



Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee  
Research Foundation

# The Nationalist

ISSN 2454-9401

Issue: February, March - 2018

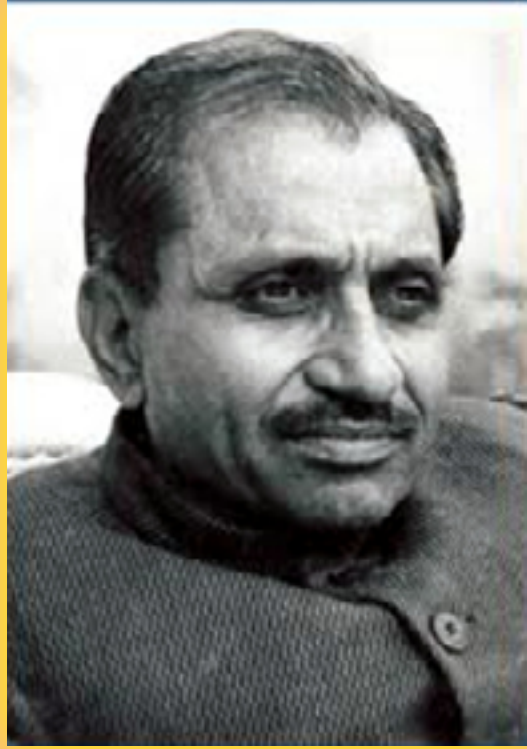


Imparting New Dynamism to India's  
Engagements with West Asia

"Roti, Sehath aur Makan"  
Budget, 2018

Ashtalakshmi to Act-East

वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट 2017:  
जंगलों के भी आ रहे हैं 'अच्छे दिन'



**“Unity in diversity and the expression of unity in various forms has remained the thought of Bharatiya Culture.”**

**-Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya**

## Editorial Advisors:

### Shakti Sinha, IAS (Rtd)

Former Power & Finance  
Secretary Govt. of Delhi

### Dr. Anirban Ganguly

Director, SPMRF

### Dr. Shiv Shakti Bakshi

Executive Editor, Kamal Sandesh

### Dr. Vijay Chauthaiwale

In Charge BJP Foreign Affairs Department  
& Convener, Overseas Friends of BJP

### Dr. Dhananjay Singh

(Assistant Professor)  
Jawaharlal Nehru University

### Professor Santishree D. Pandit

Professor  
Savitribal Phule Pune University &  
Vice President - Indian Politics Science Association

### Dr. Amit Singh

Assistant Professor ARSD College,  
Delhi University

### Amit Malviya

National In Charge, IT & Social  
Media Vibhag, BJP

## Research Team

- Shivanand Dwivedi
- Ajit Jha
- Shailendra Kumar Shukla
- Shubhendu Anand
- Ayush anand
- Vaibhav Chadha
- Amit Kumar

### Layout -

**Anup Chaurasia**

# CONTENT

## EDITORIAL

- \* Expanding the Base - Dr. Anirban Ganguly

## PM MODI'S VISION

- \* Salient Points of PM Modi's address at the dedication of several development projects to the nation in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh on 15 Feb, 2018
- \* Salient Points of PM Modi's address at the inauguration of Uttar Pradesh Investors' Summit - 2018 in Lucknow on 21 Feb, 2018
- \* Salient Points of PM's speech at the launch of National Nutrition Mission and Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in Jhunjhunu on 08 Mar, 2018
- \* Salient Points of PM's address at the inaugural session of the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance on 11 Mar, 2018

## SPECIAL ARTICLE

- \* Imparting New Dynamism to India's Engagements with West Asia - Samuel Rajiv
- \* "Roti, Sehath aur Makan" Budget, 2018 - Ashutosh Garg
- \* Triple Talaq to Haj Subsidy: Shaping the Future of Muslim Women in India - Prof. Syed Tanveer Nasreen
- \* Ashtalakshmi to Act-East - Anugula Rakesh Reddy

## POLICY ANALYSIS

- \* Indian agriculture gets a fresh new lease of life - Saswat Panigrahi
- \* वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट 2017: जंगलों के भी आ रहे हैं 'अच्छे दिन' - अरुणा त्रिपाठी
- \* मोदी केयर : आम जन के स्वास्थ्य की सुध लेने वाली योजना - सतीश सिंह
- \* Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme: -Madhura Joshi

## POLITICAL COMMENTARIES

- \* वामगढ़ के अभेद किले में संध - शिवानन्द द्विवेदी

## EVENT @ SPMRF

- \* Discussion on Union Budget 2018 at SPMRF Conference Room on 1st February 2018
- \* SPMRF & NMML Organised a Panel Discussion on "Union Budget 2018" with the Members of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister at Nehru Memorial Museum & Library on 7th February 2018
- \* SPMRF Organised a Talk on "Triple Talaq to Haj Subsidy: Shaping the future of Muslim Women in India" by Prof. Syed Tanveer Nasreen (Professor-in-charge, Dept. of Women's Studies, Burdwan University, West Bengal & Social Activist) at BJP Central Library on 10th February 2018
- \* SPMRF, NMML & BharatShakti.in organised a Seminar on "Indian Resurgence: Aspirations, Approaches, Achievements" on 22nd February 2018
- \* Discussion on "इक्कीसवीं सदी के बदलते भारत में युवाओं की भूमिका" at Samvad Bhavan, Digvijay Nath PG College, Auditorium, Gorakhpur on 23rd February 2018

## Expanding the Base



Dr. Anirban Ganguly

*One of the principle reasons for the BJP's expansion has been its multi-dimensional outreach initiated in the last four years. The party has not ceased to reinvent and re-articulate itself during this period.*

**T**he BJP's resounding victory in the elections in the northeastern states has conclusively broken one of the most resistant stereotypes, that of the party being a "Hindi heartland" party. BJP President Shri Amit Shah has clearly decimated that reductionist description and has seen his insistence that the party push eastward, fulfilled. When he had taken up the reins of the BJP, one of the early points that Shri Shah had made was on the need for the party to expand its base beyond its present geographical limits. Such an expansion, he argued, would give it greater stability and strength. Despite efforts by interested groups both religious and political, despite attempts being made to portray the BJP as a negative force in the politics of northeast, the mandate in favour of the party was one of clear acceptance.

The inroads that the party made in this round of the state elections in the region is the result of years of efforts that leaders and cadres put in on the ground, sustained by a tenacity that is seen only in a party which is ideologically inspired and has sprung from a long ideological churning. A transformative narrative of governance that has appealed to aspirations and highlighted an effective model also attracted and convinced people of the region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message for the people has been of greater integration, greater opportunities and of greater hope and they people responded to that message through conferring a clear mandate. The BJP's narrative of governance and of India has exposed the hollowness of the communist model in Tripura, which for nearly a quarter century could do little in terms of the state's development, opportunities and in way of fulfilling the peoples' aspirations.

While the Congress president spends his holidays in balmy Italy, is yet to reconcile himself to a life of full time politics and is never by the side of his workers and leaders, especially when they are defeated and demoralized, BJP president Amit Shah and his lieutenants lead from the front, are active on the ground and in both victory and defeat are seen standing with the rank and file. The Prime Minister continues to be the indefatigable campaigner for his vision of governance and for the party's outreach. This solidarity acts as an elixir for the political worker on the ground, for the booth level worker, for the district worker, for the workers of the party's frontal organizations, to persist and push for altering the electoral dynamics. In short, this sense of solidarity galvanizes the rank and file of the party in their pursuit for power and political permanency.



One of the principle reasons for the BJP's expansion has been its multi-dimensional outreach initiated in the last four years. The party has not ceased to reinvent and re-articulate itself during this period. Its convincing narrative of governance and development, matched with action at the grassroots, its robust narrative of enhancing India's international standing and prestige, its message for each section of society, especially for the marginalized has been convincing and articulate. It is also interesting to note that despite earning such a huge electoral mandate and majority, the BJP, has not displayed complacency in the last four years. Through a series of activities, outreach, initiatives, both political and societal, the party continues to

be relevant and evolving. The legitimate pursuit for power has amplified its positive actions into many directions.

In fact, when the first plenary of the party took place in Mumbai in December 1980, few who had gathered there, would have imagined that the Hindi heartland party description would someday be deleted and that the BJP would eventually, through years of toil, expansion, recalibration, emerge as a pan-Indian party and see its narrative of India gradually become mainstream.

The northeast results have finally given a firm shape to that hope and dream.

## Salient Points of PM Modi's address at the dedication of several development projects to the nation in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh on **15 Feb, 2018**



**I** am delighted to visit Arunachal Pradesh and be among the wonderful people of this state

◆ My visit to Arunachal Pradesh is related to three key projects in the state. The secretariat is already functional and this was a good step taken by the state government

◆ Most of the key departments are based in the new secretariat. This makes it easier for people coming from distant villages because they do not need to move from one place to another. Everything is in one place only. Coordination and convenience are enhanced

◆ Delighted to inaugurate a convention centre in Itanagar. This is more than a building, it is a vibrant centre that will further the aspirations of Arunachal Pradesh.

◆ There will be conferences and cultural activities that will draw government officials and private companies

◆ I am personally going to tell people- go to Arunachal Pradesh and hold your important meetings at the convention centre

◆ We are working towards building medical colleges in all parts of the nation. This is because, when one studies in a particular area, one becomes better acquainted with the local health challenges

◆ We are working towards building medical colleges in all parts of the nation. This is because, when one studies in a particular area, one becomes better acquainted with the local health challenges

◆ The Naharlagun- New Delhi express will run twice a week and will be called Arunachal Pradesh express

## Salient Points of PM Modi's address at the inauguration of Uttar Pradesh Investors' Summit – 2018 in Lucknow on 21 Feb, 2018



**उ**त्तर प्रदेश में इतने व्यापक स्तर पर इन्वेस्टर समिट होना, इन्वेस्टर समिट में इतने निवेशकों और उद्यमियों का एकजुट होना, अपने आप में एक बड़ा परिवर्तन है

● मैं यूपी के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ जी, मंत्रिमंडल के उनके सहयोगियों, यहां की ब्यूरोक्रेसी, यहां की पुलिस, और उत्तर प्रदेश की जनता को बधाई देता हूँ कि वो अपने उत्तर प्रदेश को इतने कम समय में समृद्धि और विकास के रास्ते पर ले आई है

● उत्तर प्रदेश में संसाधन और सामर्थ्य का इतना विस्तार है कि यहां पर सैकड़ों वर्षों से लगभग हर क्षेत्र की अलग पहचान रही है

● उत्तर प्रदेश आज अनाज के उत्पादन में, गेहूं के उत्पादन में, गन्ने के उत्पादन में, दूध के उत्पादन में, आलू के उत्पादन में, पूरे देश का नंबर वन स्टेट है। देश में दूसरे नंबर पर सब्जियों और तीसरे नंबर पर फलों का उत्पादन यहीं होता है

● Negativity भरे उस माहौल से राज्य को Positivity की तरफ लाना, हताशा-निराशा अलग करके उम्मीद की किरण जगाने का काम योगी सरकार ने किया है

● मुझे बहुत खुशी है कि योगी जी की सरकार, इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए ही अपने निर्णय ले रही है, नीतियां बना रही है

● यूपी में औद्योगिक निवेश को रोजगार सृजन से जोड़ते हुए नीतिगत निर्णय लिए जा रहे हैं। योगी जी की सरकार द्वारा अलग-अलग सेक्टरों के हिसाब से अलग-अलग Policies बना कर काम किया जा रहा है

● योगी सरकार पूरी गंभीरता के साथ किसानों से किए गए, महिलाओं, नौजवानों से किए गए वायदे पूरे कर रही है

● Potential + Policy + Planning+ Performance से ही Progress आती है। अब यूपी भी Super-Hit Performance देने के लिए तैयार है

● One District-One Product योजना को Backup Power मिलेगी केंद्र सरकार के स्किल इंडिया मिशन से, स्टैंड अप इंडिया – स्टार्ट अप इंडिया मिशन से...इसके अलावा सबसे बड़ा लाभ मिलेगा प्रधानमंत्री मुद्रा योजना के माध्यम से

## Salient Points of PM's speech at the launch of National Nutrition Mission and Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in Jhunjhunu on 08 Mar, 2018



**T**here is no question of discrimination based on gender. Everyone is equal.

● Important that girls get access to quality education, just like boys do.

● 'बेटा-बेटी एक' भाव के लिए हमें एक सामाजिक और जन आंदोलन खड़ा करने की जरूरत.

● A daughter is not a burden. Please look around us- see how girls are bringing pride and glory for our nation. They are excelling in several fields.

● Important to provide proper nutrition to children.

● Mission Indradhanush has brought an extremely positive change in the lives of women and children.

