



Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
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Why This Budget Ensures
India's Growth, Stability
and Entrepreneurial
Dynamism in the Long Run
Pathikrit Payne

भारत के स्वास्थ्य को एक
नई दिशा देगा बजट
प्रो. कौशल किशोर मिश्र

Budget 2024-25: Strategic
Investments and Fiscal
Discipline for a sustainable
development

Alok Virendra Tiwari

बजट 2024 : आत्मनिर्भरता और
स्थिर विकास की ओर कृषि
ओम प्रकाश सिंह





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EVENTS@SPMRF



Dr. Anirban Ganguly

From Deep-Rooting Democracy to Transforming Sanitation – the many dimensions of an action oriented governance

By the time voting concluded in the third and final phase of the Jammu & Kashmir assembly elections, the voter turnout was 65 per cent plus. The entire exercise was peaceful and was a resounding response to naysayers and pessimists, both national as well as international. The people of J&K had clearly 'chosen democracy over boycott', rejecting an anti-democratic approach that had been normalized by separatism and terrorism in the Valley.

Peaceful polling, intricate and elaborate arrangements made to ensure that democracy is given a chance with people uninhibitedly exercising their choice, was a strong and unequivocal indication that people wanted a future of opportunities, growth and development. It was clear that there would be no going back, no back pedaling to a dark and divisive age. That age was

consigned to history.

The planning and execution of the entire polling exercise was meticulously done with the sole objective of ensuring that people could exercise their democratic option and choice. Overwhelming response from the voters was evident as was the peaceful atmosphere which radiated democracy and fairness. In a sweeping operation, drugs worth 110.45 crore were seized.

For all those who carried out a vicious propaganda against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the BJP, post abrogation of Article 370; this was a finger in their eyes. In fact they had all along dreaded this moment. They did not want a new beginning - a beginning which was organically democratic. Such a democratic beginning was not liable to be hijacked by anti-India, anti-Indian unity elements, both within the country and outside. These elements have tried, in the last five years, since 2019, to generate disaffection and division among people of Jammu and Kashmir. They have tried to churn out fabricated and concocted narratives of a depreciation of democracy in India and falsely spoke of the people of J&K yearning for a reinstatement of Article 370. In this they were supported and propped up by an intricate web of organizations, networks, forums and platforms which then amplified this narrative globally. Their sole intention was to stymie India's growth and to take another shot at destabilizing her.

All this negative and divisive design, intricately planned, fell flat once the elections went off well and

people opted for a democratic and stable future. The success of the election and the electoral process was also one of the finest tributes to stalwarts such as Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Sardar Patel and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar each of whom were clear that the integration of India must be complete and that it had to be one country and one Constitution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi fulfilled his promise of a new Jammu and Kashmir, made in August 2019.

Let us draw attention to another interesting and hope-generating achievement. Among the numerous, game-changing and transformational flagship projects that have been undertaken in the last one decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and vision is the aspiration and resolve to construct toilets under the flagship Swachh Bharat Mission and to see it have an impact on halting infant mortality in India.

Experts belonging to various leading public health research institutions from across the world collaborated to produce a paper on 'Toilet Construction under Swachh Bharat Mission and infant mortality in India.' The paper appeared in Nature, one of the world's 'leading multi-disciplinary science journal'.

Referring to the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) as one of the 'world's largest sanitation programmes' ever undertaken.' It spoke of how 'from 2014 to 2020, the government of India constructed over 100 million household toilets and, as a result, declared more than 600,000 villages as free of open defecation.' The paper noted that SBM 'was launched by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi on October 2nd 2014, as a "Jan Andolan" (peoples' movement) and adopted an intensive, multi-pronged approach to national sanitation.'

The authors also noted that 'recent studies find a significant influence of the programme on improving growth and immune-sensitive responses among children'. The most significant finding by these experts is that the massive public movement of constructing toilets has 'contributed to averting approximately 60,000-70,000 infant deaths annually' in India. The experts argue that their findings 'show that the implementation of transformative sanitation programs can deliver population health benefits in low and middle income countries.' The fact that under the SBM 'over 117 million toilets have been constructed since 2014 with a public investment of over 1.4 lakh crore' is a feat that is unparalleled in the history of independent India.

Prime Minister Modi's governance vision and leadership has had a transformative impact that straddles many dimensions and realms. It encompasses freeing a crucial region like Jammu and Kashmir from the regressions of a dark future and also of ensuring, through an enhanced and revolutionary approach to public health, a robust and a healthy future for India. It is perhaps this diverse dexterity that irks his detractors. They are also those who stand opposed to the vision of a transformed and developed India.

(The writer is a Chairman of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation.)

Salient Points on Union Budget 2024-25

- » I extend my congratulations to all my countrymen for this important budget that will elevate the country to new heights of development. I also extend my heartiest congratulations are due to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Ji and her entire team.
- » This budget empowers every segment of society. It paves the way for prosperity in our villages and for the poor and farmers. Over the last 10 years, 25 crore people have come out of poverty. This budget continues the empowerment of the neo-middle class, offering new opportunities for education and skills development.
- » It provides new strength to the middle class and includes robust plans to empower the tribal society, Dalits, and backward classes. Additionally, this budget will enhance the economic participation of women and create new avenues of progress for small traders and MSMEs, or small industries. By focusing on manufacturing and infrastructure, the budget will invigorate economic development and sustain its momentum.
- » Creating unprecedented opportunities for employment and self-employment has been a hallmark of our government. Today's budget further strengthens this commitment. The country and the world have witnessed the success of the PLI scheme.
- » Now, in this budget, the government has announced the Employment Linked Incentive scheme, which will create crores of new jobs across the country. Under this scheme, our government will pay the first salary of young people starting their first job. Whether it's assistance for skill development and higher education or the internship scheme for 1 crore youngsters, this will enable young people from villages and impoverished backgrounds to work in top companies, opening new doors of possibility for them.
- » We aim to foster entrepreneurship in every city, village, and household. To support this, the limit for Mudra loans without collateral has been increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. This will bolster self-employment among small business owners, especially women, Dalits, and families from backward and tribal communities.
- » Together, we will make Bharat a global manufacturing hub. The country's MSME sector is closely linked to the middle class and provides substantial employment to the poor.
- » Strengthening small industries is a crucial step in this direction. This budget announces a new scheme to improve the ease of credit for MSMEs. Additionally, there are important provisions to enhance the manufacturing and export ecosystem in every district. E-commerce export hubs and 100 units for food quality testing are among the initiatives that will boost the One District One Product campaign.

- » This budget has introduced many new opportunities for our startups and the innovation ecosystem. Whether it is the Rs 1000 crore fund to promote the space economy or the decision to abolish the Angel Tax, several significant steps have been taken.
- » Record high capital expenditure (Capex) will drive the economy forward. With 12 new industrial nodes, the development of new satellite towns, and transit plans for 14 major cities, new economic hubs will be established across the country, creating numerous new jobs.
- » Today, defence exports are at a record high. This budget includes many provisions to make the defence sector self-reliant. Global interest in Bharat has surged, creating new possibilities in the tourism sector. Tourism offers numerous opportunities for the poor and the middle class. This budget places special emphasis on developing the tourism sector.
- » Over the past 10 years, the NDA government has consistently provided tax relief to the poor and the middle class. In this budget, income tax reductions and increased standard deductions have been introduced. Additionally, TDS rules have been simplified, resulting in extra savings for every taxpayer.
- » The comprehensive development of Bharat's eastern region is crucial for the nation's progress. Our campaign will gain new momentum and energy through the vision of Purvodaya. We will accelerate development by constructing essential infrastructure such as highways, water projects, and power projects in eastern Bharat.
- » This budget places significant emphasis on the country's farmers. Following the world's largest food grain storage scheme, we are now establishing Vegetable Production Clusters. This initiative will open new markets for small farmers to sell their fruits, vegetables, and other produce at better prices.
- » Simultaneously, it will increase the availability of fruits and vegetables for the middle class, ensuring better family nutrition. It is essential for Bharat to become self-reliant in the agricultural sector. Therefore, support has been announced to boost the production of pulses and oilseeds.
- » Today's budget includes major initiatives to eradicate poverty and empower the poor. The decision to construct 3 crore new houses for the poor has been made.
- » The Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan will connect 5 crore tribal families with basic amenities using a saturation approach. Additionally, the Gram Sadak Yojana will link 25,000 new rural areas with all-weather roads, benefitting remote villages in all states across the country.
- » Today's budget has introduced new opportunities and has infused fresh energy. It has created numerous jobs and self-employment prospects, fostering better growth and a brighter future.
- » This budget will serve as a catalyst in the process of making Bharat the third-largest economic power in the world, laying a solid foundation for a developed nation.

