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The Nationalist

Democracy and India

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motivated negative reporting
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वैश्विक मीडिया के भारत विरोधी
एजेंडे के खिलाफ हर भारतीय को
तथ्यपरक लड़ाई लड़नी होगी
हर्षवर्धन त्रिपाठी

ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स-
पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित- भारत की छवि
को धूमिल करने एक प्रयास
अजय धावले





**The
Nationalist**

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Dr. Anirban Ganguly

India's Democratic Resurgence – the real narrative

narrative of “democracy in danger” in India. Having seen numerous of their attempts being exposed and failed, the neo-colonialists have started questioning the very basis of India’s democracy, its essence and its essential and core constitutionality. They have started berating and condemning the democratic choice that the people of India have democratically made. In doing this they have roped in a number of think-tanks and scholars who beat drums in support of false narratives on all possible indices to do with India. Ironically, while India has witnessed a palpable democratic surge and resurgence in the last few years, while youth participation in politics and the political and electoral process has increased, countries in the West are witnessing a democratic recession.

Neo-colonists with a focus on India have been active for some time. Especially since the summer of 2014, when Chief Minister Narendra Modi was elected Prime Minister of India with a decisive, overwhelming and unequivocal mandate to transform the fundamentals and lead the country towards its seventy-fifth year of independence and beyond. These neo-colonists, who operate out of India and from across the world are apprehensive that India is finally coming into her own, in fact, they see India already coming on her own. They see India emerging as a responsible global power, they see India rise as a power which matters and it is this that unsettles them.

The neo-colonists’ tool is false perception and false narration. A web of analysts, interpreters and disseminators distribute this false narrative in order to generate and impose a

The Cambridge based Bennett Institute for Public Policy’s Centre for the Future of Democracy, for instance, in its Democracy Report of 2020 finds that “dissatisfaction with democracy has risen over time, reaching an all-time global high, particularly in developed countries.” Its survey covers a fifty year period, has been taken from 25 data sources, 3500 country surveys and four million respondents from 1973-2020. The report finds, as S.Gurumurthy, noted public intellectual points out, an “acute crisis of democratic faith in Anglo-Saxon countries - the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK – and says that the proportion of citizens dissatisfied with democracy in those countries has doubled from a quarter in 1990s to half of all individuals.”

A Chatham House paper of 2020 on the future of democracy in Europe, for example, speaks of “a number of indicators” pointing to a “state of dysfunction in democracy in Europe” with



“satisfaction with democracy” declining.” The Chatham House paper argues that a “number of indicators point to a state of dysfunction in democracy in Europe” with “satisfaction with democracy” declining, “over the past few decades, there has been a general decline in voter turnout in many European countries, particularly, among groups such as younger or less well-educated voters. There has also been a decline in the membership of political parties...” The West clearly seems to be

in the throes of a “democratic recession.” In fact, many large democracies seem to be at “their highest-ever recorded level for democratic dissatisfaction.”

But the scene and democratic climate in India today is a complete contrast. There is an increase in voter’s participation and political participation, an increase in women participation in the electoral process, with the percentage increasing especially in the last few years. Elections and democratic participation continue to be robust and animated in India. While vast stretches of the West suffer from democratic recession, India is seeing a democratic resurgence. This is the reality of democratic India today, led by a democratic government which has been elected with the highest ever mandate in recent Indian electoral history. It is this reality which the neo-colonists want to hide or look away from or deliberately misconstrue. That false narrative is being and needs to be decisively countered and exposed.

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Salient points of PM's reaction on slavery and colonial mindset

- » Speaking of 'Panch Pran', The second Pran is that in no part of our existence, not even in the deepest corners of our mind or habits should there be any ounce of slavery. It should be nipped there itself.
- » Now, 100 per cent this slavery of hundreds of years has kept us bound, has forced us to keep our emotions tied up, have developed distorted thinking in us. We have to liberate ourselves from the slavery mindset which is visible in innumerable things within and around us.
- » I have mentioned is the mentality of slavery and the attitude of the country. Brothers, how long will the world continue to give certificates to us?
- » How long will we live on the certificates of the world? Shall we not set our own standards? Can a country of 130 crores not make an effort to exceed its standards?
- » Under no circumstances should we try to look like others. It should be our temperament to grow with our own potential. We want freedom from slavery.
- » The element of slavery should not remain in our mind even under the distant seven seas, friends. And I look with hope the way the new National Education Policy has been formulated with a lot of brainstorming, with the exchange of ideas from various people and is at the root of the country's education policy.
- » The skill that we have emphasized is such a power, which will give us the strength to be free from slavery. We have seen that sometimes our talent gets tied in the shackles of language. This is the result of slave mentality.
- » We should be proud of every language of our country. We may or may not know the language, but we should be proud that it is the language of my country and it is the language given to the world by our ancestors.
- » On the completion of 75 years of independence, the country has envisioned 'Panch Prana' (five pledges) for itself. There is resolution for the big goals of development and inspiration for duties in these five pledges.
- » These include a call to give up the slave mentality and a sense of pride in our heritage. Today India has its own ideals and dimensions. Today India has its own resolutions and goals.
- » Today we have our own paths and symbols. And friends, today if Rajpath has ceased to exist and has become Kartavya Path and if the statue of George V has been replaced by the statue of Netaji, then this is not the first example of rejection of the slave mentality.



- » This is neither the beginning nor the end. It is a continuous journey of determination till the goal of freedom in mind and psyche is achieved.
- » The name of the place where the Prime Ministers of the country have lived has been changed from Race Course Road to Lok Kalyan Marg.
- » The echo of Indian musical instruments is now heard in our Republic Day celebrations. Every Indian is filled with joy by listening to patriotic songs at the Beating Retreat ceremony.
- » More recently, the Indian Navy has also adopted the symbol of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj by removing the ensign of slavery. The country has also fulfilled the long-standing wish of all the countrymen by building the National War Memorial.
- » These changes are not limited to symbols only; these changes have also become part of the policies of the country. Today the country has abolished hundreds of laws that existed since the British era.
- » The time and date of the presentation of the Indian Budget, which was following the times of the British Parliament for so many decades, has also been changed.
- » Now the youth of the country are being liberated from the compulsion of foreign language through the National Education Policy.
- » In short, today both the idea and the behavior of the country are becoming free from the slave mentality. This liberation will take us to the goal of a developed India.

Democracy and India



Shashi Shekhar Vempati

Indian Democracy has of late been the cynosure of commentators across the globe. As the planet's only billion people democracy, India is both a living miracle and a beacon of hope for peoples across the globe several of who continue to be denied basic freedoms. The reservoir of strength within Indian society to withstand the several internal and external factors constantly ripping away at the fabric of democracy is without a parallel or precedent in the history of democracy. It is this resilience that baffles commentators and frustrates the activists who remain in a state of denial over the success of democracy in India and retain strong beliefs over illegitimacy of democracy in India. It is these twin factors that have contributed questionable assessments of Indian Democracy in the form of global indices that are meant to be an objective measure of democracy.

The subject of how Indices of Democracy are constructed, the datasets they rely on and the inherent flaws and limitations of their methodology has been objectively analysed by Dr. Salvatore Babones in his paper for the Quadrant Magazine titled "Indian Democracy at 75: Who Are the Barbarians at the Gate?". The paper is an in-depth examination of the international

rankings of Indian democracy published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-DEM), and Freedom House. Dr. Babones in his analyses highlights obvious flaws in the manner in which these indices seek to assess the state of democracy in India such as not adjusting datasets for underlying population base. Dr. Babones also points out in his paper how individual biases and political prejudices of country specific experts inevitably influence the input data that goes into the computation of these indices of democracy.

The reality of Indian Democracy though is its intrinsic nature that makes it distinct from its western counterparts. Most global commentators tend to agree that electoral democracy in India is vibrant and successful. With more voters participating in Indian general elections than even the entire population of the next largest democracy, the United States, the smooth and fair conduct of elections at the scale of a billion, is a role model for the entire planet. While it is routinely observed in the United States, that counting of votes is a contentious process prone to disputes and long periods of time, the manner in which India has established electronic voting eliminating paper is a testimony to the success of electoral democracy in India.

However global commentators tend to privilege what they call "liberal democracy" over electoral democracy in drawing their assessments of India. From freedom of speech to adversarial Institutions, the entire thrust of these "liberal democracy"

assessments appears to be less about development for all through an electoral process of representative democracy and more about agitating for rights of assorted groups and interests where the pursuit of those rights becomes an end in itself even if at the expense of the greater public good. This notion of “liberal democracy” is intrinsically western in both its conception and its practice and is quite alien to the Indian ethos.

In a seminal lecture delivered in the earlier 1980s, prominent Indian Nationalist Ideologue Dattopant Thengadi, dwelt at length on this aspect. The lecture titled “Modernisation without Westernisation” delivered at a seminar in Delhi in 1983 is an essential read for a wider debate on how western constructs routinely tend to get force-fit into the Indian context well beyond the limited subject of democracy in India. In his lecture Dattopant Thengadi quoting John Klenig on the subject of rights, remarks that “exclusive emphasis on rights is one of the

peculiar characteristic of the western value-system” while questioning “acceptance of western paradigm as a universal model of progress”. Further Thengadi goes on to argue on the need for an indigenous model to be developed. He calls for conceiving of our model of progress and development, in the light of our own culture, our past traditions, present requirement, and aspirations for the future. At the same time Thengadi urges openness of the mind to study in depth the western paradigm, and benefit from it wherever possible.

Thengadi’s sagely wisdom and foresight in the early 1980s continues to be relevant four decades later. However there is a tendency

to confuse a nostalgia for the ancient past with a roadmap for the future, mistake an emotional rebuke to be adequate instead of a logical counter-argument and to take the shortcut of half-baked popular arguments instead of putting in the hard-work and intellectual rigor in developing alternative models that stand the test of time. The response to these multiple attempts to size up Indian Democracy within the limited span of western notions of liberalism has to be Institutional and Academic. A vast body of intellectual work has to be put in place on India and Indian Democracy based on constructs and values that derive themselves on characteristics that are intrinsically Indian, with the objective of establishing an authoritative reference point for global academics, thinkers and researchers. In the absence of such an Institutional approach and the non-availability of such an authoritative repository, knee-jerk emotional responses and intellectually suspect counter-arguments are trivialising the public debate on the state of Democracy in India.

In closing it would be pertinent to borrow from Dattopant Thengadi’s seminal lecture to point out that democracy is not an end in itself but merely a means to an end – “What is the end, the ultimate goal? According to Dharma, it is the complete, solidified, unintermittent, eternal happiness of all”. Ultimately history will judge this era not on whether India sized up to western notions of liberalism but if the Indian State delivered on the greater public good for all its citizens.

(The author is a well-known media expert and public intellectual, former CEO of India’s public broadcasting Prasar Bharati. Views expressed are his own)

वैश्विक मीडिया के भारत विरोधी एजेंडे के खिलाफ हर भारतीय को तथ्यपरक लड़ाई लड़नी होगी



हर्षवर्धन त्रिपाठी

नए और उभरते भारत के खिलाफ वैश्विक मीडिया जो माहौल खड़ा करती है, उस पर बहुत लम्बी चर्चा की जा सकती है, क्योंकि इसकी जितनी भी शिराएं हैं, सभी आपस में जुड़ी हुई हैं। ग्लोबल मीडिया पर कुछ कहने से पहले मैं भारत की तथाकथित कुछ मीडिया हाउसेस और पत्रकारों को अपनी लानत भेजना चाहूंगा, क्योंकि विदेशी तो खैर हैं ही विदेशी।

यदि हम कोरोना के दौर से ही इसे समझने का प्रयास करें तो आप सभी को उस दौर की कुछ मनगढ़ंत और भ्रामक रिपोर्टिंग याद होगी जिसमें यह दावा किया जाता था कि पूरी गंगा लाशों से पट चुकी हैं। शमशान पर जगह नहीं बची हैं।

चूँकि अपनी बात करूँ तो मैं प्रयागराज का रहने वाला हूँ और हमारे यहाँ यह कहा जाता है कि हम घर से लुढ़क भी जाएं तो गंगा की गोद में गिरेगे। हमारे यहाँ से गंगाजी की दूरी 500 मीटर भी नहीं है। जिस जगह की रिपोर्टिंग को लेकर यह पूरा मसला खड़ा किया गया वह श्रृंगवेरपुर हमारे यहाँ से 30 किमी दूर है।

अब दो तरह की रिपोर्टिंग होती है। एक तो यह कि कोई बड़ा रिपोर्टर आएगा जो किसी पश्चिमी मीडिया के किसी संस्थान का होगा। वह भारत में कोरोना के दौरान चलेगा

और उसे उपरोक्त हाल में लाशें दिखेंगी तो स्वाभाविक है वह इसे रिपोर्ट करेगा, लेकिन भारत की मीडिया जिनके वहाँ संपादक हैं, रिपोर्टर हैं वे जब इसका समर्थन करते हैं तब स्थिति खतरनाक हो जाती है।