● Nutrition की चिंता करना एक काम है। कभी-कभी सरकार के द्वारा vaccination के कई कार्यक्रम चलते हैं। लेकिन हम उस हेल्थ सेंटर की जितनी सेवाएं हैं- उपलब्ध हैं, बजट है, अफसर है, लोग हैं- लेकिन हम वहां तक जाते नहीं हैं। और उसी का परिणाम है कि वो कोई न कोई बीमारी का शिकार हो जाता है।



## Salient Points of PM's address at the inaugural session of the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance on 11 Mar, 2018



**I**nternational Solar Alliance का यह नन्हा पौधा आप सभी के सम्मिलित प्रयास और प्रतिबद्धता के बिना रोपा ही नहीं जा सकता था। इसलिए मैं फ्रांस का और आप सबका बहुत आभारी हूँ।

121 सम्भावित देशों में से 61 Alliance को join कर चुके हैं 32 ने Framework Agreement को ratify भी कर दिया है।

भारत में वेदों ने हजारों साल पहले से सूर्य को विश्व की आत्मा माना है। भारत में सूर्य को पूरे जीवन का पोषक माना गया है।

आज जब हम Climate Change जैसी चुनौती से निपटने का रास्ता ढूँढ रहे हैं तो हमें प्राचीन दर्शन के संतुलन और समग्र दृष्टिकोण की ओर देखना होगा।

भारत में हमने दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा विस्तार कार्यक्रम शुरू किया है।

हम 2022 तक renewables से 175 GW बिजली उत्पन्न करेंगे जिसमें से 100 GW बिजली सौर से होगी। हमने इसमें से 20 GW installed solar power का लक्ष्य हासिल कर लिया है।

हमें innovation को प्रोत्साहित करना होगा ताकि विभिन्न आवश्यकताओं के लिए सौर समाधान प्रदान हो सके।

हमें solar projects के लिए concessional financing और कम जोखिम का वित्त मुहैया कराना होगा।

Regulatory aspects एवं मानकों का विकास करना होगा जो सौर समाधान अपनाने और उनके विकास को गति दें।

विकासशील देशों में bankable solar projects के लिए consultancy support का विकास करना होगा।

हमारे प्रयासों में अधिक समावेशिता और भागीदारी पर बल दिया जाये।

पूरी मानवता की भलाई चाहते हैं तो मुझे विश्वास है कि निजी दायरों से बाहर निकलकर एक परिवार की तरह हम उद्देश्यों और प्रयासों में एकता और एकजुटता ला सकेंगे।

यह वही रास्ता है जिससे हम प्राचीन मुनियों की प्रार्थना – 'तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय' को चरितार्थ कर पायेंगे।



**Samuel Rajiv**

# Imparting New Dynamism to India’s Engagements with West Asia

**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Palestine, United Arab Emirates and Oman from February 9-12, 2018 imparted new dynamism to India’s enhanced engagement with its extended neighbourhood. The visits were infused with personal bonhomie and warmth between the leadership of these key players — with the Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale noting that ‘exceptional courtesies’ were extended to Mr. Modi and was reflective of the high esteem and importance they attach to a strong relationship with India.

## Palestine



Mr. Modi’s visit to Ramallah (via Jordan) was historic in that it was the first prime ministerial visit to Palestine. Incidentally, the last prime ministerial visit to Jordan

was by Rajiv Gandhi nearly three decades ago way back in 1988. King Abdullah himself will be making a three day visit to India from February 27.

For his three-hour long engagements in Ramallah, it was telling that Mr. Modi flew in a Jordanian helicopter escorted by Israeli helicopters. He became the first prime minister to visit the Yasser Arafat museum in Ramallah. India committed a further \$40 million to its ongoing developmental assistance to Palestine, relating to the building of schools, hospitals and the setting up of a national printing press for Palestine.

On the vexing issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Mr. Modi affirmed that a ‘permanent solution’ will only be achieved through ‘negotiations and understanding’. In remarks ahead of Mr. Modi’s visit, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas flagged a possible role for India in creating a multi-lateral forum of negotiations for the Middle East Peace Process.

India voted along with 127 other countries in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution in December 2017 which aired its opposition to the policy decision of President Donald Trump to shift the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, in tune with a long-standing, bi-partisan domestic US position. While India’s vote was appreciated in Palestine, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during his January 2018 visit to India, termed the decision as ‘disappointing’ as it relates to Jerusalem, which has been Israel’s ‘eternal capital’ for more than 3000 years since the time of King David. Most analysts note that Mr. Netanyahu’s week-long visit to India in January 2018 and Mr. Modi’s three hour trip to Ramallah have successfully de-hyphenated India’s mutually distinct relationships with the two

protagonists. Almost as soon as it assumed the reins of power in New Delhi, the Modi government came under pressure in Parliament for its refusal to condemn Israeli military actions in Operation Protective Edge (July-August 2014). Critics of the government accused it of abandoning India's long-held policy positions on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The Modi government on its part continued to reiterate that there was no such policy change, and highlighted the fact that no such demand was raised during the previous instances of Israeli military activity in the Gaza Strip in December 2008-January 2009 and November 2012, when the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government was in power. India's diplomatic and developmental support to Palestine has meanwhile continued, with Mr. Modi receiving Abbas in New Delhi in May 2017, just ahead of his stand-alone historic visit to Israel in July 2017. In fact, Mr. Modi's meeting with Mr. Abbas in Ramallah was the fourth such instance since the BJP government came to power.

## UAE



Mr. Modi's next trip on the agenda was to the UAE, to deliver the key note address at the World Government Summit in Dubai. He was personally received by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi at the airport. The Crown Prince was the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in January 2017. Mr. Modi had previously visited UAE in August 2015, which was the first prime ministerial visit to that country after 34 years. Both sides had decided to elevate their relationship to a 'comprehensive strategic partnership' during that visit, an agreement regarding which was signed in January 2017.

The defence/security component of the ties with countries in India's extended neighbourhood has seen a steady growth, and UAE has not been immune to this trend. Mr. Manohar Parrikar's May 2016 visit to the UAE was the first ever such visit by an Indian defence minister. Joint air exercises were held in May-June 2016 with UAE, after a gap of eight years. The first ever bilateral naval exercises between the two countries will be held in March 2018.

While five MOUs were signed, the most significant of these relates to the MOU between the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and a consortium of Indian oil companies led by ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) for a 10 per cent participating interest in the offshore Lower Zakhum concession. The agreement is significant for India's energy security given that the 40 year concession allows for India to receive more than 2 million tonnes of oil every year. Indian officials note that this is the first time Indian oil companies have received oil concession anywhere in the Gulf. Another agreement related to the implementation of India's first ever strategic petroleum reserve in Mangalore, for which six million tonnes of oil will be supplied by ADNOC. Another MOU related to DP World setting up a multi-modal logistics park in Jammu. This will be part of DP World's committed investments of \$3 billion in various projects in India. The UAE is India's first partner in the \$75 billion National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF), with the Abu Dhabi Investment Agency (ADIA) joining as the anchor investor with an investment of \$1 billion in October 2017. A significant cultural moment during Mr. Modi's trip related to the laying of the foundation stone for a Hindu temple via video link.

**Oman**



Prime Minister Modi’s next stop was Muscat, Oman, where eight MOUs were signed, relating to cooperation in tourism, health, outer space, as well as an annexure on military cooperation, among others. An MOU on scholarly cooperation related to that between the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and the National Defence College of the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman is one of India’s closest security/defence partners, with the MOU on military cooperation dating back to 2005 (renewed in 2016). The port of Salala provides critical logistics support to Indian naval ships in their voyages in the region. The ninth round of the Joint Military Cooperation Committee was held in April 2017 in New Delhi, with the next round to be held in Muscat in 2018. Oman extended significant assistance during ‘Op Rahat’ in March-April 2015 when Indian nationals along with other South Asians were evacuated from conflict-torn Yemen.

Oman also played a critical role in securing the release of Father Tom Uzhunnalil in September 2017. He was kidnapped from the Missionaries of Charity home for the elderly in Aden in March 2016 by Islamic State terrorists in a raid that killed 16 people. Both sides agreed to intensify their cooperation in the defence/security realm, and flagged cyber security as one area where there was the imperative need for enhanced cooperation. The India-Oman Joint Statement of February 12 notes that both are ‘maritime neighbours across

the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.’ Both sides condemned terrorism in ‘all its forms and manifestations’, emphasized on ‘the need to isolate the sponsors and supporters of terrorists’ and highlighted the India-Oman model of ‘building inclusive societies’ as effective tools to counter extremism and radicalization.

Mr. Modi’s community reception and his visit to the Motishwar Mandir built by the Gujarati business community 125 years ago highlighted the cultural connect. Over 800,000 people of Indian origin/citizens are a vibrant part of Oman’s economic life and repatriate over \$3 billion of remittances — nearly four times more than the remittances the Indian community was sending back in 2008, when the last prime ministerial visit took place.

**In Closing**



It is indeed significant that in the first two months of 2018, India has received the heads of state from Israel and Iran — two states that are at loggerheads with each other, while Mr. Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Palestine, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia respectively. These high-level visits are an acknowledgement of the success of India’s regional foreign policy in the pursuit of national interests. At the same time, they are a glowing affirmation that these countries view a robust, positive relationship with a big regional power in their neighbourhood as essential to their growth and well being.

**(The author is Associate Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi. )**



**Ashutosh Garg**

## “Roti, Sehath aur Makan” Budget, 2018

**T**he excitement and the frenzied analysis of the much talked about budget is over. The customary plaudits from the supporters and the brickbats from the opposition in the first few hours is also over. It is time for us to take stock of the budget proposals dispassionately, after taking a deep breath and leaving aside all our emotions.

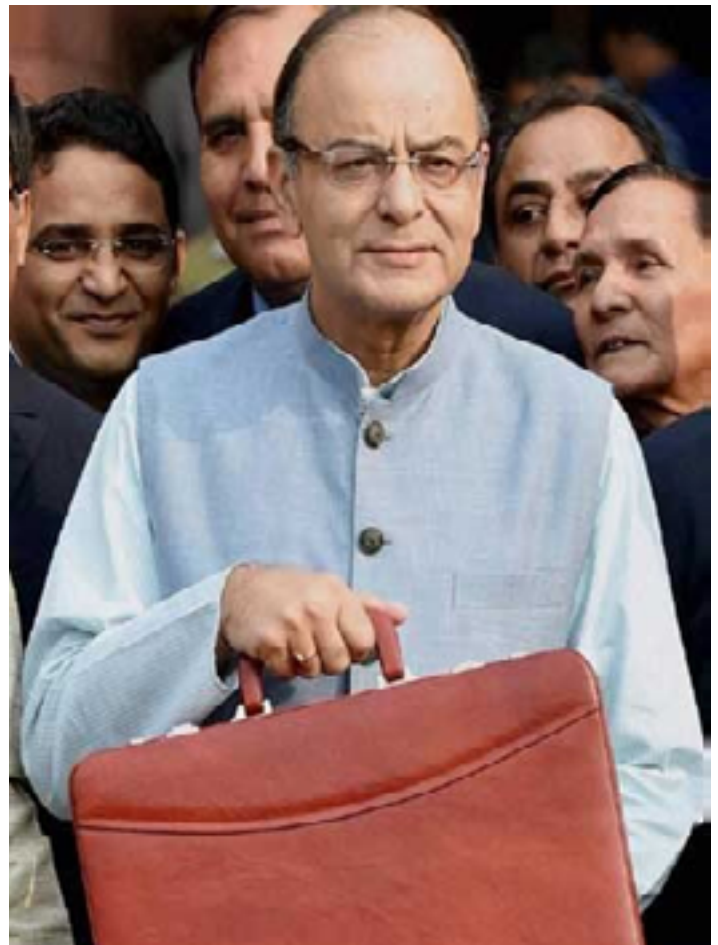
The founder of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew had stated in his first speech to the Singapore Parliament in August 1965 that he wanted Singaporeans to remember two things as they started their journey as an independent Nation. His first message to the newly elected Parliamentarians was that the World did not owe Singaporeans a living. His second message was that the planning for their generation, for better or for worse, had already been done and that the parliamentarians needed to think of planning for the next generation of Singaporeans. Keeping these two thoughts at the back of our mind, let us examine the budget presented by our Finance Minister.

The middle class is said to be upset because they feel they have been left out. The wealthy and the entitled are upset because they have not got a reduction in their income taxes. But it is time for this constituency to sit back and acknowledge that they are where they are because previous finance ministers have thought of them. Yes, they can always hope for “more and more” but in a country with such significant income disparities, they need to stop grudging incentives for the very poor and forgotten members of our country. The corporate world needs to go beyond the stipulated Corporate Social Responsibility if they are to see long term and sustainable growth in India.

