

# All the PM's presents

While the ambitious online auction along with the touristy display of the PM's gifts is new, giving away the mementos is an age-old practice



## NOT FOR PROFIT

NIVEDITA MOOKERJI

The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) at Jaipur House, New Delhi, may not be a popular destination for primary school children on any weekday, but the past month has been different. Two to three schools on an average have been sending their students daily to the NGMA to look up some of the mementos that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had received

over the years. Since September 14, the mementos, ranging from shawls to *angavastra*, paintings to ceramic to graphic prints of government schemes such as Start Up India, Beti Bachao, Jan Dhan, Make in India and more have been on display at the museum, which usually houses works of marquee painters and sculptors.

It made sense to check out the gifts that the PM had received and were now up for online auction, before they were all bought and taken away from the museum. The proceeds of the auction will go to the Namami Gange or the Clean Ganga fund, and Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary looked like an apt day for a visit. Unfortunately, October 2 was among the closed days for the NGMA, under the umbrella of the culture ministry, and one had to settle for a day ahead of Gandhi Jayanti, as the auction was scheduled to end at 5 pm on October 3.

It emerged later that the managers of the show might have decided to extend the bidding period to October 17, realising that there's energy left in the process and the funds for Namami Gange could go up further.

The scene at NGMA's administrative building, tucked in a corner of the vast complex that was once a residence of the Maharaja of Jaipur, did not quite reveal the action that the mementos under hammer had generated online. A group of uniformed school children sat on the floor in neat rows, listening to a guide about the display spread across the high walls. Some 400 odd gifts were on display, though 2,772 were being auctioned online. A helpful museum insider offered to give a guided tour on the condition that it was all off the record. Artists, businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, students and foreign tourists had been dropping in regularly to look at the PM's gifts, with

the total number of visitors way above 1,000 — the guide said in a manner of giving away a well-kept secret.

Interestingly, while the new wing has an admission fee, it's free of cost to check out the PM's mementos in the other building, where the closely monitored visitors' register remained an important item to assess the success of the display. It was the second time recently that the NGMA was getting associated with the PM's mementos and a corresponding online auction. In January too, they had a similar show, though smaller in scale. This time, the expectations were much higher, but without any target.

At the current auction of the PM's mementos, shawls from various states have attracted attention more than any other items. But, bidders online, anonymous as of now, think differently. A painting of Mahatma Gandhi has already fetched ₹25 lakh, while its base price was ₹2.5 lakh. Rather strangely, it seems not much information has been made available on the painter or the source of the memento till now, even after writing to the authorities a number of times. But Gandhi has always been a hit in the auction circuit and this should not come as a surprise, especially, as it coincides with

his 150th birth anniversary.

At a Sotheby's auction in 2017, a rare 1931 pencil portrait of Gandhi by artist John Henry Amshewitz had fetched ₹32,500. In 2018, a signed vintage photo of Gandhi, walking alongside Madan Mohan Malaviya, was auctioned for \$41,806 in the United States. Again in 2018, an undated letter written by Gandhi was reportedly sold for \$6,358. The list, of course, is much longer.

While this ambitious online auction along with the touristy display of the PM's gifts is new, giving away the mementos is an age-old practice. The gifts of ministers (including those of the PM), bureaucrats and diplomats while they are on official tours have always been deposited in the *toshakhana*, a Persian word that translates into a treasure-house. Governed by various gift acceptance policies, officials and ministers must deposit their mementos in *toshakhana* within 30 days of the end of their trips. *Toshakhana* officials assess the market worth of the gifts and then those could be purchased back. The gifts that are not purchased could be donated to public museums or embassies. Often, they are kept in Rashtrapati Bhawan or the PM's residence as well.

## CHINESE WHISPERS

### English for tourism



The Madhya Pradesh government believes language is a key barrier in the way of the state becoming foreign tourist-friendly. So it has taken up the task to equip its policemen to deal with foreign tourists visiting the state. The job to train policemen has been assigned to the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, Gwalior. Police persons ranked constable upwards are being taught English, besides being trained to be friendly with tourists and helping them.

### Ticket counter at Janpath

Infighting in the Haryana Congress has reached the doorstep of party President Sonia Gandhi, with former state unit chief Ashok Tanwar and his supporters protesting on Wednesday outside her 10 Janpath residence in New Delhi, alleging corruption in the distribution of tickets for the upcoming Assembly polls. As his supporters raised slogans against management committee chief Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Tanwar alleged that tickets were being distributed on whims and fancies and were also being "sold", ignoring those who had worked for years. In a bid to end factionalism in the party ahead of the polls, the Congress last month named Kumari Selja chief of its state unit, replacing Tanwar, and appointed Hooda chairperson of the election management committee. Hooda had openly come out against Tanwar, who is known to be close to Rahul Gandhi and had been state unit chief since 2014.

### Photo and finish

Hard on the heels of some Samajwadi Party (SP) top guns, including sitting Rajya Sabha and Uttar Pradesh legislative members, quitting the party and joining the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), another close aide of party President Akhilesh Yadav is rumoured to follow suit. Former UP cabinet minister Abhishek Mishra, who had a stint as faculty in IIM Ahmedabad before he joined the SP and won the 2012 Assembly election from Lucknow, is at the centre of much discussion, after his photograph with Lok Sabha MP and Delhi BJP President Manoj Tiwari went viral. Although both Mishra and the embattled SP are mum on the issue, the grapevine in the state capital has it that Mishra has decided to switch sides, given the sorry state of affairs in the socialist party with no perceptible revival in sight.

# Automakers hit the fast lane overseas

The slowdown in the domestic market has whetted the overseas ambition of the industry

T E NARASIMHAN

Once a booming car market, India is now in the grips of a prolonged slowdown, forcing automakers from Maruti Suzuki to Toyota Kirloskar to cut production or halt manufacturing temporarily to clear the pile-up in inventory. Since the start of the year, companies have been struggling to sell cars despite deep discounts, let alone increase demand.

But there is a positive story emerging from the gloom. The slowdown has whetted the ambition of automakers to expand their foothold abroad. So even as domestic passenger car sales declined 29.4 per cent between April and August this year, exports grew 6.5 per cent, partially cushioning the blow from slowing sales. A similar trend was in evidence for two-wheelers, where domestic sales declined 14.85 per cent, but exports grew 4.52 per cent, with motorcycles leading the way.

So what is helping this overseas push? Several factors seem to be at play. For one, a weaker rupee has helped Indian manufacturers outflank foreign rivals in terms of prices. Many car makers have designed their plants in a way that they can easily switch to making cars that are of export quality during lean phases in the domestic market. The country's largest car exporter, Hyundai Motor India's MD & CEO S S Kim, for example, says a flexible industry 4.0 plant can cater

to both domestic and export markets and switch from catering to one market to another with ease. The demand is coming in particular from markets in Africa, where automobile ownership is low and the industry is still in the early stages of growth.

This flexibility in the manufacturing plants has kept the company's Chennai unit running at around 97 per cent capacity despite flagging sales in the local market, says Kim. The plant caters to around 91 countries across Africa, West Asia, Latin America, Australia and Asia-Pacific.

This strategy has been implemented by many others who are now tapping the export market. During January to August, Hyundai Motor's export grew 15.84 per cent to 122,518 units from 105,768 units a year ago.

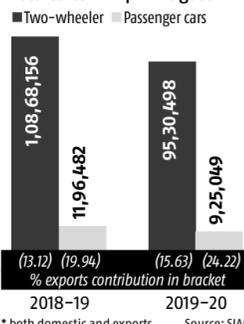
Other car makers who saw a jump in exports during this period are Nissan (27 per cent increase), Toyota Kirloskar (21 per cent) and Volkswagen (7.3 per cent). Utility vehicle manufacturer Mahindra & Mahindra's export rose by 42.3 per cent and Maruti Suzuki's by 4.4 per cent.

Some have also focussed on building synergies between alliance partners to cut operation costs. Such a strategy has several offshoots. Biju Balendran, MD and CEO of Renault-Nissan Automotive India, says optimising technology and common facility has helped them deliver higher-value vehicles to customers. Renault-Nissan has Mitsubishi as its alliance partner. In addition to cars, the company also



## OFFSHORE DRIVE

Total sales\* in April-August



exports around 4,000 auto parts to 66 plants across 28 countries. From the Chennai plant, powertrain parts are sent to countries such as Romania and Brazil. It also exports stamping panels to plants in Russia and Egypt.

As far as two-wheelers are concerned, in the scooter segment, Yamaha Motor India, Piaggio and Suzuki have reported a strong growth, while in motorcycles out of the 12 players, five have reported growth in exports. All of them though have reported a drop in sales in the domestic market.

TVS Motor Company, for example, saw 6.4 per cent growth in exports during April-August, while domestic sales declined by 5 per cent. The company currently exports to over 60 countries across the globe. Export contribution to sales rose to 24 per cent from 21 per cent. It has invested in setting up sales

and service networks to expand in new geographies and strengthening its presence in Africa, Latin America and Central America.

Exports have shored up sales for commercial vehicle manufacturers as well, although the growth in this segment has been slower than in passenger cars. Satyakam Arya, MD & chief executive of Daimler India, said the Chennai facility is being developed as a global export hub. The facility will cater to the Latin American markets from 2022. Daimler's exports saw an 8 per cent growth, and new categories are being added to grow it further. For example, the company has initiated exports of sub-9-tonne small vehicles from its India facility recently, even though it is not sold in India.

Ashok Leyland has also set a target to increase export contribution to 20 per cent over the next five years, from

## INSIGHT

# Changing the way India shops... forever

Kirana stores hold the key to retail and ecommerce growth in India



ANKUR PAHWA & PINAKIRANJAN MISHRA

India is witnessing the most compelling retail consumption story largely on the back of a young, tech-savvy population with sharp digital education, faster and cheaper internet access and growing purchasing power. As large global and domestic retail as well as ecommerce players battle for a growing share of the consumer's wallet, India's offline physical infrastructure — the *kirana* stores and telecom points — are emerging as allies to help players capitalise on the next wave of retail growth.

The traditional *kirana* channels had constraints in assortment, products, price and location, but they enjoyed massive consumer goodwill with the local community they served, thanks to proximity, availability of credit, and the option to return/exchange products with relative ease. This is the trust factor essential to scale up retail. This will remain the key advantage, and the reason *kiranas* will continue to play a key role in the Indian retail ecosystem.

Little wonder large ecommerce players are looking to leverage the existing physical infrastructure to strengthen and expand their own presence. These large players are helping the smaller ones go digital while also incorporating them into their main-

stream distribution network. Some large retail and ecommerce companies have run pilot projects and have witnessed considerable success.

Taking a cue from some major ecommerce players in China, companies in India are building business-to-business ecommerce platforms with digital wholesale marketplaces for products such as smart phones, televisions, apparels, spices and soap. It's a win-win as it opens new avenues for both retailers and small store owners. It equips retailers with customer data to analyse consumption behaviour at the grassroots level — also helping in the personalisation of their products and services, and marketing for a region — thus ensuring higher return on investment.

For offline retailers, real estate remains a huge challenge in India which has a bearing on their pricing and profitability. The *kirana* model, however, entails lower rental costs, minimal capex and fewer stock keeping units in a small space. Their knowledge of the local consumer community helps them to better utilise the limited store space and turnover goods smartly. The wholesaler is used as a warehouse. The digitisation of these stores with strong ecommerce-like technology and deals add efficiency to the entire distribution chain.

Tech startups are creating systems for easy access to wholesale procurement by these stores and to facilitate low inventory. Their solutions often entail little or no new capital investment, earning commission on all orders and increased customer loyalty. In fact, digital financial platforms are also playing a crucial role in helping *kirana* stores go online, by providing end-to-end payment solutions including invoicing, micro-lending and so on. This creates a newer and more efficient go-to-market channel for brands to cater to a burgeoning customer base in small towns with big aspirations.

However, the digitisation of these stores is still at a nascent stage. There are several

challenges in onboarding these small stores including knowledge of software use, connectivity and language (unless vernacular) which may reduce the pace of adoption of the tech-led model. Technology, while being a barrier can also be an enabler by building intelligent regional language platforms and in aiding buying, better cataloging.

The rural ecommerce market is a \$10-12 billion opportunity (EY analysis) waiting to be tapped and with internet penetration expected to touch 45 per cent by 2021, it provides for a significant opportunity. That said, companies need to come up with indigenous solutions to overcome some of the unique challenges that catering to this segment entail. Also, given the diversity that India presents, this will require uber-localisation. Existing ecommerce players will also need to tinker with their existing models to help in demand generation and supply and services innovation to serve the rural markets better. But clearly, the omni-channel approach will be the most effective strategy to reach out to consumers and fuel consumption growth.

Innovative efforts undertaken by the government, including the focus on cashless digital transactions has accelerated the inclusion of rural India in the retail map. Policy initiatives like Digital India would also help retailers connect with consumers in otherwise under-penetrated geographies. Indeed, the convergence of technology and retail, the effective use of the existing physical infrastructure with the evolving digital infrastructure have impacted retail already; a stronger focus on digitisation and omni-channel strategies will change the way India shops... forever.

Pahwa is partner and national leader, ecommerce and consumer internet, & Mishra is partner and national leader, consumer products and retail, EY India. Views are personal

## LETTERS

### Great going

Kudos for devoting a full page (October 2) to the 5th anniversary of the revolutionary Clean India programme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. You've done an excellent stock-taking of this crucial project. The project has indeed gone beyond mere tokenism and photo-ops. Notwithstanding a few misses, in total, there are huge gains. Just the costs averted and savings illustrated in your chart are hugely impressive. That each household could save as much as ₹70,000 on an average per annum is incredible. A possible reduction of over 5 per cent in the loss to GDP if 100 per cent households are provided toilets is mind boggling. Who would've imagined such widespread advantages of a clean-up programme?

The frank comments of Parameswaran Iyer, secretary, Ministry for Drinking Water and Sanitation, give us hope that the government is serious and the 10-year sanitation strategy will ensure that "India will transition from open defecation free (ODF) to ODF Plus". The government's move to rope in a vocal and eloquent Opposition leaders like Shashi Tharoor is a great idea. Such efforts will help widen the acceptance of the scheme across the political spectrum and make it a truly national effort. Endorsement by the country's biggest industrialist Mukesh Ambani should also help. More than anything else, enthusiastic participation of school children gives a lot of hope.

Of course, a lot remains to be done but it's been a tremendous start and the going has been great.

Krishan Kalra Gurugram

### Khadi's relevance

As part of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, various institutions, boards, departments, agencies and organisations have come out with

excellent initiatives, plans and programmes. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has asked schools across the country to voluntarily observe khadi-wearing day at least once a month. Mahatma Gandhi propagated the use of khadi or *khaddar* during the freedom movement not only to boycott foreign goods but also to make Indians self-reliant and use clothes spun by our people with indigenous material that is affordable, climate-friendly and good for us and the environment. Gandhi gave a message to India that khadi can unite us. The CBSE's proposal is laudable and can be emulated by other organisations.

Khadi, being the heritage fabric of our nation and institutions, pushing forward the idea of using it can truly provide employment opportunities to lakhs of rural artisans in the country. Khadi promotes unity and equality, and by incorporating innovative fashion technology, the new generation is sure to take it with open arms. Being skin-friendly and adaptable to any climatic condition makes Khadi unique. Its quality and the eco-friendly production make it extraordinary.

The young generation will definitely love it. It will also teach them about our rich heritage, our freedom movement and also bind them to the worthy life of Gandhi.

M Pradyu Kannur

### Being Indian

The Citizen Amendment Bill is a long overdue step in the right direc-

tion. Following partition, Pakistan became the land of the Muslims, but the Hindu-majority India had no qualms about minorities, including Muslims, choosing to stay back. India therefore belongs to these original Indians and their descendants. India has the right to have a selective admission policy. Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, who want to come back have nowhere else to go except India.

Apart from the Citizenship Amendment Bill, I request the home minister to also pass a Natural Indian Citizen Bill, defining a natural Indian. A natural Indian is one whose parents were Indians at the time of his/her birth and who has never held the citizenship of a foreign country even for a single day. Only such natural Indians will be allowed to hold Constitutional posts, enter the armed forces and other sensitive organisations in the intelligence, communications and scientific domain. The third Bill necessary is the Prevention of Conversion Bill. Only then will our citizenship and demographic structure remain truly secular.

TR Ramaswami Mumbai

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

## HAMBONE



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## Risk to state govt finances

Debt at the subnational level is high

Goods and services tax (GST) collection in September slipped to a 19-month low of ₹91,916 crore. A lower GST collection along with slower growth in direct taxes and a reduction in corporation tax rates could affect the finances of not only the Union government but also of the state governments. States spend about one and a half times more than the Centre and account for about two-thirds of the general government capital expenditure. Therefore, the state of state government finances has a significant bearing on macroeconomic outcomes. In this context, the annual study of state finances by the Reserve Bank of India serves an important purpose by filling a critical information gap. The latest edition, released this week, highlights several issues that could affect the broader economy in the medium term.

For one, at the aggregate level, states have budgeted for a fiscal deficit of 2.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the current fiscal year, compared to the revised estimate of 2.9 per cent last year. While states at the aggregate level have maintained the fiscal deficit below the 3 per cent mark, the quality of expenditure has deteriorated in recent years with a rise in revenue expenditure. In 2018-19, for instance, states witnessed a slippage of 34 basis points in their revised estimates for fiscal deficit, compared to the budget estimates, largely because of lower receipts and higher expenditure on account of farm loan waiver and income support schemes. This restricted the flow to capital expenditure, which would affect growth in the medium term and, in turn, hamper revenue mobilisation.

Second, GST collection has fluctuated and the targets for most states have remained elusive. While the states are compensated for any shortfall in GST collection, the arrangement is not permanent. Therefore, all outstanding issues in the GST system should be resolved at the earliest. It is also important to examine what needs to be done with regard to the introduction of the invoice matching system, which so far has posed a major challenge before the tax administration. The other problem for states is that the revenues from sources such as stamp duty and sales tax have become more volatile in recent years, which affects predictability of receipts. Also, states generally tend to overestimate revenues, which could be undermining the quality of expenditure.

Third, debt at the state level has increased over the last few years and is at about 25 per cent of GDP. The report shows that India has the highest debt-to-GDP ratio at the subnational level among its peers. It further highlights that at the aggregate level, debt is sustainable in the medium term, but if outstanding guarantees are taken into account, state government debt would become unsustainable. State governments provide guarantees to borrowings by state public sector enterprises, which have gone up in recent years. Deterioration in the financial conditions of power distribution companies could also put pressure on the state governments' finances. As things stand today, bringing down the state debt to 20 per cent of GDP by 2024-25 — as recommended by the committee that reviewed the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act — would require an increase of 14 per cent in receipts every year.

Overall, while states have adhered to fiscal discipline, there are potential risks to their finances. A prolonged slowdown can dent state government finances and result in a vicious cycle of lower expenditure and lower growth. Therefore, it would be advisable that the Centre and states work together to push up economic activity, improve tax compliance and prioritise capital expenditure to maximise returns.

## A laudable achievement

But Swachh Bharat could have been more than building toilets

One of the signature programmes of the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), which was launched five years ago on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, October 2. It followed up on Mr Modi's laudable decision to highlight the problem of sanitation and cleanliness in his first speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort, on Independence Day 2014. In many ways, the SBM is representative of many of the missions of the NDA government; it takes an existing scheme under a Central line ministry and adds enthusiasm, public engagement and implementation energy to the mix. This combination has led to the NDA's most notable successes, including the Jan Dhan programme for access to bank accounts and the sanitation component of the SBM. The government has sharply accelerated toilet-building in rural India and, according to its statistics, almost all Indian households now have access to toilets. By any standards, regardless of questions about usage and the reliability of statistics, this is a worthy aim and an admirable achievement.

However, questions should indeed be asked along three axes. First, is the sanitation and waste disposal task indeed as complete as suggested? Second, are the institutional bases for the SBM firm enough to ensure a sustainable change in Indian public hygiene and cleanliness? And third, is the SBM too narrow-focused on toilet-building? Of these questions, the first is most controversial, but perhaps has the clearest answer. The statistics from the Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDW) have been challenged by independent researchers. A study released by the Research Institute for Compassionate Economics insisted that, in spite of official claims to the contrary, 44 per cent of those living in rural areas of the heartland states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan continue to defecate in the open in spite of a spike in the increase in access to toilets. These figures underline questions about MDW claims regarding sanitation that date back to the Census 2011 and the National Family Health Survey. The most objective interpretation of these disparities is that a gap between availability and usage continues to plague the SBM. More independent evaluation is necessary.

However, on its fifth anniversary, it should be noted that the SBM was not supposed to be about just the disposal of solid waste. It is supposed to be about more than sanitation — it is about public cleanliness, particularly clean cities with proper drainage and garbage disposal. This aspect of the SBM, which had no effective ministry-run scheme to draw on, could have seen better performance. The ministry of urban development runs a contest for the cleanest Indian city, the results of which are usually greeted with derision by most cities' residents. This is in spite of exceptional citizen engagement, with volunteers taking the lead to clean up public spaces in many areas. The problem here is that such volunteerism is no replacement for the institutional architecture, such as empowered and accountable local government, that would genuinely guarantee cleaner towns. Even the sustainability of dry latrines which will need to be emptied after a few years can be questioned. The Indian state is good at missions that target one thing, and less good at administrative reform that improves people's lives sustainably. Swachh Bharat, in spite of its many laudable achievements, is a reminder that this broad trend still holds good.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



## Extend the tax-cut logic to infrastructure

A judicious lowering of input costs can increase productivity

With the tax cuts, it is as though the government suddenly stumbled on the wisdom of deferred gratification. The government line is that tax cuts will give much more in the long run than revenue lost, and we heartily agree. Yet, this logic isn't extended to personal and consumer taxes. Nor is it applied to essential inputs to infrastructure to reduce costs further, specifically for radio frequency spectrum for communications, and for coal for electricity.

The cut in corporate taxes is brilliant. A significant step in responsive governance, and so utterly overdue. No ifs and only a few buts, which one hopes influencers and decision makers will consider and act on in short order. The concerns are about interrelated processes (for completeness in end-to-end design and execution, upping the odds of delivery and achievement), and symmetry on the demand side, without which we cannot get optimal results.

Many have expressed reservations about the tax cuts instead of incentives to consumers to revive demand. Some experts have cited the failure of such reforms globally in reviving growth. While these concerns may have merit, the key criteria in such comparisons are whether the circumstances are comparable, or too different. For instance, are the markets large, with scope for expansion, or small, less diverse, or more saturated; what is the level of momentum or inertia? And so on.

While stock markets were euphoric, experts have been divided in their opinion, because demand has been subdued and these are supply-side incentives. Another reason is that companies paying high taxes gain the most, while the majority don't gain directly in profits. Profits will rise for the highest taxpayers by 11 per cent, while large FMCG companies such as HUL, ITC, and Nestle will increase profits by 9 per cent (Moneycontrol). Profits for IT and pharmaceutical companies are estimated to increase by 5 to 6 per cent, and existing automobile manufacturers are unlikely to benefit directly during this slowdown, although new ones will pay 17 per cent tax, as in Singapore. However, a number of auto component manufacturers who paid taxes at 29-35 per cent will get increased profits of 4 to 10 per cent, and Ica expects localisation to increase. Crisil's study of nearly 1,000 companies in 80 sectors estimated that profits would increase by nearly ₹37,000 crore, while

the State Bank of India, based on about 3,500 companies (and this newspaper based on 490 companies), estimated increased profits of about ₹45,000 crore, and India Ratings of ₹60,000 crore. These profits could result in price cuts, spurring demand.

However, India's tax rates are still not especially competitive. A recent article in these pages showed that effective tax rates in India are still among the highest after including tax on dividends and share buyback, at 46.8 per cent for existing manufacturers, and 41.1 per cent for new manufacturers. By contrast, comparable rates in Vietnam and Thailand are 20 per cent, and in Indonesia and China, 25 per cent. For details, see chart.

Add costs for improving infrastructure (stable electricity supply; water, sewerage, and waste management; communications; transport and logistics), and law and order, and that's how much must be done for our supply side to be really competitive. Then, there's demand, which needs a stable, functioning GST system with lower rates, and income tax cuts to match.