A Proposed Semiconductor Plant and West Bengal's Chance to Come Out of The Politics of Disruption

Dr. Anirban Ganguly

P rime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced, along with US President Joe Biden, the firming up of the deal for the semiconductor plant to be set up in Kolkata

In a week, Kolkata and West Bengal saw two major developments in terms of investment, industry, futuristic technology, and advancement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced, along with US President Joe Biden, the firming up of the semiconductor plant deal to be set up in Kolkata. Many observed that it was the first such big-ticket initiative in almost two decades. For a state that has seen politics of confrontation for the last five decades and running, this was indeed a major leap forward in trying to rescue Bengal from the unfortunate situation of continued de-industrialisation and a degenerating investment climate.

Five decades of militant trade unionism and political disruptions have contributed to this plight. The vision or belief of a synthesis or synchronicity between regional aspirations and national growth has been singularly absent in parties that have ruled the state for over five decades. Replying in Parliament on the motion of thanks to the President in February 2022, Prime Minister Modi said

his fundamental belief was that there are no “conflicts between national progress and regional aspirations”. It is useful to recollect his words, that “India’s progress will be stronger when it addresses regional aspirations keeping in mind the development of the country. When our states progress, the country progresses”.

No leader had spoken in this manner in the past three decades. Most had resorted to the politics of conflict and confrontation. While many states have now realised the benefits of this view and mantra, West Bengal’s politics continues to be driven by a separatist and confrontationist mindset. The deal to set up the semiconductor plant in Kolkata and the commissioning of one of the PARAM Rudra Supercomputers for the Kolkata-based SN Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences thus came as a whiff of fresh air. It demonstrated PM Modi’s governance vision of a conflict-free trajectory of regional and national growth.

The PARAM Rudra Supercomputers are major milestones in India’s scientific quest and will boost research and development across various fields. It demonstrates India’s growing capacity for developing high-end advanced technology domestically. The supercomputer commissioned in Kolkata will promote advanced studies in cosmology, earth

sciences, and physics. For a city which had once been home to some of the most advanced scientific minds in the country such as Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Dr SN Bose, Dr Meghnad Saha, to name a few, all of whom had made it their life-mission to reinstate India on the world's scientific map, the supercomputer commissioning in Kolkata by PM Modi is a significant tribute.

Both leaders, PM Modi and President Biden, the White House 'Joint Fact-Sheet' states, "hailed a watershed arrangement to establish a new semiconductor fabrication plant focused on advanced sensing, communication, and power electronics for national security, next-generation telecommunications, and green energy applications. The leaders praised combined efforts to facilitate resilient, secure, and sustainable semiconductor supply chains including through GlobalFoundries' (GF) creation of the GF Kolkata Power Center in Kolkata, India that will enhance mutually beneficial linkages in research and development in chip manufacturing and enable game-changing advances for zero and low emission as well as connected vehicles, internet of things devices, AI, and data centres".

Indeed, it was a watershed development for India and more particularly for West Bengal. Experts have also argued that this deal is as powerful as the India-US nuclear deal which proved to be a redefining moment in the strategic relations between the two countries.

These hope-infusing developments

come on the heels of the working paper 'Relative Economic Performance of Indian States: 1960-61 to 2023-24', released by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PM-EAC). The findings, especially to do with West Bengal, were indeed disconcerting. It spoke of West Bengal experiencing "a significant decline in relative per capita income". It was a reality that most knew. The report did not articulate an unknown dimension. But it exposed a truth that the ruling TMC dispensation now and the Left dispensation in the past have refused to take note of. The economic decline of West Bengal was and is a result of the policies of these political formations effectuated over five odd decades.

The PM-EAC working paper noted how West Bengal, "which held the third largest share of national GDP at 10.5 per cent in 1960-61, now accounts for only 5.6 per cent in 2023-24". There was a "consistent decline throughout this period". Even in 1960-61, the state's per capita income was above the national average at 127.5 per cent, "but its growth failed to keep pace with national trends" and its "relative per capita income declined to 83.7 per cent in 2023-24", falling below that of even traditionally laggard states like Rajasthan and Odisha. The report points out how Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu were home to India's three largest industrial clusters in the 1960s. Over the years, while Maharashtra continued a steady growth at a steady pace and Tamil Nadu saw a pick-up in the 1990s after an initial phase of decline, West Bengal's share has seen a steady decline.

The report also makes an interesting

observation worth a deeper and more detailed probe, that of states with a long coastline, 'maritime-states', outperforming other states. Again, here too, West Bengal is the outlier, by not having been able to take advantage of this natural bounty. Whereas Odisha has seen improved growth in the last two decades.

In his once widely discussed study, 'The Agony of West Bengal', veteran journalist Ranajit Roy argued how from "the Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757), the British 'bled' West Bengal, for a full one hundred and ninety years, one month and twenty-two days. The State surely had amazingly large resources and vitality to be able to emerge from that long dark period still buoyant, still full of optimism about her future. The people had been oppressed, exploited and impoverished. Yet, on the dawn of independence, she was producing, per head of the population, much more than any other state in the country. Considering her territory and population she was still the wealthiest state".

Speaking of the amazing resilience of Bengal, Roy observed that "Britain's first big achievement in Bengal was the great famine of 1770, the starting point of Bankim Chandra's Anandamath". While Britain's parting gift to the province was the great famine of 1943. In this famine 15 lakh people perished, according to the official Woodhead Commission, and 34 lakh, according to the Calcutta University's Anthropological Department [Tarak Chandra Das, Bengal Famine (1943): As Revealed in a Survey of the Destitutes in Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1949].

"The second world war was on... Commodities were taken out of the province as from other parts of the country without giving anything in return... Bengal's economy was shattered and her social and cultural fabric shaken to its foundation... And then came partition... Throughout the British period, many man-made calamities struck Bengal's economic and social order. Every time she showed resilience and recovered thanks to the bounties of Nature and the abilities of her people," he wrote.

Despite massive waves of adversities, in 1947, argued Roy, "West Bengal had the highest per capita income. In literacy, she yielded place only to Kerala. In installed electric power capacity and per capita consumption, she had a long march over the other States... She had access to industrial raw materials and had business connections and an infrastructure to make progress faster than any other State. Calcutta was the busiest city, and the port there handled much more cargo than even Bombay."

Citing a study by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in 1967, Roy pointed out how in 1950, "West Bengal's net domestic product was higher than that of every other State, even Maharashtra" and the "wealth that West Bengal produced per head of the population was considerably more than elsewhere". While in industrial production West Bengal was "slightly behind Maharashtra but more than made this up in the field of trade and commerce in which West Bengal had a pre-eminent position. West Bengal's net output in agriculture and allied sector was 25 per

The PARAM Rudra Supercomputers are major milestones in India's scientific quest and will boost research and development across various fields. It demonstrates India's growing capacity for developing high-end advanced technology domestically. The supercomputer commissioned in Kolkata will promote advanced studies in cosmology, earth sciences, and physics. For a city which had once been home to some of the most advanced scientific minds in the country such as Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Dr SN Bose, Dr Meghnad Saha, to name a few, all of whom had made it their life-mission to reinstate India on the world's scientific map, the supercomputer commissioning in Kolkata by PM Modi is a significant tribute.

cent higher than Maharashtra's." In fact, Roy wrote, "No State other than UP, exceeded West Bengal's output in this sphere." UP was "more than three times as big in area and almost two and a half times as big in population as West Bengal".

Flawed policies of the Congress at the Centre, and obstructionist policies of the Left Front and of the TMC in the state over the last five decades led to West Bengal's decline. Mohan Dharia, then Minister of State for Planning, told the Rajya Sabha

on May 12, 1972, "that the whole of West Bengal, except for Calcutta, Howrah, 24 Parganas districts, is now being treated as backward". Roy lamented that this was the "fate in independent India of the state which was most advanced in industry, agriculture, commerce and cultural activities and had the highest per capita production and income in 1947". None of these parties and their leaders and legacies can escape the blame for West Bengal's decline. Posterity will judge them harshly.

Meanwhile, the proposed semiconductor plant can prove to be a game-changer to start with. Besides this, in the last decade PM Modi has kept his focus on the growth and rejuvenation of West Bengal. His vision of Purvoday, articulating a roadmap for the multi-sectoral rise of eastern India, can be a transformative proposition for West Bengal. But today's rulers in West Bengal adhere to a zamindari mindset, they want to go it alone. Their false pride has greater priority than West Bengal's growth. But just by taking recourse to slogans and claptrap on West Bengal's glory and Bengali pride, the state will not see growth and prosperity. For that to be realised, what is needed is an action-oriented mindset which will respond to PM Modi's call of Purvoday. That way lies West Bengal's chance for a comprehensive rebooting in our times.

