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Reduce domestic violence, and it will unleash an economic bonanza worth thousands of crores

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Indian states would enjoy an economic boon worth thousands of crores of rupees if they reduce domestic violence, brand new research reveals. Globally, violence between intimate partners costs the world 25 times more than all wars and terrorism. In India, the latest National Family Health Survey shows 22% of married women aged 15-49 experienced spousal physical or sexual violence in the past year. That suggests at least five crore Indian women were assaulted last year.

Yet, there has been relatively little research into reducing this devastating impact. Evidence of the effectiveness of the 2005 Domestic Violence Act is fragmentary at best. The few available assessments suggest there is a lack of clarity within the judiciary about interpretation, inadequate money is allocated for infrastructure, and there is too little awareness about the law among judges, protection officers, civil society, and among women. Legislation alone is not enough to change outdated norms that underpin violence.

Research commissioned by Tata Trusts and Copenhagen Consensus from Srinivas Raghavendra, Mrinal Chadha, and Nata Duvvury, of the National University of Ireland in Galway, helps close gaps in the evidence – and points to sizable economic benefits from reducing domestic violence. They study two of the very few approaches that have empirical evidence of effectiveness, and estimate the costs and benefits of introducing them in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. The first is based on the SASA! project, a community mobilisation intervention seeking to change the norms and behaviours that result in gender inequality and violence, pioneered in Uganda and used in more than 20 countries.

The approach, costing Rs 980 per person, guides communities through a process in which people are repeatedly exposed to the programme. New attitudes and norms promoting more equitable relationships diffuse throughout the community. The researchers suggest this community mobilisation intervention could target women aged 15-59 years below the poverty line, who have been in a partnership in the past year. In AP this would mean reaching 17 lakh women for a cost of Rs 164 crore. Of these 17 lakh women, more than 5 lakh would be assaulted by a spouse annually. Based on studies in India and abroad, it is likely each will on an average experience abuse 8 times a year.

The second intervention, used in South Africa, combines microfinance with training about domestic violence, gender norms and sexuality, thus providing women with the means and knowledge to improve their well-being. Using this programme to target the same women over a two year trial, followed by a two year scale up, would cost about Rs 850 per person, meaning a cost of Rs 142 crore in AP. In their original countries, both programmes led to an estimated 55% reduction in domestic violence by the end of the intervention.

Women who are victims of spousal abuse have to miss paid work as well as unpaid domestic work. Each assault on average costs a woman 5.5 days. This productivity reduction is a huge loss to AP. The cost to the entire formal and informal economy in 2018 from all married women is a whopping 1.8% of GSDP or Rs 13,000 crore per year. Helping just the 17 lakh women would create total benefits worth about Rs 3,000 crore, meaning that either of the programmes would have benefits worth in the region of Rs 20 for every rupee spent. Expanding the cheaper programme to the entire state of Andhra Pradesh would cost Rs 1,300 crore but the benefits would increase to a phenomenal Rs 28,000 crore.

Rajasthan's domestic violence rate is much lower, so the benefits would be less considerable – but remain compelling. The cost of domestic violence to Rajasthan in 2018 was a whopping Rs 8,200 crore, and targeting 19 lakh women would help some 2 lakh women avoid abuse, leading to benefits worth Rs 2,360 crore. Each rupee spent could still help avoid damages worth around Rs 10. Reducing domestic violence is not only morally imperative, but can help Indian states become more productive and generate benefits worth many thousands of crores of rupees.

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Private Help for Public Heritage

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A recent newspaper headline screamed the warning about the US National Park Service, whose responsibility essentially mirrors that of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI): 'Corporate Giants Buying Big Influence Over National Parks, Monuments'. Or this somewhat more moderately stated headline from The Washington Post: 'Will Corporate Cash Save Roman Monuments or Diminish Them?' We need to ask whether the influx of corporate resources to support heritage necessarily translates to influence, or diminution of importance? In other words, whose heritage is at stake? And whose responsibility is it to maintain that heritage?

