब बार-बार यही सवाल उठ रहा है कि पार्टी आखिर क्यों हार गई? क्या इसके लिए राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्री और प्रदेश कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष जिम्मेदार हैं? क्या कांग्रेस-शासित राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्रियों और प्रदेश कांग्रेस अध्यक्षों ने जीत के लिए वैसी हाड़-तोड़ मेहनत नहीं की, जिसकी जरूरत थी और जिसकी उनसे उम्मीद थी? या फिर सरकार और संगठन के शीर्ष नेताओं के बीच मतभेदों और तालमेल की कमी ने पार्टी की नैया डुबो दी? रणनीति में कहां कमी रह गई? पिछले दस दिनों के भीतर कांग्रेस कार्यसमिति की कई बैठकें हो चुकी हैं, पार्टी अध्यक्ष से नेताओं की मुलाकातें और तमाम तरह की चर्चाएं हो रही हैं, लेकिन अभी तक तय नहीं हो पाया है कि हार का जिम्मेदार कौन है? किस पर फोड़ा जाए हार का ठीकरा?

कांग्रेस जैसी राष्ट्रीय पार्टी के लिए हार से भी बड़ा संकट उसमें जिम्मेदार नेताओं का अभाव है। वरना हार को लेकर राजस्थान से जो खबरें आ रही हैं वे नहीं आतीं! राजस्थान में प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री अशोक गहलोत और प्रदेश कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष व उपमुख्यमंत्री सचिन पायलट के बीच जिस तरह का विवाद सामने आया है, पार्टी की हार के कारण तो स्पष्ट तौर पर उसी में नजर आते हैं। अब साफ हो गया है कि चुनाव में कांग्रेस इसलिए बुरी तरह पिटी कि सरकार और संगठन में तालमेल की कमी तो थी ही, टिकट बंटवारे से लेकर चुनाव प्रचार तक में पार्टी के भीतर जमकर मतभेद थे, जो नतीजों के बाद खुल कर सामने आ गए। गहलोत सरकार के मंत्री और कई विधायक तक साफ कह रहे हैं कि हार के लिए मुख्यमंत्री ही जिम्मेदार हैं। विधायकों और मंत्रियों का इस तरह मुखर होना इस बात का पुख्ता संकेत है कि प्रदेश कांग्रेस में खेमेबाजी तगड़ी है जिसका खमियाजा कांग्रेस को लोकसभा चुनाव में उठाना पड़ा है।

राजस्थान में अब ताजा विवाद मुख्यमंत्री के बेटे वैभव गहलोत की हार पर केंद्रित हो गया है। वैभव गहलोत ने जोधपुर संसदीय सीट से कांग्रेस के टिकट पर चुनाव लड़ा था और दो लाख सत्तर हजार से ज्यादा वोटों से हार गए। मुख्यमंत्री के अपने क्षेत्र में ही पार्टी की अगर यह हालत है तो प्रदेश में क्या रही होगी, इसका अंदाजा जा सकता है। अब मुख्यमंत्री कह रहे हैं कि इस हार की जिम्मेदारी सचिन पायलट ले। गहलोत ने यह बयान भले किसी संदर्भ में दिया हो, लेकिन उनके इस बयान से विवाद और तूल पकड़ गया। सवाल है कि हार के लिए अकेले मुख्यमंत्री या सिर्फ प्रदेश अध्यक्ष कैसे जिम्मेदार हो सकते हैं? हालांकि नतीजों के ठीक बाद पार्टी अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी ने हार का ठीकरा वरिष्ठ नेताओं पर यह कहते हुए फोड़ा था कि इनकी दिलचस्पी अपने बेटों को टिकट दिलवाने में ही रही। ऐसे में क्या लगता नहीं है कि पार्टी अध्यक्ष के इस कथन में ही हार के कारण छिपे हैं। फिर भी हार की जिम्मेदारी न तो तय हो पा रही है और न ही कोई लेने को तैयार है। कांग्रेस के लिए इससे बड़ा संकट और क्या हो सकता है!

## नवजात का जीवन

किसी भी देश में विकास के चढ़ते ग्राफ के बरक्स अगर जन्म के बाद शिशुओं की मौत के आंकड़े चिंता पैदा करते हों तो उस पर सवाल उठना लाजिमी है। भारत में स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में सुधार के तमाम दावों के बावजूद प्रसव के दौरान माताओं और शिशुओं की मौत की दर पर काबू पाने में कामयाबी नहीं मिल पाई है। हालांकि पिछले कुछ सालों के दौरान  इसमें कुछ सुधार जरूर दर्ज किया गया है, लेकिन इससे संबंधित आंकड़ों को अब भी संतोषजनक नहीं कहा जा सकता है। हाल ही जारी हुए एसआरएस यानी सैंपल रजिस्ट्रेशन सिस्टम की ओर से जारी आंकड़ों के मुताबिक देश के कुछ राज्यों में जहां शिशु मृत्यु दर में कमी आई है, वहीं कई राज्यों के आंकड़े अभी भी चिंताजनक हैं। मसलन, मध्यप्रदेश में आज भी जन्म लेने के बाद प्रति एक हजार बच्चों में से सैंतालीस की मौत पांच साल की उम्र तक पहुंचने के पहले ही हो जाती है। राज्य के ग्रामीण इलाकों में स्थिति और ज्यादा बुरी है और शिशुओं के मरने का आंकड़ा इक्यावन तक है। उत्तर प्रदेश में भी हालत बेहद निराशाजनक है और प्रति एक हजार बच्चों में से इकतालीस बच्चों की मौत असमय ही हो जाती है। मामूली सुधार बिहार में देखा गया है, जहां अब नवजात बच्चों के मरने का यह अनुपात पैंतीस है।

