**Donkey tales** 

**CHINESE WHISPERS** 

#### Lessons from Dadagiri

#### Sourav Ganguly gets a new platform to walk his leadership talk



**HUMAN FACTOR** 

SHYAMAL MAJUMDAR

l leven years after his retirement from international cricket, Sourav Ganguly is set to begin another important innings in his spectacular career. Ganguly has of course downplayed his role as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president, saying no job in Indian cricket is more difficult than being the captain. That might be true, but what one of Team India into a combative unit. More India's finest cricket captains is trying to do here is known in corporate lexicon as expectation management.

Taking charge of the BCCI is a formidable task, and Ganguly wants to make it clear that no one should expect miracles from him especially when he has just 10 months to implement his administrative skills before he goes to a three-year cooling-off period as per BCCI's constitution. Like all shrewd leaders, he is drawing a line on expectations from him and the new team of BCCI office-bearers.

The BCCI is indeed facing a formidable task of regaining its bargaining power with the International Cricket Council (ICC). It's unlikely, however, that the BCCI with Ganguly as the boss will go down without fighting. That's because the former India captain has already given enough evidence of his calibre in team-building skills and ability to think big that helped turn importantly, criticism was a leitmotif throughout his 12-year-long international career, but he took it chin up first as player and then as captain.

Ganguly has been a prolific speaker at some of India's premier management schools and has written a book, A Century Is Not Enough. Both give insights into his leadership vision that has relevance in corporate life, too.

#### **Nurturing talent**

Spotting talent is important, but the leader's job just begins there. Ganguly not only spotted talent in youngsters, he backed them to the hilt. At an IIM, Calcutta lecture, Ganguly said once a leader is convinced about someone's class, he should allow him to blossom by removing his fear of failure, Ganguly revealed how he backed Harbhajan Singh in 2001, when the selectors wanted to drop him. "I believed in throwing the younger players at the deep end. The better ones did handle themselves swam their way and beat the odds. I had backed Harbhajan because I saw a spark in him", he said. The spinner justified the faith by almost single-handedly winning a series against Australia.

#### The trust factor

Every leader has to take harsh decisions but the team members must believe that they are purely for professional reasons. So, every time he had to drop a player, Ganguly would explain the circumstances in details to the player concerned before discussing the matter with the selection committee. A player knew exactly why the captain has taken the decision and believed he can make a comeback if his performance improves. In short, a leader has to create an atmosphere where personal equations do not matter in professional matters. Shane Warne and Steve Waugh had no love lost between them personally, but that did not prevent them from collaborating on the cricket field for Australia.

#### Strategic vision

Ganguly wanted to change the perception of the Indian team being tigers only at home. In his book, Ganguly writes, "The day I became captain I told myself this age-old policy (of spinners being preferred) had to change. I wanted to build a bank of fit and strong fast bowlers and create a new template. I said, within the subcontinent, the emphasis will be on spinners. But outside, pacers will have to assume primary responsibility for picking 20 wickets.

The new template — a team with a killer instinct overseas — did pay off, as India notched up several memorable victories under his leadership.

#### Self-belief

Ganguly once referred to a conversation he had with West Indies great Gordon Greenidge. Every time he opened the innings against the likes of Dennis Lillee, Graeme Pollock etc, Greenidge erased the slip cordon from his mind. That's because the moment he became conscious of the four slip fielders, he would invariably nick one to them. That was Greenidge's way of overcoming fear. That anecdote from one of the world's most successful opening batsmen, said Ganguly, taught him to believe that he would succeed every time he walked into a cricket field. A leader can't be tentative and must be confident that he would deliver results, come what may.

production is subject to fluctuations.

This necessitates reliance on public stock

for price stabilisation. We cannot expect the private sector to play the role — as

any price fall or rise offer big gains to the

private sector. Onion prices around this time would have skyrocketed if NAFED

procured 53,000 tonne of onion (45.53

thousand tonnes from Maharashtra) as

part of the price stabilisation fund was

not available to be released in the market.

The lesson from this is that the country

should maintain a reasonable level of

onion stock at the end of the rabi and

kharif seasons, based on empirical data

on season-wise production and demand. This will be beneficial not only to the

Two, preserved and processed prod-

consumers but also to the producers.

#### Four-horse race in Kerala Congress

population, at 72 per cent, among all

states, the Census showed.

A fascinating finding of the preliminary

20th Livestock Census is the sharp

decline in the number of donkeys.

India's donkey population has gone

down precipitously, at almost 62 per

small transport in the country. The

some decades ago were some of the

prime modes of transport in several

cent, between 2012 and 2019. Beyond the

joke, the falling donkey population also

points to the growing mechanisation of

number of horses and ponies, which till

small towns and cities across India, has also seen an almost 46 per cent drop between 2012 and 2019. Interestingly, UP has seen the biggest fall in the donkey



The Kerala unit of the Congress is facing a problem of plenty. There are at least four leaders who are nursing chief ministerial ambitions. The list includes a senior

leader who has the ears of former party president Rahul Gandhi (pictured). The state has the largest number of Congress MPs in the current Lok Sabha and is crucial to the political relevance of the grand old party. Party sources say the support of the cadre and backing of the influential Nair community will determine the chances of the aspirants. And also the word of a former Union minister who is close to 10 Janpath.

#### **Red herrings galore**

The down-and-out Opposition has put up a subdued campaign against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the run-up to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly by-elections in 11 seats. Staring at defeat, the Opposition Benches have started using red herrings to preempt finger-pointing after the polls. Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav has put the ball in the Election Commission's (EC's) court by urging it to conduct "free and fair" elections. He alleged that some BJP leaders were threatening voters and even Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had been talking about teaching the Opposition a lesson. Yadav said the people of UP were with the SP; it was up to the EC to ensure that the polls are not rigged.

## The unending tale of 'onion tears'

Geographical diversification, development of early warning systems and promotion of substitutes will go a long way in mitigating the next onion crisis



RAMESH CHAND & RAKA SAXENA

he onion price shock has hit the country once again. This is the third price shock in the last 10 years. Onions, which were sold at approximately ₹10 per kg in the wholesale market and at about ₹20 per kg in the retail market during May and June, have crossed ₹35 per kg in wholesale and ₹60 per kg in retail in most markets in the country. Inter-year price volatility and intra-year abnormal price spread in any crop hurt both producers as well as consumers, besides the economy. Given that, it is important to understand the causes of abnormal price fluctuations and look at workable options to address the same.

The recurrent price shock reveals an interesting change in the behaviour of Indian consumers. Before discussing that, it is important to look at the trends in production and the availability of onions in the country Onions have been the fastest growing crop in recent times. It recorded annual growth of about 10 per cent during 2004-05 to 2018-19 as domestic production increased from 6.43 million tonne to 23.49 million tonne. The per capita availability, net of exports, has risen from 5.15 kg in 2004-05 to 15.7 kg in 2018-19 — a more than threefold increase. The other food item that followed onions in terms of per capita consumption in the country is edible oil. Surely, Indians are fast moving towards spicy and oily food, much against the public policy goal to promote nutritive food. It is actually astonishing that despite

such increase in per capita availability of onion, a small decline in its availability causes a big jump in its price. This points to a change in the consumption behaviour of the average Indian and the absence of mechanisms to adapt to this change. Though onion is not a staple food item — it is used primarily in preparing gravy and salads - its demand reveals considerable rigidity to any downward adjustment. It appears that consumers are willing to shell out three to four times the normal price of this commodity rather than go without it. Social pressure — of not being seen consuming onion in lesser quantities because of the price rise — seems to be discouraging households from reducing onion intake.

The trigger and main reason for the abnormal increase in onion prices in recent weeks is a decline in its production. Maharashtra is the biggest onionproducing state and the price leader. Due to the drought-like situation in some parts of the state, onions were sown on a much smaller area in the state in the last rabi season. This caused a 9.11 per cent decline in the annual onion production in the state. Because of this, NAFED went for record procurement of onion after



The trigger for the abnormal increase in onion prices is a decline in its production

the harvest of the rabi crop in the month of June to be able to deal with the eventuality of a price rise in the lean months of September to November. The second crop of onion, grown in the kharif season, was damaged because of excessive rain and flood in onion-growing areas of Maharashtra. The expectation of lower crop fuelled the price hike.

Like earlier years that got a similar price shock, the Centre has responded by imposing stock limits for traders and a ban on onion export. The first step is meant to check hoarding and the second is aimed to divert the produce from the export to the domestic market. The decision has come under criticism from some quarters that did not look at the price situation in its totality.

With regard to trade in food items. India and most other countries follow a policy of strategic liberalisation rather than free trade. This policy responds to production shortfall by liberalising import and restricting export. The opposite is done in the case of bumper production - restrictions on imports and push to exports.

In line with this policy, the country often imposed bans on the import of agri/food commodities to protect producers against low prices, though it came at a cost to consumers. The present situation justifies protection to consumers as onion prices increased three times in a short period of three months since June. The current prices represent a big gain for farmers who waited to sell their rabi crop of onion in the lean months. The export ban will not hurt producers if the restrictions are removed when farmers start bringing their fresh harvest of kharif onion to the market in November or when prices come back to the normal level.

The recurring price cycle and the emerging demand and supply scenario related to onions provide useful insights into managing future price volatility. One, rigidity against downward movement in onion demand requires steady supply throughout the year. However,

ucts — like dehydrated onions, onion paste etc - should be promoted as substitutes of raw onion. Three, the base of onion production is very narrow as a third of India's production is contributed by Maharashtra alone. With climatic events becoming severe, production variability is likely to increase in the future. Geographical diversification and cultivation of onion in new pockets, particularly kharif onion in northern states, would definitely help in reducing production fluctuation and price volatility. Four, suitable varieties of onion need to be developed for various agro-climatic conditions so that the seasonal span of the crop can be expanded or adjusted to have continuous supply in the markets. Five, there is a need to strengthen market intelligence on onions and develop a sort

courage the area under cultivation. Adopting these measures will prove effective in preventing the cycle of "onion tears" in the country.

of early adjustment system on the lines

of the early warning system of FAO. This

should include advisory to farmers about

next-season prices to encourage/dis-

Chand is member, NITI Aayog; Saxena is  $principal\,economist, National\,Institute\,of$ Agri Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi. Views are personal

#### **INSIGHT**

### **Faltering on speed limits**



JYOTI MUKUL

s one turned left onto National Highway 8 near Subroto Park in Delhi while driving towards Gurugram, one noticed vehicles had started slowing down. It is an accident prone, under construction stretch. In the darkness of the evening, the blinding light from a flashlight forced a three-wheeler driver to a halt. A Delhi Transport Department enforcement wing official jumped in front and tried grabbing the driver by his collar.

The flashlight is a tool to stop vehicles that violate traffic rules. This happens every evening and highlights the crude ways often employed by law enforcing agencies that can endanger the lives of people they are trying to protect.

On the other side of the capital, the Delhi Traffic Police has decided to suspend 150,000 challans, or penalty notices, issued to those found to overspeed on National Highway 24 in September. That is because the cameras installed on that route were configured to issue challans to vehicles travelling over 60 kilometre per hour (kmph) though the signage put up by the Public Works Department said the permissible speed limit on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway was 70 kmph. So now the cameras will be reconfigured to give the citizens taking that route an unambiguous rule to follow. Meanwhile, those who have already paid up are feeling cheated.



One newspaper report quoted a National Highways Authority of India official as saying that roads designed for speed of 120 kmph shouldn't have speed limit of 50 kmph, the official speed limit on most Delhi roads. This leads to the question as to why spend money on building expressways when travelling on them does not ensure speed or reduced journey time. Perhaps for this reason, the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway has capped vehicle speed at 80 kmph.

Nevertheless, there can't be any quibbling over the fact that Indian drivers need to be reined in through stringent provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. According to the dashboard of the ministry of road transport and highways, some 147,913 people died in road accidents across the country in 2017, with a national average of 11 deaths for every 100,000 population that year. In Delhi, this figure is lower at 7 deaths, while for Tamil Nadu, the red zone of dangerous driving, it is as high as 23.

Despite the compelling argument of putting the fear of law in citizens, it is also a fact that systems are not designed to handle the consequences. The two

instances cited here expose the inadequacies of law enforcing agencies. It is not that they lag in technology. E-challans, for instance, are generated without human intervention. Images — either caught on cameras installed along the road or through speed guns stationed in police vehicles — are generated through a SIM card and then challans are issued.

These challans can be checked online, either on the website of city traffic police or on echallan.parivahan.gov.in, which has a cheeky tagline of One Nation One Challan — as if a challan is not a penalty but an award.

Once issued, these challans can be paid online but on September 30, for instance, about a kilometre long queue was seen at the Delhi Traffic Police headquarters at Todapur since its computer network had collapsed across the city and violators had lined up to pay their penalty manually. The State Bank of India's payment gateway could not take the sudden increase in traffic, so to speak.

Elsewhere in the country, the enforcement might not be so stringent but speeding within city limits can be an issue given the state of the roads. Jumping signals or not wearing helmets or talking on mobile phones are rampant in those regions. Overloading and driving of defective vehicles could be more prominent violations on highways.

The amended and more stringent Motor Vehicles Act came into effect on September 1. Some states decided not to notify it but a majority of the states have implemented it. However, as the Delhi experience brings out, a mere change of law cannot ensure seamless implementation. The size of the country's population ensures that violation, penalty and enforcement are of a scale that renders implementation difficult. This only means that all the systems and processes need strengthening - not as an afterthought but even before the rules are put down for voluntary and effective enforcement.

#### **LETTERS**

#### Act before it's too late

The collapse of PMC Bank has once again brought the issue of effective regulation of banks into focus. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is entrusted with the responsibility of regulation of banks. Hence, the RBI cannot escape being questioned whenever a bank regulated by it fails. With a spate of banking scams recently, the feeling is getting stronger that the RBI should own up to its failure in regulating banks and make its regulatory mechanism more robust so as to detect frauds early.

But the larger question of how to suitably compensate the hapless victims of bank frauds remains unanswered. From a common man's point of view, the government of India and the RBI need to collaborate and find a solution. The RBI on its part must do all it can to gather early warning signals of a fraud and carry out preemptive strike before it is too late. The reputation of both the RBI and the government is at stake and it is up to them to save the common man from the predators.

#### Sanjeev Kumar Singh Jabalpur End dual regulation

This refers to "SC to hear plea to protect PMC customers tomorrow" (October 17). I feel the system of dual regulation of urban cooperative banks (UCBs) must end. They must be regulated by the central bank. The control of management, administration, personnel by the state/central registrar of societies must end. The central registrar as a government department is too closely linked to the dominant political group/ management and allegedly creates impediments in the smooth functioning of banks. Half-way houses like the proposed board of management will not work.

Second, it is time that the deposit



insurance cover be increased to cover deposits up to Rs10 lakh, with the depositor and the UCB sharing the cost of the increased premiums. Third, the largest UCBs should be legally enabled in due course, to be converted into private banks while the smaller ones become small finance banks. Consistently poorly performing UCBs need to be closed down. Fourth, interest rates on deposits should be related to returns on assets and operational costs.

It is time the interests of depositors, who are often pensioners, salaried persons and small businessmen, are rigorously protected. In the name of cooperative banking, "politically managed", dilapidated, scam ridden entities should not be allowed to exist. If they call themselves banks and perform functions of banks, they should be fully regulated and supervised as banks.

Arun Pasricha New Delhi

#### Bajaj's trump card

This refers to "E-scooters: Bajaj makes first move" (October 17). Bajaj Auto was a front-runner in the scooter seg-

ment till the late nineties. Kudos to them for coming out with an electric variant of a two-wheeler well ahead of schedule. The icing on the cake is that it named the variant Chetak, an iconic scooter brand, which the company built decades back. It still has a nostalgic feeling, especially, among the people in their 40s and 50s. Since pricing is a critical component for any product — and the e-scooter is not an exception — it is good to know Rajiv Bajaj is patient enough to not stress on his bottom line from day one of

the product's launch. Since greener fuel and clean energy is the future, patience is key and gradually, once the market accepts this technology and becomes part of the ecosystem, there will not be any looking back for Mr Bajaj or any other competitor who forays into this segment. We all know that the first mover advantage is a huge advantage to have for any manufacturer and that is where Mr Bajaj has played his trump card well. Now the big task for the government is to provide the necessary infrastructure for such vehicles to run on the roads smoothly. The hard work of Bajaj Auto should

**Bal Govind** Noida

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

not go vain.

**HAMBONE** 



#### MUMBAI | FRIDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2019 The nutrition crisis

Politicians and the PDS are failing India's children

uch concern has rightly been expressed about India's rank on the Global Hunger Index, which was released this week as part of an annual exercise by two well-known international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). India was ranked 102 out of 117 countries, indicating that only 15 countries covered did worse than India in terms of the spread and intensity of hunger. Broadly, it has been noted that India was ranked 95th in 2010, so it appears to have slipped down the ladder. The index is composed of several indicators, including child wasting (the proportion of children who are too underweight for their height), child stunting (the proportion who appear too short for their age), child mortality, and undernourishment. It is possible that overall ranks on such indices are sensitive to minor changes in the weighting or methodology. But even the individual trends for the index's components make for disturbing reading. Those on wasting in particular are disturbing: The report says the numbers rose from 16.5 per cent of children prior to 2012 to over 20 per cent in the years since 2014. What is worth noting in particular here is that these numbers are broadly in line with other indicators of wasting from sources such as the National Family Health Survey. And the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) report on the State of the World's Children, released this week, had almost identical concerns, arguing that 35 per cent of Indian children suffer from stunting, 17 per cent from wasting, and 33 per cent are underweight. That India is performing exceptionally badly is clear from the fact that all its neighbours are doing better than it on the Hunger Index.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh once called malnutrition a "national shame" but it is unfortunate that, in spite of successive governments' efforts in multiple directions to address this issue, sufficient progress has not been made. Part of the reason for poor nutrition may have been problems related to sanitation, such as are being targeted by the Swachh Bharat Mission. But the report points out that open defecation is still being practised with unfortunate effects for nutrition. But even basic diet issues have not yet been sorted out, in spite of more than two decades of consistent economic growth. The Hunger Report says that over 90 per cent of children between six months and two years are not fed a "minimally acceptable diet". The UNICEF report says 40 per cent of children are anaemic, and only 40 per cent of children, teenagers, or mothers consume dairy products at least once a week. This comes at a time when milk production has grown 6 per cent annually, and the most recent animal census shows an increase in the number of milk-providing cows.

The Indian state must go back to the basics, and address the question of food distribution. The existing public distribution system, which has become more than anything else a form of support for farmers in certain areas who wish to grow wheat and rice, must be reformed. It is a distribution system, not merely a procurement system. The focus must now be on ensuring that vulnerable Indians, particularly children, get access to a nutritious and balanced diet. There is no point having granaries overflowing with procured wheat and rice if children in UP schools are receiving just haldi and rice for their mid-day meal. Ensuring the distribution of hot cooked food, of vegetables and proteins, in mid-day meal would be a good starting point to address the hunger issue.

#### Guarding the financial system

Govt, RBI must work on improving supervision

eserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das is reported to have been questioned by the central bank's board members about frauds in the banking system. The central bank needs to answer a lot of such questions after the latest scam involving Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank. The management of the bank was manipulating records for years, but the wrongdoing came to light only after the bank on its own disclosed the matter to the regulator. Regrettably, PMC is not an isolated incident where the RBI failed to live up to expectations. The deficiency in oversight is also evident from the current state of the Indian financial system. The fact that the RBI had to issue a statement assuring the public that the banking system is safe shows that the credibility of the system has been somewhat dented. The financial system functions on trust and it is incumbent on the RBI and other financial regulators to make sure that the system works smoothly. A lack of trust in the system can affect financial intermediation, impeding the flow of savings to the productive sectors of the economy.

To minimise financial stability risks, the government and the banking regulator would have to work at multiple levels. For one, it is important to see to it that financial institutions adhere to the best governance standards. To ensure this, the regulator itself will have to build adequate institutional capacity. It is possible that there will be some rogue elements who would want to game the system, but the regulator should be in a position to nab them in time sadly, it has been found wanting on this in several cases. Clearly, the RBI needs to improve its audit processes for both banks and non-banking financial companies. Failure on this count can put the entire financial system at risk.

Further, despite all the regulatory safeguards, some financial institutions would still fail in a functioning market economy. Thus, India needs a framework to handle the insolvency of financial institutions. As reported by this newspaper on Thursday, the government is reviewing the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill. The Bill was withdrawn in August last year, owing to concerns about the "bail-in" clause. Recent developments in the financial sector have provided a good opportunity to come up with a comprehensive framework, as India clearly does not yet have a robust enough financial system to protect the common man's savings. The government is also reported to be reviewing insurance cover for bank deposits. This is an important aspect and it is worth debating whether depositors should be made to take a hit at all in the case of a bank failure. In a banking system dominated by the public sector, the possibility of bank failures in the private sector and a potential hit for depositors can shift deposits to state-run banks. This would bode ill for the financial system and will increase financial stability risks. The present condition in the financial sector has exposed plenty of weaknesses in the system, which needs urgent attention. A strong and stable financial system is a necessary condition for higher sustainable growth.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



## The politics of surrender

#### Why our institutions and politicians aren't protective of individual freedom and the rule of law

**AAKAR PATEL** 

n 1995, in a rare instance of internal indiscipline, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat split. The dispute was obviously over who would lead and who would get what ministry, even if the arguments were couched in more principled terms. The

factions were led by Keshubhai Patel and Shankarsinh Vaghela. It was this squabble that began a series of events that ultimately led the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to install as chief minister the man who currently leads India.

In that period, the BJP had names for the two rival factions. Those rebel legislators who left with Vaghela, in classic Indian fashion en masse to be locked up at a resort Khajuraho, were called Khajuriyas. Those who remained, happy to serve the existing order,

were called Hajuriyas. This word refers to someone who says "ji huzoor" to everything, unable and unwilling to assert independence. In English, it is someone who kowtows. The interesting thing is that Hajuriya was not used as a term of condescension any more than Khajuriya was. It was understood and accepted that to be around power meant necessarily to surrender one's independence. To thump the table enthusiastically at the master's every pronouncement, even before he had finished.

This is not new or recent to our culture: Total capitulation has always been demanded. European travellers have recorded that India's Mughal emper-

ors insisted on the kurnish, the bending of the torso forward and the triple salute, raising the cupped palm from floor to forehead (familiar to us through some old Bollywood movies). This action was symbolic of letting go of one's dignity. Akbar did not find this satisfactory and required full prostration. Many high Mughal traditions were Persian and it is likely that this was the same salute that got Alexander the Great into trouble after he vanquished Darius.

He introduced it in his court and the bending, bowing and curtsying that still happen in the presence of kings and queens across Europe's kingdoms are a direct result of it. Called proskynesis in Greek, the Persian custom left the Macedonians and Greeks in the army appalled because they did not accept the idea of a divine king. They felt it was not only their right but their obligation to assert their individualism and their equality. In contrast, it is the

tradition, the convention and indeed the culture that the Indian folds before power. In Gujarati the word "chaatu", literally meaning a lick-spit, is a term of everyday usage and can be used easily even among friends. The Hindi word "chamcha" has no parallel in European languages: Sidekick is not the

In the period of Akbar, it was only a tiny section of the Sunni ulema who for theological reasons resisted the deification of the ruler. This information comes to us only because it is described by the court chronicler Badauni in his unofficial diary. All the others capitulated willingly.

Among Hindus, the acceptance of divinity in the living is conventional. Other than pure selfish interest, there is no real reason to take a position that might be viewed in the least by the authority as antagonistic. Especially on something that might affect us directly. This is important to internalise when one is trying to understand the pusillanimity of the Supreme Court on the matter of the Emergency. Similar motives run through the recent recusal by several current justices who have fled from defending the rights of citizens. It will explain generally why Indian institutions are supine in the time of a strong leader.

It is unfair to see this purely through the perspective of the state and its institutions. We should accept that also. Even in adversarial politics, this surrender to the powerful leader is made manifest through the constant defections that haemorrhage opposition parties. Ours is a democratic polity, which is based on a mercenary culture, where there is neither qualm at reversing a long-held principle, nor any real penalty. The voter is also a part of the system and will accept and endorse the reality after the defection.

There is, of course, no real ideology in such a polity and the division of people into such categories as Conservative and Right is meaningless. Standing up for principle — or indeed for anything — is difficult in a part of the world where prostration is demanded. The core aspects of constitutionalism freedom, individual rights, a non-intrusive state and the rule of law — can be and will be sacrificed at this altar quite easily. Even civil society and business leaders will fall in line because there will be punishment forthcoming for those who are seen to resist. And it will be accepted because that is the way things are. It is important we examine what is happening around us from this point of view because otherwise there will be bewilderment at the chasm between what should be happening and what is.

Finally, how did that rebellion referred to at the start against the Gujarat tyranny end? Of the 100 or so people who began the passage to Khajuraho initially, a few slipped away at the first stop. Others needed help: The wife of Babubhai Bokhiria (today still a Cabinet minister in Gujarat) arrived to rescue him and he left with her. Only 50 were left by the time the destination arrived and in due course all of them became reconciled to the reality of power.

### Water needs trans-disciplinary governance

Tt is inadequately recognised that water is India's most important sector in the infrastructure space. Even less understood is that water is the most unreformed of them all. Absence of reforms could not only jeopardise lives and livelihoods of millions but also seriously undermine India's growth. Ever since independence, water governance has suffered from hydro-schizophrenia: Where the left hand of drinking water does not know what the right hand of irrigation is doing and the right toe of surface water does not know what the left foot of groundwater is up to!

There are countless instances where a source of drinking water has run dry because farmers started

using the same aquifer to irrigate water-intensive crops. Rivers are increasingly drying up because of over-exploitation of groundwate which supplies inflows into the river after the monsoon is over. River flow and quality also suffer because of destruction of catchment areas. And floods have become more frequent because natural drainage lines for excess water are blocked or encroached upon.

Each of these water challenges can be traced to the way we have divided water into silos and the complete absence of any meaningful dialogue across divisions impacting water. They also arise because we

have not understood that water is multi-dimensional and, therefore, demands trans-disciplinarity in governance. The two apex water organisations are the Central Water Commission (CWC), responsible for surface water and the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), dealing in groundwater, with analogous arrangements in each state. Not only have these organisations functioned unreformed since inception, they have also worked largely independently of, and often at cross-purposes with, each other.

Tragically, although groundwater now provides more than two-thirds of India's water, the more it has grown in significance, the weaker groundwater departments have become at the Centre and in the states. What is worse, surface water is handled mainly by civil engineers and groundwater by hydrogeologists. completely overlooking the fact that effective management of water requires professionals from many other disciplines. Despite India's avowed commitment to rejuvenating its rivers, revered by the people of this country, we have never had a single river ecologist or ecological economist in any department handling water anywhere in India. Despite the overwhelming fact that agriculture takes up most of India's water, monopolised by water-guzzling rice, wheat and sugarcane, we have not ever had even one agronomist within the water bureaucracy. While it is abundantly clear that the best work in water has happened wher ever communities have been mobilised, whether in groundwater management or command area development, water departments have never included

social mobilisers. Nor have governments built institutionalised partnerships with those outside government who could provide them the necessary intellectual and social capital, be they civil society, academia or corporate India.