We have long lived in a world in which we assumed that it was government's responsibility to maintain heritage, and that the money to do so came with no strings attached. But, in politics, as in the corporate world, that just isn't true. ASI, even if it had unlimited resources, still would make decisions about where to put those resources. Should they go into new exploration and excavation? Should they go to preservation of monuments? What about the museums at sites? Within those categories are the sorts of decisions that ASI makes routinely: what sort of excavations, monuments and museums get priority? Is there a political agenda to the decision? Of course, there is, especially when the funds may be allocated in the hope that new exploration could demonstrate politically charged theories.

Or when the heritage of one religion is given priority of that of others that are also part of India's heritage. ASI's budget is small: only Rs 974.56 crore for the current fiscal year to protect some 3,686 monuments across India and about 50 museums. China, by contrast, allocates some Rs 23,565 crore just

for its 4,000 museums. To that one must add the cost of maintaining an enormous number of ancient sites. Generally, in China, admission to these museums and monuments is free for both Chinese and foreign visitors, though there are some notable exceptions. Even with India's dual-pricing policy by which foreigners pay as much as 20 times the price of admission for an Indian, a policy that frankly discourages foreigners from visiting monuments and museums, the income is insufficient to offset the cost of maintenance.

To cite just one example, Humayun's tomb in Delhi, the number of foreign tourists has gone down from 3,30,216 in 2011-12 to 2,56,421 in 2014-15. Foreigners generally feel that dual pricing is a form of discrimination. But if it were not for the dual pricing, ASI's budget would be even more seriously strained. In May, the Supreme Court argued that ASI was inadequately protecting the Taj Mahal in Agra, and that its upkeep should be assigned to another agency. If ASI spends more to maintain the Taj, then it will have to allocate less for the upkeep of other monuments and museums. So who should set the priorities? Judges, or ASI experts?

Which is where the private sector may have a role. But it must be a role with tight controls, ones that don't cede authority over the monument to any entity other than the institution with expertise, the one charged with maintaining it. A carefully considered policy could limit the display of corporate recognition, review and establish levels of admission fees that may make monuments more accessible to Indian and international visitors (e.g., a student rate), and provide for the possibility of shared corporate sponsorship, that is, sponsorship from multiple corporations.

Finally, corporate sponsorship could provide sorely needed infrastructure: clean toilets, handicap access, railings along stairways and level pathways. Both directly and indirectly, there is corporate sponsorship of professional athletic teams. In the US, teams play in stadia bearing the name of a corporate sponsor and endorse corporate products in media advertising, while electronic scoreboards flash brief advertisements for a range of products.

In India, the Chinese smartphone manufacturer Vivo sponsors the Indian Premier League (IPL). But it would be impossible to imagine the company being given any role in the selection of players or coaching decisions. That seems a perfectly reasonable model for the sponsorship of heritage in India and elsewhere. Sponsorship may provide discrete advertising, but not engagement with decisions appropriately left to professionals.

Is there a danger? Yes. The recent discovery that George Mason University, a public university in the US state of Virginia, allowed the far rightwing Koch Foundation to have a role in hiring and firing of faculty is an example. So, unquestionably, there must be a firewall between the corporate sponsor of heritage and the decisions of experts charged with maintaining and advancing knowledge about the sites. This should be easy enough. A contract, one that is made available for public scrutiny, should stipulate that the corporation will receive credit for sponsorship and that its role ends with the gift. The public recognition of the sponsorship needs to be discrete, recognised on signage, but not so overwhelmingly blatant that great monuments become an extension of corporate identity.



