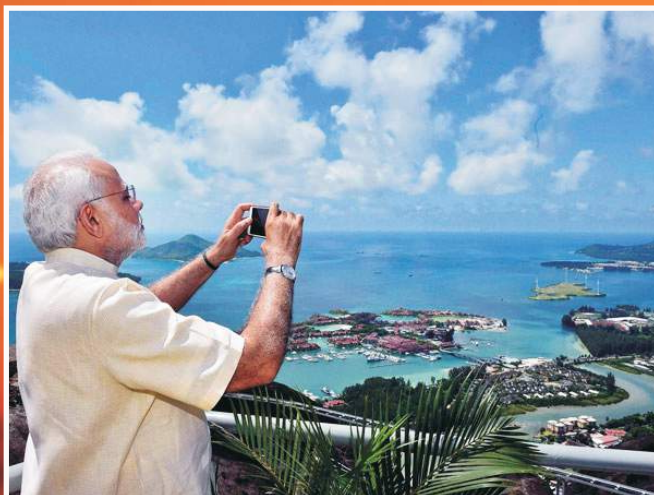




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An Indian perspective

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Special Article

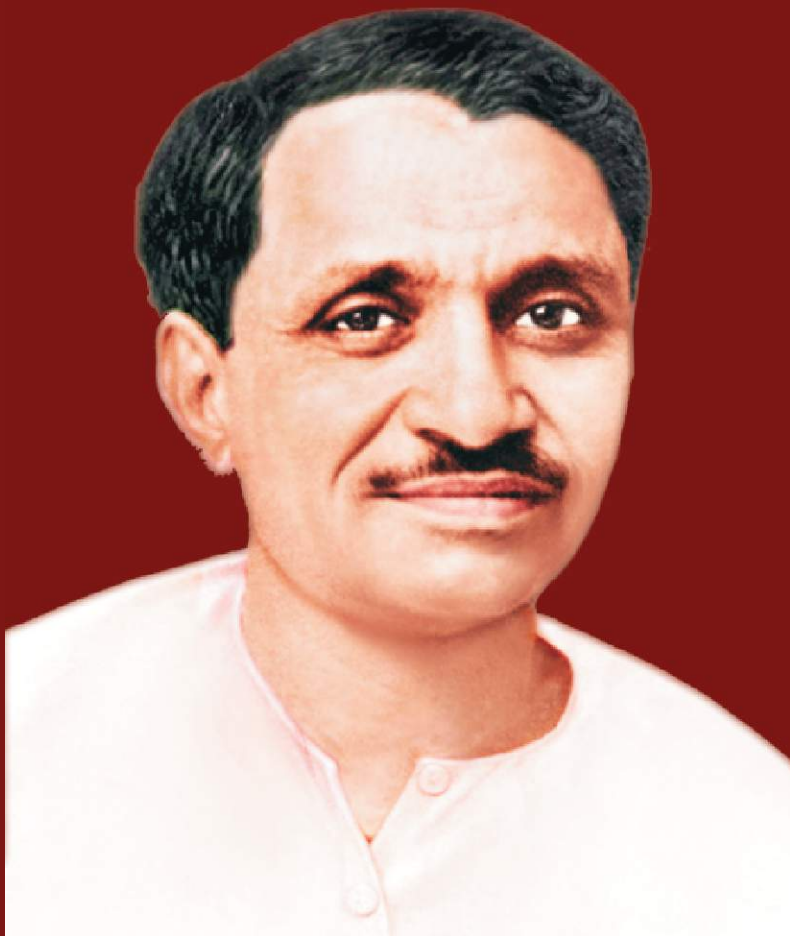
- Dr. Ambedkar–A Great Visionary of Modern India
- भूमि अधिग्रहण- सच्चाई एवं भ्रम

PM Modi's three-nation
tour: Reclaiming India's
position in Indian Ocean

Pradhan Mantri
Kaushal Vikas
Yojana

Extraordinary transformation of
Madhya Pradesh in agriculture
through the last decade

राष्ट्र का विचार लेकर आगे बढ़ें तो एक और एक मिलकर दो नहीं ग्यारह होंगे



“व्यक्तिगत, दलगत या वादगत कोई विचार लेकर चलने से प्रगति नहीं हो सकती। राजनीति आखिर राष्ट्र के लिए ही है। यदि राष्ट्र का विचार छोड़ दिया, यानी राष्ट्र की अस्मिता, उसके इतिहास, संस्कृति, सभ्यता को छोड़ दिया तो राजनीति का क्या उपयोग? राष्ट्र का स्मरण कर कार्य होगा तो सबका मूल्य बढ़ेगा। राष्ट्र को छोड़ा तो सब शून्य जैसा ही है। राष्ट्र का विचार लेकर आगे बढ़ें तो एक और एक मिलकर दो नहीं ग्यारह होते हैं।”

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Editorial Advisors :

Shri Shakti Sinha, IAS (retd)
Former Power & Finance Secretary,
Govt. of Delhi

Dr. Anirban Ganguly
Director, SPMRF

Dr. Shiv Shakti Bakshi
Executive Editor, Kamal Sandesh

Research Team:

Amarjeet Singh

Siddharth Singh

Shubhendu Anand

Ajit Jha

Priya Sharma

Gaurav Jha

Shailendra Kumar Shukla

Published by :

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Research Foundation
11, Ashok Road,
New Delhi - 110001
E-mail : office@spmrf.org,
Telephone : 011-48005769

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02 EDITORIAL

PM MODI'S VISION

03 Our vision for Indian Ocean is
'SAGAR': "Security and Growth
for All in the Region"

POLICY ANALYSIS

05 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas
Yojana - *Siddharth Singh*

07 मेक इन इंडिया के लिए कौशल विकास जरूरी
- डॉ. रजनीश त्यागी

SPECIAL ARTICLE

09 Dr. Ambedkar—A Great Visionary
of Modern India

- *Ram Nath Kovind*

12 भूमि अधिग्रहण- सच्चाई एवं भ्रम

- गोपाल कृष्ण अग्रवाल

NATIONAL AGENDA

15 Implementation of Bezbaruah
Committee recommendations by
Modi Government

- *Siddharth Singh*

18 Coal Mines Special Provisions
Act and Mines & Minerals
Development and Regulation
(MMDR) Act: An appraisal

- *Shubhendu Anand*

22 Jan-Suraksha schemes will
create a Universal Social
Security Net

POLITICAL COMMENTRIES

24 Many Faces Black After Coal
Block Auctions

- *A. Surya Prakash*

27 Extraordinary transformation of
Madhya Pradesh in agriculture
through the last decade (An
interview of Dr. J.K. Bajaj)

- *Shubhendu Anand*

31 New media ensuring the
emergence of new politics in
India

- *Ram Madhav*

INDIA'S WORLD OF DIPLOMACY

35 PM Modi's three-nation tour:
Reclaiming India's position in
Indian Ocean - *Nitin Gokhale*

INDIA@NEW INITIATIVES

38 Digital Gender Atlas for Girls'
Education in India

39 33% Reservation for women in
police forces of all Union
Territories including Delhi
Police

STATES CORNER

40 Local Body Tax (LBT) on traders
abolished by BJP led
Maharashtra Govt

40 Rs. 15,000 crore relief and
assistance to farmers in Madhya
Pradesh in last 2 years

INDIA@POSITIVE

41 India's Beyond Visual Range
Air-to-Air Missile 'ASTRA'
Successfully Test Fired

41 'Subah-e-Banaras' a hit as
Assighat in Varanasi gets a
makeover

EVENT

42 Launch of web-portal "Bharat
Niti" for discussing public policy
matters

EDITORIAL

Despite the degenerative efforts of some sections to force a negative discourse on the country in the past few days and months, the Prime Minister and his Government have, in fact, made it a determined habit to re-lay the vision of governance systems, its approach and attitude.

The launching of the multi-purpose and multi-modal platform PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation) a unique integrating and interactive platform is a reflection of that spirit of innovation which aims to transform governance by making it responsive to the aspirations and needs of the common citizen. The platform also aims to simultaneously monitor and review important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments. PRAGATI symbolizes a major step towards achieving Prime Minister's promise of making governance in India more efficient and responsive.

The go-ahead given to the SAGARMALA Project is another step ahead for India, in her quest for achieving self-reliance in the vital national sectors of transport infrastructure and connectivity. The flagship SAGARMALA project aims to develop enhanced connectivity with main economic centres and beyond through a multi-dimensional

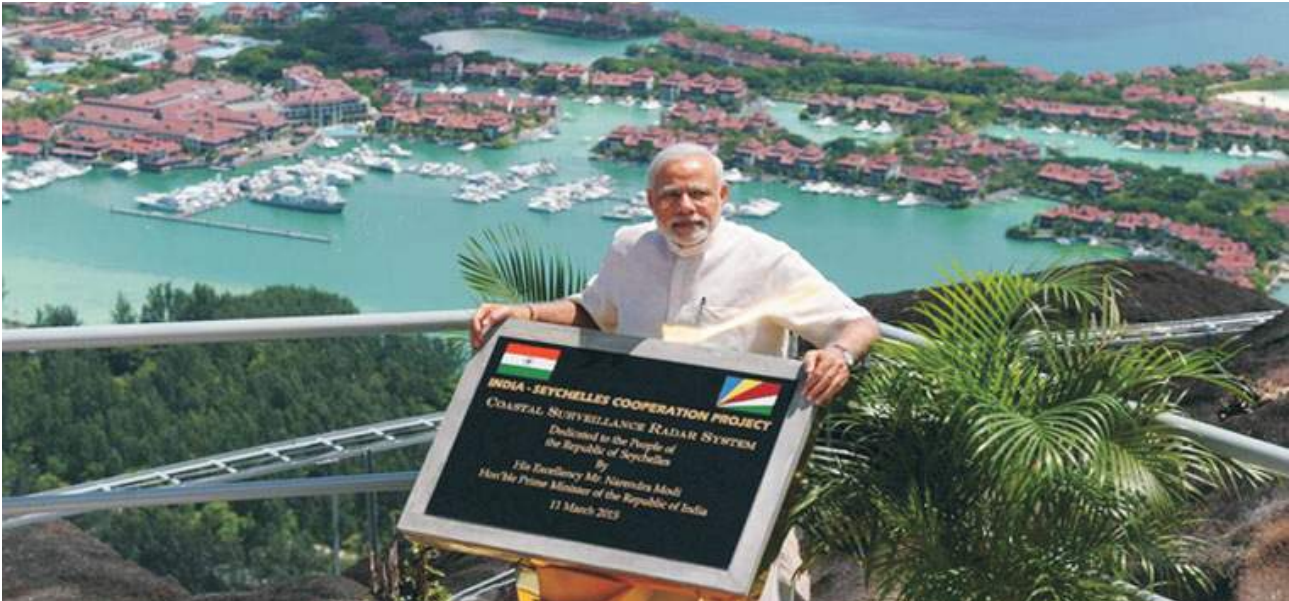
expansion of rail, inland water, coastal and road services.

Some political formations, especially the Communists, appear to be stuck in a dialectal time warp of their own making. They keep seeing and interpreting India through the lens of class-conflict, imagined nationhood and periodically raise false alarms of a "corporate-communal alliance", essentially to dupe the common citizens of this country. Such negative words coming from rootless politicians devoid of a mass-base have no takers in today's India. Still living in a political ice-age, the CPIM and its Leftist drum-beaters, fail to realize that the age of their conflict-generating politics is over.

In the past few months, under the Narendra Modi led dispensation, a definitive era of cooperative and responsive governance has been inaugurated. It is a governance model that is inspired by the basic tenets of Integral Humanism and Antyodaya, it is a governance vision which has pledged to work and dedicate itself to the progress of all sections of our society, including the long-neglected 'proletariat' which, in India, has always been historically abandoned and marginalized even by its most vocal ideological trumpeters.