देश के कुछ अन्य राज्यों में कोई खास बदलाव नहीं दर्ज किया गया है। इसके बावजूद केरल और नगालैंड जैसे कुछ राज्य यह आदर्श सामने रखते हैं कि मामूली इच्छाशक्ति के साथ इस गंभीर समस्या को काबू में किया जा सकता है। केरल में प्रति एक हजार शिशुओं में से जहां यह संख्या दस है, वहीं नगालैंड में महज सात। यानी कुछ राज्यों में काफी सकारात्मक सुधार के बावजूद दूसरे कई राज्यों में अपेक्षित बदलाव देखने में नहीं आया है और यही वजह है कि समूचे देश के स्तर पर यह आंकड़ा प्रति एक हजार में तैंतीस बच्चों का है। अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है कि देश में कुपोषण की समस्या से लेकर स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक के मामले में दावे और हकीकत क्या हैं। सही है कि पिछले दो-ढाई दशकों के दौरान देश भर में इस समस्या पर काबू पाने के मकसद से सरकारों की ओर से गर्भवती माताओं के पोषण से लेकर नवजातों के टीकाकरण जैसे अनेक कार्यक्रम चलाए जा रहे हैं। लेकिन मुश्किल यह है कि कई बार इसके साथ जुड़े कुछ दूसरे कारकों की अनदेखी की वजह से समस्या का अपेक्षित हल नहीं निकल पाता है। दरअसल, जिन राज्यों में आज भी सामाजिक परंपरा के रूप में और राक्षसी संरक्षण की वजह से बाल विवाह का चलन है, वहां गर्भवती होने के बाद कम उम्र की माताओं की सेहत का सीधा असर उसके बच्चे पर पड़ता है। प्रसव के दौरान स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं की कमी, संक्रमण, निमोनिया और दस्त जैसी स्थितियां बच्चों की मौत की बड़ी वजह बनती हैं। इसके अलावा, समाज में स्त्री-पुरुष के बीच भेदभाव के मानस की वजह से बचपन से बेटियों के पोषण के मामले में लोग कटौती करते हैं। इसका असर महिलाओं की सेहत पर दीर्घकालिक पड़ता है। यह ध्यान रखने की जरूरत है कि एक कुपोषित महिला जिस बच्चे को जन्म देगी, वह भी कुपोषण का शिकार होगा और उसके स्वरथ रहने और जीने की संभावना भी कम होगी। इसलिए जरूरत यह है कि न केवल स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक साधारण लोगों की पहुंच सुनिश्चित की जाए, बल्कि सबसे हाशिये पर पड़े तबकों के बीच खासतौर पर महिलाओं के पोषण के बारे में पूरी तरह सुधार लाने की व्यवस्था की जाए। अन्यथा माताओं और शिशुओं की चिंताजनक मृत्यु दर देश के विकास पर सवाल की तरह कायम रहेगी।

## कल्पमेधा

**जो जान गया कि उससे भूल हो गई है और उसे ठीक नहीं करता, वह एक और भूल करता है।**
**—कन्यूशियस**

# जनसत्ता

#### मुकेश पोपाली

**शहरीकरण अपने आप में कभी समाप्त न होकर निरंतर चलने वाली प्रक्रिया है और विभिन्न नीतियों में समय-समय पर बदलाव आदि के कारण और आर्थिक तथा ढांचागत साधनों की आसानी से उपलब्धता नहीं होने के कारण भी इस प्रकार की परियोजनाओं को लागू करने में देरी होती है।**

# शहर हमेशा से ही आकर्षक रहे हैं।

हर आदमी शहर में जाकर बसना चाहता है। आखिर शहरों में ऐसा क्या है जो गांवों में नहीं है? कहा जाता है कि आधुनिकीकरण के प्रति आकर्षण, उच्च शिक्षा, रोजगार की उपलब्धता, चिकित्सा सुविधाओं आदि के कारण हर कोई शहरों में रहना चाहता है। जहां एक ओर शहरों का अपना आकर्षण है, वहीं दूसरी ओर शहरों की अपनी गंभीर समस्याएं भी हैं, जैसे वायु प्रदूषण, ध्वनि प्रदूषण, बढ़ती भीड़, सार्वजनिक परिवहन सेवाओं का घोर अभाव, बुनियादी सेवाओं का खस्ताहाल ढांचा आदि। इन समस्याओं से शहरों का विकास पीछे छूट गया है, वे तेजी से नरक बनते जा रहे हैं। शहरीकरण की सबसे बड़ी समस्या है कि एक कम क्षेत्र में अधिक से अधिक आबादी का रहना, जिसके लिए शहर में जगह समाप्त होती जा रही है। एक के ऊपर एक भवन बन कर तैयार होते हैं, लेकिन गांवों जैसा शुद्ध वातावरण फिर भी नदारद रहता है।

#### जगमोहन चोपता

गोपेश्वर से जैसे चमोली के लिए मोटरसाइकिल पर जाता हूं तो सड़क पर गुलमोहर के खूब सारे नीले-नीले फूल बिखरे होते हैं। लगता है, इस अजनबी शहर में कोई तो है जो हमारी राह में फूल बिछाए खड़ा है कि आओ प्यारे, इस जगह तुम्हारा स्वागत है। काहे अकुलाए और खिसियाए हुए दिख रहे हो और मोटरसाइकिल पर पर सपट दौड़े जा रहे हो! चिंता न करो... काम गंभीर जरूर है, पर जरूरी तो नहीं कि हर वक़्त अपनी शक्ल पर बारह बजाए रखा जाए। खुश हो जा प्यारे... कि नीले रंग ही सही, पर कितने खूबसूरत तरीके से खिलाया है मैंने इन्हें। दरअसल, इन्हें मैंने बड़े नाओं से पाला है। बस तुम्हारे लिए बिछाए हैं मैंने ये।

इसके बाद मैं एक गहरी सांस लेता हूं और मन ही मन यह कहता हूं कि सच तो कह रहे हो दोस्त! काम के साथ थोड़ा मुस्कराया भी जा सकता है। खेला जा सकता है, गाना गाया जा सकता है, चंद अल्फाजों को लिखा जा सकता है। कितना कुछ किया जा सकता है, लेकिन आखिर क्यों कुछ गुम-सा हो गया लगता रहता है !

### सुलगते जंगल

इन दिनों उत्तराखंड के वनाच्छादित पिथौरागढ़, अल्मोड़ा, नैनीताल, बागेश्वर, टिहरी, उत्तरकाशी व रुद्रप्रयाग-देहरादून जिलों में जंगल की आग लोगों को डराने का कारु कर रही है। इनमें से कुछ जंगलों की आग पर काबू पा लिया गया है, लेकिन अभी भी कई जगहों के जंगल धधक रहे हैं। पौड़ी जिले के विकासखंड कीर्ति नगर में राजकीय इंटर कॉलेज जंगल की आग के चपेट में आकर स्वाहा हो गया। इस भीषण गर्मी में जंगलों में आग लगने से न सिर्फ वनस्पतियां नष्ट होती हैं, बल्कि वन्य जीवों के अस्तित्व पर खतरा रहता है। अफ़सोस की बात है कि जंगलों की यह अब उत्तराखंड के लिए एक सालाना त्रासदी जैसी बन गई है लेकिन उसे रोकने के लिए स्थायी और कारगर उपाय नहीं किए जा रहे हैं।

सरकारी आंकड़े के मुताबिक अब तक कुल मिला कर जंगल में आग लगने की सोलह सौ से अधिक घटनाएं हुई हैं। बहरहाल, विज्ञान कितनी भी तरक्की कर ले, लेकिन प्रकृति के आगे हमेशा बीना नजर आता है। उत्तराखंड में हर वर्ष फरवरी के बाद से जंगलों में आग लगने की घटनाएं शुरू हो जाती हैं। प्रशासन आग बुझाने का काम भी करता है लेकिन नतीजा वही ढाक के तीन पात रहता है। जून आते-आते हजारों हेक्टेयर जंगल स्वाहा हो जाते हैं। इस दौरान भीषण गर्मी में आग बुझाना प्रशासन के बस में नहीं रहता। लिहाजा, प्रशासन खानापूर्ति कर जुलाई में बरसात के साथ हो लेता है। सवाल है कि जंगलों में लगी आग को बुझाने के लिए तकनीकी तरक्की, पर्यावरणीय राज्य, जैविक संतुलन और पर्यटन की अपार संभावना सहेजे राज्य के प्रति इस तरह की लापरवाही क्यों? पहले से ही हम साफ पानी, स्वच्छ हवा और सदाबहार मौसम के लिए कई चुनौतियों का