If time, energy and money were channelled into these areas instead of events and jamborees, we could be further along in unleashing our potential. Thereafter, skilling and education applied to systematic development could take us even further.

### Tax-cuts & infrastructure

It is this episodic intervention without logical consistency or integrated, step-by-step convergence focussed on delivery that results in our disjointed infrastructure, and this infrastructure is the very foundation for our productivity and wellbeing. Apart from apparent lack of systems thinking, detailed process flows, and project management, there is also confusion between free-market ideas and the application of any form of industrial policy, because of the backlash from past mistakes with dirigisme and socialist planning.

This is where we have to leap across the chasm, and either "get it" as with the corporate tax cuts, or fail.

### Digitisation as development priority

Our broadband and digitisation efforts are disappointingly ineffective.

This is one instance where we should consider



SHYAM PONAPPA

## EFFECTIVE TAX ON CORPORATIONS

(in %)

India (existing cos)*	46.8
India (new mfg units)**	41.1
France	34.4
Brazil	34.0
Japan	29.7
South Africa	28.0
South Korea	27.5
US	25.8
China	25.0
Indonesia	25.0
Russia	20.0
Vietnam	20.0
Thailand	20.0
UK	19.0

Note: OECD rates based on the 2018 numbers consider combined taxation for corporates at the top marginal rate. \*India's rate given is the lowest applicable to current companies; \*\*For new domestic manufacturing units. Source: OECD, EY, Business Standard research

adopting China's approach in developing broadband (except for state ownership) as a priority, driven by a strong industrial policy, "to play a leading strategic economic role and to deliver economic benefits to the Chinese people".<sup>2</sup> India proposes similar objectives, but without the detailed planning to adopt broadband and to aid manufacturing. There are expectations about e-services without detailed, step-by-step proposals. In China the broadband network was formally recognised as public infrastructure and incorporated into government plans, and spectrum was not auctioned. The backbone is dominated by state ownership, and private investment in broadband for access in buildings and public facilities (airports, subways, highways) has to ensure fair access to all service providers as a matter of policy.

Two other developments have a bearing on this. One is the move to share spectrum and infrastructure. In July, the UK allowed public access to three bands assigned to businesses, organisations, and mobile companies for use by anyone at nominal cost.<sup>3</sup> Another is the deteriorating state of BSNL and MTNL with their 185,000 employees, before they go entirely Air India's way. As with tax cuts, the government can, after consultation and with participation from the private sector could:

- Adopt a beneficial shared infrastructure policy with centralised/cloud Radio Access Networks (c-RANs): see [https://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/w8ds5f/global\\_cran?w=12#summary](https://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/w8ds5f/global_cran?w=12#summary)),
- Give access to all available spectrum on payment based on usage,
- Retrain and use BSNL and MTNL as stakeholders for public security and public interest in consortiums with private operators.

Our interests would be well served at much lower cost by extending this approach to all resources for our collective benefit.

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- 1: For a good example applied to Aadhaar/PDS, see: Subhashish Bhadra and Varad Pande - <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/public-distribution-system-one-nation-one-ration-card-scheme-modi-government-6029134/>
- 2: Krishna Jayakar and Liu Chun, 2014: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267726214\\_The\\_Race\\_between\\_the\\_Dragon\\_and\\_the\\_Elephant\\_Comparing\\_China\\_and\\_India's\\_National\\_Broadband\\_Plans](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267726214_The_Race_between_the_Dragon_and_the_Elephant_Comparing_China_and_India's_National_Broadband_Plans)
- 3: <https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/airwaves-opened-up-to-support-wireless-revolution>

## Aligning the CSR mandate

You could almost sense the dismay in C-suites across India following the news that the Union government was shelving its big-bang Gandhi Jayanti announcement of a blanket ban on six items that contain single use plastics (SUP). Judging from the hectic email traffic from corporate communications professionals and PR executives, it was clear that the impending SUP ban was about to become a major cause celebre in corporate India's corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda.

There's one thing to be said for Indian corporations. They may be short of innovation, strategic ideas or even governance standards, but on CSR they have been unerringly on point. Perhaps it's something to do with India Inc's DNA that they've honed the ability to pick up signals from Raisina Hill to a fine art.

Narendra Modi's enlightened announcement that the government would ban cups, plates, bottles, straws, bags and sachets using SUP on Gandhi's birth anniversary has provoked robust support. Airports and other public places complied with lightning speed to declare their spaces no-SUP zones, and large manufacturers made sure the press propagated their efforts to recycle plastic and so on. That is certainly a heartening response to a problem that is reaching code red status rapidly.

The no-SUP CSR programmes won't go to waste, though. The blanket ban was rescinded because it would have thrown thousands of workers in small units that make SUP-based products out of work. Now, the Union environment ministry has said it

would work towards curbing SUP, offering manufacturing units a sensible phase-out route that will keep the campaign relevant for some time to come.

It is easy to predict that how far India Inc persists with its no-SUP projects will depend on how much emphasis Mr Modi's government continues to place on the issue. The close alignment between CSR programmes and pet prime ministerial projects has been a pattern ever since the CSR law was passed by the preceding United Progressive Alliance government.

The latest India CSR Outlook report, published annually by NGOBOX, shows that the bulk of the CSR spends by 368 large corporations — accounting for three-fourth of CSR spending — were devoted to education and skill development, followed by WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene). Together, these issues account for 61 per cent of CSR spends. The NGOBOX study shows that this has been the trend for the past four financial years.

The first is partly the legacy of Manmohan Singh's Right to Education legislative initiative that saw large corporations focus their CSR energies on primary schooling. Many companies narrowed it down to schooling for girls — a subset of "women's empowerment," the issue in vogue at the time. Mr Modi's "Beti bachao, Beti padhao" and "Skill India" campaign offered opportunities for corporations to enlarge these programmes.

The rising number of sanitation CSR projects is unmistakably an offshoot of Mr Modi's Swachh



SWOT  
KANIKA DATTA

Bharat programme, which imaginatively relabelled the UPA's Bharat Nirman toilet-building project and infused it with greater energy to reduce if not eliminate (as is claimed) open defecation in India.

What's not to like if corporations are focusing their CSR mandates on education, sanitation and related issues? Nothing at all, if the projects are viewed in isolation. But a closer look at spending patterns suggest that the programmes aren't that aligned with the original intent of the mandate (introduced via an amendment to the Companies Act in 2014).

The UPA government thought up this stipulation as a means of deflecting criticism for the inefficient and inadequate compensation to people impacted by large industrial projects in the backward regions of central and eastern India. But a closer examination of the spending shows that the bulk of it has gone to the relatively better developed western regions, mostly within the ambit of corporations' operations (the lack of new projects anywhere in India may have something to do with this).

By ostensibly encouraging corporations to focus on societal development, the UPA adroitly avoided the "suit-boot ki sarkar" sneer that so enraged Mr Modi in his first term. This may explain why the NDA initially attempted to deepen this CSR legacy by transforming a voluntary "pay or explain" mandate into an obligation that would attract criminal charges for defaulting companies. Cooler heads have prevailed since and the proposal has been withdrawn but corporate India has understood the signals. This year, the big companies spent 63 per cent more than their prescribed CSR spending. Next year could see corporate India outdo itself on fulfilling its CSR mandate. Whether all of this really transforms India is, of course, another question.

## Why India's waste management stinks



### BOOK REVIEW

GEETANJALI KRISHNA

India ranks among the world's 10 biggest producers of waste today and is projected to be in the top four within the decade. Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been successful in raising awareness that the nation urgently needs to be cleaned, the fact is that five years since its launch, the country continues to reel under growing mountains of waste. Ankur Bisen's *Wasted:*

*The Messy Story of Sanitation in India, a Manifesto for Change* examines India's sanitation challenge, tracing it to its historical and cultural roots.

The questions aren't new, but they still manage to raise a stink. How is it that India has caught up with the developed world as far as consumption is concerned but remains firmly in the middle ages when it comes to waste management? Why is India dumping 80 per cent of its garbage in open landfills without treating or processing it? And why are some Indians so fanatical about kitchen hygiene — but throw kitchen waste on the streets? Mr Bisen explores the reasons, historical, cultural and infrastructural, for the twisted Indian mindset on sanitation and the biases that force it to oscillate between pretense and ignorance. At the root of India's waste problem is a

simple, indisputable fact — the role of citizens and waste management has never been defined. Individuals have never been guided or mandated on methods of disposing of their own waste. Predictably, Mr Bisen examines how notions of caste and purity have influenced Indian attitudes towards cleanliness and sanitation. Waste has traditionally been seen as ritually polluting and the job of an inferior "other" to pick up. This has resulted in a collective attitude that blames the garbage on the streets on the paucity or inefficiency of the municipal cleaning staff, instead of questioning why the garbage is there in the first place.

It is while examining the infrastructural and legislative weaknesses in the country's waste management system that Mr Bisen makes some excellent points. The job of waste management has largely been left to

local municipal bodies. And although effective waste management today needs precise scientific inputs, upgraded infrastructure and legislation, the government has not empowered local civic bodies with any of this. To understand what good laws can achieve, one need not even look to the West; India's cleanest state, Sikkim, has already enacted some of the country's most effective laws governing waste and e-waste disposal. Mr Bisen examines laws in other "cleaner" countries to give a clearer understanding of what needs to be done in India. Seattle, for example, enforces a law that decrees that a household is also responsible for keeping clean the public area that is immediately outside. When it comes to waste segregation, Belgian law mandates that citizens segregate their waste into not two, but six (for glass, paper, plastic, e-waste, batteries

and miscellaneous). The author seems slightly out of touch with reality when he suggests that a similar system be implemented in India, where agencies have not even been successful in persuading citizens to segregate their waste into two bins! The need perhaps, isn't six different bins but a concerted effort to bring the issue of waste management into the mainstream.

Comparisons of Indian waste management practices with those followed by "cleaner" countries throughout the book are interesting. Hong Kong, for instance, incentivises the on-site recycling and reuse of construction waste with favorable tax slabs. It emerges that cleaner countries tend to have waste management as a central or federal subject, instead of dealing with it at the local level. Japan is a striking stand-out: The author writes that it has enacted 25 Acts on waste management in the last 50 years! In recent years, all the laws Japan has passed pertain to the changing nature of waste. Some countries have become such

successful recyclers of waste that they no longer have a lot of waste that goes into the landfill. Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Austria are now almost circular economies, which means that everything they use, gets reused.

Mr Bisen writes that India is at a crossroads: Either it can seek a new solution to waste management or benefit from new technologies and experiences of other countries. Whichever path the country chooses, garbage disposal and sanitation practices cannot, and should not, be viewed as merely the sum of sweepers and waste collectors available at any point in time.

### WASTED: The Messy Story of Sanitation in India, a Manifesto for Change

Ankur Bisen  
Pan Macmillan India,  
584 pages; ₹699

# Opinion

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2019



**SMELLS LIKE A COUP**

President of the US, Donald Trump

As I learn more and more each day, I am coming to the conclusion that what is taking place is not an impeachment, it is a COUP

## GST outlook worrying, big expenditure cut likely

Direct taxes below target and with GST shortfall, overall taxes could fall short by ₹2 trn; state compensation dicey

**WITH GST COLLECTIONS** by the central and state governments (CGST + IGST + Compensation Cess + State GST) coming in at just ₹91,916 crore, or the lowest in the last 19 months, not only are the central government's overall tax numbers in trouble—more so after the corporate tax rate cut—even the GST compensation to state governments could be affected. According to Credit Suisse, while there could be a ₹210,000 crore overall shortfall in all central tax collections now, the fall in GST means state revenues from this tax will also come under pressure. In which case, as per the agreement with them, the Centre, which had promised to ensure their GST revenues grew at 14%, will have to give them more compensation. According to Credit Suisse, the compensation that was budgeted to be around ₹109,000 crore in FY20 could rise to ₹150,000 crore; based on April-August data from the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), the compensation cess collections are averaging around ₹7,900 crore per month right now. In which case, the central government will have to dip into its own tax collections to compensate the states. While the Centre is keen to revise this pact with states—valid till FY22—the state governments are trying to ensure that it extends a similar guarantee for another five years after FY22.

West Bengal finance minister Amit Mitra has been arguing that if GST collections continue to fare as they are right now, state government collections will continue to be under pressure. The crux of the problem is that, with the government—the Centre and states—not able to bring in the invoice-matching feature that is key to raising compliance in the GST system, the required buoyancy in GST collections is far from what is required. GST collections by the central government (CGST + IGST + Compensation Cess) in FY19 were ₹582,000 crore, a figure that was short of the original target of ₹743,000 crore; this was later revised down to ₹643,000 crore. While the government had budgeted a growth of around 13% in FY20—a monthly run-rate of ₹55,278 crore versus ₹48,500 crore in FY19, the April-August FY20 run rate was just ₹47,321 crore. And, as compared to the same period in FY19, there has been virtually no growth at all.

Faced with a big tax shortfall, the government will then have no option but to either raise the target from divestment of existing shares of PSUs—including the SUUTI shares it owns—as well as aggressive privatisation of these firms. While the budget has estimated receipts of ₹105,000 crore under this head—as compared to ₹80,000 crore in FY19—it is not clear that an amount larger than this can be raised if the stock markets don't remain buoyant; also, if there are too many equity offerings, the appetite for them might reduce. The other option is to make aggressive cuts in expenditure. What is more likely is a combination of expenditure cuts and more divestment/privatisation, along with the usual rollover of certain expenditure on subsidies like those on food and an increase in the fiscal deficit; the likely slower nominal GDP growth, in any case, will add to the fiscal slippage.

## An atrocity, indeed

SC recalls checks on Atrocities Act misuse

**THE SUPREME COURT (SC)** recalling its March 20, 2018, order that put checks on the misuse of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act is quite unfortunate. A bench comprising Justices AK Goel (now retired) and UU Lalit had diluted some of the more draconian provisions of the Atrocities Act—relating to arrest of the accused and the granting of bail—to discourage the use of the Act as a tool to “blackmail” innocent citizens and public servants. The bench had felt that the law was being used for exacting “vengeance” and realising vested interests, and stated that instead of helping erase caste divides, it was reinforcing these and was even helping “perpetuate casteism”. So, while the Act originally provided for immediate arrest of the accused followed by judicial remand and barred anticipatory bail, the SC ruled that arresting public servants accused of an offence(s) under the Act will require written permission from their appointing authority, and, in the case of private citizens, permission from the senior superintendent of police will be required. It also scrapped the provision barring anticipatory bail, a statutory right.

Now, a three-judge bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, MR Shah, and BR Gavai, has recalled the 2018 judgement, saying that if it were to be implemented as worded, then “the very purpose of the Act is likely to be frustrated.” Indeed, while the 2018 order called for an investigation before arrests were made, the SC, in the latest judgement, notes, “Various complications may arise. Investigation cannot be completed within specified time...delay would be adding to the further plight of the downtrodden class.” While the fact that a charge-sheet was filed in over 78% of the Atrocities Act cases the police took up for investigation in 2016 and disposed would suggest that there is a prima facie case for keeping the original provisions, the courts awarded convictions in just a fourth of the cases that went to trial that year. Poor convictions also have a lot to do with weak prosecution or witnesses being coerced, it is true, but that holds for all crimes and not just those under the Atrocities Act. In its recall judgement, the SC said that the permission criterion laid down by the March 2018 judgement “is not at all statutorily envisaged; it is encroaching on a field which is reserved for the Legislature. The direction amounts to a mandate having legislative colour which is a field not earmarked for the Courts.” It also said that the March 2018 judgement was “against the concept of protective discrimination in favour of the down-trodden classes.” It should have kept in mind that the judgement—rendered nullified with Parliament later passing a law to restore the original provisions on arrest and granting of bail—in no way impinged on scheduled caste/scheduled tribe individuals getting justice in genuine Atrocities Act cases; it only provided for protection against wrongful application of the law.

## Ringling INDICTMENT

Trai's failure to act in a timely manner has stoked the needless ringing-time jousting amongst telecom players

**WHILE TRAI WAS** notified of Rjio reducing its ringing time to 20 seconds some months ago, its failure to take cognisance of this and initiate action has now pushed other telcos to do the same. Jio subsequently raised the ringing time to 25 seconds, but older networks allowed for a 45-second ringing time. Now, both Airtel and Vodafone have decided to bring down ringing times. So, a person that receives a call gets only 25 seconds to respond. While Trai did release a consultation paper on the matter, it failed to ask telecom service providers to stick to the legacy ring-time before a final ring-time was fixed.

This is not the first time that Trai's inaction has had such implications for stakeholders in the telecom space. It has even been accused of bias by TDSAT and the Supreme Court, and rapped by the Telecom Commission, telecom's highest policy-making body. More important, in this matter, the issue is not of ringing time, but of the interconnect usage charge (IUC)—this is what the originating network pays to the terminating network. But, when the ringing time is shortened, and there are more missed calls, those who received these calls are likely to return them; a telco that would have paid an IUC now ends up collecting it. When Trai reduced the IUC rates in 2017, to six paise from 14 earlier, this wasn't without its share of controversy either. New players, like Jio, that use IP technology wanted IUC eliminated, and argued that IUCs created a barrier to entry for new operators—the IUC meant Jio's IUC payments exceeded what it charged customers—and was the reason for legacy operators not upgrading themselves. On the other hand, legacy players that had already built sizeable networks on the older technologies battled for higher IUCs. Ideally, instead of a Trai-mandated IUC, this should have been a market-determined one, with negotiations between the major players; all that Trai needed to mandate was that interconnections couldn't be refused or delayed.

## POPULATION WOES

WITH THE 18-23 POPULATION HARDLY GROWING, INDIA WILL SOON HAVE AN AGEING POPULATION SUPPORTED BY A SHRINKING WORKFORCE

# Need urgent action to reap demographic dividend

## TV MOHANDAS PAI & NISHA HOLLA

Pai is Chairman, Aarin Capital Partners & Holla is Technology fellow, C-CAMP. Views are personal



urban and rural.

After Class 12, the number of youngsters entering higher education drops further—AISHE data indicates GER in 2018-19 was 26.3 across India. AISHE also uses the information from its surveys to estimate the population in the ages of 18-23, the eligible ages for higher education. The accompanying graphic indicates this number has hardly grown from 14.03 crore in 2011 to 14.2 crore in 2018, translating to a CAGR of only 0.18%. Low CAGR in this age group is a clear indication that our workforce size will stagnate soon.

With the number of children in India reducing, and the 18-23 population hardly growing, soon India may have an ageing population supported by a shrinking workforce. Today, however, we have an incredible advantage—we are the youngest of the large economies. Median age here is 28 years, compared to 32 in Brazil, 37 in China, 38 in the US, 40 in the UK, and 47 in Japan. Having such a large young population is an irreplaceable opportunity India must take advantage of before it is too late.

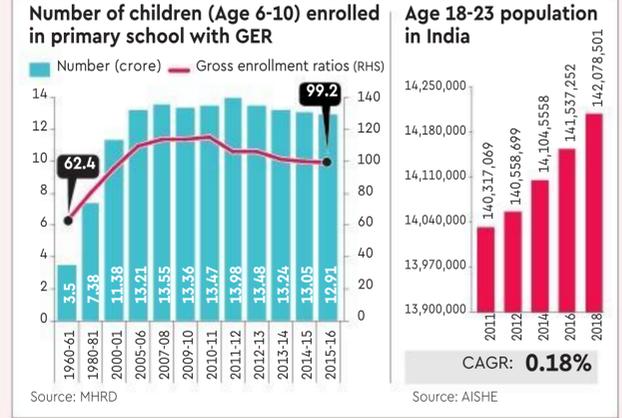
**Robust educational pipeline:** Now that the first step of 100% enrollment in primary school is complete, focus must shift to keeping our children in school, and providing a quality education. Emphasis is needed

in districts with low scholastic achievement. Today's school students are tomorrow's workforce.

**Staffing for schools:** A substantial part of the Union budget supports teacher training and staffing in schools. With the number of children in decline, we must understand when it will taper, and plan staffing accordingly. Care must be taken not to over-budget and build excess capacity here.

**Improve higher education:** India's higher education base lags in both enrollment and quality. AISHE 2018-19 indicates there are 51,649 institutions in India. For an eligible population of 14.2 crore, that amounts to ~2,750 students per institution. So, we have the base infrastructure required; we may need 10,000 more institutions over time, but the focus now should be on enhancing our current institutions, improving enrollment, and imparting quality education. A study by FICCI suggests GER can grow to 50 by 2030. Overall quality-wise, India's institutions aren't keeping up with US and Chinese institutions—this year, for the first time in seven years, no Indian institute featured in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. We lag in research and impact, international outlook, and industry outcomes.

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## Europe has a way out of tariffs

Analysts of trade wars take into account lots of data on how demand in various sectors reacts.

However, they ignore a potentially meaningful factor: the “brand value” of the country of origin

**LEONID BERSHIDSKY**

Bloomberg

**THE TRADE WAR** between the US and China has already slowed down growth in Europe's export-oriented economies—including the biggest of them, Germany—even though they haven't been slapped by any punitive tariffs. The wholesale buyers of European products, though, should perhaps be more optimistic about signing deals: Consumers attach a lot of value to the national brands of Germany, Italy and France, and that may compensate for any price increases caused by tariffs.

So far, the US president Donald Trump's trade wars have largely spared Europe, and German exports haven't seen a significant drop.

But Germany's economy has stopped growing, in part because trading partners' concerns about future tariff hikes are already leading to lower factory orders. On the face of it, the worries are justified: Analytics abound that predict big hits to demand if the trade war spreads to Europe.

The models used to predict the impact of trade wars take into account lots of data on how demand in various sectors reacts to price changes. They largely ignore however, a potentially meaningful factor: the “brand value” of the country of origin.

There is surprisingly little research on how consumers' perceptions of a product's country of origin affect their

willingness to pay. The little academic work that exists on the subject shows consumers are likely to pay more for the same product if it comes from a country they think is good at making such products. And when it comes to such perceptions, Western European countries shine.

A survey published this week by the polling firm YouGov and the Cambridge Globalism Project shows that, across 23 countries where the study was carried out, “Made in Germany” carries the greatest weight, and Italy, the UK and France also score high.

In the US, the country that seems most likely to slap high tariffs on European goods, American-made goods are the most popular, but German-made ones come second, and France and Italy enjoy some cachet, too.

The difficult part, of course, is translating these perception differences into prices. It would take detailed research into specific products to figure out what kind of cushion German, Italian and French producers have against tariff pressure. But, if previous studies of the country of origin effect are any guide, the same tariffs should hurt Chinese manufacturers

much more than German or Italian ones. Unless imports from Europe can be replaced with goods made in the US, which is unlikely in the short run, German, Italian and French exporters should still be able to sell their goods to the significant percentage of Americans who attach a high value to these countries' manufacturing prowess.

One other important finding in the YouGov survey is that European goods are disproportionately more popular in the developing world than in the US, and often even more popular than at home. If the US tries to price them out of its market, diverting the exports to the Middle East, Latin America, China and India should ultimately compensate them for American losses.

In a world of trade wars, price competition becomes more difficult and harder to predict. That increases the importance of quality, and thus, of the corporate and national brands that serve as quality guarantees to consumers. Economists need to start building that into their models.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The immortal

**Mahatma Gandhi**

Perhaps next to Lord Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi is India's greatest son ever. Deified for his courage and compassion, he is still looked up to as a model for generations to follow. In his own lifetime, he became a symbol of the pursuit of truth and non-violence. It is hard to think of any other leader who exercised such a civilising influence on the world in the 20th century as Mahatma Gandhi did. The Father of the Nation has stood the test of time. Even today, he inspires us and fascinates us. We easily identify with the ‘half-naked fakir’ or fragile beauty sporting a toothless beatific smile. Mahatma Gandhi epitomised courage and freed us from the yoke of British imperialism. The might of the British Empire could not make him drop the handful of salt he picked in defiance of the British law. He made it clear that sometimes breaking the laws becomes necessary to win freedom and secure justice. To borrow prime minister Narendra Modi's words, Mahatma Gandhi's teachings act as a moral compass. It was his unshakable belief that the ‘means’ should be as fair as the ‘ends’. Gandhiji represented the ‘federation of different faiths’. He imbibed the best in all religions. He made the supreme sacrifice for religious unity and amity.