- Dr. Anirban Ganguly
Director, SPMRF

Our vision for Indian Ocean is 'SAGAR': "Security and Growth for All in the Region"



Why Indian Ocean is at the centre of global attention

Indian Ocean is critical to the future of the world. Today, the world speaks of 21st century driven by the dynamism and the energy of Asia and the Pacific. But, its course will be determined by the tides of the Indian Ocean. This is why Indian Ocean is at the centre of global attention more than ever before. We also see growing global stakes and presence in the Ocean. Even in this changing world, the oceans hold the key to its fortunes. And, we will all prosper when the seas are safe, secure and free for all. To ensure this will be our greatest collective responsibility. We have seen the tragedy of tsunamis and cyclones. Terror has visited us from sea. We all feel the rising impact of climate change on our coasts and islands.

The seas forged links of commerce, culture, and religion with our extended neighbourhood across several millenniums. India is becoming more integrated globally. We will be more dependent than before on the ocean and the surrounding regions. We must also assume our responsibility to shape its future. So, Indian Ocean Region is at the top of our policy priorities.

Our Vision for Indian Ocean Region

Our vision for Indian Ocean Region is rooted in advancing cooperation in our region; and, to use our capabilities for the benefit of all in our common maritime home. We will do everything to safeguard our mainland and islands and defend our interests. Equally we will work to ensure a safe, secure and stable Indian Ocean Region that delivers

us all to the shores of prosperity. And, our capabilities will be there for those struck by the ocean's fury. Or, caught in distress on the seas. We will deepen our economic and security cooperation with our friends in the region especially our maritime neighbours and island states. We will also continue to build their maritime security capacities and their economic strength. Collective action and cooperation will best advance peace and security in our maritime region. It will also prepare us better to respond to emergencies.

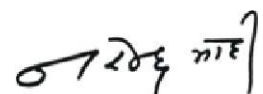
Maritime cooperation is a prerequisite for blue revolution

Our goal is to deepen our mutual understanding on maritime challenges; and, strengthen our collective ability to address them. We also support efforts to strengthen our regional mechanisms for maritime cooperation - from dealing with piracy terrorism and other crimes; to marine safety and natural disasters. We also seek a more integrated and cooperative future in the region that enhances the prospects for sustainable development for all. We must promote greater collaboration in trade, tourism and investment; infrastructure development; marine science and technology; sustainable fisheries; protection of marine environment; and, overall development of Ocean or Blue

Economy. To me the blue chakra or wheel in India's national flag represents the potential of Blue Revolution or the Ocean Economy. That is how central the Ocean Economy is to us.

Ensuring peace, stability and prosperity is India's responsibility

Those who live in this region have the primary responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean. We recognize that there are other nations around the world, with strong interests and stakes in the region. India is deeply engaged with them. We do this through dialogue, visits, exercises, capacity building and economic partnership. Our goal is to seek a climate of trust and transparency; respect for international maritime rules and norms by all countries; sensitivity to each other's interests; peaceful resolution of maritime issues; and increase in maritime cooperation. We seek a future for Indian Ocean that lives up to the name of SAGAR - Security And Growth for All in the Region. We should be inspired by Monsoon, which nurtures and connects us all in region. We will strive to unite our region in partnership, as we were once in geography. An Ocean that connects our world should become the pathway of peace and prosperity for all.



NARENDRA MODI

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

• *Siddharth Singh*

Modi government has launched a new scheme for skill training of youth to harness the demographic dividend and to provide employment to youth as per their enlarged skills. Last month the Union Cabinet gave its approval for the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) with an outlay of Rs. 1500 crore. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

Skill training under the new scheme will primarily be focused on a first time entrants to the labour market and primarily target Class 10 and Class 12 drop outs.

will be the flagship scheme for skill training of youth and it will be implemented by the new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The scheme will cover 24 lakh persons. Skill training would be done based on the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) and industry led standards. Under the scheme, a monetary reward will be given to trainees on assessment and

certification by third party assessment bodies. The average monetary reward would be around Rs. 8000 per trainee.

Out of the total outlay, Rs. 1120 crore will be spent on skill training of 14 lakh youth, special emphasis has been given to recognition of prior learning for which an amount of Rs. 220 crore has been provided. Awareness building and mobilization efforts would be focused for attention, for which Rs. 67 crore has been provided. Mobilization would be done through skill melas organized at the local level with participation of the State Governments, Municipal Bodies, Panchayati Raj Institutions and community based organizations. The focus under the scheme is also on mentorship support and placement facilitation for which an outlay of Rs. 67 crore has been provided. An allocation of Rs. 150 crores has been made for training of youth from the North-East region.

Skilling youths as per demand: For assessment of demand of Central Ministries / Departments / State Governments, industry and business would be consulted. A demand aggregator

platform would be launched for the purpose very soon. The target for skilling would be aligned to demand from other flagship programmes launched in recent times such as Make in India, Digital India, National Solar Mission and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Skill training under the new scheme will primarily be focused on a first time entrants to the labour market and primarily target Class 10 and Class 12 drop outs.

Implementation: The scheme would be implemented through NSDC training partners. Currently NSDC has 187 training partners that have over 2300 centres. In addition, Central / State Government affiliated training providers would also be used for training under the scheme. All training providers will have to undergo a due diligence before being eligible for participating under this scheme. Focus under the PMKVY would be on improved curricula, better pedagogy and better trained instructors. Training would include soft skills, personal grooming, behavioral change for cleanliness, good work ethics. Sector Skill Councils and the State Governments would closely monitor skill training that will happen under PMKVY.

Evaluation: Skill Development Management System (SDMS) would be put in place to verify and record details of all training centres

All persons undergoing training would be required to give feedback at the time of assessment and this would become the key element of the evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the PMKVY scheme.

a certain quality of training locations and courses. Biometric system and video recording of the training process would be put in place where feasible. All persons undergoing training would be required to give feedback at the time of assessment and this would become the key element of the evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the PMKVY scheme. A robust grievance redressal system would be put in place to address grievances relating to implementation of the scheme. An online citizen portal would also be put in place to disseminate information about the scheme.

(Siddharth Singh is Research Associate at SPMRF)

मेक इन इंडिया के लिए कौशल विकास जरूरी

• डॉ रजनीश त्यागी

पीएम नरेंद्र मोदी ने 15 अगस्त को लाल किले से अपने पहले भाषण में मेक इन इंडिया का नारा दिया था। वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने भी अपने बजट भाषण में मेक इन इंडिया की बात कही थी। उनके बजट भाषण में इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर और कारोबार आसान करने से लेकर स्किल डेवलपमेंट तक मेक इन इंडिया की झलक देखने को मिली। मेक इन इंडिया का लक्ष्य नए उद्योगों की शुरुआत करना है।

भारत में औद्योगिक उत्पादन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए मजदूरों में कुशलता और कौशल का होना आवश्यक है। मैनुफैक्चरिंग नई सरकार के प्रमुख पॉलिसी उद्देश्यों में शामिल है। मैनुफैक्चरिंग लॉन्ग-टर्म ग्रोथ का इंजन साबित होगी। यदि देश में उत्पादन की इकाइयां नहीं लगेगीं तो देश कारोबारियों और व्यापारियों का बन कर रह जाएगा। विनिर्माताओं का नहीं बन जाएगा। आज देश को विनिर्माताओं की जरूरत है। निर्माण ही नहीं होगा तो कारोबारी क्या बेचेंगे?

भारत दुनिया के सबसे जवान आबादी वाले देशों में शुमार है और देश इस वजह से एक बड़ी फायदेमंद स्थिति में है। देश की युवा आबादी में मौजूद संभावनाओं का पूरा फायदा उठाने की जरूरत है। जवानी को स्कूलों में खपाने की जगह कार्यशालाओं और फेक्ट्रीओ में लगाना पड़ेगा। देखने में यह आया है की जवानी कॉलेज में खर्च हो जाती है और कॉलेज से निकलने के बाद विद्यार्थी किसी काम का नहीं बचता है। एक जमाना था जब पढ़ाई लिखाई, डिग्री, क्वालीफिकेशन ही जॉब के लिए पर्याप्त हुआ करती थीं।

आज स्किल डेवलपमेंट की महती आवश्यकता है। बेहतर और कुशल कामगार ना सिर्फ देश में बेरोजगारी की समस्या को खत्म कर सकते हैं बल्कि देश और कारोबार की तरक्की में भी अहम भूमिका निभा सकते हैं। अक्टूबर 2009 में नेशनल स्किल डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन की शुरुआत की गई। कौशल निखार के लिए नेशनल स्किल डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन ने करीब 2500 करोड़ रुपये का कोष बनाया है।

पब्लिक-प्राइवेट पार्टनरशिप के आधार पर कौशल निखार के लिए नेशनल स्किल डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन निजी संस्थानों को धन एवं मार्गदर्शन देने का काम करती है। कौशल विकास मिशन द्वारा प्रशिक्षण केंद्र के इंस्ट्रक्टर को 30 रुपये प्रति घंटा प्रति प्रशिक्षणार्थी मानदेय दिया जाता है। प्रशिक्षण कोर्स पूरी तरह से निशुल्क है। किसी तरह का कोई चार्ज नहीं लिया जा सकता। कम से कम 60 फीसदी प्रशिक्षार्थियों को नौकरी दिलाना संस्था की जिम्मेदारी है। ऐसा न होने पर 20 फीसदी मानदेय में की जाती कटौती है।

इक्रा मैनेजमेंट कंसल्टिंग सर्विस लिमिटेड और एओन हेवित जैसी अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कंसल्टिंग फर्म के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक साल 2022 तक भारत में करीब 35 करोड़ कार्य-कुशल कामगारों की जरूरत होगी। कामगारों की कुशलता को निखारने का काम भी लक्ष्य से काफी पीछे चल रहा है। नवंबर 2012-13 के मध्य तक नेशनल स्किल डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन महज 14 लाख कामगारों को ही ट्रेनिंग दे पाई थी जो कि उसके अपने लक्ष्य 85 लाख कार्य-कुशल कामगारों से काफी पीछे है। देश में हर साल 1.80 करोड़ कामगार बढ़ जाते हैं। लेकिन हर साल सिर्फ 31 लाख को ही स्किल डेवलपमेंट की ट्रेनिंग देने की व्यवस्था है। इलेक्ट्रिक और हाउस वायरिंग, सिल्क, स्क्रीन और प्रिंटिंग, वेल्डिंग एवं फैब्रिकेशन, एलईडी, एलसीडी और टीवी रिपेयरिंग, यूपीएस और इनवर्टर रिपेयरिंग, ब्यूटीशियन एवं कटिंग, आर्टिफिशियल ज्वेलरी और मोबाइल रिपेयर, कंप्यूटर आपरेटर, इलेक्ट्रिक एवं मोटर बाइंडिंग सहित करीब 250 ट्रेडों में प्रशिक्षण दिया जाता है। युवाओं की स्किल बेस्ड इंडस्ट्री में राह आसान करने के लिए सरकार बैंकों, के जरिए भी उन्हें वित्तीय मदद पहुंचाती है।

देश में करीब 80 फीसदी कंपनियां भी कुशलता की कमी को मान रही हैं। ऐसे में उत्पादन और सेवाओं के लिए कामगारों की कमी मेक इन इंडिया के सपने को तोड़ सकती है। जब देसी कंपनियों को ही कुशल कारीगर नहीं मिल रहे तो अर्थव्यवस्था में तेजी और विदेशी निवेश के आने पर कुशल कारीगरों की जरूरत

से कैसे निपटा जाएगा? टाटा कंपनी और आईसीआईसीआई जैसी संस्थाओं ने स्किल डेवलपमेंट के मूल मंत्र को काफी पहले ही समझ लिया था। आज वो अपनी कंपनी और संस्थाओं में कुशल कारीगरों की जरूरत को अपनी खुद की सीएसआर योजनाओं के द्वारा ही पूरा कर रही हैं। सभी कंपनियों को स्किल डेवलपमेंट पर ध्यान देना चाहिए। सेंटर फॉर सिविल सोसायटी विकल्प वाउचर्स प्रोग्राम के जरिए स्किल डेवलपमेंट के काम में अनोखे प्रयोग कर रहा है।