(The writer is a Member, National Executive Committee (NEC), BJP and Chairman of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation. Views expressed are personal)

Why This Budget Ensures India's Growth, Stability and Entrepreneurial Dynamism in the Long Run



Pathikrit Payne

Against the backdrop of a tumultuous global economic environment, with major conflicts in Middle-East and Eastern Europe having serious impact on global supply chains and prices of critical commodities, India recently witnessed its forex reserve breaching the \$700 billion mark. This marks as a benchmark and testimony of India's growth story that continues to impress the world, especially at a time when most major and middle economies of the world, have been facing major instability. Over the last 10 years, PM Modi led NDA Government went in for major restructuring of the Indian economy, by ushering in a series of crucial structural reforms such as implementation of GST and Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code Act, followed by major investments in developing the digital framework for effective execution of welfare schemes, as well as massive push for infrastructure development that encompasses spending in excess of Rs 100 lakh crore to increase the infrastructural capacity of Indian economy to absorb investments.

These initiatives along with the PLI scheme to push for making India as a

preferred hub of global manufacturing, played critical roles in making India emerge as the fifth largest economy of the world. One should also not forget the massive initiatives taken by Modi Government to successfully combat the Covid and Post Covid challenges.

Against this backdrop, continuity in the investments, welfare schemes and reform process, was crucial. It was because of these reasons that the mandate which Modi Government got for the third term is extremely critical. The first full budget of the third term of Modi Government was thus expected to carry on the momentum in these spheres, and it indeed lived up to its expectations.

The nine major focus areas of the budget have been the following:-

1. Productivity and resilient in Agriculture
2. Employment and Skilling
3. Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice
4. Manufacturing & Services
5. Urban Development
6. Energy Security
7. Infrastructure
8. Innovation, Research and Development
9. Next Generation Reforms

A critical aspect of the budget this year

has been the focus on skilling. As part of it, five schemes were announced. This includes

- A for First Timers, who would be provided with a one-month salary up to Rs 15,000/- that would be provided to them in three instalments, once registered in EPFO.
- Scheme B that Incentivizes both Employers and Employees towards their EPFO contributions in the first four years of employment.
- Scheme C focuses on support to Employers with reimbursement of up to Rs 3000 per month for two years of EPFO contribution, for every additional person employed.
- Additionally, 20 lakh youth are to be skilled over a period of five years, and 1000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) are to be upgraded.
- Also, this budget initiated a new scheme for internship programs for 1 crore youth in top 500 companies in India.

While continuing with budgetary support of Rs 1.52 lakh crore for the agriculture and allied sectors, the budget focused specifically on release of 109 varieties of high-yielding and climate resilient crops, and development of 10,000 need-based resource centers for development of natural farming.

This apart, the budget gave special focus on development of new industrial corridors, enhancing the MUDRA loan limit from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 Lakh, development of E-commerce export hubs under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, enhancing the scope of exploration, production and recycling of critical minerals on a mission

mode, as well as expansion of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) applications to include areas such as e-commerce, education, health, law and justice, logistics, MSME, service delivery and e-governance.

Some of the other interesting features of the budget included a strategy to formulate Transit Oriented Development Plan to 'implement and finance' 14 large cities with population above 30 lakh, and continued emphasis on PM Awas Yojana to provide affordable housing for 1 crore urban poor and middle-class families.

A striking feature of this year's budget has been the unprecedented level of funds earmarked for capital expenditure which is to the tune of Rs 11.11 lakh crore, in addition to special focus on research and innovation funding. The Anusandhan National Research Fund for financing of basic and prototype development with a corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore to drive private-sector based research and innovation at commercial scale is a great step forward.

This apart, introduction of Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) or Bhu-Aadhar for digitization of cadastral maps and establishment of land registry is also a positive initiative.

The emphasis of the Budget on Purvodaya, that envisages all-round development of eastern parts of India including Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh is also a welcome step

Interestingly, the budget this year has also earmarked more than Rs 3 lakh crore for schemes that are aimed at women and girl child development, apart from earmarking Rs 2.66 lakh crore for rural development, especially for development of

rural infrastructure.

The budget this year also earmarked Rs 6.21 lakh crore for defence sector. Of this, Rs 1.72 lakh crore has been committed for capital expenditure, which means acquisition of weapon systems, while Rs 92,000 crore has been put for 'sustenance and operational readiness' of Armed Forces. Home Ministry meanwhile has been allocated Rs 2.19 lakh crore. This is important given the necessity for modernization of central police forces, as well as central investigation and law enforcement agencies, to deal with sub conventional threats that India.

While overall the budget is extremely positive that takes forward the momentum of continuity and growth story, in Modi era, announcement of policy measures is not restricted to annual budget alone. Interestingly, a few days after the Budget announcements, Modi Government expanded the Ayushman Bharat Scheme to include every Indian who has crossed the age of 70 years, thereby making them automatically eligible for Rs 5 lakh of medical insurance. This is perhaps one of the biggest social welfare schemes undertaken by any country. Simultaneously, Modi Government also recently approved 12 Industrial cities under the National Industrial Corridor Development Program that has the potential to eventually generate more than 10 lakh direct jobs.

Further Modi Government also recently approved disbursement of fortified rice under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, Integrated Child Development Service and PM Poshan till December 2028. This scheme has major positive impact in terms of addressing issues of anemia and

micro-nutrient deficiencies among the beneficiaries.

Last but not the least, Modi Government has ensured the maintenance of perfect balance between economic development, industrial growth and welfare schemes in its policy framework matrix. The reason being that funding of welfare measures can only be sustained in the long run by any country if the economy continues to grow and generate enough revenue for people and the state. It is from this perspective, Modi Government, which has been striving hard to revive India's proficiency as a global manufacturing hub, has taken several initiatives in the last one decade. From emphasis on expansion of the space economy with a Rs 1000 crore venture fund, to abolition of Angel Tax for all types of investors, to reduction of corporate tax on foreign companies from 40% to 35% to attract more investments, to reduction of customs duty on various kinds input commodities, a whole array of measures has been taken, in this budget as well, to ensure India's economy reach the \$5 trillion mark in the next few years.

The world is expected to have major turmoil in the next few years and in the middle of such a situation having a stable government which can ensure India's all round economic and social growth has been of utmost necessity. Modi Government's third term ensures stability along with growth. Modi Government's Budget for 2024 perfectly exemplifies that.

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

Budget 2024-25: Strategic Investments and Fiscal Discipline for a sustainable development



Alok Virendra Tiwari

The 2024 Indian Union Budget holds critical significance for the nation's economic landscape, offering a glimpse into the government's fiscal plans and aspirations for fostering an inclusive and resilient economy. This annual presentation provides a roadmap for allocating financial resources, setting the tone for India's economic journey. Against the backdrop of global and domestic challenges, this year's budget assumes heightened importance as it aims to address issues such as post-pandemic economic recovery, inflation control, and sustainable development, reflecting the government's commitment to steering India through uncertain times. The 2024 budget embodies the Indian government's efforts to bolster economic strength, improve infrastructure, and ensure social equity. With a strong focus on embracing digital advancements, promoting eco-friendly energy initiatives, and uplifting rural regions, the budget seeks to strike a balance between economic growth and environmental well-being. Additionally, measures aimed at bolstering the manufacturing sector, generating employment opportunities, and enhancing healthcare and education

systems underscore a commitment to holistic development. As individuals and communities across multiple sectors reflect on the impact of these budgetary provisions, the 2024 Union Budget offers a glimpse into the nation's path towards economic stability and long-term prosperity, signaling a collective aspiration to build a better future for all.

The Union Budget of 2024 puts a significant focus on bolstering infrastructure development in India, with a staggering allocation of INR 11.11 lakh crore, which amounts to 3.4% of the GDP. This allocation marks the highest ever investment in this sector and is aimed at boosting the competitiveness of the manufacturing industry and supporting crucial industrial corridors like the Amritsar-Kolkata and Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridors. Additionally, a considerable portion of this funding will be directed towards establishing new industrial parks and enabling ecosystems, with the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) spearheading the promotion of 12 new industrial zones. Moreover, the budget emphasizes addressing industrial housing in peri-urban areas by supporting worker housing through public-private partnerships (PPPs). To further promote balanced urban development, there are initiatives planned for economic and transport planning that will prioritize Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, thus alleviating pressure on major urban centers. In

this regard, the introduction of Transit-Oriented Development (ToD) projects in 14 cities is set to integrate various modes of transport infrastructure like metros and airports to facilitate economic growth. Furthermore, the budget outlines schemes such as a credit guarantee scheme and the establishment of e-commerce export hubs for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to stimulate demand and bolster India's target of achieving USD 1 trillion in exports by 2030.

In the energy sector, the budget lays out a comprehensive strategy encompassing the entire energy value chain, focusing on managing and reducing energy demand, enhancing resource efficiency, and fortifying energy security. Special attention is given to energy transition and the utilization of indigenous technologies, including advancements in nuclear reactor technology. Climate finance and the development of carbon markets feature prominently in the budget, with substantial investments allocated towards initiatives such as the solar rooftop mission to reduce energy costs for consumers. India's commitment to investing over USD 130 billion in infrastructure and climate-related sectors in the upcoming fiscal year underscores the nation's dedication to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Notably, the budget allocates over INR 1.5 lakh crore towards the agriculture sector to drive productivity enhancements, climate resilience, and technological innovations. The introduction of a National Cooperation Policy and the promotion of collaborative research

with private sector entities signal a strong commitment to revolutionizing the agricultural landscape. Moreover, strategic support for pulses and oilseeds aligns with the government's objective of achieving self-sufficiency in key agricultural commodities.