The Government, over the past few years has made very courageous moves by implementing struc-

tural reforms through the introduction of Demonetisation, Goods and Services Tax and the Bankruptcy Code. The short term problems faced because of these reforms will benefit our economy for many years to come. The fiscal deficit in this budget is being contained at 3.3% showing a strong leaning towards financial prudence in the run up to the elections.

Let us look at the significant budget proposals, both positive and not so positive, that affect the masses in our country.



● Health Insurance Scheme – The announcement of the world’s largest health insurance scheme will benefit 10 crore households or 50 crore people. When one realises that this number is 40% of the country, the magnitude of the proposal sinks in. This will truly benefit the common man. Implementation of anything of this magnitude will take time and will have some glitches but as long as the intent and direction are clear, the critics can be conveniently ignored.

● Crop Procurement Price – The budget has proposed a 1.5 times increase in the procurement prices of crops which will immediately put more money in the hands of the farmers. This is very significant coming on the back of a consistently increasing procurement price over the past 4 years. This will be augmented with a huge increase in institutional credit for farmers. Though the farmers expected loan waivers, this has not been done. Loan waivers are temporary “fix-its” and offer temporary solutions at a huge cost to the economy.

● Operation Green – Taking into account the annual challenges most of the country faces because of the varying prices of potato, tomato and onion, this budget has recommended an Operation Green similar to Operation Flood for milk. Once again, this will help to stabilize the prices of these staple vegetables in all our diets. The impact will be felt over a period of time.

● Housing for all by 2022 – The budget continues to lay a strong emphasis on housing for all by 2022, the 75th anniversary of the Republic. Imagine an India where everyone has a roof over their head.

● Infrastructure – The Budget continues to commit more funds to building the much needed infrastructure all over the country. The poll bound state of Karnataka received a special mention from the Finance Minister through an enhanced allocation for the Bangalore Metro.

● Ujjwala Scheme – This scheme has given free cooking gas to over 5 crore women and the budget proposes to increase this number to 8 crore women. We should sit back and think that for a lot of people, gas is taken for granted and yet such a significant number of our fellow citizens, dependent on wood

and coal fires, are getting the benefits of gas for the first time post-independence.

● Swachh Bharat – After the installation of 6 crore toilets in the past few years, the budget emphasizes the need to continue this drive and make an additional 2 crore toilets in the coming year. Once again, we should think of something as basic as making India open defecation free has not been available to so many in 7 decades.

● Long Term Capital Gains – These have been re-introduced and the cover the Finance Minister has taken is one of a buoyant stock market. Buoyancy of stock markets can never be taken for granted but the long term capital gain is a one way street of paying out cash. This provision needs to be reconsidered and reversed.

● Customs Duty Increase – The proposal to increase customs duties is definitely a very retrograde and ill-advised step especially for a country that is pushing for more investments. While this may seem to be a strong step to support “Make in India”, customs duties are always seen as trade barriers and frighten away potential investors. Increasing customs duties on smart phones, the very tool of the masses, while referring to additional investments in Artificial Intelligence and Block chain is baffling to say the least.

If India is to occupy its rightful place in the comity of nations as the 5th largest economy, some sacrifices will have to be made by the people who have “had it all” over the past 7 decades.

**(The author is the founder Chairman of Guardian Pharmacies. A keen political observer, he is an Angel Investor and Executive Coach. He is the author of 5 best-selling books, Reboot. Reinvent. Rewire: Managing Retirement in the 21st Century; The Corner Office; An Eye for an Eye; The Buck Stops Here - Learnings of a #Startup Entrepreneur and The Buck Stops Here – My Journey from a Manager to an Entrepreneur.)**



**Prof. Syed Tanveer  
Nasreen**

## Triple Talaq to Haj Subsidy: Shaping the Future of Muslim Women in India

“Our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal (*italics mine*).”

**T**his is a sentence from the famous Gettysburg Address by President Abraham Lincoln on November 19, 1863. It had successfully changed the narrative of the American history and marked the beginning of modern day free democracy. In this famous 272-word Gettysburg address, Lincoln had also underlined that the ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people’ shall not perish from the earth.

The Gettysburg address has been described as a milestone in American history because of its sheer nature and faith in the ideals of equality and justice.

In fact, this remarkable address by Abraham Lincoln, made at the cemetery of the soldiers who died protecting the value and spirit of the American constitution, has been rendered more important in history than the battle itself.

It was an altogether novel spirit and a new system of values which led the American President to state ‘...all men are created equal’, thus ending the system of slavery prevalent in the American society and charting a new road-map for the African-Americans living in the country.

Why I began with a reference to the Gettysburg address of President Lincoln is that I, as a student of history, found the same spirit and same determination in Prime Minister Narendra Modi when I heard him, declaring from the Red Fort, that Indian Muslim women should have the same rights and facilities that the Constitution of India guarantees to other sections of the population. With my little sense of history and understanding of how the dynamics of gender equality

operates in our country, I compare and equate Narendra Modi’s Lal Quilla Speech with the Gettysburg address of Abraham Lincoln as both these addresses serve as milestones in history; promising to usher in a new phase in the history of their respective countries, ensuring equality and justice for the human being above everything else.

**Imagine any statesman or a government elsewhere in the world, trying to initiate a substantial change in the lives of ten crore people through reforms. This would have been considered as a phenomenon in social history. Narendra Modi undertook the same heroic or Herculean task, of trying to free Indian Muslim women from the shackles of age old tradition and customs.**

You might find my comparison weird or a bit too far-fetched; but I reaffirm my position that Narendra Modi’s speech and the commitment of his government to liberate Indian Muslim women from the shackles of patriarchal oppression in the name of religious custom, is actually a process of liberating nearly ten crore Indian Muslim women from a position of virtual slavery.

I can give you numerous examples to show how Indian Muslim women suffer the status of virtual slavery in the name of instant triple talaq, or the Muslim Personal Law. Even Shayara Bano of Kashipur, Uttarakhand, who has played a pivotal role in the movement in recent times, had apologetically explained, “Mere purey khandan mein kisi ka kabhi talaq nahi hua hai” (No one in my entire family has gone through a divorce before me). Tradition teaches women to suffer silently at the hands of patriarchy. Salima Khatun (name changed), a

poor homemaker from Birbhum district of West Bengal, had helped her poorer parents with a paltry sum of twenty rupees, a money she had sent through her brother when he came to visit her. The enraged husband, a daily labourer, abandoned Salima on this excuse of disobedience. Another young woman had stepped out of home to buy a dozen of glass bangles before Id, without the permission of her husband. She was also served an instant triple talaq by the enraged husband as a punishment for her obstinacy. Could slavery be worse?

But examples are examples. Let us consider certain figures.

**I can give you numerous examples to show how Indian Muslim women suffer the status of virtual slavery in the name of instant triple talaq, or the Muslim Personal Law. Even Shayara Bano of Kashipur, Uttarakhand, who has played a pivotal role in the movement in recent times, had apologetically explained, “Mere purey khandan mein kisi ka kabhi talaq nahi hua hai” (No one in my entire family has gone through a divorce before me).**

Muslims comprise a little more than twenty crore in the 120 crore total population of India, and half of these are women. Ten crore is a huge number, comprising a population larger than the total population of many European countries, and greater than the cumulative population of the top five cities of the world.

Imagine any statesman or a government elsewhere in the world, trying to initiate a substantial change in the lives of ten crore people through reforms. This would have been considered as a phenomenon in social history. Narendra Modi undertook the same heroic or Herculean task, of trying to free Indian Muslim women from the shackles of age old tradition and customs.

‘Triple Talaq’ apparently is a small word, but it carries with it very great implications of gender oppression and violence. It has been an open sword, dangling over the heads of Muslim women, transforming their status to that of slaves under the Muslim patriarchy. Even where arbitrary triple talaq is not exercised, the very threat to which the woman is subjected, can be

understood to be gross emotional violence for the wife subjecting her life to perpetual insecurity, and therefore, no better than a slave in practice [Emotional violence, we may recall here, is a major component of violence in the PWDVA, 2005 ].

Those of us who have seen the Muslim society from inside know how these ‘threats of arbitrary abandonment’ in the name of a religious custom, drown the ‘voices’ of Muslim women, strategically marginalizing them and pushing them further into the secluded corners of the household, rendering them into social non-entities in the name of purdah, so that they are finally excluded and peacefully forgotten by the rest of the society!

‘Liberal’ historians like Ramachandra Guha, have often paradoxically, bitterly criticized the Modi Government, but have praised Virat Kohli for his consistency and battling mettle in tough situations. Like Guha, many cricket analysts rank Virat Kohli higher than Sachin Tendulkar, the God of Indian cricket, for his consistency in the 22 yard pitch. I would like to apply the same theory and parameters in judging and evaluating the will and determination of this government in liberating Indian Muslim women.

Just after the triple talaq movement, came the suggestion of the Central Haj Committee to allow Muslim women above 45 years to go for Haj without a male guardian of mahram. The principal opposition Party, Congress, has criticized the central government for its claim of giving this opportunity to Indian Muslim women for the first time. According to the claim of the Congress, it has been done in compliance with the reform initiated by the Government of Saudi Arabia and that the present Government in India has no right to claim a pioneering role for this decision.

If only we go back a few months and flip through the pages of the newspapers in October 2017, when the Central Haj Committee, first announced their recommendation that Indian Muslim women, above 45 years of age and in groups of four, would be permitted to travel for Haj without mahram, you will see the sharp resistance it evoked from the quarters of Deoband and other Muslim clerics.

Did any Congress leader at that time oppose or condemn the approach of the Muslim orthodoxy regarding the Haj Committee’s decision? Did they utter



any single word supporting the right of Muslim women to travel for Haj without a male guardian?

No. And, how could they?

A senior minister of the former UPA Government, Kapil Sibal stood in the Supreme Court, defending the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), an NGO which has gained considerable reputation, or disrepute I must say, in recent times for its regressive stand on the rights of Muslim women. Sibal had even defended triple talaq as a 1400 year old custom and therefore deserving deepest veneration.

Salman Khurshid, however, did not appear on behalf of the AIMPLB, but acted as *amicus curiae*, on being asked by the Supreme Court. In his submission before the Supreme Court, Khurshid is said to have opined triple talaq as one revocable talaq. But he did not say a word about it in public. We have not heard a public statement from Salman Khurshid after the Constitutional Bench gave the historic verdict, terming triple talaq as unconstitutional on August 22, 2017.

The Congress leaders have attested to their displeasure on the verdict as we also saw their reaction to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill after its introduction in the Parliament.

We have seen examples of 'secular' 'liberal' Muslim politicians in India, who for instance, married to a Christian, a noted journalist from the English Press, would ritually convert her to Islam after marriage and made to abide by all Sharia rules. The personal becomes political as such micro-narratives within the domestic space transform into larger macro-narratives of support for the orthodoxy and resistance to any change in favour of women.

It was thus when Narendra Modi was consistent and determined to take the next step forward by allowing Muslim women to go for Haj without mahram, the entire Congress leadership turned into a great band of silent actors, without uttering a single word in favour of Muslim women.

This is only an attempt to rob the government of the credit due to it for this momentous reform. I regard this right to travel for Haj without mahram as a major step in the empowerment of Muslim women, even though starting from a religious premise.

It is also likely to increase the self-esteem and confidence of these women. The idea that it is possible to do something by themselves, be it a religious pilgrim-

age, without male guardianship, will mould the future of Indian Muslim women very positively, in the days to come. It is indeed a very positive indication that 1300 women will travel for Haj this year, the largest number of women-pilgrims coming from Kerala and West Bengal.

As a student of history, I can always give references from the days of the freedom struggle of India to the modern day Parliamentary democracy of how the Congress leadership has always surrendered to the pressure from the Muslim orthodoxy and patriarchy. It started from Gandhiji's endorsing of the Khilafat Movement into the Indian freedom struggle to Nehru's decision to continue with the discriminatory colonial Muslim Personal law, the Shariat Application Act, Act 26 of 1937, vis-à-vis the newly drafted Constitution of India which in its Preamble ensured "Equality of status and of opportunity", to all sections of the population. Let us not go so far back in history.

I would like to take a flashback in the 1980s when Rajiv Gandhi was ruling with an absolute majority in the Parliament and decided to overturn the Shah Bano verdict by introducing a new ordinance.

What could have been more horrific for the Indian Muslim women than this?

Coming to the point of maintenance, it is ironical and paradoxical that the Congress leadership is now raising the point that if the offender husband is imprisoned for three years as punishment for arbitrary triple talaq, how will he provide for the maintenance of his wife?