It is with these considerations in mind that the Government of India committee for restructuring the CWC and CGWB, which I chaired in 2015-16 suggested a radically new architecture of water governance in India. We proposed that the CWC and CGWB be merged and their capacities greatly expanded to form a brand new National Water Commission (NWC). Such an NWC would enable: One, tran-

scending hydro-schizophrenia; two, bringing transdisciplinarity into water governance; and three, building a novel architecture of enduring partnerships with key stakeholders outside government, that would withstand the passing whims and fancies of changing bureaucrats and politicians. The report was very well received within government and outside, with the Ministry of Water Resources, Niti Aavog and the Prime Minister's Office all giving it strong endorsement. India's leading social science journal Economic & Political Weekly devoted an entire issue to an exhaustive and critical discussion of the report. However, concrete action on the report by government is still awaited.

The formation of the Jal Shakti ministry is an important first step in the direction of overcoming hydro-schizophrenia, bringing together the irrigation and drinking water departments within one ministry. Now the two departments need to work in close coordination with each other. The real test will come when the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission begins to roll out on the ground. The only way the people of India can be assured safe and secure drinking water is if we are able to maintain source sustainability, in terms of both quantity and quality. Most of this water will be supplied from aquifers, which are also used for irrigation. Without the irrigation and drinking water departments working closely together, source sustainability cannot be assured. And without participatory management, these aquifers will simply run out of groundwater, whose quality will also deteriorate. This will require both strengthening of the rapidly evaporating groundwater departments throughout the country and also the closest possible involvement of primary stakeholders in the stewardship of groundwater.

If the Jal Jeevan Mission has to stand any cha of success, governments all over the country will need to build strong partnerships with civil society organisations, as well as the best scientific resources available in universities and academia. The humongous task of aquifer mapping and management, a pre-requisite for the success of the Mission, cannot be accomplished by government alone. Farmers, most critically will need to be centrally involved. Once they understand the nature of the aquifers underlying their farms, they will be better placed to make informed decisions about their cropping patterns and water use. But the most important change in water governance will need to occur in the crop procurement policies of the Government of India. Unless we provide farmers a steady market for low water-consuming. locally appropriate millets, pulses and oilseeds by including them in the mid-day meal and Anganwadi programmes, the aquifers of the Jal Jeevan Mission will continue to be over-exploited and water security will remain a distant dream for the people of India. This means the Ministries of Agriculture, Food & Public Distribution and Women & Child Development will need to work in close co-ordination with the Jal Shakti Ministry. Both at the Centre and the states. Thus, multi-stakeholder, holistic, trans-disciplinary water governance is a pre-requisite for tackling India's

The writer is distinguished professor, Shiv Nadar University and former member, Planning Commission, Government of

## When the sword replaced the sacred thread



#### **BOOK REVIEW**

SAI MANISH

S Grewal's book titled Guru Gobind Singh: Master of the White Hawk details the life and times of Sikhism's last guru. The book is a scholarly account with references to multiple sources to describe the same events encapsulating the life of Guru Gobind Singh. For those (including many young Sikhs) who revere the last Sikh guru for his martial skills and as founder of the warrior community called Khalsa, Mr Grewal's book is of immense value to understand other little- heavy spiritual and philosophical underknown facets of Guru Gobind Singh's life.

One of the biggest achievements of Mr Grewal's book is its vivid description of the literary achievements in the court of Guru Gobind Singh. He writes, "Guru Gobind Singh emerged as a great patron of literature. In some cases, the Guru himself invited poets to join his court. Some poets were uncomfortable at the Mughal court due to the religious attitude of Aurangzeb. There was no safer place than the Anandpur of Guru Gobind Singh for poets who were either oppressed or had fallen out of favour or were simply looking for a location to sell their wares.

The book extensively details works of the Sikh faith produced during the last guru's time. Much of the focus is on the *Dasam Granth* — a compilation of not just Guru Gobind Singh's own works but also many poets who thronged his court. It has

tones dealing with the meaning of god, purpose of existence, human equality and religious conduct. The author also explains how the Dasam Granth is an invocation of the martial spirit and not just philosophical or religious treatises. One of the compositions lucidly explained by the author and believed to have been written by Guru Gobind Singh himself invokes Durga — the goddess of destruction. It details the epic battle of Durga with the demon-king Mahikhasur and how her victory to help Indra regain his throne was the use of "physical force sanctified in a righteous war." There is also a special emphasis on the Bachittar Natak — a 14chapter composition written by the last Sikh guru, which forms an integral part of the Dasam Granth. Mr Grewal describes the sixth chapter

of Bachittar Natak as the "most important

for Guru Gobind Singh's conception of his mission." The book mentions that the realisation of his spiritual purpose dawned on Guru Gobind Singh after meditating in the Sapt-sring mountains (present day Hemkunt Sahib in Uttarakhand). After his spiritual awakening the guru proclaims, "Anyone who calls me the Supreme Lord shall fall into the pit of hell. Call me his slave and make no mistake in this matter. The divine guru has sent me for the sake of dharam, to spread dharam everywhere and to destroy the wicked enemies." While literary pursuits form a memo-

**WATER: REFORM** 

OR PERISH

MIHIR SHAH

rable part of Mr Grewal's book, it also captures the diplomacy and political skills of Guru Gobind Singh — especially after he founded the Khalsa. The book details the many battles of Guru Gobind Singh with the hill kings of the Punjab region and his confrontations with Aurangzeb's commanders. Aurangzeb was the Mughal

emperor who had beheaded Guru Gobind research and extensive cross referencing Singh's father for resisting his religious agenda. The book details the events leading to Guru Gobind Singh and the starved Sikhs being forced out of Anandpur by the hill kings supported by Mughals. It depicts the guru's desire to negotiate with Aurangzeb and his proximity to Bahadur Shah — the last Mughal emperor. Mr Grewal doesn't shed light on attempts made by Guru Gobind Singh to establish a Khalsa Raj in the Punjab region after he retired to Nanded (in present day Maharashtra) following failed negotiations with Bahadur Shah. But then the mission was led by his commander Banda Singh Bahadur; and any emphasis on that would have taken away from the book's pure focus on the last Sikh guru.

Perhaps the most exciting part of this scholarly book is the chapter titled "The Baisakhi of 1699" which details the day Guru Gobind Singh formed the Khalsa. Every Sikh (and those interested in the religion) would probably know this by heart. But Mr Grewal's meticulous

to multiple sources makes it a delight to read for anyone interested in understanding the formation of the Khalsa and the spiritual moorings of this warrior clan. Mr Grewal while quoting another scholar describing the Khalsa Panth writes, "Hindus and Turks were opposed to each other. Whenever a critical situation developed in their affairs, God sent an avatar to redress the balance between the wicked and the saintly. Turks became overwhelmingly powerful and Hindu dharma was on the verge of extinction. The Khalsa Panth was created to uproot the Turks. To this end, Guru Gobind Singh has been sent to the world. The sacred thread was replaced by the sword."

**GURU GOBIND SINGH: Master** of The White Hawk J.S Grewal

**Oxford University Press** ₹ 1,100; 296 pages





## NO DEALTO NEW DEAL Prime minister of the UK, Boris Johnson

We've got a great new deal that takes back control now Parliament should get Brexit done on Saturday so we can move on to other priorities like the cost of living, the NHS, violent crime and our environment

## Insure all bank deposits to retain depositor faith

If banks fail & depositors get back just ₹1 lakh, they could start exiting; in which case, lending rates will start to soar

**ATER TODAY, WHEN** the Supreme Court hears the PIL that, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank, wants the government to insure all bank deposits, it would do well to keep in mind the current ₹1 lakh ceiling was fixed way back in 1993; India's GDP has risen around 25 times since, but the government still thinks the amount doesn't need to be raised significantly. But, if there are more PMC-type bank failures—fortunately there has been no commercial bank failure since 1969, and RBI has arranged mergers for some private sector banks that looked close to collapse and people find their hard-earned savings at risk, the low levels of insurance could well turn the more well-heeled away from keeping their life's savings in fixed deposits who could then put them in securities like gold, the post office, or the stock market. Should that happen, as bank deposits shrink or their growth slows, the immediate impact will be a rise in interest rates charged on bank lending.

To that extent, the inexplicable delay of decades in taking a decision to raise the levels of deposits that are to be insured, and the unreasonable curbs put on how much money hapless PMC depositors can now withdraw—after all, even if there was a scam in how the bank was run, how are investors to be blamed?—is reckless since it is playing with the country's financial system. Given this, and the fact that hiking the ceiling for deposit insurance should have been a routine administrative decision, and an easy one to make, it is not even clear why the matter had to reach the SC.

While no one who has invested her money should lose any part of it, especially since bank deposits are considered zero-risk savings—unlike investments in the stock market—this is not just a question of what is morally right, it is also a matter of being practical. According to SBI data, while 61% of bank accounts have deposits of under ₹1 lakh—this is why the government doesn't think the deposit insurance level has to be raised—these comprise just 7.8% of the total deposits base. And, while just 0.2% of bank deposits are of more than ₹1 crore, around a third of all deposits in the banks are made by this category of depositors.

Some argue that insuring all bank deposits, as the PIL wants, will cause a spurt in premium rates for deposit insurance; this is incorrect since the premium will rise only it there is a spurt in bankruptcies. The other argument is that it all deposits are insured, there will be less pressure on regulators like RBI to guard against bank failure by effective supervision, and even politicians will not press for better oversight in the manner they would if the voting public was in danger of losing its life savings. Wanting to hold regulators accountable is a noble objective, but it cannot be at the expense of depositors who stand to lose their savings. Also, if a bank fails, even if depositors get their money back from an insurance firm, they may be reluctant to deposit that in another bank; if that happens, it will put pressure on both RBI as well as the government since lending rates will start rising. Just because you buy house insurance, to use another example, doesn't mean there is no onus on the authorities to ensure there are no fire hazards in the area, or for the fire department to have adequately equipped fire-fighters and equipment.

## Skills university is great...

...but meaningful skilling effort needs much more

**GAINSTA BACKDROP** of a large skilling gap—as per government data, less than 5% of the workforce is formally skilled, compared to say 28% in China and 75% in Germany—Delhi planning a Skills and Entrepreneurship University is welcome news. The university, as per news reports, will focus on ensuring graduates are skilled in accordance with market needs. So, it will not be enough to just bring existing Industrial Training Institutes (ITI), polytechnic institutes, and skill development centres under the aegis of the university, as is planned; the need will be to ensure that the training programmes are upgraded significantly given how obsolete ITI training has meant poor uptake of pass-outs by industry. The proposed university will also be open to collaborations with foreign skilling institutes and universities.

For the university to have any meaningful impact, it will need to address the shortcomings of the present skilling ecosystem in the country. The stagnation of the ITIs didn't occur only because services rapidly became the dominant sector of the Indian economywhile the ITIs remained skilling factories for the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing itself has shifted decisively towards Industry 4.0, which is founded on emerging technologies that the ITIs are largely not equipped to train people for. It is simply not enough anymore, for instance, to hold a Bachelor's degree (vocational) in computer science without competence in data analytics or machine learning. Industry's tech-positive turn is also impacting services—secretarial assistants, for instance, require a much more sophisticated set of skills than they did in the past. With nearlogarithmic progression of technological developments, the need for continuous upskilling has emerged as a key demand. Data from the World Economic Forum show that nearly 54% of the country's workforce today is in need of re-skilling, with nearly 41% needing re-skilling/up-skilling levels that could take anywhere between a month and over a year to achieve. Increasing automation also imposes a higher ask, in terms of both skill requirement and minimum learning levels. While the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that in a mid-point scenario, automation will cost the country 57 million jobs—it will add 114 million jobs at the baseline scenario-100 million new jobs will require secondary-level education, and jobs requiring college level education will go up by 50%. India's manufacturing sector has staggering levels of under-education—in textiles/clothing alone, as per an Icrier estimate, 55% of the workers with no formal education, nearly two-thirds of those with below-primary-level education and 54% of those with primary-level education hold jobs that require higher educational attainment. This means any meaningful skilling effort will also need to tackle poor educational attainment. Yet, the gap between education and skilling remains quite wide. Skilling efforts will also have to fight societal attitudes towards skills training/apprenticeship. To be sure, the mismatch between skills training and industry requirements dims apprenticeship's appeal—industry is reluctant to invest in apprentices given they come with low-level/outdated prior training. But, the fact is that significantly large numbers opt for a regular degree course, even if it does little for a person's employability. Merely having a skills university will not address this.

## **Engineering AUTONOMY**

Good move to grant leading private engineering/management schools greater autonomy

**HE DECISION OF** the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to grant graded autonomy to leading private engineering and business schools is a welcome move. As per the University Grants Commission (Categorisation of Universities for the Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations, 2017, universities, both private and public, will be divided into three categories based on their rating by the National Board of Accreditation and showing in global subject rankings. Private engineering/business schools belonging to category-1, apart from being eligible for grants without the requirement of inspections, will now be free to offer new courses, open research parks, incubation centres, etc, without approval as long as these are in the self-financing mode. They can also independently decide on salaries and fees. Academic autonomy has also been extended to category-2 institutions.

While graded autonomy might seem complicated, it is a huge improvement on the prevailing system where course creation, curriculum development, and faculty appointment pay little heed to industry demands. This cuts down red tapism and bureaucratic delays, and allows for greater alignment between educational institutes and the jobs market. One way to overcome the problem of a skills gap in India is to grant autonomy to higher education institutes across the board, and let the success of their graduating students in the jobs market dictate the institutes' reputations. While this might still be a long way to go, AICTE's decision is definitely a good move forward.

#### THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

CONVERTING A BASIC HUMAN NEED INTO TRADABLE ECONOMIC CONTRACTS LEADS TO SIMILAR GAINS AS LENDERS HAVE COMFORT IN FINANCING HOME-EQUITY OWNERS

# Housing needs a stronger mortgage market

**AKHILESH** 

Author of 'The Making of India'

**TILOTIA** 

**OUSING IS A** fundamental requirement of human existence. The requirement of shelter is so basic that in common parlance in India, it is clubbed together with food and clothing as the troika of basic human needs of roti, kapda, and *makaan*. It is no wonder that housing is a key social demand, and a priority area for governments, both at the Centre and the states.

#### Housing as a socio-economic construct

The development of housing is a function of the economic reality of a location and its era. India has seen, and will continue to see, significant urbanisation. Where people choose to live is a complex optimisation of how close houses are to their places of economic activity (work, business catchment area, etc), how conveniently it is located (from schools, hospitals, common public areas like gardens, etc), and how cheaply and effectively it is connected with various other parts of the city.

Housing is intricately linked with urban planning, and public transportation. A well-designed city, with low cost and high speed of intra-city transportation, will have dispersed and more formal housing, which keeps prices low. A not-so-well-connected city will see dense clusters of housing—many of which may be informal, "illegal", or "slums". Any discussion on housing is, hence, a wider discussion on the economic development of a city, and the country.

A house is not merely a place to live and build a life, it is also one of the most significant assets of the family. An investment in a house roots a family to a location, giving them a significant stake in the development of the local

Views are personal area. If the house also happens to be an appreciating asset, it creates its own wealth effect, allowing families to stretch themselves somewhat in times of need, or to increase consumption. In this role of housing, there is a natural trade-off for policymakers to think about: should housing supply remain constrained relative to demand so that there is a natural scope of appreciation, or is the public good better served by

continuously reducing the costs of

making a house so that more and more

people can aspire to formal housing?

#### Is housing a public or a private good?

A point that requires conceptual clarity and political consensus is whether housing is a public good or a private one. Housing is a basic human necessity, and good housing creates strong linkages with the local society. However, beyond the basic aspect of shelter, housing increasingly starts to become a private good, with significant investment by families and individuals in shaping their houses according to their specific usage and needs. The political consensus on this topic is relevant because the economic lens through which a public and a private good is viewed are very different. In case housing is seen as a public good, tight low-rental laws, or high supply of government-constructed flats are tools to keep in check the overall prices of houses. In case housing is viewed as a

private good, there are incentives for asset-owners to preserve and grow the value of their assets.

Across most societies, there is a thin, sometimes undefined, line between economic segments of society where housing moves from being a public good to a private one: it is important to keep policies meant for one segment from impacting the viability of the other.

**RBI's Harsh Vardhan** 

committee

recommended

the formation

of a new

government-

sponsored

intermediary

through NHB

specifically for HFCs

#### Mortgage securitisation

Development of a

housing mortgage market is the conversion of a physical unit of infrastructure into a bundle of economic rights and liabilities that are reasonably standardised. The standardisation of economic agreements and legal architecture can lead to the creation

of a tradable market in such rights and liabilities. The rights in a property can create significant economic value—such rights allow various players like lenders, tenants, service providers, etc, to take an economic interest in a property.

Standardised loan covenants can allow pooling, sharing, and diversification of risks by allowing investors to assess the risks and returns of bringing together different types of bor-

rowers in a portfolio. Converting a basic human need into tradable economic contracts leads to significant gains from financialisation: costs of ownership can be reduced and purchasing ability increased as lenders have comfort in financing homeequity owners.

Regulatory support can help in the creation and development of this market. Harsh Vardhan Committee formed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to improve mortgage-backed securitisation recommended the formation of a new government-sponsored intermediary through the National Housing Bank (NHB) specifically for housing finance companies. The committee has suggested forma-

tion of an intermediary company, with an initial capital of ₹500 crore, in which the government will hold 51% stake, which will gradually be brought down to 26% over five years. The intermediary would be allowed to invest in the pool it securitises.

Shareholding in, or association with such an intermediary can offer originating entities (banks, and housing finance companies) the

ability to shape the standardisation of the mortgage contracts, servicing agreements, legal recourses, etc. Especially, in times of stress in the underlying housing market or within the financing entities, such a market can help transfer assets and risks to hands that are more capable of taking them on.

A well-functioning housing and its finance market is a fundamental requirement of an economy.

## The upside to Facebook's Libra disaster

If Facebook really wants to bring financial services to the "unbanked," it should try doing it on a smaller scale than these companies' presence promised

**IT IS JUST AS** well that big companies that process and facilitate payments have quit Facebook's Libra cryptocurrency project, fearing a regulatory backlash. If Facebook really wants to bring financial services to the "unbanked," it should try doing it on a smaller scale than these companies' presence promised. And even then, the probability of failure will be high.

It is clear why PayPal Holdings Inc, Stripe Inc, eBay Inc, MasterCard Inc and Visa Inc have decided not to join the Libra Association, which Facebook has been organising to run the proposed digital currency. They took seriously the recent warning of senators Brian Schatz of Hawaii and Sherrod Brown of Ohio that because of their membership, they could "expect a high level of scrutiny from regulators not only on Libra-related payment activities, but on all payment activities." The concern is that a cryptocurrency used in conjunction with encrypted messaging could potentially be used in illegal transactions, and anyone involved in creating such an opportunity would be suspect.

The US regulators are perfectly capable of scuppering major cryptocurrency projects. On October 11, the US Securities and Exchange Commission announced it had stopped Telegram Group Inc from distributing digital tokens, so-called Grams, to the investors who contributed \$1.7 billion to the creation of the cryptocurrency last year. These include major US venture capital firms such as Benchmark, Sequoia and Lightspeed. The same could easily happen to Libra.

That is the problem with starting so big. Telegram's token offering was the biggest ever recorded. Facebook made a big announcement on Libra and presented a list of partners that read like a who's who of the payments industry. They envisaged global launches for their cryptocurrencies. Of course regulators and politicians were alarmed.



Facebook should

go back to the

drawing board and

start thinking of

smaller projects

tailor-made to

specific countries'

requirements

To avoid this kind of outcome, Facebook—whose stated goal with Libra is to offer affordable payment services and loans to people currently priced out of the financial services market could have tried the strategy that got results for one of its remaining partners, Vodafone Group Plc.

Vodafone launched M-Pesa, Kenya's storied "mobile money," in 2007, and one of the project's major assets was the Kenyan central bank's consent to the launch without any formal regulation. Vodafone's local cellular operator, Safaricom Plc, quickly built up a network of stores where people without bank accounts could pay in and

receive cash, and old-fashioned mobile phones began to double as wallets for transfers and purchases. The lack of regulatory intervention and the large physical network, fed by relatively generous commissions, made sure that by 2019, M-Pesa claimed 37 million active customers in seven African countries.

But attempts to transplant the service to many other markets have failed. Vodafone has closed M-Pesa in India (in part because of regulatory obstacles), South Africa (low customer interest), Romania and Albania (apparently it was unprofitable). Vodafone discovered there was no cookie-cutter solution. In different countries, lenders, retailers and mobile operators offered competing services, and regulatory scrutiny varied. To find countries in which to launch

such an electronic money service, one would need to go down the list of nations with large populations of the unbanked. The top 20, according to the World Bank, includes big ones, such as China, India, Indonesia and Brazil.

But in most of these countries, people are already using some form of digital money in lieu of dealing with tradi-



smallest percentage of people who have recently made or received digital payments looks completely different. In other words, it is not easy to find a country where a lot of people have neither a bank account nor access to other

kinds of financial services. And then there is a chance that the cash-using population of a specific country wants to stay that way. One possible reason M-Pesa didn't quite work in Albania and Romania is that these countries have large informal economies. With up to a third of gross domestic product "in the

shadow," traceable elecunattractive compared with cash.

These difficulties of finding good target markets, and ones with friendly regulators to boot, should explain Facebook's desire to launch at scale, to throw everything at the wall and see what sticks. But the risk with this approach is that the

idea of offering cheap financial services to the unbanked begins to look like a smokescreen for building a huge unregulated bank in the developed world—just what regulators in Europe and the US fear the most.

Instead of pushing ahead with the remaining partners and risking the same kind of trouble as Telegram, Facebook should go back to the drawing board and start thinking of smaller projects tailor-made to specific countries' requirements. Expansion would be slow, and there would be failures and miscalculations along the way, but regulators in each market might be easier to persuade that the project's goals aren't nefarious.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners

#### **LETTERS TO** THE EDITOR

#### Another jolt for Congress

The Congress, whose fortunes are at a low ebb, received another jolt with Karnataka leader KC Ramamurthy putting in his papers in the Upper House. The Rajya Sabha MP cited the inability of the party leadership to address the problems plaguing it as the prime reason for quitting. Elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2016, Ramamurthy is likely to cross over to the BJP soon. With its numbers rapidly dwindling, the Congress must address the growing sense of gloom within its rank and file if it is to be a viable alternative to the BJP. — NJ Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

#### Tackling lynching Union home minister Amit Shah has

been denving that there has been increase in lynchings in the country under the BJP, calling it propaganda While several incidents of lynching have been reported, most were linked to suspicion of cow slaughter. Men from the Muslim community have also been beaten to death after being harassed for not chanting Bharat Mata ki Jai or Jai Sri Ram.Recently, 49 eminent personalities had written a letter to prime minister Narendra Modi on the growing cases. The issue also featured in the Vijaydashami speech of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, but he disowned the word 'lynching', calling it a western concept. It should be stopped and a new law must be made to tackle it — M A Qasmi, Mumbai

#### Brexit deal

Britain & EU Deal must be farsighted, broad-minded, and cooperative, and not be done in a hurry, involving irrelevant people. This should inspire other trades for future eras. Involved must be Economics Nobel laureates, who have publications via theoretical and practical experiments with real economics of an individual and the society.

— PVM Rao, Secunderabad

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

R.N.I. Reg. No. 6188/61 Printed for the proprietors, The Indian Express (P) Ltd by Vaidehi Chintaman Thakar at The Indian Express (P) Ltd Press, Plot No. EL-208, TTC Industrial Area, Mahape, Navi Mumbai-400 021. Phone: 22022627/67440000. Fax: 022-22856323.

**FINANCIAL EXPRESS** 

ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE



Pai is Chairman, Aarin Capital Partners and Holla is





## Historical shift in higher education

This is the first year that the all-India female GER has risen above male GER, which stagnated at 26.3

VERY YEAR SINCE 2012, MHRD compiles and presents data on India's higher education (HE) base through its AISHE reports. The recently released 2018-19 report affirms India's rapid progression towards higher enrollment and inclusion. By harnessing this correctly, we can develop human capital to accelerate

economic growth. Total enrolment in HE in 2018-19 was 3.74 crore, with 1.92 crore men and 1.82 crore women (see table). Since 2011-12, enrolment has increased by 82.2 lakh at 3.6% CAGR, with 30.4 lakh men at 2.5% CAGR and 51.8 lakh women at an incredible 4.9% CAGR. Women enrolment is rising faster; latest data buttresses our previous analysis (*FE*, June 6) demonstrating that women are increasingly turning toward HE with clearer aspirations.

Male enrolment has slowed from a 7year CAGR of 2.5% to a 3-year CAGR of 1.1%. Between 2017-18 and 2018-19, male enrolment only moved by 5,000 whereas women enrolment rose by 7.5 lakh. Women enrolment has also slowed from a 7-year CAGR of 4.9% to a 3-year CAGR of 4.4%, but is nevertheless encouraging. Women are now 48.6% of enrolled students, up from 44.6% in 2011-12. The Gender Parity Index reached 1.0 for the first time, having risen from 0.88 in 2011-12. Female gross enrolment ratio (GER) jumped from 19.4 in 2011-12 to 25.4 in 2017-18, and then by another whole point in 2018-19 to 26.4. This is the first year that

the all-India female GER has risen above male GER, which stagnated at 26.3.

How is it that even though women

enrolment in absolute numbers is lesser,

female GER is higher? GER is calculated as the ratio of students enrolled to the eligible 18-23 age—in which there are fewer women, at 48.6%, than men. Interestingly, in the seven years between 2011-12 and 2018-19, the number of women in the eligible 18-23 age population increased from 6.7 crore to 6.9 crore whereas the number of men decreased from 7.33 crore to 7.3 crore. These dynamics combined with the rapid increase in women enrolment is yielding a female GER that is overtaking male GER. The 2020-30 decade will see the rise of the Indian Woman; as more educated women join the workforce.

#### Focus on expansion and quality

The number of registered HE institutions has risen from 49,964 in 2017-18 to 51,649 in 2018-19. AISHE estimates the eligible 18-23-year-old population was 14.2 crore in 2018-19. FICCI's Higher Education report indicates GER could rise to 50 by 2030. Today, GER of 50 indicates a potential capacity of ~1,375 students/institution.Instead,because GER is only 26.3, average enrolment is 693/college. For now, India has adequate base infrastructure for rapid brownfield expansion, which is easier, quicker and more effective. The need of the hour is to expand and enhance our current institutions and improve quality of education and GER.

#### Graduates need follow-on employment opportunities

Total number of graduates who completed their course in 2018-19 is 90.9

Higher education enrollment						
Enrolment	2011-12	2015-16	2018-19	7-yr CAGR Base: 2011-12	3-yr CAGR Base: 2015-16	
Total	2,91,84,331	3,45,84,781	3,73,99,388	3.6%	2.6%	
Male	1,61,73,473	1,85,94,723	1,92,09,888	2.5%	1.1%	
Female	1,30,10,858	1,59,90,058	1,81,89,500	4.9%	4.4%	
% Female	44.6%	46.2%	48.6%			

Correlation of workfo	rce to high	er education	anrolment
Data from AISHE, MHRD			
		10	

	(15	LFPR 5-29 yrs)	(18-23) age population		Estimated workforce in 15-29 bracket*			AISHE enrolment	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
2011-12	63.6%	24.4%	7,33,33,306	6,69,83,763	13,99,19,948	4,90,32,115	1,61,73,473	1,30,10,858	
2017-18	58.8%	16.4%	7,31,21,283	6,87,08,245	12,89,85,943	3,38,04,457	1,92,04,675	1,74,37,703	
Delta		-	-2,12,023	17,24,482	-1,09,34,005	-1,52,27,658	30,31,202	44,26,845	
Data fron	n PLFS, A	AISHE			*calculated k	y authors as LI	FPR x (18-23)	) popn. x 3	

#### Population data from census 2011

\* OBC population from NSSO

Group F	Population %		AISHE enrolment, % of total	
	2011	2012-13	2018-19	numbers (lakh)
SC	16.6%	12.8%	14.9%	17.19
ST	8.6%	4.4%	5.5%	7.47
OBC*	40.9%	31.2%	36.3%	41.76
Minorities	20.2%	6.0%	7.6%	10.11
Remaining population (general merit)	13.6%	45.6%	35.7%	-4.06
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	72.47

lakhs, up from 89.7 lakhs in 2017-18. Tamil Nadu has India's highest GER at 49, and third highest number of graduates at 8.64 lakh. Bihar's GER is among the lowest in the country, at 13.6 barely up from 12.0 in 2011-12. It produced 3.81 lakh graduates, only 4% of India's total. If Bihar with such a large population and high fertility rates does not focus on human capital development, it is a demographic disaster in the making.

Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of graduates—15.3 lakhs amounting to 16.8% of the total. The state has been the highest producer of graduates every year. Moreover, more than half the graduates are women! Providing these graduates with gainful employment in the state will greatly boost UP's economy.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 is reporting labour force participation rate (LFPR) in the 15-29 age group as 16.4% for women and 58.8% for men; down from 24.4% and 63.6% respectively in 2011-12. By extrapolating AISHE data for the 18-23 age population to the 15-29 bracket (with a factor of three to adjust for the 5- to 15-year window), we arrive at rough estimates of the 15-29 population for 2011-12 and 2017-18 as shown in accompanying table. The corresponding LFPR indicate that approximately 14 crore men and 4.9 crore women were in the workforce in 2011-12, which dropped to 12.9 crore and 3.4 crore respectively in 2017-18—a drop of 1.09 crore men and 1.52 crore women. In the same time period, AISHE data shows college enrolment rising from 1.62 crore men and 1.3 crore women in 2011-12 to 1.92 crore men and 1.74 crore women in 2017-18—an increase of 30.3 lakh men and 44.3 lakh women.

PLFS must consider that the 15-29 years' workforce could have seemingly shrunk because more are in school and college. In the 18-23 bracket alone, AISHE data demonstrates increased enrollment year-on-year in colleges. MHRD data shows enrolment in secondary school and pre-university is also increasing, which means more children in the 15-18 age bracket are in school. Putting the two together, more than half of the 15-29 age bracket surveyed by PLFS are increasingly in school/college, which could account for the perceived drop in workforce participation. Secondly, after receiving an education, many women do not get employment opportunities in their home states. On average, men are more mobile than women and are able to move elsewhere in search of skilled work. Both these counts could explain the increase in unemployment rates among women as reported by PLFS. Today, PLFS is only conducted across 1.02 lakh households; there is need to expand the sample size while also considering education as a factor for perceived nonparticipation in the workforce.

#### Affirmative action yields results

The 2011 census provides composition of all groups except OBCs, which we obtain from NSSO. The upcoming 2021 census will provide updates. Percentage of SC, ST and OBC groups in HE rose from 12.8%, 4.4% and 31.2% respectively in 2012-13 to 14.9%, 5.5% and 36.3% respectively in 2018-19 – all moving close to their population compositions at 16.6%, 8.6% and 41% respectively. Minorities have not demonstrated the same progress; while their population is 20.2%, their HE representation has only moved from 6% in 2012-13 to 7.6% in 2018-19.

Government's focus on HE has benefitted previously disadvantaged classes who have developed dramatically. Representation from the population designated 'general merit'is regressing. Between 2012-13 and 2018-19, other groups increased by 17.2 lakh (SC), 7.5 lakh (ST), 41.8 lakh (OBC), and 10.1 lakh (minorities), while the 'general merit' enrolment decreased by 4 lakhs-from 45.6% representation to 35.7% in six years. NDA-II was probably responding to this decline when they instituted the 10% EWS reservation to support low-income families in general category.

AISHE clearly indicates aspirations are on the rise. We have enough capacity to get bullish on increasing enrolment and improving access to high quality education. We must build on the momentum to push this through to the peak of human capital development as India rises.

## RCT fodder for agri growth

**KUSHANKUR** DEY

Faculty, IIM Lucknow, associated with

an Agri-Business Group



Relevance of RCT can be explored in agricultural marketing policy research

CT OR RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIAL has become a fad in experimental research. Relevance of RCT can be explored in agricultural marketing policy research as agriculture and development cannot be seen in isolation. And that exploration bears some rationale for India.

We know that small landholders account for a little over 85%, and have less than one to two hectares of operational landholdings. They, however, contribute to more than 40% of gross cropped area, but often realise a poor return as consequence of unexpected crop loss due to climate change, distress sales of their marketed surplus, and excessive intermediation in agricultural markets. Because of these interconnected issues, smallholders do often fail to take informed decisions on which crops they should grow, when, where, and how to market their produce.

To overcome such problems or to offer a real-time feedback to smallholders about market potential of their produce, National Agricultural Higher Education Project at the auspices of Indian Council of Agricultural Research has instituted the Centre for Agricultural Market intelligence in a few State Agricultural Universities. World Bank has extended funding support. The major objectives are to study price forecasting and behaviour of agricultural commodities, export competitiveness, evaluation of electronic National Agriculture Market (e NAM), capacity building of farmers and associated stakeholders or market institutions.

The Centre need to carry out experimental research to a greater extent. Evidence-based scientific study needs in-depth understanding of the context and phenomenon, that Randomised Control Trails (RCTs) can achieve.

First, price forecasting of agricultural commodities neces-

Randomised control trials can be instrumental in assessing pre- and post-intervention of resource agencies towards capacity building of farmer organisations

sitates an extensive field research to understand how farmers engage in price setting. RCTs make a significant difference as gainst other evaluationbased measures. For instance, in Africa, experiments have focused on assessing the role of price information in agricultural markets via SMS. In India, similar type of intervention took place in Gujarat in 2007-09 to elicit information about farmers' price expectation and their attitude towards futures price adoption.

Second, export competitiveness of commodities is based on acreage and substitution effect

of agricultural crops that leads to price effect in international trade. RCTs can be useful in assessing export competitiveness in those areas of cultivation which are awarded with GI for particular crop/commodity.

Third, evaluation of e-NAM requires a thorough understanding of agricultural market functioning. As 8-9% of total regulated market yards (about 7,500) are converted into e NAM, it is opportune time to use RCTs for evaluating the performance of the electronic spot market in terms of price discovery, crops arrival, auctioning, and trend in farmer participation. Based on RCT-based experimental research, agriculture marketing policies can be tweaked to increase farmer awareness of market realities, improve their bargaining power through collective action, and to bring about efficient allocation of resources.

Fourth, capacity building of farmers and stakeholders also need RCT. For instance, Farmer Producer Companies have drawn policy attention from the market access and risk management viewpoint. Notwithstanding a renewed interest in agriculture policymaking, capacity building programme need to assess farmer market orientation, perceived risk attitude, risk exposure, farm size and performance. RCTs can be instrumental in assessing pre- and post-intervention of resource agencies towards capacity building of farmer organisations.

Fifth, it is important to note that any evaluation-based experiment entails investment and time. As poverty alleviation research has been emerged through a dedicated lab named J-PAL, a network of researchers does carry out extensive fieldinterventions in the developing and least-developed countries on poverty issues. Drawing a parallel from such research, agricultural market intelligence centre needs an appropriate design for the required intervention and should develop a network of diverse scholars and professionals to incentivise farm realities with appropriate policy instrument and mechanism.

#### HIS YEAR'S SVERIGES Riksbank prize in economic sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel has gone to three American development economists—Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer (BDK henceforth). The prize recognises the importance of using experimental approaches in global poverty research and development economics, using randomised controlled trials (RCT), also known as field experiments. Their organisation The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) has been funding, organising and supervising many field experiments. At present, there are many researchers using RCT.

Economics is an inexact science of social behaviour and true to its fame, each theory or study can be subject to biases, critiques and prejudices.

Nowadays, there have been many variations and extensions in the RCT methodologies. RCTs are conducted to measure comparative effects of a cause, i.e., a policy intervention randomly administered to a select group (treatment group) while keeping the behaviour or status of a compared group, known as the control group, constant. This type of methodology is popularly called as the 'difference in differences' (DID) regression method. Esther Duflo's early influential paper on the effect of school construction in Indonesia on education outcomes used this DID method. Duflo's most cited work to

## experiments

Randomised control trials are no panacea

**SITAKANTA PANDA** 

Assistant professor (Economics), IIT Bhilai. Views are personal.

date, which she had co-authored with Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan in 2004, analysed the efficacy of the DID estimates. Not just DID, other methods like propensity score matching and regression discontinuity design have also become popular within the field experiment literature.

This also is an opportune time to remember and appreciate that experimental approaches are not the only guiding light or the best of the methods to study development phenomena. Thanks to a lot of methodological pitfalls, RCTs are not the best approach to study development issues in many settings. Another Nobel laureate Angus Deaton, and others, have been vocal

critics and rightfully so, about the often erroneous lessons or approaches we derive from RCTs. Angus Deaton and Nancy Cartwright (DC henceforth) have written a seminal critique against RCTs titled "Understanding and misunderstanding randomised controlled trials", published in the journal Social Science & Medicine in 2018.

Most people do not believe that a certain finding of an RCT in a certain region or for a certain population could be valid to other regions or populations due to contextual differences. RCTs are prone to such issues of lack of external validity. In many circumstances, randomising the intervention raises ethical and social issues. Moreover, RCTs are



In another article titled "Reflections on

RCTs" published in the same journal, DC

remarked, "Experiments are sometimes the

best that can be done, but they are often not.

Hierarchies that privilege RCTs over any

other evidence irrespective of context or

quality are indefensible and can lead to

harmful policies. Different methods have

different relative advantages and disadvan-

All the estimation methods need meet-

ing of requisite assumptions and causal inference methods are no exception to it. If

causal assumptions are met, many methods

including RCTs can provide credible para-

very expensive.

tages."





meter estimates. In this sense, RCTs are not

special. One of the assumptions of an RCT is

that the treatment or intervention is inde-

pendent (orthogonal) to all causes of the out-

come other than its own downstream effects. Many 'randomistas' (believers of

RCTs) cite randomisation as the source of such orthogonality conditions and DC argue

it is not true. There are concerns about

whether the treatment assignment process

was really random or made to be random fol-

lowing a statistical scheme. Further, post-

randomisation problems can occur. Owing

to reasons like lack of blinding, varying lev-

els of time/place/length of treatment for the

two groups, an RCT cannot rule out correla-

tions with other factors affecting the out come. Many people ignore the fact that full blinding of subjects in experiments is impossible and they take the RCT results at their face value. Even if full blinding is assumed, the RCTs must ensure, and not assume, that no other relevant systematic differences occurred between treatment and report of results. This orthogonality condition must be satisfied in any case and not iust assumed.

It is observed that RCT-using researchers are signing agreements with provincial and national governments to obtain funds and approvals for such studies. Since RCTs are very expensive, some critics point to the incentive structure of tailoring results. Then there is 'publication bias' that afflict some researchers.

To sum up, we quote DC, "They show that the treatment worked somewhere, usually a very special somewhere (often made more special by the stringent requirements of doing a good RCT) and it is a long and often difficult evidential road from that to 'It will work here'. And for this endpoint, the RCT is not a particularly natural starting point Indeed, this is one of the misunderstandings that we are most concerned about, that a well-done RCT can be automatically transported, simply by virtue of being an RCT."

It's a good time to listen to Deaton and put the RCT studies in perspective.

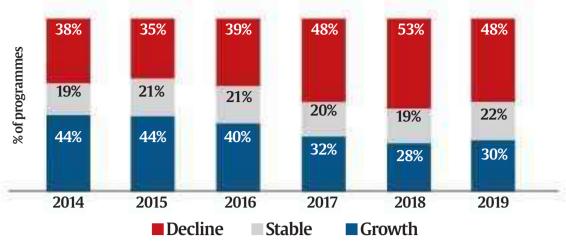
epaper. financia press.com

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

#### **TELLING NUMBERS**

### In US B-schools, dip in interest from global students: report

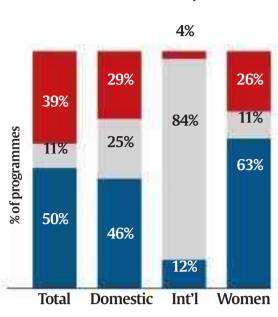
YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGES IN GLOBAL APPLICANTS, US



THIS WEEK, 50 deans and 13 CEOs of business schools at major US universities wrote an open letter to President Donald Trump, seeking re-examination of the country's visa policy and reform of the H-1B visa programme. They flagged an international nonprofit organisation's findings that the number of foreign students studying at US business schools has fallen.

The non-profit body, Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), has put up the data on its website. The data show that during the three years from 2016 to 2018, the volume of foreign applicants in US business schools witnessed growth in fewer and fewer programmes, and declined in more and more programmes.

The GMAC study shows the percentage of programmes in various countries reporting year-on-year changes in application volumes. In US business schools, there has been a steady reduction in the percentage of programmes that have registered growth in applications from international students. In half the programmes (48% in 2019), such applications have seen a decline. The GMAC INDIAN B-SCHOOLS, 2019



attributed this trend to the "harsh rhetoric in the US on visa policies and immigration (that) is driving international students elsewhere."

About 28 Indian business schools, it said: "Consistent with past years, the vast majority of applications to Indian programs were domestic this year (95%). Forty-six percent of programs grew their domestic application volume and 25 percent report that it stayed the same. Less than 1 in 3 report domestic application declines (29%).

Source: GMAC

#### THIS WORD MEANS

#### **MOUNT PAEKTU**

Where Kim Jong-Un rode horseback. Why is it symbolically significant for Koreans?

ON WEDNESDAY, North Korea's state news agency KCNA released a series of photographs showing the country's leader Kim Jong-Un riding a white horse to a sacred mountain. The mountain, Mount Paektu, is also known as Baekdusan (translated: white-head mountain) and Changbaishan in Chinese.

Mount Paektu is on the border of North Korea and China and rises to about 9.000 feet. It is the highest peak in the Korean peninsula and for centuries has been considered sacred by Koreans. They believe that it is the spiritual birthplace of the Korean kingdom. The peak has also played a significant role in the Kim dynasty's claim that Kim Jong-Un's father Kim Jong-Il was born on its slope. The peak features in the state emblem of North Korea.

Kim has often ridden to the mountain before key decisions. Most recently, he climbed the mountain in 2018 with South



Kim Jong Un on Mount Paektu. **KCNA via Reuters** 

Korean President Moon Jae-in, and in 2017 after he announced the launch of North Korea's largest intercontinental ballistic missile. His latest climb has given rise to speculation about another announcement.

#### SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

## Reading the livestock census

Indigenous cattle population is further down while crossbred numbers have gone up. Latest census also shows an eastward shift as West Bengal overtakes UP with highest cattle count. A look at these trends

#### HARIKISHAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 17

ON WEDNESDAY, the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying released the results of the latest livestock census, which provides headcount data of domesticated animals in the country. The census shows a further decline in the indigenous cattle population. It also shows that the cow belt of the country has shifted eastwards with West Bengal emerging as a state with the largest cattle population, leaving behind Uttar Pradesh.

#### What is the livestock census?

Under the livestock census, various species of animals possessed by households, household enterprises or non-household enterprises and institutions are counted at site both in rural and urban areas. In other words, it covers all domesticated animals in a given period of time. India has been conducting livestock censuses periodically since 1919-20. This is the 20th one, started in October 2018. The last livestock census was conducted in 2012.

#### Which animals and birds are counted in this census?

The census tracks the population of various species of domesticated animals such as cattle, buffalo, mithun, yak, sheep, goat, pig, horse, pony, mule, donkey camel, dog, rabbit and elephant and poultry birds (fowl, duck, emu, turkeys, quail and other poultry birds). The breed-wise headcount of animals and poultry birds has been carried out in about 6.6 lakh villages and 89,000 urban wards across the country covering more than 27 crore households and non-households.

However, the key results released on Wednesday do not include the latest animal count for Delhi as the census operations in have not been completed as yet in the national capital. So the Delhi-specific figures are from the previous census.

For the first time, livestock data has been collected online through tablet computers.

#### What are the key results, and changes since the last census?

In 2019, the total livestock population is 535.78 million; cattle (192.90 million) is the largest animal group in the country followed by goats (148.88 million), buffaloes (109.85 million), sheep (74.26 million) and pigs (9.06 million). All other animals taken together contribute just 0.23 per cent of the total livestock population in the country.

#### CATTLE MARGINALLY UP, GOATS AND SHEEP RISE SHARPLY **CHART 1: LIVESTOCK POPULATION CHART 2: CATTLE POPULATION** (MAJOR STATES) (MAJOR SPECIES) 2019 % Growth 2019 % Growth **Category** Category **Population Population** (in million) (in million) Cattle 192.49 0.83 **West Bengal** 19.0 15.18 Buffalo 109.85 1.06 **Uttar Pradesh** 18.8 -3.93 74.26 18.7 14.13 Madhya Pradesh -4.42 Sheep Bihar 15.3 Goat 148.88 10.14 25.18 Pig 9.06 -12.03 Maharashtra 13.9 -10.07 Mithun 26.66 Rajasthan 13.9 0.38 4.41 Yak 0.06 **Iharkhand** 11.2 28.16 -25 **Horses & Ponies** 0.34 -45.58 Assam 10.9 5.29 -57.09 Chhattisgarh 10.0 1.63 Mule 0.08 0.12 -61.23 **Odisha** 9.9 -15.01 Donkey Camel 0.25 -37.05 **Total Livestock** 535.78 4.63 CHART 3: CROSSBRED POPULATION GROWING FAST; INDIGENOUS DECLINING

Category	2019 Population (in million)	% Growth
Total Exotic/Crossbred	50.42	26.9
Total Indigenous/Non-Descript	142.11	-6



As *Chart 1* shows, in 2019, the total livestock population has registered a growth of 4.6 per cent over the last census in 2012 (512.06 million). The total population was 529.70 million at the time of 18th census in 2007.

However, the numbers of some animals such as pig, yak, horses and ponies, mule, donkey and camel have come down drastically.

The cattle population has grown marginally by 0.83 per cent, and the buffalo population by 1.06 per cent. The populations of sheep (14.13%), goat (10.14%) and mithun (26.66%) have risen significantly, underlining the preference of farmers for keeping milch animals.

#### What are the population trends for different kinds of cattle?

As Chart 2 shows, while the overall cattle population has increased by 0.8 per cent between 2012-19, the population of indigenous cattle has come down by 6 per cent — from 151 million to 142.11 million. However, this pace of decline is much slower than the 9 per cent decline between 2007 and 2012.

In contrast, the population of the total exotic/crossbred cattle has increased by almost 27 per cent to 50.42 million in 2019.

How do the data show an eastward shift

#### of cattle, as mentioned earlier?

West Bengal has emerged as the state with the largest number of cattle in 2019 (Chart 2), followed by Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. In 2012, Uttar Pradesh had the largest number of cattle but this population has come down by almost 4 per cent since. The cattle population is also down in

Madhya Pradesh (4.42%), Maharashtra (10.07%) and Odisha (15.01%).

States that registered the maximum increases between 2012 and 2019 were West Bengal (15.18%), Bihar (25.18%) and Jharkhand (28.16%).

#### What are the implications of the decline in the numbers of indigenous cattle?

Due to continuous fall in productivity, indigenous breeds of cattle have become liabilities for farmers, forcing them to desert the unproductive cows. Farmers find other animals such as buffaloes, goats and sheep much more productive. Unlike cows, if these animals become unproductive, they can be sold and slaughtered for further processing.

Experts believe this could have long term health and environmental impacts because the milk of indigenous breed has higher nutritional value than that of crossbreeds. Moreover, there is a danger of losing these indigenous breeds, which have been developed and sustained by generations from time immemorial.

#### What are the trends in the population of livestock other than cattle?

The total population of buffaloes in the country has gone up from 108.70 million in 2012 to 109.85 million in 2019. States which have seen a rise in the buffalo population during this period include Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Telangana. However, some states including Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab have seen a decline in their respective buffalo populations.

In 2019, the total poultry in the country is 851.81 million — of which, 317.07 million are backyard poultry and 534.74 million are commercial poultry. While the total poultry has registered an increase of 16.8 per cent over the previous census, the backyard poultry has increased by around 46 per cent and commercial poultry by just 4.5 per cent.

Tamil Nadu is the leading state in poultry population followed by Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, Maharashtra Karnataka, Assam, Haryana, Kerala and Odisha. Assam had registered the largest (71.63%) growth in poultry population.

### How to tax tech giants profiting from 'away' where a business has a sustained and signif-

#### KARISHMA MEHROTRA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 17

THE ORGANISATION of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the global grouping of 36 mostly high-income, free-market economies, has released a consultation paper proposing changes in the rules for taxing Internet giants such as Facebook, Apple, Google, Amazon, and Netflix.

In essence, the proposal, called "Unified Approach", is to shift the standard of taxation from physical presence to sales in a particular market. That is, the companies will have to pay more taxes in the markets in which they sell more.

"Countries like India understand that we can't go ahead without seriously improving tax certainty," Pascal Saint-Amans, head of tax at the OECD's Centre for Tax Policy and Administration, said in the *International Tax* Review.

#### Why new taxation laws

The ongoing global battle over how to tax the digital economy is yet to reach resolution. As of now, "highly digitalised businesses" can operate remotely and have high profits. Many companies have moved their source of profits to countries with low tax rates, such as Ireland.

The proposal would give new taxing rights to countries with many users of such business models. India is among countries that rely on a "significant economic presence model". In April, the Income-Tax Department proposed new taxing norms for MNCs, with a different weightage for digital companies, incorporating the number of users in India.

#### Designing a new rule

The key to the proposal is that the "new nexus" would be based on sales. A "nexus" in international tax refers to the operating presence in a country that makes a company taxable. "The new nexus rule would address this issue by being applicable in all cases icant involvement in the economy of a market jurisdiction, such as through consumer interaction and engagement, irrespective of its level of physical presence in that jurisdiction," said the OECD report.

The proposal suggests designing the new rule and determining significant involvement in the jurisdiction by assigning a revenue threshold in the market. It considers a 750-million-Euro revenue threshold. This would allow the rule to encompass those who enter the market through a distributor. It also means the rules would apply not just to large tech multinationals, but any firms with a presence online, such as automakers.

The proposal focuses on "large consumerfacing businesses, broadly defined, e.g. businesses that generate revenue from supplying consumer products or providing digital services that have a consumer facing element". The report states that this definition will need further articulation, but its recommendation exempts resource extraction companies like oil companies.

#### What's next The proposal leaves many questions

unanswered — in particular, how much profit should be reallocated to the country. "The choice of this amount will ultimately be the result of a political agreement that needs to be acceptable to all members of the Inclusive Framework, small and large, developed and developing," the report states. Stakeholders can submit their responses

by November 12. Officials hope a new tax framework could

be agreed upon by early 2020. G20 finance ministers are expected to discuss the proposal this week, and countries in favour of new laws could begin negotiations thereafter. Among Internet giants, Amazon has wel-

comed the proposal, according to a report in The New York Times quoting a company spokesperson.

## RSS and Sikhs: defining a religion, and how their relationship has evolved

#### **KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR** AMRITSAR, OCTOBER 17

FOLLOWING RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's speech on Dussehra, during which he said India is a Hindu nation, Sikh community leaders such as Akal Takht jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh and SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee) president Gobind Singh Longowal have reacted sharply. A look at the RSS view of Sikhism, and its relationship with the community over the years:

#### Arya Samaj, Sikhs and RSS

"The Hindu-Sikh tension... was a thing unknown during the Sikh rule up to middle of the last [19th] century." historian Dr Ganda Singh wrote in his paper 'The origin

of the Hindu-Sikh Tension in the Punjab'. In 1875, the Arya Samaj published the book Satvarth Prakash which. Sikhs held. made defamatory references to Sikh gurus. It was followed by the Singh Sabha movement which, while countering these references, focused on a larger objective of asserting the Sikh identity as unique.

The SGPC, formed in 1920, adopted the Sikh Rehat Maryada code of conduct, defined "who is a Sikh" and also underlined

that Sikhism is an independent religion. The RSS has had differences with the Arya Samaj, which shows in their relationship with Sikhs too. The RSS and late VD Savarkar have often praised the Sikh gurus; the RSS also celebrates their birth anniversaries.

#### **How RSS defines Sikhism**

In the RSS understanding, all religions originating in India are part of a Hindu Rashtra, an idea that the Akal Takht finds problematic.

G S Gill, president of RSS affiliate Rashtriya Sikh Sangat, said: "Mohan Bhagwat has said nothing new or objectionable. It is the basic concept of the RSS that India is a Hindu nation. But the RSS chief has explained what 'Hindu nation' means: it means all communities who have been participating in the development of the nation. Also Bhagwat has widened the vision of Hindu Rashtra by saying that all indigenous

religions are part of it."

Dr Sukhpreet Singh Udoke, a writer who has officially advised the Akal Takht on RSS issues in the past, explained the RSS view. "The RSS thinks that Sikhs fought Mughal invaders and saved the indigenous ideology," he said. "The RSS treats Sikhs as part of a Hindu nation like Jains and Buddhists, and unlike Christians and Muslims. Sikhs oppose this RSS idea about them: they believe their history is not about fighting Muslims... Sikhs also see themselves as an independent religion and with a unique identity. They fear the RSS wants them to assimilate into Hinduism."

"Unlike the Arya Samaj, the RSS has respect for Sikh gurus. But the problem is that most of the RSS and BJP leadership in Punjab came from Arya Samaj and Congress backgrounds. The local leadership didn't understand that the RSS approach to Sikh gurus is different from the Arya Samaj approach. So there is a problem within RSS about how they want to see Sikhs, which is complicating the relationship with the Akal Takht," said a professor of religion with

**Flashpoints** 

Guru Nanak Dev University.

#### Beyond the RSS leadership, stands taken

by the Jana Sangh and the BJP leadership on key issues have contributed to creating differences between the RSS and Sikhs.

In Jalandhar in 1960, then RSS chief Guru Golwalkar said Puniabi is the mother tongue of every Punjabi. RSS affiliate Jana Sangh, however, had joined the "Save Hindi agitation" launched by the Arya Paritinidhi Sabha in 1956. Its participants sought to convince Punjabi Hindus to mention Hindi as their mother tongue in the 1961 Census.

In 1984, the BJP extended support to Operation Blue Star on the Golden Temple complex. In 2009, the party revised its stand and the late Arun Jaitley described the operation as a 'historical blunder' of the Congress.

In 1999, then RSS chief KS Sudarshan visited the headquarters of the Damdami Taksal. which was once headed by the militant leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The Akali Dal was already in alliance with the BJP then.

On July 13, 2004, the Akal Takht issued

of the RSS and Rashtriya Sikh Sangat. Both organisations had taken up celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib, and published literature that the Akal Takht read as an RSS interpretation of Sikh beliefs.

a directive cautioning Sikhs about activities

Rulda Singh, former Rashtriya Sikh Sangat president who played a key role in organising Sudarshan's 1999 visit, was shot dead in 2009. In 2016, when RSS state vice president Brig Jagdish Gagneja was killed, police said Sikh militants were responsible. In 2017, when RSS leader Ravinder Gosain was murdered in Ludhiana, the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat said misconceptions among a section of Sikhs, al-

decree, could be a reason behind the murder. Rashtriya Sikh Sangat spokesperson Avtar Singh had said: "The RSS is always open to dialogue and discussing the misconceptions with Akal Takht."

legedly created in the name of an Akal Takht

#### Greater activism

The Rashtriya Sikh Sangat has of late been taking up issues on which the SGPC

used to be the sole voice earlier, such as Sikh prisoners, Sikhs on a government blacklist, or justice for the 1984 riots. The RSS has been staking claim to campaigns such as ending the blacklisting and celebrating Guru Nanak Dev's birth anniversary in Indian embassies. The Sikh Sangat has also been criticising the SGPC over a range of issues.