In the realm of education, the budget reflects a substantial increase in funding for both school and higher education initiatives. For school education, there is a notable 7% increase in allocation, with a significant 10% rise for the Samagra Shiksha scheme. The PM Shri scheme witnessed a substantial surge in funding to INR 6,000 crore, doubling its previous allocation to enhance the accessibility of quality education across the nation. On the higher education front, there is an increment in funding for institutions from INR 1,300 crore to INR 1,800 crore, with a specific focus on developing top-tier educational establishments. Teacher training and research funds receive a boost of 25%, accompanied by support for digital learning initiatives. Despite a reduction in the budget for the University Grants Commission (UGC) from INR 6,400 crore to INR 2,500 crore, which could potentially impact grants to public universities, increased allocations for research and development in the private sector are anticipated to have a positive impact on university research endeavors. Additionally, the budget introduces new measures to enhance access and employability in education, such as interest subvention for education loans for 100,000 students and a 40% increase in financial aid to INR 1,900 crore. A novel scheme for paid internships aims

to equip one crore youth with industry-relevant skills, alongside providing enhanced apprenticeship opportunities.

In a bid to enhance job creation and workforce engagement, the Union Budget 2024 unveils a wage support initiative offering up to Rs 15,000 for EPFO-registered first-time employees. This scheme aims to catalyze the integration of workers into the formal economy. Furthermore, the budget includes incentives for EPFO contributions in the manufacturing sector, fostering growth in this critical industry. A novel reimbursement program is introduced to provide up to Rs 3,000 monthly per new employee for employer EPFO contributions over two years. These combined efforts are poised to not only generate fresh job opportunities but also foster sustained employment growth. Acknowledging the necessity for upskilling to align with industry demands, the budget proposes an extensive plan to upgrade 1,000 industrial training institutes over the next five years. This enhancement is designed to augment the institutes' capacity to deliver specialized skills. Additionally, a new internship scheme is introduced to benefit one crore young individuals, offering them practical work experience with renowned companies. Interns will receive a monthly stipend of Rs 5,000 along with a one-time aid of Rs 6,000 to bolster their professional development. This initiative incentivizes corporate involvement, with companies expected to cover training expenses and contribute 10% of the internship outlay from their CSR funds. These initiatives are set

to enhance the convergence between educational outcomes and industry. The budget delineates a targeted growth and improvement strategy for specified states, including Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh. Substantial financial backing is allocated to elevate human resources, infrastructure, and economic potentials in these regions. Notably, Andhra Pradesh is designated to receive Rs 15,000 crore for the establishment of a new capital city, showcasing the government's dedication to infrastructure and regional growth. This focused assistance aims to mitigate regional inequalities and bolster state-level progress.

Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a pivotal role in India's economic advancement and employment creation. The budget introduces a credit guarantee scheme to streamline term loan accessibility for MSMEs to acquire machinery and equipment without necessitating collateral. A self-sustaining guarantee fund will be instituted, offering coverage up to Rs 100 crore. Additionally, the Mudra loan ceiling is raised from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh for entrepreneurs who have previously availed and repaid loans. These measures are crafted to empower MSMEs by facilitating easier credit access, thereby enhancing their operational capabilities and growth prospects. A comprehensive strategy is outlined in the budget to combat high carbon emissions by establishing emission reduction objectives and advocating sustainable practices. Investments in emerging nuclear energy technologies, in partnership with the private sector, are

To further promote balanced urban development, there are initiatives planned for economic and transport planning that will prioritize Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, thus alleviating pressure on major urban centers. In this regard, the introduction of Transit-Oriented Development (ToD) projects in 14 cities is set to integrate various modes of transport infrastructure like metros and airports to facilitate economic growth.

planned to bolster a more eco-friendly and sustainable energy framework. These initiatives align with global environmental preservation endeavors and strive to boost energy efficiency. The emphasis on these advancements underscores a commitment to transitioning towards cleaner energy sources and curbing the nation's carbon footprint. Agricultural progress takes center stage in the budget, with blueprints to overhaul research infrastructures for heightened productivity and the promotion of climate-resilient crop strains. The creation of vegetable production clusters in proximity to major consumption hubs is anticipated to refine supply chain efficiencies and bolster local agricultural economies. Moreover, the formulation of a national policy for cooperative sector advancement underscores the government's resolve in enhancing cooperative farming methodologies and

uplifting farmers' livelihoods. These reforms aim to fortify the agricultural sector's resilience and productivity.

Urban and rural development undertakings in the budget are tailored towards elevating living standards and infrastructure nationwide. A transit-oriented development blueprint will be crafted for 14 major cities with populations surpassing 30 lakh, emphasizing sustainable urban planning and efficient transportation systems. Measures to reduce steep stamp duties, particularly beneficial for women property purchasers, are also introduced. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, an additional three crore residences will be erected in both rural and urban areas, mitigating housing shortages and furnishing affordable solutions for the underprivileged. These endeavors seek to foster comprehensive urban and rural progress.

Tax Proposals

The Union Budget 2024 introduces significant changes to the taxation of capital gains. Short-term capital gains tax on listed equity shares, equity mutual funds, and REITs/INVITs is set to increase from 15% to 20%, aligning these gains more closely with other asset classes. Long-term capital gains will now be taxed at a uniform rate of 12.5%, replacing the previous rates of 10% for listed assets and 20% with indexation for non-listed assets. The removal of indexation for properties, gold, and other unlisted assets may lead to an increased tax burden on these investments. Financial assets held for over a year will be considered long-term,

while non-financial assets will require a two-year holding period to attain this status. Furthermore, the exemption limit for long-term capital gains from listed equity shares, equity mutual funds, and business trusts is set to rise from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.25 lakh. Share buybacks will now be taxed similarly to dividends, showcasing a broader shift in the tax treatment of capital returns.

The budget proposes an increase in the Securities Transaction Tax on options and futures transactions. The STT on options will be raised from 0.0625% to 0.1% of the option premium, while the tax on futures transactions will increase from 0.0125% to 0.02% of the trading price. These adjustments aim to bolster government revenue from financial market activities and could impact the trading strategies of market participants by elevating the cost of trading. Noteworthy revisions to TDS rates are outlined, incorporating reductions across various categories. The TDS rate is slated to decrease from 5% to 2% for insurance commission, life insurance policy payments, rent, and commission or brokerage. Additionally, the TDS on e-commerce transactions is set to decrease from 1% to 0.1%, signaling an effort to alleviate compliance burdens on e-commerce operators and participants. These changes are anticipated to lower the tax withheld at source for these transactions, potentially enhancing liquidity for individuals and businesses. A novel scheme, the Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, 2024, is proposed to streamline the resolution of tax disputes by providing leniency in the payment of disputed interest or penalties. This scheme

is designed to expedite the resolution of tax conflicts, offering a mechanism for taxpayers to settle disputes with reduced financial penalties and interest, thereby encouraging timely compliance and the resolution of outstanding issues.

The budget outlines the removal of the equalization levy on non-resident e-commerce operators effective from August 1, 2024. Currently set at 2% of the proceeds received, this levy was intended to tax digital services provided by foreign entities. Its removal indicates a potential shift in the approach to taxing international e-commerce transactions and may reflect broader changes in global tax agreements. Customs duties undergo adjustments for a variety of goods, with reductions for items such as gold, silver, and mobile phones, including their chargers and adapters. Certain materials used in the textile, steel, and capital goods sectors receive exemptions from customs duty in a bid to reduce production costs and stimulate these industries. Conversely, increases are announced for solar glass and specific chemicals, potentially impacting the cost structure of industries reliant on these materials. The budget eliminates the tax on unlisted companies receiving funds exceeding the face value of their shares. This tax, previously imposed to curb inflows that could inflate share valuations, will no longer apply, potentially easing funding conditions for startups and small companies seeking investment. Movable assets valued up to Rs 20 lakh are exempt from penalties under the Black Money Act, 2015, for non-declaration of foreign assets. This exemption aims to reduce

compliance burdens for individuals who may have overlooked declaring such assets, reflecting a more lenient stance on foreign asset disclosure. A new provision under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988, offers immunity to benamidars who turn approvers, incentivizing cooperation in uncovering illegal transactions. This provision targets the accountability of both the benamidar and the beneficial owner, aiming to strengthen enforcement against illicit property transactions.

