



Date: 17-08-17

## भूमंडलीकरण की उलटी गिनती

**डॉ. भरत झुनझुनवाला, | लेखक वरिष्ठ अर्थशास्त्री और आइआइएम बेंगलुरु में प्रोफेसर रहे हैं।**



आजादी की 70वीं सालगिरह मनाने के साथ ही जिस एक प्रश्न विचार करने का समय आ गया है वह यह है कि हम भूमंडलीकरण की ताकतों के आगे अपनी स्वतंत्रता की रक्षा कर पाएंगे या नहीं? बीते दो दशकों से हमारी तमाम नीतियां विदेशी ताकतों द्वारा तय की जा रही हैं। जैसे विश्व व्यापार संगठन यानी डब्ल्यूटीओ द्वारा तय किया गया कि भारत सरकार सोलर पैनल खरीद में घरेलू उत्पादकों को प्राथमिकता नहीं दे सकती। भारत सरकार सोलर पैनल किससे खरीदेगी, यह डब्ल्यूटीओ के मठाधीशों द्वारा तय किया जा रहा है। इसी प्रकार संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद, अंतरराष्ट्रीय न्यायालय आदि द्वारा हमारी घरेलू नीतियों को निर्धारित किया जा रहा है। मेरी समझ से यह भय निराधार है कि इससे धीरे-धीरे हमारी स्वतंत्रता-स्वायत्तता स्वाहा होती दिख रही है।

अपने 400 वर्ष पुराने इतिहास का ही स्मरण करें। भारत पर मुगलों का शासन था। अरब सागर के समुद्री डाकुओं द्वारा हमारे जहाजों को लूटा जा रहा था। ऐसे में ब्रिटिश व्यापारियों ने मुगल शासकों को प्रस्ताव दिया कि यदि उन्हें भारत में खुलकर व्यापार करने की छूट दी जाए तो शुल्क के रूप में वे भारतीय जहाजों को समुद्री सुरक्षा उपलब्ध करा देंगे। ब्रिटिश व्यापारियों की नौसेना हमारी तुलना में ताकतवर थी और वे समुद्री डाकुओं के सामने झुकते नहीं थे। हमारे मुगल शासकों ने यह प्रस्ताव स्वीकार कर लिया। बस भारत का भूमंडलीकरण हो गया। ब्रिटिश व्यापारियों ने अपने पैर पसारें। समय क्रम में हमारे तमाम राजाओं ने स्वेच्छा से ब्रिटिश लोगों को अपनी संप्रभुता दे दी। उन्होंने आकलन किया कि ब्रिटिश शासन के नीचे दोगुना दर्जे का भागीदार बने रहना उनके लिए लाभदायक रहेगा। कमोबेश देश की जनता ने भी ब्रिटिश शासकों का स्वागत किया। राजस्थान में डूंगरपुर के आदिवासियों ने बताया कि घरेलू राजाओं के आतताई व्यवहार से बचने को वे अजमेर ब्रिटिश प्रेजिडेंसी की शरण में जाते थे। आज डब्ल्यूटीओ द्वारा उसी प्रकार भूमंडलीकरण लागू किया जा रहा है जैसे कभी ब्रिटिश शासकों ने भारत में लागू किया था। ब्रिटिश माल को भारत में न्यून आयात कर पर प्रवेश करने की छूट दी गई थी जैसा वर्तमान में डब्ल्यूटीओ के अंतर्गत चीन के माल को भारत में न्यून आयात कर पर प्रवेश करने की छूट है।