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बदल रही है ग्रामीण भारत की तस्वीर, देश के निर्माण में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान

सरकार इस वित्त वर्ष में ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रोजगार सृजन, आजीविका विस्तार और आधारभूत ढांचे के विकास पर 14.34 लाख करोड़ रुपये खर्च करने जा रही है।

नरेंद्र सिंह तोमर, (लेखक केंद्रीय ग्रामीण विकास, पंचायती राज एवं खान मंत्री हैं)

हालांकि गांव, गरीब और किसान सभी सरकारों की प्राथमिकता सूची में रहे हैं, लेकिन इसे एक मिशन का रूप देने का श्रेय मोदी सरकार को जाता है। यह सरकार गांव, गरीब और किसानों को ऊपर लाने के लिए कितनी प्रतिबद्ध है, इसका अंदाजा इससे लगाया जा सकता है कि ग्रामीण विकास विभाग का बजटीय प्रावधान 2012-13 में 50,162 करोड़ रुपये था, जिसे 2018-19 में बढ़ाकर 1,12,000 करोड़ रुपये कर दिया गया। नाबार्ड से लिए गए कर्ज को मिलाकर यह प्रावधान 1,24,000 करोड़ रुपये हो जाता है। गांव के हर व्यक्ति के पास अपनी छत का सपना पूरा करने की प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना-ग्रामीण योजना के तहत 2022 तक हर पात्र व्यक्ति को पक्का मकान उपलब्ध कराने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है। 2017-18 में कुल 44.53 लाख आवास पूरे कर लिए गए। मार्च, 2019 तक एक करोड़ मकान बना लिए जाएंगे। संप्रग सरकार के दौरान 2010-11 से 2013-14 तक 25.51 लाख मकान बनाए गए थे। इसके मुकाबले मौजूदा राजग सरकार ने अपने चार साल के कार्यकाल में 106.8 लाख मकान पूरे कर लिए हैं। गांवों की जीवन रेखा मानी जाने वाली सड़कों के विकास और विस्तार की दिशा में भी केंद्र सरकार ने उल्लेखनीय काम किया है। प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना के तहत मार्च, 2018 तक कुल 1,52,165 बसावटों को सड़क संपर्क से जोड़ा गया है, जो कुल बसावटों का लगभग 85 प्रतिशत है। प्रत्येक ग्रामीण परिवार के एक सदस्य को साल में कम से कम सौ दिन का गारंटीयुक्त रोजगार उपलब्ध कराने की योजना मनरेगा के तहत अब कृषि क्षेत्र के विकास और जल संरक्षण पर पर्याप्त बल दिया जा रहा है। आवंटित निधियों की 68 प्रतिशत धनराशि कृषि से जुड़ी गतिविधियों पर खर्च की गई है। बीते तीन वर्षों में 1.43 लाख हेक्टेयर भूमि को जल संरक्षण का लाभ पहुंचाया गया है।

पारदर्शिता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए 2.84 करोड़ संपत्तियों की जियो-टैगिंग की जा चुकी है। संप्रग सरकार ने 2010-11 से 2013-14 तक मनरेगा पर लगभग 1,58,730 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए थे, जबकि मौजूदा सरकार ने वर्ष 2014-15 से चार साल की अवधि में 2,02,379 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए, जो पिछली सरकार के मुकाबले लगभग 27.5 प्रतिशत अधिक है। इसमें महिलाओं की भागीदारी बढ़कर 53.45 प्रतिशत हो गई है। दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्रामीण कौशल्य योजना के तहत पांच लाख 73 हजार लोगों को प्रशिक्षण दिया गया और तीन लाख 54 हजार लोगों को रोजगार दिलाया गया। 2018-19 के दौरान सरकार ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रोजगार सृजन, आजीविका विस्तार और आधारभूत ढांचे के विकास पर 14.34 लाख करोड़ रुपये खर्च करने जा रही है। राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण आजीविका मिशन-दीनदयाल अंत्योदय योजना का विस्तार 584 जिलों के 4456 ब्लॉकों तक कर दिया गया है। इसके तहत स्व-सहायता समूहों की संख्या लगभग 41 लाख हो गई है। चार