देश में 53 फीसदी कर्मचारियों को स्किल डेवलपमेंट की ट्रेनिंग देने की जरूरत है। विकास, निवेश और नौकरी के अवसर बढ़ाना और डिमांड-सप्लाई को बेहतर बनाने के लिए स्किल डेवलपमेंट के जरिये युवाओं को ट्रेड करना चाहिए। लेकिन 19 से 24 वर्ष की आयु के मात्र पांच फीसदी ही व्यावसायिक शिक्षा के जरिये ट्रेड हो पाते हैं। स्किल डेवलपमेंट के जरिये लक्षित 50 करोड़ लोगों में कमसे कम 25 करोड़ ग्रामीण लोगों को गांवों से जुड़े लघु-मझोले उद्योगों की ट्रेनिंग मिलेगी तो इससे ज्यादा रोजगार पैदा होंगे। केंद्र सरकार ने 1500 करोड़ रुपए की दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्रामीण कौशल योजना शुरू की है। डिजिटल वाउचर द्वारा पैसा सीधे छात्रों के खाते में जायेगा। अगर हम नौकरियों का सृजन करते हैं तो हमारी आर्थिक वृद्धि की दर स्वतः ही बढ़ जायेगी। आज भारत के युवाओं का मुकाबला दुनिया के युवाओं से भी है। ओबामा ने कहा था कि जब मैं भारत जाऊंगा तो 21 हजार नौकरियां लेकर आऊंगा। दूसरे देशों के राष्ट्राध्यक्ष आते हैं, तो अपने देश को यह बता कर आते हैं कि वे भारत से इतनी नौकरियां लायेंगे।

प्रशिक्षकों की कमी के कारण लोगों को ट्रेनिंग देने की रफ्तार धीमी है। 2008 के वर्ल्ड डेवलपमेंट रिपोर्ट में यह कहा गया था कि भारत की युवा पीढ़ी के लिए इंडस्ट्रियल ट्रेनिंग इंस्टीट्यूट्स बनाये जायें। 2009 में वित्त मंत्री पी चिंदबरम ने एक हजार आईटीआई की घोषणा कर दी थी। देश में 10,000 से अधिक आईटीआई हैं। इनमें करीब 15 लाख सीटें हैं लेकिन 75,000 प्रशिक्षकों की कमी है।

अगर बीते दस साल का रिकॉर्ड देखते हैं तो देश में जॉबलेस ग्रोथ हुई है। हालात यह हैं की चंद पदों के लिए हजारों लाखों लोग आवेदन करते हैं। 18

से 23 साल की उम्र के युवाओं की संख्या तकरीबन 15 करोड़ है। युवा जल्दी से जल्दी जॉब पाने की जुगत में मंहंगे कोर्स तो कर लेते हैं लेकिन जब इन कोर्सों से मिले अनुभव की बात आती है तो वे कार्यस्थल पर फिट नहीं बैठते। युवाओं को चीजों को बेहतर ढंग से मैनेज करने की कला आनी चाहिए। सोचना यह है कि आगामी वर्षों में इनके लिए नौकरियां कहां से आयेंगी? बेरोजगार इंजीनियर की संख्या में साल दर साल इजाफा हो रहा है। डिग्री होल्डर इंजीनियर कंप्यूटर फ्रैंडली तो हैं, लेकिन जिस क्षेत्र में उनसे विशेषज्ञता की जरूरत है उसमें उन्हें कुशलता हासिल नहीं है। स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में चुनिंदा स्किल्स में मात खा जाने के कारण मेडिको युवा इन अवसरों का लाभ नहीं उठा पा रहे हैं।

नई चुनौतियों से मुकाबले के लिए युवाओं को स्वयं को तैयार करना होगा। युवाओं की शारीरिक क्षमता का स्तर नीचे आया है। इसलिए बड़ी से बड़ी भर्ती में भी सेना को निराशा ही हाथ लगती है। आज सेना को अपने स्तर के लायक युवा नहीं मिल पा रहे हैं। युवाओं को अपनी शारीरिक क्षमता बढ़ानी होगी। जो युवा शिक्षा क्षेत्र में जाना चाहते हैं वो अपनी जानकारी बढ़ाएं। विषय की गहरी जानकारी शिक्षा क्षेत्र में स्थिरता पाने की पहली शर्त है। लेकिन सामान्य ज्ञान का कम पाया जाना चिंता का विषय है। आजकल के छात्रों को गणित से बहुत डर लगता है बैकिंग क्षेत्र पूरी तरह गणनाओं पर ही चलता है। वे छात्र जिनकी कैलकुलेशन पॉवर अच्छी है वो बैकिंग क्षेत्र में बहुत आगे तक बढ़ते हैं। इसके साथ ही करेंट नॉलेज भी जरूरी है। मीडिया लोकतंत्र का चौथा स्तम्भ है। मीडिया डेड लाइन बेस्ड प्रोफेशन है जहां टाइम का मतलब ही सफलता है। भारतीय छात्र आमतौर पर लेटलतीफ होते हैं इसलिए वो मुकाबले में टिक नहीं पाते हैं। इस फील्ड में हिंदी-इंग्लिश दोनों ही भाषाओं पर पकड़ बहुत जरूरी है। स्किल डेवलपमेंट सतत प्रक्रिया है। अगर कोई जिज्ञासु हैं तो किसी भी क्षेत्र में अपनी स्किल्स बढ़ा सकता हैं। व्यक्ति के विकास की जिम्मेदारी उसकी स्वयं की है। सरकारें तो केवल सहारा दे सकती हैं। सरकारों पर पूरी तरह निर्भर हो जाना स्वस्थ समाज का लक्षण नहीं है।

(लेखक आगरा विश्वविद्यालय में प्रवक्ता रह चुके हैं)

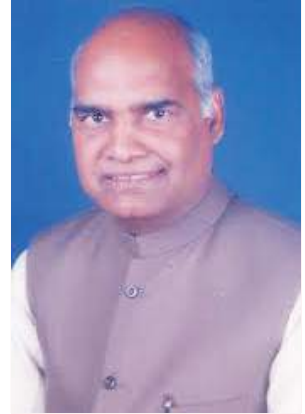
Dr. Ambedkar – A Great Visionary of Modern India

• *Ram Nath Kovind*

India produced many great leaders whose contribution has been immense. One such leader of great vision and extraordinary brilliance was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He had a multi-faceted personality. His vision of India differed from that of other Indian leaders of his time. Often his visionary ideas and lofty ideals were misunderstood or misinterpreted. But when we closely examine the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar, we can under-

stand and appreciate their usefulness and relevance to rising India.

Born in a very low caste and facing many hurdles in the social, religious, political and economic fields, he devoted himself and his life to fight for justice for the suppressed and secure adequate safe guards and rights to these people. Throughout his life, Dr. Ambedkar had to struggle against Orthodox elements in the Hindu society on the one hand and the foreign authorities on the other so as to make available the benefits of emancipatory discourses to the citizens of India. It is at times difficult to see Ambedkar's extreme views in the right perspective today but, anybody with a clear understanding and appreciation of the social realities of pre-independent India would agree with his logic and consider his line of thinking as course of action for great social change.



Dr. Ambedkar (R) with Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee (L)

Dr. Ambedkar's prime objective

was to reform the society. His social struggle was primarily aimed at establishing equality. His agitation to secure basic rights for the oppressed people brought to the fore the serious social peculiarities including caste system of the Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar struggled to secure basic civic rights like the right to collect water from public ponds and wells, temple entry, entry into public places such as Public Burial Grounds, Parks, Museums, Public Resorts, etc, and right to education.

Through his leadership and strategies, not only the depressed classes but Indian society as a whole has been benefited. India owes a debt of gratitude to this great social reformer for the awakening he brought about in the neglected sections of society and created healthy environment for these hitherto voiceless people to contribute their due share to India's progress and prosperity. Social awareness and elimination of social evils was his greatest contribution. The atmosphere which prevailed during his time does not exist today. It has changed and the credit for it should necessarily go to Ambedkar's pioneering work as a social liberator. However much still needs to be done in this regard. He had rightly focused attention on the principle of social equality in the Constitution of

India itself making it a constitutional guarantee thus affecting lasting liberal influence on the Indian ethos. His whole life was a ceaseless struggle for the attainment of this great objective. This itself is a great evidence of Ambedkar's greatness as a social reformer and harbinger of a new era in Indian social system.

Dr. Ambedkar worked for the uplift of women from 1927 till his death. His resignation from the Cabinet was for the cause of women. It speaks about his sincere commitment towards the emancipation of women, as well. He championed their cause in Bombay Legislative Council, Viceroy's Executive Council, in the Constituent Assembly and as first Law Minister of Independent India. Liberation of women was an important part of his liberal agenda and hence his demand for the universal adult franchise at the Round Table Conferences was only to be expected. Dr. Ambedkar was bold enough to treat both men and women as equal in the Constitution of India. Today, one can see the progress of women in political, social, economic and educational fields. The purpose of the Hindu Code Bill was to codify and modify certain provisions of the Hindu law enabling the same set of laws to govern all Hindus whether men or

women. He inaugurated the era of women empowerment through Hindu code.

His obsession with the goal of social justice was such that the Government of India under V.P. Singh, supported by BJP, decided to observe Ambedkar's birth Centenary Year as the year of Social Justice (April 14, 1990 to April 13, 1991). The Union government also conferred Bharat Ratna (posthumously) on Dr. Ambedkar in 1990, which the Congress Government had preferred to avoid as per its own wisdom. V.P. Singh Govt., under political pressure of BJP, also put a portrait of Dr. Ambedkar in Central Hall of Parliament in the same year and this was a great tribute not only to Dr. Ambedkar but the entire Dalits and backward community whose Messiah was neglected by the erstwhile Congress Government. As we all know his portrait deserved to be put in Central Hall on priority as Dr. Ambedkar presided over many Constituent Assembly sittings and finally presented Draft Constitution of India to President Dr. Rajendra Prasad in Feb 1948 in this very Central Hall of Parliament.

While paying tribute to Dr. Ambedkar, once Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister and a vocal supporter for Ambedkar's social reformatory

thoughts enshrined in the Constitution of India, said that some of his opponents wanted to brand him as Manuvadi but the fact is that he had never been a Manuvadi but a Bhimvadi i.e. follower of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar.

Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer very eloquently once declared that Ambedkar "will be remembered as long as the Indian Constitution lasts, revered by all lovers of social justice". Inequalities in society had to be abolished if democracy had to be meaningful and purposeful. He was a pragmatic liberal thinker because he wanted democracy not only in political but also in social and economic fields of society.

Thus Dr. Ambedkar, by his decisive and visionary efforts to bring social equality and social justice to the exploited section of society through Constitution of India and by many enactments based on the principle of equality of women at par with men, has proved undoubtedly to be a great visionary and statesman of India.