Budget Estimates

In the upcoming fiscal year 2024-25, the government has laid out a substantial budget allocation of Rs 48,20,512 crore, indicating an 8.5% increase from the previous year's actuals. This growth is propelled by a noteworthy 17.1% surge in capital expenditure, while the rise in revenue expenditure is contained at 6.2%, maintaining consistency with prior allocations for critical sectors such as pensions, defense, and major schemes like MGNREGS and Jal Jeevan Mission. Total receipts, excluding borrowings, are anticipated to reach Rs 32,07,200 crore, signifying a significant 15% upturn from the preceding fiscal year. To bridge the fiscal gap between these receipts and the expenditure, borrowings are earmarked at Rs 16,13,312 crore, representing a slight 2.4% decrease from the previous year's figures. Regarding financial transfers to states and union territories, the central government aims to allocate Rs 23,48,980 crore, marking an 11.9% increase over 2023-24. This comprises Rs 12,47,211 crore from central taxes and Rs 11,01,769

crore in grants. The budget sets its sights on reducing the revenue deficit to 1.8% of GDP from the previous year's 2.6%, and targets a decrease in the fiscal deficit to 4.9% of GDP, down from 5.6%. This reduction in the fiscal deficit is primarily attributed to the 15% growth in receipts outpacing the 8.5% rise in expenditure. The nominal GDP is predicted to grow by 10.5%, reflecting an optimistic economic outlook for the upcoming year.

The fiscal year 2024-25 Union Budget exemplifies a balanced strategy to boost economic growth while upholding fiscal discipline. By increasing capital expenditure to enhance infrastructure and vital sector investments, the government emphasizes its dedication to long-term economic advancement. The controlled growth in revenue spending, alongside substantial investments in state and union territory transfers, highlights a commitment to fair resource allocation. The projected uptick in total receipts and the strategic cuts in fiscal and revenue deficits showcase a methodical approach to public finance management. The expected 10.5% growth in nominal GDP signifies a promising economic path, paving the way for a more resilient and dynamic economic landscape. Overall, the budget mirrors the government's aspirations of nurturing sustainable growth with fiscal prudence, positioning India for ongoing advancement in the coming year.

(Author has worked with the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. He was part of the Delegate Affairs Team of Youth 20 Y20)

भारत के स्वास्थ्य को एक नई दिशा देगा बजट



प्रो. कौशल किशोर मिश्र

मो दी सरकार के बजट 2024-25 में स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को मजबूत करने और सुलभ स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कई महत्वपूर्ण घोषणाएं की गई हैं। सरकार का यह दृष्टिकोण भारत की स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली को अधिक समावेशी, किफायती और आत्मनिर्भर बनाने पर केंद्रित है।

स्वास्थ्य बजट में वृद्धि और प्राथमिकता क्षेत्र

बजट 2024-25 में स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र के लिए ₹90,171 करोड़ का आवंटन किया गया है, जो 2023-24 के ₹79,221 करोड़ के बजट की तुलना में लगभग 12.6% की वृद्धि है। यह वृद्धि स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं के विस्तार और नवाचार को प्रोत्साहित करने के साथ-साथ महामारी के बाद की चुनौतियों से निपटने में मदद करेगी।

प्रधानमंत्री आयुष्मान भारत योजना

सरकार ने आयुष्मान भारत योजना के तहत आवंटन को ₹7,500 करोड़ तक बढ़ा दिया है। यह योजना गरीब और वंचित वर्गों को 5 लाख रुपये तक का कैशलेस स्वास्थ्य बीमा उपलब्ध कराती है। नए बजट में आशा और आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं को भी इस योजना के तहत शामिल किया गया है, जिससे उनकी स्वास्थ्य सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित होगी।

प्रधानमंत्री आयुष्मान भारत स्वास्थ्य अवसंरचना मिशन

PM-ABHIM के तहत ₹4,108 करोड़ का प्रावधान किया गया है, जो पिछले वर्ष के ₹2,100 करोड़ से लगभग दोगुना है। इस योजना का उद्देश्य प्राथमिक, माध्यमिक और

तृतीयक स्वास्थ्य ढांचे को मजबूत करना है, ताकि दूरदराज के क्षेत्रों में भी गुणवत्तापूर्ण स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं उपलब्ध हो सकें। इस मिशन के तहत कई नए डायग्नोस्टिक सेंटर और जिला स्तर के अस्पताल स्थापित किए जाएंगे, जिससे स्थानीय स्तर पर रोगियों को उपचार मिल सकेगा।

डिजिटल स्वास्थ्य और अनुसंधान को बढ़ावा

सरकार ने U-WIN प्लेटफॉर्म के जरिए देशभर में टीकाकरण के प्रबंधन को सुदृढ़ करने का लक्ष्य रखा है। यह पहल मौजूदा मिशन इंद्रधनुष के प्रयासों को और प्रभावी बनाएगी, जिससे सभी बच्चों और गर्भवती महिलाओं को टीके लगाना सुनिश्चित होगा।

स्वास्थ्य अनुसंधान के क्षेत्र में भी सरकार ने ₹3,301.73 करोड़ का प्रावधान किया है, जिससे नए उपचारों और टीकों के विकास में तेजी आएगी। साथ ही, कैंसर जैसी गंभीर बीमारियों के इलाज के लिए सरकार ने कुछ महत्वपूर्ण दवाओं पर कस्टम ड्यूटी हटा दी है, जिससे इनका उपचार किफायती हो सके।

कैंसर और टीकाकरण अभियान पर विशेष जोर

बजट में सर्वाइकल कैंसर से बचाव के लिए 9 से 14 वर्ष की लड़कियों के टीकाकरण को बढ़ावा देने का प्रावधान किया गया है। यह कदम महिलाओं के स्वास्थ्य को प्राथमिकता देने की दिशा में एक बड़ा प्रयास है। साथ ही, सरकार ने कई नए चिकित्सा कॉलेजों की स्थापना का ऐलान किया है, जो अस्पतालों के मौजूदा ढांचे का उपयोग करके

बजट 2024-25 में स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र के लिए ₹90,171 करोड़ का आवंटन किया गया है, जो 2023-24 के ₹79,221 करोड़ के बजट की तुलना में लगभग 12.6% की वृद्धि है। यह वृद्धि स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं के विस्तार और नवाचार को प्रोत्साहित करने के साथ-साथ महामारी के बाद की चुनौतियों से निपटने में मदद करेगी।

संचालित किए जाएंगे। इससे स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में कुशल मानव संसाधन की आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित होगी।

मातृ एवं शिशु स्वास्थ्य और पोषण योजनाएं

बजट 2024-25 में मातृ एवं शिशु स्वास्थ्य के लिए कई योजनाओं को समेकित करने का प्रस्ताव है। इसके तहत सभी योजनाओं को एक व्यापक कार्यक्रम में शामिल किया जाएगा, ताकि इनकी कार्यान्वयन प्रक्रिया को सरल और प्रभावी बनाया जा सके। इसके अतिरिक्त, सक्षम आंगनवाड़ी और पोषण 2.0 योजना के तहत बच्चों और महिलाओं को पोषण और प्रारंभिक शिक्षा के बेहतर अवसर प्रदान करने का भी लक्ष्य है।

स्थानीय उत्पादन को प्रोत्साहन और आत्मनिर्भरता

स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भरता को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सरकार ने एक्स-रे ट्यूब्स और फ्लैट पैनल डिटेक्टरों पर कस्टम ड्यूटी घटाई है, जिससे घरेलू उत्पादन को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। यह कदम न केवल स्वास्थ्य उपकरणों की लागत को कम करेगा, बल्कि भारत को चिकित्सा उपकरणों के उत्पादन में आत्मनिर्भर बनाएगा।

इसके अलावा, PLI (Production Linked Incentive) योजना के तहत ₹6,200 करोड़ का प्रावधान किया गया है, जो फार्मास्यूटिकल्स और बायोटेक्नोलॉजी के क्षेत्र में निवेश को प्रोत्साहित करेगा। यह योजना स्वास्थ्य उद्योग में नवाचार और रोजगार के अवसरों को भी बढ़ावा

PM-ABHIM के तहत ₹4,108 करोड़ का प्रावधान किया गया है, जो पिछले वर्ष के ₹2,100 करोड़ से लगभग दोगुना है। इस योजना का उद्देश्य प्राथमिक, माध्यमिक और तृतीयक स्वास्थ्य ढांचे को मजबूत करना है, ताकि दूरदराज के क्षेत्रों में भी गुणवत्तापूर्ण स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं उपलब्ध हो सकें। इस मिशन के तहत कई नए डायग्नोस्टिक सेंटर और जिला स्तर के अस्पताल स्थापित किए जाएंगे, जिससे स्थानीय स्तर पर रोगियों को उपचार मिल सकेगा।

देगी।

ग्रामीण और पशु स्वास्थ्य को बढ़ावा

ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को बेहतर बनाने के लिए सरकार ने पशु स्वास्थ्य और रोग नियंत्रण के लिए ₹2,465 करोड़ का आवंटन किया है। यह राशि पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में काफी अधिक है, जो पशुपालन क्षेत्र में बीमारी से बचाव और पशु स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को मजबूत करेगी।