करोड़ 80 लाख महिलाएं इन समूहों में भागीदारी कर रही हैं। यह एक अच्छा संकेत है कि इस योजना में मौजूदा समय में गैर निष्पादित परिसंपत्तियां यानी एनपीए 2.4 प्रतिशत से भी कम हैं। 2 अक्टूबर, 2014 को स्वच्छ भारत मिशन-ग्रामीण कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत के बाद देश के ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में स्वच्छता का दायरा 2014 के 39 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर वर्तमान में लगभग 84 प्रतिशत हो गया है। 2014 में खुले में शौच जाने वाले लोगों की आबादी 55 करोड़ थी जो जनवरी, 2018 में घटकर केवल 25 करोड़ रह गई। कुल 17 राज्य और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश खुले में शौच से मुक्त हो चुके हैं। अक्टूबर, 2014 से अब तक सात करोड़ 25 लाख से अधिक शौचालयों का निर्माण किया जा चुका है। देश के 386 जिले और लगभग तीन लाख 70 हजार गांव खुले में शौच से मुक्त घोषित कर चुके हैं।

गांव, गरीब और किसान के जीवन स्तर में सुधार से जुड़ी विभिन्न जन-कल्याणकारी योजनाओं को लागू करने में 2,48,160 ग्राम पंचायतें, 6,284 ब्लॉक पंचायतें और 595 जिला पंचायतें पूरे मनोयोग से लगी हुई हैं। प्रधानमंत्री ने 14वें वित्त आयोग की दो लाख 292 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक राशि सीधे पंचायतों को देने की स्वीकृति प्रदान की है। यह राशि 13वें वित्त आयोग द्वारा स्वीकृत राशि से लगभग तीन गुना अधिक है। 2014-15 से 2017-18 के दौरान राज्यों को 1,02,023 करोड़ रुपये जारी किए जा चुके हैं। यह उत्साहित करने वाला है कि ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में विकास कार्यों और स्थानीय स्तर पर नेतृत्व में महिलाओं की भागीदारी बढ़ी है। आज 14.39 लाख महिला पंचायत प्रतिनिधि, गांव और कस्बों का नक्शा बदलने के लिए काम कर रही हैं। मोदी सरकार मार्च, 2022 तक लगभग 5.50 लाख गांवों को वाई-फाई सुविधा से जोड़ने की महत्वाकांक्षी योजना पर काम कर रही है। भारत नेट परियोजना के तहत पहले चरण में 21 जनवरी, 2018 तक 1,11,000 ग्राम पंचायतों को ऑप्टिकल फाइबर कनेक्टिविटी उपलब्ध करा दी गई है।

सरकार पूरे देश में डेढ़ लाख स्वास्थ्य एवं आरोग्य केंद्र भी खोलने जा रही है। मिशन इंद्रधनुष के अंतर्गत स्वास्थ्य एवं कल्याण केंद्रों का निर्माण और वंचित रह गए बच्चों का टीकाकरण किया जा रहा है। अब तक तीन करोड़ 14 लाख बच्चों और 80 लाख 64 हजार से अधिक गर्भवती महिलाओं का प्रतिरक्षण किया जा चुका है। सरकार अनुसूचित जाति/अनुसूचित जनजाति और अल्पसंख्यकों के कल्याण से जुड़ी योजनाओं को विशेष महत्व दे रही है। अनुसूचित जातियों के लिए मौजूदा वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 के लिए 56,618.50 करोड़ रुपये का प्रावधान किया गया है। अनुसूचित जनजाति वर्ग के लिए मौजूदा वर्ष के दौरान 39,135 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए जाएंगे। दिव्यांग-जनों को सहायता उपकरण इत्यादि उपलब्ध कराने के लिए भी सरकार ने 622.45 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए हैं। प्रधानमंत्री जनधन योजना के अंतर्गत अब तक 31 करोड़ 80 लाख 54 हजार से अधिक खाते खोले जा चुके हैं और उनमें 81,200 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक राशि जमा हो चुकी है। 23 करोड़ 35 लाख से अधिक खातों को आधार से जोड़ दिया गया है। 10 मई, 2018 तक 19,679 गांवों में से 18,374 गांवों का विद्युतीकरण कार्य पूरा किया जा चुका है। इससे गांवों में विकास की गति बढ़ी है। प्रधानमंत्री सुरक्षा बीमा योजना में 13 करोड़ 49 लाख लाभार्थी बीमा करा चुके हैं। इसके तहत 16,469 दावों का निपटारा किया जा चुका है और 328 करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान किया गया है। प्रधानमंत्री जीवन ज्योति योजना में अब तक पांच करोड़ 33 लाख लाभार्थियों का बीमा हो चुका है। 19,082 दावों के निपटान हेतु 1802 करोड़ रुपये जारी किए गए हैं। प्रधानमंत्री सहज बिजली हर घर योजना के तहत अब तक 41 लाख परिवारों को बिजली कनेक्शन दिए जा चुके हैं। अब तक 29 करोड़ 90 लाख एलईडी बल्ब भी बांटे जा चुके हैं। ग्रामीण भारत की तस्वीर बदलने वाली योजनाओं की कामयाबी से मुझे विश्वास है कि ग्रामीण क्षेत्र नए भारत के निर्माण में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान करने को तैयार है।