(The writer is two term Rajya Sabha M.P., former National President of BJP Scheduled Castes Morcha and former National Spokesperson of BJP. He has been an Advocate practicing in Delhi High Court and Supreme Court during 1976-1993. He was also acting Chairperson of SPMRF and can be contacted on Mob. 9868511414 and Email – ramanath.kovind7@gmail.com)

भूमि अधिग्रहण- सच्चाई एवं भ्रम

• गोपाल कृष्ण अग्रवाल

भूमि अधिग्रहण संशोधन विधेयक पर विपक्ष के तेवर काफी आक्रामक हो गये हैं। कई विपक्षी पार्टियों ने पैदल मार्च कर राष्ट्रपति को इसके विरोध में ज्ञापन सौंपा। उनका दावा है कि वर्तमान संशोधनों से इस विधेयक का स्वरूप किसान विरोधी हो जाएगा।

जब भाजपा एक अध्यादेश के तहत संशोधन दिसम्बर माह में लाई थी तो चारों तरफ इसका विरोध हुआ था इसी को ध्यान में रखकर यह बताना आवश्यक है कि अध्यादेश लाना कानूनी आवश्यकता थी। भूमि अधिग्रहण विधेयक 2013 में एक क्लॉज था जिसके तहत 13 पूर्व ऐक्ट जो उसमें इंग्लैम्बिड थे,

किसान एवं किसान संगठनों से सीधी वार्ता एवं उनके सुझावों को शामिल करने के लिए भाजपा ने छह सदस्यीय भूमि अधिग्रहण समिति का गठन किया। इसमें किसान संगठनों से लेकर सीधे तौर पर किसानों से मुलाकात करना शामिल था। अगर उनकी कोई आकांक्षा या सुझाव है तो उसे समझने और उन्हें शामिल करने के लिए ही यह समिति बनाई गई।

उनपर नया भूमि अधिग्रहण कानून लागू नहीं होता। इसलिए उन 13 ऐक्ट के तहत अधिग्रहित की गई भूमि पर मुआवजा पुराने रेट से ही किसानों को मिलता

अगर उसको इस नए ऐक्ट के तहत 31 दिसंबर 2014 तक नहीं लाया जाता। नए कानून के तहत किसानों को ज्यादा मुआवजा मिले इसके लिए अध्यादेश लाना जरूरी हो गया था। यह किसानों के हित की बात थी।



अध्यादेश के बाद जब संशोधन विधेयक संसद में लाया गया तो हर जगह इस पर तीखी प्रतिक्रियाएं हुईं। कुछ संगठनों ने आंदोलन किया और कुछ ने आने वाले दिनों में सड़कों पर उतरने की बात कही। हर जगह यह कहा गया कि यह संशोधन किसान विरोधी है। जबकि स्थिति ऐसी नहीं है। पार्टी नेतृत्व को लगा कि यह सब भ्रामक स्थितियों के कारण है। इसमें वस्तुस्थिति से पूरी तरह अवगत नहीं होने के साथ-साथ विरोधी दलों का भ्रामक दुष्प्रचार भी शामिल है। भाजपा ने महसूस किया कि किसानों से सीधी बात करनी चाहिए और उनकी जरूरतों पर चर्चा करनी चाहिए। किसान एवं किसान संगठनों से सीधी वार्ता एवं उनके सुझावों को शामिल करने के लिए भाजपा ने छह सदस्यीय भूमि अधिग्रहण समिति का गठन किया। इसमें किसान संगठनों से लेकर सीधे तौर पर किसानों से मुलाकात करना शामिल था। अगर उनकी कोई आकांक्षा या सुझाव है तो उसे समझने और उन्हें शामिल करने के लिए ही यह समिति बनाई गई। अलग-अलग संशोधनों पर उनके विचारों को शामिल कर ही रिपोर्ट देनी थी जो उस समिति नेदिये और इसलिए सरकार ने इस संशोधन विधेयक में कुल नौ और संशोधन पेश करके लोक सभा में पारित करवाया।

रिपोर्ट में हमने कुछ समस्याएं बताई थीं। आम तौर से आप देखेंगे तो किसान, सरकार द्वारा इस ऐक्ट के तहत भूमि अधिग्रहण के पक्ष में हैं वे ये भी जानते हैं कि अगर इसमें सरकार थोड़ा संशोधन नहीं करती तो वर्तमान कानून में इतनी पेचीदगियां हैं कि कोई अधिग्रहण के लिए सामने नहीं आएगा और अगर यह प्रक्रिया नहीं होती है तो आज जो खेती का हाल है

उससे जीविका चलाना मुश्किल है। देश की 60 प्रतिशत से अधिक जनता खेती पर आधारित है जिसकी देश की सकल घरेलू उत्पादन में मात्र 13 प्रतिशत भागीदारी ही है।

भू-स्वामी की औसत भूमि का पट्टा बहुत छोटा हो गया है जो की व्यापारिक खेती के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं है इन सब लोगों को वैकल्पिक रोजगार के संसाधन ढूँढने पड़ेंगे और अगर उनको अपनी भूमि की कीमत सही नहीं मिली तो परिस्थिति विकट हो जाएगी। अधिग्रहण से कम से कम दाम तो ठीक मिल जाते हैं। और जिस क्षेत्र में आधारभूत ढांचे का निर्माण किया जाता है उसके आसपास की भूमि के दाम भी अच्छे हो जाते हैं। भू अधिग्रहण से ही तो देश के सभी कोनों में आधार भूत ढांचे की संरचना हो पाएगी।

अगर इन संशोधनों को हम बारीकियों से देखेंगे तो पता चलेगा कि लोगों की चिंता है कि भूमि अधिग्रहण कानून में भू स्वामी की सहमति का एक क्लॉज था, जिसे भाजपा ने अब हटा दिया। इस विषय पर भी स्पष्टीकरण की आवश्यकता है। आजकल भ्रामक बातों पर बहस हर जगह चल रही है, चाहे वह मीडिया हो या बुद्धिजीवियों की बैठक।

भूमि अधिग्रहण ऐक्ट 2013 के बारे में सभी की मान्यता है कि यह किसानों के हित में है। हमारा यह जानना आवश्यक है कि उसमें भी सरकारी परियोजनाओं के लिए भू स्वामी की सहमति का क्लॉज नहीं है। उसमें केवल दो प्रकार के अधिग्रहणों के लिए किसानों की सहमति की बात थी। पहला, अगर सरकार पब्लिक-प्राइवेट पार्टनरशिप प्रोजेक्ट के लिए भूमि अधिग्रहित करती है तो ही 70 प्रतिशत भू स्वामियों से सहमति लेने की आवश्यकता थी। और अगर सरकार किसी प्राइवेट परियोजना के लिए भूमि अधिग्रहित करती है तो ही उसमें 80 प्रतिशत भू स्वामियों की सहमति की जरूरत थी। इसके अलावा, अगर सरकार अपने लिए लगभग 9 क्षेत्र की परियोजनाओं में किसी भूमि का अधिग्रहण करती तो उसमें सहमति वाली क्लॉज नहीं थी। ये अधिग्रहण सरकारी प्रोजेक्ट के लिए हैं। जिसमें किसानों की सहमति की आवश्यकता नहीं थी। पुराने ऐक्ट के 9 क्षेत्र जिसमें सहमति जरूरी नहीं है उसमें अब सरकार ने केवल 5 और आवश्यक क्षेत्रों को जोड़ा है।

निजी अस्पताल और निजी शिक्षण संस्थाओं के लिए भूमि अधिग्रहित नहीं की जाएगी। ये सुझाव भी हमें मिले थे और सरकार ने इसे मान भी लिया। मुआवजे की रकम मिलने में वर्षों लग जाते हैं, ऐसी समस्या भी सामने आई। इससे निपटने के लिए जिला स्तर पर समाधान केन्द्र स्थापित करने की बात को भी सरकार ने माना। इस तरह ज्यादातर सुझावों को सरकार ने मान लिया।

पूर्व में निम्न आवश्यकताओं के लिए भूमि अधिग्रहण पर सहमति नहीं चाहिए थी। पहला सुरक्षा के कारण स्ट्रेटैजिक आवश्यकता के लिए। दूसरा आधारभूत ढांचों के लिए। तीसरा, कृषि क्षेत्र की आवश्यकताओं के लिए। चौथा इन्डस्ट्रीयल कारिडॉर के लिए। पांचवां, सामरिक प्रयोजनों या भारत की राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा या रक्षा अथवा राज्य पुलिस, जनसाधारण की सुरक्षा के महत्वपूर्ण कार्य के लिए। छड़वां भारत सरकार के आर्थिक कार्य, कृषि प्रसंस्करण, शैक्षणिक और अनुसंधान स्किमों इत्यादि के लिए। सातवां, परियोजना से प्रभावित कुटुंबों की पुनर्वास परियोजना के लिए। आठवां, विशेष वर्ग के लिए और गृह निर्माण परियोजना। और नौवां, निर्धन, भूमिहीन या प्राकृतिक आपदा से प्रभावित व्यक्तियों के लिए। इसलिए स्पष्ट होना चाहिए कि सरकार ने अब इसमें पांच नई आवश्यकताओं को ही सम्मिलित किया है।

बिना सहमति से भूमि अधिग्रहित किए जाने वाले

जो पांच कैटेगरी हैं, उसमें इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर डेवलपमेंट, इंडस्ट्रियल कॉरिडोर जैसे बिंदुओं को और भी सीमित किया गया है। इसे सरकार ने माना कि इन्डस्ट्रीयल कॉरिडोर के दोनो तरफ एक एक किलोमीटर से ज्यादा का क्षेत्र अधिग्रहित नहीं किया जाएगा। निजी सार्वजनिक भागीदारी 'पीपीपी' परियोजनाएं जिसमें भूमि का स्वामित्व तो सरकार के पास ही रहेगा उसमें भी सामाजिक ढांचागत परियोजनाओं के लिए भूमि अधिग्रहित करने का अधिकार सरकार ने अपने पास से हटा लिया है। क्योंकि लोगों का कहना था कि इस में कोई स्पष्टता नहीं है और इसका दुरुपयोग हो सकता है। निजी अस्पताल और निजी शिक्षण संस्थाओं के लिए भूमि अधिग्रहित नहीं की जाएगी। ये सुझाव भी हमें मिले थे और सरकार ने इसे मान भी लिया। मुआवजे की रकम मिलने में वर्षों लग जाते हैं, ऐसी समस्या भी सामने आई। इससे निपटने के लिए जिला स्तर पर समाधान केन्द्र स्थापित करने की बात को भी सरकार ने माना। इस तरह ज्यादातर सुझावों को सरकार ने मान लिया। राव बिरेन्द्र सिंह द्वारा नए संशोधन पेश करने के बाद किसान और किसान संगठन संतुष्ट हैं।

कुछ लोगों का इस पर मतभेद है कि सरकार ने सामाजिक प्रभाव आकलन की आवश्यकता को भी हटाया है लेकिन उसकी प्रमुख धारा जैसे कि सरकार को भूमि अधिग्रहण से पहले यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि परियोजना के लिए जितनी जमीन मांगी गई है। क्या वास्तव में उतनी जमीन की आवश्यकता है? और इतनी जमीन ही अधिग्रहित की जाए जितनी कम से कम आवश्यकता है। देश में जितनी बंजर भूमि है उसका सर्वेक्षण कर एक 'लैण्ड बैंक' बनाया जाए जिसमें परियोजनाओं को लगाने की छूट हो। इस सारी बंजर भूमि की जानकारी संलग्नक में दी जाए। अधिग्रहित क्षेत्र में खेतिहारी मजदूर के परिवार के कम से कम एक सदस्य को परियोजना में रोजगार देना आवश्यक करना ऐसे प्रावधान सरकार ने मुख्य धारा में अपना लिए हैं। फिर भी अगर सबका विचार बनेगा तो सामाजिक प्रभाव आकलन का संशोधित रूप लागू किया जा सकता है। संशोधनो के तहत अब बिल में किसानों की ज्यादातर बात मान ली गई है। जब यह बिल लोकसभा में आया था, तब एनडीए के कुछ घट

कभी इसके पक्ष में नहीं थे। लेकिन उनके सुझावों को शामिल किया गया। मुझे लगता है कि राज्यसभा में आने तक एनडीए के घटक इसके पक्ष में तो आयेयें ही, और राजनितिक पार्टियों को भी साथ आ जाना चाहिए।

अब जो विपक्ष का मार्च है वह केवल राजनिति के तहत ही लगता है क्योंकि जिला स्तर पर किसानों की शिकायतों के निस्तारण के लिए ट्रिब्यूनल का गठन करने की बात और उसकी सुनवाई भी जिला स्तर पर ही किये जाने का प्रावधान और साथ में राज्य सरकारों को इस संशोधन को लागू करने या ना करने की स्वतन्त्रता देकर केन्द्र सरकार ने, राज्य सरकार को काफी स्वतन्त्रता दे दी है। अब इस आन्दोलन की आवश्यकता नहीं है। उन्हें अहसास तो हो गया होगा कि यह विधेयक किसान विरोधी नहीं है। अगर वे साथ नहीं भी आए तो संसद का संयुक्त सत्र बुलाकर सरकार इस विधेयक को पास कराने का प्रयास करेगी।

एक बात ध्यान रखने की आवश्यकता है कि पिछली सरकार के समय में SEZ जैसी योजनाओं का व्यापक रूप से दुरुपयोग किया गया। कुछ ही SEZ बनाने की योजना थी लेकिन UPA सरकार ने लगभग 400 से अधिक SEZ को मंजूरी देकर इस योजना को जमीन हड़पने का जरिया बना दिया इस पर पुनः विचार की आवश्यकता है।

वैसे भी विपक्ष को ध्यान रखना चाहिये कि संसद का कार्य कानून बनाना है अगर देश में कानून बनाने की प्रक्रिया गड़बड़ाएगी तो सरकार नहीं चल सकती। जो देश की वर्तमान आर्थिक स्थिति है उसमें अगर हम समुचित विकास के मार्ग पर आगे नहीं बढ़ें तो फिर हमारे भविष्य पर काले बादल मंडराने लगेंगे और ऐसे मौके बार बार नहीं आतें। समय पर निर्णय लेना आवश्यक है।

(लेखक भाजपा के राष्ट्रीय कार्यकारिणी एवं भूमि अधिग्रहण समिति के सदस्य हैं)

Implementation of Bezbaruah Committee recommendations by Modi Government

• *Siddharth Singh*

Northeast has always been and continues to be a focal area for the Modi government as displayed by its prompt action whenever it comes to issues concerning the people and welfare of the region as a whole.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had constituted a Committee under the chairmanship of Shri M.P. Bezbaruah to look into the various concerns of the citizens hailing from

Northeast has always been and continues to be a focal area for the Modi government as displayed by its prompt action whenever it comes to issues concerning the people and welfare of the region as a whole.

the North Eastern States who are living in different parts of the country and to suggest suitable remedial measures including legal measures which could be taken up by the Government. Modi government has recently accepted the recommendations made by the

Bezbaruah Committee with regard to immediate measures.