# शहरीकरण की चुनौतियां

प्रसिद्ध समाज शास्त्री राबर्ट रेडफ़ील्ड मानते हैं कि शहरी समाज की विशेषताओं में प्रमुख रूप से वृहद जनसंख्या होती है और साथ ही उसका दूसरे समाजों से व्यापार और संचार के माध्यम से निकट का संबंध होता है, उसमें एक जटिल श्रम-विभाजन भी होता है। इसके आधार पर यह कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि शहरों में प्रारंभ से ही भीड़-भाड़ रही है। धीरे-धीरे ज्यादातर गांव और कस्बे भी शहरों का रूप धारण करते जा रहे हैं। चौड़ी सड़कें, बहुमंजिला इमारतें, बड़े-बड़े बाजार, आधुनिक यातायात सुविधाएं, उद्योग-धंधे, आधुनिक सुविधाओं से सुसज्जित अस्पताल, शिक्षण-संस्थान आदि किसी भी शहर की विशेषता हैं। लेकिन दूसरी ओर गांवों और कस्बों में छोटी-छोटी दुकानें, पालतू पशु, कच्चे-पक्के घर, खेत-खलिहान, कुएं और नहरें आदि उपलब्ध हैं। यदि तुलनात्मक अध्ययन किया जाए तब अंतर तो साफ दिखाई देता है। लेकिन, शहर हो या गांव, दोनों ही भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था के मुख्य अंग हैं और दोनों का ही अपना-अपना महत्त्व है।

विज्ञान के साधनों ने आज व्यक्ति के जीवन को बहुत आसान बना दिया है। बहुत सारा काम मशीनों से होने लगा है। यह शहरीकरण का ही नतीजा है कि आज का बचपन जल्दी किशोरावस्था और किशोरावस्था शीघ्र ही युवावस्था की ओर अग्रसर है। संचार साधनों में नित्य-प्रति नई क्रांति देखने को मिल रही है। रेडियो, दूरदर्शन, समाचार पत्रों आदि के साथ-साथ सोशल मीडिया भी आज आसानी से उपलब्ध है। गांवों में थोड़े भी पढ़े-लिखे युवा खेती से मुंह मोड़ रहे हैं। बिजली, पानी, लकड़ी, लोहा, कुटीर उद्योग आदि में महारत हासिल करने के लिए हर युवा शहर की ओर भागता नजर आता है। गांव में कमाई के साधन बहुत कम होते हैं और आमदनी कम होने के कारण बहुत से लोग आत्मनिर्भर नहीं बन पाते। ऐसे में गांव के मेहनतकश लोग न चाहते हुए भी रोजगार की तलाश में शहर आते हैं और फिर वहीं बस जाते हैं।

आधुनिक युग पुरातन परंपराओं को पीछे छोड़ आगे बढ़ना चाह रहा है। शहरों की चकाचौंध से हर व्यक्ति आकर्षित है। शहर के सेवा संस्थानों, शिक्षण संस्थानों, अस्पतालों आदि में पिछले तीस वर्षों में अनेक आधुनिक सुविधाएं उपलब्ध होने से प्रत्येक नागरिक शहर में आना चाह रहा है। देश में औद्योगिक क्रांति को बढ़ावा देने के लिए शहरों के आसपास की जमीन को ऊंचे दामों पर खरीदा जा

रहा है और साथ ही आवास समस्या से निपटने के लिए भी जमीन को उनके पुराने मालिकों से खरीदा गया है। बड़े-बड़े राजमागों, हवाई अड्डों के निर्माण के लिए भी अनेक शहरों में योजनाओं को कार्यान्वित किया गया है। सरकार ने शहरों को और आधुनिक बनाने के लिए ‘स्मार्ट सिटी’ की मुहिम छेड़ दी है। पूरे देश में नब्बे शहरों को ‘स्मार्ट सिटी’ बनाने के लिए विभिन्न परियोजनाओं पर काम किया जा रहा है। इन स्मार्ट शहरों में वे तमाम सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है जिनसे देश आर्थिक और सामाजिक क्षेत्र में समान रूप से और निरंतर विकास कर सके। यद्यपि अभी भी यह कार्य रंगती हुई गति से ही हो रहा है।

एक अनुमान के अनुसार स्मार्ट सिटी की लगभग तीन हजार योजनाओं में से केवल एक सौ पचास योजनाएं मूर्त रूप ले सकी हैं। शहरीकरण अपने आप में कभी समाप्त न होकर निरंतर चलने वाली प्रक्रिया है और विभिन्न नीतियों में समय-समय पर बदलाव आदि के कारण और आर्थिक तथा ढांचागत साधनों की

दिल्ली में एक व्यस्त गलियारा

आसानी से उपलब्धता नहीं होने के कारण भी इस प्रकार की परियोजनाओं को लागू करने में देरी होती है। आजादी के समय भारत की कुल जनसंख्या के लगभग अस्सी फीसद लोग गांवों में निवास करते थे। भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था कृषि पर ही निर्भर थी। देश को प्रगति के पथ पर ले जाने के लिए उद्योग-धंधे और कल-कारखानों की स्थापना की जाने लगी थी। भारत को प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भर बनाने के लिए समय-समय पर अनेक उपाय किए जाते रहे। कृषि में भी पूर्ण आत्मनिर्भरता हासिल करने के लिए र्वेत क्रांति और हरित क्रांति ने जोर पकड़ा और ये दोनों क्रांतियां अपने उद्देश्यों में सफल रहीं। आजादी के सात दशक बाद भी लगभग साठ फीसद आबादी का मुख्य आजीविका साधन खेती ही है। लेकिन ग्रामीण आबादी घट कर लगभग उनहत्तर प्रतिशत पर आ गई

## ओ नीले गुलमोहर

इस तपती दोपहरी में कितना कुछ अनकहे ही कह जाते  हो गुलमोहर! किसने लगाया होगा तुम्हें... कैसे पाला होगा इस सर्पीली सड़क के किनारे! कितना ध्यान रखना पड़ा होगा! एक ही नजर में यह साफ हो जाता है कि बहुत मेहनत लगी होगी तुम्हें पनपने और पनपाने में। हम कहां इतनी मेहनत कर पाते हैं। हालांकि यह जरूर लगता रहता है कि मेहनत करनी तो चाहिए। चलो... थोड़ा तुम्हें ही समझने में मेहनत कर ली जाए।