अब जो दूसरे रिपोर्टर होते हैं, जिन्हें कहा जाता है कि न्यूयार्क टाइम्स में छप गया, वाशिंगटन पोस्ट में छप गया, जाओ जाकर संबंधित विषय की रिपोर्ट लेकर आओ। अब रिपोर्टर उस स्थान पर जाएगा, वहाँ संबंधित जनों से बातचीत करेगा और कुछ तस्वीरें लेकर अपनी रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित कर देगा। विडंबना यह है कि ऐसे रिपोर्टर जिन्हें गंगा की समझ नहीं है, गंगा के आस पास बसावट की समझ नहीं है वे भी इस विषय पर लम्बी चौड़ी खबरें लिखने लगें।

संयोगवश मैं उस दौरान प्रयागराज में ही था और मैंने वहीं से पूछना शुरू किया कि संगम से लेकर फाफामऊ तक के इलाके में, रेती में गड़ी एक भी लाश दिखा दें तो जो कहें सो.. लेकिन फाफामऊ से आगे बढ़ने पर श्रृंगेरपुर में सामान्य दिनों में भी ऐसे लोग दिख जाएंगे जो अपनी परम्पराओं के चलते, अपनी आर्थिक स्थिति के चलते ऐसा करते हैं और कुछ लोगों का यह भी मानना होता है कि यदि वे गंगा में जाएंगे तो सीधे स्वर्ग जाएंगे। उन्हें मोक्ष की प्राप्ति होगी।

अब इस विषय को भारत के खिलाफ एक नैरेटिव बनाकर अल जजीरा या फिर न्यूयार्क टाइम्स अथवा वाशिंगटन पोस्ट कुछ छापे, लिखे तो हमें चिंतित नहीं होना चाहिए क्योंकि उन्हें धरातल की वास्तविकता पता ही नहीं है। विचित्र स्थिति तब बनती है जब भारत का कोई बड़ा पत्रकार, मीडिया हाउस ऐसा करने लगे। ऐसी स्थिति में हमें चिंतित होना चाहिए और ऐसे तथ्यों का नीर-क्षीर निरूपण करना चाहिए।

इसी कोरोना के दौरान पश्चिमी मीडिया ने यह अनुमान लगाते हुए कहा था कि भारत में लोग तड़प-तड़पकर मर जाएंगे क्योंकि यहाँ तो वेंटिलेटर बन ही नहीं सकता है. वेंटिलेटर बनाने वाली शीर्ष 20 कंपनियों में अधिकतर चीन में है और वेंटिलेटर में लगाने वाले अधिकतर सामान यूरोप से आते हैं. दवा के लिए आवश्यक कच्चा माल चीन और दूसरे देशों से आता है. ऐसा माहौल तब बनाया गया जबकि हम दुनिया की बड़ी फार्मा फैक्ट्री हैं.

दरअसल वैश्विक मीडिया भारत के खिलाफ कैसे माहौल बनाती है इसे समझने के लिए सबसे पहले आपको कुछ नाम याद करने होंगे. यूनाइटेड नेशंस, डब्ल्यूएचओ, वर्ल्ड बैंक, आईएमएफ इन्हें आप देखने का नजरिया बदलिए.

आईएमएफ की एक रिपोर्ट के कुछ पॉइंट्स से यह कोशिश की जाती है कि भारत के डिलीवरी सिस्टम पर प्रश्न चिन्ह लगाने की कोशिश की जाती है. कमाल की बात है कि उसी आईएमएफ के एशिया पैसिफिक डिपार्टमेंट के निदेशक कृष्णा श्रीनिवासन कहते हैं कि आज जहां लगभग हर देश की रफ्तार धीमी है, तो वहीं भारत बेहतर कर रहा है. भारत अन्य देशों की तुलना में अग्रिम और उज्ज्वल स्थान पर है.

भारत के कितने मीडिया संस्थानों ने इस खबर को चलाया? इस आधार पर कोई रिपोर्ट छपी? जबकि उसी रिपोर्ट में इस तथ्य का उल्लेख भी है कि 2022 में भी भारत की आर्थिक वृद्धि दर 6.8 प्रतिशत रहेगी वह भी तब जब दुनिया के विकसित देशों की वृद्धि 3 प्रतिशत से कम रहेगी.

आज हम चीन को पछाड़कर दुनिया के सबसे बड़े मैनुफैक्चरर बनने जा रहे हैं लेकिन चूंकि यह पश्चिमी मीडिया के दिलचस्पी का विषय नहीं है तो वे इस पर कोई चर्चा नहीं करेंगे. दुनिया में सप्लाइ चेन की चर्चा होती है तब माइक्रोसॉफ्ट के प्रमुख यह कहते हैं कि भारत के अलावा कोई विकल्प नहीं है.

गूगल जब यह कहता है कि कोविड के दौरान हमने 6800 करोड़ रूपए कमाकर भारतीयों को दिए गूगल को यह देखना होगा कि आपके पास कोई विकल्प भी था? दुनिया में गूगल को अपना व्यवसाय बढ़ाने के लिए भारत

से ज्यादा बड़ी और अच्छी जगह कोई मिल सकती है?

हमें याद है कि अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पत्रिकाओं में भारत को लेकर एक तस्वीर जरूर छपती थीं जिसमें कोई आदमी दीवार पर पेशाब करते हुए दिखलाया जाता था और दीवार पर लिखा होता था कि यहाँ पेशाब करना मना है. बीबीसी का कोई फोटोग्राफर आया लेकिन बजाय किसी अच्छी तस्वीर के दिल्ली से लेकर किसी सुदूर इलाके में वह ऐसी ही किसी तस्वीर को खोजता और उसे भारत की तस्वीर बनाकर प्रदर्शित करता था. आज स्वच्छ भारत योजना के चलते ऐसे तमाम फोटोग्राफर को वह नैरेटिव मिलना बंद हो गया.

बीबीसी को कश्मीर का नैरेटिव मिलना बंद हो गया जिसने अपने यहाँ आर्टिकल 370 पर 7 दिन बकायदा कार्यक्रम किया था. अब वह बेचारा फोटोग्राफर कितना भी प्रयत्न करे उसे कश्मीर की दीवारों पर गो बैक इंडिया लिखे नारे दिखने बंद हो गए. यहाँ से पश्चिमी मीडिया के भारत विरोधी अभियान को इसी देश के कुछ बेईमान पत्रकारों ने आगे बढ़ाना शुरू कर दिया.

अब प्रश्न है कि क्या हम पश्चिमी नियंत्रण वाले उनके मंच जैसे गूगल, फेसबुक, ट्विटर, यूट्यूब पर हम अपना नैरेटिव बना पाएंगे? बिलकुल.. और बना भी रहे हैं. आज 68 फीसदी कंटेंट हमारी भारतीय भाषाओं का है. यूट्यूब की प्रमुख जब भारत आई तब उन्होंने बताया था कि 2016 में 1 मिलियन से ज्यादा सब्सक्राइबर वाले केवल 3 लोग थे. आज वह संख्या 500 से ज्यादा है. हमारे नैरेटिव के आधार पर दुनिया में बहुत कुछ बदल रहा है, लेकिन हमें यह ध्यान रखना होगा कि कौन से आंकड़े कहाँ रखने हैं.

इसलिए आज यह आवश्यक हो गया है कि हमें इस पूरी व्यवस्था के खिलाफ स्वयं को एक संस्था के रूप में स्थापित कर अपनी लड़ाई शुरू करनी होगी. इन बिन्दुओं पर ज्यादा से ज्यादा संवाद करना होगा तभी हम पश्चिमी मीडिया और उनके भारत में बैठे तथाकथित पत्रकारों के एजेंडे की हकीकत समझ सकेंगे.

(लेखक वरिष्ठ स्तंभकार एवं डॉ. श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी रिसर्च फाउंडेशन में सीनियर फेलो हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार उनके निजी हैं।)

Artha Bhrashta: The motivated negative reporting on the Indian Economy



Pritam Banerjee

There has been a lot of good news for India on the economic front in the last few weeks. Both the World Bank and IMF have confirmed that India will be the fastest growing large economy for sometime to come. The IMF commended India for its 'swift and substantial' response during the pandemic, and especially underlined the fact that India continued to undertake challenging structural reforms during the pandemic despite the difficult times.

Further good news has come from the recently released UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index that has provided strong evidence of rapid reduction of poverty in India, especially during the tenure of the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. More on this will follow later.

The biggest vote of confidence has come from the investment banking community who have the best sense of pulse of global investors and the direction of economic winds. Deutsche Bank CEO Christian Sewing went on record to state that 'India will be the 'shining star' of the global economy that faces a decade of volatility

amid war, inflation and supply chain disruptions'.

Morgan Stanley, in its report titled "The New India: Why this is India's Decade' has predicted India to emerge as the third-largest global economy by end of this decade and drive close to 20% of the global growth, cementing India's position as a leading global economic power. The report expresses confidence in India's ability to deepen its existing competitiveness in services while expanding its manufacturing base. More tellingly, it highlights the success of the JAM trinity and targeted social sector interventions in being one of the factors leading to poverty reduction and growth.

With all this 'positive news' all around, it might be easy to forget the negative reporting on the Indian economy and the politically motivated cherry picking of economic facts and data by a host of global experts, many of the 'eminent' professional economists or journalists of Indian origin, especially during the pandemic and its aftermath.

Starting the second quarter of 2019 when India was facing some economic headwinds, there has been a concerted effort to put forward a narrative that the government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was failing India economically. The result of such economic mismanagement was low economic growth, increased poverty, fall in competitiveness and increased

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unemployment.

So, the confused citizen who read all of that reportage must be asking if things were so bad, why is everybody, including credible global public and private institutions claiming just the opposite—that the Indian government not only did a stellar job in managing the economy during a once-in-a-century global crisis like the pandemic, but has had a sustained positive effect on the economy overall? To emerge from the pandemic, despite several structural challenges accumulated due to decades of poor policies that have only begun to be addressed in the last few years, and be considered the brightest spot in the global economy is after all no mean achievement.

Let us be mindful that such negative slant in the coverage and use of motivated interpretation of economic data and facts have significant impact. Global investors and policy-makers follow eminent economists and journalists, and well-known publications like New York Times, Economist and Financial Times. Painting a poor picture of India's economic prospects, its socio-economic situation, and its overall

economic competitiveness have adverse impact on India's investment and trade prospects. These half-truths and lies get repeated and amplified-discussed casually in boardrooms and social clubs frequented by the global business and policy elite.

I use the term Artha Bhrashta in that sense. Artha refers to wealth or economic well-being, but artha also stands for meaning or interpretation. The corrupting of meaning and interpretation is artha bhrashta. To cover the full gamut of such corruption of meaning through negative spin, and provide the reality check on that spin would take an entire book. So, we will summarize some of the most important facets in the following paragraphs to illustrate to the reader the intellectual dishonesty of such motivated reportage.

Headlining to Illude

The average Indian reader would have been bombarded by headlines that have consistently claimed that the pandemic has led to massive increase in poverty in India. These articles are typically based on data of some surveys conducted by private agencies or academic institutions. Two good examples are the recently published Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting the Course by the World Bank which uses the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE's) Consumer Pyramids Household Survey to make the claim that India accounted for 80% of those pushed to extreme poverty during the pandemic. The other example was the survey conducted by Azim Premji University around May, 2021 that claimed that 230 million Indians were pushed into poverty due to the lockdown and loss of

employment during the initial phase of the pandemic.

Now institutions have a right in a democracy to conduct studies and surveys and come to their conclusions about it. However, serious journalist and academics/experts have a responsibility to exercise discretion when reporting these results and drawing conclusions on them. Neither can one deny that the huge global shock to the economy like the pandemic would have significant impact on a country like India with so many millions of its citizens being poor and vulnerable. But precisely because the shock was global, disrupting incomes and lives across the world, the ability of a country to meet this challenge has to be put in this relative perspective.

But these headlines and the reporting that follows do not exercise any such discretions. These headlines are then picked by the global media and a section of 'eminent' economists to berate the lack of action or faulty policies of the government. It is important to note that most of the actual reports like the one from World Bank do not imply that this hugely negative fallout of the pandemic on the poor and vulnerable populations were due to government policies or the lack of them.

Even more dishonest is their lack of balance in reporting counterfactuals published by credible economists or institutions. Take a look at the perfunctory coverage received by the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (GMPI) published by UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index that takes into account a number of quality-of-life parameters covering education,

health and standard of living. This report has clearly indicated that India has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty and improving quality of life. Incidence of poverty declined from about 54% to 16% over the period 2005-06 to 2019-21. India has made the most substantial contribution to reducing global poverty in this period.

Even more pertinently, the report underlines that the relative reduction from 2015/2016 to 2019/21, coinciding with Prime Minister Modi's tenure, was faster, at 11.9% a year compared with 8.1% for the period 2005/2006 to 2015/2016. But do a Google search on this very significant achievement for the country and you would be hard-pressed to come up with any 'eminent' commentator holding eloquent on this subject.

What you would find though is a comment by Mr. P.Chidambaram claiming falsely that Congress led UPA did better in reducing poverty quoting this same report in the Hindu. No editorial discretion is exercised to point out to the reader that Mr. Chidambaram is in factually wrong.