Meanwhile, the BIP government at the Centre has been negotiating with former Sikh militants. One of them, Jaswant Singh Thekedar, back in India after decades, has said on record: "It is not the Akali Dal that has ended the blacklisting; it is the Narendra Modi government...'

Giani Harpreet Singh, the Akal Takht jathedar who has objected to Bhagwat's remark, said: "When we oppose the RSS, then it is not opposition of Hindus; it should be clearly understood. The RSS can preach Hinduism; we have no problem with that. But they should stop defining Sikhism. Sikhs have many institutions to decide who they are. We don't want outsiders to tell us who we are... We are not part of the Hindu nation of the RSS."

## **The Indian EXPRESS**

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## CHIPPING AWAY RTI

Downgrading information commissioners will further weaken the Act, reduce power of citizen vis-a-vis government

HE NEW RULES downgrading the office of the chief and other information commissioners at the Centre and in the states, flowing from the July 2019 amendments to the 2005 Right to Information Act, send out disturbing signals about the fate of one of the most progressive, democracy-enhancing pieces of legislation to be enacted in free India. If the amendments were the first step in hollowing out the Act, the rules, as reported in this newspaper, have added the finishing touches. So far the CIC received the same salary and perks as that of the Chief Election Commissioner or a judge of the Supreme Court. The new rules, framed by the Department of Personnel and Training - yet to be approved by the prime minister — make the CIC an equivalent of the cabinet secretary, and central information commissioners the same as secretary to the government in terms of salary. The tenure has been reduced from five years to three. In the states, the downgrading will be to the level of secretary to the government, and additional secretary respectively. To view these reductions simply as a matter of pay, and therefore not of consequence, would be to miss the point. The CICs and ICs at both the Centre and states have the power to review the functioning of government public information officials, and intervene on behalf of citizens seeking information about decisions of the government. The new rules effectively undermine their authority. These statutory officials have zero powers to enforce their orders, except the imposition of a fine for non-compliance. But over the years, if government departments coughed out information that was demanded of them under the provisions of the Act, it was because they were seen in the same league and of the same authority as the CEC and Supreme Court judges.

Even before this dramatic downgrade, governments at the Centre and states, from the time the legislation came into being, have pushed back against the promise of transparency in the RTI Act. Appointments to the posts have been used to grant sinecures to favoured retired bureaucrats, or dispense favours to camp-followers. There has been an enormous reluctance in many states to appoint the full strength of commissioners, leading to a large pendency. The CIC returns a large number of complaints and appeals on minor grounds. Even so, the RTI Act helped ordinary citizens feel empowered, and equipped with some means, even if not entirely imperfect, to take on corruption.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has reportedly remarked that the government wants to put out as much information in the public domain as possible in order to reduce the need for RTI applications. High-minded though this may be, what the government wants to put out is rarely matched with what citizens want to know about its decisions. But destroying the authority of the RTI will certainly ensure that the number of applications reduce on their own.

### NUTRITION IS NO PUZZLE

Global Hunger Index figures are stark. They bring home urgency of long-term investments in nutrition, health, sanitation

AST YEAR, THE Centre launched the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) to ensure a "malnutrition free India" by 2022. The Global Hunger Index (GHI), released on Tuesday, has sobering figures for this inter-ministerial mission. India is one of the 47 countries that have "serious levels of hunger", according to the study. Though the country's position has gone up a notch since last year, this is not an improvement since this year's GHI mapped two more countries. It is particularly worrying that India is among the worst-performing countries on the acute under-nutrition parameter. "India's wasting rate (indicative of acute under-nutrition) is extremely high at 20.8 per cent — the highest wasting rate of any country for which data or estimates were available," the report states.

Malnutrition is most often a product of several factors including poverty, inadequate availability of food, genetic predisposition, environmental factors and poor health and sanitation services. And, the oft-repeated complaint of policymakers that there is no realtime data that brings all these factors together to show the extent of India's malnutrition problem is valid to an extent. However, it is also clear that providing nutritious food to the country's children is more a matter of political will and effective policy implementation at the grass roots level than solving a difficult puzzle. For example, in May-June, the Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) outbreak in Bihar bared the failure of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in the state. Moreover, by its own admission, the state government did not have any special nutritional programme to combat a disease that has been a scourge for at least 10 years.

The ICDS has also been vexed by disagreements over the constituents of the mid-day meal programme. In the past four years, the Centre has increasingly laid emphasis on the use of "fortified varieties" of salt, wheat flour and edible oil. A section of policymakers have also advocated the use of Ready To Use Therapeutic Food (RTUF). The debate on the nutritional quality of "fortified food" is far from settled. But the emphasis on such food has led to the increasing centralisation of the mid-day meal scheme and moreover, has not addressed local food sensitivities and tastes. Also, as a study published, this week, in PLOS Medicine shows, long-term investments in health, sanitation and nutrition are far more effective in preventing deaths due to severe acute malnutrition than measures such as RTUF. The NNM would do well to keep such studies in mind. But most of all, it should be bear in mind that the GHI figures are too stark for any further prevarication.

## BOURBON, SCOTCH & BEER

There is every chance that US whiskey and chicken will become cheaper. At last, trade for the everyman

NY FORM OF revelry in north India requires two things — whiskey and chicken. Too often, these simple pleasures are swept aside in the broad sweep of diplomacy, and the technicality of negotiations on trade and tariffs make them all too distant from the concerns of the everyman. But thanks to the uncertainties wrought by Donald Trump's pledge to put "America First", and perhaps even due to the paens of praise that the leaders of India and the US heaped on each other at "Howdy, Modi", the diplomatic corps is all set to ensure that bourbon and chicken imported from the US will become cheaper for Indians. An expectant nation holds its breath, and readies the ice cubes and mint chutney.

Slashing the import duties on whiskey, frozen chicken, walnuts, milk albumin and un-denatured ethanol are part of the basket of goods — food and beverages and ingredients for biofuels — will be discussed at a secretary-level inter-ministerial panel to be held on October 21. Reportedly, the government is considering the reduction of import tariffs on bourbon whiskey from 150 per cent to 30 per cent and on frozen chicken cuts from 100 per cent to 30 per cent. It will also consider a reduction of import duty on walnuts from 100 per cent to 10 per cent and on apples from 50 to 10 per cent will also be discussed.

The rise in import duties was in retaliation to a similar action by the US on Indian goods. And luckily, free trade itself can enable a less expensive way to celebrate it. Of course, given the size of the Indian market, and the appetites of so many of its people, other countries may cry foul. Perhaps the next step ought be to make other fruits, dairy and their fermented products a little less expensive as well. Beyond whiskey and chicken, Indians may like a taste of some French wine, Swiss cheese, Spanish sausages and Belgian beer.

## The BJP's double engine



THE DEVELOPMENT OF Maharashtra brought about by the "double engine" of Narendra (Modi) and Devendra (Fadnavis) may be a matter of contention, but this engine is surely pumping in a lot of political energy into the BJP's electoral campaign in the state, which votes on October 21. Election outcomes tend to spring surprises, but it will be a real surprise if the Maharashtra assembly results are not what they are generally expected to be.

The campaign would be remembered as among the most most lacklustre ones in the state. The 2019 election to the Maharashtra assembly election has been marked by a lack of curiosity and the absence of an alternative to the BJP. This was not the case in 2014 when the party managed to form a government with the Shiv Sena's support. It is true that the past cannot be explained in terms of ifs and buts. Nevertheless, the Shiv Sena's capitulation in 2014, and consistently thereafter, has helped the BIP jockey itself into a position of advantage. The victory of Modi's BJP in the 2019 parliamentary elections not only enthused the party's state unit but also demoralised the Congress in Maharashtra completely.

This is not to take any credit away from the state BJP and the Fadnavis government. The strategies adopted by them are instructive not only to understand the BJP's possible victory in next week's election; they are also useful to comprehend the BJP's overall approach to competitive politics — and the dilemma of overcoming issues specific to a state.

To begin with, the entrapment of the Shiv Sena, and the Congress and NCP's demoralisation, are not merely the failures of these parties. The predicaments of these parties have been systematically orchestrated. Both in 2014 and now in 2019, the BJP has accommodated defectors. The entry of a variety of characters into the BJP may invite criticism, but it has ensured the weakening of the Opposition parties and created confusion among them. This open-door policy has been the hallmark of the BJP across states — Assam, Haryana, West Bengal and Maharashtra.

At the same time, various corruption-related enquiries have kept the Opposition under stress.

Such moves often cause analytical confusion as to how an ideological party like the BJP keeps amalgamating power-seekers from competing parties. But in reality, such moves only represent the party's willingness to employ political force and, at the same time,

shine a light on its long-term objective of building social acceptability. While the party is busy crafting hegemony in the societal realm, it is equally busy crushing competition, threatening its opponents and coercing non-BJP politicians into deploying their political energies in favour of the BJP. A ruthless fortress of dominance is under construction along with creating a suave and sophisticated image that befits a hegemonic power.

The Fadnavis government has also ensured that it does not slip below the minimum governance standards —- it could be favourably compared with the Congress-NCP government of the past without necessarily faring very well on the criteria of welfare, programme delivery, law and order or development. The prime minister could extol the Fadnavis government's development record not necessarily because Maharashtra has seen any great development but because the state did not decline from where it stood in 2014. Moreover, the state's publicity machinery has been smart in presenting the government's achievements, real and imagined.

At the same time, the Fadnavis government has kept away from ideological controversies. This was possible due to a complex differentiation between the government and party. While BJP functionaries did not abjure ideological assaults, the government would claim that it was engaged in governance. The recent statement by the BJP's Mumbai chief is an instance of such duality — crassness among party workers but caution within the formal circles of power.

But the more important factor leading to the BJP's ascendance pertains to the party's handling of the dominant caste syndrome. For long, the BJP has adopted the strategy of mobilising the non-dominant — and mainly OBC — communities. This helped the party to evolve a social base and make it electorally competitive. Once that stage was reached, it took on the task of neutralising the politics of the dominant caste. The BJP has been flexible about absorbing political actors from the dominant community. This ensured the fragmentation of the Maratha political elite. At the same time, through the lure of reservations as well as through the deployment of grand narratives of Hindutva and masculine nationalism, the BJP left members of the dominant community scarcely any option other than extending support to the party.

Riding on its success in the Lok Sabha election, the BJP knows that its real strength is the construction of a new all-India politics.

The party has carefully woven the national element into the state assembly election While talking of unprecedented development in the state under the Fadnavis government, the prime minister took a doob maro jibe at those who question the relevance of the Kashmir issue to Maharashtra's elections - he talked about the sacrifices of Maharashtra's sons fighting terrorism in Kashmir. The one thing the BJP is wary about — not just in Maharashtra, but in all state elections — is that state specificity can upset its electoral chances, especially if local issues and local factors rear their head. This explains its strategy of intermixing local/regional issues with national ones.

The elevation of V D Savarkar certainly suits the BJP's ideological position. But it is significant that the Bharat Ratna for Savarkar has entered the discourse around the time of the state assembly elections and found a mention in the party's manifesto. This is an instance of appropriating the regional space neutralising state specificity — and also tactically pushing the Opposition to participate in debates that are bound to be counterproductive for them. The double engine analogy, thus, fits the BJP's approach to resolving the dilemma of balancing regional aspirations with the party's all-India perspective.

These strategic and tactical moves have created favourable prospects for the BJP in Maharashtra. The failures of the state government are obvious, both on rural and urban issues. But the ruling parties are banking on an edge in the war of perceptions. One, they are trying to create a perception that the state government has done well. Two, they are hoping to be assessed as better than their predecessors. And three, in the time of the politics of images, the BJP is relying on its all-India image and its all-India leadership — key handicaps of the Opposition.

This election has not been marked by any great voter excitement but an absence of explicit voter disaffection is all that the BJP needs for the moment. With the Opposition clueless and bankrupt, this factor alone could help the BJP — and its piggyback partner wade through the electoral challenge. It is another matter that victories in the backdrop of voter disinterest do not represent a mandate. But when majorities are enough to form a government, who cares for mandates?

The writer taught political science at the Savitribai Phule Pune University and is chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics

## assembly elections and found a mention in the party's manifesto.

The elevation of V D

Savarkar certainly suits the

But it is significant that the

Bharat Ratna for Savarkar

has entered the discourse

around the time of the state

BJP's ideological position.

## Bapu, Your Work Isn't Over You will have to tell us how to wipe the tears from every person's eye

YOGINDER K ALAGH

ONE HUNDRED and fifty years of a major event calls for gala spectacle. In ancient Rome, such spectacles would take place at the Coliseum. We do that in two-minute bytes on TV channels. I was also asked to participate, but chose to stay away. I remembered the Urdu poet "Hum has deiye; hum chup rahe" (I laughed; I kept quiet ). The only serious byte I got was that by the Gandhian, Sudarshan Iyengar, angrily telling one anchor that we have done nothing on Gandhi's views on a terribly important issue, agriculture. Then there was an anguished piece by Tushar Gandhi.

In 1997, Bapu's memories were fading with the globalising reform regime. The Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti organised "Freedom 50 Lectures" in different parts of India. The director of the Samiti, N Radhakrishnan, was able to get some of these lectures published in a book, Gandhi and the Changing Facets of India. I am told it sold reasonably well — it had pieces by EMS Namboodripad, CSubrahmaniam, Ravindra Verma, Surendra Mohan and me, among others. I wrote on Gandhi and the Indian economy in the 21st century.

Let us critically examine the relevance of Gandhi's main economic ideas. The first is that wants should be be limited. This is imBapu wanted self-reliant villages and relevant technologies. On the last bit we followed him and succeeded beyond dreams. That was Verghese Kurien. In fact, at a more basic level, computerisation, new communication and fibre optics did it. So dairy, agrobased development did the trick. Bapu's technologically savvy village became a reality. But not self-reliant. It provided for itself and trade.

portant in a poor economy. You have to provide for the future (high savings rate) and the poor. But the policy-makers were against "forced savings" and now consumption is the driving force of the economy. Khadi is passe, unless presented on the ramp. Such communication makes consumption both a product and an industry. If you say China has a savings rate of 40 per cent and ours has gone down from 32 per cent to 29 per cent, you are against reform.

The more serious question is that the world of finite resources in a fundamental sense can't afford such consumption. China and India are consumerist regimes but if their per capita consumption exceeds a quarter of the American levels, the world will explode or more correctly drown in climate change.

Bapu wanted self-reliant villages and relevant technologies. On the last bit, we followed him and succeeded beyond dreams. That was Verghese Kurien. In fact, at a more basic level, computerisation, new communication and fibre optics did it. So dairy agrobased development did the trick. Bapu's technologically-savvy village became a reality. But not self-reliant. It provided for itself and trade. Also, not unexpectedly, organisations that focused on the village became big — KVIC,

NDDB, Amul. They are now going global. Now, this is where I differ with Gandhi -

and duck. He was against trade. This is important, when you are addressing the imperialist. But, after the imperialist went, Bapu we must trade. In fact, being a Bania from Porbandar, you may well agree with me. Most Gandhians don't.

They are wrong and I am right. Fair trade helps both the seller and the buyer. Nontrading societies become authoritarian because wealth is dispensed by plutocrats. Yes, trade can degenerate into exploitation. But after Independence, we can elect regimes which regulate fairly. If they don't, we must change them.

Bapu, you made us a mighty machine. A 100-crore people in a democratic phalanx We are unbeatable if the goal is clear and we are organised for it. But, your work remains. Will we love the neighbour? Will we be your "vaishnav jana"? Will the tear be wiped from his eye? Come in our dreams Bapu and tell us how. Until then, you cannot just be the lord of the 150 years' celebration because you still have a lot of work to do.

> The writer, a former Union minister, is an economist

## OCTOBER 18, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



MOTHER TERESA' NOBEL MOTHER TERESA, CALCUTTA'S "Saint of the Gutters," was awarded the 1979 Nobel peace prize for her work among the poor of India. The Yugoslavia-born Roman Catholic nun is the sixth woman to win the prize. The Norwegian Nobel committee said Mother Teresa was given the prize "in recognition of her work in bringing help to suffering humanity". In 1947, Mother Teresa-moved into Calcutta's slums "to serve God among the poorest of the poor'. The order she founded, the Missionaries of Charity, is best known for its "Home for the Destitute Dying" which opened in Calcutta in 1952. She is the first

Indian citizen to win the peace prize since it

was instituted in 1901.

PAK HOUSE ARREST IN ISLAMABAD, AUTHORITIES placed several political leaders under house arrest early on Wednesday following President General Ziaul-Haq's order banning political parties and putting off national elections indefinitely. Official sources said the heads of most of the parties and other leaders were ordered detained in their homes for three months. There was no official explanation for the action, but observers said its purpose was to stifle political activity. The offices of all the parties, including their branches in various

cities, have been sealed by the government.

TN COP STRIKE

SERVICES OF THE Border Security Force (BSF) have been requisitioned by the Tamil Nadu government as the agitation by a section of Tamil Nadu policemen intensified. It is learnt that the BSF battalions are to move in tonight The number of battalions sought had not been disclosed, but police sources said that the strength would be "adequate". The ultimatum issued by the Director-General of Police, E L Stracey, that the striking policemen should withdraw their stir and resume duty has had little effect. On the contrary, the agitation, which was limited to Madurai and Coimbatore districts initially, has since spread to five other nearby districts.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2019

## 15 THE IDEAS PAGE

## A space for the future

The lines Supreme Court draws in the Ayodhya judgment will determine whether it responds to the mood of the moment or leaves room for the next generation



SOPHIE HOWE IS a Future Generations Commissioner in Wales. Her job, as defined by a law that was enacted in Wales in the UK in 2017, is to make sure that public bodies are accountable to the future. As she said in a recent podcast: "My job description, as set out in law, is to act as the guardian of the interests of future generations." Her duty is to make sure that decisions, which the next generation could have to pay for in 30 years, are not

The spirit behind this Welsh law is: Rushed judgments and decisions that appear like they would "settle" disputes, often do the opposite. They draw lines in ways that make it very difficult for future inhabitants of the planet to escape them. The latter can only shuffle and adjust to decisions made without any imagination of, or concern about, the troubled future — these are often built into actions aimed at present-day concerns.

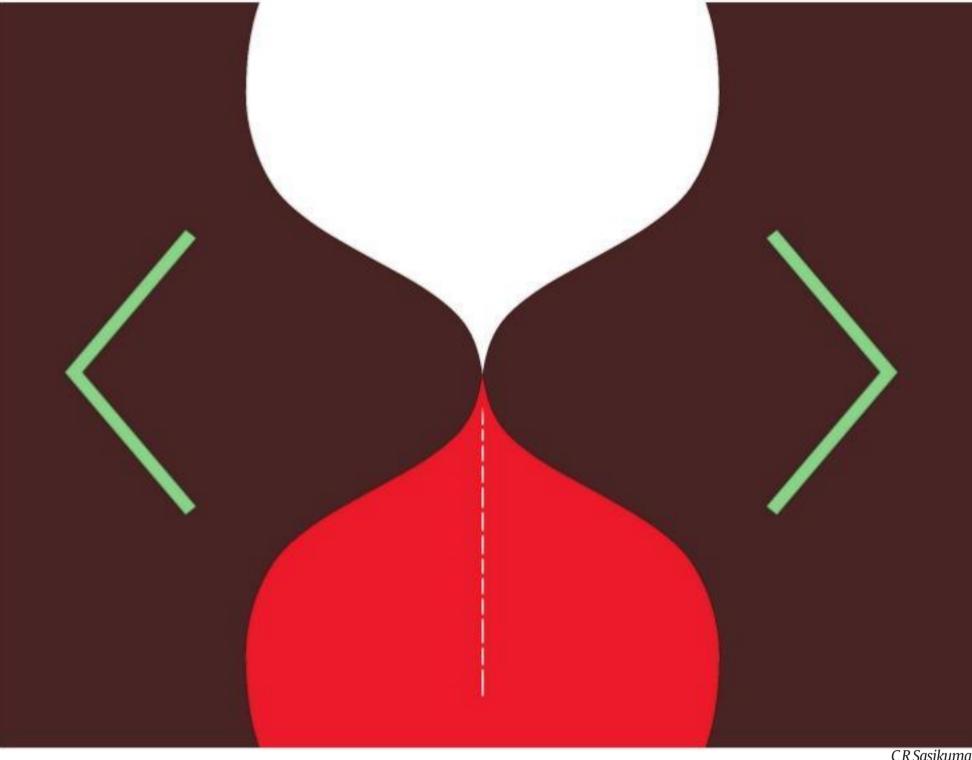
As the 40 days of hearings are over, and just before the Lordships are set to rule on the matter, it is good to recall that it will be 27 years since the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya this December. And longer than that since judicial activity over the title suit of the land with competing claims began. It reached the Supreme Court after appeals were made to the Allahabad High Court order, nine years ago.

The matter coming to the Supreme Court carries an expectation from all sides. It is hoped that the answers it finds would be judicious, fair and draw a line on this matter. A matter which has exhausted much national energy ever since a series of events made Ayodhya a topic of discussion that went beyond the poetry the city once inspired — its legendary evenings by the spires alongside the Sarayu, of Tulsidas and Amir Khusrau.

The Supreme Court has done this "drawing the line" with some aplomb in the past. Its judgments and judges are remembered for the ways in which they have enabled the deepening of democracy. Reading down Section 377 liberated a sexual minority which seldom drew empathy. On the Right to Privacy, the Court read "life" as expansively as possible and gave each citizen a feeling of being important enough to be protected from the peering eyes of the state. Despite stumbling, as it did in cases controversially calling for assuaging the "collective conscience" of a nation, there are innumerable times when the Court has been able to push aside the hectoring of "public opinion" and set the tone for a just and robust beginning, enabling a reset in the public discourse.

There are many judgments known more for the dissent than the majority view. And there are times when this pillar of Indian democracy is asked to provide some sort of closure to big debates that are social, not just political, and have repercussions on the lived reality of millions.

Top courts in other societies and democracies like Germany, the UK and the US also sometimes find themselves in situations where lines must be drawn — and sometimes erased — in order to let citizens achieve higher aims. In countries with a younger demography and more plural populations, like South Africa or India, the task is harder, but by definition, more important. No wonder then,



The matter at hand has seen

all kinds of archaeology at

Archaeological Survey of

India, which conjectures

about what is true, authentic

excavating definitive truth

straightforward task. Is it

Ayodhya or Saketa? It the

from all the layers is hardly a

matter just about a title suit?

Is it about belief, and if yes,

traverses so much of India's

currently could gently point

to the palimpsest that India

recognising how perilous it is

is and the importance of

to label any one layer as

being the seminal one.

past and its journeys. The

then the beliefs of how

many? It is a case that

mounds being dug at

Muziris or at Keeladi

work. There is the

or 'indigenous'. But

C R Sasikumar

as Granville Austin has pointed out, of all things, the Constituent Assembly debates spent the maximum amount of time on securing an independent judiciary — the salaries of its judges coming from the Consolidated Fund of India and it being vested with the power of contempt. The framers of the Constitution figured that a judiciary which could truly rise above any pressures from the other pillars of democracy would decide how free India would eventually be, even of its own limitations.

South Africa had its transformational moment when the apartheid regime was forced to shut shop. Nelson Mandela, with the massive credibility he enjoyed, could have steered the ship any which way but he chose to take it to a safe harbour when he proposed "Truth and Reconciliation". The simple formulation hid the large and elegant message that a revolutionary chose to give as he went about setting the terms of a new South Africa. In the words of Dullah Omar, former minister of justice in South Africa, the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation was "a necessary exercise to enable South Africans to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation".

The matter at hand has seen all kinds of archaeology at work. There is the Archaeological Survey of India, which conjectures about what is true, authentic or "indigenous". But excavating definitive truth from all the layers is hardly a straightforward task. Is it Ayodhya or Saketa? Is the matter just about a title suit? Is it about belief, and if yes, then the beliefs of how many? It is a case that traverses so much of India's past and its journeys. The mounds being dug at Muziris or at Keeladi currently could gently point to the palimpsest that India is and the importance of recognising how perilous it is to label any one layer as being the seminal one.

The judiciary has often been the one arm of Indian democracy that has had to insulate itself from the "mood of the moment", and

deliver more than just the law of the land. There is a long and fractious debate on how "transformatively" the courts must intervene in support of what "many" think must be done. And, how much they need to weigh in on behalf of those who stand for "progress", often antithetical to the "mood". Sometimes, legislatures have attempted

to draw a line. The Places of Worship (Special Provisions Act), 1991 intends to do this: "An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." There was a time when diversity, the

salad bowl/melting pot/khichdi was celebrated and Ganga-Jamuni was not something seen as an "insult" by the late arrivals to the self-proclaimed "originals". Things appear to have changed with the powerful notso-hesitant to exert power in their quest to re-examine the Indianness of the millions here for generations.

As an aside, among the most striking things about Jerusalem is the cheek-by-jowlness of the Wall — where Jews worship the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock in Al Aqsa. This is not to airbrush the politics and separation that plays out there.

Whatever may be the verdict of this fivejudge bench, after all the effort that has gone into it and the long hearings, it may prove to be foundational and responsible for providing closure and calm for India. If we would rather laugh at the idea of Future Commissioners, we could open the doors for more chaos and leave no scope for the future. It is a choice that will have serious implications for India.

We will know on judgment day, about where the line is finally drawn.

seema.chishti@expressindia.com

#### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The prime minister ran out of time playing political games (with Brexit), and he wants British workers to pay the price for his bungling." — THE GUARDIAN

## Reform, not compliance

A law alone will not serve as a panacea against torture by police in India. What is needed is 'ease of policing', better training and infrastructure



ASHOVARDHAN AZAD

COMMON CAUSE'S recent survey on the Status of Policing in India is said to have affirmed that the black sheep in the police force find nothing wrong with beating up criminals to extract a confession. It is still, however, too judgemental to suggest that torture is endemic to Indian policing, as Maja Daruwala does ('Exorcising third-degree', IE, September 27). There is still an overwhelming majority of IPS and other police officers in the country who abhor torture and have faith in human dignity. Torture is not justified under any circumstance. It is a wound in the soul that demeans the society.

India signed the UN Convention Against Torture on October 14, 1997, but is yet to ratify it by enacting the law on torture. It does, though, have instruments in place to take immediate action in torture cases. Any custodial or other case of death in police custody is enquired into by a magistrate and in some cases, a judicial enquiry can also be ordered. Criminal cases under substantive sections can also be instituted against the accused policemen. Complaints against policemen have been filed in courts, which have taken severe action in such cases. Installation of CCTV cameras covering hawalat rooms in police stations has been made mandatory. In addition, the National Human Rights Commission acts as the watchdog of human rights. Why then are such cases still coming to light? The state must take the responsibility of fixing these instruments to ensure that they deliver justice to the victims of human rights abuse. And it must implement the Supreme Court's directive on setting up a Police Complaints Authority in every state

The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on December 10, 1984, and came into force on June 26, 1987. In November 2017, the Law Commission of India in its 273rd report recommended that the government ratify the convention. The Commission also presented a draft of a new Prevention of Torture Bill to the government, which has not yet been adopted.