स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में पारदर्शिता और दक्षता

सरकार ने बजट में यह भी घोषणा की है कि स्वास्थ्य योजनाओं का संचालन और निगरानी डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म के माध्यम से की जाएगी। इससे न केवल योजनाओं के कार्यान्वयन में पारदर्शिता बढ़ेगी, बल्कि लाभार्थियों तक सेवाएं तेजी से पहुंचाना भी संभव होगा।

सशक्त और समावेशी स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली की ओर

बजट 2024-25 में स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को लेकर किए गए प्रावधान सरकार की सबके लिए स्वास्थ्य (Health for All) के लक्ष्य को प्रतिबिंबित करते हैं। PMJAY और PM-ABHIM जैसी योजनाओं के माध्यम से सरकार ने स्वास्थ्य के बुनियादी ढांचे को मजबूत करने और आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर वर्गों को स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं का लाभ देने का संकल्प दिखाया है।

डिजिटल हेल्थ प्लेटफॉर्म, स्थानीय उत्पादन को प्रोत्साहन, और अनुसंधान में निवेश से यह बजट न केवल स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगा, बल्कि सभी के लिए सस्ती और सुलभ चिकित्सा सुविधाओं को भी सुनिश्चित करेगा।

इस प्रकार, 2024 का स्वास्थ्य बजट न केवल महामारी के बाद की चुनौतियों से निपटने में सहायक सिद्ध होगा, बल्कि भारत को एक सशक्त और आधुनिक स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली की ओर भी अग्रसर करेगा।

(लेखक समाज विज्ञान संकाय, काशी हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय के पूर्व संकाय प्रमुख हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार लेखक के निजी हैं।)

बजट 2024 : आत्मनिर्भरता और स्थिर विकास की ओर कृषि



ओम प्रकाश सिंह

2 024 के केंद्रीय बजट में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की सरकार ने कृषि क्षेत्र को आधुनिक बनाने और किसानों को आर्थिक रूप से सशक्त बनाने के लिए कई ठोस कदम उठाए हैं। यह बजट 'विकसित भारत' के दृष्टिकोण का हिस्सा है, जिसमें कृषि को आत्मनिर्भरता, नवाचार और जलवायु-लचीले मॉडल की ओर अग्रसर किया जा रहा है।

कृषि और ग्रामीण विकास को प्राथमिकता

कृषि बजट में इस बार ₹1.52 लाख करोड़ का आवंटन कृषि और संबद्ध क्षेत्रों के लिए किया गया है। इसके साथ-साथ ग्रामीण विकास के लिए ₹2.66 लाख करोड़ का प्रावधान है, जो दर्शाता है कि सरकार कृषि को सिर्फ खेती-बाड़ी तक सीमित न रखकर ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था के पुनरुद्धार का साधन बना रही है।

प्राकृतिक खेती और जैविक इनपुट केंद्रों की स्थापना

अगले दो वर्षों में एक करोड़ किसानों को प्राकृतिक खेती में शामिल किया जाएगा। यह कदम रासायनिक उर्वरकों और कीटनाशकों पर निर्भरता कम करेगा और किसानों को कम लागत में बेहतर गुणवत्ता वाली उपज प्राप्त करने में मदद करेगा। इस पहल को ब्रांडिंग और प्रमाणन के साथ जोड़ा गया है, जिससे किसानों को अपनी उपज के लिए प्रीमियम दाम मिल सकेंगे।

सरकार ने 10,000 जैविक इनपुट केंद्रों की स्थापना का भी प्रस्ताव दिया है। ये केंद्र किसानों को सुलभ और

पर्यावरण के अनुकूल खेती के संसाधन प्रदान करेंगे, जिससे टिकाऊ कृषि पद्धतियों को बढ़ावा मिलेगा।

जलवायु परिवर्तन के अनुकूल किस्में और आत्मनिर्भरता पर जोर

जलवायु परिवर्तन से कृषि उत्पादन पर लगातार पड़ रहे प्रभावों को देखते हुए सरकार ने 32 फसलों की 109 नई जलवायु-लचीली और उच्च उत्पादक किस्मों को जारी करने का ऐलान किया है। इन फसलों के विकास से किसानों की आय में सुधार होगा और वे अनिश्चित मौसम की परिस्थितियों का सामना बेहतर ढंग से कर सकेंगे।

इसके साथ-साथ सरकार ने दालों और तेलबीजों में आत्मनिर्भरता की दिशा में बड़े सुधार किए हैं। सरसों, मूंगफली, सोयाबीन, और सूरजमुखी जैसी फसलों के उत्पादन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए विशेष योजनाएं बनाई गई हैं। इस पहल से न केवल भारत की आयात पर निर्भरता घटेगी, बल्कि किसानों को घरेलू बाजार में प्रतिस्पर्धी मूल्य भी मिलेंगे।

डिजिटल अवसंरचना और आधुनिक कृषि प्रबंधन

मोदी सरकार ने कृषि को डिजिटलीकरण से जोड़ने के लिए कई बड़े कदम उठाए हैं।

1. डिजिटल पब्लिक इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर (DPI): इस नई व्यवस्था के तहत 400 जिलों में खरीफ फसलों का डिजिटल सर्वेक्षण किया जाएगा।
2. किसान और भूमि पंजीकरण: छह करोड़ किसानों और उनकी भूमि का पंजीकरण इस प्रणाली में किया जाएगा, जिससे सरकारी योजनाओं का लाभ किसानों तक तेजी से पहुंचेगा।
3. जन समर्थ आधारित किसान क्रेडिट कार्ड (KCC):

इस साल पाँच राज्यों में इस योजना को लागू करने का प्रस्ताव है, ताकि किसानों को आसान और सस्ते ऋण की सुविधा दी जा सके।

सहकारी समितियों और किसान संगठनों का प्रोत्साहन

सरकार किसान उत्पादक संगठनों (FPOs) और सहकारी समितियों के माध्यम से कृषि आपूर्ति श्रृंखला को बेहतर बनाने पर जोर दे रही है। यह पहल छोटे और सीमांत किसानों को एकजुट कर उनके उत्पादों का कुशल संग्रहण, विपणन और निर्यात सुनिश्चित करेगी। इसके अलावा, राष्ट्रीय सहकारिता नीति का प्रस्ताव सहकारी क्षेत्र में व्यवस्थित विकास और रोजगार सृजन के लिए महत्वपूर्ण साबित होगा।

मत्स्य पालन और कृषि प्रसंस्करण का विस्तार

मोदी सरकार ने मत्स्य पालन के क्षेत्र में भी निवेश बढ़ाने की योजना बनाई है। श्रिम्प ब्रूडस्टॉक के लिए नाभिकीय प्रजनन केंद्रों की स्थापना की जाएगी, जिससे मत्स्यपालन और प्रसंस्करण उद्योगों को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। यह पहल ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रोजगार बढ़ाने और निर्यात को बढ़ावा देने में सहायक होगी। नाबार्ड के माध्यम से इस क्षेत्र में वित्तीय सहायता भी प्रदान की जाएगी।

आर्थिक स्थिरता और मुद्रास्फीति से निपटने का प्रयास

भारत में हाल के वर्षों में मौसम की अनिश्चितताओं और खाद्य मुद्रास्फीति ने किसानों की आय पर नकारात्मक प्रभाव डाला है। बजट 2024 में कृषि के लिए बढ़ाए गए आवंटन से ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था को स्थिर करने और मुद्रास्फीति को नियंत्रित करने की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण प्रयास किए गए हैं।

उदाहरण के तौर पर, सरकार ने सब्जी उत्पादन के बड़े पैमाने के क्लस्टर विकसित करने का प्रस्ताव दिया है। ये क्लस्टर प्रमुख उपभोक्ता बाजारों के पास स्थापित किए जाएंगे, जिससे आपूर्ति श्रृंखला में सुधार होगा और

किसानों को बेहतर मूल्य मिलेंगे।

महत्वपूर्ण सामाजिक पहल और किसानों का सशक्तिकरण

सरकार ने न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (MSP) बढ़ाने के अपने वादे को पूरा करते हुए सभी प्रमुख फसलों के लिए उत्पादन लागत से 50% अधिक MSP की घोषणा की है। यह पहल किसानों को आर्थिक सुरक्षा प्रदान करने में मददगार होगी।

इसके अतिरिक्त, प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण अन्न योजना को अगले पाँच वर्षों के लिए बढ़ा दिया गया है, जिससे 80 करोड़ से अधिक लोगों को सस्ती खाद्य सामग्री मिल सकेगी। यह ग्रामीण और कृषि अर्थव्यवस्था को स्थिर करने की दिशा में एक सकारात्मक कदम है।