The mainstream media also largely ignored the IMF Working Paper (Pandemic, Poverty, and Inequality: Evidence from India) by economists Surjit Bhalla, Karan Bhasin, and Arvind Virmani that point out that poverty indicators that look purely at consumption expenditures are likely to overestimate poverty as they undercount the impact of in-kind transfer such as food and other rations. Their working paper concludes that both poverty and inequality came down in India, and this did so despite the shock produced by the pandemic largely due to the ability of the

Government to make targeted transfers of food and other rations. In fact, such targeted transfers were a key part of the government's overall pandemic economic management strategy that is now receiving high praise, but more on that later.

Constant sniping using cherry-picked facts and motivated interpretation

Take your mind back to the pandemic times and you would recall the horror scenario being made out for you. In fact, it started before the pandemic. A good example is former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian's much-publicized paper (India's GDP Mis-estimation: Likelihood, Magnitudes, Mechanisms, and Implications) published in June 2019 that claimed India's GDP was overestimated by 2.5% between

2011-12 and 2016-17 due to a change in methodology. Subramanian had used a series of what are called high-frequency indicators-which are basically indicators that measure actual consumption or production. Examples include commercial electricity consumption, GST collections, sale of tractors or two-wheelers, or sale of fast-moving consumer goods or electronic goods etc. to make this claim.

There is nothing wrong with Mr. Subramanian's use of such indicators to question Indian GDP numbers and the changes in methodology. But cut to January 2022, Mr. Subramanian was questioning the robustness of India's post-pandemic recovery when the evidence of these same high-frequency indicators clearly showed that India was on a high-growth trajectory and quickly recovering from the economic effects of the pandemic. In other words, Mr. Subramanian is willing to be selective to what kind of data to highlight in his enthusiasm to prove that the Indian economy, under its current leadership, is not doing well.

The idea of such motivated reportage is to focus on the bad news that can help undermine any positive news on post pandemic recovery. Since these commentary and reportage are always couched in the language of the 'concerns' they feel for the Indian economy, this was a clever way to hide the real motivation, i.e., animosity towards the man and party leading India. The main effort was to counter any credit or credibility for India's current leadership.

Some examples of attempts to undermine can be absolutely ludicrous,

The average Indian reader would have been bombarded by headlines that have consistently claimed that the pandemic has led to massive increase in poverty in India. These articles are typically based on data of some surveys conducted by private agencies or academic institutions. Two good examples are the recently published Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting the Course by the World Bank which uses the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE's) Consumer Pyramids Household Survey to make the claim that India accounted for 80% of those pushed to extreme poverty during the pandemic.

such as stating something completely inane and making it sound like a profound insight. For example, Bloomberg boldly stated, that while the economy is recovering fast, it is still not doing as well it would have, had the pre-pandemic trajectory of growth continued. Now imagine you are a businessman who had an accident, and did not have an income for 6 months because you were bed-ridden. But you bounce back and start earning again, and your business starts to grow. Now your economist friend tells you while all that is great, you would have been so much better off had you not been bed ridden in the first place! First you would find him to be a bit slow in the head for stating the obvious—that of course life would have been much better without that accident. But you would also find him completely without any empathy for your situation. Many of the economists/journalists who have critiqued India on the quality and substance of India's post-pandemic recovery display this trait of stating the obvious and being without empathy for the genuine challenges produced by an external shock beyond the control of any government across the world.

Take another great example of motivated interpretation. As India's post economic growth took off, eminent economists like Raghuram Rajan and Kaushik Basu were eager to temper the enthusiasm about such growth since this was starting from a low base caused due to the contraction of the economy during the pandemic, otherwise known as the base effect. Nothing wrong with that. But when Kaushik Basu started scaremongering about possible stagflation in India due to steep increase

in India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI), he conveniently forgot to mention that such a steep increase was also due to the fact that wholesale prices had also been low in the previous period, i.e., base effect.

Scaremongering can also go to ludicrous levels. Mr. Basu famously pointed out that polarization was hurting India's growth, and immediately found himself headlined in major dailies across the world. No real evidence is provided to prove this relationship between growth and so-called polarization. Forget data, not even some credible anecdotal evidence is made available for this serious accusation undermining the Modi government being carried across major newspapers across the world. The reason of course being that there is no actual evidence for increase in polarization, let alone it having impact on economic growth. This is simply an example of the use of 'eminence' and weaponization of that 'eminence' to push forward a politically motivated narrative.

There are also instances of hypocrisy that get amplified. Take Raghuram Rajan's critic of Indian PLI schemes and his advice to Indian policy-makers not follow an aggressive industrial policy using incentives to drive investments in manufacturing. The western media quickly picked that up. But the reality is that several US state governments also have such aggressive industrial policy in place. Did you hear any critic of such policies from Mr. Rajan, or any mention that US states and indeed many EU sub-regional governments either had or currently have similar policies? Of course not! Advice from the hallowed corridors of western academia and media mostly applies to emerging economies in

Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The light touch approach to lying

Can one make even good news look bad, and get away with that? Yes, some of our economic journalists have perfected this art-what I would like to call the light touch approach to lying. Mr. Andy Mukherjee of the Bloomberg is a great auteur of this art form. In an article in September 2021 Mr. Mukherjee screams ‘India’s world-beating GDP masks pain of the pandemic’ and goes on with dramatic flourish to state that while India’s officials celebrate their world beating 20% quarterly growth of GDP, the April-June period was when the pandemic overwhelmed oxygen supplies and hospital beds, villagers floated bodies in rivers or left them in shallow graves, families sold their assets to save their loved ones’.

All of the above is true. But most countries across Eurasia have faced similar dire situations due to the pandemic. USA, Germany, France, Russia, Italy, UK-the list is endless. And that there would some instances of the system being overwhelmed in a relatively poor country with a large population when far richer countries had similar tragic examples of mismanagement is only to be expected. But notice how Mr. Mukherjee issues almost visual imagery of the pain of the pandemic trying to undermine the positive story of GDP growth and economic recovery. This is light touch lying at its most subtle.

There are more blatant examples. Many of them were related to constant attempts to show India’s vaccination drive in poor light. In one article Mr. Mukherjee claims “Only 146 million people in a country of 1.4 billion have been inoculated so far

with the required two doses”. This at a time when most countries, many with 10 to 15 times the per capita income of India and with total adult populations of just 40 or 50 million were finding it difficult to inoculate their citizenry! When eventually the Indian vaccination program became a stellar example of global best practice, reaching 10 million vaccination per day at one point, there was hardly a whimper from this crowd.

Readers would have seen a similar trend in other reportage. You would have seen several articles highlighting that many toilets built under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan lacked water. But why this focus on the lack of amenities in a few of these toilets and not on the radical transformation this initiative has brought about in a country where millions of homes lacked this basic amenity even after 70 years of independence, and now finally have toilets? Is the fact that open defecation has reduced very substantially in large parts of the country not important? Apparently not. Instead, you would find a particular class of Indian and foreign journalists trying to find that one picture of open defecation to prove ‘all is not well’.

Take the ‘Har Ghar Jal’ Abhiyaan. Close to 60% of Indian households in rural areas today have direct tap water connection due this mission that started only in 2019, up from just under 15% before. Most states have been able to provide such connection to 50% or more households. This is a radical socio-economic transformation, freeing up labour and productivity, especially for rural women. One would have thought that the global development community would be celebrating this achievement, and India’s

‘eminences’ in the developmental field would take the lead. Especially since in the seven decades following independence only about 1 in 10 rural households had such a connection, and this basic human need of the citizen had been reduced to a luxury.

But did you hear even a whimper? Did India’s celebrated economists explain the socio-economic impact of this radical change, achieved during the height of the pandemic? Did our celebrated sociologists and their journalistic cabal bother to highlight the potential impact of direct tap water connection on women’s literacy and labour force participation rates? The silence was deafening.

Listen to the sound of silence

Let us end this article on this topic of silence, and where we started off from—India’s recent celebration as a bright spot in the global economy. Some readers would recall that several of our ‘eminences’ had been advocating that the Indian government was not doing enough for the economy during the pandemic and such ‘mismanagement’ would bring unmitigated disaster. Following the trend in western countries, their advice was to spend profusely.

Thankfully, the Indian government did not take such advice too seriously. Realizing that the pandemic was a combination of both income shock that would have its most serious impact on India’s poor, and supply-shock that would lead to inflationary pressures, it resisted a strategy based purely on income transfers and increased government spending. Instead, it paid serious attention to removing supply side

The biggest vote of confidence has come from the investment banking community who have the best sense of pulse of global investors and the direction of economic winds. Deutsche Bank CEO Christian Sewing went on record to state that ‘India will be the ‘shining star’ of the global economy that faces a decade of volatility amid war, inflation and supply chain disruptions’.

constraints, supporting industry through increased liquidity, while also undertaking the world’s most ambitious and well targeted support to its poor through in-kind transfers of essential items to cushion the impact of income shock.

While kudos have come from IMF, World Bank and other international organizations for this well thought through and executed strategy, there is silence among the ranks of many of the eminent economists and journalists. But this silence will not last. Very soon, ‘experts’ would be dissecting the various reasons why World Bank, IMF and international investment bankers are wrong and trying to find holes in this positive India story. But this current silence is also important. It tells its own story. I would urge the Indian reader who follows reporting on the Indian economy to carefully listen to this sound of silence, and understand its significance.

(The writer is an independent trade and logistics expert and writes extensively on these issues. The views expressed are his own)

Spurious Western Indices Must be Met with Stern Action



Sandeep Balakrishna

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI's strong condemnation of the recently-published Global Hunger Index Report is not only timely but eminently commendable. Two elements stand out in a pronounced fashion in his rebuttal: commitment to his India-first mantra and a renewed demonstration of his resolve that India will no longer be bullied unlike in the past.

But beyond the Prime Minister's reproach, such indices and reports must be broad-based and placed in their historical and geopolitical contexts.

The historical context dates back to the colonial era and the endeavour of Europeans to study India in a comprehensive manner. The outcome of this "study" affixed a near-permanent badge of International disrepute to this great civilisational nation as being peopled with a dark, regressive, unscientific, superstitious and barbaric culture. Colonising it is the only means of civilising and uplifting it.

This biased narrative till date, is at the root of a majority of such indices and reports and journalistic reportage emanating from the West. It is thus no coincidence that

Prime Minister Modi gave a rousing call to thoroughly decolonise ourselves in his Independence Day address this year.

This also reminds us of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's famous retort damning Katherine Mayo's racist book, *Mother India* as a "gutter inspector's report." Indeed, the western media and agencies that regularly produce such indices are still carrying on this gutter inspector's work which have no basis in Bharatavarsha's realities much less facts. A pertinent question arises: in the backdrop of this prolonged history, since when has the Western media and its political class ever been friendly to India? The answer: almost never, barring a few honourable exceptions like Will Durant in his *A Case for India*.

A psycho-colonial and political phenomenon is also at work here. This is the seasoned and habitual viewing of India as a subject country. India's political independence and sovereign integrity matters little to such a psyche. Thus, the scorn and bias and abuse against India that were routinely heaped by British newspapers like *The Guardian* and *The Times* in the colonial period are now being heaped by such spurious indices, which are deliberately created. Which necessitates us to make an addition to the renowned adage, "lies, damned lies, statistics and indices." If the intent is only to find negativity, you will find it for every street in every country has a dustbin and you can concoct an index to prove how dirty the country is based on such selectivity.

Thus, it is not accidental that the ascent of India especially after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister twice has been concomitant with a slew of all kinds of indices and reports and surveys that explicitly, desperately try to prove a lot of things together: how India is intolerant, dangerous, sectarian, business-unfriendly, squalid, hungry, authoritarian, unfree and unsafe for foreign journalists. One can find an “index” for each of these parameters, and all of them originate in either America or Europe. These are not indices but frank attacks.

If this is the intensity and frequency of attacks, it shows that PM Modi has clearly rattled a wide spectrum in the West. It also reveals the fact that there are competing ideologies and factions within those countries. Broadly speaking, one faction wants the money generated through commercial collaboration with India while the other desperately wants to retain in perpetuity, the Western hegemony over former colonies. It is the latter faction that should concern us.

One of the main geopolitical realities that followed the political decolonisation of the world is the fact that several former colonies were indirectly controlled by their erstwhile masters, who used a variety of underhand measures to retain their hold. A major tactic included exerting constant economic pressure in the form of grants and aids. A variant of this was the invention of the econo-racist term, “third world country,” coined by the French anthropologist, Alfred Sauvy in 1952.

The phrase was specifically applied to the so-called non-aligned countries including India. It quickly became a weapon of war in the postcolonial period. Third-world countries were defined by large-scale poverty,

mass hunger, horrible health conditions, poor education, food scarcity, political corruption, open drainages, etc. We need to recall how Hollywood movies like Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Octopussy and Slumdog Millionaire depicted India. These were political depictions.

One of the major ways in which the term “third world” was used was to keep these countries in a state of continuing poverty so that they could remain permanently dependent on former colonialists. This was economic warfare of the cruellest kind or political warfare by proxy. Thus, we had a situation where India, once the global economic leader, was savagely looted by the British, and after it attained political independence, continued to depend on a closed club of former colonialists.