ब्रिटिश कंपनियों ने भारत में निवेश किया जैसा कि आज बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों द्वारा किया जा रहा है। भारत के घरेलू कानूनों को ब्रिटिश कानूनों के अनुसार बदला गया जैसे आज हमने अपने पेटेंट कानूनों को डब्ल्यूटीओ के अनुरूप बदल लिया है। समय क्रम में भारतीयों ने पाया कि उनके द्वारा स्वेच्छा से ब्रिटिश शासकों को हस्तांतरित की गई स्वतंत्रता का विपरीत प्रभाव पड़ रहा है। तब देश ने लाला लाजपत राय और महात्मा गांधी के नेतृत्व में उस भूमंडलीकरण को चुनौती दी। पूरे देश में स्वतंत्रता का आंदोलन छिड़ गया। हमारे राजाओं द्वारा ब्रिटिश शासकों के साथ की गई संधियों का कोई अर्थ नहीं रह गया। अंत में भारत भूमंडलीकरण के फंदे से बाहर निकला जिसे हमारे शासकों ने स्वेच्छा से अपने गले में हीरे का हार समझ कर डाल लिया था। इसी प्रकार के भूमंडलीकरण की वापसी आज पूरी दुनिया में हो रही है। आज डब्ल्यूटीओ को लकवा सा मार गया है। तमाम देश अपने पड़ोसियों के साथ ही क्षेत्रीय समझौते कर रहे हैं जैसे अमेरिका, कनाडा और मेक्सिको ने नाफ्टा नाम से मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र बनाया है। पूर्वी एशियाई देशों ने आसियान बनाया है और भारत का प्रयास है कि दक्षिण या बिस्मटेक की छतरी तले दक्षिण एशिया के देशों का मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र बनाया जाए। 1995 से 2005 तक डब्ल्यूटीओ में मंत्री स्तरीय सभाओं पर देश में विस्तृत चर्चा होती थी। आज पता भी नहीं चलता कि सभा कब हुई। इन घटनाओं से संकेत मिलता है कि भूमंडलीकरण स्थाई व्यवस्था नहीं है। जब किसी देश के नागरिकों के लिए भूमंडलीकरण नुकसानदेह हो जाता है तो वे पीछे हट जाते हैं। भूमंडलीकरण उसी तरह 'स्थाई' अथवा 'सतत' नहीं हो सकता है जैसे भारत में मुगल एवं ब्रिटिश साम्राज्य स्थाई नहीं हो सके थे। कहे अनकहे किसी भी देश की संप्रभुता आखिरकार उस देश के लोगों के पास होती है। जनता की संप्रभुता को हथियारों के बल पर कुछ समय तक दबाया जा सकता है, परंतु अतत: जनता ही निर्णय करेगी कि भूमंडलीकरण उपयुक्त है या नहीं? पूर्व में हुए

भूमंडलीकरण और मौजूदा दौर के भूमंडलीकरण में अंतर उसकी रफ्तार का है। जब ब्रिटेन ने भारत का भूमंडलीकरण किया था तो भारत से इंग्लैंड पहुंचने में कई हफ्ते लग जाते थे, लेकिन आज आठ घंटों में ही पहुंचा जा सकता है। दुलाई का खर्च कम हो जाने से माल का आयात और निर्यात दोनों ही ज्यादा हो रहा है। तमाम सेवाओं का आयात एवं निर्यात कंप्यूटर के एक क्लिक से हो रहा है, लेकिन रफ्तार की इस वृद्धि से भूमंडलीकरण पर निर्णय लेने की जनता की क्षमता का हास नहीं होता है। जैसे मान लीजिए गांव को अधिकार है कि वह बाहर से आने वाले व्यक्ति के प्रवेश को रोक सकता है। वह व्यक्ति तांगे से आ रहा है या कार से-इससे गांव के अधिकार पर प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता है। भूमंडलीकरण आखिरकार तब तक टिकता है जब तक किसी देश के लोगों को यह फायदेमंद लगे। जब शासक जनता के हितों के खिलाफ भूमंडलीकरण को अपनाते हैं तो जनता उस देश के शासकों को उखाड़ फेंकती है जैसे हमारे शासकों द्वारा ब्रिटिश शासकों को सौंपी गई संप्रभुता को हमारी जनता ने ही उखाड़ फेंका था। हर हाल में अंतिम संप्रभुता जनता की होती है। अतः भूमंडलीकरण से डरने की जरूरत नहीं है। जरूरत इस बात की है कि शासकों द्वारा लागू किए गए भूमंडलीकरण के नफा-नुकसान का स्वतंत्र आकलन करके जनता को बताया जाए। जिस प्रकार लाजपत राय ने ब्रिटिश शासन के भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था पर पड़ रहे प्रभाव का आकलन कर जनता को जागृत किया उसी प्रकार देश के बुद्धिजीवियों की जिम्मेदारी बनती है कि भूमंडलीकरण के फायदे और नुकसान की सही तस्वीर जनता को दिखाएं। मिसाल के तौर पर आज हमारी सरकार चीन से आयातित माल के विरुद्ध कदम उठाने को तैयार नहीं है, किंतु जनता कहने लगी है कि इसे रोका जाना चाहिए। देश के बुद्धिजीवी सतर्क रहेंगे तो जरूरत पड़ने पर हम भूमंडलीकरण से पीछे हट सकते हैं जैसे आज तमाम देश डब्ल्यूटीओ से पीछे हट रहे हैं। यदि बुद्धिजीवी सुप्त रहते हैं जैसे मुगल काल में थे तो फिर स्वतंत्रता संग्राम जैसे कष्टप्रद आंदोलन के बाद ही परिणाम हासिल होता है। हमारी संप्रभुता तो बनी रहेगी, केवल यह तय होना बाकी है कि कार्यान्वयन का कष्ट कम होगा या अधिक? भूमंडलीकरण से डरने के बजाय उसका निष्पक्ष आकलन करना चाहिए। मेरा आकलन है कि आने वाले समय में हम भूमंडलीकरण से पीछे हटेंगे, क्योंकि इससे आम आदमी के रोजगार का हनन हो रहा है। उसे चीन में बना सस्ता माल उपलब्ध है, किंतु उसे खरीदने के लिए जब में पैसा नहीं है। भूमंडलीकरण का लाभ आज हमारी बड़ी कंपनियों और मध्यम वर्ग मात्र को हो रहा है। जैसे जैसे जनता को यह वास्तविकता समझ में आएगी, हमारे नेताओं को भूमंडलीकरण से पीछे हटना ही होगा।