### दुनिया मेरे आगे

यही पता है कि तुम्हारा जन्म स्थान ब्राजील है, लेकिन तुम यहां गोपेश्वर कैसे आए होगे! खैर, तुम्हारे फूलों से यही लग रहा है कि तुम्हें भी मेरी तरह गोपेश्वर बहुत पसंद आ रहा है। सुना है कि तुम्हारे पुरखों को भारत आए फिलहाल दो सौ साल ही हुए हैं। तो अभी समाज में जैसा मौसम चल रहा है, उसे देखते हुए मेरी एक सलाह है कि खबरदार हो जाओ गुलमोहर! कहीं देश के ठेकेदार बने खास किस्म के लोग तुम्हें भी विदेशी न बोल दें। लेकिन ऐसी बातों पर बहुत ज्यादा चिंता न करो! यहां के आम लोगों ने तुम्हारे फूलों का उपयोग कृष्ण की मूर्त को सजाने में कर

लिया है। तभी तो तुम्हें कृष्ण-चूड़ भी कहते हैं। सुनो यार... लेकिन तुम्हारे नजदीक जब अपनी मोटरसाइकिल पर आते ही ये कीड़े-मकोड़े तेज गति से नाक, कान, आंख में घुसते हैं न, वह जरा खराब लगता है। लेकिन जब तुम्हारी जासूसी यानी तुम्हारे बारे में तथ्यों की जानकारी हासिल की तो पता लगा कि तुम तो सड़क-किनारे खड़े भरी पूरी शहद की फैक्ट्री हो यार! खूब शहद हो तो तुम्हारे फूलों में।

यह अलग बात है कि वह शहद कैसे और कहां इस्तेमाल होता है। अभी तक यही जाना

है कि तुम्हारी शाखाओं में फूल लगते ही मधुमक्खियां डेरा डाल देती हैं यहां। हम तुम्हें गुलमोहर बुलाते हैं। वह भी नीला गुलमोहर। लेकिन तुम्हारा ब्राजीली नाम जैकरंडा है और ये वनस्पति विज्ञानी तुम्हें जैकरंडा मिमोसिफोलिया ही कहते हैं। हम भारतीय भी गजब के हैं न! चीज कहीं की भी हो नामकरण संस्कार जरूर कर लेते हैं। वह अपने इलाके और भाषा की सुविधा के साथ। तभी शायद तुम्हारा नाम बंगाल के लोगों ने ‘कृष्णचुरा’ तो कन्नड़ में ‘केम्पू तोराई’ रख दिया। तुम्हें इतने नामों से कभी गुटगुदी नहीं लगती क्या! वैसे सुना है तुम तो ‘कैसलपिनियासी’

के कारण यह मरुध्य के शरीर को बहुत हानि पहुंचता है। तंबाकू से जुड़ी कई बीमारियों में से कैंसर सबसे घातक है। कैंसर से मृत्यु होने के मामले में यह बीमारी दूसरे नंबर पर विराजमान है और मुंह में कैंसर होने का खतरा सबसे ज्यादा है। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक दुनिया की कुल जनसंख्या में से बारह प्रतिशत धूम्रपान करती है। धूम्रपान से कर्क रोग होता है, वह लिखा होने के बावजूद भारतीय इसका कश लगाते हैं। धूम्रपान की आदत युवाओं में बढ़ती जा रही है यह एक चिंता का विषय है। सिनेमाघरों और टीवी विज्ञापन के

जरिए अभियान चलाया जाता हैं लेकिन लोगों में तंबाकू सेवन के प्रति घृणा पैदा नहीं होती। गुटखा और खैनी की बिक्री पर महाराष्ट्र व अन्य राज्यों में पाबंदी है लेकिन इस नियम को ताक पर रखते हुए राज्यों में अवैध तरीके से और छुपा कर ग्राहकों को इसे पहुंचाया जाता है। इसे खाकर लोग सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर थूक कर देश को गंदा करते हैं जिससे अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर भारत के छवि भी धूमिल होती है।

ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के लोग अशिक्षित होने के कारण इसके सेवन से होने वाले गंभीर परिणामों से वाकिफ नहीं हैं इसलिए बुजुर्ग से लेकर बच्चे भी गुटखा और खैनी का सेवन करते हैं। इससे उनके मुंह में संक्रमण हो जाता हैं जिसका महंगा इलाज इन्हें कराना पड़ता है। इस तरह तंबाकू का सेवन निधनता

है। ग्रामीण आबादी का कम होना बता रहा है कि शहरों पर बोझ बढ़ा है। शहरी आबादी बढ़ने से शहरों में अनेक प्रकार की समस्याएं जन्म ले चुकी हैं और आवासीय समस्या के साथ-साथ ग्लोबल वार्मिंग, प्रदूषण आदि समस्याओं ने शहरी जीवन को लीलना शुरू कर दिया है। शहरों और महानगरों में आवास की समस्या बड़ी चुनौती के रूप में सामने आई है। सबके लिए आवास उपलब्ध कराना गंभीर समस्या है। शहरों और महानगरों में झुग्गी झोपड़ियों की संख्या बढ़ती जा रही है। एक तरफ अट्टालिकाओं का निर्माण किया जा रहा है तो दूसरी तरफ एक से सटे एक छोटे-छोटे मकानों में चार-चार परिवार रहने लगे हैं। ये वही लोग हैं जो फैक्ट्रियों, कारखानों आदि में या फिर कोई अन्य छोटा-मोटा काम करके जीवन-यापन करते हैं।

शहरीकरण की समस्या बढ़ने के साथ ही अपराध भी तेजी बढ़े हैं। एक तरफ पैसे के लालच में अपहरण और छीना-झपटी की घटनाएं तेजी से बढ़ रही हैं तो दूसरी ओर महिलाओं से छेड़छाड़ व अन्य अपराध, बाल-तस्करी जैसी घटनाएं भी तेजी से बढ़ी हैं। साथ ही मादक पदार्थों का कारोबार तेजी से फलफूल रहा है। यदि गौर किया जाए तो हम पाएंगे कि शहरीकरण से उत्पन्न अनेक समस्याओं के पीछे मूल कारण आवास ही है। यदि नगरों का योजनाबद्ध विकास किया जाए और साथ ही पुरानी योजनाओं को आवश्यकतानुसार परिवर्तित किया जाए तो इन समस्याओं को दूर किया जा सकता है। दरअसल, आवास समस्या के कारण ही जल प्रदूषण, ध्वनि प्रदूषण, यातायात समस्या, स्वास्थ्य समस्या,

पर्यावरण समस्या आदि पैदा होती हैं। चरणबद्ध योजना के निर्माण और उसके अनुपालन से इस प्रकार की समस्याओं से निजात पाई जा सकती है। अंततः यह कहा जा सकता है कि विश्व की अर्थव्यवस्था में भी अपना दवदबा बनाए रखने के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि शहरीकरण में वृद्धि हो। उद्योग-धंधे और सेवा क्षेत्र दोनों का जिससे आवश्यक है। सरकारी नीतियों को समयबद्ध तरीके से लागू करने और ढांचागत परियोजनाओं को शीघ्रता से पूरा करने के लिए गंभीर चिंतन होना चाहिए। जनता की भागीदारी और सरकार के समन्वित प्रयासों से सकारात्मक दृष्टिकोण अपनाते हुए वृहदस्तरीय परिवर्तनों से शहरीकरण की परियोजनाओं को आगे बढ़ाना होगा ताकि हमारा देश भी विश्व के विकसित राष्टों में शामिल हो सके।