आत्मनिर्भर और नवाचारी भारत की दिशा में कदम

निःसंदेह मोदी सरकार का 2024 कृषि बजट एक व्यापक और दूरदर्शी दृष्टिकोण को दर्शाता है। यह न केवल किसानों की वर्तमान समस्याओं का समाधान करता है, बल्कि कृषि को दीर्घकालिक आत्मनिर्भरता और स्थिरता की ओर ले जाता है।

डिजिटल तकनीक, प्राकृतिक खेती, और जलवायु अनुकूल फसल किस्मों के माध्यम से यह बजट भारत की कृषि को एक नई दिशा दे रहा है। इसके साथ-साथ सहकारी संगठनों, किसान उत्पादक संगठनों और स्टार्टअप्स को प्रोत्साहित कर सरकार ने कृषि में नवाचार और रोजगार सृजन को गति दी है।

इस बजट के माध्यम से मोदी सरकार ने एक स्पष्ट संदेश दिया है कि कृषि केवल अन्न उत्पादन तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि यह भारत के आर्थिक विकास और ग्रामीण समृद्धि का आधार भी है। यह बजट 'विकसित भारत' के सपने को साकार करने की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण मील का पत्थर साबित होगा।

(लेखक महामना मदन मोहन मालवीय हिंदी पत्रकारिता संस्थान के पूर्व निदेशक हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार लेखक के निजी हैं।)

वित्तीय अनुशासन पर कायम सरकार: बजट में विकसित भारत के लक्ष्य को साधने पर अधिक ध्यान



प्रो राजीव कुमार भट्ट

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पने तीसरे कार्यकाल के पहले बजट में भी मोदी सरकार ने वित्तीय अनुशासन की राह पर चलने की अपनी परिपाटी को कायम रखा। अस्थिर एवं उथल-पुथल भरे वैश्विक एवं घरेलू माहौल में वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने बजट के माध्यम से संतुलन साधने का प्रयास किया। किसी बड़ी रेवड़ी के एलान से परहेज करते हुए उन्होंने आवश्यक क्षेत्रों के लिए सरकारी खजाने का मुंह खोलने से संकोच भी नहीं किया।

स्वस्थ राजस्व संग्रह के साथ ही भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक से सरकार को जो अतिरिक्त लाभांश प्राप्त हुआ, उसका उपयोग भी बहुत विवेकसम्मत ढंग से किया गया। सरकार ने जहां इसका कुछ हिस्सा राजकोषीय घाटे को घटाने में किया तो वहीं शेष राशि को वहां खर्च किया, जहां इसकी सबसे अधिक आवश्यकता महसूस हो रही थी।

जैसे सरकार ने ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था को सहारा देने, कौशल विकास एवं रोजगार सृजन, एमएसएमई सहित समग्र मैन्यूफैक्चरिंग को प्रोत्साहन, शहरी आवास की समस्या के समाधान और महंगाई को काबू करने से जुड़े उपाय तलाशने में अपने संसाधन लगाए। देखने में ये भले ही बड़े खर्चे लगें, लेकिन इनकी प्रकृति बहुत उत्पादक किस्म की होती है।

जैसे कौशल विकास से लोगों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर बढ़ते हैं तो उद्योगों को अपनी आवश्यकताओं

के अनुरूप कर्मियों की आपूर्ति होती है। इसी प्रकार, शहरी आवास के निर्माण की योजना को देखें तो जहां उनके निर्माण से बड़े पैमाने पर रोजगार सृजन की संभावनाएं बनेंगी, वहीं ऐसी परिसंपत्तियों का भी सृजन होगा जो दीर्घकाल में उद्योगों से लेकर कामगारों की आवासीय आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति में सहायक होंगी। इस प्रकार की गतिविधियों से आर्थिक गतिविधियों में लोगों की भागीदारी बढ़ती है, जिससे अंततः आर्थिकी को ही गति मिलती है।

विभिन्न मर्दों में अपना खर्च बढ़ाने के बावजूद यदि सरकार राजकोषीय घाटे को जीडीपी के 4.9 प्रतिशत तक लाने में सफल रही तो यह बहुत सराहनीय कहा जाएगा। यह अंतरिम बजट में घाटे के 5.1 प्रतिशत के अनुमान से भी बेहतर प्रदर्शन है। वित्त मंत्री ने आगामी वित्त वर्ष में न केवल घाटे के दायरे को और घटाकर 4.5 प्रतिशत पर लाने का एलान किया, बल्कि यह भी कहा कि सरकार चरणबद्ध रूप से अपनी उधारी का दायरा घटाएगी।

असल में सरकार का राजकोषीय घाटा बढ़ने का अर्थ बाहरी उधारी पर उसकी निर्भरता बढ़ना है। इससे जहां ब्याज अदायगी पर सरकारी राजस्व का एक बड़ा हिस्सा खर्च हो जाता है, वहीं आर्थिक गतिविधियों के

स्वस्थ राजस्व संग्रह के साथ ही भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक से सरकार को जो अतिरिक्त लाभांश प्राप्त हुआ, उसका उपयोग भी बहुत विवेकसम्मत ढंग से किया गया। सरकार ने जहां इसका कुछ हिस्सा राजकोषीय घाटे को घटाने में किया तो वहीं शेष राशि को वहां खर्च किया, जहां इसकी सबसे अधिक आवश्यकता महसूस हो रही थी।

लिए वित्तीय तंत्र में संसाधनों की किल्लत भी पड़ जाती है। राजकोषीय घाटे का बेलगाम होना कई मोर्चों पर चिंता का सबब बन जाता है। यही कारण है कि इसे काबू करना सरकार की प्राथमिकताओं में शामिल होता है और मोदी सरकार इस मोर्चे पर खरी उतरती आ रही है।

उत्पादक खर्चों में कोई कंजूसी न करते हुए सरकार ने पूंजीगत व्यय को बढ़ाए रखने का सिलसिला कायम रखा है। देश में पिछले कुछ समय से बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास ने तेज रफ्तार पकड़ी है। केंद्र सरकार इस मोर्चे पर राज्य सरकारों से लेकर निजी क्षेत्र को भी साधकर समन्वित प्रयासों पर जोर दे रही है। चूंकि बुनियादी ढांचे का प्रभाव कई स्तरों पर देखने को मिलता है, इसलिए इस पर जोर दिया जाना आवश्यक ही नहीं, अपितु अपरिहार्य हो जाता है।

बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास से निजी क्षेत्र के लिए भी अनुकूल कारोबारी परिवेश तैयार होता है। बजट में निजी क्षेत्र को और सहारा देने के लिए सरकार ने कई वस्तुओं पर ड्यूटी घटाई है। इससे देश में मोबाइल फोन से लेकर चार्जर का निर्माण किफायती होगा। मूल्यवान धातुओं सहित कई अन्य वस्तुओं पर ड्यूटी घटने से उनके दाम भी संभलेंगे, जो वर्तमान परिस्थितियों में बहुत आवश्यक हो गया था।

जैसे कौशल विकास से लोगों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर बढ़ते हैं तो उद्योगों को अपनी आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप कर्मियों की आपूर्ति होती है। इसी प्रकार, शहरी आवास के निर्माण की योजना को देखें तो जहां उनके निर्माण से बड़े पैमाने पर रोजगार सृजन की संभावनाएं बनेंगी, वहीं ऐसी परिसंपत्तियों का भी सृजन होगा जो दीर्घकाल में उद्योगों से लेकर कामगारों की आवासीय आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति में सहायक होंगी। इस प्रकार की गतिविधियों से आर्थिक गतिविधियों में लोगों की भागीदारी बढ़ती है, जिससे अंततः आर्थिकी को ही गति मिलती है।

मैनुफैक्चरिंग के मोर्चे पर लेबर इंटेसिव एमएसएमई के लिए क्रेडिट गारंटी योजना और मुद्रा लोन का दायरा बढ़ाना भी सराहनीय कदम हैं। कौशल विकास और इंटरनेट से जुड़ी पहल न केवल रोजगार सृजन का विस्तार करेगी, बल्कि उद्यमों को भी बड़ा सहारा देगी। अतिरिक्त कर्मियों की भर्ती पर सरकार का 3,000 रुपये का प्रोत्साहन भी नई नौकरियों को बढ़ावा देने में प्रभावी सिद्ध हो सकता है।

आर्थिक मोर्चे को संतुलन प्रदान करने की दृष्टि से महंगाई पर अंकुश लगाने को सरकार ने अपनी प्राथमिकता सूची में रखा। अक्सर देखने में आता है कि महंगाई की स्थिति मौद्रिक मोर्चे के बजाय आपूर्ति शृंखला से जुड़ी होती है तो सरकार ने इस स्थिति को सुधारने के लिए कदम उठाए हैं। इस दिशा में जलवायु परिवर्तन की दृष्टि से अप्रभावित विभिन्न फसलों की नई किस्मों की पेशकश जैसी पहल की गई है।