— G David Milton, Maruthancode

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com



ILLUSTRATION: SHYAM KUMAR PRASAD

**ARUNA SHARMA**

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THE DIGITAL WAY

# Growth with welfare

The concept of the Samagra goes beyond convergence of social sector schemes to the creation of a unique database and a common platform for providing entitlement-based, not demand-driven, benefits

**I**NDIA HAS MANAGED to leverage digital technology to usher in socio-economic equity and growth in the last 10 years. Digital technologies are key to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to make India a \$5-trillion economy. The digital India initiative launched in 2015 has helped improve the delivery of government support and public services. The software industry has revolutionised India in more ways than one. Apart from creating millions of jobs, it also helped the central and state governments to improve governance. The focus on digitising various welfare schemes, creating a robust database and having a universal identifier in Aadhaar helped the government target its welfare efforts and save crores of rupees. Improved delivery of welfare expenditure is expected to have a multiplier effect on economic growth and welfare.

With its more than 1.3 billion population, India had no option but to embrace digitisation to optimise resources for effective outcomes. There are several success stories of Digital India in governance, service delivery, financial transactions, identification mechanism and population register. Efforts are on to replicate these success stories in more areas to facilitate informed decision-making, inclusiveness in financial dealings, creation of a population register and better infrastructure planning.

Digitisation is key to identifying the beneficiaries based on constitutional rights and eligibility for various welfare schemes. It was in 2012 that the first challenge for the Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) with effective financial inclusion was flagged. All types of financial institutions—banks, post office, cooperative banks, National Payments Corporation of India, payment gateways, credit cards—were creating their digital processes independent of each other. The challenge then was to make the IT talk to each other. The digital evolution of DBT payment was the first step towards creating a strong bridge for financial transactions across financial institutions. For post office and cooperative banks, software that enabled credit into beneficiary accounts in 20 days was accepted. In 2012, the system became operational with all financial software and transaction platforms getting in sync. This became the foundation that allowed the government to make nearly 85% of its transactions with citizens and merchants cashless. Efforts are on to make it 100% as per the recommendations of the five-member high level committee of RBI, of which I was a member.

The efforts towards DBT ran parallel to financial inclusion. This was done by the Jan-Dhan Yojana, but then accounts were open only in banks that constitute 13-15% of financial institutions. Post offices and cooperative banks that handle about 50% and 38% of transactions, respectively, were left out. This resulted in the accounts at far-off locations becoming non-operative. The need now is to systematically plan and map all financial institutions within a 5-km radius for ensuring improved financial inclusion and more digital transactions. Digitisation brought in a paradigm

shift in governance—from welfare mode to entitlement mode. The need is to have a robust real-time household-wise database that will allow the government to disburse entitlements instead of waiting for anyone to apply. The UN had set the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that no one is left behind. Robust data is needed to make sure the last one in the queue, who is unlikely to approach the authorities, is able to get the benefits. Madhya Pradesh pioneered in this area with the *Samagra* experiment, which is now adopted not just by eight states, but also by some foreign countries. The concept is to have a common household database instead of silos of individual databases that have evolved over a period of time. Many a times, these databases do not talk to each other and are updated at different frequencies. Aadhaar may have helped avoid duplication in many cases, but in this case it may not be of help as the household is the basis of entitlement. A household database with a unique number assigned to each household was built up using the Socio-Economic Caste Census and the National Population Register data. The common household database, thus, had verified parameters such as BPL, address, gender, caste, bank account number seeded for once as per the choice of individual. Aadhaar was used only as the identifier. This common household database was then subjected to NIC developed software *Samagra*. All government departments that provide wages, scholarship, food security, housing, differently-abled assistance, health and labour worked in their own security protected vertical columns. The benefits once given were available in read-only mode. Thus, for any given time, the household data was updated as modified for birth, death, migration, split in household family, addition/subtraction due to marriage. This enabled linking of insurance and health benefits with the software. The claims went up manifold, while ensuring the benefits reached as per entitlement. The common household database is also used in the government's health insurance scheme *Ayushman Bharat*.

In Sanskrit, *samagra* means all-comprehensive, integrated—and that precisely defines its vision. The concept of the *samagra* goes beyond convergence of social sector schemes to the creation of a unique database and a common platform for providing entitlement-based, not demand-driven, benefits. This represents a much-needed paradigm shift from social sector schemes in silos and databases that do not talk to each other, to rationalisation of schemes and streamlining of the procedures involved in imparting benefits based on entitlement. To be effective, the data should project the status of a household, its entitlements, and the benefits imparted to the household and its individual members. This is what the *Samagra* does—it captures all the required household-based data with verified parameters of caste, age, SECC status, vulnerability and the masked bank account and Aadhaar number that saves the pain of seeding them again and again in different databases.

A common database enables rationalisation of different schemes for the same or similar objectives spread across departments. Take the example of assistance for marriage of girl child scheme. This was operated by different departments including the minorities commission and the SC/ST commission with different amounts given. A common database helps avoid duplication and ends the need for applying for entitlement several times. The *Samagra* weedled out duplication of premium payment to the LIC for BPL, by fisheries department, by *mandi*, etc. The claim settlement also got streamlined as the LIC linked to *Samagra* database and thus once the death certificate is uploaded by the authority and eligibility is checked being BPL/labour/fishermen, etc, the claim directly goes into the account of the bereaved wife as the verified account number is already in the database.

The digitisation of government services has not just enabled DBT, but has also reduced wastage of resources and duplication of assistance by multiple departments working for similar objectives. It is a step towards better coordination and convergence amongst government departments and sharing of data. This, along with data security and privacy, remains a major challenge for the government.

NBFC CRISIS

## A "heavy-touch" regulation

**KUSHANKUR DEY**

Faculty, IIM Lucknow. Views are personal



As one-size-fits-all is not applicable for NBFCs, RBI should appoint a dedicated advisory committee to assess their health

**N**BFC CRISIS IS looming large following the failure of a few systemically important financial institutions in infrastructure, financial leasing, and housing. NBFCs leverage on low transaction costs, financial innovation, and regulatory arbitrage (RBI, 2014). Thus, the on-going crisis has received a considerable attention of the regulator and the government.

The Union Budget 2019 announced that only solvent NBFCs can sell their high-rated (AA) pooled assets (of ₹1 lakh crore) to public sector banks and the government can extend a partial credit guarantee cover to PSBs in the case of first-loss up to 10%. While this measure was sought to facilitate fund-raising opportunity for cash strapped NBFCs in the short-run, liquidity problems remain unaddressed.

Prudent framework of stressed asset management and asset liability management have already caught RBI's attention. These are applicable for systemically important NBFCs, NBFCs—ND with asset size of ₹100 crore and above, NBFCs—D (irrespective of asset size) and Core Investment Companies.

Besides this following measures can be considered. **Basel accord:** RBI should implement the Basel-IV accord for NBFCs/FIs. The regulatory architecture needs to incorporate market-based indicators attributed to the three important pillars of Basel accord, namely capital requirement, market discipline, and supervisory review.

Consideration of CAMELS approach for systemically important NBFCs can help with Basel-IV implementation.

Further, capital requirement can be reduced—9-12% (6-8% of Tier I plus 3-4% of Tier II capital) from 15% current

level—from source of funding point of view. The amount of discretionary financing needed will also be reduced as NBFCs can use their surplus or retained earnings for internal financing putting an end to current fund-raising problems both from money and capital markets.

**Investment maturity:** NBFCs need to shift their interest sensitive assets or change the blending of investment maturities as interest-rate expectations change (riding the yield curve). For example, investment portfolio can shift

toward long-term maturities when interest rate is expected to fall (as can be seen from a downward sloping yield curve). They can bucket interest sensitive assets to short-term maturities if interest rates are expected to rise (from an upward sloping yield curve).

NBFCs can improve their liquidity position and avoid a large capital loss in case of upward movement of interest rates, by adopting a front-end load maturity policy. They can maximise their earnings through a back-end load maturity in case interest rates fall. Both strategies can improve earnings potential.

**Interest rate risk management:** NBFCs have more long-duration than liabilities. Hence, they need to finance their fixed-rate assets with floating-rate liabilities. However, as NBFC's credit-rating has already plunged, they are likely to pay a fixed-rate interest on deposits and receive a floating-rate interest on loans and advances. Thus, using interest-rate collars (combination of cap-rate and floor-rate) similar to long-call and long-put options can help NBFCs.

More importantly, as a one-size-fits-all is not applicable, RBI should appoint a dedicated advisory committee. Periodic review of their operations, financial disclosure can help take ex-ante corrective measures. The committee can refer to terms of reference and conduct a bi-monthly meeting to discuss the state of NBFCs in a financial landscape—lending and borrowing quantum, external benchmarking, product-market mix and asset securitisation.

While the virtue of regulatory arbitrage has pushed several NBFCs to face headwinds of shadow banking, lack of due diligence and poor asset transformation strategies has moved net-NPAs to 6.6% in FY19 from 5.0% in FY18. Therefore, any short-term stimulus will not heal the wounds of the sector. Instead, RBI should have more bandwidth and autonomy to regulate the number of debilitating NBFCs.

This is a strip-down version of an article communicated to Mumbai World Trade Centre for a panel discussion: 'Strengthening the NBFC sector' held in August 2019.

Limits to Indian governance approach

**MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS OFFERING SIMILAR, OVERLAPPING, REPETITIVE SCHEMES:** Various departments offer similar schemes targeting different categories of people, but the job-portability factor results in individuals benefiting from all or several departments. Since there is no monitoring system, there is no clarity on benefits derived from different departments. This leads to statistical misrepresentations and skewed estimates and strategies.

the beneficiaries are not even aware of all the benefits due to him/her.

**MULTIPLE REGISTRATIONS OF BENEFICIARIES AND NON-SHARING OF DATA:** *Samagra* has flagged that certain agencies such as the Building and Other Construction Workers Board, formed under the aegis of the labour department, have collected cess and registered workers for schemes. These workers are entitled to receive certain benefits, but the same benefits are also being provided under different schemes. This duplication happens because the data is neither shared nor integrated.

**NO ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY:** Implementation of these

schemes in a proper and transparent manner is a major challenge as the entire work is carried out manually and in an isolated manner. There is little accountability and transparency in such a system and the citizens find it difficult to avail the benefits intended for them in a prompt and hassle-free manner.

**MULTIPLE AUTHORITIES GOVERNING SIMILAR SCHEMES:** Those in need of a specific service have to approach multiple offices for the benefits of schemes for which she/he is eligible. Take the example of maternity benefits—one has to approach the health department for some services and the labour department for compensation of wages.

**I**NFRASTRUCTURE, AS IT creates capacities, generates employment and increases efficiencies, was the most talked about and searched term a couple of years ago. In the early part of the decade we were talking about \$1 trillion-dollar infrastructure investment, the dream, now, is to achieve a \$5 trillion economy. And, the government is investing heavily on infrastructure to support India's long-term growth. India is far ahead than many emerging economies in terms of providing qualitative transportation related infrastructure.

India has achieved fair amount of growth in the infrastructure segment, typically, in ensuring connectivity via airways, waterways and roads. Although, regional connectivity scheme UDAN and Sagarmala initiative are yet to achieve potential, road network is getting tremendous impetus. Under the ambitious Bharatmala Pariyojana the government plans to develop about 35,000 km in Phase-I at an estimated cost of ₹5,35,000 crore to provide seamless connectivity to interior and backward areas and borders of the country. In the Union Budget 2019-20, the government allocated ₹1.12 trillion (\$15.48 billion) expressing its intention to maintain the momentum in road expansion

# A bumpy ride

Economy should not miss the important link between the automobile and the infrastructure sector

**SHARAD KUMAR & SUNIL SHARMA**

Senior management professionals, SBI. Views are personal

projects. Highway construction has increased to 10,800 km in FY19 from 4,260 km in FY14. As per the latest estimates there are 225 projects, with an aggregate length of about 9,613 km, which have been appraised and approved under Phase-I of the project. Moreover, various projects put together are expected to provide 14 crore man-days in employment. The substantial numbers speak about the linkages generated by the road sector. As per the toll information system, 512 toll plazas are operating in the country. Moreover, there are 2,363 road projects in the

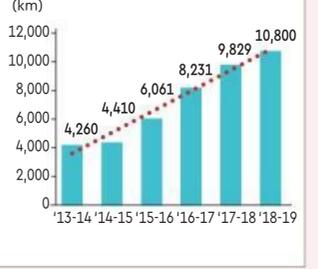
pipeline with a cost of ₹8.62 lakh crore. The highway construction in India has reported 20.45% CAGR from FY14-19 taking the NH length to 1,32,499 km as on March 2019. However, there are some legacy projects operating under old model, which are facing difficulties on account of debt servicing. Traffic estimates are an important part of the puzzle, and incorrect estimations may result in stressed assets. Some of the well-known Infrastructure companies, today, are under stress and are facing rating downgrades. In the one year period ending July

Road infrastructure status projects in pipeline

Description	No of projects	Amount (₹ crore)
Completed	553	97,659
Operation and maintenance stage	477	2,06,083
Pre-construction stage	264	1,12,239
Under construction	1,622	5,44,148
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>9,60,128</b>

Source: Govt. Portal

Highway construction



31, 2019, the upgrade to downgrade ratio for road constructions sector deteriorated by 22 bps to 0.58x from 0.80x.

At a time when the economy needs infrastructure push in greenfield projects, the stress in these segments may hamper growth prospects and dent profitability of lenders. It is, therefore, important to analyse the reasons for this decline and the impact of the changes on the economic skyline of the country.

While the road length is witnessing an increase, the traffic forecast of the highway projects may go haywire on account of mul-

iple factors such as Increase in official maximum load carrying capacity of heavy vehicles, including trucks by 20-25% (increased in July'18). The gross vehicle weight of a two-axle truck (two wheels in the front axle and four wheels in the rear) has been increased to 18.5 tonne from the existing 16.2 tonnes, increasing the load carrying capacity by just over 20%. For a five-axle truck, the vehicle weight has been increased from 37 tonne to 43.5 tonne, increasing the load carrying capacity by more than 25%. Statistically, commercial vehicle traffic would also see a decline denting the toll revenue.

Though the decision to increase axle load was taken with a view to increase the carrying capacity of goods transport vehicles and bring down logistics cost, the immediate impact on vehicle sales and longer term affect on traffic assessment may not have been given consideration.

Road sector traffic assessment also has not been quantified and factored the likely dent by the future projects such as Sagarmala, which aims to modernise India's ports. The Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) network of railway lines would also cause shifting of transport preferences based on cost and convenience. It is pertinent to mention that, road sector exposure, from the banking system, reported a 14.6% growth in June-19, increasing to ₹1,861 bn as on June-19 from ₹1,624 bn a year ago. The overall bank credit during this period grew by 11.1%.

The growth of infrastructure needs a push, but on the other hand, one needs to remember that growth of one sector may stunt the growth of another critical sector. This changing logistics model may give rise to problem with the related entities. Economy should not miss the important link between the automobile and the infrastructure sector. There is a need to take a holistic view for the future of Indian transport sector factoring all the modes (rail, road, ports, and air) and not in isolation.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

MAKING AMENDS

SC's recall of 2018 order on SC/ST Act reflects institutional learning, resilience. And affirms new Dalit assertion

THE SUPREME COURT has done well to recall its 2018 order that diluted provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The three-judge bench observed that the March 20, 2018 judgment was "against the spirit of the Constitution". A two-judge bench had, then, forbidden the arrest of public servants and private persons without prior permission in cases filed under the SC/ST Act and insisted on a preliminary inquiry before registering an FIR in such cases. The Court also found that the guidelines for the execution of the Act given in the 2018 order were beyond its remit and an encroachment on the legislature's domain. Indeed, the 2018 order had read the Act apparently without taking into consideration the social context and imperatives that led to its enactment in the first place.

The 2018 order triggered unrest among Dalits and gave fresh impetus to the mobilisations that had started in the wake of a series of high-profile crimes against the community. The political churn following the rise of the BJP in the 2014 general election unleashed a new social dynamic. Even as the BJP's top leadership began a high-visibility outreach to Dalits, the latter came under attack from communities whose political-ideological prejudices found validation from elements of the Hindutva agenda such as cow protection. The public flogging of five Dalits by cow vigilantes in Una, Gujarat, became a symbol of the new political hooliganism. In western UP, attempts were made to crush Dalit assertion. Earlier, the suicide of Rohith Vemula, a research scholar in Hyderabad Central University, had bought to the fore the issue of caste discrimination on campus. While these incidents fitted the pattern of the anti-Dalit violence Indian society has been experiencing for centuries, they also created a new narrative of Dalit resistance and agency that led to the emergence of a new generation of leaders such as Jignesh Mevani and political outfits including the Bhim Army. The 2018 order came in the backdrop of this political ferment and stoked unrest in large sections of the SC/ST communities. A Bharat bandh called by Dalit groups was met with violence and at least nine persons were killed in police firing.

It is creditable that the Supreme Court has revisited its order and recalled it. The apex court's willingness to course-correct in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution points to institutional resilience, especially at a time when questions are being asked on the independence of institutions when a domineering political executive is armed with a large mandate.

WRIT IN WATER

Late monsoon floods are a warning of changing contours of climate that town planners and civic authorities must heed

INDIA'S MONSOON SEASON officially ended on Monday. But a telling image of the vagaries of climate was captured by a photograph taken that day. The visual showed Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi and his family, bag and baggage, after they were rescued from their flooded home in Patna by disaster relief personnel. Bihar is amongst the worst hit by the late monsoon rains that have inundated several parts of the country. Nearly 30 people have lost their lives in the state. In neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, floods have claimed more than 100 people. The death toll in Maharashtra is more than 20. A common feature of the flood stories in all three states is that of civic authorities caught unawares.

Normally, the monsoon begins to retreat in the first week of September. But this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) reckons that the monsoons will not withdraw from the northwest of the country before October 7. As a result, the rainy season is likely to linger till October 15. This, according to the IMD, is the most extended monsoon season in more than 50 years — in 1961, the monsoons withdrew on October 1. The recent floods are not the only ones to have hit the country in the current monsoon season. In fact, the season began with Bihar being deluged by a flash flood. Maharashtra, too, had an earlier spell of floods this year. Karnataka, Gujarat, Assam and Kerala have also suffered the ravages of incessant rainfall. Such extreme precipitation events interspersed by dry spells, several studies reckon, could become the new normal for the country.

Dealing with the changing contours of the monsoons would, however, require coordination between weather authorities and state governments. For instance, authorities in Bihar were not prepared in spite of the red alert issued by the met department. Moreover, the drainage systems of most Indian cities are ill-equipped to withstand this change in precipitation patterns. Patna, for example, had more than 1,000 water bodies, which would absorb excess rainfall, 30 years ago. Their number has gone down to less than 500. Pune's canals and streams are similarly encroached upon. Disregard for hydrology has, in fact, been the Achilles heel of planning in most Indian cities. Reviving drainage systems might take time. But civic authorities could make a beginning by unclogging stormwater drains, which often become garbage dumps in several Indian cities. Urban planners should read the warning in the floods this year.

FLIX AND ORKA

The Star Wars universe has its first openly queer couple. It's about time

AS WITH ALBUS Dumbledore and the Potterverse, many fans of *Star Wars Resistance*, an animated children's programme set "a long long time ago in a galaxy far far away", suspected that Orka and Flix were in a gay relationship. The creators of the show confirmed the rumours earlier this week, adding the pair to a small but much-publicised list of queer characters in mainstream entertainment for children and young adults.

The characters, and the acknowledgment of their sexuality, are welcome and long overdue. After all, the *Star Wars* saga has contained from its very inception in the 1970s, talking bear-like creatures, lascivious blob-villains, creatures of every size and shape really. Yet, like so many other fantasy series, its depictions and appeal managed to be restrictive — its protagonists were straight men, on the standard "hero's journey", finding themselves and, in the process, defeating evil. Princess Leia was strong, but also a motivation for Luke Skywalker and Han Solo. A change in that heterosexual male-centric outlook began with the series reboot in 2015, with the lead character now a woman. With Flix and Orka, the ambit of diversity in the vastly popular franchise has expanded, and that can only help normalise something which should never have been not-normal to begin with.

In fact, it is perhaps time to reveal more about the private lives of the Jedi, their friends and enemies. In the celibate order of warrior monks, the main conflict in the original *Star Wars* trilogy appeared from Anakin Skywalker having to repress his sexuality and hide his love. Such was the damage of being made to feel abnormal for his desire that he turned into one of the most dreaded villains of all time — Darth Vader. There is a lesson there for the writers of sci-fi as well as society at large. In the long run, it's always better to be open and accepting.



HARSH MANDER

The rising storm

Citizenship Amendment Bill, a nation-wide NRC, will result in untold fear and dislocation of Muslim citizens

THERE WAS, FOR a while now, the ominous rumbling of distant thunder. Today, this is fast gathering into a menacing storm, one which can ultimately destroy India as we know it. Many had hoped that the idea of amending citizenship laws in ways which exclude from citizenship people of just one religious identity would be abandoned in the face of vehement opposition in the states of India's Northeast. They also expected that talk during the communally-surcharged summer election campaign of 2019, of extending the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) to states outside Assam, was just electoral provocation, which would be stilled after the polarised election accomplished its objectives.

But it is now apparent that the Union government, the ruling party and their ideological lodestar, the RSS, are determined to introduce both the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and national NRC, in pursuit of their political agenda. Home Minister Amit Shah declares in Parliament his commitment to deport every "infiltrator" from every square inch of Indian soil, asks states to build detention centres for foreigners, and affirms his resolve to pass the CAB in ways that protect the interests of states of the Northeast. Several BJP chief ministers and leaders call for the extension of the NRC to their states. And Mohan Bhagwat, RSS chief, assures Hindus that they will not be harmed in any way by the NRC.

The result is widespread panic and dread in Muslim settlements across India, including in Bengal, Bihar, UP and the metropolises. People are desperately asking what documents will be required to prove they are Indian citizens, what the cut-off year will be — 1971, 1947, 1951, 1987 — and what will be the consequences for those who cannot muster these documents. No one in the ruling establishment is supplying answers, and the trepidation and confusion only mounts each day. Even in our homeless shelters in Delhi, Muslim homeless people are asking us — "What will become of us? We have no documents." Meanwhile, Indians of all other religious persuasions are unperturbed.

For the first 40 years of freedom, until 1987, anyone born in India was deemed an Indian citizen. In 1987, the law was amended to require, in addition, that at least one par-

ent was Indian. In 2003, I could become a citizen only if one parent was Indian and the other not an illegal migrant, defined as one who has entered or stayed in India without legal authorisation.

This laid the seeds of the terrifying exclusions which lie ahead. What the CAB, if passed, would do is to allow illegal migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who are of every religious identity except Muslim, to become Indian citizens. Combined with the 2003 amendment, this would mean that only Muslims who are unable to prove that they did not enter India unlawfully would be deemed illegal migrants. Not only they, but their children, and in turn their children, would be denied the right to Indian citizenship. This denial would be in perpetuity, because there is no redress in the law for the progeny of such persons to ever become Indian citizens, even though they were born in India, and know and aspire for no other country.

This amendment would also mean, in effect, that the NRC will have no impact on people other than Muslims, because all others would qualify for Indian citizenship even if they are undocumented. The NRC, after the CAB, would, in operation, only require Muslim Indians to establish that they or their ancestors entered India lawfully. Other Indians may be mandated to produce documents, but even if they fail, they would qualify for citizenship. The Supreme Court has already shifted the burden of proof to individuals to prove their citizenship based on documents such as of birth, land ownership or voting rights, which most impoverished and poorly lettered citizens find difficult to muster. To make matters worse, the home ministry under Shah has already notified the right of every state government, and even district magistrates, to establish Foreigners Tribunals, and for these tribunals to frame their own procedures and standards of proof.

The Union government is confident of passing the CAB in the Rajya Sabha, given the divided and ideologically confused Opposition. But even before this change in law, the Union government, by a notification in 2015, had exempted non-Muslim "illegal

immigrants" from the three neighbouring countries from adverse legal action, and in 2018, had accelerated the process for their citizenship.

The CAB, and indeed these notifications, fly in the face of many fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution. One of these is the right to equality. After all, if religious persecution of illegal migrants in India's neighbourhood is deemed to qualify migrants for accelerated citizenship, then why not extend this to the Rohingya from Myanmar, Uyghurs from China, Ahmediyas and Shias from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and indeed secular bloggers and homosexual Muslims from these countries?