# परिवार के हो और तुम्हारा बॉटनिकल नाम ‘जैकरंडा मिमोसिफोलिया’ है।

तुम्हारे फूलों के बाद फल भी तो मनमोहक लगते हैं। बल्कि मैं इन्हें फल के बजाय बीजों की टोकरी कहूंगा तो ज्यादा बेहतर होगा। करीब-करीब किसी सीपी की तरह होते हैं तुम्हारे फूल। और जब खुलते हैं तो दर्जनों बीजों को फैला देते हो तुम धरती पर, ताकि खूब सारे फूल खिलें इस धरती को सुंदर बनाने के लिए। वैसे 1978 में बनी फिल्म ‘देवता’ में गुलजार साहब ने तुम पर बहुत ही रूमानियत भरा गीत लिखा है। पता है न तुम्हें! अरे वहीं गीत- ‘गुलमोहर तुम्हारा नाम होता, मौसमे गुल को हंसाना भी हमारा काम होता...!’

गुलमोहर, तुमने कभी लेखक और गायक स्टीव टिलसम का ‘ओ जैकरेंडा...’ गीत सुना है? कभी फुर्सत हो तो सुनना प्यारे... बिन हवा के झुमने न लगेो तो बताना। उत्तराखंड की एक साथी समाजकर्मी लिखती हैं कि तुम्हारे फूलों के रंग को स्त्रीवादी रंग भी कहा जाता है। और मेरी एक शिक्षिका सहेली तो तुम्हारे फूलों के रंग की तरह के खूब सारे सूट सिलवाना चाहती हैं। यानी कि तुम तो बहुत सारे लोगों की पसंद हो। यों ही खिलते रहो प्यारे!

- निशत महेश निपाटी, कोंडाली, नागपुर***

### जन्मत के विरुद्ध

उत्तर प्रदेश में बसपा प्रमुख मायावती ने सपा के साथ अपनी पार्टी के गठबंधन को स्थगित रखने की घोषणा की है। कल तक साइकिल पर हाथी की सवारी और गठबंधन की पैरोकारी कर रहे दोनों दलों के कार्यकर्ता और गठबंधन को वोट देने वाले मतदाता खुद को ठगा महसूस कर रहे हैं। बहुदलीय व्यवस्था में हजारों की संख्या में राजनीतिक दल पंजीकृत हैं और कुछ दल किसी चुनाव विशेष के लिए एक साथ आते हैं तो ऐसे में सवाल उठता है कि सिद्धांतविहीन दलों की आवश्यकता क्या है? कानून में चुनाव-पूर्व गठबंधन का प्रावधान कहाँ है? एक दल के चुनावी मंच पर दूसरे दल के नेताओं की मौजूदगी, उनके भाषण और उनके दलीय चुनाव चिह्न वाले झंडे-पोस्टर कानूनी दृष्टि से अवैध और अमान्य होने चाहिए। मतदाता स्वयं परिपक्व हैं। उन्हें गठबंधन के नाम पर भ्रमित करना कतई उचित नहीं कहा जा सकता है। बिहार में जनता दल (एकी) और राष्ट्रीय जनता दल ने मिलकर विधानसभा चुनाव लड़कर सफलता पाई थी लेकिन कुछ दिनों के बाद जनता दल (एकी) ने राष्ट्रीय जनता दल को ठंगा दिखा दिया। यह जन्मत का अपमान है, जो बंद होना चाहिए।

- अजिताभ सिन्हा, चित्रगुप्त नगर, खगड़िया***

#### नई दिल्ली

किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है : ए-8, सेक्टर-7, नोएडा 201301, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश

आप चाहें तो अपनी बात ईमेल के जरिए भी हम तक पहुंचा सकते हैं। आइडी है : chaupal.jansatta@expressindia.com

क्या आप हमसे जुड़ना चाहते हैं? हमसे जुड़ें

हमारे फेसबुक पेज पर हमसे जुड़ें

हमारे ट्विटर पेज पर हमसे जुड़ें

हमारे गूगल प्लस पेज पर हमसे जुड़ें

हमारे यूट्यूब चैनल पर हमसे जुड़ें

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हमारे यूट्यूब चैनल पर हमसे जुड़ें

हमारे स्टाइल पेज पर हमसे जुड़ें

हमारे फेसबुक पेज पर हमसे जुड़ें

## शिक्षकों की जल्दी भर्ती

सुदृढ़ शिक्षा तंत्र के बिना कोई भी देश विकास की राह पर मजबूती के साथ आगे नहीं बढ़ सकता है. अनेक क्षेत्रों में प्रगति के बावजूद देश में शिक्षा की बेहतरी पर समुचित ध्यान नहीं दिया गया है. संसाधनों और पाठ्यक्रमों के अभाव का क्या रोगा, जब 48 केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों में ही शिक्षकों के लगभग पांच हजार पद रिक्त हैं. नये केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों में जहां 48 फीसदी पद खाली हैं, वहीं इलाहाबाद और दिल्ली जैसे पुराने व प्रतिष्ठित विश्वविद्यालयों में रिक्तियों का आंकड़ा क्रमशः 64.44 और 47.7 फीसदी है. इन तथ्यों से राज्य-स्तरीय एवं अन्य केंद्रीय संस्थानों की हालत का अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है. ज्यादातर संस्थानों में शिक्षण-प्रशिक्षण संविदा और तदर्थ शिक्षकों के भरोसे है. पर इस स्थिति में बहुत जल्दी सकारात्मक परिवर्तन की आशा है. विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (यूजीसी) ने देशभर के संस्थानों को छह महीने के भीतर सभी खाली पदों को भरने का निर्देश दिया है. आयोग के अंतर्गत 900 से अधिक विश्वविद्यालय और 40 हजार से अधिक कॉलेज हैं. यूजीसी और मानव

**अगले छह माह में हजारों शिक्षकों की स्थायी बहाली 3.7 करोड़ छात्रों के भविष्य को संवारने की दिशा में बड़ी पहल हो सकती है .**