As part of the Legal Measures, the Indian Penal Code (IPC) will be amended for insertion of new sections of 153C and 509A as recommended by the Committee. As part of Legal Assistance, a panel of seven lawyers including five women lawyers has been constituted for providing legal assistance to the needy people from the North East. State Bhawans of concerned North-Eastern States have also agreed to play active roles to assist the persons in distress.

All the recommendations made by the Committee regarding Special Police Initiatives and additional steps to be taken by the various State Police Forces and Delhi Police have been accepted for immediate implementation. These include:

- Delhi police will recruit 20 police personnel, (10 male – 10 female) each from North East States.

- Police exchange programme has been approved between NE States and metropolitan cities including Delhi.

- North East Special Unit at New Delhi is activated to address the grievances of the NE people. Other States have been advised to do the same.

- A decision has been taken that cases of NE people be referred to the existing fast track courts for early decision.

- A special helpline No.1093 for NE people is being synchronized with helpline No.100. Other States are advised to set up special helpline.

- Various Metropolitan Police including Delhi Police are being advised to post NE Personnel in their force in the visible positions in vulnerable areas prone to crime against NE people. Also they will be advised to have due representation of the senior officers at the field level.

Some recommendations related to the Ministry of Human Resource Development have also been initiated in this regard including:

- In order to educate people about the North East, Universities have been advised that the history of North East and the region's participation in the freedom movement of the country should be taught at graduation level and post-

In order to educate people about the North East, Universities have been advised that the history of North East and the region's participation in the freedom movement of the country should be taught at graduation level and post-graduation level.

graduation level, and for this purpose, the curriculum be effectively restructured.

- Similar action is being taken by the NCERT with respect to elementary and higher secondary education.

- A special scholarship scheme for students of North East Region 'Ishan Uday' has been launched from the academic session 2014-15 providing 10,000 scholarships ranging from Rs.3,500/- to Rs.5,000/- per month for studying at under-graduate level in colleges and universities of the country.

- Under 'IshanVikas' scheme, selected students from school and college levels from the North Eastern States will be taken to Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), National Institute of Technology (NITs) and other engineering institutes for exposure/internship programme.

The acceptance of the recommendation given by Bezbaruah committee actually shows the resolute commitment of Modi Government to prohibit any kind of discrimination on the basis of region.

Ministries of Culture & Tourism and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting have also planned to roll out programmes for bridging the gap between the peoples of the North-Eastern Region and the rest of the country, those initiatives includes:

- Chalking out action plan for educating the people about the rich cultural heritage of the North Eastern States and its wider coverage & promotion at the national level.

- The North East Film Festival & North East Festival to be organized annually at New Delhi, showcasing culture, films, foods, sports etc.

Ministry of Sports has also been roped in this endeavor and has committed the following new initiatives:

- Identification of talented sports persons from North East with the help of State Governments for arranging their training in reputed

sports training centres.

- An amount of Rs.100 crore has been earmarked for setting up of National Sports University in Manipur.

Ministry of DoNER being the nodal agency for development of the remote region has also initiated the following steps:

- DONER Ministry is in the process of clearing the proposal for construction of a hostel at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and four other colleges at Delhi expeditiously.

- DONER is also exploring effective measures to deal with the problem of accommodation and high rent faced by the students and professionals/service persons from the North East in Delhi.

- Govt. of Delhi is being advised to initiate measures to resolve the problem of less payment/non-payment of wages being faced by the North Eastern People.

The acceptance of the recommendation given by Bezbaruah committee actually shows the resolute commitment of Modi Government to prohibit any kind of discrimination on the basis of region.

(Siddharth Singh is Research Associate at SPMRF)

Coal Mines Special Provisions Act and Mines & Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Act: An appraisal

• *Shubhendu Anand*

Parliament on March 20, 2015 approved two crucial bills, which form part of NDA government's reforms agenda, after the opposition unity was broken and a number of non-NDA parties backed the legislations in Rajya Sabha. Overcoming stiff opposition in the Rajya Sabha,

Overcoming stiff opposition in the Rajya Sabha, where the ruling party is in a minority, the government displayed deft political management to pass the Coal Mines Special Provisions Bill as well as the Mines & Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Bill.

where the ruling party is in a minority, the government displayed deft political management to pass the Coal Mines Special Provisions Bill as well as the Mines & Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Bill. The government obtained the support of regional

parties such as Trinamool Congress, Biju Janata Dal and AIADMK by pointing to them the actual quantum and benefits of revenues that states will receive from the auction of mines, thus overcoming opposition from Congress and the Left.

The Narendra Modi government was successful in getting a crucial bill on mines and minerals passed by the Rajya Sabha on the last day of the first half of the Budget session. The Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015 to replace an ordinance promulgated in January, was passed by 117 votes in favour while 69 MPs opposed it. Among the parties, other than the BJP, that voted in favour are the Trinamool Congress, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Biju Janata Dal, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Samajwadi Party and the AIADMK.

The opposition Congress and the Left voted against the bill while the Janata Dal-United and the Rashtriya Janata Dal abstained. The Congress and the Left had

demanding that the bill be sent to the Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha.

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015 was introduced in Lok Sabha on February 24, 2015. The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. The Bill replaces the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Ordinance, 2015 promulgated on January 12, 2015. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 regulates the mining sector in India and specifies the requirement for obtaining and granting mining leases for mining operations. The Bill adds a new Fourth Schedule to the Act. It includes bauxite, iron ore, limestone and manganese ore and are defined as notified minerals. The central government may, by notification, amend this Schedule. The Bill creates a new category of mining license i.e. the prospecting licence-cum-mining lease, which is a two stage-concession for the purpose of undertaking prospecting operations (exploring or proving mineral deposits), followed by mining operations.

Key highlights of Bill

Addition of new schedule-

The bill adds a new 4th schedule in the parent Act to include mining of bauxite, iron ore, limestone and manganese ore as notified minerals.

Lease period- Bill has changed it for 50 years, as against present 30 years for all minerals other than coal, lignite and atomic minerals. While, there is no provision for renewal of mining concessions, unlike the parent Act.

Auction of notified and other minerals- State governments will grant mining leases and prospecting licence-cum-mining leases along with approval of Union government. In this case, Union government will prescribe the terms and conditions for selection of bidders as also the procedure for auctions.

Maximum area for mining- Union government is permitted to increase the area allowed for mining, instead of granting additional leases as per parent Act. Union government may reserve some mines exclusively for some specific purposes.

Institutions- District Mineral Foundation (DMF) to be set up in mining areas affected by mining operations to address local area grievances. National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) to be set up for regional and pan-India planning and detailed mine exploration.

Shortly after the bill on mining, the Rajya Sabha also passed the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill 2015 on Friday, the last day of the first half of Parliament's Budget session. In a repeat of what happened with the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Bill 2015, the coal bill was also favoured by the Trinamool Congress, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Biju Janata Dal, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Samajwadi Party and the AIADMK.

The coal bill was passed by a division vote - 107 in favour and 69 against. The opposition Congress and the Left voted against the bill while the Janata Dal-United and the Rashtriya Janata Dal abstained.

The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill, 2014 was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 10, 2014 by the Minister of Coal, Mr. Piyush Goyal. It sought to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 and the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. The Bill replaces the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 2014 that was promulgated on October 21, 2014.

Under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973, coal mining was

The enactment of the two laws allows transparent auction of mines, a process that has already begun. The ongoing auction has attracted aggressive bids, which will give states about Rs 2 lakh crore over the life of the mines that have been auctioned so far. Further, the auction process ends the opaque system of mine allotment, which drew sharp criticism from the Comptroller & Auditor General and contributed to the collapse in the authority and standing of the Manmohan Singh government.

allowed for (i) government companies, (ii) companies that the government had sub-leased the mines to, and (iii) private companies engaged in a specified end-use such as power, iron and steel, cement and coal washing. The Bill seeks to enable private companies to mine coal for sale in the open market.

Key highlights of Bill

- The bill has provisions for allocation of coal mines through a transparent bidding process i.e e-auction.

- The e-auction of coal blocks will ensure the continuity in coal mining operations and promoting optimum utilization of coal resources.

- The bill also facilitates e-auction of coal blocks for private companies for captive use and allots mines directly to state and central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).

- It has provisions that propose strong measures for rehabilitation and compensation for displaced persons.

- The bill also provides for vesting of the right, title and interest over the land and mine infrastructure together with mining leases to successful bidders.

- The passage of the two Bills means the Modi Government has now managed to obtain Parliament's approval for three of the four reform measures that were implemented through ordinances. The last one that waits Parliament's nod is Land Acquisition Bill.

The enactment of the two laws allows transparent auction of

mines, a process that has already begun. The ongoing auction has attracted aggressive bids, which will give states about Rs 2 lakh crore over the life of the mines that have been auctioned so far. Further, the auction process ends the opaque system of mine allotment, which drew sharp criticism from the Comptroller & Auditor General and contributed to the collapse in the authority and standing of the Manmohan Singh government. The allocation of all coal mines since 1993 was struck down by the Supreme Court in August last year.

In the coal sector, foreign companies with Indian subsidiaries will be eligible for commercial mining. This provision is expected to attract global mining giants and make the sector more competitive and cost-effective.

(Shubhendu Anand, a graduate of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and currently a student of Law at University of Delhi, is a Research Associate at SPMRF).

Jan-Suraksha schemes of NDA govt will create a Universal Social Security Net

Recognising the fact that a large number of people have continued to remain deprived of any kind of insurance coverage be it for health, accidents or life the Government is making efforts to create a universal social security system for all Indians, specially the poor and the under-privileged. The Union Budget 2015-16, has proposed, three Social Security Schemes, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha BimaYojna, Atal PensionYojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana. These three social security schemes, on Jan Dhan platform, is to protect an Indian citizen against illness and accidents.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) seeks to ensure risk coverage in case of accidental death, full or partial disability. The insured amount for accidental death and full disability is Rs 2 lakh and it is Rs 1 lakh for partial disability. It has an annual premium of Rs 12 only, which will be directly auto-debited by the bank from the subscriber's account. People between the age of 18 and 70 years, having an Aadhar linked bank account, are eligible for the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna (PMJJBY) seeks to benefit people in case of death for any reason. It is available to people in the age group of 18 to 50, having a bank account. People who join the scheme before completing the age of 50, can continue to have the risk of

The Union Budget 2015-16, has proposed, three Social Security Schemes, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha BimaYojna, Atal PensionYojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana. These three social security schemes, on Jan Dhan platform, is to protect an Indian citizen against illness and accidents.

life cover up to the age of 55 years, subject to the payment of premium. The scheme has an annual premium of Rs 330, with a risk coverage of Rs 2 lakh. Life Insurance Corporation and other willing life insurers with a tie-up with the bank are to implement the scheme.