But even more fundamentally, these amendments strike at the soul of the secular democratic constitution of India. The India we inherited from Mahatma Gandhi, B R Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad was a country which belonged equally, in every way, to all its people, regardless of which god they worshipped or if they chose to worship no god. India was not imagined as a country that would either exclude or include people on the basis of their religious identity.

A hundred years ago, the Hindu Mahasabha, and in 1925, the RSS, imagined another India, one in which Hindus would rule and dominate, and in which Muslims would be expelled or forced to live as second-class citizens. The current ruling establishment believes that 100 years later, their time has come. The CAB, followed by a nation-wide NRC, in which effectively only Muslims will have to prove their citizenship, will result in untold fear, suffering and dislocation of millions of Muslim citizens.

This is the fearful tempest that threatens to engulf India in the coming months, one which will destroy in its wake this country as it was imagined and promised. Our Muslim sisters and brothers are today seeing clearly the threat of this impending catastrophe. The rest of us continue with our lives, unconcerned.

Do we not realise that this will mark the death of India's secular democratic constitution?

Mander is a human rights worker and writer

A LEGACY, IN A SALT PAN

Remembering Gandhi means working for the poorest communities



PETER COOK

YESTERDAY, MILLIONS OF Indians around the world honoured one of the greatest figures in Indian history — Mahatma Gandhi. His struggle for equality, his support of the poorest and his non-violent protest for India's independence not just paved the way for modern India, but also served the greater global good by setting new standards for civil, social and economic rights. So many countries now treat these standards as fundamental basic rights that all citizens and society must enjoy.

How should we honour Gandhi in the year of his 150th anniversary? It is not an easy question. Particularly as I represent the country against which Gandhi spent a large part of his life rebelling. Of course, the best answer is not found in words but in deeds, supporting causes and communities that he fought hard to defend.

My team at the British Deputy High Commission in Gujarat had the pleasure of visiting the salt worker (Agariya) community in the Rann of Kutch earlier in the summer. The Agariyas are often forgotten souls who pan the salt in the most remote corner of Gujarat, working in the most inhospitable conditions. It is back-breaking work. They carry freshwater by hand 20 km into the desert. Cars, bikes and cycles cannot make it through the salt mud. There are no roads, only tracks which the line of salt workers have made with their feet. Walking on the salt damages their skin terribly. They have cal-

lused and sores and many suffer badly from skin cancers, eye damage and tuberculosis. Life expectancy for the community is rarely over 60. They do all this for a tiny amount. One of the Agariya women, Rudiben, told us that she started working for Rs 5 a day.

We have been working with the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) to improve the lives of women across the state. SEWA defends and supports women, especially from the poorest communities. They have over two million members, all volunteers. Their story is an example of Gandhian philosophy that is alive and well today and it makes them an ideal partner to work with, especially in honouring Gandhi.

We all remember that Gandhi's famous salt march in 1930 against the British drew attention to the plight of the salt workers of Gujarat and the Agariya community. SEWA explained to us that many of the salt workers are trapped in a modern form of tied labour, incurring debts that they can never hope to repay. Since their existence is often hand to mouth, they needed to borrow money to pay for medicines, extra food and their children's education. The nearest school is many miles away and there is no transportation. The salt traders loan them money in return for future earnings from panning the salt. And so in the next salt season, in order to pay back their debts, more money has to be borrowed. The same cycle continues year after year.

SEWA realised that one way to help the Agariyas would be to provide loans and support to these women to use solar powered pumps instead of diesel pumps. Since they do not have to buy expensive diesel, and the sun is free, the Agariya families have a way to save money to pay off their debts. Over 1,100 Agariya families now have a solar panel installed. For the first time in generations, they have a chance at financial independence. They have been taught how to manage basic finances. Each of them now owns a solar panel and has money to buy medicines, extra food and can afford to keep their children in school.

SEWA asked us to help by training some of the younger Agariyas to manage and maintain the solar panels. We provided training courses so that simple repairs and maintenance could be carried out by young girls. Along with solar panels came Wellington boots. Rudiben told us that the help from SEWA and the UK has made an important difference in their lives. Gandhi's legacy lives on in the spirit of those who continue to support the poorest, who struggle for equality and who work for inter-communal harmony across society. We are pleased to have played a small part in honouring Gandhi on the occasion of his 150th anniversary and in upholding his values as an enduring force for good.

The writer is British Deputy High Commissioner, Ahmedabad

OCTOBER 3, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

VIOLENCE AT RAJGHAT

FOR THE FIRST time, Rajghat was the scene of violence in fits and starts and the scent of flowers and incense was mingled with tear gas as the Delhi University Students' Union and its sympathisers tried to oppose the yagna of purification set up by the Lok Dal with Raj Narain presiding. In the violence, six policemen and five youths were injured. Members of the ABVP, DUSU and Janata Vidyarthi Morcha put the figure of injured youths of their group at over a score. Both agree that no one of the yagna party sustained any injuries. One thing that was obvious at Rajghat this morning was the partisan attitude of the police when it came to han-

dling the two factions. While the yagna group was accorded gentle treatment with kid gloves on, the university students were man-handled without any let.

CHARAN'S THREAT

PRIME MINISTER CHARAN Singh, in a sharp rebuke to his party's working president, Raj Narain, announced that he was resigning from the party at a public function but later withdrew his threat on request from his party colleagues. Singh's threat came during an altercation with Narain over the latter's repeated demand that the general elections be postponed. The PM said whenever Narain made a statement about the government's

policies, he faced the difficulty of contradicting them. Even so, it is said that Narain has the PM's tacit approval.

US DEPLOYMENT

US PRESIDENT JIMMY Carter announced a series of dramatic measures to counter the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba. They ranged from the establishment of a permanent fulltime Caribbean Joint Taskforce headquarters at Key West, Florida, to reinforcing America's presence in the Indian Ocean, from increasing surveillance of Cuba to enhancing the capacity of US forces to respond to protect American interests and respond to requests of assistance from allies.



WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"With greater technological advancements, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence, the ability to mislead the public through 'fake news' is only going to increase in the years to come."  
—DAWN

Red weapons, blue skies

CPC's 70th anniversary parade revealed China's well-established architecture for undertaking weather modification



AJEY LELE

CHINA'S PRESIDENT Xi Jinping announced that "no force" can shake China during the huge military parade to celebrate 70 years of Communist Party rule on October 1. China's progress in the military arena was on full display during this parade. One of the major military systems displayed was the new hypersonic ballistic nuclear missile. Such missiles are capable of breaching all existing anti-missile shields available with the major powers. However, one weapon, which China was expected not to "display" but to "demonstrate" was absent and that was the Weather Weapon.

Chinese authorities always try to ensure that they have blue skies during the conduct of such parades and festivities. However, this time, there was a cloud of smog hanging over Beijing. Though it did not dampen the spirits of the people, it did prove that the Chinese Communist Party may control many things but it still cannot control the weather. However, it is important to note that in recent past China has been manipulating the weather over a limited geographical area with some success before such mega events. There could be various reasons for China failing to do so this time.

In the past, on various occasions, China has successfully managed clear skies. The most talked-about incident was the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting held at Beijing during November 10-12, 2014. During this event, China ensured that Beijing, which is famous for its heavy haze and smog, would have absolutely blue skies. Since then, this Chinese ability to have blue skies on demand is famously referred as "APEC blue". In 2014, this became possible since Beijing and nearby regions were put under most stringent pollution control measures. It was a result of harsh 11-day emissions-reduction measures.

To have blue skies during the October 1 parade, the efforts started well in advance. August 20 onwards, no trucks were permitted to enter Beijing and all construction work was halted. Also, there was a major clampdown on mining activities and fireworks were totally banned. There was even a request for to stop production in the nearby industries. All this was leading to an improvement in the sky conditions. However, just few days before the event, a weather system in the form of a low-pressure front got positioned unfavourably and ended up pushing the pollution from the surrounding provinces towards Beijing. Also, there is a possibility that the authorities would not have employed heavy-handed practices against polluting industries for various reasons.

It is important to note that the Vice Premier Hu Chunhua had visited the China Meteorological Administration and had asked for possible meteorological support just before the 2019 parade. Normally, such support comes in the form of firing missiles/rockets on the rainbearing clouds, making them precipitate before they approach the Tiananmen Square parade ground. Such rockets (with "warheads" containing dry ice, salt and silver iodide) are part of weather modification experiments and make precipitation happen. Usually, such rain also cleans up the smog-filled atmosphere. Possibly, this time there were no clouds around Beijing and hence, there are no reports of firing of any rockets. Exactly 10 years ago during the 60th National Day Parade, China had managed clear skies through such attacks on clouds. As per reports, some 432 rockets were fired then.

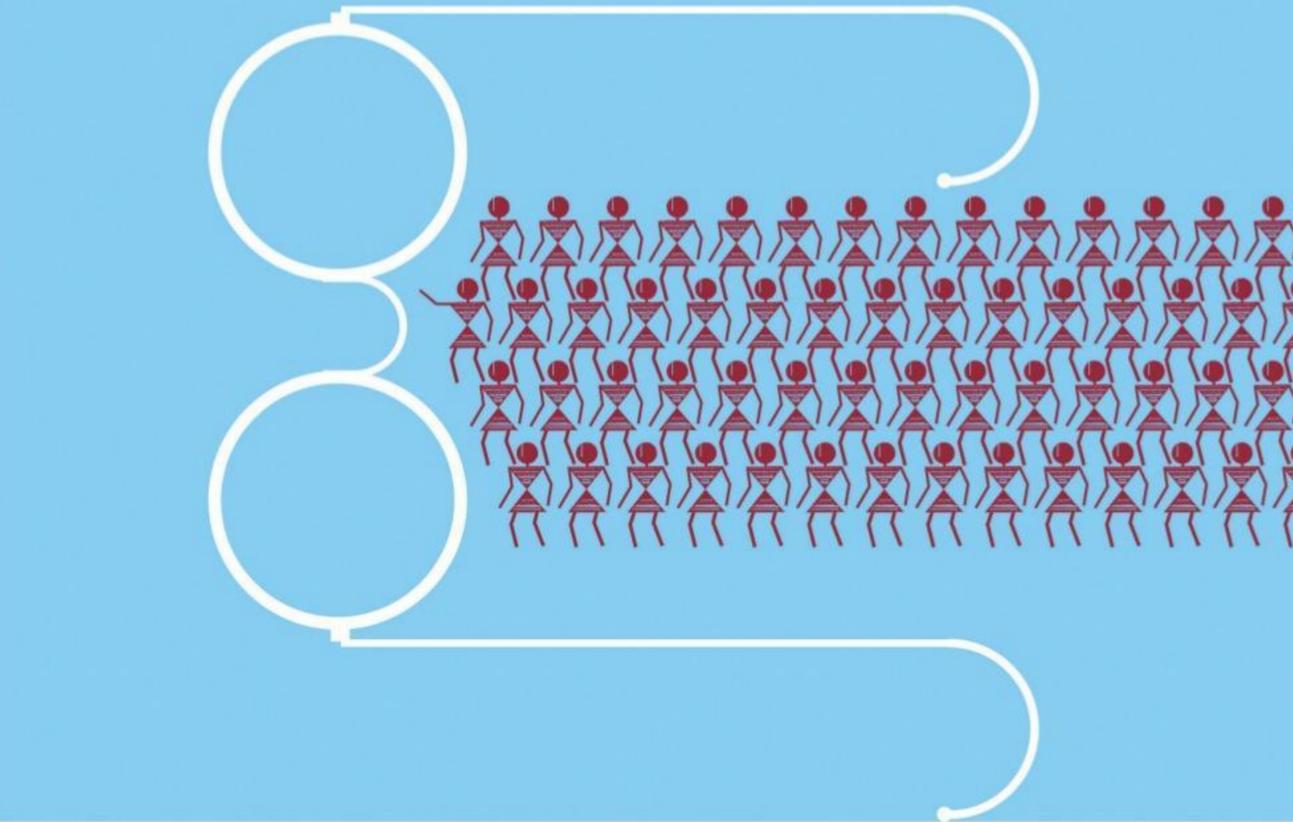
China has a well-developed infrastructure to undertake such tasks. They have many specialised vehicles ready to throw streams of air to chase away any approaching fog. Similarly, on August 8, 2008, the day of the Olympics opening ceremony, it was reported that the Chinese weather modification office had fired a total of 1,104 rain dispersal rockets. These rockets were fired to stop rain clouds approaching the Olympics arena. This operation lasted for eight hours and rockets were launched from 21 different sites.

There is evidence that in the past even during wars, states have used such techniques not only to help the advancement of their own forces, but also to cause flooding over enemy territory. During the Vietnam War (1967), US forces had launched Operation Popeye. This led to heavy flash floods and is known to have caused damage possibly worth three years of sustained bombing.

Today, China has a well-established architecture to undertake weather modification at will and runs one of the biggest weather modification programmes in the world, with investments touching millions of dollars. China has modified various aircraft to conduct weather modification experiments. They are keen to change the weather pattern over the Tibet region. There is a plan to use weather modification techniques to divert water vapour (Project "Sky River"). Many scientists are known to be working on the "art of mastering the weather".

There is a United Nations Convention called Environmental Modification or ENMOD convention, which prohibits states from "engaging in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques". Various major countries are signatories to this. However, even during peacetime, any large-scale weather modification experiments possibly leading to changes in the ecological balance are not a healthy proposal. Artificial weather changes, which could be a boon for one geographical region, may turn out to be a bane for other nearby regions.

The writer is senior fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi



CR Sasikumar

From protest to governance

Our Lokpal movement to schools, water, power – Gandhi's vision endures



ARVIND KEJRIWAL

AS A PRODUCT of the Gandhian Jan Lokpal movement against corruption in high places, I have witnessed the power of Gandhian methods of resistance and protest. Mass movements throughout independent India's history as well as around the world have taken inspiration from the original mobiliser of the masses, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. In this context, as long as there is injustice in the world, Gandhi will remain relevant.

What makes Gandhi especially relevant in the times we live in is his unflinching commitment to democracy and the wisdom of the people. The idea of decentralising power from the hands of a few to the hands of many was a romanticised utopia for many of us as activists. "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village," Gandhi wrote in *Harjjan*.

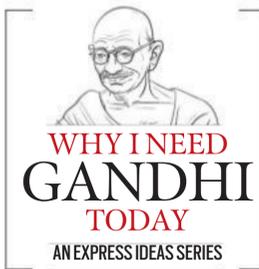
Long before India introduced the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, the Right to Information (RTI), and other decentralising measures, Gandhi had championed this powerful idea. He believed that the strength of democracy is when power is given not to the executive, but to the people themselves. This was the essence of the Anna movement as well. The movement was not merely a mobilisation against a corrupt regime. It was an attempt to compel the government to involve the people in the process of lawmaking. Unfortunately, the UPA did not see merit in hearing the voice of civil society and forced the ordinary people of our country to enter politics.

In the time I have been chief minister – nearly five years, I have witnessed Gandhian decentralisation of power being brought to life. Before 2015, the education minister was the most powerful authority when it came to all issues related to schools. For the smallest of expenses, administrative authority lay with the minister. Such a top-heavy power structure can never effectively run any public system, even in a city-state like Delhi.

In 2015, I along with Manish Sisodia met 1,000 principals of Delhi government schools and asked them to give us a list of the things they have wanted to do in their schools, but have not been able to for lack of funds. We made proposals based on the principals' inputs and that is one of the reasons why Delhi's education budget suddenly doubled that year to consume 25 per cent of the entire state's budget. The year after that, instead of going back to the principals once again, we gave them complete discretion over funds, and the freedom to use them. For the first time in the history of India's education system, government school principals were given the means and resources to run their schools the way they wanted to. This transformed the school administration, suddenly making it more efficient and energetic.

Similarly, we formed groups of parents – School Management Committees – to help with the school management: Maintaining cleanliness, keeping up mid-day meal standards, among others. Involving the people in governance by providing them the power to take decisions for themselves, and giving them the means to exercise that power, is the key to progress.

Today, a government school principal, along with the parent-led SMC, is empowered to hire a resource person, maintain their school infrastructure, purchase books of their choice for libraries, bring in experts for teaching music, arts, sports. All of this, without sending a single file to the department for permission. This is Gandhian governance being realised.



In the last five years, the government of the common man has been led by the most Gandhian of philosophies – looking out for the last man in the queue. It was Gandhi's dream that we build a country where every child has access to good education, every person gets quality healthcare, and all people live together in peace and brotherhood. I am happy this has started to become a reality in today's Delhi.

In the last five years, the government of the common man has been led by the most Gandhian of philosophies – looking out for the last man in the queue. In one of his last notes before his tragic death, he had said, "Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him." It was Gandhi's dream that we build a country where every child has access to good education, every person gets quality healthcare, and all people live together in peace and brotherhood. I am happy this has started to become a reality in today's Delhi.

Many of us believed that most Indian cities including Delhi have had 24 hours electricity supply for years now, but the reality is otherwise. Many parts of the city did not have access to such a basic necessity when we assumed office in February 2015. Our government had to push for more transformers, infrastructure upgrade to ensure all households have 24-hour electricity. Only about 58 per cent of the colonies were connected by water pipelines in 2015. Today, we have taken that number to 93 per cent, ensuring that lakhs of families do not have to rely on water tankers any more. Most importantly, the government of the common man has attempted to build a system where ordinary citizens no longer have to plead before bureaucrats for basic services.

Gandhi envisioned a country where every person can dream of a better life. In Delhi, today, there is a semblance of opportunity for people to lift themselves out of poverty. We are working towards building a Delhi where a dignified life is the right of all citizens. It is humbling when one realises just how little of India's progress would have been possible without Gandhi and the idea of Gandhi. My heartfelt tribute to the man whose memory continues to inspire a billion Indians.

The writer is the Chief Minister of Delhi

VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

GOING GLOBAL

IN THE WAKE of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US, the cover story of RSS mouthpiece *Panchjanya* has said that through the Howdy Modi event at Houston Texas, Modi has not only showcased a new, rising India, but has also exposed the reality of the neighbouring country to the world.

In a report titled 'Togetherness Improves Credibility', *Panchjanya* said, "The America which had the image of being the world's policeman; which is needed by other countries of the world; on whose dias every leader wants to reach; the same America has come onto Modi's dias. Modi's address in Houston was that moment when the global superpower saw India as another superpower, when due to Modi's magic the American president became a guest in his own country. In that moment America felt elated to find Modi in its company."

The article said Modi made India's stand clear on Jammu and Kashmir and the abro-

gation of Article 370. It said that through his references to 9/11 and the 26/11 attacks, Modi exposed Pakistan. It said the Houston event also showcased a new movement by India to connect with all expats across the world.

Attacking left liberals on the issue of terrorism, the article suggested President Donald Trump had exposed the lie of "terror has no religion". "Till now, on the issue of rising terrorism across the world and in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India, the so called seculars would say terrorism has no religion and that it should not be associated with any faith. But President Trump made it clear from the dais that he would fight extremist Islamic terrorism jointly," the report said.

GANDHI ON SAVARKAR

IN ITS LATEST issue dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, *Organiser* has attempted to clear the air on Hindutva ideologue Veer Savarkar's clemency plea to the British administration when he was lodged in the cellular jail in the Andaman islands.

The article, written by J Nandakumar, has claimed that Gandhi was all praise for Savarkar and had called him "brave", "clever" and "true son of Bharat". The article has said that filing clemency pleas with the British

was commonplace in those times and the narrative of a chasm between Gandhi and Savarkar, and the latter's capitulation before the British power had been created by new-age leftist historians in the wake of Congress's defeat post the emergency.

Quoting a note by Gandhi as published in a book, the article said Gandhi had positive views about Savarkar and his elder brother, GD Savarkar: "The Savarkar Brothers' talent should be utilised for public welfare. As it is, India is in danger of losing her two faithful sons, unless she wakes up in time. One of the brothers I know well. I had the pleasure of meeting him in London. He is brave. He is clever. He is a patriot. He was frankly a revolutionary. The evil, in its hideous form, of the present system of government, he saw much earlier than I did. He is in the Andamans for his having loved India too well. Under a just government, he would be occupying a high office. I therefore feel for him and his brother."

SWADESHI AND SWARAJ

IN ITS SPECIAL issue, *Organiser* has also carried an editorial espousing Swaraj and an article by Prof Bhagwati Prakash which has argued that India must shift from Make in India to Made by Bharat to realise the dream of Swaraj.

Claiming that liberal imports and FDI jeopardised the growth of domestic industry and trade and increased foreign ownership, the article has argued for "economic patriotism" and "techno-nationalism" through mandatory norms.

"To turnaround this situation of persistent rise in trade and current account deficits as well as in the deficit in investment income, and also to remedy our growing dependence over foreign investments, along with saving various sectors of the economy, from further slipping into foreign ownerships, India should chart a course of self-reliance and Swadeshi inter alia by developing 'Made by India' products and brands through endeavours like promoting and adopting techno-nationalism and economic patriotism," the article said.

It said that the development of home-grown technologies and promoting these should be done "through mandatory norms and other methods". It can alone help the country to launch 'Made by Bharat' products and brands to alleviate the country's growing dependence upon imports and FDI. "Economic patriotism inter alia reflects one's resolve to buy the Made by India goods, wherever available. Which can be said as pursuing 'Swadeshi,'" the article added.

Compiled by Deeptiman Tiwary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SWACHH LESSONS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The people's policy' (IE October 2). It rightly describes the Swachh Bharat Mission as a benchmark of transformative policy making. Such policies can also be adopted for pollution control and environmental conservation. Environmental protection is not achievable only by the government's initiative and corporate sector's financial support. It requires public participation as well.

Jainil T Shah, Ahmedabad

TOLL ON STATES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'States at Centre' (IE, October 2). Doling out of subsidies, freebies, leakages/pilferage, over-staffed government departments and evasion of taxes are taking a toll on the financial health of the exchequers both at the state and Central levels. Disinvestment needs to be aggressive. Futile expenditure in the name of cow shelters and statues should be shunned. Advertising welfare schemes amounts to misuse of government resources. Rather than engaging in witch hunts, agencies should effectively uspin down tax dodgers.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

CLEAN AIR

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Bad air but how bad' (IE, October 2). Crop residue burning in Punjab and Haryana is detrimental to the region's air quality. There is a need to exterminate this method of disposal of residue and create alternatives to stubble burning.

Nayan Agarwal, Ujjain

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.

Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

HISTORIAN, CRITIQUE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Her way of seeing' (IE, October 1). The writer says that his film was called good by two different political dispensations but not acceptable for airing on DD because one objected to Romila Thapar's critique of Emergency while another found the film's depiction of the Babri mosque's demolition objectionable. Thapar is above such narrow minded operators. "Caste is immutable while class is mutable," a sentence that I read in the early 1970s in a history book written by Thapar still rings true.

Basudev Mazumdar, Kolkata

**FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY**

**HOW TO READ NORTH KOREA'S LATEST MISSILE TEST**



A report on N Korea firing what seems to have been a submarine-launched ballistic missile is broadcast on S Korean TV in Seoul on Wednesday. Reuters

ON WEDNESDAY morning, North Korea test-fired a medium-range missile from an undersea platform — its 11th missile test in 2019, and its first submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test since August 2016.

**WHAT, WHEN, HOW:** Japan said the missile was fired from a point in the Sea of Japan 17 km northeast of the North Korean naval base of Wonsan a little after 7 am, or 3.30 am India time. The projectile, launched from either a submarine or an offshore rig, landed in the waters of Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Jeong Kyeong-doo, the Defence Minister of South Korea, said the missile flew 450 km in a trajectory that peaked at 910 km high.

**HOW BIG A THREAT:** As it has done earlier too, North Korea fired the missile in a very steep trajectory; had the launch followed a more standard trajectory, it could have travelled 1,900 km, standard for a medium-range missile. Such a missile would reach South Korea and Japan easily, especially if it were launched from a submarine with a significant range. North Korea's 1990s vintage Romeo-class submarines are thought to be able to travel 7,000 km, or about the distance to

the United States territory of Hawaii. A saving grace, from the perspective of the West, is that these diesel-electric powered machines are extremely noisy, and can probably be detected.