ने गंभीरता दिखायी है और न ही यूजीसी ने जरूरी दबाव बनाया. बहरहाल, अगले छह माह में हजारों शिक्षकों की स्थायी बहाली 3.7 करोड़ छात्रों के भविष्य को संवारने की दिशा में बड़ी पहल हो सकती है. वर्तमान में देश में उच्च शिक्षा और शोध की दिशा में व्यवस्थित सुधार की बड़ी दरकार है. साथ ही, इस क्षेत्र में सावर्जनिक निवेश को भी बढ़ाना होगा. प्रस्तावित नयी शिक्षा नीति में इन पहलुओं पर ध्यान दिया गया है. जो देश उच्च शिक्षा पर अधिक खर्च करते हैं, उनके संस्थान वैश्विक सूची में अग्रणी होते हैं. ज्ञान-विज्ञान के हर क्षेत्र में भारतीय मेधा का लोहा दुनिया मानती है, परंतु शीर्ष शैक्षणिक संस्थानों की सूची में हमारे विश्वविद्यालय दूर-दूर तक नजर नहीं आते हैं. आखिर उच्च शिक्षा में पांच लाख रिक्त पदों के साथ बहुत बड़ी उपलब्धियां हासिल भी नहीं की जा सकती हैं. केंद्र सरकार ने अपने पहले सौ दिनों के शैक्षणिक एजेंड में खाली पदों पर बहाली को प्राथमिकता देकर अत्यंत सराहनीय पहलकदमी की है. इसके साथ 10 अन्य उत्कृष्ट संस्थानों को दर्जा दिये जाने की कार्य-योजना भी है. उम्मीद है कि यूजीसी के निर्देश के अनुसार सभी संस्थान निर्धारित समय पर नियुक्ति की प्रक्रिया को पूरी कर लेंगे. इससे न सिर्फ छात्रों को पूर्णकालिक शिक्षक मिलेंगे, बल्कि समूचे शैक्षणिक परिवेश में नयी ऊर्जा का संचार भी होगा.



## ज्ञान-चक्षु

इस धरती पर मानव ही ईश्वर की एक ऐसी खुबसूरत कृति है, जो चिंतन कर सकता है. यह बौद्धिक विधा इस कायनात के किसी अन्य जीव को हासिल नहीं है. ईंसान कभी जीवन के बीते दिनों और भविष्य के बारे में सोच कर हलकान होता है, तो कभी उसके जेहन में परिवार के प्रति आसक्ति और मोह-माया की तेज आंधी चलती है. आशय यह है कि ईंसान ताड़प कुछ-न-कुछ सोचता रहता है. हर पल उसके दिमाग में विचारों का तेज बवंडर चलता रहता है. काफी शिद्दत से विचार करें, तो इस सत्य को किसी आईने की तरह साफ होने में देर नहीं लगती है कि ईंसान की सोच का गहरा संबंध जीवन में विविध प्रकार की समस्याओं के समाधान की खोज से होता है. यहां पर एक अहम प्रश्न यह उठता है कि आखिर एक ईंसान अपने जीवन की समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए कितना सोचे? आखिर किसी समस्या के हल के लिए सोच का चयन क्या होना चाहिए? जीवन में सोच अनिवार्य है, क्योंकि इसके गर्भ में समस्याओं के समाधान और आत्मज्ञान का धूप छुपा होता है. लेकिन इस सत्य से हम इनकार भी नहीं कर सकते हैं कि किसी विषय पर निरंतर सोचते रहने से समस्या और भी गंभीर हो जाती है, मानसिक शक्ति का क्षरण होता जाता है. मन आशंकाओं की अभेद्य परतों से आवृत होता जाता है और जिसकी परिणति मानसिक तनाव और अवसाद में होती है. इसलिए जीवन की समस्याओं पर बहुत सोचने की प्रवृत्ति से खुद को महफूज रखना जरूरी है. जीवन के बारे में कहा जाता है कि यह कभी ठहरता नहीं है. जीवन ठहर जाये, तो वह फिर जीवन नहीं है. जीवन चलने का नाम है. नदी की तेज बहाव के मध्य यदि कोई शिलाखंड हो, तो उससे टकराने के बाद मधुर संगीत का सुजन होता है. मानव जीवन का फलसफा भी इससे परे नहीं है. जीवन में समस्याएं ज्ञान-चक्षु खोलती हैं, स्वयं में बुद्ध का आविर्भाव करता है. लिहाजा समस्याओं पर अवश्य सोचिये, लेकिन इसकी लगाम पर आपकी पकड़ भी मजबूत होनी चाहिए.

**श्रीकाश थर्मा**

## कुछ अलग

# गरमी से लड़ने के तौर-तरीके

**गरमी** से हाहाकार है. कहीं पानी नहीं है, कहीं बिजली नहीं है. दोपहर में सड़कों पर कर्फूस सा लगा है. चुरू राजस्थान में पारा 50 डिग्री तक जा पहुंचा है. कानपुर ने गरमी का दशकों का रिकॉर्ड तोड़ दिया है. लोग गरमी से बचने के लिए शीतल पेय और आइसक्रीम का सहारा ले रहे हैं.

भारत एक गरम देश है. इसलिए पुरखों ने गरमी से निपटने के तरह-तरह के तरीके भी ईजाद किये थे. घर की रसई संभालने वाली स्त्रियों को इसकी जानकारी थी. गरमी के दिनों में खाली पेट कभी बाहर न निकला जाये. छाछ का अधिक से अधिक प्रयोग किया जाये. सौंफ, खरबूजे के बीज गुलाब की पंखुड़ियों और काली मिर्च की ठंडई दूध में मिलाकर पी जाये. फालसे का शर्बत पिचा जाये. मौसमी फल जैसे खीरा, ककड़ी, तरबूज, खरबूज का इस्तेमाल किया जाये. खीरा, ककड़ी या खरबूज खाली पेट कभी न खाये जायें. इन्हें खाने के बाद पानी कभी न पिया जाये. कच्ची अमिया, चीनी, पोदीना, भुने जीरे से बना पना और दही की लस्सी का प्रयोग किया जाये. लू से बचने के लिए घर से बाहर निकलते वक्त खूब पानी पीकर निकला जाये. सिर ही नहीं शरीर के अन्य अंग भी ढका जाये. गरमी से लौटकर तत्काल पानी न पिया जाये. पंखे के नीचे खड़े होकर पसीना न सुखाया जाये, जिससे ठंडा-गरम न हो जाये. इन दिनों एक पंखे का विज्ञापन कहता है कि पंखे के नीचे खड़े होकर जल्दी से पसीना सुखा लिया जाये, यानी कि विज्ञापन

### क्षमा शर्मा

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आपदाओं से लड़ने के तरीके पीढ़ियों के अनुभव जन्य ज्ञान से निकलते हैं. ज्ञान एक तरह से आजकल कहे जानेवाले क्लीनिकल ट्रायल जैसे होते हैं. इन ट्रायल्स में भी दवाओं के असर को मरीज के अनुभव जन्य ज्ञान से ही मिलाया जाता है, बल्कि डॉक्टर भी दवा लिखने से पहले मरीज से तकलीफ और अनुभव को ही पूछते हैं. सिर्फ खान-पान ही नहीं मौसम जन्य विपत्तियों से निपटने का एक तरीका हमारा पहनावा और वस्त्र भी होते हैं. इसीलिए हर जगह की पोशाकें अलग-अलग दिखती हैं.