Give me one instance where a Muslim man in India has provided for the maintenance of his divorced wife, if he has provided it at all, beyond the compulsory period of waiting, or *iddat*? This is because he is not required by customary law to provide for the maintenance of his wife beyond the period of *iddat*. With great hope, I look forward to the future of women, and the future of Muslim women in India, who have been empowered by the Supreme Court verdict of the Bench of Justices R Banumathi and M Santanagoudar which set an alimony benchmark, i.e., 25% of the ex-husband's net salary, ensuring "a dignified life for the ex-wife".

As a Bollywood enthusiast, I often feel that the political leadership in our country, the Congress and others, love to see Indian Muslim women in the stereotypical role as portrayed in B R Chopra's legendary film,

Nikaah. Entrapped and enslaved by what is glorified as religious, and therefore would even be a sacrilege to think of changing it, Muslim women would remain the perpetual victim, iconically romanticized by the lyrics of “Dil ki arman ansuon me bahe gaye”, and that she can never wipe her overflowing tears and decide to rise up for herself, claiming her rights to an equal world.

Otherwise, in the fifteen years of Congress-NCP rule in Maharashtra, have you ever heard that they are proposing any change in the patriarchal dictats in the Haji Ali darga? Why did Muslim women have to wait till a Devendra Fadnavis led Government came in Mumbai, and Muslim women fought their battle in the Mumbai High Court to achieve their right to enter the holy shrine located on the rocks off the Worli sea-shore, on Aug 26, 2016? The PIL, I understand, was filed in November, 2014 but the public hostilities the activists encountered would have been fanned by any other political party, set upon pleasing the Muslim orthodoxy.

Muqtar Abbas Naqvi had said that the Congress has proved its chronic anti-woman mindset by opposing every single move which seeks to liberate Muslim women and shape their destiny in this world of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Even Sharad Pawar of the NCP in Maharashtra has, of late, been vocally criticizing the triple talaq bill & mobilizing public opinion against it, with his eyes set on vote bank politics.

In January 2018, the Government has announced the withdrawal of Haj subsidy from this year, following a 2012 Supreme Court order, in keeping with its stated philosophy of ‘empowering’ minorities, and not ‘appeasing’ them. The Hon’ble Minister for Minority Affairs, Shri Muqtar Abbas Naqvi, stated that the Government, which spent around Rs 500 crore in its last Haj subsidy bill would like to see the money being used for educating girls. This would definitely go a long way in the mainstreaming and empowerment of Muslim girls in the country and lead to a considerable mobility among them, both horizontal and vertical.

Along with the middle & the upper middle classes, the steps taken for the empowerment of the lower middle and the lower sections of the Muslim women population also need to be considered. Towards the end, I would like to mention a few schemes aimed at empowering women, and likely to benefit Muslim women immensely because the majority of them belong to these socio-economic categories.

**These are:**

1) Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana ( Micro Units Development & Reference Agency Limited), active since April 8, 2015. The fact that no collaterals are required to avail the loan, is likely to ease the process of participation of women in the non corporate small business.

2) Nai Roshni Scheme: The scheme for leadership development of minority women, under the Ministry of Minority Affairs. This will also shape the future of minority women in India, empower & instill confidence among them, while significantly contributing to poverty reduction, economic growth & strengthening of civil society. The health concerns of women in our country is a very serious issue and in a community where women suffer from poverty and malnourishment, along with multiple pregnancies lead to severe medical complications including osteoporosis, cervical and ovarian cancers. Coupled with ‘taboos’ regarding the female body, which preclude the possibilities of being touched and examined by the unrelated male, the health issues of Muslim women remain a serious challenge in India.

Like the Ujala Scheme that has immensely benefited the poor women, including Muslim women in our country, the medical cover of up to Rupees five lakh to be given to ten crore families, in the world’s largest government funded health care programme, ‘Modicare’, as it is being called is also likely to shape a healthy future for our women.

**(The author is Professor, Department of History and Professor In-Charge of the Department of Women’s Studies at the University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India, where she is teaching for the last two decades. She has done her PhD on the identity of Muslim women from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She led the movement for the ban of triple talaq and has been crusading for the equal rights of Muslim women. She is a regular columnist in several Bangla newspapers and appears regularly on television as a commentator on contemporary issues)**



**Anugula Rakesh Reddy**

## Ashtalakshmi to Act-East

**N**orth-East India is one of the most fascinating places of India. It is India's Ashtalakshmi. But, due to decades of isolation and neglect by Governments of the past, North East could never unleash its full potential. Lack of political will from Delhi not only resulted in unacceptable level of underdevelopment but also created a feeling of isolation among the masses of this region. But, thanks to Act East Policy of the Modi Government the region is receiving a lot of attention both politically and otherwise.

Lack of connectivity isolated the region not only from the rest of the country and the world, but also within itself. Infrastructure deficit impeded the economic growth of the region. The previous governments paid minimal attention to the situation. Although the P.V. Narasimha Rao Government came up with the "Look East" policy in 1992, its focused implementation began only after 2008 with the intervention of the then foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee. Initiatives such as earmarking at least 10% of Plan Budgets of Non Exempted Central Ministries for North East Region have been started by the past governments but the progress of North East Region(NER) remained tardy due to delayed completion and non-completion of projects.

North East obtained a special place in the country's development agenda under the current NDA regime. Modi government from day one has put extra efforts to pace up the development work in the region. Under the Proactive Act East Policy, the Government aims not only to reduce the isolation of the region but also plans to make it India's gateway to the South East Asian Countries. This was asserted by its mention in the then president Pranab Mukherjee's address in February last year where the idea of development of North East as the "Ashta-lakshmi" was envisaged.



The Prime minister's vision of Transformation of North East by Transportation is given a high priority. The issue of Connectivity is being unraveled by the major infrastructural boost. In the last three years, the centre has sanctioned 3800 km of national highways with an investment of over Rs 32,000 crores, of which more than 1200 km roads have already been laid. The Prime Minister who is spearheading the development in the NER, also promised that the union government would invest another 60,000 crore rupees under the SARD (Special Accelerated Road Development) Program and additional Rs 30,000 crores under the Bharatmala project in the next few years to come.

Road connectivity projects are not only empowering the North East by generating large-scale employment opportunities to the people of the region but are also playing key role in facilitating the defense capabilities of the country. This region having high strategic importance, is being used to open doors for establishing strong relations with Southeast Asian countries. Some projects are also being backed by Japanese funding. Aimed at countering China's ambitious OBOR Initiative, India hastened the South Asian Sub-Regional Eco-

conomic Cooperation (SASEC) programme and is also working on a multitude of road and bridge projects to improve connectivity with Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Thailand.

Rail connectivity for the region is vital considering the regular damage of roads accounting to severe weather conditions. In terms of rail connectivity, Suresh Prabhu will be remembered by the people of North East for delivering what other railway ministers before him could not. The situation of rail connectivity was so adverse that only one of the capital city of the north eastern states had a railway station until 2008, when Agartala became the second capital to have one. Projects of gauge conversion had also been started in the past but none were completed before 2014.



But within three years of the formation of this government, five of the north eastern states have been brought under the broad gauge map of the country. Today, no metre gauge line exists in the northeastern states, thanks to the conversion of over 900 kms of track to broad gauge in the last three years. Tripura also got its Rajdhani express last October. All the states of the region are now included in the broad gauge network, except for Sikkim which hasn't seen any rail connectivity even after 70 years of Independence. More than 30 new trains including two freight trains have been added in the past few years alone. Work has also started on connecting the region with Bangladesh and Myanmar via rail in order to facilitate easy access to ports and to cut down the time and distance to Kolkata.

Of late, The Union Aviation Ministry has also been busy in the Northeast region. The government's

plans to add 19 new or underserved airports and 17 new heliports in the region under its aviation network. Plans are being laid out to connect the region not only with the country's mainland but also with other South East Asian Countries. With bases in Shillong and Imphal, the Ministry of Development of North East Region is also planning to introduce a helicopter-based dispensary and OPD services in the far-flung areas of the region. This depicts the Government's efforts to use all its means to push for better connectivity of the region.

Being blessed with pristine scenic beauty and profuse natural resources, the North East Region has attracted the trading community even in the pre-independence era. The Brahmaputra and the Barak rivers were the main conveyance systems through which the goods were transported to the port of Kolkata through undivided Bengal. However, the new political boundaries dealt a major blow to the then flourishing inland navigation systems and the region become disconnected and later turned into a region with a lot of hurdles in connectivity.

Lately, the government of India seem to renew its focus on developing the cost effective and environmental friendly inland navigation systems. Whereas only five waterways have been recognized as national waterways prior to 2016, the new national waterways Act of 2016 recognized 106 new waterways as National Waterways (NWs). Of these, prime attention is being given to the NW-2 which is 891 kms of Brahmaputra covering the entire length of Assam and NW-16, which is 121 kms of Barak river. The terms of the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol for Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) have also been modified enough to ease the connection of these waterways with Kolkata through Bangladesh. This includes the allowance of River Sea Vessels to carry huge amounts of cargo through the waters of Bangladesh. The central government is aptly following the principle of "Think Globally, Act Locally" by promoting the use of waterways.

Another sector which bolstered Government's North East plan is the power sector. The region, with its huge hydro power potential of more than 58,000 MW could soon be the "Power House" to India. Sadly, only less than 2% of it has been exploited until 2016. The situation is currently improving as the region started feeding the rest of the country with 100s of MWs in 2017.



Venture Fund is receiving a huge praise from the local youth. This fund stands as a great support to local entrepreneurs working on areas such as horticulture, food processing, hand-crafts and ITES. Initiatives such as these demonstrates the central government's focus on development of the region.

Politically, the region has been for long considered as a bastion of congress. But with the special focus on creation of "Ashtalakshmi" under the Act-East Policy, BJP is reaching out to the people of North East with a positive development agenda. The effects of that

The region not only has the potential to generate a huge amount of hydro-power but also has a lot of scope to set up non conventional wind and solar power plants as well as conventional gas and coal power plants. The power potential of the region is so huge that it will not only supply power to the rest of the country but also satisfy the power needs of neighboring countries - Bangladesh and Myanmar, in turn leading to good relations with them. The fruits of the government's efforts in the power sector are still awaited.

The Tourism Sector which is a major revenue source for the NE region is the biggest gainer considering the infrastructural push by the Government. Enhanced air connectivity will attract tourists from other states and also people from all over the world to explore the beauty of the region. Rail connectivity would help all weather tourism and Road connectivity would increase Trans - Border tourism. River-based tourism is yet another prospect that the region has. Particularly with India and Bangladesh signing a MoU on operating cross-border river cruises along protocol routes, there has already been some movement in this direction.

Apart from all this, the government's support to the ventures by the locals through the North East

development narrative was reflected in the assembly polls of Assam, Arunachal and Manipur that were held post the formation of the government at the centre in 2014. The recent assembly election results in Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya is a resounding endorsement of the developmental vision for the region that Prime Minister Modi has put forward

Apart from developmental initiatives, acts such as the proactive intervention in Doklam and hosting all ASEAN leaders at Republic Day Celebrations have created a sense of pride and instilled faith among the masses of this region in PM Modi's vision of Act East Policy. The Act and not just the Look of the present regime towards India's northeast has huge potential to transform the long neglected region into a vibrant hub of possibilities.

**(The Author is BJP Official State Spokesperson of Telangana, an Economist and Director, Center for Leadership and Governance)**



**Saswat Panigrahi**

## Indian agriculture gets a fresh new lease of life

**B**udget 2018, the last full year Budget of the Modi government, is undoubtedly a calibrated departure from policy in the last two decades. A careful study of the fine print of the Budget clearly suggests that agriculture is the prime focus.

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Around 70 per cent of India’s population depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The agriculture sector contributes approximately 17 per cent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Agriculture has the potential in turning around the Indian economy.

In a bid to propel the sector, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has announced raft of measures. The idea is welfare of the farmers. The aim is to make agriculture an engine of employment, growth and development. The focus is on development and upgradation of agricultural infrastructure. The Finance Minister has emphasised on the Modi government’s commitment in achieving the target of doubling farmers’ income by 2022, the 75th year of India’s Independence.

In order to create and develop rural infrastructure and connect farmers directly to the markets, the government has earmarked a whopping Rs 14.34 lakh crore for 2018-19. The proposed investment will also generate employment to the tune of 321 person-days in FY18. The government has announced an Agri-Market infrastructure Fund with a corpus of Rs 2000 crore for developing and upgrading agricultural marketing. This will in turn help enable the famers to get the right price for their produce. Further, the government has hiked the agricultural credit target to a whopping Rs 11 lakh crore.

A big support to the famers in this Budget is the promise of Minimum Support Price (MSP). The gov-

ernment will keep the MSP for all unaccounted kharif crops at least 1.5 times of the cost of production. The Finance Minister said in his Budget speech, “NITI Ayog in consultation with Central and state governments will put in place a full proof mechanism so that famers will get adequate price for their produce.”