But ratification of the global human rights treaty alone is not a panacea for the ills of torture. Cases of police torture still surface in all the 160 nations that have enacted laws on torture to ratify the treaty. In South Asia, detainee torture and custodial deaths remain at a disturbingly high level in Pakistan (which signed the convention on April 17, 2008, and ratified on June 3, 2010) as well as in Afghanistan (signed the convention on February 4, 1985, and ratified on April 1, 1987). China, for instance, signed the Convention on December 12, 1986, and hurriedly ratified the treaty on October 4, 1988. Yet, the country is con-

demned for horrific state repression while interrogating detainees and suppressing political dissent. It will be unfair to infer that we are amongst the worst in this respect because India has not yet adopted the Prevention of Torture Bill. On the other hand, it is about time we

took a closer look at the reality of policing in India. Police stations in outlying rural areas lack even the basic technology, forensic aid and materials for crime detection. Many of them are located in signal gap zones. where mobile phones barely work and internet connectivity is weak or non-existent. The roads are unmotorable. A single big police station looks after 70 to 80 villages in large states. Crime is rampant. The building infrastructure in many cases is still poor and unliveable — forget about interrogation or detention cells. Life there is torture anyway, even when one is held in custody for 24 hours.

With a severe manpower deficit, India's police force is grossly overworked. The heavy pendency of work is coupled with brazen political interference. Work stress is inordinately high and the quality of life poor and demotivating. The urgency to improve the crime detection rate is a matter of constant worry. All this, regrettably, does make the police lose patience in trying to bring cases to a quick culmination.

These are not "pocketful of ready excuses" as Daruwala suggests but debilitating conditions. Rickety infrastructure with rudimentary facilities cannot inspire high grade, enlightened policing. All police stations need to be provided with modern-day amenities and connectivity. A dire need is the state-of-the-art technology and equipment to promote hassle-free interrogation and crime detection. The police force needs to be trained at regular intervals and special training should be imparted to the state police personnel by the CBI on questioning suspects. But more often than not, they cannot be spared for refresher courses.

Working on the identified but long pending gaps in criminal justice system that may disincentivise torture — like separation of the law and order and investigation wings at police stations, strengthening the prosecution apparatus and provision of legal advisors in the district police set up – will enable the police supervisory structures to reduce torture to a great extent. It may sound ironical but a sustained focus on Ease of Doing Policing and measures for empowering the police within a well-established accountability framework could prove to be the biggest step towards reducing this practice. Finally, the recruitment process for the police has to be equipped with modern psychoanalytical tools to shun the entry of those with a grain of brutality. This will help weed out the instinct to torture from the core of the system.

Ratification of the UN convention against torture needs to be done in letter and spirit. Unless we upgrade our infrastructure, ramp up our capacities, strengthen our police force, enacting the Prevention of Torture Bill will be just another exercise of official compliance to free our conscience.

> The writer is a former IPS officer and Central Information Commissioner

## The path to peace

Centre should not insist on the three-month deadline for Naga peace talks

THANGKHANLAL NGAIHTE

THE NAGA peace talks are back in the headlines. The scramble started on August 17 when the interlocutor for the talks, and now governor of Nagaland, RN Ravi disclosed that the prime minister has asked him to conclude the talks in three months. "In the last five years, we have resolved all the substantive issues," he said.

This has been the government's position for some time. Last year, Ravi told a parliamentary committee that the framework agreement of 2015 was signed after the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak Muivah), or NSCN-IM, gave up the idea of Naga sovereignty and "agreed for a settlement within the Indian federation". Subsequently, the NSCN-IM also came to accept that the "boundaries of any state will neither be changed nor altered". The NSCN-IM is the body representing the Nagas in the talks. On its part, the Indian government reaffirmed its recognition of the uniqueness of Naga history. A special status on the lines of Article 371-A will be explored for Naga areas outside Nagaland.

Given this, there is nothing surprising about the prime minister getting impatient with the talks. But then, other things happened. On August 5, the Narendra Modi government abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the

epaper indianexpress.com

Constitution. This provoked anxiety in Nagaland and other northeastern states, most of which are endowed with different levels of special status under different sections of Article 371. It also emerged that the demands for a separate Naga flag and constitution — the very same things that were taken from Jammu and Kashmir — were what had stalled the talks.

The response from the NSCN-IM came through a series of aggressive statements. On September 11, the group stated that "the Nagas will not merge with the Union of India"; that they "do not accept Indian Constitution, but Nagas and Indians will share sovereign powers based on competencies". This follows the group's statement on August 24 that an "honourable" accord demands acceptance of the Naga national flag and constitution and that "talks sans integration of all the contiguous Naga areas will be a futile exercise". Thousands of Nagas had sacrificed their lives for these causes and we cannot dishonour their sacrifices, Muivah said. The three-month deadline was denounced as a unilateral ultimatum.

With this, the unlikely honeymoon between the overtly Christian NSCN-IM and the Hindu BJP regime comes to an end. Should we be surprised?

It is important to remember that the two foundational, and explicit aims of the Naga movement — from Phizo to Muivah — were sovereign statehood and territorial integration. Sovereignty was claimed on the basis of prior sovereign existence and difference, which is today expressed in terms of "uniqueness". Second, the "artificial boundaries" separating the Nagas will be dismantled and be placed under one administration.

On sovereignty, the NSCN-IM's manifesto was categorical: "We stand for the unquestionable sovereign right of the Naga people over every inch of Nagaland whatever it may be and admit of no other existence whatever." Yet, the goal of sovereignty was effectively given up long ago. And territorial integration also turned out to be not possible. According to Ravi, the NSCN-IM had already accepted that.

So, the NSCN-IM was left with little of substance to begin with. No amount of grand spectacle can hide this cold reality. And when the symbolic yet significant demands for a flag and constitution are not acceded to, what are they left with? The Naga side cannot simply walk away now when everyone is expecting a final solution. They had oversold their prospects and over-interpreted the government's recognition of Naga uniqueness.

The taste of relative peace since 1997 emboldened the people and they are unlikely to be happy with renewed violence. Against the NSCN-IM's objections, other Naga groups are asserting themselves and the government is happy to indulge them. The NSCN-IM manifesto warned that negotiations, if indispensable, should be done only from a position of strength. Today, they seem to be grasping at straws.

Muivah faces an inevitable dilemma. The uncompromising, hardline position that gave them legitimacy during the struggle returns to haunt them in the end when they realise that compromises are the only way to a solution. Ironically, it was Muivah's former comrade-turned-enemy S S Khaplang, who had predicted this. The book, Rendezvous with Rebels, recorded Khaplang's thoughts on the peace talks: It was a "huge mistake" that will preclude sovereignty and integration. And ultimately, "they will have to be satisfied with whatever scraps the government concedes".

The NSCN-IM is apparently weighing its dwindling options. Modi, who has invested so much, will be ill-advised to insist on his three-month deadline and end up with a non-final agreement. The next few weeks may tell us where the road will lead.

> The writer teaches political science at Churachandpur College, Manipur

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### POVERTY & HEALTH THIS REFERS TO 'Easing poverty' (IE,

October 18). The Nobel Prize to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Dufflo and Michael Kremer sends a message to those trying to reduce poverty. They should not treat the poor as mere subjects of welfare. Even though the global economy has grown faster than ever, millions have failed to reap its benefits. It might not be enough to announce free vaccination programme to reduce child mortality, giving some incentive like milk, might make mothers walk an extra mile to bring their children to the vaccination centre. Banerjee and Dufflo have set up what they call a poverty action lab at MIT to develop such insights. Some one has rightly said that the "the biggest enemy of health in the developing countries is poverty".

Lal Singh, East Mohan Nagar

#### ALLY SPURNED

THIS REFERS TO the editorial. 'Pullback and chaos' (IE, October 17). The Kurds were an ally of the US against the ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The editorial talks about the rough treatment meted out to them. President Donald Trump's behaviour is not new. From North Korea to China to the Kurds, there has never been any consistency in Trump's policies. Indian diplomats and foreign policy makers must always keep Trump's unpredictability in mind. India cannot rely on the US administration's words for support when it comes to New

#### 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 or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

Delhi's interests. Suchak D Patel, Ahmedabad

#### COURT STEPS IN

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Place before us all your orders imposing curbs on J&K, SC tells Centre' (IE, October 11). Kashmir is open for tourists but the lock down is still not over. One may feel good that the state won't lose any tourism revenue but the condition of people remains the same. The government must address the issue. It is time that they start lifting the curbs and as per the Supreme Court's order, should they ever decide to impose new curbs, they must submit all the details on the same to the Supreme Court.

Sauro Dasgupta, Kolkata

#### बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 208

#### पोषण का संकट

भारत की रैंकिंग को लेकर चिंता जाहिर करना वाजिब ही है। हर साल जारी होने वाले इस से पीछे हैं। मोटे तौर पर देखें तो भारत वर्ष भारांक या गणना-पद्धति में छोटे बदलावों

इस हफ्ते जारी वैश्विक भूख सूचकांक में 2010 में 95वें पायदान पर था, लिहाजा यही लगता है कि वह रैंकिंग में नीचे गिरा है। इस सचकांक में बच्चों का कद के अनपात सूचकांक में भारत को इस बार 117 देशों में में कम वजन, उम्र के अनुपात में कम दिखना, से 102वां स्थान मिला है। इसका मतलब है बाल मृत्यु दर और जरूरत से कम पोषण कि भूख की तड़प एवं उसके विस्तार पर जैसे तमाम संकेतक शामिल होते हैं। यह काब कर पाने में केवल 15 देश ही भारत संभव है कि इन पैमानों पर कल रैं किंग

के प्रति संवेदनशील हो। लेकिन सूचकांक है, 17 फीसदी दुबले रह जाते हैं और 33 में शामिल घटकों के अलग-अलग रुझान भी परेशान करते हैं। कद के अनपात में वजन का पैमाना अधिक परेशान करता है। रिपोर्ट कहती है कि जहां वर्ष 2012 के पहले 16.5 फीसदी बच्चों का वजन कद के अनुपात में नहीं था, वहीं 2014 के बाद से ऐसे बच्चों की संख्या 20 फीसदी से अधिक हो चुकी है। यहां यह खास तौर पर उल्लेखनीय है कि ये आंकड़े मोटे तौर पर राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण जैसे स्रोतों से हासिल संकेतकों से मेल ही खाते हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र बाल कोष (यूनिसेफ) की इस हफ्ते जारी 'विश्व बाल स्थिति' रिपोर्ट में भी ऐसी ही चिंताएं जताते हुए कहा गया है कि 35 फीसदी भारतीय बच्चों का अपेक्षित कद नहीं बढता

फीसदी बच्चों का वजन कम रहता है। भारत का प्रदर्शन बेहद खराब रहने की पुष्टि इससे भी होती है कि इसके सारे पड़ोसी देश भूख सूचकांक में बेहतर स्थिति में हैं।

पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह ने एक बार कुपोषण को राष्ट्रीय शर्म बताया था लेकिन यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि इस मसले पर सरकारों की लगातार कोशिशों के बावजूद समुचित प्रगति नहीं हो पाई है। साफ-सफाई से जुड़ी समस्याएं भी कुपोषण की एक वजह हो सकती हैं, मसलन, स्वच्छ भारत अभियान। लेकिन रिपोर्ट बताती है कि खुले में शौच का सिलसिला अब भी जारी है जिसका पोषण पर दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण असर होता है। लेकिन अनवरत आर्थिक वृद्धि के दो

दशक बाद भी खानपान के बुनियादी मसले नहीं निपटाए जा सके हैं। हंगर रिपोर्ट कहती है कि छह महीने से लेकर दो साल तक के 90 फीसदी बच्चों को न्यूनतम स्वीकार्य आहार भी नहीं मिल पा रहा। यूनिसेफ रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक 40 फीसदी बच्चे एनीमिया की चपेट में हैं और केवल 40 फीसदी बच्चे, किशोर या माताएं ही हफ्ते में कम-से-कम एक बार दुग्ध उत्पादों का सेवन करते हैं। ऐसी हालत तब है जब दूध उत्पादन छह फीसदी दर से बढ़ा है और नवीनतम पश् गणना में दुधारू गायों की संख्या बढ़ने की बात सामने आई है।

भारत राज्य को बुनियादी तत्त्वों पर जोर देना होगा और खाद्य वितरण के सवालों को हल करना होगा। किसी इलाके में गेहूं एवं

धान उगाने की इच्छा रखने वाले किसानों के समर्थन का एक माध्यम भर रह गई मौजुदा सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में सधार करने होंगे। यह एक वितरण प्रणाली है, केवल खरीद व्यवस्था नहीं। अब यह सुनिश्चित करने पर जोर होना चाहिए कि कुपोषण का जोखिम झेल रहे बच्चों समेत तमाम भारतीयों को संतुलित एवं पोषक आहार मिले। अगर उत्तर प्रदेश के स्कूलों में बच्चों को मध्याह्न भोजन में चावल के साथ हल्दी का पानी भर मिल रहा हो तो अनाज के भंडारगृहों में गेहूं एवं चावल का ढेर लगा होने का कोई मतलब नहीं है। दोपहर में बच्चों को सब्जियों एवं प्रोटीन से भरपूर गरम खाना परोसना भूख से जुडे सवाल हल करने का बढिया शुरुआती



## पीएमसी संकट के हल में छिपा अवसर

सहकारी बैंकों में फैली अव्यवस्था को हमेशा के लिए दूर करने की जरूरत है। पीएमसी बैंक का संकट इसके लिए माकूल मौका पेश करता है। बता रहे हैं देवाशिष बसु

न हफ्ते पहले पंजाब ऐंड महाराष्ट्र को-ऑपरेटिव बैंक (पीएमसी बैंक) अचानक धराशायी हो गया। बैंक के तीन लाख से अधिक खाताधारकों ने करीब 11,500 करोड रुपये उसमें जमा कर रखे थे। उसने दिवालिया हो चुके रियल एस्टेट समृह एचडीआईएल को 6,500 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक कर्ज दिया हुआ था। खास बात यह है कि पीएमसी बैंक पर एचडीआईएल ही समान निदेशकों एवं शेयरधारिता के जरिये चोरी-छिपे नियंत्रण कर रहा था। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) ने बैंक से जमा राशि निकालने पर पाबंदियां लगा दी हैं। ऐसे में जमाकर्ताओं का गुस्सा एवं मायूसी बढ़ती जा रही है। सोशल मीडिया पर वित्त मंत्री की असंवेदनशीलता को लेकर टिप्पणियों की भरमार है। वित्त मंत्री ने जिंदगी भर की बचत स्वाहा हो जाने की हृदयविदारक घटनाओं पर दर्भाग्यपर्ण ढंग से प्रतिक्रिया देते हए कहा है कि सहकारी बैंक वित्त मंत्रालय के नियंत्रण में नहीं आते हैं।

महाराष्ट्र में आसन्न विधानसभा चुनावों के बीच मुख्यमंत्री ने यह आश्वासन दिया है कि वह एक महीने में इस मसले का समाधान निकाल लेंगे। आरबीआई गवर्नर ने असाधारण दावा किया है कि वह किसी भी सहकारी बैंक को डबने नहीं देगा जबकि पराने आंकडे बताते हैं कि हरेक कुछ महीनों पर एक सहकारी बैंक दिवालिया होता है और ऐसे बैंकों की संख्या 1,000 से भी अधिक है। हम सहकारी बैंकों की समस्या दूर करने के लिए एक भी समझदार कदम नहीं उठाया है क्योंकि हमारे पास ऐसे संकट से निपटने का कोई सांचा ही नहीं है। इस लेख में पीएमसी बैंक संकट के समाधान एवं भविष्य में ऐसा संकट पैदा होने से रोकने के लिए जरूरी कदमों के बारे में कुछ विचार रखे गए हैं। इसके लिए वित्त मंत्रालय एवं आरबीआई को तीव्र कार्रवाई करने और कुछ नियमों में बदलाव करने की जरूरत पड़ेगी। यह सरकार तो जब चाहे, नियम बदल सकती है।

#### तात्कालिक कदम

किसी भी वित्तीय संकट में पहला काम यह होता है कि चल एवं अचल संपत्तियों का मल्य बचाए रखने के लिए जल्दी से कदम उठाए जाएं। इसके लिए हमें नियमों के एक समूह की जरूरत है या फिर सत्यम और आईएलऐंडएफएस मामलों की तरह जरूरत पडने पर हम नए नियम भी बना सकते हैं। पीएमसी बैंक संकट सामने आने के बाद तीन हफ्ते बीत चुके हैं और अभी तक इस दिशा में कोई कदम नहीं उठाया गया है। यह चौंकानी वाली बात नहीं है क्योंकि नेताओं एवं बाबुओं का कुछ भी दांव पर नहीं होता है लिहाँजा वे परिसंपत्ति मूल्य को बचाए रखने पर ध्यान नहीं देते हैं।

दुर्भाग्य से कुछ व्यावहारिक दिक्कतें भी हैं। आप यह गौर करेंगे कि जब भी संकट आता है तो राजस्व विभाग, प्रवर्तन निदेशालय, आर्थिक अपराध प्रकोष्ठ और गंभीर धोखाधड़ी कार्यालय जैसी तमाम एजेंसियां सिक्रय हो जाती हैं। इनमें से कुछ एजेंसियां परिसंपत्तियों को जब्त करना शुरू कर देती हैं। नेता संपत्तियों की जब्ती एवं कर्की की खबरें मीडिया में देखना पसंद करते लेकिन ऐसे कदम जमाकर्ताओं एवं ऋणदाताओं के हितों के खिलाफ है। किसी भी समाधान का फायदा इन्हीं दो समहों को होता है। आरबीआई या वित्त मंत्रालय को फौरन एक पैनल बनाना चाहिए जिसकी मियाद सीमित हो। इस पैनल को यह दायित्व एवं शक्ति दी जाए कि वह पीएमसी बैंक की परिसंपत्तियों और एचडीआईएल के प्रवर्तकों एवं पीएमसी बैंक के प्रमुख की निजी संपत्तियों को एक एस्क्रो खाते में रख दे और राजस्व विभागों एवं कर्जदाताओं के तदर्थ कदमों से उसे सरक्षित रखे। आईएलऐंडएफएस मामले में ऐसा ही किया

सबसे अहम सवाल यह है कि इस पैनल का अगुआ किसे बनाया जाए ? यह जिम्मेदारी किसी सामान्य नौकरशाह या बैंकर को दी जाती है तो यह एक निरर्थक कवायद ही साबित होगी। सत्यम घोटाले के सामने आने के बाद समाधान निकालने का काम दीपक पारेख की निगरानी में किया गया था। वहीं आईएलऐंडएफएस को संकट से बाहर निकालने का काम उदय कोटक की देखरेख में चल रहा है। पीएमसी बैंक के लिए बनने वाले पैनल का नेतृत्व दीपक पारेख या एचडीएफसी बैंक के आदित्य पुरी को सौंपा जा सकता है। दोनों ही सख्त एवं व्यावहारिक बैंकर हैं और उन्हें वित्त एवं रियल एस्टेट

दोनों क्षेत्रों की समझ है। अचल संपत्तियों को कब्जे में लेने के अलावा पैनल को इसकी मुख्य परिसंपत्ति- बेहद सुचारू ढंग से संचालित शाखाओं एवं जमाकर्ता आधार की बढिया कीमत निकालने पर ध्यान देना होगा। मुंबई में खास मौजूदगी नहीं रखने वाले किसी भी बैंक के लिए यह आकर्षण का विषय होगा। लेकिन बैंकिंग लाइसेंस पाने की इच्छा रखने वाली एक चुस्त-दुरुस्त एवं पूंजी से लैस वित्त कंपनी के लिए यह बेहद कीमती होगा। जहां इससे जमा आधार का बडा हिस्सा मिलेगा वहीं अभाव की भरपाई सरकार की तरफ से होगी। जब सहकारी बैंकों की नाकामियों के लिए वित्त मंत्रालय, राज्य सरकार और आरबीआई सम्मिलित रूप से जिम्मेदार हैं तब बैंक जमाकर्ताओं के किसी भी तरह का घाटा उठाने का कोई कारण नहीं है। दशकों से कमजोर नियामकीय व्यवस्था होने और विभिन्न सझावों पर कदम नहीं उठाने से ये बैंक नाकाम साबित होते रहे हैं। पीएमसी बैंक के जमाकर्ताओं को सरकार की दरियादिली की कहीं अधिक जरूरत है। केंद्र सरकार के कर्मचारियों का महंगाई भत्ता गत दिनों ही पांच फीसदी बढाने का फैसला

#### संकट के बाद

नियामकों को पता है कि सहकारी बैंकों में फैली अव्यवस्था दूर करने के लिए क्या किए जाने की जरूरत हैं? गत दो दशकों में तमाम सरकारी समितियों एवं कार्यबलों का गठन शहरी सहकारी बैंकों का कामकाज सुधारने के लिए किया गया है। माधव दास समिति (1978), मराठे समिति (1991), माधव राव समिति (1999), मालेगाम समिति (2010) और आर गांधी समिति (2015) इसके लिए ही बनी थीं। इसी तरह वर्ष 2006 में पूंजी परिवर्द्धन और वर्ष 2008 में शहरी सहकारी बैंकों के लिए एक छाता संगठन बनाने पर कार्य समृह बनाए जा चुके हैं। इसके बावजूद शहरी सहकारी बैंकों के नाकाम होते रहने की वजह यह है कि हर बार हम तात्कालिक उपचार करने की कोशिश कर रहे थे। इसके अलावा अधिकांश विवेकपूर्ण सुझावों को नजरअंदाज किया जाता रहा है।

यहां पर एक सरल सिद्धांत लागु करने की जरूरत है: जमा लेने वाले सभी संगठनों को आरबीआई की एकल निगरानी में लाया जाना चाहिए। पूरी तरह बेअसर रहे सहकारी समितियों के रजिस्टार का जमा लेने वाले संगठनों पर नियमन के साथ कोई लेना-देना नहीं होना चाहिए। इसमें ख़ुद को बैंक कहने वाले वित्तीय संस्थान भी शामिल हैं। शहरी सहकारी बैंकों को छोटे बैंकों में तब्दील होने या अन्य छोटे बैंकों के साथ विलय और शेयर बाजार में सुचीबद्ध होने के लिए बाध्य किया जाना चाहिए। इस प्रक्रिया में हमें सहकारी बैंकों एवं छोटे बैंकों के बीच स्वतंत्र एवं सरल विलय की जरूरत है। एक कहावत है, कभी भी संकट को व्यर्थ न जाने दो। पीएमसी बैंक का मामला न केवल सहकारी बैंकों की अव्यवस्था को हमेशा के लिए खत्म कर देने का बडा मौका है बल्कि आईएलऐंडएफएस के साथ मिलकर यह भविष्य में डुबते वित्तीय संस्थानों को उबारने का एक सांचा भी खडा करता है।

#### गलितयों से बचे सर्वोच्च अदालत लिए समय नहीं है।' बिहार के यह सवाल अंतहीन बहस का मुद्दा है कि क्या न्याय की चक्की मुख्यमंत्री जगन्नाथ मिश्रा से जुड़े को धीरे-धीरे और सुचार रूप एक मामले में उसी न्यायाधीश ने से चलना चाहिए या इसका इसी तरह की टिप्पणी की थी। मकसद तेजी से फैसला देने का

अहम फैसले देते वक्त पिछली

अदालती आईना

जब ब्रिटेन के उच्चतम न्यायालय ने पिछले महीने तीन दिन की सुनवाई के बाद प्रधानमंत्री के खिलाफ 20 पृष्ठों का फैसला दिया था, तो कुछ लोगों ने इसे हमारी अदालतों के लिए नजीर माना था जहां लोगों को न्याय पाने के लिए दशकों लग जाते हैं। हालांकि ब्रिटेन की अदालत के सामने तुलनात्मक रूप से सरल मसला था लेकिन इसका राजनीतिक प्रभाव बहुत व्यापक था। हमारे उच्चतम न्यायालय के सामने कई अपील और रिट याचिकाएं हैं जिनमें इतिहास, पुरातत्व, धर्म, राजनीति, आठ भाषाओं में 20,000 पृष्ठों के दस्तावेज और 8,000 पृष्ठों का उच्च न्यायालय का फैसला है। यदि मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने समयसीमा निर्धारित नहीं की होती तो अयोध्या मामले की सुनवाई इस सप्ताह पूरी नहीं होती।

होना चाहिए।

खत्म करने के लिए कोई समयसीमा निर्धारित नहीं करते हैं। सामान्य मामलों में सुनवाई पूरी होने में कई हफ्ते लग जाते हैं। सुनवाई में तेजी दुर्लभ है और अगर किसी एक न्यायाधीश को सेवानिवृत्त होना हो तो इससे न्यायिक व्यवधान का खतरा रहता है। अयोध्या मामले में यह उन कारकों में शामिल था जो मुख्य न्यायाधीश की अगुआई वाले पांच न्यायाधीशों के पीठ के समक्ष थे। वह 17 नवंबर को सेवानिवत्त हो रहे हैं और सनवाई में तेजी के लिए इसे सबसे अहम कारण

अमूमन न्यायाधीश जिरह

माना जा रहा है। वकीलों का एक वर्ग मानता है कि सेवानिवृत्त होने जा रहे न्यायाधीशों को बड़े मामलों पर सुनवाई नहीं करनी चाहिए। ऐसे मामलों की सुनवाई ऐसे न्यायाधीशों को करनी चाहिए जिनके पास सभी पक्षों की दलीलें सुनने, सम्मेलन करने, टिप्पणियों का आदानप्रदान करने और अंतिम फैसला देने के लिए पर्याप्त समय हो। पिछले मामलों में यह देखने में आया है कि अगर पीठ का कोई एक सदस्य सेवानिवृत्त होने वाला हो तो इससे पीठ के तालमेल में व्यवधान पैदा होता है। ऐतिहासिक माने जाने वाले



एम जे एंटनी

मामले से जुड़े विभिन्न पहलुओं

पर चर्चा करने का समय नहीं था।

दिवंगत न्यायाधीश वाईवी

चंद्रचुड ने अपने अलग फैसले में

लिखा कि इस वजह से

न्यायाधीशों के बीच पूरी चर्चा

हुई। संविधान के बुनियादी ढांचे

मामले मिनर्वा मिल्स वाद में

दिवंगत न्यायाधीश पी एन

भगवती ने इस मुद्दे पर एक लंबा

होने जा रहे थे जिसके कारण

संविधान पीठ के पास सभी मद्दों

सामहिकता' की जरूरत पर जोर

है। पूरा फैसला अगले मंगलवार

को उपलब्ध हो पाया था। एक

न्यायाधीश ने लिखा कि उसे

सेवानिवृत्त होने में कुछ ही घंटे

कई अन्य मामलों में इस

नहीं हो सकी।

से बचा जा सकता है। दिवंगत कानूनविद एनए पालकीवाला ने एक बार कहा था कि न्यायाधीशों को इस बात को ध्यान में रखना चाहिए कि इंसान की जिंदगी केशवानंद भारती मामले में स्पष्ट छोटी होती है। मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने हाल में अदालत के फैसलों तौर पर ऐसा हुआ था। सेवानिवृत्त होने जा रहे तत्कालीन मुख्य को राष्ट्रीय भाषाओं में अनुवाद न्यायाधीश और पीठ में शामिल करने से जुड़ी परियोजना की 12 अन्य न्यायाधीशों ने 11 शुरुआत करते हुए कहा था कि अलग-अलग फैसले दिए। मुख्य लोगों को फैसलों को पढ़ना और न्यायाधीश के सेवानिवृत्त होने से समझना चाहिए। ऐसा इसलिए है एक दिन पहले आया यह फैसला क्योंकि दुष्प्रचार और मुद्दों के 800 पृष्ठों का था। पीठ के एक राजनीतिकरण के इस दौर में सदस्य की शिकायत थी कि चूंकि किसी विचार का सही संचार मुख्य न्यायाधीश सेवानिवृत्त होने ज्यादा जरूरी है। न्यायाधीशों को वाले थे, इसलिए सदस्यों के बीच