The Government of India's concern for old age income security for

the working poor, particularly in the unorganised sector, resulted in the creation of a new initiative in the Union Budget proposals 2015-16, called, Atal Pension Yojana (APY). It is to encourage the uninsured workers in the unorganised sector to come under National Pension System (NPS), under Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). The scheme meant to persuade workers in unorganised sector, who form 88% of total workforce, to save voluntarily for the retirement. Under the APY, the subscribers would receive the fixed pension of Rs. 1000 per month, Rs. 2000 per month, Rs. 3000 per month, Rs. 4000 per month, Rs. 5000 per month, at the age of 60 years, depending on their contributions, which itself would vary depending on the age of joining the APY. The scheme is open to all bank account holders who are not members of any statutory social security scheme. The minimum age of joining APY is 18 years and the maximum is 40 years. The scheme is mainly targeted at unorganised sector workers. The Government would provide fixed pension guarantee for the subscribers, and would co-contribute 50% of the subscriber's contribution or Rs. 1000 per annum, whichever is lower, to eligible subscribers.

In order to achieve the goal of

universal social security system, especially for the poor and the under-privileged, the three-tier social security schemes, announced in the current year budget, is definitely going to spread the safety net of protection to people in all strata of life against deprivation and uncertainties. These are the steps towards ensuring financial security and long term sustenance to families when the earning family member retires, dies or suffers full or partial disability. Jan Dhan Yojana was started for guaranteeing financial inclusion and now Jan Suraksha (providing universal social security net) is all about guaranteeing financial security because both are prerequisites for inclusive growth and all round development. These social security schemes reflect the Modi Government's commitment to utilize the Jan Dhan platform, to ensure that no Indian citizen will have to worry about illness, accidents, or penury in old age.

(SPMRF Desk)

Many Faces Black After Coal Block Auctions

• A. Surya Prakash

There is no better case study on the ill-effects of corruption on governance and the people, than the coal block allocation scam. The Modi regime's transparent e-auction and its successful outcome is an eye-opener.

All those who were pouring ridicule on Mr Vinod Rai, the former Comptroller and Auditor-General of India for estimating the total loss from the arbitrary and non-transparent methods adopted by the Manmohan Singh regime to allocate coal blocks to be around Rs1.86 lakh crore, now have egg on their faces. It now transpires that the former CAG could well have under-estimated the loss, because the open and competitive bidding initiated by the Narendra Modi Government has already netted over Rs2.09 lakh crore for just 33 blocks.

The fresh bidding was necessitated by the August 2014 judgement of the Supreme Court that the allocations were arbitrary and illegal, and its subsequent order cancelling the allocation of 204 coal blocks. Though the process of auction is still on, one can already see the distinct

advantages that accrue to the people at large when corruption and arbitrariness are thrown out of the window and a clean and transparent system is adopted by a Government for the allocation of resources.

These developments provide evidence, if evidence was needed, that the gut assessment of the people vis-à-vis corruption was, after all, correct. They also vindicate the general feeling across the country since 2012 that corruption had reached humongous proportions and unless there was a change of regime and the political will to check its corrosive nature, the future of India and her 1.3 billion citizens would be in jeopardy.

In this context, we need to recall the CAG's report on the allocation of coal blocks, which triggered many political and legal battles and eventually led to the cancellation of allotments and fresh auctions. The CAG found that there were no specific criteria for allocation of coal blocks until 1993. The allocations were done on the basis of letters of recommendation by state governments. After 1993, the Union Ministry of Coal identified coal

blocks that could be allocated for captive mining to the eligible coal-using companies. Allocations to public sector undertakings for captive use or commercial mining were done through direct allocation.

For the private sector, the allocations were made by the ministry, based on the recommendations of an inter-ministerial screening committee which was headed by the Secretary, Coal. The criteria for selection of companies were laid down for the screening committee to follow. However, the auditors found that “there was nothing on record in the said minutes or in other documents on any comparative evaluation of the applicants for a coal block which was relied upon by the screening committee. Minutes of the screening committee did not indicate how each one of the applicants for a particular coal block was evaluated. Thus, a transparent method for allocation of coal blocks was not followed by the screening committee”.

The United Progressive Alliance Government promised on June 28, 2004, that it would bring in transparency and objectivity in the allocation of coal blocks. The same coalition continued in power for five years and was returned to office in the parliamentary election held in 2009. However, despite such politi-

cal continuity, which is critical to issues of governance and policy implementation at the macro level, the much promised 'transparency' and 'objectivity' in the allocation of coal blocks was still not in place, even as late as February 2012. As a result, the CAG found that “in the meantime, 194 net coal blocks with aggregate GR of 44,440 million tonnes were allocated to different Government and private parties up to March 31, 2011.

The financial impact of the benefit to the private allottees has been estimated to the tune of Rs1,85,591.34 crore as on 31 March, 2011 for opencast/OC reserves of mixed mines. The Government could have tapped a part of this financial benefit by expediting decision on competitive bidding for allocation of coal blocks”.

This was the most damning indictment of the UPA Government by the CAG in regard to its policy of allocating coal blocks to private companies. People were shocked to learn that a scarce and limited resource like coal had been bartered away by the then Government to private players in a manner that smacked of corruption and favouritism.

The CAG's findings, therefore, resulted in fresh political turmoil and the derailment of Parliament. Unable to cogently explain its deci-

sions, the UPA regime resorted to the old tactic of shooting the messenger — by hurling accusations at the CAG. One leader even accused the person heading the organisation of harbouring political ambitions. But the Government could not shut out debate on the issue by bamboozling the CAG. Soon a public interest litigation was filed in the Supreme Court seeking an independent probe into 'Coalgate'. The court directed the Central Bureau of Investigation to begin a probe and report directly to it.

The central point of investigation of Coalgate by the CBI was, just as in the case of the auditors, the absence of a transparent and objective method to allocate coal blocks to private players. When the CBI began virtually singing the CAG's tune, the UPA Government panicked and made a brazen attempt to doctor the agency's report to the court via worthies holding the offices of Law Minister and Attorney General, and through some officials in the Prime Minister's Office and the Coal Ministry. They were soon caught out and the Law Minister lost his job.

Following the Supreme Court judgement cancelling 204 allocations, the National Democratic Alliance Government brought in an ordinance to re-allocate these coal

blocks. It also chose the e-auction mode in order to ensure transparency. The estimated revenue from 33 blocks is Rs2.09 lakh crore and the Union Government has already announced that the auction proceeds will be transferred to the respective State Governments. The biggest beneficiaries of this bonanza will be the eastern States of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal, and Maharashtra. The Centre has also announced that in addition, electricity consumers in these States will get an additional tariff benefit of Rs97,000 crore through the process of reverse auction of coal blocks. This will certainly offer a major boost to the idea of cooperative federalism that Mr Narendra Modi has been talking about ever since he became the Prime Minister.

Buoyed by the success of these auctions, Mr Modi has said that this only shows, if the Government runs on policies and governs efficiently, the system can be rid of corruption. Can there be a better case study for those researching the ill-effects of corruption?

(A. Surya Prakash is a senior journalist and chairperson of Prasar Bharati).

Courtesy: The Pioneer, 17 March 2015

Extraordinary transformation of Madhya Pradesh in agriculture through the last decade - An Interview

Madhya Pradesh has created history by posting the highest ever agricultural growth rate. As per the figures for year 2013-14 released by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Madhya Pradesh has registered a 24.99 per cent agricultural growth rate. This includes animal husbandry sector too. Notably, Madhya Pradesh enjoys an enviable distinction of being bestowed the prestigious Krishi Karman Award by the Government of India for the last two years in a row in recognition of its outstanding performance in agriculture sector. This rate was 20.16 per cent in year 2012-13 and 19.85 per cent in year 2011-12 in the State.

*Noted demographer and social scientist **Dr. J.K. Bajaj**, Director of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), New Delhi, who has done an extensive research on the improvement of agricultural status of Madhya Pradesh in past 10-12 years, talks about his research and observation in this interview with Shubhendu Anand.*

What made you choose Madhya Pradesh as the state



for your research over other Indian states?

Madhya Pradesh is a predominantly agricultural state. It is the foremost state in the production of pulses and oilseeds and contributes one-fourth of the national production of these. It also contributes one-fifth of the total production of cereals. In the production of gram and soybean, the state is far ahead of others; as much as 40 percent of the national production of gram and 60 percent of soybean comes from here. The state has a share of 20 percent in the national production of masur as well.

Madhya Pradesh has seen extraordinary transformation in agriculture in the last 10-12 years. Agriculture there was growing slowly even in the earlier period, but

the period of around 2002 was actually a period of great decline in agriculture in the state. After 2002, the kind of change in all parameters of agriculture that we have seen is extraordinary. When you look at the graphs, they look spectacular; one feels indeed round to see the way the area under cultivation, the area under irrigation and the production of different crops have gone up.

Madhya Pradesh seems to have undergone a green revolution in the last 10-12 years. The state is said to have skipped the first green revolution and for long it was being said that Madhya Pradesh needs to go through such a revolution. The state was experiencing some slow growth of agriculture, except for a few years at the beginning of the last decade when there was a precipitous decline. But there was no revolution. Finally we have seen a revolutionary growth of agriculture in Madhya Pradesh.

What have been your research findings? Could you please throw some light on it?

Madhya Pradesh is one of the more important agricultural states in the country. In the state, nearly 70 percent of the workers are engaged in agriculture. Only in Chhattisgarh and Bihar, the percentage of workers in agriculture is larger than that of Madhya Pradesh. On an all India

basis this number is declining. In Madhya Pradesh, agriculture contributes 22 percent of the State Domestic Product (SDP); which is low compared to the proportion of workers involved in this sector but compared to the all-India average it is very high. At the all-India level only around 12 percent of GDP comes from agriculture. During the last ten years, the share of agriculture in GSDP has been declining in every state except in Madhya Pradesh, where it has remained more or less steady at 22 percent. And that is an indication of the kind of growth that is taking place in the field of agriculture in Madhya Pradesh.

Over these 10 years, the proportion of workers in agriculture has somewhat declined, which means that the average worker in agriculture is actually doing better. While everywhere the economic status of workers engaged in agriculture is declining, it seems that in Madhya Pradesh their status is actually improving. You can see this if you go to villages of Madhya Pradesh. You hear people saying that their situation has improved. It is very rare in India to hear the agricultural rural people expressing satisfaction at their situation. Much of the prosperity that you see in Madhya Pradesh is because of the improve-

ment in the agricultural sector in the state. Improvements in agriculture have led to corresponding improvements in trade, manufacture and services, thus spreading prosperity all around.

Could you please share some significant data with us?

The following is the comparison of different parameters of agricultural development in the state. The numbers are triennial averages for the years mentioned:

| | 2000-2003 | 2009-2012 |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Gross Cropped Area | 18 million hectare | 22 million hectare |
| Gross Irrigated Area | 4.5 million hectare | 7.3 million hectare |
| Production of Wheat | 5.5 million tonne | 10.9 million tonne |
| Production of Gram | 1.9 million tonne | 2.8 million tonne |
| Production of Soybean | 3.3 million tonne | 6.4 million tonne |

In the data above, you see that the production of several crops has almost doubled. This is largely due to the increase in gross irrigated area. This kind of sharp change in agriculture is what forms the basis of prosperity in an agrarian society. The increase in gross cropped area means the farmers are doing intense agriculture. Instead of one crop, they are now harvesting two crops from the same piece of land. And that's largely because of irrigation. The more irrigation you provide the more production of crops you get.

Because of the increase in production of wheat, per capita annual production of wheat in the state has

increased to nearly 150 kg in 2009-2012 from 85 kg in 2000-2003.

There is no other state that has transformed agriculture so drastically.

What have been your findings in the allied sectors of agriculture?

The horticulture sector is also growing in Madhya Pradesh at 10% per annum. At present, the horticulture area covers 6% of the total sown area. Milk production has gone up from 5.28 million tonne (2001-02) to 8.84 million tonne (2012-13). Fish production has also gone up from 47,457 tonne (2001-02) to 85,235 tonne (2012-13). It went up further to 96,257 tonne in the year 2013-14.

Do you think it is justified to call Madhya Pradesh a 'BIMARU' state anymore?