It is this third-world status that made India vulnerable to the other face of this economic warfare: sanctions. We are all familiar how the same, closed Western club imposed economic sanctions when we tested the nuclear bomb in 1998.

But for such a hegemonic global order to work smoothly, their former colonies had to be headed by dictators or quasi-dictators or weak leaders or weaker coalition governments. From one perspective, this is also the history of the successive Congress and Congress-supported Governments since 1947.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi’s ill-advised attachment for the Soviet Union ensured that India became almost wholly dependent on the USSR. In both the domestic and foreign spheres, both these Prime Ministers were scared of incurring Soviet Russia’s displeasure. If

this was not enough, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi also hankered for England's approval. Few today might remember her 1978 trip to the UK in the immediate aftermath of her post-Emergency defeat. She was given an open platform there to help her resurrect her tattered image and rehabilitate her political career. The whole event was orchestrated and organised by the entire British political establishment including but not limited to Margaret Thatcher, Michael Foot (deputy PM) and Louis Mountbatten.

In our own time, proof of this remote-controlled hegemony is available in the Ukrainian President, Zelensky who unwisely allowed himself to be used by the West and ushered in disaster for his own country.

The same had occurred for more than sixty years here as well. In 1999, the explosive Mitrokhin Archives revealed to our eternal shame that India was the “model of KGB infiltration of a Third World Government.” The USSR Counterintelligence officer Oleg Kalugin noted how it “seemed like the entire country was for sale; the KGB — and the CIA — had deeply penetrated the Indian Government. After a while neither side entrusted sensitive information to the Indians, realising that their enemy would know all about it the next day.”

It is precisely this that Prime Minister Modi has decisively halted. His other tough measures like cutting off foreign funding for subversive NGOs that had exploded under the patronage of the two-term UPA regime also falls in this category of firming up national security.

Small wonder that he is being relentlessly attacked via spurious indices and manufactured “international” reports.

Another favourite theme of these narratives is to disparage PM Modi as a “muscular nationalist PM.” Shorn of sophistry, it can be plainly understood as a narrative preaching pusillanimity.

Neither will these attacks via indices stop any time soon. But several antidotes to curb them exist. As we mentioned earlier, these are in essence, bullying tactics and standing up to them will prove highly effective. A second method is to respond in kind.

California for example, presents an eminent case. Since 2017-18, San Francisco has earned the crown of being the open defecation capital of the world. Homelessness has reached epidemic proportions in Los Angeles. Likewise, a drug-addiction scourge has enveloped most major American cities and law enforcement has all but crumbled. It would be a good approach for India to begin publishing indices on these and similar parameters. With India's newfound clout on the global stage and with PM Modi's elevation as the head of the G-20, the task will not be really difficult.

In the end, the West has realised that it has reached a point of irreversible decline and so it appears that it's playing a double game of sorts: courting India for business on one side and demonising it on the other. It can't have it both ways.

But the real threat is internal — the Indian suppliers and amplifiers of fake data, which often acts as the raw material for these foreign index-makers. As our millennial history shows, many a crucial war has been lost owing to internal sabotage and treachery.

(The writer is a well-known historian, author, columnist, cultural-commentator. Views expressed are his own.)

ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स - पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित- भारत की छवि को धूमिल करने एक प्रयास



अजय धावले

हा

ल ही में ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स 2022 में भारत को 107 वें स्थान पर रखा है जिसपर तमाम विपक्षी दलों ने भारत सरकार की आलोचना की। दरअसल ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स (जीएचआई) के जरिए वैश्विक, क्षेत्रीय और राष्ट्रीय स्तरों पर भूख पर नजर रखी जाती है और उसकी गणना की जाती है। 29.1 अंकों के साथ भारत में भूख का स्तर 'गंभीर' दर्शाया गया है। ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स 2022 के अनुसार भारत की स्थिति और खराब हुई है और वह 121 देशों में 107वें स्थान पर पहुंच गया है।

ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स 2022 पर भारत सरकार ने प्रश्न उठाते हुए कहा कि यह सूचकांक गंभीर गणना प्रणाली मुद्दों से ग्रस्त है और इसकी गणना त्रुटिपूर्ण है। वास्तव में त्रुटिपूर्ण है गणना के आधार पर भारत को 107वें स्थान पर रखना देश की छवि को 'एक राष्ट्र जो अपनी आबादी की खाद्य सुरक्षा और पोषण संबंधी आवश्यकताओं को पूरा नहीं करता है' के रूप में खराब किए जाने के निरंतर प्रयास का हिस्सा है।

सूचकांक की गणना के लिए इस्तेमाल किए गए चार संकेतकों में से तीन बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित हैं और ये पूरी आबादी का प्रस्तुतीकरण नहीं कर सकते तथा चौथा और सबसे महत्वपूर्ण संकेतक 'कुपोषित आबादी का अनुपात' (पीओयू) का अनुमान 3000 के बहुत छोटे नमूने के आकार पर किए गए एक सर्वेक्षण पर आधारित है। वास्तव में यह रिपोर्ट जमीनी हकीकत से काफी अलग

तस्वीर पेश करने वाली है।

इस रिपोर्ट में 109वीं रैंकिंग पर मौजूद अफगानिस्तान एशिया महाद्वीप में एकमात्र देश है जो भारत से पीछे है, नेपाल, भूटान, पाकिस्तान और बांग्लादेश और आर्थिक संकट से जूझ रहे श्रीलंका की स्थिति भी भारत से बेहतर बताई गई है। भारत 2021 में 116 देशों में 101वें नंबर पर था जबकि 2020 में वह 94वें पायदान पर था। पड़ोसी देश पाकिस्तान (99), बांग्लादेश (84), नेपाल (81) और श्रीलंका (64) भारत के मुकाबले कहीं अच्छी स्थिति में हैं।

गौरतलब यह भी है कि दुनिया के कई देश इस सूचकांक से स्वयं को दूर रखते हैं, जिसमें अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन, फ्रांस और नेपाल जैसे देश शामिल हैं। यह बताता है कि विकसित देशों के बीच भी इस सूचकांक को लेकर विश्वसनीयता नहीं है।

वर्तमान में जारी रिपोर्ट को दो यूरोपीय एनजीओ ने जारी किया है, जिनमें से एक है आयरलैंड का एनजीओ कंसर्न वर्ल्डवाइड और दूसरा है जर्मनी का वेल्ट हंगर हिल्फे। यह दोनों संस्था कथित रूप से दुनियाभर में भुखमरी से लड़ने का कार्य करने का दावा करती हैं। इस रिपोर्ट को बनाने के

ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स 2022 की रिपोर्ट ना सिर्फ जमीनी हकीकत से परे है बल्कि इसमें जानबूझ कर सरकार द्वारा आबादी की खाद्य सुरक्षा, खास तौर पर कोविड के दौरान, किए गए प्रयासों को नजरअंदाज कर दिया गया है। इस रिपोर्ट में भारत सरकार द्वारा सुपोषण एवं गरीब कल्याण के प्रयासों और अभियानों के बारे में कोई चर्चा तक नहीं की गयी है।

लिए जानबूझकर ऐसे प्रश्न पूछे गए जिससे भारत की छवि खराब हो, जैसे एक प्रश्न में लोगों से पूछा गया कि क्या कभी आपको यह चिंता हुई कि आपके पास इतने कम पैसे हैं कि आपको शायद भरपेट खाना ना मिले? इस तरह के प्रश्नों को पूछने से ही भारत की छवि धूमिल करने के प्रयास स्पष्ट होते हैं।

ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स 2022 की रिपोर्ट ना सिर्फ जमीनी हकीकत से परे है बल्कि इसमें जानबूझ कर सरकार द्वारा आबादी की खाद्य सुरक्षा, खास तौर पर कोविड के दौरान, किए गए प्रयासों को नजरअंदाज कर दिया गया है। इस रिपोर्ट में भारत सरकार द्वारा सुपोषण एवं गरीब कल्याण के प्रयासों और अभियानों के बारे में कोई चर्चा तक नहीं की गयी है। यह किसी के लिए भी सोचनेवाली बात हो सकती है कि करीब 65 लाख करोड़ रुपये की विश्व की पांचवीं सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था, जहां प्रति व्यक्ति आय 91 हजार रुपये से अधिक है और जिसका सकल घरेलू उत्पाद 32.4 फीसदी की दर से बढ़ रहा है, वहां के लोगों को भूखे रहना पड़ता है। क्या यह मानने वाली बात हो सकती है कि जिस देश की सरकार मनरेगा जैसी रोजगार गारंटी योजना पर 98 हजार करोड़ रुपये खर्च करती है, 80 करोड़ लोगों को पिछले दो साल से मुफ्त अनाज दे रही है और करीब 60 करोड़ किसानों को हर महीने दो हजार रुपये का भुगतान किया जा रहा हो, वहां इतनी बड़ी संख्या में लोग भूखे रह सकते हैं। तो फिर इस तरह की रिपोर्ट को जारी करने और फिर इस पर राजनीति करने का एक ही उद्देश्य नजर आता है और वह है भारत की छवि धूमिल करने की अंतरराष्ट्रीय साजिश।

भारत की विपक्षी पार्टियों ने इस मुद्दे का अभ्यास किये बगैर ही राजनीति शुरू कर दी एवं सरकार की आलोचना को महत्पूर्ण समझा। जबकि एक राष्ट्र के रूप में हमें यह सोचना था की अंतराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर भारत की बढ़ती शक्ति को कुछ राष्ट्र पचा नहीं पा रहे हैं, भारत की छवि को धूमिल करने के लिए किस तरह अलग-अलग प्रयास चलते रहते हैं। जब हम आजादी का अमृत महोत्सव मना रहे हैं तो ये भी हमारा दायित्व है कि विश्व भारत को सही रूप में जाने।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने भी हाल में कहा था कि भारत

क्या यह मानने वाली बात हो सकती है कि जिस देश की सरकार मनरेगा जैसी रोजगार गारंटी योजना पर 98 हजार करोड़ रुपये खर्च करती है, 80 करोड़ लोगों को पिछले दो साल से मुफ्त अनाज दे रही है और करीब 60 करोड़ किसानों को हर महीने दो हजार रुपये का भुगतान किया जा रहा हो, वहां इतनी बड़ी संख्या में लोग भूखे रह सकते हैं।

की छवि खराब करने के संगठित प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं। मोदी जी ने स्पष्ट कहा था की इन प्रयासों केवल राजनीति समझकर खारिज नहीं किया जाना चाहिए, विशेषकर तब तो बिल्कुल भी नहीं जब देश आजादी का अमृत महोत्सव मना रहा हो। प्रधानमंत्री जी की यह टिप्पणी बीते दो वर्षों के दौरान कतिपय पश्चिमी संस्थानों द्वारा भारत के उदार एवं लोकतांत्रिक परिवेश पर प्रश्नचिन्ह लगाने के संदर्भ से ही जुड़ी है। एक राष्ट्र के लिए चिंताजनक बात यह है की पूर्वाग्रह से तैयार की गई ऐसी रिपोर्टों को भारत में वामपंथी और तथाकथित बुद्धिजीवियों द्वारा हाथोंहाथ लिया जाता है। ऐसे लोगों का एजेंडा देश की जनता के सामने पूरी तरह उजागर हो चुका है। देश में इनके पास कोई काम नहीं बचा तो ये लोग विदेशी संस्थानों के साथ जुड़कर भारत को नीचा दिखाने में जुट गए हैं।

मोदी जी के नेतृत्व में आत्मनिर्भरता की ओर बढ़ता भारत विश्व की आर्थिक महाशक्ति बनने की ओर अग्रसर है सरकार द्वारा देश के हर वर्ग के लिए योजनाएं बनाई गईं और उन्हें धरातल पर भी उतारा जा रहा है किन्तु तथाकथित ताकतें विश्व पटल पर भारत के बढ़ते हुए मान सम्मान को पचा नहीं पा रहे हैं। इसलिए ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स जैसी भारत की आलोचना हेतु पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित कोई रिपोर्ट सार्वजनिक होती है।

(लेखक कॉर्पोरेट लॉयर हैं। ये उनके निजी विचार हैं।)

The Tyranny of Western Think-Tanks and India's Crusade Against Distorted Rankings: Are Biased Anti-India Reports the New Tool of 'War By Other Means' Against India?



Pathikrit Payne

In March 2020, Prime Minister Modi led NDA Government announced the disbursal of free additional rations, consisting of 5 kg of food grains and 1 kg of pulse each month to 80 crore beneficiaries, in what can be termed as the single largest food support program by any country in the last one century during a pandemic phase. More than thirty months down the line, the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan- Anna Yojana continues to provide additional food rations to a vast proportion of Indian populace.

During the peak of the Covid pandemic, when the whole world was being ravaged both economically and health wise by a devastating virus, with healthcare systems in most nations stretched beyond their limits, Modi Government withstood all kinds of unwarranted criticisms and pressure, resiliently worked with India's private sector to develop Covid vaccines and mass produced them at a

scale unimaginable for most countries. Eventually, the Modi government provided not only free rations but administered more than 200 crores of free Covid vaccines to the eligible population of India. Not just that, India also provided vaccines to more than 70 other countries, especially at a time when the so called Western developed nations, the self-proclaimed gatekeepers of global righteousness and humanity, were accused of vaccine hoarding.