लंबे चौड़े फैसलों के साथ उनका एक सारांश भी देना चाहिए। केशवानंद और मिनर्वा मिल्स मामलों में ऐसा किया गया था। अयोध्या मामले में इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय के तीन न्यायाधीशों ने अपने फैसलों में सारांश दिया था। आने वाले महीनों में निर्णयों का सही अर्थ समझने की

अगर न्यायाधीशों के पास

एकदुसरे से मंत्रणा करने और

छोटे फैसले लिखने के लिए पर्याप्त

समय है तो इस तरह के नुकसान

अप्रिय परिदृश्य की पुनरावृत्ति अहमियत पर ज्यादा जोर नहीं से जुडे एक और ऐतिहासिक दिया जा सकता है। लोगों को अयोध्या मामले के फैसले को समझना ही होगा। संविधान के अनच्छेद 370 को खत्म करने के मामले में भी न्यायालय का अंश लिखा। उनका कहना था कि एक न्यायाधीश जल्द सेवानिवृत्त फैसला लोगों की समझ में आना चाहिए। लंबी सनवाई के बाद अनिर्दिष्ट फैसलों अनिश्चितता बढेगी जैसा कि पर विचार करने के लिए पर्याप्त समय नहीं था। उन्होंने 'न्यायिक आरक्षण, भूमि अधिग्रहण और सबरीमला के मामलों में हो रहा है। सैकड़ों पृष्ठों के न्यायिक दिया। ओडिशा की पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री नंदिनी सत्पथी से जुड़े व्यक्तिगत विवेक के बावजूद ये मामले आजादी के एक और प्रसिद्ध अभी तक नहीं सुलझ पाए हैं। मामले में फैसला जल्दबाजी में इसमें स्पष्टीकरण आवेदन, पनर्विचार याचिकाएं और शनिवार को सुनाया गया जबकि उस दिन अदालत की छट्टी होती उपचारात्मक याचिकाएं आएंगी और शायद सड़कों पर प्रदर्शन भी हो सकते हैं। अंत में न्यायाधीशों को अमेरिका के फैसले सुनाए जाने से एक दिन सुप्रीम कोर्ट के अपने समकक्षों की तरह यह स्वीकारोक्ति करनी पहले ही दोपहर को अपने साथी न्यायाधीश से मसौदा मिला था। पडेगी कि 'हमारी बात इसलिए साथ ही मुख्य न्यायाधीश के अंतिम नहीं हैं क्योंकि हम गलती नहीं करते हैं मगर हम गलती थे। न्यायाधीश ने लिखा, 'मेरे इसीलिए नहीं करते हैं क्योंकि पास विस्तृत फैसला लिखने के हमारी बात अंतिम हैं।'

#### कानाफूसी

#### अनूठी पहल

तेलंगाना के मुलुडु जिले के जिलाधिकारी ने शहर में प्लास्टिक कचरे से निपटने का एक अभिनव तरीका निकाला है। बुधवार को जिलाधिकारी सी नारायण रेड्डी ने घोषणा की कि 1 किलोग्राम प्लास्टिक कचरा देने के बदले जिला प्रशासन लोगों को एक किलो चावल मुहैया कराएगा। उन्होंने कहा कि अंगले 10 दिन में वे सारे प्लास्टिक थैले हटाकर उन्हें सीमेंट फैक्टरियों में भेजेंगे जबकि प्लास्टिक की बोतलों को रिसाइकल किया जाएगा। इस योजना में चावल दान देने के लिए अनिवासी भारतीय, स्थानीय राजनेता, व्यापारी और स्वयंसेवी संगठन आगे आए हैं। अब तक 335 क्विंटल चावल जिला प्रशासन द्वारा जुटाया जा चुका है। जबकि एक अनिवासी भारतीय ने इसके लिए 5 लाख रुपये की राशि भी प्रदान की है। रेड्डी को आशा है कि 26 अक्टूबर तक जिले की 174 ग्राम पंचायतों से करीब 500 क्विंटल प्लास्टिक एकत्रित हो जाएगा।

#### घर वापसी

ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि मध्य प्रदेश में भारतीय जनता पार्टी (भाजपा) के बागी विधायक नारायण त्रिपाठी का कांग्रेस से भी मोहभंग हो गया है। उनकी भाजपा में घर वापसी हो गई है। पिछले दिनों वह प्रदेश भाजपा अध्यक्ष राकेश सिंह के साथ भाजपा मुख्यालय पर अवतरित हुए और उन्होंने मीडिया से बातचीत की। त्रिपाठी ने कहा कि उन्होंने कभी पार्टी छोडी ही नहीं थी और विधानसभा में एक विधेयक पर कांग्रेस के पक्ष में मतदान भ्रामक परिस्थितियों के चलते किया था। उन्होंने

कहा कि उन्हें लगा कि उस विधेयक पर मतदान में भाजपा और कांग्रेस दोनों एक साथ हैं लेकिन वास्तव में ऐसा नहीं था। गत जुलाई में दंड प्रक्रिया संशोधन विधेयक, 2019 पर मत विभाजन के दौरान नारायण त्रिपाठी और शरद कोल नामक दो भाजपा विधायकों ने कांग्रेस के पक्ष में मतदान कर भाजपा को स्तब्ध कर दिया था। कोल एक महीने पहले ही भाजपा के साथ आ चुके हैं और अब त्रिपाठी ने भी घर वापसी कर ली है।

#### आपका पक्ष

#### भूख से निपटने के लिए उचित कदम

हाल में जारी वैश्विक भूख सूचकांक में भारत सात स्थान फिसलकर 102वें स्थान पर पहुंच गया है। यह स्थान भारत को 117 देशों के बीच मिला है। एक कृषि प्रधान देश का बड़ा तबका भूख से जूझ रहा है जो अफसोस की बात है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश में पांच साल से कम उम्र के बच्चों की लंबाई के अनुपात में कम वजन वाले बच्चों की संख्या भी बढी है। यह दर अब 20.8 फीसदी हो गई है। इससे साफ है कि इन बच्चों को जरूरी पोषक आहार नहीं मिल पा रहा है। केंद्र सरकार की खाद्य सुरक्षा योजना के बावजूद देश में भूख मिटाने का अभियान कमजोर नजर आ रहा है। वास्तव में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली का लाभ उन लाभार्थियों को नहीं मिल पा रहा है जो वास्तव में उसके हकदार हैं। देश में अनाज की कमी नहीं है इसलिए अपर्याप्त भोजन समस्या की रैंकिंग में सुधार हुआ

है। लेकिन उत्पादित अनाज में



पोषण की कमी है जिस वजह से : विश्व भूख सूचकांक में भारत देश को विश्व भुख सुचकांक में का स्थान गिरकर १०२वें स्थान पर पहुंच गया है निचले पायदान में स्थान मिला है। केंद्र सरकार एवं राज्य सरकार भूख और कुपोषण से निपटने के लिए आंगनबाड़ी एवं सरकारी प्राथमिक स्कूलों के माध्यम से बच्चों को

भविष्य में जलवायु परिवर्तन की वजह से देश के खाँद्यान्न उत्पादन मध्याहन भोजन का लाभ एवं पोषण में कमी देखने को मिल सकती है युक्त आहार देती है। लेकिन इस और देश की आबादी भी 1.36 क्षेत्र में सुधार की गति सुस्त है। ! अरब पहुंच गई है। इतनी बड़ी

सरकार के सामने कठिन चुनौती साबित होगी। इसलिए यह जरूरी हो गया है कि आबादी को नियंत्रित कर कृषि क्षेत्र के लिए सुधारवादी कदम उठाए जाएं ताकि भविष्य में वैश्विक भुख सुचकांक में देश का स्तर सुधर जाए। निशांत महेश त्रिपाठी, नागपुर

आबादी को भोजन मुहैया कराना

#### कौशल युक्त शिक्षा से अर्थव्यवस्था मजबूत

देश में प्रतिवर्ष 1.2 करोड यवा रोजगार के लिए तैयार हो रहे हैं। शायद इस वजह से सरकार ने 5 खरब डॉलर की अर्थव्यवस्था का सपना देखा है। लेकिन इस सपने के बीच पिछड़ी शिक्षा व्यवस्था आ रही है। जब तक स्कूली स्तर पर सार्वभौमिक गुणवत्ता वाली शिक्षा मुहैया नहीं कराई जाती तब तक भारत के विकास की गाथा

के अनुसार तीसरी कक्षा में पढ़ने वाले 3 से 4 बच्चे कक्षा 2 की किताबें पढ़ने में अक्षम हैं। हाल में राजस्थान के स्कूलों की स्थिति अखबारों में दिखाई दी है वह शर्मनाक है। उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली शिक्षा व्यवस्था का लाभ तभी है जब स्कूली शिक्षा पूरा करने वाले बच्चों में बुनियादी नींव मजबूत हो सके। इस समस्या से निपटने के लिए सरकार को बुनियादी शिक्षा पर ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। इसके लिए बच्चों में लिखने पढने की कुशलता का विकास जरूरी है। कक्षाओं में दी जाने वाली शिक्षा की कमी को दूर करना चाहिए। शिक्षकों के प्रशिक्षण की व्यवस्था करना भी जरूरी है तभी प्राथमिक स्तर पर प्रभावशाली तरीके से बच्चे पढने लिखने और सीखने की समझ विकसित कर पाएंगे। शिक्षकों पर भी नैतिक और प्रशासनिक दोनों तरीकों से ही जोर डालकर उन्हें अपनी जिम्मेदारी का एहसास कराना जरूरी है।

पूरी नहीं हो सकती है। एक रिपोर्ट

संगीता चौधरी, जयपुर

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड, 4, बहादुर शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं : lettershindi@bsmail.in उस जगह का उल्लेख अवश्य करें, जहां से आप ईमेल कर रहे हैं।



सब्र करने वाले को सब कुछ हासिल होता है

#### कश्मीर में दहशतगर्दी

कश्मीर में बीते तीन दिनों में तीन गैर कश्मीरियों की जिस तरह चुन-चुन कर हत्या की गई उससे यही स्पष्ट हो रहा है कि घाटी में छिपे आतंकी दहशत फैलाने में तुल गए हैं। इस दहशतगर्दी का सिर कुचला ही जाना चाहिए और वह भी आनन-फानन। आतंकियों ने जिन्हें अपना निशाना बनाया उनमें एक ट्रक ड्राइवर था, एक सेब व्यापारी और एक ईंट भट्ठे में काम करने वाला मजदूर। आतंकियों ने खास तौर पर सेब की खेप लाने गए लोगों को जिस तरह निशाना बनाया उसका मतलब यही है कि वे नहीं चाहते कि घाटी में सेब उगाने वाले किसानों का भला हो। ये तीन हत्याएं कश्मीरियत को कलंकित करने के साथ ही यह भी बताती हैं कि कश्मीर में पाकिस्तान की शह पर सक्रिय आतंकी किस तरह कश्मीरियों के लिए ही खतरा बन गए हैं। तीन निर्दोष-निहत्थे लोगों की हत्या के बाद कश्मीर में काम-धंधे के लिए गए अन्य लोगों में दहशत होना स्वाभाविक है। यदि उन्हें सुरक्षा का भरोसा नहीं दिलाया गया तो वे कश्मीर छोड़ने को मजबूर हो सकते हैं। इससे सबसे अधिक अहित कश्मीर के लोगों का ही होगा। निःसंदेह एक ओर जहां यह जरूरी है कि पुलिस एवं सुरक्षा बल काम-धंधे की वजह से कश्मीर गए बाहरी लोगों का निशाना बना रहे आतंकियों का सफाया करें वहीं यह भी आवश्यक है कि आम कश्मीरी जनता आतंकी तत्वों के खिलाफ खुलकर खड़ी हो। आम कश्मीरी जनता पाकिस्तानपरस्त कायर आतंकियों और साथ ही उनके खुले-छिपे समर्थकों के खिलाफ मुखर हो, इसकी कोशिश सुरक्षा बलों के साथ-साथ कश्मीर के राजनीतिक, सामाजिक और धार्मिक संगठनों को भी करनी चाहिए। ऐसा करके ही कश्मीरियत को जीवित किया जा

यह मानने के अच्छे-भले कारण हैं कि गैर कश्मीरी लोगों को मारने वाले आतंकियों ने प्रतिबंधों में ढील का फायदा उठाया है। वे ऐसा कैसे कर पा रहे हैं, इसकी न केवल तह तक जाना होगा, बल्कि आतंकियों और उनके समर्थकों के खिलाफ सख्ती का भी परिचय देना होगा। ऐसा करते हुए यह भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा िक आतंक के समर्थक मानवाधिकारों की फर्जी आड़ न लेने पाएं। सरकार और सुरक्षा बल इसकी अनदेखी नहीं कर सकते कि स्वतंत्रता और मानवाधिकारों की बात करने वाले कई ऐसे तत्व सिक्रय हैं जो वास्तव में अलगाव और आतंक के पिट्टू हैं। यही तत्व कश्मीर के बारे में दुष्प्रचार करने में लगे हुए हैं। उनकी ढिठाई का पता इससे चलता है कि वे खूंखार आतंकियों को भी आम कश्मीरी नागरिक की संज्ञा देने से बाज नहीं आते। यह जरूरी है कि भारत सरकार सोशल मीडिया से लेकर पश्चिमी मीडिया में सिक्रय ऐसे तत्वों को बेनकाब करने का काम करे।

### 2021 चुनाव की रणनीति

बंगाल में विधानसभा चुनाव में अभी काफी वक्त है, परंतु दो पार्टियों में 2021 के चुनाव के लिए रणनीति बनाने में होड़ सी लगी है। एक ओर तृणमूल तीसरी बार सत्ता पर काबिज होने के लिए लोकसभा चुनाव में लगे झटके को भुला कर स्थिति मजबूत करने को अभी से मोहरे सजा रही है तो दुसरी ओर पहली बार बंगाल में 18 लोकसभा सीटें जीतने वाली भाजपा अपनी जमीन को और सख्त करते हुए तुणमूल को हर हाल में सत्ता से बाहर करने की रणनीति को आगे बढ़ा रही है। भाजपा अब कोलकाता और आसपास के जिलों के साथ-साथ मुस्लिम बहुल खासकर सीमावर्ती जिले मुर्शिदाबाद, मालदा में अपना जनाधार बढ़ाने के लिए विशेष अभियान छेड़ने की तैयारी की है। वहीं तुणमूल ने जनसंपर्क बढ़ाने और जनाधार को मजबूत करने के लिए 'दीदी के बोलो' अभियान के तीसरे चरण की शुरुआत की है। चुनावी रणनीतिकार प्रशांत किशोर 2021 विधानसभा चुनाव के लिए तृणमूल की रणनीति पर काम कर रहे हैं। वहीं भाजपा भी पीछे नहीं है। एक बाद क कार्यक्रम आयोजित कर लोगों को जोड़ने की कोशिश में है। प्रदेश अध्यक्ष एवं सांसद दिलीप घोष ने स्वीकार किया है कि सुबे में भाजपा का प्रभाव काफी बढ़ा है। बावजूद इसके मुर्शिदाबाद, दक्षिण 24 परगना, कोलकाता, वीरभूम जैसे जिलों में पार्टी अब भी कमजोर है। भाजपा राज्य नेतृत्व ने इन जिलों के संगठन को निर्देश दिया है कि अधिक से अधिक लोगों के साथ जनसंपर्क बढाएं, कार्यक्रम आयोजित करें और केंद्र सरकार की उपलब्धियों को लोगों तक पहुंचाएं। इस समय भाजपा के बूथ स्तरीय संगठन का चुनाव चल रहा है। 79 हजार बूथ स्तरीय कमेटियों में से करीब 64 हजार बूथ स्तरीय कमेटियों का चुनाव हो चुका है। इस कमेटी के जरिये ही भाजपा हर बुथ पर अपनी पहुंच को मजबूत करने की रणनीति पर काम कर रही है। वहीं तृणमूल 'दीदी के बोलो' अभियान के तहत 600 से अधिक ब्लॉक एवं नगर अध्यक्षों को राज्य के 2000 गांवों एवं वार्डों का दौरा करने का निर्देश दिया गया है। यही नहीं वे सभी पार्टी सदस्यों के घर रात्रि भोजन करने के साथ-साथ बुथ स्तर के कार्यकर्ताओं से मिलेंगे और उनकी बातें सुनेंगे। साथ ही पार्टी समर्थक के घर एक रात बिताएंगे। तृणमूल एवं भाजपा जहां एक के बाद एक रणनीति बन रही हैं तो दूसरी ओर माकपा एवं कांग्रेस में सन्नाटा है।

## गरीबों का जीवन बदलने वाले प्रयोग



विवेक कौल

वास्तविक जीवन में प्रयोग करना काफी मुश्किल होता है, लेकिन अभिजीत बनर्जी और डुफ्लो के साथ ऐसा नहीं है, उनके शोध प्रायोगिक दृष्टिकोण पर आधारित हैं

र्ष 2011 की बात है। अभिजीत बनर्जी प २०११ का बात हा जानजात जनजा मुंबई आए हुए थे और मुझे उनका साक्षात्कार करना था। साक्षात्कार के दौरान उन्होंने मोरक्को से जुड़ा एक दिलचस्प प्रसंग बयान किया। अपने मोरक्को दौरे के दौरान बनर्जी जब एक गरीब आदमी से मिले तो उन्होंने उससे पूछा कि अगर तुम्हे थोड़े और पैसे मिलें तो तुम उन पैसों का क्या करोगे? उस आदमी ने कहा कि वह उन पैसों से भोजन खरीदेगा। इस पर बनर्जी ने उससे पूछा कि अगर और भी पैसा मिले तो वह उन पैसों का क्या करेगा? आदमी ने फिर जवाब दिया कि वह और भी भोजन खरीदेगा। बनर्जी को यह सुनकर काफी अजीब लगा, पर जब वह उस आदमी के घर पहुंचे तो हक्के-बक्के रह गए। उस आदमी के घर में टीवी और डीवीडी प्लेयर भी था। यह देखने के बाद बनर्जी ने उससे कहा कि अगर तुम्हारे पास खाने के लिए पर्याप्त आहार नहीं है तो फिर टीवी कैसे है? इस पर उसने जवाब दिया कि जिंदगी में टीवी होना खाने से अधिक जरूरी है। बनर्जी के लिए यह काफी चौंकाने वाली बात थी। इस अनुभव से दो-चार होने के बाद उन्होंने अपनी पत्नी एस्थर डुफ्लो के साथ विश्व के कई देशों में भोजन के अधिकार पर कई प्रयोग किए। इसके अलावा उन्होंने बाल शैक्षिक सुधार की दिशा में भी काफी काम किया। उन्हें इन क्षेत्रों में काम के लिए ही माइकल क्रेमर के साथ अर्थशास्त्र

में इस साल के नोबेल पुरस्कार से सम्मानित

किया गया है।

अधिकांश अर्थशास्त्री अपने काम के लिए प्रयोग आधारित दुष्टिकोण का पालन नहीं कर पाते, क्योंकि वास्तविक जीवन में प्रयोग करना काफी मुश्किल होता है, लेकिन अभिजीत बनर्जी और डुफ्लो के साथ ऐसा नहीं है। अर्थशास्त्र में उनके शोध प्रायोगिक दृष्टिकोण पर आधारित हैं। मोरक्को वाले उदहारण के आधार पर चीन में एक प्रयोग किया गया। इस प्रयोग की चर्चा बनर्जी ने उक्त साक्षात्कार में की थी। इसके बाद 2014 में मुंबई में हुए एक लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल में भी उन्होंने इसके बारे में काफी विस्तार से बताया। संयोग से मैं वहां मौजूद था। बनर्जी ने बताया कि हमने चीन में कुछ लोगों को सस्ते चावल खरीदने के लिए वाउचर दिए। हमारा अनुमान था कि इससे पोषण में सुधार होगा। चूंकि यह एक प्रयोग के रूप में किया गया था इसलिए कुछ लोगों को वाउचर दिए गए थे और कुछ को नहीं। इस प्रयोग का परिणाम उम्मीद से बहुत अलग निकला। आशा यह की जा रही थी कि लोगों का पोषण सधरेगा. पर ऐसा हुआ नहीं। बनर्जी ने बताया, वाउचर वाले लोग पोषण में बदतर निकले। दरअसल उन्हें लगा कि अब उनके पास वाउचर है सो वे पहले से ज्यादा अमीर हैं। और अब उन्हें चावल खाने की जरूरत नहीं है। वे पोर्क, झींगा आदि खा सकते हैं। उन्होंने पोर्क और झींगा खरीदा और परिणामस्वरूप उनके शुद्ध कैलोरी ग्रहण में कमी हो गई। भले ही यह



अवधेश राज

बात सुनने में थोड़ी अजीब लगे, पर बनर्जी इसे पूरी तरह तर्कसंगत मानते हैं। उनका कहना है कि वे लोग आनंद की प्रतीक्षा कर रहे थे। आनंद न केवल हमारे जीने के लिए, बल्कि हमारे भाग्य को नियंत्रित करने के संदर्भ में भी बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। अगर किसी को लगता है कि उसे शेष जीवन दब्बू होकर जीना होगा तो इसका मतलब है कि उसका जीना बहुत मुश्किल हो गया है। बनर्जी के अनुसार, चीन के वे लोग अपने पोषण में सुधार कर सकते थे या अगले दस दिनों के लिए थोड़ा बेहतर खा सकते थे, लेकिन आनंद एक ऐसी चीज है जिसके बारे में हम भूल जाते हैं।

दुनिया भर के विभिन्न देशों ने भोजन के अधिकार को इसी विचार के साथ लागू किया है कि अगर गरीब लोगों को रियायती भोजन दिया जाएगा तो उनके पोषण में सुधार होगा। जब खाद्य सुरक्षा नीतियां तैयार की जाती हैं तो उन्हें तैयार करने वाले जीवन के आनंद के बारे में नहीं सोचते। वे यह मानकर चलते हैं कि अगर भोजन रियायती दरों पर उपलब्ध कराया जाएगा तो लोग स्वाभाविक रूप से पोषण के बारे में ही सोचेंगे, लेकिन ऐसा नहीं है। यह एक बहुत ही सरल, किंतु गहरी बात है जो किसी प्रयोग से ही बाहर आ सकती थी। यह प्रयोग बनर्जी और डुफ्लो ने किया। ऐसे ही प्रयोग उन्होंने शैक्षिक सुधार के क्षेत्र में भी किए और यह पाया कि भारत के सरकारी स्कूलों में शैक्षिक सुधार की काफी जरूरत है। ऊंची कक्षाओं के छात्र भी ठीक से पढ़-लिख नहीं पाते हैं। उन्हें बुनियादी गणित के सवाल हल करने में भी दिक्कत होती है। इसी बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए उन्होंने सरकारी शिक्षकों के साथ एक प्रयोग किया।

बनर्जी दंपती ने शिक्षकों से कहा कि छह हफ्ते तक वे केवल छात्रों के बुनियादी कौशल पर ध्यान दें। यदि वे पढ़ नहीं सकते तो उन्हें पढ़ना सिखाएं। यदि वे गणित में दक्ष नहीं तो उन्हें गणित सिखाएं। इन शिक्षकों को थोड़ा वजीफा और साथ ही कुछ दिनों का प्रशिक्षण भी दिया गया। छह सप्ताह के इस प्रयोग से यह पता चला कि अगर एक अलग तरीके से पढ़ाया जाए तो बच्चों का भविष्य बदला जा सकता है। इस बारे में बनर्जी ने समझाया कि शिक्षकों को एक ऐसा काम करने के लिए कहा गया था जो वास्तव में उन्हें समझ में आता है। उन्हें बच्चों को वह सिखाने के लिए कहा गया जो बच्चे नहीं जानते थे। आम तौर पर शिक्षकों को पाठ्यक्रम पढ़ाने के लिए कहा जाता है।

शिक्षा अधिकार अधिनियम के तहत हर साल शिक्षकों को पाठ्यक्रम पूरा करना पड़त है। बच्चे कुछ समझ रहे है या नहीं, इसकी उन्हें चिंता नहीं होती। जरा कक्षा चार में पढ़ने वाले उन बच्चों के बारे में सोचिए जो पढ नहीं सकते, लेकिन वे सामाजिक अध्ययन और अन्य सभी चीजें सीख रहे होते हैं। वे किसी विदेशी भाषा में कुछ फिल्में भी देखते हैं। बनर्जी के अनुसार, दरअसल वे कुछ नही सीख रहे होते हैं और इसीलिए ड्रॉपआउट दर अधिक हैं। शिक्षा की समस्या का एक सरल समाधान है। बनर्जी का कहना है, पहले चार वर्षों में हमें बुनियादी कौशल सिखाने को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए। देश के इतिहास से परिचित कराने का काम बाद में भी हो सकता है। बनर्जी के अनुसार, हम यह भूल जाते हैं कि पूर्णता अच्छे की दुश्मन है। हम एक ऐसी शिक्षा प्रणाली की कोशिश कर रहे हैं, जो एकदम सही हो और हर बच्चा इसके अंत में ज्ञान के साथ सामने आए। इस कोशिश के कारण वे कुछ नहीं सीख पाते। ऐसे प्रयोगों से काफी लोगों का फायदा हुआ है। नोबेल पुरस्कार संबंधी प्रेस विज्ञप्ति में कहा भी गया है कि महज एक अध्ययन के प्रत्यक्ष परिणाम के रूप में पचास लाख से अधिक भारतीय बच्चों को स्कूलों में ट्यूशन के प्रभावी कार्यक्रमों से लाभ हुआ है यह बहुत बड़ी बात है।

> (स्तंभकार अर्थशास्त्री एवं इजी मनी ट्राइलॉजी के लेखक हैं) response@jagran.com

## वक्त से पहले हासिल उपलब्धि

स देश में सरकारी योजनाएं देरी के लिए कुख्यात हों वहां समय से पहले किसी योजना का लक्ष्य पूरा होना नई और अनोखी बात है। इस मामले में सबसे उल्लेखनीय है कि प्रधानमंत्री उज्ज्वला योजना। इस योजना के तहत मार्च 2020 तक आठ करोड़ गैस सिलेंडर देने का लक्ष्य तय किया गया था, लेकिन उसे बीते महीने यानी निर्धारित समय से सात माह पहले हासिल कर लिया गया। इस योजना के साथ ही सरकार हर गांव तक बिजली पहुंचाने और हर घर को शौचालय सुलभ कराने में भी कामयाब रही है। चूंकि मोदी सरकार की इन योजनाओं का लक्ष्य चुनावी राजनीति न होकर आम आदमी का सशक्तीकरण है इसलिए चुनाव बीतने के बाद भी उनके क्रियान्वयन पर पहले जैसा ही जोर दिया जा रहा है। अभी तक सरकारें आम तौर पर चुनावों को ध्यान में रखकर ही योजनाएं बनाती रही हैं। इसीलिए चुनाव बीतते ही उनकी रफ्तार सुस्त पड़ जाती थी। इसके अलावा राजनीतिक प्रतिबद्धता की कमी, नौकरशाही की शिथिलता और भ्रष्टाचार की व्यापकता के कारण सरकारी योजनाओं के अपेक्षित लाभ हासिल नहीं होते थे। वास्तव में इसी कारण जन कल्याणकारी योजनाएं गरीबी उन्मूलन का कारगर हथियार नहीं बन पाईं। इसके विपरीत मोदी सरकार ने समाज के वंचित तबकों को हर तरह से सशक्त बनाने का काम किया। गरीबों को बिजली, सडक, पक्के मकान, शौचालय, रसोई गैस जैसी मूलभृत सुविधाएं बिना किसी भेदभाव के मिलीं, जिनके लिए सरकारें आम आदमी को दशकों से ख्वाब दिखा रही थीं। जैसे-जैसे मोदी सरकार की योजनाओं का लाभ ग्रामीण इलाकों और वंचित तबकों तक पहुंचा वैसे-वैसे इन क्षेत्रों और समुदायों में भाजपा की पैठ बढ़ी। इन योजनाओं में प्रधानमंत्री उज्ज्वला योजना का उल्लेख इसीलिए बार-बार होता है, क्योंकि इससे करोड़ों महिलाओं को चूल्हे के धुएं से आजादी तो मिली ही, उनके समय की बचत भी हुई। चूल्हे में भोजन पकाने में महिलाओं को कहीं अधिक श्रम के साथ समय भी खपाना पड़ता था। अब उन्हें कहीं कम समय देना पड़ता है। शेष समय का उपयोग वे ऐसे कार्यों में