**Date: 16-08-17**

## E-possibilities

***Digital technologies are being harnessed to empower people, create employment opportunities and bring about transparency.***

**Written by Ravi Shankar Prasad, The writer is Union minister for Law and Justice, Electronics and IT**



Digital India is a flagship programme of the Narendra Modi government to empower India and Indians using technology. More significantly, it is a transformational initiative incorporating the spirit of “sabka saath” to create a new India by ensuring “sabka vikas”. Digital India aims to bridge the gap between the digital haves and have-nots. Digital India BRIDGE (Bringing Revolution In Digital Governance and Economy) channelises initiatives like Aadhaar, eSign, digital lockers, Aadhaar Pay and BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) to offer citizen-centric services at marginal costs — or zero cost. The trinity of Jan

Dhan, Aadhaar and mobile (JAM) uses more than 116 crore Aadhaar cards, 118 crore mobile phones,

including 40 crore smart phones, 110 crore bank accounts, including 29 crore Jan Dhan accounts, to bring about inclusive development.

The Narendra Modi government has been able to tap the true potential of the Aadhaar platform and use it to transform the lives of the poor, and strengthen digital governance. The use of Aadhaar enables nearly 3 crore e-authentications everyday at no cost. Citizens can get new mobile connections, open bank accounts or avail government services based on Aadhaar-based e-KYC in a paperless manner. Digital India has been a driver of good governance, epitomising the government's credo of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance". Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is an example of that. Former PM Rajiv Gandhi had famously said that of the Rs 100 released by the Centre, only Rs 15 reaches the beneficiary. Welfare schemes had to pass through layers of bureaucracy at the Centre and states, as well as at the district, block and panchayat levels. Their implementation would get delayed by months and involved administrative overheads. The Modi government not only releases Rs 1,000 but ensures that the entire amount reaches the beneficiary's account instantly. Direct transfers of cooking gas subsidies (PAHAL), ration subsidies — through the public distribution system — MGNREGA wages, scholarships and many other entitlements have ensured transparency and also saved Rs 57,000 crore of public money. DBT has been extended to over 316 schemes of 51 ministries leading to the transfer of Rs 2.16 lakh crore as benefits to the common man in the last three years.

Government eMarketplace (GeM) is another example of this regime's commitment to removing corruption and ensuring good governance. Savings of around 10 per cent have been observed in the procurements made on GeM. The World Bank is studying India's innovation in public procurement. Common Service Centres (CSCs) have been galvanised into becoming agents of rural transformation. About 83,000 CSCs were operational in May 2014. Today such service centres number 2.59 lakh. These CSCs deliver over 300 services. Women, tribal people and Dalits have used CSCs to become digital entrepreneurs, transforming their own lives and the lives of others in the process. These CSC owners have collectively earned over Rs 1,800 crore for the various services they have rendered. The monthly income of several CSC owners is in excess of Rs 1 lakh. Over 10 lakh persons are employed, formally and informally by the CSCs. Digital literacy initiatives are further helping in bridging the digital divide. Under the new Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) programme, another six crore adults are to be made digitally literate in the next two years.

The Rural BPO scheme is another initiative to take the IT industry to smaller towns and cities. More than 19,000 BPO seats have been allocated in 64 towns across 23 states/Union Territories, including four in the Northeast. This will not only uplift the employment ecosystem in small towns but will also help in reducing migration to cities. India had a very high cash to GDP ratio. Unaccounted cash was one of the main reasons for corruption, black economy, funding of terrorism and Naxalism, electoral malpractices and market distortions. On November 8, 2016 the prime minister delivered a big blow to the black economy by announcing the demonetisation of high value currency notes. The move also gave a huge boost to digital payments. Such payments bring transparency and accountability in the economy. Prices have fallen and tax collections have risen. India's unique innovations in the field of digital payments such as BHIM, UPI (Unified Payments Interface), USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) and Aadhaar Pay have offered affordable digital payment solutions to people. Steep growth has been registered in digital transactions in the last six months. UPI/BHIM transactions have increased to 3.31 lakh transactions per day from near zero. Digital wallet transactions have doubled, and debit card payments (Rupay) have increased four-fold. Hundreds of villages and townships across the country have become completely digital payment enabled in a very short span of time. The government is targeting 2,500 crore digital payment transactions this year. According to a Boston Consultancy Group-