**WHAT TEST INDICATES:** Commentators have underlined the apparent range and capabilities of the missile, and the fact that it demonstrates continuing progress on Pyongyang's SLBM programme, long recognised as a very potent threat. It is difficult to anticipate the time and place of a submarine-borne strike, and SLBMs are seen as extending crucial second-strike capabilities to militaries faced with a nuclear attack. However, it is not certain that North Korea's submarine programme is very advanced as yet.

The missile test came days ahead of the planned resumption of nuclear talks between North Korea and the United States. Negotiators from the two sides are scheduled to meet on Saturday — and several analysts said Wednesday that Pyongyang was trying to raise the stakes and send out the signal that it will return to the table on its own terms, and expected Washington to back off from its demands for full denuclearisation.

**TIP FOR READING LIST**

**WHAT DROVE SUSAN SONTAG**

EVER SINCE Susan Sontag, American writer and political activist, died in 2004, a number of books have been published on her. These include *Swimming in a Sea of Death*, which is her son David Rieff's account of the leukaemia that caused her demise, and Phillip Lopate's *Notes on Sontag*. The latest addition to this list is Benjamin Moser's *Sontag: Her Life and Work*; it is the authorised biography. Sontag was a difficult subject, prone



to wild swings. Moser attempts to trace the roots of Sontag's troubled personality starting with the influence of her alcoholic mother, Mildred. Then came Sontag's troubled marriage to Phillip Reiff, her professor at the University of Chicago; by 19 she was a mother but stuck in a marriage with a man who was the exact ideological opposite of her leftist self. But the book stands out not for its analysis but description.

**SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER**

**Highway versus forest**

Protests in Wayanad after Supreme Court asked Centre for alternatives that would enable permanent closure of Kerala-Karnataka highway that cuts through tiger reserve. A look at both sides of the debate

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 2

OVER THE last one week, Kerala's Wayanad district has witnessed a series of protests against a ban on night traffic on the forest stretch of NH 766, a key highway between Karnataka and Kerala that passes through the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. Although the night ban was first enforced a decade ago, the immediate trigger for the current agitation was a recent Supreme Court direction to the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to suggest alternative routes so that NH 766 could be shut down permanently. Since then, Wayanad has witnessed an ongoing indefinite hunger strike and several protest marches.

**In what circumstances was night traffic on the highway banned?**

In August 2009, the district administration of Chamarajanagar district, Karnataka, banned night traffic on the 19-km forest leg of NH 766. This was after the project officer of Bandipur Tiger Reserve had prepared a report on the number of animals being hit by vehicles at night. An inspection had found that 44 vehicles were on this 19-km stretch in a span of 30 minutes. The report said night traffic would affect behaviour biology such as breeding and parental care of animals, disrupt their life cycle and make them stray to human habitats.

Using the central Motor Vehicle Act read with the Karnataka Motor Vehicle Rules, the district administration banned traffic from 9 pm to 6 am. Vehicles were stopped on both sides of the stretch and allowed to resume the journey in the morning.

**Were there no protests then?**

After the ban, transport operators in both states and people's representatives in Kerala petitioned the Chamarajanagar Deputy Commissioner, who lifted the ban. Then conservationists moved the Karnataka High Court, which reinstated the ban by an interim order. At one point, the court observed that the interest of protecting wildlife is important, and no less important is the need to protect the interest of the public, who are commuters and traders.

In 2010, the court upheld the night traffic ban. Pointing to an alternative road that is 35 km longer than travelling through NH 766, the court directed the Karnataka government to upgrade this road, which runs from Mananthavady in Kerala to Mysuru via Gonikuppall in Kodagu district.

**SITE OF DISCONTENT**



School students of Wayanad march in protest amid rain on Tuesday. PTI



The Kerala government moved a special leave petition in the Supreme Court; conservationists too were impleaded. The issue remained inconclusive despite discussions between the states. Kerala's suggestion for an elevated highway through the forest reserve was turned down by the ministry.

**Has the night ban met its objective?**  
According to Bandipur Tiger Reserve project

director Thippaiah Balachandra, animal fatalities have come down significantly. "Before the ban, the stretch was reporting 100-odd animal deaths in accidents, but now it has come down to five to ten. If the highway is opened, fatalities would increase manifold. Over the last one decade, animal populations as well as traffic have gone up."

Spread over 990.51 sq km, Bandipur Tiger Reserve is part of interconnected forests that

include Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu), Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) and Nagarhole National Park (Karnataka). A large variety of wildlife including the elephant moves from one stretch to another, cutting the states. Once a hunting reserve for the Maharaja of Mysore, Bandipur is one of the oldest tiger reserves in the country, having been declared as such in 1973 and a national park in 1984. Bandipur has 140 tigers, 1,600 elephants and 25,000 spotted deer, forest department sources said.

**Is there no way to avoid the highway?**

The Kollegal-Mysuru-Kozhikode road has existed for 200 years and remains a major link. It was declared a national highway in 1989, then named NH 212, and later renamed NH 766. The opening of the Pune-Bengaluru Hyderabad-Bengaluru highways, along with the development of the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, made NH 766 a major link between Kerala and the rest of the country. With 150-odd registered resorts and hundreds of homestay facilities, Wayanad has emerged a major hill destination, catering to tourists from Bengaluru. NH 766 is also used by transporters of essential provisions from Karnataka to Kerala, and by commuters from Kerala to Bengaluru for want of good rail connectivity.

Two other roads exist between Wayanad and Karnataka. One of these, between Mysuru and Mananthavady (Wayanad), part of which passes through the Nagarhole National Park, has been closed for night traffic from 6 pm to 6 am since 2008, on the recommendation of an empowered committee appointed by the Supreme Court. The other road, the only alternative that remains available for night traffic, is the one that the High Court referred to in 2010. Also between Mananthavady and Mysuru, it runs via Kutta, Gonikuppall and Hunsur in Karnataka. This too cuts through forest.

**Who are behind the present protest?**

On August 8, the Supreme Court upheld the night traffic ban, which was supported by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu while Kerala wanted it lifted. The court asked the NHAI to upgrade the alternative road and sought the Centre's opinion on closing down NH 766 permanently. The protest in Wayanad, which picked up with the hunger-strike starting September 25, is backed by all political parties in Kerala, religious organisations, traders and youth organisations. People fear that a blanket ban on traffic would impact the economic development of Wayanad, particularly in Sulthan Batherly taluk. Besides, the alternative road is 35 km away, which would cost time and money besides raising prices of commodities.

**TELLING NUMBERS**

**All the carbon in Earth, and CO<sub>2</sub> from volcanoes**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

DEEP CARBON Observatory (DCO), a 10-year programme at the US National Academy of Sciences, has released a series of papers estimating the total carbon on Earth. This includes an analysis of the total carbon dioxide released by volcanoes, which are often viewed as a possible main contributor to such emissions, but which, it turns out, contribute much less than human activities.

**1.85 BILLION GIGATONNES: TOTAL CARBON ON EARTH**

**BELOW THE SURFACE**  
**1.845 BILLION Gigatonnes (Gt).**  
This includes:  
**1.5 BILLION Gt** in lower mantle.  
**315 MILLION Gt** in continental and oceanic lithospheres  
**30 MILLION Gt** carbon in the upper mantle

**ABOVE THE SURFACE**  
**43,500 Gt.** This includes:  
**37,000 Gt** in the deep ocean (85.1%)  
**3,000 Gt** in marine sediments (6.9%)  
**2,000 Gt** in terrestrial biosphere (4.6%)  
**900 Gt** in the surface ocean (2%)  
**590 Gt** in the atmosphere (1.4%)

Source: Deep Carbon Observatory

Carbon dioxide out-gassed to the atmosphere and oceans from volcanoes and other magmatically active regions is estimated at 280 to 360 million tonnes per year, including that released into the oceans from mid-ocean ridges. Humanity's annual carbon emissions through the burning of fossil fuels and forests, etc, are 40 to 100 times greater than all volcanic emissions, DCO said in a statement.

Two-tenths of 1% of Earth's total carbon (43,500 gigatonnes) is above surface in the oceans, on land, and in the atmosphere. The rest is subsurface, 1.85 billion Gt in all, DCO said.

**Hasina in India: Amid some challenges, celebrating a special friendship**

**ASHIKUR RAHMAN**  
DHAKA, OCTOBER 2

BANGLADESH and India's bilateral ties have rarely been a linear affair. That is why Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India beginning October 3 is a much-anticipated political event. There is little doubt that when India assisted Bangladesh to attain independence in 1971, many believed that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mrs Indira Gandhi would forge a partnership rooted in progressive ideals and a common vision for their nations in South Asia and the world, one that would last for generations.

**Trust and engagement**

The assassination of Mujib and most of his family members in 1975, which resurrected the political, Islamic and military leaders from the political right between 1975 and 1996, meant that Bangladesh could not structure any lasting partnership with India. Its relationship with India reached an all-time low when the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami coalition government between 2001 and 2006 allowed Bangladesh territory to host insurgent activities against the Northeastern states of India. This unfortunate nosedive in the Bangladesh-India relationship was decisively reversed after the electoral victory of the Awami League and Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina in December 2008. There is little disagreement today that Bangladesh-India ties have greatly benefited since then.

That is why, since 2009, Bangladesh and India have peacefully navigated many contested issues that had remained unresolved since 1947. In 2015, the Indian government led by the BJP ratified the 1974 Land Boundary Treaty which executed a land swap of enclaves, settling historical anomalies dating back to the Partition of the subcontinent. Bangladesh and India also peacefully obtained an international court ruling that allowed the two nations to explore resources in the Bay of Bengal without stepping on each other's toes. These milestones show that a partnership based on trust and a willingness to engage on equal terms can help sovereign nations resolve historical disagreements.

**Rivers and credit lines**

The upcoming trip of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina can be viewed as an effort to re-invest in the special friendship that Bangladesh and India have developed during her premiership. It will likely touch on a wide range of issues that will require improvisation and cooperation from both governments to find new solutions to old problems.

Specifically, Prime Minister Hasina is likely to request New Delhi's cooperation for an improved management of all rivers that Bangladesh and India share, so that a better frame-



Modi with Hasina in New York last week. Twitter photo via PTI

work is created to ensure their equitable distribution. The pending dispute over the Teesta river has shown how difficult it is for India's central government to offer amicable solutions on such matters. Finalisation of an efficient and mutually acceptable river management framework will test imaginations and capacities of the governments on both sides.

Dhaka is also likely to seek New Delhi's cooperation in upgrading its railways, roads and shipping infrastructure, and might ask

for the export of more electricity to Bangladesh. As of 2017, India had extended three lines of credit worth approximately \$7.4 billion; however, the execution of projects under these credit pipelines has been very slow. Less than 10% of the cumulative commitments have been disbursed so far, while almost no money from the third line of credit promising \$4.5 billion has been utilised. Dhaka might seek both prompt disbursements of the existing commitments and, per-

haps, an additional line of credit to finance infrastructure projects in the pipeline.

**NRC and the Rohingya**

Refuelling of the development partnership aside, some areas of concern too, are likely to be taken up during the deliberations. It remains unclear how the NRC saga will ultimately play out in Indian politics, and the implications it might have for Bangladesh. For now, it has definitely added an extreme level of suspicion about India among ordinary Bangladeshis. And while Prime Minister Modi has assured Prime Minister Hasina during a meeting at the UN that the NRC will have no implications for Bangladesh, this commitment needs continuous reiteration, because an element of noise has been added to the partnership.

Many among the Bangladeshi intelligentsia believe that if the NRC wave gets more air from communal political currents in India, politicians in India might fail to ensure that this wave does not reach international shores. Given that politicians often create forces that they cannot contain — most people are now familiar with the term "unintended consequences" in international policy literature — the NRC is likely to remain a real concern for both neighbours, and Bangladesh is likely to keep a close watch on it irrespective of Prime Minister Modi's assurances.

Many in India are also concerned about

Bangladesh's growing partnership with China. This, by any standards, is a misplaced fear. Prime Minister Hasina's China diplomacy is focused to structure a win-win economic cooperation to address Bangladesh's developmental aspirations — and so far, there is no indication that this relationship has any possibility of adding a military dimension to it. This balancing act by Bangladesh is especially important because it needs the support of both China and India to mitigate the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis. Given India's historical friendship with Bangladesh, New Delhi bears the responsibility of going a few steps further than Beijing on the Rohingya crisis. To what extent Dhaka can convince New Delhi to make the maximum effort to push for a peaceful repatriation of the Rohingya, however, remains to be seen.

On the whole though, Prime Minister Hasina's visit will underline and nurture the special friendship between Dhaka and New Delhi. In a world where building walls and distrusting neighbours have become the international norm, Prime Ministers Hasina and Modi are likely to demonstrate that forward-looking partnerships on equal terms are possible when bilateral ties are rooted in trust, and a common vision of peace and economic progress.

(Dr Ashikur Rahman is Senior Economist, Policy Research Institute, Dhaka)

## बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 195

### सराहनीय उपलब्धि

नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व वाली राष्ट्रीय जनतांत्रिक गठबंधन (राजग) सरकार के सबसे प्रमुख कार्यक्रमों में से एक स्वच्छ भारत मिशन पांच वर्ष पहले 2 अक्टूबर को महात्मा गांधी के जन्मदिन पर शुरू किया गया था। मोदी ने 2014 के स्वतंत्रता दिवस पर लाल किले के प्राचीर से दिए गए भाषण में सफाई और स्वच्छता की बात को प्रमुखता से उठाया था।

स्वच्छ भारत मिशन राजग सरकार के तमाम अभियानों में प्रतिनिधि स्थान रखता है। सरकारी योजनाओं के क्रियान्वयन से संबंधित मंत्रालय के अधीन आने वाली इस योजना ने लोगों में उत्सुकता पैदा की, उन्हें अपने साथ जोड़ा और क्रियान्वयन को अंजाम दिया। इस मिशन ने ही राजग की सबसे उल्लेखनीय सफलताओं में से शामिल बैंक खातों वाले

जन धन कार्यक्रम और स्वच्छ भारत मिशन को अंजाम दिया। मिशन के तहत सरकार ने ग्रामीण इलाकों में शौचालय निर्माण की गति तेज की। आंकड़ों के मुताबिक अब लगभग हर भारतीय परिवार में शौचालय है। उपयोग और आंकड़ों की विश्वसनीयता पर उठने वाले सवाल से परे होकर देखें तो यह उपलब्धि मामूली नहीं है।

बहरहाल तीन ऐसी बातें हैं जिनके इर्दगिर्द सवाल उठ सकते हैं। पहली बात, क्या सफाई और कचरा निपटान के काम को उतनी सफलता मिली है जितनी बताई जा रही है? दूसरा, क्या स्वच्छ भारत मिशन का संस्थागत आधार यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए पर्याप्त है कि देश में स्वच्छता और सफाई में स्थायी बदलाव आ जाएगा? तीसरी बात, क्या स्वच्छ

भारत मिशन शौचालय निर्माण के अत्यंत संकीर्ण लक्ष्य पर केंद्रित है? इन सवालों में से पहला सबसे विवादित है लेकिन उसका जवाब शायद सबसे स्पष्ट है। केंद्रीय पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता मंत्रालय के आंकड़ों को स्वतंत्र शोधकर्ताओं ने चुनौती दी है। रिसर्च इंस्टीट्यूट फॉर कंपैसिनेट इकॉनॉमिक्स के एक अध्ययन के मुताबिक सरकारी दावों के विपरीत उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार, मध्य प्रदेश और राजस्थान के ग्रामीण इलाकों में रहने वाले लोगों में से 44 फीसदी शौचालयों तक पहुंच की स्थिति में सुधार होने के बावजूद अब भी खुले में शौच करते हैं। ये आंकड़े स्वच्छता को लेकर मंत्रालय के दावे पर सवाल पैदा करते हैं। इस विषयता का सबसे स्पष्ट उत्तर यह है कि स्वच्छ भारत मिशन में बने शौचालयों की

उपलब्धता और इस्तेमाल का अंतर अब तक बरकरार है। इस विषय में और अधिक स्वतंत्र आकलन की आवश्यकता है।

बहरहाल, पांचवीं वर्षगांठ के अवसर पर यह ध्यान देना चाहिए कि स्वच्छ भारत मिशन का काम केवल ठोस कचरे का निस्तारण करना नहीं था। इसका संबंध स्वच्छता से होना था, सार्वजनिक स्वच्छता और खासतौर पर समुचित नाली और कचरा निपटान व्यवस्था वाले साफ-सुथरे शहरों से होना था। स्वच्छ भारत मिशन के इस पहलू पर काम होता तो कहीं बेहतर प्रदर्शन देखने को मिल सकता था। शहरी विकास मंत्रालय देश के सबसे स्वच्छ शहर के लिए एक प्रतियोगिता कराता है। इसके नतीजों को लेकर अधिकांश शहरों के निवासी उपहास करते नजर आते

हैं। ऐसा तब है जबकि इसमें नागरिकों को जोड़ा जाता है और स्वयंसेवक कई जगहों पर साफ-सफाई करते नजर आते हैं। दिक्कत यह है ऐसी स्वयंसेवा कभी संस्थागत व्यवस्था की जगह हो सकती है। मिसाल के तौर पर सशक्त और जवाबदेह स्थानीय सरकार जो साफ-शहरों की गारंटी ले सकती है। यहां तक कि शुष्क शौचालयों का स्थापित भी सवालों के घेरे में आ सकता है जिनको कुछ वर्ष बाद खाली करना होगा। हमारा देश उन लक्ष्यों को पूरा करने में अच्छा जहां एक लक्ष्य तय किया जाता है। जबकि लोगों के जीवन में स्थायी बेहतरि लाने में वह पीछे है। अपनी तमाम सफलताओं के बावजूद स्वच्छ भारत मिशन हमें यह याद दिलाता है कि यह व्यापक रूझान अब भी बरकरार है।



अजय मोहंती

# अमेरिका के साथ भारत के कारोबारी मसलों का हल

भारत और अमेरिका अहम व्यापारिक समझौते पर पहुंच सकते हैं लेकिन यह अनुमान गलत था। द्विपक्षीय मुक्त व्यापार समझौता या आर्थिक सहयोग समझौता चर्चा के बिंदुओं में शामिल नहीं था। बता रही हैं अमिता बत्रा

ऐसे सप्ताह में जब अमेरिका के साथ भारत की कूटनीतिक सफलता नई ऊंचाइयों पर पहुंची, भारत और अमेरिका के बीच कारोबारी बातचीत अपेक्षाकृत खामोश बनी रही। इसमें चकित होने वाली कोई बात नहीं क्योंकि अमेरिका के करीबी साझेदार भी राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप की शत्रुतापूर्ण व्यापार नीति संबंधी कदमों से बच नहीं सके। बीते एक वर्ष में भारत को उच्च शुल्क दर, सीमित बाजार पहुंच और कारोबार के माहौल के लिए बार-बार आलोचना का सामना करना पड़ा है।

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति ने हाली डेविडसन मोटर साइकिल पर आयात शुल्क का बार-बार उल्लेख अवश्य किया लेकिन अमेरिका ने इससे कहीं अधिक कठोर नीतिगत कदम उठाए। उसने जनरल सिस्टम ऑफ प्रिफरेंस प्रोग्राम के तहत भारत तथा कुछ अन्य देशों को दी जाने वाली प्राथमिकता समाप्त कर दी। गत वर्ष जून में अमेरिका ने स्टील और एल्युमीनियम के आयात पर क्रमशः 25 फीसदी और 10 फीसदी शुल्क लगा दिया। भारत को अब इसमें रियायत नहीं मिल रही थी जबकि कनाडा और ऑस्ट्रेलिया जैसे देशों को यह रियायत उपलब्ध थी। हालांकि भारत ने विश्व व्यापार संगठन के समक्ष अपनी शिकायत दर्ज की लेकिन इसकी अपील संस्था की नई नियुक्तियों को लेकर अमेरिकी

निष्क्रियता ने इस बहुपक्षीय संस्थान की प्रणाली को कमजोर कर दिया है। ऐसे में पंजीकृत विवादों का समय पर निस्तारण मुश्किल है। ऐसे में भारत ने भी अमेरिका से हाने वाले 29 जिंसों के आयात पर शुल्क बढ़ाकर प्रतिक्रिया दी।

इन तमाम नीतिगत निर्णयों का भारत-अमेरिका द्विपक्षीय व्यापार पर भले ही बहुत अधिक असर न पड़े लेकिन इसे तात्कालिक व्यापारिक नुकसान के रूप में नहीं देखा जा सकता बल्कि घरेलू उत्पादकों के समक्ष प्रतियोगिता में भी भारी इजाफा होना तय है। ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि भारतीय निर्यातकों को एमएफएन टैरिफ का सामना करना पड़ेगा और निर्यात बाजार में उनकी हिस्सेदारी पर भी असर होगा। उच्च शुल्क के कारण कुछ जिंस का कारोबार भी प्रभावित होगा।

हाल के वर्षों में भारत-अमेरिका द्विपक्षीय कारोबार में सकारात्मक वृद्धि देखने को मिली है। वर्ष 2015-16 की गिरावट के बाद 2016-17 में कुल व्यापार बढ़ा। बाद के दो वर्षों में इसमें और इजाफा हुआ। वर्ष 2017-18 में अमेरिका के साथ भारत का कारोबार 15 फीसदी और 2018-19 में 18 फीसदी बढ़ा। कई वर्षों तक चीन से पीछे रहने के बाद आखिरकार 2018-19 में अमेरिका भारत का सबसे बड़ा कारोबारी साझेदार बन गया। दोनों देशों का कुल कारोबार 8,700 करोड़

अमेरिकी डॉलर रहा। आयात में भारी वृद्धि हुई और यह 2017-18 के 19.29 फीसदी से बढ़कर 2018-19 में 33.59 फीसदी हो गया। बहरहाल, निर्यात वृद्धि 2017-18 के 13.42 फीसदी से घटकर 2018-19 में 9.46 फीसदी रह गई। 2018-19 में जहां तमाम विपरीत नीतिगत बदलाव हुए, वहीं भारत के कुल कारोबार में अमेरिका की हिस्सेदारी थोड़ी और बढ़कर 10.42 फीसदी हो गई।

वरीयता कम करने का असर रसायन, प्लास्टिक, मशीनरी और मैकेनिकल उपकरण, इलेक्ट्रिकल उपकरण, फोटोग्राफिक, ऑप्टिकल, मेडिकल, सर्जिकल उपकरण आदि क्षेत्रों में देखने को मिल सकता है। ये ये क्षेत्र हैं जिनमें सबसे अधिक जिंस जीएसपी रियायत के अधीन आती थीं। ये तमाम क्षेत्र देश के शीर्ष 20 निर्यात क्षेत्रों में आते हैं, अमेरिका भारत के लिए सबसे बड़ा या दूसरा सबसे बड़ा निर्यात बाजार है। बीते दो वर्षों में भारत के कुल निर्यात में अमेरिकी बाजार की हिस्सेदारी की बात करें तो बिजली मशीनरी के 7 फीसदी से यह मशीन एवं अन्य उपकरणों में यह 20 फीसदी तक रही। परंतु रसायन के अलावा इन क्षेत्रों में अमेरिका के कुल आयात में भारत की हिस्सेदारी बेहद कम यानी एक फीसदी या उससे कम है। रसायन में यह 4.6 फीसदी है। जीएसपी समाप्त होने के बाद

चूंकि भारतीय निर्यात को एमएफएन शुल्क का सामना करना पड़ता है तो उसे चीन, जर्मनी, जापान, दक्षिण कोरिया तथा अन्य विकसित देशों से प्रतिस्पर्धा करनी पड़ती है। ये देश अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में अमेरिका को निर्यात करने वाले प्रमुख देश हैं। इन विकसित देशों से कड़ी प्रतिस्पर्धा के बीच भारत शायद अमेरिकी बाजार में अपनी मामूली हिस्सेदारी बचाए न रख सके।

स्टील निर्यात में 2018-19 में 34 फीसदी की गिरावट देखने को मिली। इस वर्ष मई में इसका निर्यात तीन वर्ष के निचले स्तर पर आ गया। ऐसा अमेरिका द्वारा टैरिफ बढ़ाने तथा अन्य आयात करने वाले देशों द्वारा सुरक्षा उपाय अपनाने से हुआ। हमारे कुल निर्यात में एल्युमीनियम निर्यात की हिस्सेदारी 2018-19 में 1.4 फीसदी थी जो अब घटकर 1.1 फीसदी रह गई।