The government has doubled the allocation for Food Processing Ministry from Rs 715 crore in FY17 to Rs 1400 crore in FY18. In order to address the price volatility of perishable commodities like potatoes, tomatoes and onions, the government has announced the launching of Operation Greens with an outlay of Rs 500 crore. The government has announced the development and up-gradation of existing 22,000 rural haats into Grameen Agricultural Markets (GrAMs). Rs 2600 crore has been allocated to ensure irrigation facilities in 96 irrigation deprived districts.





The Finance Minister has announced the launch of a Re-structured National Bamboo Mission and Rs 1,290 crore has been earmarked for this. The FM has announced two new funds – Fisheries Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FAIDF) and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) –with a corpus of Rs 10,000 crore each.

“It is indeed heartening to see that after many decades the theme of agriculture dominates the Union Budget. This Budget has spelt out the government’s clear intention towards incising farmers’ income and augmenting agricultural infrastructure. However, the implementation will remain a challenge. The Centre and states must come together to implement the much needed measures,” said Mohini Mohan Mishra, well-known agriculture scientist and national secretary of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh.

Mission Antyodaya (Empowering the underpowered) has been the theme of Budget 2018 and that clearly reflects when the Finance Minister quoted Swami Vivekananda in his Budget speech. “...let New India arise in your place. Let her arise out of the peasants’ cottage,

grasping the plough; out of the huts of the fishermen, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her emanate from the factory, from the marts, and from the markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains.”

Budget 2018 is certainly made inroads in containing agrarian distress and strengthening agriculture and rural economy. The Budget will go a long way toward bridging the rural-urban divide. It could rightly be termed as a Budget for Bharat.

**(The writer is a senior journalist, and researcher based out of Delhi. He writes on politics, policy, national interest and cultural nationalism.)**



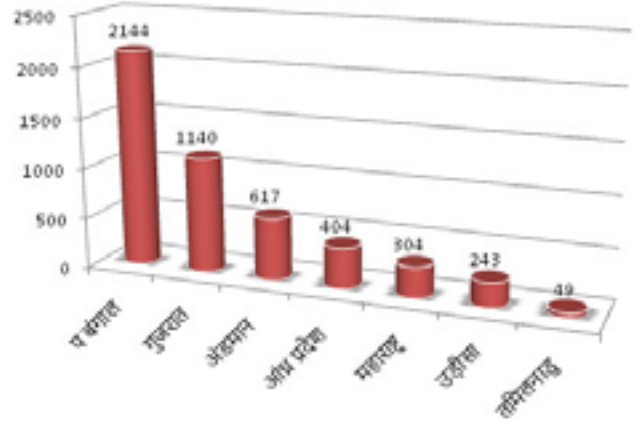
अरुणा त्रिपाठी

# वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट 2017: जंगलों के भी आ रहे हैं 'अच्छे दिन'

**भा**रत, जो विश्व के 2.4 प्रतिशत भूभाग में स्थित है और जहाँ विश्व के 17 प्रतिशत लोग और 18 प्रतिशत पालतू पशु रहते हैं, वनों के मामले में विश्व में 10वें स्थान पर है। हाल में संयुक्त राष्ट्र खाद्य एवं कृषि संगठन की ताजा रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत को दुनिया के उन 10 देशों में 8वां स्थान दिया गया है जहां वार्षिक स्तर पर 'वन क्षेत्र' में सबसे ज्यादा वृद्धि दर्ज की गई। पर्यावरण मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत आने वाला 'फॉरेस्ट सर्वे ऑफ़ इंडिया' प्रत्येक दो वर्ष में 'वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट' जारी करता है। हाल ही में जारी 15वीं 'भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट' में भारत में विभिन्न प्रकार के वनों की स्थिति का विस्तृत विश्लेषण किया गया है। इस रिपोर्ट में वन एवं वन संसाधनों के आकलन के लिए भारतीय दूरसंवेदी उपग्रह रिसेसर्स सैट -2 से प्राप्त आंकड़ों का इस्तेमाल किया गया है, साथ ही सटीकता लाने के लिए आंकड़ों की जमीनी स्तर पर जांच हेतु वैज्ञानिक पद्धति अपनाई गई है।

वन सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत का कुल वनाच्छादित क्षेत्र 24.39 प्रतिशत है, पिछले 2 वर्षों में यह 6,778 वर्ग किलोमीटर अर्थात 1% बढ़ा है। रिपोर्ट में वनाच्छादित क्षेत्र, कार्बन स्टॉक, बांस रिसोर्स और मैंग्रोव क्षेत्र आदि पर विस्तृत चर्चा है। रिपोर्ट में वनों को सघनता के आधार पर चार भागों में बांटा गया है - 70% से अधिक घनत्व वाले 'अति सघन वन', 40% से 70% वाले 'मध्यम सघन वन', 10% से 40% वाले 'खुला जंगल' और 10% से कम घनत्व वाले क्षेत्र को 'झाड़ी' कहा गया है।

**भारत का मैंग्रोव क्षेत्र (वर्ग किमी)**



रिपोर्ट के ताजा आकलन के अनुसार कुल वनाच्छादित क्षेत्र का 40% भाग देश में 9 ऐसे बड़े क्षेत्रों में फैला है जो 10 हजार वर्ग किमी से अधिक के हैं। 15 राज्य और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश वन नीति के 33% लक्ष्य को पूरा करते हैं, इनमें से मात्र 7 राज्य और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश- मिजोरम, लक्षद्वीप, अंडमान, नागालैंड, मेघालय और मणिपुर में 75% से अधिक भूभाग वनाच्छादित है। वैसे देश में सर्वाधिक वनाच्छादित राज्य मध्यप्रदेश, अरुणाचल और छत्तीसगढ़ हैं, पर आंध्र प्रदेश और कर्नाटक और केरल में वनाच्छादित क्षेत्र में सर्वाधिक वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है। जहां आंध्र प्रदेश और कर्नाटक में वनाच्छादन क्षेत्र में वृद्धि का कारण 'वृक्षारोपण गतिविधियां' और



‘संरक्षण के बेहतर प्रयासों’ को बताया गया बताया गया है, वहीं केरल में इस वृद्धि के लिए ‘वाणिज्यिक प्लांटेशन, को कारण माना गया है। मिजोरम, नागालैंड, अरुणाचल प्रदेश जैसे राज्यों में वनाच्छादन क्षेत्र में कमी आई है और इन सभी राज्यों में इसका कारण ‘विकासात्मक गतिविधियों’ एवं ‘झूम कृषि’ को माना गया है।

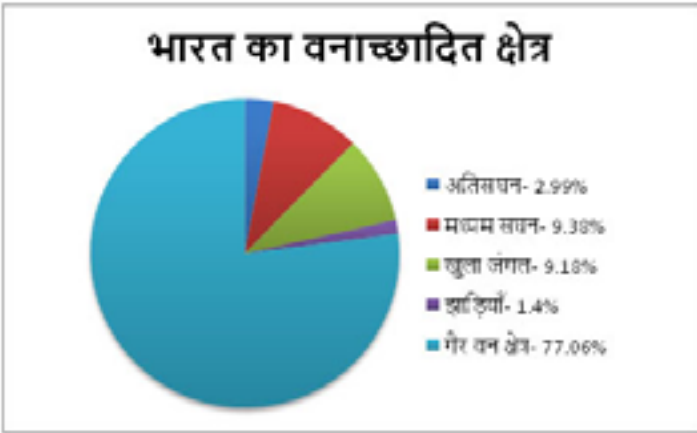
रिपोर्ट में पहाड़ी राज्यों, जनजातीय जिलों और उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्यों के वनावरण पर अलग से विस्तृत चर्चा की गई है। पहाड़ी राज्यों के पर्यावरण एवं अर्थव्यवस्था में वनों का एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान होता है। रिपोर्ट के

प्रयोग भोजन, औषधि, टेनिन, ईंधन तथा इमारती लकड़ी के लिये किया जाता रहा है। तटीय इलाकों में रहने वाले लाखों लोगों के लिये जीवनयापन का साधन इन वनों से प्राप्त होता है तथा ये उनकी पारम्परिक संस्कृति को जीवित रखते हैं इसके साथ-साथ मैंग्रोव तटीय क्षेत्रों को चक्रवात जैसी प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से सुरक्षा भी प्रदान करते हैं। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश में मैंग्रोव 4,921 वर्ग किमी का क्षेत्रफल पर फैले हैं और इनमें 181 वर्ग किलोमीटर की वृद्धि दर्ज की गई। महाराष्ट्र, आंध्र प्रदेश और गुजरात सर्वाधिक वृद्धि दर्ज करने वाले 3 राज्य हैं।

इस वन रिपोर्ट में पहली बार वनों के अंदर जलाशयों के बारे में भी जानकारी दी गई इनका क्षेत्रफल 2,647 वर्ग किमी आंका गया है और सर्वाधिक वृद्धि महाराष्ट्र, गुजरात और मध्य प्रदेश में दर्ज की गई है। देश में बांस के अंतर्गत कुल 1.57 करोड़ हेक्टेयर क्षेत्र का दर्ज किया गया है और जिसमें पिछले आंकलन की तुलना में बड़ी वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है। सरकार ने वन क्षेत्र के बाहर उगाए जाने वाली बांस को वृक्षों की श्रेणी से हटाने के लिए हाल में एक संसद में विधेयक पारित किया था इससे लोग निजी भूमि पर बांस उगा सकेंगे, जिससे किसानों की आजीविका को बढ़ाने में मदद मिलेगी और इससे हरित आवरण और कार्बन सिंक भी बढ़ेगा।

रिपोर्ट में वर्ष 2004 से 2017 के बीच वनों में लगी आग की घटनाओं को दर्ज किया गया है। आग की सर्वाधिक घटनाएं आबादी के निकट वाले मध्यम सघन वनों दर्ज में की गई। आंकड़े के अनुसार पिछले 14 वर्षों में आग की सर्वाधिक घटनाओं में वर्ष 2017 चौथे नंबर पर रहा। इस आग पर काबू पाने के लिए अलर्ट जारी करने की अहम भूमिका को देखते हुए भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण ने वर्ष 2016 से प्री वार्निंग अलर्ट भेजने का काम भी शुरू कर दिया है और इसका विशेष रूप से उल्लेख रिपोर्ट में किया गया है।

रिपोर्ट में ‘राष्ट्रीय वन सर्वेक्षण’ द्वारा वन संरक्षण के प्रयासों और उठाए गए नए कदमों का भी उल्लेख है। वनों और वनीकरण की प्रभावी निगरानी और मूल्यांकन के लिए ‘ई-ग्रीन वॉच’ नामक वेब पोर्टल चालू किया गया है। इस समय 28 राज्य और संघ शासित प्रदेश इससे जुड़ चुके हैं। इसके अंतर्गत राज्य सरकारों फाइलें और फोटो अपलोड करती हैं और भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण उनकी जांच करने के पश्चात ‘मासिक रिपोर्ट’ पर्यावरण मंत्रालय को भेजता है। इसी प्रकार ‘निर्णय सहायता तंत्र’ (डिसिशन सपोर्ट सिस्टम), एक वेब आधारित एप्लिकेशन तैयार किया गया है जिसका उद्देश्य वनों से संबंधित गुणवत्तापूर्ण सूचनाएँ, निर्णयकर्ताओं और नीति निर्धारकों को उपलब्ध कराना है। इस तंत्र के पास भौगोलिक, भूभौतिक, भूभौतिक जल, संरक्षित क्षेत्र, टाइगर रिजर्व, वनावरण, वनों के प्रकार और जैवविविधता आदि से संबंधित डाटा रहता है। उन्नत तकनीकी की वजह से अब सेटेलाइट से अत्यधिक उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली (वेरी हाइ रेसोल्यूशन) तस्वीरें प्राप्त होने लगी हैं और इनकी सहायता से वनों और वन संपत्तियों की मॉनिटरिंग हो रही है, जंगल की आग की रियल टाइम आधारित जानकारी मिल जाती है, खनन क्षेत्रों की निगरानी संभव है और



अनुसार देश में इस समय 127 पहाड़ी जिले हैं जहां 40.22% वनावरण है। अरुणाचल प्रदेश, हिमांचल प्रदेश, मणिपुर, मेघालय, मिजोरम, नागालैंड, सिक्किम, त्रिपुरा और उत्तराखंड के सभी जिले, पहाड़ी जिलों के अंतर्गत आते हैं, जबकि पश्चिम बंगाल, तमिलनाडु, महाराष्ट्र, केरल, कर्नाटक और जम्मू कश्मीर जैसे राज्यों में भी कुछ जिले पहाड़ी जिले हैं।

रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 215 जनजातीय जिले 27 राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों में फैले हुए हैं। जनजातियों का जंगलों के साथ प्राचीन काल से ही आत्मीय रिश्ता रहा है। वे वनों पर अपनी सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक एवं चिकित्सकीय आवश्यकताओं के लिए संबद्ध एवं आश्रित हैं। इन जनजातीय जिलों में 37.43% भू-भाग पर वनाच्छादन पाया गया है।

उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्य हमारे देश के केवल 7.8% भूभाग पर हैं जबकि देश का एक चौथाई वनाच्छादित क्षेत्र इन्हीं राज्यों में है। इन 8 राज्यों में 65.34% वनाच्छादन पाया गया है।

रिपोर्ट में समुद्र तल से ऊंचाई के आधार पर भी वनाच्छादन क्षेत्र का वर्गीकरण किया गया है। सर्वाधिक वनाच्छादन समुद्र तल से 500 मीटर ऊंचाई तक, उसके बाद 500 से 1000 मीटर तक और फिर 4000 मीटर से ऊपर के पहाड़ी क्षेत्र में पाया गया है।

मैंग्रोव सामान्यतः वे पेड़ व पौधे होते हैं, जो खारे पानी में तटीय क्षेत्रों में पाए जाते हैं। हमारे देश की ज्यादातर मैंग्रोव वनस्पति पूर्वी एवं पश्चिमी तटों के किनारे पाई जाती हैं। पारम्परिक रूप से स्थानीय निवासियों द्वारा इनका

‘पर्यावरण प्रभाव अध्ययन’ भी किया जा रहा है। इन सभी प्रयासों के अतिरिक्त विगत कई वर्षों से सरकार भी वनों के संरक्षण और संवर्धन की दिशा में अनेक प्रयास कर रही है। सरकार ने कुछ समय पूर्व ‘नेशनल मिशन फॉर ग्रीन इंडिया’ लांच किया था, जिसके माध्यम से जंगलों के विकास और उनके दुरुपयोग को रोकने के लिए संस्थागत मैकेनिज्म स्थापित करने की कोशिश की गई थी। इस मिशन के अंतर्गत वनाच्छादन और वनाच्छादन की गुणवत्ता बढ़ाने का लक्ष्य है। इसके अंतर्गत वनों में ग्रासलैंड और झाड़ी भूमि का क्षेत्रफल बढ़ाने और झूम कृषि वाले क्षेत्रों एवं त्याग दी गई खनन भूमि, बंजर भूमि और मैग्रोव के पुनर्विकास का लक्ष्य स्थापित किया गया है। साथ ही केंद्र सरकार ने राज्य सरकारों को केंद्र प्रायोजित स्कीम ‘राष्ट्रीय वनीकरण कार्यक्रम’ (एनएपी) में प्रोत्साहन देने के लिए योजना बनाई है, जिसके अंतर्गत वनों और उसके आसपास के क्षेत्रों का लोगों की सहभागिता के माध्यम से विकास करने का लक्ष्य है।

सरकार ने वन संरक्षण के प्रयासों को विस्तार देते हुए ‘वन्यजीव संरक्षण अधिनियम 1972’ के प्रावधानों को और अधिक मजबूत बनाया है। ‘आर्द्रभूमि संरक्षण एवं प्रबंधन नियम 2010’ राज्यों के लिए निर्धारित किए गए और उनके प्रबंधन की जिम्मेवारी राज्यों पर सांविधिक रूप से डाली गई है। केंद्र ने ‘जलीय पारितंत्र संरक्षण’ हेतु और देशभर के ‘रामसर क्षेत्रों’ के विकास के लिए केंद्र प्रायोजित राष्ट्रीय योजना लागू की है। ‘वन्यजीव अपराध नियंत्रण ब्यूरो’ के माध्यम से वनों और वन्यजीवों के अवैध शिकार पर रोक लगाने का प्रयास किया गया और इस प्रकार के जीव जंतुओं के शारीरिक अंगों या उनसे बनने वाली औषधियों के निर्यात पर रोक लगाई गई है, साथ ही प्रवर्तन एजेंसियों को इस दिशा में कड़े कदम उठाने के निर्देश दिए गए हैं। ‘केंद्रीय अन्वेषण ब्यूरो’ को ‘वन्यजीव संरक्षण अधिनियम 1972’ के प्रावधानों में विस्तार देते हुए सशक्त बनाया गया है। चूंकि वनों और वन्यजीवों का विकास अंतरसंबंधित है इसलिए सरकार ने वन्यजीवों के संरक्षण एवं ब्रीडिंग हेतु हाल में ही हरियाणा, पश्चिम बंगाल, असम आदि में ब्रीडिंग सेंटर स्थापित किए हैं।

इसके साथ-साथ ‘प्रतिपूरक वनीकरण कोष विधेयक’ (कैम्पा) को संसद द्वारा पारित कराया जा चुका है, इस विधेयक में प्रतिपूरक वनीकरण के लिए ‘लोक लेखा निधि’ के तहत केंद्र और राज्य स्तर पर कोष बनाने का प्रावधान है। इस कोष को मुख्य रूप से वन क्षेत्रों के नुकसान की प्रतिपूर्ति के लिए, वनीकरण के लिए, वन परिस्थितिकी तंत्र को फिर से बनाने के लिए और वन्यजीव संरक्षण एवं संरचनात्मक विकास कार्यों पर खर्च किया जाएगा। औद्योगिक प्रदूषणों को वनों में जाने से रोकने और उसके प्रबंधन के लिए ‘क्षमता विकास कार्यक्रम’ भी आरंभ किया गया। ‘राष्ट्रीय हरित न्यायाधिकरण’ को पर्यावरण और वनों से संबन्धित मामलों की सुनवाई के लिए मजबूती प्रदान की गई है। इसके अलावा ‘हिमालय क्षेत्र अध्ययन’ के लिए राष्ट्रीय मिशन चालू किया गया है और 30 क्षेत्रों के संवहनीय प्रबंधन के लिए भी एक राष्ट्रीय केंद्र बनाया गया है।

लेकिन कुछ अन्य ऐसे क्षेत्र भी हैं जहां सरकार को और अधिक प्रयास करने की आवश्यकता है जैसे राष्ट्रीय वन नीति- इसके अंतर्गत स्थानीय ग्रामवासियों की सहभागिता और अधिक बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता है जिसमें इस वन क्षेत्र से होने वाली आमदनी का एक निश्चित प्रतिशत उस गांव के निवासियों को प्रदान किया जाना चाहिए। आरक्षित वन, जो ज्यादातर हिमालय, पूर्वी घाट और पश्चिमी घाट के राष्ट्रीय उद्यानों और अभ्यारण्यों में स्थित है, इन में वाणिज्यिक गतिविधियों को पूरी तरह से रोक दिया जाना चाहिए। दक्षिण भारतीय राज्यों में पूर्व अनुभवों से देखा गया है कि स्थानीय सहभागिता से मनुष्य-पशु संघर्ष को कम करने में व्यापक सफलता मिली है। यदि इसी प्रकार की सहभागिता वनों के संरक्षण कार्यक्रम में की जाए तो यह भी निश्चित रूप से वनीकरण के लिए अच्छा प्रयास होगा। 1972 का ‘चिपको आंदोलन’ इसका एक प्रमुख उदाहरण है। चूंकि वन, वाणिज्य क्षेत्र के लिए कच्चा माल उपलब्ध कराने का एक प्रमुख स्रोत इसलिए इस जरूरत को दीर्घ अवधि में पूरा करने के लिए ऐसी कंपनियों को त्याज्य एवं खाली पड़ी भूमि पर वृक्षारोपण के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिए। साथ ही साथ जंगल की उत्पादकता को बढ़ाकर, बेहतर वन प्रबंधन, बीमारियों से रोकथाम, वैज्ञानिक तकनीक के माध्यम से वृक्षों की ब्रीडिंग एवं टिशू कल्चर मेथड का प्रयोग करके भी वनों का विकास और संरक्षण किया जा सकता है।

आज देश में केंद्रीय बजट और विभिन्न राज्यों की औद्योगीकरण नीतियों से आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ाने के प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं, परंतु यह भी ध्यान रखना होगा कि इस विकास की कीमत पर्यावरण और वनों को ना चुकानी पड़े। आज इस बात की आवश्यकता है कि सरकार व इसके विभिन्न विभागों के साथ साथ आम जनता की भागीदारी भी बढ़ायी जाये। हमें स्वच्छता अभियान की तरह ही इस उद्देश्य के लिए भी जागरूकता दिखानी होगी और वैसी ही मुहिम देश में वनों के संरक्षण के लिये भी चलाई जानी चाहिए। आज कई पर्वतीय राज्यों की तरफ से वन संरक्षण के लिये सख्ती करने से होने वाले घाटे को पूरा करने के लिये ग्रीन बोनस की मांग की जा रही है। जनजातीय लोगों के लिए भी प्रोत्साहन के जरिये वैकल्पिक उपाय किए जाने चाहिए। साथ ही साथ उन कंपनियों की जवाबदेही भी तय की जाये, जिनकी परियोजनाओं के अस्तित्व में आने से वन संपदा को क्षति पहुंचती है। देश की सेहत और पर्यावरणीय चुनौती के मुकाबले के लिये सरकारी प्रयासों से वनों का विकास और विस्तार करना होगा साथ ही सामुदायिक प्रयासों से इसका संरक्षण और संवर्धन, तब हम वन नीति के 33% वनाच्छादन के लक्ष्य तक पहुंच सकेंगे।

(लेखिका दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में रिसर्च स्कॉलर हैं )



**सतीश सिंह**

# मोदी केयर : आम जन के स्वास्थ्य की सुध लेने वाली योजना

**स**रकार ने वित्त वर्ष, 2019 के बजट में “आयुष्मान भारत” कार्यक्रम के तहत राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य संरक्षण योजना (एनएचपीएस) नाम से एक नई योजना की घोषणा की है। इसे मोदी केयर भी कहा जा रहा है। इसके अंतर्गत प्राथमिक, माध्यमिक और तृतीयक स्तर पर लोगों के स्वास्थ्य को बेहतर बनाने का प्रस्ताव है। इस योजना के माध्यम से 10 करोड़ से अधिक गरीब परिवार (लगभग 50 करोड़ लाभार्थी) लाभान्वित होंगे और माध्यमिक और तृतीयक स्तर पर इन्हें प्रति परिवार 5 लाख रुपये तक स्वास्थ्य बीमा कवरेज प्रदान किया जायेगा। इस प्रस्तावित योजना को दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा सरकारी वित्त पोषित स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम माना जा रहा है।

इस योजना को अमलीजामा पहनाने पर पड़ने वाले वित्तीय बोझ, व्यवहार्यता, कवरेज और सफलताओं को लेकर सार्वजनिक मंच पर निरंतर

विमर्श का दौर चल रहा है। कुछ जानकारों का कहना है कि इस योजना की लागत की वजह से राजकोषीय घाटा 10 से 15 आधार अंक बढ़ सकता है। हालांकि यह सिर्फ एक अनुमान है, बावजूद इसके कहा जा सकता है कि गरीब लोगों के स्वास्थ्य के प्रति सरकार की संवेदनशीलता समय की जरूरत है। कई विकसित एवं विकासशील देशों में ऐसी योजना 40 के दशक में ही लागू कर दी गई थी। उदाहरण के तौर पर सार्वभौमिक स्वास्थ्य योजना को जापान ने 1938, जर्मनी ने 1941 और बेल्जियम ने 1945 में लागू किया था।

मौजूदा समय में 33 विकसित देशों में से 32 में सार्वभौमिक स्वास्थ्य योजना चल रही है, लेकिन ऐसी योजनाओं को लागू करने की प्रणाली उन देशों में अलग-अलग है। 12 देश एकल-भुगतान प्रणाली के तहत अपने नागरिकों पर कर आरोपित करके स्वास्थ्य बीमा का भुगतान करते हैं।

राज्यवार स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना				
राज्य	योजना	शुरू करने का वर्ष	कवरेज राशि (रूपये में)	लाभार्थी
आंध्र प्रदेश	राजीव अरोग्य श्री योजना	2006	2,00,000	सभी बीपीएल परिवार
तमिलनाडू	कलैगनर कपेट्टू धिट्टम योजना	2009	2,00,000	72,000 रुपये तक की वार्षिक आमदनी
गुजरात	मुख्यमंत्री अमृतम योजना	2012	2,00,000	2,50,000 तक की आय (इसमें पत्रकार एवं तृतीय व चतुर्थ श्रेणी के कर्मचारी शामिल हैं)
पश्चिम बंगाल	स्वास्थ्य साधि योजना	2016	1,50,000-5,00,000	स्व-सहायता समूह, सिविक पुलिस, ग्राम पंचायत और आपदा प्रबंधन दल
महाराष्ट्र	राजीव गाँधी जीवनदायी अरोग्य योजना	2012	1,50,000	22.3 मिलियन राशन कार्ड धारक
राजस्थान	भामाशाह स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना	2015	30,000-3,00,000	गरीबी रेखा से नीचे के लोग
कर्नाटक	आरोग्य भाग्य योजना	शुरू होने वाला है	कोई भी मेडिकल केप नहीं	पूरे राज्य की आबादी