Google study, India is poised to become a 500 billion dollar digital payments market by 2020. Soil health cards and e-NAM (e National Agricultural Mandi) are programmes to empower farmers. More than eight crore soil health cards have been issued, helping farmers save crores on their inputs. The e-NAM brings together disparate mandis into a single marketplace. More than 450 mandis and 48 lakh farmers use e-NAM today and 585 mandis across the country are expected to be integrated on the portal by the end of this year. The online registration system, e-Hospital, has empowered patients in rural India. They can seek appointments in AIIMS and other big hospitals from their villages without having to wait for days in Delhi or other big cities. More than 170 government hospitals have been brought on the digital platform.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is one of the biggest financial reforms after Independence. It is a completely digital tax administered through the GST network that is capable of handling 60,000 simultaneous users per second. The network is expected to process 3.5 billion transactions every month. Rural electrification is happening at an unprecedented pace; this can be easily tracked on the Garv mobile app. More than 14,000 villages have been provided electricity in record time. Efforts to promote renewable energy have, for the first time, made solar power cheaper than coal-based power in India. Coal or wood-based cooking systems were a bane for poor women, causing them serious health problems; treatment costs would aggravate their poverty. The Ujjwala Yojana has provided free LPG cooking gas connections to 2.5 crore BPL families, who now have a clean cooking option.

Loans amounting to Rs 3.55 lakh crore have been provided to Rs 8.17 crore youth under the Mudra scheme. Small and medium entrepreneurs have been given easy institutional credit. To make India a vibrant digital democracy, a unique initiative, MyGov, was undertaken by the government. With over 45 lakh registered users, MyGov is the world's largest digital platform for citizen's participation in governance. The government believes in encouraging innovation and nurturing talent. With nearly 1,000 start-up deals, engaging around 50,000 youth and valued at Rs 50,000 crore a year, India is the world's third largest start-up hub. More than 80 new mobile manufacturing and component manufacturing units have come up in the past two years. Mobile production has grown from 6.5 crore units to 17.5 crore units in two years and is expected to touch 50 crore units by 2020. Digital India is one of the biggest government programmes in the world to bring about sustainable and inclusive societal transformation using digital technologies. The process of making India into a trillion-dollar digital economy has begun and Digital India is making this dream a reality. Digital India will surely create a new India.

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*Date: 16-08-17*

## **The citizen as artist**

*Written by T M Krishna, Carnatic vocalist, author of 'A Southern Music: The Karnatik Story', public speaker and writer on human choices, dilemmas and concerns*

Independence needs no introduction, explanatory notes or constitutional description, for we have all experienced its fullness. In moments of abandon, when we express, receive and share it without any external or inner censorship whatsoever, we rejoice in its sanctity. Yes! I have said sanctity, because there is something utterly precious, untainted in its embrace. Our lungs fill up with it, and though this may sound incredible, our hearts smile. Even the grievously marginalized feel this sensation of joy and of hope, and in those rare occasions they are distanced from unending oppression.

But independence does not live in or between us in permanence and hence every August 15th when India turns one year older we need to and seek to explore this idea and describe it to ourselves with many more adjectives and analogies. Even after 70 years, independence is not a living idea for every Indian, nor is it shared in equality. Vigil is a constant necessity. As an artist I am tempted to reflect upon frameworks such as independence and democracy because these words rarely find place in an artistic context. In some surreal manner we feel that art inherently expands horizons and enables greater goodness and therefore leads to a more democratic society. A euphemism that gives us a permanent 'feel good' sensation, detaching artists from any form of self-questioning.

In reality, artists have elevated themselves and art into a realm way above the stratosphere from in a way that makes the real no more than a speck of dust. Consequently, the artist is disconnected from everything real. But art is society's most expressive vehicle to understand identities, beliefs, inter-community behaviour, ritual and the politics of livelihood. Art celebrates, describes, navigates, dreams, proposes, questions and answers life's every moment, which also means that it connives, exploits and orchestrates. These become functional in the way art's aesthetics, its participants, spatial addresses and contextual roles are determined. Therefore every moment of beauty is more often than not created amidst great disparity and even violence. Marginalized art forms very much like the communities they originate in are rarely given respect or empowered to participate in the larger discourse. An overall assessment of the art space leads me to say that it is unequal and undemocratic, lacking independence. But for these issues to be even addressed we must first acknowledge that art is a willed act, not a gift of god or blessing, it is the creation of conscious human endeavour. When we re-engage with art looking at it as a space for democracy another thought emerges. Can there ever be true creativity when art worlds do not permit disruptions that de-stabilize every basic premise? Unfortunately art cloisters are bound by norms that make sure that this kind of freedom or independence is kept in check. Hence we need to wonder if artists are free and that leads to another difficult question, what then are we creating?