भारत ने भी प्रतिक्रियास्वरूप शुल्क बढ़ाया। अमेरिकी निर्यात में बादाम 54 फीसदी, सेब 15 फीसदी, फॉस्फोरिक ऐसिड 33.7 फीसदी और लोहे तथा गैर अलॉय स्टील उत्पाद 29.7 फीसदी की हिस्सेदारी रखते हैं। बहरहाल अमेरिकी निर्यात में जबर्दस्त हिस्सेदारी के साथ ही ये उत्पाद भारत के कुल आयात के लिए भी मायने रखते हैं। वर्ष 2018-19 में देश के बादाम आयात में से 80 फीसदी, अखरोट और ताजे सेब में से 47 फीसदी तथा स्टील आयात में से 41 फीसदी, अमेरिका से आए थे। कहा जा सकता है कि उच्च शुल्क दर भारतीय आयातकों को भी नुकसान पहुंचा रही है। प्रतिक्रियास्वरूप उठाए गए कदमों से कुछ खास हासिल नहीं हुआ और शायद इससे अमेरिका पर इतना दबाव भी नहीं बना कि वह भारत का दर्जा बरकरार कर दे।

ई-कॉमर्स कृषि क्षेत्र में बढ़ी हुई बाजार पहुंच, आईसीटी उत्पादों पर घटा हुआ शुल्क तथा डेरी उत्पादों में आधुनिकीकरण आदि से संबंधित अमेरिकी मांग के कारण भी काफी दिक्कत बनी हुई है। यह आसानी से स्वीकार्य नहीं है क्योंकि भारत बहुपक्षीय स्तर पर भी और द्विपक्षीय मुक्त व्यापार वार्ताओं में भी इन मसलों से जूझ रहा है। चुनिंदा चिकित्सा उपकरणों की मूल्य सीमा समाप्त करना भी अमेरिका की मांगों में शामिल है। ऐसा करना भी कठिन है क्योंकि सस्ती स्वास्थ्य सेवा भारत की प्राथमिकता में है।

हालिया यात्रा के दौरान दोनों देशों के बीच व्यापार समझौते की उम्मीद या उसका जिज्ञासिरे से गलत था क्योंकि किसी द्विपक्षीय मुक्त व्यापार समझौते या आर्थिक साझेदारी पर चर्चा ही नहीं होनी थी। हां, इस दौरान एकपक्षीय तदर्थ व्यापार नीति उपायों को वापस लिए जाने की उम्मीद जरूरी की जा सकती थी। परंतु चूंकि व्यापार नीति को राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप एक अहम राजनीतिक हथियार की तरह इस्तेमाल कर रहे हैं ऐसे में भारत के लिए इसे हासिल करना भी कतई आसान नहीं था। बादाम, अखरोट और सेब के आयात शुल्क के बदले कुछ प्रमुख निर्यात उत्पादों को वापस वरीयता देने का अनुरोध करना भारत के लिए अधिक व्यवहार्य होगा। अगले कुछ दिन में जब बारचनी दोबारा शुरू होगी तो इस दिशा में प्रयास किया जाना चाहिए।

(लेखिका जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय के अंतरराष्ट्रीय अध्ययन केंद्र में प्रोफेसर हैं)

## दिल्ली स्कूल ऑफ इकॉनॉमिक्स जैसी संस्था की छवि का पतन

मनमोहन सिंह कुछ दिन पहले 87 साल के हो गए। इस मौके पर मेरे दिमाग में 49 साल पहले की यादें ताजा हो गईं जब मैं पहली बार उनसे दिल्ली स्कूल ऑफ इकॉनॉमिक्स (डीएसई) में मिला था। उन्होंने हमारी कक्षा को चार



सम सामयिक

टीसीए श्रीनिवास-राघवन

महोने तक अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार पढ़ाया था। 1960 के दशक के अंत में डीएसई में पढ़ाने वाले कई लोग ऊंचे पद तक पहुंचे। इनमें डॉ. सिंह और अमर्त्य सेन का नाम सबसे ऊपर है। लेकिन एक संस्थान के रूप में डीएसई की छवि का पतन हुआ।

ज्यां ट्रेज ने 1995 में प्रकाशित अपनी किताब में डीस्कूल पर एक लेख लिखा था। उनका कहना था कि यह संस्थान अपनी वास्तविक संभावनाओं को हासिल करने में नाकाम रहा। यह अर्थशास्त्र में विशेषज्ञता रखने वाले दुनिया के कई जाने माने अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्थानों को टक्कर दे सकता था लेकिन ऐसा नहीं हुआ।

कभी-कभी मैं सोचता हूँ कि आखिर ऐसा क्यों हुआ। 1970 के दशक की शुरुआत से अब तक संस्थान में शिक्षकों की कमी बढ़ती गई क्योंकि उन पदों पर भर्तियां नहीं की गईं। लेकिन जो कुछ शिक्षक इस संस्थान में हैं उनकी योग्यता संदेह से परे है। कॉलेज छात्रों की संख्या अब बहुत बढ़ गई है। लेकिन संस्थान और शिक्षा के स्तर में कोई कमी नहीं आई है। साथ ही परीक्षा का स्तर भी यथावत बना हुआ है।

### तरीके को लेकर भ्रम

तो फिर संस्थान के साथ क्या गलत हुआ? डीस्कूल शीर्ष संस्थानों की सूची से कैसे बाहर हो गया? जब आप इसकी तह में जाते हैं तो आपको इसके पतन के असली कारण नजर आने लगते हैं। इसके लिए विश्वविद्यालय भी बराबर का जिम्मेदार है। करीब 40 वर्षों से पहले अर्थशास्त्र की किसी अवधारणा को साबित करने के लिए गणितीय तकनीक के इस्तेमाल की जरूरत पड़ती थी। विश्वविद्यालय शोध को ज्यादा अहमियत नहीं देते हैं। उनका जोर शिक्षा के प्रसार पर रहता है और रहना भी चाहिए।

साफ है कि डीस्कूल ने अपनी सबसे बड़ी गलती 1950 के दशक के उत्तरार्द्ध में की थी जब उसने अपनी स्वायत्तता छोड़ दी और दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय का एक

लफ्फाजी के के लिए कोई जगह नहीं थी और न है।

### अमेरिकियों का प्रवेश

इसके उलट अमेरिकी तरीके में पूरा पैसा वसूल किया जाता है। इसका मतलब है कि इसमें गणितीय तकनीकों के बजाय आंकड़ों को प्रमाण माना जाता है। यह ठीक है क्योंकि सिद्धांत देने वालों की ज्यादातियों के कारण इस सुधार की सख्त जरूरत थी। लेकिन इसने भारत में एक अजीबोगरीब स्थिति पैदा कर दी।

उचित आंकड़ों के अभाव में डीस्कूल के अर्थशास्त्रियों के पास शोध के लिहाज से कोई चारा नहीं रह गया था। शोधपत्रों की संख्या बहुत कम हो गई थी। जल्दी ही संस्थान की व्यक्तित्व और संस्थागत छवि प्रभावित होने लगी। कई पेशेवर अर्थशास्त्रियों ने एक साथ देश छोड़ दिया। दूसरे लोग ऐसे पेशों में शामिल हो गए जहां गहरे शोध की जरूरत नहीं थी। तीसरी तरह के लोगों को थिंक टैंक के साथ मिलकर ही काम चलाना पड़ा। मेरी राय (संभवतः गलत) में इससे डीस्कूल में दुविधा पैदा हो गई है। उन्हें पता नहीं है कि पढ़ाई में किस चीज पर जोर देना है। पुराने यूरोपीय/ऑक्सब्रिज तरीके पर या फिर नए अमेरिकी तरीके पर।

इससे यह सवाल पैदा होता है कि क्या डीस्कूल को अपनी स्वायत्तता मांगनी चाहिए और शोध पर जोर देना चाहिए, आर्थिक विभाग के रूप में अपनी पहचान छोड़ देनी चाहिए जिसे विश्वविद्यालय अपने पास रख सकता है? जाहिर है कि यह सवाल केवल डीस्कूल का ही नहीं है बल्कि सभी विश्वविद्यालयों को इसका सामना करना चाहिए। क्या उन्हें पढ़ाई और शोध को अलग कर देना चाहिए? मुझे लगता है कि उन्हें ऐसा करना चाहिए।

यह सवाल अर्थशास्त्र में ही नहीं होगा चाहिए बल्कि सभी विषयों में होना चाहिए। अन्यथा हमें आशंका है कि सभी उत्कृष्ट केंद्रों का हथ डीस्कूल को सौंपा जा सकता है। इससे भी बदतर स्थिति यह है कि उन्हें राजनीतिक रूप से नियुक्त और राजनीतिक विचारधारा से प्रेरित कुलपतियों को झेलना पड़ेगा जो मनमाने ढंग से काम करते हैं। इनमें से कई हमें हिंदी के इस मुहावरे की याद दिलाते हैं, बदरों के हाथ में हीरों का हार।

## कानाफूसी

### महज खानापूर्ती

उत्तर प्रदेश विधानसभा में विपक्ष ने योगी आदित्यनाथ की भाजपा सरकार द्वारा महात्मा गांधी की 150वीं वर्षगांठ मनाने के लिए आयोजित दो दिवसीय विधानसभा सत्र का बहिष्कार करने का निर्णय लिया है। तीन प्रमुख विपक्षी दलों बहुजन समाज पार्टी, समाजवादी पार्टी और कांग्रेस ने न केवल संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के सहस्त्राब्दी विकास लक्ष्यों पर होने वाली चर्चा से दूर रहने का निर्णय लिया है बल्कि कांग्रेस ने तो यह भी कहा है कि जिस समय यह सत्र चल रहा होगा वह प्रत्येक जिले में शाहजहांपुर बलात्कार मामले को लेकर विरोध प्रदर्शन करेगी। विपक्षी दलों के सदस्यों की अनुपस्थिति में इस बहुचर्चित सत्र के केवल सत्ताधारी दल की मौजूदगी में होने वाली खानापूर्ती में बदल जाने का खतरा भी उत्पन्न हो गया है। क्योंकि वहां न तो कोई बहस होगी न कोई अन्य बातचीत।

### ऋण मेला या ग्राहक मेला?

केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने पिछले दिनों यह घोषणा की थी कि देश के 400 जिलों में ऋण मेला आयोजित किया जाएगा। मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों ने इन ऋण मेला को ग्राहकों तक पहुंच बनाने के एक सामान्य कार्यक्रम के तर्ज पर पेश करने का निर्णय लिया गया है। गौरतलब है कि इस कदम की घोषणा के लिए आयोजित संवाददाता सम्मेलन में सीतारमण ने ऋण मेला शब्द से दूरी बनाए रखी। वित्त मंत्रालय ने इस संबंध में बैंकों से जो आंतरिक संवाद किया है, उसमें 3 अक्टूबर से शुरू होने वाले इस अभियान को ग्राहक मेला शिविर का नाम दिया गया है।



## आपका पक्ष

### सल्फर उत्सर्जन पर लगे रोक

हाल में जारी एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत दुनिया में घातक सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड का सबसे बड़ा उत्सर्जक देश है। भारत वैश्विक स्तर पर मानव जनित सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड उत्सर्जन में 15 प्रतिशत का योगदान देता है। सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड एक विषैली गैस है जो सामान्यतः कोयले के दहन से निकलती है। इसकी सूक्ष्म मात्रा मानव में अस्थमा जैसे रोगों का कारण बनती है। सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड गैस वनस्पतियों के वृद्धि व विकास पर भी बुरा प्रभाव डालती है। भारत में सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड गैस के उत्सर्जन में हुई बेतहाशा वृद्धि का कारण बड़े स्तर पर कोयला आधारित बिजली संयंत्रों की स्थापना रही है। औद्योगीकरण के दौर में बिजली की बढ़ती मांग को पूरा करने के लिए ताप बिजली संयंत्र स्थापित किए गए हैं जहां प्रति दिन लाखों टन कोयला जलाया जा रहा है।



कोयला खदान वाले क्षेत्रों के आसपास कोयले का अधिक इस्तेमाल किया जाता है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत में 10 स्थानों पर सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड उत्सर्जन की दर भयावह स्तर तक पहुंच गई है। इन शहरों में लोग स्वास्थ्य संबंधी गंभीर समस्याओं का सामना कर रहे हैं। सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड के कुप्रभावों को

झारखंड के झरिया कोयला खदान क्षेत्र में कोयला ले जाते स्थानीय लोग -पीटीआई

खतरनाक स्तर तक पहुंचने से पहले इसके उत्सर्जन में कमी लाने की आवश्यकता है। गौरतलब है कि मंत्रालय ने सल्फर उत्सर्जन कम करने के लिए कोयला

आधारित सभी बिजली संयंत्रों के लिए फ्लू गैस डीसल्फराइजेशन तकनीक के प्रयोग को अनिवार्य कर रखा है। इसे स्थापित करने के लिए दिल्ली-एनसीआर में 2019 तथा पूरे देश में 2022 तक की समय सीमा तय की गई है। इसके अलावा कोयले के अवैध खनन, व्यापार और ईट भट्टे पर सख्ती से रोक लागानी होगी। लोगों को रसोई गैस के प्रति प्रोत्साहित करना होगा। इस तरह हम सल्फर डाई ऑक्साइड के उत्सर्जन में कमी लाकर वातावरण को दूषित होने से बचा सकते हैं। ऋषभ देव पांडेय, जांजगीर

### प्लास्टिक को प्रतिबंध करने का लें संकल्प

आज प्लास्टिक हमारे जीवन के लिए बहुत बड़ा खतरा बनकर उभर रहा है। दिन की शुरुआत से

रात तक प्लास्टिक ने किसी न किसी रूप में हमें जकड़ रखा है। बाजार से कोई सामान लाना हो या टिफिन और वाटर बोतल में पानी ले जाना, प्लास्टिक हर जगह हर समय साथ है। विश्व में प्लास्टिक का उपयोग इतना बढ़ चुका है कि यह भविष्य में हमारी पीढ़ी को बीमार बनाएगा। अब ऐसे कदम उठाने जरूरी हो गए हैं जिनसे हम प्लास्टिक से पूरी तरह छुटकारा पा सकें। हम सभी को प्लास्टिक के विकल्प पर ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। प्लास्टिक की थैलियों के विकल्प के रूप में जूट, कपड़ा और पेपर बैग को लोकप्रिय बनाना चाहिए। प्लास्टिक के गिलास, बोतल या कैन में पानी पीने के बजाय कंच या स्टील गिलास का प्रयोग करना चाहिए। चाय के लिए मिट्टी के बने बर्तन का इस्तेमाल करना चाहिए। हम सभी को एकल इस्तेमाल वाले प्लास्टिक को पूरी तरह से त्यागने की जरूरत है। इसके लिए जनभागीदारी की आवश्यकता है।



दैनिक जागरण

विनम्रता से असंभव को भी संभव किया जा सकता है

## बारिश में बदहाल शहर

इस वर्ष मानसून के लंबा खिंचने के चलते बाढ़ जनित समस्याएं कम होने का नाम नहीं ले रही हैं। पहले महाराष्ट्र और मध्य प्रदेश बाढ़ से हलकान थे तो अब पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार और बंगाल के साथ कर्नाटक और केरल भी बदहाल हैं। यह पहली बार नहीं जब देश के तमाम हिस्से बाढ़ की चपेट में आए हों, लेकिन कुछ अरसे से कम समय में ज्यादा बारिश अधिक देखने को मिल रही है। यह जलवायु परिवर्तन का नतीजा है। आने वाले समय में जलवायु परिवर्तन के ऐसे दुष्प्रभाव कहीं अधिक देखने को मिल सकते हैं। अब जब यह माना जा रहा है कि जलवायु परिवर्तन के दुष्प्रभाव से बचना कठिन है तो यह आवश्यक ही नहीं अनिवार्य है कि बारिश से उपजने वाली समस्याओं का समाधान करने के लिए हर संभव कदम उठाए जाएं। ऐसे कदमों की सबसे अधिक जरूरत शहरों में है, क्योंकि बरसाती पानी की निकासी के अभाव में वे थोड़ी सी भी अधिक बारिश में उफन पड़ते हैं। अब तो यह भी देखने को मिल रहा है कि क्षेत्र विशेष में कम बारिश के बावजूद वह बाढ़ की चपेट में आ जाता है। पटना इसका ही उदाहरण बना हुआ है। पटना के साथ-साथ भागलपुर की भी हालत खराब है और अंदेशा इस बात का है कि आने वाले दिनों में बिहार के कुछ और शहरी इलाके बाढ़ की चपेट में आ सकते हैं। ध्यान रहे कि कुछ दिनों पहले मुंबई और पुणे बारिश से बदहाल थे।

यह सही है कि जब कहीं जरूरत से ज्यादा बारिश होगी तो समस्याएं सिर उठाएंगी ही, लेकिन भारत की समस्या यह है कि हमारे शहरों का ढांचा चरमर गया है। स्मार्ट सिटी सरीखी योजनाओं के बाद भी स्थिति में कोई बुनियादी बदलाव आता नहीं दिख रहा है तो इसीलिए कि सुनियोजित विकास की घोर अनदेखी की जा रही है। यह तब है जब देश के सभी शहर आबादी के बढ़ते दबाव का सामना कर रहे हैं। चूंकि शहरी ढांचे को दुरुस्त करने का काम आधे-अधूरे मन और अधकचरी योजनाओं से किया जा रहा है इसलिए बारिश के दिनों में शहरों में ढंग से रहना मुश्किल हो रहा है। खराब बात यह है कि शहरों की दुर्दशा से परिचित होने के बाद भी उन्हें रहने लायक बनाने के मामले में जरूरी राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति नहीं दिखाई जा रही है। ऐसे में आम जनता को यह समझना ही होगा कि केवल नेताओं और नौकरशाहों को कोसने से काम चलने वाला नहीं है। उसे नीति-निर्माताओं को जवाबदेह बनाने के साथ यह भी समझना होगा कि शहरी ढांचे में व्यापक तब्दीली लाने की जरूरत है और इस तब्दीली की कुछ क्रीमत भी चुकानी होंगी।

## फ्लाईओवरों में दरार

बंगाल की राजधानी कोलकाता में विभिन्न फ्लाईओवरों से लेकर रेल ओवरब्रिजों की हालत गंभीर है। स्थिति ऐसी है कि हाल के दिनों में बने अधिकांश फ्लाईओवरों पर बसों की आवाजाही बंद है। कुछ फ्लाईओवरों को तो रात में पूरी तरह से बंद तक कर दिया जाता है। जाम की समस्या से निजात पाने के लिए महानगर और आसपास के जिलों में कई फ्लाईओवर तैयार किए गए हैं। परंतु देखा जा रहा है कि कुछ ही वर्षों में उन फ्लाईओवरों की दशा पतनिय हो चुकी है। ऐसा ही एक फ्लाईओवर है उल्टाडांगा में। इस फ्लाईओवर के उद्घाटन के कुछ वर्ष बाद ही एक हिस्सा धराशायी हो गया था। इसके बाद लंबे समय तक फ्लाईओवर बंद रहा। बसों एवं ट्रकों की उक्त फ्लाईओवर पर आवाजाही बंद कर दी गई। इसके बाद अभी कुछ माह पहले ही उक्त फ्लाईओवर फ्लाईओवर समेत कई और ओवरब्रिज हैं जिस पर बसों को चलने की अनुमति नहीं है। आखिर इन ब्रिजों एवं फ्लाईओवरों के इस हाल के लिए कौन जिम्मेवार है। पिछले वर्ष सितंबर के प्रथम सप्ताह में माइज़हट रेल ओवरब्रिज धराशायी हो गया था। इससे पहले बड़बाजार में निर्माणाधीन फ्लाईओवर ढह गया जिसमें दो दर्जन से अधिक लोगों की जान चली गई थी। माइज़हट या फिर टाला ब्रिज तो काफी पुराने ब्रिज हैं, परंतु उल्टाडांगा, नागेरबाजार और अन्य फ्लाईओवर तो हाल के दिनों में तैयार हुए हैं। फिर इसकी हालत ऐसी क्यों है? इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करने की जरूरत है। साथ ही ऐसी व्यवस्था विकसित करने की आवश्यकता है कि इन फ्लाईओवरों से लेकर रेल ओवर ब्रिजों तक को इतना मजबूत बनाया जाए कि सौ-दो सौ वर्षों तक कुछ न हो।

## हिंदी को राष्ट्रभाषा बनाने के पक्षधर थे गांधी

के श्रीनिवास राव

महात्मा गांधी का हिंदी के प्रति प्रेम बड़ा गहरा था। उन्होंने 29 मार्च, 1918 को इंदौर में आठवें हिंदी साहित्य में पहली बार आह्वान किया था कि हिंदी को ही भारत की राष्ट्रभाषा का दर्जा मिलना चाहिए। बापू ने अपने उद्बोधन में हिंदी की गंगा-जमुनी संस्कृति पर भी प्रकाश डाला था। उन्होंने कहा था-हिंदी वह भाषा है, जिसे हिंदू और मुसलमान दोनों बोलते हैं और जो नागरी अथवा फारसी लिपि में लिखी जाती है। यह हिंदी संस्कृतमयी नहीं है, न ही वह एकदम फारसी अल्फ़ाब से लदी हुई है। एक बार उन्होंने कहा था कि हमारी कानूनी सभाओं में भी राष्ट्रीय भाषा द्वारा कार्य चलने चाहिए। जब तक ऐसा नहीं होता, तब तक प्रजा को राजनीतिक कार्यों में भी ठीक तालीम नहीं मिल सकेगी। उनका मानना था कि हमारी अदालतों में राष्ट्रीय भाषा और प्रांतीय भाषाओं का अवश्य प्रचार होना चाहिए।

गांधी जी के हिंदी के बारे में स्पष्ट दृष्टिकोण से हम यह बात सहज ही समझ सकते हैं कि हिंदी उनके लिए मात्र एक भाषा नहीं थी, बल्कि वह एक व्यापक अर्थों में पूरे देश की

**हिंदी गांधी के लिए मात्र एक भाषा नहीं थी, बल्कि पूरे देश की धड़कन थी, सबको एक सूत्र में बांधने का माध्यम थी**

धड़कन थी, सबको एक सूत्र में बांधने का माध्यम थी और इसी के साथ वह राष्ट्रीय स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन का एक कारगर अस्त्र बन सकी थी। गांधी जी मानते थे कि एक संप्रभु राष्ट्र में स्वराज, स्वतंत्र, स्वचिंतन एवं स्वधर्म का विचार होना आवश्यक है। यही 'स्वदेशी चिंतन' है। अपनी भाषा हिंदी में यह तत्व और गुण है कि वह हमें स्वदेशी चिंतन करने का आधार प्रदान कर सकती है।

महात्मा गांधी ने हिंदी के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए मात्र वक्तव्य ही नहीं दिए थे, बल्कि अपने जीवन में इसे करके भी दिखाया था। एक घटना का यह हमें अरुल्लेख करना चाहता हूं। भारत को जब स्वतंत्रता मिल गई तो देश और विदेश के पत्रकार सभी नेताओं के साक्षात्कार ले रहे थे। तब एक विदेशी पत्रकार ने गांधी जी से हिंदी के बजाय अंग्रेजी में उत्तर



प्रदीप सिंह

**कुछ हालिया फैसले भाजपा में काम करने वाले आम कार्यकर्ताओं को इस बात का अहसास कराते हैं कि शिखर पर बैठे लोग ऊपर ही नहीं नीचे भी देखते हैं**