No Starvation Death in India Even During the Devastating Covid Pandemic

During the whole phase of Covid pandemic, from early 2020 to till date, there has been no record of even a single incident of death in India due to starvation in spite of massive economic challenges ushered in by the pandemic.

There have been incidents of food riot in other parts of the world but not in India. In spite of the massive economic challenges that the entire world faced, including India, it is because of Modi Government's food policy and other reforms, that not only made India emerge stronger and more resilient economically, post the peak phase of the Covid pandemic, but also, Modi Government won most of the major

elections during that phase, a vindication that people of India, by and large, stood by his policies that helped India wither the violent storms of pandemic and had made sure that come what may, India's 140 crore population always had adequate food to eat.

Praise for India: From UN to IMF

India's massive economic resilience was applauded by the IMF in the recent past, wherein IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva termed India as a 'Bright Spot in a Dark Horizon'. Interestingly, a UN report published in 2020 stated that India had uplifted 271 million people out of multidimensional poverty in a decade and 415 million over a 15-year period.

The Absurdity of India's Rank in Global Hunger Index: What is the Hidden Agenda?

And yet, in the most obnoxious and brazen manner, as if with an ulterior motive, Global Hunger Index ranking published by a consortium of Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe ranked India 107 out of 121 countries. Both the cases of methodology used for such report compilation, as well as the ulterior motive of those organisations become suspect when one wonders as to how a country which has not witnessed any food riot or death due to starvation even during the peak of the Covid pandemic, a country which has by far one of the best public distribution systems for heavily subsidised foodgrains for the underprivileged, can be ranked so low. Does it not stink of an agenda?

One can only laugh and scoff at such reports when one finds that the makers of such reports have even put impoverished and war-torn countries like Sudan, Congo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, even a near bankrupt Venezuela, (which witnessed massive food riots in not-so-distant past) and even Myanmar and Sri Lanka above India. Myanmar has been torn badly by civil strife, while Sri Lanka is not just almost bankrupt but has been provided food and aid worth billions of dollars by none other than India especially at a time, when most of Western European countries, from where most of these reports originate, stayed away or looked the other way when Sri Lanka needed them the most.

Modi Government's DBT Scheme and Free Additional Rations During Pandemic Phase Have Been Game Changers: They Don't Need Endorsement from Snobbish Western Think-Tanks

The Narendra Modi government's dual scheme of providing additional free rations as well as Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme to place cash subsidies directly into the bank accounts of beneficiaries of government schemes, have been pathbreaking, and have delivered massive positive results. And yet, some armchair NGOs sitting in some distant glass houses with some rudimentary data collection mechanism in place, try to paint a picture about India which is far from the reality. One only needs to wonder if in a country whose GDP has gone up by around 75% in the last eight years, is it possible in the same very country to have deteriorating condition of hunger?

Problem with most of these Western NGOs is their heavy reliance on a cabal or coterie of anti-establishment activists in India to draw conclusions about India. Often their personal bias against the present regime overshadows their reporting on facts.

Also, heavily reliant on most occasions on secondary data and miniscule sample size, these Western think-tanks often draw most loathsome conclusions about India that most Indians can only laugh at. It would not be too far from the truth if anyone presumes that many such presumptuous Western think-tanks and academic organisations, still live in a time warp, and continue to imagine India as the impoverished and struggling state of 1960's. For many of them it is often hard to imagine this new India with a \$3.5 trillion economy powered by global scale industrial proficiency and nuclear capable armed forces, and which over the last two years not just provided vaccines but also foodgrain to many other countries to tide over the pandemic induced economic and health crisis. India's contribution in certain respects have been more profound than that of Western developed states and even select multilateral institutions.

A Hilarious Press Freedom Index Which Forgot to Press the Right Buttons

In the same league, the Press Freedom Index, published by Reporters Without Borders have ranked India at 150 out of 180 countries, with similar bias at display. What is most shocking and what can irk any rational mind, which is not swayed or awed by hype surrounding Western think-tanks, is the fact that India has

been ranked even below Hong Kong, a state which witnessed the imposition of National Security Law by China and where entrepreneur and founder of Apple Daily, Jimmy Lai, was jailed under the same law.

Contrast this with India, a nation with more than 80 news channels and more than 70,000 newspapers, and innumerable online sites and portals streaming analysis and perspectives on national affairs literally on a twenty-four-seven basis. Yet, surprisingly India finds ranked, in a similar pattern, much lower than many of the war-torn countries of Africa and even states ruled by dictatorial regimes.

For almost two decades now, a section of India's media has remained rabidly anti-Narendra Modi. Even when he became the Prime Minister of India through an unprecedented popular mandate, which no one in India could get in almost two decades before that, that very section of media continued with their biased reporting and never spared a moment to pin down the Modi Government, sometimes even by putting up false narratives.

Prime Minister Modi may often have been pained by the manner in which distortion of news was being constructed, by some, to harm his reform and developmental plans, yet he kept his stoic like composure and gave his replies only with performance.

The coterie or the cabal which did not want Narendra Modi Government to return to power in 2019, kept spreading different kinds of canards and seldom did course correction. They were given befitting reply by the people of the country

For almost two decades now, a section of India's media has remained rabidly anti-Narendra Modi. Even when he became the Prime Minister of India through an unprecedented popular mandate, which no one in India could get in almost two decades before that, that very section of media continued with their biased reporting and never spared a moment to pin down the Modi Government, sometimes even by putting up false narratives.

who returned PM Modi back to power with an even bigger mandate in 2019 Lok Sabha Elections. On several occasions India witnessed fake narratives fuelling protests and arson, even disrupting Modi Government's reform work.

Yet, in spite of all these, can anyone say if any major media house in India has been wrongly targeted or shut down or its editors been arrested for promoting anti-establishment views? If not, then on what ground can India, a nation with one of the largest news media industries in the world, can be rated so low in global rankings for press freedom, unless there are some ulterior motives behind the same?

Incidents where individuals have broken laws have been prosecuted under legal provisions, have been projected wrongly as persecution of journalists, even when their activities had little to do with journalism and more to do with promoting enmity among community

and violating foreign contributions laws such as FCRA. India is not a Laissez faire state. This must be remembered.

Will George Soros Decide the Quality of India Democracy?

Now, the most surprising pack of the lot is how India has been ranked in V-Dem's Democracy Report at 93rd spot. This is in spite of being one of the most vibrant democracies of the world, with perhaps the most efficient electoral system ever been put into action anywhere on earth.

No country with such a gargantuan population, and so much of diversity and interest groups, has ever witnessed such seamless transfer of power without any riot or stalemate as India has witnessed decade after decade, thanks to its democracy. Just because PM Narendra Modi led BJP is getting popular support of people, can India be termed an electoral autocracy? Is it a fair judgement or reflection of frustration of those whose relevance have gone down in India's electoral politics?

In spite of Capitol Hill riots in US post the presidential election result in January 2021, and brutal crackdown on truckers in Canada, these states can be termed as liberal democracies but not India. How fair is that?

V-Dem's mockery of India's vibrant democratic process, not only stinks of ill-intentions of the institutions that come up with such reports but also perhaps the latent disdain that some of their donors possibly harbour for India. Sweden based V-Dem is funded among others by US based George Soros whose anti-Indian views and extreme left-wing ideologies, are

well known, and therefore most of these reports should actually not be taken too seriously. In the garb of academic work, these reports are essentially propaganda material.

Is the Business of Ranking by Western NGOs Increasingly Becoming a Geopolitical Tool to Pin Down Nations Who Are Not of West's Liking?

In most of these reports published by NGOs and think-tanks, it seems that non-compliance with Western diktats results in a price that nations pay through low rankings. It would also not be surprising that beneath the veneer of academic work, some of these hyped-up think-tanks indulge in activism wherein they push their own agenda through such reports instead of giving holistic pictures of reality. It seems that often there are preconceived conclusions already drawn and then data is collected, and manipulated in a manner to endorse those conclusions.

Some in India view that socio-economic and socio-political rankings by Western think tanks and NGOs are increasingly becoming geopolitical tools to pin down nations who are not of West's liking anymore and who are now challenging the West's dominance or false sense of superiority.

With declining clout of Western institutions and economies, vis-à-vis the rising clout of Asian economies such as that of India's, there is perhaps a rising desperation to paint a picture of India, which may be far from the truth in macro sense of things, but are portrayed in a manner, and with hope that such reports would make the incumbent regime fall

out of favour with both global investors and electorates. Sadly, for the Western think tanks and NGOs, their predicament lies in the fact that neither of that has happened with India. With time PM Modi's popularity has only gone up and India's economic and social resilience has only become better. It is also to be remembered that just as BJP has won numerous elections since 2014, it has also lost quite a few state level elections, a reflection of India's electoral vibrancy and fairness of the process. Terming India an 'electoral autocracy' is an insult to every Prime Minister and every Chief Minister ever voted to power in India.

West is No More the Last Word on Every Issue

Gone are the days when Western Europe and US based NGOs would consider themselves as repository of global wisdom and gatekeeper of so-called righteousness and through their machinations, as well as activism in name of academic research, would try to pin down any regime which does not suit their version of what is right. Today's India does not need validation from the West's self-proclaimed intellectuals who for decades have developed a habit of sitting in their glass chambers and giving sermons on what is good for the developing world, which often serve their own purpose more than that of the developing states.

Part of the problem also lies with a section of India's intelligentsia including people from academia, media and West funded left leaning think-tanks, who for long thrived by denigrating India because that was perhaps the easiest way to get

validation in the West, and in turn an easy route to more funding. They opposed any developmental or industrial activity here by raking up other issues, and have often endorsed the trash that are churned out from many of the Western NGOs and think tanks, without even bothering to cross check as to whether what is being churned out makes any sense or not.

Anyone with even an iota of understanding about the vibrancy of India's democracy would only laugh out loud by these rankings where India has been ranked even below Nepal and Sri Lanka. However, India's left leaning academia, and a section of media, instead of questioning the authenticity of such reports, have often attempted to use these defunct and junk reports to question Narendra Modi Government. Reason being that much like those Western NGOs, the problem of these elements too is that neither democratically nor in terms of perception or performance, they are being able to counter Narendra Modi otherwise.

As India Grows Stronger, it May Face More Such Brickbats from Western NGOs

It has to be understood that with time, as India emerges more resilient economically and militarily, as new generations of Indians get more rooted to their cultural ethos even while setting new benchmarks in the realm of entrepreneurship and developmental work, as India sheds the remaining colonial imprints, becomes more resolute in its decision making in the realms of its economic, defence, foreign policy and socio-economic interests, as it

shows more of the mirror to the West and their double standards, as it increasingly defies the Western construct of issues and take an independent path of decision making, India would face more of these barrages of criticism which are aimed at nothing but creating fissures and discord within the Indian society and to negate India's actual strides in various fields.

It has been seen how a series of falsehoods, lies, and a web of misinformation were used by vested interests to vilify historic legislative amendments such as Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Article 370 and the farm laws. CAA was never about taking away anyone's citizenship but about hastening the process of providing Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Likewise, abrogation of Article 370 was a historic step to do away with a law which was always temporary in nature but which was used for decades to discriminate Dalit Hindus in the most deplorable manner by denying them the domicile rights in J&K.

In the same way, the farm reforms were aimed at improving income of farmers, reducing the clout of middlemen and bringing a holistic change in the manner in which farming is done in India that would have encouraged crop rotation and reduced massive ground water consumption that happens in rice and wheat cultivation.

In other words, both CAA and Article 370 abrogation were pro-minority amendments in their own respective ways, while the new farm laws were environment friendly that were aimed at conservation of ground water. But without

understanding even the basics of these or delving into the details, Western NGOs, think-tanks and media just latched on to the fake narratives that vested interests in India were constructing to counter Modi Government by hook or crook.

Since Prime Minister Modi came to power in 2014, there has not been a single instance where any minority community has been discriminated on any issue, be it while giving out state funded subsidies or vaccines or participation economic activities. Instead, efforts are being made to reform institutions so that underprivileged sections even among minority communities, especially Muslim community, can avail all opportunities that India's growth story offers. Yet, India's projection by vested interests has been deliberately painted negative and anti-minority, because it suits the narratives that West loves to hear about India.

Is India Facing 'War by Other Means'?

In today's world, craftily setting an anti-establishment narrative and amplifying the same with optimal use of social and conventional media to corner nationalist governments in developing countries have become a new tool for 'war by other means' for many in the West. One cannot ignore the fact that some of the better-known NGOs of the West are often accused of being nothing less than front organisations of some of the most powerful intelligence agencies of the world.

While it is not to say that all rankings are to be ignored, it is important to keep in mind that India has come a long way from the time when every ranking was

taken by face value without any questions asked. Now questions would be asked, methodologies would be questioned and if there are enough evidences of Western bias, those reports would be junked. It would not in any way impact India's growth story that runs on India's own inherent strengths and are not at the mercy of these rankings.