इससे प्रतिकूल मौसमी परिघटनाओं से फसल को होने वाले नुकसान पर अंकुश लगने के साथ ही आपूर्ति के समीकरण भी नहीं बिगड़ेंगे और किसानों के हित भी सुरक्षित रहेंगे। सरकार कृषि उपज के भंडारण के लिए भी कमर कसे हुए है। निजी आयकर की दरों में बहुत मामूली फेरबदल किए हैं।

इसे लेकर वेतनभोगी वर्ग में असंतुष्टि का भाव दिख सकता है, क्योंकि ये शाश्वत अपेक्षाएं हैं। हालांकि पूंजीगत लाभ जैसे कर को लेकर अभी बहुत स्पष्टता नहीं है, लेकिन इसे बाजार में विभिन्न प्रकार के करों को एक स्तर पर सुसंगत करने की दिशा में आगे बढ़ने का संकेत माना जा सकता है। वैसे भी, प्यूचर एंड आप्शन यानी एफएंडओ को लेकर बीते दिनों तमाम तरह की आशंकाएं जताई गईं तो उसे देखते हुए यह अपेक्षित लग रहा था कि कुछ कदम जरूर उठाए जाएंगे। एंजल टैक्स की विदाई निःसंदेह स्वागतयोग्य है।

(लेखक काशी हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय में अर्थशास्त्र के प्रोफेसर हैं। प्रस्तुत विचार लेखक के निजी हैं।)

Prof Kanagasabapathi Ji Secretary and Trustee, SPMRF, New Delhi addressed a gathering of over 600 young minds on 25 July 2024



Discussion on “Union Budget 2024” on 29 July 2024



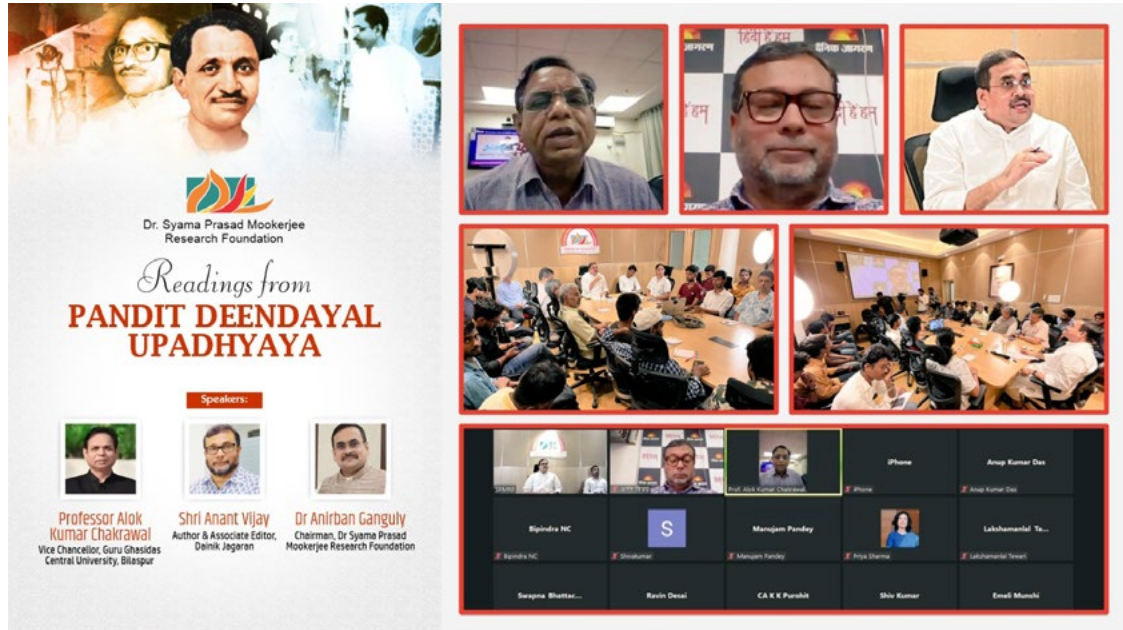
SPMRF Organised a Book Discussion on “Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi” at New Delhi on 10 August 2024



Discussion on “Bangladesh Turmoil: Implications on Economic Future, Safety of Minorities & Regional Stability” on 02 September 2024



Discussion on ‘Readings from PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA’ on 23rd September 2024



“Sree Sree Durgavandana 1431” & launch of 5th “Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” at West Bengal on 07 October 2024



“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Old Ever Green Club Durga Puja at Hanskhali, Nadia, West Bengal on 08 October 2024



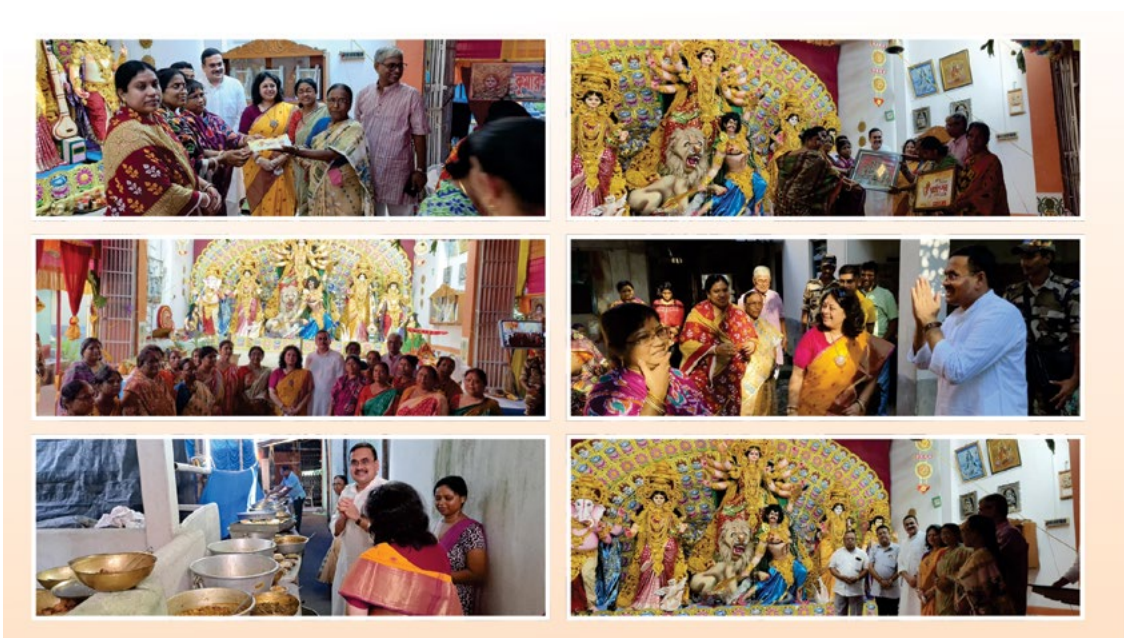
“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Udan Club Durga Puja at Krishnanagar, Nadia, West Bengal on 08 October 2024



“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Pallysree Samiti Durga Puja at Badkulla, Nadia, West Bengal on 08 October 2024



“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Kumarpur Mahila Parichalita Durgabari Samiti, at Contai, Purba Midnapore, West Bengal on 09 October 2024



“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Guru Ma Saraswati Hansda’s Ashram Durga Puja, at Domohani, Bankura, West Bengal on 10 October 2024



“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Durbrajpur Sarbojonin Durga Puja at Chatna-Bankura, West Bengal on 10th October 2024

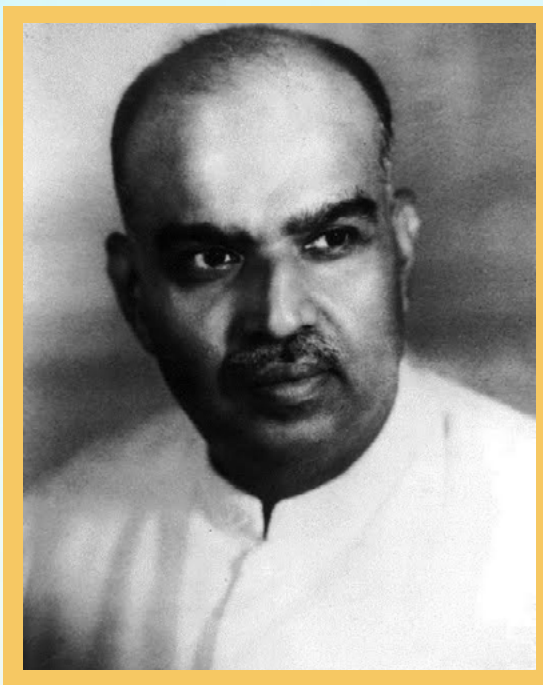


“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Naskarpara Mahila Samiti, Baruipur, Jadavpur, West Bengal on 12 October 2024



“Syama Prasad Durgotsav Samman” - 2024 given to Noapara Mandal-4 Durga Puja at Mohanpur, Barrackpore, West Bengal on 12 October 2024





“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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Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation

9, Ashoka Road New Delhi - 110001

E-mail: office@spmrf.org, Phone: 011-69047014