उत्तर प्रदेश के घोसी विधानसभा क्षेत्र के लिए हो रहे उपचुनाव में भाजपा ने विजय राजभर को उम्मीदवार बनाया है। विजय के पिता सब्जी का टोला लगाते हैं। मंगलवार को पिता जब उम्मीदवार बेटे को माला पहनाने आए तो बेटा खुद को रोक नहीं पाया और फूट-फूट कर रो पड़ा। समाज में ऐसे दृश्य अक्सर देखने को मिल जाते हैं, पर राजनीति में ऐसी घटनाएं अपवाद के रूप में ही दिखती हैं। भारतीय राजनीति पिछले कई दशकों से ऐसे दौर में है जहां पैसा, रसूख और परिवार की ताकत का बोलबाला है। ऐसी घटनाएं भारत की राजशाही, सामंती मानसिकता से निकलकर लोकतांत्रिक होने की गवाही देती हैं। हमने लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था तो अपना ली, लेकिन हमारा मन राजशाही वाला ही रहा। यही कारण है कि पिछले सात दशकों में लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था के बावजूद वंशवाद की राजनीति कमजोर होने के बजाय फलती-फूलती रही। हमने लोकतंत्र को वंशवाद और परिवारवाद के पोषकों को चुनने की व्यवस्था बना दिया, मगर 2014 के लोकसभा चुनाव के बाद से देश की राजनीति में एक निर्णायक मोड़ आया। नरेंद्र मोदी का प्रधानमंत्री बनना एक नई परिघटना थी। ऐसा नहीं है कि समाज के कमजोर तबके के लोग पहले राजनीति में सफल नहीं हुए या सत्ता में नहीं आए, लेकिन राष्ट्रीय फलक पर पिछड़े वर्ग के एक निर्धन और साधनहीन परिवार के व्यक्ति को इतना

जनसमर्थन मिलना सामान्य बात नहीं थी। इसका नतीजा यह हुआ कि राजनीति के स्थापित वंशों के पराभव का दौर शुरू हो गया। इसका सबसे बड़ा उदाहरण कांग्रेस का प्रथम परिवार यानी नेहरू-गांधी परिवार है। वह देश की राजनीति में प्रथम परिवार के सिंहासन से उतर कर अब महज कांग्रेस का प्रथम परिवार रह गया है। वहां भी इसके ज्यादा टिके रहने की संभावना कम होती जा रही है। उत्तर प्रदेश का मुलायम परिवार, बिहार का लालू परिवार, हरियाणा का चौटाला परिवार और कर्नाटक का देवेगौड़ परिवार अपने खाब सहला रहा है। कुछ हैं, जो गिरने का इंतजार कर रहे हैं।

एक तरफ वंशवादी राजनीति का पराभव रह रहा है तो साथ ही कुछ नए वंशवादी भी सत्ता पर काबिज हुए हैं। तो क्या यह तथ्य पहले की परिघटना को गलत साबित करते हैं? नहीं। संस्कृति के पाठ्यक्रम में 'थ्योरी ऑफ कल्चरल लैग' पढ़ाई जाती है। इसके मुताबिक सभ्यता के विकास के साथ होने वाले बदलावों के बावजूद संस्कृति का एक हिस्सा पीछे रह जाता है। उग्र और बिहार में बारात की विराटें से पहले लड़के का मूसल से परछन करने की रस्म होती है। मूसल, सूप, चाकी जैसी धेरूल उपयोग की तमाम चीजें जो एक समय हर घर में अनिवार्य रूप से पाई जाती थीं, अब खोजे नहीं मिलेंगी, क्योंकि उनकी उपयोगिता खत्म हो गई। इन्हें अब केवल शादी-ब्याह के अवसर के लिए ही बनाया जाता है। वंशवादी राजनीतिक



अवधेश राजपूत

दलों का भी यही भविष्य है। लोग अक्सर वंशवाद और परिवारवाद को एक ही मान लेते हैं। वंशवाद वह है जहां आपके जन्म से आपका पद आरक्षित हो जाता है। कई बार यह मैज सर्टिफिकेट से भी होता है। वंशवादी पार्टियां अपने कार्यकर्ताओं को संदेश देती हैं कि पार्टी और सत्ता का शीर्ष पद परिवार के सदस्य के लिए आरक्षित है। भाजपा और वामपंथी दल जैसे चुनिंदा राजनीतिक दल हैं जो वंशवाद से अछूते हैं, मगर परिवारवाद के मामले में वामपंथी दल एकमात्र अपवाद हैं। यह दौर का बात है कि वामपंथी दल लुप्तप्राय राजनीतिक प्रजाति बन गए हैं। संसद से सड़क तक उनकी उपस्थिति उत्तरोत्तर घटती जा रही है और प्रभाव तो अपने घर में भी नहीं रह गया है। किसी भी सामाजिक-राजनीतिक परिवर्तन में कमसु लगता है।

इस सिलसिले में एक बार फिर प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी का जिज्ञ आवश्यक है। भाजपा के आलोचक कहते हैं कि दो लोग पार्टी चलाते हैं-मोदी और अमित शाह। इस पर बहस हो सकती है कि पार्टी यही दो लोग चलाते हैं या नहीं, लेकिन एक बात निर्विवाद रूप से कही जा सकती है कि भाजपा की राजनीतिक कार्य

संस्कृति में बदलाव लाने की सोच और क्षमता इन्हें दो नेताओं में है। लोकसभा चुनाव हो या विधानसभा चुनाव, टिकटों का वितरण हो या मंत्रिमंडल का गठन, सबमें इस बात का खयाल रखा जा रहा है कि परिवारवाद की बढ़ती प्रवृत्ति पर लगाम लगाई जाए। कुछ अपवादों को छोड़कर इस नियम का बड़ी कड़ाई से पालन किया जा रहा है। इसके कारण पार्टी के अंदर विरोध भी झेलना पड़ रहा है और चुनाव में नुकसान का जोखिम भी है। लोकसभा चुनाव में अपने बेटे को टिकट दिलाने के लिए चौधरी वीरेंद्र सिंह को मंत्री पद से हथ धोना पड़ा। प्रेम कुमार धूमल की दावेदारी खत्म होने के बाद ही बेटे अनुराग ठाकुर को मंत्री पद मिला। राजनाथ सिंह का बेटा दूसरी बार विधायक बनने के बावजूद मंत्री नहीं बन पाया। ऐसे दर्जनों उदाहरण हैं, मगर कल्याण सिंह के परिवार के रूप में अपवाद भी हैं।

राज्यपालों की नियुक्ति में भी पार्टी में कोई कार्य संस्कृति की झलक मिलती है। कांग्रेस दशकों तक पूर्व नौकरशाहों और परिवार के वफादारों को इस पद से नवाजती रही है, लेकिन पिछले साढ़े पांच वर्षों में मोदी सरकार ने दो-तीन अपवादों को छोड़कर उन्हीं लोगों

## दुनिया को दिशा दिखाने वाले गांधी

महात्मा गांधी की 150वीं जयंती के उपलक्ष्य में हाल में संयुक्त राष्ट्र में एक विशेष श्रद्धांजलि सभा में उनका स्मरण किया गया। इस दौरान संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासचिव समेत तमाम राष्ट्राध्यक्षों ने गांधी की प्रार्संगिकता को रेखांकित किया। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने अपने संबोधन में कहा, 'महात्मा गांधी भारतीय थे, लेकिन वह केवल भारत के नहीं थे और यह हमें इसका जीवंत उदाहरण है।' वास्तव में महात्मा गांधी की स्वीकार्यता विश्व के कोने-कोने में है। इसी कारण भारत समेत दुनिया के कई मुल्क उनकी 150वीं जयंती पर उनके आदर्शों को प्रचारित-प्रसारित कर रहे हैं। गांधी के प्रति सच्ची श्रद्धा एवं वैश्विक स्वीकार्यता की ऐसी ही एक कड़ी में संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने 15 जून 2007 को उनकी जन्मतिथि को 'अंतरराष्ट्रीय अहिंसा दिवस' घोषित किया था।

अमेरिका के प्रसिद्ध अश्वेत नेता डॉ. मार्टिन लूथर किंग जूनियर ने जब भारत दौर किया तो उन्होंने इसे 'तीर्थयात्रा' कहा था। इसका एकमात्र कारण गांधी जी थे। गांधी जी के सिद्धांतों के कारण भारत की धरती को 'तीर्थ स्थल' करार देकर उन्होंने भारत का मान बढ़ाया। किंग लूथर ने जैसे-जैसे गांधी जी के बारे में जाना, उनके मन में गांधी के प्रति सम्मान और बढ़ता चला गया। गांधी को जानने से पहले रंगभेद और नस्लभेद आंदोलन के प्रणेता मार्टिन लूथर का मानना था कि 'प्रेम की नीति सिर्फ व्यक्तिगत संबंधों में ही प्रभावी हो सकती है, अन्य सामाजिक, प्रजातीय संघर्षों एवं राष्ट्रीय के बीच में नहीं।' गांधी के विचारों का अनुसरण कर वह इस नतीजे पर पहुंचे कि 'प्रेम और अहिंसा' किसी सामाजिक-सामूहिक परिवर्तन के लिए भी शक्तिशाली उपकरण साबित हो सकते हैं। उन्होंने कहा था, 'जो बौद्धिक-नैतिक संतुष्टि में बेध्या और मिल के उपयोगितावाद, मार्क्स और लैनिन की क्रांतिकारी पद्धतियों, हॉब्स के सामाजिक सिद्धांत और नील्स के दर्शन में भी नहीं पा सका, वह मुझे गांधी के अहिंसक प्रतिरोध के दर्शन में मिला।'

अफ्रीका के गांधी कहलाए नेल्सन मंडेला ने भी गांधी जी के विचारों से प्रभावित होकर रंगभेद के खिलाफ अपने अभियान को मूर्त रूप दिया। गांधी से प्रेरणा लेकर ही उन्होंने अन्याय के खिलाफ आक्रोश को रचनात्मक और अहिंसक रूप प्रदान कर नस्लभेद और रंगभेद की लड़ाई को एक युक्ता तक पहुंचाने का काम किया। उनकी एक विशेषता यह भी रही कि वह गांधी की ही तरह स्थानीय लोगों में अहिंसा की धारा का प्रवाह तेज करने में कामयाब



केसी त्यागी

**यह गांधी की स्वीकार्यता ही है कि भारत के अलावा दुनिया के कई देश उनका स्मरण कर रहे हैं**



रहे। कोई किसी से कितना प्रभावित हो सकता है, मंडेला इसकी मिसाल हैं। रंगभेद के खिलाफ लड़ाई में मंडेला को 27 वर्षों तक जेल में यातनाएं झेलनी पड़ीं, लेकिन जैसे गांधी ने विश्व युद्ध के बाद के हालात में असहयोग, अहिंसा और सत्य का मार्ग बुलंद किया, ठीक उसी तरह तमाम विषय और हिंसक परिस्थितियों के बावजूद मंडेला गांधीवादी तौर-तरीकों पर टिके रहे। स्मरण रहे कि वह समय तबाही और हिंसक माहौल का था। हिरोशिमा और नागासाकी की तबाही के बाद अहिंसा की हिमायत तब बेमानी लगती थी। द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के दौरान गांधीजी ने हिटलर के खिलाफ अहिंसात्मक रुख अपनाने की अपील की। कई वैश्विक दार्शनिकों का मानना है कि गांधी की अहिंसा और असहयोग वाली नीति किसी राष्ट्र की सीमा तक सीमित नहीं रही, बल्कि वह वैश्विक बन गई। स्वयं मंडेला ने कहा था, 'दक्षिण अफ्रीका के शांतिपूर्ण बदलाव में गांधी जी की विचारधारा का बहुत बड़ा योगदान है। उनके सिद्धांतों के बल पर ही दक्षिण अफ्रीका में रंगभेद जैसा सामाजिक पाप समाप्त हो पाया।'

बीसवीं शताब्दी में भारत समेत विश्व के कई मुल्कों के लिए गांधी के सत्याग्रही औजार कव्य का रूप ले चुके थे। जाफना यु्ध कांग्रेस के संस्थापक और श्रीलंका एवं भारत के लिए पूर्ण स्वराज की वकालत करने वाले

पेरिनवनयागाम के निमंत्रण पर अक्टूबर 1927 में गांधी जी ने श्रीलंका की यात्रा की। लगभग 20 दिनों के प्रवास के दौरान गांधीवादी मूल्यों का प्रवाह तेज हो चुका था। बांग्लादेश यानी पूर्वी पाकिस्तान में शांतिप्रिय बंगालियों के आंदोलन पर भी गांधी जी के आदर्शों की अमिट छाप देखने को मिली थी। पाकिस्तानी शासकों के अत्याचार के खिलाफ शेख मुजीबुद्दहमान का अहिंसात्मक संघर्ष भी गांधीवादी प्रवृत्ति का था। दुनिया के अन्य देशों में भी लोगों ने गांधीवादी तरीकों से अपनी लड़ाई लड़ी।

गांधी ने लंदन में वकालत की पढ़ाई की और दक्षिण अफ्रीका में प्रैक्टिस की। इंग्लैंड और दक्षिण अफ्रीका में उनका व्यापक प्रभाव भी पड़ा। उन्होंने अमेरिका की यात्रा कभी नहीं की, लेकिन हिंदुस्तान के बाद अमेरिका शायद ऐसा देश है जहां गांधी जी की सर्वाधिक प्रतिमाएं हैं। अमेरिकी नागरिकों पर गांधी जी के विचारों का गहरा असर है। भारत में उनके द्वारा किए जा रहे समाज सुधार और स्वाधीनता आंदोलन पर अमेरिकियों की पैनी नजर रहती थी। स्वराज प्राप्ति की दिशा में गांधी जी का असहयोग आंदोलन दैनिक रूप से अमेरिकी अखबारों की पृष्ठियों में हुआ करता था। जातीय भेदभाव की समाप्ति और करीब छह दशक बाद एक अश्वेत का अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति चुना जाना जातीय बराबरी के संघर्ष का नतीजा है जिसमें कहीं न कहीं महात्मा गांधी का अमूल्य योगदान देखा गया। बराक ओबामा खुद को गांधी का अनुगामी मानते हैं।

गांधी को अंग्रेजों से कोई परेशानी नहीं थी, लेकिन ब्रिटिश उपनिवेशवाद और उसके शोषक रवैये के प्रति उनके असहयोग की नीति दुनिया के लिए मजबूत हथियार बनी।

गांधी भारत की मिट्टी के ऐसे सपूत थे जिन्होंने विश्वपटल पर भारत की 'बहुजन हिताय-बहुजन सुखाय' वाली छवि प्रस्तुत की। शायद गांधी इकलौते भारतीय हैं जो समूची विश्व विगदरी के लिए प्रेरणास्रोत हैं। अपने जीवन काल में उन्होंने सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक, शैक्षणिक, सांस्कृतिक, भाषाई, मानवतावादी आदि सभी पक्षों को अपने जागरण और सत्याग्रह अभियान से जोड़े रखा। ये सभी विषय आज भी पूरी दुनिया के लिए प्रार्संगिक है। इसलिए वह जहां भारत में स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के महानायक, महात्मा के नाम से जाने जाते हैं वहीं पूरी दुनिया में एक बड़े समाज सुधारक, और राजनीतिक मार्गदर्शक के रूप में।

(लेखक जदयू के राष्ट्रीय प्रवक्ता हैं)

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### मेलबाक्स

का नासूर देने वाला पाकिस्तान नहीं होता। देश के स्वाभिमान के साथ राष्ट्रीय एकता को बनाए रखने के लिए कभी-कभी 'जैसे तो तैसा' की नीति का अनुसरण करनी ही जरूरी होता है।

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### ई-सिगरेट पर प्रतिबंध

देश में प्राचीन काल में मादक पदार्थों का प्रयोग करना तामसिक व राक्षसी प्रवृत्ति कहलाता था व तत्कालीन समाज की दृष्टि में यह हेय कर्म था। धीरे-धीरे इसकी स्वीकार्यता बढ़ने लगी। कोई भी वस्तु धीरे-धीरे प्रयोग में लाए जाने पर कालांतर में सर्व स्वीकार्य हो जाती है। शराब, सिगरेट, तंबाकू के साथ ऐसा ही हुआ। यह वह देश है जहां कभी प्याज और लहसुन को भी दुर्गंध की वजह से तामसिक की श्रेणी में रखा जाता था, यद्यपि इन्हें औषधीय गुण विद्यमान हैं। यह हमारे चारित्रिक क्षरण का ही तो प्रतीक है। पहले शौक में इसका प्रयोग कालांतर में लत में बदल जाता है तथा व्यक्ति अपना तन, मन, धन, प्रतिष्ठा, चरित्र आदि सब कुछ लुटा बैठता है। उसका मानस सिर्फ इन द्रव्यों की तलाश करता रहता है। उसका अविशयकता बन चुकी होती है। ई-सिगरेट पर यद्यपि प्रतिबंध लगाकर सरकार ने सुकर्म मंत्रित है। तथापि इनका प्रयोग करने वालों को हतोत्साहित व उनकी पहचान कर इसकी लत से बाहर निकालने के लिए चिकित्सकीय, सामुदायिक व व्यवहारिक प्रयासों की आज अधिक जरूरत है। अन्याय यह भी किसी दिन स्वीकार्य हो जाएगा।

डॉ. मनोज कुमार शर्मा, स्थाना, बुलंदशहर

### खिलाड़ी को मिले मार्गदर्शन

जब कोई युवा खिलाड़ी टीम का हिस्सा बनता है तो उसे अपने वरिष्ठ खिलाड़ियों के प्रोत्साहन की आवश्यकता पड़ती है। कोच और कप्तान का वह दायित्व बनता है कि वे नए युवा सदस्य का मार्गदर्शन करें, लेकिन भारतीय क्रिकेट टीम का रवैया विचित्र है। युवा क्रिकेटर रिषभ पंत को जहां मार्गदर्शन की जरूरत थी वहीं आलोचनाओं का दौर शुरू हो गया और परिणामतः उन्हें दक्षिणी अफ्रीका के विरुद्ध खेले जा रहे धौले टेस्ट की टीम में नहीं चुना गया। बेशक महेंद्र सिंह धनी महान खिलाड़ी हैं, लेकिन वे एक दिन में महान नहीं बन गए थे। यदि किाई देखा जाए तो ज्ञात होगा कि आरंभ में लगभग सभी खिलाड़ियों ने संघर्ष किया है। रिषभ पंत का प्रदर्शन इतना बुधा भी नहीं रहा कि उन्हें टीम से बाहर का रास्ता दिखा दिया जाए। सबसे बड़ी बात तो यह है कि रिषभ पंत युवा हैं और आगे चलकर देश के लिए क्रिकेट में नए कीर्तिमान रच सकते हैं। उन्हें अपने वरिष्ठ साथियों के प्रोत्साहन की आवश्यकता है।

रणजीत वर्मा, फरीदाबाद

इस संतभ में किसी भी विषय पर राय व्यक्त करने अथवा दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय संस्करण पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने के लिए पाठकवृण सादर आमंत्रित है। आप हमें प्रभ भेजने के साथ ई-मेल भी कर सकते हैं।

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## पाबंदी के बजाय

इस बात से शायद ही किसी को असहमति होगी कि प्लास्टिक के बढ़ते बेलगाम इस्तेमाल ने आज समूचे पर्यावरण के सामने एक बड़ा संकट खड़ा कर दिया है। इससे न केवल जल, वायु और जमीन को दीर्घकालिक नुकसान हो रहा है, बल्कि इससे उपजी मुश्किल को आम लोग रोजमराा की जिंदगी में भी महसूस कर रहे हैं। इसके बावजूद न तो लोगों के स्तर पर इसके प्रयोग से बचने की कोशिश होती है, न सरकार की ओर से इस पर कोई ठोस कार्ययोजना अमल में आ पाती है। हाल के वर्षों में प्लास्टिक से पर्यावरण को होने वाले व्यापक नुकसान के मद्देनजर इस पर प्रतिबंध लगाने का मुद्दा दुनिया भर में चर्चा का विषय बना है। इसी क्रम में हमारे देश में भी स्वच्छ भारत अभियान के तहत दो अक्टूबर यानी गांधी जयंती के दिन से एक बार इस्तेमाल में आने वाले प्लास्टिक पर पूरी तरह प्रतिबंध लगाने की घोषणा हुई थी। लेकिन इस महत्वाकांक्षी कार्यक्रम के पीछे अच्छी मंशा होने के बावजूद यह सच है कि पाबंदी और उससे उपजी स्थितियों का आसानी से सामना करने की तैयारी अभी पूरी नहीं हो पाई थी। इसलिए फिलहाल सरकार ने प्लास्टिक के इस्तेमाल को हतोत्साहित करने के लिए जन-जागरूकता फैलाने का अभियान चलाने पर जोर दिया है। यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है कि लंबे समय से इसके नुकसान की अनदेखी के नतीजे में रोजमराा की आम जिंदगी में प्लास्टिक का उपयोग व्यापक स्तर पर घुल-मिल चुका है और इसकी जरूरतें पूरी करने के लिए प्लास्टिक की वस्तुएं तैयार करने का एक बड़ा बाजार खड़ा हो चुका है। ऐसे में अगर प्लास्टिक पर अचानक ही पाबंदी लगाई जाती है तो आम जनजीवन पर इसका असर पड़ने के साथ-साथ अर्थव्यवस्था के मोर्चे पर कई दूसरी गंभीर समस्याएं खड़ी हो सकती हैं। अगर अचानक ही ऐसा प्रतिबंध लगाया जाता है तो प्लास्टिक की वस्तुएं तैयार करने के काम में लगी लगभग दस हजार औद्योगिक इकाइयां बंद हो जाएंगी और पांच लाख से ज्यादा लोग बेरोजगार हो जाएंगे। देश फिलहाल पहले ही आर्थिक मंदी और तेजी से बढ़ती बेरोजगारी की गंभीर समस्या से दो-चार है। ऐसे में पाबंदी के सवाल पर अगर जरूरत से ज्यादा सख्ती बरती जाती तो शायद स्थितियां और विकट हो जातीं। कहा जा सकता है कि मकसद में अच्छा होने के बावजूद एक बार इस्तेमाल में आने वाले प्लास्टिक को पूरी तरह प्रतिबंधित करना व्यावहारिक नहीं होगा।

जाहिर है, एक बार इस्तेमाल में आने वाले प्लास्टिक पर आम लोगों से लेकर बाजार तक जिस पैमाने पर निर्भर हो गया है, उसमें इस पर अचानक पाबंदी के बाद जटिल हालात पैदा होंगे। इसके बावजूद यह तथ्य है कि प्लास्टिक से तैयार सामानों और खासतौर पर एक बार प्रयोग में आने वाली प्लास्टिक की वस्तुओं के इस्तेमाल से होने वाले नुकसान का दायरा काफी बड़ा हो चुका है। शहरों-महानगरों के नालों के जाम होने से लेकर चारों तरफ पसरा कचरा एक पक्ष है तो इससे होने वाले वायु प्रदूषण से लेकर जमीन तक के बंजर होने का सवाल ज्यादा गंभीर है। इसलिए समय रहते कम से कम एक बार इस्तेमाल में आने वाले प्लास्टिक के सामान पर से निर्भरता खत्म करके दूसरे विकल्प नहीं निकाले गए तो इसका गंभीर दुष्परिणाम सबको भुगतना पड़ेगा। अब अगर सरकार ने एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लास्टिक पर पूरी तरह पाबंदी के बजाय फिलहाल इस मसले पर जन-जागरूकता फैलाने पर जोर देने का निश्चय किया है तो अब इसे महज औपचारिकता का निर्वहन करने वाली गतिविधि तक सीमित नहीं रखना होगा। लोग इसका इस्तेमाल खुद छोड़ें और इस उद्योग में लगे लोगों को रोजगार का विकल्प मिले, इसके लिए एक बड़ी योजना बनाने और उस पर ईमानदारी से अमल की जरूरत है।

## संकट का संकेत

वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी) के संग्रह में जिस तेजी से गिरावट आ रही है, वह अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए गंभीर संकट का संकेत है। पिछले कई महीनों से अर्थव्यवस्था मंदी का सामना कर रही है। संकेतक बता रहे हैं कि किसी भी क्षेत्र में हालत अच्छी नहीं है। सरकार ने हर महीने जीएसटी संग्रह का लक्ष्य एक लाख अठारह हजार करोड़ रुपए तय किया हुआ है, लेकिन देखने को यही मिल रहा है कि जीएसटी संग्रह निर्धारित लक्ष्य से काफी दूर रह जा रहा है। इस बार ज्यादा चिंता की बात यह है कि सितंबर में जीएसटी संग्रह पिछले उन्नीस महीनों में सबसे कम इनव्यानवे हजार नौ सौ सोलह करोड़ रुपए ही रहा है। अगर पिछले साल की इसी अवधि से तुलना करें तो यह 2.67 फीसद कम रहा और अगस्त, 2019 के मुकाबले तो इसमें 6.4 फीसद की कमी दर्ज की गई। पिछले दो महीनों से जीएसटी संग्रह एक लाख करोड़ रुपए से कम रहा है। जाहिर है, उद्योग और कारोवारी कर जमा नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। इसके कई कारण हो सकते हैं। लंबे समय से छोटे कारोबारियों से लेकर बड़े उद्योग तक मंदी की मार झेल रहे हैं। लोगों का रोजगार खत्म हो रहा है। बाजार में मांग नहीं है। नगदी संकट भी बड़ा कारण माना जा रहा है, लेकिन सरकार इसे मानने को तैयार नहीं है।

पूरे देश में एक कर प्रणाली लागू करने के मकसद से जीएसटी की व्यवस्था शुरू हुई थी। तब इसे लेकर लंबे-चौड़े दावे किए गए थे और सरकार को उम्मीद थी कि इससे उसका खजाना तेजी से भरेगा और कर चोरी करने वाले किसी भी सूरत में बच नहीं पाएंगे। इसके लिए कड़े प्रावधान भी किए गए। पर आज के हालात बता रहे हैं कि हकीकत इसके उलट है। अगर आज सरकार जीएसटी संग्रह का लक्ष्य पूरा नहीं कर पा रही है तो इसका सीधा-सा मतलब यही है कि छोटे-मझोले कारोबारी हों या बड़े उद्योग, जीएसटी भरने में सबके हाथ-पांव फूल रहे हैं। जीएसटी को जितना आसान बनाने का दावा किया गया, वह छोटे कारोबारियों के लिए उतना ही भारी पड़ा है। हर तरफ से यही सुनने को मिल रहा है कि धंधा टप रहा है। मांग और उत्पादन का चक्र थम गया है। ऑटोमोबाइल क्षेत्र की हालत तो इतनी खराब है कि ज्यादातर कंपनियों ने उत्पादन में भारी कटौती कर दी है। ऐसे में कैसे तो माल बने और बिके!