करती हैं जिनसे उनका जीवन सुधरे। देश में परंपरागत चूल्हों के धुएं से होने वाले प्रदूषण से हर साल पांच लाख महिलाओं की मौत हो जाती थी। विशेषज्ञों के मुताबिक रसोई में खुली आग के धुएं में एक घंटे बैठने का मतलब चार सौ सिगरेट के बराबर धुआं सुंघना है। 2014 में वर्ल्ड वाच इंस्टीट्युट ने अपनी रिपोर्ट



उज्ज्वला के तहत मार्च 2020 तक आठ करोड़ गैस कनेक्शन देने के लक्ष्य को समय से पहले हासिल करना बड़ी बात है



में बताया था कि दुनिया में सबसे अधिक जैव ईंधन पर निर्भर आबादी विकासशील एशिया में है। अकेले भारत में 70 करोड़ लोग परंपरागत ईंधन (लकड़ी, गोबर आदि) से खाना बनाते हैं। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक दुनिया में ऐसे प्रदूषण से हर साल 20 लाख लोगों की अकाल मौत होती है जिसमें करीब 44 फीसद बच्चे हैं। वहीं बड़े लोगों में 60 फीसद महिलाएं इस तरह के प्रदूषण के कारण मौत के मुंह में चली जाती हैं। यह संख्या हर साल मलेरिया से होने वाली कुल मौतों से ज्यादा है, लेकिन विडंबना यह है कि जहां मलेरिया की रोकथाम के लिए बचाव से लेकर इलाज तक हर स्तर पर कोशिशों जारी हैं वहीं रसोईघर के खतरे को काबू करने के लिए बहुत कम प्रयास हुए।

आंकड़े इसकी पुष्टि करते हैं। देश में एलपीजी वितरण की शुरुआत 1955 में हुई थी और 2014 तक अर्थात साठ वर्षों के दौरान सिर्फ 13 करोड़ लोगों को एलपीजी कनेक्शन मुहैया कराया जा सका। वहीं एलपीजी का दायरा शहरी एवं कस्बाई इलाकों तथा गांवों के समृद्ध वर्ग तक सिमटा रहा। स्पष्ट है सरकारी उदासीनता के चलते चूल्हे के धुएं से हर साल लाखों लोग बीमार पड़कर गरीब बनते रहे। गरीबों को चूल्हे के धुएं और बीमारियों से मुक्ति दिलाने की पहली ठोस पहल मई 2016 में 'प्रधानमंत्री उज्ज्वला योजना' के तहत हुई। इसके तहत गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाले पांच करोड़ परिवारों को मार्च 2019 तक

एलपीजी कनेक्शन मुहैया कराने का लक्ष्य रखा गया। बाद में लक्ष्य को बड़ा करते हुए मार्च 2020 तक आठ करोड़ एलपीजी कनेक्शन कर दिया गया। शुरू में इस योजना का लाभ उन्हीं परिवारों को मिल रहा था जो 2011 की गणना के अनुसार गरीबी की रेखा के नीचे थे। आगे चलकर इस योजना का दायरा बढ़ाते हुए इसमें सभी अनुसूचित जाति-जनजाति परिवार, वनवासी, अत्यंत पिछड़ा वर्ग, द्वीपों, चाय बागानों में रहने वालों तथा प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना एवं अंत्योदय योजना के लाभार्थियों को भी शामिल कर लिया गया।

राजनीतिक इच्छाशिक्त और हर स्तर पर जवाबदेही सुनिश्चित करने के कारण उज्ज्वला योजना में लक्ष्य की तुलना में अधिक कनेक्शन बांटे गए। इसका नतीजा यह रहा कि आठ करोड़ कनेक्शन का लक्ष्य वक्त से पहले हासिल हो गया। यदि कुल गैस कनेक्शनों को देखें तो यह आंकड़ा 10 करोड़ की संख्या को पार कर जाएगा। अब तक देश की 95 प्रतिशत आबादी तक रसोई गैस पहुंच चुकी है और हर रोज 69000 नए कनेक्शन दिए जा रहे हैं। सबसे बड़ी बात यह है कि अधिकतर नए गैस कनेक्शन पश्चिम बंगाल, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार, झारखंड, ओडिशा और पूर्वोत्तर जैसे पिछड़े राज्यों में जारी हुए जहां स्वच्छ ईंधन की पहुंच बहुत कम रही। उज्ज्वला योजना के कुल लाभार्थियों में 48 प्रतिशत अनुसूचित जाति-जनजाति से संबंध रखते हैं। स्पष्ट है कि उज्ज्वला योजना करोड़ों गरीबों के सशक्तीकरण का कारगर हथियार साबित हुई है।

रसोई गैस की देशव्यापी पहुंच के बाद एक बड़ी चुनौती यह आ रही है कि जहां सामान्य उपभोक्ता प्रति वर्ष औसतन सात सिलेंडर गैस भरवाते हैं वहीं उज्ज्वला योजना के लाभार्थी औसतन तीन सिलेंडर ही भरवाते हैं। बड़े सिलेंडर की कीमत अधिक होने के कारण बीपीएल परिवारों द्वारा कम संख्या में सिलेंडरों का उपयोग किया जा रहा है। इसे देखते हुए मोदी सरकार पांच किलो के छोटे सिलेंडर आवंटित कर रही है। यह जरूरी है कि सरकार यह सुनिश्चित करे कि इन छोटे सिलेंडरों का उपयोग बढ़े, क्योंकि ऐसा करके ही कुपोषण की समस्या का सामना किया जा सकता है। चूंकि अब सब्सिडी और गैर सब्सिडी वाले सिलेंडर के दाम में अधिक अंतर नहीं रह गया है इसिलए इस पर विचार किया जाना चाहिए कि क्या रसोई गैस सब्सिडी खत्म करने का समय आ गया है?

(लेखक केंद्रीय सचिवालय सेवा में अधिकारी हैं) response@jagran.com



#### आंतरिक प्रकाश

विश्व के हर धर्म ने किसी न किसी रूप में मन की अवस्था की बात की है। बाह्य परिस्थितियां उसकी सोच और व्यवहार को संचालित करती रहती हैं। किसी दूसरे देश में भूकंप आता है तो वह करुणा से भर उठता है किसी अपरिचित की उपलब्धि पर वह हर्ष से भर जाता है। उसे अहसास भी नहीं होता कि उसके मन के अंदर भी निरंतर कुछ न कुछ घटित हो रहा है। उसके पास दुष्टि ही नहीं है अपने मन में देखने की। उसकी आय निरंतर व्यतीत होती जा रही है। उसके दुर्लभ मानव जीवन का अवसर निरंतर संकुचित होता जा रहा है उसका मन दुख से भरा हुआ है, क्योंकि वह अपने जीवन के लक्ष्य से दूर होता जा रहा है। उसे मन का यह दुख दिखाई नहीं दे रहा, क्योंकि अंदर तो माया, मोह और विकारों का अंधकार व्याप्त है। माया और विकार उसे लूट रहे हैं, किंतु वह अनभिज्ञ है। यह परमात्मा के विश्वास को तोड़ना और जीवन हार जाने जैसा है।

अंधेरा कभी भी स्वागतयोग्य नहीं है। बाहर तो उजात

के लिए बड़े-बड़े बिजली घर बना लिए गए, नित नई परियोजनाएं लाई जा रही हैं, किंतु मन में वैसा ही अंधेरा है। मन में जब तक परमात्मा के प्रति अट्ट आस्था और श्रेष्ठ जीवन गुणों के बिजली घर नहीं लगाए जाते तब तक जीवन उद्देश्य नहीं देखने को मिलेगा। यह पता तो चले कि कहां और कैसे जाना है। जीवन उपभोग के लिए नहीं उपयोग के लिए मिला है। मोह, माया और विकारों के अंधेरे में तो मनुष्य ने न जाने कितनी सदियां गुजार दी हैं और अभी भी आवागमन के चक्र में फंसा हुआ है। मनुष्य का जन्म ऐसा अवसर है उस अंधेरे से आजाद होने का, अपने जन्मों-जन्मों के पाप धोकर पुण्य कमाने और परमात्मा की कृपा पाने का, ताकि मुक्ति प्राप्त हो सके। यह आस्था और गुणों के प्रकाश के बिना संभव नहीं है। मन के अंदर के जीवन लक्ष्य के बीज को आस्था की हवा, गुणों का पानी और संकल्प का प्रकाश दें और उसे अंकुरित, पल्लवित होने दें। इस बार उजाले का पर्व, मन को प्रकाशित करने के लिए मनाएं। आंतरिक प्रकाश के बिना बाहरी प्रकाश व्यर्थ है डॉ. सत्येंद्र पाल सिंह

### जागरूकता की अदद जरूरत

मिताली जैन

हाल ही में कानपुर आइआइटी विशेषज्ञों और मनोवैज्ञानिकों द्वारा किए गए अध्ययन में शहर के तीन स्कूलों में 61 बच्चे डिस्लेक्सिया से ग्रस्त मिले। यहां सबसे चैंकाने वाली बात यह थी कि इन बच्चों के माता-पिता, डॉक्टर, इंजीनियर, प्रशासिनक अफसर और व्यवसायी हैं, लेकिन किसी भी अभिभावक ने बच्चों को न्यूरोलॉजिस्ट या मनोरोग विशेषज्ञ को नहीं दिखाया। यह अध्ययन जाहिर करता है कि आज के समय में अभिभावकों में जागरूकता का कितना अभाव है। इसकी कमी के कारण उनके बच्चों को कई बार गंभीर स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है।

बच्चे शारीरिक ही नहीं, बल्कि कई तरह की मानसिक समस्याओं से भी जूझ रहे हैं। जब भी बच्चों में मानसिक समस्या की बात होती है तो सिर्फ तनाव, अवसाद या ऑटिज्म का ही नाम लिया जाता है, पर इसके अलावा भी एंग्जाइटी डिसऑर्डर, एडीएचडी, ओपोजिशनल डेफिएंट डिसऑर्डर, कंडक्ट डिसऑर्डर, मूड डिसऑर्डर, परवेसिव डेवलपमेंट डिसऑर्डर, सिजोफ्रेनिया जैसी कई मानसिक समस्याएं होती

अधिकांश माता – पिता में जागरूकता की कमी के कारण उनके बच्चों को गंभीर स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ रहा है

हैं जो बच्चों में देखी जाती हैं, लेकिन माता-पिता को इनके बारे में अधिक जानकारी नहीं होती। इसलिए वे बच्चों के गलत व्यवहार करने पर गुस्सा करते हैं या कई बार हाथ भी उठा देते हैं। मानसिक समस्या होने पर जहां बच्चों को सही इलाज की जरूरत होती है, वहां पर उन्हें अपने माता-पिता की नाराजगी झेलनी पड़ती है, जिससे उनकी समस्या और अधिक बढ़ जाती है। जब तक अभिभावक को बच्चे की स्थिति के बारे में पता चलता है, तब तक स्थिति उनके नियंत्रण से बाहर हो चुकी होती है।

अगर बच्चों में बढ़ती मानसिक समस्याओं के कारणों की बात करें तो इसके लिए कई वजहें जिम्मेदार है। इनमें सबसे पहली वजह है खानपान। हाल ही में हुए एक शोध के अनुसार भारत में पिछले दो दशकों में सामाजिक और आर्थिक स्थितियों में बदलाव के बावजूद पोषण की स्थिति में सुधार देखने को नहीं मिल रहा है। शहरी जीवन में बच्चे अधिकतर जंक फूड या बाहर का भोजन करना ज्यादा पसंद करते हैं और इस तरह का आहार उनके मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर व्यापक प्रभाव डालता है। वहीं जलवायु परिवर्तन भी बच्चों को मानसिक बीमारियों का शिकार बना रहा है।

अगर देश को बेहतर बनाना है तो देश के भविष्य को सहेजना होगा। इसके लिए सबसे पहले तो सरकारी नीतियां कुछ इस प्रकार बनाई जाएं, जिसके चलते अभिभावक बच्चों में विभिन्न तरह की मानसिक बीमारियों की पहचान आसानी से कर पाएं और उन्हें समय रहते विशेषज्ञ से मिलवाएं। साथ ही माता-पिता को बच्चों में पोषण एवं आहार संबंधी जानकारी भी प्रदान की जाए। अधिकतर अभिभावकों को यह पता ही नहीं होता कि बच्चों के समग्र विकास के लिए उनकी आहार योजना क्या होनी चाहिए। वहीं अपने पर्यावरण के प्रति भी जागरूक होना जरूरी है। बेहतर पर्यावरण बच्चों को एक स्वस्थ जलवायु प्रदान कर सकता है।

् (लेखिका स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)

#### सही दिशा में भारत की कृटनीति

भारत के खिलाफ उभरता नया गठजोड़ शीर्षक से लिखे लेख में ब्रिगेडियर आरपी सिंह ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र में कश्मीर मसले पर पाकिस्तान को तुर्की, मलेशिया और चीन से मिले समर्थन और उससे जुड़े विविध पहलुओं का सांगोपांग वर्णन किया है। जहां तक मलेशिया की बात है, उसे सबक सिखाने के लिए भारत ने उससे होने वाले आयातों में कमी लाने के संकेत दिए हैं। निशाना सही जगह पर लगता हुआ दिख भी रहा है। मलेशिया ने भारत से आयात बढ़ाने का प्रस्ताव दिया है। तुर्की की बात करें तो उसके साइप्रस और ग्रीस के साथ ऐतिहासिक रूप से बेहद खराब रिश्ते हैं, खासकर जुलाई 1974 में उसके द्वारा बलपूर्वक साइप्रस के उत्तरी क्षेत्र को हड़प लेने के पश्चात। आर्मेनिया के साथ भी उसका कोई औपचारिक संबंध नहीं है, विशेषकर मार्च 2018 में दोनों देशों के बीच संबंधों को सामान्य बनाने वाले प्रोटोकॉल (2008) को आर्मेनिया द्वारा निरस्त कर देने के बाद। संयुक्त राष्ट्र में तुर्की द्वारा कश्मीर का राग अलापने के बाद मोदी ने ग्रीस, साइप्रस और आर्मेनिया के राष्ट्र प्रमुखों के साथ बैठक कर उन्हें एक सख्त कूटनीतिक संकेत दे दिया है। इधर चीन को साधने के लिए भी यह आवश्यक है कि भारत उस पर युक्तिसंगत आर्थिक-राजनीतिक दबाव लगातार बनाए रखे। चीन के राष्ट्रपति शी चिनिफंग के हालिया भारत दौरे में उनके द्वारा कश्मीर के मुद्दे को उठाने से परहेज को भारत की कूटनीतिक जीत के रूप में देखा जा सकता है। मोदी सरकार ने अपने काल में अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंधों के मामलों में भारत की परंपरागत सुरक्षात्मक नीति में यथोचित संशोधन कर उसे भारत के हित में अधिक प्रासंगिक बनाया है, इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं।

चंदन कुमार, देवघर

#### मेलबाक्स

#### भारत में कुपोषण

दुनिया में सबसे ज्यादा कुपोषित बच्चों में भारत का नाम आता है। भारत के अंदर इस अवस्था के लिए सिर्फ हम प्रशासन को ही जिम्मेवार नहीं ठहरा सकते हैं, बल्कि कहीं ना कहीं इसके लिए हम भी जिम्मेवार हैं। ऑस्ट्रेलिया, अमेरिका, कनाडा के बाद सबसे ज्यादा खाना भारत में बबांद होता है, लेकिन हमें यह नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि वह एक विकसित देश हैं और हम एक विकाससील राष्ट्र। अपने देश में उत्पादन होने वाला 40 प्रतिशत भोजन बर्बाद हो जाता है। यह कुव्यवस्था का परिचायक है। हम अगर चांद पर जाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं तो हर व्यक्ति को पौष्टिक आहार मिले, यह भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा।

विजय किशोर तिवारी, शिक्षक, नई दिल्ली

#### धैर्य की आवश्यकता

दैनिक जागरण के 17 अक्टूबर के अंक में संपादकीय, फैसले की प्रतीक्षा, पढ़ा। अयोध्या प्रकरण में सुप्रीम कोर्ट का जो भी फैसला आए सभी को उसका सम्मान करने के लिए तैयार रहना चाहिए। उचित होगा कि दोनों पक्ष इसके लिए माहौल बनाएं कि जो भी फैसला आए उसे सभी स्वीकार करें। भले ही दुनिया की नजर में यह एक जमीनी टुकड़े की लड़ाई हो, लेकिन ये भी सचाई है कि यह मामला आस्था से भी जुड़ा है। साक्ष्य जिसके पक्ष में होंगे फैसला उसी के पक्ष में जाएगा। इसमें दोनों पक्षों को अत्यंत धैर्य रखने की आवश्यकता है।

चंद्र प्रकाश शर्मा, दिल्ली

#### प्रदुषण की रोकथाम

देश में बढ़ता प्रदूषण भयंकर रूप धारण करता जा रहा है। पूरे देश में जलवायु जहरीली होने लगी है। जिस तरह कानून-व्यवस्था के लिए जिम्मेदार एजेंसियां अपराधों की रोकथाम के लिए काम करती हैं उसी तरह सभी राज्यों को भी जिम्मेदारी लेकर बढ़ते प्रदूषण को रोकने के लिए कानून को सख्ती से लागू करना चाहिए।

आचार्य राम कुमार बघेल, प्रभारी पर्यावरण सचेतक,

#### बदलते वक्त को समझें

कभी भारतीय राजनीति की धुरी रही कांग्रेस आज जिस हाल में है उसकी शायद किसी ने कल्पना भी नहीं की होगी। एक प्रभावी विपक्ष की भूमिका निभाने का काम कांग्रेस अपनी कमजोरियों की वजह से नहीं कर पा रही है। पार्टी छोड़ने वाली की तादात रोज बढ़ती जा रही है। कांग्रेस को खुद कांग्रेसी ही पुनर्जीवित कर सकते हैं। पार्टी में ऊपर से लेकर नीचे तक हर एक को बदलते वक्त को समझना होगा।

बृजेश माथुर, गाजियाबाद

इस स्तंभ में किसी भी विषय पर राय व्यक्त करने अथवा दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय संस्करण पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने के लिए पाठकगण सादर आमंत्रित हैं। आप हमें पत्र भेजने के साथ ई–मेल भी कर सकते हैं।

अपने पत्र इस पते पर भेजें : दैनिक जागरण, राष्ट्रीय संस्करण, डी–210–211, सेक्टर–63, नोएडा ई–मेल: mailbox@jagran.com

## घाटी के घाव

म्मू-कश्मीर में जन-जीवन सामान्य करने के लिए प्रतिबंध क्या हटने शुरू हुए, चरमपंथी गतिविधियों ने सिर उठाना शुरू कर दिया है। हालांकि इसकी आशंका पहले से थी। खुफिया सूचनाएं मिल रही थीं कि जैसे ही प्रतिबंध हटेंगे, वहां चरमपंथी गतिविधियां बढ़ सकती हैं। इसीलिए घाटी में कर्फ्यू हटाने और संचार सुविधाओं की बहाली में करीब ढाई महीने लग गए। मगर विपक्षी दल इस बात को लेकर सरकार पर हमलावर थे कि वह घाटी के लोगों के मूलभूत अधिकारों का हनन कर रही है। पाकिस्तान भी अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर गुहार लगाता फिर रहा था कि पूरे जम्मू-कश्मीर को एक जेल में तब्दील कर दिया गया है। वहां के लोगों का दमन हो रहा है। इसे देखते हुए सरकार ने चरणबद्ध तरीके से प्रतिबंध हटाने शुरू कर दिए। फिर वहां ब्लॉक विकास परिषद के चुनाव भी कराने की प्रक्रिया शुरू कर दी। अनुमान था कि इस तरह घाटी के लोग लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया में लौटना शुरू कर देंगे और लोकतंत्र पर उनका भरोसा बढ़ेगा। मगर चरमपंथी संगठन जैसे पहले से तैयार बैठे थे कि मौका मिलते ही वे अपनी साजिशों को अंजाम देंगे। इसी का नतीजा है कि जम्मू-कश्मीर में कठुआ, पुलवामा, शोपियां, पुंछ, अनंतनाग आदि जगहों पर आतंकी सिक्रयता बढ़ गई। उन्होंने शोपियां में एक फल बिक्रेता और पुलवामा में एक दिहाड़ी मजदूर की गोली मार कर हत्या कर दी। घाटी में अनुच्छेद तीन सौ सत्तर हटने का विरोध अब नए ढंग

से भी सुगबुगाने लगा है। वहां से आने वाली सेबों की खेप में सेबों पर पाकिस्तान के समर्थन और भारत के विरोध में नारे लिखे मिले। उन नारों में आतंकवादियों का समर्थन भी जताया गया था। हालांकि यह सेब किसानों या सामान्य फल विक्रेताओं का विरोध नहीं जान पड़ता। निश्चित रूप से इसके पीछे भी चरमपंथी गुटों का हाथ होगा। वहां सशस्त्र बलों का सख्त पहरा है, आतंकवादियों के लिए किसी बड़ी साजिश को अंजाम देना आसान नहीं है। इसलिए वे अपनी उपस्थित दर्ज कराने के मकसद से ऐसी हरकतें कर रहे हैं, जो उनकी खीज का पता देती हैं। शायद उन्हें लगता होगा कि इस तरह वे स्थानीय लोगों का समर्थन हासिल कर सकेंगे, पर यह भ्रम ही साबित होगा। मगर उनकी ये हरकतें सरकार और सशत्रबलों के लिए एहतियात बरतने के संकेत तो हैं ही।

जम्मू और लद्दाख संभाग में पहले भी कोई बड़ी चुनौती नहीं थी, सबसे बड़ी चुनौती कश्मीर में थी। वहीं पाकिस्तान समर्थित आतंकवादियों की पैठ हो पाती है और वे अशांति फैलाने का प्रयास करते हैं। हालांकि अलगाववादी संगठनों पर नकेल कसी जा चुकी है, विपक्षी राजनीतिक दलों की गतिविधियां भी शिथिल हैं, इसलिए उनके घाटी के आम लोगों को उकसाने की संभावना फिलहाल नहीं दिखती। पर इस बात से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता कि वहां के युवाओं में एक प्रकार का आक्रोश दबा हुआ है। चरमपंथी और अलगाववादी ताकतों, कट्टरपंथी नेताओं के बहकावे में आकर वे पहले भी आजाद कश्मीर की मांग के साथ सड़कों पर उतरते रहे हैं। इसलिए विशेष राज्य का दर्जा समाप्त होने के बाद उनमें आक्रोश और बढ़ा है। वह फूटने का रास्ता तलाश रहा है। उसी को रोकने के प्रयास किए जाने जरूरी हैं। हालांकि सीमा पार से मिल रही मदद रुक जाने से वे अपने पांव नहीं पसार सकते, पर बाहरी मजदूरों, व्यापारियों, अधिकारियों आदि को निशाना बना कर अपना आक्रोश जाहिर करेंगे। अब सरकार और सुरक्षाबलों को इससे पार पाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने की जरूरत है।

## भुखमरी की जकड़

सी भी देश में आम नागरिकों की सेहत का स्तर यह बताता है कि वहां के विकास कार्यक्रमों में स्वास्थ्य के मुद्दे को कितनी प्राथमिकता मिल सकी है। लोगों की सेहत की स्थिति इस बात पर निर्भर है कि भरपेट और संतुलित भोजन तक उनकी कितनी पहुंच है। इस लिहाज से देखें तो विकास और अर्थव्यवस्था की रफ्तार बढ़ने के तमाम दावों के बीच भारत में अपेक्षित प्रगति संभव नहीं हो सकी है। गौरतलब है कि वैश्विक स्तर पर जारी हुए ताजा भुखमरी सूचकांक, 2019 के आंकड़ों में भारत की स्थिति काफी चिंताजनक है। दुनिया के एक सौ सत्रह देशों की सूची में भारत को एक सौ दो नंबर पर जगह मिल सकी है। जबिक पड़ोसी देश नेपाल, पाकिस्तान और बांग्लादेश को इस सूची में बेहतर जगह मिली है। इससे यही पता चलता है कि हमारे यहां बेशक विकास को मुख्यधारा की राजनीति का मुद्दा बनाने में कामयाबी मिली है, लेकिन इसके बुनियादी पहलुओं को केंद्र में रख कर जरूरी कदम नहीं उठाए गए या उन पर अमल नहीं किया गया। यह बेवजह नहीं है कि नेपाल, पाकिस्तान और बांग्लादेश जैसे पड़ोसी देश भी इस मामले में हमसे बेहतर स्थिति में पहुंच गए, जो अपनी बहुत सारी बुनियादी जरूरतों तक के लिए आमतौर पर भारत या फिर दूसरे देशों पर निर्भर रहते हैं।

यों ऐसे हालात लंबे समय से बने हुए हैं कि एक ओर रखरखाव के पर्याप्त इंतजाम और जरूरतमंदों तक पहुंच के अभाव में भारी पैमाने पर अनाज सड़ कर बर्बाद हो जाता है, दूसरी ओर देश में बड़ी तादाद ऐसे लोगों की है, जिन्हें पेट भरने लायक भोजन नहीं मिल पाता। इस मसले पर एक बार सुप्रीम कोर्ट को यहां तक कहना पड़ा था कि गोदामों में या उनके बाहर सड़ कर अनाज के बर्बाद होने से अच्छा है कि उसे गरीबों में मुफ्त बांट दिया जाए। लेकिन इस तल्ख रुख के बावजूद न सरकारों का रुख बदला, न इस मसले पर कोई नीतिगत पहलकदमी हुई। आज भी नीतियों और व्यवस्थागत किमयों की वजह से भारी पैमाने पर अनाज की बर्बादी होती है और कहीं बहुत सारे लोगों की थाली में जरूरत भर भी भोजन नहीं पहुंच पाता। अफसोस की बात है कि विकास के ब्योरों में इस समस्या को पर्याप्त जगह नहीं मिल पाती। यही वजह है कि जब विकास की संपूर्ण तस्वीर का आकलन होता है, तो उसमें हमारा देश काफी पीछे खड़ा दिखता है, जबिक अर्थव्यवस्था के साथ-साथ अन्य कसौटियों पर अपेक्षया कमजोर माने वाले हमारे कुछ पड़ोसी देशों ने इस मसले पर एक निरंतरता की नीति अपनाई और अपनी स्थिति में सुधार किया।