An artist's first democratic act is to awaken to this stranglehold and unsettle this recurring pattern of passivity. The artist then releases art and herself from submissive silence, but more significantly allows art to become a transformative instrument. Art enables change only when artists first question arts own prescriptive hierarchies. The reader may wonder if change in art's own dynamics and between art forms makes any difference to society at large. When art becomes questioning and liberal then art objects in their multiple mediums and forms influence every thought. A society of independent artists from across the social spectrum belonging various gender identities stimulate thought through music, dance, drama, literature, visual art and cinema. Until then the art is lost, democracy muffled and independence a lie.

There is another intersection, one where the non-artist meets art. Art is about creating objects of aesthetic distinctiveness. But if we understand art as a philosophical edifice from which we can draw, then there is something much more intrinsic to learn. And this is very closely related to being a citizen. What makes us citizens? And I am not talking about our address of birth, the passport, Aadhaar number or suffrage. There is something deeper that defines me as a citizen of India, and that is active participation in its democracy. Democracy occurs and is mutilated everyday and at every moment and hence this is not some grandiose theorisation. And very closely tied to its occurrence is the independence of all those involved in its play. Therefore becoming a citizen is to remain alive to the complexities of who we are, where we live, our relationships and to empathise with all that exists around. A citizen is one who places others before herself. Very often we find that those who have very little and have been discarded, brutalised by society do this with ease, while you and I selfishly reject such theories as utopian.

It all begins with the individual, yet in concentric circles enlarges and creates communities of citizenry. A citizen is not a passive consumer of her rights, privileges and responsibilities. She introspects, rediscovers and questions all aspects of her citizenship. She begins with her own identity and the various roles she plays in her immediate circle. But very soon the questions covers everyone of us and she is constantly grappling with the inside and the outside. The artist may arrive at these questions through, sound, light and shape, but for citizens it is their everyday encounters. But in both cases observation, self-criticism and an openness to receive are imperative.

To reflect about who we are as participants in an inter-connected society and to realise the obvious inequalities in our relationships with people and the environment is citizenship. We are un-free and what many of us consider the normal way of living in actuality infringes upon the independence and rights of others. But citizenship comes alive only when we respond and act, when imagination becomes creativity. This will lead to a realignment, a re-drawing of personal maps, identities, practices and nature of our contribution to society. When Bezwada Wilson rejected the manual scavenging job offered to him or when Perumal Murugan declared that the writer dies when his words are erased, they acted as citizens. These were acts that collapsed the personal struggle with a bigger calling, transcending the private. These were creative acts of disruption, instants of freedom, when the artist in these individuals emerged.

The artist and the citizen are realised through very similar processes. Both are intentional and deliberate and occur only when we express, empathise, share, introspect, challenge and live in the conflict of disagreement on an everyday basis. In the last 70 years we have had phases when sections of our population became citizens and were at the forefront of this participatory democracy. But later we forfeited our spirit of citizenship to activists. We have remained quiet, selective, a fearful lot unable to spread our wings. The time has come for us to become citizens of India, democratise thinking and make independence an everyday discourse. And when we act on these ideas we stumble upon creativity and un-fettered freedom. The citizen then becomes an artist and the artist finally discovers her citizenship.

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*Date: 16-08-17*

## **Living With The Deluge**

***Focus should shift from relief measures to building resilience in flood-prone areas***

***Written by Nirmalya Choudhur, The writer is a Consultant for Tata Education and Development Trust and a member of the research team at Centre for Development and Research, Pune. Views expressed are personal***

During his recent visit to Assam, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a Rs 2,000 crore package for relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation in the flood-affected states in the Northeast. A corpus fund of Rs 100 crore will be used to set up a high-powered committee that will work on finding permanent solutions to the flood problem. There is, however, a need to shift the focus from flood protection to flood governance. Hopefully, the high-powered committee, whenever it is constituted, will make this paradigm shift. This would require a shift in the understanding of floods from being an extreme weather event, to a hazard that is partly natural and partly anthropogenic. Flooding is natural because the rivers in the Northeast, mostly originating in the Eastern Himalayas, experience a sharp fall in gradient as they move from Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan to reach Assam's floodplains. This fall in altitude causes a large volume of water to gush to the floodplains.