Madhya Pradesh can't be called a BIMARU state anymore. In any case that is a very bad acronym and we should never have used this term to describe the heartland states of India. In the case of Madhya Pradesh, I strongly feel that in this process of improvement of agriculture, there should not be any slackening. If the state keeps the same trend of growth in agriculture for next 10-15 years, Madhya Pradesh would become one of the more



The overflowing Gulab Sagar dam on Mahan River (tributary of Banas River) in Khaddi Khurd village of Rampur Naikin tahsil in Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh. (October 2013).

prosperous states in the country.

What are your suggestions to the state government following your research?

I feel that the great work being done in agriculture and irrigation should be continued. I am not saying that there should not be focus on trade and manufacturing, but nothing should be done at the cost of agriculture. Because agricultural prosperity is what becomes the bedrock for prosperity in trade, manufacture and services also.

The steps taken by the Madhya Pradesh government in improving the agricultural status and irrigation in the state should be talked

about. So much is being done in that state, but hardly anything is being talked about. Only a few know about this miracle that is happening in Madhya Pradesh. Let us celebrate the miracle, it shall give us the strength and encouragement to continue in the same direction.

(Dr. Bajaj has compiled and edited a comprehensive Agricultural Atlas of Madhya Pradesh. The Atlas, to be jointly published by the Centre for Policy Studies and the Madhya Pradesh Council for Science and Technology is in press.)

(Interview by Shubhendu Anand, a graduate of Tata Institute of Social Sciences and currently a student of law at University of Delhi and a Research Associate at SMPRF).

New media ensuring the emergence of new politics in India

• *Ram Madhav*

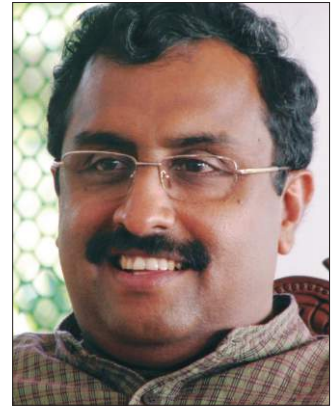
The days of political elite have ended with the advent of new politics and new media. Today every citizen is a politician, social worker and an intellectual.

When India was becoming independent someone asked Nehru as to why he wanted the newly freed country to opt for a democratic form of government. Nehru said, 'because it is the second best form of government'. 'What was the best form of government?' the questioner persisted. 'Yet to be invented', quipped Nehru.

This demographic dividend needs to be converted into an asset. For that we need a new kind of politics. The days of conventional politics are gone. The predominantly young population of India is highly aspirational. In order to meet the aspirations of the people the political system has to also undergo transformation.

Time has come for us to invent a new form of politics and gover-

nance. The world is changing; especially the democratic world is changing fast. India of the 21st century is remarkably



different from India of the 20th century. It is enjoying rich demographic dividend. It is the world's most youthful nation today.

Very soon this young population will take the size of India's workforce to some 500 million. While China has almost peaked its workforce size at around 380 million, India will surpass it in less than a decade's time. This demographic dividend needs to be converted into an asset. For that we need a new kind of politics. The days of conventional politics are gone. The predominantly young population of India is highly aspirational. In order to meet the aspirations of the people the political system has to also undergo transformation.

India is fast urbanising. According to one estimate, three-fourths of India's population lives in around 80,000 semi-urban and

urban centres, where as one-fourths of its population will be living in the remaining 5 lakh villages. Once an agrarian economy India is transforming into a non-agrarian economy with agricultural component of the gross domestic product reducing to about 25 per cent of the total GDP. Industry, services etc. drive the economy today. But the population dependent on agriculture continues to be above 50 per cent.

Swami Vivekananda was once asked by a disciple in Europe as to why the country which used to be described by Swamiji as the 'land immortal' has so many poor, diseased and destitute. Swamiji's reply was: 'My country and culture are great. But my people have become lethargic and self-centred'.

Systemic lethargy and corruption are the biggest malady of Indian polity. It is not allowing the enormous potential of India to blossom.

In order for it to change India needs new politics. That is what the new government in India under Prime Minister Modi is attempting to bring in. A cycle of mediocrity, loyalty and intimidation has plagued Indian politics for several decades now. Mediocrity was the norm; loyalty the test and intimidation the order. It is time we bring in excellence. We need the best and

intelligent people in politics. Before independence politics was a mission for the people. After independence it became a family vocation. Of late we see the emergence of a creature called 'professional politician'. There are institutions in India today that 'train' politicians. Politics has

Politics has become a profession. But the new politics is about passion; a strong desire to serve the community and country.

become a profession. But the new politics is about passion; a strong desire to serve the community and country.

New politics is the most liberal and inclusive politics. For long we have been having ideology driven politics. Ideology is important. It provides vision and direction to politics. But what is lacking in politics is idealism. New politics is all about idealism. Ideologies should no longer become barriers. They should instead help find common ground. They should guide our political behaviour, not the social behaviour. Ideology sans idealism only produces demagogues.

Plato talked about philosopher-kings. The new politics is akin to that. Professionalism with passion and idealism inspired by ideology is

how the new politics can be described.

It is data-driven, not dogma-driven. Transparency and accountability are vital to it. The new age politician is honest, humane and knowledgeable. New politics is also politics of courage. We increasingly find leaders who are willing to question the established wisdom and ready to experiment. The quintessential democratic principle of equality based on 'one man one vote' is central to new politics. Here the

An important tool to achieve this new politics is the explosion of new media. New media is truly democratic media. It has ended the era of 'opinion makers'. The advent of internet enabled people's media has freed the dependence of public opinion on the elite group of intelligentsia that has captured the space in mainstream media.

people are supreme. They have all the power. Armed with Right to Information they can challenge any system or leader.

Not just a bureaucrat, but even a politician is a 'public servant'. He cannot expect any special privileges

any more. He is under public scrutiny round-the-clock.

Olof Palme, prime minister of Sweden was murdered in 1986. He was walking back from a cinema theatre after watching a movie with his wife in company. The prime minister of a super-rich European nation goes out to watch a movie with his wife like a commoner.

This NoVIP tradition is emerging as another hallmark of new politics in India.

Chanakya in the Artha Shastra insists that the king should live the life of the last man of his kingdom. If the last man can't afford a neat bed the king too is expected to sleep on the floor.

Chandragupta was already a married man when he was asked by Chanakya to marry the daughter of Seleucas in order to ward off repeated aggressions from the Greeks. Chandragupta protests only to be rebuked by Chanakya who insists that a king has no personal choices other than what is beneficial to his subjects.

This is a tall order for a country like India. We are taking baby steps towards it. How to achieve it?

An important tool to achieve this new politics is the explosion of new media. New media is truly democratic media. It has ended the era of

'opinion makers'. The advent of internet enabled people's media has freed the dependence of public opinion on the elite group of intelligentsia that has captured the space in mainstream media.

With more than 800 million Facebook users and 200 million Twitter accounts the new media is ruling the roost in India today.

It is this media that is ensuring the emergence of new politics in India. Not just the politician, even the MSM is under constant scrutiny by the new media. It is making system accountable and transparent. Fear of public outrage in social media is a big conditioning factor in Indian politics today.

New media is also a great instrument in data and information inflow and outflow. Used appropriately the new media can be of great help to the government and institutions in the discharge of their duties with due diligence. At the people's level governments are expected to deliver on 6 major areas: Bijli, Sadak, Pani, Swasthya, Suchita and Suraksha (Power, roads, water, health, sanitation and security). The Chanakyan principle of 'minimum government -maximum governance' can be achieved in several of these areas if the government uses new media. It can help in surveys, data collection, information dissemination and

feedback gathering.

Crowdsourcing is increasingly becoming popular with governmental departments thanks to new media. People's participation is key to the success of new politics. The days of political elite have ended with the advent of new politics and new media. Thanks to new media today every citizen is a politician, social worker and an intellectual rolled in one depending on what he does in a given situation. In a way the new politics empowered by new media has brought in a major paradigm shift in Indian politics. Today the ancient dictum 'Yatha Raja Tatha Praja' (people imitate their king) no longer holds any water. It is the other way now: 'Yatha Praja Tatha Raja' (As the people so the king).

A small caution though. While the era of new-age politicians has begun in India there can be many a politician who would be unwilling to let it succeed. In no time would he master the art of manipulating new media and new politics too. Hence eternal vigilance is the price that a society has to always pay to ensure its own safety and well-being.

(BJP, National General Secretary Ram Madhav's address to the Harvard India Forum at Harvard University)

Courtesy: www.rediff.com, March 11, 2015

PM Modi's three-nation tour: Reclaiming India's position in Indian Ocean

• *Nitin Gokhale*

By all accounts Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Indian Ocean sojourn--which took him to Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka last week--has served to reclaim some of New Delhi's lost footing in the area.

India has long been a pre-eminent maritime power in the Indian Ocean but for the past decade, its primacy has been increasingly challenged by China.

In the first two legs of his three-nation tour Modi secured agreements to develop islands in Mauritius and Seychelles. India and Mauritius signed an agreement to upgrade sea and air links on the remote Agalega islands, providing India a foothold in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The two sides have been discussing development of North and South Agalega islands for years but there were last-minute hiccups and reservations about actually clinching an agreement. Under the act, India will assist in improving infrastructure for air and sea connectivity to the two remote

islands. And for once the Ministry of External Affairs statement wasn't pulling any punches. It said the new facilities would also "enhance the capabilities of the Mauritian Defence Forces in safeguarding their interests," hinting at a military benefit at a later stage.

In Seychelles Prime Minister Modi announced an agreement to develop infrastructure on Assumption Island. Of late, India has indirectly helped Seychelles with hydrography, map its exclusive economic zone, provided a Dornier aircraft for surveillance but this is the first time New Delhi is helping in building infrastructure. India's proactive push is no doubt prompted by China's aggressive foray in the Indian Ocean and especially its wish to use Seychelles as a resupply port for its ships taking part in anti-piracy operations.

India has long been a pre-eminent maritime power in the Indian Ocean but for the past decade, its primacy has been increasingly challenged by China. Apart from the strategic requirement of maintaining its supremacy in the Indian Ocean Region, there are commercial reasons that dictate

New Delhi's recalibration of Indian Ocean policy. As Modi said 90 per cent of India's trade and oil imports moves by sea and as its economy becomes more globally integrated it would become more dependent on the ocean. "So, the Indian ocean region is at the top of our policy priorities," he said during his tour.

While Seychelles and Mauritius are important in New Delhi's Indian Ocean diplomacy, Sri Lanka remains the pivot around which India's IOR policy revolves. And Since January, when Sri Lanka witnessed an unexpected change in government, India has made special efforts to re-engage with Colombo. The new regime in Sri Lanka, still somewhat on a shaky ground, has also seized the opportunity afforded by India's active outreach. Modi received a red carpet welcome as the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Sri Lanka on a bilateral visit in 28 years.

While he made the right noises about India-Sri Lanka partnership while in Colombo, the highlight of Modi's two-day was his historic visit to the Northern Province, a region once ravaged by strife. In Jaffna, the heart of Tamil-dominated Province, Modi called for an equitable development and respect for all citizens, in what is seen as a subtle signal to the government in Sri Lanka to

reduce if not eliminate discrimination against minority Tamils. During his visit to Jaffna, the first by an Indian Prime Minister, Modi handed over 27,000 new homes to Tamils who became homeless during the civil war that ended in May 2009 with the defeat of the dreaded Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The houses were built with Indian assistance as part of India's efforts to help in the reconciliation process.

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In Colombo on Friday, Modi had reiterated India's long-standing position that early and full implementation of the 13th Amendment to the country's constitution done in 1987 relating to devolution of powers to Tamils must be done and if needed and to go beyond its provisions in finding a political solution. He re-emphasised the point in Jaffna while laying the foundation today for a Cultural Centre being

built by India.

"Sri Lanka should also progress. Unity, peace and amity are essential ingredients for equitable development where there is respect for all citizens," PM Modi said.