यह तो साफ है कि भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था में आज जो सुस्ती दिखाई पड़ रही है, उसका वैश्विक कारण कम, घरेलू कारण ज्यादा है। जीएसटी और नोटबंदी जैसे फैसलों ने अर्थव्यवस्था को भारी नुकसान पहुंचाया। सरकार का खजाना करों से ही भरता है। लेकिन जब कर मिलने ही बंद होने लगे तो जाहिर है सरकार की चिंताएं बढ़ेंगी। सरकार को बार-बार जीएसटी संग्रह के लक्ष्य में कटौती करनी पड़ रही है। जब जीएसटी लागू किया गया था तब राज्यों को भरसा दिया गया था कि पांच साल तक उनके राजस्व में कमी की भरपाई केंद्र करेगा। ऐसे में अगर कर राजस्व निर्धारित लक्ष्य से कम होगा तो सरकार पर उसके नुकसान की भरपाई करने का दबाव बढ़ेगा। हालांकि पिछले एक महीने में सरकार ने अर्थव्यवस्था में जान फूंकने के लिए कदम तो उठाए हैं, लेकिन इनका असर दिखने में अभी वक्त लगेगा। सरकार को लग रहा है कि त्योहारी मौसम में मांग निकलेगी और रीयल एस्टेट क्षेत्र सहित उपभोक्ता बाजार में मांग बनेगी और जीएसटी संग्रह बढ़ेगा। फिलहाल, आने वाले दिनों के लिए यही एकमात्र उम्मीद है।

## कल्पमेधा

**महानता अहंकार रहित होती है, तुच्छता अहंकार की सीमा पर पहुंच जाती है।**

–तिरुवल्लुवर

## संजीव पांडेय

**अगर इस्लामिक देशों के बीच आपसी लड़ाई खत्म हो गई तो अमेरिकी और रूसी रक्षा उद्योग को भारी नुकसान होगा। ईरान और सऊदी अरब हथियारों के बड़े खरीदार हैं। अगर ईरान और सऊदी अरब के बीच शांति संधि हो गई तो सऊदी अरब अमेरिकी हथियार नहीं खरीदेगा और ईरान रूसी हथियार नहीं खरीदेगा।**

संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के चौहतरवें अधिवेशन में दुनिया के तमाम नेता पहुंचे और एशियाई क्षेत्र की समस्याओं सहित कई मसलों पर चर्चा की। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ही नहीं, बल्कि तमाम एशियाई नेताओं ने एशियाई क्षेत्र से संबंधित समस्याओं और विवादों पर चिंता जताई। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप की चिंता में ईरान से आने वाला खतरा स्पष्ट रूप से झलक रहा था। उन्होंने चीन से चल रहे व्यापार युद्ध पर भी चर्चा की और राष्ट्रवाद को अमेरिका की प्राथमिकता बताया। चीन के विदेश मंत्री ने भी अमेरिका से चल रहे व्यापार युद्ध के साथ-साथ म्यांमा की रोहिंग्या समस्या, कश्मीर विवाद और कोरियाई विवाद पर चिंता जताई। बांग्लादेश की प्रधानमंत्री की चिंता भी रोहिंग्या समस्या थी। पाकिस्तानी प्रधानमंत्री के भाषण में मुख्य मुद्दा कश्मीर था। भारत के प्रधानमंत्री ने अपनी सरकार के काम और उपलब्धियों का ब्योरा दिया। अहम बात है कि एशिया से संबंधित समस्याओं को आपस में मिल बैठ कर हल करने के बजाय एशियाई देश संयुक्त राष्ट्र के फोरम पर इसकी चर्चा कर रहे थे। जबकि तमाम एशियाई

#### कमल कुमार

दुनिया के किसी भी हिस्से में जब आस्था या धर्म के नाम पर तनाव पैदा होने लगता है तो लोगों का जीवन मुश्किल में पड़ता है। जहां तक भारत का सवाल है कि तो यह एक धर्मप्राण देश है। मानव धर्म इसके मूल में है। इसलिए धर्म का एक व्यापक अर्थ है जो जीवन की क्रियाओं को समग्र रूप से संबोधित करता है। लेकिन वार्तात्विक स्थिति बिल्कुल अलग है। धर्म के नाम पर बहुत सारे साधु-संत और आश्रम के संचालक महात्मा कहे जाने वाले लोग आमजन को बेवकूफ बना रहे हैं। पिछले कुछ सालों के दौरान आश्रमों और बाबाबों के किस्से हम सबने पढ़े हैं। हर व्यक्ति के जीवन में दुख और निराशा किसी न किसी कारण से होती है। इस हताशा में लोग धार्मिक बाबाओं के दुश्चक्र में फंस जाते हैं। इसके अलावा, लोगों के अपने-अपने भगवान होते हैं। वे अपनी भक्ति और सामर्थ्य से दान भी देते हैं। जल, फल-फूल या नारियल आदि अर्पित किए जाते हैं। पैसे मंदिरों की 'गुल्लक' में या यों ही भगवान के सामने रख दिए जाते हैं। कई मंदिरों की आमदनी लाखों में होती है जो अखिरकार पुजारी या पंडितों के पास जाती

## भाषा की जगह

कुछ दिन पूर्व केंद्रीय गृहमंत्री के 'एक देश-एक भाषा' की कवालत करने से बेवजह का विवाद पैदा करने की कोशिश गई। गृहमंत्री ने कहा था कि हिंदी ही देश को एकता की डोर में बांधने और विश्व में भारत की पहचान बनाने का काम कर सकती है। उनके इस बयान पर दक्षिण के राज्यों से तीखी प्रतिक्रियाएं आने लगीं। विपक्षी दलों कांग्रेस और भाजपा ने भी इस बयान की आलोचना की। भारत जैसे बहुभाषी देश में भाषा का मुद्दा बेहद संवेदनशील रहा है। संविधान निर्माताओं को इसका एहसास था, इसलिए उन्होंने हिंदी को संघ की राजभाषा का दर्जा दिया लेकिन अंग्रेजी के उपयोग का भी प्रावधान रखा। अनुच्छेद 346 और 347 में कहा गया है कि राज्य के विधानमंडल द्वारा राज्य में प्रयोग की जाने वाली किसी भी एक या अधिक भाषाओं या हिंदी को राज्य में किसी भी या सभी राजकीय उद्देश्यों से उपयोग के लिए अपना सकता है।

भारत में हिंदी की तरह अनेक भाषाएं हैं जो हिंदी जैसी ही समृद्ध हैं। संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची में भी बाईस भाषाओं को मान्यता दी गई है। कई भाषाओं जैसे भोजपुरी और राजस्थानी के लोग भी लगातार प्रयासरत हैं कि उनकी मातृभाषा को मान्यता मिले और उसमें भी रोजी रोजगार हो। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में अंग्रेजी को लोंगे ने बड़-चढ़ कर अपनाया है क्योंकि यह रोजगार और नई तकनीक की भाषा है। रही बात हिंदी की, तो यह लगातार संपर्क भाषा के रूप में बढ़ रही है। कोई भी राज्य अपनी मातृभाषा कभी नहीं छोड़ेगा, इससे देश का विकास भी रुकने वाला नहीं है। एक भाषा की बात करने वाले देश की तमाम प्रमुख परीक्षाओं जैसे-यूपीएससी, जेईई, नीट सबमें अंग्रेजी को ज्यादा तरजीह देते हैं। क्या यह सच

## क्षेत्रीय विवाद और पश्चिमी रणनीति

समस्याओं की जड़ में एशियाई संसाधनों और भूगोल पर कब्जे की लड़ाई है। एशियाई संसाधनों और भूगोल पर कब्जे को लेकर एशियाई मुल्क आपस में ही नहीं लड़ रहे हैं, बल्कि पश्चिमी देशों को हस्तक्षेप करने का मौका भी दे रहे हैं। गौर करें तो यह लड़ाई लंबे समय से चल रही है। दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध की जड़ में भी संसाधन और भौगोलिक रूट थे, जिन पर कई ताकतें कब्जा चाहती थीं।

पश्चिम और मध्य-पूर्व एशिया के इस्लामिक देशों के बीच संघर्ष ऊर्जा संसाधनों को लेकर है। लेकिन ताज्जुब की बात है कि पड़ोसी मुल्क मिल-बैठ कर आपसी विवाद को हल करने के लिए रची नहीं हैं। म्यांमा की रोहिंग्या समस्या की जड़ में चीनी, दक्षिण कोरियाई और कुछ पश्चिमी देशों की कंपनियां हैं, जिनकी नजर म्यांमा के जंगल, रबर और अन्य संसाधनों पर है। कश्मीर की समस्या भी कहीं न कहीं इसके भौगोलिक महत्त्व को लेकर है। दिलचस्प बात है कि संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में इन क्षेत्रीय विवादों पर बात करने वाले एशियाई नेता आपस में ईमानदारी से बैठ कर समस्या का हल नहीं चाहते। चीन और ईरान को छोड़ दें, तो कई एशियाई नेता अपने आप को अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति के लेफ्टिनेंट के तौर पर पेश करने में ज्यादा गर्व महसूस करते रहे हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा की बैठक में भाग लेने अमेरिका पहुंचे कई एशियाई नेताओं ने ट्रंप को नायक बनाने में कोई कसर बाकी नहीं रखी। वे अपनी समस्याओं को हल करने के लिए ट्रंप की सहायता मांग रहे। और हकीकत यही है, यही अमेरिका चाहता भी है। अमेरिकी तेल, रक्षा उद्योग के आर्थिक हित भी इससे जुड़े हैं। एशियाई विवादों में मध्यस्थता के बहाने अमेरिका का रक्षा और तेल उद्योग फलता-फूलता रह रहा है।

इस बार भी संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा का मंच आलोचना का मंच नजर आया। आलोचना के बीच ज्यादातर नेता विवादों के समाधान के लिए आशान्वित नजर आए। हालांकि सब जानते हैं कि ईरान और सुन्नी अरब देशों की लड़ाई जल्द खत्म नहीं होने वाली। अगर इस्लामिक देशों के बीच आपसी लड़ाई खत्म हो गई तो अमेरिकी रक्षा उद्योग और रूसी रक्षा उद्योग को भारी नुकसान होगा। ईरान और सऊदी अरब हथियारों के बड़े खरीदार हैं। अगर ईरान और सऊदी अरब के बीच शांति संधि हो गई तो सऊदी अरब अमेरिकी हथियार नहीं खरीदेगा और ईरान रूसी हथियार नहीं खरीदेगा। गौर करने वाली बात है कि

## इंसानियत के हक में

है। उनसे पूछने वाला कोई नहीं कि कितना पैसा आया और उसका क्या हुआ। कई प्रतिष्ठित मंदिरों में तो जमा धरनाशिक करोड़ों रुपए है। लेकिन इन पर न कोई सामाजिक-धार्मिक दबाव है और न ही शायद कोई कानून लागू होता है। जबकि इस पैसे का सामाजिक कल्याण कार्यक्रमों, स्वास्थ्य, शैक्षिक संस्थाओं पर और आम जन के सहायतार्थ उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए।

यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है कि मंदिरों के बाहर भूखे लोगों की कतारें होती हैं। जैसे-तैसे उनके खाने की व्यवस्था हो जाती है, पर कोई यह नहीं सोचता कि उन्हें सक्षम कैसे बनाया जाए। वे मनुष्य की तरह जी सकें। उनके बच्चों को अक्षर ज्ञान मिले। प्रशिक्षण देकर उन लोगों को सिलार्ड, कढ़ाई, बुनाई और हाथ से किए जाने वाले छोटे रोजगार दिए जा सकें, ताकि वे भी सम्मान से जी सकें। लेकिन होता यह है कि धर्म के नाम पर उनके आगे खाने का सामान या कुछ सिक्के फेंक दिए जाते हैं, वे वहीं पड़े रहते हैं। दूसरी ओर, मंदिर बड़े और भव्य बनते जाते हैं। उनमें मौजूद मूर्तियों को पहनाए जाने वाले वर्कों और आभूषणों की कीमत बढ़ती जाती है। मंदिर के बाहर सड़कों के किनारे फटेहाल या कंबल लपेटे लोग कड़ाके की सर्दी में टिटुरी पड़े रहते हैं। स्कूल

में हिंदी भाषा की परवाह है? बेहतर होगा कि सियासी दल भाषा जैसे संवेदनशील मामलों से दूर रहें और इस मामले में लोगों को फैसला करने दें।

- प्रिंस अभिषेक, छपरा, बिहार*

#### रोजगार का सवाल

देश में बेरोजगारी इन दिनों 45 वर्षों के चरम पर है। इसकी तुलना में विभिन्न विभागों में खाली पड़े पदों की पड़ताल के लिए एक विभाग का ही उदाहरण लिया जाए तो सारे देश की स्थिति का अंदाजा लग जाएगा। अकेली उच्च शिक्षा की बात करें तो 2017-18 के ऑल इंडिया सर्वे ऑन हायर

एजुकेशन की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक देशभर में 40 केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय हैं। इनमें प्राध्यापकों के 2476 पद स्वीकृत हैं जिनमें से 1301 खाली पड़े हैं। यानी करीब 54 प्रतिशत प्राध्यापकों की कमी है। दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में 59 और जेएनयू में शिक्षकों के 50 फीसद पद रिक्त हैं। यहां 199 प्राध्यापकों का काम 100 शिक्षकों से चलाया जा रहा है। अलीगढ़ मुसलिम विश्वविद्यालय में 200 के बजाय 137, बनारस हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय में 253 के बजाय 171 प्राध्यापकों से ही काम चलाया जा रहा है।

मार्च 2018 की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक 23 आईआईटी में 2806 पद खाली पड़े हैं। सबसे ज्यादा 552 पद आईआईटी खडगपुर में खाली हैं। देश के आईआईटी में शिक्षकों की कमी पर सिलसिलेवार एजुकेशन की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक देशभर में 40 केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय हैं। इनमें प्राध्यापकों के 2476 पद स्वीकृत हैं जिनमें से 1301 खाली पड़े हैं। यानी करीब 54 प्रतिशत प्राध्यापकों की कमी है। दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में 59 और जेएनयू में शिक्षकों के 50 फीसद पद रिक्त हैं। यहां 199 प्राध्यापकों का काम 100 शिक्षकों से चलाया जा रहा है। अलीगढ़ मुसलिम विश्वविद्यालय में 200 के बजाय 137, बनारस हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय में 253 के बजाय 171 प्राध्यापकों से ही काम चलाया जा रहा है।

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अमेरिकी दबाव में भारत ईरान से स्थायी द्विपक्षीय संबंध विकसित करने में विफल रहा है। भारत के लिए जरूरी ईरान-पाकिस्तान-भारत गैस पाइप लाइन के विकास पर बात आगे नहीं बढ़ सकी। अमेरिकी कूटनीति का खेल देखने वाला है। एक तरफ संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने ईरान के खतरें से दुनिया को अगाह किया। इमरान खान के साथ की गई प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में भी ट्रंप ने ईरानी आतंक को ज्यादा खतरनाक बताया। लेकिन तस्वीर का दूसरा पक्ष भी है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में ईरान पर हमला करने वाले ट्रंप ने ईरान से बातचीत का रास्ता भी खोल रखा है। ट्रंप ने पाकिस्तानी प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान से ईरानी नेतृत्व से बातचीत करने का आग्रह किया है, ताकि ईरान के साथ चल रहे तनाव को कम किया जा सके। इसका खुलासा खुद इमरान खान ने किया। इमरान खान के अनुसार ट्रंप ने उनसे मध्यस्थता का आग्रह किया और उन्होंने ईरानी राष्ट्रपति हसन रूहानी से बातचीत की है। खान ने यह भी खुलासा किया कि सऊदी राजकुमार मोहम्मद बिन सलमान ने भी उनसे ईरानी राष्ट्रपति से बातचीत करने को कहा है ताकि क्षेत्रीय तनाव कम हो। ट्रंप के लिए पाकिस्तान आज भी महत्त्वपूर्ण है। पाकिस्तान भौगोलिक रूप से जहां ईरान और अफगानिस्तान के नजदीक है, वहीं सुन्नी देश होने के कारण वह सऊदी अरब जैसे इस्लामिक देशों के नजदीक है।

अमेरिकी जमीन पर जाकर अपनी समस्याओं को बताने वाले एशियाई नेता गंभीरता से यह विचार करें कि संसाधनों से भरपूर होने के बावजूद एशियाई मुल्क गरीबी से क्यों जूझ रहे हैं। एशियाई मुल्कों में आखिर क्यों बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं और शिक्षा का आभाव है? आखिर क्यों गरीबी, शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में भारत और पाकिस्तान दोनों देश अच्छी हालत में नहीं है? मध्य एशिया और पूर्वी एशिया के देश भी संसाधन संपन्न होने के बावजूद गरीबी और बेरोजगारी से जूझ रहे हैं। दिलचस्प स्थिति यह है कि आपसी विवाद खत्म करने की स्थायी योजना एशियाई मुल्कों ने अभी तक नहीं बनाई है। परस्पर विवादों को सुलझाने के लिए ये आपस में गंभीरता से बातचीत नहीं करते। इनके विवादों की पंचायत पश्चिमी देश करते हैं। इसीलिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में कई विवादों और समस्याओं पर लंबे समय से चर्चा चल रही है, लेकिन हल आज तक किसी का नहीं निकला है।

क्यों बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं और शिक्षा का आभाव है? आखिर क्यों गरीबी, शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में भारत और पाकिस्तान दोनों देश अच्छी हालत में नहीं है? मध्य एशिया और पूर्वी एशिया के देश भी संसाधन संपन्न होने के बावजूद गरीबी और बेरोजगारी से जूझ रहे हैं। दिलचस्प स्थिति यह है कि आपसी विवाद खत्म करने की स्थायी योजना एशियाई मुल्कों ने अभी तक नहीं बनाई है। परस्पर विवादों को सुलझाने के लिए ये आपस में गंभीरता से बातचीत नहीं करते। इनके विवादों की पंचायत पश्चिमी देश करते हैं। इसीलिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में कई विवादों और समस्याओं पर लंबे समय से चर्चा चल रही है, लेकिन हल आज तक किसी का नहीं निकला है।

## दुनिया मेरे आगे

यकीन होता है कि आत्मघाती हमला करने के बाद मिली मौत के बाद उन्हें स्वर्ग मिलेगा। इसी तरह, हाल ही में केरल में एक नन से पादरी ने जिस तरह बलात्कार किया, वह भी अकेला मामला नहीं है। मुश्किल यह है कि पहले तो इन धर्म के ठेकेदारों की पोल नहीं खुलती। खुल भी जाए तो बहुत मुश्किल से इनके खिलाफ कोई कानूनी कार्रवाई होती है। बल्कि आज हालत यह है कि भीड़ बन कर हत्या तक देने के आरोपी जेल से निकल कर आते हैं तो उनका स्वागत होता है। फिर सब वैसा ही चलता रहता है। अंतर आता है तो उन पीड़ितों के जीवन में, जो इनके विरोध में आवाज उठाते हैं। उनके दुनिया के किसी भी राह बहुत कठिन हो जाती है। हालत यह है कि धार्मिक भावनाओं, आस्था और विश्वास का ठेस पहुंचने की दलील पर न्यायालय के फैसले तक पर सवाल उठाए जा रहे हैं। सबरीमाला में रजस्वला उग्र की स्त्रियों के प्रवेश निषेध पर अदालत का फैसला और उसका विरोध इसका ज्वलंत उदाहरण है। राजनीतिक पार्टियां भी भीड़ को अपना वोट बैंक मान कर राजनीति कर रही हैं। जबकि दुनिया के किसी भी समाज में मनुष्य और मनुष्यता प्राथमिक होने चाहिए। जहां आस्था के नाम पर अंधविश्वास हावी होगा, वहां मनुष्यता खंडित होगी।

है। गांधीजी की 150वीं जयंती पर भारत को प्लास्टिक मुक्त करने की बातें तो खूब की गईं मगर एक भी प्लास्टिक कंपनी का नाम सामने नहीं आया जिसे बंद करने की बात कही गई हो। सिर्फ लोगों से कहा जा रहा है कि आप प्लास्टिक का इस्तेमाल नहीं करें। हमारा मानना है कि प्लास्टिक बनाने वाली कंपनियों को बंद कर दी जाए। जिस तरह अणुधन रोकने के लिए कानून बनाया गया है उसी तरह जल, जमीन, पर्यावरण की सुरक्षा के लिए भी कानून बना कर प्लास्टिक निर्माण पर प्रतिबंध लगाना जरूरी है। लेकिन यह काम करेगा कौन?

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**शरणाथी बनाम घुसपैठिए**
केंद्रीय गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने राष्ट्रीय नागरिक पंजीकरण (एनआरसी) पर सरकार के संकल्प को दोहराते हुए मंगलवार को कोलकाता के एक कार्यक्रम में कहा कि 'देश से किसी शरणाथी को जाने नहीं देंगे और घुसपैठिए रहने नहीं देंगे।' दरअसल, शरणाथी और घुसपैठिए में बहुत अंतर होता है। जो शरणाथी भारत में बाहर से आए हैं उनसे देश की संरभुता और एकता को कोई खतरा नहीं होता, जबकि अवैध घुसपैठियों के कारण देश की शांति भंग होती है। इनके कारण अपराधों में वृद्धि हुई है, भूमि व संसाधनों पर अवैध कब्जे हुए हैं, जिसे रोका जाना चाहिए।
असम व पश्चिम बंगाल दोनों ही प्रदेशों में अवैध घुसपैठियों के कारण स्थायी निवासियों को बहुत-सी समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। भूमि, नौकरी, व्यवसाय के साथ-साथ धार्मिक मामलों में भी घुसपैठियों के हस्तक्षेप के कारण आएदिन तनाव की स्थिति बनती है। कई बार तो नाबत मारपीट और दंगे तक पहुंच जाती है। स्थानीय चुनावों में भी इन अवैध घुसपैठियों की हिंसा फैलाने में सँदिग्ध भूमिका थी। केंद्र सरकार को इसे देखते हुए एनआरसी का काम बहुत सावधानी से करने की आवश्यकता है।

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