गरमी के इस मौसम में अपने अतीत की तरफ देखना जरूरी है. हमारी माताएं, दादियां, नानियां इन दिनों हमें क्या खिलती-पिलाती थीं, क्या सलाह देती थीं. जित करने पर भी बहुत सी चीजें खाने को मना करती थीं और कहती थीं कि अगर खाओगे तो बीमार पड़ोगे. अक्सर उनका कहा सच भी होता था. गरमी में अक्सर रात के वक्त हल्का खाना खाने की सलाह दी जाती थी. डॉक्टर आज भी यही कहते हैं जिससे कि गरमी से परेशान हमारा पाचनतंत्र रात में और परेशान न करे. हम चैन की नींद सो सकें. मुड़कर बुजुर्गों की सीख के बारे में सोचिये और गरमी से अच्छी तरह से निपटिये.

बनानेवालों को भी हवा में पसीना सुखाने के दुष्परिणाम नहीं मालूम हैं. अक्सर पुरानी बातों को पिछड़ा कहकर खारिज कर दिया जाता है, जबकि यह सच नहीं होता है. कठिनाइयों, रोगों और मौसम की आपदाओं से लड़ने के तरीके पीढ़ियों के अनुभव जन्य ज्ञान से निकलते हैं. ज्ञान एक तरह से आजकल कहे जानेवाले क्लीनिकल ट्रायल जैसे होते हैं. इन ट्रायल्स में भी दवाओं के असर को मरीज के अनुभव जन्य ज्ञान से ही मिलाया जाता है, बल्कि डॉक्टर भी दवा लिखने से पहले मरीज से तकलीफ और अनुभव को ही पूछते हैं. सिर्फ खान-पान ही नहीं मौसम जन्य विपत्तियों से निपटने का एक तरीका हमारा पहनावा और वस्त्र भी होते हैं. इसीलिए हर जगह की पोशाकें अलग-अलग दिखती हैं.

गरमी के इस मौसम में अपने अतीत की तरफ देखना जरूरी है. हमारी माताएं, दादियां, नानियां इन दिनों हमें क्या खिलती-पिलाती थीं, क्या सलाह देती थीं. जित करने पर भी बहुत सी चीजें खाने को मना करती थीं और कहती थीं कि अगर खाओगे तो बीमार पड़ोगे. अक्सर उनका कहा सच भी होता था. गरमी में अक्सर रात के वक्त हल्का खाना खाने की सलाह दी जाती थी. डॉक्टर आज भी यही कहते हैं जिससे कि गरमी से परेशान हमारा पाचनतंत्र रात में और परेशान न करे. हम चैन की नींद सो सकें. मुड़कर बुजुर्गों की सीख के बारे में सोचिये और गरमी से अच्छी तरह से निपटिये.

## देश दुनिया से

## हिंद महासागर में प्रभुत्व जमाना चाहता है भारत

**अमेरिका**, जापान, ऑस्ट्रेलिया और भारत हिंद-प्रशांत रणनीति के आधार स्तंभ हैं. लेकिन वर्तमान में, यहां इस क्षेत्र के प्रमुख खिलाड़ी भारत की भूमिका गायब है. ऑस्ट्रेलियाई रक्षा बल अपेक्षाकृत छोटा है और वह लगभग 60,000 पूर्णकालिक सक्रिय-कर्मियों के साथ इस क्षेत्र में मौजूद है. जापान यहां 23 अमेरिकी सैन्य ठिकानों की मेजबानी करता है. जापान के 300,000 सेल्फ-डिफेंस फोर्सज के सक्रिय और रिजर्व कर्मी यहां तैनात हैं, जिनमें से अधिकांश पूर्वोत्तर एशिया में हैं. शांगरी-ला संवाद में, अमेरिकी रक्षा सचिव पैट्रिक शैनहान ने कहा कि हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में उसके 370,000 से अधिक सर्विस मेंबर हैं. हालांकि, एक बड़ी तैनाती के बावजूद अमेरिका अभी तक हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में शीत युद्ध जैसा अर्ध-गठबंधन बनाने में विफल रहा है. अमेरिका, चीन को नियंत्रित करने के लिए भारत का उपयोग करना चाहता है, लेकिन वह हिंद महासागर में नयी दिल्ली की महत्वाकांक्षा से सावधान है. भारत अपने प्रभाव क्षेत्र में अमेरिका को कदम को नहीं रखने देगा. असल में भारत की इच्छा हिंद महासागर पर प्रभुत्व जमाने की है. इस महत्वाकांक्षा की सबसे बड़ी बाधा अमेरिका है, चीन नहीं.

## कार्टून कोना



सामार कार्टून क्यूमेट

**पोस्ट करें** : प्रभात खबर, 15 पी. इंस्टिट्यूल एरिया, कोकर, रांची 834001, **फैक्स करें** : 0651-2544006, **मेल करें** : eletter@prabhatkhabar.in पर ई-मेल संक्षिप्त व हिंदी में हो. लिपि रोमन भी हो सकती है

# दूसरे कार्यकाल में विदेश नीति



### पुपेश पंत

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**जयशंकर और डोभाल दोनों ही (अति) यथार्थवादी हैं तथा पाकिस्तान एवं चीन के साथ प्रतिद्वंद्विता का निर्वाह नेहरुयुगीन आदर्शवादी अदूरदर्शिता के साथ नहीं करना चाहते .**

सलाह से ही विदेश नीति संचालित हुई है.

जहां तक सैद्धांतिक मतभेद का सवाल है, जयशंकर और डोभाल दोनों ही (अति) यथार्थवादी हैं तथा पाकिस्तान एवं चीन के साथ प्रतिद्वंद्विता का निर्वाह

इस बार यह मंत्रालय किसी और को मिलेगा. कोई यह अनुमान नहीं लगा सकता था कि विदेश सेवा के एक अवकाशप्राप्त अधिकारी को यह जिम्मेदारी मिलेगी. जयशंकर विश्विक्षण प्रतिभाशाली हैं, साथ ही प्रधानमंत्री के विश्वासपात्र भी. उन्होंने अमेरिका और चीन में भारत के राजदूत के रूप में काम किया है. अब लाल-बुझकड़ी इस बात को लेकर जारी है कि राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सलाहकार अजीत डोभाल से उनके संबंध कैसे रहेंगे? कई लोग यह मानते हैं कि गुप्तचर संगठन में काम कर चुके डोभाल को विदेश मंत्रालय के अधिकारी अपना समकक्ष नहीं मानते तथा प्रधानमंत्री पर उनके प्रभाव के कारण ईर्ष्यादथ रहते हैं. जयशंकर को काबोना मंत्री बनाये जाने के तत्काल बाद डोभाल की भी पदेनति हो गयी है तथा यह ऐलान किया गया है कि वह पांच साल तक इस पद पर बने रहेंगे. यह सोचने का कोई कारण नहीं है कि प्रधानमंत्री की इस भरोसेमंद जोड़ी में कोई दरार पड़ सकती है. इसके पहले भी पुलिस के वरिष्ठ अधिकारी राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सलाहकार रह चुके हैं और उनकी