स्रोत: राज्यों की वेबसाइट

यूनाइटेड किंगडम ने इस प्रणाली को अपने यहाँ लागू किया है। 6 देशों में सभी को स्वास्थ्य बीमा खरीदने की जरूरत है, जिसे नियोजित या सरकार के माध्यम से खरीदा जाता है। जर्मनी ने इस प्रणाली को अपनाया है।

9 देशों ने दो-स्तरीय प्रणाली को अपनाया है, जिसके तहत सरकार अपने नागरिकों को बुनियादी स्वास्थ्य सेवा देने के लिये भुगतान करती है, लेकिन इसके लिये नागरिकों पर कर लगाया जाता है। इस आलोक में, जो नागरिक बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवायें हासिल करना चाहता है, उसको इसके लिये अलग से भुगतान करना होता है। फ्रांस ने इस मॉडल को अपना रखा है। शेष देशों ने सरकार और निजी सेवा प्रदाताओं के संयोजन वाले मॉडल के आधार पर ऐसी योजना को लागू किया है।

वर्तमान में भारत में राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना (आरएसबीवाई) चल रहा है, जिसका उद्देश्य गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाले परिवारों को स्वास्थ्य बीमा उपलब्ध कराना है। इसके अंतर्गत 5 सदस्यीय परिवार को अस्पताल भर्ती खर्च के लिये 30,000 हजार रुपये तक फ्लोटर आधार पर भुगतान किया जाता है। वर्ष 2017 में आरएसबीवाई के तहत लाभार्थी परिवारों की संख्या लगभग 3.65 करोड़ थी, जो कुल पात्र परिवार का 61% था। इसतरह, राशि और कवरेज दोनों दृष्टिकोण से इस योजना को पर्याप्त नहीं कहा जा सकता है।

आरएसबीवाई और सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित अन्य योजनाओं के तहत वित्त वर्ष 2017 के दौरान शीर्ष 4 राज्यों में स्वास्थ्य बीमा प्रीमियम		
	राशि (करोड़ रुपये में)	% में योग
महाराष्ट्र	77311	25
तमिलनाडु	65723	21
कर्नाटक	8091	3
गुजरात	5152	2
देश के अन्य प्रदेशों में	152774	49
स्रोत: इरडा		

गौरतलब है कि सभी राज्यों में आरएसबीवाई अभी भी लागू नहीं है। जैसे, आंध्र प्रदेश में यह योजना लागू नहीं है। इसकी जगह वहाँ राजीव आरोग्य श्री योजना चल रही है। कर्नाटक और तमिलनाडू के केवल कुछ ही जिलों में आरएसबीवाई को लागू किया गया है। वहाँ, दूसरे जिलों में राज्य द्वारा वित्त पोषित स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजनाएं चल रही हैं। उल्लेखनीय है कि राज्यों द्वारा वित्त पोषित स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना से संबंधित राज्यों की एक बड़ी आबादी आरएसबीवाई के मुकाबले ज्यादा लाभान्वित हो रही है। वैसे राज्य, जो 40 प्रतिशत स्वास्थ्य खर्च स्वयं वहन कर रहे हैं, दोनों स्वास्थ्य योजनाओं को एक साथ नहीं चला सकते हैं। इसके बरक्स लाभार्थियों के दोहरीकरण की भी संभावना है। राज्य नई योजना के साथ अपने यहाँ चल

रहे मौजूदा स्वास्थ्य योजनाओं के विलय के पक्ष में भी नहीं हैं, क्योंकि बजट में प्रस्तावित एनएचपीएस वर्ष 2011 में किये गये आर्थिक, सामाजिक एवं जातीय जनगणना के आधार पर चिन्हित एक छोटी जनसंख्या समूह को ही कवर करता है, जबकि गुजरात जैसे राज्य 2,50,000 लाख रुपये से कम आय वाले सभी लोगों को “मुख्यमंत्री अमृतम योजना” के तहत स्वास्थ्य बीमा की सुविधा उपलब्ध करा रहे हैं।

मई 2015 में सरकार ने जन सुरक्षा योजना के तहत 2 कम लागत वाली बीमा योजनाएं शुरू की थी। दोनों बीमा योजनाओं के लिये बैंक खातों में ऑटो डेबिट के माध्यम से बीमा का हर साल नवीनीकरण किया जा रहा है। इन दोनों बीमा योजनाओं के लिये समाज के सभी वर्गों का अच्छा प्रतिसाद मिला था, जिसका कारण कम बीमा प्रीमियम था। आज की तारीख में इस योजना के तहत 19 करोड़ बीमा पॉलिसी पंजीकृत हैं और लगभग 18 करोड़ नई पॉलिसियां बीमा कंपनियों द्वारा जारी की गई हैं। इस योजना की सफलता से साफ हो जाता है कि सरकार समर्थित बीमा योजना की सफलता की संभावना ज्यादा रहती है।

एक अनुमान के मुताबिक एनएचपीएस की प्रारंभिक लागत बाजार अनुमान, जो 12,000 करोड़ रुपये है, से कम रहेगी। सरकार ने बजट में 2,000 करोड़ रुपये आवंटित किया है और 11,000 करोड़ रुपये उपकर के जरिये जुटाने का प्रस्ताव है। इसमें कोई परेशानी भी नहीं है, क्योंकि शुरू के वर्षों में दावा अनुपात कम होने का अनुमान है। आम तौर पर ऐसी योजनाओं के लोकप्रिय होने में समय लगता है। उदाहरण के तौर पर शुरू के सालों में आरएसबीवाई के दावे कम आये थे। वित्त वर्ष 2012-13 के दौरान इसका दावा अनुपात 87% था, जो वित्त वर्ष 2016-17 में बढ़कर 122% हो गया।

एनएचपीएस को सरकार कैसे लागू करेगी, इसका अभी तक खुलासा नहीं किया गया है। मसलन, क्या सरकार इसके लिये ट्रस्ट की स्थापना करेगी, जो बीमा कंपनी की भूमिका निभायेगा या फिर निविदा आमंत्रित करके किसी बीमा कंपनी का चयन करेगी या फिर इस योजना को अमलीजामा पहनाने की जिम्मेदारी राज्यों को दी जायेगी आदि।

अगर सभी राज्यों के लिए एक प्रीमियम निर्धारित किया जाता है तो कुछ राज्यों को ज्यादा प्रीमियम का भुगतान करना पड़ेगा, जबकि कुछ को कम। उदाहरण के तौर पर महाराष्ट्र और तमिलनाडु जैसे राज्य, जिनका आरएसबीवाई के तहत कुल प्रीमियम में सभी राज्यों में बड़ा हिस्सा है, को एनएचपीएस के तहत सभी राज्यों के लिये एक प्रीमियम का निर्धारण करने से लाभ हो सकता है। बहरहाल, योजना के क्रियान्वयन की रूपरेखा निर्धारण के दौरान इन बातों पर ध्यान दिए जाने की उम्मीद है। मगर, इस योजना से देश का एक बड़ा वर्ग लाभान्वित होगा, इससे इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है।

**(लेखक भारतीय स्टेट बैंक के कॉर्पोरेट केंद्र मुंबई के आर्थिक अनुसन्धान विभाग में कार्यरत हैं। ये उनके निजी विचार हैं।)**



Madhura Joshi

# Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme:

## An effective tool to empower rural women through community participation

**‘Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme’ is one of the most unique developmental schemes passed by current NDA government for upliftment of women focusing on the ones in rural areas.**

**T**he concerned scheme was passed in 2017-18 and will be extended up to 2019. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the Committee of Economic Affairs that gave a nod to this ambitious scheme. ‘Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme’ (PMMSK) is an addendum to the most revered ‘Beti Padhao Beti Bachao’ which has proved to be a tour de force of the NDA. PMMSK will be under the direction of Women and Child Development Ministry and the financial outlay of the scheme from the year 2017-18 to 2019-20 will be Rs. 3,636 crore with a central share of approximately Rs 3,084 crore.

The scheme will be implemented with a cost sharing ratio of 60:40 percent between the union and state governments but in North-East and special category states it will be 90:10 percent. Main emphasis of the scheme is to generate awareness among women of rural areas regarding the various programs of government concerning Women like ‘Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna’, One-stop Center Scheme, Women Helpline Scheme, Swadhar Greh Scheme and Mudra Yojna and to create an ambiance in which they can realize their full potential. College students will volunteer in almost 115 backward districts and the Government aims to

ensure participation of NCC cadets as well. This move will ascertain community engagement and is yet another ingenious effort towards the government’s motto of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas’. Involvement of NCC cadres and other students in the work will surely help them evolve and understand the real spirit of rural women. Women on the other hand will engage with a generation younger and well familiar with current socio-economic scenario of the country.

The new scheme will be conceived at various levels, where the National Centers will provide domain-based knowledge support with State Resource Centers for Women providing technical support, Block and Village level centers are expected to carry out the actual pursuit of the scheme. The scheme will be implemented through State and UT governments. Government is expected to open PMMSK’s in 115 backward districts which will be covering 920 blocks with expected expansion in future.

At National Level, the experts will provide domain-based knowledge support to educate about steps to be taken to improve capabilities and impart training to women thereby ensuring their engagement in overall socio-economic activities. A task team will be setup with Principal Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development as Chairperson including financial advisors and other ministry persons as members. The concerned team will supervise the overall implementation of the scheme.



The State Resource Centre for Women (SCRW) at state level is expected to provide technical assistance and review various laws, schemes concerning women monitoring the ground level implementation. A team will be setup under guidance of Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development as Chairperson and members of concerned ministries to undertake reviews of SRCW, DRCW and Block Level centers.

District Resource Centers for Women (DRCW) will be built to act as link between ground level and State level centers that will identify information on various programs, laws and schemes of Government. At District Level, a team will be setup under District Collector as Chairperson. They will act as a link between the team at State level and atground level. It will have three staff members.

Block level implementation will be the actual implementation of schemes that will be carried out by the Gram Panchayats, where students and NCC cadets will engage with women and appraise them of various schemes of the Government and provide training to increase their capabilities. The services will be carried out in coherence with various vanguard social organizations like ASHAs, AWW, ANMs, CSCs, and Women Self Help Groups, etc.

At union level, the feedback mechanism is based on online submission of reports, suggestions and views. Concerned officers will be asked to upload reports, mechanisms, instructions and feedback of the various schemes.

The structural blueprint of the scheme, which is based on hierarchy, with one level supervised by the other, is

quintessential. The echelons in the model with one level under the other will help improve the effectiveness of the scheme, plus it will keep in check malpractices as one grade will have to report to the other.

‘Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme’ is designed for aid and convenience of women. The scheme also aims at improving child sex ratio, securing future of the girl child and empowering them. It hitches on providing rural women a perspective of Government’s programs, schemes and projects and also accords these to them, to help them utilize this projects, schemes or programs to improve their capabilities.

PMMSK is contemplated as a single step support service with opportunity for skill development, health and nutrition and employment.

The scheme is aimed to create discernment among rural women regarding schemes like ‘Ujjwala Yojna’, Women Help Line Centers, and otherefficacious scheme like ‘Mudra Yojna’ that will help women get loan with ease for their entrepreneurial aspirations.

The Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme in its current avatarhas potential to become one of the most efficacious schemes of the NDA government. The scheme will help empower rural women in a true sense, giving spectacular results rather than paper-based cliché schemes that were brought in by the previous governments.