Most of these rivers carry large amounts of sediments, which then get deposited on the floodplains, reducing the storage capacity of the river channels and resulting in inundation of the adjoining floodplains. Flooding is partly anthropogenic as the sediment load carried by the rivers is accentuated through “developmental” interventions in the Eastern Himalayas that result in deforestation. The dominant narrative of flood protection includes measures such as embankments, dredging rivers and bank strengthening. In a study spread over 96 villages in Assam, Bihar, UP, and Bengal, we found embankments are cost-intensive options. The focus here has been more on construction and less on maintenance. The scope of storage dams in Arunachal Pradesh is limited, given the region’s geology and the ecology. Proposals for dams have been a matter of serious debate in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Shifting the focus of action towards flood affected people will require building resilience of these communities. Access to schools during the flood months is restricted, because the schools are either inundated or are make-shift relief centres. Water and sanitation issues require attention during the flood months. Floods are accompanied by outbreaks of diseases such as diarrhea. Access to veterinary services is limited resulting in high cattle mortality and morbidity. People in the flood-prone areas in the Northeast, by and large, practice subsistence agriculture. While the land remains inundated for an extended period in the monsoons, limited irrigation coverage (less than 10 per cent in Assam, compared to 49 per cent as an average for the country) constrains intensification of agriculture in the dry months.

Flood governance through resilience building could bring about sustainable change in this situation. This could be an outcome of three broad sets of action: Reducing vulnerability, increasing access to services, and maximising productivity through optimal use of available resources. Community-based advance flood warning systems, for example, have been successfully piloted in parts of Assam. Providing adequate number of boats — the most important, yet scarce resource in the villages — will enhance access to developmental activities during floods and also facilitate safe commute for schoolchildren. Usual toilets are of limited use in flood-prone areas. Elevated toilets, ecosanitation units — promoted in the flood-prone areas of North Bihar — and elevated dugwells or tubewells with iron filter need to be installed in the Northeast. These are more expensive than the Swachh Bharat toilets and wells or handpumps. But if promoted on a large-scale, they will reduce the public health challenges in the flood-prone areas.

Productivity can be maximised by giving people access to cheaper sources of irrigation, research on short duration boro paddy, and innovative agriculture techniques like floating vegetable gardens. Scientific fish farming on the waterbodies and the inundated land can ensure that inundation, when it cannot be avoided, is put to optimal use. Flood governance would require innovative combination of these initiatives. Strategic environment assessment of development activities, a practice followed in several countries, needs to be undertaken in the Brahmaputra basin. Strengthening planning authorities like the Brahmaputra Board and flood control departments by staffing them with scientists from a wide range of disciplines is essential. The flood-prone regions of the country require a focused approach from the Centre and state governments.

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*Date: 16-08-17*

## **A great divide**

***There is a contrast between the status of women and their political presence, as Nagaland and Haryana show***

***Radhika Kumar is Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Motilal Nehru College, New Delhi***

The incidents of protests and violence by tribal bodies in Nagaland earlier this year over 33% reservations for women in urban local bodies have once again highlighted the issue of women and representation. In this context, it is interesting to look at the case of Haryana which conducted elections to rural panchayat bodies in January last year. The State amended the State Panchayati Raj Act, even including criteria such as educational qualifications and standards for candidates to meet while seeking election to panchayat bodies. Academically, men from the general category had to be matriculates, women and Scheduled Caste (SC) candidates had to have passed out of middle school, while SC women should have passed standard five. This raised criticism as it disqualified 68% of SC women and 41% of SC men. But quite interestingly, women's representation increased to an average of 42% across all levels in comparison to 36% in the fourth panchayat election held in 2010.

### **Decoding the data**

Along caste categories, State Election Commission (EC) data show that SC women panches were 32.81% in comparison to women from the Backward Classes (BC) category who constituted 27.49% of elected women panches. In fact SC women have higher representation than BC women at all levels of local governance except for the office of the sarpanch wherein the difference is 2.41% in favour of BC women when calculated as a percentage of the total number of elected women sarpanches. Also, 9.24% of the total seats in panchayat elections were reserved for BCs (both men and women), while 10.87% were for SC women. Therefore, reservation for SC women did bolster their numbers, enabling them to overtake BC women representatives.

The second development with regard to the category of gender is that the representation of SC women exceeds that of SC men among the panches at the village level and among members of the zilla parishad. This is again heartening given that reservation for SC women as a total of SC reservations for panchayat members' at all three levels was 48%, while for SC men it was 52%. Primary research makes it clear that the spurt in women's representation was not by design but by default. A newly elected woman panch from a Jat-dominated village in Ballabgarh block in Faridabad district said that she had heard of her nomination after it was announced by the locals and when she was not present in the meeting. Her nomination was a result of the new criteria introduced in the amended Panchayati Raj Act of Haryana. An amendment to the Act resulted in her husband being disqualified from contesting as he had a criminal case pending against him while her son was ineligible being a minor. In a bid to retain the panch seat



among her community that is concentrated in a particular area of the village, it was decided to nominate her instead of her husband. Therefore, she was a consensus candidate.