नेहरुयुगीन आदर्शवादी अदूरदर्शिता के साथ नहीं करना चाहते. अमेरिका के साथ घनिष्ठता के बारे में दिवंगत साम्यवादी पार्टियों के अतिरिक्त सर्वदलीय सहमति है. संकट इस बात का है कि अमेरिका की हर इच्छा को पूरा करने के बाद इसके एवज में कुछ हासिल करने के लालच में भारत ठोकर खा सकता है. मसलन, ईरान पर अमेरिका द्वारा अंकुश लगाने से हमारे उभयपक्षीय संबंधों में तनाव. मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवादी घोषित करवाने में चीन की रजामंदी अमेरिकी कृपाकटाक्ष से संभव हुई, यह अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप का दावा है. अमेरिका और चीन के बीच अभी वाणिज्य युद्ध जारी है. भारत को यहां भी सतर्क रहने की जरूरत है. अफगानिस्तान के दलदल में फंसने से बचने की जरूरत है. अमेरिका के लिए 'अफ-पाक' क्षेत्र संवेदनशीलता है, हमारे लिए प्राथमिकताएं दूसरी हैं. बृहतर भारत का जो क्षेत्र हिंदू-बौद्ध-सूफी इस्लामी सांस्कृतिक विरासत का साझेदार है, वही हमारा नैसर्गिक प्रभावक्षेत्र है. दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया, मध्य एशिया, मॉरीशस के अलावा विश्वव्यापी प्रवासी भारतीय हमें उन दूसरे देशों से अलग करते हैं, जिनकी हस्ती क्षेत्रीय ही हो सकती है.

देश की आंतरिक सुरक्षा की चुनौतियां कम नहीं हैं. कट्टरपंथी आतंकवाद, माओवाद, अलगाववाद तथा इनका गठजोड़ विकास को बाधित करता रहा है. अमित शाह द्वारा गृह मंत्रालय का दायित्व संभालने के बाद इस शूल के समूल उन्मूलन के लिए एका मंत्रालय के साथ संयुक्त अभियान संचालित हो सकता है. नये रक्षा मंत्री पूर्व गृह मंत्री रह चुके हैं. भारत की अखंडता तभी निसपद रह सकती है, जब इन तीन मंत्रालयों में प्रतिस्पर्धा नहीं, परस्पर पूरक सहयोग हो. हमारी समझ में मोदी निर्वाचित प्रधानमंत्री जरूर हैं, पर उनकी कार्य-शैली अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति सरीखी है. अपने 'नवरत्नों' का सदुपयोग करने में वह समर्थ नजर आते हैं.



## आपके पत्र

### लैंगिक समानता के लिए काम हो

लैंगिक समानता के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए वर्ष 2015 में 193 देशों ने हस्ताक्षर किये थे, जिसकी समय सीमा वर्ष 2030 रखी गयी थी. पिछले दिनों बिल एवं मिलिंडा गेट्स फाउंडेशन द्वारा इस पर समीक्षा एवं स्थिति विकास रिपोर्ट जारी किया गया. इससे ज्ञात होता है मुड़ी भर देशों जैसे डेनमार्क, ऑस्ट्रेलिया, जापान और जर्मनी को छोड़ कर किसी देश ने अभी तक कुछ भी नहीं किया है. 120 देशों के रैंक में भारत का स्थान 95वां है. यतलब बेटी को सिर्फ देवी का दर्जा देकर हम पिछले सौ सालों से इस दिशा में तीसमारा खां बने बैठे हैं. मगर पितृसत्तात्मक सोच वाली मानसिकता की जो स्थिति वर्ष 1919 में था, वही हाल वर्ष 2019 में भी है. इसमें सिर्फ भारत ही नहीं बल्कि पूरे ब्रह्मांड की एक ही कहानी है. नीति बनाने और कानून का प्रावधान कर देने से यह मन:स्थिति नहीं बदलने वाली है.

**जंग बहादुर सिंह**, गोलपहाड़ी,जमशेदपुर

### भीषण गर्मी से त्रस्त जनजीवन

ताकतवर होने के दंभ में मनुष्य प्रकृति और पर्यावरण से जितना छेड़छाड़ कर रहा है, प्रकृति उसका उतना ही भयंकर प्रतिशोध ले लेती है. लगभग 70 वर्ष पूर्व जब भारत में जंगलों, नदियों, जलाशयों, तालाबों, बावड़ियों, भूगर्भीय जल की स्थिति अच्छी थी, तब गर्मी के दिनों में भी दक्षिण-मध्य भारत के कुछ शहरों का तापमान 41 डिग्री सेल्सियस तक ही पहुंच जाता था, लेकिन उतर भारत अपेक्षाकृत ठंडा रहता था. आज राजस्थान का चुरू शहर का तापमान 50डिग्री सेल्सियस तक और लखनऊ तक का तापमान 45 डिग्री सेल्सियस पहुंच रहा है. अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्था एल्डराडो वेदर वेबसाइट द्वारा जारी विश्व के सबसे गर्म 15 शहरों में 10 भारत में और 5 पाकिस्तान में स्थित है. हर साल पिछले साल से ज्यादा गर्मी होने का रोगा रोगे हैं परंतु गर्मी इतनी भीषण और विकट क्यों होती जा रही है, इस पर कभी भी गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार नहीं किया जाता. हमें, हमारे समाज और हमारी सरकारों को ईमानदारी से और गंभीरतापूर्वक इस विषय पर काम करना होगा.

**निर्मल कुमार शर्मा**, गाजियाबाद

### शिक्षा प्रणाली को दुरुस्त करने की जरूरत

आज के समय में विद्यार्थियों को कक्षा एक से अष्टम तक तो पढ़ाई करने में उतनी परेशानी नहीं होती, परंतु नवम में जाते ही उनकी परेशानी शुरू हो जाती है क्योंकि अचानक सिलेबस बढ़ जाता है. यह एक बड़ा कारण है जिसकी वजह से विद्यार्थी खुद को उस परिस्थिति में ढाल नहीं पाते और उनकी कुछ कड़ियां कमजोर रह जाती हैं. ऐसा लगता है कि अष्टम और नवम् के सिलेबस में साइंस को छोड़ कर और किसी विषय का लिंग हो नहीं है. इसलिए इस शिक्षा प्रणाली को दुरुस्त करने की जरूरत है. सिलेबस को बेहतर तरीके से तैयार करने की जरूरत है ताकि विद्यार्थियों को पढ़ने में दिक्कत न हो. इस परेशानी को विद्यालय के प्राचार्य और सभी विषयों के शिक्षक ही दूर कर सकते हैं, बशर्ते कि वे अपने छात्रों की मुश्किलों को समझ सकें.

**नयन कुमार सिंह**, इमेल से