इंडोनेशिया से समझौता

संपादकीय

प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के पहले इंडोनेशिया दौरे में जो समझौते हुए, जो घोषणाएं हुईं, उनसे दोनों देशों के संबंधों में एक नये दौर की शुरुआत माना जा सकता है। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी और इंडोनेशिया के राष्ट्रपति जोको विदोदो के बीच संबंधों का जो रसायन दिखा वह भी उत्साहित करने वाला है। दोनों नेताओं ने अपने बयानों में स्वतंत्र, खुला, पारदर्शी, शांतिपूर्ण, समृद्ध और समावेशी हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र की वकालत की। यह बहुत बड़ी बात है। प्रशांत क्षेत्र को हिन्द प्रशांत क्षेत्र के रूप में धीरे-धीरे दुनिया में मिलती स्वीकृति भारत के बढ़ते प्रभाव को दर्शाता है। इंडोनेशिया सहित पूर्वी एशिया के कई देश चीन की बढ़ती आक्रामकता से आशंकित हैं। परंपरागत रूप से ये देश अपनी सुरक्षा के लिए अमेरिका पर निर्भर रहे हैं। जबसे अमेरिका ने अपने को सिमटना आरंभ किया, इनके सामने समस्याएं बढ़ गई हैं। हालांकि डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने पूर्व सरकार से अलग नीति बरती है, किंतु प्रशांत क्षेत्र में पुरानी स्थिति लौट पाएगी ऐसा मानना कठिन है।

इसमें भारत के साथ उनके रणनीतिक संबंधों का महत्व बढ़ जाता है। आसियान के ज्यादातर देश चाहते हैं कि भारत उस क्षेत्र में अपनी भूमिका बढ़ाए। कुछ लोग इसे चीन के मुकाबले के तौर पर देखते हैं। हालांकि हम यह नहीं मानते कि भारत किसी तरह क्षेत्र में चीन के साथ मुकाबला करने या उसकी तुलना में अपना वर्चस्व बढ़ाने की रणनीति पर काम कर रहा है। बावजूद इसके आप देखेंगे कि जिन 15 समझौतों पर दोनों देशों ने हस्ताक्षर किए, उनमें हर तरह की सुरक्षा के बिंदु शामिल हैं। मोदी ने बयान में एक्ट ईस्ट पॉलिसी और इसके अंदर सभी के लिए सुरक्षा एवं विकास का वर्णन किया। वास्तव में मोदी इंडोनेशिया सहित क्षेत्र के देशों को संदेश देना चाहते थे कि इन देशों को संबंधों में महत्व देने की तो भारत की नीति है ही, लेकिन यह आर्थिक विकास के लिए सहयोग तक सीमित नहीं है, सुरक्षा इसका महत्वपूर्ण पहलू है। मोदी ने कहा कि सामुद्रिक पड़ोसियों के रूप में हमारी चिंताएं एक जैसी हैं और समुद्री मागरे की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना हमारा कर्तव्य है। यह देखना होगा कि मोदी की इस यात्रा का क्षेत्र पर कैसा प्रभाव पड़ता है, पर भारत और इंडोनेशिया ने जो समग्र रणनीतिक साझेदारी की घोषणा की उससे आगे का रास्ता खुलता है। भारत ने अभी तक इस समुद्री क्षेत्र में ऐसा व्यापक समझौता किसी देश के साथ नहीं किया था। वैसे हमें अपने-आपसे यह प्रश्न करना है कि क्या हम वाकई इतना बड़ा दायित्व निभाने के लिए तैयार हैं?