### West to east

Data from the Haryana EC website shows that 42.3% women candidates at the level of the village panch were elected unopposed. Women campaigned actively in the panchayat elections. Women nominees also participated in village rallies and sought electoral support. Most election posters used pictures of both the woman candidate and a male relative. Scaling up the analysis to the level of the Legislative Assembly, Haryana has the interesting distinction of electing the highest percentage of women representatives among all States, namely 14.44% or 13 out of the 90 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). On the other hand, there is no woman MLA in Nagaland. Yet, in terms of sex ratio and female literacy, Nagaland scores over Haryana. According to the 2011 census, female literacy in Nagaland was 76.69% as against 66.77% in Haryana. The sex ratio in Nagaland was 931 women per 1,000 men as against 879 women per 1,000 men in Haryana, which is the second lowest in the country. Clearly, there is a disconnect between the low social status of women in Haryana and the comparatively higher political presence that they enjoy in representative bodies. The more vexing question is the case of Nagaland, wherein women have formal agency in terms of literacy and numbers but lack a democratic voice as political representatives and decision makers. The question that one must then ask is this: Can democratic rights and representation be traded off for tradition and the promise of development?



Date: 16-08-17

## स्वतंत्रता के सत्तर साल- एक नई ऊर्जा

**रविशंकर प्रसाद, केंद्रीय कानून एवं सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री**

पंद्रह अगस्त का पावन दिन हमें यह अवसर देता है कि हम देश की वर्तमान परिस्थिति, उपलब्धि और चुनौतियों को समझें और भविष्य के लिए एक नया संकल्प लें। आज 2014 के लोकसभा चुनाव के पूर्व की स्थितियों का स्मरण जरूरी है। देश में तब भयंकर निराशा और अंधकार का माहौल था। चारों ओर भ्रष्टाचार, ऊंचे पदों पर बैठे लोगों के आचरण और देश की साख के संबंध में ही सवाल उठ रहे थे। ऐसी स्थिति में नरेंद्र मोदी देश की आशा के प्रतीक बनकर उभरे और 30 वर्षों के बाद पहली बार केंद्र में एक दल को पूर्ण बहुमत मिला। इन तीन वर्षों के कार्यों की समीक्षा भविष्य की दिशा बताती है। आज केंद्र सरकार सभी फैसले ईमानदारी से लेती है। यह बात उन लोगों को भी मालूम हो गई है, जो वर्षों से नई दिल्ली में अपने संपर्कों का दुरुपयोग कर भ्रष्ट तरीके से सरकारी निर्णयों को प्रभावित करते थे। आज एक नए प्रकार की ताजगी, निर्णयों में तेजी और सुशासन का प्रभाव साफ दिखता है। काले धन के खिलाफ अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग में सफलता, बेनामी संपत्ति अधिनियम को वर्षों के बाद प्रभावी बनाना, मनी लॉन्ड्रिंग ऐक्ट को सख्त करना, विमुद्रीकरण के जरिए काले धन पर चोट करना आदि साहसिक निर्णय भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ सरकार के संकल्प को दर्शाते हैं।

भारत की अंतरराष्ट्रीय साख बहुत बढ़ी है और दुनिया भारत की आवाज आदर के साथ सुनती है। अमेरिका, रूस अथवा यूरोप के अलावा बड़ी संख्या में इस्लामिक अथवा मुस्लिम बहुल देश भारत के करीब आए हैं। अभी उरी, पठानकोट व अन्य पाकिस्तान प्रायोजित आतंकवादी गतिविधियों और उसके खिलाफ सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक के विषय में सऊदी अरब, ईरान, इराक, दुबई सहित सार्क के सभी देश (पाकिस्तान छोड़कर) भारत के साथ खड़े रहे। यह भारत की एक बहुत बड़ी सफलता है। पाकिस्तान और चीन को छोड़कर आज पूरी दुनिया आतंकवाद के खिलाफ सघन कार्रवाई में भारत के साथ मजबूती से खड़ी है। जिस प्रभावी रूप से आतंकवादियों के खिलाफ कश्मीर में रोज कड़ी कार्रवाई हो रही है, अलगाववादियों की फंडिंग और उनके नेटवर्क को ध्वस्त किया जा रहा है, वह हमारी