**(The author is a student of engineering at University of Mumbai and a regular commentator on social and political issues.)**



शिवानन्द द्विवेदी

## वामगढ़ के अभेद किले में सेंध



**त्रि**पुरा, मेघालय और नागालैंड, के चुनाव परिणामों ने भारतीय जनता पार्टी के पूर्वोत्तर में हो रहे विस्तार की नई इबारत लिखी है। वैसे तो इन तीनों ही राज्यों में भाजपा ने बेहतर प्रदर्शन किया है, लेकिन त्रिपुरा के चुनाव परिणाम बेहद अहम हैं। त्रिपुरा की जनता ने भाजपा को दो तिहाई सीटों के साथ पूर्ण बहुमत का जनादेश देकर ढाई दशकों से त्रिपुरा की सत्ता पर आसिन वामगढ़ के अभेद दुर्ग को ध्वस्त किया है। अभी ज्यादा समय नहीं गुजरा है, जब भाजपा को 'हिंदी हार्टलैंड' पार्टी कहा जाता था। ऐसा माना जाता था कि भारतीय जनता पार्टी एक खास क्षेत्र और खास वर्ग की पार्टी है। लेकिन वर्ष 2014 के लोकसभा चुनावों में नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में मिली प्रचंड जीत के बाद इस अवधारणा के टूटने की जो शुरुआत हुई, अब विस्तार की ओर है। आज भारतीय जनता पार्टी का विस्तार देश के लगभग हर राज्य में फैल चुका है और वह 20 राज्यों में सहयोगियों के साथ सरकार में हैं। यह स्वतंत्र भारत के इतिहास में अभी तक की अभूतपूर्व घटना है। मोदी-शाह युग की भाजपा ने वह करिश्मा कर दिखाया है, जो इंदिरा गांधी

और प्रचंड बहुमत से सत्ता में आये राजीव गांधी भी नहीं कर पाए थे। वर्ष 2014 के बाद पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों में भाजपा का प्रभाव बढ़ा है। असम और मणिपुर में भाजपा पहले ही जीत चुकी है और नागालैंड में भी गठबंधन के साथ सरकार में थी। ऐसे में भाजपा के लिए त्रिपुरा को बड़ी चुनौती के रूप देखा जा रहा था। त्रिपुरा की चुनावी लड़ाई के दो आयाम थे-पहली लड़ाई वैचारिक थी और दूसरी लड़ाई चुनावी हार-जीत की थी।

चूँकि ढाई दशक से त्रिपुरा में मार्क्सवादी कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी की सरकार चल रही थी और त्रिपुरा को कम्युनिस्टों का अभेद किला कहा जाता था। इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि वैचारिक स्तर पर माकपा और भाजपा दो ध्रुव हैं। अतः त्रिपुरा में दो वैचारिक ध्रुवों की लड़ाई को भाजपा के लिहाज से अत्यंत कठिन माना जा रहा था। अगर त्रिपुरा की लड़ाई को चुनावी दृष्टि देखा जाए तो यहाँ जनादेश की कसौटी पर भाजपा की स्थिति शून्य थी। विधानसभा चुनाव-2013 में भाजपा को पूरे प्रदेश में मात्र 33,808 यानी 1.5 फीसद वोट मिले थे। त्रिपुरा में भाजपा का कोई भी उम्मीदवार चुनाव नहीं जीत सका था।

अनेक विधानसभाएँ तो ऐसी थीं जहाँ भाजपा के उम्मीदवार जमानत भी नहीं बचा पाए थे. इस लिहाज से इस लड़ाई को कठिन कहना स्वाभाविक था. कुल 60 सीटों वाले त्रिपुरा में 2013 के विधानसभा चुनाव में कम्युनिस्ट दलों ने 49.7 फीसद मतों के साथ 50 सीटों पर जीत दर्ज की और कांग्रेस को 10 सीटों पर जीत मिली थी.

लेकिन ठीक पांच साल बाद हुए 2018 के विधानसभा चुनाव के परिणाम एकदम उलट सिद्ध हुए. सत्ताधारी दल 16 सीटों पर सिमट गया और पिछले चुनावों में 8 लाख से ज्यादा वोट हासिल करने वाली कांग्रेस को मात्र 41,325 वोट हासिल हुए और उसके खाते में एक सीट भी नहीं आई. महज पांच वर्षों में भारतीय जनता पार्टी ने 43.2 फीसद वोट के साथ शून्य से 35 सीटों का सफ़र करते हुए शानदार जीत दर्ज की. यह तब है जब भाजपा सिर्फ 51 सीटों पर चुनाव लड़ी थी जबकि कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी सभी 60 सीटों पर चुनाव लड़ रही थी.

अगर आंकड़ों के धरातल पर पिछले विधानसभा चुनाव से इस चुनाव की तुलना करें तो भाजपा ने के विस्तार ने कांग्रेस के साथ-साथ कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी के वोटबैंक में भी ठीकठाक प्रभाव बनाने में कामयाबी हासिल की है. वर्ष 2013 के चुनाव में कम्युनिस्ट पार्टियों को लगभग 49.7 फीसद वोट मिले थे, जो इसबार घटकर 43.5 फीसद हो गया है. यानी पिछले चुनाव के मुकाबले कम्युनिस्ट पार्टियों को लगभग 80 हजार वोट कम मिले हैं. त्रिपुरा जैसे छोटी मतदाता संख्या वाले राज्य में 80 हजार वोट का अंतर ठीकठाक कहा जा सकता है. वहीं कांग्रेस का त्रिपुरा में जनाधार भी नहीं बचा है. भाजपा को पिछले चुनाव की तुलना में लगभग 9 लाख 60 हजार मतों का फायदा हुआ है, और 43 फीसद वोट के साथ वह अकेले दम पर सबसे बड़ी पार्टी बनी है. अगर भाजपा गठबंधन का मत फीसद जोड़ दें तो यह आंकड़ा 43 सीटों और 50.5 फीसद वोट तक पहुँच जाता है. वहीं कांग्रेस के हाथ से मेघालय के फिसलने की गुंजाइश इसलिए बनी है क्योंकि भाजपा की स्थिति में मजबूती और कांग्रेस के प्रति घटते जन विश्वास को एक कारण माना जा सकता है.

आंकड़ों के धरातल और जनादेश की कसौटी पर त्रिपुरा में सभी दलों को मात दे चुकी भाजपा ने महज पांच वर्षों में यह उपलब्धि कैसे हासिल कर ली, यह समझना ज्यादा रोचक है. दरअसल, राजनीति की एक अपनी वैज्ञानिक प्रणाली होती है. इसीलिए एक विषय के रूप में इसे 'राजनीति विज्ञान' कहा जाता है. राजनीति में सामाजिक गणित राजनीति की दशा-दिशा तय करते हैं.

नरेंद्र मोदी के सत्ता सम्हालने और अमित शाह के हाथों भाजपा की बागडोर आने के बाद से ही इसबात के संकेत मिलने लगे थे कि पार्टी और सरकार दोनों एक दूसरे के पूरक बनकर देश के हर वर्ग, हर क्षेत्र और हर समुदाय तक पहुँचेंगे. पार्टी की विचारधारा के आर्थिक और सामाजिक तत्व सरकार की योजनाओं के मूल में होंगे तो वहीं पार्टी द्वारा सरकार की योजनाओं

को संगठन के माध्यम से ले जाने का कार्य किया जाएगा.

अमित शाह ने अध्यक्ष का पद सम्हालते ही संगठन की पहुँच को बूथ स्तर से नीचे जाकर पन्ना-प्रमुख तक ले जाने का कार्य किया. उन्होंने पार्टी को साल के हर दिन और हर पल जीवंत और गतिशील रखने के कार्यक्रम चलाए. सरकार की योजनायें बूथ-बूथ तक कैसे पहुँचे इसके लिए संगठन स्तर पर विस्तारकों के प्रशिक्षण के कार्यक्रम तय किये. शाह ने खुद देशव्यापी भ्रमण करके पार्टी की संगठनात्मक कार्यप्रणाली को सुदृढ़ता प्रदान करने का कार्य किया. अमित शाह कई बार यह कह चुके हैं कि उनके लिए हर चुनाव कड़ा है और वे हर चुनाव को परिश्रम की हद तक जाकर लड़ते हैं.

त्रिपुरा में असंभव सी दिखने वाली जीत के पीछे भी शाह की यही रणनीति काम कर रही थी. गत वर्ष 6-7 मई 2017 को अपने संगठनात्मक प्रवास के दौरान अमित शाह ने त्रिपुरा के संगठन और वहाँ की सामाजिक स्थिति की नब्ब टटोल ली थी. इस प्रवास के दौरान वे वहाँ के पत्रकारों, प्रबुद्ध वर्ग, संगठन के निचले स्तर के कार्यकर्ताओं, बूथ विस्तारकों से खुद मिले थे. त्रिपुरा की कम्युनिस्ट सरकार की नाकामियों और संघ व भाजपा कार्यकर्ताओं की हत्या के मुद्दे को सही ढंग से चिन्हित करने और उसे उठाने के लिए शाह ने अत्यंत सूक्ष्मता से नीति तैयार की और उसे कुशलता से बूथ स्तर तक पहुँचाया. साथ ही मोदी सरकार की उपलब्धियों को भी जनता तक पहुँचाकर भाजपा को एक विकल्प के रूप में स्थापित किया. त्रिपुरा में मिली इस जीत के आलोक में अगर गत कुछ वर्षों से पूर्वोत्तर के घटनाक्रमों को देखा जाए तो भाजपा अपने संगठन के माध्यम से पूर्वोत्तर के लिए नीतिगत स्तर पर कार्य कर रही है. स्थानीय सरकारों की खामियों को उजागर करने के साथ-साथ केंद्र सरकार की उपलब्धियों को बताने का समानांतर कार्य भाजपा ने सफलतापूर्वक किया. इसका परिणाम है कि आज भाजपा त्रिपुरा जैसे अभेद किले को भेद पाने में कामयाब हुई है.

इस मामले में भाजपा के बरक्स राष्ट्रीय दल के रूप में कांग्रेस अत्यंत कमजोर सिद्ध हो रही है. कांग्रेस के पास न तो कोई ठोस वैचारिक नीति है और न ही जनता तक पहुँचने का आत्मविश्वास ही नजर आ रहा है.

**(लेखक डॉ श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी रिसर्च फाउंडेशन में रिसर्च फेलो हैं.)**



## Discussion on Union Budget 2018 at SPMRF Conference Room on 1st February 2018



# SPMRF & NMML Organised a Panel Discussion on “Union Budget 2018” with the Members of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister at Nehru Memorial Museum & Library on 7th February 2018



**SPMRF Organised a Talk on “Triple Talaq to Haj Subsidy: Shaping the future of Muslim Women in India” by Prof. Syed Tanveer Nasreen (Professor-in-charge, Dept. of Women’s Studies, Burdwan University, West Bengal & Social Activist) at BJP Central Library on 10th February 2018**

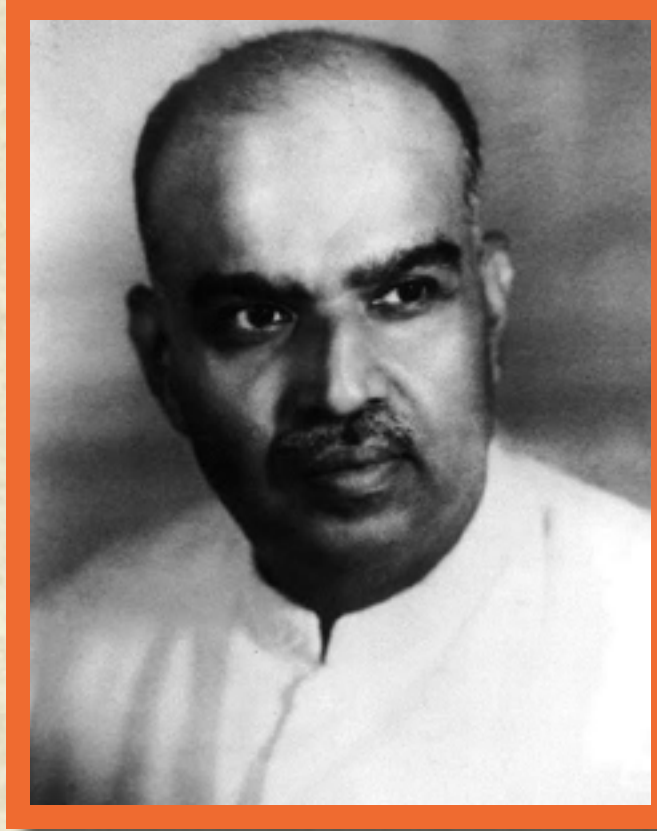


SPMRF, NMML & BharatShakti.in organised a Seminar on  
“Indian Resurgence: Aspirations, Approaches, Achievements”  
on 22nd February 2018



# Discussion on “इक्कीसवीं सदी के बदलते भारत में युवाओ की भूमिका” at Samvad Bhavan, Digvijay Nath PG College, Auditorium, Gorakhpur on 23rd February 2018





“The gigantic task of reconstruction, cultural, social, economic and political can be rendered possible through coordinated efforts of bands of trained and disciplined Indians. Armed with the knowledge of Indian’s past glory and greatness, her strength and weakness, it is they who can place before their country a programme of work, which while loyal to the fundamental traditions of India civilisation will be adapted to the changing conditions of the modern world.”

**-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee**  
*Convocation Address delivered at Gurukul Kangri  
Viswavidyalaya, Haridwar, 1943*

---

**Published By:**

**Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation**

9, Ashoka Road New Delhi - 110001

E-mail: office@spmrf.org, Phone: 011-23005850