Time is running out for the public sector. As technologies change and the world advances further into the digital era, many PSUs will become more and more obsolete

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Everything in life comes with a “sell by” date. This is a lesson no Indian finance minister has ever managed to learn. The result is a waste of billions of dollars over the years, something a country like ours can ill afford. The government suffers from a strange belief that it should cling on to what it considers the family silver, till it realises that the asset has gone bad and then rush to offer it for sale, little realising that private enterprises are not exactly suckers waiting to buy lemons from the government stable. The lack of enthusiasm from bidders for Air India only highlights this malaise.

The Niti Aayog has recently put out another list of PSUs which it wants the government to sell, wholly or partially. It includes the Ashok Hotel in Delhi, marquee names like BHEL and the fallen star, MTNL. The Niti Aayog’s intentions are good, but the government will simply sit on this list and watch more value get eroded, almost as if it derives a perverse pleasure in watching things go to waste. Take the case of MTNL. In its heyday, it was this telecom giant lording over a landline monopoly, till the sector was thrown open to private competition. The inevitable followed; MTNL withered away to nothing. It had a market value of Rs 13,000 crore in 2008, which is when it should have been sold, that has now shrunk to 1,000 crore. And now the government wants to sell it. Maybe there will be takers for its towers and the land it owns, else the company is a dud.

The other big name on the list is BHEL, another classic case of missed opportunity. Back in 2011, its market value was Rs 82,000 crore, now down to only Rs 28,000 crore. This is no Navratna. Which jewel loses two thirds of its value in seven years? In the same time, peers like Larsen and Toubro and Thermax have more than doubled in value.

Such examples abound in practically every sector that the government is present in. In power, NTPC — the third most valuable listed PSU, has lost 40 per cent of its value in the last decade. In shipping, SCI is down 70 per cent in the last 10 years. In finance, IFCI which the government has made half-hearted attempts to divest in the past, has seen its market capitalisation shrink from Rs 18,000 crore in 2007 to only Rs 3,000 crore today. In the service sector — areas like banking, aviation or hotels — the wealth destruction is even more alarming. Yet, the government clings on, in the futile hope that somehow these dysfunctional PSUs will resurrect themselves and offer a better exit opportunity. When it is forced into a corner by a poor fiscal deficit situation, it resorts to eyewashes like cross-ownership of these very PSUs — one entity buying the government’s stake in another, under the garb of creating giant global corporations. It is almost laughable.

The government is in denial about the simple truth that it cannot run businesses efficiently. Unless it is a government-protected monopoly, no public sector enterprise can compete effectively against private competition; that is the blunt reality. And even in these quasi monopolies, the government often steps in to destroy value by putting its own political objectives ahead of prudent corporate policy. Our oil companies, such as Indian Oil Corporation or ONGC, are classic cases in point.