Let It Be Made Loud and Clear: Not Western NGOs But Governments Elected by Indians Would Set and Drive India's Agenda for Future

Prime Minister Modi is not just making India more resilient but has gradually shrunk the space for these foreign NGOs and think tanks, to set the narrative for India. Often those narratives were aimed at obstructing India's industrialisation process, promoting armed insurgency and civil unrest, and create an overall disdain

The coterie or the cabal which did not want Narendra Modi Government to return to power in 2019, kept spreading different kinds of canards and seldom did course correction. They were given befitting reply by the people of the country who returned PM Modi back to power with an even bigger mandate in 2019 Lok Sabha Elections. On several occasions India witnessed fake narratives fuelling protests and arson, even disrupting Modi Government's reform work.

for anything that is deeply rooted to India's culture, heritage and achievements.

In the last eight years India has been galvanised even more by a government at the centre, which has clamped down severely on those NGOs who bring in foreign funds for nefarious activities. India's policy reforms, industrialisation, development of resilient supply chains, promotion of indigenous technologies, wiping out of terror syndicates and their money laundering mechanisms, as well as creating opportunities for young Indians through newer policy initiatives have been going on in full steam resulting in India emerging as the fifth largest economy of the world with potential to become the third largest in terms of nominal GDP in the next half a decade. India is already the third largest economy of the world in terms of Purchasing Power Parity.

This is exactly what many in the West have a problem with. Most would have preferred India to vacillate somewhere in between a 'Strong' China and a 'Failed' Pakistan, internally in chaos but somehow stable otherwise. They just wanted India to remain a mere market and not emerge as a competitor for West and counter their power structure. To their horror, Modi's India is not just emerging more resilient but is making their worst nightmares come true by becoming a powerful state. It is perhaps this very reason why attempts are being made to pin down Modi Government with these manipulated rankings.

Western NGOs Must Do Course Correction to Remain Relevant

If the Western NGOs continue with

their agenda driven activities against India, then they only risk being totally ostracised in India. Barring a few foreign funded portals operating in India, (one of whose editors recently had to run for cover after their blatant, falsehood driven story against the ruling party was squarely exposed), none else care for what is written about India in some of the capital cities of Western European states or in US based tabloids.

India Must Take the Information Warfare More Seriously

While India must counter these agenda driven narratives, it is also imperative for India to promote its own media houses and push them towards addressing the global audience by taking India's views to the world. It is imperative for India to take this information war more seriously and make sure that the possible gameplan of these Western academies to create fissures within India through agenda driven narrative setting and deliberate dissemination of misinformation, are constantly nipped in the bud.

Recently, Professor Salvatore Babones of the University of Sydney stated "India's intellectual class is anti-India" and there's a class that is "anti-Modi and anti-BJP". That is both the tragedy and the battle that India has to fight against. Those who give grand lectures on what is defined as 'freedom', 'democracy' and 'rights' must themselves be accountable as well for what they write and profess.

(Pathikrit Payne is a New Delhi based Geopolitical Analyst and Senior Research Fellow, SPMRF. Views expressed are his own).

With Modi at helm, India Assumes Global Leadership



Biresh Chaudhuri

Introduction

In times of “global crisis,” economic experts and analysts are looking at India as a “bright spot,” given that the world has huge expectations from that country.

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, while addressing the three-day Global Investors’ Meet, ‘Invest Karnataka 2022’ on November 2, 2022 via video conference, said: “India received a record foreign investment of 84 billion dollars last year.”

Referring to the sense of global optimism towards India, he added, “These are uncertain times, still most of the nations are convinced about the fundamentals of the Indian economy. In this period of fragmentation, India is moving with the world and giving emphasis on working with the world.”¹

“We are continuously working towards cementing our fundamentals to further strengthen India’s economy with each passing day,”² he said. He added that

¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1872929>

² Ibid

building a new India is possible only with “bold reforms, big infrastructure and best talent.”

Listing out the measures taken and achievements made towards reforms, infrastructure, and talent, Modi said, “Only with a focus on investment and human capital, progress can be achieved.”³

UN praises Modi & India for its economic and foreign policies

At this year’s UN General Assembly (UNGA) session held between September 21 and 23 in New York, several developing and developed nations praised India for its economic and foreign policies. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and French President Emmanuel Macron referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s India in positive light,

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres acknowledged the key role India can play in making the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) successful, given the fact that it is home to the largest population of youth in history.

Countries like France, Jamaica and Portugal also praised India. While referring to Prime Minister Modi’s remark

³ PTI, The Economic Times, World has huge expectations from India at this time of “global crisis,” says PM Modi, 2 November 2022. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/new-india-focusing-on-bold-reforms-big-infra-best-talent-pm-modi/articleshow/95247041.cms>

to Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron said Modi, was right about the time not being right for war.

“It is not for revenge against the West, or for opposing the West against the East. It is a collective time for our sovereign (and) equal states to cope together with the challenges we face,” Macron said in reference to the conversation that Modi and Putin had on the sidelines of the recently held Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit-level meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov “explicitly” backed India for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC) an hour after he met his Indian counterpart, Dr. S. Jaishankar.

Addressing the UNGA, Lavrov said Moscow sees India as a “key international actor” and a “worthy candidate for permanent membership within the Council.”

Jamaican Foreign Minister Kamina J Smith thanked India for its assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Smith said Kingston is grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s and his government and its people for the vaccines sent during the pandemic. She also termed India a reliable partner whose assistance was critical to Jamaica’s pandemic response

Guyanese Foreign Minister Hugh Hilton Todd said, “Small countries like Guyana would have benefitted immensely from India’s growth trajectory as it has always been an economy that focuses on human development, putting humans

ahead of any other form of development.”⁴ Bhutan and Nepal also expressed gratitude to India for supplying COVID-19 vaccines under the ‘Vaccine Maitri’ initiative, wherein, more than 250 million COVID-19 vaccine doses were supplied to over 100 countries, including nearly 95 lakh doses to Nepal and 5.5 lakh doses to Bhutan. Bhutan’s Foreign Minister Lyonpo Tandi Dorji said more than 90 percent of his country’s population is fully vaccinated. He said this was possible due to the heart-warming goodwill of friends and partners, including India. Nepal’s Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal expressed appreciation for the vaccines provided by India to his country.⁵

IMF praises the Indian Economy’s performance during pandemic

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has praised the performance of India’s economy during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and underlined the effectiveness of its structural reforms in recent years. In a meeting with India’s Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Washington D.C., IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva lauded

4 ANI, The Economic Times, From Ukraine to Russia to France, PM Modi’s India wins global praise at UNGA, 26 September 2022. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/from-ukraine-to-russia-to-france-pm-modis-india-wins-global-praise-at-unga/article-show/94444115.cms>

5 AIR News, PM Narendra Modi’s economic and foreign policy attracts global praise at UNGA session, 28 September 2022. <https://newsonair.com/2022/09/28/pm-narendra-modis-economic-and-foreign-policy-attracts-global-praise-at-unga-session/>

India's well-targeted policy mix, saying that it has helped the economy remain resilient.

Georgieva further said India remains the fastest-growing country across the globe despite COVID-19 challenges. She also praised India for its contribution towards enhancing the IMF's capacity development activities.

Explaining India's approach, Sitharaman mentioned that an accommodative fiscal stance was accompanied by major structural reforms, including introduction of the Bankruptcy Code and providing targeted help to the MSME sector and other vulnerable sectors. Georgieva also praised India's vaccination programme and the help it had extended to her neighbours and other vulnerable economies.⁶

Upon being asked by a journalist to comment on her expectations from India's G20 presidency next year, Georgieva said, "India deserves to be called a bright spot on this otherwise darkening horizon because it has been a fast growing economy even during these difficult times. But most importantly, this growth is underpinned by structural reforms, among them the remarkable success in digitalisation in India from digital ID to providing all services and support on the basis of digital access. This has been indeed a huge factor for India's success. And the country is now stepping into taking the lead on G20 from that position of strength, which makes me strongly believe that we would see India

leaving a mark on the world for years to come during next year's Presidency."⁷

Paolo Mauro, IMF India's Deputy Director for Fiscal Affairs too praised India's digital cash transfer scheme and several other social welfare programs and asserted that there is a lot to learn from India.

Underlining the sheer size of the country, Mauro said it is a "logistical marvel" that several programs aimed at assisting low-income people reach hundreds of millions of people. He also highlighted that there are various welfare programs specially meant for women, the elderly, and farmers.⁸

This praise for India's economic growth comes as the country continues to maintain its position as the fastest-growing economy in the world despite lowered GDP growth projections.

"The outlook for India is for growth of 6.8 percent in 2022, a 0.6 percentage point downgrade since the July forecast, indicating a weaker-than-expected outturn in the second quarter (April-June) and more subdued external demand," the latest IMF World Economic Outlook report states.

The IMF has projected a 7.4 percent GDP growth for India in its July 2022

7 <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/10/13/tr101322-transcript-of-md-press-briefing-annual-meetings>

8 Reena Bhardwaj, "A bright spot in a dark horizon..." IMF Managing Director's praise for India, ANI, 13 October 2022.

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/us/a-bright-spot-in-a-dark-horizon-imf-managing-directors-praise-for-india20221013215353/>

6 ANI, Business Standard, IMF praises India's resilient economy, highlights structural reforms taken, 19 April 2022.

report. The IMF's latest GDP growth projection for India is lower than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 7 percent for Fiscal 2022-23.⁹

World Bank praises Modi Government's approach to stimulate local production to reduce global dependency

India adopted a whole-of-government approach to stimulate local production that helped reduce unit prices and the dependency on global supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. No compromises were made on quality in the largest procurement exercise conducted by the government, according to a World Bank report.¹⁰

A World Bank discussion paper titled "India COVID-19 Procurement: Challenges, Innovations and Lessons", released in July 2022, mentioned the supply chain challenges encountered by India during the pandemic and its innovative responses. It takes a close look at the initiatives taken by the Centre to ensure the sustained supply of essential medical commodities during the critical initial phase of the pandemic, including efforts to develop the local market, following a whole-of-government approach. It lists certain global experiences and summarises the procurement innovations undertaken by the Centre, including its

9 Ibid.

10 PTI, World Bank praises Modi govt's approach to stimulate local production to reduce global dependency during pandemic, Zee Business, 31 August, 2022. <https://www.zeebiz.com/india/news-world-bank-praises-modi-govts-approach-to-stimulate-local-production-to-reduce-global-dependency-during-pandemic-196600>

efforts to develop the domestic market for essential COVID commodities and life-saving equipment.

A unique feature in India was the private sector's active role in testing, contributing to nearly 50 percent of laboratories as well as venture capital, raising additional resources to support domestic manufacturing of COVID commodities and develop IT-supported innovations for tele-consultation and intensive care unit (ICU) management, the paper highlighted. Severe global supply chain constraints of essential COVID commodities and an unprecedented demand for life-saving equipment led to an entirely supplier-driven market and a huge variation in prices. The challenges faced by India included an extremely limited domestic production capacity of essential medical equipment, inadequate market intelligence, a wide variation in the intensity of the pandemic across states, price and supply constraints due to an increased demand across the globe and no prior experience of handling a pandemic of this size.

To address this concern, the government took responsibility for centralised procurement to support the states. Flexibility under the existing legal frameworks and budgets allowed fast-track procurement, while empowered groups helped accelerate decision making. The country also imposed export restrictions early and encouraged, facilitated and funded the private sector to support domestic manufacturing and the creation of laboratory facilities. This enabled accelerated imports to begin with and the development of local markets

later on.¹¹

The Central Procurement Division (CPD) and the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) division of the Ministry of Health and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) led India's initial efforts to sustain supply chains, supported by HLL Lifecare Limited as a procurement agent. While the CPD primarily focused on the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), goggles and N95 masks to safeguard the health staff, the ICMR rapidly ramped up the testing infrastructure in partnership with the private sector and established a validation mechanism to scale up the availability of COVID testing supplies, the report said.