Modi flagged off a train service in the north-western town of Talaimannar, the closest point to India restored after decades of civil war, completing the reconstruction of the entire Northern Province Railway Line. Another small but significant breakthrough came in the form of the announcement that India will be developing the Oil tank Farm near Trincomalee in Eastern Sri Lanka. The China Bay Tank farm is the largest one located between West Asia and Singapore and serves as a major fuel supply hub for ships traversing the busiest sea route between the Gulf and East Asia. For years, India wanted to run the facility jointly with Sri Lanka and retain a foothold in this crucial strategic facility but in 2013, Colombo had hardened its stance and refused to sign an agreement to lease the Trincomalee strategic oil storage to a unit of Indian Oil Corp (IOC) and had blocked the Indian firm's plans to set up a bitumen plant in the country.

But now the two governments have decided to move forward. Prime Minister Modi announced:

"We are also focusing on new opportunities. Today Lanka IOC and Ceylon Petroleum Corporation have agreed to joint development of the upper tank farm of the China Bay installation in the Trincomalee on mutually agreed terms." Talking to the media after meeting President Maithripala Sirisena, Mr Modi said: "A joint task force will be constituted soon to work out the modalities. India stands ready to help Trincomalee become a regional petroleum hub."

Currently Lanka IOC, a subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation, operates 15 storage tanks out of 99 in Trincomalee. The Sri Lankan government had been considering developing the rest to increase its fuel storage capacity. Each of the storage tanks has a capacity of around 12,000 tonnes. Other steps like increasing people-to-people contacts, giving visa-on-arrival to Sri Lankans and starting more direct flights will further boost to the new-found New Delhi-Colombo bonhomie.

(Nitin Gokhale is a National Security Analyst, Media Trainer and Executive Editor, DSA)

Courtesy: www.dnaindia.com, 15 March 2015

Ministry of Human Resource Development

Digital Gender Atlas for Girls' Education in India

Nearly every month or perhaps every fortnight new projects and new initiatives are being launched by the Narendra Modi led BJP government and yet so one-sided is the discourse, so biased is mainstream media's reporting of facts that the other view point, the reality that governance is now abound with new energy and new dynamism hardly ever gets space or receives due mention. In its 300 days the Modi Government has launched a number of innovative initiatives, each keeping in mind all sections of society, especially those that need support and strength in order to move ahead. We, at The Nationalist, feel happy and driven to keep sharing these "national positives" with our readers, workers and supporters with the hope that truth shall find light and be widely disseminated.

The MHRD, Department of School Education and Literacy, recently presented the Digital Gender Atlas for Advancing Girls' Education in India. The tool will help identify low performing geographic pockets for girls, particularly from marginalised groups such as scheduled castes, schedule tribes and Muslim minorities, on specific gender related education indicators. The Atlas has been placed on the MHRD website and is available and ready to be used by States /Districts/Blocks education administrators or any other interested group. In order to plan and execute educational interventions, the purpose of the Gender Atlas is to help identify and ensure equitable education with a focus on vulnerable girls, including girls with disabilities. To ensure this is feasible, the Gender Atlas has been developed as a hands-on management tool to enable critical

decisions and actions in pockets where gaps are to be met. The Gender Atlas enables the user to navigate between geographical representation and numeric data at state, district and block levels and gives information on key indicators for girls' education at primary, upper primary and secondary level. No primary data has been generated for the development of the atlas. The main components of the Gender Atlas are : (i) Composite Gender Ranking (ii) Trend Analysis of Gender Indicators (iii) Vulnerabilities based on educational indicators in districts with substantial tribal, schedule caste, minority population in educationally backward blocks and in districts afflicted with Left wing extremism and the low sex ratio districts selected under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme.

Ministry of Home Affairs

33% Reservation for women in police forces of all Union Territories including Delhi Police

Modi government has given its approval for making reservation of 33 percent for women, horizontally and in each category (SC/ST/OBC and others) in direct recruitment in non-gazetted posts from Constables to sub-inspector in the police forces of all Union Territories, including Delhi Police. This decision will help in augmenting the representation of women in the police forces of all UTs and Delhi Police so as to make the

police more gender sensitive. It will also instill confidence among women to enable them to approach the police without hesitation for seeking protection and assistance as and when required. It has been observed that many women do not approach the police, as they may have to confide or report the incident to a male police officer. This is particularly so in respect of sex related crimes.



Maharashtra

Local Body Tax (LBT) on traders abolished by BJP led Maharashtra Govt

The BJP-led Maharashtra state government has announced in its Budget 2015-16 that the Local Body Tax (LBT) on traders would be abolished by August 1, 2015. This was one of the poll promises of the BJP during the poll campaign. The BJP had supported the agitations by traders against double taxation – LBT in addition to Value Added Tax (VAT)– and promised during the assembly campaign that if voted to power, the party would scrap the

LBT. The move has been roundly welcomed by traders. As regards LBT, a compensation of Rs. 6,875 crore will be given to the municipal corporations, excluding Mumbai. The loss of revenue would be compensated by enhancing the rate of tax under VAT which will be applicable to the whole state. A revenue neutral rate has been recommended considering the share of increased tax collection to be given to the areas where LBT is not levied.

Madhya Pradesh

Rs. 15,000 crore relief and assistance to farmers in Madhya Pradesh in last 2 years

Approximately Rs. 15,000 crore has been made available to farmers as relief and assistance under various schemes during last 2 years. The relief was given for natural calamities, crop insurance compensation, and bonus on procurement of wheat and paddy on support price, subsidy on loans at zero percent interest rate, power subsidy and subsidy on agriculture implements. In most cases assistance amounts were deposited in most farmers' bank accounts. Power subsidy worth about Rs. 4,684 crore was given during last 2 years to relieve farmers

from burden of enhanced power tariff and supply of free power to weaker sections. Of this, 1968 crore was given as tariff subsidy and Rs. 466 crore for supply of free power during 2012-13. During year 2013-14, a sum of Rs. 1700 crore was given as tariff subsidy and Rs. 550 crore for supply free power. In the state, loans are being provided to farmers at zero percent interest rate for agriculture works. About Rs. 404 crore was given to 27 lakh 18 thousand farmers during 2012-13 and Rs. 494 crore to about 28 lakh farmers in 2013-14.

India's Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile 'ASTRA' Successfully Test Fired

India's Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile ASTRA has been successfully test fired by the Indian Air Force off the coast of Odisha near the Integrated Test Range, Balasore. The missile has been indigenously designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). In test flight an ASTRA missile carrying telemetry equipment in place of the warhead was fired from a Sukhoi-30 aircraft against a Lakshya (Pilotless Target

Aircraft) target. The target was successfully engaged and it was captured by Telemetry and Electro-optical tracking stations. A successful trial of ASTRA was also launched from a Sukhoi 30 aircraft, which was aimed at confirming missile's capability to undergo manoeuvre involving very high gravitational forces upto the order of 30 'g'. The Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad is the primary development agency for the missile.

'Subah-e-Banaras' a hit as Assighat in Varanasi gets a makeover

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on the cleaning of the ghats of Varanasi, changes are slowly becoming visible in some of the important ghats, particularly the famous Assighat. Though cleaning all the 100 ghats is a slow process, tonnes of mud have been removed from the Assighat to reclaim the steps on the banks of the river. The ghat is now the venue of a unique cultural and spiritual event — Subah-e-Banaras — that draws large numbers of visitors every morning. It was on November 24 last year that Subah-e-Banaras was

started and within three months, this amalgamation of culture, music and yoga has now become an integral part of the itinerary of every tourist visiting Varanasi. The day at the Assighat begins at 4.30 a.m. with an aarti to the Sun, followed by 'yagna,' recitation of the Vedas and morning 'ragas', and ends with a yoga session at 7.30 a.m. This event has given a platform to upcoming artists from across India who perform every morning. Foreigners who are studying music in Varanasi also perform at Subah-e-Banaras.

Launch of online portal “Bharat Niti” for discussing public policy matters



Bharat Niti, an online portal for discussing public policy matters was launched in New Delhi on 18 March 2015 by Shri Ravishankar Prasad (Hon. Minister for Telecom & Information Technology) in the presence of Shri Muralidhar Rao (BJP National General Secretary), Shri A Suryaprakash (Chairman Prasar Bharati) and Shri Baldev Bhai Sharma (Chairman National Book Trust).

Bharat Niti is a forum consisting of online and offline platforms to spread information on various public policy matters and initiate discussions and debates on aspects

related to various public policies from time to time. The portal will focus mainly on areas of economics, foreign affairs, governance, education, religion, culture among other issues, basically any and every policy that has a direct impact on today's India. Leaders, academics, scientists, senior journalists, activists among others will come together on this platform to offer their expertise in strengthening the objective.

Those whose views were rejected by people in general elections are getting "maximum exposure" in editorial space in newspapers,



Minister for Communications and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad said, while speaking at the web launch function. He also said that the government fully supports free exchange of ideas on the new media though it should not be misused.

"Despite that, what is often the comment in newspapers? I am not talking about reporting, I am talking of editorial space. And this I say with full sense of responsibility that those who have been rejected, those whose views people did not appreciate today are having the maximum exposure. I respect their right to write... (But) why the alternative view is not coming?" he said.

The minister added that the counterview must be presented before the people so that there is an informed discussion. "Today it is very important that the counterview must come so that there is a proper debate before the people of the country. Our critics' view is welcome but the other view should also come," he added. The minister said the government is a supporter of freedom of expression as well as that of the freedom of press.

The minister further said that some people were attempting to teach secularism to the government but the country is secular because of its values.

उत्तर प्रदेश में सत्ता परिवर्तन जरूरी : अमित शाह



भारतीय जनता पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष अमित शाह ने कहा कि अब उत्तर प्रदेश में सत्ता परिवर्तन की जरूरत है। प्रदेश सरकार को निशाने पर लेते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि आरक्षण की व्यवस्था यहां जरूर है, लेकिन पिछड़ी जातियों को इसका सही लाभ नहीं मिल रहा है। इसकी मुख्य वजह जाति विशेष की राजनीति करने वाली पार्टी का सत्ता में होना है। इसलिए पूरे देश में समरसता लाने के लिए भाजपा की सरकार होनी जरूरी है।

उन्होंने कहा कि भाजपा मतबूत होगी, तभी देश

तरक्की करेगा। प्रधानमंत्री गरीबों का दर्द जानते हैं क्योंकि उन्होंने इसे देखा व जिया भी है। इसलिए भाजपा की सरकार बनते ही जनधन योजना लागू की गई, कारण स्पष्ट था कि बिना खाते के गरीबों के पास धन कैसे आता। उनकी गरीबी दूर कैसे होती। पूर्व की सरकारों ने गरीबी दूर करने के नाम पर सिर्फ गरीबों को ठगा है। भाजपा अध्यक्ष अमित शाह ने कहा कि 2017 में उत्तर प्रदेश में भी भाजपा की सत्ता होगी। दो करोड़ का सदस्यता लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लिया तो पार्टी को सत्ता में आने से कोई नहीं रोक सकता। प्रदेश में एक करोड़ नये सदस्य बनाने का लक्ष्य था, तकरीबन डेढ़ करोड़ बन चुके हैं। अगर दो करोड़ का लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लिया तो भाजपा को सत्ता में आने से कोई नहीं रोक सकेगा। समाजवादी पार्टी से लोगों का विश्वास उठ चुका है। भूमि अध्यादेश संशोधन बिल पर उठ रहे सवालियों पर उन्होंने कहा कि कार्यकर्ता लोगों को बताएं कि यह उनके लिए ही है। पहले कभी चार गुना भूमि का मुआवजा नहीं मिला। जिसकी भूमि का अधिग्रहण किया जा रहा है उसके परिवार के एक सदस्य को नौकरी भी मिलेगी। खेतीहर किसान के परिवार के भी एक सदस्य को नौकरी मिलेगी। चार गुना मुआवजे का जो प्रावधान है उसके तहत मुआवजा उस जगह के आखिरी पांच बैनामे के औसत के हिसाब से दिया जाएगा।

"If we are to live and grow as a university [Calcutta], one of whose paramount tasks is to produce not only leaders of thought and action but also workers dedicated to the service of the nation, we cannot sit idle with philosophic concern and let things drift as they may. So far as we are concerned, it is for us to set our house in order. It is for us, and specially the younger generation, Hindus, Moslems and Christians alike, to combine and resolutely stand for the permanent wellbeing of our province ..."

- Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee

*(Excerpts from the speech delivered at Calcutta University Convocation on
2nd March 1935)*