संकल्प शक्ति दिखाता है। प्रधानमंत्री का स्पष्ट मानना है कि यह युग टेक्नोलॉजी का है और हमें इसका सदुपयोग करके आम लोगों के जीवन का विकास करना है। डिजिटल इंडिया, मेक इन इंडिया, स्किल इंडिया, स्टार्टअप इंडिया, स्टैंडअप इंडिया और स्मार्ट सिटी ये सभी तकनीक आधारित विकास के कार्यक्रम हैं, जिनसे दूरगामी बदलाव होगा। कुछ सरल उदाहरणों से इसे समझा जा सकता है। आज 116 करोड़ से अधिक भारतीयों के पास आधार है और लगभग 118 करोड़ मोबाइल फोन हैं। तीन वर्षों में लगभग 29 करोड़ गरीबों के जन-धन बैंक अकाउंट खोले गए, जिनकी सुनवाई किसी बैंक में नहीं थी। आज जन-धन, मोबाइल और आधार के प्लेटफॉर्म से नरेंद्र मोदी की सरकार ने विभिन्न प्रकार की सब्सिडी, मनरेगा का भुगतान आदि सीधे गरीबों के बैंक खाते में भेजना शुरू कर दिया है। अभी तक 2.16 लाख करोड़ रुपये गरीबों को भेजे गए हैं, जिसमें 57,000 करोड़ रुपये की बचत हुई, जो बिचौलिए और छद्म नाम से लूट लिया जाता था। पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री राजीव गांधी ने कहा था- मैं दिल्ली से एक रुपया भेजता हूँ और जमीन पर 15 पैसे ही पहुंचते हैं। नरेंद्र मोदी की सरकार में दिल्ली से चले 100 रुपये सीधे करोड़ों गरीबों के बैंक खाते में जाते हैं। यही है डिजिटल इंडिया, जिसकी चर्चा आज पूरी दुनिया में हो रही है।

अगर विकास के कार्यों की सघन समीक्षा हो, तो परिणाम साफ दिखाई पड़ते हैं। 2017 में ग्रामीण सड़क योजना में प्रतिदिन 133 किलोमीटर सड़कें बन रही हैं, जो 2014 में सिर्फ 73 किलोमीटर बनती थीं। राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग 2014 के 11.4 किलोमीटर की तुलना में 2017 में 16.6 किलोमीटर प्रतिदिन बन रहे हैं। इनफॉर्मेशन हाइवे पर भी पूरा ध्यान दिया गया है। देश के ढाई लाख ग्राम पंचायतों को ऑप्टिकल फाइबर से जोड़ने की योजना 2011 में शुरू हुई थी और वर्ष 2014 तक केवल 358 किलोमीटर केबल बिछा था, वहीं तीन वर्षों में 2,10,000 किलोमीटर केबल बिछा है और एक लाख ग्राम पंचायतें ऑप्टिकल फाइबर से जुड़ चुकी हैं। डिजिटल साक्षरता अभियान के अंतर्गत छह करोड़ परिवारों को डिजिटली साक्षर करने की योजना है। छोटे शहरों में बीपीओ योजना के अंतर्गत आज सिलीगुड़ी, पटना, मुजफ्फरपुर, गाजीपुर, उन्नाव, इलाहाबाद, बरेली, अमरावती समेत देश के कई अन्य छोटे शहरों में बीपीओ स्थापित हो गए हैं या फिर जल्द ही स्थापित होने वाले हैं। डिजिटल पेमेंट और भीम एप एक आंदोलन बन चुका है। भारत में विकसित यह तकनीक बहुत सस्ती है।

आर्थिक क्षेत्र में भारत आज दुनिया के सबसे आगे बढ़ने वाले देशों में है। सबसे बड़ी मात्रा में विदेशी पूंजी निवेश भारत में हुआ है। उद्योग के क्षेत्र में भी अनेक सार्थक पहल हुई हैं। तीन वर्ष में मोबाइल फोन बनाने की 83 नई फैक्टरियां भारत में स्थापित हुई हैं। पूरी दुनिया भारत के आर्थिक विकास को एक प्रभावी उपलब्धि मानती है। समन्वय, समझदारी और सहयोग के साथ जीएसटी को सफलतापूर्वक लागू करना, हमारी सरकार की एक बहुत बड़ी उपलब्धि है। लोगों की उद्यमशीलता को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए जिस प्रकार की नई नीतियां लाई गई हैं, उसका सीधा परिणाम बहुत बड़े स्टार्टअप आंदोलन के रूप में दिखाई पड़ता है। नरेंद्र मोदी ने प्रधानमंत्री बनते समय दो आह्वान किए थे- 'सबका साथ, सबका विकास' और 'एक भारत, श्रेष्ठ भारत'। बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ, सुकन्या समृद्धि योजना और तीन तलाक के मुद्दों पर पीड़ित महिलाओं के साथ निर्णायक रूप से खड़े होकर हमने नारी न्याय, नारी गरिमा, और नारी समानता को एक नई ऊंचाई दी। भविष्य की हमारी दिशा स्पष्ट है। आने वाले पांच वर्षों में एक ऐसे भारत का निर्माण करना है, जो गरीबी से, भ्रष्टाचार से, जातिवाद से, संप्रदायवाद से और आतंकवाद से मुक्त हो। भारत की नियति दुनिया के बहुत बड़ी ताकत बनने की है। इस महान यज्ञ में 125 करोड़ भारतीय 'सबका साथ, सबका विकास' के मंत्र के साथ अपना योगदान दें, यही संकल्प आजादी के 70 वर्ष पूर्ण होने पर हमें लेना चाहिए।