Long-term implications of market development in globalised supply chains need carefully calibrated export controls to balance domestic needs with global market opportunities for local manufacturers.¹²

UNDP Report Lauds Aspirational Districts Programme

The India unit of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

11 NV Ramana Gandham Et al. India Covid 19 Procurement Challenges, Innovations and Lessons, Discussion Paper, World Cup, December 2021

12 PTI, World Bank praises Modi govt's approach to stimulate local production to reduce global dependency during pandemic, Zee Business, 31 August, 2022. <https://www.zeebiz.com/india/news-world-bank-praises-modi-govts-approach-to-stimulate-local-production-to-reduce-global-dependency-during-pandemic-196600>

“It is not for revenge against the West, or for opposing the West against the East. It is a collective time for our sovereign (and) equal states to cope together with the challenges we face,” Macron said in reference to the conversation that Modi and Putin had on the sidelines of the recently held Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit-level meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

released an independent appraisal report on the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) on June 11, 2021.¹³ This report lauded the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) as ‘a very successful model of local area development’ that ‘should serve as a best practice for several other countries where regional disparities in development status persist for many reasons’. The report was handed over by Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India to Dr Rajiv Kumar and Mr. Amitabh Kant, Vice Chairman and CEO respectively of NITI Aayog. It included a comparison of Aspirational Districts (ADs) with non-aspirational districts and indicated that ADs have outperformed

13 The Aspirational Districts Programme was launched by the Prime Minister in January 2018 as a part of the government's effort to raise the living standards of its citizens and ensure inclusive growth for all, ‘Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas’

non-ADs by substantial margins, given the increased focus on real-time data, convergence across government programmes and schemes, and receiving the benefits of the Aspirational Districts Programme. Faster development in the ADs was all the more creditable given the fact that to start with, most of them were difficult and remotely located backward districts.¹⁴

The report said due to the concerted efforts made under the ADP, previously neglected districts, including those in remote locations and those affected by Left Wing Extremism, 'have experienced more growth and development in the last three years than ever before'. Notwithstanding some speed bumps in its journey, the APD 'has been immensely successful in propelling development among the backward districts'. The UNDP analysis across five key sectors of the ADP—health and nutrition; education; agriculture and water resources; basic infrastructure; and skill development and financial inclusion—found that the programme has acted as a catalyst for expediting development in these districts. According to the report, while health and nutrition, education, and to a certain extent, agriculture and water resources, have registered massive improvements, the other indicators despite making significant strides offer scope for further strengthening. It also recognised the unique collaborative nature of the programme to bring all stakeholders, including state and local governments, development partners, and

citizens, together to achieve goals and targets. It is this key pillar that enabled district commissioners 'to build a strong COVID-19 response and cope with the challenges of the pandemic by working in close coordination' with the panchayats, faith and community leaders and development partners in their respective districts.¹⁵

The report also acknowledged the remarkable commitment shown by the political leadership of the country, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, towards the programme. Ever since the launch of the programme in 2018, the Prime Minister has constantly 'motivated and enthused district collectors to deliver their best at the field level'.

Overall, the report appreciated the positive impact of the programme and stressed on the need to ensure that 'the focus on development is encouraged further and momentum gained so far in expediting growth is maintained. Based on the findings of the evaluation, it is recommended that the success of the programme be scaled up and replicated for other sectors and districts.'¹⁶

The Success of Jal Jeewan Mission receives global recognition

Launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission (henceforth JJM), is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by

14 <https://www.undp.org/india/press-releases/undp-india-releases-appraisal-report-aspirational-districts-programme>

15 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1726315#:~:text=In%20an%20independent%20appraisal%20report,where%20regional%20disparities%20in%20development>

16 Ibid

2024 to all households in rural India. This mission has received endorsement from the global scientific community as well as leading water experts, notably Nobel Laureate and renowned development economist, Professor Michael Robert Kremer. He noted that the JJM was not just making water available in rural households, but it also ensured that water supplied was of a prescribed quality.¹⁷

A significant study-led by Professor Kremer and his team (Akanksha Saletore, Witold Więcek and Arthur Baker) found that the JJM can save the lives of 1.36 lakh children under the age of five every year. This implies that efforts to reach as many people as possible with safe water are likely to have very large net benefits.¹⁸ This is mentioned in a paper titled 'Potential Reduction in Child Mortality through Expanding Access to Safe Drinking Water in India'.

They also said that this will require that water delivered through JJM is free from microbiological contamination, for which numerous cost-effective measures like chlorine dispensers, deworming, etc., were suggested.¹⁹

The legitimacy provided to the Jal Jeevan Mission by one of the world's top most experts is indeed very significant. With the progress of JJM, India has become

17 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1841315>

18 <https://www.sarkaritel.com/jal-jeevan-mission-will-prevent-around-1-36-lakh-under-5-deaths-per-year/>

19 <https://news-waali.com/research-led-by-nobel-laureate-kremer-shows-indias-jal-jeevan-mission-could-save-1-36-lakh-lives-of-under-5s-the-tribune-india-news-waali/>

a shining example for its impactful WASH policies that are being driven on such a large scale. Upon having received global endorsement, India is now certainly in a position to transfer/make available the knowledge/experience to other countries, especially in South Asia and Africa.

Indian democracy in good health under Modi government: Sydney academic

In an article written for The Australia Today, Salvatore Babones, Associate Professor at the University of Sydney, has said that all objective indicators show that Indian democracy is in good health and in much better shape than other peer countries with similar levels of education and income. He said that the world should be looking at India as a model, not of democratic backsliding, but of democratic success.

“At 75 years old, it might reasonably be said that Indian democracy is healthier than ever.”²⁰

Babones said that some recent international evaluations are “suffused with wanton speculation, misleading statistics and uncritical reproductions of activist accusations” against the BJP-led government, often criticisms that are levelled at it by its domestic political opponents. These are then amplified and broadcast by academics, international organisations and overseas Indian intellectuals.”

20 <https://theprint.in/world/indian-democracy-in-good-health-under-modi-government-data-presented-by-international-critics-shows-signs-of-deception-sydney-based-academic/1126462/>

The article notes that one example of data misrepresentation is the claim that in 2021, more journalists were killed in India than in any other country outside China.

“Even taking the underlying data at face value, they show that India’s rate of deadly violence against journalists was 3.5 per billion people. The rate for the rest of the world outside China was 6.3 per billion people. A fair appraisal would conclude that journalists are actually safer in India than in the rest of the world. But by failing to adjust for India’s extraordinarily large population (and accordingly a large number of journalists), the data are made to tell a different story.” It says that another misrepresentation is the claim that the BJP uses sedition laws to silence critics.

“When carefully examined, the data adduced in support of this claim actually show no trend in the filing of sedition accusations. Moreover, those who make the claim routinely fail to note that in the Indian justice system; virtually anyone can file a First Indication (Information) Report for sedition (or any other crime). Thus of the thousands of sedition accusations filed during the period of the BJP government, very few have actually resulted in prosecution (there are no data on prosecutions under the previous Congress-led government).”

“The organisations doing democracy rankings have a responsibility to be critical in their use of evidence and sceptical of highly politicised views. However, these organisations have themselves become politicised and are losing the credibility that made them prestigious in the first

place by justifying these views.”²¹

Conclusion

Whatever individual Indians may think of Shri Narendra Modi and the BJP government, all research and analysis done at the global level shows Indian democracy to be a cut above its peer countries and she seems to have solved the problem of how to run a liberal democracy in a developing country.

Driven by the motto of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas’, Shri Narendra Modi has ushered in a paradigm shift in governance that has led to inclusive, development-oriented and corruption-free governance. The Prime Minister has worked with speed and scale to realise the aim of ‘Antyodaya’, or ensuring last-mile delivery of schemes and services.

Leading international experts have noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has been eliminating poverty at a record pace. This is attributed to a series of pro-poor decisions taken by the Centre. Undoubtedly therefore, it can be said that the BJP Government’s policy initiatives driven by the charisma of Shri Narendra Modi, has realised the true potential and role of the world’s largest democracy.

(The author is Senior Research Associate, SPMRF)

²¹ Salvatore Babones, ‘Indian intellectuals’ poisoning its reputation globally in pursuit of hate towards Modi government, The Australia Today, 1 November 2022. <https://www.theaustraliatoday.com.au/indian-intellectuals-poisoning-its-reputation-globally-in-pursuit-of-hate-towards-modi-government/>

बदलता भारतवर्ष : साकार होते सपनों के हस्ताक्षर

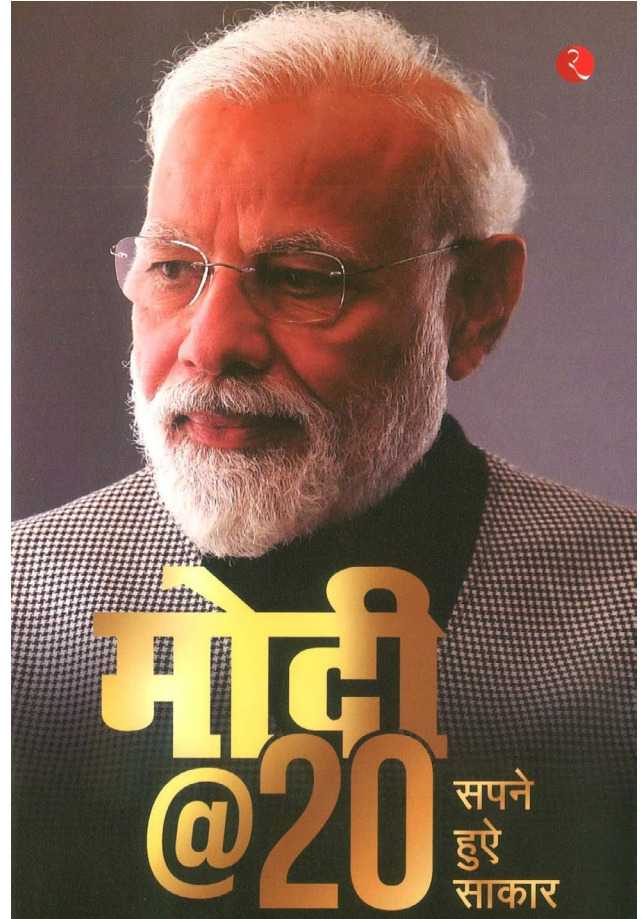


शैलेन्द्र कुमार शुक्ला

“आ

खिर देश के अलग अलग वर्गों, क्षेत्रों, जनसांख्यिकियों और उम्र के लोगों के बीच मोदी की इस निरंतर जन लोकप्रियता के क्या कारण हो सकते हैं ? क्या यह ‘गुजरात मॉडल’ है ; जो अच्छाई का पर्याय बन गया है और बाद में राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर दोहराया गया शासन उनकी सफलता की व्याख्या करता है ? जटिल शासन चुनौतियों का सामना करते समय क्या यह मोदी की काम करके दिखाने की जानी मानी क्षमता है, जो उन्हें सबसे अलग बनाती है ? क्या ये जन भागीदारी और सहभागी शासन पर उनका जोर है, जो न सिर्फ उन्हें लोगों से जोड़ता है बल्कि अन्य राजनेताओं से अलग बनाता है ? क्या मोदी की सफलता की व्याख्या ‘सबका साथ सबका विकास’ से की जा सकती है, जिसने भारत में शासन के पैमाने को पूरी तरह से बदल दिया है और पहली बार जनता और केंद्र सरकार के बीच विश्वास पैदा किया?

भारतीय राजनीति के वर्तमान परिदृश्य को भारतीयता के सूत्र से जोड़कर संचालित करने वाले यशस्वी प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के राजनीतिक सफर और दूरदृष्टि को परिभाषित करने वाली पुस्तक ‘मोदी @ 20 : सपने हुए साकार’ उपर्युक्त सभी प्रश्नों और उन तमाम निर्मूल आक्षेपों को सिरे से खारिज करते हुए मोदी जी के संघर्ष और कार्यकुशलता को उसकी पूरी वस्तुनिष्ठता और स्पष्टता से पाठकों के सामने रखती है। यह पुस्तक मोदी जी के 7 अक्तूबर, 2001 से 7 अक्तूबर, 2021 तक के बीस वर्षों के भारतीय राजनीति में दो दशकों



पुस्तक का नाम-

मोदी @ 20: सपने हुए साकार

मूल्य: 895 रुपये

के नेतृत्वशाली व्यक्तित्व की विलक्षणता को अपने में समोए है। यह पुस्तक पांच भागों और इक्कीस अध्यायों में विभक्त है, जो मोदी जी की कार्यशैली के आधार को भी अभिव्यक्त करती है। यहाँ आधार से संबंध उनकी मौलिक कार्यप्रणाली से है। ये मौलिकता ही उन्हें पिछले सभी प्रधानमंत्रियों से विशेष और विरल बनाती है। यह विरलता पिछले पचास

भारतीय राजनीति के वर्तमान परिदृश्य को भारतीयता के सूत्र से जोड़कर संचालित करने वाले यशस्वी प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के राजनीतिक सफर और दूरदृष्टि को परिभाषित करने वाली पुस्तक 'मोदी @ 20 : सपने हुए साकार' उपर्युक्त सभी प्रश्नों और उन तमाम निर्मूल आक्षेपों को सिरे से खारिज करते हुए मोदी जी के संघर्ष और कार्यकुशलता को उसकी पूरी वस्तुनिष्ठता और स्पष्टता से पाठकों के सामने रखती है।

वर्षों के नायकों में सबसे विशिष्ट है।

पुस्तक की प्रस्तावना स्वर कोकिला भारत रत्न लता मंगेशकर जी ने लिखी है, जो मोदी जी की सहजता और भावुकता का परिचायक है। लता जी द्वारा मोदी जी के संबंध में कहा गया यह कथन कि, “उनके लक्ष्य बड़े हैं; जो कि भारत के लोगों के लिए कुछ करने के लिए हैं। उनकी अभिलाषा इस तथ्य में निहित है कि वह हमारे देश के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के विकास की कहानी को अर्थपूर्ण बनाना चाहते हैं।” भारतीय जनमानस के प्रति, उसकी प्रगति और विकास के प्रति मोदी जी की प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाता है। अपनी जनता के विकास की कहानी को अर्थपूर्ण बनाने का स्वप्न उनकी संकल्प शक्ति का द्योतक है। यह स्वप्न महज कोरा स्वप्न नहीं है, अपितु स्वप्न के संकल्प में परिवर्तित व्यावहारिकता की पृष्ठभूमि भी है।