In doing all this, the government not only shoots itself in the foot but also does a huge disservice to minority shareholders of these public sector companies. This is best demonstrated by turning the lens around to the few stray cases of strategic disinvestment it has managed in the past, like Maruti. In 2007,

the government exited Maruti by selling its residual 10 per cent stake to Suzuki at Rs 797 per share. After its exit, the stock rose 11 times in subsequent years to touch Rs 8,500. An exemplary case of wealth creation for minority shareholders, which would never have happened had the company not been sold to Suzuki.

In the past, governments supported by Left parties have found it difficult to push through strategic sales in the face of opposition from labour unions. But for the last four years, we have a majority government in place with a supposedly strong leader whose core mantra is development, yet all we have seen is more pussyfooting with regard to PSUs. And as far as PSU banks are concerned, the less said the better. The silliest argument one hears from ministers is that many PSU companies are “strategic” in nature, therefore should remain in the government’s fold. This is, of course, total bunkum. Other than a few specific defence related products, nothing is strategic. Given sufficient incentive to make profit, the private sector will swiftly move into every area that these PSUs squat in, rendering them redundant overnight. Perhaps it is this fear which keeps bureaucrats from pushing disinvestment. Control, and the perks of it, aren’t so easy to give up, after all.

The government’s expenditure in key areas of welfare such as health, education, agriculture and skill development is woefully below what it should be. In a country with greater accountability, governments would have been taken to task by voters for wasting such precious fungible resources that could have been utilised for development expenditure. But unfortunately, our electorate remains too mired in primitive considerations of caste and religion to spot these glaring inefficiencies.

But time is running out for the public sector. As technologies change and the world advances further into the digital era, these PSUs will become more and more obsolete and redundant. They have to be sold while they still hold some value in the eyes of the buyer. Else they will die, slowly and painfully. The government will be left only with their ashes.



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How to be garbage-free

Cleanliness will only follow an attitudinal change

Samir Nazareth , [The writer is the author of ‘1400 Bananas, 76 Towns & 1 Million People’]



In the spirit of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the Goan government promised to make the State garbage-free by 2020. With a population of 18.2 lakhs and an economy geared for tourists, is Goa prepared to reach this milestone? Quite possibly not. In Candolim beach, for example, plastic and glass bottles are ubiquitous. This shows that tourists and beachgoers lack basic civic sense. The apparent dichotomy between their desire to enjoy a beach and their garbage-related attitude can be explained in terms of people equating the beach to revelry and not to

nature's beauty. Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether concern for nature would prevent littering. Perversely, tourists coming to imbibe the much-marketed carefree spirit of Goa have no qualms in pretending that waste disposal has nothing to do with collective enjoyment of this public good. Their ability to add to the litter and enjoy a dirty beach is something unique to this part of the world. Do foreigners, who may be more civic-minded in their home countries, consider this part of the much-vaunted Indian experience?

Litter on the beach also shows that there is no responsible waste management system. One reason why people abandon their garbage with such impunity may be the paucity of waste receptacles along the beach. There is also abdication of responsibility by the companies, distributors, restaurants and shopkeepers who manufacture, market and sell these products. Garbage on the beach also shows a lack of attention by authorities towards this issue though it concerns health, hygiene and protecting natural spaces — all of which are key to attracting tourists. There are no police or other such representatives on beaches who are empowered to enforce the law and hand out fines. Just as justice needs to be seen to be done, respect for the law arises from its implementation and the visible presence of an agency dedicated to deterrence and application of the law.

Behaviour change communication (BCC) could be the key to changing attitudes and behaviour patterns. India has seen success with this method regarding nutrition for expectant mothers. However, BCC on tourist-focussed waste management is non-existent in Goa. There is no mention of fines or the responsibilities of tourists. A critical element of BCC is having requisite infrastructure. In this case it would mean installation of waste receptacles, proper collection and management, and proper policing.

The situation at Candolim beach is a microcosm of the challenges that face Goa, if not the country. While technology such as clean composting can help, it is an insufficient response to an attitudinal issue. Lasting change may only come when people realise that their enjoyment of the beach is inextricably linked to keeping that beautiful environment garbage-free.