इसमें कोई शक नहीं कि दावों के मुताबिक सतह पर विकास की चमक दिखती है। लेकिन सच यह है कि देश में होने वाली तरक्की का लाभ मुख्य रूप से एक छोटा तबका ही उठा पा रहा है और बाकी लोग हाशिये के बाहर ही रह जाते हैं। अगर गरीबी और अमीरी के बीच खाई चौड़ी हो रही है तो इसका मुख्य कारण विकास का एक छोटे दायरे में सिमटा होना है। हालांकि देश में भूख और कुपोषण की समस्या से लड़ने के लिए अनेक योजनाएं हैं और समय-समय पर इसके लिए अभियान भी चलाए जाते हैं, लेकिन अगर भुखमरी के सूचकांक में देश की स्थिति सुधरने के बजाय बिगड़ी है तो इससे साफ है कि या तो नीतिगत स्तर पर कोई बड़ी खामी है या फिर इस मसले से पार पाने में राजनीतिक इच्छाशिक्त का अभाव है।

#### कल्पमेधा

कल्पना ज्ञान से अधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण है। ज्ञान तो सीमित है, कल्पना संसार को घेर लेती है। -अलबर्ट आइंस्टीन

## रोजगार से दूर होती महिलाएं

ऋतु सारस्वत

भारत में एक तिहाई कंपनियां तो ऐसी हैं जहां कोई भी महिला कार्यरत नहीं है, जबिक इकहत्तर फीसद कंपनियों में महिलाओं की संख्या मात्र दस फीसद से भी कम है। महज चौबीस फीसद कंपनियां ऐसी हैं जहां महिलाओं और पुरुषों को बराबर का अधिकार दिया गया है। लेकिन बात यहीं खत्म नहीं हो जाती। अगर महिलाएं नौकरी में हैं भी, तो उनके सामने वे तमाम बाधाएं हैं जिनके चलते या तो वे खुद नौकरी छोड़ देती हैं या फिर निकाल दी जाती हैं। यह स्थिति कमोबेश दुनियाभर में एक जैसी है।

굳 श में समान योग्यता रखने के बावजूद महिलाओं की 🛰 बेरोजगारी दर पुरुषों के मुकाबले दोगुनी है। यह खुलासा 'भारत में नियुक्ति में लैंगिक भेदभाव' नामक शोध में हुआ है। इसके मुताबिक शहरों में काम करने वाली योग्य शिक्षित महिलाओं में सत्तासी फीसद बेरोजगार हैं, जबिक पुरुषों में यह आंकडा मात्र चार फीसद है, जिनके पास काम नहीं है। 'फीमेल लेबर फोर्स पार्टिसिपेशन रेट (एलएफपीआर) 2017-18' की रिपोर्ट भी इस हकीकत को पृष्ट करती है। यह रिपोर्ट बताती है कि पिछले साल भारत में महिलाओं की रोजगार में शामिल होने की दर 23.3 फीसद के निचले स्तर पर थी। 2011-12 में पंद्रह से उनतीस वर्ष की कामकाजी महिलाओं की रोजगार में शमिल होने की दर में आठ फीसद की गिरावट हुई थी, जो 2017-18 में 16.4 फीसद हो गई। इसी तरह तीस से पचास वर्ष की महिलाओं में रोजगार की दर में सात फीसद की गिरावट देखने को मिली थी। स्पष्ट है कि तीस से पचास वर्ष की कामकाजी महिलाओं में तीन में से दो काम नहीं कर रही हैं। इनमें से ज्यादातर का कहना है कि वे गृहस्थी की जिम्मेदारियां निभा रही हैं।

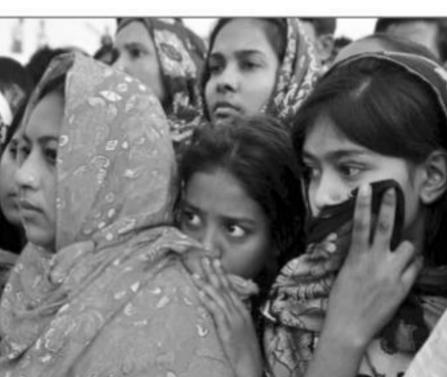
लेकिन क्या परिवार का दायित्व ही महिलाओं की प्राथमिकता है, या फिर वे भी बाहर जाकर काम करना चाहती हैं। समाज और परिवार द्वारा निरंतर यह छिव गढ़ी जाती है कि महिलाएं स्वयं काम नहीं करना चाहतीं। लेकिन वास्तविकता इससे अलग है। जनगणना के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि यदि महिलाओं के लिए रोजगार के रास्ते खुले हों तो घर में रहने वाली एक–तिहाई महिलाएं काम करना चाहेंगी। दरअसल, भारत ही नहीं विश्वभर में महिलाओं का संघर्ष दो तरफा है। एक ओर परिवार और दूसरी ओर रोजगार देने वाली सस्थाएं हैं जो उन्हें काम पर रखने की इच्छुक नहीं होतीं। भारत में सामाजिक मानक महिलाओं को लेकर आश्चर्यजनक रूप से रूढ़िवादी हैं। 2012 में हुए एक शोध में चौरासी फीसद भारतीयों ने इस बात पर सहमित जताई थी कि यदि रोजगार कम हो तो महिलाओं के बजाय पुरुषों को काम करने का अधिक

अधिकार है। यह सोच हैरान नहीं करती क्योंकि अधिकार है। यह सोच हैरान नहीं करती क्योंकि आर्थिक स्वावलंबन पर आज भी पुरुषों का अधिपत्य माना जाता है और यह स्वीकारोक्ति घर और बाहर दोनों ही जगह है। यही कारण है कि पुरुष को नौकरी करने के लिए किसी से अनुमित नहीं लेनी पड़ती, जबिक लड़िकयों और महिलाओं को काम करने, रोजगार योग्य नए कौशल सीखने के लिए अपने पिता, भाई या पित से अनुमित लेनी पड़ती है।

यह चिंताजनक विषय है कि समान शैक्षणिक स्तर और काबिलियत होने पर भी महिलाओं के पास रोजगार नहीं है। यह सवाल पैदा होना भी स्वभाविक है कि पिछले कुछ दशकों में जब शिक्षा तक महिलाओं की पहुंच बढ़ी है तो उनके पास रोजगार क्यों नहीं है। अध्ययन बताते हैं

कि करीब अठहत्तर फीसद पात्र स्नातक महिलाएं संगठित कार्यबल का हिस्सा नहीं बनती हैं। ये वे महिलाएं हैं जो केवल सामाजिक कारणों से अपनी पढ़ाई पूरी करती हैं, न कि संगठित कार्यबल में भागीदार बनने की इच्छा के कारण। ये 'इच्छा' उस समाजीकरण की परिणित है जो स्त्री को यह विश्वास दिलाती है कि उसका जन्म परिवार की देखभाल के लिए ही हुआ है और पुरुष का कर्तव्य घर के लिए पैसे कमाना है।

यह तथ्य ही इस हकीकत को सत्यापित करने के लिए काफी है कि देश के सबसे प्रतिष्ठित संस्थान भारतीय प्रबंधन संस्थान (आइआइएम) अमदाबाद की लगभग पचास फीसद स्नातक लड़िकयां काम नहीं कर रही हैं। उन्होंने अपनी प्रतिभा को दरिकनार करते हुए परिवार को प्राथमिकता दी। 'स्त्रियां होती ही ऐसी हैं, उनके लिए स्वयं की इच्छा कोई मायने नहीं रखती, अगर कुछ उनके लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण है तो घर-परिवार', निरंतर दोहराए गए ये वाक्य महिलाओं के इर्द-गिर्द सम्मोहन का ऐसा मायाजाल सदियों से बनाते आ रहे हैं कि वे स्वयं ही यह विश्वास करने लगती हैं कि उनका पहला और आखिरी दायित्व परिवार की देखभाल ही है। परिवार और बच्चों को संभालने का दबाव महिलाओं पर निरंतर बनाया जाता है। अगर महिलाएं उस दबाव का सामना करते हुए कार्यस्थल की राह चुनती हैं तो वहां भी उन्हें उसी असहयोगात्मक व्यवहार का सामना करना पड़ता है जो उन्हें अपने परिवार से मिलता है। कार्यस्थल पर उनके किए हर कार्य को संशय से देखा जाता है। अगर वे किसी कार्य में असफल हो जाएं तो उसे मानवीय भूल न मान कर 'स्त्री होने के कारण प्राप्त असफलता' की तथाकथित अवधारणा से जोड़ कर देखा जाता है। घर से लेकर कार्यस्थल पर निरंतर कसी जाने वाली कसौटी के चलते



अधिकांश महिलाएं स्वयं ही अपनी आर्थिक आत्मनिर्भरता के स्वप्न को तिलांजलि दे देती हैं।

हाल ही में हुए नेशनल सैंपल सर्वे की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण पाने के बाद रोजगार पाने में मिहलाएं पुरुषों की तुलना में काफी पीछे हैं। आंकड़े बताते हैं कि तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण पाने वालों में करीब सत्तर फीसद युवक और अड़तीस फीसद मिहलाओं को ही रोजगार मिल पाता है। ऐसा इसिलए होता है कि कंपनियां ही मिहलाओं को काम पर रखना नहीं चाहतीं। भारत में एक तिहाई कंपनियां तो ऐसी हैं जहां कोई भी मिहलाओं को संख्या मात्र दस फीसद से भी कम है। महज चौबीस फीसद कंपनियां ऐसी हैं जहां मिहलाओं और पुरुषों को बराबर का अधिकार दिया गया है। लेकिन बात यहीं खत्म

नहीं हो जाती। अगर महिलाएं नौकरी में हैं भी, तो उनके सामने वे तमाम बाधाएं हैं जिनके चलते या तो वे खुद नौकरी छोड़ देती हैं या फिर निकाल दी जाती हैं। यह स्थिति कमोबेश दुनियाभर में एक जैसी है।

पिछले साल अक्तूबर में अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष (आइएमएफ) ने बताया था कि 'स्वचालन' जैसी नई प्रौद्योगिकियों ने वैश्विक स्तर पर महिलाओं से जुड़ी लगभग अठारह करोड़ नौकरियों को खतरे में डाल दिया है। 'हाई पोटेंशियल अंडर हाई प्रेशर इन इंडिया टेक्नोलॉजी सेक्टर' की रिपोर्ट बताती है कि भारत में उच्च क्षमता वाले पुरुष और महिलाएं एक समान स्तर पर शुरू करते हैं, लेकिन समय के साथ महिलाओं के लिए लिंगभेद उभर रहा है। जो कम कमाती हैं, कम विकास के अवसर प्राप्त करती हैं, जो प्रगति के लिए आगे बढ़ती हैं और पुरुषों की तुलना में घर पर अधिक जिम्मेदारियों का सामना करती हैं, उन्हें पीछे धकेल दिया जाता है।

महिलाओं का मां बनना कंपनियों को नुकसान का सौदा दिखाई पड़ता है। विश्व बैंक की एक रिपोर्ट में साफ कहा गया है कि जब महिलाओं ने अपनी गर्भावस्था का जिक्र अपने मैनेजर या सहकर्मियों से किया तो उन्होंने पाया कि उन्हें कैरियर में प्रोत्साहन दिए जाने की दर में कमी आई।

बंगलुरु में नई कंपनियों और छोटी कंपनियों के सर्वे में यह बात सामने आई कि छियालीस फीसद कंपनियों ने पिछले डेढ़ साल में ज्यादातर पुरुष कर्मियों की ही बहाली की। वहीं इसी तरह के एक अध्ययन में इस बात का खुलासा हुआ कि 2004-05 से 2011-12 के दौरान अट्ठाईस लाख महिलाओं को नौकरी से निकाल दिया गया। संशोधित मातृत्व लाभ अधिनियम के बाद एक साल में ही ग्यारह से अठारह लाख महिलाओं की नौकरी चली गई।

यह तय है कि जब तक महिलाओं पर परिवार और नौकरी में से किसी एक को चुनने का दबाव रहेगा, तब तक महिलाएं नौकरियों से दूर होती रहेंगी। आर्थिक सहयोग एवं विकास संगठन का सुझाव है कि बच्चों की देखभाल के लिए दी जाने वाली मदद से महिलाओं के कामकाजी होने की संभावना बढ़ जाएगी। एसोचैम के सुझावों के मुताबिक श्रमबल में महिलाओं की भागीदारी बढ़ाने के लिए विशेष रोजगार कौशल प्रशिक्षण, छोटे शहरों में रोजगार के अवसर, बच्चों और बुजुर्गों की देखरेख के लिए केयर सेंटर, सुरक्षित कार्यस्थल जैसे प्रयास बढ़ाने होंगे। सरकारी स्तर पर प्रयास तो अपरिहार्य हैं ही, पर उससे भी अधिक उस सोच में बदलाव की आवश्यकता है जो स्त्री का दायरा घर की चारदीवारी तक सीमित रखना चाहती है।

## विज्ञान की चेतना

कैलाश चंद्र काण्डपाल

ज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण आजकल फिर चर्चा में है। हालांकि यह एक अलग बात है कि क्या इस पर चर्चा की जरूरत है या एक अच्छा जनतांत्रिक और प्रगतिशील देश बनने के लिए इसका होना नितांत जरूरी है। अगर हम विश्व का विश्लेषण करें तो पाएंगे कि इसके वर्तमान स्वरूप में होने में भी वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण का महत्त्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा है। यूरोपीय पुनर्जागरण के बाद इसी दृष्टिकोण से औद्योगिक क्रांति की नींव पड़ी और उसके बाद विश्व इतिहास के नए पन्ने लिखे गए, जिसमें उपनिवेशवाद और साम्राज्यवाद जैसे आख्यान आए और विश्व में नया आर्थिक और सामाजिक स्वरूप उभरा। इसने मात्र विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी में ही योगदान नहीं दिया, बल्कि एक जीवन दर्शन भी दिया जो एक प्रगतिशील समाज के लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण है। यह बात दीगर है कि यह हमारा भविष्य भी निर्धारित करेगा।

स्वतंत्र भारत में वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण के लिए प्रतिबद्धता की बात सत्तर के दशक में शुरू हुई, जिसे 'अपोलो–11' यान के चंद्रमा की यात्रा के घटनाक्रम से भी जोड़ा जाता है। इसी दशक में वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण के लिए देशव्यापी प्रचार– प्रसार देखा भी गया, जिसमें कुछ स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं ने महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। इसी दशक के उत्तरार्ध में वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण को संविधान में बयालीसवें संशोधन से मूल कर्तव्यों के रूप में समाहित किया गया और स्कूली शिक्षा के पाठ्यक्रम में भी इसने अपनी प्रमुख जगह बनाई। इसमें इस बात को रेखांकित करना आवश्यक है कि हमारे प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण के प्रबल हिमायती थे। भारत के संविधान में उल्लिखित मूल कर्तव्यों में एक यह साफतौर पर लिखा गया है कि 'भारत का नागरिक वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण, मानववाद और ज्ञानार्जन तथा सुधार की भावना का सुधार

करे'। दरअसल, वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण को मूल कर्तव्य के रूप में संविधान में समाहित करने का निर्णय सतही नहीं है, बिल्क यह अपने आप में एक जीवन दर्शन है।

वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण मात्र विज्ञान विषय से संबंधित नहीं है, बल्कि यह एक जीवन दर्शन के रूप में समाज को दिशा देता है। यह नागरिकों को इस बात के लिए प्रेरित करता है कि वे जिज्ञासा से प्रेरित रहें, प्रश्न करने की प्रवृत्ति बनाए रखें, तर्कशील और विवेकसम्मत बनें। तर्कशील और विवेकसम्मत बनें। तर्कशील और विवेकसम्मत समाज ही वास्तव में एक बेहतर जनतांत्रिक समाज की बुनियाद होता है। कई प्रकार से विविधता वाले देश भारत में अगर यह दृष्टिकोण प्रमुखता से अपनी जगह पाता है तो इसकी प्रगति के कई रास्ते खुलते हैं, चाहे वे एक वांछित समाज के हों या एक विकसित राष्ट्र के रूप

में उभरने के। राष्ट्र के रूप में हमें यहां यह समझ लेना होगा कि हम जहां और जैसे हैं, इसका एक इतिहास है और इसमें वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण की भूमिका बहुत महत्त्वपूर्ण नहीं रही है। समाज में व्याप्त असमानता, अंधविश्वास आदि इसी बात के प्रमुख उदाहरण हैं कि हमारी चेतना में वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण अहम स्थान नहीं रखता है। आज भी अंधविश्वास के कई नमूने हमें हर रोज दिखाई पड़ते हैं। अगर हम इन असमताओं और अंधविश्वासों पर

तर्क कर विवेकसम्मत तरीके से सोचें तो यह बात स्पष्ट हो जाएगी कि ये भारत के लिए वांछित समाज बनाने और इसकी उन्नति में बाधक हैं। समाज में वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण लाने का दायित्व औपचारिक शिक्षा पर भी है और खासतौर पर स्कूली शिक्षा पर। वर्तमान में सारे प्रयासों के बाद भी स्कूली शिक्षा एक दर्रे पर स्पारी दिखती है। शंकों की दोद ने द्यारों स्पारत

समाज म वज्ञानिक दृष्टिकाण लान को दायित्व औपचारिक शिक्षा पर भी है और खासतौर पर स्कूली शिक्षा पर। वर्तमान में सारे प्रयासों के बाद भी स्कूली शिक्षा एक ढरें पर सिमटी दिखती है। अंकों की होड़ ने इसमें समझने के बजाय रटने की प्रवृत्ति को ही बढ़ावा दिया है। विषयगत अध्ययन में 'क्यों' के सवालों में बच्चे संघर्ष करते दिखाई देते हैं। वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण या चिंतन इस बात को रेखांकित करता है कि औपचारिक शिक्षा के तहत विषयगत अध्ययन में जब तक 'क्यों' पर विमर्श नहीं किया जाएगा, तब तक यह दृष्टिकोण स्थापित नहीं होगा। वर्तमान स्कूली शिक्षा का ताना–बाना इसी पर बुना हुआ है और इसके लिए निर्धारित पाठ्यचर्या की रूपरेखा इस पर बात करती है। लेकिन समस्या इस पर अमल या काम करने के तरीके में दिखती है। आज भी वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण का वांछित स्वरूप हमें कक्षा-कक्ष की प्रक्रियाओं में नहीं दिखता है।

औपचारिक स्कूली शिक्षा का मुख्य उद्देश्य एक बेहतर वांछित समाज का निर्माण करना है। भारत के लिए ऐसे वांछित समाज की परिकल्पना भी भारत के संविधान में स्पष्ट की गई है कि भारत के लोग ऐसे समाज के लिए संविधान को अंगीकार करते हैं जिसमें न्याय, स्वतंत्रता, समानता और भाईचारा हो। वास्तविक रूप में देखा जाए तो इस प्रकार के समाज को पाने के लिए हमें अभी और सायास प्रयत्न करने हैं। यह तभी संभव है जब हम तर्कपूर्ण और विवेकशील बनें और इसकी राह हमें वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण से मिलती है।

वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण और चिंतन हमें इस बात में मदद करेगा कि हम अपने भीतर निष्पक्ष रूप से सोचने-समझने की प्रवृत्ति विकसित करें। हमें अपने स्कूलों में बच्चों को ऐसे चिंतन में लगाना होगा, तािक वे खुद को, अपने आसपास होने वाली घटनाओं और उनके अंतर्संबधों को तार्किक रूप से समझ सकें और इस पर अपनी तर्कसम्मत और विवेकपूर्ण राय बना कर आगे बढ़ें, तािक वे एक जागरूक नागरिक के रूप में उभरें, न िक भेड़चाल का अनुसरण करने वाली भीड़ के रूप में।

#### दुरुस्त आयद

ते दिनों विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग ने देर से ही सही मगर दुरुस्त कदम उठाते हुए युवाओं को सोशल मीडिया की नैतिकता और शिष्टाचार सिखाने के लिए इसे स्नातक स्तर के पाठ्यक्रम का हिस्सा बना दिया है। सोशल मीडिया के दुरुपयोग को देखते हुए उसके बारे में युवाओं को जागरूक करने के लिए इस तरह के पाठ्यक्रम की आवश्यकता बड़ी शिद्दत से महसूस की जा रही थी। आजकल सोशल मीडिया आपस में लोगों के जुड़ने और संचार का प्रमुख साधन बन गया है। हमारे जीवन में उसकी निरंतर बढ़ती उपयोगिता के साथ-साथ उसका निहित स्वार्थी तत्त्वों द्वारा दुरुपयोग भी बढ़ता जा रहा है।

आज सोशल मीडिया को कुछ लोगों ने दुष्प्रचार का माध्यम भी बना लिया है जिसके कारण झूठी और नफरत फैलाने वाली खबरों की एक अलग ही दुनिया बन गई है जो समाज को बांटने और आपसी विश्वास में दरारें डालने का काम कर रही है। बड़े पैमाने पर अफवाहों, खौफ और नकारात्मक खबरों को प्रसारित– प्रचारित करने में सोशल मीडिया की भूमिका के मद्देनजर कई बार इसे नियमित और नियंत्रित करने के लिए सख्त कानून बनाने की मांग भी उठती रही है।

सोशल मीडिया में झूठी खबरों की समस्या की गहराई का अंदाजा इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि अधिकांश परंपरागत माध्यम, जैसे रेडियो, टीवी और पत्र-पत्रिकाएं 'फेक न्यूज' यानी झूठी या फर्जी खबरों को जानने की व्यवस्था करने लगे हैं। अमेरिका जैसे देश इस मामले में अत्यंत जागरूक हैं और वहां सोशल नेटवर्किंग साइट पर नियंत्रण को लेकर पर्याप्त कदम समय-समय पर उठाए जाते हैं। भारत में भी सोशल मीडिया से संबंधित नैतिक और शिष्टाचार से जुड़े पाठ्यक्रम युवाओं की भावनात्मक और बौद्धिक क्षमताओं को विकसित करने और उनमें सकारात्मक ऊर्जा का संचार करने में महती भूमिका निभाएंगे तभी सही मायने में सोशल मीडिया अपने नाम को सार्थक करेगा।

• बिजेंद्र कुमार, आंबेडकर कॉलेज, दिल्ली

#### पटाखों से परहेज

दिल्ली के मुख्यमंत्री ने अपील की है कि दिवाली पर फटाखे नहीं फोड़ें। प्रदूषण के कारण सभी को परेशान होना पड़ता है। हम सब बुराइयों का ठीकरा सरकार पर फोड़ते हैं, लेकिन अपनी जिम्मेदारियां नहीं समझते हैं। पूरे देश की जनता से उम्मीद है कि फिजा में शोर व धुआं फैलाने से तौबा करें। चाहे दिवाली हो, शादी-

की मात्रा बढ़ती जा रही है। इसके आगे और बढ़ने की आशंका है क्योंकि हरियाणा में पराली जलाई जाने लगी है। मानसून के जाते ही दिल्ली के स्वच्छ हवा चली गई। अब सरकार जनता को विश्वास दिलाने के लिए कागजी कार्रवाई कर रही है। आखिर इस समस्या को गंभीरता से कब लिया जाएगा?

गया। तब से लगातार दिल्ली की हवा में प्रदुषक कणों

• नीतीश कुमार पाठक, आश्रम, नई दिल्ली

अश्लोलता का प्रसार समाज के कई पहलुओं को हम फिल्मों के जरिए समझते हैं। अब

किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है : ए-८, सेक्टर-७, नोएडा २०१३०१, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश

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

ब्याह हो या ख़ुशी का कोई अन्य अवसर हो, सभी लोग ये फिल्में डिजिटल (ऑनला

पटाखे नहीं फोड़ने का संकल्प लें। अगर हमें पर्व मनाना है तो ऐसे पटाखे इस्तेमाल करें जो पर्यावरण के अनुकूल हों। सरकार को ऐसे पटाखों के बारे में जनता को जागरूक करना चाहिए। हम सभी संकल्प लें कि ऐसा कोई काम नहीं करेंगे जो वातावरण को विषैला बनाए। • हेमा हरि उपाध्याय अक्षत, खाचरोद, उज्जैन

#### दिल्ली की हवा

दिल्ली-एनसीआर में आठ वर्ष बाद लगभग तीन महीने का समय ऐसा रहा जब हवा लगातार सांस लेने लायक बनी रही। मानसून के दौरान भी स्थिति काफी हद तक सही रही। नौ अक्तूबर तक वायु गुणवत्ता सूचकांक 173 यानी मध्यम स्तर तक था पर उसके अगले ही दिन अचानक खराब श्रेणी में पहुच ये फिल्में डिजिटल (ऑनलाइन) प्लेटफॉर्म के जिए 'वेब सीरीज' का रूप ले रही हैं। डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म ने लोगों के घरों में स्मार्टफोन के माध्यम से खासी पैठ बना ली है जिसका लाभ उठाकर लगातार गाली-गलौच, नशा व अश्लील यौन संबंधी सामग्री परोसी जा रही है।

सेंसर बोर्ड से फिल्मों पर तो नियंत्रण हो जाता है लेकिन डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म के लिए कोई सेंसर या नियम-कानून लागू नहीं होते हैं। एक ओर सरकार पॉर्नोग्राफी वेबसाइट बंद करने का प्रयास कर रही है मगर दूसरी तरफ इन प्लेटफार्म के जिरए इसे बढ़ावा मिल रहा है। इसकी लत से युवा अपने स्वास्थ्य के साथ खिलवाड़ कर रहे हैं। हाल ही में बेंगलुरु के एक युवक को अस्पताल में इसलिए भर्ती कराया गया कि उसे 'नेटफ्लक्स' की लत गई थी। ऐसी लत खासकर युवाओं को आकर्षित कर नशा और अश्लील यौन सामग्री देखने पर मजबूर कर रही है।

हाल में ही दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने जस्टिस फॉर राइट्स फाउंडेशन (एनजीओ) द्वारा दायर याचिका खारिज कर दी थी पर उच्चतम न्यायालय के प्रधान न्यायाधीश रंजन गोगोई और न्यायमूर्ति संजीव खन्ना के पीठ ने सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय, विधि एवं न्याय मंत्रालय और संचार मंत्रालय को नोटिस जारी किया व नेटिफ्लक्स और एमेजॉन प्राइम वीडियो जैसे ऑनलाइन मीडिया प्रसारण की सामग्री को नियंत्रित करने के लिए दिशा-निर्देश तय करने की मांग वाली याचिका पर केंद्र से जवाब मांगा है।

#### पराली से खाद

विकास अक्सर विनाश के कंधों पर सवार होकर आता है। जब से मजदूरी ज्यादा होने के कारण और मशीनों से कटाई आसानी से हो जाने लगी, तभी से किसानों ने खेतों में पराली जलाना शुरू कर दिया। हाथ से कटाई होती थी तो भूसा बचता था और भूसा इस्तेमाल हो जाता था। अब ऐसा नहीं हो पाता और पराली जलाने से पर्यावरण को कितना ज्यादा नुकसान पहुंच रहा है इसे लेकर पर्यावरणविदों ने अभी से आगाह करना शुरू कर दिया है। दिल्ली, हरियाणा और पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश की हवा जरूरत से ज्यादा जहरीली हो चुकी है।

इसे रोकने की जिम्मेदारी सरकार की है। यदि किसानों को विधिवत जानकारी दी जाए और समझाया जाए कि पराली को 'बायो कंपोस्ट' के जिए खाद बनाकर खेत में ही फिर इस्तेमाल कर लें तो अगली फसल बिना कीटनाशक और बिना खाद के भी बहुत अच्छी हो सकती है। स्थितियां बद से बदतर हों उसके पहले ही इसके लिए सरकार को पहल करनी होगी।

• रमेश माहेश्वरी, सुल्तानपुर

नई दिल्ली