ये पृष्ठभूमि ही है जो सपनों को साकार बनाने के लिए संकल्पित करती है। इस पुस्तक के केंद्र में है जनता, जो केंद्र है एकता और विकास की राजनीति का, जन-धन योजना द्वारा देश की अर्थव्यवस्था से उसे जोड़ने और उसकी महत्ता को दिखाते हुए शासन की आदर्शात्मक स्थिति में उसके योगदान को भारत के विश्व बंधुत्व में सहायक भूमिका निभाने के लिए प्रेरित करने का। इस पुस्तक की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता मोदी जी द्वारा दो दशकों में भारतीय राजनीति को समाज केंद्रित बनाने की पूरी यात्रा को स्पष्टता से उल्लिखित करना। 'मोदी @ 20 : सपने हुए साकार' पुस्तक – विश्लेषणात्मक

व अकादमिक, दोनों शैलियों का संग्रह है। विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के योगदानकर्ताओं द्वारा साझा किए गए व्यक्तिगत आलेखों से युक्त है। इन आलेखों में राजनीति (अमित शाह), खेल (पीवी सिंधु), कला (अनुपम खेर), अर्थशास्त्र (अरविंद पनगढ़िया), लोकप्रिय लेखक (अमीश त्रिपाठी और सुधा मूर्ति), प्रौद्योगिकी (नंदन नीलेकणी), डेटा विज्ञान (शनिका रवि), चुनाव विज्ञान (प्रदीप गुप्ता), स्वास्थ्य (डॉ. देवी शेटी), निजी उद्यम (उदय कोटक), आध्यात्मिकता (सद्गुरु), राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा (अजीत डोभाल) और कूटनीति (डॉ. एस. जयशंकर) शामिल हैं। ये सभी विभूतियाँ अपने-अपने क्षेत्र के हस्ताक्षर हैं।

यदि हम देखें तो इसके पाँचों भाग अपने शीर्षकानुसार मोदी जी के कार्य करने के तरीकों और भारतीय मानस की चिति के अंतर्संबंधों को चित्रित करते हुए इस पूरी दो दशक की विकास यात्रा का बिंब पाठकों के समक्ष उपस्थित करते हैं। इस विकास यात्रा में बढ़ते हुए हर कदम की अपनी महत्ता है और इस यात्रा को अनुभूत करने के लिए गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में दायित्व के निर्वहन के रूप में ली गई शपथ से लेकर 2019 में पुनः भारत के प्रधानमंत्री के रूप ली गई शपथ के बीच के पूरे कालखंड को समझना जरूरी है। इस पूरे कालखंड को समझने की अर्हता पाठक को विपक्षियों द्वारा बनाए गए पूर्वाग्रह से मुक्त कर इस स्वस्थ और स्वच्छ कार्यपद्धति को समझने के लिए जरूरी है। इसमें भी सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण है शपथ के रूप में कार्यभार को दायित्व के रूप में ग्रहण करना। ये दायित्वबोध भारत के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति से उनके आत्मिक संबंध की सूत्रबद्धता को भी दिखाता है। पुस्तक में मोदी जी को युवाओं के निर्विवादित आइकन के रूप में वर्णित करना कोई अतिशयोक्ति नहीं है। क्योंकि युवाओं की मनःस्थिति उन्हें युवा बनाए रखने के लिए बहुत आवश्यक है। यह सच है कि “वह युवा नहीं हैं। वह खेल-कूद, सिनेमा, लोकप्रिय संस्कृति अथवा ऐसे किसी भी अन्य कार्यक्षेत्र से नहीं आते जो कि पारंपरिक रूप से युवाओं को आकर्षित करते हैं।” लेकिन जो संकल्प शक्ति और दृढ़निश्चय युवाओं को आगे बढ़ने और हार न मानने के लिए प्रेरित करती है, वह शक्ति और निष्ठा उनमें पर्याप्त है और जब वर्ष 2017 के स्वतंत्रता दिवस लाल किले की प्राचीर से उन्होंने कहा था कि, “हमें यह ‘चलता है’ का रवैया छोड़ना होगा। हमें ‘बदल

सकता है' के बारे में सोचना होगा। हमें एक राष्ट्र के तौर पर यही रवैया मदद करेगा। हमारे अंदर यह विश्वास होना चाहिए कि त्याग और कड़ी मेहनत और कुछ करने के संकल्प से हमें आवश्यक संसाधन मिलेंगे और उस कार्य को करने की क्षमता मिलेगी, फिर एक बड़ी तब्दीली आएगी और हमारा संकल्प एक उपलब्धि में बदल जाएगा।” तब पहली बार इस देश का युवा प्रधानमंत्री से सीधे तौर पर जुड़ता है और ऐसा नहीं है कि यह प्रोत्साहन उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद दिया, ये कार्य जब वह गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री थे तब भी व्यापार के लिए प्रसिद्ध गुजरात को खेल के नजदीक लाने और देश के खेल के प्रति अपने नकारात्मक पक्ष को छोड़कर आगे आकर खिलाड़ियों के साथ तादात्म्य स्थापित करने का आग्रह किया।

इसके साथ ही तकनीक के क्षेत्र में भी युवाओं की भूमिका को समझा और व्यापक संसाधन तथा आत्मविश्वास दिखाया जिसका परिणाम हम यू. पी. आई. के रूप में देख सकते हैं, “पूरी तरह से घरेलू तौर पर बनाया यू. पी. आई., एक डिजिटल भुगतान पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र के रूप में इतना अच्छा है कि गूगल ने भी अमेरिकी फेड्रल रिजर्व को इसी की तर्ज पर डिजिटल भुगतान के लिए एक समान पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र विकसित करने की सिफारिश की है।” साथ ही जो मोदी जी के लिए सबसे महत्वपूर्ण कार्य है, वह है महिलाओं की भागीदारी को सुनिश्चित करना, जिसकी अनिवार्यता भ्रूण

हत्या को रोकने से लेकर ‘बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ’ के नारे को व्यवहारिकता तक पहुंचाने से है, “यह चार शब्द एक चौंका देने वाला प्रभाव पैदा करने के लिए बनाए गए हैं और हमारे देश में अद्वितीय विकास की अगली लहर को खोलने की क्षमता रखते हैं।” यदि देखा जाए तो इस कार्य की आधारशिला भी मोदी जी अपने मुख्यमंत्री काल के समय ही रख चुके थे जो ‘पंचामृत’ की अवधारणा से स्पष्ट है।

हमारे समाज में विमर्श के रूप में महिलाओं के अधिकारों को लेकर 1980 से ही आंदोलन चल रहे हैं लेकिन ये आंदोलन किसी नतीजे तक नहीं, इसका कारण साहस का न होना है किंतु मोदी जी एक निडर नेता होने के साथ ही परंपरा और रूढ़ि में अंतर जानते हैं और समाज एक साथ मिलकर चलने, काम करने की धारणा में विश्वास रखते हैं, तभी तो ‘सबका साथ, सबका विकास और सबका विश्वास’ नारा सफल हुआ। ये मात्र नारा नहीं है, ये वह बीज मंत्र जो भारत को एकसूत्रता में बांधने में सहायक है, जिसकी वजह से मोदी जी स्वयं एक व्यक्ति न होकर एक विचार के रूप में पूरे की भारत चेतना बन गए हैं। यह पुस्तक मोदी जी द्वारा इन दो दशकों में देखे और साकार किए गए सपनों का संग्रह है, वह चाहे जनता को स्वच्छता के प्रति जागरूक करना हो या बैंक से जोड़ना, कश्मीर को पृथकतावादी विचार से मुक्त करना हो या नई शिक्षा नीति और तकनीकी विकास द्वारा भारतीय पहचान को कायम करना हो, इससे आगे वैश्विक स्तर पर भारत को उसके वास्तविक परिचय के साथ रखना हो, जिसमें चाहे अध्यात्मिकता के स्तर पर हो या विज्ञान अथवा तकनीक के स्तर पर भारत मोदी जी के नेतृत्व में वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् के भाव को लेकर नया कीर्तिमान स्थापित कर रहा है। इसके अतिरिक्त पुस्तक का किसी अन्य रूप में आना पाठक के लिए इतना शिक्षाप्रद नहीं हो सकता था जितना अब, क्योंकि ये सभी आलेख मोदी जी को करीब से जानने वाले अथवा उनके साथ काम करने वाले लोगों ने लिखे हैं, जिससे सम्पूर्ण भारतवासी की आंखों से देखे गए सपनों का मोदी जी द्वारा साकार होने का बिंब पाठकों के लिए प्रेरणाप्रद रहेगा।

पुस्तक की प्रस्तावना स्वर कोकिला भारत रत्न लता मंगेशकर जी ने लिखी है, जो मोदी जी की सहजता और भावुकता का परिचायक है। लता जी द्वारा मोदी जी के संबंध में कहा गया यह कथन कि, “उनके लक्ष्य बड़े हैं; जो कि भारत के लोगों के लिए कुछ करने के लिए हैं। उनकी अभिलाषा इस तथ्य में निहित है कि वह हमारे देश के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के विकास की कहानी को अर्थपूर्ण बनाना चाहते हैं।”

(लेखक श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी शोध अधिष्ठान में रिसर्च एसोशिएट है)

Centenary Tribute to Shri K.R. Malani Release of “K.R. Malkani & The Motherland” by Shri Arif Mohammad Khan, Hon’ble Governor of Kerala at New Delhi on 19 November 2022



Special discussion on Contribution of Janajatiya Samaj in India’s Freedom Movement & Nation Building and Release of a Special booklet on Janajatiya Heroes & Warriors! at Kolkata, West Bengal on 14 November 2022



Public Talk on “How International Democracy Ratings Misrepresent India” by Prof. Salvatore Babones (Associate Professor at the University of Sydney & Author “India’s democracy rankings “Indian Democracy at 75: Who Are the Barbarians at the Gate”) at New Delhi on 09 November 2022



Discussion on “Forgotten Kashmir: The Other Side of the Line of Control” on 28 October 2022



Discussion on “State of Democracy in India – Narrative” on 12 October 2022



“अंत्योदय: सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक और आर्थिक विकास का सर्वस्पर्शी विचार” विषय पर परिचर्चा 25 सितम्बर 2022





**डॉ. श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी
रिसर्च फाउंडेशन**

अंत्योदय: सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक और आर्थिक विकास का सर्वस्पर्शी विचार

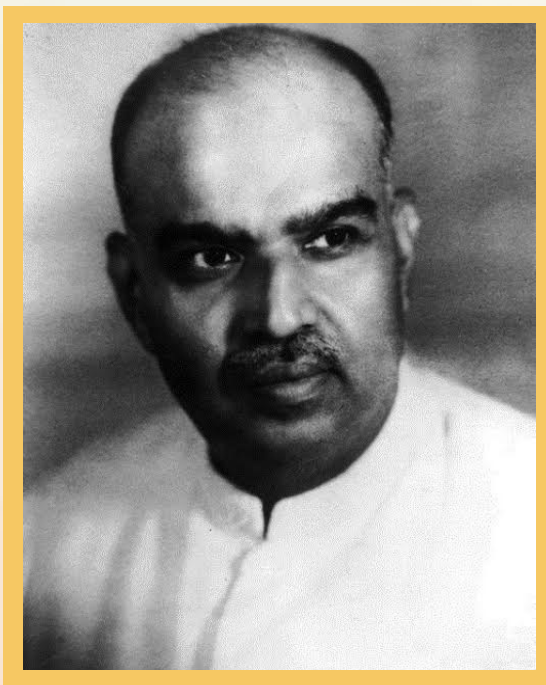
 SPMRF Host	 Shiwan... Co-host	 हर्ष वर्धन ... Speaker	 Dr. Anir... Speaker	 Amar Si... Listener	 Sajjan Sh... Listener	 Arvind M... Listener	 Rudra Pra... Listener
 Manoj Dixit Speaker	 KK Upadh... Speaker	 Arun H... Requested	 Sunil Kum... Requested	 Alok A... Listener	 Talks w... Listener	 Sajjan Sh... Listener	 Thakur Ra... Listener

Dr Anirban Ganguly (Director, SPMRF) Addressed on “Modi@20: Dreams Meet Delivery” at Howrah, West Bengal on 17 September 2022



Dr Anirban Ganguly (Director, SPMRF) addressed a young elected leaders, policy experts, academics from 6 countries organised by Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) at Parliament, New Delhi on 06 September 2022





“Freedom consists not only in the absence of restraint but also in the presence of opportunity. Liberty is not a single and simple conception. It has four elements – national, political, personal and economic. The man who is fully free is one who lives in a country which is independent; in a state which is democratic; in a society where laws are equal and restrictions at a minimum; in an economic system in which national interests are protected and the citizen has the scope of secure livelihood, an assured comfort and full opportunity to rise by merit.

-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Patna University Convocation
27th November 1937

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